

A DAY OF MEMORIES

Today marks five years since the tragic loss of our friends Lance Brabham, John Stumpff, and Cameron Carter, in a helicopter accident near Whittier.

All that night and for the next several days, members of Lifeguard Alaska huddled together, with members of Aeromed International and Transcare frequently at our side. Old friends flew back to join us. Doors and hearts were opened. It was a sad time, but incredibly touching to see everyone come together as one family to support and sustain each other through the search, and the mourning, and the healing that followed.

Although the accident predates LifeMed and didn't involve any of our current vendors, it is an important part of our institutional memory and psyche. Until about two years ago, all LifeMed aircraft bore a decal with a black ribbon, an image of the helicopter, the date of the accident and the initials of the crew. When these were removed LifeMed promised that some other reminder, meaningful to us yet less obvious in meaning to others, would replace that memorial. Today that promise is fulfilled.

The new symbol is a simple field of three blue stars. I have asked the vendors to place these decals on the aircraft and ambulances this morning, positioned such that they will be the last thing you see as you board after doing your walkaround.



For those of us that remember them, the stars may remind us of Lance's quiet excellence, John's explosive laughter, and Cameron's infectious positivity. We'll be reminded of the sacrifice that they and 355 other air medical flight crewmembers have made in the line of duty. And it should serve as a final gut check and reminder that we all must be vigilant, proactive participants in our own safety.

Honoring that memory is important, but it is vital when we say "we will never forget" that as we remember the individuals, we're careful not to neglect the lessons of their experience. We've learned a lot, much has changed since then, and we are a safer operation because of their sacrifice. But still, nothing that we as an organization can do will ever change the fact that you and the decisions you make are the finest safety tool we have.

How can we turn these three stars—these three reminders—into tangible actions? How do we create a narrative that we can share with patients and tense family members who may ask what they represent? Here are three sets of three ideas each—maybe one of these will resonate with you, and you will choose integrate it into your thinking and share it when you are asked about

the stars:

“We have three simple rules: All to Go. One to Say No. Everyone Goes Home.”

“I am safe for me, because if I do not arrive safely I cannot help you. I am safe for my partners, because we look out for each other. And I am safe for those whose lives I touch—my patients and the family I return home to.”

“There are three basic directives when making any decision at LifeMed: 1. Do what's safe. 2. Do what's right for the patient in front of us. 3. Do what's right for LifeMed, so that we can be there for the next patient.”

What we do is risky, but it doesn't have to be dangerous. We are a safe program, but only because we work to be safe on each and every transport. Please remember Lance, John, and Cameron, and watch out a little extra for yourselves and those around you today, tomorrow, and in the weeks that come.

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Many of us will gather this evening to celebrate Lance, John and Cameron. I hope you can join us to salute them. Peanut Farm, 6pm, private room on the old side.

Your assignment this week: In the days and weeks following the accident, members were frustrated watching as Lifeguard struggled to know who to contact for Lance and John, and as their families wrestled through getting their affairs in order. Cameron had a thorough emergency contact packet on file, which made finding his parents much easier. *Have you filled out an emergency contact packet? Does it need to be updated?* Our emergency contact packets are sealed, confidential, and secured away from your employee and medical files. They contain materials to help LifeMed locate your designated contacts and to help you make sure your family understands your wishes should anything ever happen to you. Need one? You can pick one up in [Tim's](#) office, or he'd be happy to send you one.

LifeMed employees: There are approximately FOUR weeks left to get your 2012 [Click Safety](#) topics completed. Have you done yours?

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