

DISPATCHES

A PUBLICATION OF THE LIFEFLIGHT FOUNDATION
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From the roof of his home ...to the roof at EMMC

It was a sunny January day when Ron Cousins headed outside to clean the snow off the roof of his home in South Hope. A long-haul truck driver, he was leaving later that afternoon and wanted to remove the snow that the last few storms had dumped on the area.

He used the mostly dry deck to support the ladder, but when he finished and began to climb down, the ladder slipped on a patch of ice and Ron fell to the deck below. Unfortunately, his head and neck took the brunt of the impact.

Luckily his wife, Leanne, was home and called 9-1-1 when she heard the crash. Ambulance crews from both Union and Camden responded. Once they arrived, the paramedics immediately recognized the possibility that Ron had seriously injured his spinal cord and made the critical decision to immobilize him with a neck collar and backboard. During their assessment, Ron's mental state became confused, prompting concerns that he had internal bleeding in his skull. Following established protocol, they requested LifeFlight for transport to a regional trauma center.

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LifeFlight crew members (from left to right) Communication Specialist Jonathan "JR" Roebuck, Paramedic Carl Zenk, and Nurse Missy McCann, pose with patient Ronald Cousins and his sister Laura Robinson on the rooftop at Eastern Maine Medical Center.



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Ron Cousins, left, takes a moment to meet his ambulance crew at the landing zone where the LifeFlight helicopter picked him up. Starting second from left, Jon Powers, EMT-P; Scot Sabins, EMT, Ambulance Director; and Jesse Thompson, EMT-I. Also on the original call was Jim Justice, EMT.



From his roof

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Once it was confirmed that LifeFlight was available, responders from Hope Fire Department got to work setting up a rendezvous point for the helicopter at the South Hope Community Church on Route 17. This site had already been established as a landing zone through a project with the local snowmobile club (see page five), which meant LifeFlight's communications center, MedComm, already had GPS coordinates and a physical description of the site.

The paramedics secured Ron to a backboard and transported him less than a mile up the road to the landing zone, where they met the helicopter. He was in a great deal of pain, so the flight crew administered pain medication to help keep him comfortable for the 18-minute trip back to EMMC. They also monitored his

neurological status to make sure he remained in stable condition.

Once he arrived at the emergency department at EMMC, trauma physicians discovered he had fractured his C1 and C2 vertebrae, the very same injury that paralyzed actor Christopher Reeve.

Ron had surgery a few days later to repair his broken vertebrae. He spent 12 weeks recovering and nursing a very stiff neck, but hopes to be able to return to work this summer.

A Vietnam veteran with two tours of duty as a flight engineer under his belt, Ron had been on hundreds of medevac missions. He never imagined, however, that he would find himself a patient on a medical helicopter.

"When you need it, you realize how grateful you are for the service." 

Profile | Bob Johnson, LPN, CCEMT-P, FP-C

Bob grew up in Greene and served in the US Air Force, where he became certified as an LPN.

Growing up in a public service-oriented family helped him decide to build a career in healthcare. He became a paramedic at Tri-County EMS and worked at his local ambulance service in Turner. Before coming to LifeFlight in 1998, Bob also worked for Central Maine Medical Center and United Ambulance Service, both in Lewiston. Bob serves as a state delegate for the International Flight Paramedic Association and is also a member of the Association of Air



Medical Services' standards committee. He is currently taking courses to pursue a nursing degree. Bob is one of LifeFlight's "can do" people with an eye for detail, overseeing LifeFlight's mobile ICU medical equipment.

Bob, his wife and two sons live in Turner where they enjoy hiking and spending time together. He also spends time on his Harley-Davidson motorcycle, taking in the sights of New England. 

Culture of Safety

LifeFlight of Maine takes safety seriously. Each day people in Maine entrust us with their lives and the lives of their loved ones. Our simple, yet profound, philosophy is that we must always be worthy of that trust.

Over the last 10 years, LifeFlight has worked diligently to create a culture of safety. We have transported more than 9,000 patients without incident, precisely because we put safety first. But we know that our commitment to safety must be renewed daily.

Our safety culture covers every aspect of our operations. Here are just a few of the steps LifeFlight takes to ensure the highest level of safety:

- o LifeFlight is a non-profit organization that doesn't face the same revenue pressures as for-profit programs.
- o Hospitals in New England work collaboratively to avoid creating a competitive air ambulance environment.
- o Strict guidelines, written by a team of physicians, govern the medical necessity of each flight.

- o Our helicopters are equipped with instrument flight (IFR) technology and state-of-the-art navigation and weather radar.
- o LifeFlight of Maine recently installed night vision technology on both of its helicopters.
- o Pilots make flight decisions based strictly on safety, without knowing the clinical needs of the patient.
- o Our ongoing infrastructure project, considered a national model, is building a comprehensive system of automated weather observation stations and safe landing zones.

LifeFlight was built on the premise of achieving the highest performance possible for operating and clinical safety. We believe that by developing a carefully designed and operated system, we can significantly reduce the risks of emergency operations.

For more details on our culture of safety, visit www.lifeflightmaine.org. 

Aviation Safety Conference a Success

The 9th annual North East Safety Brief was held on April 16, 2009 at the National Guard Amory in Augusta. This year's conference, co-sponsored by LifeFlight of Maine and FAA Portland FSDO, was titled *Target Zero: You hit what you aim for* and set a goal of zero accidents and incidents for 2009. The one-day conference featured workshops on air traffic control accident prevention, helicopter training safety, safety management systems, and EMS safety solutions.



Profile | Jon Roebuck, Communications Specialist



Jonathan "JR" Roebuck has spent most of his life in public safety. With the exception of a few years spent as a truck driver,

JR has served the public in law enforcement and emergency services for nearly 15 years.

He was born and raised in central Maine, in the small town of Atkinson. He attended the University of Maine in Orono, as well as the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. He worked as a police officer in Brownville and

Orono, and as a Corrections Officer for the Piscataquis County Sheriff's Office.

He became an emergency dispatcher in 2003 when he started work for MedComm. He still works part time as a police officer, but enjoys the unique challenges that come with each new request for the LifeFlight team.

JR is spearheading efforts to improve emergency access to accident scenes along Maine's extensive recreational trail system (see story on facing page).

When he's not serving the public, JR is probably outside enjoying recreational activities like hunting and fishing, and watching his daughter grow up. 🐟

You Can Help LifeFlight Save Lives

*The crew onboard the LifeFlight helicopter carries blood with them to accident scenes and trauma calls. These critically injured patients may need up to, or even more than, a unit of blood during the transport to a trauma center. Throughout much of the summer, blood banks across the state have only about 1 day's worth of blood stored. **Please consider giving blood this summer season.***

American Red Cross

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Friday 8 am to 2 pm

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By appointment or walk-in

207-941-2900

Red Cross Blood Donor Center

at Central Maine Medical Center
300 Main Street
Lewiston, Maine

OPEN

Tuesday - Thursday

12pm to 7pm

Monday 9am to 4pm

By appointment or walk-in

207-795-2260



**American
Red Cross**





Improving Emergency Access in Rural Maine

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LifeFlight, the Maine Snowmobile Association and ATV Maine are working together to establish landing zones along the state's extensive trail system

In an effort to improve access and reduce extraction time for emergency calls involving snowmobile and ATV accidents, LifeFlight of Maine has been working with the Maine Snowmobile Association and ATV Maine to establish landing zones along the main trail system. They are also helping local clubs develop comprehensive rescue plans.

"By establishing a plan locally, clubs and responders will know what resources are available and how to implement those resources when the need arises," said Bob LaFontaine, Coastal Region Vice President of the Maine Snowmobile Association. "LifeFlight will not be needed at every accident, but when they are, this project will help ensure the helicopter can gain direct access to the trail system."

The project is twofold; first, local clubs are working to establish landing zones at appropriate locations along the trail; and second, LifeFlight crew members and local rescue personnel will be training trail users on how to report a serious accident and how to set up a landing zone in the unlikely event local rescue is not available.

Clubs will establish sites along the trail that meet the criteria for a landing zone, which

must be firm, level areas, 100 feet by 100 feet square, clear of power lines and tree branches. They can then provide GPS coordinates to LifeFlight's dispatchers and pilots. MedComm, the organization that provides communications specialists for LifeFlight of Maine, will maintain a database of the trail coordinates, as well as panoramic photographs of each landing zone.

A key factor in the project is involvement from local fire and rescue personnel, many of whom have already been trained in landing zone establishment and safety. These



EMS providers are also an integral part of any rescue plan and will likely be the first responders to the scene of most accidents.

For more information or to schedule a training for your local club, contact Jon "JR" Roebuck at jonr@medcommdispatch.org or call the LifeFlight Foundation at 785-2288. 

Aviation Infrastructure Project

The LifeFlight Foundation has been working to create a statewide comprehensive aviation infrastructure, which means a safer environment for our crew and patients. We have requested funding from the state, which is slated to be included in the next transportation bond.

The funding will improve the safety of every LifeFlight transport, increase the accessibility of emergency medical care to rural and island communities, and increase the reliability of LifeFlight's service.

Twelve new automated weather observing stations (AWOS) will be built, 33 GPS helicopter approaches will be developed, and LifeFlight's radio communications system will be upgraded.

To learn more about how to support this project, visit www.lifeflightmaine.org.

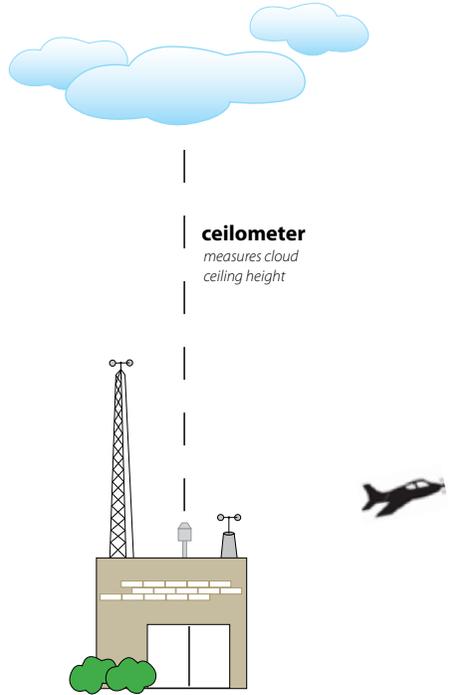
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AWOS

Automated Weather Observing Station

Remote, real-time weather reporting enhancing safety and predictability

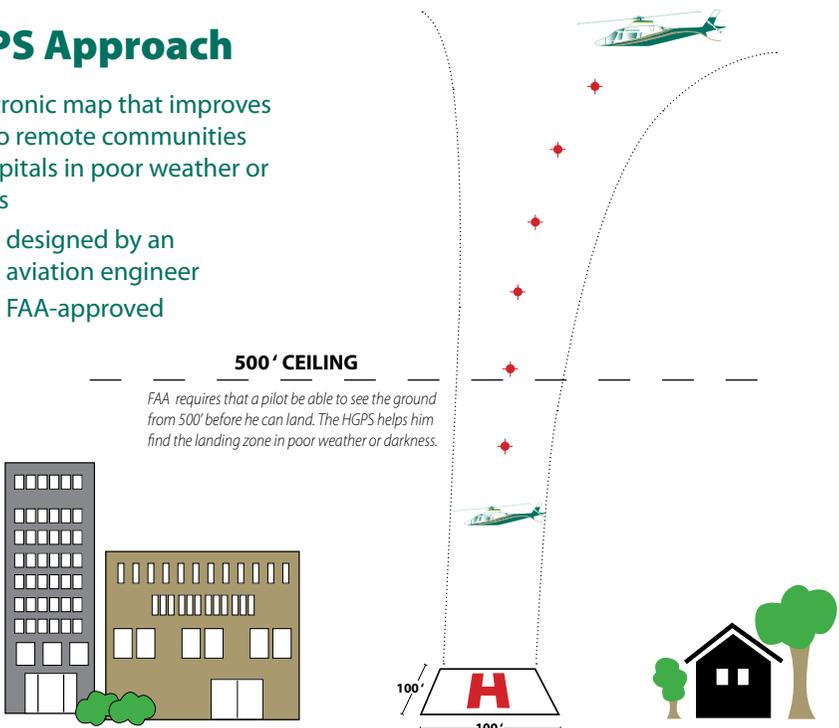
- temperature
- dewpoint
- wind speed/direction
- visibility
- cloud coverage/ceiling height
- altimeter/barometric pressure
- present weather
- freezing rain
- thunderstorms/lightning



HGPS Approach

An electronic map that improves access to remote communities and hospitals in poor weather or darkness

- designed by an aviation engineer
- FAA-approved





Mobile Hands-On Training Available by Request

The Human Patient Simulator program, owned by Maine EMS and operated by LifeFlight of Maine, is available to bring advanced medical training directly to rural communities in Maine. This mobile training lab features life-size mannequins capable of breathing, talking and reacting to healthcare provider interventions. Through this program, facilitators from LifeFlight are able to provide a unique, hands-on experience, fully customized to meet the medical education needs of any hospital, EMS service or educational institution.

The state-of-the-art HPS mannequins (adult, pediatric, infant) simulate a lifelike patient who will improve or deteriorate based on treatment by the practitioner. Programs offer CEUs for nurses and respiratory therapists, CEHs for paramedics, and Category 1 CMEs for physicians and mid-levels.

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Education and scenarios are constructed to meet practitioners needs and can include:

- Didactic/Practical education
- Integration into certification classes like ATLS, PALS, TNCC and PHTLS
- Customized scenarios
- EMS-specific topics
- Physician-specific topics

Call The LifeFlight Foundation at

207-785-2288

to schedule sessions

For more information, you can also visit

www.lifeflightmaine.org



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DISP

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All donations are tax deductible.

LIFELIGHT FOUNDATION

DISPATCHES is a publication of The LifeFlight Foundation, which provides fundraising and public relations support to LifeFlight of Maine, the state's only medical helicopter service.

The LifeFlight Foundation is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Service Tax Code. It is governed by an elected board of trustees who represent medical, business, legal and educational fields throughout the state.

LifeFlight also aids the development, training and funding of Maine's major air medical needs, such as trauma training statewide, construction of hospital helipads, and installation of weather reporting, navigational and communications systems across the state.

The Foundation's office is located in the Town of Union in the Thompson Community Center at the corner of Routes 17 and 131.

LIFELIGHT OF MAINE

LifeFlight of Maine is a nonprofit statewide critical care medical helicopter service jointly owned by Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems and Central Maine Healthcare Corporation. LifeFlight's two helicopters, based in Bangor and Lewiston, cover the entire state and offshore islands. LifeFlight complements and supports the work of local EMS and hospital personnel in caring for the critically ill or injured. Each base is staffed by a highly qualified team of pilots, mechanics, flight nurses and paramedics. More than 9,000 patients have been safely transported since LifeFlight's founding in 1998.

LifeFlight is fully accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems.

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www.lifeflightmaine.org