



SHANNON D. DICUS, SHERIFF-CORONER

On Monday, August 1, 2022, at approximately 1600 hours, I was assigned as pilot in command (PIC) working night shift in N833SB. Deputy Paul Kowalski was the PIC for day shift in N833SB. Kowalski told me about a call that Deputy Lauren Abernathy, Deputy Jacob Hernandez and he handled in the Deep Creek area and was going to have Maintenance Supervisor Frank Paniagua inspect the helicopter (See Kowalski's statement reference their incident).

When Deputy Jessica Agullera and I took off for our first call on Monday, I noticed a slight bounce that felt like an out of balance main rotor. I continued to monitor the helicopter and flight controls throughout my shift and the bounce never got worse. I spoke with other day shift pilots on Tuesday and Wednesday that flew the helicopter. They told me they felt the same bounce and it never progressed during their shift.

On Wednesday, August 3, 2022, at approximately 1809 hours, I was assigned PIC of N833SB. Deputy Agullera and I were assisting Chino Hills Station with a law enforcement call. On our way there from San Bernardino Airport, I noticed the helicopter had a slight bounce, which I related with a main rotor out of balance. As we arrived, I slowed the aircraft and began a left-hand orbit. The bounce did not go away, but did not get any worse. However, I did mention it to my partner, Agullera.

I monitored the bounce and helicopter controls during the entire call which had no change. At approximately 1845 hours, I rolled out of our patrol orbit and was going to transition back toward San Bernardino Airport. I was handed off to Ontario Tower from Chino Tower and made my radio call to Ontario. As I did this, the helicopter began to shake aggressively along with a loud whipping noise. I was approximately two miles north of Chino Airport and chose to divert there to land. I advised Ontario Tower of our situation and that I wanted to land at Chino. Ontario approved my request and I contacted Chino Tower. I advised Chino the helicopter had something wrong and a lot of vibrations.

I requested to land at the base of the tower and was approved to do so. As I was making my approach to the taxiway parallel to runway 21, I slowed my airspeed, the vibrations became more violent, and the whipping noise became louder. The closer I got to the ground, the vibrations got worse. Due to this, I chose to do a run-on landing. I was concerned that with the amount of vibration, I may lose control if I attempted to hover.

I was able to land and shut down the helicopter. When we got out of the helicopter, we observed one of the main rotor blades was delaminating. It had what appeared to be a two foot "blister" on the top and bottom of the blade. I notified Sergeant Jon Anderson and Maintenance Supervisor Frank Paniagua who responded to Chino Airport. Due to the condition of the blades and possible delamination starting on the other two blades, the helicopter was placed into a hangar for the night. Prior to storing the helicopter, maintenance had to remove the blades so the helicopter would fit in the hangar. I also notified the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) of the incident and spoke to Austin Croy and Eleazar Nepomuceno. NTSB Investigator Eleazar told me he would follow up with our maintenance on August 4, 2022.

Ryan Pepler, Corporal
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