

Accident Report Narrative for N99TE that occurred on 6-14-2024

Robert J. Roper cert. # [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Alva FL. 33920

Aircraft N99TE, Rotoway 162F

The flight departed from my home on 6-14-2024 at approximately 17:18:22 local. The flight lasted about 5-8 minutes. I had a passenger on board, my son, Timothy J. Roper. I have asked Timothy to provide a narrative of the events and email them to Tim Monville (NTSB).

I (Robert Roper) conducted the pre-flight, the start up, and all checklists provided with the helicopter. I lifted into a hover to conduct a stability check and noted hover power at about 29" manifold pressure. I departed my property to the north and made a right turn east bound. At about 200' I offered the controls to my son. We flew to an airstrip (Alma, a crop dusting airstrip) just east of my home.

My son began a normal approach into the airstrip (Alma) with the intent to make either a low pass without a hover or hover and depart. There was no intention of landing at the airstrip. Maintaining an altitude of about 300', Timothy circled the airstrip for recon and determined an approach to the east would be appropriate. During the approach at approximately 100-150' agl and 20-30 mph (heading 090) we passed through ETL. Rotor RPM was on the lower end but in the green and corrections were being applied.

Once below ETL the aircraft made an un-commanded yaw to the left even with full right pedal applied. At that point I announced, "I have the controls" and began the recovery from LTE by applying forward cyclic while increasing power with the throttle and "milking the collective". We were in a descending left turn with full right pedal applied. The aircraft began responding to the recovery control input by slowing the rate of turn while the rate of descent decreased to almost level (estimated 50 fpm rate of descent).

We were unable to choose the location for the touch down and the left skid touch first on level ground while the right skid was over a canal. The rate of descent was minimal as well

as forward motion. The landing gear was not damaged in the landing and the main rotor did not contact the tail-boom at any time.

Meteorological conditions: At the time of departure, the winds were noted as light and variable. There were some distant rain cells but conditions were VFR with a high overcast and very good visibility. I do not know the temperature at take off but it was the cool of the day as dusk was approaching. At ALMA airstrip Timothy observed a light wind from the south (using the wind sock) and set up for an approach to runway 09 from a left “down wind” entry. Immediately after the accident I noted a significant wind shift such that the prevailing wind (as noted from the ground after the accident) was from the west at about 5 mph.

Aircraft Data: The aircraft had about 440 hrs. total time engine and airframe at the time of the accident. The counterweight was located on the aft tail-boom station per to POH. The aircraft had 10 gal. of fuel and 5 qts. of oil for the flight. I was in the left seat as PIC and I weight 165 lbs. Timothy was in the right seat at 190 lbs. The aircraft was well within weight and balance limitations. The aircraft handled in the hover as expected prior to departure. Hover power was noted at 29” manifold pressure. Coolant temp was about 180 and the oil temp was in the green at departure. Volts were about 14v. The aircraft has a current condition inspection and is registered to Roper Aviation Services, Inc. The engine seemed to operate as expected for the duration of the flight. No abnormal vibrations or sounds were noted during the initial part of the flight. All flight controls and engine operated as expected.

Pilot information: I was the pilot in command of the flight and was the sole manipulator of the controls at the time of the accident. I received a very thorough checkout in May of 2024 by an instructor very familiar with Rotorway aircraft. All the training took place in N99TE. I had a current flight review before the training and received an updated flight review dated May 25, 2024 after the training. My medical is current using Basic med. I was well rested and focused on the flight. I am not on any prescription drugs. I do not drink, and there were no medical factors affecting this flight. I have approximately 7,500 hrs. total time, about half is Rotor Wing. I was once a DPE for Rotorcraft for the TPA FSDO (only one year due to lack of applicants for turbine helicopter initial rides). I have flown Rotor Craft in Law Enforcement and Mosquito Control in Lee County prior to retiring from aviation about 11

yrs. ago to pastor a church locally. I owned an 8KCAB based at LaBelle Airport (X14) up until April of 2024. I am a current CFI.

NOTE: It was nearly dark by the time we got back to the point of departure [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Alva FL). We had experienced large amounts of rain earlier in the week and the day of the accident. The forecast was for more rain beginning early in the AM. The water in the canal was flowing freely toward the local river. I determined that to minimize damage to the environment that it would be necessary to get the helicopter out of the waterway as soon as possible. I spent that night arranging for heavy equipment to arrive at first light on 6-15-2024. I am responsible for the decision to move the aircraft as I truly believed it was the best decision given the circumstances. After removing the aircraft it was noted that no fuel leaked into the waterway.

Upon examination of the tail rotor belt tensioner, after the accident, it was noted that one of the two jam nuts had backed out of the "jam" position. I cannot say this was or was not a contributing factor. The aircraft is safely preserved in a locked building at my home and will not be touched by anyone until released by the NTSB/FAA.

Robert J Roper

[REDACTED]

N99TE Narrative

I Arrived approximately 20 minutes before the departure and was informed the preflight had been already completed. The start and run-up checklists were completed by Robert Roper, while orientating me to the gauges/panel. He picked up to a hover and conducted a hover power check and noted the current manifold pressure. We departed to the north along a clear departure path and turned east bound. Once leveling off I was offered the flight controls. We flew approximately 1 mile east to a small grass runway in an orange grove.

At approximately 300' AGL we circled the runway, conducting a high area recon, ensuring where the winds were from and that there was nothing that could be damaged by rotorwash. I noted that the windsock was indicating winds from that south, perpendicular to the runway, at what appeared to be less than 6 knots. I began a normal approach from the east to midfield of the runway. During the approach at approximately 150' AGL I noticed that I was right of the runway and began to correct back to the left. Once, making the cyclic correction back to the runway centerline, I noticed the Rotor RPM was below 100% and began to correct by increasing the throttle. As we began to pass through ETL the aircraft began to yaw to the left with full right pedal applied. As the left yaw began, Robert Roper assumed the flight controls.

Upon establishing directional flight the aircraft remained in a slight descent until it contacted the edge of a ditch that lead to a large canal. With low forward airspeed and minimal descent rate, the impact was mild but did result in the helicopter, falling/rolling into the ditch.

Myself and Robert Roper were able to egress the helicopter without issue. Upon exiting the aircraft and ensuring no injuries, it appeared that the impact was not hard enough to damage frame components of the aircraft. Both Robert and myself also made note that the winds were out of the east at 3- 7 MPH and not from the south that we had seen on the wind sock