

Air crash kills pilot in Akwa Ibom

A helicopter belonging to Bristow, operators of aviation services for Mobil Producing Nigeria, crashed into an open field in Eket, Akwa Ibom State on Friday, killing its Australian pilot.

The pilot; an expatriate, was identified as Captain Brown. The pilot was said to be test running the helicopter when it suddenly developed a problem midair and crashed on an open field at Qua Iboe Terminal in Mkpanak, Ibeno.

An eyewitness account showed that the incident, which occurred at exactly 7.45 am, drew the attention

Chukwudi Akasike, Uyo and Mudiaga Affe

of residents and passers-by as a result of the deafening sound that followed the crash. A QIT resident, who owns a supermarket in the area, said he was shocked at the sound of the crash and wondered why it happened in an open field.

The resident, who identified himself as Godwin, told *Saturday Punch* that the helicopter hovered for about five minutes before it finally crashed. He pointed out that the pilot apparently avoided crashing into buildings as it hovered, before it diverted

to the QIT open field.

"The noise that followed the crash was deafening and this drew the attention of the people around the area and when they came out, they saw the wreckage of the helicopter," Godwin stated.

The Commissioner of Police in the state, Mr. Moses Anegbode, confirmed that only one occupant of the helicopter lost his life. He said the pilot was actually test running the aircraft in readiness for the day's job when the incident occurred at the QIT, an oil field owned by Mobil.