



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: August 2, 2022
Person Contacted: Charles "Chuck" P. Aaron
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22LA342

Narrative:

Mr. Aaron was contacted by phone on August 2, 2022 at 1039 EDT. He was called at [REDACTED] and left a voice mail message. He returned the call the same day at 1042 EDT from the same phone number. He provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

He indicated that he holds an Airline Transport Pilot and airframe and powerplant certificates, certificate number [REDACTED]. He was the previous owner of the helicopter but sold it to Southern Utah University years ago. The purpose of the accident flight was for the accident pilot to fly the helicopter from Spruce Creek Airport (7FL6), Daytona Beach, Florida to his (Mr. Aaron's) next airshow in Tarkio, Missouri. He indicated that the tail rotor was re-built by a certified repair station in Minnesota. After the repair he installed it the day before and performed a dynamic balance. The accident pilot (Robert Paul) was in the helicopter during all dynamic balance testing. After that work was performed the fuel tanks were topped off.

He was asked the following questions –

Are the anti-torque pedals adjustable?

Yes, by a knurled knob. Also, the pilot's seat is adjustable.

Were you, the mechanic, and accident pilot present when the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector performed his postaccident inspection of the helicopter?

Yes.

NTSB Questions Continued –

Were there any issues noted with the anti-torque control system during that postaccident inspection?

Nothing wrong. They did note that the anti-torque control system was “locked up.” On the first landing on the dolly the left skid was on the dolly and the right skid was on the ground, a 18 inches height difference existed between the dolly and the ground. Then the pilot picked the helicopter up, added full left pedal and the helicopter yawed to the left then landed hard jamming the aft skid crosstube into the belly which impinged the anti-torque control tube.

Did he have a contact (phone and e-mail address for the helicopter owner)?

Yes. Michael Mower who is the Director of Aviation for Southern Utah University. Cell phone [REDACTED] and e-mail: [REDACTED]

Not knowing the helicopter what is the range with full fuel tanks?

300 nautical miles with equipped auxiliary fuel tank

Was a static and dynamic balance done after the tail rotor repairs were performed?

The repair facility did a static balance check and he performed a dynamic balance check with Chadwick system and obtained 0.01 inches-per-second (IPS). The accident pilot was in the helicopter during the dynamic testing and approved the results.

After the dynamic balance testing was performed was the helicopter test flown?

No, it was only ground run then approved for return to service. The accident pilot was in the helicopter when the dynamic balance testing was performed.

After the accident did the pilot say anything to you about what happened?

He said he thinks the anti-torque pedals were “stuck.” The pilot asked him postaccident to check the anti-torque control pedals and he said they were “stuck.” During the postaccident examination of the anti-torque control system by the FAA they found that the control rod was jammed by the skid crosstube.

Did you witness any preflight check of the helicopter?

Yes. The pilot confirmed as part of his preflight check the hydraulic and flight controls were smooth with no issues reported.

Who installed the tail rotor?

I did 2 days ago.

Why was the tail rotor sent out for repair?

They were having a vibration issue at flight idle. They previously had maintenance done to the grip of the red blade where they installed new bearings, but no work was done to the bearings of the white blade. They experienced vibration after the work was performed. He grounded the helicopter and he inspected the fork and noted “big movement” of a bolt that was secured by a

cotter pin. Following removal of the cotter pin the nut “wasn’t tight.” And that resulted in damage to the bearing. The bolt, and bearing were replaced.

What was the wind at the time of the accident?

There was no wind. It was calm with clear skies.

The call end time was 1103 EDT.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on August 2, 2022. He replied verbally on October 21, 2022, at 1239 EDT, with changes that were incorporated into the digest. The corrected digest was e-mailed to him for final review on October 21, 2022. He replied the same day at 1317 EDT with, “Excellent, this along with my eye witness account explains it all.” The FINAL digest was e-mailed to him on October 21, 2022.