



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	HUNTSVILLE, Alabama	Accident Number:	ATL87LA222
Date & Time:	July 23, 1987, 17:35 Local	Registration:	N972B
Aircraft:	BELL 47G-2	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Aerial observation		

Analysis

THE HELICOPTER IMPACTED THE WATER DURING A LOW-ALTITUDE TURN OVER A RIVER. THE PLT MADE A LOW PASS TO THE SOUTH OVER AN ISLAND AT ABOUT 30 FT AGL, TO SHOW THE ISLAND TO THE POLICEWOMAN/TRAFFIC OBSERVER ONBOARD. AS HE WAS MAKING A CLIMBING RIGHT TURN AT ABOUT 40 KTS IAS TO PASS BACK OVER THE ISLAND, THE ACFT ROLLED EXCESSIVELY IN THE DIRECTION OF TURN AND THE NOSE BEGAN TO 'TUCK'. HE ATTEMPTED TO CORRECT THE SITUATION BY APPLYING OPPOSITE CYCLIC ONLY. HE DID NOT INCREASE THE PWR OR ADD COLLECTIVE PITCH. HE DID NOT REMEMBER IF HE USED ANY LEFT PEDAL TO ASSIST IN COUNTERACTING THE EXCESSIVE TURNING. THE ACFT IMPACTED THE WATER IN A SLIGHT, RIGHT BANK ATTITUDE, WITH THE NOSE LOW. THE PLT REPORTED THAT THE ENGINE AND MAIN ROTOR RPM'S REMAINED 'IN THE GREEN' DURING THE MANEUVER.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING - TURN TO REVERSE DIRECTION

Findings

1. TERRAIN CONDITION - WATER
2. (C) LOW PASS - PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) OSTENTATIOUS DISPLAY - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (C) DESCENT - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (C) CLEARANCE - MISJUDGED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	38, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	December 18, 1986
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	5600 hours (Total, all aircraft), 800 hours (Total, this make and model), 200 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	BELL	Registration:	N972B
Model/Series:	47G-2 47G-2	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	1320
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	February 6, 1987 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2450 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	56 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4591 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	VO-435
Registered Owner:	LOGAN J. LANIER	Rated Power:	200 Horsepower
Operator:	JOHN L. LANIER	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:	VALLEY FLYING SERVICE	Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	HSV ,630 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	3 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	17:47 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	315°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 10000 ft AGL	Visibility	15 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 25000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	7 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	350°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	28°C / 22°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	16:45 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

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

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Strickland, Scott
Additional Participating Persons:	JOHN R HARDY; BIRMINGHAM , AL
Original Publish Date:	April 24, 1989
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=7492

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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](#).