

ACCIDENT

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| Aircraft Type and Registration: | Bell 206L-3 Longranger III, G-LVDC |
| No & Type of Engines: | 1 Allison 250-C30P turboshaft engine |
| Year of Manufacture: | 1989 (Serial no: 51300) |
| Date & Time (UTC): | 8 July 2012 at 1000 hrs |
| Location: | Near Silverstone, Northampton |
| Type of Flight: | Commercial Air Transport |
| Persons on Board: | Crew - 1 Passengers - None |
| Injuries: | Crew - None Passengers - N/A |
| Nature of Damage: | Damage to the vertical fins and main rotor blades |
| Commander's Licence: | Commercial Pilot's Licence |
| Commander's Age: | 52 years |
| Commander's Flying Experience: | 1,737 hours (of which 126 were on type) Last 90 days - 57 hours Last 28 days - 23 hours |
| Information Source: | Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot |

Synopsis

While taking off, the helicopter's low rotor rpm warning horn sounded. The pilot entered autorotation and carried out a forced landing into a field. Having landed, lowered the collective and closed the throttle, the pilot re-opened the throttle and lifted into the hover, watching the engine gauges. All appeared normal and the pilot flew on to his destination.

Following the flight, damage was discovered on the vertical fins and main rotor blades. This was linked to the forced landing. No fault was found with the engine, fuel, fuel system or associated controls.

History of the flight

The pilot had dropped passengers at Silverstone Circuit and was taking off to return to the "feeder site", some 12 km to the east. In the climb, at about 300 ft, the low rotor rpm warning horn sounded and he immediately lowered the collective lever to enter autorotation and carry out a forced landing into a field. The warning horn remained on throughout the autorotation but the landing was successful with a short run-on, although the pilot noticed some "rocking". He lowered the collective lever and closed the throttle to idle. He then opened the throttle and lifted into the hover, watching the engine gauges. Everything appeared normal, so he transitioned out of the field and returned to the feeder site without further incident. After shutdown, he noticed that the vertical fins on the horizontal stabilisers were

damaged and that there was associated damage to the main rotor blades.

In his report, the pilot linked the damage to the landing in the field but was unsure of the reason for the low rotor rpm. He concluded that there was either a “transient reduction in engine power” or that the throttle was not fully open on departure.

Subsequently, the engine, fuel, fuel system and associated controls were examined by a maintenance company and no faults were found. The engine was also run on a test bed at an engine test facility but, again, no faults were detected.