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Date: 9/8/2007 11:56:50 AM

Subject: Fw: Helicopter flight

---- Original Message ----

From: Tom Averill

To: Wayde Fredrickson ; Margaret Higbee ; George Crawford ; Bill & Mo Hewes

Sent: Friday, September 07, 2007 12:13 AM

Subject: Fw: Helicopter flight

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Helicopter flight : A bunch of spare parts flying in close formation.

Anything that screws its way into the sky flies according to unnatural principals.

There are no old helicopters lying around airports like you see old airplanes. There is a reason for this. Come to think of it, there are not many old, high-time helicopter pilots hanging around airports either, so the first issue is problematic.

You can always tell a helicopter pilot in anything moving : a train, an air plane, a car or a boat. They never smile, they are always listening to the machine and they always hear something they think is not right.

Helicopter pilots fly in a mode of intensity, actually more like " spring loaded ", while waiting for pieces of their ship to fall off.

Flying a helicopter at any altitude over 500 feet is considered reckless and should be avoided. Flying a helicopter at any altitude or condition that precludes a landing in less than 20 seconds is considered outright foolhardy. Remember in a helicopter you have about 1 second to lower the collective in an engine failure before the craft becomes unrecoverable.

Once you've failed this maneuver the machine flies about as well as a 20 case Coke machine. Even a perfectly executed autorotation only gives you a glide ratio slightly better than that of a falling set of keys.

While hovering, if you start to sink a bit, you pull up on the collective while twisting the throttle, push with your left foot (more torque) and move the stick left (more translating tendency) to hold your spot. If you now need to stop rising, you do the opposite in that order. Sometimes in wind you do this many times each second. Don't you think that's a strange way to fly ?

For Helicopters : You never want to feel a sinking feeling in your gut (low "g" pushover) while flying a two bladed underslung teetering rotor system. You are about to do a snap-roll to the right and crash. For that matter, any remotely aerobatic maneuver should be avoided in a Huey. (I should point out that this never deterred me from exploring what a Huey can do when gently and politely asked to perform.)

Don't push your luck. It will run out soon enough anyway. If everything is working fine on your helicopter consider yourself temporarily lucky. **Something is about to break !!**

Harry Reasoner once wrote the following about helicopter pilots : " The thing is, helicopters are different from planes. An airplane by its nature wants to fly, and if not interfered with too strongly by unusual events or by an incompetent pilot, it will fly. A helicopter does not want to fly. It is maintained in the air by a variety of forces and controls working in opposition to each other.

Having said all this, I must admit that flying in a helicopter is one of the most satisfying and exhilarating experiences I have ever enjoyed : skimming over the tops of trees at 100 knots is something we should all be able to do, at least once ".

And remember the fighter pilot's prayer : " Lord I pray for the eyes of an eagle, the heart of a lion and the courage of a combat helicopter pilot !!! "

Many years later, I know that it was sometimes anything but fun, but now it IS something to brag about for those of us who survived the experience.



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