



## Record of Conversation

**Fabian Salazar**  
**Air Safety Investigator**  
**National Transportation Safety Board**  
**Air Safety Investigator**

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**NTSB Accident Number: CEN22FA317**  
**Aircraft Registration & Make/Model: N911SZ / Bell UH-1H+**  
**Accident Location: Chapelle, NM**  
**Accident Date: July 16, 2022**  
**Person Contacted: Charles Tuberville, Former pilot and TFO for Bernalillo County Sheriff's Department, Metro Air Support Unit**

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In a telephone interview, Mr. Tuberville stated that he flew with the Metro Air Support Unit initially as a Tactical flight Officer and later trained to be a pilot with the unit. He flew the UH-1H and the AS-350. He conducted mission training with the accident pilot (pilot), but the pilot was not a flight instructor, therefore they only trained together in mission related activities. He left the unit in good standing around 2020.

He stated that when he first started flying with the unit, he flew with the pilot almost daily. He thought the pilot was very good and excelled in his ability to remember every detail of the UH-1. He said that when the pilot is flying from point A to B and is not in support of a mission, the typical altitude and airspeed he would fly at was about 1,000 feet and 100 knots. He stated that if the pilot were at 500 feet, that would not concern him. He said that the helicopter could only be started from the right seat and the only time that the pilot flew in the left seat was when another pilot was in the right seat. They had a part-time pilot by the name of John Fishburne, but he left to fly for a Part 121 operator. He said the pilot did have an iPad but used the Aero Computer for navigating. He said the aero computer does retain non-volatile memory but needs to be turned on to collect flight data.

He recalled that the unit got the helicopter from the Hawaii National Guard. The pilot was also a certificated A&P repairman and worked on the helicopter after it was purchased. He recalled the T53-L-703 engine upgrade occurred about two years ago and they studied training supplements to learn how to operate it. He said the supplements are available in the unit. He said that the 703 engine came with a start fuel switch. He didn't recall if it had to be turned off after the engine start. He said the boost pump was always left on.

He said that the helicopter was configured for a hoist and a Fast Rope Insertion Extraction (FRIES) bar. Neither were installed at the time of the accident. When asked about flying doors off, he said the pilot preferred flying with the doors off. Mr. Tuberville stated that all the doors would be removed, not just the pilot's doors. He said that there were three places that they mounted a Go-Pro camera, to the skid opposite the tail rotor, and area toward the back of the cabin, and the helmet.

He said that on a good year they accrued about 500 to 700 hours flight time. He stated that they conducted annual flight training at HeliStream in Orange County, California. He said that HeliStream had a Bell 205, and they did autorotation training that included touchdown autorotations and autorotations with turns. He said that they went once a year to HeliStream, but it wasn't always the same time of year, as it was budget dependent. They did not conduct any type of emergency flight training at the unit. The unit also conducted weekly mission training and that training is documented and put on video. He said that the unit has mountains of documents to review if the investigation needed to see it.

He said that for mission planning they had a Risk Assessment Tool (RAT) and that there should be one for the accident mission. They did not typically file FAA flight plans but did coordinate with the Forest Service when supporting them.

When asked about his thoughts on the accident he indicated that the pilot was very good at flying the UH-1, and he knew everything about it. He indicated that if the pilot did enter an autorotation, he is surprised by the outcome. He thought the pilot should have been able to handle an autorotation. When the subject of flying into the setting sun came up, he stated that the setting sun could cast shadows and cause the loss of terrain features.