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Record of Conversation – Douglas Herlihy
Helicopter Flight Services

Mr. Herlihy was the owner/operator of the accident helicopter. He was interviewed during a meeting with NTSB investigators and FAA inspectors with regard to the maintenance history of the accident helicopter on October 25, 2017. Minutes of the meeting were taken, and today Mr. Herlihy was interviewed by telephone to gain some more detail with regard to the disassembly/reassembly and rigging of the throttle during carburetor/engine changes.

According to Mr. Herlihy, when the engine was changed for overhaul, the carburetor goes with the engine, and the throttle control arm is removed at the carburetor splined shaft. The throttle control bellcrank is removed from the front of the carburetor, and the entire throttle control system remains with the helicopter. The throttle control arm, the throttle tie rod, the throttle control bellcrank, and the throttle cable all remain attached to each other and to the helicopter. At this point, there is no need to disconnect, or adjust, the throttle tie rod that connects the bellcrank and the throttle control arm.

When a new engine was installed, the correct “angle” is measured for the installation of the throttle control arm on the carburetor. Adjustment of idle and mixture set screws is often required as the carburetors are often set at the factory “for airplanes.”

When asked about the most recent installation of the throttle control cable, Mr. Herlihy stated that the cable was a fixed measurement, and changing the cable did not change the rigging of the throttle. When the cable was changed, no throttle rigging adjustments were necessary. The cable was disconnected at the bellcrank, upstream of the tie rod and throttle control arm. He repeated that the cable installation was “plug and play” and that no adjustments were necessary to achieve/maintain proper throttle rigging.

When asked about the most recent engine change on the helicopter, Mr. Herlihy was asked specifically about the throttle rigging, and the nominal measurement of the tie rod during the throttle rigging procedure. He said, “I don’t know if I did. I’m sure I did, because that’s part of the procedure, but I’m not 100 percent [sure].”

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