



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Factual Report

Location:	VENICE, LA	Accident Number:	FTW95FA186
Date & Time:	05/02/1995, 0653 CDT	Registration:	N347AL
Aircraft:	BELL 206L-3	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Fatal, 2 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter - Non-scheduled		

HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On May 2, 1995, at 0653 central daylight time, a Bell 206L-3 helicopter, N347AL, impacted the water following an approach for landing on an offshore platform in the Gulf of Mexico. The aircraft was destroyed and the pilot and one passenger received serious injuries. The other passenger received fatal injuries. The flight was being conducted under 14 CFR Part 135 when the accident occurred. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and a company flight plan was filed. The flight departed Venice, Louisiana, at 0633.

According to the pilot and witnesses, the helicopter was in the final stage of approach to Marathon Platform SP86 located 120 degrees at 32 miles from Venice, Louisiana. The pilot added power to come to a hover as he was crossing the platform edge. He said that the engine did not respond to the power demand and the helicopter settled and struck the edge of the platform. The pilot also said that during this time he got a low rotor speed aural warning, but did not get an engine warning.

According to witnesses, as the helicopter descended toward the water, after striking the platform, it rolled inverted. The pilot and one passenger exited the helicopter, which was floating inverted, and were picked up by a boat operating in the vicinity.

The other passenger was found in the helicopter by divers several hours later.

At the time of the accident, the platform had a flare boom in operation to burn off excess gas. This flare boom was located directly upwind from the approach path to the platform landing pad, and persons on the platform said they could feel a considerable increase in temperature as the burned excess gas passed over the platform. (See attached photographs). According to Air Logistics Operations personnel, the normal approach path of the helicopter would cause it to pass through the flare exhaust during the final phase of approach to the platform. Both the company personnel and the engine manufacturers' representative expressed the opinion that performance of both the helicopter rotor system and engine could be adversely affected by the flare exhaust gas.

INJURIES TO PERSONS

The pilot, who occupied the right front seat, and one passenger, who occupied the left front seat, received serious injuries attributed to impact forces. The passenger in the cabin of the helicopter received fatal injuries due to drowning.

OTHER DAMAGE

During the impact sequence, a portion of the helicopter struck the edge of the platform causing visible damage. (See attached photographs).

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

The pilot's last date of issue on his certificate was March 17, 1989. He held an airline transport certificate with commercial privileges in rotorcraft - helicopter, and a helicopter instrument certificate. According to FAA records, his other helicopter experience was in the Boeing 107 and Sikorsky S-58.

The pilot's last medical certificate was issued on March 28, 1995. It was a 2nd class certificate with the restriction that the "holder must possess glasses that correct for near vision."

A review of the pilot's records indicate no previous accidents or incidents.

The day prior to the accident the pilot came on duty at 0530, was on duty for 13 hours, and during that duty period flew 1.9 hours in the accident aircraft. He was released from duty at 1830. The accident flight was his first flight of the day and he came on duty at 0530.

For additional pilot information refer to page 3 of this document.

METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

Era Aviation, Inc., provides Gulf of Mexico weather service to the operator. Weather in the gulf in the area where the accident occurred was overcast skies with visibility ranging from 7 to 15 miles, temperatures in the low 70s and winds generally from the north at 11 to 25 knots. Water temperature was not recorded.

WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

Witness marks on the platform edge and witness observations provided evidence that the helicopter struck the platform prior to making an uncontrolled inverted descent to the water beside the platform. The helicopter was later recovered by a work boat. During the recovery, additional damage occurred. (See attached photographs). The helicopter was eventually taken ashore and moved by surface transportation to the operator's maintenance facilities in New

Iberia, Louisiana, where an examination of the airframe, drive train, systems, and engine was conducted. The examination provided no evidence of preimpact failure or malfunction.

SURVIVAL ASPECTS

The pilot and front seat passenger remained in their respective seats during the impact sequence. Both seats were equipped with four point restraint devices which remained intact and operable. These persons extracted themselves from the inverted and submerged cockpit.

A determination of the use of seat restraints by the passenger could not be determined. He was briefed and was using the seat restraint on departure. His body was recovered from the cabin area and he was not strapped in at the time of recovery.

TESTS AND RESEARCH

During the examination of the helicopter, the fuel pump, fuel control, governor, bleed valve, and fuel nozzle were tested. All units operated within design parameters.

ADDITIONAL DATA/INFORMATION

The wreckage was released to the Director of Safety, Air Logistics, Inc., on May 5, 1995, no parts were retained.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline Transport	Age:	48, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	03/28/1995
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	9806 hours (Total, all aircraft), 2287 hours (Total, this make and model), 6530 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 154 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 55 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	BELL	Registration:	N347AL
Model/Series:	206L-3 206L-3	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	51381
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	7
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	04/06/1995, AAIP	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	4150 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	86 Hours	Engines:	1 Turbo Shaft
Airframe Total Time:	4888 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	ALLISON
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	250-C30P
Registered Owner:	AIR LOGISTICS, INC.	Rated Power:	650 hp
Operator:	AIR LOGISTICS, INC.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand Air Taxi (135)
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	ALGA

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	, 0 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0000	Direction from Accident Site:	0°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown / 0 ft agl	Visibility	7 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 2500 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	12 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	20°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	21° C / 16° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	, LA (45LA)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Company VFR
Destination:	PLATFORM 86C, LA	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0633 CDT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal, 2 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	NORMAN F WIEMEYER
Additional Participating Persons:	BOB TALMEDGE; BATON ROUGE, LA
Investigation Docket:	NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at pubin@ntsb.gov , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/ .