



## Motorcyclist Hit – No Helmet

*Imagine losing a year of your life while you struggle to regain your memory. Doug's encouraging story of neurologic recovery contains an underlying message for motorcycle enthusiasts: wear your helmet.*

On July 7, 2014, 46-year-old Doug Dexter of Battle Creek got on his motorcycle and left home for a quick trip to the hardware store – without his helmet. It's a day he can no longer remember, so he

blood pressure was high: 168/106. Within minutes, the air medical crew secured Doug's airway using the rapid sequence induction (RSI) drugs Fentanyl, Etomidate, and Succinylcholine. This kept Doug's blood pressure from dangerously increasing which could, in turn, increase the pressure on his already injured brain. After RSI, Doug's blood pressure remained consistently in a safer range, around 120/80.

While at Borgess in Kalamazoo, Doug has no memory of coming out of a coma and talking to the nurses there, but they later assured him he did! He was transferred to Borgess-Pipp Hospital in Plainwell for rehabilitation and likewise has no memory of the staff there, although on a recent return visit they said they missed his sense of humor. Again, this was disconcerting because Doug couldn't—and still can't—remember. At that time, Doug's



Scene photos courtesy of Trace Christenson, Battle Creek Enquirer

can't explain why he skipped the helmet that day. Nor can he remember anything several days prior to the accident.

On the way to the store, Doug was taking a curve and was struck by a van that pulled into traffic. The collision left Doug head-injured and lying unconscious in the roadway. Traffic was stopped on all sides as first responders arrived from Emmett Township Department of Public Safety and Battle Creek Fire Department. LifeCare Ambulance personnel, Jennifer Turner, EMT-P, Zachary Mohny, EMT-B, and Garth Prior, EMT-P/field supervisor, arrived and gave Doug sedation and pain control when he became combative.

When Air Care arrived on scene, Doug had been fully immobilized on a spineboard. He was being mask ventilated and his

The Air Care medical crew noted a large oozing open posterior scalp laceration with a fracture line noted on the skull. No brain tissue was observed and no fluid or blood was observed from the nose or ears. Doug's pupils were 3 mm, equal and reactive, his chest, abdomen and pelvis showed no signs of obvious trauma. His left ankle and foot were deformed however, with bruising also present.

Doug was quickly loaded into the aircraft and flown to Borgess Medical Center in Kalamazoo, where he and the crew were met on the helipad by trauma surgeon Dr. William Curtiss. The crew provided the details of Doug's injuries and the trauma resuscitation continued in the Emergency Department.

brain was still repairing itself, and he wasn't able to make memories just yet.

It was at Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital that Doug recalls his first memory following the accident. "I remember a voice telling me it could be a week to a year before my mind started working again. I didn't know where I was or why I was there. Someone told me I was in a motorcycle accident." Commenting further on his long recovery at Mary Free Bed, Doug says, "The best comfort was when the hospital staff talked to me like a human being, not a patient."

Doug has maintained a positive and grateful attitude throughout his recovery, which hasn't been easy. Known as a hard worker, Doug is trying to heal up as he also gets back into a routine. He just had a surgical

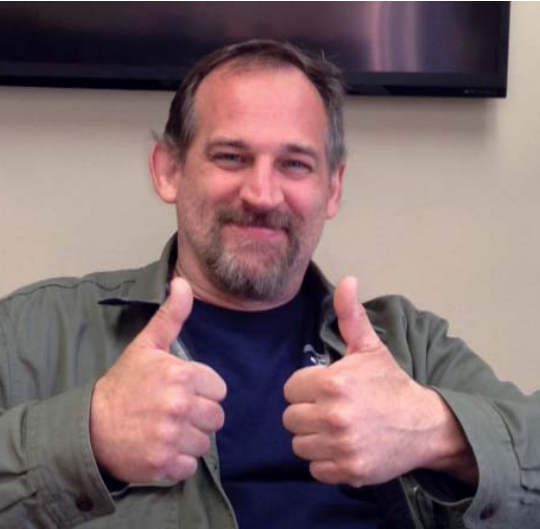
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revision of his foot and plans to have the cast off soon. He enjoys his time with his 16-year-old son and 19-year-old daughter. Doug is a pharmacy technician and hopes to return to his position or a similar one.

Despite the accident, he is an undeterred motorcycle enthusiast, and even bought another motorcycle although



*Doug Dexter is well on the road to recovery.*

his foot injury has kept him from riding it. Importantly, Doug says he has three helmets to choose from.

“I have all my fingers and toes,” Doug says. “I’m thankful for what I have. My biggest complaint is my brain. I don’t have all my memories, but it makes me smile when I suddenly remember something.”

Doug greatly appreciates those who helped him recover. To his former caregivers, he remarks “I’m thankful for the job they do and for taking care of me.”

He also feels more grateful for his life than ever. “The other night I was looking up at the stars and the moon. When you’ve been handed back your life, you appreciate it. It makes you appreciate things a little more. I enjoy every day, even the rain.”

### ***Doug’s Air Medical Team:***

- » Dawn Johnston, Flight Nurse
- » Paul Mazurek, Flight Nurse
- » Brian Vanderberg, Pilot in Command
- » Steve Riet Kerk, Communication Specialist



*By Dawn Johnston, BSN, CFRN, MBA  
Flight Nurse  
West Michigan Air Care*

## Jan Eichel Nominated to CAMTS Board of Directors

**CAMTS accredits helicopter EMS just as Joint Commission accredits hospitals.**

**Congratulations to Jan Eichel on becoming a CAMTS Board member!**



*Jan Eichel, Director of Clinical Operations and Communications*

Jan Eichel, Director of Clinical Operations and Communications at West Michigan Air Care, was recently honored by the American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN) to serve as their representative on the Board of Directors of CAMTS, the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems. Jan has been a CAMTS site surveyor for over 10 years and received the Peggy Calhoun Memorial Site Surveyor award in 2011 for “outstanding service and dedication.”

The CAMTS organization is dedicated to improving the quality of patient care and safety of the transport environment for services providing rotorwing, fixed wing and ground transport. Jan was selected after a lengthy interview process. Congratulations Jan!



*Summer often brings dry, dusty conditions and our helicopter can generate a mini-dust storm as we land and depart. Set up landing zones (LZs) away from rescue personnel, patients, and bystanders. In some cases, it may be a good idea to wet down the LZ before we arrive. Photo courtesy of Ryan Schoonveld.*

# Air Care's Mobile Website

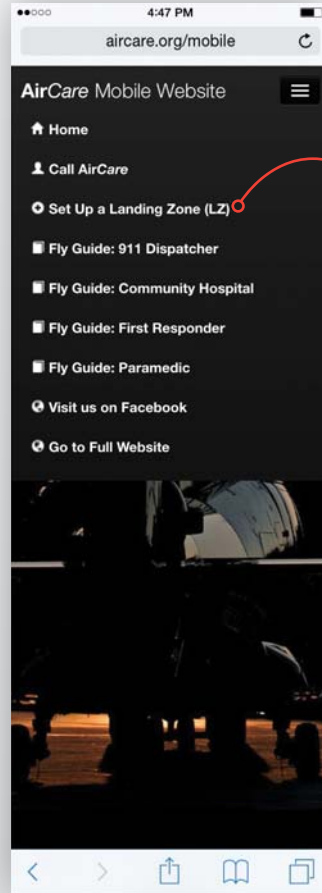
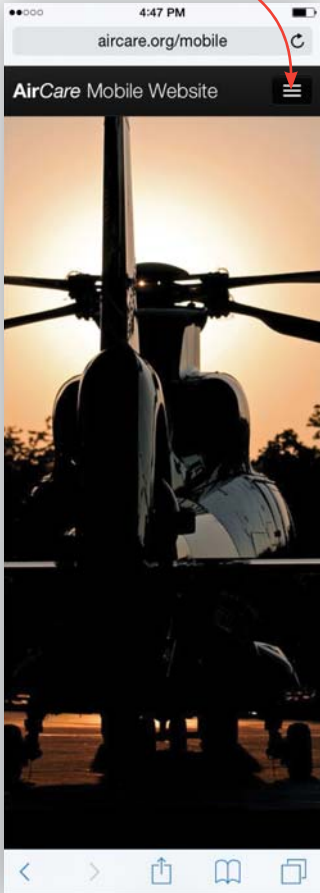
When you need a quick refresher on setting up an LZ or deciding whether to fly a patient, help is as close as your phone. Get the Air Care mobile website today! On your phone, go to [aircare.org/mobile](http://aircare.org/mobile) and save us to your home screen. It's free!

## Landing Zone Safety Checklist

Tap on the menu icon

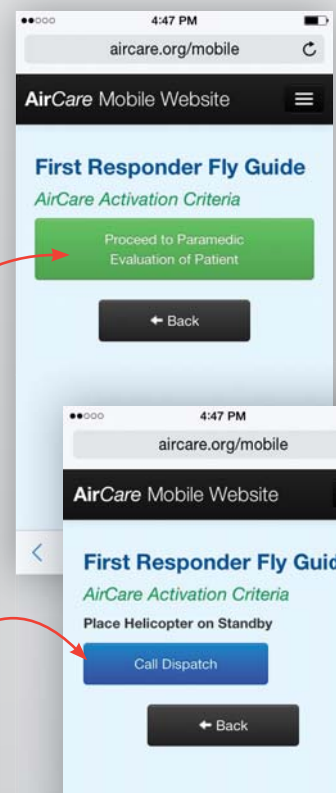
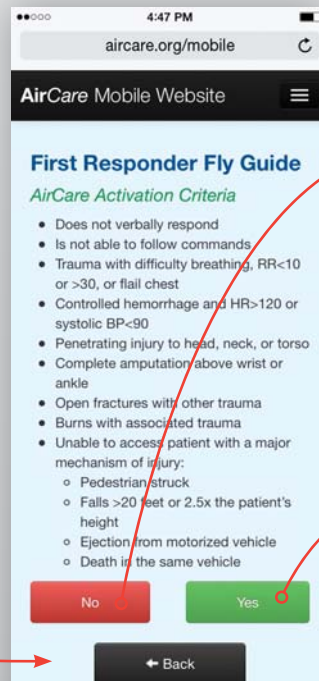
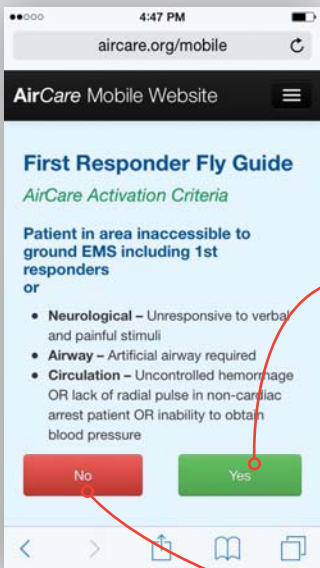
Select "Set Up a Landing Zone (LZ)"

Select "Landing Zone Safety Checklist"



## Click on a Fly Guide to decide whether a patient needs Air Care transport

Select the appropriate answer, step-by-step.



# Air Care's Fall Conference – Save the Date!

Our Fall Conference is always the first Saturday in October, so put it on your calendar today! See you October 3rd for food, fun, prizes, and stimulating speakers. Nursing and EMS credits available, including Critical Care Paramedic credits. Keep checking our website for more details. See you there!

OCTOBER  
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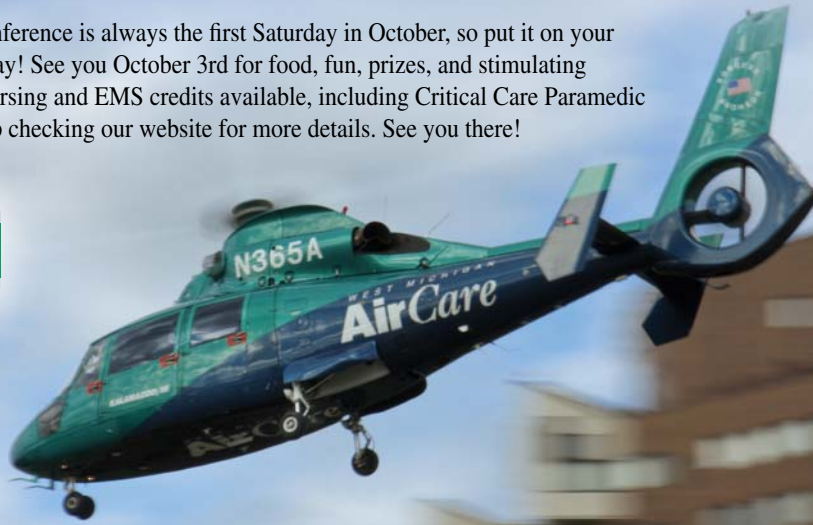


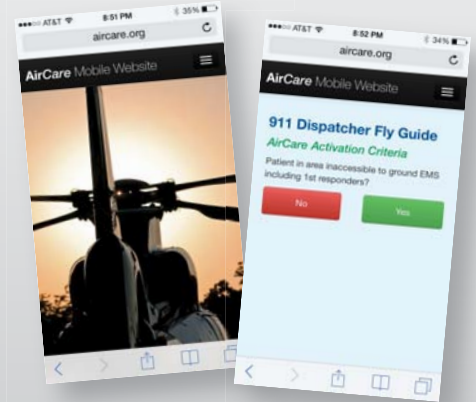
Photo courtesy of Rob Wetterholt

## Get Our Mobile Website on Your Phone!



On your phone, go to [AirCare.org/mobile](http://AirCare.org/mobile) and save the "AC" icon to your home screen.

- » Review how to set up a landing zone.
- » Use the Fly Guides to see if a patient needs air transport.
- » Call to request the helicopter.



Find electronic copies of AirWaves at our website: [AirCare.org](http://AirCare.org)  
Please email comments to AirWaves Editor and Flight Nurse Dawn Johnston at [dmjohnston@aircare.org](mailto:dmjohnston@aircare.org).



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