

Memorandum of Conversation

Date: 16 August 2018

Time: 1442 central daylight time

Conversation Including: Dr. Thomas D. Nagle; pilot/helicopter owner

Conversation Regarding: CEN18LA334, N3625Z

Duration of Call: 29 Minutes



Summary & Factual Information from Conversation:

Dr. Nagle reported that the accident occurred during a Part 91 pleasure flight. He departed Hector International Airport (FAR), Fargo, North Dakota, earlier in the morning and flew to McLeod, North Dakota, to pick-up a friend who lived on a nearby farm. Dr. Nagle completed an uneventful local flight with the passenger before departing McLeod, North Dakota, about 1015 CDT by himself for the return flight to FAR. Dr. Nagle estimated that the helicopter had between 25-28 gallons of fuel remaining when he departed McLeod, North Dakota.

Dr. Nagle reported that at 1030 CDT, while enroute direct to FAR, at 1,000 ft above ground level, he heard a loud "snap" followed by a quick yaw of the helicopter. He immediately pushed the cyclic control forward and lowered the collective. He observed a "split needle" indication. The throttle still controlled engine speed; however, the main rotor speed did not respond to his throttle changes. He stated that the engine continued to run normally. He noted that he still had directional control through the antitorque pedals. Dr. Nagle immediately entered an autorotation and made one revolution while he located a suitable landing area. He maneuvered the helicopter to a nearby wheat field for landing. He estimated that the wheat crop was between 2-3 ft high. Dr. Nagle stated that the helicopter landed level on its skids, but it still had forward ground speed that caused the helicopter to briefly pitch nose-up. The helicopter subsequently pitched down before it slowly rolled over onto its right side. Dr. Nagle reported that the engine continued to run after impact, and that he shut down the engine by moving the mixture control to the idle cutoff position. After the accident, he was able to exit the helicopter unaided and without injury. Dr. Nagle stated that he observed smoke from the right side of the helicopter (possibly near the damaged right fuel tank) and that the helicopter caught on fire after a few minutes. A majority of helicopter was destroyed by the postimpact fire.

Dr. Nagle reported that he purchased the helicopter in 2000, and that he passed his FAA private pilot checkride in 2001. He estimated that he has flown more than 600 hours in the Schweizer 300 helicopter. All his flight time in helicopters were flown in the Schweizer 269C (aka Schweizer 300C). He had not flown a full autorotation to the ground before the accident flight.

--- End of interview summary ---

I can attest that the above summary and factual information was taken on the above stated day, and is correct to the best of my knowledge:

Signed: _ Andrew Todd Fox _

Dated: _ 16 August 2018 _

Andrew Todd Fox
National Transportation Safety Board
Air Safety Investigator