

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
RECORD OF INTERVIEW

ACCIDENT NUMBER: CHI02FA174
INTERVIEW DATE: June 22, 2002
TIME OF INTERVIEW: 1800 cdt
PERSON INTERVIEWED: Bill Philgren
RELATIONSHIP TO ACCIDENT: Mechanic

On the 19th he and Phil flew the helicopter to Lincoln to get avionics work done. During takeoff from Lincoln the cabin fill with smoke. They landed back at Lincoln and discovered that the air conditioner compressor had locked up and the belt was burned. Bill changed the belt and when he was closing the cowling the hydraulic pump belt snapped. He stated the hydraulic pump belt was close to the compressor and it heated up when the air conditioner compressor failed. He changed the hydraulic belt and they flew back to Norfolk without incident.

He stated the distance between Lincoln and Norfolk is about 122 miles.

The helicopter was refueled with 25 gallons of fuel when they returned from Lincoln. They landed back in Norfolk at 1939 and the helicopter departed for the hospital at 1953.

Helicopter burns about 45 gallons per hour.
Usually land with 65% to 70% fuel on board.


Pilot's duty day began at 0700
Medical Crew's duty day began at 0800
Both the pilot and the medical crew work 24 hour shifts.

Bill met with the pilot at 0715 on the 21st. Bill did a preflight on the helicopter. He stated that he does a preflight on the helicopter at the beginning of every shift. The pilot then does his own preflight and they discuss any issues with the helicopter. There were no issues and the helicopter appeared fine on the morning of the accident.

The pilot does a walk around prior to every takeoff.

They always shut down the helicopter when they are loading. They never load hot.

Average 30 – 32 flights per month. Average trip is about 1 ½ hours


Pamela S. Sullivan
Investigation in Charge

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
RECORD OF INTERVIEW

ACCIDENT NUMBER: CHI02FA174
INTERVIEW DATE: June 22, 2002
TIME OF INTERVIEW: 1045 cdt
PERSON INTERVIEWED: Mike White
RELATIONSHIP TO ACCIDENT: Pilot of N75ZT

Departed from Columbus, Nebraska.

He entered a downwind and flew the pattern for runway 19 and was on final approach when he heard a helicopter call in "Lifeflight 12 - North of city landing south."

While on 1 ½ mile final the helicopter crossed in front of him, approximately ½ to ¾ mile out from the runway, from right to left. The helicopter was descending at a sharp angle. Mr. White aborted his landing and performed a go around because of the helicopter in front of him. He side stepped his airplane to the right and saw the helicopter go to the ramp area. He stated that he thought he saw him land. As he turned base to final he saw the smoke.



Pamela S. Sullivan
Investigation in Charge

NORFOLK POLICE DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

VOLUNTARY STATEMENT

Date 6-21-02 Place Norfolk Airport Time started 107 P.M.

I, the undersigned William C Philgreen, am 32 years of age, having been born on
(date) [REDACTED], at (city) [REDACTED] (state) MD

(phone) [REDACTED] I give this statement to Randy Raney
a person that has identified himself as a police officer.

I declare that the following voluntary statement is made to the aforesaid person of my own free will without promise or hope of reward, without fear of threat of physical harm, without coercion, favor or offer of favor, without leniency or offer of leniency by any person or persons whomsoever.

at 12:08 AM I received a call from LifeCom Dispatchers saying that the aircraft had a problem the right pedal bending and told me to meet them at the airport when I got to the airport the accident had already taken place.

I have read each page of this statement consisting of _____ page(s), each page of which bears my signature, and corrections. If any, bear my initials, and I certify that the facts contained herein are true and correct. I further certify that I made no request for the advised or presence of a lawyer before or during any part of this statement, nor at any time before it was finished did I request that this statement be stopped. I also declare that I was not told or prompted what to say in this statement.

This statement was completed at _____ M. on the _____ day of _____, 20____.

Signature: [REDACTED]

Witness: _____

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20594

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

The purpose of this statement is intended solely for use in determining the facts, conditions and circumstances, and the probable cause of the subject accident.

Date 6-24-02

1. Place of accident KARL STEFAN FIELD Date 6-21-02 Hour 12:05 PM CDT

2. Type of vehicle HELICOPTER

3. Identification of vehicle N852HW

4. What is your name MONICA TALBOTT Age [REDACTED]

5. Address [REDACTED]

6. Occupation MGR. By whom employed NORFOLK AVIATION

7. Where were you at the time of the accident IN THE ^{FBO} OFFICE AT THE AIRPORT

8. Tell in your own words what you saw or heard before and at the time the accident occurred.

I heard 852HW radio in to land at OFK and also heard a King Air was inbound at the same time for runway 19. I radioed to 852HW to see if they needed fuel, but did not receive a response. The King Air announced he was doing a go-around. I looked out the west office windows and saw 852HW over the ramp about 10' off the ground. It seemed to me, he was going to ~~be~~ set the helicopter down at this point. I answered the phone a seconds later looked out again and saw a dust cloud - saw the helicopter had crashed north of the ramp area. Called 911 and the airport mgr. [REDACTED] (Signature)

NTSB FORM 6120.11 (Rev. 10/77) (Use reverse side of sheet for diagram and additional statement)
 The pilot of the King Air came in after landing and said the helicopter cut in front of him causing him to do the go-around.

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20594

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

The purpose of this statement is intended solely for use in determining the facts, conditions and circumstances, and the probable cause of the subject accident.

- Date 7-08-02
- Place of accident Karl Stefan Memorial Airport Date 6-21-02 Hour 12:07pm
 - Type of vehicle Helicopter
 - Identification of vehicle Life Net medical helicopter
 - What is your name Michael E. Jones Age [REDACTED]
 - Address [REDACTED]
 - Occupation Contractor By whom employed Self-employed
 - Where were you at the time of the accident Driving north on US Hwy 81
 - Tell in your own words what you saw or heard before and at the time the accident occurred.

The helicopter was located on the north end of the airport about 70 feet southwest of the 2 north buildings. I was at the intersection of Hwy 81 & Sherwood Road going north. The helicopter was about 30 feet in the air. The nose was pointed east the tail was about 30° angle above the nose. The tail was swinging from northward by west to southwest by west. I done this about 3 times with the nose in same location. It veered to the left. The buildings blocked my view. I saw a cloud of brown dust. As I got more north past the buildings it laid there with no smoke or fire. I then turned my vehicle around and helped to get the gates opened for emergency vehicles & then left my scene & address with officers at the scene & then left.

Michael E. Jones
(Signature)

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20594

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

The purpose of this statement is intended solely for use in determining the facts, conditions and circumstances, and the probable cause of the subject accident.

Date 7-8-02

1. Place of accident Stefan Memorial Airport, Norfolk, NE Date 6-21-02 Hour 1705 Zulu
2. Type of vehicle BE-20
3. Identification of vehicle N75ZT
4. What is your name Michael C. White Age [REDACTED]
5. Address [REDACTED]
6. Occupation Pilot By whom employed Nebraska Public Power District
7. Where were you at the time of the accident Final Approach to Runway 19 Norfolk, NE
8. Tell in your own words what you saw or heard before and at the time the accident occurred.

I was piloting Aircraft N75ZT, BE-20, at Stefan Memorial Airport, Norfolk, NE. when I made an initial report that N75ZT was entering 45° to left downwind to Runway 19. Then an Aircraft, identified as "Chopper N.", was North of the City, landing South." During the course of the Airport pattern, I ask the chopper (3) times (additional) for a position report relative to the Airport, with no response. I assumed the chopper landed internally within the City of Norfolk, NE, along with his only transmission being vague in position to the airport. When I was on (1) one mile Final to runway 19, the chopper came into my view from high right, descending across to low left view (at a high rate of descent), between my Aircraft and the threshold of runway 19 (estimated distance between N75ZT and chopper, 1/4 mile).

- next page -

[REDACTED]
(Signature)

At this point, I aborted the landing and the mid-air collision by a climbing, right turn, followed by a left-cross-wind turn back to runway 19. During this period of time, I saw the chopper descend towards the North end of the ramp, next to the last hanger on the North end of the Airport. I saw, what I thought was a landing, then I became occupied with my aircraft, the next view, I saw was the chopper crashing on its side and coming to a rest. I continued my traffic pattern and landed on runway 19 at Norfolk, NE.

~~Mr. [redacted]~~
~~[redacted]~~

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20594

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

The purpose of this statement is intended solely for use in determining the facts, conditions and circumstances, and the probable cause of the subject accident.

- Date July 6, 2002
1. Place of accident Norfolk, NE Date June 21, 2002 Hour 12-Noon
2. Type of vehicle Helicopter
3. Identification of vehicle _____
4. What is your name Patricia E. Widner Age [REDACTED]
5. Address [REDACTED]
6. Occupation Wallpaper Hanger By whom employed Self
7. Where were you at the time of the accident Hwy 275- West of town
8. Tell in your own words what you saw or heard before and at the time the accident occurred.

On Friday, June 21st, 2002, I had gone out to Divots, a reception hall west of town, and at about noon, I was driving back towards Norfolk and noticed the Life Flight helicopter, which was to the south, was circling and rocking back and forth. At that time I was probably about a mile from 25th Street. I know the helicopter was not to the airport yet, I could see it very clearly and would estimate it to be about over the Good Year plant or around that vicinity. I thought it was really strange the way it was rocking (nose to tail) and going in a circle, it was ~~NOT~~ SPINNING when I saw it.

[REDACTED]
(Signature)

OVER →

I hope this information will be of some help in the investigation. Please contact me if you have any further questions. [REDACTED]

FOLD HERE THEN STAPLE BEFORE MAILING

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20594

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PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300

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SAFETY BOARD



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
BUREAU OF ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20594

FOLD AND STAPLE BEFORE MAILING

02-2240

6-21-02

Richter

Reed Borgman called the PD to report that he witnessed the Helicopter crash.

Borgman said that he was northbound on Highway 81 and had just come around the curve east of the main airport entrance and was facing in the direction of the helicopter when he saw the helicopter take off, start to fly strangely and then crash. He didn't see it actually hit the ground as a building blocked his view, but he did see smoke come up.

Borgman said he also saw a plane land right after that.

Reed Borgman, [REDACTED]

I told Borgman that someone from our office or the FAA would probably be in contact with him.

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20594

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

The purpose of this statement is intended solely for use in determining the facts, conditions and circumstances, and the probable cause of the subject accident.

- 1. Place of accident KARL STEPHAN AIRPORT Date 7/1/02
NORFOLK, NE. Date 6/21/02 Hour Approx Noon
- 2. Type of vehicle LIFE-FLIGHT HELICOPTER
- 3. Identification of vehicle BROWN/BLACK & WHITE
- 4. What is your name DON EDWARDS Age [REDACTED]
- 5. Address [REDACTED]
- 6. Occupation COUNSELLOR By whom employed THE BANK, INC.
- 7. Where were you at the time of the accident TRAVELING SOUTH ON THE HWY BESIDE THE AIRPORT
- 8. Tell in your own words what you saw or heard before and at the time the accident occurred.

(DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT ON ACCOMPANYING PAGE)

[REDACTED]
[Signature]
(Signature)

7/1/02

To whom it may concern:

My name is Donald E. Edwards. This letter is in response to a written request from the National Transportation Safety Board for information pertaining to the helicopter accident that occurred at the Karl Stefan Memorial Airport in Norfolk on June 21, 2002.

I was traveling south on Highway 81, and was just topping the overpass a mile north of the airport when I saw a white twin engine airplane coming in from the northeast to land. I looked ahead to the airport and saw the Life Flight helicopter hovering over the northern quadrant of the airport in the apparent flight path of the airplane. This is the reason I kept watching the situation take place as I drove toward the airport.

As I watched, the airplane aborted his landing, first climbing above the helicopter and angling off a little to the right (west), then turning left in a sweeping turn that took him to the east of the airport.

I lost sight of the helicopter for ten or twenty seconds, and then it reappeared, climbing to a height of approximately one to two hundred feet above the northern part of the airport. The pilot then leveled off and hovered above the ground. As I drew parallel with the helicopter, it suddenly began to spin (I believe counter-clockwise, but upon reflection, I'm not positive) with its nose angled down, and a moment later it started to descend rapidly, still spinning, apparently out of control. After several complete revolutions, the helicopter dove to the ground, coming to rest on its right side.

I turned in the closest entrance and drove to the gates on the far north of the airport. I then climbed through the gates and ran over to where the helicopter had come to rest. It was lying on its right side, the nose facing west. I could hear gurgling and an occasional release of pressure from what I believed to be the hydraulic systems, and from time to time there would be a brief puff of smoke from the exhaust. I hesitantly ran around to the west side of the helicopter and saw the pilot suspended in the air, still strapped into his seat, his body collapsed forward, his head to the right and hanging at an impossible angle. I heard a moaning sound coming from inside the helicopter, but from the north side of the aircraft I couldn't see anyone other than the pilot. When I ran around to the south side of the helicopter, I could see what appeared to be a uniformed pants leg in the wreckage, but couldn't see any more of the body. I didn't know until later that there was also a nurse on board the helicopter.

I ran around to the north side of the aircraft and tried to get in to the pilot, but I couldn't get through the broken wreckage at that time. I could see no signs of his breathing, and there were no more audible signs of life from within the helicopter at that time. The EMT's, firemen and police started to show up at this point (approximately five to ten minutes after the crash). A man from the airport had arrived before them and had sprayed a fire extinguisher a couple of times on the engine. There was also another man on the scene, another motorist I think.

When the EMT's arrived, I helped them drag the pilot from the wreckage, and as soon as more people arrived, I gave a brief report to one of the policemen and then left the scene so as not to be in the way.

I do not think that the airplane that tried to land affected the helicopter in any way. There appeared to be a safe distance between them at the time. Right up to the time when the helicopter was hovering, the pilot appeared to be in control of the aircraft. I had been playing golf earlier that morning, and so I know that although the wind was gusty at times, it was not a particularly strong wind. It appeared to me that something gave out all of a sudden while the pilot was hovering.

Obviously this was a tragic accident. I know very little about the mechanics of a helicopter, but the aircraft appeared to be okay up until the moment it suddenly started spinning and then dove to the ground.

I realize it may not be within my rights to ask, but I would appreciate it if there could be some way I could find out just what happened when it is all over and done with. I watched one man die and another two people sustain injuries that ultimately claimed their lives that same day. I understand that this might not be possible, but I would appreciate it if it is.

If there is anything else I can do for you, you have my address. My phone number is [REDACTED]. My work number is ([REDACTED]).

I hope this helped in some small way.

Respectfully,
Donald E. Edwards

[REDACTED]
[Handwritten signature]

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20594

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

The purpose of this statement is intended solely for use in determining the facts, conditions and circumstances, and the probable cause of the subject accident.

Date 7-1-02

1. Place of accident Norfolk Airport Date _____ Hour 11:30 approx
2. Type of vehicle Helicopter
3. Identification of vehicle Life net
4. What is your name Philip L Neuhafer Age [REDACTED]
5. Address [REDACTED]
6. Occupation Salesman By whom employed Fritz Lay
7. Where were you at the time of the accident Approx 1/4 mile Northwest of Crash Site
8. Tell in your own words what you saw or heard before and at the time the accident occurred.

I first saw and heard the helicopter as it passed and hovered over our warehouse. It stopped for a short time over our warehouse, then proceeded to the airport. As it ~~landed~~ went to the airport to land it pitched side ways and the pilot hit the power and got the helicopter back up in the air. The helicopter began to spin around in a clockwise spin (as you look from on top). ~~As~~ as the helicopter gained altitude the spin slowed and I thought the pilot was getting control. Then the helicopter dove forward and down into the ground. The rotors ~~hit~~ hit first and then the main body of the helicopter hit and collapsed to the ground. I grabbed my phone and called 911. A few moments later I saw some people coming out of the Hanger buildings to help. Later the Police and Rescue vehicles showed up.

[REDACTED]
(Signature)

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
RECORD OF INTERVIEW

ACCIDENT NUMBER: CHI02FA174
INTERVIEW DATE: June 22, 2002
TIME OF INTERVIEW: 1900 cdt
PERSON INTERVIEWED: Angie Prather
RELATIONSHIP TO ACCIDENT: Witness

She was driving on Highway 81 headed south near the viaduct when she saw an airplane circling. She saw the helicopter takeoff from the airport. It got to an altitude that was above all the buildings, about 2 building heights, when it started spiraling. The helicopter then turned and did a nose dive into the ground.




Pamela S. Sullivan
Investigation in Charge

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
RECORD OF INTERVIEW

ACCIDENT NUMBER: CHI02FA174
INTERVIEW DATE: June 22, 2002
TIME OF INTERVIEW: 1915 cdt
PERSON INTERVIEWED: Linda Meikle
RELATIONSHIP TO ACCIDENT: Witness

She was driving in a van on North Airport Road heading east toward Highway 81. She saw the helicopter coming in from the northwest and she pulled over so the kids in the van could watch the helicopter. She stated that she noticed it was in a level attitude and traveling very slow, barely moving. Another airplane was coming in from the northeast. The airplane swung around behind the helicopter then the airplane continued to the south. The helicopter banked a little when it got close to the hangars and it started spinning. It was spinning counterclockwise at first then it started spinning clockwise. The helicopter went down then came back up at which time she was distracted. It then entered a nose dive into the ground. The helicopter was approximately twice the height of the buildings when it first started spinning.


Pamela S. Sullivan
Investigation in Charge

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
RECORD OF INTERVIEW

ACCIDENT NUMBER: CHI02FA174
INTERVIEW DATE: June 22, 2002
TIME OF INTERVIEW: 2000 cdt
PERSON INTERVIEWED: John Linke
RELATIONSHIP TO ACCIDENT: Rocky Mountain Lead Pilot in Norfolk

He stated that he got to the scene shortly after the impact. Fuel was leaking from the helicopter and he was concerned because of the oxygen on board.

He shut off the: power switches
standby attitude indicator
HSI
Radio Master
Intercom

When asked, he stated that he did not touch the hydraulic cut off switch.



Pamela S. Sullivan
Investigation in Charge