



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	PACIFIC OCEAN, PO	Accident Number:	LAX96LA149
Date & Time:	11/02/1995, 1000	Registration:	N99138
Aircraft:	Bell 47G-4A	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 None

Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation - Aerial Observation

Analysis

The helicopter was being flown from a fishing vessel during a fish spotting operation. The pilot reported that shortly after liftoff from the ship, he experienced a hydraulic failure. The seas were reported as high, and the pilot did not feel he could safely return to the pitching and rolling ship deck without hydraulic assist. He decided to land the float equipped helicopter in the water next to the ship. While hovering just above the water, the spotter unexpectedly jumped out of the helicopter without permission from the pilot. This resulted in a sudden imbalance, and the pilot lost control of the helicopter. The helicopter then rolled over, collided with the water, and sank.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: failure of the pilot to maintain lateral control of the helicopter, while hovering in preparation for a precautionary landing next to a ship at sea. Factors relating to the accident were: the passenger's premature evacuation from the helicopter, and the resultant lateral imbalance of the helicopter as the passenger jumped.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: HOVER - IN GROUND EFFECT

Findings

1. (F) ROTORCRAFT FLIGHT CONTROL SYSTEM, PRIMARY SERVO - FAILURE
2. PRECAUTIONARY LANDING - INITIATED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) EVACUATION - PREMATURE - PASSENGER
4. (C) AIRCRAFT WEIGHT AND BALANCE - EXCESSIVE
5. (C) AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: ROLL OVER
Phase of Operation: HOVER - IN GROUND EFFECT

Factual Information

On November 2, 1995, about 1000 hours local ship time, a Bell 47G-4A helicopter, N99138, collided with the Pacific Ocean about 800 miles east of Guam, MP, while attempting a precautionary return to the tuna fishing vessel MV Milagros Z. The aircraft was operated by Z Fishing Company of Pita, Guam, MP, and was engaged in fish spotting operations. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time and no flight plan was filed. The helicopter was destroyed. Neither the certificated commercial pilot nor the spotter was injured. The flight originated from the ship about 5 minutes prior to the accident.

The pilot reported to his insurance company adjuster that shortly after liftoff he experienced a hydraulic failure. The seas were reported as high, and the pilot did not feel he could safely return to the pitching and rolling ship deck without hydraulic assist. He decided to land in the water next to the ship. While hovering just above the water, the spotter jumped out of the helicopter without permission from the pilot. The sudden imbalance caused the pilot to lose control of the helicopter and it rolled over, collided with the water and sank.

The pilot did not report the accident to either the Safety Board or to the FAA. The accident was reported by the insurance company adjuster on March 16, 1996. To date, the pilot has not responded to repeated written requests to complete a Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident Report, NTSB Form 6120.1/2.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	32, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	06/07/1995
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	350 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Bell	Registration:	N99138
Model/Series:	47G-4A 47G-4A	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	7750
Landing Gear Type:	Float	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	10/11/1995, 100 Hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2950 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	25 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	5777 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	VO-540-B1B3
Registered Owner:	BIG EYE HELICOPTERS	Rated Power:	290 hp
Operator:	Z FISHING COMPANY	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

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:	Clear / 0 ft agl	Visibility	0 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None / 0 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0950	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): JEFF RICH Report Date: 11/11/1996

Additional Participating Persons: SCOTT CHRISTIANSON; HONOLULU, HI

Publish Date:

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 pubinq@ntsb.gov, or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/>.

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The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).