

Witness Statement

At about 1940 hours on 6/26/2022 I was departing Clear Helibase exit in route to the ICP. As the call came across the radio I was at the Clear Helibase entrance and could see black smoke. I arrived on scene roughly a minute later. The helicopter was on the tarmac fully engulfed in flames. The HECMs were attempting to suppress with extinguishers on hand. As the secondary explosions begin I and another HECM determined current suppression efforts and any attempt to reach the pilot with resources on hand posed to great of a risk to personnel on scene. We ceased suppression and evacuated to a safe distance. About 4 minutes later an Anderson FD Engine arrived.

I had assured there were no one in need of medical attention and I assisted the AFD engine with the attack line. Suppression was limited due to water spreading the fuel on the tarmac however the majority of the fire was knocked down other engines started to arrive. I moved to assist with scene preservation and control to allow clear access for incoming fire units. As more resources started to arrive. I was contacted by the MEDL and gave an intial verbal report and was advised of two incoming fire medics that would relieve me temporarily to return to ICP. When they arrived I briefed them on the current situation and reported back the ICP were I spoke with the MEDL in person.

I returned to the scene with meals and relieved the other two medics. I followed up with the HECMs on scene to determine and assist with mental wellness. I remained on scene untill suppression efforts were complete and all resources were clear of scene. I then assisted with shuttling the HECMs back to the ICP. It is my assessment that the pilot likely died on impact and that the HECMs and the helicopter mechanic are and were uninjured but in need of mental well-being care and follow up.

[REDACTED]
Jarrod Macneil

(127/22)

[REDACTED]

GENERAL MESSAGE (ICS 213)

1. Incident Name (Optional):

2. To (Name and Position):

3. From (Name and Position):

4. Subject:

5. Date:

6. Time

7. Message:

I saw one helicopter lift off the ground about 150 ft heard a loud noise and a piece of it fly off and it lost control and hit the ground catching on fire.

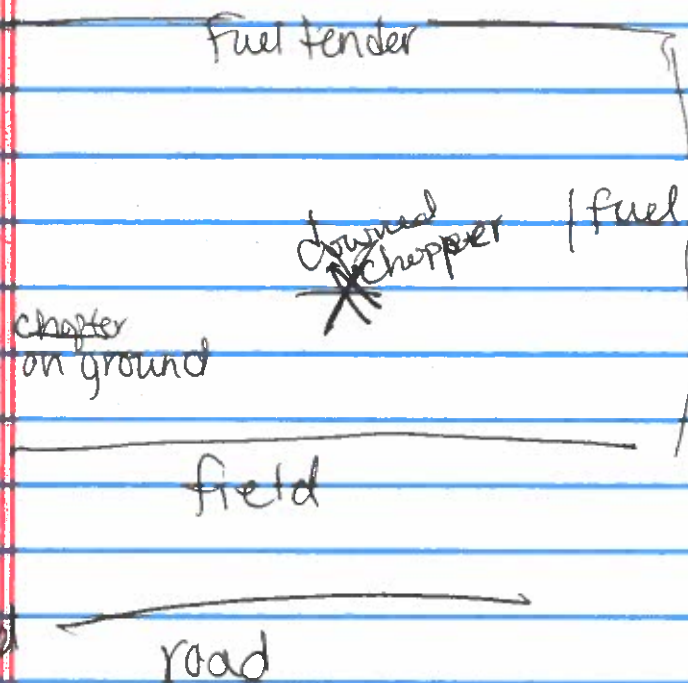
[REDACTED]

8. Approved by: Name: _____ Signature: _____ Position/Title: _____

9. Reply:

Tracy Schwent 6/26/22

At approx 1930 helo was lifting off he was about 6 stories up when an explosion occurred in the tail rotor. ^{second explosion near belly} The chopper lost control and dove nose-first into the tarmac and burst into flames. Several smaller explosions occurred after crash spreading debris. Reported immediately to 911 + IC stayed on phone to report



Head count all crew accted for except pilot

Other hazards assessed on scene, determined fire contained to crash site

One safety officer was on scene at time of crash.

Flight crew responded with suppression.

1st on scene ~~engineer~~ medic 5-42 Fairbanks E4
#2 medic + #3 medic (both ENT on scene) (ambulances)

X

Witness Statement from Chad Williamson 26 June 2022

- At the time of the incident the helicopter was preparing for a sling load operation.
- I was exiting the restroom adjacent to the helipad entrance road when I heard a loud bang. As I looked over my shoulder towards the sling location I saw the under belly of the helicopter pointing towards the road and witnessed it crash into the tarmac and explode into flames.
- I then proceeded to the crash site to assist with fire suppression that was already in progress from the other personell on site.
- Assisted with fire suppression activities until determined it was no longer safe to do so at which time we all pulled back to the cabin. Fire department arrived on scene and took over the scene.

- I was exiting the restroom adjacent to the helipad entrance road when I heard a loud bang. As I looked over my shoulder towards the striking location I saw the under belly of the helicopter pointing towards the road and witnessed it crash into the tarmac and explode into flames.

- I then proceeded to the crash site to assist with fire suppression that was already in progress from the other — as personell on site. ————— on

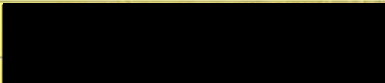
- Assisted with fire suppression activities until determined it was no longer safe to do so at which time we all pulled back to the cabin. Fire department arrived on scene and took over the scene.

Report written @ 20:27. by Chad Williamson [REDACTED]

Witness ABRO
Michael Theisen

I was talking on radio
heard explosion and
ball of fire on deck


6-26-2022



Brad Kraychy

1/2
June 26/2022

As the afternoon passed and the evening progressed, myself and the other HECMs were making up sling loads in nets to be flown to the main incident.

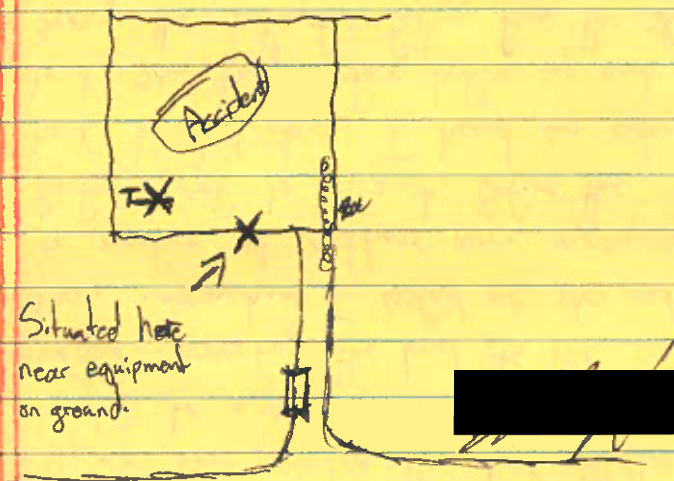
As we were preparing for ~~the~~ the final sling load we had prepared, Jesse and myself were awaiting the hook off the longline to approach and hit the tarmac before connecting the load. As the hook approached I looked at the pad to confirm all conditions were appropriate ~~for~~ for myself to approach. Before the hook touched down, I heard an extremely loud snap/bang before looking up and seeing the helicopter falling from the sky. Myself and Jesse dove for cover before collecting ourselves, and attempting firefighting actions. These actions were completed to the best of our abilities and equipment before our outliners were depleted.

2/2

Brad Kaychy

June 26, 2021

Location of myself and Jesse.



Clark Hunter Stratton

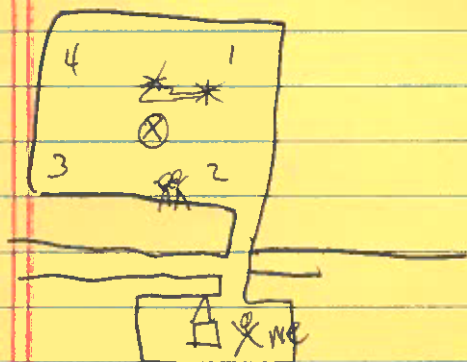
8:10pm Was just walking off the pad and sat down for a few minutes at the cabin talking to lady (cant remember name). I heard the Heli lift off while my back was to the pad. Maybe 45 sec to a $1\frac{1}{2}$ minute later I heard a pop or 2 in succession and turned in time to see the belly of **70F** extra light. The heli was approx. 150 ft in the air falling rapidly. I cant recall if the explosion was in the air or on the ground. I called all ~~the~~ pretty immediately.

The 2 HECMS on the deck dove behind some

extinguisher and
rushed to the pad with
it. Handed my phone
to another pilot
and extinguisher to
another HECM. After
that I got my phone
back and walked back
to cabin.

Hunter Stratton

9-26-22



WITNESS STATEMENT

I had been walking off the deck and as I neared the main access Road, I turned around and saw the Ship twist and start falling to the ground. On Impact Ship immediately burst into flames and essentially Exploded, spewing parts across the deck.

6/26/22

[REDACTED]

Sam Collinson

6/26 in the evening
I was in radio
communication with
helicopter TOF clearing
him to lift from pad
4 and informed him
a fellow Helicopter
crew member (Hecm)
was standing by to
hook the long line to
a sling load on the
helibase deck. ^{few} moments
before the ~~a~~ person
got arrived to the remote
hook ~~I was alerted~~
~~at~~ Heard, the sound
of the helicopter change
looked up from the hook
and person hooking to see
TOF losing altitude at

and heard impact with tarmac as this was occurring I took shelter behind a forklift. flames continued to build and debris flew away from the helicopter forcefully for long distances.

I attempted to contact the air base radio operator was unsuccessful. myself and multiple other ~~Heer~~ employees on the deck waited until debris seemed to stop flying and began an attempt to control fire with extinguishers but deemed it impossible with the intensity of the flames.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

David B Banning
Senior Aviation Accident Investigator
Alaskan Region

Date: June 27, 2022
Person Contacted: Doug Buzga
Location: Telephone
NTSB Accident Number: ANC22FA047

Narrative:

On June 26, 2022, about 1938 Alaska daylight time, a Bell UH1B helicopter, N9970F was destroyed when it was involved in an accident near Anderson, Alaska. The pilot and sole occupant was fatally injured. The helicopter was operated by Northern Pioneer Helicopters LLC as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 133 flight.

Mr. Buzga was a helicopter pilot and had accumulated about 5,000 hrs of flight time. He was at the airport in Clear, AK, observed the accident and stated the following:

He observed the helicopter takeoff and stated that everything appeared normal. The long line hook was about 15– 30 ft off the ground. The helicopter appeared stable in normal flight when he heard a loud bang or pop and the helicopter appeared to buck. Subsequently, the helicopter made a quartering right turn as the nose pitched down. The helicopter impacted the airport's ramp area and erupted into a fireball.

He stated that the pop or bang did not sound like a compressor stall, and he did not believe it emanated from the engine; however, it did sound very mechanical. He didn't observe the helicopter yaw or spin and there was no inflight fire.

He observed the accident pilot working the controls as the helicopter descended and immediately before impact. – END