

Fox Todd

From: Fox Todd
Sent: Wednesday, April 28, 2021 11:21 AM
To: MITCHELL Jason (SAFRAN HELICOPTER ENGINES USA)
Cc: Fox Todd; LARIMORE Bryan (SAFRAN HELICOPTER ENGINES USA); seth.buttner [REDACTED]; Martens, Allan (FAA); Knox, John (FAA); thomas.j.davis [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Chopper Charter H120 Troubleshooting Recap

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Mr. Mitchell,

Thank you for providing your statement concerning your phone conversations with Mr. Kenneth Norman.

I intend to include your statement with the public docket materials in support of the ongoing investigation.

Sincerely,
Andrew Todd Fox
NTSB, Air Safety Investigator

From: MITCHELL Jason (SAFRAN HELICOPTER ENGINES USA) [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, April 28, 2021 10:53 AM
To: Fox Todd [REDACTED]
Cc: LARIMORE Bryan (SAFRAN HELICOPTER ENGINES USA) [REDACTED]
Subject: Chopper Charter H120 Troubleshooting Recap

Hello Todd,

The following is a recap of the troubleshooting discussed with Ken Norman regarding the fuel system issues with Chopper Charter as best I can recall.

I was contacted by Ken Norman from Rototex, LLC on 8-April-2021 to discuss a trip he was making to Kansas to investigate some fuel filter light/ fuel system issues that Chopper Charter was having with their H120. Ken stated Chopper Charter had experienced a fuel filter bypass indication, as well as a fuel filter light. Ken told me that prior to this call, he had suggested they inspect and replace their fuel filter which he stated had been performed. Ken also told me he had ordered and sent them a filter for this task (exact date/process unspecified). Ken told me Chopper Charter told him there was no sign of fuel system contamination in the aircraft fuel cell or in the filter, etc. Ken had phoned me on the 8th to tell me he was on his way to Kansas to investigate what was going on because he felt he was getting mixed stories about how many times they had experienced a fuel filter light, which light they were getting exactly, and what exactly had been done on their end as far as troubleshooting. Ken and I discussed the fuel system and possible causes of the lights. I reminded Ken there is a fuel filter in the FCU, and Ken was familiar with this task. He said when he arrived he would check this filter as well. I told him I thought this was the best place to start and to give me call if he had any questions once he was on site.

One day later, on 9-April-2021, Ken phoned me to inform me that during a flight from Kansas to Claremore, OK, they had lost power and made a forced landing near a house. Ken stated that they had gotten a low NR warning and spent some time (I recall Ken said about 5 minutes) trying to determine what exactly was going on. Subsequent conversation with Ken confirmed after hearing the audible low rotor warning, there were no associated lights on the panel and that the low rotor condition persisted resulting in the process of attempting to land – all in short order. Then, Ken said that power was lost very rapidly and the pilot (Terry, I believe) made a landing attempt which ended in a hard landing. Ken stated that there was “nothing left” when the collective was pulled for the flare near the ground. I asked Ken if anything was done when he had arrived a day earlier to inspect the engine/aircraft prior to this flight. He said he had pulled the FCU filter and it was clean. He added that “everything checked out” and so they departed for Oklahoma on the 9th. He also made mention that he had seen the filter he had ordered for them and suggested they replace on a workbench near the helicopter. We ended our phone call as the landing had just occurred and Ken needed to go. Ken had informed me prior to these calls that they had planned on replacing the windshields in the aircraft and my assumption was the aircraft was being relocated for this purpose.

For clarification purposes - subsequent conversation with Ken following this call on the 9th confirms: the FCU filter was not removed on the 8th. According to Ken, nothing was physically done that day (8th) – only a review of the situation. Personnel from Chopper Charter maintained the issues they had experienced were no longer, when he arrived on the 8th. Ken also told me he was not convinced they ever really had an actual bypass based on the probability of the operator confusing the red button in the bypass indicator glass and the operator’s ability / knowledge of resetting this button when popped.

Sincerely,



Jason A. Mitchell
Field Representative (South Central U.S.)
Safran Helicopter Engines

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