



UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER

13 March 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Appointment as Investigating Officer

1. You are appointed to investigate the facts and circumstances surrounding the crash of a UH-60 in vicinity of Eglin Air Force Base on 10 March 2015 that resulted in the deaths of four Soldiers and seven Marines. I may also appoint additional members for their subject matter expertise at your request. Please identify any such additional members to the SJA, USSOCOM, for my approval.
2. In your investigation, use the informal investigation procedures outlined in AR 15-6. You will provide a detailed chronology of events, and determine all facts and circumstances relating to mission preparation, aircraft, personnel and causal factors for the accident. In addition, you will make specific findings concerning the following:
 - a. What was the mission? Was mission planning adequate and did it thoroughly address all considerations?
 - b. At what level was any risk assessment done, and was that appropriate to this mission? Were there any changes during mission planning to the mission or risk assessment?
 - c. Identify all personnel involved in this mission execution, including mission approval authorities on the ground.
 - d. Identify all personnel manifested on the aircraft involved in the accident, including aircrew and Marine special operations personnel, and include their duty status at the time.
 - e. What was the status of training and qualification for each member of the aircrew? Include current status with regard to numbers of flight hours, night vision goggle proficiency, instrument qualification and recency of testing or evaluation in proficiency training, and what training was specific to the aircraft on this mission.
 - f. What was the maintenance status of the aircraft?
 - g. What flight procedures were in place at the time of the accident, to include airspace restrictions, altitude restrictions, weather forecasts, flight corridors, and other factors that may have contributed to this accident?

SOCC

SUBJECT: Appointment as Investigating Officer

h. Identify whether there were any communications issues between aircraft on the mission, or aircraft and ground control elements.

i. What were the weather conditions and illumination during this flight and particularly at the time of the accident?

j. Were all crew members in compliance with applicable crew rest standards?

k. Were there any flight policies, procedures or directions that contributed to the accident.

l. Were there communications with the flight crew and Marine Special Operations Command elements? If so, identify individuals involved and the transcripts or substance of such communications.

m. Whether the actions of the Marine special operations personnel during the flight contributed to the accident?

n. Whether the crew and passengers were wearing appropriate personal protective equipment?

o. Whether procedures for emergency egress of the aircraft or survival equipment, either type or availability, contributed to the loss of life in this accident?

p. Were all necessary and appropriate steps initiated for rescue/recovery operations?

q. Any other matters you determine relevant to your investigation.

3. I will separately appoint representatives from the National Guard and U.S. Marine Corps to serve as members of this investigation team, and you will include them to the maximum extent possible in collection of evidence and preparation of findings and recommendations. You will further coordinate with the already-appointed Louisiana Army National Guard collateral investigation into this incident.

4. You will make recommendations based upon your findings, including appropriate changes in doctrine, training, mission rehearsal or any other aspect that will improve safety and readiness.

5. Your investigation will be conducted IAW AR 15-6.

a. You should obtain sworn statements where appropriate on a DA Form 2823, Sworn Statement, or record witness information by memorandum. You should obtain original documents whenever possible; if originals are unavailable, obtain copies and provide an MFR indicating why the original is not available.

SOCC

SUBJECT: Appointment as Investigating Officer

b. If, prior to or during any interview, you suspect an individual of a criminal violation, you must advise that individual of his rights under Article 31, UCMJ, or the 5th Amendment. Consult your legal advisor prior to any rights advisement.

6. This investigation is your primary duty. Suspense for completion is 31 March 2015; you may request additional time if necessary.

7. Before you begin your investigation, you should consult your legal advisor, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] You should consult with your legal advisor as necessary in all aspects of this investigation, from developing an investigation plan to preparing findings and recommendations.

8. Submit your findings and recommendations by memorandum with the DA Form 1574. Include all exhibits and evidence obtained during your investigation.

9. POC for this memo is the [REDACTED] USSOCOM, [REDACTED], [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]


JOSEPH L. VOTEL
General, U.S. Army
Commander