

U.S. Army helicopter UH-1H tail number 68-15223

The Army purchased this helicopter 1268

Total flight hours at this point: 00002833

Date: 04/19/71

Accident case number: 710419101

Unit: 174 AHC

The station for this helicopter was Chu Lai in

Number killed in accident = 0 . . Injured = 2 . . Passengers = 2

costing 44891

Source(s) from which the incident was created or updated: Army Aviation Safety Center database.

Crew Members:

AC CW2 FISHER GK

P CPT MCGAFFICK EF

CE E4 KLINDT MG

G E3 AZIZ GA

Passengers:

UNK, LCO, G; CORDOVA, PAX, G;

Accident Summary:

On the morning of 19 April 1971, aircraft 68-15223 departed the 174th AHC in Chu Lai on a direct support mission. The aircraft was flown for three hours and ten minutes, supplying various Fire Bases. On the last sortie, the aircraft departed Hawk Hill enroute to Hill 510, the first trip of the day to the location. The aircraft had a good hover check; 36 pounds of torque and n1 was 95.2 percent at 25 degrees centigrade. The aircraft made a good takeoff and approached LZ Ryder. Due to the low broken clouds, the pilots were unable to determine that this LZ was not Hill 510 and elected to descend and investigate. The aircraft leveled off at approximately 100 feet agl and 60 knots. Upon realizing that this was not their destination, the pilots executed a right hand turn in an attempt to re-orient themselves. While in this turn, the left fuel boost caution light came on. The pilot, CPT McGaffick, announced the light and reset the master caution light. He noted that the fuel pressure was still in the green. Shortly thereafter, the aircraft yawed to the left and right, the tachometer needles split and the low rpm audio and light came on. These events were also announced by CPT McGaffick, and CW2 Fisher reduced pitch, stopping the engine rpm reduction at 5800. The rpm built up to operating level, 6600, but the needles stayed split. The aircraft commander applied pitch and the rpm decreased to about 6200. CW2 Fisher then entered autorotation. The descent was steep and fast, approximately 50 knots at 50 feet. The aircraft hit hard and skidded, being stopped by what was described as a shallow pocket or crater. The main rotor blade struck a small hill to the right front of the aircraft, causing the trailing blade to strike the tail boom and then continue on,

striking this small hill. Upon impact, some of the cargo (boxes of c-rations) slid forward, striking the pilots on the backs of their heads and necks. At this time, CW2 Fisher made a "Mayday" call to a fixed wing aircraft overhead and checked to see if anyone was injured. Except for minor cuts and scratches, there were no injuries. However, SP4 Klindt complained of back pain the following day and was treated by the flight surgeon. A defensive perimeter was set up, while the pilots shut down and checked the aircraft. There was no fire or fuel leakage. The distress call was relayed to the Gunsmoke Recovery Team and the aircraft was evacuated by CH-47 at 1305 hours. All crewmembers were wearing the required protective clothing, to include; leather boots, flight helmets, nomex flight suits and gloves. All radios and secure gear were salvaged.