

# KNIGHTHAWK TECH NOTES

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## “Miracle in the Gobi”

Suddenly awakened in an Intensive Care facility, but I immediately noticed everyone was speaking in a language I did not understand. Then to my surprise my two boys and wife gathered around the bed side. I was on a ventilator and could not speak so my older son (works at KnightHawk) asked that I blink once for yes and twice for no. My 16 year old son, from his smart phone, played old time country gospel music he had downloaded. I remember it from before when I was unconscious but I thought it was a dream, but it wasn't. While I was in a coma they played the music and sang to me. My wife started unfolding the events that occurred, starting with “You are in Seoul, South Korea in the University Hospital”. The story unfolded over the next weeks and to this day, I can't believe the story was about me and the struggle my family had. To this day I have no memory of it but the story goes like this.

Like most of the projects at KnightHawk, it starts with an emergency or high priority problem somewhere in the world. In this case, a client had problems at a very large copper and gold mine, in the Gobi Desert, in Mongolia. I remember final confirmation came on a phone conference at 1:00 am Houston time on a Friday. By that afternoon, I was on a flight to Mongolia and had a long journey ahead. I was nearly in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (UB) the capital city, on final approach to Genghis Khan Airport, when the pilot started circling due to bad weather. The Aeroflot flight from Moscow I was on was running low on fuel and had no choice but to fly to Siberia and land, yes, in the middle of nowhere. We were taken to a small family hotel and our passports seized. We were ordered to stay in the hotel which became two full days. Finally, we made it to UB. We boarded a company plane for a 2 ½ hour flight out into the Great Gobi Desert. The plane landed at the company airport, we boarded a bus to head to the job site, one of the largest copper and gold mines in the world.

After arrival at job site, we got to work. We worked hard for one week to help our client get running. Things were going well from a technical standpoint, and the client was

pleased, and had excellent meetings with top management. A part was needed from Houston on an emergency basis. Purely by random my older son was chosen by our COO to bring it in from the US. All was going well and I was proud to be with my son working together in the Gobi Desert. That very evening of the day my son arrived, I started feeling “under the weather”. The next morning I decided I better go to the site clinic. Within a matter of hours I had high fever, within 1 day I was very sick. It was decided that I must be air evacuated to UB and was transported to a major clinic. I got worse and was transported across town to one of UB's hospitals. I was in critical condition and was not expected to live. All my major organs were shutting down. My wife and other son were called in from Houston. My older son was told I would soon die. With my wife and younger son in the air, my older son had to make a major decision on his own for major surgery with little or no chance of survival. I made it through surgery and was in guarded condition. Latter thought to be dying by hospital staff just as my wife (a certified critical care nurse) and younger son arrived. The Mongolians called the US embassy to start paperwork to transport my body to Houston. They told my wife I would die, but my wife and family refused to accept it. My wife injected her knowledge with the help of Houston doctors into the situation. Changes were made and against the Mongolian doctors' advice, my wife and boys made the prayerfully thought out decision to life flight me to Seoul, South Korea. The Mongolia doctors said I would not survive the flight.

I was on a ventilator and had to fly below 4000 ft. at 500 mph to Seoul. China gave approval to cross their territory at low flight elevation (due to ventilator) and at speed for a three hour flight. I arrived into Seoul at death's door, and immediately taken to the Seoul National University Hospital and put into the Intensive Care facility. My family was given grave news that I was not expected to live through the night. As with everything up until this point, I was in the Great Physicians hands and He was the only hope. As the word went out, prayer went out throughout the world. I made it through the night and in four days had another major surgery. Being on a ventilator my hands

were tied down by my side. I was fighting for my life. In about 7 days, my eyes opened up and I became responsive, for the first time in three weeks, there was hope.

Then one night I woke up suddenly, a voice inside me (Christians call this the Holy Spirit) said “it's time to go home (meaning Houston)”. My hands were left untied in the middle of the night and I ripped out my ventilator and NG tube, for the first time I was breathing on my own. My vitals and blood work went normal at that moment. The next days the doctors said I could be medically evacuated to Houston. The last conversation with the doctors in Seoul the night before I left was surreal. One Doctor told me “We have no idea why you are still on this earth and how you recovered”. After six ambulance trips, two major surgeries and two air evacuations I made it home to Houston and spent some time in St. Luke's at the Medical Center.

With prayers from countless churches and people, hardworking Doctors and Nurses, dedicated KnightHawk staff, a family with tenacity that would not stop, and a miracle from our Lord, I am here and alive.



## *KnightHawk Project Update*

- CFD of PSV Systems – Petrochemical
- FFS High Pressure Flange – Oil & Gas
- Combustion CFD Analysis – Power
- Flue Gas Cooler – Petrochemical
- Liquid Ring Compressor Failure – Petrochemical
- CFD of Separator – Petrochemical
- Hydrogen Gas Reformer Design – Oil & Gas
- Air Compressor Failure – Petrochemical
- Compressor Motor Turbine Train Analysis – Petrochemical
- Critical Pipe Stress – Petrochemical
- Vertical Cast Transporter Failure – Nuclear Power
- Compressor Cross Head Failure – Oil & Gas
- Transient Fluid Dynamics – Petrochemical
- API Tanks FFS – Petrochemical
- Gear Pump Failure Analysis – Petrochemical
- Transfer Line Exchanger – Petrochemical
- Flare Efficiency Analysis – Petrochemical
- Fit for Service Analysis – Petrochemical
- Tensile Testing – Manufacturing
- Pump Vibration Analysis – Petrochemical
- Motor Shaft Failure – Petrochemical
- Gas Pipeline Coupling Failure – Oil & Gas
- Ultra High Pressure Vessel FFS – Petrochemical
- Reciprocating Compressor Failure – Petrochemical
- Pump Vibration Analysis – Petrochemical
- Corrosion Analysis – Gas Pipeline
- Gasifier Equipment Design – Power
- High Temperature Molten Salt Tank Design – Green Energy
- Gas Plant Fire & Explosion – Oil & Gas

**Cliff's Notes:** This is the first non-technical article that I have written in 21 years of the KnightHawk Newsletter. I am glad to be here to write it. While it is non-technical there are many things to learn about traveling to and working out of your environment. Study this and realize that things can change in a moment.

If you want me to come share this story at your church group, or company safety meeting, drop me a line. KnightHawk has learned much about getting a person critical from the middle of nowhere to the right place. There are many lessons learned from a safety standpoint.

On behalf of me and my family I want to thank everyone who has prayed for me during this challenging time. I am at work part time and should be back at full time by September 1<sup>st</sup>.

Take care and God Bless,

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