Aviation Safety Investigation Report 198900242

Hughes H269-C

13 August 1989

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NOTE: All air safety occurrences reported to the ATSB are categorised and recorded. For a detailed explanation on Category definitions please refer to the ATSB website at www.atsb.gov.au.

Occurrence Number: 198900242 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: 10 km NW Napier Downs Homestead WA
Date: 13 August 1989 **Time:** 1400
Highest Injury Level: Nil
Injuries:

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	0	0	1	1
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	0	0	0
Total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**

Aircraft Details: Hughes H269-C
Registration: VH-THN
Serial Number: 760524
Operation Type: Aerial Work
Damage Level: Substantial
Departure Point: Napier Downs Homestead WA
Departure Time: 1300
Destination: Napier Downs Homestead WA

Approved for Release: 2nd April 1990

Circumstances:

The aircraft was engaged in aerial mustering operations approximately 6 km north-west of Napier Downs homestead when the engine suddenly lost power. At that time the aircraft was approximately 150 feet above ground level and heading south at 50 knots. The pilot immediately commenced a descent through tree tops into a small clearing. Just prior to touching down the aircraft was turned through approximately 90 degrees to face into the light easterly wind to avoid overshooting. The pilot stated that the landing was firm, but not heavy. However the tail boom was severed by the main rotor blades and carried anti-clockwise until it struck the main rotor mast head and the roof of the cockpit bubble. It is possible that the tree strikes on the approach may have damaged the tail boom and the firm landing caused the main rotor blades to strike the damaged tail. Subsequent investigation revealed that the fuel shut off valve was not fully open, although it appeared to be. The fault in the fuel shut off valve was due to excessive wear of the ball valve. It was also revealed that the inlet valve for the number two cylinder was bent. Either or both of these defects could account for the loss of engine power. This accident was not the subject of an on-scene investigation.

Significant Factors:

The following factors were considered relevant to the development of the accident

1. Defective fuel shut off valve.

2. Defective engine inlet valve.

3. Loss of engine power probably related to

1. and/or

2. above.

4. Forced landing in unsuitable area.