

ACCIDENT

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| Aircraft Type and Registration: | Hughes 369E, G-VICE | |
| No & Type of Engines: | 1 Allison 250-C20B turboshaft engine | |
| Year of Manufacture: | 1989 | |
| Date & Time (UTC): | 24 May 2010 at 1643 hrs | |
| Location: | Poundsgate, Devon | |
| Type of Flight: | Private | |
| Persons on Board: | Crew - 1 | Passengers - None |
| Injuries: | Crew - 1 | Passengers - N/A |
| Nature of Damage: | Extensive | |
| Commander's Licence: | Private Pilot's Licence | |
| Commander's Age: | 70 years | |
| Commander's Flying Experience: | 1,164 hours (of which 479 were on type) Last 90 days - 19 hours Last 28 days - 6 hours | |
| Information Source: | Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and additional AAIB inquiries | |

Synopsis

The pilot was making a different approach into a field he had used previously and failed to see a set of power cables. The aircraft struck the cables, which broke before the aircraft struck the ground.

Circumstances of the accident

The aircraft took off from a private site near Exeter and flew to another private site, located next to an inn in a hamlet northwest of Newton Abbot in Devon. The pilot had flown there on previous occasions but the field he normally used had been ploughed, forcing him to land in an adjacent field to the north. This field was bordered on its northern edge by a line of trees some 80 ft high, with a gap in the centre approximately 25 yards wide. The

wind conditions on the day of the accident necessitated the approach to the field to be made from the north, over the trees. Although the pilot had also landed previously in this field, he had used the open area at the opposite end from the trees. However, on this occasion, the presence of horses made him decide to aim for the northern end of the field. Accordingly, he decided to approach through the gap in the line of trees. The pilot stated that, at an airspeed of around 45 kt, the aircraft struck some power cables that were suspended approximately 50 ft above the ground. The cables became trapped between the skids and the fuselage underside, with the tension partially arresting the forwards motion of the aircraft before breaking. The aircraft struck the ground and

disintegrated, with the cockpit area, which remained relatively intact, rolling some 85 yards before coming to rest. The pilot's harness remained secure during the impact and he was able to extricate himself, having suffered minor injuries.

A bystander who had witnessed the accident, and who was also a pilot, ran over to the wreckage and assisted the pilot in shutting down the engine, which had continued to run after the impact.

The pilot stated that, although he had not attempted a previous landing in this area of the site, he did not fly a reconnaissance circuit and had not approached over the trees before; he was thus unaware of the presence of the cables and failed to see them during the approach. He commented that a contributory factor was that the supporting poles were hidden in the trees either side of the gap.