

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199401350**

**Robinson Helicopter Co
R22**

23 May 1994

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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.

The Bureau did not conduct an on scene investigation of this occurrence. The information presented below was obtained from information supplied to the Bureau.

Occurrence Number: 199401350 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: Walhallow Station
State: NT **Inv Category:** 4
Date: Monday 23 May 1994
Time: 1730 hours **Time Zone** CST
Highest Injury Level: None

Aircraft Manufacturer: Robinson Helicopter Co
Aircraft Model: R22
Aircraft Registration: VH-HEF **Serial Number:** 153
Type of Operation: Commercial Aerial Mustering
Damage to Aircraft: Substantial
Departure Point: Walhallow Station NT
Departure Time: 1500 CST
Destination: Walhallow Station NT

Crew Details:

Role	Class of Licence	Hours on Type	Hours Total
Pilot-In-Command	Commercial	2500.0	3587

Approved for Release: Friday, August 26, 1994

The helicopter was engaged on a cattle mustering, with several landings being made to open and close gates. On the accident flight the pilot noticed that the fuel gauge was indicating less fuel than expected, but he then became involved in mustering some troublesome cattle and the next time the gauge was checked it indicated empty. As the low fuel light had not illuminated the pilot decided to land as soon as he found a clearing, but about 30 seconds later the engine failed. The helicopter had been flying about 5 feet above the tree tops at about 20-25 knots.

The pilot attempted to side-slip to the right into a slightly more open area, but was unsuccessful and made an autorotational landing into the trees, the helicopter coming to rest upright suffering substantial damage.

Subsequent investigation revealed that the fuel filter bowl had been distorted, probably by a projection on the ground during one of the previous landings, allowing fuel to leak until the engine failed due to fuel exhaustion.