



**Aviation Operations Specialist Group
Meeting Minutes – January 10th, 2008
USFS Wildland Fire Training Center, Sacramento**

Attendees:

John Finnerty – LACOFD
Bill Frankel – MCP
John Buck – LAFD
Mark Schmitt – SBC
Glenn Smith – LAFD
Les Matarazzi – DOI
Heidi Dinkler – KCFD
Dan Reese – CDF
Ray Cheney – CDF
Jeff Power – USFS
Bill Payne – CDF
Greg Helsel – USFS
Art Torrez – USFS
Rick Griggs – SMFD
Dave Brown – SMFD
Michael Newman – NAVY
Paul Mattingly – NAVY
Keith Dittimus – CHP
Robert Park – USMC
David Weir - USMC

1015 meeting start, introductions.

Les moves to accept minutes from last meeting, Glenn seconds.

Election of Officers:

Buck giving a review of positions for new attendees. Discussion of meeting notification and update of roster.

FIRESCOPE website www.firescope.org

Review of why the Specialist Group was formed and what the group is working on.

Copies of charter and plan of work will be made during meeting for new attendees.

Question from the Navy about what will happen with our recommendations. Schmitt explaining how it they go through the process.

Discussion moved to use of Military assets. After recent fires, military has already developed a process for using the military. They have been working on the same process as this committee. Will be having a large exercise to test this at Camp Pendleton in May. Emphasize that the military works and understands capabilities and we understand assets. I.e. we order a Type I helicopter. Military needs to know that we need 2000 gallons of water delivered to Point X. Military cannot be part of our actual planning process, use them as the backup. Their response will always only be for immediate response for life and limb rescue within a 72 hour window. They cannot be used in place of civilian authorities.

Explanation of Dept of Defense DSCA (Defense Support of Civil Authorities) – military methodology for how the military supports civilian authorities during specific events. Under the term “immediate response”, the local commander can make decisions to send immediate help for life and limb, including aviation assets. This method allows for use by all branches of the military.

Everyone in the room is on the same page as far as how and when we can use/request military assets. All agree that public education on this issue is key. How do we get the public and politicians to understand how and when we can and cannot use military aviation assets?

Cheney pointed out that the system did indeed work last fire siege. Stated that from time of request to aircraft from Pendleton and Miramar flying the fire at Santa Bernardo was 4 hours. Asked that the group help stop many false rumors and innuendo. Navy officer stated that we should also help manage expectations from senior Fire Chiefs, local officials and politicians as far as the capability and response potential from the military.

Marines suggest that we reach out and form good relations with the military assets near our individual units/departments. Military at the General Staff level is preparing a letter to the California Legislature to explain what the military can and cannot do.

Hesel – 1430 Training center aviation simulator demonstration.

Break for lunch @1145.

Back from Lunch 1245.

Schmitt motions to keep existing officers. Les seconds.

After morning discussion, Mark Schmitt would like to make some additions to his discussion paper.

Art Torrez requested that the attending Military Officers make a presentation to the Ops Section.

Night Flying Guidelines can be taken off the agenda.

TRAINING/QUALIFICATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Cosey needs to send spreadsheet info to Sac Metro. Through the secretary, Cosey asked if he should forward his discussion paper up to FIREScope Operations. Group decided they would like to see final product at next meeting and then send it up.

Les suggested that we have Cosey send an email with the final version and then we have a conference call. Cosey will organize the conference call with Art Torrez and then notify the Aviation Group of the date and time.

PUBLIC USE AIRCRAFT

COMMUNICATIONS

Schmitt has Finnerty's white paper. Military wants to make sure that we are not recommending any actual modifications or additions to their aircraft. This includes any frequencies that they might not have. Will not happen. Buck will have Finnerty email the white paper to everyone. Suggestion to include the approval of this paper in the above mentioned conference call.

Discussion of yesterday's Aero Medical committee meeting yesterday. Discussion of using Cal Cord for a state-wide EMS air to ground.

NEW BUSINESS

Cheney showing a video from the recent San Diego Fires. Military put a photographer on board one of the helicopters. Showing footage from the Harris Fire.

OLD BUSINESS

Plan of work – FIRESCOPE BOD is requesting several things.

- Do we have an update on UAV's? Group was never actually tasked with this. We had a discussion about this last meeting, but that's as far as it goes. BOD is asking that we add this to our plan of work. What is the technology and how do we use it. USFS has a program with Bob Roth to evaluate current tech. Add to number 4 on the plan of work.
- Needs assessment to be conducted to determine how many military helicopter managers are available and how do we train them. Cheney will take this on.
- By April 1, the aviation assets available at the State and National Level. Cosey, Matarazzi and Schmitt will take this on.
- Request for recruitment for a National Guard Representative to this Board. Hesel will take this on.

NEXT MEETING DATE AND TIME

Camp 2 March 19th at 1000 hours.

CAL FIRE AVIATION SAFETY CONFERENCE ON FEB. 4-7TH. HOLIDAY INN NORTHEAST. MARK SCHMITT WILL SPEAK ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP.

Meeting adjourned at 1430.