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Subject: CEN23FA019 Surviving Passenger Interview
Summaries

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Both surviving passengers were interviewed on Thursday, October 27, 2022, while they were in the hospital at the LSU University Medical Center. The NTSB IIC and FAA IIC conducted the interviews.

Summaries:

Surviving Passenger Robert Romero

Mr. Romero stated they had loaded up the helicopter and left the SS349 platform and were heading back to the Westwind helicopter base at Abbeville, Louisiana. He was seated in the co-pilot seat (left front). He said that they were flying about 1,500 ft above the water. He heard the pilot say something like "this is not good; I am not going to make it." The passenger asked the pilot if there was a problem with the helicopter. The pilot said something like "it is not the helicopter, it is me. The passenger asked what was wrong, and the pilot said something like, "I'm overheating." Then, the pilot slumped over in his seat and was not responsive. He estimated that the helicopter was about 400 ft above the water when he reached over to the pilot's flight controls and attempted to control the helicopter. At some point during the descent, the skid-mounted float system was activated. The helicopter impacted the water and became inverted. The passenger exited out of the submerged cockpit and crawled onto the belly of the helicopter. Mr. Romero stated that he suffered a broken back.

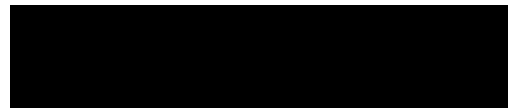
Surviving Passenger Jeremy Hollier

Mr. Hollier stated they had left ship shoal 349 and were headed back to the Westwind base. He was seated the right rear seat. He was taking a nap when he recognized that the sound of the helicopter engine had changed. He woke up and saw that the pilot was slumped over in his seat and the helicopter was headed toward the water. He stated that Mr. Romero, who was seated in the front left seat, had reached over to the pilot's flight controls, and was attempting to control the helicopter. The next thing that he recalled was that the helicopter was upside down in the water. He stated that he exited out of the cabin and climbed on top of the belly of the helicopter. He stated he

fired a signal and put dye into the water. Mr. Hollier stated that he suffered a broken leg and several cuts and scratches.

Both Mr. Romero and Mr. Hollier stated that they managed to evacuate the helicopter and they both climbed on top of the belly of the helicopter to wait for help. Note: The helicopter inverted upside down when it entered the water with the inflated skid mounted floats keeping the helicopter afloat. Both Mr. Romero and Mr. Hollier said that they saw a Westwind Helicopter fly over top of them and guessed that the pilot of that helicopter called the location of the wreckage into the Coast Guard. While waiting for rescue, a small work boat, coordinated by Westwind stayed until the Coast Guard arrived. During the interview, both Mr. Romero and Mr. Hollier appeared to be upset that, due to their injuries, neither of them was able to rescue the pilot from the wreckage. They both stated that the Coast Guard eventually rescued them and transported them to the LSU Medical Center in New Orleans. They both stated that the entire flight had been normal until the pilot became incapacitated.

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