



Case Review: Abdominal Trauma from a Pilot Perspective

— Laura Riley, Pilot

In May, 1999, Air Care lifted to transport a patient from Lee Memorial Hospital, Dowagiac, MI. After my initial radio calls were completed with Air Traffic Control (ATC), the medical crew called back to Air Care Communications for patient information. When we are initially called for a flight, the Communication Specialist only advises us if the flight is trauma or medical. It is not until we are

zone. I am then required by regulations to complete a safety walk around the aircraft and calculate a weight and balance for the flight. Once those tasks are complete, I prepare our cot with blankets for the patient. After that, I typically will walk into the patients' room and see how the crew is progressing with the patient. I can tell you, the day I walked into Jason's room will never leave my memory.

taken into surgery that night to fix his leg and to address the abdominal injuries that were becoming apparent. The surgery took four hours according to Jason's mother. The result of the surgery was a decision that Jason had injuries that were severe enough to require a higher level of care. It was at that point that Lee Memorial called Air Care.



Laura Riley (Pilot), Jason, and Linda Wood (Flight Nurse).

enroute, with the flight already accepted, that the medical crew finds out more information about the patient. Once the crew members know the specifics on the patient, they then prepare as necessary while enroute to the hospital.

At 1444 hours, I landed our helicopter at Lee Memorial and the medical crew proceeded into the hospital. As the pilot, once we arrive my job entails calling back to dispatch and letting them know we arrived safely, and if there are any changes to the landing

He was surrounded by family and the air was thick with love. I could just feel the heartache and worry radiating from Jason's family. Jason had been involved in a personal watercraft accident on Indian Lake in Dowagiac. His mother transported him by automobile to the hospital. Initially, it was believed he had a broken leg that would require surgery. The surgery was scheduled for the next morning. However, Jason ended up developing a high fever and elevated white blood cell count during the night. He was

It was a day or two later that I asked the crew how Jason was doing. They offered to take me up to see him. Once again, as soon as I walked into his room I was hit by the love, the sadness and the obvious worry of a mother and father. Jason had undergone 9-10 hours surgery at Bronson with Dr. Scott Davidson. While in surgery it was found he had damage to his spleen, liver, bladder and kidney, torn the intestine in half, and ruptured the bowel. Plus, multiple breaks to his right leg. Dr. Davidson re-routed his stomach, so the opening would empty into a different spot while the intestine healed. Dr. Davidson was able to repair all of his organs during the surgery. But this was just the beginning for Jason. Jason remained a patient at Bronson for over a month.

Unfortunately, just a few days after being sent home, Jason had to return. His intestine had torn open. This meant Jason would spend another eight days at Bronson. After the second visit, Jason returned home to recuperate.

Jason was able to return to High School and graduate with his senior class. He is now attending Purdue University where he plans to graduate in 2006 with a bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering.

Recognition of Chief Pilot – Bob McMullen

– Rick Morley, Program Director, Director of Flight Operations

As our Chief Pilot plans to face the challenges of retirement, Air Care would like to recognize the achievements of aviator extraordinaire Robert McMullen.

Bob McMullen began flying with the US Army in the mid 1960's. He

agency medical helicopter's unique attributes. In 1989, under Bob's leadership as Director of Operations, the program purchased an AS365N helicopter to replace the AS350 they had operated since 1985. The upgrade moved the program up to an IFR capable aircraft with twin engine reliability.

they continued to provide safe emergency transport to the citizens of southwest Michigan. Kalamazoo had two air medical helicopters in the early 90's and the decision was made to merge the programs. Borgess Inflight and Bronson Careflight joined forces to form West Michigan Air Care in the spring of 1993. Bob McMullen was named director of Flight Operations of the merged program and proceeded to obtain a new Air Carrier certificate under FAR Part 135 for the organization. Air Care launched with a new Eurocopter AS365N2 helicopter including fully coupled autopilot and dual long range navigation capabilities. Again Bob's foresight and attention to detail paid off as Air Care applied state of the art technology to the challenge of providing safe reliable service in an unforgiving environment. Bob has continued to explore new information and equipment to raise the bar and provide the safest and most consistent service possible.

After forty years in the helicopter business, Bob McMullen still



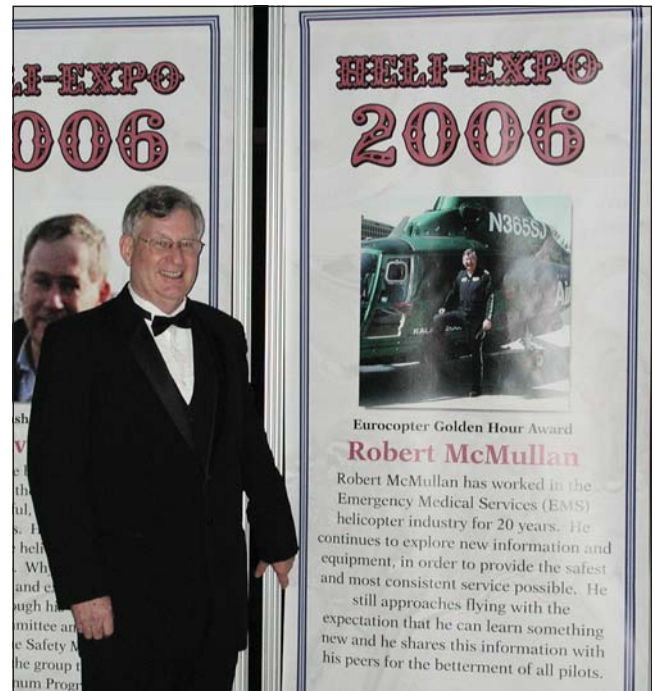
Marc Paganini (President/CEO Amercian Eurocopter), Bob McMullen (Chief Pilot), and Timothy Wahlberg (Evergreen Helicopters, Inc. and Chairman of HAI).

served two tours of duty in Vietnam where he was a pioneer in the use of the helicopter as a weapons platform. After returning from overseas duty, Bob served as an instructor pilot and maintenance officer where he honed his skills in the field of rotary wing aviation. Additionally he served as a civilian instructor for 6 years at Ft. Rucker, AL, where he taught tactics and instrument flight.

Bob ventured into the world of civilian helicopter Emergency Medical Services in 1985, going to work on a contract with Vanderbilt Lifeflight of Nashville, TN. Here he operated Bell Long Ranger helicopters to provide safe and reliable transportation to the residents of Lifeflight's service area. Recognizing talent, Huntsville Medflight lured Bob to Alabama. Here he continued to serve those members of the community in need of the emer-

This was a progressive move in the industry at the time and reflects Bob's desire to be on the leading edge of technological improvements with the goal of optimizing the safety of patients and flight crews.

In 1990, Bob turned his sights north and settled in Kalamazoo, MI, working with Borgess Inflight, a subsidiary of Borgess Medical Center. Bob once again found himself flying an AS365N helicopter in an EMS role. Eventually, Bob took over as Director of Flight Operations at Inflight as



Bob at Award Night in Dallas, Texas.

approaches flying with the expectation that he can learn something new and that he will share this information with his peers for the betterment of the pilot population as a group. Every time he flies, it is with the intention of doing

the best job possible. This attitude, applied over the course of his career, has advanced the level of professionalism of all who have had the privilege of working with him.

This lifetime of achievement was recently recognized at the annual convention of the Helicopter Association International (HAI), in Dallas, Texas. The prestigious Eurocopter Golden Hour Award was presented to Bob at the Salute to Excellence Banquet. This award was created in 1982 to recognize the efforts of the Air Medical Service (AMS) helicopter pilot who, through a particular rescue or through contributions over time to the air medical industry, has advanced the use of helicopters in this vital mission.

Thank you, Bob, from all Associates of Air Care.



Bob sharing his expertise with Ray Segorski, Pilot.

New Air Care Associates

Please join us in welcoming two new additions to the Air Care crew.



Darby Brauning

Originally from Nashport, Ohio (population 5,000) and yes, he's a Buckeye fan!!! Darby attended Hope College in Holland, Michigan and worked as a fitness trainer. His BA degree in Kinesiology (anatomy and physiology of body movement) started him as a certified athletic trainer. He returned to Hope College and completed his BS in Nursing. His experience

includes Emergency Department at Holland Hospital and Butterworth ICU. He also has experience with National Ski Patrol.

Darby, his wife Shannon, (also an RN), his son Ian (three and "a handful") and his daughter Ella (almost one) live in Jenison, Michigan. He enjoys all sports and is an avid motorcyclist, involved in racing and leisure riding. His other hobbies include eating!!



Heather Bray

Originally from Holland, Michigan and raised in Hamilton a small town outside of Allegan. Following graduation from Bronson School of Nursing in Kalamazoo, Heather worked in Critical Care at Spectrum Health in Grand Rapids, and then proceeded to travel as a critical care nurse throughout the western United States settling in San Francisco, California.

She worked at Stanford University Life Flight doing ground and rotor wing transports throughout California. During Heathers time there she finished her Bachelors degree in Nursing from California State University.

Heather returned to Michigan in 2003 and worked as a Critical Educator at Spectrum Health. In October of 2005 she returned to flying accepting a position at West Michigan Air Care as a flight nurse. According to Heather she is enjoying her new environment and feels honored to work in the community where her nursing career began.

In her free time Heather enjoys biking, sporting events and traveling.





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