



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	Barranquitas, PR	Accident Number:	ERA15CA089
Date & Time:	01/02/2015, 1640 AST	Registration:	N3183T
Aircraft:	ROBINSON HELICOPTER COMPANY R44 II	Injuries:	1 Minor, 2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

After renting the helicopter from a flight school, the pilot took off and flew to a nearby town where he picked up two passengers. He then flew them to another town to attend a party. During the flights everything was normal. Upon arrival at their destination, the pilot began to circle and asked one of the passengers to call a friend who was on the ground on his cell phone, to check the landing area to make sure it was clear for him to land. After the pilot was told it was "clear for landing," he started a smooth descent "with all of the instruments in the green arc," to the landing area which was located on a dirt road on the ridge of a mountain. The landing was smooth and the pilot touched down lightly on the skids. While the helicopter had not fully set down and was still light on the skids, he began to check the "balance of the helicopter" before setting the collective to the full down position. When he moved the cyclic forward, the helicopter pitched forward. Then when he moved the cyclic aft to its previous position, the helicopter pitched aft and he heard a "big noise" and felt a vibration. He immediately "pulled" collective and rolled the throttle to the full throttle position to get the helicopter back into the air but, the helicopter started to spin clockwise and he could not stop the rotation, even with the application of full left pedal. He then leveled the helicopter while it was still spinning and tried to make it back to the landing site but, there was not enough power to keep it airborne. The left skid then contacted the ground and the helicopter rolled over on to its left side. Postaccident examination of the helicopter by a Federal Aviation Administration inspector revealed that the tail rotor assembly and tail boom were substantially damaged.

Flight Events

Landing - Tailstrike
Landing-aborted after touchdown - Attempted remediation/recovery
Maneuvering-hover - Loss of tail rotor effectiveness
Maneuvering-hover - Loss of control in flight
Uncontrolled descent - Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:
The pilot's failure to maintain control of the helicopter while landing which resulted in a tailrotor ground strike and collision with terrain.

Findings

Aircraft-Aircraft oper/perf/capability-Performance/control parameters-Pitch control-Incorrect use/operation - C
Personnel issues-Task performance-Use of equip/info-Aircraft control-Pilot - C
Personnel issues-Action/decision-Info processing/decision-Decision making/judgment-Pilot - C

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	50
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	None
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	583 hours (Total, all aircraft), 36 hours (Total, this make and model), 504 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 62 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	ROBINSON HELICOPTER COMPANY	Registration:	N3183T
Model/Series:	R44 II	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	On file	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None	Engine Model/Series:	IO-540-AE1A5
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	TJSJ, 9 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Lowest Ceiling:	None
Condition of Light:	Day	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	13 knots, 70°
Temperature:	27° C / 22° C	Visibility	10 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Vega Baja, PR (NONE)	Destination:	Barranquitas, PR (NONE)

Airport Information

Airport:	Ridge Line (NONE)	Runway Surface Type:	Dirt; Grass/turf
Runway Used:	N/A	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry; Rough; Vegetation
Runway Length/Width:			

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Minor, 1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Todd G Gunther	Adopted Date:	06/01/2015
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.		
Investigation Docket:	http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=90559		

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accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

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