



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Allison Diaz
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: June 10, 2012
NTSB Accident Number: ERA12LA386
Persons Interviewed: Barry Kropelin

Narrative:

- Mr. Kropelin stated that he arrived at the Wrens Memorial Airport around 1500 on the day of the accident, and began unloading his gyroplane.
- The accident pilot (Mr. Bowen) was already at the airport and in the process of unloading his gyroplane.
- They talked for a while, and Mr. Bowen helped Mr. Kropelin load the rotors onto his aircraft.
- Mr. Kropelin then pushed his gyroplane away to a quiet area to conduct a preflight inspection.
- He and Mr. Bowen then departed in their gyroplanes and flew around the airport for around 10 minutes. They then conducted a pass down the runway and departed to the north to overfly some fields.
- He was following about ¼ mile behind Mr. Bowen, and radioed Mr. Bowen to tell him that he was following.
- Mr. Bowen replied and asked for a radio check, which Mr. Kropelin stated was loud and clear.
- Between the airport and the fields the pilots intended to fly over, there was a set of high-tension lines. They passed over these lines at an altitude of about 400-500 feet.
- As they reached the fields, he observed Mr. Bowen begin a descending, left hand turn.
- He described the turn as normal, and stated that nothing appeared unusual or out-of-the-ordinary.
- He continued to watch Mr. Bowen's gyroplane turn, and expected him to straighten out, but the turn continued until ground impact. The impact was followed immediately by fire.

- He stated that the turn preceding the impact did not appear to be an evasive maneuver, and that Mr. Bowen was high enough that the smaller set of overhead lines perpendicular to his flight path should not have been an issue.
- He did not observe any obvious anomalies with Mr. Bowen's gyroplane, and did not receive any radio transmissions from him after the radio check.
- When asked about Mr. Bowen's disposition prior to the accident flight, he stated that he seemed "normal."



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Date: June 18, 2012
NTSB Accident Number: ERA12LA386
Persons Interviewed: Philip Stewart, witness

Narrative:

- Mr. Stewart stated that he witnessed the gyroplane accident that occurred on June 8, 2012 in Wrens, GA.
- He was standing on the road adjacent to the accident site [Roy Hughes Rd] when he noticed the two gyroplanes flying towards him. The leading gyroplane was at an altitude he estimated as 50 feet, with the second gyroplane behind at a higher altitude.
- The first gyroplane appeared to be level with the overhead power lines that ran parallel to the road and perpendicular to the gyroplanes' direction of flight.
- Before reaching the road/power lines, the first gyroplane made a steep left turn that put the aircraft almost on its side.
- At about the 180-degree point of the turn, the gyroplane impacted the ground and burst into flames.
- He ran towards the wreckage to attempt to extricate the pilot, but the gyroplane was engulfed in flames.