

Pilot Statement

15th March 2018

My Name is James David Hines, I am a New Zealand citizen. Date of birth [REDACTED]
I am qualified commercial helicopter pilot. At the time of incident, I have flown over 1000 hours in Helicopters. This is my first incident in my career. I have passed all of my requirements to date including medical exams and flight currency checks. I have been contracted to Vertol Systems Company since March 2017 and been have deployed on fishing vessels for Jih Yu fishing company. Which I have had a good relationship with all those on board the ship I have been on.

On February, the 20th 2018 Weather fine, calm wind. Conducted first search flight after pre-flight at 0600 duration for flight was 1 hour an 40 minutes with no problems. A post flight aircraft check was done after flight and I had a morning tea break before next flight. An hour later around 1000 I conducted another search flight. After an hour into search flight at around 1100 the Chinese crewman located a log. So, we descended from 1000ft down to sea level to attach a GPS buoy. After attaching the GPS Buoy, we proceeded to climb up to cruise height, going through 400-500ft and heard a bang come from the rotor head followed by a lateral shake in the cyclic. After a brief moment of shaking helicopter smoothed out. So I communicated to the boat that something was not right and was returning to the boat for further inspection.

After turning to head back to the boat I noted distance to boat was 22NM. Moments later another bang and shake was followed in the cyclic. So, I descended to 40-50ft AMSL and slowed to 20-30kts and helicopter smoothed out. I further communicated to the boat to say something was definitely not right and that they should change heading to intercept helicopter. Once again, another bang was heard followed by a shake in the cyclic. Then I put out mayday call to the boat that we were in need of help as helicopter was shaking. I proceeded to deploy pop out float system on the helicopter to perform a forced water landing. But failure in the system and the floats did not deploy.

Further communication was had with the boat stating we may not make it back. But Tried to get closer as helicopter was having intermittent flight control problems with the shaking and the float system was not working. Last GPS position I recall being 11NM from boat and another bang was heard followed by cyclic locking right. Helicopter impacted right side, rolling inverted. Both crew man and myself exited aircraft. Helicopter fuselage sank leaving only part of the tail behind. Deploying my life jacket and helping the crewman to open his life jacket as his arm was broken. But his life jacket did not inflate automatically after pulling cord. After the crewman's life jacket failing I swam to get a piece of the tail for him to float on then proceeded to inflate his jacket manually and waited for the boat.

Boat found us after approx. 1 hour from crash. Collecting the crewman and myself in a net boat to return to mother ship where first aid was applied. Boat then proceeded to nearest

port Majuro. Arriving in Majuro on 22nd of February A ambulance was awaiting to take Crewman to medical centre in Majuro. Where we were seen by doctors and x-rayed, Crewman suffered broken arm and myself to have 2 cracked ribs and a broken knee. Majuro medical staff put my leg in a fibre glass cast in immobilise my knee to travel back to New Zealand. On arrival in New Zealand on 26th February I was transferred to Waikato Hospital. On admission, I was found to have a compound right lateral tibial plateau fracture. On the 27th February, I was taken to theatre for a wash out of the wound. Will need further surgery an insertion of a titanium plate to my knee. Doctor estimate post-surgery will need a recovery and rehabilitation time period of minimum 90 days.

Yours Sincerely
James Hines

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of James Hines.

15/03/18

