

# AirWaves

A Publication of West Michigan Air Care



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[www.AirCare.org](http://www.AirCare.org)

## What's New and Who's Who

The past year has brought about more changes for West Michigan Air Care. Our partnership with Metro Aviation has grown, and we are excited about the changes from our new aircraft design and advances in our flight tracking system. Despite having bid difficult goodbyes to a few long time employees, who have moved on to other roles and opportunities, we have also welcomed several new faces among our crew that we would like to introduce.

### Operation Status

To start, giving some explanation to our current profile, our new EC 145 aircraft is owned and operated by Metro Aviation, Inc., based in Shreveport, Louisiana. They are a worldwide provider of completion services for all missions and types of helicopters and specializes in the EC135 and EC145 with several

Part 135 air medical operations provider at several locations across the United States. The company is privately held and is one of the largest traditional air medical providers in the country. For additional information regarding Metro Aviation, Inc. please visit their website [www.metroaviation.com](http://www.metroaviation.com).

### EC145

West Michigan Air Care's new helicopter, the EC145e, is the newest edition of the Airbus Helicopters EC145 platform. Introduced at HELI-EXPO 2015, Metro Aviation configured what they call the "e-lite" for display at the largest helicopter exhibition in the world.

Combining the well-known features of the EC145, such as the large cabin and reliability, with the benefits of a simplified avionics systems and completed with dedicated mission equipment, the affordable and light twin helicopter is well suited for air medical, law enforcement, utility, offshore oil and gas, and other missions.

"The EC145e takes a proven aircraft, with proven performance and proven capability, but it comes at a lower cost of acquisition and operation that will add incremental value for customers in a variety of market segments," said Treg Manning, Vice President, Sales & Marketing for Airbus Helicopters Inc.

The versatile EC145e includes a Single Pilot VFR glass cockpit. It has a maximum takeoff weight of 7,903 lbs., the same as the EC145 C2 variant, but the useful load is increased by as much as 330 lbs. The aircraft can seat up to 11 passengers, based on the chosen configuration. Typical mission

profile for Air Care is crew of 1 pilot, 2 nurses, (occasionally an ER resident) a fuel load of approximately 2.5 hours



(which will usually enable to Detroit and back), altitude 1500' above the ground, cruise speed in the neighborhood of 130 knots (149 mph) and 1 patient.

Recently, Metro Aviation displayed West Michigan Air Care's EC145e at the Air Medical Transport Conference, October 16-18, in Fort Worth, Texas. Air Care joined the Metro family as an operations customer in 2016 and chose the EC145e as their aircraft of choice after flying it temporarily during the transition period with Metro.

In the last two years, Metro has partnered with Genesys Aerosystems to obtain supplemental type certificates (STC) for the installation of the Genesys Helicopter Autopilot and Stability Augmentation System (HELISAS) and Genesys Electronic Flight Instrument System (EFIS) that should allow the aircraft to be operated in a single-pilot IFR operation.

The pilots and full-time maintenance staff based here at West Michigan Air Care are employed by Metro Aviation,

» Continued on page 2



From left-to-right: John Eichel, Lead A&P Engineer, Matt Heffelfinger, Program Director, Darby Brauning, Flight Nurse, Melanie Whyment, Business Specialist, Nick Wright, Flight Nurse, Steve Hostetter, Pilot

Supplemental Type Certificates (STC) developed by the company for these and other aircraft. Metro is an FAA approved repair station, approved Airbus (Eurocopter) Service Center and FAR

however our medical crew and office support staff still remain employees of West Michigan Air Care. Despite the division, we work cohesively to maintain our mission, safety and dedication to serving Southwest Michigan, and the surrounding regions, remains unchanged.

## Flight Vector

Flight Vector and other new things are up and coming in the Communication Center at West Michigan Air Care.

On November 1, 2017, West Michigan Air Care introduced a new dispatch program called Flight Vector. Flight Vector allows the Communication Center to enter all of the needed information on hospitals, EMS and Central Dispatches Centers, as well as patient information required, and provides flight following of our aircraft on a moving map that updates every 10 seconds showing altitude and speed. The map also creates a corridor that is one mile both sides of a straight, point to point line. The Communicators watch the aircraft, and if the aircraft goes out of the corridor, Communication will advise the pilot and ask for a reason just to make sure all is well.

Flight Vector will do a number of things for West Michigan Air Care in the near future as well. Information in Flight Vector will be able to connect with EMS Charts, the electronic based charting system used by the medical crew, and start the Flight Nurse's medical documentation, by downloading information and start the billing process. We can also connect with EMResource, the program West Michigan Air Care Communication Center uses for Kalamazoo County Medical Control Center and the 5th District Medical Control Center.

We are looking forward to offering the Metro Aviation app that select Hospitals, Central Dispatch Centers and EMS Agencies will be able to use to request our aircraft from a mobile device or desktop. The details of this are still in the early phases but we are looking forward to launching this program so stay tuned for more details.

## Rick Miller

Rick joined the Army in October 1973 and enlisted into US Army basic Infantry/Ranger. In 1981 he was granted a position for the rotor wing Army Aviation course at Ft Rucker, Alabama. Rick's first assignment of his aviation carrier was in Frankfurt, Germany. After his time in the military was completed he relocated to Michigan in 1986 and began to further his career in civil aviation. Rick obtained a degree in Architectural Engineering through Washtenaw Community College in Ann Arbor, Michigan with a 4.0 grade point average.

As an EMS pilot, Rick started in Ann Arbor Michigan for Mid-West Med Flight. He flew for Lifeflight of Toledo Hospital in 1993 and in 2000 took the position of Aviation Site Manager for ProMedica Air in Toledo Ohio. He moved to Knoxville, Tennessee in 2005 and began flying for University of Tennessee, UT Life Star.

Returning to Ohio in 2008, Rick became a Metro Aviation employee at that time flying for ProMedica Air of Toledo. Rick was assigned as lead pilot for the Promedica program and then for Superior Ambulance AeroMed1 for The Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, Michigan under the contract for Metro Aviation. In 2016 was hired for a line pilot position at West Michigan Air Care.

"EMS is one of the most rewarding jobs that I have ever had, to be able to fly these highly trained Doctors and Nurses is a privilege that not many people can say that they do for a living".

Outside of work Rick enjoys spending time with his family, to include 8 children and 3 grandchildren. Three of his sons are serving in the military. Three of his daughters and his lovely wife, Linnea, are all in the medical field.

Rick shares that working at West Michigan Air Care has been one of the highlights in his aviation career to date.

## Travis Young

Travis joined Air Care as a Metro Aviation pilot in July 2017. He came to Air Care with experience as an EMS pilot flying with Life Team and Med-Trans in Kansas and Nebraska from 2012-2017. He has been a flight instructor and tour pilot in Colorado, as well as flown oil and gas support in the Gulf of Mexico.

In 1995 he enlisted in the US Army and served as tank driver and gunner. After the events of September 11th, 2001, he served in the Oklahoma National Guard as a military police officer until 2003. His first experience in a helicopter was a medical evacuation exercise in a Blackhawk, stating, "I knew after that day what I needed to do". Utilizing his G.I. Bill after his time in the military helped Travis pay for flight school.

Flying has always been a passion and though he enjoys all types of aircraft, he felt that airplanes seemed limited in their capabilities, which also lead him into the direction of flying rotor wing aircraft.

Travis enjoys scene flights the most and hopes to one day fly search and rescue missions.

Outside of work, his hobbies include any sport that involves a board or a bike, motorcycles (and of course he always wears a helmet!), guitars and dogs.



Pilots Rick Miller and Travis Young.

# New Faces – Medical Crew

## Wes Brubaker

Wes joined Air Care's medical crew in June of 2016. He started his EMS career in 2005 as an EMT with Newberg Township Ambulance Service in Jones, Michigan. He obtained his Paramedic license in 2007 and worked for LifeCare Ambulance in Cass County until 2009. Upon completion of his RN program at Southwestern Michigan College in Dowagiac, Michigan, he worked as an ER nurse in Brownsville Texas at a Level III trauma facility for 2 years. In 2011 Wes moved back to Michigan and began working in the Trauma and Emergency Center at Bronson Methodist Hospital. His particular areas of interest include trauma, critical care, and pediatrics and he is actively involved in teaching TNCC and ENPC, adult and pediatric trauma classes for ER Nurses.

Wes lives in Cassopolis, Michigan with his wife and two daughters, ages 4 and 1. His time away from work is primarily spent with family, traveling, running a small business, and dabbling in home improvement projects.

## Kara Kreger

Kara started with West Michigan Air Care in November of 2016. She has 25 years of nursing experience and 17 years of which have been spent in critical care transport. She graduated from Lima Technical College in 1992 with her ADN and obtained her BSN from Bowling Green State University in 1998. She completed her EMT and Paramedic Licensure in 2001 and started working in healthcare as at Nursing Aide in a local hospital in Van Wert, Ohio.

Kara knew right away that working in the Emergency Department was where she wanted to be. While in that position she was exposed to the flight teams that serviced that area of Ohio and always thought that would be the best job ever, but never thought she would have the opportunity. After several years of experience in a variety of rolls ranging from PACU, Adult ICU, and Emergency Nursing she found herself working at Toledo Hospital for their home health division primarily doing follow up visits on their post cardiac surgical patients. She came across a posting for a Mobile ICU position at a new base the hospital was opening and decided to

apply, ultimately joining their team in 1998.

After two years on the ground team Kara joined their air medical team. She spent 15 years with ProMedica Air, serving on their leadership team and helping to coordinate department and outreach education. She left transport and went back to full time bedside emergency nursing at Parkview Regional Medical Center in Fort Wayne, IN. It didn't take her long to realize that she needed to get back in the air. She worked for Parkview Samaritan's Mobile ICU and Lutheran Hospital's ground transport for a short time to keep active in the industry. When the opportunity came to join Air Care she was excited, up for the challenge, and ready to get back to her passion.

Kara has experience teaching BLS, PALS, ACLS, BTLs, PHTLS, and SCOPE. She currently is an EMT-P instructor for the state of Ohio and teaches TNCC and TPATC. She continues to work at Parkview in the Emergency Department and assist with staff education.

Kara is married and lives in Ohio. She has one son (22), three daughters (24, 17, & 15), and one stepdaughter (23). In addition the family has two dogs, 6 horses, and during the summer there are usually a few 4-H pigs running around. When she is at home she is kept busy keeping up with all the animals and her two youngest daughters high school volleyball, basketball, track, softball, 4-H, and horse showing schedules.

## Chris Mullen

Chris Mullen joined West Michigan Air Care May 30, 2017. He came to the team with greater than 15 years of flight experience from Kalitta Air, Medflight and Life Flight of Michigan. Chris developed his interest in aviation patient transport while in the military. Directly out of high school he enlisted and filled rolls that have included medic, body guard, drill instructor, nurse, MEDEVAC flight crew member, hospital company commander and forward surgical team commander.



*Medical Crew: Chris Mullen, Kara Kreger and Wes Brubaker.*

Chris completed 25 years of service and retired from the Army. During his military career, Chris has supported multiple medical missions around the world during times of both peace and combat.

In addition to his military career, Chris has filled roles in the civilian sector including Paramedic, Flight Paramedic, ER Nurse, Burn ICU Nurse, Flight Nurse, Educator (ER and Cardiac Cath Lab), EMS Instructor Coordinator, AHA TC Coordinator, ER Manager and ER Director. He has worked at many hospital and EMS locations in both the Detroit and West Michigan areas.

Chris holds the following professional credentials: RN, EMT-P, EMS I/C, CCEMTP, CEN, CFRN, CPEN. In addition, he is qualified to teach, BLS, ACLS, PALS, ENPC and is state faculty for TNCC. He currently is an active member with the ASTNA, ENA and NAEMT professional associations.

Chris moved from the Detroit area to Albion Township 17 years ago and has enjoyed country style living ever since. He has been married to his wife Cathy for 23 years and they have 4 children, Blaine, Caleb, Gage and Eli.

Chris truly loves being a nurse and making a difference in people's lives wherever he is called to assist. During his military career he has rendered care to citizens in over 32 countries. It is his goal to continue his service to the sick and injured by attending nurse practitioner school in the near future. During his personal time, he likes to work on his 110 year old home and building classic muscle cars, while listening to classic rock music.

## Landing Zone Training Available Online or at Your Department!

Need an LZ refresher? You'll find our 20-minute LZ video and quiz online at [Aircare.org/resources/lz-training](http://Aircare.org/resources/lz-training). Complete the quiz while watching the video for a quick review of all aspects of LZ safety for West Michigan Air Care. This is a highly efficient training tool for first responders and helistop managers. To schedule a free on-site LZ class at your facility worth one (1.0) operations credit, please go to [AirCare.org/contact/event-request](http://AirCare.org/contact/event-request).



## Upcoming Events

- » Educational opportunities with free credits for EMS and Nursing that will include Landing Zone classes will begin this spring and held on a semi-annual basis. Please email [sara.sturgeon@aircare.org](mailto:sara.sturgeon@aircare.org) if you would like to be contacted when this information is available, or to request to host an event at your organization.
- » Mark your calendars now for the annual Fall Conference that will be **October 6th, 2018** at Borgess Medical Center in Kalamazoo.
- » Keep your eye on our Facebook page for more information on dates and location.

## Sign Up to Receive AirWaves by EMAIL!

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