

# COMMO CHECK!

Volume 14, Issue 1

Dedicated to the proposition that a career in aviation is not something you do, it's something you survive!

August 2015

The Official Newsletter of the Professional Helicopter Pilots Association,

OPEIU Local 102

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

It appears that it has been a couple of months since the Commo Check last came out. I even heard about it from management in Bldg. 4509 and Vice President Dave said that it's all my fault. So I'll except to the blame and dutifully sit down and bang out this month's article.

There is a lot going on right now. The number one issue continues to be the Lakota transition and all that it brings with it. There are a number of personnel that originally signed up for the transition that are rethinking that decision. If you are one of those persons, then the Company needs to know that now. They need time to reconfigure the list of personnel for the first class. What are the positives and negatives for continuing with the transition or opting out. If you continue with the transition and make it through then you owe the Company/U.S. Army one year on a training contract. If you don't make it through then you will be terminated unless a job opening exist in the division that you currently flying in. Since the Army doesn't have the ability to run concurrent classes, there will not be a person pulled from the division to back fill your now vacant class seat. This really means that there will probably be no vacancy for you if you fail to complete the course. Now somewhere down the road there may be a vacancy but you will be a new hire at new hire pay. The other side of the equation is to opt out now and stay in the TH-67 until the positions go away. The down side to this is that the personnel that opted out will be on a separate seniority roster from the guys that opted to take the transition or who are already transitioned. In the event that the workforce is downsized, then the order of lay-off will by seniority, first in the TH-67 only list then the TH-67/UH-72 list then finally those personnel already in the UH-72. Obviously, according to how old you are and where you are in your career, some of this may seem downright unfair. However, others in different situations may feel that it is just and fair. Life is not always fair. It certainly wasn't fair to me when the Army was downsizing, their personnel management plan was to simply quit promoting people in the older airframes, of which I was still flying. So, think things through, weigh the pros and cons, then make your decision and live with the outcome, whatever that may be.

The transition was originally to have 23 personnel for each class. That has been cut down to 20. I've already started fielding questions from those that were the bottom three personnel and cut, about their vacation. Right now those personnel are going to stay in the UH-72 vacation pool, because there will more than likely be enough personnel electing, to drop to utilize those personnel. If, more personnel are needed, then the Company will ask, by seniority, for volunteers. If no one volunteers, then the most junior number of people needed will be chosen to go to the transition, much like overtime is done. Vacation selection when going from one airframe to the other will be tough. You will forfeit the vacation weeks in the airframe seniority list you are vacating and then reselect from the remaining weeks in the airframe seniority list that you are going to.

We have elections coming next month and we will be utilizing electronic voting. See Lee Murphy's article. Open positions are the Vice President, Recording Secretary, Advanced Division Trustee, and Trustee at Large. Running for the Vice President's position are, current Advanced Division Trustee Lee Murphy and Alan Huenstein from Primary Division. Jim Guy will remain the Recording Secretary as he was unopposed. USAF IP Matt Hedger joins the Executive Board as the Trustee at Large. He was also unopposed. Mel Strobel and Rick Vasquez are running for the open Advanced Division Trustee position. I wish all of the candidates luck. Frank Butler from Advanced Division will be the Election Judge. *(continued page 2)*



**President**

**Ron Arsenault**

**PHPA Local 102**

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(continued from page 1) The sudden passing of Richard Wing in Primary Division should once again remind us that we don't have an expiration date. We can expire at any time. Richard was relatively young compared to some of us on the contract and was still in pretty dang good shape. So, it bears repeating one more time. Please make sure your affairs are in order all of the time, your will is up to date, beneficiaries are up to date and your spouse knows what to do if required. I recommend that you have the Company Life Insurance at the X8 level with the AD&D rider, Mutual Assistance Fund at the \$200.00 level and the Union's Long Term Disability program. Last, whether you are military retiree or not, you should be trying to max out the 401k every year for your age group. Social Security may not be around when you need it.

I attended Richard Wing's funeral and would like to commend Alan Hauenstein on a job well done. It was a beautiful service in which he officiated the proceedings. Several people rose to speak of Richard and about usually being on the short end of his never ending wit. So Richard, may your weather forecast always be CAVOK, with a tail wind and the ride smooth as glass. PS: If you run into a smack talking UH-60 crew chief up there named Arsenault tell him Mom and Dad miss him.

As always, FLY SAFE!

## GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

AUGUST 13, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by President Ron Arsenault. Secretary Treasurer Rod George was out of town. Advanced Trustee Lee Murphy was on period 4 sim. There were 28 members present.

Recording Secretary: The July meeting minutes were read by Jim Guy and the minutes were approved as read.

Secretary-Treasurer: Primary Trustee Bill Haaren read the July Treasurer's report and the report was approved as read. There are 226 members

### Trustees' Reports:

Primary Division: Bill Haaren had nothing to report.

Advanced Division: Lee Murphy was on period 4 sim.

BWS Division: Rick Boylston had nothing to report.

Trustee at Large: Position has not been filled.

### Vice-Presidents Report

Dave Oltmans reported that the IFE recall was not done correctly by the Company. That is why there was a roster that was circulated to all of the divisions asking for volunteers who were qualified. This opening was not originally offered to Ron Abshire who is currently working as a clerk as it should have been. He is now being called back to that position.

There is an ongoing issue dealing with the 1.2 daily flight hour requirement in Primary Division. The company failed to cover students on the first training day (which is a non-fly day) even though these IP's were on scheduled absences. This is a full training day requiring several hours to complete all of the assigned tasks. These students did not receive the proper training on this day and the assigned IP's had to accomplish this day's training as well as day two training which includes flying 1.2 hours. The IP's were unable to get the flight time due to the higher than normal work load and were verbally reprimanded for not doing so. The issue has been brought up to Bob Price and some memorandums were written by these IP's and forwarded to him. We will follow up on this issue.

IP's need to keep good track of your overtime hours. Be honest with your time but log all of the time that you work. Be prepared to justify your time.

Grievance 14-02 is still moving ahead and should be completed soon.

### Old Business

Layoffs/Callbacks: Layoffs in all divisions have been called back. All divisions are still hiring.

Previous E-Board Nominations: Vice-President – Lee Murphy, Alan Hauenstein.

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**August Minutes** (Continued from page 2)

Recording Secretary – Jim Guy. (Uncontested.)

Advanced Division Trustee – Mel Stroebel, Rick Vasquez.

Trustee at Large – None

New Nominations: Trustee at Large – Matt Hedger was nominated and accepted. With no other nominations Matt becomes the new Adv. Div. Trustee.

Ron read a letter submitted by Al Hauenstein. A copy will be attached to these minutes.

Mel Stroebel and Rick Vasquez were given an opportunity to speak to the membership.

**New Business**

Vacation Selection: Ron warned the membership previously that this would not be a smooth process. Complaints are beginning to come in. Most of the senior IP's from Advanced and Primary are now in the same leave unit. Some IP's that were used to getting whatever day's they wanted are now finding themselves below more people on the list. Having separate leave units for the Lakota, Advanced, and Primary is the only way to work it. Each year the numbers will change as more IP's are transitioned. Plan accordingly.

Seniority Rosters: Separate seniority rosters for the three groups (Advanced, Primary, and Lakota) are being compiled and we will get them out ASAP.

UH-72 Transition: The transition numbers are down to 20 IP's per class instead of 23. We are not sure why. Also, the Company is giving all IP's a second chance to opt out of the transition. Remember that if you opt out that you will go on to the "TH-67 only" roster. Any layoffs that come down will be from this list first.

IP's who fail out of the transition will go back to the "TH-67 only" roster only if there is a position open. If there are no openings, you do not have bumping rights and will be terminated.

Our MOI is now running the transitions. All of the current details will be posted in the next Commo Check.

Tim Lee told BWS that after transitioning they would be teaching one class in the Lakota followed by a class in the OH-58. This is the first time this has been brought up, Ron will look into this.

Academics Issue: The E-Board held a meeting with members of our Academics Division on Tuesday to discuss the ongoing issue with teaching a second class on a very regular basis. The reduction in personnel was supposed to create a temporary shortage causing instructors to teach a second class occasionally. This is now becoming a serious issue and we are working on a solution.

Voting: We are planning to use electronic voting for the elections this year. Lee Murphy is working on this. Members should expect to see an e-mail from Teresa verifying their address. Frank Butler will be the election judge.

**From The Floor**

A member brought up the issue of falling off of the Lakota during pre-flight. The topic is mentioned in the Operators Manual. The ladders being used are not tall enough to get on top in order to inspect the rotor head. Ron will talk to the Company about this.

A member asked about scheduling leave. When you sign up for a complete week that includes a holiday or a DONZA you end up with additional leave days that you come back later to put in for. You may have just a single day or many. The scheduling of these days needs to be done by seniority just like all other leave days. Apparently some Divisions are allowing these additional days to be scheduled on a "first come first serve" basis. Ron will look into this.

The winner of the raffle took home \$45 tonight.

There being no new business the meeting adjourned at 7:42 PM.

**ELECTION DAY September 8-9 2015**

By Lee Murphy

The 2015 election of PHPA Local 102 officers will be accomplished via electronic ballot.

Balloting will begin at 0800 (local time) on 8 September 2015 and will end at 1800 (local time) 9 September 2015. No early or late ballots will be permitted or accepted. Members on vacation must insure they provide an email that they can access while they are on vacation to ensure their ability to vote.

Voting will be for contested officer positions only. All union members will receive an electronic ballot with which to cast a vote for the position of Vice President.

Union members in the Advanced Division will receive a second electronic ballot with which to cast a vote for the Advanced Division Trustee.

Results of the election will be announced at the General Membership Meeting on 10 September 2015.

Newly elected officers will fill their seats at the General Membership Meeting on 8 October 2015.

**A Few Words from Your Nominees:****Lee Murphy, Candidate for Vice President**

I am a candidate for the office of Vice President. My short tenure with the company, five years, has been exciting and rewarding.

I have been a union member since becoming eligible and currently serve as the Advanced Division Trustee. During my tenure in this position I have instituted the electronic voting process, helped administer two elections, and experienced my first CBA negotiations. I have fostered a good working relationship with company management.

I am a retired combat Veteran, Master Warrant Officer 4, with a career spanning Vietnam and Desert Storm. My military specialty was standardization. I have served in positions ranging from unit instructor pilot to Army level standardization instructor pilot. Other major duties included Army Air Field Operations Officer and Joint Tactical Aerospace Coordinator (combat). Awards and decorations include: Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, 6 Meritorious Service Medals and 9 Army Commendation Medals.

My civilian resume includes: remote sales office/accounts; manager of a large IT company, with total sales of \$1.6 million. Clients included: DOD CONUS, USAPAC, and USAF OCONUS. I also held the position of oversight store manager in a \$43 million dollar Home Depot retail store. I was responsible for security, processing inbound commodities, and preparing the store for the next business date. I also served 6 years tenure as the president of Rolling Thunder Inc., Illinois Chapter 2. I was responsible for all daily operations and work with the National Organization on POW/MIA issues.

As your Vice President I am willing to invest the time and effort required to support you and the union. My wife lives and works in Chicago, IL making me a geographical bachelor with plenty time available to support our union efforts.

Thank you in advance for your vote.

**Alan Hauenstein, Candidate for Vice President**

I have been a union member since day one and have seen a lot of changes, ie: starting pay \$36,000, the affiliation with OPEIU, and let's not forget the pay raises. We have finally gotten the recognition that we have earned. I have now thought that it is time for me to try and give back to the union. I am currently the flight representative for Raven Flight. Now I would like to move up to the Vice President position. Prior to 1998 I worked for an EMS company for two years and before that I retired from the Army. Over half of my Army career was spent as an instructor pilot at a small base in lower Alabama, most people have never heard of it. I have taught what was call primary in UH-1s, then basic combat skills, advanced combat skills, nights and night vision goggles. I also taught UH-1 instructor pilot course which at the time was teaching foreign nationals and Air Force pilots how to be instructor pilots. During that time I received my bachelor's degree from Embry-Riddle University.

## Lying When the Truth Would Do

By Dave Oltmans

When I was four years old I answered the siren call of the ice cream man. I heard the tinkling of his truck coming and panicked. My Mom was at the neighbor's and I took a dime from her purse and bought my Popsicle. It's hard to hide the stain of a Popsicle tongue, so I was "caught red handed" so to speak. When she asked me if I had taken money from her purse for the Popsicle, I blurted I hadn't. I'll never forget what she said,

"David, I gave you a chance to tell the truth and you didn't. That means that I have to spank you and put you in your room. If you had told me the truth, I would've put you in your room for a while and then talked about honesty. Now I have to talk about honesty first and spank it into you."

My point of relating this story has to do with how we lose our focus about telling the truth. I have had many complaints about how some supervisors have been pressuring IP's to log a certain amount of time that they may not have actually been able to fly for one reason or another. Nothing we do as IP's can justify our compliance with this kind of "supervision" that views numbers on a manifest as being more important than the honest documentation of those numbers.

The Employee Handbook is very specific when it comes the handling of forms. It is simple: Don't falsify those forms. This includes the logbook, the student records, the flight manifest, your payroll and any other form you certify as being correct. If you are caught falsifying any of these documents, there is little the union can do to protect your job. It is not a good defense to say that you did it because of supervisory pressure. Does anyone think that a supervisor will come to their rescue for such an infraction? Does the cop out, "I was just following orders" absolve anybody from doing the right thing? Most of you have figured out how to work around to this kind of supervisory pressure and suffer the abuse in silence. It is abuse and it is harassment for a supervisor to threaten you with the loss of your job because he wants you to lie about two tenths of an hour whether it is in the logbook or on your payroll entry.

It bothers me to have to tell you that I have heard that at least one flight commander has gone into the grade books and changed the IP's grades and comments in support of those grades. With the critique system being what it is, I suggest that if you think this happening, to start documenting your entries by taking screen shots of your grade sheet with your phone. You can compare this screenshot with your grade book if you think it is being tampered with. We have been told by management that our only defense against a bad critique is our documentation of the student's performance, attitude and shortcomings that may prompt him/her to unload on us. If these entries have been erased or altered by a flight commander, you may lose your job when you thought that you had the bases covered. Protect yourselves.

I have a special thanks to offer for those of you who have said "enough" and brought this to my attention. It is time for us to single out these one dimensional thinkers who wear the supervisor's rank and believe that lying makes them look more productive. You are the men and women who make them look productive. But it has to be by honest documentation or it will be you, not the supervisor, who will suffer the consequences for their lying ambition. Don't let anybody drag you down to their level.

## Stepping Down

By Dave Oltmans, VP

As you know I have chosen not to run for another term as your VP. I am confident that I will be leaving this position in competent hands. Of course there will be a learning curve for anybody new this position so I want to encourage my successor to be patient with that process, and I would like for the membership to be patient while that happens. It is not an easy job. It involves a lot of work and some long hours. It involves commitment. I will do my best to help whomever wins VP to make the transition a smooth one.

See you at the next meeting, my last as your Vice President. At the October meeting, I will be the guy next to the pizza and cokes.



### CHECKLIST

Your next general membership meeting will be 10 September 2015, 630pm at the union hall.

### MEETING AGENDA

1. Meeting called to order.
2. Officer Reports.
3. Old Business.
4. New Business.

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