



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Tealeye Cornejo

Air Safety Investigator (Field)

Western Pacific Region

Date: December 2019

Person Contacted: Mickey Evans

Contact Information: tel: W [REDACTED] C [REDACTED]

NTSB Accident Number: WPR18LA133

Narrative:

Mr. Evans stated that he was in the right rear seat and had to have back surgery and knee replacement surgery as a result of the accident.

His friend John Talma had won a golf game/helicopter excursion from a silent auction event. About 10 days before the accident Mr. Evans was asked by John if he wanted to play golf at Rams Head and he said yes. Mr. Evans was then told they would be flying from Palm Springs to the golf course in a helicopter. At that point he declined the invitation. His wife and he discussed the trip, and he changed his mind and decided to go. On the morning of the accident, he drove to Palm Springs and said it was windy. He did not think they would go as he knew they had to cross over a mountain range before they headed into a valley to the golf course.

Once he arrived, he provided his weight to the pilot, and the pilot said, "ok, let's go." They walked out to the helicopter, loaded the pod with the golf clubs, and got into the helicopter. His friend John was seated in the left rear seat, Don Graham was seated in the front left, and Mickey was seated in the right rear seat.

Mr. Evans stated that the pilot attempted 2-3 times to start the helicopter before it started. He also recalled the pilot saying that they had to burn off 3 gallons of fuel before takeoff due to weight. However, he stated that the engine was running on the ground for 1-2 min before they took off.

On the flight to the golf course, he said they flew very high above the mountains and then dropped down as they came over the mountains. Mr. Evans said that the drop was significant, and the pilot commented that it was windshear. As they approached the golf course to land, he noted that the wind was blowing from the east, and they landed facing toward the west. At that time, the wind was not too bad; it was breezy.

After they finished golfing, he notified the head pro who then contacted the pilot to come and pick up the group. While they waited, Mr. Evans stated that he was having second thoughts about flying back over the mounts due to the wind. Some time passed, and the group went outside and saw the helicopter flying over the mountains and land to the west. He did not recall if the pilot shut down the helicopter or not, but they loaded the equipment and themselves back into the helicopter. He recalled that while on the ground, the pilot increased the rotor speed for takeoff and the clutch light stayed lit for at least 20 seconds.

Mr. Evans observed that the windsock was blowing to the east and when they took off, the pilot turned and banked to the east with a strong tailwind present.

About 2 minutes and 20 seconds after takeoff, the helicopter hit the ground. Prior to the impact, he heard a loud bang (unsure where it the sound came from; overhead or behind him). He also recalled they were about 200 ft in the air, and there was a burnt rubber smell. He further stated that the helicopter was not climbing, and the ground speed was about 60-65 knots.

Mr. Evans stated that he grabbed his phone and was able to record the descent and impact with the ground. The helicopter immediately started to descend with forward speed. The helicopter did not turn, and the pilot did not tell them to brace for impact. A second before ground impact, the pilot said to hold on and then they hit the ground. Mr. Evans stated that he thought the tail hit the ground first with the nose going up and to the left. The helicopter came to rest on its right side and the tail came to rest 40-50 ft in front of the main wreckage.

Mr. Evans stated that the phone flew out of his hands but was still recording. He was first out of the helicopter and helped his friend out, while the pilot helped his other friend out of the helicopter.

Mr. Evans stated that the plot had said the main rotor belt was lost. The pilot also informed them that he owns his own maintenance shop and that he had performed a 100-hr service the Friday before the accident.

In subsequent correspondence, Mr. Evans elaborated on the broken belt. He overheard the pilot say that "we lost the belt," "we lost the main rotor belt."