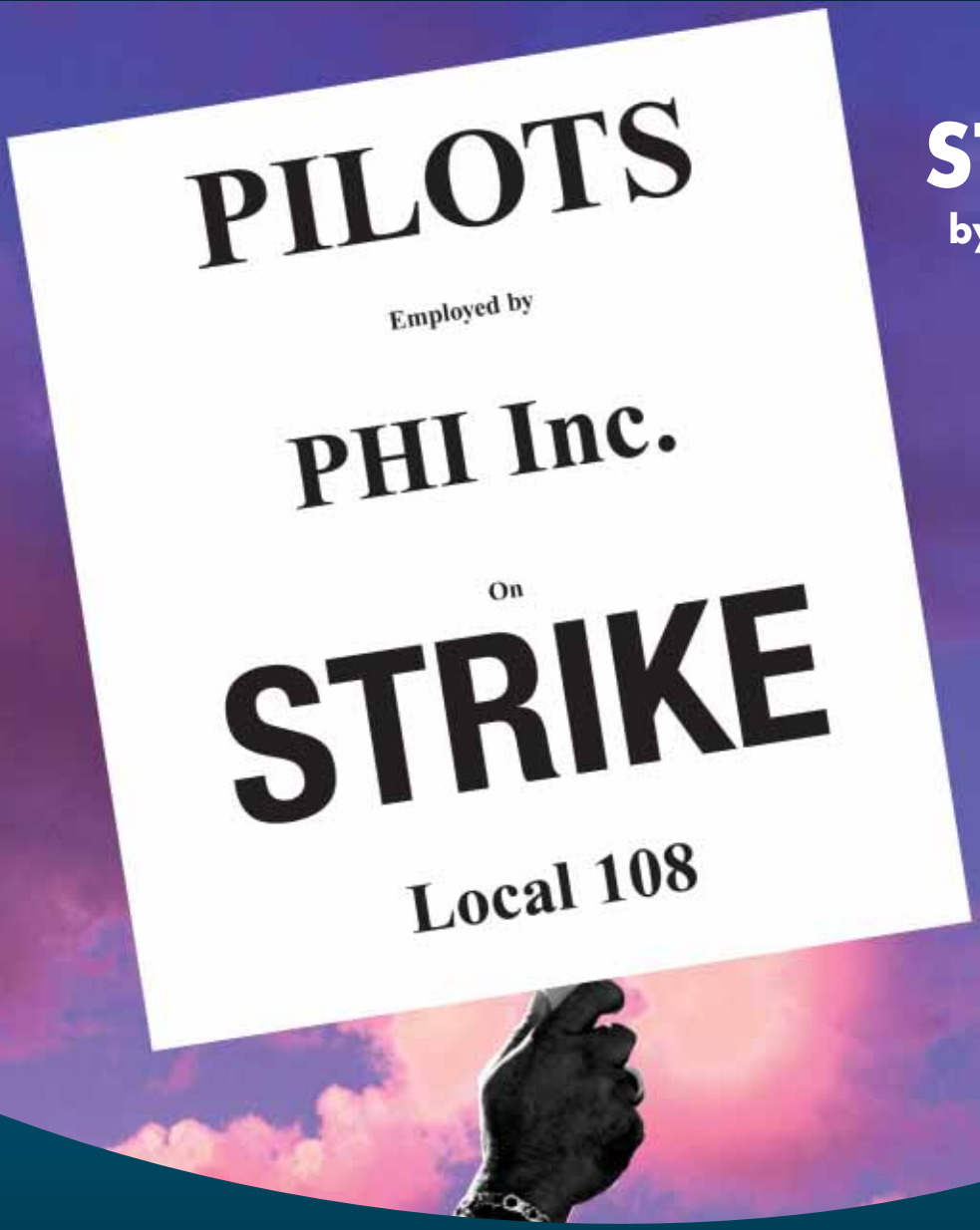
Autorotate

the journal of the professional helicopter pilot



STRIKE!

by Tony Fonze

COLUMNS

FEATURES

& MORE

Volume 6 *www.autorotate.org* *Issue 4*

Autorotate is the official publication of the Professional Helicopter Pilots' Association (PHPA)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

"Purely Pete" once again in the spotlight.

My friend Pete Gillies is a magnet for letters to the editor. The most recent is from Donald Watson who was kind enough to take the time to point out some concerns he has with Pete's article on "Landing in Confined Areas" Volume 6, Issue 2. Donald, forgive me for paraphrasing (space is an issue this issue), is concerned that Pete may have been suggesting that it is OK to do an approach without knowing all your parameters: weight, wind direction, surface/slope, etc.

He was not. Pete was pointing out the very real life situation of having to land in unimproved areas without precisely knowing your weight—you burned fuel and you let off one passenger and some equipment at another site; wind direction—you're flying in Arizona landing in the boonies with a bunch of Saguaros that are not known to sway in the breeze; and on your high recon, you can't precisely know what your surface really looks like. Most of us have been there or somewhere similar.

His article was giving advice on how to safely make an approach and takeoff in these circumstances based upon good technique. Pete's experience provides intelligent guidance that goes beyond the basics taught in flight school and if followed closely can give pilots (young and old) some new tools to help keep them safe in the world.

One of the things that is so difficult to find in the literature or on the job is someone willing to share their hard-earned experiences. Pete has that willingness and the experience to back it up. We are committed to providing help to the hundreds of new military and civilian pilots who find themselves doing something new with only the guidance of their primary training to support them.

Donald, I appreciate your views, respect your experience and thank you for taking the time to write. On the other hand, I do not want to discourage Pete from sharing his experience, nor do I want to dampen his enthusiasm for sharing. New pilots know the FARS and know what the book says about making confined area approaches.

What they don't know is how to do one, with confidence, when it doesn't fit the formula.

The editor

END

The Thunder Brigade Comes Home

On November 17, 31 UH-60 Black Hawks belonging to the 4th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, 159th Combat Aviation Brigade came home to Sabre Army Heliport at Fort Campbell, Kentucky after a year-long deployment in Iraq. The aircraft arrived after flying all day from Jacksonville, Florida where they had been unloaded off ships and pieced back into flying condition for the trip home.

Welcome home!

END

Photography: Thunder Brigade Black Hawks return home; SSG Kevin Doheny159th CAB PAO

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our profession and the industry as a whole are experiencing some very trying times. Pilots went on strike in the Gulf of Mexico. Aircraft accidents continue to plague us. Experienced pilots are becoming more and more difficult to find and the public image of helicopter flight is suffering. I heard a long-time helicopter pilot, in casual conversation, say that if he or a family member was involved in an automobile accident, they would not allow themselves to be transported to the hospital by helicopter if it was at night or the weather was less than VFR. You know there is an industry problem when those working in it are themselves having second thoughts.

The obvious question here is how do we turn this public perception of our profession around? The answer is quite simple....Quit having accidents!

Not going to happen, most say. But I know for a fact it can happen, because the Canadians have done it. Canadian Helicopters Limited (CHL) has over twenty years of accident-free EMS flying. That alone is proof it can be done if, and that is a BIG if, the operation is managed properly. The problem here is the US operators will most likely never come to terms with running an EMS operation like they do in Canada. Consequently, the accident rate will, in all likelihood, continue to be a problem in the United States. I'll let you read between the lines on the causes and solutions here.

Having sat through our second Human Factors Safety Conference and listened to all the different opinions, solutions, and new products designed to make us all safer I came away with the feeling that everybody knows there is a problem and they each feel they have a solution to a specific problem area but the overall probability of finding a silver bullet to cure what ails us is very unlikely. So, where do we go from here? That is the one question we as a pilot's organization must ask and answer before we can move in any particular direction. The safety issue is a major one but it is multifaceted, and trying to decide on where we, as an organization, can be most effective is a very real challenge. The Safety Conference simply confirmed that for me.

Our job at PHPA now is to find what areas of safety we feel are most important to our membership and then determine how we can be most effective in changing these areas for the better. We collected quite a bit of information during the conference and Jeff Smith is working with this data to help determine our next step. I will continue to update you regarding our efforts in the area of safety in my email newsletters and here in *Autorotate* as we progress forward. We will also be asking you, our members, for your input on a number of issues as we start working them. After all, you are the closest to the problems so you should have some pretty good ideas on how to cure many of them. With this in mind I have asked Tony, the editor of *Autorotate*, to begin including a "Safety Corner" column in *Autorotate* where we will ask the pertinent questions in an effort to get the answers from you. This will be a great first step in listening to what the working line pilot has to say about those everyday safety issues that plague us all. Look for it in the next issue.

Butch Grafton
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END

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Cover: Local 108 Strike Placard

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By Tony Fonze

FACT: March 2000; PHI's Pilot Union, Local 108, is voted into being

FACT: June 1, 2001; A 3 year collective bargaining agreement (contract) is signed between the pilots and the company.

FACT: May 2004; the contract expires, terms remain in affect until revisions are agreed to by both parties

FACT: Over the next 30 months, the company and the union met 79 times and they could not agree on the terms of the new contract

FACT: August 28, 2006; the National Mediation Board frees both parties to engage in non-violent self-help measures (i.e. Strike)

FACT: September 20, 2006; more than half of PHI's pilots go out on strike

FACT: November 10, 2006; The remaining striking pilots of Local 108 vote to end their strike and offer to unconditionally return to work. Company's receptiveness unclear when going to print.

Those are the facts.

The remaining portion of this article is conjecture, but not fiction. It is supposition based upon many hours spent interviewing both striking and non-striking pilots; reviewing letters sent to the pilots from PHI CEO Al Gonsoulin; studying the terms of the union's proposed contract amendments; and looking at dozens of highly emotional, but poorly written, web postings. I believe that some important truths can be gleaned from this research and applied logic.

Why are these truths important? Because they will continue to affect the lives of helicopter pilots, one way or another, for many years to come.

There are soft facts hiding between the lines of the hard facts listed earlier. They're there, but we have to look for them. Once discovered, we have to decide what to do with them.

Nobody "wants" to form a union

In 1943, Abraham Maslow published his Theory of Human Motivation. You may know it as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow submits that if our hierarchy of needs is not met, it is difficult for us to be happy and fulfilled. These needs are frequently presented as a 5-layer pyramid. The way this basically works is that once you satisfy the requirements of a lower layer of the pyramid, your requirements now expand to include the next higher level. You can't be truly satisfied until all 5 levels of requirements are met.

At the bottom level, we find our basic physiological requirements: food, water, shelter, sleep, and yes, for those of you who are one step ahead of me, sex. If you don't have these things, there's no point in going any higher. They are paramount in importance. Level 2 involves our need for safety and security including job security, health, and the well-being of our families. I interpret this as, once we've got our physiological needs met, we want to have some security that they'll still be met tomorrow.

The next level up is our requirement for friendship and belonging. My tummy is full, I'm warm and dry and I think I'll be full, warm and dry tomorrow—so, where are my friends? To what community do I belong?

Level 4 focuses on everyone's need for self-esteem and respect. And Level 5 is our need for creativity and self-fulfillment—who am I, what is my purpose.

I don't know about you, but to me it becomes quite apparent that our choice of employer and the behavior of that employer have a lot to do with whether or not we are fed, secure, respected and fulfilled. With regards to sex, you're on your own.

So what happens when you work for an employer who routinely fails to help you satisfy your requirements? Of course, you talk to them about it. But let's say that management is not receptive and now your job security is threatened. So, why not quit and go to a better company? Because there are hundreds, if not thousands of others who haven't made it to even the first level of the pyramid, who would be only too happy to take your place on the bottom rung of the ladder. You are completely out of options.

Then and only then do employees consider organizing. Organizing isn't a first resort. It is a last resort.

So, companies that are unionized—shame on you. If you had paid your employees fairly; treated them with dignity and respect; and appreciated them as members of your valued family—there never would be a union. Just ask Maslow.

Why is this relevant to a study of the strike? Because it tells us that in the past, the majority of PHI's pilots felt that the company was not treating them well and that they had run out of options. In 2000, the pilots felt that they needed a union in order to meet the requirements of Maslow's pyramid.

It takes two to tango

Both camps have made claims that the other failed to negotiate in good faith.

Photography: Striking PHI pilots shortly after strike initiated

The company says that they tried to negotiate fairly with the union but the union refused to do so. The union says that they approached the company with a set of proposals, but the company never intended to negotiate from the beginning and has been stalling for 30 months. Let's see if logic can shed any light on this.

First of all, I would have to agree that somebody does not want to play fair. There is no way for two open-minded people or groups to sit down together 79 times and not get anywhere unless somebody doesn't want to go.

In every successful contract negotiation there has to be a common thread—a goal shared by both parties. In the purchase of a home, one party has to want to sell the home and the other has to want to buy it. In the sale of a business—one party has to want to sell the business and move to Hawaii and the other has to want to own it, fix all that is wrong and get rich in the process. In an employment agreement, the employees have to want to work at the company and the employer has to want them to work there.

If both parties perceive benefit via the successful negotiation of an agreement, then reasonable compromise is possible and the goals of both parties are achieved. If only one party wants to come to the table, then they can talk till they're blue in the face and the negotiations aren't going anywhere—they don't share the same desire for the same outcome.

Neither you nor I were party to the negotiations. We do not know what took place in those negotiation sessions. But, it may be possible to analyze the situation by looking at the situation logically. Let's try to identify the common goal that both parties "should" have been after. If I were the President of PHI, I would seek a contract that allowed my pilots to feel good about working for my company but that also allowed me to be profitable and equitable with my other employees. PHI also has a fiduciary responsibility to its shareholders and creditors. Any successful agreement must satisfy all of these requirements.

The pilots should be seeking an agreement that would help them meet the requirements of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs but that would also allow the company to be profitable and successful. If they are too greedy then they may kill the goose that laid the golden egg.

It appears to me that if both parties are reasonable, then there is enough room in the middle for both to achieve the desired result. But it is clear that the two parties did not share the same goal.

Let's pose a few questions. First, what do the pilots gain by stalling negotiations?

During the stall period they have to continue to abide by the terms of the current contract. The current contract allows for mandatory workover (overtime)—something that the PHI pilots feel is making their jobs untenable. Another important issue to the pilots was a vacation and sick leave policy that they felt was ill-defined and punitive. A third important issue was that of "contract pilots." The original contract allowed the company to bring in contracted, non-employee pilots for aircraft that the PHI pilot force was not qualified to operate. The early days of the S-92 would be an example. However, the union felt that the company had now extrapolated that provision to routinely hire contract pilots in lieu of regular employees-who would also be union pilots.

By continuing to operate under the terms of the existing contract the union is penalized and unable to seek relief for issues they feel are important. This makes me think that the union did have a goal of successfully negotiating a new contract. Of course, it couldn't just be any old new contract. The new contract terms had to satisfy the issues I just raised and then some.

Photography: Idle PHI aircraft, sitting on the line due to lack of pilots. Striking pilots have bigger fish to fry than photo quality.

What does the company gain by failing to negotiate to a mutually agreeable conclusion? First, they get to continue to operate according to the terms of a contract that they prefer versus one that they anticipate will be less favorable to them. More importantly, as failed negotiation sessions drag on, the possibility increases that the union will strike. And if the company has a real goal of eliminating the power of the union at PHI and they feel that they will be ultimately successful in a strike situation, then pressuring the union to strike may satisfy their long term goals and strategy.

You'll have to draw your own conclusions.

Life isn't fair

OK, so there's at least a possibility that 30 months of negotiations did not go down according to the Marquis of Queensberry Rules (Officially entitled Marquis of Queensberry Boxing Rules Governing Contests for Endurance—apropos, wouldn't you say?) Is this inherently wrong? Who is at fault?

I'm sorry, but I don't see this as a matter of right and wrong at this point. I see this as a matter of execution. The union had a strategy and was free to execute that strategy to the best of their abilities. Similarly, the company had a strategy and they were free to execute it.

In this case, the company apparently was in a stronger position and did a better job. And it may have paid off for them. It isn't fair—but…(don't make me say it again).

What you will now read is pure conjecture on my part. It is not based upon any personal knowledge of what really went on inside PHI. It is, however, what I would have done if I were PHI—and that's all it is.

Let's say that I'm determined to get rid of the union. This is what I would do.

1. I would formulate a comprehensive strategy to accomplish my goal. That strategy would explicitly embrace my customer base, my pilots, other employees in the company, my investors, and the media.

2. I would talk to my customers and paint the case that it is possible that we would find ourselves in a strike situation, in spite of our abilities to ward one off. I would make the business case that in the end, we'll do whatever is necessary to protect them and I would paint a picture of a rosier world that lies on the other end, if a strike should ensue. I would give them confidence that the company would ultimately win. I would solicit their support.

3. I would communicate well and often with my employees, especially the pilots. I would point out all of the good things I had done for them. I would let them know how the union was being unreasonable and I would proclaim my indignation at being falsely accused of being uncooperative. I would work hard to move as many pilots to my side as possible. And, for those that wouldn't move, I would attempt to plant the seed of doubt.

4. I would have a detailed strike plan in my back pocket. What actions would I take, in the event of a strike. My strike plan would include the media, employee communications, actions to take against the striking pilots, and crew roster and recruiting plans to help me regain full operations as soon as possible. I would also look at the potential impact to my operations and communicate with my investors.

5. I would be prepared in advance to execute my plan as needed.

Did any of these things happen? I don't know, did they?

I have to point out that the company, if they did behave as I have described above, was taking advantage of a changing dynamic that has been taking place at PHI and is taking place at the other unionized helicopter operations. The pilot demographic that voted in the original union has been substantially diluted over the past 6 years. One statistic that I've heard is that almost 50% of the pilots at PHI were not there in 2000. I don't know if this is true or not, but I know that it is true that many of the newer (could be read as younger) pilots at the company did not share all of the frustrations expressed by the original union pilots. Their experience with the company was a different one. Yes, they were frustrated with mandatory workovers and some of the other issues, but some believed the company had their best interests at heart.

Somehow a "disconnect" had grown between the two pilot camps and the company leveraged that "disconnect."

What can we learn

There are some important lessons to be learned here and these may or may not be the actual lessons that were learned. Here's how I break them down.

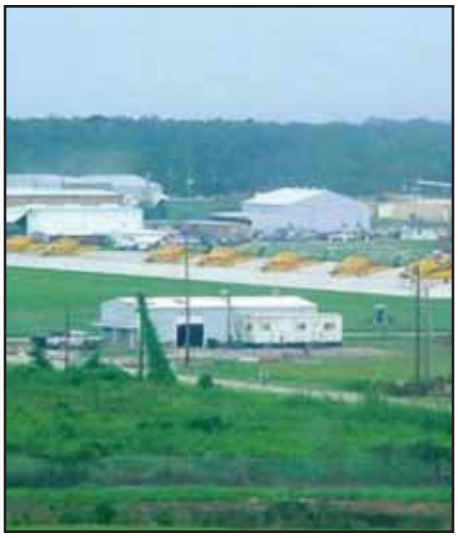
Lessons Helicopter Operators Have Learned From the PHI Strike

1. The user's guide on how to get rid of your union.

2. See 1-5 above.

Lessons Helicopter Operators Should Have Learned From the PHI Strike

1. Respect your pilots as the valuable employees they are and work together with them to help them achieve their needs while at the same time communicating and achieving the needs of the corporation. If you do this, unions will



Photography: More idle aircraft.

never be an issue in the first place. You will save yourself a lot of money and aggravation and your business will be a happier, more successful operation—for everyone involved.

2. While the law of supply and demand certainly plays a role in establishing the pay scale and benefits owed to your pilots, it should not be the only factor. There remain the demands of Maslow's Hierarchy and, more importantly, the concepts of fairness, respect, safety and dignity. How a company treats its employees is determined by the top person in that company—the CEO. Everyone else, just follows suit—for good or for ill.

Lessons the Union Has Learned From the PHI Strike

1. Not everyone sees the rules the same way.

2. Being "right" doesn't mean you will win.

3. People (including some of your friends) may disappoint you.

4. Life is not fair (already knew this, but it has been reinforced in spades).

Lessons All Unions Should Learn From the PHI Strike

1. Forming a local and negotiating your first collective bargaining agreement is just the beginning of your work—not the end of it.

2. Many of the newer pilots at PHI told me that they weren't sure what the union did for them and they didn't see why they needed a union. Unions must aggressively maintain a close relationship with their members—especially new members who join after the original action. This point bears some emphasis.

- You have to "market" to your members and you have to be smart about it
- You have to remind your members every month why you are there and what you do for them
- You have to listen to your members' concerns and be an active part of their lives
- If you fail to execute these strategies well, your members won't be there for you when you need them

3. Unions must plan, strategize, and execute as well as the companies they work for. This is not easy, but it is required.

- Communication is vital. It must be fast, accurate, compelling and well done. I've read many of the communications issued by PHI management to the pilots leading up to and during the strike. It is good stuff! The union leaders can do no less and they can do it no less effectively.
- Unions have to plan in advance how and what they want to communicate to their different audiences. These audiences include the company's customers, management, union members, other employees, investors, and the media. If you can influence the investors and the customers, you are dealing with a different situation.

4. In addition to legal support, unions could immensely benefit from public

relations assistance to help get their story told to the different audiences that need to hear it. They need a publicist at their disposal, not just during a strike, but to help them share their message with their members on a day to day basis.

The proof is in the pudding

So what will happen now? Only time will tell.

The company, though never admitting their culpability in having a union in their midst in the first place, has made it clear in their communications to employees that they are now an employee-minded company and that the labor action represents "…an opportunity to begin rebuilding our company around a new attitude, as a 'company team' instead of a 'we against them' mentality." (Quote from Al Gonsoulin letter to employees dated September 29, 2006)

Without the threat of collective action, will the company return to a past that brought the union to PHI in the first place or have they truly turned over a new leaf? We'll have to wait and see.

But there is a very sad aspect to this entire proceeding and I can't get it out of my mind. Hundreds of extraordinary pilots have dedicated their entire careers to PHI providing quality, safe service to the company and its customers. Their children have been born, raised, metriculated, married, and themselves become parents, all while their fathers and mothers were away at work at PHI.

Some of them have become friends of mine. I know them. I hold them in high regard—not just for their piloting skills and vast experience, but for the human beings that they are: strong, honorable, and possessed of the courage of their convictions. Their actions in this entire process were based on one thing—a belief that they were acting in the best interest of every pilot at PHI. They put their jobs on the line for that belief. And they lost. Some of them will never have the opportunity to again work as pilots.

So for all of the pilots still working at PHI or those thinking of going there to take the jobs of my friends who may not be welcomed back—I have a few thoughts for you as well.

The men and women whose jobs you now hold are people of honor and courage and you owe them something for their sacrifice. They and their families feel forsaken by a company they devoted their lives to, now potentially viewed as the enemy. They are not the enemy, but they are distrustful, with a distrust based upon their personal experience. How could you expect them to be otherwise?

Do not speak ill of them. The salaries, benefits and protections you now enjoy exist because of their courage—make no mistake about it. We should all use them as role models—they are among the few who are willing to risk all, for their beliefs and convictions. The world needs people like this. Would we do the same?

Let me conclude this article with one more hard fact.

FACT: Starting VFR Pilot salaries at PHI in 1998 were $31,000/year. The highest pilot salary was $59,596 for an IFR PIC who had been with the company for 35 years.

After the union-negotiated collective bargaining agreement, starting VFR Pilot salaries at PHI were $44,872—a 45% increase. The highest possible pilot salary was over $100,000.

NOT THE END!

Local 108 Helicopter Pilots Continue to Struggle

Editor's Note: OPEIU (Office And Professional Employees International Union) the parent organization of Local 108 (PHI Pilots) has submitted this update and asked me to include it in the magazine. Tony

The struggle by helicopter pilots employed by PHI, Inc. in Lafayette Louisiana, OPEIU Local 108, continues since the first helicopter strike ever in the industry began on September 20, 2006. The strike was precipitated when the company unilaterally implemented its own contract on August 28, 2006 after more than two years of bargaining.

As of this writing, no mutually agreed to contract has been reached, and the striking pilots are still not back at work. Immediately following the start of the strike, PHI reassigned its management employees and instructors to do the work of the striking pilots. They also employed contract pilots and permanent replacements at premium rates of pay.

The Local 108 bargaining unit is covered by the Railway Labor Act (RLA) which contains provisions different from the National Labor Relations Act. One of those differences allowed PHI to offer individual strikers who are willing to abandon the picket line and return to work, a "bonus" of $1,000 for each seven days of work, along with the company's implemented contract. Unfortunately, many of the strikers accepted PHI's offer.

By November 10, 2006, it was apparent that the union needed to adopt a new strategy. Under the RLA, when a union makes an "unconditional offer to return to work" and terminates its strike, the company is required to return striking pilots to work to open positions in order of seniority. The Local 108 Executive Board voted to make that recommendation to the membership at a meeting held later that day. The membership approved the Executive Board's recommendation and voted to make the offer.

Following membership approval, the "unconditional offer to return to work" was delivered to PHI that same day. The company responded on November 22 with a draft document entitled "Preliminary Unconditional Return to Work Agreement" setting preconditions before PHI would accept them back to work. The preconditions included:

Returning pilots will be subject to terms and conditions established by PHI, consistent with its business and operational needs and safety concerns.

The pilots will be subject to rates of pay, rules and working conditions in accordance with PHI's unilaterally implemented contract of August 28, 2006.

OPEIU and Local 108 will be barred from calling, sanctioning, condoning, participating in or otherwise engaging in any strike, work stoppage, slowdown, sickout, picketing, corporate campaign activities, or other self-help measures, either individually or collectively.

The issuance by OPEIU and Local 108 of appropriate clarifications, corrections, and/or retraction of communications to the Securities and Exchange Commission, Federal Aviation Administration, or Congresspersons, media, customers, and others that the OPEIU and Local 108 have contacted in pursuing its corporate campaign against PHI.

OPEIU, Local 108, and returning pilots will not condone, nor participate in, the harassment, intimidation, or threats of any pilot; nor will they otherwise discriminate against any pilot who continued working during the union-called job action, and that any pilot participating in such activities will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

OPEIU and Local 108 will not seek, nor demand, any retribution (financial or otherwise) from any pilot who continued to work, or who returned to work, during the union-called job action, regardless of the pilot's union-membership or agency fee status.

Obviously, the union could not accept such preconditions, many of which are clearly unlawful under the RLA. The company refused to relinquish its preconditions, and the union was forced to sue in Federal court, concurrently making a motion for a Preliminary Injunction for the court to order PHI to comply with the law and return striking pilots to work to open positions in order of seniority.

In response to the union's motion for a Preliminary Injunction, the court ordered "supervised mediation" between the parties, facilitated by Magistrate Judge C. Michael Hill, which was held on December 14 and 15, 2006 in Lafayette, Louisiana. The court supervised mediation did not produce any positive results. Therefore, the motion for a Preliminary Injunction will go forward to a formal Hearing scheduled for January 17 and 18, 2007 before Federal District Court Judge Rebecca F. Doherty in Lafayette, Louisiana.

The strike has had a negative financial effect on the company. In Government filings, the company reported nearly $4 million in expenses during the first ten days of the strike for the period ending September 30, 2006. Additional financial information on the effects of the strike will be made public when the company files its fourth quarter report for the period ending December 31, 2006, expected in early February 2007.

Local 108 President Capt. Steve Ragin

said: "We remain optimistic that justice will prevail and that the rights afforded to striking pilots under the RLA will be complied with by PHI through a court order. Despite the many challenges faced by the pilots, they remain strong and clearly recognize the need to continue to fight for renewal of the contract."

International President Michael Goodwin said: "We will continue to fully support Local 108 members in their struggle for justice and pursue their cause through the courts as expeditiously as possible. We will be at their side at every moment, until a collective bargaining agreement is achieved."

Director of Organization and Field Services, Kevin Kistler, monitored the negotiations and strike, and participated in Local 108 membership meetings.

Working with the pilots throughout this ordeal is Senior International Representative Paul Bohelski, who has worked tirelessly to insure that the strike lines were maintained and regular communications were established among the pilots to fully inform them every step of the way.

The Local 108 Executive Board consists of Steve Ragin (President), Mike Dorsett (Vice President), Jack Bower (Secretary-Treasurer), and Trustees Mel Sayler, Mark Hardeman, and Larry Getchell.

Further details on this struggle will be reported in the next issue of *Autorotate*.

END

A Response to Jeff Smith's Article

IN VOLUME 5 ISSUE 4—"A DEMANDING PROFESSION"

By Tom "Bo" Bohannan

Editor's Note: Over a year ago, contributor Jeff Smith wrote an article commemorating the tragic death of his friend Michael Lee, who was killed in a training accident at Ft. Rucker. The accident involved a rollover at the end of an autorotation that was executed under the assumption that the helicopter had suffered a tail rotor failure. It had not, but almost certainly had encountered LTE instead.

I'd like to use my 40 years of flying experience to make a few comments regarding Jeff's article. I speak from the knowledge of having had one LTE event and two tail rotor failures during my career. Oh yes…and three engine failures.

I was flying a JetRanger in the Bitterroot Mountains of Montana when I got myself into LTE after slowing down to look at a possible landing spot on the side of a mountain. I didn't have my winds figured out, was in a big hurry, and slowed down too quickly, requiring that I pull in a bunch of power.

Bad technique got me into LTE, but fortunately, good technique got me out of it. I lowered the collective and got the nose down to gain some airspeed and fly out of it as I started towards the mountain side. All I knew was that I was rapidly turning to the right and quickly gaining rotational speed. I didn't care if it was a tail rotor failure or LTE. All I knew was that I had to reduce my torque, gain some airspeed and get some air flowing past my vertical surfaces. In my case, I fortunately did not roll off the throttle and enter a full autorotation as did the pilot in Jeff's article. If he had taken a moment to assess the situation and regroup, he may have been able to fly out of his auto once he figured out he had all his tail

rotor parts connected and working.

Following are some of my thoughts on Jeff's friend's unfortunate accident.

• If you have some altitude to play with, don't be too quick to roll the throttle off and enter a full autorotation. Or, if you do enter a full auto, consider bringing some of your power back in (after regaining airspeed) to diagnose your possible tailrotor failure.

• For many years, I used to card pilots for the USFS. I would verbally simulate a tail rotor failure in flight by stating, "You just experienced some aircraft vibration and a moment of feedback in the pedals and now you're getting a yaw to the right (or left depending on the aircraft). Do what you need to do."

Most applicants would reduce power substantially and do everything pretty much by the book except for one thing. Too often, the pilot would not tell me the one thing he absolutely had to do before pulling collective at the bottom and that is to Turn the Engines Off or Roll Off Throttle and Hold It Off. This problem

Photography: The author; Bo Bohannon

seemed far more prevalent in pilots who were flying helicopters with power levers rather than those with twist-grip throttles.

When should they get rid of power? For me, I would probably wait until the top of my flare, having some power in could be useful on the way down if you're trying to find a place to go. In fact, you may even be able to fly to the nearest suitable airport with a little experimenting. Of course, I know that some of this won't be found in the Emergency Section of your Flight Manual, but depending upon the circumstances and the aircraft, you may have options and it may be a good idea to know and explore them.

• I'd like to share my first, real tail rotor failure experience with you to highlight some of the points I've attempted to make. I had departed a fire lookout at 9,300 feet in a Bell 47G3B1, when my Forest Service helitack crewman accidentally allowed a nylon strap to blow out his open door. The strap had been coiled between his legs when I took off and I still don't know how a portion of it got outside, pulling the whole length out and into the tailrotor. Anyway, it was a pretty exciting trip down the mountain, attempting to land in the only opening in sight, down in the canyon below. I would have never made it to the clearing had I not "stretched my glide" by use of some power (resulting in about a 10 to 15 degree right yaw and a whole lot of wind blowing in my open door and out the right. As tall as I am, I was able to look back through the bubble in flight, past the main transmission to see the tail rotor standing vertically still, with the strap wrapped around the hub. I knew I had a tail rotor failure.

I was doing quite well with my semi-powered approach, so well in fact that I was too high to go straight in and I started to circle the LZ clockwise until the glidepath looked right. At about 500 ft AGL, and perhaps 75 yards away from my LZ, one of the main rotor blades caught on the still flailing strap, causing the rotor disk to flex and cut off my tailboom, just forward of the horizontal stabilizer. The rotor flung tail rotor parts and pieces out to my 1 o'clock position and most of them landed forward of my LZ. My fuel truck driver found my tail rotor gearbox about 30 yards forward of my landing spot. That tearing and flinging of parts caused such a sudden jerk in the aircraft that I rolled the throttle off. I guess the engine quit at that point because I never remembered having to shut it down after landing. After all the low level commotion, I now found myself a little low and had to "stretch" my autorotation by use of the rotor blades. I made it over the trees and into the LZ with nothing left to cushion with, so I bowed the cross tubes about 3 inches. Many have asked me about having a CG problem—I remember that I had very little aft cyclic remaining and was very nose heavy after losing all the aft end of the tailboom.

My somewhat implausible (but totally true) experience was made possible by the fact that I did not overreact too quickly to my tail rotor failure, but decided to work with the helicopter and the situation. I understand that all circumstances are different, but there's something to think about for all of us in this experience.

It was so sad to learn that this pilot may not have needed to do an autorotation to the ground and I'm sorry for his loved ones and their loss.

This is my first attempt at writing anything for any magazine. My hope is that you can find something in this that you can put away in your "bag of tricks." It just may come in handy one day.

END

Photography: Aftermath of Bo's tail rotor failure; Bo Bohannon

PHPA's 2006 Human Factors Safety Conference

By Tony Fonze

On the last weekend of October, sixty some odd helicopter pilots from all segments of the industry and all corners of the world gathered in Memphis, Tennessee. It was a very unusual group: offshore, EMS, military, flight instruction, fire fighting, security, tours, U.S., Canada, Norway… Most of them had never met before, yet they shared a commitment. They all made a decision to invest several days of their lives, and the commensurate expenses, to get to and spend three days in Memphis in order to see what could be done to prevent helicopter pilots from killing themselves. Yes, it was a very unusual event.

If you've been living under the proverbial rock, or maybe just not reading your *Autorotates*, you still may not know that the helicopter industry has formed a group, the International Helicopter Safety Team (IHST) to research, identify and implement changes within the helicopter industry that will reduce the helicopter accident rate by 80% by 2016—just nine years from now. And, statistics show that nearly 75% of those accidents are the result of some type of human failing. The humans we're primarily talking about are us. The focus of the conference—how can helicopter pilots effectively participate in achieving the IHST goal.

I had an inkling that this weekend would be unique when I saw Elvis walking in front of me at the Memphis airport. But I didn't know just how unique.

An impressive list of speakers initiated the proceedings with a host of thought-provoking sessions. Following is a synopsis of the presenters and their materials.

- Jeff Smith, a long time IFR instructor pilot at Ft. Rucker, and a founder of PHPA was the meeting's moderator. Jeff had the unenviable job of trying to keep 60 vocal pilots and presenters on time and in line and he did so successfully and with aplomb. He kept us focused on the 3 T's of Safety: training, technology and temperament. And his tool of choice to help us maintain our focus was the oft posed question, "What will cause the next accident in your company and what will be done to prevent it?"

- Matt Zuccaro, President of HAI and co-chair of the the International Helicopter Safety Team (IHST). Mr. Zuccaro was a major player at the conference and we all appreciated his presence and perspectives. An impressive man with a no-nonsense demeanor (could have been the crowd), himself a military trained, Vietnam veteran helicopter pilot, he listened intently to what the pilots had to say while also sharing some unique perspectives on the industry. HAI is the world's largest helicopter related association representing more than 70 countries and a cumulative fleet of 4,500 aircraft. They are renowned for their annual all things helicopter gathering—HeliExpo which draws over 16,000 visitors and exhibitors. HAI's agenda, in addition to IHST, includes lobbying to prevent the formation of an ADIZ over New York with its anticipated impact on our industry and working with the FAA to encourage the deployment of Automatic Dependent Surveillance Broadcast (ADSB) in the Gulf of Mexico.

  His straight-forward perspective on safety and how to achieve it was heavily flavored with the business realities faced by operators and their customers. I was intrigued by the ideas he proffered and found a lot of truth in them (more on that later).

- Kurt Pierce, LTC U.S. Army Ret., is an expert on Risk Management and gave the group a primer on Operational Risk Management (ORM). ORM is now a widely deployed component of most military operations. Its purpose is to identify and remove unnecessary risk, thereby increasing the likelihood of success of a mission. A byproduct is improved safety. It was abundantly clear that the application of basic ORM principles into civilian rotorcraft operations could have a dramatic affect across the board. I was excited about the possibilities, but frustrated

Photography: Members of the IFALPA Helicopter Committee and some attendees of the Safety Conference gather in front of the PHPA booth.

by the quandary of how to make it happen.

- Bob Monette, CSC-Prime Contractor for the U.S. Army's Flight School XXI (21) project—a reformation of the training methodologies and syllabus at Ft. Rucker. The goals of FS XXI are to increase a pilot's hours in his advanced aircraft, reduce the amount of field training to get a pilot mission ready, reduce overall training time, and do it all at a reduced cost. These same goals could be reiterated by the civilian training environment and hopefully, a number of the techniques being developed for the military could ultimately make their way into civilian flight schools.

- Ian McIntyre and Lochian Magee of Atlantas Systems International impressed us with a presentation on their virtual reality (VR) helicopter autorotation training system being developed for the Canadian military. This VR based system includes movement and has been demonstrated to be as effective as a full motion simulator at a substantially reduced cost. This could be another example of military developed technology ultimately being deployed into the civilian marketplace. The beauty of this system is its ability to allow the pilot to test and develop their skills in extreme maneuvers within the safe confines of a virtual reality.

- John Williams, pilot safety training manager for Bell Helicopter was a welcomed guest. John has been with Bell for 29 years and reflected on the industry's need to improve training with regards to industry specific missions and enhanced human factors safety training. He also introduced the group to the Bell Training Academy's new P3 program—designed to do just that. (See article this issue).

- Mark Adolph, Aviation Advisor for Shell Oil Company shared Shell's multi-faceted perspective on safety. On the airframe/engine side Shell pushes for the use of Health and Usage Management Systems (HUMS) to detect pending main rotor transmission and tail rotor failures where an efficacy of 69% has been demonstrated. Shell also promotes the use of dual-engine, dual-pilot aircraft. Shell also believes that increased regulation helps level the playing field for customers and operators who emphasize safety and the sometimes increased costs that go along with it. This became an important, though contentious element of the safety discussion.

- Frank Condefer represented the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) and provided an interesting perspective on crew rest. It was frustrating to learn that most of today's flight and duty limitations were developed in the 1940s, prior to the development of a wealth of knowledge that now exists on the subject. Frank's comment, "Operators are required to provide well-maintained aircraft—they should be required to provide a well maintained crew as well," struck home with many in the audience.

- Bob Yerex, of Max-viz, Inc., showed the group some compelling footage of the company's new infrared enhanced vision systems and its ability to provide an entirely new "view" out the cockpit. Long range infrared is entirely different than NVG, which enhances visible light sources, and consequently can "see" in situations where the naked eye and even NVGs cannot. This relatively affordable technology weighs less than 10 pounds and was a real eye opener (forgive me). It was very impressive technology and every pilot in the room went away wishing they had one in their aircraft—especially the EMS pilots.

- Kent Sapp, an active duty, U.S. Army, Special Forces pilot and instructor pilot shared an intimate knowledge of NVG operations and training with the group. He emphasized the industry's inappropriate focus on currency rather than proficiency and gave everyone a memorable quote with, "If the baby's ugly, the baby's ugly" referring to when to make the decision to abandon an approach.

- Steve Rutland, a very experienced pilot with over 15,000 hours addressed the group on our "over motivation to succeed." He cited numerous examples where flight crews decided to launch or push on in the face of overwhelming evidence that they should stay on the ground or return to base.

- Terry Palmer, representing Flight Safety, discussed her company's renewed focus on improving the safety of EMS operations. Flight Safety has provided a series of free attendance seminars where they've invited

Photography: Why we need to do better!; Kelly Teague

EMS operators to voice their needs. What did they say? "We need more simulator based training and we need less emphasis on systems and more human factors and decision making training." In short, EMS pilots are not having accidents because they forgot what RPM their tail rotor turned at, but because they're making bad go/no go decisions and they're not getting sufficient training in accident related conditions like inadvertent IMC. The next conference is scheduled for April 12-13 in Dallas. Go to www.rotorsafety.com to find out more.

Is Safety Un-American?

The talks were interesting and the presenters appreciated. But it isn't every day that you get 60 pilots from all walks of life into the same room. We had an opportunity for some frank discussion on the general topic of safety and we took advantage of it. It would be impossible to capture all of the meaningful conversations and exchanges which ensued, but several points have stuck with me and I present them now, not in any particular order.

Three representatives from Canadian Helicopters EMS attended the meeting and contributed intelligent, thoughtful comments throughout. We very much appreciated their attendance. A significant disparity emerged between Canadian and U.S. EMS operations. If I were going to summarize it, the Canadian operations are all about safety and they put their money where their mouth is: Don't land to unimproved LZs at night; pilot knowledge of the exact nature of the mission is highly restricted (children, etc.); all operations in Canada have two pilots and nearly all are dual-engine aircraft; and they deploy the latest technologies available. The result—fatal accidents are almost unheard of. Compare this to the U.S. where there is very heavy competition between operators; the predominance of flights are single-pilot, single-engine; and there have been 67 fatalities since 2000. This leads me to the issue of culture.

During the conference, two divergent camps emerged: the "anti-regulation," let us clean up our own act crowd, versus the "more regulation" compels everyone to play by the same rules crowd. This is an important concept and may determine whether or not the 80% reduction goal is ever reached. In the U.S. we are, generally speaking, anti big government, entrepreneurial, and risk tolerant. It is who we are. That's also one of the reasons we have more accidents. The Europeans have been attempting to have the American operators play by the same rules they play by: dual engines, two pilots, restricted night operations, etc. But we have resisted. Dual engines and two pilots means higher costs which would drive some operators out of the market which probably means fewer jobs as well.

As a nation and a culture we have to decide what we want: fewer operators, fewer jobs, and fewer accidents or more operators, more jobs and more accidents. Can improvements be made without increased legislation? Yes, to some degree. But I see over and over again when meeting helicopter pilots from other countries—Americans have an accident accepting culture. Contrast this to Canada and Norway. They have a zero tolerance for accidents—they don't expect there to be ANY. And when one does occur, they are all over it. They are willing to sacrifice some level of opportunity to achieve that.

Customers Must Demand Safety

No true impact on human factors related accidents will occur without the participation and buy-in from each of the three players in the game: the customers, the operators, and the pilots. And that means, at least in part, it's about money. Here's how it works. Pilots are receptive to the subtle and not so subtle desires of their company. If the company is revenue-driven over safety-driven, the pilot knows that and will also be revenue-driven over safety-driven if he intends to stay at that company for long. To truly instill a climate and methodology to promote safety it has to come from the company. But here's the rub—for a company to be "free" to manage to safety, their customers must also understand and promote safety.

Safety has a cost. That cost is found in lost opportunity (missed flights due to weather, etc.); increased equipment and airframe costs; and potentially higher salaries and overhead. But accidents also have a cost: loss of life; loss of a revenue producing aircraft; legal fees; higher insurance costs or inability to obtain insurance with adequate limits; loss of existing clients; failure to obtain new clients; increased legislation and higher restrictions. As consumers, operators and pilots we need to decide where we want to pay the costs.

The tools for improving safety exist. They include increased simulator usage; changes in training programs; the introduction of better decision making and risk management methodologies; better deployment of technology; etc. What hasn't existed so far is the coordinated will from all participants to use these tools.

We're in a Training Rut

Our training model needs work. Here's my own recent example. I just completed my AvStar annual 135 renewal program. It took several days of intense Computer Based Training (CBT). It covered nearly everything under the sun: weather, FAR 135, NTSB reporting, hazardous materials, flight planning, helicopter systems, aerodynamics—you name it. But there wasn't a single question on decision mak-

ing or risk assessment. Why not, when this is the source of nearly 75% of all accidents?

I'm not done yet. All civilian trained pilots are part of a program where the newly minted CFIs with just a few hundred hours train the next crop of budding pilots. It's how we all got our first 1000 hours. But it isn't quite right, either. In our current single engine, single pilot environment there aren't a lot of options. But why not create a blend of instructors—brand new, eager and energetic CFIs working side by side with professional pilots and committed professional instructors with proven, real-world experience behind them. Everyone will benefit.

And we need to increase our use of simulators. Simulators offer the opportunity to do things we just can't do in a real aircraft. But, one of the reasons they are not more widely deployed is that sim time doesn't necessarily contribute to a young pilot's PIC time. This can all be worked out, but it needs to be. And company training is frequently very limited—a handful of autos a year and you're good to go for another 12 months. We can and should do more.

Much Can Be Done

We all understand that accidents are, in fact, not a single event, but a sequence of events, culminating in an accident or incident. Interrupting the chain anywhere in the cycle (not just the end) will eliminate the accident. So why is it that the FAA and the NTSB focus all of their attention on the very end of the accident chain? Why not draw attention to poor operational procedures; inadequate training; the absence of decision making disciplines? This needs to change.

The industry needs to highlight and reward safe operators and encourage other operators to emulate them. One way to do this would be through a helicopter operator accreditation program. An operator that imbedded safety standards and procedures into their program would be recognized and rewarded by insurance providers, customers, pilots (employment), etc.

Too much of our focus and measurement is on currency rather than proficiency. They are not the same. There is opportunity for a major shift here that would involve regulatory bodies, training, and operators. It could have a significant safety impact.

Operators could instill a safety manager program and actively support it. The idea is that a company has a designated safety officer. If a pilot has safety issues or concerns about an aircraft or a mission he could bring those to the safety manager who would intercede between the pilot and management. I'd quickly add that if the company had a safety focus, this position may not be necessary. Everyone would be a safety manager.

There are some good ideas vocalized by the group and captured here. Share them with other pilots at your company and with your managers. Maybe you can begin to make a difference where you work.

So what impact will all this have?

In the short term, perhaps not much. But it became clearer to everyone there that for things to change the culture must change and the climate must change. Culture change and climate change do not take place overnight. But they can take place.

Sixty some odd pilots now have a better understanding of the issues at stake. And those pilots will bring those ideas back to their respective managers and peers. PHPA is in a position to help focus the attention of the pilots. HAI is in a position to help focus the attention of the operators. Together we can make a difference.

Yes, it was an unusual event—an important, unusual event.

END

Q & A, Virtual Flight Surgeons

Q: I have always snored loudly, and my spouse says I sometime seem to gasp while sleeping. I'm thinking about getting an evaluation for sleep apnea. What impact could this have on my medical?

Sleep apnea (OSA) is a condition with potentially severe negative health impact. OSA has been shown to increase blood pressure, and has been linked to cardiac events. Severe OSA has also been associated with cognitive deficits and excessive daytime somnolence. Usually OSA is diagnosed with a sleep study. Sleep apnea is considered disqualifying for flying until the condition has been successfully treated. Acceptable treatment typically involves use of a breathing device know as CPAP or surgery or a combination of both. Once an aviator demonstrates successful treatment usually including a Maintenance of Wakefulness Test (MWT) that confirms no daytime sleepiness, they can petition the FAA for a Special Issuance to return to flying duties. More information can be found on our web site at www.AviationMedicine.com.

Q: I've noticed I'm having a little more trouble finding a good distance to read my approach plates. I've been putting off purchasing "cheater glasses" for reading and recently heard the FAA made some changes to their contact lens policies?

You are indeed correct. Recently the FAA agreed to allow the use of multifocal contacts that correct for near vision at the periphery and distant vision in the center. Clearly the aviation safety concern is the potential for degraded vision. Because of this potential, the FAA requires a one month adaptation period before wearing multifocal contacts while flying. You can read an early release of this and other protocols on our FAA Forms and Medical Protocols page found at www.AviationMedicine.com. Remember that the FAA still prohibits use of monovision correction with contacts where one eye is corrected for distant vision and one eye for near vision. Additional in depth information on this topic can be found by typing "vision" in any of the keyword search fields found on our website.

Q: I heard there is a new procedure that would correct my near vision. Is it allowed for flying?

Conductive Keratoplasty or CK uses RF energy instead of lasers to reshape the cornea for temporary improvement of near vision. Typically one eye is surgically corrected for near vision while the other eye is used for distant vision making the airman functionally monocular. In the 31 July 05 update to the FAA Guide to Aviation Medical Examiners, a new protocol was included for CK. A recent press advertisement stated "US pilots who are considering having conductive keratoplasty to improve their vision may now do so without losing their aeromedical certification for flying." Unfortunately the article left off the caveat that the FAA requires a six month observation period following the procedure, and most likely a medical flight test will be required after that point followed by a Statement of Demonstrated Ability or SODA on the permanent medical. Those considering this procedure should discuss this with an Aerospace Medicine physician or their AME beforehand.

Q: I have a small cataract that has been developing over the past few years. My Ophthalmologist recommended a new type of intraocular lens that works for both near and distant vision, but I was told the FAA would not allow it. Is this true?

Dr. Parker
Vice President for military and general aviation safety

This was true until recently. Historically a pilot could return to flying after cataract surgery once the lens was replaced and FAA vision standards were obtained. Reading glasses were required to correct for near vision. However, the newer accommodative lenses that correct for both distant and near vision much like the original lens were not allowed. Now the FAA will allow these multifocal or accommodating intraocular lens implants. However, applicants must wait at least three months for adaptation before returning to flying duties as long as visual standards are met:

Near Vision: 20/40 or better for all classes

Distant Vision :20/20 or better in each eye 1st & 2nd class; 20/40 or better in each eye for 3rd class

Intermed Vision: 20/40 or better in each eye for 1st & 2nd class pilots 50 yrs or older.

You must also be free of adverse vision side effects such as excessive glare. Typically this is documented using the FAA Form 8500-7, Report of Eye Evaluation. Both the form and protocol can be found at www.AviationMedicine.com. Airmen should remember to report the procedure on the next medical.

END

For many, the trip
to our training academy
is more than a flight.
It's a pilgrimage.

Bell Helicopter
A Textron Company

Our training academy is, bar none, the finest in the world. It's a place where novices learn to fly, and accomplished pilots learn to fly even better. One more thing to keep in mind when you're in the market for your next helicopter. When you buy Bell, you're not just buying a helicopter, you're buying the company that built it.

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P3—Bell's New Professional Pilot Program

By Tony Fonze

Editor's Note: Late last year (2005), while I was attending Bell's 407 pilot training course, Launa Barboza, Bell's Director of Customer Training, and Marty Wright, Chief Flight Instructor, gave me a heads up about a new training program they would be announcing in 2006—P3. P3 is a new approach to advanced pilot training and I've been looking forward to understanding and sharing the details with Autorotate's readers. Below are the results of a Q & A session I recently held with Launa, Marty and Gary Ostbery, the P3 program manager.

Autorotate: What factors led Bell to form the P3 program?

Launa: Bell Helicopter wants to contribute all we can to assist the International Helicopter Safety Team's initiative to reduce accidents by 80% by 2016. The most significant impact will be through enhancing pilot training at all levels. We have an opportunity to tap into a senior pilot force, harness their experience, focus their training to improve situational awareness, and carry this influence back into their organizations.

A: What makes P3 unique from your other training regimens?

Marty: We have reduced the number of students to a maximum of four per class instead of the typical eight. We provide from six to twelve different, fully-qualified instructors per class, providing a variety of unique teaching perspectives and techniques. Daily academic and flight training sessions can be focused on customer specific mission requirements. The academic training requires homework and additional studying, as well as a higher grading standard for exams. This accelerated one week course will task even the most seasoned pilot with an intensive five days of instruction that will enhance pilot skills and emphasize solid safety decision making processes. Courses will include Special Operations and Hazards, Aircraft specific recurrent training, FAR and AIM review, Instrument Flight Training, Market Segment specific flight training, CRM, Human Factors, Accident and Incident review, as well as many other subject areas not taught in our standard courses. (Takes a deep breath)

A: Who is your audience? Who are you trying to reach?

Gary: Our program is designed to target chief pilots, check airmen, instructor pilots, or operation directors, where we can "train the trainer." Our goal is to enhance the skills of these uniquely talented pilots in our P3 program. They will bring this training back to their organizations and help influence their staff aviators. This way we can reach the best-of-the-best, and all those they come in contact with.

A: What should an attendee expect to gain from the program?

G: We would expect the graduating student to leave Bell with a new level of confidence and ability. Their flying skills and decision-making capabilities should be finely tuned, enhancing overall situational and safety awareness. Individual goals may include Flight Instructor Refresher Clinic (FIRC), aircraft recurrent training (B206 & B407), FAR 61.56 Flight Review, FAR 61.57 Instrument Proficiency Check (if applicable), and NVG Pilot Refresher (flight only).

A: What's in this for the operator and the industry as a whole?

L: This program will train personnel in many aspects of aviation safety, creating an environment of elevated flight and safety standards. The industry as a whole will have a deeper base of highly skilled professional pilots who will, in turn, influence others. Our training will allow these highly skilled pilots to have an

Photography: (l to r) Gary Ostbery, P3 Program Manager; Launa Barboza, Director of Customer Training; Marty Wright, Chief Flight Instructor; Bell Helicopter

TYPICAL P3 SCHEDULE

Day One:

4 hrs	Aircraft Specific Ground
2 hrs**	FTD (Aircraft Specific, Normal Procedures** 1 hr per pilot)
1 hr	Aircraft Specific Flight

Day Two:

4 hrs	Aircraft Specific Ground
2 hrs**	FTD (Aircraft Specific, Emergency Procedures** 1 hr per pilot)
1 hr	Aircraft Specific Flight
Exam	Open Book / Take Home / Aircraft Specific

Day Three:

2 hrs	CRM & Human Factors (Ground)
2 hrs	Incident & Accident Review
2 hrs	Hazards / Special Operations
1 hr	Day / Night Flight (2 pilots fly day / 2 pilots fly night)
2 hrs**	FTD (BAI** 1 hr per pilot, night flying pilots)
Exam	Open Book / Take Home / Day Three Material

Day Four:

2 hrs	FAR/AIM
2 hrs	Weather Reports and Forecasts
1 hr	BAI Theory
1 hr	Day / Night Flight (2 pilots fly day / 2 pilots fly night)
2 hrs**	FTD (BAI** 1 hr per pilot, night flying pilots)
Exam	Open Book / Take Home / Day Four Material

Day Five:

2 hrs	Approach Procedures
2 hrs**	FTD (Approaches** 1 hr per pilot) See Note…
2 hrs	Preventative Maintenance / OCF Ground See Note…
2 hrs	End of Course Exam / Closed Book

Note: Two pilots will attend FTD session while two pilots attend Preventative Maintenance / OCF Ground.

increased level of awareness to recognize a situation that may be a precursor to an incident or accident. Recognizing the symptoms, and then applying corrective action before the situation is allowed to develop, will enhance overall safety and accident prevention. This will contribute to a lower accident/incident rate, lower operating costs, reduced down time, and hopefully reduced insurance costs.

A: I understand that P3 sets a higher standard. Can you comment on this?

M: Yes, not only do we take into account the PTS as a basis to build from, but we also demand the student perform to a standard, in many unique, mission specific profiles. This level of performance is not taught, or trained to, in most company training programs. We want the student pilot to experience and train to a standard that goes way beyond the scope of what they do in a normal day-to-day training environment. In addition, the testing requirements have been elevated from 70% to 85% for a passing score.

A: How do you expect P3 to improve safety?

M: The higher level of focused training will require the customer to concentrate on improving job specific areas that have historically contributed to helicopter accidents and incidents. Putting the student through this new comprehensive academic, FTD, and flight training program, will provide the program participants with up to date tools to help in their decision-making processes.

A: We've discussed that the flying portion of the P3 training is intended to be mission specific. Can you give me some examples?

G: Let's say we have a customer in the Law Enforcement or ENG support role. The flight crew might be at a maximum gross weight configuration, in a slow flight or OGE hover condition. We can

replicate this condition, and then induce settling with power, or a simulated engine failure…day, night, or NVG. Think of the benefits that this pilot will gain when he or she experiences these flight conditions, and then gets to apply proper recovery techniques…or takes that OGE hovering engine failure and successfully takes it to the ground for a full touchdown autorotation…at night, under the goggles.

Or, take an EMS crew…called out to a remote accident site in poor weather conditions at night. We have the capabilities to duplicate these conditions, and then induce a goggle failure, or an inadvertent IMC encounter. The student will be trained to a standard to first, avoid a situation like this, but if it were to develop, build a level of confidence and maturity to completely handle similar situations, and not be a statistic.

A: What are the prerequisites for pilots interested in attending the program?

G: Have at least 1,000 hours of helicopter flight experience. Hold at least a Commercial Pilot Helicopter certificate. Hold a valid medical certificate. Must have attended at least one Bell Helicopter Initial transition course, and one Bell Helicopter Refresher course. If all of the above requirements are met, then the Bell staff will place the applicant in the appropriate P3 class. The idea behind P3 is to train the trainers and the decision makers in the helicopter industry to a higher standard; accordingly, we want to ensure that the pilots enrolled in the program are prepared for the level of intensity involved in this training. We feel that a pilot that meets these prerequisites should be ready for this advanced training.

A: What are your expectations for P3?

L: We expect to deliver to the industry, a premier pilot force, trained to an elevated standard. This will enhance safety awareness, reduce accident rates, and reduce operational costs. Bell Helicopter fully expects to unleash this new breed of elite professional pilots, equipping them to fly at the leading edge of vertical lift. The positive influence they will generate in the field should give those junior flight crewmembers something to strive for in the future.

A: Marty, do you have anything to add as we wrap up?

M: Tony, we have put together an intensive course of study designed to challenge the idea that you can't train "headwork." We have incorporated a variety of subjects that have been directly or indirectly linked to current mishap trends and we're focusing on the decision-making processes involved. We believe that with the correct exposure and coaching in these areas we can raise the awareness level of the links in the chain that lead to undersirable events and help pilots come up with better choices to break the chain. In fact, we'd like to challenge the rest of the training industry to come up with new ideas that accomplish the same goals. Together we can achieve the goal set by the IHST.

A: Thanks. Launa, what about you?

L: Let me close with this. At the end of the week, the graduating pilots of P3 have earned the right to become members of an elite group who have demonstrated mastery of the knowledge and skills necessary to lead in their respective flight environments. They then need to take that knowledge and skill set home with them and share it—that's how we'll begin to make a difference.

END

Photography: The author; Bo Bohannon

PHPA HOSTS IFALPA HELICOPTER COMMITTEE

Just as PHPA represents predominantly U.S. helicopter pilots, an organization also represents helicopter pilots internationally--the International Federation of Airline Pilots Association (IFALPA) Helicopter Committee. PHPA is proud to participate as a member of the IFALPA Helicopter Committee and in 2006 hosted their annual meeting as part of our Safety Conference. This group is an important unifying force for safety standards and equality for helicopter pilots around the world.

(l to r) Tony Cramp from Shell Oil, representing the Oil and Gas Producers (OGP); Butch Grafton (PHPA); Jorge A. Garcia Gallegos, Mexico; Jack Bower, Vice Chairman of the IFALPA Helicopter Committee; Valerie Godfrey, England-IFALPA; Glenn Christiansen, Norway, and Chairman of the Committee; Carlos Limon, Vice President IFALPA; and Luis Suarez-Lledo, Spain.

Carlos Limon, Vice President of IFALPA, presenting a plaque to Butch Grafton, President of PHPA, thanking PHPA for hosting the 2006 IFALPA Helicopter Committee meeting in Memphis.

END

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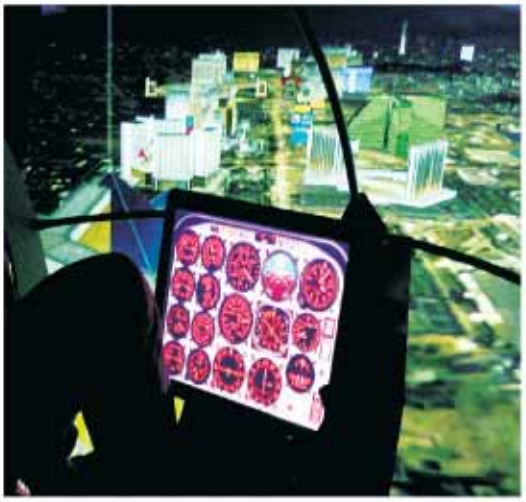

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