



The Initial Approach Fix

Human Factors

As I read a recent issue of *Approach*, I looked for some of the problems that prompted each author to write a “There I was” article. Here’s a partial list of what I found: didn’t follow procedures, communication broke down, lost situational awareness, didn’t check NOTAMS, didn’t speak up (lack of assertiveness), and poor visual scan for other aircraft. A common thread was the author’s belief they could have or should have acted differently. The human factor is integral to each story.

When we identify mishap causal factors, we find more than 80 percent of mishaps are linked to human factors. Whether the aircrew made a poor decision, omitted a step in the checklist, or succumbed to fatigue, the key ingredient—also the adversary—is human error. We’ve called this self-inflicted condition the “Blue Threat.”

This issue leads with an article by LCdr. Jeff Alton, our human-factors analyst, who examines a part of human factors that we seldom address. He looks at it from a functional viewpoint: switch positions, visual scans, and equipment shapes. This aspect of human factors is familiar to every aviator who has transitioned from one aircraft model to another. Following LCdr. Alton’s article is one by Cdr. Mike Michel of HS-21, where “switchology” played a role in his story.

If we can identify and understand the relationship of human factors in aviation mishaps, we have laid the groundwork for mishap prevention.

Approach magazine dedicated the September-October 2006 issue to the Blue Threat, and how we may be our worst enemy. Read more about this concept online at: <http://www.safetycenter.navy.mil/media/approach/issues/sepoct06/>

Fly safe.—Capt. Ed “Clyde” Langford, Director, Aviation Safety Programs

Safety Award Winner Named for 2007

Commanding General Fourth Marine Aircraft Wing was selected as the winner of the Naval Aviation Readiness through Safety Award and the Order of the Daedalians’ Adm. James S. Russell Aviation Flight Safety Award for CY2007.

These awards are presented annually to the controlling custodian who has contributed the most toward readiness and economy of operations through safety. The command selected must have an outstanding safety record, an aggressive safety program, and an improving three-year safety trend.

Grampaw Pettibone Award Update

Grampaw is announcing a new category for Grampaw Pettibone awards, beginning with CY2008. The new category will recognize individuals and commands who use digital and media resources to promote aviation safety. Videos, websites and presentations are valuable tools to prevent mishaps, and Grampaw wants to recognize those contributions. Grampaw will continue to recognize individuals and units that contribute the most toward aviation safety awareness through publications.

Bravo Zulu

The following Navy and Marine Corps squadrons submitted five or more aviation 3750 hazard reports using WESS during the fourth quarter of FY07:

HSC-26	HSL-44	VAQ-129	VAW-120	VFA-115	VMFAT-101
VP-5	VP-16	VP-30	VP-40	VP-46	VQ-1
VQ-2	VR-46	VR-56	VR-57	VRC-40	VT-2
VT-9	VT-27	VT-28	VT-31	VT-35	VT-86