



HEADQUARTERS 11TH AIR ASSAULT DIVISION  
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL  
FORT BENNING, GEORGIA

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AJVCG

23 May 1964

SUBJECT: Safe Operation of Aircraft

TO: See Distribution

1. The number and serious nature of aircraft accidents in the past several weeks cannot be tolerated. The continuance of such a rate will jeopardize the entire air assault concept. Nothing can be more easily or specifically criticized than a large number of aircraft accidents. This is true in spite of the fact that we are using aircraft in numbers and in ways that are unprecedented in the Army. We must continue to exploit in full the capabilities of our aircraft, but we must reexamine and define just how far we can go with safety in each area of our operations.

2. Each commander will immediately examine every area in which his units operate or use aircraft with a view to improved and safer practices. The following are some specific suggested areas, but are not intended to be comprehensive.

a. Better site selection of pick up and landing zones for both fixed and rotary wing aircraft (in this connection, a little work with axes or saws is good insurance).

b. Improved air and ground control on and around pick up and landing zones (emphasis on standard "rules of the road". improved standards of men guiding aircraft into proper parking area, etc).

c. Improved hot weather techniques (tailoring loads to existing conditions, measuring performance capability of aircraft prior to take off, optimum use of wind and take off directions, use of standard operational check lists; for example, a check list for helicopters in which the co-pilot would be required to determine and inform the pilot of such determining factors as density altitude; wind direction and speed; distance to and height of nearest obstacle; and gross weight of aircraft for take off).

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d. Use of safer LZ and PZ, safer routes and higher in-flight altitudes whenever tactical situation permits.

e. A slower tempo of operations if required to permit complete briefings and attention to safe practices.

f. Emphasis on safety in daily briefings and also debriefings (encouraging all crews to bring out any suggested improved practices or techniques; for example, in a preflight briefing the crews might well be reminded of the greater difficulty of going out of a restricted landing as compared to landing in the area with the same gross weight).

g. Skull sessions using all suitable training aids such as the training film "Know Your Iroquois", sand tables set up with various landing zone situations, etc., to stress the importance of individual judgment and to emphasize that each take off and landing is unique and different in some respect from every other take off and landing. In this regard we must necessarily develop the highest possible degree of skill and judgment at the individual crew member level in the many forms of aircraft operation which together make up the air assault concept.

h. Refresher courses on safe practices for men and equipment to be carried in aircraft (avoiding rotors, wearing helmets, dog tags, seat belts, etc.).

3. Closely related to safe aircraft operation is the matter of enforcement of pertinent regulations and directives. This unit must be even more meticulous and exacting in adherence to all valid in-flight rules than other Army units. This is true not only because we are using more aircraft and in more different roles than other Army units, but also because we are very much in the public eye, and consequently are analogous to "Caesar's wife." We must avoid like the plague any hint of being "aerial cowboys", but must instead exemplify professionalism in every good sense of that word. As a corollary, we must be swift and sure in appropriately punishing any infractions which do occur.

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4. I wish each of my Assistant Division Commanders to actively monitor this reexamination of our operating procedures for units under his supervision, and to advise me of progress and possible problems or areas requiring emphasis.

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Safety Officer

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