
 National Transportation Safety Board FACTUAL REPORT AVIATION		NTSB ID: FTW03LA163		Aircraft Registration Number: N7188K	
		Occurrence Date: 05/29/2003		Most Critical Injury: Fatal	
		Occurrence Type: Accident		Investigated By: NTSB	
Location/Time					
Nearest City/Place Brazos Blk 532	State GM	Zip Code 00000	Local Time 0400	Time Zone CDT	
Airport Proximity: Off Airport/Airstrip		Distance From Landing Facility:			
Aircraft Information Summary					
Aircraft Manufacturer Robinson		Model/Series R44		Type of Aircraft Helicopter	
Revenue Sightseeing Flight: No			Air Medical Transport Flight: No		
Narrative					
<p>Brief narrative statement of facts, conditions and circumstances pertinent to the accident/incident:</p> <p>HISTORY OF FLIGHT</p> <p>On May 29, 2003, approximately 0400 central daylight time, a Robinson R44 single-engine helicopter, N7188K, was destroyed when it impacted the water near Brazos Block 532, in the Gulf of Mexico. The airline transport rated pilot, who was the sole occupant, sustained fatal injuries. The helicopter was registered to and operated by Tarlton Helicopters, Inc., Houston, Texas. Dark night visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and a company flight plan was filed for the 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 135 non-scheduled, on-demand air cargo flight. The flight departed the William P. Hobby Airport (HOU), near Houston, at 0320, and was destined for an offshore platform located at the Mustang Island Area East Addition, Block A-133, in the Gulf of Mexico.</p> <p>According to the operator, the 73-year-old pilot departed HOU with a load of parts needed at an offshore platform. The pilot estimated an en-route time of 1 hour and 30 minutes to complete the 70 nautical mile flight, and estimated a total fuel on board of 2 hours and 30 minutes. After the pilot was reported missing, a search was initiated.</p> <p>On May 29, 2003, approximately 1100, the body of the pilot and debris from the helicopter were located by the U.S. Coast Guard, at 28 degrees 19.15 minutes north latitude, and 95 degrees 56.2 minutes west longitude. The ocean depth in the vicinity of the debris field was estimated to average from 100 to 120 feet. According to a Federal Aviation Administrator (FAA) inspector, the debris that was located included two skid float assemblies, cushions, and miscellaneous items. The helicopter was not recovered and is presumed destroyed.</p> <p>PERSONNEL INFORMATION</p> <p>A review of the FAA records revealed the pilot held an airline transport pilot certificate with rotorcraft-helicopter and airplane single-engine land ratings, and he also held a commercial certificate with airplane single-engine sea and airplane multi-engine land ratings. The pilot was issued a second class medical certificate on October 8, 2002, with a limitation for wearing corrective lenses. The certificate was not valid for any class after October 30, 2003.</p> <p>The operator reported the pilot had accumulated a total of approximately 15,000 hours in all aircraft, 7,500 hours in rotorcraft, and 107 hours in the make and model of the accident helicopter. The pilot had flown approximately 2 hours in the previous 90 days.</p> <p>AIRCRAFT INFORMATION</p> <p>The 2001 model Robinson R44 Clipper, serial number 1073, was powered by a six-cylinder Lycoming O-540-F1B5 (serial number L-25926-40A) engine, normally rated at 260 horsepower. The helicopter was equipped with a global positioning system (GPS) receiver.</p>					
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Narrative (Continued)

The operator reported the airframe and engine had accumulated approximately 730 total hours. The helicopter flight manual and helicopter maintenance records were aboard the helicopter and not recovered. The date and type of the most recent continuous airworthiness inspection was not determined.

METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

At 0253, the HOU Automated Surface Observing System (ASOS), located on-shore approximately 40 nautical miles northeast of the debris field, reported the wind from 240 degrees at 3 knots, 10 statute miles visibility, sky clear, temperature 66 degrees Fahrenheit, dew point 61 degrees Fahrenheit, and an altimeter setting of 30.03 inches of mercury.


At 0353, the Palacios (PSX) ASOS, Palacios, Texas, located on-shore approximately 15 nautical miles northwest of the debris field, reported the wind from 280 degrees at 3 knots, 8 statute miles visibility, sky clear, temperature 70 degrees Fahrenheit, dew point 66 degrees Fahrenheit, and an altimeter setting of 30.03 inches of mercury.


The U.S. Naval Observatory reported the moonrise was at 0528.


PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

An autopsy was performed on the pilot by the deputy medical examiner, Office of the Medical Examiner of Travis County Forensic Center, Austin, Texas, on May 30, 2003, and specimens were retained for toxicological analysis by the FAA's Civil Aeromedical Institute's (CAMI) Forensic and Accident Research Center. According to the autopsy report, "[the pilot] died as a result of multiple traumatic injuries sustained in a helicopter accident."

The results of the toxicological test were negative for alcohol and all screened drug substances.

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Landing Facility/Approach Information					
Airport Name	Airport ID:	Airport Elevation Ft. MSL	Runway Used	Runway Length	Runway Width
Runway Surface Type: Unknown					
Runway Surface Condition: Unknown					
Approach/Arrival Flown: Unknown					
VFR Approach/Landing: Unknown					
Aircraft Information					
Aircraft Manufacturer Robinson		Model/Series R44		Serial Number 1073	
Airworthiness Certificate(s): Normal					
Landing Gear Type: Skid					
Amateur Built Acft? No	Number of Seats: 4	Certified Max Gross Wt. 2400 LBS		Number of Engines: 1	
Engine Type: Reciprocating	Engine Manufacturer: Lycoming		Model/Series: O-540-F1B5		Rated Power: 260 HP
- Aircraft Inspection Information					
Type of Last Inspection Continuous Airworthiness	Date of Last Inspection	Time Since Last Inspection 50 Hours		Airframe Total Time 730 Hours	
- Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) Information					
ELT Installed?/Type No		ELT Operated? No	ELT Aided in Locating Accident Site? No		
Owner/Operator Information					
Registered Aircraft Owner Tarlton Helicopters, Inc.		Street Address 3000 Wesleyan St. Ste 320			
		City Houston	State TX	Zip Code 77027	
Operator of Aircraft Tarlton Helicopters, Inc.		Street Address 3000 Wesleyan St. Ste 320			
		City Houston	State TX	Zip Code 77027	
Operator Does Business As:			Operator Designator Code: GVTA		
- Type of U.S. Certificate(s) Held:					
Air Carrier Operating Certificate(s): On-demand Air Taxi					
Operating Certificate:			Operator Certificate:		
Regulation Flight Conducted Under: Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter					
Type of Flight Operation Conducted: Non-scheduled; Domestic; Cargo					
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First Pilot Information																																																																																													
Name		City		State	Date of Birth	Age																																																																																							
On File		On File		On File	On File	73																																																																																							
Sex: M	Seat Occupied: Right	Occupational Pilot? Civilian Pilot		Certificate Number: On File																																																																																									
Certificate(s): Airline Transport																																																																																													
Airplane Rating(s): Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land; Single-engine Sea																																																																																													
Rotorcraft/Glider/LTA: Helicopter																																																																																													
Instrument Rating(s): Airplane; Helicopter																																																																																													
Instructor Rating(s): Airplane Multi-engine; Airplane Single-engine; Helicopter; Instrument Airplane; Instrument Helicopter																																																																																													
Current Biennial Flight Review? 05/2003																																																																																													
Medical Cert.: Class 2		Medical Cert. Status: Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.		Date of Last Medical Exam: 10/2002																																																																																									
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>- Flight Time Matrix</th> <th>All A/C</th> <th>This Make and Model</th> <th>Airplane Single Engine</th> <th>Airplane Multi-Engine</th> <th>Night</th> <th colspan="2">Instrument Actual Simulated</th> <th>Rotorcraft</th> <th>Glider</th> <th>Lighter Than Air</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Total Time</td> <td>15000</td> <td>107</td> <td>500</td> <td>1500</td> <td>2000</td> <td>1025</td> <td></td> <td>7500</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pilot In Command(PIC)</td> <td>15000</td> <td>107</td> <td>500</td> <td>1500</td> <td>2000</td> <td>1025</td> <td></td> <td>7500</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Instructor</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Instruction Received</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Last 90 Days</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Last 30 Days</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Last 24 Hours</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						- Flight Time Matrix	All A/C	This Make and Model	Airplane Single Engine	Airplane Multi-Engine	Night	Instrument Actual Simulated		Rotorcraft	Glider	Lighter Than Air	Total Time	15000	107	500	1500	2000	1025		7500			Pilot In Command(PIC)	15000	107	500	1500	2000	1025		7500			Instructor											Instruction Received											Last 90 Days					2						Last 30 Days					2						Last 24 Hours					1					
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Seatbelt Used? Yes		Shoulder Harness Used? Yes		Toxicology Performed? Yes		Second Pilot? No																																																																																							
Flight Plan/Itinerary																																																																																													
Type of Flight Plan Filed: Company VFR																																																																																													
Departure Point		State		Airport Identifier	Departure Time	Time Zone																																																																																							
Houston		TX		HOU	0320	CDT																																																																																							
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Type of Clearance: VFR																																																																																													
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Weather Information					
WOF ID	Observation Time	Time Zone	WOF Elevation	WOF Distance From Accident Site	Direction From Accident Site
PSX	0353	CST	15 Ft. MSL	15 NM	315 Deg. Mag.
Sky/Lowest Cloud Condition: Clear				Ft. AGL	Condition of Light: Night/Dark
Lowest Ceiling: None			Ft. AGL	Visibility: 8 SM	Altimeter: 30.03 "Hg
Temperature: 21 °C		Dew Point: 19 °C		Weather Conditions at Accident Site: Visual Conditions	
Wind Direction: 280		Wind Speed: 3		Wind Gusts:	
Visibility (RVR): Ft.		Visibility (RVV) SM			
Precip and/or Obscuration:					

Accident Information					
Aircraft Damage: Destroyed		Aircraft Fire: None		Aircraft Explosion: None	

- Injury Summary Matrix	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None	TOTAL
First Pilot	1				1
Second Pilot					
Student Pilot					
Flight Instructor					
Check Pilot					
Flight Engineer					
Cabin Attendants					
Other Crew					
Passengers					
- TOTAL ABOARD -	1				1
Other Ground					
- GRAND TOTAL -	1				1

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Administrative Information		
Investigator-In-Charge (IIC) Aaron M. Sauer		
Additional Persons Participating in This Accident/Incident Investigation: Tom L Schmitt Federal Aviation Administration Houston, TX		
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