



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Noreen Price
Aviation Accident Investigator
Alaska Regional Office

Date: June 10, 2019

Person Contacted: Mr. Daniel R. Roberts, pilot-in-command

NTSB Accident Number: GAA19CA345

Narrative:

Mr. Roberts was the pilot-in-command of the UH-1B helicopter N64771 that crashed about 20 miles north of Northway, Alaska, on June 10, 2019. This is a summary of the statements provided to Noreen Price, NTSB duty officer, via a phone interview on June 11, 2019.

- Mr. Roberts has about 2,000 total helicopter hours and about 10 hours in a UH1 helicopter. He is new to the company and is currently the Chief Pilot for Aurora Aviation Services, Inc., which is a Part 135 and 133 operator in Alaska. He gained 8 hours of his UH1 experience the previous day.
- Mr. Roberts was sitting in the left seat and Mr. Rogers, a safety pilot with more experience, was sitting in the right seat and was flying the helicopter at the time of the accident. Mr. Rogers had much more experience in the UH1 and he was riding along to assist and train Mr. Roberts.
- The flight was one of many conducted to replenish a remote camp. They had landed at the landing zone earlier in the day to assess the site and place a wind indicator in the trees. The landing area was relatively open, with trees around the perimeter and a slight incline. It was an unimproved site that had been plowed into a landing zone.
- Prior to the accident flight, they had been moving external loads from a roadside landing zone to the camp.
- The accident flight was an internal delivery of Jet A fuel to the camp. The internal fuel was one 250-gallon plastic tank surrounded with a metal cage, and one 55 gallon drum full of fuel. The fuel belonged to Aurora Services and was being sold to the camp at the delivery point. The flight was a FAR Part 91 business flight and was about a 10-minute flight.
- They flew one pass over the intended landing zone and the wind indicator indicated light and variable winds, mostly from the northwest. The temperature was about 60 degrees F. The pilot in the right seat (safety pilot) was flying and made an approach to the northwest. At about 50 feet above the ground (agl) the rate of descent increased and the pilot flying increased collective, but the rate of descent did not diminish, and the rotor RPM began to droop. At that point in the

approach, they were losing control of the helicopter and the fly away option was not available because they were below the tree line, so they decided to continue with the landing.

- The helicopter began to yaw to the right with full left anti-torque pedal applied, and the helicopter impacted the ground level and hard. It bounced slightly and then rolled to the left, and the main rotors impacted the ground and fractured.
- They tried to secure the engine, but the battery was ejected during the landing and they could not shut it down. After rolling over the engine eventually quit.
- Both occupants egressed successfully, and no fire ensued.
- Mr. Roberts stated that he did calculate the performance numbers for the flight, and they should have been able to conduct it under the conditions that were present. They were close to max gross weight, about 8,000 lbs. They had about 450-500 lbs. of fuel in the helicopter tank at the time of the accident.
- Mr. Roberts stated that his back hurt and the doctor that reviewed his x-rays said that there was a fracture in one of his vertebrae.