

IIC ASI Corey Paczkowski's Statement
Written July 15, 2020
Accident File Number ERA20LA220
N4QW Robinson R-66
Accident Date June 18, 2020 at Pikeville NC

I investigated an accident that occurred on June 18, 2020, at 5:23 pm EDT. This office was notified on June 18, 2020 at 8:57 pm EDT. I was designated the IIC (Inspector in Charge) along with ASI Tony Kembro.

Summary: N4QW a Robinson R-66 helicopter owned by Kritter Cropdusting, Inc. struck a 5/16 inch braided wire while applying insecticide to a cornfield. This occurred near [REDACTED] in Pikeville NC. We arrived on scene June 19, 2020, at 10:45 am EDT. The law enforcement officers that were on scene were Sheriff Larry Pierce, State Trooper Grainger at [REDACTED], and First Sgt. James Dorsey.

Before we were taken to the crash site ASI Kembro inquired about the toxicity of the chemicals at the scene. It was determined by the labels found on the insecticide bottles that it was safe to proceed due to the time limit of 12 hours had passed since the accident occurred which was the life limit of the toxins from the insecticides. The helicopter was found at the northeast corner of the field. It appeared that the helicopter impacted the ground in a high nose down pitch angle and in a steep right bank. The impact marks showed that the main rotor hit the ground first followed by the fuselage hitting on the right side. The location was 35 degrees 26 minutes 39 seconds North Latitude, 077 degrees 55 minutes 30 seconds West Longitude. Final heading was 016 degrees north as the helicopter came to rest. I began taking pictures of the scene. I checked the flight controls for continuity. The collective and cyclic moved slightly and you could hear movement near the rotor head but due to the impact could not get much movement. We found about 20 feet of 5/16 inch cable rapped around the main rotor mast and several wire cuts consistent with cable marks in the main rotor blades and tail rotor blades. One tail rotor blade was sliced in half and showed cable marks where it was sliced. There was no post-crash fire. The tail boom and rotor were detached from the helicopter and were found in front and to the left of the main wreckage about 45 feet away. I then walked the field with ASI Kembro as we searched for the other end of the cable. A three-foot section of cable was found on the far northeast perimeter of the field in a retention ditch. The cable attaching point was found about 40 feet up in a pine tree at the edge of the

field. The telephone pole that had the deer stand was the beginning attachment point about 30 feet in the air and about 20 feet of cable was attached to the pole.

Investigation revealed that there were no apparent mechanical discrepancies with the helicopter that may have contributed to the crash at this time.

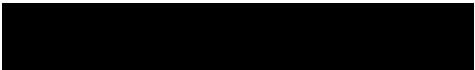
The weather at the time of the accident was reported as VMC.

Witness has stated that they saw the helicopter circle the field twice surveilling the field for hazards.

Later when we talked the owner of the farm Mr. Paul Daw about why the cable was there, Mr. Daw stated that his uncle put the cable up for Dove hunting season. He stated that the cable was installed about 15 years ago and was high enough for the combine tractor to get underneath it during harvest.

Conclusion: It was reported by the owner of the field that the helicopter was about 3 hours late getting to the field. It was also late in the afternoon when it arrived. In my opinion, since the deer stands were attached to both poles that were in the field it is possible that the pilot thought that the deer stand was the only purpose for the poles. The wire would have been impossible to see from the air since there were no ball or flags to mark the wire.

These statements are true to the best of my knowledge.



ASI Corey L. Paczkowski
Greensboro FSO EA-39

RECORD OF ☒ VISIT ☐ CONFERENCE OR ☐ TELEPHONE CALL		TIME 10:45 AM	DATE 06/19/2020
NAME (S) OF PERSON (S) CONTACTED OR IN CONFERENCE AND LOCATION (Larry M. Pierce Way County Sheriff). (P.O.I IIC Cory Paczkowski), (Mr.		ROUT NG	
		SYMBOL	INITIALS
Phillip Chambers Service truck driver /Coworker).(Jon Daw Farm owner).(Mr.			
Joseph Malecene Eye witness)			
SUBJECT Fatal Accident involving Aircraft N4QW in Pikeville,NC			
DIGEST Inspector Corey Paczkowski (IIC) arrived on the scene at approximately 10:45, and were met by Sheriff Larry Pierce. Mr. Pierce informed us as to the location of the helicopter, and that it was being secured by State Troopers. I inquired about the chemical payload of the crop duster, as to make an assessment of proper PPE that may be required. He introduced me to two men that had the products containers and ensured us as to their safety as non-toxic. We proceeded to the crash site where we were met by the State Trooper securing scene, I inquired about any media in the area. He assured me that the site was secured and he departed the scene. As we approached the helicopter I noticed that we were about to encounter a serious rain storm. Inspector Paczkowski and I began taking pictures, and I proceeded to do a parts continuity check. The helicopter was right side up and located in the NW corner of the field just inside the field access perimeter road with a wooded area outside of the road. I noticed the tail boom and rotor were detached from the airframe, and began my search for the parts. They were located 45' in front of the nose and to the left respectfully. I began collecting photos of the spray boom parts that were in pieces and scattered within a 40" area around the crash site. After many pictures from all angles, I began to survey and measure the distance from the point of contact with the wire that was			
CONCLUSION, ACTION TAKEN, OR REQUIRED			
DATE 06/19/2020	TITLE George Kembro Maint PMI	SIGNATURE	

DIGEST (CONT.):

wire that was involved, as approximately 20' was wound around the rotor shaft. The cable was attached to a telephone type pole approximately 30' high which also had a ladder type tree deer stand attached to it as well. I witnessed about 20' of the 5/16 braided steel cable still attached. I then walked off an approximate distance of 130 yards to the perimeter road to locate the other attach point of the wire. After much searching, I located the large pine tree with 30-40' of the cable remaining on it. It was my estimation that the cable at its lowest point was about 25' at the center of the field. The aircraft proceeded approximately 60 yards after contact with the wire before reaching ground. It appeared that the rotor blade hit the ground first in a high pitched down configuration as pictured. We then contacted the Medical examiner Dr. Scott to inquire about a TOX kit to be administered for CAMI. She informed me that they had a kit, and would be initiating that at autopsy. Mr. Phillip Chambers arrived on the scene to collect the deceased's personal effects. He introduced himself as a good friend and co-worker with the deceased. He explained that the pilot Mr. Eugene Kritter arrived on the job site and parked on the nurse truck, topped off and proceeded to do his surveillance flight. We released the following items that were recovered from the cockpit: 1 Pocket knife, an Ipad tablet and a cell phone. He stated that the pilot flew the perimeter, and then proceeded to spray. After sufficient photos were taken, we contacted the farmer to arrange a meeting with the farm hand that witnessed the crash Mr. Joseph Malecene. We reviewed his statement, and spoke to him. He re-iterated the account previously given in his witness statement and no further additions were required. I spoke to the Farm owner and Customer of the crop dusting service. Mr. Daw stated that he had not met the pilot, but had conversed with him over the phone. I inquired as to any briefing on any outlying hazards that may effect the job, and I specifically mentioned the Dove wire that caused the accident. He stated he did not. He stated that the wire was put in place by his uncle, and that it had been up for 15 years. It is my opinion that that the pilot did his surveillance flight, witnessed the pole with the deer stand attached and assumed that was its only purpose. The cable is virtually invisible as it did not have any markings of its existence by way of a ball, or flags.