

Accidents in Brief Compiled and edited by Jessica A. Salerno

Selected Accidents and Incidents in December 2010

The following NTSB information is preliminary.

► **Dec. 31, 2010** — At about 1426 EST, a **Eurocopter EC-135-P2 (N312PH)**, operated by Petroleum Helicopters Inc. as AirCare 5, and a Cessna 172H (N2876L) collided in midair approximately one-half mile northwest of the Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport (SHD), Weyers Cave, Va. The Cessna airplane departed controlled flight after the right wing separated, and the airplane was destroyed by impact forces at ground contact. The helicopter sustained minor damage and landed safely at SHD. The commercial pilot and passenger onboard the Cessna were killed. The commercial pilot and two medical crewmembers onboard the helicopter were not injured. It was VFR for the airplane's local personal flight that originated from SHD at 1402 and for the helicopter's positioning flight that originated from the University of Virginia Medical Center (BVA5), Charlottesville, Va., about 1410. A company flight plan was filed for the helicopter positioning flight, and no flight plan was filed for the airplane flight.

All three crewmembers aboard the helicopter were interviewed at the scene, and their statements were consistent throughout. They described departing BVA5 after completing a patient drop-off, crossing "the ridgeline" at 4,500 ft., and approaching SHD from the east. They each described monitoring the Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF),

largely consistent throughout. Most described the aircraft in level flight, with some differences as to whether the helicopter was on the airplane's left, or right. Both aircraft were described as being "lower than usual," "awfully close," "almost even . . . next to each other." Consistently, witnesses described the helicopter as it overtook the airplane from behind, "barely touching" the airplane, and then watching as the right wing departed the airplane, and the remainder of the airplane "nose-dived" to ground contact.

Preliminary radar data identified the accident helicopter by its assigned transponder code. The helicopter's ground track and altitudes were consistent with what the crewmembers described. The other radar targets were all depicted with the VFR 1200 transponder code. The number of airplanes that these "VFR targets" represented could not be immediately reconciled.

► **Dec. 30, 2010** — At 0958 CST, a **Piper PA-46-310P (N9103N)** collided with the terrain in Milaca, Minn., after the pilot reported that he had lost the autopilot and was trying to recover from an unusual attitude. The private pilot and a dog on board were fatally injured. The airplane was substantially damaged. The flight was operating in IFR conditions and the pilot had filed and activated an IFR flight plan. The flight departed from the Aitkin Municipal Airport (AIT), Aitkin, Minn., about 0930, en route to Beaumont, Texas.

The pilot was cleared to climb to 17,000 ft. Shortly thereafter he reported to the controller that he had lost the autopilot and was trying to recover from an unusual attitude.

departed Jasper County-Bell Airport (JAS) Jasper, Texas, and was destined for Jackson Hole Airport (JAC), Jackson, Wyo. The owner/pilot and two passengers were fatally injured. Jackson is located about 1,100 mi. northwest of Jasper. The day and time of the accident were unknown. Efforts to determine specific information about the flight, such as the date(s), route and fuel stops, also have been unsuccessful. No flight plan was filed.

No overdue- or missing-aircraft reports regarding the airplane were received. The search for the airplane was prompted by reports of Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) signals received by overflying aircraft. The wreckage was located on a rocky ledge at an elevation of approximately 11,700 ft. On Dec. 25, personnel from the Fremont County Sheriff's Office and the FAA flew by helicopter, and then hiked, to the accident site to document the scene, recover the victims and relevant documentation, and examine the wreckage.

► **Dec. 22, 2010** — At 1159 MST, a **Mooney M20E (N79869)** hit the ground following a missed approach to City of Colorado Springs Municipal Airport (COS), Colorado Springs, Colo. The commercial pilot and one passenger were fatally injured. The originated at Rapid City Regional Airport (RAP), Rapid City, S. D., and the intended destination was COS. IMC prevailed at the time of the accident. An IFR flight plan had been filed. The pilot

and how the announced traffic, two aircraft established in a left-hand traffic pattern for Runway 23, were acquired both visually and on the helicopter's Skywatch Traffic Collision Avoidance Device (TCAD) system. The two crewmembers in the front seats correlated the landing-pattern traffic's announced positions both visually and on the TCAD. The third, aft-seated crewmember visually acquired the landing traffic based on their announced positions. The accident airplane was operating in the airport traffic area, but not in the established traffic pattern.

One flight nurse rode on the left side of the helicopter, behind the copilot's station, and faced aft. She stated that she was aware of two airplanes in the traffic pattern, one on "short final," the second airplane behind, and that the helicopter would be "the third aircraft to land." According to the flight nurse, "I was in the back under sterile cockpit procedures. Everyone was 'eyes-out' looking for traffic. I felt a bump and a shudder and the pilot said, 'What was that?'" She looked out and saw a white rectangle under the helicopter for "less than a millisecond."

All three crewmembers stated that the TCAD did not alert them to the accident airplane. They all described the crew coordination efforts to assess the damage to their aircraft, and the completion of a safe landing.

Witness interviews and written statements provided were

There were witnesses who reported hearing the airplane engine sounds varying. One witness stated he heard the airplane engine "winding up, which I assumed it was in a spiral." He stated that he heard the airplane for 3-5 min. during which time the engine sounds varied as did the direction of travel of the airplane. The sound of the engine revved and stopped so he went out looking for the airplane. He located the airplane in a field approximately 1 mi. from his location.

► **Dec. 27, 2010** — At 1436 MST, a **Cessna C-210B (N200E)** impacted terrain near Carter Lake, Loveland, Colo. The airplane was substantially damaged and the private pilot was fatally injured. No flight plan had been filed. The flight originated at Boulder Municipal Airport (BDU), Boulder, Colo. It was VFR at the time of the accident.

Radar data indicate the airplane departed BDU at 1323 with the airplane transponder code set to 1200. The pilot did not request air traffic control services and was not talking to ATC directly at the time of the accident. At 1434, the pilot reported he was "losing elevator control" on emergency frequency 121.5. He repeated that he was losing elevator control and that he was in the vicinity of Carter Lake prior to the last radar return. The airplane impacted rolling terrain about 1 mi. north and west of the southwest corner of Carter Lake and was substantially damaged by impact forces and post-impact fire.

Dec. 24, 2010 — The wreckage of an **Aero Commander 114B (N799RS)** was located by Civil Air Patrol aerial searchers in the Wind River mountain range, about 20 mi. southwest of Lander, Wyo. Information indicated that the airplane

checked in with COS approach control at 1138 and was given an ILS approach to Runway 17L. The pilot flew one approach and reported going missed approach at 1158:27 and disappeared from radar about 1159. The airplane wreckage was located about 0.1 mi. south of the approach end of Runway 17L and about 400 ft. east of the runway centerline.

While the pilot was speaking to approach controllers during his approach, two commercial aircraft departed COS and reported light icing. The leading edge of both wings exhibited accordion type crushing consistent with a near vertical impact.

► **Dec. 21, 2010** — At about 1300 UCT, a **Bell 206B**, Brazilian registration PR-HQB, during an approach for landing encountered a strong wind gust, impacted the terrain and was substantially damaged in Aracaju, Sergipe, Brazil. The pilot was fatally injured and the passenger sustained minor injuries. The helicopter had departed Aracaju/Aeroclube (SNAU), Sergipe, Brazil, for the local flight.

► **Dec. 19, 2010** — At 1402 UCT, a German-registered **Raytheon Beechcraft Premier I (D-IAYL)** was destroyed upon impact with terrain while maneuvering near Bever, Switzerland. The two pilots were fatally injured. The airplane departed Zagreb Airport (LDZA), Croatia, and was destined for Samedan Airport (LSZS), Switzerland. **BCA**