

No: 10/83

Ref: EW/C834

Aircraft type and registration:	Alouette SA 138B (light single engine helicopter) G-AWAP	
Year of manufacture:	1962	
Date and time (GMT):	26 June 1983 at 1320 hrs	
Location:	Gat Sand 6 nm East of Boston Lincs	
Type of flight:	Commercial (Survey)	
Persons on board:	Crew – 1	Passengers – 3
Injuries:	Crew – 1 (fatal)	Passengers – 3 (fatal)
Nature of damage:	Aircraft destroyed	
Commander's Licence:	ATPL	
Commander's Age:	57 years	
Commander's total flying experience:	9340 hours (of which 3500 hours were on type)	

The helicopter was engaged in an aerial survey of seals in the area of the Wash. It took off from its local operating base at Holbeach and flew to the area of the Gat Sand where it was seen manoeuvring by eyewitnesses. A little later the attention of the witnesses was drawn to the helicopter by a sound like a rifle shot. As they looked up they saw the helicopter level at a height of about 50 feet before it rolled to the right and fell to the ground.

The eyewitness transmitted a 'Mayday Call' on a marine radio and ran cross the sand bank to the wreckage. All the occupants of the helicopter died in the crash.

The rotor head, complete with its blades, was found detached from the mast and lying close to the helicopter. The rotor head attachment bolt was still locked by the locking plate, but the threads on the bolt showed signs of corrosion. The precise mechanism of separation of the rotor from the shaft has not yet been determined but an airworthiness directive has been issued by the CAA requiring inspection of the attachment bolt on all helicopters fitted with this assembly.

The Chief Inspector of Accidents has ordered an Inspectors Investigation into this accident.