

	Washington County Sheriff's Office				Incident Report		
	Incident: Accident Investigation						
	Incident Report Number: 17-022212		Between: Date - Time		And/At: Date-Time 6/15/17 11:14		
	Incident Location: Hy 83/Terry Rd;ET						
	CFS Code-1: 9008		CFS Code-2:		CFS Code-3:		
CFS Code-5:		CFS Code-6:		CFS Code-7:		CFS Code-8:	
Name (Last, First, Middle)		DOB:		Race/Sex			
Address: (Address, City, State, Zip)				Home Phone Number			
Employer				Work Phone Number			
Employer Address				Cell Phone Number			
Name (Last, First, Middle)		DOB:		Race/Sex			
Address: (Address, City, State, Zip)				Home Phone Number			
Employer				Work Phone Number			
Employer Address				Cell Phone Number			
SUMMARY On Thursday, 06-15-2017, at 11:14 a.m., a silver hot-air, propane fired airship, owned by AIRSIGN, of Florida, crashed to the ground on the property of 1386 STH 83, Town of Erin, causing injury to the single occupant, the pilot. The airship was located out in a field, east of the residence. The pilot was air transported to a medical facility.							
Vehicle Information: (Year, Make, Model, Style, Color)							
License Number:		State:		Expiration Year:		Vin:	
						Insurance Company:	
Other Vehicle Information:						NCIC#	
Reporting Officer(s): Virchow, Ronald E.				Payroll Number: 441		Report Date: 06/15/2017	
Time Received: 11:15:37		Time Cleared: 19:49:10		Unit(s) Assigned: 403, 411, 441, 471, 485, 426, f		Pages: 1 of 5	
Reviewed by: 468				Payroll Number 404		Copy To	

Date: 06/15/2017

CFS Code-1: 9008

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Washington County Sheriff's Office**Continuation**

Incident Report Number

17-022212

Incident Location:

Hy 83/Terry Rd;ET

Incident Date:

06/15/2017

NAMES**Informational-1**

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 31 of [REDACTED], FL, 32696

DOB: [REDACTED]

Cell Phone: ([REDACTED])

Owner

Airsign of 12 Northwest 5th Place, Williston, FL, 32696

Business Phone: ([REDACTED])

Property Owner-1

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] of [REDACTED], WI, 53027

DOB: [REDACTED]

HT: [REDACTED] WT: [REDACTED] Hair: [REDACTED]

Eyes: [REDACTED] Complexion: [REDACTED]

Cell Phone: ([REDACTED])

Property Owner-2

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] of [REDACTED], WI, 53027

DOB: [REDACTED]

HT: [REDACTED] WT: [REDACTED] Hair: [REDACTED]

Eyes: [REDACTED] Complexion: [REDACTED]

Cell Phone: ([REDACTED])

Informational-2

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] Ann [REDACTED] of [REDACTED], WI, 53027

DOB: [REDACTED]

HT: [REDACTED] WT: [REDACTED] Hair: [REDACTED]

Eyes: [REDACTED]

Cell Phone: ([REDACTED]) Cell Phone: ([REDACTED])

Informational-3

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] WI, 53027

DOB: [REDACTED]

HT: [REDACTED] WT: [REDACTED] Hair: [REDACTED]

Eyes: [REDACTED]

Cell Phone: ([REDACTED])

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Virchow, Ronald E.

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Informational-4

[REDACTED] of [REDACTED] WI, 53027

DOB: [REDACTED]

HT: [REDACTED] WT: [REDACTED] Hair: [REDACTED]

Eyes: [REDACTED] Complexion: [REDACTED]

Home Phone: ([REDACTED]) Cell Phone: ([REDACTED])

NARRATIVE

On Thursday, 06/15/2017, at 11:15 a.m. I did hear a broadcast over Sheriff's Department radio that a blimp was on fire and was going down.

I did respond from the Erin Town Hall parking lot as I had been investigating complaint number 2017-22192, which is related to this matter. Upon responding initially to [REDACTED] HY 83 and did observe Police squads at that location. I did hear a broadcast from DEPUTY L'Allier/485, who stated that somebody should try accessing the crash from Dublin Drive. I had been out at the [REDACTED] farm earlier and noted that they had farm lanes that may go back to that area of the crash site.

I did meet with [REDACTED] who stated that a squad car would not likely make it back there, however, he could take me in the farm truck. I did quickly obtain my squad first aid kit and squad fire extinguisher and [REDACTED] did transport me or convey me in the farm truck down the farm lanes.

After a couple minutes I was able to access the crash site, however, by that time Law Enforcement and Medical was on scene. I was advised that there may be propane tanks in the burning airship and was told to stay wide of the aircraft. I did walk through high weeds over to the crash site and did observe a propane tank, which later was determined to be already compromised. Upon my arrival to where the pilot was, he was being attended to by HARTFORD EMERGENCY SERVICES and WISCONSIN STATE PATROL and other Law Enforcement on scene.

After the pilot was taken from the scene, I did check the area of the high grass/farm field that I had walked through and did locate the compromised propane tank, which had the bottom missing. It did appear that the bottom had blown free of the tank. I did also locate an approximately 3'x2' piece of the airship in the field near the access road. I did mark these items so they could be more easily found by investigating personnel.

It should be noted that CAPTAIN THEUSCH was on scene and did request that I interview [REDACTED] based upon the prior complaint.

I did not have my squad accessible to me as it was approximately 30 minutes away by walking. I did meet up with a MILWAUKEE POLICE Supervisor or Detective and a FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (FBI) agent both in the bomb unit, who had responded to the scene.

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Virchow, Ronald E.

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These two agents agreed to give me a ride to meet up with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] as they had also wanted to interview him. As we were walking back to their Law Enforcement vehicle, I did recognize [REDACTED] [REDACTED] from earlier, who had now come down the farm lane on his All-Terrain Vehicle. [REDACTED] stated that he had been on the farm in his bedroom when he heard two large "booms." [REDACTED] stated that he looked out and saw smoke and the airship had already been down. [REDACTED] stated that he was informed by a neighbor by the name of RACHAEL [REDACTED] that the blimp had crashed.

[REDACTED] stated, when asked about his father, that his father had been frustrated with the blimp taking off and scaring both his cattle and the deer. [REDACTED] stated that his father, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] believed that some of his fencing was now down due to the animals being spooked and running through it. [REDACTED] stated that his father was angry at the time and wanted something done about the airship. [REDACTED] stated that he was not present when [REDACTED] called the Sheriff's Department. [REDACTED] stated however he was present when Deputies arrived on scene. [REDACTED] stated that his father was irate about the blimp, however, after speaking with the responding Deputies he called the FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION (FAA) and had calmed down. [REDACTED] stated that [REDACTED] had then left and attended the US OPEN of the United States Golf Association.

[REDACTED] stated that he has never known his father to be a member of any anti-government organization or subscribe to any anti-government information or propaganda. [REDACTED] stated that his father does disagree at times with Township issues, but has never heard [REDACTED] ever threatening anyone because of such issues. [REDACTED] stated that [REDACTED] words to the Dispatcher was out of anger and frustration, and [REDACTED] stated that he felt his father would never act upon it. [REDACTED] was asked about firearms, and [REDACTED] stated that his father does own a 12 gauge shotgun and a .22 long rifle. [REDACTED] stated that he himself owns a .22 long rifle, a .223 rifle, a 12 gauge shotgun, and a 9 mm pistol.

After speaking with [REDACTED] I was conveyed by the FBI agent to meet with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in the area of HY 83 and Cork Lane as contact had been made by the FBI agent with [REDACTED]

I was informed by CAPTAIN THEUSCH that Washington County Sheriff's DETECTIVES DEMLER and KLOPFENSTEIN would also be responding.

We did meet Washington County Sheriff's Detectives at HY 83 and Cork Lane, and we also learned that [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had arrived at the Joint Operation Center at ERIN HILLS immediately off of Cork Lane. We did respond to that location and did meet up with [REDACTED] DETECTIVES KLOPFENSTEIN and DEMLER did speak with [REDACTED] in my presence.

I did ask [REDACTED] if he was a member of any anti-government group or organization, and [REDACTED] denied such. [REDACTED] said he did not have any out of the ordinary opinions of government in general, although he said he does disagree with local Township issues. [REDACTED] was asked if he owns any firearms, and [REDACTED] stated that he owns two .22 rifles, a 12 gauge shotgun, and a 410 shotgun. [REDACTED] stated that his son does own a pistol, a .223 scoped rifle, and a shotgun.

DETECTIVE DEMLER and/or DETECTIVE KLOPFENSTEIN will supplement this report regarding their interview with [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Other Deputies will supplement this report with the information that they obtained.

I have no further information. This matter is open to the Detective Bureau.

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Virchow, Ronald E.

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441/1029/mew
06/16/2017

Reporting Officer(s):

Virchow, Ronald E.

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Supplementary Report

Reporting Officer(s): Lallier, Tyler J.		Payroll Number: 485	Payroll Number:	Report Date: 06/15/2017
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Hy 83/Terry Rd;ET

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DOB: [REDACTED]

HT: [REDACTED] WT: [REDACTED] Hair: [REDACTED]

Eyes: [REDACTED]

Cell Phone:([REDACTED]) Home Phone:([REDACTED])

NARRATIVE**INITIAL CALL**

On June 15, 2017 at 11:15 a.m. I, DEPUTY L'ALLIER, was dispatched to a report of a blimp that had crashed into a field between HY 83 and Dublin Drive in the Town of Erin in Washington County, Wisconsin. Dispatch advised one subject was injured.

ARRIVAL/OBSERVATIONS

I was driving northbound on HY 83 near Cork Road and observed the thermal airship, also referred to as a blimp, to the east of my location. It appeared that the thermal airship envelope was losing air rapidly and I was soon dispatched to a report of a blimp that had crashed into a field. I drove down the driveway of [REDACTED] HY 83 and drove out onto a grass airfield, along with several WISCONSIN STATE TROOPERS.

In the field to the east of my location I could see large flames shooting into the air. I ran down to the crash site and observed the pilot, later identified as [REDACTED] lying on his back with burns to his face and he was complaining of neck and back pain. EMS and RESCUE arrived on scene and cut off [REDACTED] Nomex flame retardant coverall and took off his Nomex gloves. It appeared that [REDACTED] had suffered burns to his face, legs, chest, arms, and a large portion of his back. At that time it was decided that due to [REDACTED] serious injuries FLIGHT FOR LIFE would be called and to transport [REDACTED] to the hospital.

VERBAL STATEMENT FROM PILOT, [REDACTED]

While [REDACTED] was being treated by EMS on scene, I asked him what had happened to cause the thermal airship to crash. [REDACTED] told me that two panels failed and around 500 feet he started to prepare for an emergency landing. [REDACTED] said he shut off the two fuel valves below him and attempted to shut off the fuel valve behind him. He then tightened his restraints and prepared to crash into the ground. [REDACTED] was then loaded onto a backboard and transported in the back of a RESCUE pickup truck to the designated landing zone where he was transported by helicopter to FROEDTERT HOSPITAL.

DETECTIVE KLOPFENSTEIN responded to the hospital. Refer to DETECTIVE KLOPFENSTEIN's report for further information.

STATEMENT FROM CREW CHIEF [REDACTED]

I made contact with Crew Chief [REDACTED] who told me the following. He works for AirSign Aerial Advertising out of Williston, Florida. They are at the US OPEN

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doing advertising for Penfed Banking and Investing. Today they started blimp flights around 8:30 a.m. Contract pilot, [REDACTED] was piloting the thermal airship. Around 10:40 a.m. [REDACTED] landed the airship and they topped off the fuel. [REDACTED] took back off around 11:00 a.m. and he was going back up for another flight. [REDACTED] radioed after being in the air for 15 minutes that he was going to land because the wind was picking up.

As [REDACTED] was coming to land at about 500 feet, the envelope lost all the air and just started to come down and started on fire. He and the rest of the ground crew started running where they thought the thermal airship would end up. Once he got closer he started yelling [REDACTED] name. He heard [REDACTED] yelling and ran to his location. [REDACTED] was on his back and he pulled him as far away as he could before the tanks exploded. He believes he got about 50 feet away when one of the tanks exploded so he pulled [REDACTED] another 75 feet away to get him to a safe location.

[REDACTED] then completed a written statement, which will be attached to this report.

STATEMENT FROM GROUND CREW MEMBER [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] told me the following. [REDACTED] is part of the ground crew for the blimp and he was getting ready to sit down when he overheard the radio that the winds were bad and [REDACTED] was going to try to land. As [REDACTED] began his decent he ran into wind, which started to lift the blimp up and made it impossible to land. The wind blew the blimp up higher and [REDACTED] started going backwards away from the runaway towards a grassy field.

They started to run across the field to be there when [REDACTED] landed and saw the front of the blimp shrivel up. Immediately the blimp envelope started on fire and the whole blimp and gondola began to fall. He turned around and ran back to the trailer to grab the fire extinguisher. After he got the fire extinguisher he ran across the farm field to where the blimp had crashed.

As he ran he saw the blimp in flames and an explosion happened. He watched his brother, [REDACTED] pull the pilot, [REDACTED] away from the crash and he rushed over to try to help and possibly use the fire extinguisher. He stayed with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and the other two ground crew members until the Police and Fire arrived and told them to move to a safer distance.

[REDACTED] completed a written statement, which will be attached to this report.

STATEMENT FROM GROUND CREW MEMBER [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] told me from what he saw the balloon part of the airship ripped on the underside and then it began to deflate in the air before it began to fall. He and his coworkers started running in the direction that it was falling and he saw it fall pretty much the whole way until he lost sight of it behind the tree line. He got to the trees and caught a bit of it again and it was on fire when he got half way across the field. He saw one of his coworkers pulling the pilot away from the wreckage so he stopped running and waited for the three propane tanks in the airship to explode before getting any closer. After those exploded he went to check on the pilot and his coworkers, who both seemed fine except the pilot was burned and complained of

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back and neck pain. After that he saw STATE Troopers coming that way so he went to answer any questions they had.

█████ completed a written statement, which will be attached to this report.

STATEMENT FROM GROUND CREW MEMBER █████ █████

█████ told me the following. He was on rope duty and was waiting for the pilot to land. The wind picked up speed and caused the blimp to spark a fire. █████ grabbed the fire extinguisher, and he ran across the field with █████ and █████. The blimp then crashed, landed into a nearby field across from the landing strip. It happened so fast and as they were running they were yelling out █████ name. As they ran closer █████ poked his head up. █████ ran over to █████ and told them to stay put. █████ pulled █████ away from the incident. There was then an explosion and around five seconds later there was a second explosion. Around the third explosion the Medical staff, FIRE DEPARTMENT, as well as the Sheriff's Department, arrived on scene.

█████ provided a written statement, which will be attached to this report.

STATEMENT FROM WITNESS █████ █████

█████ stated he saw the blimp flying around normally for a little while, then he noticed that it was in the back field. It seemed like it was going up and down and not more than a couple minutes later it crashed. It happened fast. █████ stated he was in the driveway of his residence, █████ HY 83, when this occurred.

█████ provided a written statement, which will be attached to this report.

THERMAL AIRSHIP DESCRIPTION

Type:	Thermal hot airship
Make:	Gefe-Gluf GMBH
Model:	AS 105 GD4
Serial #:	0010
Certificate of Air Worthiness #:	0675541001
Nationality and Registration marks:	G-SUNA
Insured by the Schantz Agency	
Insured for Balloonist by Balloonist	
Policy #:	██████████
Advertising for Penfed	

DISPOSITION

I remained on scene until two NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD representatives and one FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION representative arrived on scene to investigate the crash further. I remained on scene until the thermal airship was removed by MAYER'S AVIATION CORPORATION.

No further information.

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Supplementary Report

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New Incident:	Original CFS Code - 1: 9008	New CFS Code - 1 :	New CFS Code - 2:

NAMES

Witness-1

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] WI, 53027
 DOB: [REDACTED]
 HT: [REDACTED] WT: [REDACTED] Hair: [REDACTED]
 Eyes: [REDACTED]
 Cell Phone: ([REDACTED]) [REDACTED] Cell Phone: ([REDACTED]) [REDACTED]

Witness-2

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] WI, 53027
 DOB: [REDACTED]
 HT: [REDACTED] WT: [REDACTED] Hair: [REDACTED]
 Eyes: [REDACTED]
 Home Phone: ([REDACTED]) [REDACTED] Cell Phone: ([REDACTED]) [REDACTED]

Witness-3

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] WI, 53027
 DOB: [REDACTED]
 HT: [REDACTED] WT: [REDACTED] Hair: [REDACTED]
 Eyes: [REDACTED]

Witness-4

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] WI, 53027
 DOB: [REDACTED]
 HT: [REDACTED] WT: [REDACTED] Hair: [REDACTED]
 Eyes: [REDACTED]
 Cell Phone: ([REDACTED])

NARRATIVE

On Thursday, June 15, 2017, I, DEPUTY JOSEPH LAGOSH 471/65695, was in full duty uniform assigned to work patrol for the Washington County Sheriff's Office. I was scheduled to work the hours of 10:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. while operating marked squad number 13.

DISPATCH

Reporting Officer(s): LaGosh, Joseph B.		Payroll Number: 471	Payroll Number:	Report Date: 06/16/2017
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On Thursday, June 15, 2017, at 11:15 a.m. while working patrol for the Washington County Sheriff's Office I overheard CAPTAIN THEUSCH/403 state over the Washington County Sheriff's Office main Dispatch channel that he was receiving information that a blimp flying near ERIN HILLS GOLF COURSE was on fire and in the process of falling from the sky.

I did immediately begin to respond toward the area of HY 83 and Holy Hill Road where it was reported that the blimp was coming down. Prior to my arrival on scene DEPUTIES L'ALLIER and VIRCHOW did arrive along with multiple STATE Troopers and RESCUE squads.

ARRIVAL ON SCENE

I continued to respond to the scene to assist with scene management. Upon arrival on scene I did immediately at the direction of CAPTAIN THEUSCH obtained the camera from squad 35, the squad of DEPUTY L'ALLIER and began to take photographs to document the scene. I did then also remain on scene for scene security while DEPUTY L'ALLIER and RESCUE personnel tended to the pilot of the aircraft. I did obtain a total of 16 photographs of the crash site. The photo log is as follows.

PHOTO LOG

Photo 1: Burning blimp wreckage facing northeast
Photo 2: Wreckage facing east
Photo 3: Wreckage facing southeast
Photo 4: Wreckage facing north
Photo 5: Second half of the wreckage facing north
Photo 6: Part of a ruptured propane tank
Photo 7: Wreckage facing northwest
Photo 8: Wreckage facing west
Photo 9: Wreckage facing southwest
Photo 10: Close up of wreckage facing southeast
Photo 11: Close up of wreckage facing south
Photo 12: Close up of wreckage facing southwest
Photo 13: Various debris
Photo 14: Various debris
Photo 15: Ruptured propane tank
Photo 16: Ruptured propane tank

After obtaining my photographs of the scene I did remain on scene at the direction of CAPTAIN THEUSCH to maintain scene security as the FAA and National Traffic Safety Board were sending investigators to conduct an investigation of the crash.

INTERVIEW WITH [REDACTED] AND [REDACTED]

While on scene I was advised of two workers that had been working in a neighboring farm field that had witnessed the accident. As there were multiple WISCONSIN STATE Troopers on scene assisting with scene security, I did respond and spoke with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

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LaGosh, Joseph B.

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████ and █████ stated that that they had been weed whacking in a neighboring field when █████ ran up to █████ stating that a blimp was on fire and falling out of the sky. Both █████ and █████ stated they observed the blimp continue its decent until it landed in a neighboring field behind a row of trees. █████ and █████ stated they immediately got into their vehicle and attempted to drive around to the other field to assist with the crash. Both █████ and █████ stated upon rounding the bend in the field and observing the crash, they did witness a large explosion coming from the crash site. █████ and █████ stated it was at this time that multiple First Responders began to arrive on scene. █████ and █████ both stated they remained in the area to assist First Responders in locating and getting to the crash site.

I did then ask either or █████ or █████ if they witnessed any malfunctions with the blimp or anything suspicious prior to it falling. Both █████ and █████ stated that when they saw it, it just looked like "a deflated balloon" and that they had not witnessed the malfunction.

I did then ask both █████ and █████ if they would be willing to complete written statements. Both █████ and █████ stated they would and completed written statements provided by the Washington County Sheriff's Office. Those statements will be attached to this supplement.

After obtaining statements from █████ and █████ I did return to the crash site where I maintained scene security while STATE PATROL diagramed the crash. I remained on scene at the crash site until I was relieved by CAPTAIN THEUSCH and the FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION and NATIONAL TRANSPORT SAFETY BOARD Investigators, who arrived on scene to take over the investigation.

INTERVIEW WITH █████ AND █████

Later that evening at 7:39 p.m. I responded to █████ Terry Rod in the Town of Erin, Wisconsin, where I met with two more witness of the blimp accident. Upon arrival on scene at that address I did speak with █████ █████ and █████ █████ who both stated that they had witnessed the blimp incident while they were sitting at the end of their driveway.

In speaking with █████ and █████ they stated that while seated at the end of their driveway they could see the blimp traveling back and forth over the trees and buildings to their southeast. █████ stated they could see the blimp flying for approximately 2 to 3 hours and that they were close enough to hear the propulsion fans as the blimp would re-position itself. █████ then stated that while watching the blimp it did appear that the center of the balloon portion of the aircraft did appear to somehow collapse.

████ did state that it had billowed back out, however, shortly there after did collapse again taking on a "banana like" shape. █████ stated that after the balloon billowed the second time that what he perceived as the front of the aircraft did appear to be begin dipping towards the ground moving from a horizontal position to a vertical position. █████ estimated this change in position to take approximately 45 seconds and that at the end of that time they did witness an explosion and fireball engulf the aircraft. █████ stated it was at that time that the aircraft then began to fall below the tree line where they lost view of the aircraft. █████ stated they did shortly thereafter hear another explosion, which

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LaGosh, Joseph B.

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they believed to be coming from the aircraft, however, they could no longer see the aircraft or crash site at that time.

I did then ask [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] if they both would be willing to complete written statements. [REDACTED] stated he would and [REDACTED] replied that she did not wish to complete a statement as hers would be the same as [REDACTED]. I did then obtain a written statement from [REDACTED] which will be attached to this report.

At this time the investigation on the crash of the aircraft has been turned over to the FAA and NTSB Investigators. For further information on this case, please refer to DEPUTY VIRCHOW and DEPUTY L'ALLIER's other attached reports.

No further information.

471/65695/mew
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Reporting Officer(s):

LaGosh, Joseph B.

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Washington County Sheriff's Office**Supplementary Report**

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New Incident:	Original CFS Code - 1: 9008	New CFS Code -1 :	New CFS Code - 2:

NAMES**Witness**

██████████ of ██████████ FL, 32696
DOB: ██████████
Cell Phone:(██████████)

Victim

██████████ of ██████████
██████████, GA, 30183
DOB: ██████████
HT: ████████ WT: ████████ Hair: ████████
Eyes: ████████
Cell Phone:(██████████)

NARRATIVE**INITIAL INCIDENT**

On Thursday, June 15, 2017, at approximately 12:00 p.m. myself and DETECTIVE KLOFENSTEIN were requested to assist with interviews in reference to an Airship that had crash landed near HY 83 and HY 167 in the Town of Erin.

Myself and DETECTIVE KLOPFENSTEIN responded to the scene and assisted with various interviews.

INTERVIEW OF ██████████

At approximately 2:10 p.m. on Thursday, June 15, 2017, I spoke with ██████████ who is the Crew Chief of the AIRSIGN airship that had crash landed in the Town of Erin. While speaking with ██████████ he stated he was with his Airship Ground Crew, as well as his pilot, ██████████ as they started their morning on a private airstrip. This airstrip was located in a farm field approximately a half mile south of HY 167 just east of HY 83 approximately one mile east of ERIN HILLS GOLF COURSE in the Town of Erin. ██████████ stated he was part of the crew of the non-ridged (no frame) thermal hot air Airship that was contracted for advertising throughout portions of the US Open.

██████████ stated ██████████ was piloting the non-ridged thermal hot Airship of which he had piloted many times in the past. ██████████ was the lone occupant while the Airship was in flight. ██████████ stated ██████████ is a very experienced pilot and has had no issues

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in the past with any type of flight difficulties. [REDACTED] stated [REDACTED] piloted the first flight this morning some time before 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, June 15, 2017, and then landed the airship shortly before 11:00 a.m. to refuel. There were two full liquid propane fuel tanks exchanged for replacement of the empties. The tanks were loaded aboard the Airship before the second flight. The second flight went back up into the air shortly after 11:00 a.m.

[REDACTED] stated approximately 10 to 15 minutes into the flight [REDACTED] made the decision to terminate the flight due to wind conditions. [REDACTED] proceeded to descend from approximately 1000 feet and was making the approach to the landing zone, however, the airship came across a thermal, which caused the airship to ascend to approximately 500 feet. [REDACTED] again attempted to descend again to set up to approach the landing zone. [REDACTED] stated this is when he observed the top portion of the airship envelope fold over and it appeared air was releasing from the envelope rapidly. The airship started to rapidly descend. [REDACTED] observed the nose of the airship start on fire and came down abruptly and crash landed into the farmer's field.

[REDACTED] stated he and the rest of his ground crew ran to the crash site. [REDACTED] stated he observed [REDACTED] crawling away from the wreckage. The wreckage was on fire. [REDACTED] stated he dragged [REDACTED] about 100 feet away from the wreckage. [REDACTED] was yelling for [REDACTED] and the rest of the ground crew to stay low in fear of the liquid propane tanks exploding. [REDACTED] stated the ground crew stayed low and took cover and shortly after [REDACTED] heard two separate explosions. [REDACTED] stated the propane tanks exploded one after the other.

[REDACTED] stated he spoke to [REDACTED] briefly after the crash, and [REDACTED] stated that two of the airship's panels (canvas type rip stop material approximately four feet by four feet in size) had failed and [REDACTED] immediately activated emergency procedures for a crash landing and shut off the fuel. The airship came to the ground quite abruptly and crash landed. [REDACTED] stated RESCUE workers arrived on scene shortly after. [REDACTED] was ultimately flighted to FROEDTERT HOSPITAL via FLIGHT FOR LIFE for treatment of his injuries.

[REDACTED] stated [REDACTED] always wears a Nomex fire retardant suit along with Nomex fire retardant gloves. [REDACTED] stated he believed if [REDACTED] would not have been wearing the fire retardant suit he may have been killed in the fire.

INTERVIEW OF [REDACTED]

At approximately 4:20 p.m. I spoke with the pilot, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in the Surgical Intensive Care Unit Room 16 of FROEDTERT HOSPITAL. During my conversation with [REDACTED] he was very lucid, coherent, articulate, and appeared to be a very knowledgeable pilot. [REDACTED] was on a 10 minute self-medicating IV with the pain medication of Dilaudid.

While speaking with [REDACTED] he stated he has been a certified pilot for over 30 years in various aircraft including Fixed Wing, Airship and Balloons. [REDACTED] stated he is a contracted pilot throughout the nation and he has been with AIRSIGN for approximately 2 years.

[REDACTED] stated on today's date he was piloting a non-ridged Airship. [REDACTED] stated

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the length of the Airship is approximately a half of a football field (50 yards) and approximately 4 stories high. [REDACTED] stated the airship was certified for 50 hours of flight time under the annual inspection. The airship was operating within the certification. [REDACTED] stated some time between 8:30 and 8:45 he piloted his initial flight in the Town of Erin. He was up in the air approximately two hours. He burned through three tanks of fuel. This was liquid propane and he had one tank left in reserve. [REDACTED] stated he always keeps one tank in reserve for landing. [REDACTED] stated he landed for fuel shortly before 11:00 a.m. The ground crew removed three empty propane tanks and brought aboard two full fuel tanks so a total of fuel tanks on the airship was three. [REDACTED] stated he planned the second flight to last an hour.

[REDACTED] described the gondola area of the airship being a four subject cockpit. [REDACTED] stated he was in the forward seat on the right and the three tanks were behind him. [REDACTED] stated at approximately 11:00 a.m. he began his second flight. He was the sole passenger of the Airship. He was in the air approximately 15 minutes at approximately 1000 feet and at that point [REDACTED] decided to terminate the second flight because of wind conditions. [REDACTED] stated he radioed his ground crew advising them he was terminating the flight due to wind and he would be maneuvering to the landing zone.

[REDACTED] stated he descended to approximately 200 feet into the wind and then there was a thermal push of air that pushed the Airship back up to approximately 500 feet. [REDACTED] stated he was almost at full throttle into the wind at 4500 RPM. He did this to assist in the descent. He also attempted to open the plexiglass "slider" that was above him so he could release the hot air from the "envelope." [REDACTED] stated when he was attempting to do that the slider jammed and would not open. [REDACTED] stated shortly after trying to open the slider he heard a loud pop, he looked up and observed that one of the upper left aft panels of the envelope had blown out or split open and then a few moments later he heard another pop and he observed that a second aft panel of the envelope blew out. This panel was right next to the previous blown out panel.

[REDACTED] stated the nose of the Airship started to dive into the wind causing the nose to "cave in" on itself. [REDACTED] stated this is considered a "Catastrophic failure." [REDACTED] stated he immediately implemented the emergency descent procedures. He tightened the straps on his four point harness, immediately turned off the fuel tank manifold, and pulled the air relief valve (10 feet by 20 feet panel release opening Velcro type closure) to release all the air from the envelope for a rapid descent. [REDACTED] stated "It is better to crash hard than explode in the air." [REDACTED] stated the nose of the airship must have reached the burner and there was still residual fuel in the lines and this ultimately started the envelope on fire.

[REDACTED] stated he immediately braced for impact. He was sitting in the cockpit. He leaned forward to cover his face. He felt the fire and the heat. [REDACTED] stated he was wearing a Nomex fire retardant flight suit, along with Nomex gloves. [REDACTED] stated the crash landing happened very quickly. [REDACTED] stated "It was 10 seconds of absolute terror." [REDACTED] stated the gondola struck the ground with a violent impact on its wheels then tipped over onto its side. [REDACTED] saw fire and immediately unclipped from his four point harness.

[REDACTED] does not believe he ever lost consciousness. [REDACTED] stated he began to crawl from the wreckage. He was approximately 50 feet from the airship when the ground

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crew arrived. [REDACTED] stated he yelled to the ground crew to stay low to the ground because the liquid propane tanks would explode. [REDACTED] stated his Crew Chief, [REDACTED] pulled [REDACTED] another hundred feet away from the wreckage and that is when [REDACTED] heard the first fuel tank explode and then shortly thereafter the second fuel tank exploded.

[REDACTED] stated his back was burned and his neck was burned. He felt burns to his face, and he felt a great deal of pain in his back. [REDACTED] stated it did not take long for RESCUE to arrive on scene, and he was flighted to the hospital.

[REDACTED] stated he flew this type of Airship many times. He has never crashed prior to today. [REDACTED] stated on other Airships he had to make two unscheduled landings on prior occasions, and also during another flight he had a blown engine, however, all three of these unscheduled landings he was able to land safely without injury.

[REDACTED] stated while piloting an Airship he has never had a panel blow out. [REDACTED] stated it has happened to other pilots where one panel has blown out, but [REDACTED] has never heard of two panels blowing out. [REDACTED] stated when one panel blows out the pilot is able to land the Airship safely, however, when two panels blow out, too much air escapes causing an uncontrolled descent and emergency procedures have to be implemented immediately.

[REDACTED] stated through his training and experience nothing he did or did not do was the cause was the panel blowout. [REDACTED] stated it's simply an equipment failure and that the Airship was an "older airship" and the fabric and canvass panels get old and fail. [REDACTED] stated the Airship had a 50 hour certification clearance to fly and it was operated within that 50 hour certification. Annual inspection performed in September of 2016.

CONVERSATION WITH THE MEDICAL STAFF

I spoke briefly to the medical staff who were attending to [REDACTED] at FROEDTERT HOSPITAL. [REDACTED] had sustained second degree burns to his right upper cheek and lower eye area, second degree burns to the right side of his back, second degree burns to the back of his neck, and a fractured T7 vertebra (center of back and spine).

No further information.

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Eyes: [REDACTED]

Cell Phone: ([REDACTED])

Witness-2

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] WI, 53027

DOB: [REDACTED]

HT: [REDACTED] WT: [REDACTED] Hair: [REDACTED]

Eyes: [REDACTED]

Cell Phone: ([REDACTED]) Home Phone: ([REDACTED])

Informational-5

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] WI, 53027

DOB: [REDACTED]

HT: [REDACTED] WT: [REDACTED] Hair: [REDACTED]

Eyes: [REDACTED]

Cell Phone: ([REDACTED])

Informational-6

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] WI, 53027

DOB: [REDACTED]

HT: [REDACTED] WT: [REDACTED] Hair: [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Eyes: [REDACTED]

Cell Phone: ([REDACTED]) Home Phone: ([REDACTED])

Witness-3

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] WI, 53027

DOB: [REDACTED]

HT: [REDACTED] WT: [REDACTED] Hair: [REDACTED]

Eyes: [REDACTED]

Cell Phone: (26 [REDACTED])

Informational-7

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] WI, 53027

DOB: [REDACTED]

HT: [REDACTED] WT: [REDACTED] Hair: [REDACTED]

Eyes: [REDACTED] Complexion: [REDACTED]

Home Phone: ([REDACTED]) Cell Phone: ([REDACTED])

Informational-8

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] WI, 53029

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DOB: [REDACTED]

HT: [REDACTED] WT: [REDACTED] Hair: [REDACTED]

Eyes: [REDACTED]

Home Phone: ([REDACTED]) Cell Phone: ([REDACTED])

PROPERTY LIST

Seq#	Reason	Make/Model	Description/Serial#	Quan/Value
=====				
17-000835				
1	EVI		CD-R Airship Crash	1.000
			Investigation - Airship	\$1.00
			Crash Related Videos (7)	[Recovered]
			Videos Various Sources	
2	EVI		CD-R Airship Crash	1.000
			Investigation - 911 Calls	\$1.00
			(5) Calls and [REDACTED] Call	[Recovered]
17-000858				
1	EVI		CD-R Airship Crash	1.000
			Investigation - 911	\$1.00
			Recorded Call - [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	[Recovered]
2	EVI		CD-R Airship Crash	1.000
			Investigation - Photos and	\$1.00
			Video [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	[Recovered]

NARRATIVE

INITIAL INFORMATION

On Thursday, June 15, 2017, I was briefed by DETECTIVE LIEUTENANT KONSTANZ about an advertising airship crash that occurred in an area east of the Erin Hills U.S. Open Golf Tournament. DETECTIVE DEMLER and I were assigned to assist in the investigation. I was advised the airship crashed to the ground and burned and the pilot was injured and taken by Flight for Life to Froedtert Hospital in Milwaukee.

I contacted CAPTAIN THEUSCH and was briefed regarding the circumstances known to this point. CAPTAIN THEUSCH was coordinating the initial response, scene security and investigation.

The area the airship crashed was in a field just east of a grass airstrip located at [REDACTED] Hy. 83, Town of Erin, Washington County, Wisconsin. I was advised that numerous people witnessed at least portions of the airship

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crash. DEPUTY L'ALLIER was in the area and observed the airship losing air, descend rapidly and after the airship was on the ground observed flames at the crash site.

SYNOPSIS

On Thursday, June 15, 2017, at approximately 11:15 a.m. the Sheriff's Office received the first of a series of 9-1-1 calls reporting the airship caught fire and crashed in the area east of Hy. 83 and south of Hy. 167/Holy Hill Road. I obtained five separate 9-1-1 recorded calls and reviewed the calls. The calls were all consistent reporting the airship in the air on fire and crashing in the field. I preserved the 9-1-1 calls to a CD-R disc to be attached to this case.

The airship is an advertising thermal hot air airship that was piloted by an experienced commercial pilot with proper certification and that had been contracted to fly in the area east of the Erin Hills U.S. Open Golf Tournament. The airship was flying within its annualized certification.

The investigation revealed that there was a structural or mechanical failure to the envelope of the airship causing the air to release and the airship to descend rapidly. The pilot reported at least two sewn fixed panels of the envelope failed causing the airship to nose downward. The pilot implemented emergency descent procedures. The pilot shut off the fuel valves to the burners and as the envelope collapsed the pilot believes fire from residual burning of the burners caught the canvas envelope material to start on fire. The airship descended rapidly and crashed to the ground. The airship ground crew assisted the pilot from the wreckage and at least two LP fuel tanks exploded. The pre-crash orientation of the airship was in a southwest direction on the north side of the landing strip.

A witness approximately 1.16 miles northwest of the air ship had a perpendicular view of the right side of the airship and was watching the maneuvers of the pilot. The witness reported the wind gusting and the pilot was maintaining good control of the airship. The witness reports observing the top center of the airship envelope "billow or buckle into a quarter moon shape almost dead center about four feet." He reports the airship regained its shape then collapsed again in the center "taking a banana shape" and then the airship tipped forward slowly to ultimately what the witness estimated was a ten degree angle to the ground. He reports when the airship was tipped forward he observed a three to five foot flash and then flame in the envelope as it caught fire.

The origin and cause of the failure will be investigated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the National Transportation Safety Board. (NTSB).

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There are a number of videos I obtained that had been posted to social media and from news reports that depict the airship with catastrophic damage to the envelope and the airship descending rapidly. At least one video I obtained depicts the airship's impact with the ground and moments later what appears to be the LP fuel tanks exploding. At least one video I obtained from the air depicts the airship burning on the ground and what appears to be the LP fuel tanks exploding. I printed still images from the videos relevant to the sequence of events as an attachment to this case. I preserved seven separate videos obtained from various sources to a CD-R disc to be attached to this case.

Deputies from Washington County Sheriff's Office and Wisconsin State Troopers responded to the crash site. Richfield and Hartford Fire and Rescue responded and Flight for Life was requested and responded to evacuate the pilot.

Wisconsin State Patrol diagramed the crash site with their Total Station Diagraming Equipment.

CONSTRUCTION AND OWNERSHIP OF THE AIRSHIP

On Friday, June 16, 2017, DETECTIVE DEMLER and I met with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] CEO of AIRSIGN, and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] crew chief of the Aerial Blimp Division for AIRSIGN, at the Sheriff's Office. I learned the airship is constructed of approximately four by four foot panels sewn to create the envelope which is the airships shape. The panels above the pilot and in the area of the gondola on the lower portion of the airship are made from a fire-resistant material such as Nomex as there is a greater potential for exposure to the LP fuel burning system. The panels on the other areas of the envelope are not made from a fire-resistant material such as Hyperlast.

The airship had last received its annualized inspection in September 2016 and was certified to fly fifty hours and it is believed to have been operating within its certification at the time of the crash.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] indicated he had met with NTSB Investigator Pam Sullivan prior to meeting with me. His understanding after talking with the pilot, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and the NTSB Investigator is that three panels failed above and slightly behind the pilot at the top of the airship. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] described his understanding of the area that failed to be the top center panels or immediate panels to the right or left of center. This area of failure would generally be a perpendicular line from the ground. At this point it is unknown what caused the failure of the three panels and the NTSB will have the panels examined.

The airship is an advertising airship owned by AIRSIGN AERIAL ADVERTISING of [REDACTED] Williston, Florida. AIRSIGN is an aerial advertising company that has been in operation since 2008. The airship is a non-rigid

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thermal airship that was manufactured in Germany in 2011 and was purchased used in Switzerland in 2012. The airship is UK-certified and with this certification is certified to fly in the United States. To fly the airship the pilot must have UK-certification and also be FAA-certified. The value of the airship at the time of purchase was approximately [REDACTED]. The airship is kept at the company in Florida and is transported to various locations by trailer. The airship is insured with liability aviation insurance with W. Brown and Associates Insurance Services.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

During the meeting with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] at the Sheriff's Office we discussed the investigation to this point. I obtained additional information about the company and specifically about the construction and operations of the airship. The company owns two envelopes and two gondolas, one of which was involved in the crash on Thursday, June 15, 2017.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] advised he had met with NTSB Investigator Sullivan in Oshkosh and learned that the three panels that had failed had been located directly above and slightly behind the pilot. NTSB investigators recovered the panels and will be examining the panels to determine the cause of the failure.

We discussed flight operations of the airship from the airstrip the day of the crash. The airship is brought to the flying site on a trailer with the envelope folded and the airship is assembled and the envelope is filled with hot air to fly. Thursday, June 15, 2017, was the first day the airship had been flown for the Erin Hill Golf event.

The airship flew for two hours generally over the airstrip and then landed to refuel. The LP fuel tanks were replaced and the airship had two LP fuel tanks and a third LP fuel tank as reserve. The plan was to fly for up to one hour more. The winds were strong approximately ten to fifteen minutes into the flight and the pilot made the decision to terminate the flight due to wind conditions. The winds were strong and possibly gusting but the wind conditions at the time of the failure were not known to be outside the operating range of the airship.

The grass airstrip runs north/south and the pilot was making progress predominately with the nose of the airship into the wind and was in the area of the north end of the airstrip close to being above the airstrip. The ground crew was at the south end of the airstrip when the airship was about two hundred feet and a thermal caused the airship to rise to about five hundred feet. The airship encountered its failure at the north end of the grass airstrip and drifted approximately three hundred thirty yards in a southeast direction to the crash site. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] emailed me two photographs of the airship gondola for reference.

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I explained the complaint from [REDACTED] [REDACTED] about airship operations and the comment he made about asking the 9-1-1 dispatcher if he could shoot the airship down. I explained the investigation, interview and information learned. We discussed the scenario and feasibility of someone shooting at the airship and causing a failure to the panels. I explained that ultimately there is no evidence to support [REDACTED] [REDACTED] being involved in anyway in the airship crash. In addition, the three panels that failed located directly above and slightly behind the pilot would not appear to support a failure of the panels from a gunshot as this would indicate the shot would have come from generally directly below the airship and there were no people under the airship at the time of the failure.

SCENE CONTROL AND SECURITY

Crash scene control and security was constantly maintained from the time first responders arrived through the time FAA and NTSB investigators arrived and the airship was removed by Meyer's Aviation Corporation at which time the airship was released to the custody of the FAA and NTSB investigators.

PARTICIPATING INVESTIGATORS

1. DETECTIVE DAVID KLOPFENSTEIN - Washington County Sheriff's Office
2. DETECTIVE HOPE DEMLER - Washington County Sheriff's Office
3. DEPUTY RONALD VIRCHOW - Washington County Sheriff's Office
4. DEPUTY TYLER L'ALLIER - Washington County Sheriff's Office
5. DEPUTY JOSEPH LAGOSH - Washington County Sheriff's Office
6. Wisconsin State Patrol
7. Pam Sullivan - NTSB Investigator

I received additional assistance from an agent of the FBI and deputies and supervisors from Washington County Sheriff's Office.

COMPLAINT ABOUT AIRSHIP OPERATIONS

During the course of this investigation DEPUTY VIRCHOW responded to a citizen complaint in reference to Washington County Complaint #17-22192 on Thursday, June 15, 2017, from an area resident who called 9-1-1 at 8:53 a.m. and spoke with a Washington County Sheriff's Office dispatcher. The subject, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who resides and operates a farm at [REDACTED] Dublin Drive, complained about the airship operating from the airstrip approximately .5 miles west of his residence and farm. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] commented to the dispatcher, "They just landed a great big blimp off at the property next to me and its scaring the living shit out of my cattle." [REDACTED] [REDACTED] commented, "They were inflating it over there and now its up there hovering, and I have cattle and its scaring the hell out of them." [REDACTED] [REDACTED] goes on to describe the blimp and describes that it is flying as part of the Erin Hills Golf

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Tournament.

After providing his name, address and cell phone number to the dispatcher, [REDACTED] comments to the dispatcher, "Can I shoot the son-of-a-bitch down?" [REDACTED] tone of voice was more sarcastic than threatening and he was told no and that a squad would be sent over right away. [REDACTED] responded, "Thank you."

DEPUTY VIRCHOW arrived within 5 to 10 minutes of [REDACTED] call and met with [REDACTED] at his residence. [REDACTED] was upset that the airship was using the grass airstrip at [REDACTED] Hy. 83 and insisted that the airship would need permits and the owner of the airstrip, [REDACTED] is on the Erin Town Board and may have somehow circumvented the location ordinances or permits required to allow the airship to operate from the airstrip.

DEPUTY VIRCHOW was aware of the comment [REDACTED] made about shooting the airship. DEPUTY VIRCHOW addressed the comments [REDACTED] made to the dispatcher. DEPUTY VIRCHOW later advised that [REDACTED] never made that comment in his presence. DEPUTY VIRCHOW advised [REDACTED] to contact the FAA to inquire about necessary permits and he advised [REDACTED] that he would check to see if town ordinance would cover the issue.

DEPUTY VIRCHOW then followed up with the owner of the airstrip and spoke with the crew chief, [REDACTED] at approximately 9:25 a.m.

DEPUTY VIRCHOW was advised by CREW CHIEF [REDACTED] they would be flying the airship another thirty to forty-five minutes depending upon the weather conditions and that there were higher than expected winds later this morning and conditions were being monitored.

DEPUTY VIRCHOW observed the airship in the air and noted the rudder functioning. DEPUTY VIRCHOW followed up with [REDACTED] owner of the airstrip and the then with the Erin Town Clerk. There were no violations of FAA, state or local regulations and the airship was operating legally.

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE

According to the computer-aided dispatch screen, DEPUTY VIRCHOW was entering names of subjects from the previous complaint about the airship into the call screen at 10:33 a.m. At 11:15 a.m. Dispatch received the first of a series of 9-1-1 calls reporting the airship caught fire and crashed in the area east of Hy. 83 and south of Hy. 167/Holy Hill Road. DEPUTY VIRCHOW responded from Erin Town Hall which is approximately three-quarters of a mile to the north of the airstrip. DEPUTY L'ALLIER radioed that a squad should try to access the crash site from Dublin Drive.

DEPUTY VIRCHOW responded directly back to the [REDACTED] residence and farm at

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█████ Dublin Drive and arrived at 11:23 a.m. DEPUTY VIRCHOW immediately made contact with █████ █████ son, █████ █████ and was advised a squad car would not be able to access the crash site due to the condition of the field and farm lanes. █████ █████ drove DEPUTY VIRCHOW in a pickup truck down a farm lane west towards the crash site and DEPUTY VIRCHOW began walking the rest of the way.

DEPUTY VIRCHOW comments in his supplement the crash site is about thirty minutes away from the █████ residence by walking. By the time DEPUTY VIRCHOW was close to the crash other emergency responders were at the site and he was advised to stay clear of the site due to the fire and explosions. After the pilot was evacuated from the crash site and the area was secure, DEPUTY VIRCHOW located some debris in the field including a compromised LP fuel tank.

DEPUTY VIRCHOW was directed to re-interview █████ █████ based upon the prior complaint and his comments to the 9-1-1 dispatcher. It had taken DEPUTY VIRCHOW thirty minutes to walk through the field to the crash site and he was no longer near his squad. He met with a Milwaukee Police Department supervisor and an FBI agent that were onsite as part of the security detail for the golf event. They traveled back to the █████ residence and farm on Dublin Drive.

█████ █████ said he was at the residence in his bedroom when he heard the two explosions. He said his father █████ █████ had calmed down after talking with DEPUTY VIRCHOW and contacting the FAA and then had left to attend the Erin Golf event.

When DETECTIVE DEMLER and I arrived we were assigned the task of locating and interviewing █████ █████ I was advised by an FBI agent that █████ █████ had been contacted and stated he was on the Erin Hills Golf Course as a spectator. █████ █████ was requested to respond to the area of the Joint Operation Center (JOC). DETECTIVE DEMLER and I responded to the JOC and interviewed █████ █████

I introduced myself and DETECTIVE DEMLER as detectives for Washington County Sheriff's Office and I explained that I would like to talk to him about some events of the day. █████ █████ was cooperative and agreed to speak with us. We were provided an air conditioned building for the interview. █████ █████ was accompanied by his sister, █████ █████ █████ was not at █████ residence when he complained about the airship and they met up afterwards to attend the golf event. I requested that █████ leave the building so I could speak with █████ alone and she agreed.

I interviewed █████ with DETECTIVE DEMLER, DEPUTY VIRCHOW and an FBI agent present. █████ said he knew someone would want to speak with him and I asked him why. He responded he expected someone would want to talk with him

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due to the complaint he made and some comments he made earlier about the airship. I asked what kind of a comment he made. [REDACTED] said he told someone he was going to shoot the blimp down. I asked him who he made the comment to and [REDACTED] said he did not remember if he told the deputy or the dispatcher.

I asked him why he would say that. [REDACTED] said he was upset that the blimp was flying from the airstrip to the west of his property. He said he did not believe the blimp could legally fly from the airstrip and did not think proper permits had been obtained. [REDACTED] said he has lived at the farm for sixty-one years and the airstrip is a private airstrip. He said he did not have as much of a problem with the airship as he did with the property and airstrip owner. He described the ongoing conflict with the owner, [REDACTED] about aircraft using the landing strip. He said the noise from aircraft disturb his cattle and cause problems when his cattle or deer are spooked and break the fences. He said his cattle react badly to hot-air balloons.

[REDACTED] said he tried to contact the FAA in Milwaukee and when he could not get through he called the Sheriff's Office to complain. He set he met with the deputy and expressed his concerns and later, around 9:30 a.m., he talked on the phone with someone from the FAA about permits. He said he considered the issue over and intended to try to resolve the issues with the town board at a later time.

I asked [REDACTED] about his comment to shoot the airship. [REDACTED] said he was not serious and he had no intention to shoot the airship. He said this was an off-hand comment he made because he was frustrated.

I asked what types of guns he owns and [REDACTED] described owning two .22-caliber rifles, a 12-gauge shotgun and a .410-gauge shotgun and his son [REDACTED] owns a .223 scoped rifle, a shotgun and a 9-mm handgun. I asked [REDACTED] if there was some reason later if I wanted to look at the guns would he allow me to do that. [REDACTED] said he had no problem with that and commented he understood the concern about his comment in light of the airship crash.

[REDACTED] said that after talking with the deputies and the FAA he met with his sister around 10 a.m. and they went to attend the Erin Hills Golf event. He said they were screened by security and entered the event through the main gate. [REDACTED] and his sister, [REDACTED] had Thursday, June 15, 2017, gallery passes. [REDACTED] gallery pass is 74TGP08140 and [REDACTED] gallery pass is 74TGP08141.

I photographed the passes and learned both passes were scanned in at the main gate at 10:38 a.m. The time of the first 9-1-1 call reporting the airship in distress is 11:15 a.m.

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The main gate is approximately one mile west/northwest from the airstrip where the airship encountered the first problems. The [REDACTED] residence is approximately .52 miles or nine hundred sixteen yards east/southeast from the airstrip where the airship encountered the first problems.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] was asked directly if he shot at the airship and he said he did not. He was asked directly if he tampered with the airship or interfered in its flight operations in anyway and he said he did not. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was cooperative during my interview and completed a written and signed statement that I will attach to this case.

PHOTO LOG - DETECTIVE KLOPFENSTEIN

I photographed the gallery passes and then responded to the crash scene. I took overall photos of the crash scene and did not manipulate or gather any evidence. The scene was preserved for the FAA and NTSB investigators.

1. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] gallery pass
2. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] gallery pass
3. Field area with evidence flags to the west of impact site
4. Field area with evidence flags to the west of impact site
5. Field area with evidence flags to the west of impact site
6. Field area with evidence flags to the west of impact site
7. Field area with evidence flags to the west of impact site
8. Field area with evidence flags to the west of impact site
9. Area of impact
10. Area of impact
11. Evidence flags in field
12. Evidence flags in field
13. Evidence flags in field
14. Evidence flags in field
15. Airship debris
16. Airship debris
17. Airship debris
18. Gondola wreckage
19. Gondola wreckage
20. Gondola wreckage
21. Gondola and envelope wreckage
22. Gondola and envelope wreckage
23. Gondola wreckage
24. Gondola and envelope wreckage
25. Gondola and envelope wreckage
26. Envelope wreckage
27. Envelope wreckage
28. Airship debris
29. Airship debris

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30. Airship debris

31. Airship debris

I later burned all the photographs taken during my investigation onto a CD-R disc and verified that the disc burned properly then filed this disc following Sheriff's Office procedures.

DEPUTY LAGOSH took initial photographs of the airship crash site, filed these photos and completed a supplement for this case.

DEPUTY KAPLA obtained photographs from Wisconsin State Patrol Troop [REDACTED] Johnson which includes eleven photographs of the airship crash site.

PHOTO LOG - DEPUTY KAPLA/TROOPER JOHNSON

1. Airship crash site
2. Airship crash site
3. Airship crash site
4. Airship crash site
5. Airship crash site
6. Airship crash site
7. Airship crash site
8. Airship crash site
9. Airship crash site
10. Airship crash site
11. Airship crash site

I later burned all of these photographs taken onto a CD-R disc, verified that the disc burned properly and filed this disc following Sheriff's Office procedures.

WITNESS STATEMENTS

Thursday, June 15, 2017, DETECTIVE DEMLER conducted a phone interview of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] the crew chief for the airship.

DETECTIVE DEMLER and I then interviewed the pilot of the airship, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] at Froedtert Hospital in Milwaukee. DETECTIVE DEMLER will document the information learned in a supplement.

During the course of this investigation DEPUTY VIRCHOW, DEPUTY L'ALLIER, and DEPUTY LAGOSH took the opportunity to speak with airship ground crew members and witnesses and obtained statements. The deputies will document the information learned in separate supplements.

WITNESS [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

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On Thursday, June 15, 2017, DEPUTY LAGOSH interviewed [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and obtained a written statement from [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] were sitting at the end of their driveway at [REDACTED] Terry Road which is approximately 1.16 miles northwest of the airstrip. I reviewed DEPUTY LAGOSH'S supplement and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] statement.

On Saturday, June 17, 2017, I conducted a follow-up phone interview with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to clarify some information. [REDACTED] was watching the airship and said the pilot was maneuvering the airship well in slow steady flight. He said the airship did not display any indication of problems and described the winds as gusty.

The airship ground crew chief described the airships pre-crash location as above and close to the north end of the grass airstrip and the orientation of the airship as facing and flying in a southwest direction.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] advised he has lived in the area all of his life and described the airship location as above the airfield and also described the orientation of the airship as facing and flying in a southwest direction.

[REDACTED] said he had a perpendicular view of the right side of the airship and could see the complete right-side profile including the nose, gondola, envelope and tail fins. [REDACTED] said that he could hear the engine as the pilot was adjusting the airship position.

I asked [REDACTED] if he heard any other noise or sound coming from the airship during flight and he said the only other noise he heard during flight was when the canvas started on fire. He said he heard explosions but this was after the airships impact with the ground.

[REDACTED] said the airship descended to the ground behind a tree line and he did not see the fire or explosions on the ground but could see the smoke. [REDACTED] said that he saw the top center of the airship envelope "billow or buckle into a quarter moon shape" which he described as "almost dead center" at the top profile of the envelope. I asked [REDACTED] to estimate how far the top buckled downward. He said that he could only estimate the top buckled "about four feet" downward due to the distance and his perspective. He clarified this and said that the very top profile of the envelope buckled downward initially and then the airship regained its shape and then again collapsed in the center "taking a banana shape." He said the center collapsed downward a second time and the airship then tipped forward slowly to ultimately what he estimated was a ten-degree angle to the ground.

[REDACTED] said as the front of the airship dipped forward and down he observed seeing a three to five foot diameter flash and then flame in the envelope as it caught fire. He said the airship then drifted southwest away from him and he lost sight of the airship behind a tree line and did not see the impact

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with the ground but heard explosions and saw smoke.

WITNESS [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

On Monday, June 19, 2017, I met with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] at her residence to interview her regarding her observations of the airship. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] resides at [REDACTED] Dublin Drive, the first residence north of the [REDACTED] residence and farm approximately one hundred thirty-five yards to the north. The [REDACTED] residence is located on the east side of Dublin Drive and the front of the residence faces to the west toward the area of the airship's flight operations.

[REDACTED] her daughter-in-law [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and her grandchildren had been outside watching the airship all morning which she estimated was about two hours. She said they all went back into the house for lunch and were watching the airship from the house. The residence has a large bay window with a window seat and two windows that were open on either side of the large bay window. [REDACTED] grandchildren were sitting on the window seat watching the airship as it was landing. There is an open area in the tree line in front of her residence and the bay window. [REDACTED] indicates, "My dining room faces the area where we could continue to watch the blimp clearly."

[REDACTED] said the airship appeared to be landing and had come down to the top of the tree line and then rose back up. She said she and her daughter-in-law were standing at the window watching because they thought the airship was trying to land "so we watched it carefully."

I asked [REDACTED] if she heard any noises at all when the airship began to have trouble. She said the only sound she heard was the engine as the pilot was maneuvering the airship. She comments in her statement, "We didn't hear any sounds. but suddenly we saw the blimp begin to crinkle and elongate. Then we saw flames and smoke and could see it coming down." [REDACTED] said she saw something fall off of the airship and she thought someone had jumped or parachuted from the airship. [REDACTED] said she called 9-1-1 and the airship had been down below the tree line for a while and then she heard two explosions and she saw a lot of black smoke.

[REDACTED] said her daughter-in-law [REDACTED] quickly ran outside to her car and drove to the north to see if she could help. [REDACTED] said [REDACTED] had taken a short video of the airship on the ground burning and several photos while it had been flying with her cell phone. [REDACTED] facilitated a phone call to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] was unavailable at this time so I made arrangements to meet with her on Tuesday, June 19, 2017.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] provided me with a written and signed two-page statement that will be attached to this case.

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I also obtained the 9-1-1 call of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] contacting the Sheriff's Office to report the airship crash and the explosions. I have burned a copy of [REDACTED] 9-1-1 call to a CD-R disc and entered this disc into Evidence Inventory.

WITNESS [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

On Tuesday, June 20, 2017, I met with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] said that she was staying with her children for the week at her mother-in-law's residence at [REDACTED] Dublin Drive. [REDACTED] lives just north of [REDACTED] and had rented her residence out to one of the golfers participating in the golf event.

[REDACTED] said she and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] children were outside in the front yard at [REDACTED] residence and had been watching the airship. She said [REDACTED] residence faces west and there is an opening in the tree line and the airship was easily seen. [REDACTED] said she took several photos of the airship while it was flying. [REDACTED] commented it was windy and she could hear the engine of the airship turn on and off while the pilot was maneuvering and changing position.

I asked if the airship was flying around and [REDACTED] said it was generally always in the same place over the airfield but would adjust its position for the wind.

[REDACTED] said they went inside the house to eat lunch and the children were sitting on the window seat of [REDACTED] dining room bay window watching the airship. [REDACTED] said the dining room bay window faces to the west and they could see the airship above the tree line. [REDACTED] said she was standing at the window watching also and then the airship descended to just above the tree line and they thought it was going to land.

[REDACTED] said the airship then went back up in the air "at a fairly fast rate." She described the airship rising faster than she had seen it before. She explained that previously the airship rose, descended and flew slow and steady when she saw it flying and when it rose this time it rose at a faster rate.

[REDACTED] showed me some photos she had taken while they were outside in the front yard at [REDACTED] residence. [REDACTED] said the airship was oriented in generally the same direction when they were watching through the front bay window which would be facing west/southwest. The view [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had of the airship would generally be the back fins and left side of the airship.

[REDACTED] had four photographs and one video. One of the photographs is of the airship above her residence that a friend of hers texted to her and the orientation of the airship in that photo is also generally facing west/southwest.

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██████ said that when the airship went back up in the air she could hear the engine of the airship and she noticed a cord drop from the airship toward the ground. I asked ██████ if she heard any other noises while the airship was flying, descending, rising again or when it started to deflate. ANGEAL said there were no other noises other than the engine.

She said just after she saw the cord drop from the airship they noticed the airship start to deflate. She commented they could tell something was wrong with the airship and then could see the material of the envelope melting and saw flame. ██████ said ██████ called 9-1-1 and the airship went down behind the tree line.

██████ said she got into her car and drove to her brother-in-law's house, just north of ██████ residence, to see if she could help. She ran out into an adjacent field and heard two explosions. She could not see the airship at the time of the explosions due to another tree line obscuring her vision. She said by the time she reached the tree line and could see the airship people were already there helping. ██████ said she took a short video of the airship which depicts the airship smoldering and smoke rising from the wreckage.

██████ said as she was walking she saw ██████ ██████ driving his pickup truck with a Sheriff's deputy in the truck driving toward the crash site. She said they were driving toward the crash site and were told to back up because the fire was still burning.

██████ said she did not see or hear anything that would have caused the airship to crash. ██████ ██████ provided me with a written and signed two-page statement that will be attached to this case.

WEATHER CONDITIONS

I took the opportunity to review weather data locating data for Weather Station Erin Hills and Hartford KWIHARTF24 from Weather Underground for Thursday, June 15, 2017. The airship took off from the airstrip for its second flight approximately 11 a.m. The time of the first 9-1-1 call reporting the airship in distress is 11:15 a.m.

10:57 a.m. - Temperature: 81.7 Degrees Fahrenheit
Dew Point: 71 Degrees Fahrenheit
Humidity: 70 Percent
Wind: West, 11.9 Miles Per Hour

11:13 a.m. - Temperature: 82.4 Degrees Fahrenheit
Dew Point: 70.3 Degrees Fahrenheit
Humidity: 67 Percent
Wind: West, 14.5 Miles Per Hour

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I printed a copy of the weather data for Thursday, June 15, 2016, 10:06 a.m. through 11:39 a.m. to be attached to this case.

SCENE DESCRIPTION

I conducted an initial scene examination and the scene was ultimately turned over to the FAA and NTSB investigators.

Using Google Earth I determined the grass airstrip runs north/south and is approximately one thousand three hundred feet long and seventy feet wide. I plotted the locations of the [REDACTED] farm, the airship crash site, the airstrip, the approximate location of the ground crew and the airship pre-crash, the Erin Hills Golf Course and main entrance gate and the location of witness [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and witnesses [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

The airstrip is approximately one miles east of the Erin Hills Golf Course in a rural area of Washington County, east of Hy. 83, south of Hy. 167/Holy Hill Road. The airship encountered its failure at the north end of the grass airstrip and drifted approximately three hundred thirty yards in a southeast direction to the crash site. The airship crash site is in a field approximately one-half mile from the nearest road access. The airship impact and explosion was in tall grass in the field. I am unaware of any damage or injury other than to the airship and the pilot.

SCENE FOLLOW UP

On Saturday, June 17, 2017, I contacted the owner of the grass airstrip at [REDACTED] Hy. 83, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and received permission to search the area of the airstrip. DETECTIVE DEMLER and I walked the airstrip and located nothing of evidentiary value.

PHOTO LOG - SCENE FOLLOW UP

- 32. Airstrip facing northwest
- 33. Airstrip facing north
- 34. Airstrip facing northeast
- 35. Airstrip facing south
- 36. Airstrip facing southeast
- 37. Airstrip facing southeast toward crash site

I burned the photographs taken of the airstrip follow up with my initial investigation photographs onto a CD-R disc, verified that the disc burned properly and then filed this disc following Sheriff's Office procedures.

CONCLUSION

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The investigation into the airship crash on Thursday, June 15, 2017, revealed there was likely structural or mechanical failure to the envelope of the airship causing the air to release and the airship to descend rapidly. The winds were strong and possibly gusting approximately ten to fifteen minutes into the flight. The airship had possibly three panels of the envelope fail causing the airship to nose downward. The pilot implemented emergency descent procedures. It is believed fire from residual burning of the burners caught the canvas envelope material to start on fire. The airship descended rapidly and crashed to the ground. The pilot sustained injury and was airlifted by Flight for Life to the hospital. The airship burned and after impact with the ground at least two LP fuel tanks exploded.

The pre-crash orientation of the airship was generally in a southwest direction on the north side of the landing strip. The airship encountered its failure at the north end of the grass airstrip and drifted approximately three hundred thirty yards in a southeast direction to the crash site.

A witness with a perpendicular view of the right side of the airship reported observing the top center of the airship envelope buckle into a quarter moon shape almost dead center at the top of the envelope then reports the airship regained its shape then collapsed in the center causing the airship to tip forward and ultimately what he estimated was a ten-degree angle to the ground. The witness reported seeing a three to five foot flash and then flame in the envelope as it caught fire.

INVESTIGATION STATUS

The Washington County Sheriff's Office investigation is closed. There is no indication or evidence that intentional human involvement is directly or indirectly involved in the cause of the airship crash operating from a grass airstrip located at [REDACTED] Hy. 83, Town of Erin, Washington County, Wisconsin, on Thursday, June 15, 2017.

On Sunday, June 18, 2017, I contacted [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] wife, to inquire about his condition and advise her of the disposition of the Washington County Sheriff's Office investigation. I previously provided her with my contact information in the event there are questions or concerns in the future.

On Sunday, June 18, 2017, I contacted [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and advised him of the disposition of the Washington County Sheriff's Office investigation. I provided the investigation case number and advised that investigative materials would be available within the next week through the Sheriff's Office Records Division.

I have consulted with NTSB Investigator Pam Sullivan and will be forwarding her information and reports from the Washington County Sheriff's Office

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investigation. The origin and cause of the airship failure will be investigated by FAA and NTSB.

I have no further information at this time.

ATTACHMENTS

- * PENFED airship photos (1 page)
- * Airship gondola photos (1 page)
- * Airship crash photos (2 pages)
- * Weather data for Thursday, June 15, 2017 (2 pages)
- * Google Earth Pin Maps (3 pages)
- * Written Statement - [REDACTED] (1 page)
- * Written Statement - [REDACTED] (2 pages)
- * Written Statement - [REDACTED] (2 pages)
- * Investigation photographs - DETECTIVE KLOPFENSTEIN - CD-R photo disc
- * Investigation photographs - DEPUTY LAGOSH - CD-R photo disc
- * Investigation photographs - DEPUTY KAPLA (TROOPER JOHNSON) - CD-R photo disc
- * 9-1-1 recorded calls - five calls and [REDACTED] call - CD-R disc (Evidence Inventory)
- * Airship crash related videos - 7 videos - CD-R disc (Evidence Inventory)
- * 9-1-1 recorded call - [REDACTED] - CD-R (Evidence Inventory)
- * Photos and Video - [REDACTED] - CD-R (Evidence Inventory)

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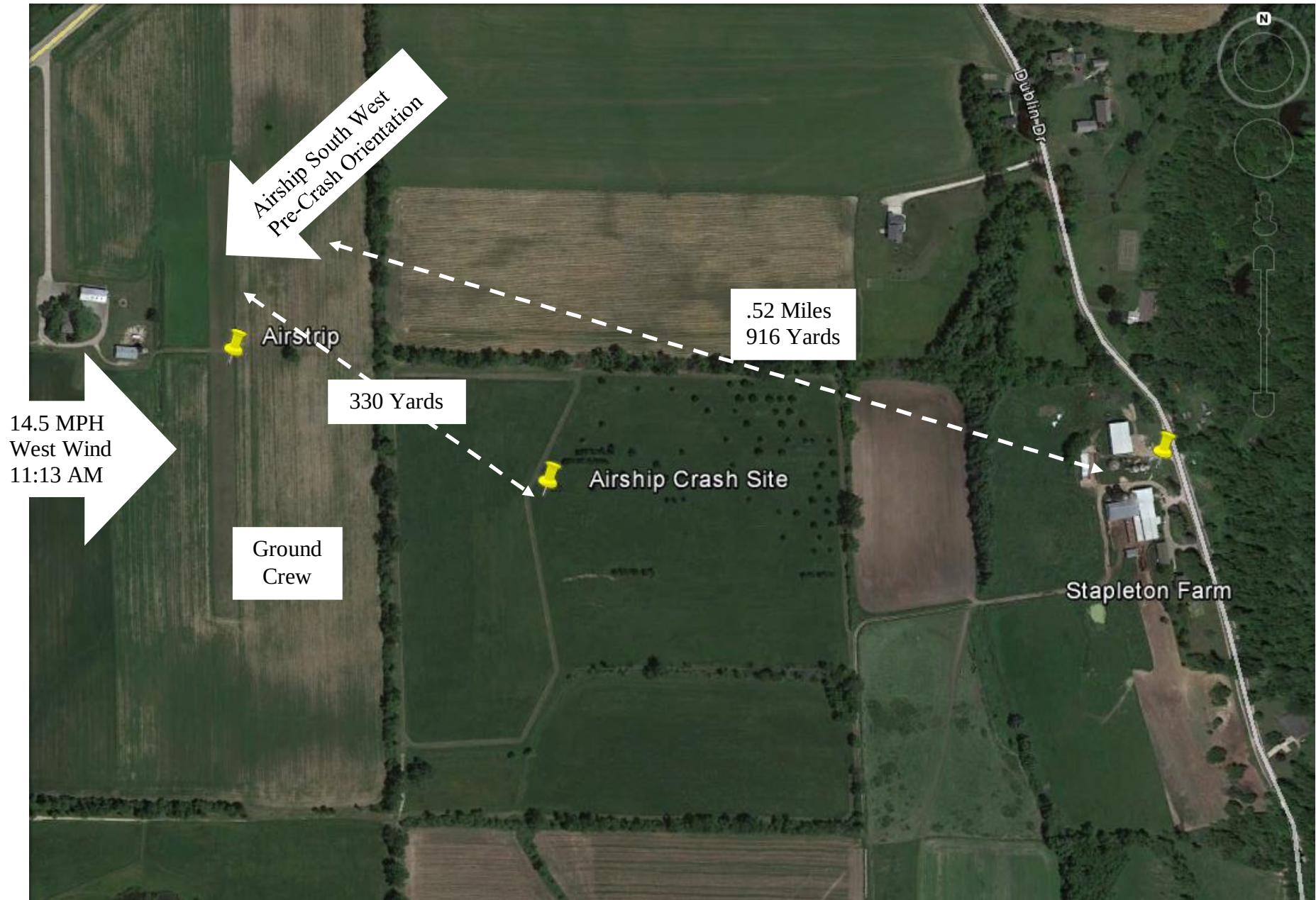
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NOT TO SCALE