



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Halloran Springs, CA	Accident Number:	CEN24MA111
Date & Time:	February 9, 2024, 22:08 Local	Registration:	N130CZ
Aircraft:	Airbus Helicopters EC130	Injuries:	6 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Non-scheduled		

On February 9, 2024, about 2208 Pacific standard time, an Airbus Helicopters EC 130B4 helicopter, N130CZ, was destroyed when it was involved in an accident near Halloran Springs, California. The two pilots and four passengers were fatally injured. The helicopter was operated by Orbic Air, LLC, as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 135 on-demand flight.

According to automatic dependent surveillance broadcast (ADS-B) data and operator personnel, the flight departed the operator's base at Bob Hope Airport, Burbank, California, at 1822, to reposition the helicopter for a charter passenger flight and arrived at the Palm Springs International Airport (PSP), Palm Springs, California, at 1907.

The accident flight departed PSP at 2045 under visual flight rules and flew a northwesterly heading for about 2 miles before following US Highway 111 to Interstate (I) 10 at altitudes varying between 2,500 - 3,000 ft mean sea level (msl). The helicopter continued along I-10, crossed over San Bernadino International Airport, San Bernadino, California, and then followed I-215 to I-15.

The helicopter followed I-15 toward the planned destination of Boulder City Municipal Airport (BVU), Boulder City, Nevada, climbed between 4,000 - 5,500 ft msl, then descended to about 3,500 ft msl near Barstow, California, where the ADS-B track data was lost about 2146, likely due to terrain interference. ADS-B data resumed at 2207 near the Halloran Springs/I-15 exit west of the accident location. The last ADS-B data points for the flight tracked east-southeast, gradually descended in altitude, and increased in ground speed (see Figures 1 and 2). The accident site was located 0.31 miles east-southeast of the last data point at an elevation of about 3,360 ft msl.

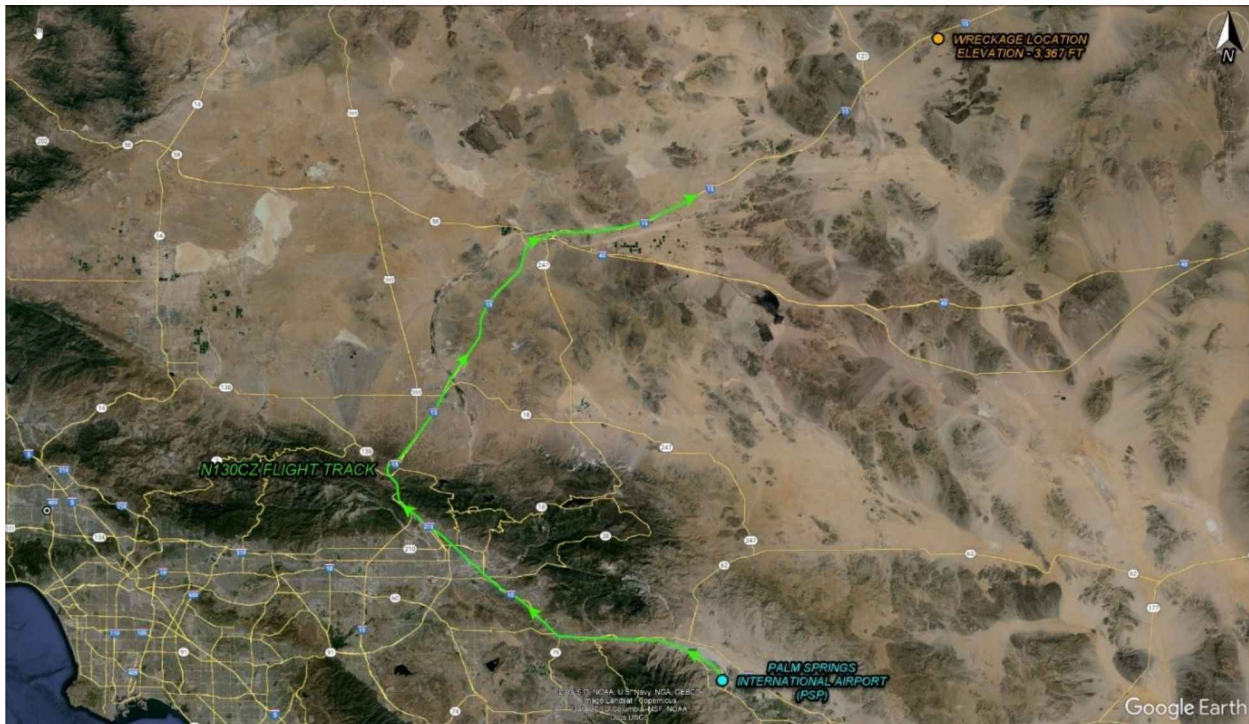


Figure 1. Overhead view of accident flight track.

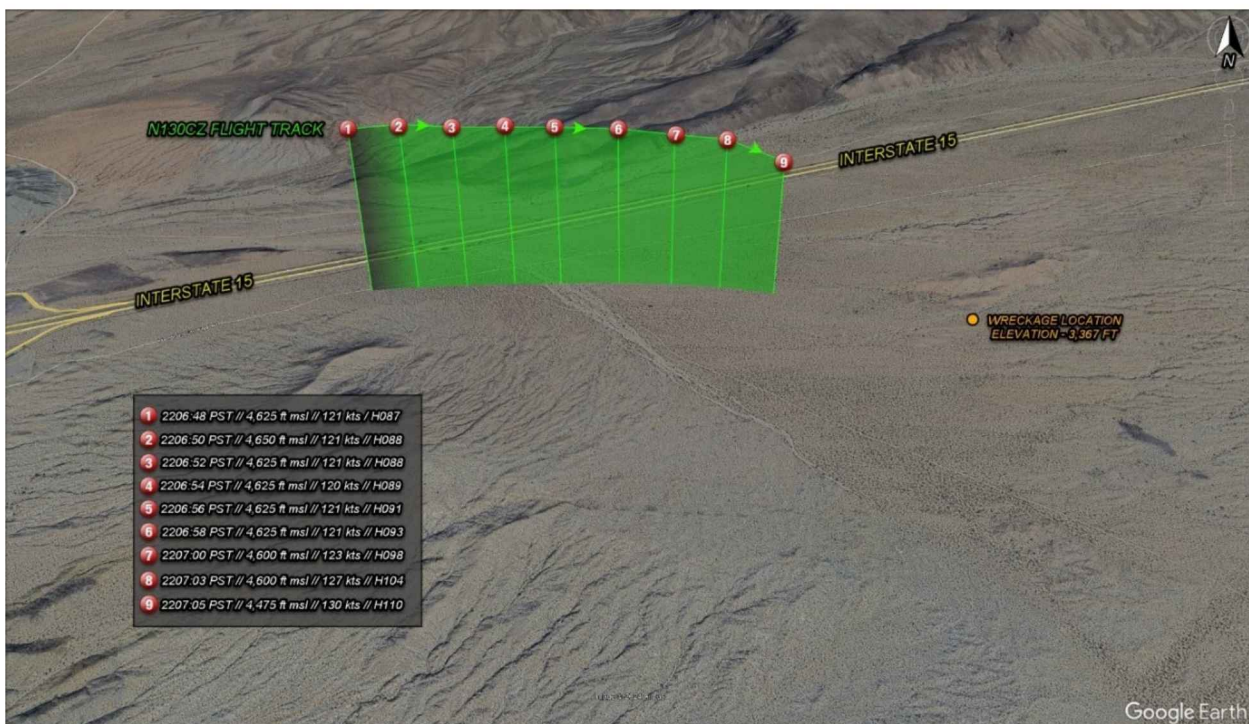


Figure 2. Final segment of flight track data with time, altitude (msl), ground speed and heading information.

The wreckage was located in high mountainous desert and scrub brush covered terrain, and debris were scattered about 300 ft along a 120° magnetic heading from the initial impact point. The initial impact point, which was a 1.5 ft deep, 12 ft long and 10 ft wide ground crater, contained portions of the right landing gear skid, right skid step, cockpit wiring, and cabin floor structure. The right skid step protruded upward at a 45° angle at the most eastern edge of the ground crater (see Figure 3). Immediately to the right of the crater was a ground divot consistent in the size and shape of the rotor head, with 2 main rotor blade impact marks extending from the divot.



All major helicopter components were identified at the accident site. The fuselage was fragmented, and the cockpit and cabin were destroyed. Some debris and vegetation displayed thermal damage. The flight control tubes and linkages leading up to the flight control servos were fragmented and continuity could not be verified. All three pitch control links were attached at the swashplate and blade pitch change horns. The main rotor blades were fragmented and broomstrawed, and the blade sleeves and tips were present (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Rotor mast and rotor head.

The fenestron tail section with the tail fin and horizontal stabilizer separated from the forward part of the tail boom. All the fenestron blades remained in their hubs and the blade tips displayed chordwise scratches (see Figure 5). The engine displayed rotational damage signatures and metal deposits consistent with powered operations at impact.



Figure 5. Tail fin and fenestron.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Airbus Helicopters	Registration:	N130CZ
Model/Series:	EC130 B4	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	ORBIC AIR LLC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand air taxi (135)
Operator Designator Code:	10BA		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	VMC	Condition of Light:	Night
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KBYS, 2350 ft msl	Observation Time:	21:55 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	38 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	7°C / 0°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	7 knots / , 210°
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 5500 ft AGL	Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	29.91 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	
Departure Point:	Palm Springs, CA (PSP)	Destination:	Boulder City, NV

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	2 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	4 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	On-ground
Total Injuries:	6 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	35.37304,-115.86357

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Sauer, Aaron
Additional Participating Persons:	David Gerlach; FAA; Washington, DC Steve Gould; Orbic Air LLC; Burbank, CA Vincent Ecalte; Bureau d'Enquetes et d'Analyses Seth Buttner; Airbus Helicopters North America; Grand Prairie, TX Bryan Larimore; Safran Group; Grand Prairie, TX
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.