

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety

Washington, DC 20594



ERA26FA035

WRECKAGE EXAM

April 6, 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. ACCIDENT.....	3
B. WRECKAGE EXAM	3
C. SUMMARY	3
D. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION	4
1.0 ACCIDENT SITE	4
1.1 Fuselage.....	5
1.2 Empennage/Fenesrton Examination.....	6
1.3 Landing Gear.....	9
1.4 Cockpit.....	9
1.5 Survivability.....	10
1.6 Fuel/Fuel System.....	10
2.0 ENGINE EXAMINATION	11
3.0 MAIN ROTOR	11
4.0 PILOT INFORMATION	12
5.0 METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION	13

A. ACCIDENT

Location: Gallatin, Tennessee
Date: November 8, 2025
Time: 1341 CST
1941 UTC
Helicopter: EC-130T2

B. WRECKAGE EXAM

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C. SUMMARY

On November 8, 2025, at approximately 1415 central standard time, an EC-130T2, N107VU operated by Air Methods, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Gallatin, Tennessee. Three personnel were on board, the pilot, flight paramedic, and flight nurse. The pilot and flight paramedic are critical, and the flight nurse was deceased. The helicopter was operated as a Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 135 Helicopter Air Ambulance flight.

D. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION

1.0 Accident Site

The helicopter came to rest in an open field just off an east/west running tree line approximately 5.2 miles from the helicopter's base of operation. The top of the tree line showed signs of main rotor impact consistent with right bank. The initial impact point was about 20 ft from the final resting point on a heading of 240°. Ground scarring indicated the helicopter impacted near level with a left slipping motion. The wreckage was oriented to a magnetic heading of 275° and an elevation of 460 ft mean sea level lying on its left side. All major components remained attached to the helicopter with main rotor debris contained within an area of about 200 ft radius from the main wreckage site.



Figure 1. N107VU Accident Site (Source: NTSB)



Figure 2. Initial Impact Point (Source: NTSB)

1.1 Fuselage

The crew and passenger compartment were intact. With the forward windshield removed by first responders. The left door was open and bent back 180° with the last one third of the door folded inward on itself. The right door was still intact but could not be opened due to crush damage by the skid step. The right sliding door was intact but unable to open due to the right skid step crush damage.



Figure 3. Fuselage Damage (Source: NTSB)

1.2 Empennage/Fenestron Examination

The empennage remained attached to the fuselage. The center portion of the empennage had impact damage compromising the structural integrity. The tail rotor drive shaft was sheared in two and the middle hanger bearing was dislodged. The right horizontal stabilizer showed no signs of damage. The left horizontal stabilizer pushed upwards approximately 30°. The vertical stabilizer exhibited no signs of damage. The Fenestron blades exhibited minimal damage from the impact, however they had made rotational cuts into the Fenestron housing. The lower stinger skid was bent up. The rear short, driveshaft spline coupling was separated from the rear driveshaft, and the cowling exhibited rotational scoring signature from the short driveshaft. The Fenestron had damage to the underside of the Fenestron housing consistent with a vertical impact. All variable pitch rotor blades and fixed blades were attached and showed no signs of impact damage. The tail rotor gear box showed no signs of damage.



Figure 4. Fenestron Damage (Source: NTSB)



Figure 4. Horizontal Stabilizer Damage (Source: NTSB)



Figure 5. Fenestron Damage (Source: NTSB)



Figure 6. Gear Box (Source: NTSB)



Figure 7. Empennage Damage (Source: NTSB)

1.3 Landing Gear

Both skids were still attached to the helicopter, compressed and spread evenly and level with the bottom of the fuselage. The skids were bent at the rear cross tube, the front left cross tube was broken from the impact. Turf was found pushed up into the belly panel seams consistent with forward left yaw and right wing-low impact.



Figure 9. Damage to Skids and Underside (Source: NTSB)

1.4 Cockpit

The unoccupied medical litter located in the right front seat locations remained attached to the floor but shifted to the left. The pilot's seat remained attached to the floor with some impact attenuation displacement damage. The pilot seat back was cut in half by first responders. The four-point restraint system was found un-clasped at the rotary hub. The two shoulder harnesses straps were also cut, similar to that of a knife or scissor cuts. The pilot's seat had additional lower-back cushion. The two aft, left seats remained attached to the floor with the left most (outboard) aft seat reportedly un-occupied and its lap belt was found clasped together. The paramedic occupied the in-board aft left seat, its 4-point restraint was found unclasped, and the seat exhibited some impact attenuation displacement and damage. The far-right aft seat was an after-market medical interior STC seat, the seat base was partially folded up and exhibited impact damage that jammed the seat base from being able to move freely. The seat remained attached to the floor. All four points of the restraint system on the seat were found un-clasp.

The cockpit forward upper ceiling was intact but cut open by first responders. The Appareo Vision 1000 Camera was intact to the ceiling, and its SD card cover was broken. However, the SD card was still intact. The overhead controls for the Emergency Fuel Shut off and the Rotor Brake were in the stowed

position. The instrument panel remained intact, all the switches had been placed in the off position; reportedly from a first responder. The instrument panel was equipped with a Garmin G500 and a Genesis Heli-SAS system. The collective was approx. mid-range and the twist grip was still in the "FLIGHT" gate, the friction lock was approx. $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way to the loose side of its setting. Flight control continuity was confirmed from the pilot input controls devices to the aerodynamic surfaces. However, the cyclic control stick had been cut off at mid-length by first responders. The cyclic friction lock was minimal.

1.5 Survivability

The pilot seat was intact and showed signs of deformation to the left with the seat back remaining upright. The pilot seat also showed signs of stroking downward by design. The pilot's lap belt appeared to be unbuckled with the shoulder straps being cut by first responders. The collective was attached but bent approximately 15° outwards. The left rear seat shows no signs of deformation or stroking with the lap belt still buckled and the shoulder harness retracted. The middle seat showed signs of deformation downward to the front right with the seat back remaining upright. The lap belt was unbuckled with the shoulder harness retracted. The back right Fisher Raap Steinert seat showed signs of deformation to bottom seat with seat being bent down and the left. The seat could not be opened to inspect for further damage.



Figure 10. Damage to Cabin (Source: NTSB)

1.6 Fuel/Fuel System

Fuel system integrity remained intact with no apparent fuel leaving the crash worthy fuel tanks. Based on the ERD engine information, engine was

functioning normally and was receiving adequate fuel. No further discontinuity was discovered.

2.0 Engine Examination

The engine appeared to have negligible impact damage apart from some crushing of the linking tube in the rear mount and dents on the exhaust pipe. The gas generator and free turbine both turned freely by hand. Proper freewheel operation was confirmed. Continuity between the engine and transmission was lost at the transmission side of the shaft by a broken flector group. All fuel, oil, air, and electrical connections were found tight and properly saftied. The module 1 and 5 magnetic plugs were found clean as was the electric chip detector. There was no bypass indication on the fuel filter delt p and neither the fuel nor oil filter were removed.

The Engine Data Recorder (EDR) was removed and downloaded. The download was successful and showed normal operation of the engine consistent with the inputs being made until the point of impact with terrain. The EDR indicated shortly before impact a significant lowering of the collective resulting in an uncoupling of the NF and NR and a maximum speed of the main rotor of almost 122%. After impact, the engine continued to run for approximately 38 seconds until it flamed out, most likely due to fuel exhaustion.

3.0 Main Rotor

All three of the main rotor star arms, on the starflex, were broken, two of the blades exhibited diagonal separation signatures. All the blade sleeves were broken but remained attached with fractures to the hub. All the pitch change links remained attached. All three main rotor blades remained attached to the hu and the blades all exhibited length and chord-wise powered impact damage from the tree and ground. The main rotor transmission chip plug appeared clean. Tail rotor transmission chip plug appeared clean. Main transmission mounts were fractured and displaced from their attachment points. All three hydraulic servos remained attached to their lower attachment points and to the non-rotating swashplate.



Figure 11. Main rotor Damage (Source: NTSB)



Figure 12. Main rotor Damage (Source: NTSB)

4.0 Pilot Information

Information is based on official Airman file provided by the FAA. With the last application of 8/16/22.



CFI-I Rotorcraft-Helicopter
ATP Rotorcraft-Helicopter
Commercial AMEL

Instrument Airplane
Private ASEL
Total: 4338.0 hours
Helicopter: 4000.0 hours
Airplane: 338.0 hours
Medical: 2nd Class, issued 5/17/25

5.0 Meteorological Information

SA 08/11/2025 19:55-> METAR KXNX 081955Z AUTO 32005KT 10SM CLR
21/14 A2984 RMK A01=
SA 08/11/2025 19:35->METAR KXNX 081935Z AUTO VRB05KT 10SM CLR
21/14 A2985 RMK A01=

Submitted by:

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