

TECHNICAL REPORT OF U.S. ARMY

PART III (Continued)

REPORTS CONTROL SYMBOL
CSFOR-5 (R1)

SECTION B - TRAUMA INFORMATION

(Complete on all individuals with physical, psychological or physiological trauma. Give detailed injury description to include exact location and extent. Under Item 4 include equipment failure and phase of accident, if applicable.)

5. AUTOPSY

YES (Report Attached)

NO (Will be forwarded when available)

6. BLOOD OR TISSUE SPECIMENS

YES (Report Attached)

NO (Will be forwarded when available)

SECTION C - FLIGHT SURGEON'S ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

THE FOLLOWING IS THE PROBABLE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS OF THE ACCIDENT ON 2 JULY 1969 INVOLVING UH-1H, SERIAL NUMBER 67-17694.

THE AIRCRAFT WAS ON A TEST FLIGHT AFTER COMPLETION OF A PERIODIC INSPECTION. THE CREW CONSISTED OF CW2 HOLDITCH, THE TEST PILOT; SFC TOVEY, THE MAINTENANCE SERGANT; AND SP4 SCHNEIDER, THE CREWCHIEF. MR. HOLDITCH WAS IN THE PILOT'S SEAT, SFC TOVEY IN THE CO-PILOT'S SEAT, & SP4 SCHNEIDER WAS IN THE CARGO AREA. ALL CREW MEMBERS WERE TAKING MEDICATIONS. FATIGUE MAY HAVE BEEN A FACTOR SINCE THE FLIGHT WAS AT THE END OF THE DAY AND ACCORDING TO A FELLOW OFFICER, MR. HOLDITCH HAS BEEN WORKING LONG HOURS AND HAD SYMPTOMS OF CHRONIC FATIGUE.

ALTHOUGH THE USUAL PERIODIC INSPECTION TAKES THREE DAYS TO COMPLETE, THIS INSPECTION WAS COMPLETED IN ONLY ONE DAY, BUT ALL INSPECTORS CONSIDERED IT ADEQUATE AND NOT RUSHED. NO MAJOR PROBLEMS WERE NOTED DURING THE INSPECTION. IT WAS CONSIDERED BY MANY AS THE BEST UH-1H IN THE TROOP.

THE BIRDCRAFT DEPARTED CHU LAI AT ABOUT 1910, 2 JULY 1969. THE TEMPERATURE WAS 84°F AND VISIBILITY WAS SEVEN MILES. THEY FLEW NORTH UP THE COAST WHICH IS THE USUAL ROUTE FOR THE TEST FLIGHTS. ABOUT THIS TIME THE SUN BEGAN TO GO BELOW THE HORIZON AND VISIBILITY DECREASED. THE INTERIOR LIGHTS WERE THEN TURNED ON TO FULL BRIGHT SINCE DARK ADAPTATION WAS NOT COMPLETE. AFTER TRAVELING FOR SEVERAL MILES NORTH THEY MADE THEIR TURN AND HEADED BACK FOR CHU LAI. AT THIS POINT IT WAS GETTING DARK AND THEY WERE FLYING SOME 200 FEET OFF THE COAST. FATIGUE STARTS TO ENTER THE PICTURE BY SLOWING THE NIGHT ADAPTATION OF MR. HOLDITCH AND MAKING HIM LESS AWARE OF HIS INSTRUMENTS AND FLIGHT PATH. IT IS COMMON OVER WATER AT NIGHT TO LOSE DEPTH PERCEPTION SINCE THERE ARE NO VISUAL REFERENCES, AND I THINK THIS OCCURRED IN THIS ACCIDENT. ALSO OF NOTE IS THAT THE ALTIMETER WAS SET TOO LOW AND THIS WOULD HAVE RESULTED IN THEM FLYING MUCH LOWER THAN USUAL. AS THEY CONTINUED IN THEIR SLOW DESCENT, THE AIRCRAFT CAME CLOSER TO THE WATER WITHOUT THE CREW BEING FULLY AWARE OF THIS. AT AN ALTITUDE OF 20 TO 30 FEET, THE PILOT FINALLY REALIZED THAT HE WAS TOO LOW AND GAVE A SUDDEN PULL BACKWARDS ON THE CYCLIC. THIS DROPPED THE TAIL AND IT STRUCK THE WATER AND BENT THE TAIL BOOM UPWARD. THE TAIL BOOM WAS THEN CUT OFF BY THE MAIN ROTOR BLADE. THE AIRCRAFT CONTINUED FORWARD AND ROLLED AND LANDED ON ITS ROOF. THE DECELERATIVE FORCES CRUSHED THE COCKPIT AREA FROM THE

(CONTINUED ON ATTACHED SHEET)

DATE OF REPORT	FLIGHT SURGEON'S TYPED NAME AND GRADE	SIGNATURE

DA FORM 1 JUN 66 2397-8

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY
REPLACES DA FORM 2397-8, 1 APR 61, WHICH IS OBSOLETE
EFFECTIVE 1 JAN 67

(CONTINUED FROM DA FORM 2397-8)

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

ROOF DOWNWARD AND CAUSED THE TRAUMA TO THE MR. HOLDITCH AND SFC TOVEY. SP4 SCHNIEDER WAS THROWN CLEAR OF THE AIRCRAFT DURING THE ROLLING MOTIONS AND RENDERED UNCONSCIOUS BY THE CONCUSSION HE SUFFERED ON IMPACT WITH THE WATER, BUT DROWNING CAUSED HIS DEATH. MR. HOLDITCH AND SFC TOVEY BOTH EXPERIENCED HIGH DECLERATIVE FORCES BUT SINCE THEY WERE DISTRIBUTED OVER THE ENTIRE BODY THEY WERE WITHIN HUMAN TOLERANCES. I BELIEVE THAT BOTH MEN WERE KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS AND DIED MINUTES LATER OF DROWNING. SINCE THE BODIES WERE NOT EXAMINED BY ME WHILE STILL IN THE AIRCRAFT, A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE INJURIES IS NOT POSSIBLE. MATERIAL FAILURE HAS NOT BEEN RULED OUT COMPLETELY AND CERTAIN COMPONENTS HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED FOR ANALYSIS TO HELP DETERMINE THIS.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

CLOSER MONITORING FOR SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF FATIGUE BY COMMANDERS AT ALL LEVELS. THIS SHOULD INCLUDE NOT ONLY HOURS FLOWN BUT TOTAL HOURS WORKED AND EVEN BEHAVIOR CHANGES.

Lawson E McClung
LAWSON E MC CLUNG
CPT
Flight Surgeon

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