

Subject: FW: LACO Sheriff's Air Rescue 5 Down After Action Report.

Date: March 20, 2022 at 1:21:16 PM PDT



10-33, Air Rescue 5 is Down...Attention, Ladies, to the After Action Report to yesterday's news of our Air 5 crash on Hwy 39 just south of the East Fork Road.

First indication I had that anything was wrong, was the 1725hrs call from Charlie Araujo, "Mike, they're saying on the radio that Air 5 is down, have you heard anything??" For the next three hours, my cell phone was melted with all you guys wanting info. I was able to piece together what happened at 1652hrs Saturday afternoon from several different sources. My thanks to Art and Nancy Medina, Dave Rathbun and Sara and Mike Rathbun, Lyn Riley, Brice Stella, Sue Burakowski via Gary Wilkerson and most notably, SEB Capt Tom Giandomenico, who stiffed in a call to me saying he knew that I was going to receive many calls from all of you and wanted me to have the info to

pass along. Just like Air 5 when we were still flying the S-58T, we could rescue the world, pulling entire families out of a car over and no one would ever know. But, hoist one horse out of a ditch, and we were National News. Samey-same, yesterday, Air 5 went National as evidenced by Mike Centofante in Gilbertsville, Kentucky, calling me, "Mike, is that Air Rescue 5 on the news I'm looking at crashed on it's side?" and Bobby Murcott, in Port St. Lucie, Florida, calling me with the question that puts it all into context, "Mike, WTF?" So, here's what I know that's up to date as of this morning.

Air Rescue 5 was responding to a call from County Fire re: a Veh roll-over on Hwy 39 just south of the East Fork. They were attempting to land in a small turnout but raised so much dust, they experienced a brownout which limited their visibility. The Air 5 Driver, Russel Helbing, was bringng it down when, **Blang!** Catastrophic main rotor blade strike on a oak tree branch and the bird rolled up in a ball. Checking the attached photos, they wound up one bounce shy of going 200 feet over the cliff and into the Morris Dam Reservoir. Sheriff Villanueva was correct when he said their survival was nothing short of a miracle. Air 5 2nd seat, Brian Marr, suffered lumbar compression fxs, a scapula fx and a cranial bleed, Air 5 Driver, Russell Helbing, lumbar compression fxs, a facial fx and also a cranial bleed but less severe than Brian's. Paramedic Crew Chief, Kamal Ahmed, sitting in the hatchway, sustained fx ribs and some facial and arm burns from being tethered but still ejected from the aircraft and slammed into the bird's jet engine exhaust manifold as it rolled. Slamned into the exhaust manifold?...Can you spell Holy Shit! The two paramedics, Garrick Twedt and Richard Diliberti, got banged up, but if you remember the motivational poster that states: Fate whispers to the Warrior, "You cannot withstand the storm" and the warrior whispers back, "I am the storm" More specifically, the calm eye of the storm as everything is turning to shit around you, (and, if you are on my list, most of you will bear me out with this, as you have all been there, and done that at one time or another) when things seem to slow down, and you can hear that little voice in your head, "Well, hello, Mr. Reaper, how are you today?" and you realize that you've seen him often enough, that he has become your friend. It has happened to me way more than once while flying Air 5, or diving black water, and when I walked into that liquor store 211 at San Antonio and Union in NWK. My old partner, Bill Kroll, and I have told our stories to my son, Mike, and I know it's happened to him in Iraq and on the job here, also. Warriors, Richard and Garrick, both became the storm, and despite their injuries, worked their way forward to the pilots, shut down the still running engines and extricated both Russell and Brian from the cockpit. I think one of the paramedics ripped his bicep and tricep muscle while pulling them

out but I don't know which one and this info is subject to change. I know our Capt. Amiel would have said, "Hey, they are paramedics, it's their job." But, no. Warriors and nothing short of "My brothers need me, I will stand with them"...Heroic! (But, you Air 5 Drivers still owe them a case of brewskies) Everyone is going to be okay, but the hospital kept both pilots and the crew chief overnight for observation, with Brian Marr in ICU re: the cranial bleed. SEB's Lt. Oscar Barragan, who lives in Glendora, was able to get to the scene in less than 20 minutes and helped secure all the weapons on board the aircraft. The Red Team with Bob (Smitty) Smith's son, Andrew, is pulling security at the hospital.

And, for LACO FD Capt. Sara Rathbun, who would know everyone onboard the two FD Air Squads that responded and transported our Air Crew to the Pomona Valley Hospital Trauma 1 Center, please...THANK them from all of us that work to keep LA County residents safe, for being there for us at the time we most desperately needed them.

Until further info becomes available, that's all I got! Any of you boyz can text or call me with questions if you wish.

Semper Fi, Airborne All The Way, and...Goodnight, Chesty, Wherever You Are.

-M



