

September 2, 2008

From: Commandant  
To: Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater Safety Department

Subject: CAPTAIN MARION "GUS" SHRODE AVIATION SAFETY AWARD

1. I note with pride and am pleased to commend LT Donnell, LT Fitzgerald, LTJG Bates, and MST1 Gebo, as recipients of the 2008 Captain Marion "Gus" Shrode Aviation Safety Award.
2. Balancing an emphasis on program fundamentals with a willingness to innovate, the Air Station Clearwater Safety Department took an already solid safety program and greatly improved it. By revitalizing and empowering the Enlisted Safety Council and Unit Safety Board, they imbued a safety culture at Air Station Clearwater. Through an innovative information campaign using multiple safety stand downs, organizational recognition programs, superbly crafted Safety Newsletters and focused training, they greatly increased hazard reporting. These proactive efforts fostered early intervention in the mishap chain reducing this large, high op-tempo unit's mishap rate and overall costs.
3. During a MEDEVAC hoist between an HH-60J and a USCG 33' SPC-LE, the basket and patient were dragged from the bow of the USCG small boat, subsequently contacting the roof of the vessel before being recovered by the helicopter crew. Demonstrating exceptional investigative skills, the Safety Department identified numerous hoisting hazards on both the 33' SPC-LE and the 25' Defender Class vessel. Partnering with CG-711, CG-731, and ATC Mobile they developed a plan for hoisting evaluations with these vessels which resulted in operating manual changes, enhancing the safety of hoisting operations Coast Guard wide.
4. The Safety Department was also instrumental in ensuring safety concerns were addressed during the introduction of new operational capabilities. They worked closely with the Airborne Use of Force stand up team to ensure that participating pilots and crew were enrolled in monitoring programs for exposure to aerosolized lead from weapons firing. Drawing on inter-service experience, they created and presented initial training to all AUF personnel and gunners mates based on the annual laser training requirements of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. The Safety Department shared this training presentation with all USCG AUF units and the ATC Aviation Special Missions Branch. The training and laser hazard information they developed is helping form Coast Guard laser policy being developed at Headquarters.
5. The Air Station Clearwater Safety Department's actions reflect favorably on themselves, their unit, and the United States Coast Guard. Their names will be added to the Captain Marion "Gus" Shrode Aviation Safety Award Plaque in the Aviator Hall of Fame at the Coast Guard Aviation Training Center, Mobile, Alabama.

For the Commandant,

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Director of Health, Safety and Work-Life