



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	FT. GRANT, Arizona	Accident Number:	LAX92FA136
Date & Time:	March 4, 1992, 19:15 Local	Registration:	N350AH
Aircraft:	AEROSPATIALE AS-350D	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Fatal, 1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Other work use		

Analysis

AFTER RECEIVING THE REQUEST FOR A MEDICAL EVACUATION MISSION, THE CREW CHECKED WEATHER WITH AN FAA FSS TO DETERMINE IF THE MISSION WOULD BE ACCEPTED. GROUND CLUTTER ON THE WEATHER RADAR PREVENTED A COMPLETE WEATHER BRIEF FOR ENROUTE MOUNTAINOUS AREAS. THE PILOT GOT WEATHER FOR HIS DEPARTURE POINT. THE PILOT TOLD FSS '...I THINK I CAN MEANDER MY WAY THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS ON THAT ONE.' THE PILOT ACCEPTED THE MISSION. AFTER TAKEOFF THE PILOT WAS TOLD BY FAA DEPARTURE CONTROL THERE WAS 'WEATHER' ON HIS ROUTE OF FLIGHT 'BUT THE INTENSITY IS UNKNOWN.' RADAR SERVICE WAS TERMINATED AND THE CREW CONTINUED. THE SURVIVING CREWMEMBER STATED THAT AS THE FLIGHT PROGRESSED, EVERYTHING GOT 'BLACK.' HE SAID HE COULD NOT SEE OUTSIDE THE AIRCRAFT. HE SAID ABOUT 5 MINUTES BEFORE THE CRASH, THE PILOT TOLD THE CREW '...WE ARE GOING INADVERTENT.' MEANING, THEY WERE GOING INTO THE CLOUDS AND HE WOULD BE FLYING BY INSTRUMENTS. THE SURVIVOR SAID HE HEARD THE 'ALTITUDE BUZZER,' FOLLOWED BY THE IMPACT.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: 1) THE PILOT INADEQUATELY EVALUATING THE ENROUTE WEATHER CONDITIONS, AND, 2) THE PILOT MAKING THE INFLIGHT DECISION TO CONTINUE VFR FLIGHT INTO ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS. FACTORS IN THIS ACCIDENT WERE THE INABILITY OF THE PILOT TO SEE THE MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN DUE TO THE AMBIENT LIGHT CONDITIONS, CLOUDS, AND SNOW.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

Findings

1. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - CLOUDS
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - SNOW
4. (C) WEATHER EVALUATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - POOR - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - ATTEMPTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
7. TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport	Age:	32, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	July 24, 1991
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	5750 hours (Total, all aircraft), 250 hours (Total, this make and model), 5700 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	AEROSPATIALE	Registration:	N350AH
Model/Series:	AS-350D AS-350D	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	1478
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	February 7, 1992 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	4300 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	34 Hrs	Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	2183 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, activated, aided in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	LTS 101-600A3
Registered Owner:	DON REDMAN	Rated Power:	615 Horsepower
Operator:	SOUTHWEST HELICOPTERS	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand air taxi (135)
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	EJYA

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument (IMC)	Condition of Light:	Night/dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - None - Snow		
Departure Point:	TUCSON , AZ (38E)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Company VFR
Destination:	SAFFORD , AZ (NONE)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	18:35 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	2 Fatal, 1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Fatal, 1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	32.430171,-109.880882(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Childress, Richard
Additional Participating Persons:	WAYNE MCKINNEY; SCOTTSDALE , AZ MAC CHILDERS; SCOTTSDALE , AZ G. E SEMPREBON; STRATFORD , CT DEL LIVINGSTON; GRAND PRAIRIE , TX
Original Publish Date:	July 26, 1993
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=27409

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