

# The Safety Wire

January 2013



**“Hindsight...”** Boy, it would be nice if it was always 20/20. It’s a new year and as we look ahead at another 12 months of laboring in what I consider the world’s greatest profession, one of the best things we can do to ensure success is to take a moment to look at the previous year. The picture provided from accident records is far from complete, but it is a good place to start. In 2012 I followed 18 law enforcement aviation accidents. Obviously there were more accidents and many more unreported incidents, but these 18 provide valuable information on the risks facing us all. Take a minute to look them over and see if the same risks need to be further mitigated at your own operation. More details are available in the ALEA Accident Report Database which can be found here:

The incidents in **RED** indicate fatal accidents. Please remember, in some of the incidents the final probable cause reports are still not complete. In these cases I have tried to provide only officially released details without making assumptions:

- Autorotation into trees [Bell 407]
- **Departure from controlled flight (spinning around vertical axis) during low level SAR maneuvering [Bell 407]**
- **TFO fell from high terrain while outside of aircraft**
- TFO hit in the head with a blade while walking away from aircraft [AS 350]
- Fuel exhaustion [Bell 206B]
- Driveshaft failure in a hover [AS 350]
- Engine failure [MD 500]
- Tail rotor departure from aircraft in cruise flight [Bell 407]
- **Fatal crash during marijuana eradication [Piper PA-12]**
- Crash during autorotation practice [MD 500]
- Engine failure [OH-58]
- **Wire strike – yet unknown additional factors [MD 500]**
- Collision between two aircraft on ramp [OH-58 x2]
- Landing incident on dolly [Bell 407]
- Landing gear collapse during snow landing [Piper Super Cub]
- Loss of Control while on the ground with engine running (inadvertent take off) [AS 350]
- Training – hover autorotation [AS 350]

- Fatal crash in snowy conditions (still under investigation) [AS 350]

While the investigations on these accidents are not all complete, most of the 2011 incidents are. I was not tracking these cases as closely in 2011, but here are some of the ones I was able to find:

- Loss of control – Loss of Tailrotor Effectiveness (LTE) at 300' OGE hover [OH-58]
- Loss of control – LTE while landing in mountains [MD 500]
- Damage from hangar debris while flying out of hangar [OH-58]
- Blade strike during run on landing practice [AS 350]
- Loss of Control during hydraulics failure simulation training [AS 350]
- Engine power loss/forced landing [OH-58]
- Wheels up landing [Cessna 210]
- Inadvertent flight into Instrument Meteorological Conditions (IIMC) leading to Controlled Flight Into Terrain (CFIT) [Cessna 185]

*To obtain maximum attention,  
it is hard to beat a good big mistake.*

*~David D. Hewitt*

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### *From the Trenches*

Alex Barreto of the XXXXX recently sent me a link to video of a Brazilian Search and Rescue helicopter crashing into the ocean while conducting a beach rescue. The link below will translate the story from Portuguese into English. There are no details yet other than the rotor RPM decayed despite still having power from the engine. There were five passengers aboard the AS350B3, all survived. I'm sure that like me, you rotorheads all will have a theory or two jump into your head after watching it. When more details come to light, I will be sure to pass them on.

One important lesson that the video offers without having to wait for a lengthy investigation is the speed in which the aircraft rolls over and submerges. From impact to when the rotors hit the water is 7 seconds. The aircraft begins to roll and the cabin is completely underwater within 5 seconds. This all demands we ask two questions of ourselves:

When was the last time you did underwater egress training?

Do you always wear your flotation vest and HEEDs bottle?

Think you can get to it if needed? Don't think you'll be close enough to water to need that stuff? Read the accident report below about the aircraft making an emergency landing in the middle of New York State and the one about EMS helicopter ditching in the ocean.

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## Online Resource Update

A Bell 407 helicopt

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### *Reality Check...*

*The following excerpts are directly from NTSB reports. The intent is not to judge, but to use the harsh lessons experienced by some to increase safety for everyone.*

Aircraft: Bell 407

Injuries: 1 Fatal

A Bell 407 helicopter, was substantially damaged when it collided with terrain shortly after takeoff. The commercial pilot, who was the sole occupant, was fatally injured. Day instrument meteorological conditions prevailed for the post-maintenance flight that was originating at the time of the accident.

According to the operator, the pilot was performing the post-maintenance flight to identify if there was any residual oil left behind during a routine phase check that had been completed the

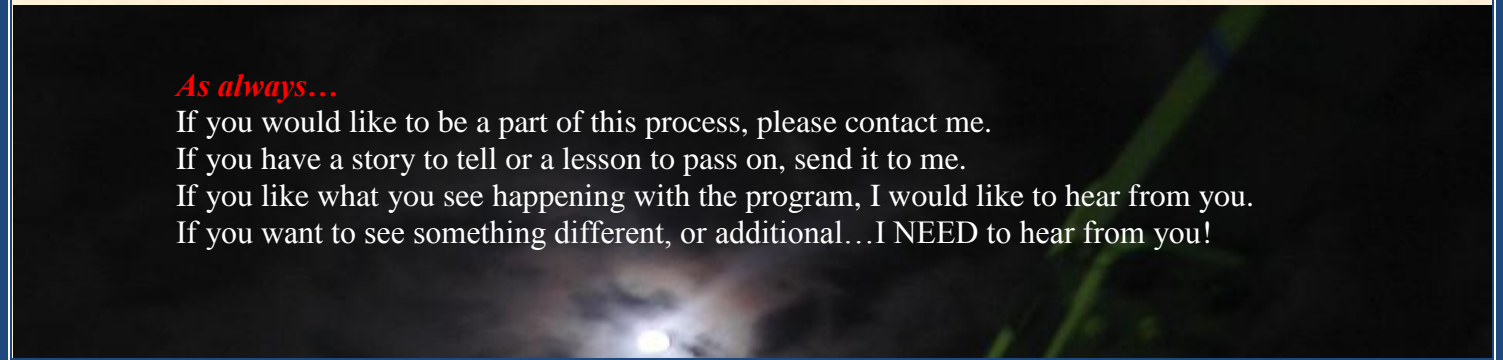
### *As always...*

If you would like to be a part of this process, please contact me.

If you have a story to tell or a lesson to pass on, send it to me.

If you like what you see happening with the program, I would like to hear from you.

If you want to see something different, or additional... I NEED to hear from you!



Until the next flight,  
*Bryan 'MuGu' Smith*

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