

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
197204951**

Bell 47J-2A

21 August 1972

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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: 197204951 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: Aboard Ship "Chita Maru", (13km NW Port Hedland WA)
Date: 21 August 1972 **Time:** 740
Highest Injury Level: Nil
Injuries:

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	0	0	1	1
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	0	0	1
Total	0	0	0	2

Aircraft Details: Bell 47J-2A
Registration: VH-INW
Serial Number: N/K
Operation Type: Aerial Work
Damage Level: Destroyed
Departure Point: N/A
Departure Time: N/A
Destination: Port Hedland Harbour

Approved for Release: 01-Oct-87

Circumstances:

The ore carrier had departed from Port Hedland and was making about 10 knots in fine conditions and a slight sea swell. Arrangements had been made for the helicopter to fly from Port Hedland to pick up the marine pilot on-board the ship when it was about 8 miles off-shore. The on-board landing site selected for landing the helicopter was the starboard side of No 8 hatch cover, which had the letter H painted on it. The complete hatch cover was divided along the centreline of the ship by 6 pairs of walkway stanchions which could be positioned upright or lie flat, pointing outwards athwart the hatch cover. These stanchions were horizontal at the time of the accident but some had their ends sloped upwards. The approach was made to the No 8 hatch cover from the starboard side of the ship and resulted in a normal landing on the starboard side of that cover. After the marine pilot boarded the helicopter, it was brought into the hover and as it did so, it slid slightly forward on its floats towards the stanchions. When the helicopter pilot applied power and attempted to climb away, the aircraft tilted forward violently and the rotor blades struck the hatch cover. The helicopter came to rest on the port side of the hatch cover in an upright position. The helicopter was equipped with rubber floats, the lower portions of which were covered by loose fitting canvas soles to reduce wear on the floats. When the helicopter slid forward during the attempted take-off, one of the stanchions caught in the canvas sole of the starboard float without the knowledge of the helicopter pilot.