

9TH ANNUAL

ARCHIE
LEAGUE
MEDAL OF
SAFETY
AWARDS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SELECTION COMMITTEE	4
ALASKAN REGION	6
CENTRAL REGION	8
EASTERN REGION	10
GREAT LAKES REGION	12
NEW ENGLAND REGION	14
NORTHWEST MOUNTAIN REGION	16
SOUTHERN REGION	18
SOUTHWEST REGION	20
WESTERN PACIFIC REGION	22
HONORABLE MENTION	24
SPONSORS	26

The ability to think quickly and remain calm under pressure while maintaining a situational awareness are unique qualities that air traffic controllers possess. Without their willingness to jump right in to resolve complex situations, offer a reassuring voice to those on the frequency and coordinate their efforts with other controllers, this group of dedicated professionals wouldn't be as successful as they are at maintaining the safety of the National Airspace System.

While many controllers often feel that they are "just doing their job," their hard work is viewed by others as remarkable and extraordinary. Named after the first air traffic controller, this program highlights a variety of "saves." Some involve a team of controllers working together. Others are the result of one controller's efforts.

Air traffic controllers juggle a variety of variables and complex scenarios. Their ability to adapt to ever-changing situations while keeping their composure is a skill they have mastered. As a result of their commitment to perfection, our aviation system is the safest in the world. Tonight we thank all controllers for the tremendous job they do, day in and day out.



**CHUCK
HOGEMAN**

Captain Charles "Chuck" Hogeman was appointed as Aviation Safety Chairman for the Air Line Pilots Association, International (ALPA), on Aug. 1, 2011. He oversees air safety policy for the association's 53,000 represented pilots at 39 U.S. and Canadian airlines. Previously he served as Human Factors and Training Group Chair from 2008 until 2011, and Director of Pilot Training and Chairman of the ALPA Training Council from 2003 until 2006. In 2003, he was designated as an ALPA advisor to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) at the ICAO Flight Crew Licensing and Training Panel.

Capt. Hogeman began his career in 1977 with Commuter Airlines in Binghamton, N.Y. In 1978, he joined Denver-based Aspen Airways as a line pilot and spent 13 years there, eventually advancing to become director of training as well as chief pilot. In 1991, he joined United Airlines and was subsequently selected as a pilot instructor in the B757/B767 program. From 1996 until 2000, he managed and oversaw the development of United's line operational simulation training program for all United fleets and served on the Airline Transport Association's (ATA) AQP Working Group. He currently flies the Airbus 320 as a captain for United.

He holds an associate degree in aeronautical engineering from Daniel Webster College, a bachelor's degree in business management from Southern New Hampshire College, and a master's degree in technical communication from the University of Colorado.

NATCA members nominated their fellow colleagues to receive the Archie League Medal of Safety.

The selection committee chose the award recipients from the nominees in each region.



**BRUCE
LANDSBERG**

Bruce Landsberg has led AOPA's safety initiatives for more than 19 years. During his tenure, the organization has been nationally recognized with numerous awards for aviation safety leadership and educational program excellence. Now, as the president of the AOPA Foundation and the Air Safety

Institute, he is responsible for a broad range of activities to preserve the freedom of flight, which include safety programs, preserving airports, the image of general aviation, and growing the pilot population.

Bruce writes the monthly "Safety Pilot" column in *AOPA Pilot* magazine, as well as a weekly blog on AOPA ePilot. He represents general aviation interests with the FAA, NTSB, National Weather Service, collegiate aviation programs and various industry groups.

A former U.S. Air Force officer, he holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in industrial technology from the University of Maryland. He has logged over 6,000 hours as an Airline Transport Pilot (ATP) and holds gold seal flight instructor certificates. He has been an AOPA member for more than 40 years.



**DALE
WRIGHT**

Dale Wright is NATCA's Director of Safety and Technology, as well as a retired air traffic controller. After entering the U.S. Air Force in 1975, he began his ATC career at Berlin Center in Germany before later relocating to England AFB in Louisiana.

Joining the FAA in 1983, Dale spent 17 years serving at Charlotte and Atlanta facilities before joining NATCA as ARS liaison and JPDO liaison in Washington, D.C., from 2000 to 2004. After returning to his hometown of Charlotte for two more years of ATC duties, Dale retired in September 2007 after 32 years of loyal government service and took over the director position he holds today.

Dale has served a variety of national-level committees, including the titles of both Southern Region member and chairman of the National Finance Committee. In addition to these significant union roles and his history of ATC experience, Dale is an instrument-rated pilot and aircraft owner.

ANCHORAGE CENTER



**RYAN
WILLIAMS**

Second generation controller Ryan Williams has had several memorable days on the job at Anchorage Center (ZAN) since starting at the facility in 2006. But perhaps none were quite like Dec. 29, 2012, when his skills were tested in assisting the pilot of a Cessna 172 Skyhawk (N4365L) that was headed to Wasilla, Alaska.

Because of Alaska's unique environment, the challenges associated with the flight were substantial, and quite imposing:

- The pilot found himself stuck on top of a dense overcast layer.
- The four-seat, single engine aircraft was flying above the rugged Talkeetna Mountains.
- It was 5:45 p.m. local time in late December and therefore very dark.
- The windshield was frosting up and the pilot lacked de-icing equipment.

The pilot fully recognized the seriousness of his situation.

N4365L: *Four three six five lima, I'm headed to Wasilla. I'm about thirty miles west of the field, at ten thousand feet, um, I'm in a little over my head I think.*

Williams was able to radar identify the aircraft and provide a great deal of assistance, from weather reports and safe altitudes to reports from other pilots, including this one:

ASAI90: *Yeah, I just thought I'd pass along a little bit of info for six five lima there, it looks real good towards Anchorage, um, looks like there's a overcast layer over towards...over Wasilla. Maybe if he makes his way towards Anchorage, he'll be able to pick up the lights better.*

STEVE MUNROE, RVP:

“Television shows have been based on it, countless books have been written about it. Alaska flying is not like flying anywhere else in the country. It is one of the most dangerous places to fly, and a routine flight can turn, without warning, into a life-threatening situation. Alaska has more than its fair share of these events. How Ryan reacted in this situation greatly affected the outcome. Both Ryan and pilot were able to keep their composure and perform to a successful outcome. What we recognize at the Archie League Awards is just a small sample of these outstanding feats when controllers and pilots exhibit these survival skills. Ryan’s performance is an example of this skill.”

Williams: *November six five lima, roger, I also got another aircraft just coming out of Anchorage. I’ll get a few pilot reports for you, and we’re gonna try to see if Anchorage Approach has anyone in the Wasilla area that can get a better report for you.*

Above all else, Williams provided the pilot with a calm, confident voice, one that reassured him he was not alone. He was clearly visible on radar and he had someone keeping an eye on his situation.

With Ryan’s help, the pilot was able to find Wasilla and continue on safely.

N4365L: *Four three six five lima would like to resume VFR. I have Wasilla in sight. Thank you very much for your help.*

Williams: *November six five lima, you’re welcome. Maintain VFR, and if you’d like, you can remain on this beacon code; I can give you advisories to Wasilla.*

N4365L: *It’s pretty clear right now. I think I’m good. I’d like to buy you dinner if I could.*

Williams: *Appreciate that, but not necessary. November six five lima, squawk VFR and change to advisory frequency approved, if you need anything else, uh, frequency one three three point seven.*

N4365L: *Thank you sir, uh, squawking VFR.*

ST. LOUIS TRACON



STEVE
CLARK



KEVIN
COOK

It's challenging enough for an air traffic controller when a high-speed aircraft is enduring poor weather conditions, bad radio connection and communication issues. It's even more so when that aircraft is experiencing a fuel emergency.

On April 4, 2012, St. Louis TRACON (T75) air traffic controller Kevin Cook was guiding an F18 (Empire II) to Spirit of St. Louis Airport (SUS) when bad weather forced the aircraft to be redirected to Scott Air Force Base (BLV). But as Cook gave the directions for the approach to the pilot, communication between them was lost.

Several minutes passed before Cook learned the aircraft had missed the approach entirely. As the pilot requested to be redirected again, he declared that he had "minimum fuel" on board. Once again, the F18 missed his approach due to the weather conditions.

Cook redirected the pilot to a third airport, Lambert-St. Louis International (STL), which was reporting slightly better weather. Although the pilot agreed to land at another alternative airport, he was quickly forced to declare an emergency due to his aircraft's lack of fuel.

As the pilot began to ascend to 10,000 feet, air traffic controller Steve Clark cleared the airspace for the stricken aircraft so that it could save gas and gain precious altitude. Without Clark's efforts in making this airspace available, while also holding or redirecting any and all of the other aircraft he was responsible for, the F18 would have had an even more difficult time getting to STL and to safety.

KEVIN PETERSON, RVP:

The pilot soon requested to climb to 15,000 feet where the air is less dense so that he could glide through the air with less drag. This would help him preserve what little fuel the aircraft had left as he was now reporting an “extreme fuel emergency.”

With time running out, Cook decided to call an emergency airport surveillance radar (ASR) approach into T75 for the aircraft. Cook monitored and directed the aircraft on the final approach to the runway and provided a play-by-play descent onto the runway, giving left and right course guidance. The pilot eventually made a safe landing in just the nick of time.

A true example of teamwork, Cook and Clark did a remarkable job getting the pilot to a safe landing. What’s even more impressive is there are no published ASR approaches at T75. Therefore, the final ASR approach given by Cook was completely improvised under extreme pressure. The pilot later said that if he had missed the approach at STL, his next request would have been to be redirected to the Mississippi River to ditch his aircraft. Working together, Cook and Clark helped avert a disaster.

“This is a true example of the teamwork and the professionalism of our nation’s air traffic controllers. After the pilot in this event missed several approaches due to poor weather conditions, time was of the essence, as the F-18 was quickly running out of fuel.

“Kevin Cook and Steve Clark worked together to ensure this pilot and his aircraft had an opportunity for a positive result, and did a remarkable job getting the pilot safely on the ground by using an emergency Airport Surveillance Radar Approach (ASR) into St. Louis. What’s even more remarkable is there are no published ASR approaches at T75, and it was completely improvised. If this didn’t work, the pilot said he would have asked to be redirected to the Mississippi River to ditch his aircraft.”

PHILADELPHIA TOWER



DAVE
GIBERSON



COREY
GRAFE

Just after 11 a.m. EST on March 1, 2012, Dave Giberson, a 12-year FAA air traffic control veteran, was working Philadelphia International Airport (PHL) arrivals on the local control west position on an east flow (Runway 9R). The weather was overcast at 600 feet, with visibility of 1.5 miles and fog obscuring the first one-third of Runway 9R. Republic Airlines Flight 3137 was on a short final to Runway 9R as Giberson did a final scan of the runway using the ASDE-X ground radar. He noticed a target on the runway and advised the pilot. He asked him to execute a go-around as he couldn't confirm or deny the target's authenticity due to the fog. A second flight, AWE1512, checked in on the frequency for the ILS Runway 9R, in response to which Giberson immediately canceled the aircraft's approach clearance and issued climbout instructions.

At the same time, Corey Grafe, a PHL air traffic controller of four years, was working the local control east position, responsible for departures off of Runway 9L. Grafe overheard Giberson send an aircraft around due to a target on the ASDE-X. As Grafe looked out the tower cab window, he spotted a black SUV speeding down Runway 9R.

While the entire tower cab tried to reach out to any airport vehicle, the SUV continued onto a taxiway, crossing Runway 35 and proceeding onto Runway 9L.

"We watched in horror as the vehicle drove all the way down Runway 9R, off the overrun, into the grass then onto Taxiway Sierra," said Giberson.

Not knowing what the SUV would do next, Grafe withheld take off clearances and kept pilots updated on the events as they unfolded.

PHIL BARBARELLO, RVP:

When an aircraft in a holding position requested to taxi off the runway because the pilot didn't trust the vehicle's rogue operator, Grafe accommodated. Grafe also diverted take-offs for several other aircraft waiting to depart, and a few arriving aircraft that were sent around by Giberson.

The SUV continued all the way down Runway 9L and into the grass, where the Philadelphia Police and airport personnel intercepted it.

Investigations revealed that the driver had rammed a secured perimeter gate to enter the airfield. An FBI agent later filed an affidavit that confirmed the man was driving on the runways at speeds in excess of 100 miles per hour. Airport personnel estimated Republic Airlines Flight 3137 was approximately 100 feet above the runway and one-quarter mile from the end of it when Giberson saw the SUV and diverted the flight. The driver confessed later that he was intentionally timing his drive so that the SUV would hit an aircraft as it landed.

The man was charged with driving under the influence, reckless endangerment, resisting arrest, defiant trespass, criminal mischief, aggravated assault and simple assault. At a sentencing in October 2012, he received 16 months in prison and must pay \$92,000 in restitution. Thanks to the swift and professional actions of Giberson and Grafe, this bizarre incident did not end in tragedy.

"March 1, 2012, turned out to be anything but average for the controllers working at Philadelphia Tower. The skies were overcast and fog obscured part of the arrival runway that Dave Giberson was working when he noticed a target in the path of a flight on short final. Because of his skill and experience, Giberson immediately had the flight execute a go-around while he further investigated the situation. At the same time, Corey Grafe displayed some of the most crucial skills an air traffic controller must have - situational awareness, the ability to multitask and decisiveness. Grafe didn't hesitate to assist his colleague's flights and those awaiting departures on his runway. He also kept the pilots informed of the situation as it evolved.

"On behalf of the NATCA family, I thank you for your commitment to safety on the bizarre days and the average days, and I congratulate you on your exemplary work."

CHICAGO CENTER



JEFF
RICHARDS

On June 29, 2012, 20-year air traffic control veteran Jeff Richards was working the LOGAN radar positions at Chicago Center (ZAU). N575RB, a Beechjet flying from Pellston, Mich., to Birmingham, Ala., checked on to the LOGAN sector level at 45,000 feet. The flight was encountering a horseshoe-shaped line of severe thunderstorms that were moving east through northwest Indiana.

Shortly after the pilot's initial check in, he requested a descent to 43,000 feet. As controllers were coordinating to allow for the aircraft's descent, the pilot advised of the urgent need for a lower altitude and was observed commencing a descent. When queried, the flight crew advised Richards that they were declaring an emergency due to a dual engine flame-out.

Over the next 15 minutes, Richards provided the aircraft with calm and professional assistance as the flight descended in heavy precipitation and searched for the nearest airport where a landing attempt could be made. They then informed Richards that their landing would need to be made "no-flaps." In response, Richards suggested the Marion, Ind. (MZZ), airport and informed them of the distance and direction from the aircraft as well as the runway type, length and configuration. The flight crew asked for another possible airfield as MZZ was also affected by the inclement weather. Richards then quickly identified and described the Anderson, Ind. (AID), airport and

BRYAN ZILONIS, RVP:

guided N575RB with runway orientation and vector assistance toward and over the airfield until the pilots could see it.

During the time the flight was in the unpowered descent, the aircraft also lost navigation and transponder systems. Recognizing the many challenges the flight crew faced, Richards smoothly transitioned to tracking the flight through primary radar returns and retained voice communication until the flight stabilized on a visual approach to AID and the pilots were ready to make a frequency change. Thanks to his assistance, the aircraft landed without incident or injury.

“Jeff was able to draw from his own experience as both a controller and a corporate pilot to help guide the aircraft to a suitable airport,” said ZAU NATCA Facility Representative Toby Hauck. Jeff’s calm and confident assistance allowed the crew of N575RB to land safely and avoid a disaster.”

“Jeff Richards is a person that I rely on every day as my Alternate Regional Vice President in the Great Lakes Region. His skills as an air traffic controller and pilot were relied upon by the pilot of N575RB on June 29, 2012. With the same confidence that he displays in everything he does, Jeff was able to assist a pilot in trouble. N575RB was dealing with severe weather, and if that wasn’t challenging enough, the pilot experienced a dual engine flame-out. Jeff helped find an airport not impacted by the weather and guided the pilot, who was in an unpowered descent, to a safe landing. I am proud to be a friend and colleague.”

BOSTON TOWER



**ERIK
ANDERSON**

Erik Anderson is a 15-year veteran member and a second-generation air traffic controller. His father was a controller for many years at Boston TRACON before becoming a supervisor and retiring several years ago. Erik began his career in the Air Force and was stationed in Bosnia during that nation's conflict in the 1990s. He then worked for the Department of Defense before being selected at Cape Approach (K90) in 1998, where he excelled.

But it's been his decade of service at Boston Tower (BOS) where Anderson has made his biggest impact, according to BOS Facility Representative Jim Peterson, who nominated Anderson for this award.

Early in his BOS career, Anderson played a key role in an incident in which an air carrier had been cleared for takeoff on Runway 33 Left. Anderson had noticed an American Eagle SF34 that was moving towards the runway at an intersection downfield and did not appear to be stopping. It was too late to cancel the takeoff clearance, but Anderson was able to get the SF34 to stop just a few feet before a collision.

In 2011, Anderson's calm professionalism and skill helped ensure safe outcomes in two separate events; one involving an aircraft that reported a bird strike and had to return immediately to BOS, and the other in which Anderson alerted the local controller that an aircraft had taken a wrong turn towards Runway 22 Right and was not stopping. The takeoff of the second aircraft was aborted.

Anderson was nominated for this award last year after another

MIKE ROBICHEAU, RVP:

event that showed, yet again, an extraordinary display of alertness and quick action that prevented a very dangerous situation from becoming potentially catastrophic.

On June 7, 2012, while conducting on-the-job training on the local control east position, Anderson noticed an American Airlines 737 heading towards Runway 4 Right (4R) as a Delta flight approached on short final. The American aircraft appeared not to be slowing to a stop. Anderson quickly got on the frequency to send the Delta jet around while the American 737 went onto the runway. His reactions were so quick that the Airport Surface Detection Equipment had not yet projected the problem.

“For him to be able to recognize that situation as he did before the ASDE-X went off is just outstanding,” said Peterson.

Anderson said he had noticed the aircraft taxiing “extremely fast,” and that after working at BOS for 12 years, he knows what kind of actions might signal an impending safety issue.

“Sometimes you just see things out of the corner of your eye,” he said. “You’re always watching. It was the perfect time for them to meet right at the critical point of the runway.”

“It is a very exciting and proud moment for the New England Region to recognize a truly outstanding example of a member who not only has air traffic control in his genes and his blood, but has spent his career demonstrating the highest qualities of professionalism that we try to teach to our newest members.

“Erik is a respected controller who has consistently demonstrated skill and quickness. He has ensured safety in a number of different incidents that had the very real potential to result in disaster. He is a very deserving winner of this year’s New England Regional award.”

PORTLAND TRACON



**DONOVAN
CARSON**

Donovan Carson has been a controller at Portland TRACON (P80) for almost three years, after transferring from Albuquerque Center (ZAB). He has quickly become an expert on the intricacies and challenges within the P80 airspace, and his skill and knowledge were crucial when he helped save the life of the pilot of a Pilatus PC-12 on Dec. 11, 2012.

The single-engine turboprop was preparing to descend into Hillsboro (HIO), Ore., west of Portland, when Carson noticed that the aircraft was headed toward an area with known and charted hills and obstructions. Even though he had previously terminated radar service in order to transfer the aircraft to HIO Tower, he reinstated radar service when he noticed the pilot was off course.

Carson: *November Zero Kilo Charlie, tell you what, you can remain with me. It looks like you're going south of the final approach course.*

The pilot was having trouble lining up on the final approach into HIO as he was instructed. He was supposed to intercept the final approach course. Instead, he went through the final and started maneuvering without instruction from air traffic control.

That became a serious problem when he went below 3,500 feet, the area's minimum vectoring altitude (MVA) above the mountainous terrain. The pilot was having a difficult time controlling the aircraft and likely became disoriented due to poor weather conditions, including fog. As the pilot began making a turn to the northeast, he started to descend below the MVA and was dropping rapidly through 3,000 feet, headed directly for the 2,500-foot peak of a mountain.

JIM ULLMANN, RVP:

“A mix of terrain, fog and other bad weather. A pilot quite busy with multitasking as he tries to navigate safely to the ground. Just another day in the Pacific Northwest. Fortunately, the pilot of this Pilatus PC-12 had a skilled, confident and extremely alert air traffic controller on the other side of his microphone. Donovan Carson turned in a life-saving performance on this day. He joined the list of outstanding examples of extraordinary, professional service from the Northwest Mountain Region that have earned Archie League Medal of Safety awards throughout the program’s nine years. I join our members at P80 and throughout the region in congratulating Donovan.”

Carson knew the pilot was in immediate danger. Given the size of the aircraft and the high rate of speed at which it was traveling, tragedy was likely just minutes away. Carson quickly alerted the pilot that his first priority needed to be to climb to a safe altitude. Within a few radar sweeps, the aircraft climbed from 3,000 feet to about 4,200 feet.

Carson then worked with the pilot to get him set up correctly for the approach, and started his descent to HIO. The anxious moments of the incident had given way to a safe, routine and uneventful outcome.

“What impresses me about this scenario,” says fellow P80 controller Neil Miller, who nominated Carson for this award, “is the calming demeanor of the controller with a very nervous pilot in a dangerous situation. It’s difficult enough to control these aircraft when the pilots are doing what you expect. But when something out of the ordinary happens, both controller and pilot panicking will always make the situation worse. Instead, Donovan performed his job perfectly and with professionalism. NATCA should be proud of him. I believe he saved the pilot’s life.”

TAMPA TOWER



**BILL
SULLIVAN**

On March 1, 2012, air traffic controller Bill Sullivan was directing a Piper Malibu [PA-46, N377HC] from Tampa Executive Airport to Tampa International Airport (TPA). But shortly after takeoff, the pilot declared an emergency due to flight control problems.

N377HC: *Seven Hotel Charlie, we got an emergency.*

Sullivan: *Seven Hotel Charlie, state the nature of the emergency.*

N377HC: *I'm losing my controls.*

Sullivan: *All right sir, do you need, do you want to land at Tampa International? Do you want to land back at Vandenburg? Or where do you want to go?*

N377HC: *You tell me, I'm trying to get my act together.*

Realizing his best plan of action would be redirecting the pilot back to Tampa Executive, Sullivan began giving him the necessary coordinates to return to the airport. At the same time, he began handing off some of his workload so he could focus on the situation at hand and ensure that the service to the other flights he was responsible for would not be degraded.

The pilot was in clear distress. His breathing became rapid and he was unable to communicate his situation with Sullivan as he attempted to steer the aircraft in response to the turns being issued.

Sullivan continued directing the pilot until he finally saw the airport.

N377HC: *[heavy breathing] How much further is this airport?*

VICTOR SANTORE, RVP:

“This air traffic event just goes to show that air traffic controllers guide you in more ways than one. Bill kept his cool as the pilot he was directing was losing not only control of his aircraft, but also his nerve. With his best plan of action in mind, Bill began redirecting the pilot back to the airport he departed from, and calmly stayed with the pilot until he safely landed at Tampa Executive.

“Just when you think it’s over, the pilot asks Bill to call his wife to pick him up, even giving him two numbers to try! It was a great example that our men and women are there to help wherever it’s needed.”

Sullivan: *Seven Hotel Charlie, at your 11-10 o’clock now in about two and a half miles. It’s just on the other side of that interstate, sir...*

Sullivan worked for several more minutes to assist the pilot in finding the airport, repeatedly pointing out its proximity to the interstate.

N377HC: *Seven Hotel Charlie, got it! Finally!*

Sullivan: *Okay, sir. You can go ahead and resume navigation to the airport.*

N377HC: *Don’t leave me, this ain’t over.*

Sullivan: *No, sir. I’ll be right here.*

Sullivan stayed with the pilot until he landed safely. When the pilot did land, he asked Sullivan for a favor – could he place an important phone call? The pilot asked if Sullivan could call his wife and let her know that he was no longer going to be at Tampa International and would need to be picked up at Tampa Executive.

Sometimes, being an air traffic controller is more than just directing air traffic. Sometimes you might need to direct someone’s spouse to an airport.

FORT WORTH CENTER



LOUELLA
HOLLINGSWORTH

On Nov. 16, 2012, controller LouElla Hollingsworth was faced with a pilot flying a Piaggio PI80 Avanti (N501PM) that was experiencing one of the worst and most unsuspecting conditions pilots can encounter when flying – extremely low blood oxygen levels known as hypoxia.

Hollingsworth first suspected something was wrong when she realized the aircraft was not climbing. She requested a climb, but the pilot did not respond. Instead, she heard just a ‘click’ sound on the radio frequency. She asked for a microphone check several times, thinking the pilot had a connection problem. When he did make verbal contact with Hollingsworth, his speech was slurred and he seemed to be incoherent. Hollingsworth had no previous flight experience herself, but knew this pilot was in trouble.

Hollingsworth: *November five papa mike, I think you need to start a descent; can you do that for me? Descend and maintain flight level two four zero?*

Another pilot noticed the situation and contacted Hollingsworth, “*I don’t know if you can hear that guy, but he does not sound good... oxygen... oxygen.*”

With no other options except to continue to keep communicating, Hollingsworth began to repeatedly advise the pilot to descend. She asked him to put on his oxygen mask in hopes he would soon respond and fly to a lower altitude.

TIM SMITH, RVP:

“Veteran controller LouElla Hollingsworth helped avert another tragedy like that which befell Payne Stewart in 1999. Losing oxygen at 27,000 feet is a serious thing, and hypoxia sets in quickly. Thanks to her quick actions, and her calm, authoritative demeanor, she was able to keep the pilot engaged, get him to put on his oxygen mask, and descend to an altitude that likely saved the lives of everyone on the aircraft that day.

“Her D-side that day, Jeremy Hughes, probably said it best when he said, ‘Today exceeded all the days of my career in what it truly means to save someone’s life.’”

Hollingsworth: *November one papa mike, if you got the oxygen, try that, and descend and maintain flight level one eight zero.*

At some point, the pilot strapped his oxygen mask on and immediately seemed more coherent when contacting Hollingsworth. She continued to direct and advise the descent, and then asked if he was doing better. The answer came as a relief.

N501PM: *Yes we are, thanks for the help. For some reason the cabin altitude was showing okay but it... uh ...we had some oxygen issues so, down to...uh... eighteen or lowest we can get.*

Hollingsworth: *November one papa mike, descend and maintain one four thousand, we’ll get you down there first and take a look at it and see. Let us know if you need to go anywhere else, but you do sound a whole lot better. You were not sounding good at all earlier.*

Hypoxia is a dangerous occurrence, and it’s often hard to diagnose. But throughout this event, Hollingsworth maintained a firm, calm voice until she passed the pilot to the next controller. The pilot continued the rest of his flight and eventually made it to his destination with no further problems.

OAKLAND CENTER



EMILY
BIRKLAND



ROY
TESHIMA

On the evening of Sept. 9, 2012, the pilot of N80SS, a Cessna 185 floatplane, transmitted on the Oakland Center (ZOA) emergency frequency that he had executed a forced landing in the Pacific Ocean, about 20 miles west of San Simeon, Calif. Pilot Stanley Shaw and his son, Stanford Shaw, were headed to their annual fishing trip in Alaska from the Los Angeles area on a Visual Flight Rules (VFR) flight when their aircraft suffered an engine failure. The aircraft and passengers had become trapped in a kelp bed with six to 10 foot swells, and a water temperature of about 50 degrees.

ZOA controller Roy Teshima and developmental Emily Birkland were monitoring the emergency frequency at Sector 10 and heard Shaw's emergency transmissions. Birkland and Teshima were working a low altitude sector (Sector 10), which was moderately busy that day with a mix of VFR and Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) traffic, and included active restricted airspace. A large amount of inquiries and information being relayed back and forth through another aircraft, CPF420, and N80SS increased the situation's complexity. CPF420 was the first aircraft to relay to Birkland that he had heard the distress call of N80SS. Birkland confirmed she was aware and enlisted his help in finding the downed aircraft, which he located in about 18 minutes. Throughout the search, CPF420 also relayed information from N80SS to Birkland, including the aircraft's distance from San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport and that the plane was going to flip over at any moment.

HAM GHAFFARI, RVP:

Due to low fuel, CPF420 had to leave the scene. Birkland then enlisted the assistance of the pilot of N4734K, who followed Birkland's guidance to locate and keep relaying transmissions from N80SS. The pilot of N4734K was instrumental in relaying information from the downed aircraft to controllers and was the only resource available until the United States Coast Guard (USCG) (C6555) and California Highway Patrol (CHP71) rescue aircraft responded to the scene. N4734K remained airborne to assist as a communication relay with C6555 and CHP71.

Over the next two hours, Birkland and Teshima obtained information about the rescue through continuous communications with CPF420 and N4743K. The ZOA management team in the area forwarded the information to the ZOA operations manager, who coordinated with the USCG and other agencies.

Both father and son were positioned on one of the floats of the plane when rescued by the USCG, just moments before the floatplane inverted and sank. If the two had been forced into the Pacific Ocean they would have most likely succumbed to hypothermia in just 20 minutes. Thanks to the timely actions of the controllers and pilots involved, two lives were saved.

“Teamwork and trust are an essential component of being an effective air traffic controller. On September 9, 2012, when Emily and Roy heard the distressed pilot's transmission on the emergency guard frequency, they acted quickly and worked together to enlist the help of nearby pilots in order to get as much information as possible about the location of the downed Cessna and the passengers. They also worked with their local FAA managers to ensure all the appropriate information was relayed to the Coast Guard rescue team.

“Emily and Roy's dedication and perseverance ensured that the Coast Guard found Stanley Shaw and his son minutes before their plane sunk into the icy waters of the Pacific Ocean, where they would have faced hypothermic conditions. I am proud to have these two professionals keeping the Western Pacific Region skies safe, and I congratulate them for their extraordinary work.”

CENTRAL REGION

Stephen ClarkSt. Louis TRACON

Rich Salmen.....Kansas City Center

Scott Lawniczak

Aaron Dunbar

Josh Brown

Nathan Burch

EASTERN REGION

Jonathan KendallPotomac TRACON

Casey Whittaker

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