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# FLIGHT ROUNDS

A Program of  
the Milwaukee  
Regional  
Medical  
Center

Spring 2006



## **MCI: It Can Happen In Your Community**

**Suzette Firnrohr, RN**

*Flight Nurse, Flight For Life - Wisconsin*

It'll never happen to us. How many times have you heard that phrase? My guess is that many people involved in this call have thought the same thing. Unfortunately, tragedies happen.

Saturday, March 12, 2005 started out like any other day. At the Wisconsin Flight For Life office, morning report and daily, routine tasks had been completed. After lunch, the flight pager went off for a 'standby' with the Children's Transport Team. The Northern Illinois Flight For Life (FFL-No. IL) helicopter was transporting a patient to Froedtert Hospital.

Just about the time the FFL-No. IL helicopter was landing, our communications base called to tell us the City of Brookfield was requesting a helicopter for a multiple shooting. The decision was made to have FFL-No. IL take the Children's Team flight and the Wisconsin helicopter go to the scene in Brookfield. This change in dispatching the two helicopters had a variety of benefits. First, the Wisconsin helicopter crew was very familiar with the Brookfield area. Second, and probably more important, at that time FFL-No. IL did not have an 800 radio, and the Wisconsin aircraft did. The 800 radio in the helicopter gave us the capability to contact the landing zone directly, even before we lifted off. In the past, we were not able to make contact until we were airborne. With such a short flight time to the scene, contacting the scene landing zone commander for information, especially when that radio is shared with our pilots who need to speak with air traffic controllers, can become very complicated. Some of the first questions to landing zone command were "Is the scene safe? Is the shooter in custody?" With assurance that the scene was secured, we lifted off with less than a three-minute ETA. Incident Command again informed us there were multiple victims.

# 2006 UPCOMING EVENTS/CONFERENCES

## Emergency Services Conference New One Day Format!

Flight For Life will host its 22nd annual Emergency Services Conference: Trends and Issues 2006 on September 9th, 2006 at the Kenosha County Center in Wisconsin. Registration begins at 8:00am and the conference will conclude at 4:45pm. For more information, contact Julie Piorkowski at (414) 778-5435 or go to the Flight For Life website at [www.flightforlife.org](http://www.flightforlife.org).

## PHTLS

- March 25, 2006 -  
Refresher class at Allenton Fire Department
- April 22-23, 2006 -  
SERTAC PHTLS class at Froedtert Hospital
- September 16-17, 2006 -  
Provider class at Silver Lake Fire Department

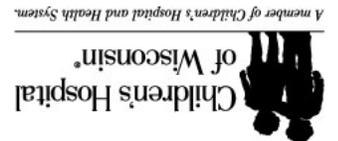
## Safety Inservice

The Wisconsin helicopter will offer a safety inservice August 19, 2006. The location of the inservice will be Froedtert Hospital. Upon completion of the inservice, personnel are eligible to sign up for a ride along shift with the Flight For Life staff.

Participation in this program is open to pre-hospital personnel in the following counties: Dodge, Fond du Lac, Jefferson, Kenosha (north of Hwy 142), Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Sheboygan, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha.

Participation is also open to registered nurses working in emergency and critical care departments.

To register, call Julie Piorkowski at (414) 778-5435.



Centegra Northern Illinois  
Medical Center



Flight For Life  
A Program of the Milwaukee Regional  
Medical Center  
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Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53226



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## Scene Call of the Year Award - 2004

The 11th Annual Scene Call of the Year Awards were presented at two separate events in the spring of 2005. The award was developed to recognize and honor the extraordinary contributions to patient care given by EMS professionals in northern Illinois and Wisconsin.

Flight For Life – Wisconsin recognized Oostburg Ambulance as the recipient of its 2004 Scene Call of the Year Award. On June 16, 2005, a large gathering of EMS providers and law enforcement gathered in Oostburg to welcome recovering patient John Reimer to an award ceremony hosted by Oostburg Ambulance. John had been pinned in his pick-up truck following a severe, one vehicle crash on the Interstate. It took over an hour of intense effort, and the teamwork of many departments, to finally extricate John from his truck. He was in critical condition, with multiple injuries, and flown by Flight For Life- WI to the Level 1 Trauma Center at Froedtert Hospital.

The evening of June 16th, the Village Board Safety Chairman also presented Oostburg Ambulance with a special Citation from the Assembly – State of Wisconsin, on behalf of state Rep. Dan LeMahieu. Flight For Life also recognized Oostburg Fire Department, Cedar Grove First Responders, Cedar Grove Fire Department, Wisconsin State Patrol, Sheboygan County Sheriff's Department and the Sheboygan County Dispatch for their support in this successful rescue.

Flight For Life-Northern Illinois recognized Countryside Fire Protection District (Full-time Department Award Winner) and Harvard Fire Protection District (Combination Department Award Winner) at two different events in 2005.

The Harvard Fire Protection District presentation was done at the department's monthly meeting on Wednesday, April 27th with the patient, Oscar Jimenez and his wife in attendance. Harvard's call involved a garbage truck vs car that resulted in 4 patients, two of which were critical, three mutual aid companies- Woodstock Fire-Rescue, Capron Rescue, and Marengo Fire Protection District-and two helicopters. The call was an outstanding example of teamwork, patient care, and coordination in a very difficult situation.

Countryside Fire Protection District received their award at the District meeting on Thursday, May 19th at the main station. This call was somewhat unusual in that it involved a patient who suffered a penetrating neck

injury in a home construction accident. Upon arrival at the scene, the paramedics made a rapid assessment of the patient's injury and called for FFL-Northern Illinois. This decision was made due to the location of the injury and the threat of possible spinal cord damage that could have occurred due to unnecessary movement during transport. It was the quick-thinking of the paramedics and proper patient management that helped to provide this patient with an excellent recovery.

These calls highlight the teamwork that exists among EMS, fire departments, law enforcement agencies, dispatch and air medical services as they work together to provide services that result in the best possible patient outcomes. Congratulations to Oostburg Ambulance, Countryside Fire Protection District, Harvard Fire Protection District, and all agencies involved for an outstanding job!



*Oostburg Ambulance*



*Countryside Fire Protection District*



*Harvard Fire Protection District*

(MCI: It Can Happen In Your Community)

We flew to Brookfield Square, which is a large urban mall with a variety of other buildings and shops on the premises. This extremely busy shopping center is along two of the busiest roads in the area. As we circled around our landing zone checking for hazards, the enormity of this incident became apparent to us. Numerous police cars, fire trucks, and ambulances were located in a large parking lot south of the Square. As we confirmed our exact landing zone with the landing zone commander, a cold chill went through us. This is the parking area for a large hotel and a very popular toy store. Many thoughts went through our minds. Scenes like this are always very difficult, but we all prayed that the shooting victims weren't children from the toy store.

The Flight Crew members quickly developed a plan that included how much equipment we had available, what to do if we were needed to help treat patients that had been triaged, and our ability to transport multiple patients.

The helicopter landed after we were satisfied that the landing zone was safe and security was sufficient for the numerous onlookers. We hot-offloaded our medical team and equipment and approached the EMS group that was moving toward us; they came from the direction of the hotel. At this time, we knew that we were going to treat and transport one patient. The Flight Physician and I received a brief report from EMS, did a quick assessment, and decided to hot load the patient. We transferred and secured the patient to the FFL stretcher, and loaded him into the running helicopter.

We decided to "load and go" instead of "stay and play". Part of this decision was based on our short distance to Froedtert's Level I Trauma Center, just minutes away from definitive care for this very critical patient; part was based on knowing we may be needed to transfer additional patients from this scene. We wanted to expedite the transport and "turn around" time, enabling a rapid return to the scene if requested. We knew that any care needed by the patient on the ground, we would be able to perform in the helicopter.

Upon lift off, we notified our communications base of our short ETA to the Trauma Center and that we were transporting a victim with multiple gunshot wounds. We hot-offloaded the patient due to his critical condition. When we arrived in the Trauma Room, we were amazed that we were bringing in the third patient from this incident. Patient #4 was coming in right behind us via EMS ambulance. The communications base was relaying to the Emergency Department (ED) staff more patients

were on the way. The ED and trauma teams kept on working. The FFL MD began treating patient #4, while I continued to help with the FFL patient until he went to the operating room.

More victims from the scene were brought into the already crowded Trauma Room, where care was provided to each patient. The decisions that were made in that Trauma Room were done expeditiously and efficiently. Being a Level I Trauma Center, with minimal notice the staff was able to rapidly take the most critical patients to a waiting and fully staffed Operating Room. Other patients quickly went to the CT scanner for assistance with diagnosis and treatment.

Over an hour later, we convened back in the flight office to discuss and review this call. By that time, many of the TV stations were broadcasting information and video coverage of the devastating occurrence. That was how we learned more details about what had happened, who was involved, and that the shooter had taken his life.

Ultimately, 11 patients were transported to the Trauma Center and 4 people were pronounced at the scene. EMS and medical personnel practice mass casualty situations on a regular basis. Gratefully, many never actually have to experience what they learn from those scenarios. In this case, the practice paid off. All patients were efficiently and effectively triaged, treated, and transported to definitive care.

In this quiet Milwaukee suburb where victims of gunshot wounds are rare, many lives were affected that Saturday afternoon. Victims' lives were forever changed, physically and emotionally. Families were torn apart, not understanding why attending a worship service would have these terrible consequences. EMS, fire, police, dispatchers, medical staff, and the FFL crew were also shocked and saddened by the events of this day. But, what this tragedy translated to for many police, fire, and health-care providers was the need to stay vigilant in our preparedness and not be lulled into thinking "it'll never happen to us". It no longer applies to those who were there that day.

## “What we have here is a...”

**Lisa Heinz, RN**

*Flight Nurse, Flight For Life-WI and No. IL*

Failure to communicate? Communication is an essential part of our ever-busy day to day life. In the realm of EMS and fire department operations, you know how critical it is to have good communications, especially during situations that may require the assistance of neighboring departments for mutual aid. Also, in the hospital setting, specifically in the ED, communication from the pre-hospital caregiver is vital in order for some preparation to take place prior to the patient's arrival.

When Flight For Life is requested to respond for a scene call, the requesting agency will be asked for a radio frequency that the flight crew can use for air to ground communications. Do you know what that frequency is? Is it written down somewhere? Do you have a pre-determined frequency that your department uses for this situation? Both Flight For Life helicopters have a list of radio frequencies utilized most by requesting agencies. We also have the ability to program a frequency into our radio while enroute to the scene. Information about the scene location, landing zone and patient status needs to be relayed to the air medical crew. Please keep a few things in mind: if you are using a portable radio for communications, the flight team may not be able to hear your transmission until they are within a few minutes of your scene. Or, if you are in a very low area, geographically, this may affect your radio communication as well. The helicopter will make every attempt to establish communications when the ETA to the scene is 5-10 minutes. It is particularly frustrating when the air medical crew has no communication with on-scene personnel. Then additional time is spent circling the landing zone to determine whether or not it is safe to land.

When responding to a hospital, the Flight For Life Communications Specialist will alert the facility with an approximate ETA of the helicopter. The flight team will place a radio call when their ETA is 10 minutes to that facility. Hospital security can then be notified by the hospital staff so the helipad area can be secured. This is very important when the helipad area is a parking lot and vehicles need to be moved.

Safety is our number one priority within the Flight For Life organization. Having a basic understanding of your radio communication system can help maintain that priority. Reviewing operation of your radio equipment with staff (new as well as current), labeling a frequency, or notifying Flight For Life of a pre-determined frequency to be used when responding to a scene in your depart-

ment's response area or in a specific county are ways to support communication. When communication is present, it should be clear, concise, well received and reciprocated. Sometimes, it begins just by making sure the radio is on and the volume turned up.

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## Flight For Life Receives CAMTS Re-accreditation

**Tammy Chatman**

*Professional Relations/Marketing Manager, FFL-No. IL*

Flight For Life has received its third re-accreditation from CAMTS (Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems). The accreditation is a voluntary evaluation of compliance with the CAMTS accreditation standards and demonstrates FFL's ability to deliver service of a specific quality. FFL received its original CAMTS accreditation in 1996 and has been reaccredited every 3 years since that time.

The re-accreditation involves a year long process that requires a pre-submission of specific policies and procedures relating to outreach and education, dispatch, clinical care, and aviation safety. This is then followed by a site visit by CAMTS-certified site surveyors. The accreditation standards function as a benchmark of excellence for federal, state, and local governmental agencies, as well as private agencies and the general public. The CAMTS organization and Flight For Life are dedicated to the two key priorities of the transport environment: patient care and safety.

In this recent re-accreditation, Flight For Life was recognized by CAMTS for its commitment to safety and for the outstanding safety program that is embraced by all personnel, starting with top management.

Congratulations to the staff and crew at Flight For Life for their hard work and commitment to the standards set forth by the CAMTS organization!

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## 2007 Flight For Life Calendar

We are now beginning production of our 2007 calendar and would like your help in obtaining calendar quality photographs from a pre-hospital or hospital setting.

If you have a photograph(s) to submit, please call Tammy Chatman at (414) 778-4573. Photos must be from 2005 to present and once submitted become property of Flight For Life. Any photos not selected may be used in other FFL projects. With your assistance, next year's FFL calendar will be as visually exciting as previous calendars.

## Flight For Life-Northern Illinois Paramedic Wins National Award

### Tammy Chatman

Professional Relations/Marketing Manager, FFL-No. IL

On Monday night, October 24, 2005, Stuart (Stu) McVicar, flight paramedic with FFL-Northern Illinois, was presented with the Association of Air Medical Services (AAMS) Medical Crew Member of the Year Award at the Air Medical Transport Conference in Austin, Texas. The conference, the largest in the history of the organization with over 2600 attendees, is attended by air medical personnel from all regions of North America and other countries throughout the world.

The award, sponsored by American Eurocopter, is given out each year to an individual/team that has made a significant contribution to enhance the development or promote the improvement of patient care in the air medical community. It can be awarded for the overall contribution to patient care or for a specific transport situation/outcome. In either case, safe and proper safety procedures, clinical expertise, and participation in community associations are a part of the judging criteria.

The award was presented to Stu by Brenda Reuland, VP of Communications/Public Relations for American Eurocopter, during the annual awards dinner at the 25th anniversary celebration of AAMS. Many of the Flight For Life staff and crew were present to witness this memorable event including Program Director, Jim Singer. As a

surprise to Stu, his Mom, Helen McVicar and sister, Anne Acker, flew in to be present when he received his award as well.

Stu has been a Flight Paramedic with FFL-Northern Illinois since 1997. He is a Certified Flight Paramedic and also a Registered Respiratory Therapist. Stu is one of the most recognizable members of the FFL team not only for his bright red hair but for his skills and expertise in patient care, particularly airway management, and education.

Congratulations Stu on an outstanding achievement! We can think of no one more deserving of this award and are very proud to have you on our team!



Tom Judge, AAMS President, Dawn Mancuso, AAMS Executive Director, Stu McVicar, and Brenda Reuland, VP of Communications/Public Relations for American Eurocopter.

## Into The Night

### John Wescott, Pilot

Flight For Life-No. IL

As if operating a helicopter into and out of an unimproved landing site during daylight hours wasn't challenging enough, someone had to go and turn the lights out!

**Hey it's dark out there! I hope you brought your "A" game!**

The following are a few thoughts for getting us through the night:

- First and foremost...**YOU**...the ground personnel setting up the landing zone and/or providing security, are the major part of our "A" game

- Study your Landing Zone Set-up Card often

- If the helicopter arrives before you have a landing zone ready, do not cut any corners. Tell the helicopter crew you will let them know when the landing zone is set-up and ready.

- If the landing area is going to be a road or parking lot, then extra care **MUST** be taken to control vehicle movement. Do not allow any vehicle movement in, near or through the landing area.

- Remember, a landing area used yesterday during the day is a totally different landing area today in the dark

- Do not assume...communicate

- Do not approach the helicopter without a clear signal from the pilot to do so

Thanks in advance for bringing your "A" game!