

NAME: Darrell Lambert

ADDRESS: [REDACTED] Alpine Tx 79831

PHONE: [REDACTED] EMAIL: [REDACTED]

AGE: 58 OCCUPATION: Ranch hand

EMPLOYER: Yarborough Ranches

In your own words, describe what you recall about the event. Attach additional sheets if necessary:

~~See~~ I was sitting in the rear seat behind the Pilot. Flying for a wildlife survey and encountered a group of feral dogs and circled ^{them} several ~~times~~ times and at some point ~~the~~ I heard the Low Rotor RPM Horn and at that time I leaned over and saw the Low RPM light on the dash lit up. come out Pilot flew down into a canyon to increase air speed trying to recover and regretfully ran out of room. I cant state strongly enough how well the pilot performed trying to save the aircraft.

[REDACTED]
Signature

11-14-15
Date



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy N. Sorensen
Aviation Accident Investigator
Central Region

Date: February 8, 2016
Person Contacted: Darrell Lambert
NTSB Accident Number: CEN16LA039 – Alpine, TX

Narrative:

Mr. Lambert noted that the takeoff area was bordered by power lines on three sides, with the “open end” behind the helicopter. He reported that, at the beginning of an earlier flight that day, the pilot picked up into a 15 to 20-foot hover, turned 180 degrees, and flew away. He added that it seemed to be a somewhat aggressive move to get the helicopter off the ground. The helicopter subsequently “skimmed” the roof of a barn/office building as they departed. To the best of his recollection, the accident flight takeoff was executed over the power lines.

Mr. Lambert commented that he had talked to the pilot before the afternoon flight, while the pilot was refueling the helicopter. The pilot noted that during the takeoff on the morning flight, the helicopter “wouldn’t go.” The pilot explained that the helicopter had full fuel and four occupants; the low rotor speed warning came on, which can occur if the rotor blades reach full pitch for the given conditions. The pilot added that when that situation occurs the rotor speed needs to be increased, which can be accomplished by increasing the helicopter’s airspeed or initiating a descent.

Mr. Lambert noted that the pilot did a “splendid job” immediately prior to the accident. Upon hearing the low rotor speed warning, the pilot attempted to regain rotor speed by flying into a canyon. The helicopter seemed to be gaining speed, it had reached the bottom of the descent and was beginning to climb when the accident occurred.

Mr. Lambert did not perceive of any issues with the helicopter; he had the “utmost confidence” in the vehicle.

----- End of entries -----

NAME: Lew M. Speck

ADDRESS: [REDACTED] San Angelo TX 76905

PHONE: [REDACTED] EMAIL: [REDACTED]

AGE: 35 OCCUPATION: Construction / Rancher

EMPLOYER: Symco Structures

In your own words, describe what you recall about the event. Attach additional sheets if necessary:

We were finishing in the afternoon. We stopped for lunch. We were surveying wildlife for harvest recommendation. We departed around 3:18 pm. We resumed our game census. We flew at about 4145 and we came across some hogs. Darrett we climbed higher David gave the word to rebail. It felt like we were losing lift. The engine was fine and I heard a buzzer go off and everyone stopped talking. We were heading NW and we turned left and lowered the nose apparently to gain airspeed. As we were going down the canyon we picked up airspeed but we didn't gain lift. It was apparent we were going down. David (pilot) pitched up but we didn't gain altitude. (over)

Signature

Date

The main rotor began clipping trees. There was a dead pinon tree and that is what we hit. The tail popped upward. Everything went dark. We moved around a bit, and we came to a rest.

I ^{was} helped out of the helicopter and I managed to reach my phone and I didn't have cell phone coverage and I noticed the time was 4:57 pm.




Notes taken by FAA Inspector Gordon Morris on 11/15/2015 AND signed by the witnesses, I confirm this information is true AND Accurated (As it was presented to me) to the best of my ability.


FAA Inspector In Charge

Lewis! Speck (Tex) Page 2



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy N. Sorensen
Aviation Accident Investigator
Central Region

Date: February 8, 2016
Person Contacted: Lenal Speck
NTSB Accident Number: CEN16LA039 – Alpine, TX

Narrative:

Mr. Speck noted that he is not a pilot; however, he has been on many previous wildlife survey flights. He estimated between two and six flights each year since 2000.

Mr. Speck commented that when he initially perceived there was a problem, he brought his arms and elbows in and sat back in his seat in order to stay out of the pilot's way as much as possible. He added that the pilot kept his composure and executed a "textbook crash landing."

Mr. Speck recalled that the flight departed at 3:12pm and that his phone indicated 4:57pm when he looked at it between 5 and 10 minutes after the accident. Shortly before the accident, the helicopter was in straight and level flight about 5,700 feet mean sea level. Initially, he felt that the helicopter was dropping, possibly due to a downdraft. The pilot immediately began checking the instrument indications and control settings. While the pilot was checking the status of the helicopter, the low rotor speed warning light and buzzer came on. After scanning the area, the pilot pitched the helicopter nose down, turned 180 degrees, and entered a descent. The helicopter did not regain lift again until the pilot flared just above the ground.

Mr. Speck elaborated on his initial statement that the "engine was fine." He explained that he has always worked on a ranch or farm. As a result, he has the habit of being very aware of any changes in the sound or performance of mechanical equipment. With respect to the helicopter, he did not perceive any issues with the aircraft during the flight until after it began to descend, approximately halfway to the ground. Before that point, the helicopter "felt the same" and "sounded the same" as usual.

Mr. Speck recalled that one of the fuel gauges indicated three-quarters full and the other about five-eighths at the beginning of the flight. He was fairly confident of this; however, he was not absolutely certain of the exact values.

----- End of entries -----

NAME: Cody B. Wood

ADDRESS: [REDACTED]

PHONE: [REDACTED] EMAIL: [REDACTED]

AGE: 36 OCCUPATION: RANCH MANAGER

EMPLOYER: YARBOROUGH RANCHES L.P.

In your own words, describe what you recall about the event. Attach additional sheets if necessary: TO THE BEST OF MY MEMORY:

WE WERE PARALLELING A GROUP OF FERAL HOGS IN ORDER TO GET A ~~SH~~ SHOT AT THEM. ONCE OUR RIFLES & SHOTGUNS WERE EMPTIED, THE PILOT ~~WAS~~ CIRCLED TO THE LEFT WHILE WE WERE RELOADING AND WAS ~~IN~~ IN THE PROCESS OF GETTING BACK INTO POSITION WHEN WE HEARD THE LOW ROTAR RPM HORN. AT THAT TIME WE DOVE OFF INTO THE CANYON (I ASSUME TO GAIN ~~ROTAR~~ ROTAR RPM). ~~THE~~ THE PILOT ATTEMPTED TO PULL THE AIRCRAFT UP ~~AB~~ ABOUT THE SAME TIME WE REACHED THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CANYON. AT THAT TIME WE STARTED CLIPPING JUNIPER TREES AND FINALLY ENDED UP HITTING ONE SQUARE WITH THE FRONT ~~WIND~~ WINDSHIELD. WE UPROOTED THAT ONE (OVER)

Signature [REDACTED]

Date 11/14/15

AND HIT ANOTHER ONE. THATS ABOUT THE
TIME EVERYTHING SLID TO A STOP. IT SEEMS
LIKE THERE WAS A ROLL OVER OR TWO
IN BETWEEN HITTING THE FIRST TREE AND
~~ROLLING OVER AND STOP~~ SECOND TREE WHERE
WE SLID TO A STOP. THE FRONT PASSANGER
AND PILOT WE BLEEDING AT LOT. AND
WHERE IN WORSE SHAPE THAN ~~THE~~ THE REAR
PASSENGERS. I WAS IN THE REAR. I ENDED
UP WALKING OUT ALONG WITH THE OTHER
REAR PASSENGER. WE WALKED TO THE HIGHWAY
AND GOT A RIDE TO THE NEAREST TELEPHONE
AND CALLED 911.

- [REDACTED]



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy N. Sorensen
Aviation Accident Investigator
Central Region

Date: February 3, 2016
Person Contacted: Cody Wood
NTSB Accident Number: CEN16LA039 – Alpine, TX

Narrative:

Mr. Wood stated that the purpose of the accident flight was to conduct a wildlife survey. They would also address issues with any predatory animals that they came across; there were three firearms onboard the helicopter. The flight conducted with the doors off and departed from a takeoff/landing area adjacent to the ranch headquarters building.

Mr. Wood reported that the helicopter had difficulty clearing power lines on takeoff. He explained that power lines bordered the takeoff/landing area on three sides: north, east, and south. He estimated the power lines as about 35 feet high. There were no power lines along the west perimeter of the takeoff/landing area; however, there were cattle corrals and a one-story building, which was the ranch headquarters. Earlier in the day, the pilot had departed to the east. On the accident flight, after the helicopter was unable to clear the power lines to the east, the pilot turned around and departed to the west. He recalled that the landing skids on the helicopter cleared the building by about 15 feet, which he thought was a little too close.

Mr. Wood noted that the accident site was about 3 miles north of the departure site. The pilot fueled the helicopter before the accident flight; although, he was unsure of the amount of fuel onboard.

Mr. Wood stated that he weighs about 170 lbs., with an additional 20 lbs. for clothing and gear worn/used during the accident flight.

----- End of entries -----