



## RECORD OF INTERVIEW

**Mitchell Gallo**  
**Aviation Accident Investigator, NTSB IIC**  
**Central Region**

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**Date: March 14, 2019**  
**Person Contacted: Carl Buckley, Pilot, Bristow Group Inc.**  
**Present: Donald Robson, Chief Pilot, Bristow Group Inc.**  
**James Stottlemeyer, Director of Safety Performance, Bristow Group Inc.**  
**NTSB Accident Number: CEN19FA095**

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### **Narrative:**

Carl Buckley stated he flew a maintenance test flight in N577AL on March 9, 2019 sometime after the sun went down around 1900 and the flight was “non-eventful.” There was “a little bit of weather” during the flight. He said it was a “very short flight” and when he took off, there was “plenty of vertical visibility.” He flew a figure eight pattern because the visibility was about 2 miles and did not want to go into the “blackness.” It was a “horrible night” due to the weather before the accident. He said the helicopter was “smooth” and there were no issues with the avionics. He said the flight was 0.1-0.2 hours in duration.

Taken by:

Mitchell Gallo



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**Central Region**

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**Date: March 13, 2019**  
**Person Contacted: Jeff Asire, Pilot, Bristow Group Inc.**  
**Present: Donald Robson, Chief Pilot, Bristow Group Inc.**  
**NTSB Accident Number: CEN19FA095**

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### **Narrative:**

Jeff Asire stated that his flight was delayed and did not depart until the morning and returned and landed at Venice at 1204. He said that about 4-5 minutes prior to landing, he heard the pilot of N577AL give a pilot report. Mr. Asire said the pilot reported 700 feet and 5- or 6-miles visibility. When Mr. Asire returned to Venice, he shutdown the helicopter and began completing paperwork. The base manger Colby Landry told him to get ready to launch because there was a helicopter missing. Mr. Asire was given N577AL's last polled position. He departed at 1244 and was flying in VFR conditions. There "still was a little mist." The ceilings were 6,000 or 7,000 feet broken and the visibility was 6-7 miles. He departed on a direct heading to Galliano because he was trying to determine the correct coordinate that were given. He said he finally converted the coordinates to degrees, minutes, and seconds. At 1,250 feet, they were westbound and 12 minutes after takeoff, they encountered multilayered clouds that corresponded with a large bay between Galliano and Venice. The visibility between layers was 3 or 4 miles. He saw the water below and patches of weather, but he could see the water.

He said that the accident site was "a little north" of the coordinates that were given to him. The debris field was about the course that was N577AL was going. The debris field was northwest/southeast, about 120-130 degrees with floatation device and raft in the northwest area and the rotor blades were in the southeast corner. He said they could see South Lafourche from their position. He said they arrived at the accident site about 1306. The search and rescue helicopter arrived about 1320. He said the weather was "good" at the debris field but was not good at the bay.

He said there was fog “patchy” beneath them while en route. About 7-8 miles from the accident site, they broke out into the clear. He said the weather was “much better” when they arrived at the accident site.

He said he did not see any birds on the water or elsewhere and that it would have been hard to see birds on the water because it was brown in color. He did not encounter any bird activity en route nor did he see any near the area of the accident site.

He said that the helicopter skids were “sticking upward,” and the helicopter was “upside down.” The raft was deployed and upside down. The skids were pointed north/northwest to south/southeast. He did not know the heading of the helicopter nose. The vertical fin was by itself with the tail boom separated. The vertical fin was south about 15-20 yards of the rotor hub.

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**Date: March 12, 2019**  
**Person Contacted: Nuri Hattum, Pilot, Bristow Group Inc.**  
**Present: Donald Robson, Chief Pilot, Bristow Group Inc.**  
**NTSB Accident Number: CEN19FA095**

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### **Narrative:**

Nuri Hattum stated he was called to respond to the helicopter accident not through company dispatch channels but informally and about 5-10 minutes, that changed to a presumed fatal aircraft accident. He stated that he was in communication with another helicopter that had arrived at the accident site and was not sure how long they had been there when the wreckage was located. The other helicopter let Mr. Hattum fly into the area after it had departed the accident site area.

He said that he had a time log of events. He said that the log showed that he received a call at 1305 and then went to the hangar and pulled the helicopter out. The helicopter engine was started at 1313 and released and taxied at 1317. At 1328 they arrived on-scene and departed the scene at 1426. He said that after searching for about 40 minutes, they identified the pilot of N544AL. Mr. Hattum said he was piloting a Sikorsky SK92, N920VH for the search.

He said the weather at South Lafourche Leonard Miller Jr Airport (GAO), Galliano, Louisiana, was wind – 180 degrees at 7-10 knot “breeze”, outside air temperature - 28 degrees Celsius, and visibility – 10-20 kilometers, the sea state was smooth, broken clouds at 1,400 feet, and there was “no significant weather”.

He said that United States Coast Guard HS65 was about 13 miles from the accident site when HS65 encountered fog during their search pattern. He said that the weather “looked pretty nice” and it was a “VFR flying day.” He said that HS65 was out of the New Orleans Air Station. He said the contact for the Coast Guard was 504-365-2209.

He said that there was a company Bell 407 and a company Sikorsky S76, that “sounded like” they were airborne and were in contact with the accident site location. He said that a third company helicopter that attempted to fly to the accident site was unable to get to the site due the weather about 2-3 hours after the accident. Mr. Nuri flew to the accident site at an altitude of 500 foot to the accident site which was about 5 miles from GAO.

He said he began his duty day on the day of the accident at 0900 and the weather was “scuzzy” and “typical”. He said the weather would “burn off” later in the day.

He said that Scott Gordon was a rescue swimmer and was the only one in the water.

He said that he would provide a written statement regarding his flight and provide a wreckage diagram to the NTSB IIC.

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**Date: March 12, 2019**  
**Person Contacted: Timothy Cahanin, Pilot, Bristow Group Inc.**  
**Present: Donald Robson, Chief Pilot, Bristow Group Inc.**  
**NTSB Accident Number: CEN19FA095**

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### **Narrative:**

Timothy Cahanin stated he got a call when he returned to base. He questioned what the call was about and was advised that the pilot of N577AL was not answering his radio. Mr. Cahanin was launched to look for the pilot of N577AL and in the process of launching, a company mechanic came aboard the flight. He and the mechanic talked about the procedures they were going to use for the flight.

He flew a southeasterly course. Mr. Cahanin was advised that a company Sikorsky S76 was launched on a reciprocal path. When Mr. Cahanin was about 11 miles from base, he started encountering "low level fog." He started a search pattern initially in an east/west pattern. He heard N890BG, piloted by Jeff Asire, who called me and determined (Mr. Cahanin) was 5 miles south of the accident site. He joined Mr. Asire and saw the accident scene and the debris.

He said that he departed from Bristow US LLC Heliport (2LS0), Galliano, Louisiana about 1248 in a Bell 407, N939AL. His altitude during the search was not more than 700 feet. When he was about 11 miles from 2LS0, he called base and said he could not continue on N577AL's course line any further due to weather. South of the N577AL course line, visibility was about 5 miles. He said there was fog on the water and could not tell the height of the clouds.

He said he began his duty day at 0600 and it was "foggy," and flights were on hold. He said that some flights were going to MP28. He said he was going to Venice to get fuel. He said that he was waiting for a pilot report from the pilot of N577AL but did not receive one. He said that there was uncertainty about the weather.

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