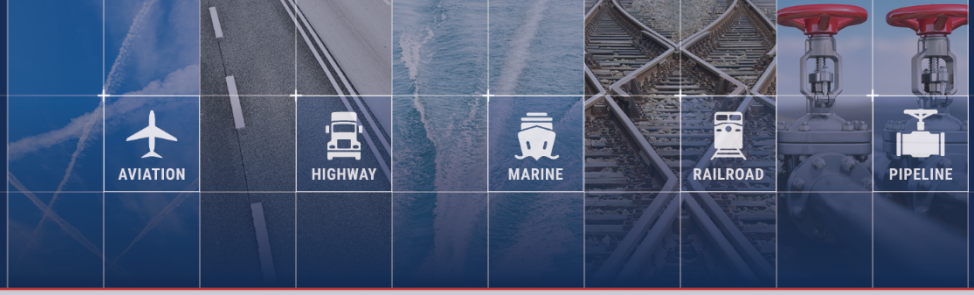

Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Enterprise, Alabama	**Accident Number:**	ERA26LA193
Date & Time:	April 4, 2026, 11:30 Local	**Registration:**	N75140
Aircraft:	Bell UH1	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:	Part(s) separation from AC	**Injuries:**	4 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Other work use		

Analysis

The operator reported that following an uneventful flight, the pilot-in-command conducted a postflight inspection of the helicopter and noted a missing turn lock fastener stud on the tail rotor driveshaft cover of the vertical stabilizer. Additionally, the leading edge of one tail rotor blade near the blade tip was substantially damaged. The missing fastener was not located. The pilot reported that the fastener had been in place prior to the accident flight and that the tail rotor blade was not damaged. Thus, the fastener likely separated in-flight and contacted the tail rotor blade. The helicopter's most recent inspection was completed about 2 months and 77 flight hours before the accident flight.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The in-flight separation of a turn lock fastener stud, which resulted in substantial damage to one tail rotor blade.

Findings

Aircraft	Fasteners - Unknown/Not determined

Factual Information

History of Flight

Enroute-cruise	Part(s) separation from AC (Defining event)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	**Age:**	56,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	**Seat Occupied:**	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	**Restraint Used:**	Unknown
Instrument Rating(s):	Helicopter	**Second Pilot Present:**	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	Helicopter; Instrument helicopter	**Toxicology Performed:**	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	September 2, 2025
Occupational Pilot:	No	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	May 10, 2024
Flight Time:	5843 hours (Total, all aircraft), 293 hours (Total, this make and model), 1026 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Co-pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Private	**Age:**	60,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	**Restraint Used:**	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Helicopter	**Second Pilot Present:**	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	**Toxicology Performed:**	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Without waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	January 12, 2026
Occupational Pilot:	No	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	February 19, 2026
Flight Time:	1048 hours (Total, all aircraft), 324 hours (Total, this make and model), 100 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Bell	**Registration:**	N75140
Model/Series:	UH1 H	**Aircraft Category:**	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	1971	**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental (Special)	**Serial Number:**	71-20123
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	**Seats:**	13
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	February 20, 2026 AAIP	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	9500 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	77 Hrs	**Engines:**	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	5762 Hrs	**Engine Manufacturer:**	Lycoming
ELT:	C91 installed, not activated	**Engine Model/Series:**	T-53-L13
Registered Owner:	FRIENDS OF ARMY AVIATION-OZARK	**Rated Power:**	
Operator:	FRIENDS OF ARMY AVIATION-OZARK	**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KDHN,400 ft msl	**Distance from Accident Site:**	16 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	11:53 Local	**Direction from Accident Site:**	100°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 2700 ft AGL	**Visibility**	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots / None	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	Unknown / None
Wind Direction:	170°	**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	Unknown / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.23 inches Hg	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	27°C / 20°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Enterprise, AL (EDN)	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	Company VFR
Destination:	Ozark, AL (71J)	**Type of Clearance:**	None
Departure Time:	11:00 Local	**Type of Airspace:**	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	4 None	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:		**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	4 None	**Latitude, Longitude:**	31.364017,-85.760655

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Monville, Timothy
Additional Participating Persons:	Christopher J. Campbell; FAA/FSDO; Birmingham, AL
Original Publish Date:	October 8, 2026
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=202910

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, "accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties … and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person" (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB's statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available here.