



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE

March 9, 2022

Abingdon, VA

TO: Captain Shawn T. Rivard

FROM: Trooper-Pilot Jason L. Barney

SUBJECT: N29VA Incident – March 6, 2022

On March 6, 2022 I was the assigned Med-Flight Duty pilot for the Virginia State Police Aviation Division at the Abingdon Aviation Base. My duty day started at 0800 hours. Throughout the day I completed 4 medevac requests. At approximately 2200 I received a request for an emergency room transfer from Lonesome Pine Hospital to Holston Valley Hospital. I accepted the request and responded. The flight from my base to Lonesome Pine Hospital and on to Holston Valley Medical Center was normal in all respects. While preparing for departure from Holston Valley I started the helicopter and proceeded to lift from the helipad. As I slowly pulled up on the collective the helicopter became light on the skids and I noticed what sounded like a surge in the engines. I also noticed the FLI needles surged upward. I immediately asked Paramedic Carter, who was in the front seat, "Did you hear that?" I do not recall that Paramedic Carter responded to my question. I then stabilized the helicopter in a hover and made an assessment of the aircraft systems. As everything appeared to be in the normal range with not further abnormalities I made a decision to continue the flight back to base and further evaluate the situation from there. The flight back to base was normal. Upon arrival at base I hover taxied the helicopter to abeam the landing dolly to get into position to land. I then maneuvered the helicopter in a sideward flight to the right to get centered over the dolly. I visually verified my position over the dolly by looking over my right shoulder and verifying that the reflective tape was visible letting me know that I was centered fore and aft on the dolly. Further I looked through the chin bubble and verified that the left front tractor tire was aligned between the anti-torque pedals. Once I was centered on the dolly I lowered the collective to land. Next I felt the rear of the skids make contact with the dolly. The next thing I remember was what sounded like an engine surge similar to the sound the helicopter had made at the Holston Valley pad. Then I remember the helicopter moving towards the corporate hangars next to our ramp. I also remember the helicopter becoming in an extreme nose low position and quickly heading toward the ground. As I feared contact with the ground I maneuvered the cyclic full aft and left in an attempt to arrest my descent into the ground. I then felt the helicopter make

contact with the ground and I felt the tail of the helicopter coming up. As I feared that we were about to tip over I forcefully slammed the collective to the floor of the aircraft. The helicopter then came to rest on the pavement with the engines still running and the blades still turning. I instructed my crew to not exit the aircraft until I could secure the engines and get the blades stopped. Once it was safe we exited the aircraft and assessed each other for injuries. After we were safely away from the aircraft I immediately contacted my supervisor, First Sergeant John Ratliff, and made notification of the incident.

JLB

Trooper-Pilot Jason L. Barney

Statements from the pilot, and two other occupants, detailing the 'facts, conditions, circumstances' relevant:

- Specific areas to address:
 - Describe the overall purpose of flight- **Medevac**
 - Departure time, purpose of flight, how many other flights/ hours in the past 24 hours? **4 flights/4.5 flight hours**
 - When did your duty day start? When was it expected to end? **Day started at 0800 hours and was to end the following day at 0820 hours**
 - Describe the landing event in detail- **See attached statement**
 - What were the engine indications? **See attached statement**
 - What was the direction of landing? **Dolly was oriented in a Northerly position**
 - Where was the dolly, what was the alignment of the dolly? Was it chocked or fixed via some manner? **Dolly was oriented in a Northerly position and was chocked via the right front wheel**
 - Were there multiple approaches or contacts with the dolly? **Only one**
 - What was the wind and visibility? Gusts? Dark night? **Winds were light and it was Dark**
 - Is a wind sock visible and lighted at night? **Yes there is a lighted windsock visible from the dolly**
 - Were there any abnormal sounds with the helicopter/ engines? **Yes, see attached statement**
 - Any caution or warning lights/ horns received during the flight? **No**
 - Were night vision goggles being used? **No**
 - Any flight control anomalies? **No**
 - Any issues with the helicopter recently, or earlier in the flight? **Yes, see attached statement**
 - What were your injuries? **Back injuries**



Summary of incident on March 6th 2022

On the evening of March 6th I was on duty at Medflight II for a 24 hour shift along with Paramedic Earl Carter and Trooper Pilot Jason Barney. We had just completed our 5th mission of the shift with an interfacility transfer from Lonesome Pine Hospital in Big stone Gap VA to Holston Valley Medical Center in Kingsport Tn. Upon lifting from Holston Valley Medical Center Pilot Barney made a brief statement to Paramedic Carter asking, "did you feel that?" Indicating that he felt something unusual as the aircraft lifted. We arrived back at Virginia highlands airport at approximately 23:59 and Trooper Pilot Barney was in the final stages of attempting to land the aircraft on the dolly. I was fully restrained in the forward facing rear seat during the process. As we were touching down I suddenly felt the aircraft lurch violently to the right and felt it impact at multiple points as it seemed to pitch and yaw in multiple directions. The aircraft suddenly came to an upright position after impacting the pavement. The rotors were still turning as we became stationary. The sliding door nearest to me fell off the aircraft with minimal pressure. After the wellbeing of each crew member was verified and the engines were completely powered down, we were able to exit the aircraft.

Timothy W Smith

March 9th, 2022



Timothy Smith, Flight RN

- Purpose of the flight
 - Interfacility transfer from Lonesome Pine Hospital to Holston Valley Medical Center.
- Departure Time
 - 22:17
- Number of flights/hours in the past 24 hours
 - 4 flights 5-6 hours
- Shift Time
 - 8am-8am
- Landing Details
 - Q: What were the engine indications?
 - A: unknown
 - Q: What was the direction of the landing?
 - A: West to east
 - Q: Position of the dolly?
 - A: The dolly was on the tarmac and was chocked. It was aligned in a north-south position
 - Q: Were there multiple approaches or contacts with the dolly?
 - A: no
 - Q: What was the wind and visibility?
 - A: not aware of any issues with wind or visibility
 - Q: Is a wind sock visible and lighted at night?
 - A: The wind sock is visible but I am uncertain if it was lit
 - Q: Were there any abnormal sounds with the helicopter engines?
 - A: I did not detect any abnormal sounds with the helicopter engines
 - Q: Any cautions or warning lights/horns received during the flight?
 - A: I was not aware of any lights or horns
 - Q: Were night vision goggles being used?
 - A: Yes, I was using night vision goggles
 - Q: Any flight control anomalies?
 - A: Not aware of any anomalies
 - Q: Any issues with the helicopter recently or earlier in the flight?
 - A: On launching from Holston Valley Medical Center, I heard Trooper Pilot Barney ask paramedic Carter, "Did you feel that?"
 - Q: What were your injuries?
 - A: No apparent injuries.

Timothy Smith, Flight RN



Earl Newlin Carter Jr.

Statement of Incident

03/06/2023 at approximately 2359

On Sunday March 06, 2022 Med Flight II received a request form Flight Com for an interfacility transfer from Lonesome Pine Hospital to Holston Valley Medical Center. After a weather check we accepted the flight. Med Flight launched from Virginia Highlands Airport at 2217. We arrived at Lonesome Pine Hospital at 2242. Departed Lonesome Pine at 2301 and arrived at Holston Valley at 2316. After a brief stop in the Emergency Department, we delivered our patient to the Cardiac Cath Lab. We departed Holston valley at 2342. Startup was normal, upon pulling power Trooper Barney asks "did you feel that" he stated that he felt a brief power surge. I did notice a skid slip nose right but didn't think it was anything out of the normal. The flight back to Virginia Highlands was uneventful with normal conversation between the crew.

We approached the taxiway on the approach end of runway 6 and hovered over to the dolly. The dolly was positioned on the right of the Virginia State Police ramp, almost to the end of the concrete. This is looking from the hangar. It was positioned 90 ° to the taxiway with the tug to the taxiway. As we approached the dolly the helicopter was turning to orient with the dolly. As the helicopter turned, I picked up the NVG bag. I was in the process of stowing my NVG's at the time of the incident. I was looking down at the bag placing my NVG's in it. As I became aware of the erratic movement of the aircraft, I raised my head to see we were close to 180° off in a nose down attitude tilted slightly to the Right moving to left. I was looking at the asphalt in front of the aircraft, seeing debris coming across the nose. The aircraft settled aft to an upright position sitting on its belly running. I ask if everyone was OK, and had a positive response from both Trooper Barney and Tim Smith. Tim made a statement that we needed to get out in case of fire, seeing no indication of fire I countered that with not until we shut down, I made a second statement that we need to shut the engines down and cut off power. Trooper Barney secured the engines and cut off all power. At that time Trooper Barney stated that his back was hurting and we may have to help him out. I was unable to open my door in the conventional manner. Tim came around and tried to open it. He was unsuccessful and I resorted to the door jettison lever. After a quick 360 ° survey, we did not see any fuel leaks or other hazards, the decision was made not to call 911. Trooper Barney called VSP Supervisor Ratliff and Tim Smith called Ballad Health's Corporate Director of Trauma Services and Med Flight II Supervisor Anita Perry. Mrs. Perry responded to the hangar and escorted us to the Emergency Room at Bristol Regional Medical Center. Before leaving the scene, we secured the NVG's, narcotics and both drug kits.

I can't put into words how fast this happened.

Earl Carter
Ballad Health
Flight Paramedic
Virginia State Police Med Flight II

Note: All times noted were provided by Flight Com for the PCR.

Earl Newlin Carter Jr.



Statement of Incident (Questions)
03/06/2023 at approximately 2359

Describe the overall purpose of flight-

On Sunday March 06, 2022 Med Flight II received a request from Flight Com for an interfacility transfer from Lonesome Pine Hospital to Holston Valley Medical Center. The nature of the flight was a Cardiac ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI).

Departure time, purpose of flight, how many other flights/ hours in the past 24 hours?

Med Flight launched from Virginia Highlands Airport at 2217. We arrived at Lonesome Pine Hospital at 2242. Departed Lonesome Pine at 2301 and arrived at Holston Valley at 2316. After a brief stop in the Emergency Department, we delivered our patient to the Cardiac Cath Lab. We departed Holston valley at 2342.

When did your duty day start? When was it expected to end?

My day Sunday March 6, 2022 started at 1745. I was scheduled for a 12-hour shift ending Monday March 7, 2022 at 0600.

Describe the landing event in detail:

We approached the taxiway on the approach end of runway 6 and hovered over to the dolly. As we approached the dolly the helicopter was turning to orient with the dolly. As the helicopter turned, I picked up the NVG bag. I was in the process of stowing my NVG's at the time of the incident. I was looking down at the bag placing my NVG's in it. As I became aware of the erratic movement of the aircraft, I raised my head to see we were close to 180° off in a nose down attitude tilted slightly to the Right moving to left. I was looking at the asphalt in front of the aircraft, seeing debris coming across the nose. The aircraft settled aft to an upright position sitting on its belly running. I ask if everyone was OK, and had a positive response from both Trooper Barney and Tim Smith. Tim made a statement that we needed to get out in case of fire, seeing no indication of fire I countered that with not until we shut down, I made a second statement that we need to shut the engines down and cut off power. Trooper Barney secured the engines and cut off all power. At that time Trooper Barney stated that his back was hurting and we may have to help him out. I was unable to open my door in the conventional manner. Tim came around and tried to open it. He was unsuccessful and I resorted to the door jettison lever. After a quick 360 ° survey, we did not see any fuel leaks or other hazards, the decision was made not to call 911. Trooper Barney called VSP Supervisor Ratliff and Tim Smith called Ballad Health's Corporate Director of Trauma Services and Med Flight II Supervisor Anita Perry. Mrs. Perry responded to the hangar and escorted us to the Emergency Room at Bristol Regional Medical Center. Before leaving the scene, we secured the NVG's, narcotics and both drug kits.

What were the engine indications?

What was the direction of landing?

We approached the taxiway on the approach end of runway 6 and hovered over to the dolly. As we approached the dolly the helicopter was turning to orient with the dolly. The dolly was

Where was the dolly, what was the alignment of the dolly? Was it chocked or fixed via some manner?

Looking from the hangar, the dolly was sitting to the right and close to the end of the Virginia State Police concrete hangar ramp at a 90° angle to the taxiway. The Dolly was chocked.

Were there multiple approaches or contacts with the dolly?

One approach.

What was the wind and visibility? Gusts? Dark night?

Wind was calm. No gusts noted. The incident happened near midnight. The area was lit by night lights mounted on the surrounding hangers.

Is a wind sock visible and lighted at night?

A wind sock is visible. It is approximately 150 feet to the west. Normally it is lit. I do not remember if it was lit at the time of the incident.

Were there any abnormal sounds with the helicopter/ engines?

None that I am aware of.

Any caution or warning lights/ horns received during the flight?

No caution or warning lights/horns during the flight.

Were night vision goggles being used?

Yes, NVG's were used.

Any flight control anomalies?

None that I am aware of.

Any issues with the helicopter recently, or earlier in the flight?

At Holston Valley Medical Center startup was normal, upon pulling power Trooper Barney asks "did you feel that" he stated that he felt a brief power surge. I did notice a skid slip nose right but didn't think it was anything out of the normal.

What were your injuries?

I was uninjured.