

SAFETY ALERT



AFZF-GA-SAFE

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS III CORPS AND FORT HOOD
FORT HOOD, TEXAS 76544-5056



10 May 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Aircraft Accident Prevention -- Safety Alert 02-05

1. Upon completion of a lane training exercise, the crew of an OH-58D(R) was en route to the AAR site when a cockpit warning sounded. The aircraft was in a low-level right-hand turn at the time so the pilot-in-command immediately leveled the aircraft and noted a high turbine gas temperature. Moments later, the low rotor RPM audio sounded. The pilot-in-command simultaneously lowered the collective to conserve rotor RPM; however, the aircraft hit hard and rolled forward.

2. This accident is still under investigation and causes and factors are not available at this time. However, based on the known information, the aircraft sustained major damage and may be totally destroyed. To everyone's good fortune, the crew incurred no serious injuries. This accident highlights how quickly a situation can go from the seemingly casual and mundane situation to an overwhelming and dangerous situation. Although all indications are that the crew performed quickly and appropriately, this incident resulted in a loss of over four million dollars of valuable and precious Army assets, not to mention a very harrowing experience for the crew. In our business, we can never afford to take any task as casual or mundane. Sometimes risky operations become routine due to performing them frequently. This allows us sometimes to unconsciously lose contact of the seriousness and gravity of the task at hand. When that happens, we also lose our necessary edge. As the incident above illustrates, we can be tested at any time - and often when we least expect it and without prior warning.

3. It is only through aggressive command-driven training and risk management programs that we can keep the odds in our favor. Commanders and leaders must constantly review and assess risk management and training programs to ensure the emphasis is placed where it is needed most. Incidents such as the one described above are often wake-up calls. Abide by established standards and never accept unnecessary risks. We owe it to soldiers that we lead and to the country we defend.

ENSURE WIDEST DISSEMINATION & POST ON AVIATION UNITS BULLETIN BOARDS

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "B B Bell".

B. B. BELL
Lieutenant General, USA
Commanding

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Special - Commanders of aviation units

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