

Pilot: John Martin

- Duty Day started at 1900 on 8/5/2023 (12hr shift /1900-0700) (First Flight of Shift)
- Helmet: Gallet H250 (individually owned)
- Seat: Front Right (Pilot's Seat)
- NVG status: In use during the time of the accident (Anvis-9 / company supplied)

Statement:

"6AUG2023 Approximately 0117 hours Hancock County (138 degrees – 17NM from Base) Summary of incident – Dispatched to scene flight in Hancock County, IL, departed at 0050. Received coordinates enroute, contact with Carthage Fire Department 10 NM from scene, received LZ brief – East/West gravel road with no wires, cornfields to the North and South, fence on south side of road. The following conducted under HNVGO flight – Approached scene from the NW, conducted high recon at approximately 700" AGL in a left-hand orbit, confirming LZ brief received from ground contact. Approached from North to South perpendicular to the road. During descent (low recon), verified no poles or wires and visual contact with ground personnel. I came to a 10' hover over the road. We identified the fence and direction of the scene, noting ditches on either side of the road. I cleared the tail to the left, crew acknowledged, and initiated a right pedal turn. I planned to land so the medic/patient door was towards the scene to provide visual contact with medical and EMS personnel departing and entering the rotor system and aid in patient loading. My heading was 310 degrees when I initiated the descent towards the ground. As I was landing, I heard a pop and felt feedback in the tail rotor pedals. I announced we hit the fence, aircraft began to rotate to the right, full left pedal had no effect. I lowered the collective immediately and initiated an emergency shutdown. Final heading of aircraft approximately 360 degrees (perpendicular to the road), not intended landed direction. We verified we were all okay. Medical Crew immediately provided medical care, accompanying Hancock County EMS to Carthage Memorial Hospital. [REDACTED] 6AUG2023 (0600 hours)"

Flight Nurse: Amanda Kane

- Duty Day started at 0700 on 8/7/2023 (24hr Shift) (Second Flight of Shift)
- Helmet: Gentex Alpha Eagle (individually owned)
- Seat: Rear Left Seat
- NVG Status: In use during the time of the accident (Anvis-9 / company supplied)

Statement:

"AEL 59 was responding to a scene call approximately around 0100 this morning outside of Carthage, IL in Hancock County. On arrival at the overhead of the scene, I was wearing my NVGs along with the pilot. Carthage fire gave us a description of the landing zone, advising that there are no wires and that we would be landing just east of the accident on a gravel road with cornfields on both sides of the road. We circled around to the left to view the whole landing zone, and no power lines were seen. We made the decision to come in from the north. As we were on final, we called out the ditches on both sides of the gravel road and a fence line that was on the south side of the road, but I thought the fence row was farther away than it actually was. We came to a hover, and the pilot cleared the tail left before we started to turn to the left. As we were turning the tail left, the pilot was trying to place the patient door toward the scene of the accident. That is when I started to hear an abnormal sound coming from the tail rotor area. The pilot stated that we possibly hit something with our tail rotor. The pilot then placed the aircraft onto the ground and immediately did an emergency shutdown. After completing the shutdown, all medical crew exited the aircraft. After making sure the pilot was okay, we took our equipment and provided treatment to the patient and went by ground to the local hospital."

Thank you, Amanda Kane

Flight Medic: Caitlin Tucker

- Duty Day started at 0700 on 8/7/2023 (24hr Shift) (Second Flight of Shift)
- Helmet: Gentex SPH-5 Helmet (Company provided)
- Seat: Rear Right Seat
- NVG Status: Unaided during the accident

Statement:

On 8/6/23 at approximately 12:40, AEL59 was dispatched to a scene flight located in Hancock County, just outside Carthage, Illinois. John Martian (pilot), Amanda Kane (flight medic), and myself Caitlin Tucker (flight nurse) were making final approach to the scene at around 0100. Flight medic and pilot were in NVG's. We received description of landing zone from ground contact (firefighter) about 5 minutes out, and the firefighter mentioned no wires present on gravel road that they had chosen for LZ. Pilot then led an additional landing brief, discussing the need to stay on high alert for wires—flight medic and myself agreed. We circled to the left to scope out scene and pilot made the decision to come in north to the landing zone after no wires or immediate threats were identified. On final approach, flight paramedic and myself were calling out what we saw—a ditch on either side of the road with a small embankment and wire fence on top of south side. Pilot came to a hover before clearing tail to left and when helicopter was completing turn, there was an abnormal crunching noise. Our pilot immediately stated that we struck something with the rotor. Before we knew it, he had landed the aircraft safely and already initiated emergency shutdown. Flight medic, pilot and myself remained in the aircraft until engines were off and shutdown was completed. Before exiting the aircraft, our pilot asked if we were okay, to which we replied that we were. Once we confirmed our pilot was okay, we exited the aircraft and confirmed those around the landing zone were okay. After that confirmation, the flight medic and myself gathered our gear and immediately provided care to our patient. We then chose to accompany patient and EMS crew to the hospital chosen. Pilot remained with the aircraft.

Thank You,
Caitlin