

Post-Crash Statement

N841PB

Occurred: May 12, 2021

Submitted: May 14, 2021

Air Interdiction Agent



On May 12, 2017 at approximately 1525 hours local, while flying with Air Interdiction Agent [REDACTED] I was involved in a crash in Helicopter N841BP at the Clarence E. Page Municipal airport (KRCE) in Yukon, Oklahoma. Agent [REDACTED] and I were on a training flight as part of the ASTAR 350 B2 Initial Pilot Certification course for U.S Customs and Border Protection Office of Air and Marine. Agent [REDACTED] was the Instructor Pilot located in the left front seat. I was sitting in the right front seat in the role of Student Pilot. The sky was overcast at around 4,000 feet AGL, the temperature was approximately 15 C (59 F), winds were out of the Northeast (approx. 040 degrees approx. 10 knots). We launched from the lander at the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Hanger at Roy Rogers International Airport (KOKC) in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma at approximately 1500 hr. local time. From KOKC we flew directly to KRCE to conduct training in landings and emergency procedures. We intended on beginning with pinnacle landings at the pinnacle area on the Southeast area of the airport. There was another helicopter already training on pinnacles when we arrived, so we maneuvered to the Northeast area of the field and flew two approaches and one landing in the confined area. Next, we moved to the pinnacle area and flew two approaches to the pinnacle. From the pinnacle we joined right traffic for runway 35L. We flew the first approach to 35L with a simulated yaw-servo control seizure with the hydraulics off (disengaged with the hydraulic cutoff switch/button on the end of the right seat pilot collective) to a shallow approach to a run-on landing. Once the helicopter was on the ground with the control locked, I re-engaged the hydraulics with the hydraulic cutoff switch/button. We launched and joined left traffic for runway 35L. This trip in the traffic pattern we practiced loss of tail rotor control during which I disengaged the hydraulics and tail rotor hydraulic accumulator for 5 sec per the emergency procedure with the hydraulic test switch then I reset with the same switch followed by a shallow approach to a run-on landing. The next trip in the pattern we practiced a simulated main hydraulic servo slide valve seizure during which I switched off the hydraulics with the hydraulic cutoff switch/button followed by a shallow approach to a run-on landing to the south end of runway 35L. Once the helicopter was on the ground and the collective was locked, I re-engaged the hydraulics with the same button. From that position we began a series of quick stop maneuvers down runway 35L. After the third quick stop I heard another airplane call final approach for 35L. AIA [REDACTED] indicated that we would expedite and clear the runway. We made one final quick stop and then just past mid field we launched with an immediate left turnout to clear the runway. After passing through ETL we began a climbing left turn. In the turn I noticed a left yaw and the pedals were not responding to correct the yaw. When I adjusted my grip on the collective to begin reducing it, I felt my thumb on the hydraulic cutoff switch button. As I tightened my grip on the collective the hydraulics came offline aggravating the left yaw into a hard left spin. I immediately felt AIA [REDACTED] on the controls attempting to help me out of the spin by attempting to help me reduce the collective and increase forward

airspeed. The controls were very stiff. AIA [REDACTED] yelled to get the hydraulics back on. I intentionally pressed the button but felt no effect. I pressed the button a second time attempting to re-engage the hydraulics while attempting to verify with the hydraulic light on the Caution Warning Panel. I noticed the hydraulic light still on and attempted to press the button a third time. By this time, I could see the ground approaching rapidly out my right-side door. We made impact in the grass approximately 75 yards west of runway 35L in the grass. I recall the rotor blades breaking as the helicopter came to rest on the right side. Once motion stopped AIA [REDACTED] asked multiple times if I was alright. I affirmed that I was and asked him if he was alright. He affirmed that he was and then unbuckled his seat belt. AIA [REDACTED] said we needed to get out and that we might be on fire. This seemed to stimulate me to action as I grabbed the fuel cutoff lever and pulled it to the rear. I then reached up and turned off the fuel boost pumps one and two. As I reached to turn off the generator, I decided to follow AIA [REDACTED] and unbuckled my seat belt instead and climbed out the left side door right behind him. I noticed AIA [REDACTED] looking at the aircraft logbook which landed on the ground near the base of the tail. He reached down to pick up what I thought was the helicopter logbook but instead grabbed his iPad from that same area. I noticed a small grass fire approximately 1 foot square approximately 10 feet off the nose of the helicopter. I also noticed what I initially thought was water coming out from under the helicopter. I bent over to investigate and could smell jet fuel. AIA [REDACTED] asked several more times if I was ok. After a moment to gather our wits AIA [REDACTED] suggested we should move away from the helicopter back toward the runway. After we began walking away, I first noticed smoke rising from the body of the helicopter near the area of the engine.