

I COULD HAVE BOUGHT THE FARM

From memoirs of Captain William E. Murphy, USCG(ret) , CG Av 517

[Correspondence in Sitreps 3-00 and 2-01 provided details about a fatal training accident forty years ago involving HO4S 5509. The information in Ptero Bill Murphy's story related here and the email which follows it warrant this additional coverage of a sad day.]

Several days before the 29th of June, 1961, I was scheduled to make a training flight from the CG Air Station, Salem, Mass. in the HO4S helicopter CGNR 5509. This was a very routine event. I had flown this same helicopter on the 12th and 14th of this month. My copilot and I located the helicopter parked on the ramp between the hangar and Salem Harbor. After the usual preflight walk-around, we climbed into the cockpit, I took the right seat and the copilot the left.

Having completed the pre-start checklist and receiving a thumbs up from the line crewman, I pressed the engine start button. After the Wright R-1300-3 600 HP engine started and came up to speed, I engaged the main rotor system. Immediately after the rotor system was engaged, a loud, penetrating, siren like noise assaulted us through the earphones in our helmets. I immediately called operations on the radio and asked if they were conducting a fire drill on the base or was there a real fire in progress? The response received was that all was normal on the station. I then asked what the source of the siren was and was informed that no siren was heard on the base. With that bit of information, I concluded that the noise we were hearing in the helicopter was

generated within the aircraft and immediately shut the engine down.

Having shut down the engine I again called operations and asked that they send the head of the engineering department out to our helicopter to investigate the terrible noise we had experienced. He soon arrived, donned a headset, I restarted the engine and engaged the main rotor system and again the siren like noise was heard. The decision was made to cancel the training flight and have the engineering department investigate the source of the noise. After a careful inspection of the helicopter, no abnormality could be identified and the helicopter was put back in service. I was assured that all available system checks had been performed with satisfactory results.

On the afternoon of June 29th, Charlie Mueller, Tom Scharfenstein, and crew member John Doherty, were on a flight in the same HO4S 5509. As they were proceeding southbound returning to the air station, a catastrophic event occurred. A control rod in the main rotor blade system failed resulting in disintegration of the rotor blade system. The helicopter plummeted to earth resulting in fatal injuries to all on board.

Investigation of the accident concluded that the cause of the rotor system failure was a harmonic vibration that caused a control rod to vibrate harmonically and eventually suffer metal fatigue and failure. I'm convinced that the loud siren like noise we experienced was caused by the same harmonic vibration that caused the rotor system failure later. I have always been mystified that the helicopter continued to be operated by different crews between the time I

rejected it until the in-flight failure. None of those crews rejected the helo because of the siren like noise. It is conceivable that, during the inspection of the helicopter that followed my rejection, something occurred that silenced the noise.

Although all the families of the crew members killed were devastated by their loss, Tom Scharfenstein's family was most severely impacted. His wife, Marion, was pregnant, and it was close to time to deliver the baby. She did have the support of Tom's older brother, an officer in the Coast Guard and his family. The entire crew of the Salem Air Station and their families were supportive of the bereaved.

[Here are excerpts from an email relative to this accident]

The article [about HO4S 5509 in Sitrep 2-01] was very interesting. I would like to add a few additional facts and make one correction.

I reported to CGAS Salem from flight training in March of 1961. Although I flew only fixed wing aircraft, the helicopter rated pilots often complained about 5509. I recall remarks like it takes over and flies on its own...on 29 June 1961 I was flying UF2G 1241 when we received a call from operations about a possible mayday call. Shortly thereafter, we saw a plume of smoke roughly north of the station. Upon arrival, we found 5509 burning furiously...my recall supported by my log book is that there were three crewmembers rather than five...LCDRs Charlie Mueller and Tom Scharfenstein and AL1 J.R. Doherty.

Ptero Frank Dean, CG Av 863

Excerpts From Weekly Briefing Sheets Prepared by the Commandant's Office of Aviation Forces (G-OCA)

CAPT Tom King, recently C.O. CG Air Station and Group Commander Atlantic City, is now G-OCA at Coast Guard Headquarters...his predecessor, Capt. Gary Blore, has been reassigned to assist RADM Terry Cross in the Commandant's Office of Operations...The NAS Wildwood Museum has acquired retired HH-52A CGNR 1462 which during its service life flew at North Bend and Kodiak air stations and from pole to pole in polar operations...because of Freedom of Information Act requests being received at CG Headquarters, anyone having information on CG C-130's landing in Oklahoma City on any mission during the month of April 1995 is asked to contact CG headquarters at (202)267-1568 or by email to "dolson@comdt.uscg.mil"...an IMAX film is being planned for the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum which will include action footage of CG aircraft participating in various missions.

BOOK REVIEW

UNITED STATES NAVAL AVIATION

Each and every man or woman who ever earned "Wings of Gold"

needs to obtain a personal copy of the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation recently published book, "United States Naval Aviation."

This impressive coffee table book will absolutely thrill anyone who loves the romance of flying. Anyone turning the pages of this beautiful volume will soon understand why our Wings of Gold are held so sacred.

President George H.W. Bush expressed it eloquently:

"The spirit of naval aviation is superbly captured in this absolutely wonderful coffee table book. My memories came flooding back! Many decades ago, I served as a young naval aviator flying Avengers off USS *San Jacinto*. There I learned first hand of the greatness of naval aviation. That view was only enhanced when I was Commander-in-Chief as, once again, naval aviators served their country with great effectiveness and honor — always with honor."

United States Naval Aviation enables the history of America's naval aviators to be cherished permanently in a handsome package that pilots, aircrewmen, and aviation personnel will be proud to own and — with its unique medallion-inlaid cover — to display. This book will be read again and again by past and present aviators, their families and friends, and the countless others that have been inspired by the exploits of U.S. naval aviation.

The book was written by distinguished naval historians including our own Ptero Tom Beard who authored an eloquent and beautifully illustrated chapter on Coast Guard aviation titled "Guarding our Shores." Other chapters cover every aspect of naval aviation from 1910 to today.

The book is available now and can be ordered directly from the National Museum of Naval Aviation Gift Shop (800-AIR-NAVY or http://naval-air.org/museum_store). It is also available through warehouse clubs (Costco,

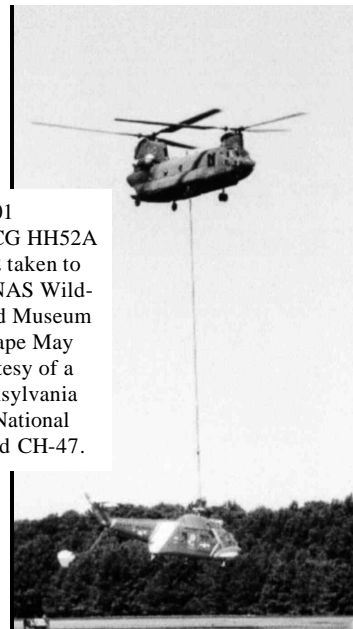
line (barnesandnoble.com, amazon.com, etc.).

As our members know, the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and promotion of naval aviation history and traditions. The Foundation celebrates the great legacy of aviation at its National Museum of Naval Aviation in Pensacola, Florida. This splendid museum houses a Coast Guard Aviation exhibit supported by our membership.

This book will make a great Christmas gift. To yourself or from a "hint" to your significant other. Enjoy it!!

*Ancient Order President
George Krietemeyer*

HOISTER HOISTED



9/7/01
Ex-CG HH52A
1462 taken to
the NAS Wild-
wood Museum
in Cape May
courtesy of a
Pennsylvania
Air National
Guard CH-47.



MAIL

HO4S OVER MIAMI

That photo [of HO4S 1256 flying over Miami in 1952] was familiar. My recollection is that I was the pilot, but it has been so long ago I'm a little fuzzy on it. My log book shows I flew 1256 in March '52 on ten occasions. According to notations, these flights were for test, training, bay patrol, boat aground and Easter bunny to Bay-front Park[!]. I remember the photo very well but cannot be absolutely sure whether another pilot may have been involved. We were flying out of Dinner Key at that time.

Ptero Jim Durfee, CG Av 251

HH52 HISTORY

Thanks once again to all of you for the help you've provided over the last few years with my research into the history of the Coast Guard H52. After several delays, the manuscript will [soon] be going to the publisher.

Lennart Lundh

[Lennart of Orland Hills, IL has solicited information from Pteros in previous Sitreps. We look forward to reviewing his work.]

MEMORIAL DATA

Our thanks to Ptero Bob O'Leary, P-2098, who quickly responded with good information to a broadcast for data on some of the earlier accidents listed on the CG Aviation Memorial Monument at Elizabeth City. Page 6 highlights missing data on other accidents and asks for help from anyone who may have data to offer.



NEWLY DESIGNATED AVIATORS

The following pilots have been designated as Coast Guard Aviators and have been provided with a first year dues-free membership in the Order. Welcome aboard, Pterodactyls!! We salute you and wish you safe flight. We envy the thrills, opportunities and satisfaction which are on and beyond your individual horizons. As you settle in at your initial and subsequent assignments and carve out future CG aviation history, we hope you will maintain your Pterodactyl membership and "stay tuned" to your rich heritage and your own history-in-the-making. Your modest annual dues will help to keep you informed and make possible a multitude of active duty awards, memorials and CG aviation history-preserving- projects.

Happy Landings, and again, Welcome Aboard!!!

	<u>CG Aviator Nr.</u>		<u>CG Aviator Nr.</u>		<u>CG Aviator Nr.</u>
Ralph Boyes	3521	Kevin Smith	3532	Mark Lay	3544
Scott Murphy	3522	Jody Popp	3533	Wesley Hester	3545
Joshua Bauman	3523	Gregory Barbiaux	3534	Adam Merrill	3546
Matthew Bourassa	3524	Robert Botmen	3535	Patrick Murray	3547
Jeffrey Henderson	3525	Stephen Priebe	3536	Paul Beavis	3548
Charlotte Pittman	3526	Robert Donnell	3537	Kenneth Bethea	3549
Benjamin Maule	3527	Brent Bergon	3538	Daniel Warren	3550
Gregory Parsons	3528	Brian Potter	3539	Matthew Buckingham	3551
William Strickland	3529	Brust Roethler	3540	Ryan Macloed	3552
Jeremy Anderson	3530	Jerad Williams	3542	Anna Hopkins	3553
Lawrence Gaillard	3531	Alan Hansen	3543		

Multi-mission Form:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Ptero Lapel Pin | \$ 5 | size: M ___ L ___ XL ___ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ptero Ball Cap | \$ 15 | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ptero CG Aviation History Book | \$ 50 | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ptero Coin | \$ 5 | | |

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 - Aircrewman/Observer
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**The Ancient Order of The Pterodactyl
P.O. Box 9917
Mobile, AL 36691-9917**

Please make copies of this form and pass it to prospective new members.