

A crew from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 461 were preparing to fly a long-range external transport of an M998/HMMWV from the Horn of Africa. Capt. Jennifer Grieves, the CH-53E aircraft commander, and Sgt. Joseph White, the crew chief, were conducting a prelift brief with the helicopter-support team (HST) to inspect the security and integrity of the dual-point external slings.

They discovered one of the sling's retaining bolts was missing, and only a small cotter pin kept the retaining pin in place. Had the crew failed to discover this imperfection and tried to lift the external load, the retaining pin could have fallen out, resulting in the inadvertent jettisoning of the HMMWV, potential damage to the aircraft, or injury to the HST or aircrew. Thanks to the aircrew's attention to detail and highly professional work ethic, a flight mishap was avoided.



Left to right, Cpl. Daryl Brinegar, Sgt. Joseph White, Capt. Jennifer Grieves, 1stLt. John Martin, and Cpl. Terry Skinner.

# BRAVO Zulu



From L to R: Cpl. James Inglis (AO), Capt. Samar Nashagh (HAC), Capt. Christian Robertson (PAC), Sgt. Gabriel Walker (CC), LCpl. Jared Johnson (CC)



During a section resupply mission from Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Ironman 43, a Marine Corps CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462, lost the No. 1 engine while approaching the summit of a 10,000-foot mountain. The aircraft carried 19 passengers and 9,000 pounds of cargo.

Without sufficient power to clear the mountain peak, Capt. Samar Nashagh, the helicopter-aircraft commander (HAC), immediately reversed course, enabling a descent and increasing airspeed. The copilot and crew chief began dumping fuel and prepared to blow the auxiliary-fuel tanks. The fuel dump, decreasing altitude, and the additional airspeed proved sufficient to arrest the dramatic and immediate loss of power and altitude caused by the engine failure.

The aircraft returned to Bagram airfield and landed with two of its three engines operating. An engine loss at those altitudes and weights can (and has) resulted in catastrophe. Were it not for the immediate and appropriate actions of this aircrew, 23 souls and an aircraft may have been lost.