

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

EUROCOPTER DEUTSCHLAND GMBH,
MBB-BK 117-C-2 HELICOPTER
ACCIDENT AT VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS
AIRPORT IN ABINGDON, VIRGINIA
ON MARCH 6, 2022

Accident No.: ERA22LA145

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Interview of: JASON BARNEY, Pilot in Command

Via telephone

Wednesday,
March 23, 2022

APPEARANCES:

ADAM GERHARDT, Aviation Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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I N T E R V I E W

MR. GERHARDT: This is Adam Gerhardt here, NTSB, the investigator in charge for the investigation involving the Virginia State Police helicopter accident involving, let's see here, the N number is -- I think it's November 29 VA.

MR. BARNEY: Victor Alpha.

MR. GERHARDT: Victor Alpha, 29 Victor Alpha. And I have Mr. Jason Barney on the line.

And Jason, is that -- are you okay with me recording this conversation?

MR. BARNEY: Yes, sir.

MR. GERHARDT: Thank you very much. I appreciate that. And before this recording started, we had a brief conversation about the NTSB accident investigation and, of course, it's a strictly fact-finding mission safety investigation led by the NTSB.

INTERVIEW OF JASON BARNEY

BY MR. GERHARDT:

Q. So let's see here. Jason, I'd appreciate -- so you've already provided a written statement, and very, very detailed. Appreciate that. I think if we could look into the specific area of, of the, of the ins and outs of the landing on the platform, and just what you can remember as for the orientation. And again, your statement really does cover this, but if you can describe it just in case there's any sort of gaps of was there forward momentum, was -- any sort of power collective applications. Just

1 the best of your recollection. If you can walk us through that to
2 better understand what we need to look at when we look at the
3 helicopter, if that makes sense.

4 A. Okay. Can I add something to that?

5 Q. Yes, sir.

6 A. The -- just before we made the trip home from Holston Valley
7 Medical Center, I had -- I started the helicopter. We did
8 everything we're supposed to do, and we picked up. And as I was
9 picking up the helicopter at Holston Valley, I call this a surge,
10 I don't know if you want to call it something else, but as I was
11 lying on the skids there at Holston Valley, I noticed FLI needles
12 surge upward as though like it -- give itself power real quick.
13 And I made the comment to my paramedic that was in the front seat.
14 I said, did you that, then engines had surged? And I don't recall
15 if he said anything really at that moment, but we was -- I
16 stabilized there in a hover about three foot, and sit there, and
17 looked at everything, and everything appeared normal, in the
18 normal ranges. Everything appeared to be done fine. So we
19 decided we'd go ahead and make the trip back.

20 So we come back, and everything was normal for -- from
21 Holston Valley back to Holston Valley. We --

22 Q. Yeah. And, Jason, if I can interrupt. I really appreciate
23 you starting there because I -- we can certainly do that in
24 chronological order. I recall that the paramedic seated in the
25 front seat, in one of his statements he said that he saw the skid

1 -- I think is words were like the skid of the helicopter slipped
2 right.

3 A. Yes. But not much at Holston Valley. I was already probably
4 coming up into the air. I thought maybe I was a little lazy on my
5 left paddle at that time.

6 Q. Got it.

7 A. Taking it --

8 Q. And I was just, I was just wondering if that increase in
9 power that -- I will call it, you know, obviously, correct me if
10 you -- I will call it some sort of form of uncommanded increase in
11 power that you're feeling. Is that generally -- capture what,
12 what you experienced?

13 A. Yes. I was calling it an engine surge. I guess in my lingo
14 here.

15 Q. No. I think that that's --

16 A. Say it was uncommanded. How did you say it?

17 Q. I said, which I actually, I like your description too. Maybe
18 that's the NTSB speak. But the uncommanded increase in power.

19 So --

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. -- that's -- and then but what I, I guess what I, and I, you
22 know, what I wanted to cover while we're talking about that event
23 prior to the, prior to the landing back at, at the base airport is
24 when that uncommanded increase in power occurs, at that, that
25 first time, then is there a yaw? And I'm an airplane guy. So --

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. -- my apologies there. But I'm thinking when you, when you
3 have that, you know, the corrections with, with the rudder pedal,
4 cyclic, all of that, do you believe that that -- is that something
5 that you can, that you can recall in a sense of you're having --
6 you had to make other inputs given that change in torque and
7 change in power --

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. -- or am I --

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. -- covering -- am I going a little too deep there?

12 A. No. Any increase in power as you pull the collective on a
13 helicopter, it's going to, it's going to want to yaw to the right
14 due to torque. So you -- that's what your anti-torque pedals are
15 for is to correct that. As you're, as you're sitting on the
16 ground and increase the collective it's wanting to, to yaw right.
17 So you're -- as you're increasing the collective you're having to
18 add (indiscernible) pedal. That's on a normal flight.

19 Q. Got it. Got it. And that, that slip -- that skid slip do
20 you believe it happened about the same time as the increase in
21 surge or were the two events unrelated? I'm just trying to
22 capture that first surge in power. Like you said maybe, you know,
23 if we can't pinpoint it, that's -- we're talking about a, we're
24 talking about split seconds.

25 A. I can't really recall that. A lot of commands now. After

1 I've done this so long it's just automatic. You don't really --
2 you understand what I'm saying? It's kind of -- you just do it.

3 Q. Exactly. I'm think of a --

4 A. Like muscle --

5 (Crosstalk)

6 Q. Yeah. It's like trying to explain two weeks ago how was the
7 cross-wind landing that you did when you had the wind gusting at
8 20 knots, and you, you subtly applied the right amount of rudder,
9 and dipped the wing. It's --

10 A. Yeah. You don't really remember. You don't really remember
11 what you're doing there.

12 Q. Absolutely.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Okay. Well, I interrupted you.

15 A. No, that's fine.

16 Q. I appreciate that detail. But, again, anything -- again,
17 this is very minutia, but any sort of engine needle indications
18 about with that first event? Your -- perhaps your eyes are
19 outside or maybe you see the needles changed direction, anything
20 like that?

21 A. Yeah. I actually seen the needles move upward on the FLI
22 indicating the power increase at Holston Valley. And also you
23 could hear it. It had a little bling to it, real quick -- these
24 needles didn't stay there. It's just a real quick like you would
25 gas your car once your tac's on your car -- just increase them by

1 dots, you know. It was just that quick back to, I guess, the
2 power setting that I had in, that I had inputted in it. It wasn't
3 like go up and sit two or three seconds. It was just like you'd
4 just jump the pedal, gas pedal on your car (indiscernible).

5 Q. Got it. Got it. And that -- the sound. And, again, I know
6 we're focusing on just the first, the first even.

7 A. Well, this is going to -- this will play into the dolly when
8 we get back to Virginia Highlands.

9 Q. Got it.

10 A. Is the reason I wanted to start there.

11 Q. The sound of the -- and during that first event, did it --
12 was there just a typical, you know, the turbine increasing? Was
13 it like a --

14 A. Yeah. Racing in power.

15 Q. It wasn't like a, you know, like a whoosh of air like a
16 foghorn? It was just increase in turbine sound is that --

17 A. That's what I would call it.

18 Q. Okay. Not some sort of --

19 A. Just like your car would sound if you -- not the sound of the
20 car, but just like the car would if you push the gas pedal down
21 and back off.

22 Q. Got it.

23 A. Your engine will rev us, and that's what it sounded like the
24 engines done when the needles went -- hear it just like a -- like
25 a turbine would sound.

1 Q. Got it. Just like the turbine increasing and --

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. -- rotation. Okay. Okay. Got it. Perfect.

4 A. It's hard to explain.

5 Q. Yeah. When we start making different sounds over --

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. -- that's not going to go well. Okay. Now, any other -- I
8 know you, I believe you did four other flights that day. Any sort
9 of --

10 A. Yes, sir.

11 Q. -- issues before, before this, this takeoff to your home
12 base?

13 A. No, sir, not, not one whatsoever.

14 Q. Got it.

15 A. It was a normal day. Everything worked fine all day long.
16 Nothing different.

17 Q. Got it. Got it. Now, I will, I will be quiet here, and let
18 you continue on. Again, I apologize for interrupting, but I
19 completely agree with the sentiments of that first event capturing
20 -- leading into the dolly landing. So please feel free to pick
21 back up as the story goes there.

22 A. Okay. Well, like I said, we -- I stabilized about three-foot
23 hover there, and everything was in the normal parameters of the
24 helicopter. Appeared to be running just fine. So we decided to
25 make the trip back to Virginia Highlands from Holston Valley. And

1 the whole trip is around 15 minutes or so back. Everything was
2 operating normally.

3 We got back and made my approach at Virginia Highlands was as
4 usual. I sidestepped to the right over top of the dolly. That's
5 the way I land on it. I hover taxied over to it, turned into the
6 direction that the dolly was. I sidestepped over. There's a
7 piece of reflective tape on the, the dolly off my right shoulder
8 that I line to forward and astf (ph.). And then the tire on the
9 tug that pulls the dolly, it's placed at between your torque
10 pedals in front of your line left to right. I had all that set as
11 I descended started slowly setting down on the dolly, pretty much,
12 I can't remember if it was -- if it's the right or left. I'm
13 pretty sure it's the right rear skid that always touches first.
14 But that's what I feel for. And everything was lined up. I felt
15 the skid touch the dolly, and at that time I'm looking outside. I
16 hear what appeared to be that engine surge again, the sound that I
17 heard at Holston Valley.

18 I didn't see the FLI at that time, but I was, as I was
19 sitting down on the dolly, I heard that sound, and from that
20 moment the next thing I remember is I was seeing the hangar
21 approach me at a high rate of speed, and I was in a nose low
22 attitude banking to the right close to the ground. I can't
23 believe I can't recall any of this. Apparently I had grabbed --
24 the skid got hooked on the dolly, but I don't remember any of
25 that. It was so quick. I was actually kind of amazed when I got

1 out of the helicopter after we shut down that that thing, the
2 dolly, was moved to the right. I seen -- like I said, I seen the
3 hangar out my front, and when -- and we, we -- the impact was
4 right under my front feet. At that time -- do you want me to keep
5 explaining like this or --

6 Q. Yeah, no. This is, this is great. This is -- I appreciate
7 that. This is great.

8 A. Okay. Well, like I said, when I -- the last I remember, I
9 was setting down on the dolly, and the next thing I remember is I
10 was heading straight toward a hangar that was to the right side of
11 us very close, nose low attitude, and kind of banking to the
12 right. At that moment, I just -- I remember that I just correct
13 -- went to correct the attitude. I went full aft cyclic and to
14 the left to correct the attitude, and but I believe I was a little
15 too close to the ground by the time the helicopter reacted. I'd
16 done -- I struck the ground. I seen the ground in front of me
17 through the (indiscernible) bubble. That's what struck first.
18 And the windscreen I'm not really sure, but pretty sure I seen
19 nothing but pavement through the windscreen. I had the sensation
20 of the tail coming up over top of us. At that time I slammed the
21 collective to the floor to stop that motion, and it did, and we
22 come back down, and landed flat on its belly of the, of the
23 helicopter.

24 After that, the engines was still running. The rotors were
25 still turning just like we still in the fly mode or throttles up.

1 At that time I just all I could think about was fire, and confused
2 -- little confused kind of everything happened like that so quick.

3 Q. Sure.

4 A. And the only thing I could think of was is get the engines
5 cut off. So at that time I just cut the fuel with the throttles
6 off of my engines. And then next thing that hit my mind was
7 electrical, and I flipped the master switch off the helicopter so
8 it wouldn't have, hopefully, wouldn't have anything that would
9 start a fire. And we kind of -- we waited 'till the rotor blades
10 stopped, and I advised my crew wait 'till the blades stop, and
11 that's what we done. My door, kind of it was still attached, and
12 but everything was warped. See gaps in the door and stuff. And I
13 just grabbed the handle latch on my door, and it fell off.

14 My paramedic that was beside of me, his door was kind of
15 wedged, and I told him to use the door gust, and he pushed it.
16 When he pushed that down, his door come off, and we proceeded out
17 the aircraft.

18 Q. Got it.

19 A. That's about all I, all I've got.

20 Q. No, that -- I appreciate that detail. Now, it sounds -- so
21 it sounds to me like once you, once this, the A skid makes contact
22 with that dolly there's not any -- there was, there's no forward
23 momentum or lateral momentum going. It's really -- is that, is
24 that correct there's really --

25 A. There's no movement that way at all. I mean, no. You know

1 how a helicopter would be. There's no side-to-side motion,
2 forward to aft motion. When that skid touched, I was in the spot
3 I wanted to be, and I don't know really if, if all the skids had
4 come out. We had really light on the at that moment. The next
5 thing I remember was the nose low to the right attitude heading.
6 It's almost a 90 degree to the right turn is the way we ended up
7 that I remember.

8 Q. So it's just a gentle -- it -- you're light on the skids.

9 A. Um-hmm.

10 Q. You do feel one of the skids touch; is that correct?

11 A. Yes. Yes. I feel contact.

12 Q. Yeah.

13 A. But basically at that moment I'm still -- some skids is
14 probably still in the -- still above the dolly. Still haven't
15 made contact. That first -- it's either the right or left. I'm
16 pretty sure it's the right rear skid always kind of touches first.

17 Q. And then all of a sudden it's a turn or a --

18 A. I don't even remember the turn. I heard the surge, but like
19 I said, the next thing I remember was in that attitude toward that
20 hangar.

21 Q. Um-hmm. Got it. Now, the orientation of the helicopter, I,
22 I'm looking at a aerial picture of the, of the hangar, the apron
23 area, the parking lot. I can recognize everything from the, you
24 know, the accident photos. The heading of the helicopter if that
25 -- maybe perhaps that can get -- help me with orientation. When

1 you're setting down on the dolly the heading of the helicopter is
2 it to the south or to the north or --

3 A. It's a northerly direction. It's actually probably -- it's
4 facing straight toward the runway.

5 Q. Got it. Okay. So your -- when you come -- when you approach
6 the dolly, you kind of have to come around, and then come --

7 A. Well, I was coming from the west. So --

8 Q. Okay. Got it. Got it.

9 A. Yeah. And so really the approach end of Runway 6. As I come
10 in, make my approach to the, the ramp or air ramp and the taxiway,
11 we -- or what I, what I usually do is I'll come in, and sideslip
12 to the right, and turn in the direction that I was landing, and
13 then sidestep over top of the dolly. Does that make sense?

14 Q. It does.

15 A. From that direction.

16 Q. So you're coming in the taxiway that you have Runway 6.

17 A. Um-hmm

18 Q. There's a taxiway that you've got the chevrons there, a
19 there's, there's a taxiway that leads into -- it leads into
20 Runway 6. That's the taxiway that you came down?

21 A. Yes, I came from the -- just like you would approach from an
22 airplane coming into Runway 6, and then I would just sidestep to
23 the taxiway, which comes all the way to the end of Runway 6, right
24 in front of our air ramp, our hangar. And then once I, once I
25 made my approach down to that taxiway there, I would sidestep

1 right in the same -- I'm still heading the same direction as
2 Runway 6, sidestep right that's where I can watch my tug and dolly
3 and everything in front of me. Then I'll pedal turn to the left
4 to orientate myself the way I would be landing on the dolly, and
5 then I would sidestep over top of the dolly to make my landing on
6 the dolly.

7 Q. Got it. Okay. So if I'm -- I'm going to, I'm going to put
8 this in my, my airplane speak, and so when it -- stop me when I
9 get it wrong, but I'm imagining the dolly again it's -- the
10 helicopter when you set down like you said it's oriented on a, a
11 northerly heading.

12 A. Uh-huh.

13 Q. And you're -- if you're coming -- you're coming over top of
14 the dolly that's also of course oriented on north south direction.

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And the tractor, the Kubota is on the north, the north end of
17 the dolly?

18 A. Yes. Yes.

19 Q. Got it. On the north end of the dolly. And then you come
20 over it from the left to the right.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Got it. Okay. And so you -- you're coming -- you can see
23 the way I would describe it is your -- you could see the dolly --
24 excuse me -- you can see the Kubota --

25 A. Um-hmm.

- 1 Q. -- ahead of you, and then the, the dolly platform --
- 2 A. Yes.
- 3 Q. -- is then slowly sliding underneath of you --
- 4 A. Uh-huh.
- 5 Q. -- from the left to the right?
- 6 A. From the right to the left.
- 7 Q. Yes. Excuse me. Thank you. Thank you. From the right to
- 8 the left.
- 9 A. Yeah.
- 10 Q. Got it.
- 11 A. -- come in like that I try to keep everything in front of me
- 12 so I can see it. It's never in a blind spot when I, when I do the
- 13 sidestep and keep everything looking I can see it the whole time.
- 14 Q. Got it. So from the right to the left?
- 15 A. Um-hmm.
- 16 Q. Got it. Okay. I'm just -- so I'm -- I'm just drawing a
- 17 picture of the two dolly -- the platform, and then your -- the
- 18 helicopter's right to left over top of the dolly.
- 19 A. Yes.
- 20 Q. Okay. Perfect. Now, what's the altitude? Like how much
- 21 -- when you, when -- once you get center, and I -- you explained
- 22 that in excellent detail. I think I understand how you center
- 23 yourself over the dolly. Then you have to drop down.
- 24 A. Um-hmm.
- 25 Q. Can -- is that, is that generally the moment -- so you're,

1 you're reducing the power, the collective is coming down, and then
2 you're making contact -- at least one of the skids makes contact
3 with the dolly. That's generally that's the moment that the
4 uncommanded increase in power occurs?

5 A. Yes. I did not see it now on the FLI like I did at Holston
6 Valley, but I heard what appeared to be the same sound.

7 Q. Got it. Got it. Now, how much altitude do you estimate that
8 you have to lose when you're -- I'm imaging the sidestep, and then
9 you have to come down --

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. -- a number of feet. How many feet is that?

12 A. Maybe three.

13 Q. Got it. Okay.

14 A. It's probably different each time, but done it so many times
15 that you kind of, you kind of know about how high you need to be.
16 You can't see the skid from the 145, but you -- I get plenty of
17 clearance, make sure I have plenty of clearance. And then once
18 I'm over top of it, I start down slowly 'till things come into
19 view like my tire on the tug, and then once I, once I get to that
20 point I start adjusting a little bit, and then come on down.

21 Q. Got it. Okay. Understood. And the power -- let's kind of
22 focus on the throttle. When you're -- I'm going to say the term
23 when you're rolling off some of that power to lose altitude is
24 that --

25 A. No, I don't -- we don't roll off the -- it's just collective

1 inputs. The power stays the same on the collective in the 145.

2 Q. Got it.

3 A. Once you roll your engines up from like Holston Valley once I
4 roll them up to what I call the fly position, then you don't touch
5 throttles at all. You -- when you apply collective to come up,
6 the -- I want to say the computer it adjusts, and the engines and
7 so forth like that what power needs to be -- and same as just as
8 putting the collective down it does what it needs to do to add or
9 I guess decrease power --

10 Q. Oh, okay.

11 A. -- the engines.

12 Q. Understood. I appreciate that clarification. It's
13 important. And so when that collective comes down, there's,
14 again, there's nothing, there's nothing abnormal --

15 A. No.

16 Q. -- at that point. It's just once again after the surge's
17 experience.

18 A. Um-hmm. I'm -- I've run this over in my head a million times
19 since, and I thought, you know, I thought it was in kind of the
20 same configuration as it was at Holston Valley when I heard that,
21 light on the skids at that moment right there. That's the way it,
22 way it was at Holston Valley as I was picking up. So it -- was
23 light on the skids picking up, light on the skids as I was coming
24 down over here. The collective don't -- you don't have big
25 inputs. I mean, it's just like really small input as you do this

1 stuff, and it was kind of in the same configuration as down there
2 as I was picking up but I was sitting down. You understand what
3 I'm saying?

4 Q. That makes perfect sense, yeah.

5 A. Yeah. It's not in a fly mode in cruise -- I've got the
6 collective pulled in and stuff in cruise, and everything is kind
7 of in the same, same neighborhood there as, as Holston Valley and
8 landing on the dolly. Both of them's kind of in the same
9 neighborhood far as power. I don't know if that has anything to
10 do with it or whatever, but it's kind of odd that it was in the
11 same configuration.

12 Q. Yeah. Absolutely. Well, we shall, we shall hopefully find
13 something in those examinations. Got it. Any -- I think you
14 already covered this in your statement, but it sounds like the
15 windsock and the wind, any sort of issues there that you can
16 recall?

17 A. No, sir. I remember the windsock. We have one just outside
18 the hangar, and it was limp.

19 Q. Got it.

20 A. As I come in. Skies was clear. I mean, no weather issues.

21 Q. Now, and I do want to clarify one question I had. The hangar
22 that you're seeing once the helicopter starts to move away from
23 the dolly, and it does its pitch changes, the hangar, is this the
24 hangar that's the neighbor to your --

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. -- hangar; is that correct?

2 A. Yes. To the right of us.

3 Q. Got it. Perfect. I just wanted to confirm that.

4 A. There's a parking lot at the end of it there. That's where I
5 ended up.

6 Q. Got it. Got it. Let me see here. Okay. I don't have any
7 other -- I may have maybe one or two about if I recall anything
8 from this specific event. But really appreciate all the detail
9 there. The description, if you, if you felt like you're kind of
10 walking through minor little details there, nothing, nothing is
11 minor for us. So thanks. Thanks again for --

12 A. Well, I thought -- yeah, I know you wanted the moment we was
13 landing, but I had to throw in the part that happened at Holston
14 Valley to be able to tell what I know landing on the dolly.

15 Q. Right. Absolutely. Now, it sounds like the -- and I learned
16 a little bit about this from Mr. Shawn Revard (ph.), about the
17 purpose of the previous flight. It sounds like you guys have a
18 really good mission there at the Medevac.

19 A. Um-hmm.

20 Q. And those, like we said before, those prior Medevac flights
21 were all routine, and it looks like they were four flights, about
22 four and a half hours. Is that generally correct?

23 A. Yes. I was -- that -- when this incident happened that was
24 my fifth one, and I was at my -- by our policy at our 10-hour task
25 time. Once I had landed I had planned on telling my first

1 sergeant to let him know that I was at the 10 hours. That's what
2 we was supposed to do. It's usually 5 flights gets you 10 hours,
3 and then I have to call the supervisor, and we talk about it, you
4 know, how do I feel and so forth like that. And but I didn't get
5 -- the call that I made to my supervisor was to tell him that the
6 helicopter was tore up. Wasn't over the flights that I done.

7 Q. Got it. So after -- is the, is the policy once you hit 10
8 hours it's -- is it 10 total hours of just -- is it 10 hours of
9 duty or? If you could explain that.

10 A. Duty time, not flight time.

11 Q. Right, right.

12 A. Yeah. Because some of our calls could be, some of our calls
13 could be no more than an hour total, and just short slots. And
14 then some could last two, two and a half hours. But at that -- my
15 voice is giving way or something. I'm sorry.

16 Q. Hey, no problem. If you need a drink of water or something
17 take some --

18 A. I've got some here. But anyway, we -- it's 10 past hours,
19 and kind of keep up with that through the day.

20 Q. Okay. I think I understand. Because your duty day started
21 at I believe your overall duty day started at 8, 0800 hours,
22 8 a.m., is that correct?

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. And then you somehow have perhaps down time that doesn't
25 count against that time; is that how I understand that?

1 A. Yes, sir. It's just strictly by calls.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. We try to rest, and if we get a chance we kind of take what
4 we call safety naps and so forth through the day.

5 Q. Okay. Okay. So you were approaching at the end of that
6 flight you were approaching the 10 hours?

7 A. Somewhere close to that, yeah.

8 Q. Got it. Okay.

9 A. Yeah. And I was going to call him when we got back, and let
10 him know that I'd reached the 10 hours, and then we -- we're
11 supposed to talk about it, see how tired I am and so forth.
12 Because I was -- if I was tired all I would have to say is, hey,
13 I'm tired, you're going to have to get another guy in here, and
14 that would be taken care of.

15 Q. Got it. Okay. So you come on -- even though you come on at
16 0800, you -- were you able to take naps throughout the day or was
17 it just --

18 A. Well, that day in particular I didn't because we was -- the
19 way the calls come in. Once you start to try to seems like the
20 phone always rings when you start to take a nap. So, no, I didn't
21 take a nap that day.

22 Q. Got it. Okay. Yeah, and that's hard to -- that's -- I would
23 assume that you -- and I don't know how your -- what shift
24 schedule you're working on, but I don't think that you're doing a
25 lot of like overnight shifts or kind of like a FedEx pilot or

1 something where you used to work in the -- are your duty hours
2 normally during the day?

3 A. Yeah. Well, usually, you know, the shift that I work is 8 to
4 8 to 8. It's a 24-hour shift, but we do go to bed and sleep. If
5 you get a call out, you'll have to get up and go. But far as the
6 being tired or whatever or rest periods, we can take naps through
7 the day or just whatever we need to do. So --

8 Q. Got it.

9 A. -- it's kind of like an apartment there. You know what I
10 mean? We got our own bedroom, myself, medic, and nurse. We all
11 have our separate bedrooms. We can go back, lay on the bed, and
12 take a nap, and we've got our own kitchen, and all that kind of
13 stuff. So it's not like we're just sitting in a conference room
14 or something or some room waiting on a call. It's plenty -- it's
15 comfortable.

16 Q. Yeah, absolutely. And that seems like a -- you've got a very
17 unique mission there, and it's -- it sounds like you've got a good
18 facility there for resting. And at the same time, if you get a
19 call, it's a challenge both ways. I see that.

20 Now, do you, do you think that -- as for fatigue and getting
21 closer to midnight, do you think that that played a role at all?
22 And, again, I'm not trying to read into that, but it's a standard
23 question for us and so --

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. -- what are your --

1 A. I'm sorry. Go ahead.

2 Q. Yeah. What are your thoughts on that of just once you're
3 leaving the hospital coming back do you feel -- and that's a
4 really tough question. I get that. Because you're kind of
5 looking in hindsight of how you feel and the performance. But do
6 you think fatigue is relevant here?

7 A. I don't think so. Actually, I think I made the comment on
8 the trip back I said, man, we've had calls today. We talk on the
9 way back. I said, shoot, we had all these calls today and stuff.
10 I said, and I even made the comment that, you know, I don't feel
11 too bad through you know? So I don't think that was no factor in
12 that. I still felt pretty good.

13 Q. Got it. Got it. And you guys, like you said, you still have
14 the policy of once you reach the 10 hours of task hours then it's
15 a call to --

16 A. To your supervisor is who we call.

17 Q. Got it. To say, hey, I've reached, I reached this amount of
18 time.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. And then it's really kind of a mutual --

21 A. Yeah. We -- I hadn't really reached that point to -- I mean,
22 I had timed out. What I mean by timing out is, is having those 5
23 calls 10 past hours, and he gets another pilot to come in. But
24 I've never really went past that ever. So we usually just talk
25 about it or would talk about it, and, hey, do you feel, and are

1 you okay, are you tired? And there's no pressure.

2 Q. Absolutely.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. And that's where it's -- you make the call and if, if another
5 flight came in, it would be your -- like you said, you're on duty
6 until, all the way until eight. If another call -- it's my
7 assumption that if another call came in at two in the morning it
8 would be your, you know, your discretion to take that --

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. -- to take that flight as well?

11 A. Um-hmm.

12 Q. Got it.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Okay. Understood.

15 A. I try my best to be safety conscious. I mean I -- if I
16 thought I was too tired, I'd just say, hey, I'm tired, and either
17 cancel the call or tell supervisor to get somebody else in. And
18 I've never been one to hotdog or think I'm invincible or anything
19 like that. So --

20 Q. Absolutely, and that's --

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. -- it's a judgment call for every pilot out there, and really
23 any, any line of work that's like this. And you have to -- it's,
24 it's -- they're tough decisions, but it sounds to me like again
25 you're saying there's no, there's no one -- organizational

1 pressure to --

2 A. No.

3 Q. No, no. Got it. Okay. Now, how was the day prior? Were
4 you off the day before or is this like the fourth or fifth day of
5 your shifts?

6 A. No. I was -- I didn't work the day before, no.

7 Q. Okay. Got it.

8 A. I can't remember really when I worked before. This is Sunday
9 when that happened Sunday night.

10 Q. Yeah.

11 A. I can't remember my week that week. But, no, I didn't work
12 the day before.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And we don't, we don't work the day after of course. We're
15 getting off at eight the next morning. We could come in the day
16 after that, but I can't remember what it was, but I know I didn't
17 work the day before the shift.

18 Q. Okay. Got it. Got it. Yeah. The accident happened on
19 the --

20 A. It's like 5 minutes before 12 or something like that.
21 Accident actually happened on the 6th, but ended up on the 7th
22 there.

23 Q. Oh, okay. Got it. Yeah.

24 A. Yeah. It was like 5 before 12 or 5 before midnight or
25 something.

1 Q. Yeah. And I think that that's where we -- we thought that
2 the accident happened on March 7th, but exactly as you're saying,
3 we have it in our, in our database as March 6th, and that sounds
4 like that is correct.

5 A. It is. It was just before midnight right there. I can't
6 remember if it was 10 minutes or 5 minutes before 12 --

7 Q. Got it.

8 A. -- that night.

9 Q. Yeah. Now, and then like you said on Saturday, the day
10 prior, you didn't, you didn't work a shift on that Saturday; is
11 that -- does that sound right then?

12 A. Yes. Yes. We -- I did not work on Saturday.

13 Q. But on Friday did you work?

14 A. I'd have to look at my schedule. I can't remember.

15 Q. No. That's fine. I can follow-up with that. And then they
16 wouldn't have you come back in. Do you remember what you were
17 scheduled? So, again, you get, you get done with your shift on
18 Monday, March 7th --

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. -- at 8 a.m.

21 A. I think I was scheduled to work on Tuesday.

22 Q. And you come in at 8 a.m.; is that correct?

23 A. On Tuesdays, yes, Tuesday morning.

24 Q. And then do another, another 24-hour shift?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Got it.

2 A. And then basically that would have been it for the week.

3 Q. Got it. Okay. Now, was this -- four flights, it's -- or
4 excuse me -- four flights, and then the fifth repositioning flight
5 back to the base, is that an average amount of flying or is that
6 kind of like you're saying maybe kept you busy?

7 A. Yeah. Normally, you know, things since Covid has really
8 stepped things up. We're flying a little more than what we used
9 to when I first -- 12 year ago. We average around three a day, I
10 guess. You might come in one shift, and not get a call at all,
11 and then the next shift get five. You see what I'm saying?

12 Q. Absolutely.

13 A. And then you have weather days too that you can't do
14 anything. You might get calls, but you don't go.

15 Q. Yeah.

16 A. It's somewhere around from what I hear everybody say all the
17 time talking and so forth, I haven't done any numbers on it, but
18 average maybe three a day or something.

19 Q. Okay. Got it. Got it. And how do you keep -- I mean, is it
20 -- it sounds to me like it's really informal how you keep track of
21 your task hours to get to that 10 hours. Is it really just based
22 upon the flights that you have, and then --

23 A. Well, basically.

24 Q. -- pre and post, pre and post hours that you can account for?
25 Is that -- or is it some different way to --

1 A. Well, I kind of, I kind of jot them down a little bit each
2 flight, and come in, and do the paperwork, and flight hours in the
3 logbook, and the aircraft logbook and so forth. And just kind of
4 know what time we got the call. We document times of when we get
5 the call, and what time we clear from the calls on our flight
6 reports that we do, and just kind of keep up with in a general --
7 not to the minute but, you know, close.

8 Q. Oh, yeah, yeah. Okay. Oh, boy, well, I don't have any other
9 big questions here. Is there anything else to add? Again, I
10 sincerely appreciate all the level of detail so far, but that --
11 really, that's the end of my sets of questions.

12 A. I can't think of any.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Anything to add.

15 MR. GERHARDT: All right. Well, Mr. Barney, I will -- I'm
16 going to, I'm going to stop the recording here.

17 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: EUROCOPTER DEUTSCHLAND GMBH,
MBB-BK 117-C-2 HELICOPTER
ACCIDENT AT VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS
AIRPORT IN ABINGDON, VIRGINIA,
ON MARCH 6, 2022
Interview of Jason Barney

ACCIDENT NO.: ERA22LA145

PLACE: Via telephone

Date: March 23, 2022

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Katherine Motley
Transcriber