



SABER

Special Airborne Emergency Response

Well where did the idea of saber come from and what is it intended to be anyway...

One evening back in 1997 Steve England and Bill Correll were talking about ideas to make the emergency service program both realistic and fun for the seniors and cadets in Squadron 72. Yes the squadron had done bivouacs, land navigation, compass courses and weekend SAR training before but nothing to make a member feel like it was a real field training exercise (FTX) that was both demanding and rewarding.

The two men talked about some of the realistic field training that they both had done in the Air Force, Army Airborne, and Special Forces on active and reserve status. In a short while they both talked about a joint activity that involved the Army National Guard airborne inserting two fully qualified ground teams (cadets and seniors) in the high sierra with the mission to locate a possible down aircraft. The mission would include advanced orienteering, and direction finding for a downed simulated aircraft (practice ELT). A base camp would be established for an overnight, and depending if the target was located the activity would either continue or a training evolution was conducted the next morning. The two teams would hike out to a Landing Zone (helo spot) where the Army National Guard would airborne extract the two teams back to the Stockton Airport marshalling point. The primary purpose was to give those members who had worked hard all year to become fully qualified as CAP ground team members to earn their ground team badge as a result of completing **SABER**. It was **NOT** to be a joy ride or even an O-ride in a military helicopter, but a practical exercise to insert and extract ground teams in a remote high mountain site as a lead to graduating as Squadron Ground Teams members.

Once the basic outlined was formulated, Major England took on as the Senior Project Officer assignment and 1LT England (then a cadet) took the activity on as the Cadet Project Officer. This activity involved a great deal of planning and coordination with the National Guard in Sacramento and the local unit, along with the US Forest Service. It involved several trips to possible sites to identify a location that would work for CAP and the National Guard who would be bring to the sites Chinook helicopters to drop off and pick up the two Ground Teams in full field gear. The area also had to be accessible by vehicle so that a support truck could bring along some mission base items for the overnight. In addition training needed to be planned and executed to prepare members for the course completion.

MAJ Steve England and 1LT Erin England both received special Commander Commendations for all of the hard work and extra time spent making this a successful activity. LTC Correll placed the name **SABER** (Special Airborne Emergency Response) on the activity because of the nature of the operation; immediate insertion by air of two special trained ground teams to conduct an operational mission and then an immediate extraction also by air to the marshalling area. This is one example of an air assault used by the military today in many of their tactical missions around the world.

Every year Squadron 72 has conducted a **SABER** exercise for those who have trained and become qualified to be involved in a true high adventure fast moving tactical emergency service operation.