



**Aviation Operations Specialist Group  
Meeting Minutes – May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007  
Ventura County Support Complex**

**Attendees:**

Gary Hart – VNC  
John Finnerty – LACOFD  
Keith Dittimus – CHP  
Bill Frankel – MCP  
John Buck – LAFD  
Mark Schmitt – SBC  
Gerald Cosey – LACOFD  
Heidi Dinkler – KRN

Art Torrez – USFS  
Les Matarazzi – DOI  
Bob Curry - SDSO  
Brian Stephens - OCFA  
Rob Mergen - OCSO  
Heidi Dinkler - KRN  
Jack Froggatt - KCFD

Premeeting information – Jorge Camargo has been promoted to Division Chief and Brian Stephens will be representing the Orange County Fire Authority.

0920 – Chair Jon Buck opened the meeting and started introductions. Jack Froggatt is attending as our secondary liaison to FIRESCOPE.

Motion to approve last minutes, approved.

**Committee/Sub-Committee Reports**

**Military MOU's – Mark Schmitt**

- Binder is almost done. Missing a couple of MOU's.
- Just a matter of the other subcommittees giving information. Basically ready to present to FIRESCOPE.
- Will have Art help us with that process.
- Mark covered the contents of the binder.
- Les contributed paragraph to address aircraft from outside of California. Added to Binder.
- Art has a copy of the white paper format. Will leave a copy at this meeting.

## NVG Guidelines

- John is done with the guidelines and would like to submit. Jorge may have done the white paper, Brian will check.
- This is a guideline and not intended as a policy for everyone.
- Suggests that we post this on the firescope website. If folks want, each department can post their policy manual on the website as well.
- Gary Hart said that the new NVG guidelines helped immensely with development of VCFD policy, but we don't need to wait and try and include everyone's policy in the NVG guidelines. John Finnerty agrees.
- Agencies can select what part of the NVG guidelines to adopt (or not) as part of their own policies.
- Gary makes motion to submit the current NVG document, as is, to FIRESCOPE. Seconded and approved by group.
- Art said June 20<sup>th</sup> meeting at South Ops would be good occasion to present. John Finnerty will attend and present. John will also give a final finished copy to Mark Schmitt to include in the binder.

## Training, Qualifications and Certification – Gerald Cosey

- 9 Agencies that have sent in their spreadsheets. Handed out a packet. Need LA City, Kern County, San Bernardino, FS and LAPD.
- This is an information sharing tool.
- Secretary will email all the offending agencies and ask that they complete a spreadsheet. Gerald will email Heidi with a clean electronic version to send out.
- Appreciates any constructive criticism. Would like to wrap up this end of project
- Discussion of what do we do with this information now that we have it. How does this info directly answer any of the Blue Ribbon Commission recommendations? We were tasked with finding out what agencies want to be involved and to what extent. We now know that the military cannot meet out training minimums due to their high turnover. We need to make a recommendation on how to use the military. For example, not for water dropping but maybe for personnel transport, since that is what they train for.
- Mark Schmitt suggests that the committee agree that the process between CALFIRE and Cal. National Guard is in place and does not need to be replaced or reworked. However, the issues surrounding the use of Federal Military assets revolve around the ordering process and communications interoperability. Streamlining the ordering process can be addressed through the local agreements mechanism. It appears the common communications issue can be overcome with existing radios being installed in military aircraft. Additionally, the Federal Military assets should only be tasked with incident support in the form of personnel and

cargo movement, a task they are familiar with, and not water dropping operations. This effort would relieve federal, state and local government fire aviation assets to focus on the fire suppression component or incident support.

- Bill Frankel has confidence that the Marines have the proper communication equipment.

#### Public Aircraft Operations

- Jon Brick not in attendance. Les stated he received an outline from Jon, but some did not. Les will email to Heidi and I will forward to group.
- Group agrees that Pressler would not really be an issue if we are at the point of using the military. Not something we will be able to resolve.

#### Communication – John Finnerty

- Has a lot of material. Will wait to put together info until after South Ops dispatch meeting.
- What should we include? Suggests we recommend a minimum standard of VHF AM in the civil band (approx 125.000-132.000) and VHF FM that will cover all the freqs in the Field Operations Guide. This would be for all aircraft – military, law enforcement, fire, civilian.
- How complicated should this recommendation be? We should agree with recommendations of the FIRESCOPE communications group. Are they going to recommend ground resources go to 800 band? Perhaps we should recommend equipment that is expandable.
- John concerned that we will come up with all this good information and some agencies (contra Costa County, Pasadena, etc) will not get it. Suggests that we post on websites and do a mailer to all identified fire, law enforcement, civilian, and military agencies/authorities/companies.
- Jack cautioned on using the term “required” as opposed to “recommend” with our findings. Required items have large impacts. John Finnerty suggests that the min. standard of the VHF AM and FM should be a requirement, the rest should be a recommendation. After much discussion, Gary suggests that we recommend redundant radios, 800 expandable, etc and require that if the aircraft will have any contact with ground resources, they shall have the min. requirements.

#### Lunch

Old Business – Plan of Work. Updates completed on the worksheet. Will update and email.

## New Business

- Need to reach out to the original participants and try to stimulate interest. Email minutes and the plan of work to all interested parties. Try to solicit input from other agencies or get them to send a representative.
- Gary Hart will contact folks in Sac/Metro to see if they would like to host the next meeting.
- There is a link to the Aviation Specialist Group on the FIREScope website. It should have the minutes, plan of work etc on the page. [www.firescope.org](http://www.firescope.org) Tom Dryer will post our minutes. Email Don Weiss (webmaster) can provide a password if you need one. The roster is password protected.
- If there needs to be a change in meeting location, run thru the Chair (John Buck) or Vice-Chair (Keith Dittmus).
- Safety Alert regarding the SPH-5 helmets and cracks on the earpieces. Gary is wondering if you can legally purchase just the shell and put the old guts in. They have lots of helmets with new avionics but cracked ear pieces. Genetex does not have that answer. Bob Curry said that Gibson and Barnes may be able to do that work. [www.gibson-barnes.com](http://www.gibson-barnes.com) He works next to them and will inquire. Art suggested that we put the info on the webpage.
- Next meeting. Will try for the 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> or 26<sup>th</sup>. Gary will email. If Sac/Metro does not host we will try to schedule at McClellan. Start time at 0930.

Meeting adjourned at 1400