

Memorandum of Conversation

Date: 06 February 2019

Time: 1115 central standard time (CST)

Conversation Including: Ernest Brown; pilot/helicopter owner

Conversation Regarding: CEN19LA067, N3755Z

Duration of Call: 35 Minutes



Summary & Factual Information from Conversation:

Mr. Brown stated that shortly before the accident he had maneuvered the helicopter into an out-of-ground effect hover about 50 ft above the ground. Mr. Brown reported that the carburetor heat was not engaged while he flew the helicopter in the out-of-ground effect hover. Mr. Brown stated that he "got complacent about maintaining main rotor speed" and subsequently observed an unsafe main rotor speed. Mr. Brown lowered the collective control for an immediate landing and engaged the carburetor heat. He attempted to reduce the helicopter's descent rate before impact by increasing the collective control, but the helicopter landed hard in the soft terrain. The main rotor blades subsequently impacted the tail boom and tail rotor. Mr. Brown reported that after impact the engine continued to run at about 1,500 rpm, and that he secured the engine by turning the fuel valve to OFF. Mr. Brown reported no preimpact mechanical anomalies with the helicopter that would have precluded normal operation. Mr. Brown postulated that an insufficient main rotor speed had precluded him from making a normal flare and landing. Mr. Brown stated that the engine might have encountered carburetor icing as he maneuvered the helicopter into the out-of-ground effect hover at a decreased engine power setting, which, in turn, might have contributed to his failure to maintain adequate main rotor speed while hovering.

Mr. Brown asked why the "hard landing" was being investigated by the NTSB and FAA. NTSB Investigator Fox explained that the helicopter had received substantial damage (to the tail boom and tail rotor) during the hard landing. Mr. Brown reiterated that neither he or his passenger were injured during the accident.

Mr. Brown stated that the low altitude (about 50 ft above the ground) at which the helicopter was being flown did not provide enough time for him to identify if carburetor ice had developed or not. Mr. Brown reiterated that after he noticed a low main rotor speed he focused on making an immediate landing with little to no forward speed.

Mr. Brown explained that he did not have a current medical or flight review. He estimated that his total flight time was about 9,000 hours, of which 500 hours were in helicopters. He estimated that he had flown about 100 hours in the Bell 47 helicopter. Mr. Brown ceased logging his flight time in the 1970s.

Mr. Brown estimated that the 30 to 40-minute local flight likely departed around 1400 mst.

--- 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: _ 06 February 2019 _

**National Transportation Safety Board
Air Safety Investigator**