



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Central Region

Record of Telephone Conversation

Person Interviewed: Darlene Braswell - Witness

Date: March 29, 2016

Subject: – CEN16LA135

Ms. Braswell was inside her house when she first heard the helicopter. She went outside thinking maybe it was an EMS helicopter. She saw a red and white helicopter that was unusually low and her initial thought was that it was going to land.

The helicopter then climbed out and circled the area. She saw it circle overhead three times. On the third circle, when it was climbing, she saw the helicopter start spinning to the left. The helicopter was initially in a level attitude when it started spinning, about 20 feet above the trees. The nose of the helicopter then dropped and it descended into the ground. She stated that the engine continued to run for several minutes after the helicopter contacted the ground.

She called 911 and her husband ran into the woods to see if he could help. He stated the helicopter was leaking gas and there was a small fire.

Pamela S Sullivan
National Transportation Safety Board
Air Safety Investigator



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
Central Region

Record of Telephone Conversation

Person Interviewed: William “Chip” Taylor – FSDO Inspector

Date: May 3, 2016

Subject: – CEN16LA135

He and John Roberts, TSI, examined the wreckage. The tail rotor and tail rotor drive system appeared to have been attached and functioning at the time of the impact with the trees.

They examined the engine and reported the following discrepancies:

The lower spark plug on the right lower cylinder was finger tight.

The instrument air line that supplies intake manifold pressure to the manifold pressure gauge was loose at the manifold.

Drill bit found in the engine area.

Multiple bolt on the engine that had safety wire holes, but no safety wire was present.

None of the discrepancies found would have resulted in a loss of control or engine power.

Pamela S Sullivan
National Transportation Safety Board
Air Safety Investigator



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Central Region

Record of Telephone Conversation

Person Interviewed: Michael Murphy - Witness

Date: March 29, 2016

Subject: – CEN16LA135

Mr. Murphy lives just across the road from where the helicopter crashed. He was working outside in his yard on the east side of his barn when he first heard the helicopter.

The helicopter made three passes over his property all at a low altitude. He believes the helicopter first approached from the southwest, passing over Highway Y, and it circled the property in a clockwise direction.

His first wondered if the pilot was a gentleman that he met at church last fall. The helicopter was red and white and looked like an old vintage helicopter.

1st Pass – The helicopter circled his property clockwise at a low altitude.

2nd Pass – The helicopter was probably about 40 to 60 ft above the trees. He waved to the pilot and the pilot waved back with his right hand.

3rd Pass – The helicopter looked like it was going to land in the field on the north side of his house. His grandson ran off the porch and he suspected the pilot did not land because of the child. The helicopter descended to about 20 ft above the ground prior to climbing out. He stated it appeared the pilot was in control of the helicopter during the time it was circling his house.

After the last pass, the helicopter climbed out, circling to the right, and he momentarily lost contact with it. It sounded like the engine was changing power levels. He stated it sounded like a “staccato” type sound. He ran around the house and saw the tail of the helicopter dip. He knew the helicopter was in trouble so he started running toward it.

He then heard the impact and the engine continued to run after the impact. He called 911 and ran toward the woods. A neighbor also started running toward the helicopter. He stated that they were in the woods when he heard the engine stop running.

They located the helicopter and the pilot was strapped in the seat with his face on the ground. He then went out to the road to help emergency vehicles find the location of the accident.

Pamela S Sullivan
National Transportation Safety Board
Air Safety Investigator



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
Central Region

Record of Telephone Conversation

Person Interviewed: Gary Schuster - FAA

Date: March 28, 2016

Subject: – CEN16LA135

The pilot crashed a helicopter about 10 years ago after which he surrendered his pilot certificate.

There was no registration on the helicopter. He contacted the registered owner. He stated he sold the helicopter to the accident pilot in September 2015. The helicopter logbook indicated the helicopter had an annual inspection on July 15, 2015.

The pilot's logbook had one recent instructional flight was signed by an instructor. He was signed off for solo flight.

The pilot took off from his house and flew to a café in Cape Fair where he landed in the parking lot. He apparently ate at the café prior to departing on the accident leg of the flight.

A witness who heard the pilot starting the helicopter stated it backfired and was running rough. He then flew over a group of people at the café prior to leaving the area.

He then circled a residence about ¼ mile from the café. He was at a low altitude.

The helicopter was moved from the site and is in a secured hangar at the West Branson Airport.

The tail boom is broken off.

Pamela S Sullivan
National Transportation Safety Board
Air Safety Investigator