



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Shreveport, Louisiana	Accident Number:	CEN14LA048
Date & Time:	November 9, 2013, 12:45 Local	Registration:	N911KB
Aircraft:	EUROCOPTER DEUTSCHLAND GMBH EC135P1	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control in flight	Injuries:	3 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Flight test		

Analysis

The helicopter departed on a local maintenance test flight to perform a hover test. The pilot flew the helicopter toward a nearby field to perform the test and then heard a "pop," and the helicopter subsequently began to spin. The pilot attempted to regain control of the helicopter using the antitorque pedals, but they were ineffective. The pilot reduced engine power and performed an autorotation to the field. The helicopter landed hard and rolled on its right side.

Examination of the wreckage found that the antitorque pedals had separated from the antitorque levers. The attachment hardware was not located in the wreckage or the surrounding area. Neither the antitorque pedals nor the lever attachment holes displayed elongation, which is consistent with the hardware bolts not being in place at the time of impact. A review of maintenance logbooks revealed that a mechanic had conducted maintenance on the antitorque pedals 9 days before the accident flight. After the accident, a parts bag containing bolts similar to the bolts needed to secure the antitorque pedals was found in the maintenance facility where the maintenance was performed. Based on the evidence, it is likely that the mechanic reinstalled the antitorque pedals without the required attachment hardware, which allowed the antitorque pedals to separate from the antitorque levers during flight and led to the loss of helicopter control.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The mechanic's improper installation of the antitorque pedals, which resulted in an in-flight loss of helicopter control.

Findings

Personnel issues	Installation - Maintenance personnel
Aircraft	(general) - Incorrect service/maintenance
Aircraft	(general) - Attain/maintain not possible

Factual Information

History of Flight

Prior to flight	Aircraft maintenance event
Maneuvering	Loss of control in flight (Defining event)

On November 9, 2013, about 1245 central standard time, a Eurocopter Deutschland GMBH EC135P1 helicopter, N911KB, impacted terrain near Shreveport, Louisiana. The commercial pilot and two company mechanics sustained minor injuries and the helicopter was substantially damaged. The helicopter was registered to and operated by Metro Aviation Inc., under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 as a maintenance test flight. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the flight, which operated without a flight plan. The local flight was originating from the company's facility in Shreveport, Louisiana.

The helicopter had recently undergone maintenance inspections at a company maintenance facility. The day prior to the accident several ground runs were performed on the helicopter in order to track and balance the rotor system and to check the parameters of the number 2 engine. The crew for the maintenance flight consisted of one pilot and two aviation mechanics. The pilot preflighted the helicopter and performed several ground runs. The helicopter was refueled, preflighted again, and the pilot completed a hover test in an adjacent field which was separated by a chain link fence. The hover test was completed without incident and the pilot landed the helicopter back at the maintenance facility. After maintenance personnel made adjustments to the rotor system another hover test needed to be accomplished. The pilot once again preflighted the helicopter and the crew began another hover test. The helicopter was brought to a hover and climbed to about 20 feet above ground level and proceed to overfly a chain link fence towards the adjacent field. When the helicopter was abeam to fence the pilot heard a "pop" and the helicopter began a rapid spin. Directional control of the helicopter was lost and the pilot attempted to regain control by using the anti-torque pedals but he found them ineffective. The pilot was not able to regain control of the helicopter and he reduced the engine throttle for an autorotation. The helicopter descended, landed, rolled, and came to rest on its right side.

A security surveillance camera recorded a portion of the accident sequence. The helicopter was observed to lift into a hover, climb and rotate counterclockwise about 90 degrees before heading towards the chain link fence. As the helicopter exited the camera's field of view the helicopter began a rapid counterclockwise turn.

An examination of the helicopter was conducted by the Federal Aviation Administration with assistance from the airframe manufacturer. Crushing damage was observed on the right, lower, and aft sections of the airframe consistent with a nose high/tail low impact. Cyclic and collective control continuity was established from the controls to the main rotor swashplate. Both anti-torque pedals were found near the wreckage, unattached from their respective attachment levers. None of the attachment hardware was found in the wreckage or in the vicinity of the accident. There was no visible elongation of the pedal bolt holes or the holes on the attachment levers. Tail rotor control continuity was established from the anti-torque pedal levers through to the tail rotor pitch change mechanism. No other preimpact anomalies

were detected with the airframe. The engine's Data Collection Unit (DCU) and Engine Electronic Control (EEC) were removed and sent to Pratt & Whitney Canada for data download. Examination of the devices found no fault codes recorded during the accident flight which would indicate an engine malfunction.

A teardown for the right engine found that all the power turbine (PT) blades fractured at the airfoil pocket. The PT shaft showed strong circumferential rubbing. The left engine remained as a training device for hot section inspection until other damage was detected. The left engine was examined and found that all PT blades had fractured in overload. Evidence of significant plastic deformation and secondary cracks, parallel to the fracture, were also visible. Visual examination of the PT shaft showed significant wear consistent with rubbing against an adjacent component. Signatures of frictional heat were also detected. The compressor turbine (CT) disk displayed circumferential rubbing in the inner bore diameter at the same location where the PT shaft had fractured.

The transmission was removed from the helicopter and examined. The examination did not reveal any preimpact anomalies.

A review of the helicopter's log book found an entry dated October 31, 2013, that a mechanic performed the action "disassemble, inspect, and reassemble tail rotor pedals". According to a statement provided by the company's director of maintenance, after the accident a search of the area maintenance area was conducted. Near the area where the helicopter was previously repaired, a small parts bag was found tied to the tail rotor control cable that had been replaced. Inside of the bag were bolts similar to the bolts used to secure the anti-torque pedals.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	41
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	September 9, 2013
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	August 24, 2013
Flight Time:	4245 hours (Total, all aircraft), 456 hours (Total, this make and model), 3788 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 52 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 16 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	EUROCOPTER DEUTSCHLAND GMBH	Registration:	N911KB
Model/Series:	EC135P1	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	1997	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	0013
Landing Gear Type:	N/A; Skid	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	October 28, 2013 AAIP	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	5997 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	0 Hrs	Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	9430 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	P&W CANADA
ELT:	C126 installed	Engine Model/Series:	PW206B
Registered Owner:	METRO AVIATION INC	Rated Power:	621 Horsepower
Operator:	METRO AVIATION INC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand air taxi (135)
Operator Does Business As:	METRO AVIATION INC	Operator Designator Code:	HDNA

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KGGG,373 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	9 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	12:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	165°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Thin Overcast / 10000 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 10000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	160°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.2 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	15°C / 7°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Shreveport, LA	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Shreveport, LA	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	12:27 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	3 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	32.512866,-93.75749

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Aguilera, Jason
Additional Participating Persons:	Keith Kibodeaux; FAA; Baton Rouge, LA
Original Publish Date:	September 8, 2015
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=88414

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](#).