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Aviation - Western Pacific Region

Date: April 27, 2021

Subject: WPR21LA158

Contact: L. Jane Schill - Pilot

During a telephone conversation, Ms. Schill reported that the landing area was a "rugged wilderness type area." She didn't know exactly what the wind was during the landing, and stated that the terrain had ravines, gullies, bushes, and rocks. She added that there were also areas of flat terrain, such as mesas, with dry grass. Ms. Schill stated there was a bush that she selected to intentionally hit to slow the balloons ground speed down. She said that when the basket hit the bush, it released, and hit the ground hard in a level area, and that it was a hard landing, not a high wind landing.

Ms. Schill further stated that the suddenly it felt like a wind movement, the basket was at a slight angle, when the passenger "slid out of the basket." The balloon ascended slightly, as she continued to pull the red line. Ms. Schill said that immediately after landing, she hollered at the passenger, and he responded, while he was walking to her location. She added that when the passenger got to the basket, he told her "I think I bumped my elbow" and took his jacket off. Ms. Schill noted that his elbow was bleeding a little and it was the only injury she saw.

After securing the balloon, they walked up the south side of the ravine, which was between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{3}^{\text{rd}}$ of a mile in distance. She said that during this time, the passenger seemed fine, was talking, alert. While walking across the flat area, starting to go down to a point where they would be able to provide the ground crew their location, the passenger told her that he wanted to sit down. Ms. Schill recalled that the passenger was conscious and talking until the EMT's arrived, and that the LifeFlight helicopter had arrived at 11 am or so.

Ms. Schill further reported that the passenger was briefed to hold on to the basket in 2 places and to "get down into the basket" prior to the event.

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