

THE AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT BOARD SHALL SUBMIT THIS REPORT TO THE C.O. OF THE ACTIVITY CONDUCTING THE INVESTIGATION. IT SHALL THEN BE FORWARDED BY THE C.O. IN ACCORDANCE WITH CURRENT AAR INSTRUCTIONS.

1. DATE OF ACCIDENT: 20 April 1953 1720 MST  
2. ACTIVITY SUBMITTING REPORT: NAF LITCHFIELD PARK  
3. AAR SERIAL NO.: 2-53

4. MODEL A/C: HRS-3B 130248  
5. REPORTING CUSTODIAN OF A/C: NAF LITCHFIELD PARK

6. NAME OF UNIT OPERATING THE A/C: AIR TRANSPORT SQUADRON 31 NAS NORFOLK  
7. LOCATION OF ACCIDENT: Green Airway 5, 25 mi. W.N.W. Rodeo Radio in vicinity Hilltop Fan Marker  
8. UNIT TO WHICH OPERATOR ATTACHED: HMR-363  
9. PERSONNEL INVOLVED (including name and injury code of those injured, not occupants of A/C):  

FULL NAME, RANK, SERVICE, FILE NO. (List person in control first)	BILLET	POSITION	INJURY
Robert Randolph Ayers, Jr., LtCol, 010288/USMC	PILOT	Right Seat	B
Lloyd G. Walsh, Major, 026536/USMCR	CO-PILOT	Left Seat	A
Ivan S. Berry, M/Sgt, 308603/USMC	CREW CHIEF	Pass comp	A
John Henry Schweitzer, LtCol, 58114A/USAF	Passenger	Pass comp	B

CO-PILOT EXPERIENCE	TOTAL ALL MODELS	TOTAL THIS MODEL	LAST 12 MONTHS ALL MODELS	LAST 3 MONTHS ALL MODELS	LAST 3 MONTHS THIS MODEL	INSTRUMENT RATE
TOTAL HOURS	1,703.6	77.3	167.4	15.5	10.2	None
INSTRUMENT HOURS			10.4	3.2	0	35
NIGHT HOURS			3.2	1.2	0	3 July 1943
CY LANDINGS						

PILOT EXPERIENCE	TOTAL ALL MODELS	TOTAL THIS MODEL	LAST 12 MONTHS ALL MODELS	LAST 3 MONTHS ALL MODELS	LAST 3 MONTHS THIS MODEL	INSTRUMENT RATE
TOTAL HOURS	1,993.7	179.4	212.2	44.2	44.2	None
INSTRUMENT HOURS			0	0	0	34
NIGHT HOURS			0	0	0	2 May 1942
CY LANDINGS						

11. CHECK IF INCIDENT TO FLIGHT:  INCIDENT TO FLIGHT  NOT INCIDENT TO FLIGHT  
12. PURPOSE OF FLIGHT: FERRY  
13. TIME IN FLIGHT: Approx 1 hr & 50 min  
14. TYPE OF ACCIDENT: collision with tree & ground  
15. MANEUVER INVOLVED: left turn to avoid collision with tree  
16. WEATHER:  VFR  IFR N.A. 30 mls  
17. DARKNESS:  YES  NO  
18. CLEARANCE ISSUED: VFR  
19. WIND DIRECTION: East 12-18  
20. ANGLE OF IMPACT: 10° nose down  
21. DID FIRE FOLLOW IMPACT:  YES  NO

22. AIRCRAFT AND ENGINE DATA (Fill in all data in every case of material failure or malfunction, actual or suspected)

HISTORY	SERVICE TOUR	TOTAL NUMBER OF OVERHAULS	MONTHS IN THIS TOUR	FLT HOURS SINCE OVERHAUL	FLT HOURS SINCE ACCEPTANCE	TYPE OF CHECK LAST PERFORMED	FLT HOURS SINCE CHECK	NO. DAYS SINCE CHECK
AIRCRAFT	0	0		new	unknown	NEW	NEW	NEW
ENGINE 1								
ENGINE 2								
ENGINE 3								
ENGINE 4								

HAS THIS A/C BEEN DAMAGED IN PREVIOUS ACCIDENT(S) DURING PRESENT SERVICE TOUR?  YES  NO

23. CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS:  
 PILOT (OR CREW) ERROR  
 MATERIAL FAILURE OR MALFUNCTION  
 ERROR OF OTHER PERSONNEL  
 wind and thermal conditions

24. CHECK CONDITIONS INVOLVED:  
 TURBULENCE  
 PITCHING OR ROLLING DECK  
 COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTY  
 AIRPORT HAZARD  
 ROUGH SEAS  
 TERRAIN CONDITIONS

25. EMERGENCY CONDITIONS:  
 IMMEDIATE FORCED LANDING  
 PRECAUTIONARY LANDING  
 ENGINE FAILURE  
 FUEL EXHAUSTION OR REAR EXHAUSTION

26. PERSONNEL SAFETY EQUIPMENT USED:  
 PARACHUTE  
 EJECTION SEAT  
 SHOULDER HARNESS  
 SAFETY BELT  
 EXPOSURE SUIT  
 G-SUIT  
 PROTECTIVE HELMET  
 OXYGEN EQUIP.

27. ENCLOSURES AND DISTRIBUTION CHECK OFF LIST

CHECK	ENCLOSURES	CHECK	NO.	DISTRIBUTION BY COMMANDING OFF.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PILOT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ORIG. CHO (OP-330) VIA CHM. OF COMD.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LSO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	BUXEN DIRECT	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	WITNESSES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	U.S. NAVAL AVIATION SAFETY ACTIVITY Direct	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	OTHER PASSENGER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	BAR E. HARTFORD	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PHOTOGRAPHS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	VR-31	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DRAWINGS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	VR-32	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	WEATHER REPORT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	COMFLOGAIRWINGLANT/Cont	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LOADING MANIFEST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	COMAIRLANT	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HMR-363 Marine Squadron	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MAG-16 SANTA ANA	

28. SIGNATURES:  
 Joseph H. McLothlin, LT, USN  
 G. L. Wood, LCDR, USN, Production Officer  
 Paul P. Lumpee, LCDR, USN, Operations Officer

RESTRICTED SECURITY INFORMATION

ORIGINAL

**24681**

29. The Accident At 1530 April 20, 1953 a flight of 4 helicopters, being ferried from Bridgeport, Connecticut, to Santa Ana, California, by Marine pilots, departed the International Airport at El Paso, Texas, on a VFR clearance to Tucson Municipal Airport via Green Airway 5. The weather was VFR with light easterly winds of 12 to 20 knots, thin scattered clouds at 25 and 40 thousand feet and visibility of 30 miles or better, temperature 79°, dew point 35.

The flight proceeded without incident until reaching the range of mountains between Cochise Range and Rodeo Radio where the entire flight encountered moderate turbulence and the customary thermals to be expected over such terrain. The helicopters were cruising several hundred feet above the ground with HRS-3 Marine Buno 130248 piloted by LT COL R. R. Ayers leading the flight. At about 1720 MST HRS-3 Buno 130248 slowed to an incident air speed of about 40 to 45 knots in order to maintain altitude. At this time the other helicopters in the flight passed #0248 in order to maintain a safe speed and altitude to combat the down draft condition through which they were passing. Shortly after the other helicopters had passed, #0248 slowed to zero air speed and started settling with a loss of rotor r.p.m. After descending about 800 ft, HRS-3 Buno 0248 was turned 180° to head into the wind in anticipation of making a forced landing. The terrain at this point was very rough consisting of deep narrow canyons, very rocky with some large timber growing from their bottoms and near bottoms of the canyons. HRS-3 #0248 continued to settle with about 20K indicated air speed and reduced rotor r.p.m., heading directly toward a very large pine tree growing from the bottom of a "blind canyon" about 500 feet deep and approximately 500 yards wide from rim to rim. The helicopter continued to settle and engaged the pine tree with the main rotor blades about 20 feet below the top. (This placed the helicopter well below the rim of the canyon).

The main rotor blades were torn from the rotor head as they cut approximately 20 feet from the top of the pine tree; the fuselage and tail boom fell the remaining 100 feet to the bottom of the canyon about 35 feet from the base of the pine tree where it came to rest nose low tilted sharply to the right. Fire broke out almost immediately consuming the entire helicopter as shown in enclosure (3).

30. Damage to Aircraft. The main rotor of the helicopter engaged the top of the pine tree at a glide angle of about 10° and forward speed about 10 kts. The main rotor blades came off with this impact. The fuselage and tail boom fell about 100 feet to the bottom of the canyon striking the ground nose down about 80° breaking at the engine fire wall and rolling sharply to the right. Fire developed with this impact and completely consumed the entire fuselage and tail boom.

RESTRICTED SECURITY INFORMATION