



MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Aaron McCarter
Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

May 2, 2018

Accident Number: ERA18LA210

Subject: Robinson R-44 (N923SM) Forced Landing in Water; Bay County Sheriff's Office Report

er Crash Report INVESTIGATION REPORT BEING GIVEN BY INVESTIGATOR DUSTIN ROACHE OF THE BAY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE'S CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION IN REFERENCE TO BCSO CASE #2018-035116

On May 2nd, 2018, I responded to the area of Ramsgate Harbour, located at [REDACTED] in reference to a helicopter crashing into the Gulf of Mexico near this location.

Upon arrival, I observed a partially submerged helicopter approximately 200 yards offshore from the rear of Ramsgate Harbor Condominiums drifting Northwest. I observed numerous water rescue personnel in the water rescuing the pilot from the downed aircraft. Once on land, EMS personnel evaluated the pilot who was walking and had only appeared to have ingested salt water from the Gulf. While walking toward the ambulance, The pilot identified himself as Randall Jack Gross from Saint Francis, Louisiana. Mr. Gross stated he was flying from the Perry-Foley Airport (40J) to the Destin Executive Airport (KDTS) when he began to have issues with the cyclic.

Mr. Gross stated he began to have a decrease in airspeed which he stated was a common problem in the Robinson R22 Mariner Helicopter. Mr. Gross stated he tried to correct the deficiency by increasing the airspeed, however he lost cyclic forward movement. Mr. Gross stated he tried to turn into the wind the best he could in order to auto rotate. Mr. Gross stated he was aiming for the water in order to cushion the impact and prevent injury to persons on the beach. Mr. Gross stated once in the water he lost complete control of the helicopter. Mr. Gross stated he was the only occupant inside of the helicopter at the time of the crash, however he was flying a formation of two with another white Robinson R22 Mariner Helicopter. Mr. Gross stated they were flying from the North Perry Airport in Hollywood, Florida (KHWO) and flying to the Destin Executive Airport (KDTS), but they stayed the night at the Perry-Foley Airport in Perry, FL (40J). Mr. Gross stated the Robinson R22 Mariner Helicopter bearing tail number N923SM he was piloting belongs to Thomas McDermat with Boatpix.com and Helicopter Academy. Mr. Gross stated prior to the incident he contacted Eglin Tower and notified them he was entering the area. I received a sworn recorded statement from Mr. Gross prior to him going to the hospital.

Mr. Gross was transported via Bay County EMS Medic 24 to the Bay Medical Center on the Beach for evaluation. The scene was turned over to Florida Wildlife Commission Capt Scott Lee, Bay County Fire Chief Marcus Vigil, and the US Coast Guard who were all on scene. BCFD notified the regional contact for the Federal Aviation Administration, Pat Bruce, at [REDACTED] of the incident.

This concludes my involvement in this case.

Investigator Dustin E. Roache
Criminal Investigations Division
Bay County Sheriff's Office