



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	Stonesboro, South Carolina	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ATL00LA043
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	April 20, 2000, 09:00 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N9762C
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Hiller UH-12ET	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	1 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 137: Agricultural		

## Analysis

The pilot had completed two spray runs and was on the third operation when he experienced a total loss of engine power. The pilot explained that, the truck used to support the spraying operation had been driven into a ditch and he was distracted by the truck driver's problem, and neglected to refuel the helicopter. Moments later, the engine lost power after the helicopter ran out of fuel. The pilot selected an area for a forced landing. During the final approach to touchdown, the tail rotor assembly collided with a tree. The subsequent examination of the helicopter disclosed that there was only a trace of fuel in the fuel tanks. The pilot did not report a mechanical problem with the helicopter before the total loss of engine power.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's improper inflight decision not to refuel which resulted in fuel exhaustion and a total loss of engine power.

### Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER(TOTAL) - NONMECHANICAL  
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING - AERIAL APPLICATION

#### Findings

1. (C) FLUID,FUEL - EXHAUSTION
2. (C) REFUELING - NOT PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND

3. (C) PLANNING/DECISION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND

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Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

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Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Findings

4. (F) OBJECT - TREE(S)

## Factual Information

On April 20, 2000, at 0900 eastern daylight time, a Hiller UH-12 helicopter, collided with trees while attempting an autorotation near Stonesboro, South Carolina. The aerial application flight was operated by the pilot under the provisions of Title 14 CFR Part 137 with no flight plan filed. The helicopter sustained substantial damage, and the commercial pilot was not injured. The flight initially departed the staging area in Stonesboro, South Carolina, at approximately 0830.

The pilot reported that he had completed two spray runs and was on the third operation when he experienced a loss of engine power. The pilot explained that, the truck used to support the spraying operation had been driven into a ditch and he was distracted by the truck driver's problem, and neglected to refuel the helicopter. Moments later, the engine loss power after the helicopter "ran out of fuel". The pilot selected an area for a forced landing. The pilot reported that, he entered an autorotative descent for the forced landing. During the final approach to the touchdown point, the tail rotor assembly collided with a tree.

The subsequent examination of the helicopter disclosed that there was only a trace of fuel in the fuel tanks. The pilot did not report a mechanical problem with the helicopter before the total loss of engine power. No mechanical malfunction or component failure with the helicopter was discovered during the post-accident examination.

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	49, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Center
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	February 28, 2000
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	Yes	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	June 20, 1999
<b>Flight Time:</b>	17500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 3500 hours (Total, this make and model), 16900 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 100 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 30 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Hiller	<b>Registration:</b>	N9762C
<b>Model/Series:</b>	UH-12ET	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Helicopter
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Restricted (Special)	<b>Serial Number:</b>	2159
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Skid	<b>Seats:</b>	1
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	2750 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	1 Turbo shaft
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	8500 Hrs	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Allison
<b>ELT:</b>	Not installed	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	C-250-20B
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	H&M Aircraft Leasing	<b>Rated Power:</b>	420 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	Henry Haddock	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	CAE,236 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	20 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	10:56 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	270°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	5 knots /	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	160°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30.06 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	21°C / 14°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Stonesboro, SC	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>		<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	08:30 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	33.938888,-81.119445

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Powell, Phillip
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	Bob Jenkins; South Carolina FSDO
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	September 30, 2003
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=49013">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=49013</a>

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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](#).