



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	GALAX, Virginia	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ATL86FA264
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	September 23, 1986, 12:42 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N251CC
<b>Aircraft:</b>	BELL 222UT	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	3 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Non-scheduled - Air Medical (Unspecified)		

## Analysis

THE HELICOPTER WAS DISPATCHED ON AN EMERG MED SVC (EMS/MED-EVAC) FLT TO TRANSPORT A PATIENT WITH SUBCRANIAL BLEEDING BACK TO A HOSPITAL IN WINSTON-SALEM. BFR TAKEOFF, THE PLT RECEIVED A WX BRIEFING. AT THAT TIME, WIDESPREAD IMC PREVAILED THRU-OUT THE AREA & VFR FLT WAS NOT RECOMMENDED. WHILE EN ROUTE, THE PLT CLIMBED TO 4500' MSL. IN THE LAST TRANSMISSION FROM THE ACFT (TO HOSPITAL DISPATCH), THE HELICOPTER WAS RPRTD TO BE APRX 12 MI FROM GALAX (THE DESTN). A WITNESS IN THAT AREA HEARD THE SOUND OF A HELICOPTER WHICH CEASED WITH A 'THUD' WHEN IT CRASHED. HE LOOKED IN THE DIRECTION OF THE NOISE, BUT HE COULD NOT SEE ANYTHING DUE TO FOG. THE WRECKAGE WAS FND APRX 10 MI SE OF GALAX. THE HELICOPTER HAD CRASHED JUST BELOW THE TOP OF A MTN RIDGE AT AN ELEV OF ABOUT 3500'. THERE WAS EVIDENCE THE HELICOPTER WAS IN ABOUT A 20 DEG RGT BANK WHEN IT CRASHED. NO PREIMPACT PART FAILURE OR MALFUNCTION WAS FND DURING THE INVESTIGATION.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

### Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER  
Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

1. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
3. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (F) SELF-INDUCED PRESSURE - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (F) PRESSURE INDUCED BY OTHERS - PILOT IN COMMAND

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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT

Findings

6. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY
7. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - HIGH TERRAIN
8. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - RISING
9. (C) PROPER ALTITUDE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

## Factual Information

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Airline transport; Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	36, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Right
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane; Helicopter	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	Yes
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	January 2, 1986
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	Yes	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	8085 hours (Total, all aircraft), 566 hours (Total, this make and model), 7535 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 40 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 9 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	BELL	<b>Registration:</b>	N251CC
<b>Model/Series:</b>	222UT 222UT	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Helicopter
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	47517
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Skid	<b>Seats:</b>	4
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	September 18, 1986 100 hour	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	8250 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	8 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	2 Turbo shaft
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	445 Hrs	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	LYCOMING
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, not activated	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	LTS-101
<b>Registered Owner:</b>		<b>Rated Power:</b>	735 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>		<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>	AIR CARE [EMS]	<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument (IMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	-18°C / -18°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - None - Fog		
Departure Point:	WINSTON-SALEM , NC (INT )	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	GALAX , VA	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	12:22 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

## Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:	0 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	0 ft / 0 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

## Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	3 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	On-ground
Total Injuries:	3 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	36.65937, -80.9094(est)

## Administrative Information

**Investigator In Charge (IIC):** Coleman, Ben

**Additional Participating Persons:** DAVE TOWNSEND; CHARLESTON , WV  
TYRONE MILLARD; DALLAS , TX  
JOE SYSLO; DALLAS , TX  
DALE FOWLER; PROVO , UT

**Original Publish Date:**

**Note:**

**Investigation Docket:** <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=6967>

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The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).