**2017 Star of Life**

**Region III**

Tuesday, August 9th is a warm, sunny day after last night’s rain. Tia

Garner is on a camping trip with her family just outside Sherwood, Tennessee.

Her father lives in the area and she has just dropped her kids off at his

home for a visit and is heading back to the campground, traveling along

Leon Stevens Lane.

At the same time a CSX freight train is traveling along Track 193 at 45

miles per hour due to a slowdown order issued for that area. First the

engineer spots the white 2005 Ford Escape at the crossing ahead.

At that instant the conductor comes to his side and shouts in his ear,

“Bobby! Bobby! Do you see ‘im?” They both know that they are going to hit

the vehicle. Bobby’s blowing the horn, braking hard, trying to get the vehicle

to clear the crossing. The point of impact is the center of the passenger’s side.

The deafening crash of the collision launches the 3400 pound vehicle

into flight. On the first hit all the windows explode out of the vehicle.

On the second flip Tia is ejected through her wrenched open door. There

are two more flips before the vehicle comes to a stop. Miraculously, Tia

lands another 60 feet beyond the Escape, face down in a muddy

bean field.

Dispatchers Megan Kirk, Kirby Burgett, and Elizabeth Carter at Franklin

Consolidated Communications, the county’s emergency dispatch center,

receive the 911 call regarding: train versus vehicle collision with ejection of

the driver. Crow Creek Valley Volunteer Fire Department is dispatched at

18:54:07. Thirty-eight seconds later Grundy EMS Unit M1 with Paramedic

Nick Harris an AEMT Jessica Gilliam is dispatched and responds in emergency

traffic. Kirby, Megan and Elizabeth contact their director and paramedic, Don

Hutcheson, and begin a search for an air ambulance service. Three services

are contacted and placed on stand-by. Lifeforce 5 has a 5 minute ETA to the

scene.

Upon arrival at the scene, Crow Creek Valley Volunteer Fire Department

Firefighters and First Responders Chief Terry Pack, Assistant Chief Wayne

Prince, Captain Ronald Jackson, Steve Roberts, and Randy Roberts; Firefighter

and Advanced EMT Adam Hoosier; Firefighters Assistant Chief Bobby Hoosier,

Tommy Pierce, James Shetters, John Nance, Scott Guess, and Eric Green; First

Responder Sue Shetters; and Junior Firefighter Dylan Jackson check the

vehicle for other occupants and with the help of Franklin County Sheriff’s

Department Sergeant Chuck Stines and Emergency Management Agency

Director, Scott Smith, they secure the scene. Fire trucks begin to mark the

landing zone. When EMS Unit M1 arrives, Nick and Jessica find Garner now

supine in the field with manual c-spine immobilization provided by off-duty

Grundy County Paramedic Melissa Hoosier.

Tia can open her eyes on command. She can say her name, but she’s

disoriented to time and place. There is swelling around both eye orbits.

Suspicion is high for a traumatic brain injury. Oxygen is applied and she is

fully immobilized. The crew transfers Garner to the ambulance. She has

rapid, shallow respirations, decreased breath sounds in bilateral lower lung

fields and is gasping, “I can’t breathe.” Monitors go on. She is hypotensive at

77/60, pulse = 145; two large bore IVs with Normal Saline go in. An obvious

deformity of her right wrist is splinted by Gilliam. Bilateral needle chest

decompressions are done for suspected pneumothoraces; because of the

scene noise, they cannot hear a whoosh, but her breath sounds do improve.

Abdominal exam reveals rigidity in the left upper and lower quadrants.

Intra-abdominal injuries with hemorrhage are a possibility.

Garner’s respirations are still rapid and shallow and on 15 L/min O₂ her sat is

80%. With poly-system trauma and respiratory failure, the crew preps for

Rapid Sequence Intubation. Then it’s re-assess, monitor, intervene.

Life Force 5 with Flight Nurse Jared Hedden, Flight Paramedic Andy

Condrey and pilot Patrick Coleman have landed at the impromptu LZ. Hedden

and Condrey enter the ambulance and accept transfer of care. BP still 78/50

and O₂ sat = 75%. Hedden inserts a chest tube into Tia’s left side, immediately

evacuating air and blood from the chest cavity. Oxygenation, blood pressure

and breath sounds improve. She’s ready to move. Because of the boggy path

to the helicopter Crow Creek Valley Fire assists in the transport across the

bean field. The ‘copter lifts off and 20 minutes later Tia is off-loaded at

Erlanger Medical Center.

Her injuries include a traumatic brain injury, a right orbital blow-out

fracture, an open right elbow injury, fracture of the right radius and hand ,

a ruptured spleen, an injury to the left diaphragm, multiple bilateral

rib fractures with pneumothorax, a broken neck and lower spine fractures.

That first night she has a splenectomy and repair of the diaphragmatic injury.

Over the next several days multiple orthopedic surgeries follow. Respiratory

complications lead to a tracheostomy. Tia remained on life support for three

weeks and was hospitalized for 6½ weeks. A long period of rehab followed.

This was a miraculous call in a rural area, with muddy fields, multiple

emergency agencies responding and coordinating care, and recognizing each

system of injury and initiating critical interventions in the field. Thanks

to their incredible team effort Tia is here with us tonight. And, it is for these

reasons that Grundy County EMS, Franklin County Consolidated

Communications, Crow Creek Valley Volunteer Fire Department, Franklin

County Sheriff’s Department, Franklin County Emergency Management

Agency and Erlanger Life Force receive the 2017 Star of Life Award for

Region 3.

Director Tidwell will now present to Tia her “Certificate of Life” that reads: “It

is hereby certified and solemnly attested that Tia Garner survived a life-

threatening event on August 9th, 2016. This certificate commemorates the first

day of the rest of your life.”