

N2890SL WITNESS STATEMENT RYAN FRETZ

AFTER THE AIRCRAFT STARTED, IT APPEARED TO HAVE A NORMAL VERTICUE DEPARTURE FROM A HOVER. AT ABOUT 20 TO 30 FEET AGL I BELIEVE THE AIRCRAFTS TAILROTOR CAME INTO CONTACT WITH THE TREE ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE LZ. THE AIRCRAFT CONTINUED TO CLIMB UNTIL THE "TRIMMING" NOISE GOT VERY LOUD. THERE WAS A LOUD BANG. AIRCRAFT IMMEDIATELY YAWED TO THE LEFT WITH A FULL REVOLUTION BEFORE IMPACT WITH THE GROUND. I IMMEDIATELY WENT TO HELP OCCUPANTS ON BOARD AND HIT THE FUEL SHUTOFF VALVES ON THE FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEM AND MOVED THE POWER CONTROLLERS TO OFF POSITION. CREW MEMBERS WERE THEN REMOVED FROM THE AIRCRAFT.

THE EVENTS STATED ABOVE ARE RECALLED TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FEEL FREE TO REACH OUT.

RYAN FRETZ



Statement on ARCH 1 Incident

I am the Base Outreach Coordinator and a Flight Nurse at the ARCH 1 base in Granite City, IL. I scheduled a Landing Zone class for Hartford Fire Department on the evening of April 24th. The class was scheduled from 1800 to 2000. The classroom portion went well. There was some delay in getting the aircraft up for the hands-on portion of the class due to the duty crew getting dispatched on a flight. I kept in touch with Ryan to see when the aircraft may be available. However, he said it would likely be after pilot shift change. I asked Ryan to discuss the PR event with the oncoming night pilot, Steven, and see if he would be agreeable to land at the event. Ryan called me back and said Steven would be agreeable to land. Steven and the duty crew landed at the PR event without incident and Hartford Fire Department was able to complete the hands-on portion of the class.

I went to the front of the fire department with the fire crew and Ryan to watch the duty crew lift and take off. I saw the aircraft lift and shortly after it appeared that the tail of the aircraft made contact with a tree. The aircraft appeared to crash and catch fire. I am unsure if the rotors were still moving, however Ryan and I ran towards the aircraft to help with extricating the crew. I saw Steven in the front right seat and assisted him with exiting and moving away from the aircraft. It looked like his door was already open and he removed his helmet. I stuck my head in the back of the aircraft to check on Jason, but I did not see him. It appeared that he was able to extricate himself. There was significant smoke in the rear compartment and a strong smell of Jet fuel. I went to the other side of the aircraft, and I saw Ryan assisting Chase. Chase was in the front left seat and his door was stuck. The jettison did not work, and Chase was unable to remove himself from the aircraft. Ryan pulled the door open by ripping and tugging on it. Then we assisted Chase out of the aircraft.

Shortly after we pulled Chase out, the fire in the aircraft became considerably larger. I continued to try to move Chase away from the burning aircraft. At one point Ryan and someone from Hartford Fire were able to help me move both Chase and Jason to a safe area. I completed an MCI triage and rendered medical care to Chase, Jason, and Steven. Local EMS arrived, I gave report on what care I had provided. Then, I rode in the ambulance with Chase to the hospital.



**HARTFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT
VOLUNTARY STATEMENT
(Not Under Arrest)**

I was standing on the fire department's front apron as Arch 1 began pre-flight procedures. As the helicopter was taking off I faced away to avoid getting dust/debris in my eyes. I heard an impact noise which caused me to glance over and I noticed the helicopter was now facing a different heading, followed by the absence of rotor noise ^{or} as the helicopter was coming down. I immediately ^{or} ran to my gear locker to don my bunker gear and went to the crash site. I saw the occupants getting tended to and began assisting with fire suppression activities. No fire was immediately spotted until the engine was placed into pump. As lines were stretched, I noticed a small flame was visible and started to quickly grow. Two 1 3/4" lines were used to suppress the fire. Mutual aid depts began to arrive and WRED was tasked with foam from their dedicated foam unit while our engine was still getting primed with foam. I ensured all fire was extinguished and a foam blanket was applied. The rest of the incident I maintained scene security and ensured all evidence and pieces of the helicopter remained in place and weren't removed or moved from their original position.

I have read each page of this statement consisting of _____ page(s). Each page of which bears my signature and corrections if any bear my initials and I certify that the facts contained herein are true and correct.

Dated at Hartford Police Department, this 25 day of April 20 25.

Witness

Signature of person giving voluntary statement



**HARTFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT
VOLUNTARY STATEMENT
(Not Under Arrest)**

On 4-24-25 in the evening Hartford Fire had a training event with ABC H. Air Methods about Landing Zone. A Helicopter landed at approximately 9:20 in the field to the south of the station. At approximately 9:50 the helicopter took off. It reached about 50 or 60 feet when the tail rotor struck a tree. The helicopter spun about 3 times & then made a hard landing on the left side. At that time I called on the radio to Dispatch & asked for 3 ambulances & mutual aid for a helicopter crash. I ran over to the scene to discover one patient sitting upright holding his head & one laying on the ground. I called out for C collars & turned over care to an EMT. I ran back to the station & packed my gear. At that time, I returned to the scene & called out for a tagline from our truck. At that point a small fire had started under the aircraft & water was put on the fire. The fire advanced & we dug out a second line. The fire was quickly extinguished. Wood River, Roxana, & South Roxana arrived on scene for assistance. Alton Ambulance & Survival Flight Ambulance arrived & took over patient care. 3 patients were transported to Trauma centers in St. Louis. Wood River Fire applied Foam on the incident. At this time incident is secure. Fire is out & patients are transported.

I have read each page of this statement consisting of 1 page(s). Each page of which bears my signature and corrections if any bear my initials and I certify that the facts contained herein are true and correct.

Dated at Hartford Police Department, this 25 day of April 2025.

Witness

Signature of person giving voluntary statement



**HARTFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT
VOLUNTARY STATEMENT
(Not Under Arrest)**

Arch Air Methods was at Hartford Fire Department for Landing Zone class. After the classroom portion of the class Arch one landed for demo of emergency procedure of the helicopter when caved to scene. After training concluded the helicopter went to take off and struck the tree south of where the helicopter landed for the demo causing it to fall^{over} and crash. I then put my gear on and responded to assist the crew where I worked with other members of the Fire Department and the Teacher of the training class to get the crew to a safe location to treat injuries after the helicopter crashed & caught on fire. That's why the members of the crew were moved. I assisted with holding C-spine on one pt. and gave report to arriving ground ambulances with pt status and directed them to the most critical. I then assisted packaging and providing light and gathering pt info for the ambulance. I then got to work after the pt's were gone to assist anywhere I could.

I have read each page of this statement consisting of ____ page(s). Each page of which bears my signature and corrections if any bear my initials and I certify that the facts contained herein are true and correct.

Dated at April Hartford Police, this 25th day of April 2025.

Witness

Signature of person giving voluntary statement



HARTFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT
VOLUNTARY STATEMENT
(Not Under Arrest)

arch med was at Hartford for a Landing Zone
Training and when to ~~call~~ call. They landed with
out issue and went over if something was
to happen, during take off they clipped
the top of a tree then it spun twice
Then crashed and ~~the~~ the HFD
responded the class with EMS and
fire suppression after all victims were
clear

I have read each page of this statement consisting of 1 page(s). Each page of which bears my signature and corrections if any bear my initials and I certify that the facts contained herein are true and correct.

Dated at 4/25/2025, this _____ day of _____ 20____.

Witness

Signature of person giving voluntary statement



**HARTFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT
VOLUNTARY STATEMENT
(Not Under Arrest)**

At some time, ~~Me~~ about 9:00pm +/- 00:10 I finished trailing on how and when to call for a helicopter. No issues happened during takeoff until they were partially in the air when the top blades got intertwined with the branches of a nearby tree. I partially witnessed the loss of control before running into the meeting room. Less than a minute after I donned my bunker gear and ran outside to the incident, walking around and asking other Hartford firemen what help they needed. Most of my time was spent sitting around, I did preform no hands-on assistance to any of the injured crewmen; the only fire protection work I preformed was operating a hose for less than minute before having the hose get taken over by someone more experienced.

I have read each page of this statement consisting of 1 page(s). Each page of which bears my signature and corrections if any bear my initials and I certify that the facts contained herein are true and correct.

Dated at Hartford Police Department this 25th day of April 2025.

Witness

Signature of person giving voluntary statement



**HARTFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT
VOLUNTARY STATEMENT
(Not Under Arrest)**

Arch 1 attempted to depart HFD after
a LZ training session. During liftoff the helicopter
struck the limb of a tree and crashed into a
lot across from the firehouse. ~~WMP~~

I have read each page of this statement consisting of 1 page(s). Each page of which bears my signature and
corrections if any bear my initials and I certify that the facts contained herein are true and correct.

Dated at Hartford Police Department this 25 day of April 20 25.

Witness

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Signature of person giving voluntary statement



**HARTFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT
VOLUNTARY STATEMENT
(Not Under Arrest)**

I was standing across the street from the field and watch the Chopper taking off and as he got about 20 or 30 feet caught the side of the tree and slammed to the ground and pieces went flying all over and ran in the station to get my bear

I have read each page of this statement consisting of 1 page(s). Each page of which bears my signature and corrections if any bear my initials and I certify that the facts contained herein are true and correct.

Dated at Hartford PD, this 25 day of April 20 25.

Witness

[Redacted]

[Redacted]
Signature of person giving voluntary statement