

## Witness Interviews

### Interview Team Members

Investigator James R. Fowden  
Perquimans County Sheriff's Office  
110 North Church Street  
Hertford, NC 27944



Cory Cummins  
Director of Flight Safety, Air Methods  
7211 S. Peoria St  
Englewood, CO 80112

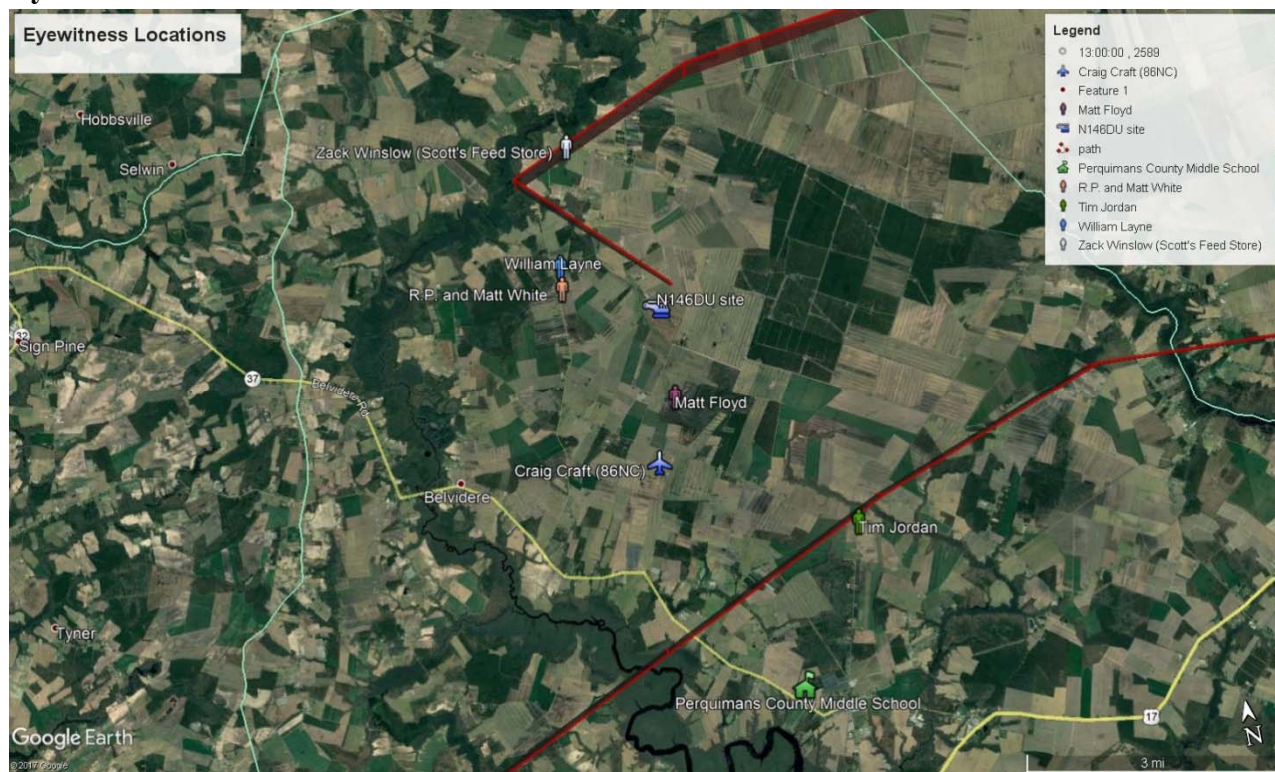


Tim Camelin  
Aviation Safety Technician, FAA 1301 S.  
Terminal Service Rd. Greensboro, NC 27409



**Coordinates for Accident Site: N 36 17.419 W 76 29.252**

### Eyewitness Locations:



## Witness Statement

**Witness Name:** William Greene — Private Pilot, 20 + years with U.S. Coast Guard  
**Contact:** [REDACTED]  
**Interview Date:** 9/9/17  
**Time:** 3:30 pm  
**Location:** At the Elizabeth City Regional Airport

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**Narrative:** Mr. Greene was at the Elizabeth City Airport on the morning of 9/8/17. About 9:10 to 9:15 am, he saw the helicopter arrive at the Fixed Base Operator (FBO), where he spoke to the air crew of Duke Life Flight. Estimated the crew to be there between 9:15 am and 10:00 am. (Fuel receipt available for corroboration). Mr. Greene talked with the crew, crew, who stated they were there to be refueled, but not receiving a patient. The pilot was doing paperwork inside of FBO. The Nurses from the crew seemed to be talkative, and Mr. Greene talked with them for approximately 30 minutes. He took photos of the aircraft at approximately 9:50 am. When asked, he stated no unusual exhaust soot or fluids were present on the aircraft fuselage, that the aircraft appeared clean.

Mr. Greene observed the aircraft start up and then hover taxi to the taxiway. It stayed about 30 feet high, hovering for approximately 1 1/2 minutes. Helicopter then sat back down for approximately 1 1/2 minutes, picked back up to about a 40- 50 foot hover, sat there for about 40 seconds. Mr. Greene wondered if there was a mechanical issue because of the multiple hovers. The helicopter then departed to the west, not toward the direction of the Hospital, watched aircraft until out of sight heading west. Mr. Greene stated it did not appear that anything was wrong with aircraft; “normal spool up, everything seemed normal.”

Note: Obtained 8 pictures that were taken at airport by William Green.

## Witness Statement

**Witness Name:** Carla Godwin Medical Examiner, works at Pasquotank County EMS  
**Contact:** [REDACTED]  
**Interview Date:** 9/9/17  
**Time:** 1:49 pm  
**Location:** Near the accident site

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Ms. Godwin observed the helicopter at Sentara Albemarle Medical Center on 9/8/17. She watched it land and the crew go into hospital. She then took a picture of the helicopter on the helipad, which is located right next to her office. The time was between 10:30 am and 11:00 am. When she took the picture, the aircraft was completely shut down.

Note: Obtained picture from Ms. Godwin

## Witness Statement

**Witness Name:** Zack Winslow, Private pilot, works at Scott's Store, Belvidere, NC  
**Contact:** [REDACTED]  
**Interview Date:** 9/9/17  
**Time:** 11:27 am  
**Location:** Scott's Store Belvidere, NC

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On 9/8/17, while working at Scott's Store (N 36 degrees 19 minutes 28.1 seconds W 76 degrees 29 minutes 59.2 seconds) Mr. Winslow observed the aircraft traveling westbound. It then made a hard turn to what he believed was the direction to Craig Craft's air strip (NC86), but everything looked normal. He lost sight of the aircraft behind the building. Later, several customers reported seeing smoke (uncertain whether the smoke was seen while the aircraft was still airborne, or smoke rising from the crash site).

## Witness Statement

**Witness Name:** William Layne, 27919  
**Contact:** [REDACTED]  
**Interview Date:** 9/9/17  
**Time:** 2:14 pm  
**Location:** [REDACTED] Belvidere, NC

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Mr. Layne stated that he was out in the field in front of his residence (N 36 degrees 18 minutes 11.3 seconds W 76 degrees 30 minutes 21.8 seconds) picking sweet potatoes with his cousin. He heard and observed aircraft that flew directly over top of him, then making a turn to the left. He stated the aircraft was making a “funny noise,” sounded like it was “dying out.” The motor was “popping” or “missing,” and had a trail of “blue smoke, like a truck would leave when it is burning oil, blue, not black” trailing approximately 20 feet behind the aircraft, in “one single wide streak of blue.” He said the aircraft sounded “like it wanted to stall,” and that the smoke was coming from the tail end.

Mr. Layne stated the helicopter came from the direction of Scott's Store, and watched it make a sudden turn left overhead then turned back to the right as if it was headed toward the airport. He said the aircraft appeared to be flying fairly smooth, stated it did not just drop down or “fall out of the sky”, but appeared to be a controlled descent. He watched it until it disappeared behind the tree line to the southeast. He then heard a thud and saw black smoke rise from behind the trees. He got in his vehicle to go assist, but couldn't find a route. He then heard emergency vehicles heading to the scene.

## Witness Statement

**Witness Name:** R.P. White owns RP's Wrecker Service on Sandy Cross Rd.  
**Contact:** [REDACTED]  
**Interview Date:** 9/9/17  
**Time:** 11:05 am  
**Location:** [REDACTED], Belvidere, NC 27919

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Mr. R.P. White was out in pasture behind the house (N 36 degrees 17 minutes 57.1 seconds W 76 degrees 30 minutes 23.8 seconds). He stated he saw the helicopter but did not pay much attention to it and only glanced at it, at some time between 10 am and 11 am (knew it to be before lunch). He stated that it appeared to be in normal flight, no strange noise, coming from direction of Bethany Church Rd (Northwest of his location). His son Matt, who was also at that location, standing in front of the shop, had seen the helicopter fly over the shop.

## **Witness Statement**

**Witness Name:** Matt White, helicopter sheet metal mechanic, U.S. Coast Guard  
**Contact:** [REDACTED]  
**Interview Date:** 9/9/17  
**Time:** 11:05 am  
**Location:** By telephone

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Mr. Matt White was in the front of the wrecker service shop when he saw the helicopter fly over. He saw smoke coming from under to rotor of the helicopter, and stated that the smoke was “darker than lighter” in color.

## Witness Statement

**Witness Name:** Matt Floyd  
**Contact:** [REDACTED]  
**Interview Date:** 9/9/17  
**Time:** 11:39 am  
**Location:** In the field north of Swamp Rd., where he had observed the aircraft the day before  
(N 36 degrees 16 minutes 35.2 seconds W 76 degrees 29 minutes 12.6 seconds)

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Mr. Floyd was working out in a corn field (N 36 degrees 16 minutes 35.2 seconds W 76 degrees 29 minutes 12.6 seconds), servicing a combine near the aircraft accident site on 9/8/17. He heard the aircraft begin making a “funny noise,” which sounded “like a cartoon where the helicopter is spinning around” (mimicked the sound). He turned around and only caught a glimpse of the aircraft. “As far away as I was, it was about an inch from the ground.” Mr. Floyd could not tell if the aircraft was coming toward him or going away. He heard a big boom and saw a black cloud of smoke. He asked the other person on the combine, who is a retired fire chief, if he saw anything, that he (Mr. Floyd) didn’t know what it was. Mr. Floyd then went toward the crash site, and stopped at a gate in the electric fence, where he was met by another individual, a building inspector, who told Mr. Floyd that it was a helicopter that had gone down. Mr. Floyd then called 911 at 11:27 am. Mr. Floyd told the dispatcher that the crash site was about ¼ mile in a Northwest direction from where he was located, that as soon as it hit the ground he saw heavy black smoke.



## Witness Statement

**Witness Name:** Tim Jordan, worked EMS for 18 years  
**Contact:** [REDACTED]  
**Interview Date:** 9/9/17  
**Time:** 11:48 am  
**Location:** By telephone

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Mr. Jordan was near the intersection of 2 Mile Desert Rd. and Swamp Rd. He stated that the aircraft appeared to be flying in the direction of the Perquimans Middle School. The aircraft was coming towards him and he did not see a change of direction. He said the aircraft sounded normal, that he has worked EMS 18 years and knew what a "normal" helicopter sounded like. As the aircraft passed, he saw that it was still flying normally, but with dark smoke, smoke coming from back of aircraft. He did not see the helicopter go down.

## Witness Statement

**Witness Name:** Lt. Commander Jeff Cowan, U.S. Coast Guard. U.S. Coast Guard Air Station  
Elizabeth City, NC  
**Contact:** [REDACTED]  
**Interview Date:** 9/10/17  
**Time:** 11:52 am  
**Location:** By telephone

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LCDR Cowan was the Aircraft Commander of the helicopter crew called out to crash scene on 9/8/17. The call was specifically to search for the helicopter crash. He and his crew took off from the Elizabeth City base at 12:50 pm local time. The flight took approximately 10 minutes to arrive on scene, as the scene was approximately 15 miles from base. As they arrived on scene, they observed two civilian medevac helicopters, navy blue in color, (possibly EC 135's but not sure) were shut down at the Craig Craft airstrip approximately 1 to 2 miles from the scene. They decided to land at the airstrip to find out what the situation was. They then departed from the airstrip and located crash site. By the time they located the scene, first responders were on scene and no smoke was observed at the crash site.

# XProtect Smart Client Surveillance Report

## Surveillance Report



<b>Camera Name:</b>	[ER PKG Ramp Helo Pad] Camera 124
<b>Image Capture Time:</b>	Friday, September 08, 2017 10:57:44 AM
<b>Report Print Time:</b>	Sunday, September 10, 2017 10:04:30 AM
<b>User:</b>	security
<b>User's Note:</b>	

ERA17FA316

Witness Re-interviews for IWI, 29 November 2017

By: Cory Cummins, Carl Schultheisz and Seth Buttner

Notes

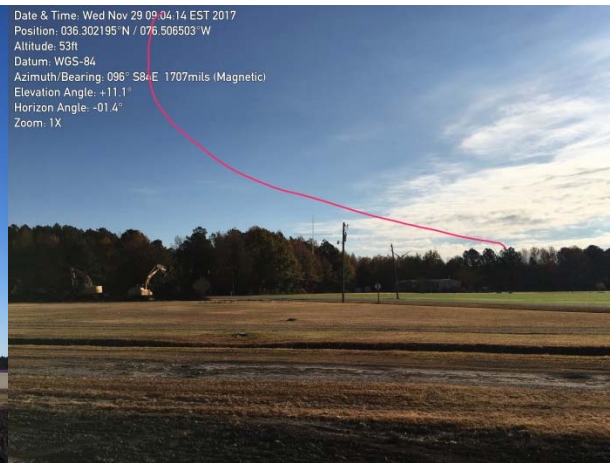
09:00, Mr. **William Layne**, (at his residence on Upriver Rd.) Phone: ( [REDACTED] )

**Location: 36°18'7.76"N 76°30'24.41"W**

**Two annotated photographs were taken**

Mr. Layne stated he saw the helicopter coming from the direction of Scott's Store (northwest of his location). He did not see any smoke until it passed by, then saw blueish colored smoke trailing from the helicopter "like a jet makes". It sounded like the helicopter was "dying out" – not a normal jet engine sound (Mr. Layne has worked with helicopters in the past)

It was descending while coming over the top of his location in a left turn, coming over top of his position (as he was in the field in front of his house, picking sweet potatoes), it sounded like it was "dying out" (repeated description). When it was over the trees to the southeast of his location, it made an abrupt right turn as it appeared to also descend, but it didn't look like it was "falling out of the sky." He lost sight of it between two of the wind turbines behind (southeast of) the tree line. He heard a "thud", then saw black smoke near the rightmost wind turbine.



Additional comments:

- While at the hospital recently, one of the nurses there told Mr. Layne that when the helicopter took off, "it did a double take", that it lifted then set back down.
- Mr. Layne was interviewed recently by a Ms. Valerie Summer, Private Investigations Services. (Business card was photographed)

09:34, Mr. **Zach Winslow**, (at Scott's Store on Sandy Cross Rd.) Phone: ( [REDACTED] )

**Location: 36°19'28.64"N 76°29'59.13"W**

**Two annotated photographs were taken**

Mr. Winslow stated that the helicopter was heading westerly, and that its left (southerly) turn "caught his attention". Mr. Winslow is a private pilot and likes watching airplanes and helicopters. He followed it as it approached his position on the loading dock of the store. He estimated its altitude at 1500-2000 feet AGL. He assumed that the helicopter was heading toward Craft Airstrip. He observed that it was in a gradual descent. He did not see any smoke coming from the helicopter.



Additional comments:

- Mr. Winslow was also contacted by a Ms. Valerie Summer, Private Investigations Services. However, he said he never met or spoke with her.

10:13, Mr. **Matt Floyd**, (at the field where he observed the helicopter crash site.) Phone: ( [REDACTED] )

**Location: 36°16'35.20"N 76°29'12.60"W**

**One photograph was taken (no annotation required)**

Mr. Floyd was blowing off a combine with an air hose. He was facing the combine, with his back toward the crash site. He heard a noise "like a cartoon helicopter", but did not see the helicopter. He heard the (cartoon like spiraling) noise just before he heard a "boom" (the crash), he turned around and saw black smoke rising from near a wind turbine to the north of his location. He asked another person (Mike) at the combine if that was a helicopter, who told him "yes", that it had gone down. Mr. Floyd then called 911 and made his way toward the crash site. He heard several explosions, assuming they were oxygen tanks exploding, and black smoke. He stopped at a gate, near a cedar tree, where he met Mr. Jordan, who was on the other side of the gate and unable to get through. They were trying to direct fire and EMS to the location. Mr. Floyd did not take photos of the scene.

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3:30, Mr. **Glen Cunningham**; (at road side where he pulled over) Phone: [REDACTED] )

**Location: 36°17'37.59"N 76°30'25.83"W**

**One annotated photograph was taken**

Former AMP Mechanic (C130 experience) who is now a building and windmill inspector. He said he had experience with other airplane and helicopter accidents. He works out of an office near the Perquimans County Sheriff's Office. He had not been interviewed before November 29, 2017 at approximately 3:30 pm. The interview took place on Sandy Cross Road, a mile or two north of Swamp Road. He was not sure if it was the exact location where he had seen the accident.

Mr. Cunningham was driving south on Sandy Cross Road toward Swamp Road when he saw the helicopter. He reported it was hovering near to a windmill just above, or at approximately the same altitude, as the tip of a blade straight up from the windmill tower, which Mr. Cunningham stated was 300 feet. He thought maybe the helicopter was involved in some kind of windmill inspection and stopped to observe. He said the helicopter was facing him (he could not see its livery) and hovering. He said it hovered for about 10 seconds, and then dropped straight down. He said it dropped quickly. As it dropped he saw a narrow plume of black smoke come out the top of the helicopter. After the impact he saw the smoke from the post-impact fire rising from the site.

He said that the altitude where he first observed the helicopter would be too low for autorotation. He also was certain that the crash was not survivable.

He said that the windmills were rotating on the day of the accident at about the same speed as on the day of the interview. He said that the windmills are intentionally limited so they would not rotate faster. The windmills were estimated to be rotating at about 8 rpm.

After the crash, he attempted to gain access to the crash site and assist. A law enforcement officer took his name and number.



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5:30, **Matt White**, (at front of fathers business, R.P.'s Wrecker Service), Phone: ( [REDACTED] )

**Location: 36°17'57.01"N 76°30'24.26"W**

**No photograph was taken**

Phone call reply only: Mr. White said he was working in this dads shop and heard a helicopter he stepped outside the front of the garage door (west side) and saw it overhead for about 2 seconds. He saw a little bit of a blueish colored smoke coming from the helicopter. The said the helicopter was traveling towards the back right corner of the shop (northwest to southeast). He said it was a normal speed.

Mr. R.P. White, (father of Matt White), said he paid little, to no attention, to the helicopter; his 4 year old granddaughter said, "look grandpa a helicopter", to which he looked up for about one second and said "Yup, that's a helicopter". There was no other recollection.

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Mr. **Robert Dozier** (at his cousin's residence on Upriver Rd.) Phone: ( [REDACTED] )

**Location: 36°18'7.76"N 76°30'24.41"W**

**No photographs were taken**

Phone call reply only: Mr. Dozier is Mr. Layne's cousin who was out picking potatoes with him at the time of the accident. Contacted by phone but said he was sick with the flu and unable to talk, or meet with the investigative team.