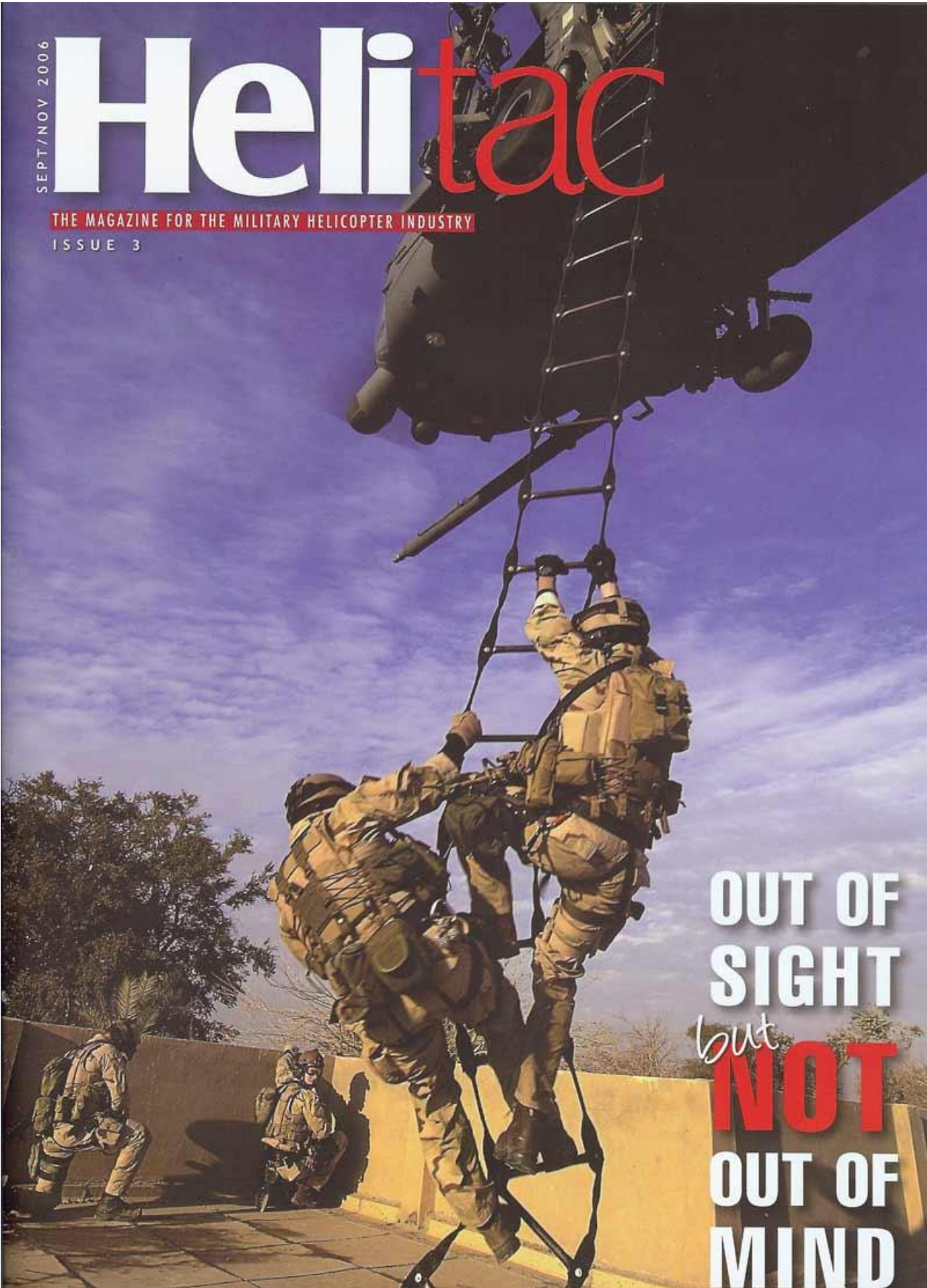


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OUT OF
SIGHT
but
NOT
OUT OF
MIND



very technical. It's important to use the proper terminology and protocol. As an instructor if my wingman has a problem with his HUD, armament control panel, or navigation system, I can't help him unless he can successfully communicate his problem to me and I can successfully communicate a solution.

Communication not only has to be correct, it has to be timely. CRM is here and it's important. We need to take care of each other in flight and on the ground. In one of my prior squadrons, an A-10 flight lead flew into the ground while holding at low altitude. He hit the ground at an extremely low angle of impact.

He was highly experienced, had flown three different kinds of fighters, and was also a major airline pilot. He essentially mis-prioritized his attention in the cockpit while attack planning and gently descended right into the ground.

He had two wingmen with him in tactical formation. Neither one said a word. One of them, a very young pilot, actually admitted to watching lead descend the whole time all the way to impact. Afterward, he said it looked wrong, but he didn't say anything, because he figured the guy knew what he was doing. Now he has to live with that.

8. DON'T GET TOO MARRIED TO YOUR PLAN

Murphy is out there on every mission. If you are like me, it seems like the harder you work on your plan and briefing, the more chance that it will change. Plan properly, but don't become emotionally invested in your plan. It can lead you

to make bad decisions. For a particular mission, you may have created the greatest low altitude attack geometry ever know to man, but if the weather doesn't cooperate, you may need to shelve it and go to plan B. It's tempting to push weather or fuel in order to meet your objectives.

One of the things that make our job so gratifying is that you can never totally predict what is going to happen. Flying is more like a chess game than filling out a tax form. Stay flexible, keep thinking, and don't get too married to your plan.

9. ADMIT WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW SOMETHING

There are so many new systems, weapons, regulation changes, acronyms, tactics, and techniques that it's becoming increasing hard to stay on top of all the things you need to know to do the job.

It's staggering when you think of all the layers of knowledge you are responsible for in the Air Force. You have know your plane, then the sub-systems of the plane (navigation computer, counter measures systems, displays), the mission planning software, the electronic briefing room, the simulator, and the new scheduling software. Add to that the volumes of regulations, the demands of your non-flying duties, death by PowerPoint, and the bombardment of emails from around the base. It's amazing to me we can do our jobs at all.

The fact is...there is tons of stuff I don't know. Even in the flying arena, all I have to do is sit through a briefing by a motivated young weapons officer and I'm lucky if I understand half of

ABOVE LEFT: A CH-53E Super Stallion from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 465 approaches a hulk as Marines from a Combat Logistics Battalion 2 helicopter support team wait to hook the vehicle to the helicopter. Photo by Sgt. Juan Vara

ABOVE RIGHT: The crew of an AH-1 Cobra conducts a post-flight rundown of their helicopter. The attack helicopter and the CH-46E Sea Knight transport helicopter in the background stand by for casualty evacuation missions. Due to inclement weather at their base Camp Taqaddum, the pre-positioning marked the first time the helicopters and their crews, assigned to Marine Aircraft Group 26, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (FWD), used the forward landing zones for a more rapid aerial response to those injured in the battlefield.

Photo by Cpl. Ruben D. Maestre

OPPOSITE: Pararescuemen from the 304th Rescue Squadron are hoisted up to an HH-60G Pave Hawk at Tallil Air Base, Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Photo by Staff Sgt. Shane A. Cuomo - USAF