

Record of Telephone Conversation

Name: Craig R. Hoyt, Pilot in Command, (PIC) N653CH
Address: 942 Mahaffey Hollow Road, Linden, PA 17744
Phone: [REDACTED]
Date: 08/30/2019
Description: PIC statement regarding accident of August 25, 2019.

This Inspector conducted a telephone interview with Mr. Craig Hoyt, (Hoyt) regarding the accident of August 25, 2019, involving a Hughes 269A helicopter, N653CH.

Hoyt stated he took off from Northumberland County Airport (N79), with one passenger (also the owner of the helicopter) at approximately 0800 hours local, on a pleasure flight to Sunbury Airport, PA (71N) and terminating at N79. Hoyt stated he reviewed the weather forecast via fore flight and considered the forecast to be acceptable.

Hoyt was asked if he was providing any instruction on the flight. Hoyt replied he was not.

Hoyt was asked to describe the sequence of events leading to the accident. Hoyt stated the weather was "beautiful" clear, sunny with calm winds. Hoyt went on to say the aircraft was initially started, he heard a loud bang, like the engine backfired and asked the owner what that was, Hoyt stated the owner told him he didn't know but it always did that on initial start. Hoyt stated the engine ran normally after that and he continued with the run-up procedure. Hoyt went on to say all instrument readings were good and he hover taxied to the runway and proceeded with a normal takeoff and entered the traffic pattern. Hoyt then stated he flew "2 maybe 3" patterns when he asked the passenger/owner if he could do some practice autorotations. Hoyt stated that owner said he did not mind. Hoyt went on to say that he wanted to do a hovering autorotation first because he is more aggressive when doing a hovering autorotation and he wanted to see how the aircraft responded. Hoyt stated he performed a hovering autorotation from approximately 500 feet by rolling off the throttle and lowering the collective. Hoyt stated he got a good "split" and successfully recovered power. Hoyt stated after termination of the hovering autorotation, he flew another traffic pattern to set up another autorotation from 1700 feet. Hoyt stated he initiated the autorotation by lowering the collective, inputting a "little right pedal" and rolling off the throttle. Hoyt stated he noticed he got the needles to split. Hoyt stated the passenger remarked that was "a helluva" split. Hoyt stated that was when he noticed rotor RPM was in the green and the engine RPM was zero. Hoyt stated he rolled the throttle back on and the engine RPM remained at zero and he would not be able to recover power. Hoyt stated he pitched the nose slightly down to maintain rotor speed and flared to a hard landing.

Hoyt was asked if he heard the engine running and he replied that he was wearing noise-canceling headphones and did not hear the engine running. Hoyt was then asked if he ever lost tail rotor effectiveness and he replied he did not.

Hoyt was advised he may be contacted by this office and/or the NTSB regarding this matter in

[REDACTED]
Harold W. Haase
Aviation Safety Inspector