

## A forced landing that ends well – at least for the pilot.

Rémi Girard, Member of the CA Aviateurs.Québec, Provincial Training Officer, Research Coordinator and Head of SERABEC Operations



On July 24, 424 Squadron (CFB Trenton) and CASARA Ottawa assisted a pilot whose aircraft crashed north of Petawawa, ON. A well executed forced landing, a Mayday call, an ELT 406 and a SPOT allowed this pilot to escape with minor injuries. Everything was in place to allow for a search and rescue operation that went very well, thanks to a whole team: Air Canada Flight 139, ACC Toronto, ACC Montreal, CASARA Ottawa, Sûreté du Québec, International Emergency Response Coordination Center (IERCC), Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Canadian Mission Control Center (CMCC), Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC) Trenton and 424 Squadron (a C-130 Hercules and a Griffon helicopter). Here is the thread of events as reported by JRCC Trenton:

1054L ACC Toronto notifies CCCOS that ACA 139 has heard a MAYDAY appeal

1059L ACC Montréal relays to CCCOS the device identifier, the situation and a general position.

1102L CMCC notifies CCCOS that IERCC has detected a 406 beacon signal without position.

1103L CMCC transmits to the JRCC an initial position (acquired by IERCC).

1106L CCCOS – Activation of the standby crews of 424 squadron (the crews are in response posture 2 hours on weekends and between 1600 and 0600L)

1106L CMCC transmits to CCCOS all the information about the tag (Hex code, identifier and position).

1114L JRCC – A C-130 Hercules and a Griffon helicopter of the 424 are tasked for the search and rescue mission

1122L JRCC -CASARA Ottawa (in flight) are tasked to visually and electronically search for the location of the accident

1124L CMCC confirms the position of beacon 406 to the JRCC.

1134L ACC Mtl confirms the presence of another aircraft at the scene – relays to JRCC that are unable to see the crash site.

1139L IERCC shares the details of the SPOT beacon. Their detection indicates movement and a position relatively close to the beacon 406. The beacon information allows us to identify (potentially) the pilot in distress. Are unable to reach the users listed on the SPOT emergency card.

1215L CASARA Ottawa on site (research area)

1231L CASARA Ottawa updates the information – attempts to establish communications with the pilot without success, stays on site, monitors the situation and reports the changes.

1330L The Hercules (Rescue 337) arrives on the spot. CASARA is relieved and returns to Ottawa

1335L The Griffon (Rescue 493) arrives onsite. SAR Tech inserted

1347L Griffon's SAR Tech Report: The pilot appears to be in good condition. Patient stabilized on a stretcher by prevention. Extraction by helitreillage.

1440L Rescue 493 transfers the pilot to Pembroke hospital.

It is remarkable to note that thanks to the 406 beacon, just 10 minutes after the Mayday call, the JRCC had in hand the position of the aircraft and the name of the identifier. From that moment on, the whole search and rescue machine was set in motion. The signal from the SPOT beacon confirmed the whole thing some 30 minutes later. This information has become complementary to that provided by the 406 beacon.

CASARA Ottawa also played an important role in all of this. With information provided by JRCC Trenton, the accident site was located and confirmed. The CASARA aircraft remained in the area, providing information to the CCCOS, the Hercules and the Griffon.

<https://twitter.com/i/status/1419092317487738881>

There are certainly a few lessons to be learned from what happened on 24 July:

1. Know and master your reaction to an emergency condition like the one this pilot experienced.
  - a. The priority is to fly the aircraft
  - b. communicate
  - c. Do not move away from the crash site
2. File a flight plan.
3. Have a functional and registered ELT 406. A reminder that the installation of an ELT 406 will become mandatory in November 2025 for private aircraft – some exceptions are provided for.  
<https://www.aviateurs.quebec/news/nouvelles-exigences-en-matiere-de-radiobalises-de-reperage-d-urgence-des-aeronefs>
4. You too could contribute to this search and rescue team that is working to save pilots by joining [SERABEC](#).

Aviateurs. Québec would like to congratulate the pilot for her exceptional <airmanship> and all those involved in this search and rescue mission for their professionalism.

Photos: Canadian Forces