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Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: May 23, 2023

Subject: WPR22LA221 / Record of Conversation

Contact: Joel Dozhier, Pilot

In a telephone interview with the pilot, he stated that he was the president of the company, and they had four Bell 206 helicopters. He said that the helicopter was equipped with Van Horn composite tail rotor blades since about 2015 or 2016, and they may have 1500 hours remaining on them. He stated that they did have another set that they sent I for inspection and one was rejected due to voids in the blade. He stated that two other helicopters have the Van Horn rotor blades.

He departed his shop, located on highway 12, around 0600. He climbed up to about 500 ft above ground level (agl), had about 75% Torque, and about 80 to 85 MPH while heading south. He was enroute to a parcel of land with the intent to spray about 90 acres of sweet corn.

About ten to twelve minutes, after crossing highway 4, He felt a vibration that lasted about 4 to 5 seconds, then heard a bang. The helicopter yawed sharply to right. He stated that he lowered collective, rolled the throttle off and the helo straightened up. He started looking for a place to land and saw nothing underneath but large trees. He saw that about ½ mile was an orchard with smaller trees. He increased the collective slightly and maintained heading with throttle to arrive at the orchard with the smaller trees. While he was enroute he was slowing and descending. When he arrived at the smaller orchard, he continued to descend and slow down. When he descended to about 25 to 30 ft agl, and about 15 to 20 mph, the helicopter began to spin to the right. He then chopped the throttle and entered an autorotation. The helicopter landed flat but was still spinning and then rolled onto its left side. He shut the engine off and the fuel off and exited through the passenger windshield.

He said that he figured it was a tail rotor issue immediately due to the sharp yaw to the right and while he was travelling to the smaller orchard the helicopter occasionally yawed.

The pilot stated that the weather was clear maybe 6 or 8 mile per hour wind from the south. He thought the temperature was from the mid-60's to low-70's, and that there were no weather issues.

He stated that at the time of the accident, there was only about 1 gallon of water in the tank, and about 35 to 40 gallons of jet fuel on board.

He stated that he did not have any engine concerns.

He stated that he had good crew rest. He had not done anything the day before and he did not fly the day before. He stated that the last day he flew was the 14th and in the same aircraft.

He recalled that they had the helicopter since before 2016 and that it had not been involved in any accident prior to this one in the past year. Regarding maintenance he stated that the last time the helicopter was in for maintenance was the 12-month inspection that was completed in January, and they completed a 100-hour inspection about 30 hours before the accident.

He stated that he had another issue with a set of composite tail rotor blades. He sent in a pair to be inspected and one was returned due to voids.

He stated that the helicopter was now at his shop and outside on a trailer. The 90° gearbox had separated from the tailboom.

He stated that he had a photograph of the wreckage location and the location of the sections of separated T/R blade.

He stated that he knew the area he was enroute to and did not use or need a GPS to get to it.



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In a follow up interview with the pilot, he stated that he did not see any preexisting indications of damage to the tail rotor blades on the morning of the accident flight nor the evening prior. He indicated that he did not know if it could have been a bird that may have caused the damage. When the topic of examining the 90° gear box was discussed, his opinion was that both blades would have exhibited damage if it would have been a gearbox issue.