

AIRBORNE PUBLIC SAFETY ASSOCIATION



The

Safety

Wire

January 2020

I'VE NEVER BEEN SO NERVOUS TO GIVE GOOD NEWS.

Every autumn, I hold my breath for a couple reasons. Traditionally, our accident rate tends to increase in the last quarter of the calendar year. More importantly, I wait to see what the final accident count for the year will be. Since I started this position with our association in 2012, I have hoped that I could report a year without any fatalities in public safety aviation. We came very close this year with one fatality last January.

The definition of which accidents should be included in these statistics can get confusing. As I have done in the past, let us consider only public safety agency owned and operated aircraft. I will also exclude military aircraft.

For North America and Europe, I am relieved to report that there were no fatal accidents in this group in 2019. Looking through the APSA accident database, the last time



North America was blessed with a year without a fatal public safety aircraft accident was in 2006. Prior to that, we had suffered at least one fatality per year since 1953.

What makes me nervous about announcing that last year was only the second time without a death in nearly 70 years? Looking at the accidents we did suffer in 2019, it is clear that part of the credit goes to good fortune. Several of the accidents could have easily killed someone. I do not want to jinx our luck by appearing to ignore it.



However, our success cannot be completely credited to good luck. You all have put tremendous effort into making our operations more professional, which leads to increased safety. We have to thank all of the safety officers who spend countless hours working on reducing risk, often with great resistance from others in the unit or within the agency. Credit is due to the flight crews and maintenance technicians who make the difficult choices that are simultaneously right and unpopular. The instructors who stick their necks out, taking on the added risk of flight training maneuvers so we can survive the inevitable emergencies we face. The managers who find a way to fund the training and equipment we need to be safe deserve our thanks as well.

The list of those of you who have not relied on fate but created good fortune through hard work and courage is too long for this newsletter. However, it is you and your efforts that have brought us this far. It is your ongoing work that will continue to decrease our dependence on luck and ensure steady progress towards even higher safety standards. I look forward to seeing what we can accomplish in 2020.

2019 Public Safety Accidents:

1. Brazilian Police AS350 – 1 fatality. Unknown cause. Passenger drowned.
2. Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office AS350. Autorotation training.
3. Cayman Islands Police EC135. Crash during takeoff. Mechanical failure.
4. St John's County Sheriff's Office Bell OH-58. Engine failure
5. Omaha Police Bell OH-58. Engine failure.
6. Gainesville Police Bell OH-58. Training.
7. Houston Police MD500. Landing Loss of Control (LOC).
8. Omaha Police Bell 206BIII. Training.
9. South Africa Police AS350. Training. Rollover after landing.
10. South Carolina Law Enforcement (SLED) MD-500. Flight control interference.
11. Lane County Sheriff's Office MD-500E. Landing LOC (?).
12. San Joaquin County Cessna 206. Engine failure.
13. Polk County Sheriff's Office Bell OH-58. Loss of Control while picking up victim.

“Pilots gear their moments of greatest attention to the times when flight conditions change. When you get through them, you’re glad for a fraction of a second, and then you think about the next thing you have to do.”

~John Glenn

APSA Safety Survey

APSA invites all members to participate in our annual Safety Survey. Please take a few minutes to answer our short survey so we can better understand the present status, and future needs, for public safety aviation safety. Your input helps guide APSA's safety program and outreach. All entries are kept strictly confidential and a summary of the results will be presented in a future newsletter. Thank you for your time and assistance.



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/APSA2020SafetySurvey>

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE OF THE MONTH

In each monthly emergency situation, discuss what you would do, as a crew, to respond to the following emergency. If the EP does not apply to your specific aircraft, think of something similar.

Aircraft being shot at and/or hit by ground fire

ONLINE MEETINGS

APSA conducts regularly scheduled online meetings for safety officers, maintenance technicians, SAR personnel, and UAS operators via a conference call you can join using your computer, mobile device or phone. Online meetings are open to any APSA member. Contract maintenance providers to APSA members are welcome to participate in the maintenance meeting as well.

The schedule for upcoming APSA online meetings is as follows.

If you would like to join, send an email to: bsmith@publicsafetyaviation.org



SAR:

Wednesday, Feb 12, 2020
1:00 PM – 2:00 PM EST (1800 UTC)

UAS:

Wednesday, Feb 19, 2020
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM EST (1800 UTC)

Safety Officers:

Friday, March 6, 2020
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM EST (1800 UTC)

Maintenance:

Wednesday, March 18, 2020
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM EDT (1700 UTC)

"One cool judgment is worth a dozen hasty councils. The thing to do is to supply light and not heat."

~Woodrow Wilson

Reality Check...

This month I am going to include the links to the accident reports that are available in lieu of the accident report summary at the end of the newsletter. Some reports are still not complete.

Brazilian Police AS350 – 1 fatality. *Report not yet available. News story:*

<https://apnews.com/61c43f4ca13e4c06821d2f30ddbda483>

Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office AS350. Autorotation training.

https://www.nts.gov/layouts/nts.gov/aviation/brief.aspx?ev_id=20190129X01825&key=1

Cayman Islands Police EC135. Crash during takeoff. Mechanical failure.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5de9185440f0b60881a07240/Eurocopter_EC135T1_VP-CPS_01-

St John's County Sheriff's Office OH-58. Engine failure.

https://www.nts.gov/layouts/nts.aviation/brief.aspx?ev_id=20190313X90607

Omaha Police Bell OH58. Engine failure.

https://www.nts.gov/layouts/nts.aviation/brief.aspx?ev_id=20190416X11603

Gainesville Police OH-58. Training.

<https://app.nts.gov/pdfgenerator/ReportGeneratorFile.ashx?EventID=20190701X40440&AKey=1&RType=HTML&IType=LA>

Houston Police MD500. Landing LOC.

<https://app.nts.gov/pdfgenerator/ReportGeneratorFile.ashx?EventID=20190704X30312&AKey=1&RType=Prelim&IType=LA>

Omaha Police Bell 206BIII. Training.

<https://app.nts.gov/pdfgenerator/ReportGeneratorFile.ashx?EventID=20190816X23745&AKey=1&RType=Prelim&IType=LA>

South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) MD-500. Flight control interference/Loss of Control (LOC).

https://www.nts.gov/investigations/layouts/nts.aviation/brief.aspx?ev_id=20190711X43717&key=1

Lane County MD-500E. Landing LOC.

<https://app.nts.gov/pdfgenerator/ReportGeneratorFile.ashx?EventID=20190730X15341&AKey=1&RType=HTML&IType=LA>

San Joaquin County Cessna 206. Engine failure.

<https://app.nts.gov/pdfgenerator/ReportGeneratorFile.ashx?EventID=20191017X22012&AKey=1&RType=Prelim&IType=LA>

Polk County Sheriff's Office Bell OH-58. Loss of Control while picking up victim.

https://www.nts.gov/layouts/nts.aviation/brief.aspx?ev_id=20191004X94049

*There are no new ways to crash an aircraft...
...but there are new ways to keep them from crashing.*

Bryan 'MuGu' Smith

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