



Air Wing TOOLBOX

State-of-the-Art Survival Items (SOASI) Program

By Margie Conlin Gauntt

In 1987, something finally was done about outdated aviator's survival equipment. The chief of naval operations sponsored a program at NAVAIR to document deficient equipment and to implement a system for getting new items to users. The State of the Art Survival Items (SOASI) Program, it was established to identify new or replacement items for the fleet. Unfortunately, funding cutbacks hurt the program, and many deficient items were not being replaced in a timely manner.

The fleet and OPNAV still supported the program but needed a less costly and more expeditious means to introduce low-risk items. A streamlined process would reduce the cost and time needed to provide product options to the fleet, and candidate items could be submitted through their type commander. These items could range from expensive, well-made items to

inexpensive, cheaply made items. Updates authorizing new gear were sent via message, reducing long waits for manual revisions.

An annual SOASI authorization message is published once or twice a year and includes a list of alternatives to already-required items, along with a list of other

Flexible-neck NVG-compatible flashlight.



The IR-14 JR strobe.



optional items. These alternatives allow a one-for-one replacement of each piece of survival equipment—at the fleet user's discretion. These alternatives are tested to meet performance, safety and integration requirements.

Optional equipment—those items in addition to required items—is counted as part of the five pounds

of extra gear authorized. These items are considered "endorsed equipment," meaning they are proven safe and effective. This list doesn't limit other approved optional items that the user wants to carry.

This published list of optional items creates many benefits:

- Fleet users are notified of optional items NAVAIR endorses.
- These items reduce the chance of a user choosing dangerous alternatives. Aviators have carried and used items that didn't seem dangerous when chosen but turned out that way (such as an item becoming a FOD hazard).
- The fleet is outfitted with items that enhance survival and improve signaling capability. The old development method took years to research, assemble, test, and evaluate before making it to the fleet. The SOASI program rapidly transitions items using non-developmental items (NDI) and commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) equipment, reducing the time and effort to push products to fleet users.

How does the fleet suggest items for SOASI to consider? Simply follow these seven steps and timeline:

- Submit a written request (naval message or letter) to the TYCOM and then to NAVAIR to evalu-

ate a proposed new item, replacement item, or an idea for an unresolved requirement. Use plain language and include details about the proposed item. List a single point of contact who can identify more specific information, if needed.

- An internal review board screens requests within 30 days of receipt.

- An integrated-program team (IPT) does an initial assessment within 45 days.

- The request originator or vendor provides samples within one to four months. Test samples also can be purchased, using program funds.

- An analysis, test and fleet assessment (if required) are done in the next one to four months.

- Within 30 days of that milestone—should that item pass the required tests—it is declared acceptable. The program team recommends an airworthiness certificate, and a message is sent, authorizing local purchase.

- If the item fails tests for safety, effectiveness or integration, the originator is notified within 30 days. This item no longer is considered, unless the requirements are changed or redefined.

The SOASI program must keep up with continuous changes and advances in technology. This state-of-the-art equipment helps to ensure our warfighters are the best equipped in the world.

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For more info...

The POC for the SOASI program is Mr. Frank Boka; (301) 342-9222, or e-mail: frank.boka@navy.mil. Visit the SOASI website at <https://pma202@navair.navy.mil/SOASI>. It contains the naval message that authorizes equipment to be ordered this way, a flow chart that demonstrates the process, a more in-depth SOASI-program process schedule, and various other documents about the SOASI program. Signing up to the PMA-202 website is quick and easy.

The last message authorizing equipment is 1016152 Nov 03, PSN 351243M18, Annual State-of-the-Art Survival Equipment. SOASI messages are released in the spring and fall.



SOASI made it possible to “fast track” an alternate fixed-blade knife.

Flight, Flight-Related, and Ground Class A Mishaps 12/13/2003 to 03/16/2004

Aircraft	Command	Date	Fatalities
FA-18C	VX-9	12/17/2003	0
Aircraft departed runway on landing. Pilot ejected.			
UH-1N	HMM-166	01/22/2004	4
Aircraft struck ground during night-ops training mission.			
AH-1W	HMLA-367	01/23/2004	0
Helo crashed while conducting day urban CAS training mission.			
CH-53D	HMH-463	02/18/2004	0
Inadvertent actuation of ramp during de-rigging.			
T-45C	VT-9	02/24/2004	0
Student on FCLP solo crashed on runway during roll out on touch and go.			
EA-6B	VAQ-141	02/26/2004	0
Blown tire on landing. Aircraft departed runway after main mount collapsed.			
SH-60B	HSL-40	03/04/2004	0
Aircraft had a hard landing, struck ground, and rolled over on its side.			
FA-18C	VFA-94	03/10/2004	0
Hornet departed runway on landing rollout and overturned.			
UC-35	COMCABWEST EL TORO	03/10/2004	4
Aircraft stuck ground during ground-controlled approach.			

Class B Mishaps 12/13/2003 to 03/16/2004

Aircraft	Command	Date
UC-35	MAG-42	12/22/2003
Nose wheel collapsed on landing.		
FA-18C	VFA-83	12/23/2003
Aircraft hit a bird on low-level route.		
SH-60F	HS-8	02/03/2004
Sonar transducer departed aircraft.		
EA-6B	VAQ-141	02/26/2004
Aircraft departed runway following a landing gear and hydraulic system malfunction during landing rollout.		
AH-1W	VX-9	02/26/2004
Helo's main rotor blades struck tower during low altitude, no injuries.		
S-3B	VS-24	03/02/2004
Aerial-refueling store separated from aircraft during takeoff.		
CH-53E	HMM-266	03/12/2004
One aircraft hit another during an undetermined ground evolution.		
FA-18C	VFA-81	03/16/2004
CATM-88 control fin departed during cat launch, damaging inner wing.		

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