

Joshua Cawthra
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Aviation - Western Pacific Region

Date: October 4, 2022

Subject: WPR23LA004

Contact: Eric Pietryga - Mechanic

During a conversation with Mr. Pietryga, he stated that he was the mechanic that did maintenance on the helicopter. He said that he was seated in the left front seat and the pilot was in the right front seat. The purpose of the flight was an operational check flight following a 100-hour on the main rotor gearbox, 200/12 month oil change, and a tailrotor gearbox 200/12month oil change. He added that the anti-ice on the engine was cracked, valve was worn, and he had replaced a lower collective cover.

Mr. Pietryga said that the flight was an operational check was for operational and a power check. The morning of the accident, morning, they performed a 7 to 8 minute ground run, shut the engine down, looked things over, and serviced main rotor gearbox. He said that they discussed the preflight risks talked about what the flight should look like, refueled the helicopter with 60 gallons of Jet-A fuel.

Mr. Pietryga further stated that at 0945, they departed to the south with the plan to do a power check, which they performed at 100 knots, 100% torque, and noted that the helicopter was pretty stable. As they conducted 2 orbits at an airspeed of 60 knots, and checking for traffic in the area, they began to head to the airport when they heard a loud crack/pop noise. Mr. Pietryga didn't recall spinning; however, he later learned the helicopter was spinning to the right. He recalled that the pilot said they had lost the tail rotor, and that it appeared the pilot had initiated an auto rotation. As the helicopter descended closer to the ground, it began spinning more. He said that after the helicopter impacted the ground, it rolled onto its left side.

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