



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Research and Engineering
Washington, DC

Medical Factual Report

December 2, 2019

Mary Pat McKay, MD, MPH
Chief Medical Officer

A. ACCIDENT: CEN18FA149; Hazelhurst, WI

On April 26, 2018, about 2250 central daylight time, a Eurocopter AS 350 B2 helicopter, N127LN, impacted trees and terrain during cruise flight near Hazelhurst, Wisconsin. The pilot and two crewmembers were fatally injured. The helicopter was destroyed during the impact. The helicopter was registered to and operated by Air Methods Corporation as a Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 repositioning flight. Night visual meteorological conditions were reported in the area about the time of the accident, and the flight was operating on a company visual flight rules flight plan. The flight originated from the Dane County Regional Airport- Truax Field (MSN), near Madison, Wisconsin, about 2104, and was destined for the Howard Young Medical Center Heliport (6OWI), near Woodruff, Wisconsin.

B. GROUP IDENTIFICATION

No group was formed for the medical evaluation in this accident.

C. DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION

1. Purpose

This investigation was performed to evaluate the pilot for medical conditions, the use of medications/illicit drugs, and the presence of toxins.

2. Methods

The FAA medical case review, autopsy report, toxicology findings, and the investigator's reports were reviewed. Relevant regulation and medical literature were reviewed as appropriate.

FAA Medical Case Review

According to the FAA medical case review, the 34 year old male pilot reported having 3,200 total flight hours as of his last exam, dated 5/31/2017. At that time, he was 69 inches tall and weighed 202 pounds. He reported no chronic medical problems and no use of medications to the FAA. No significant abnormalities were identified on the physical exam and the aviation medical examiner determined he was not at risk for sleep apnea. He was issued a second class medical certificate without limitations.

Autopsy

According to the autopsy performed by the University of Wisconsin Anatomic Pathology Laboratory, the cause of death was multiple traumatic injuries sustained in an aircraft crash. No significant natural disease was identified.

Toxicology

Toxicology testing performed by the FAA's Forensic Science Laboratory did not identify any tested-for substances in the pilot's muscle tissue.¹

Personal Medical Records

Records from the pilot's usual source of medical care were requested for the 3 years preceding the accident. These records contain information from a single physician visit in April 2016 for a check up. The pilot reported no chronic medical conditions, no use of medications, and had no specific symptoms. The physical exam was unremarkable and routine bloodwork did not identify any concerns. The pilot was asked to return in about two years.

D. SUMMARY OF MEDICAL FINDINGS

The 34 year old male pilot reported no medical conditions or use of medications. No significant disease was identified by the FAA or his personal physician. According to the autopsy performed by the University of Wisconsin Anatomic Pathology Laboratory, the cause of death was injuries sustained in an aircraft crash. No significant natural disease was identified. Toxicology testing did not identify any tested-for substances in the pilot's muscle tissue.

¹ The FAA Forensic Sciences Laboratory has the capability to test for more than 1300 substances including toxins, common prescription and over-the-counter medications as well as illicit drugs. See: <http://jag.cami.jccbi.gov/toxicology/default.asp?offset=0> .