



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Oakland, Florida	Accident Number:	ERA22LA209
Date & Time:	April 26, 2022, 19:00 Local	Registration:	N281SP
Aircraft:	GARLICK HELICOPTERS INC OH-58A+	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)	Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

The pilot of the helicopter was performing aerial application operations and had sprayed one load early that morning, then returned for his second load. While on the ground, operations were halted because another company helicopter had crashed into the water they were conducting operations over. Following that accident, a safety briefing was held with the pilots, and they were instructed to maintain constant communications with the loader truck. They resumed spray operations and later that afternoon the pilot noted that it was difficult to judge his height above the water and advised another company pilot via radio of that fact. He further described that the water was “like a mirror,” which hampered his depth perception. Later that evening, during a final application pass while he was looking down at the GPS, the helicopter impacted the water. The helicopter’s fuselage, main, and tail rotor blades were substantially damaged during the impact. Following the accident the pilot indicated that there were no mechanical deficiencies of the helicopter that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot’s decision to continue the low-altitude aerial application flight over water conditions that degraded his depth perception, which resulted in an inadvertent collision with the water.

Findings

Personnel issues	Decision making/judgment - Pilot
Aircraft	Altitude - Not attained/maintained
Environmental issues	Water - Effect on personnel
Personnel issues	Visual illusion/disorientation - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT) (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Private	Age:	54, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	September 4, 2021
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	September 3, 2021
Flight Time:	16835 hours (Total, all aircraft), 16835 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	GARLICK HELICOPTERS INC	Registration:	N281SP
Model/Series:	OH-58A+ NO SERIES	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	1973	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	73-21912
Landing Gear Type:	High skid	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 22, 2022 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3200 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	7 Hrs	Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	9041 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Rolls-Royce
ELT:	C126 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	T63-A-720
Registered Owner:	COASTAL AIR SERVICE INC	Rated Power:	420 Horsepower
Operator:	COASTAL AIR SERVICE INC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Agricultural aircraft (137)

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KORL,112 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	16 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	18:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	95°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	11 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:	100°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.07 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	28°C / 17°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Oakland, FL	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Oakland, FL	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	28.56966,-81.64492

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Monville, Timothy
Additional Participating Persons:	Michael Loehlein; FAA/FSDO; Orlando, FL
Original Publish Date:	October 13, 2022
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=105009

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).