

CHS Midair Collision  
Moncks Corner, SC  
July 7, 2015  
ERA15MA259AB

**NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

ATTACHMENT 3

USAF Accident Investigation Board (AIB) Record of Interview with Chief ATC Automation  
(CATCA)

6 Pages

**VERBATIM TESTIMONY OF  
MISTER CATCA**

**PRESIDENT:** My name is Brigadier General Scott Kindsvater. We are investigating the F-16/Cessna 150 aircraft accident that occurred on 7 July 2015, near Moncks Corner, South Carolina. This investigation is conducted under AFI 51-503. It is separate and apart from the safety investigation conducted under AFI 91-204. This accident investigation board is a legal investigation that was convened to inquire into all the facts and circumstances surrounding the aircraft accident, to prepare a publicly-releasable report, and to obtain and preserve all available evidence for use in litigation, claims, disciplinary actions, adverse administrative actions, and for other purposes.

A safety investigation was previously conducted on this accident. You did not provide testimony or a statement to that safety investigation board. Your sworn testimony today to this board may be used for any proper purpose. Additionally, your testimony can be released to the public. Do you understand how your testimony before this accident board may be used?

**WITNESS:** Yes, I do.

**PRESIDENT:** Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give in the matter now under investigation shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help you God?

**WITNESS:** I do.

**PRESIDENT:** Today is 9 September 2015, at 0858 hours, at Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina. The following members of the AIB are present: Brigadier General Scott Kindsvater Colonel (Legal Advisor), Major (Pilot Member), Chief Master Sergeant (Operations Member) and Technical Sergeant (Recorder). The witness has been sworn.

**Q1 (PRESIDENT):** Mr. CATCA, please state your full name, job title, present duty assignment, and location.

**A1 (WITNESS):** CATCA. I am assigned as a civilian air traffic controller, Chief of Air Traffic Control Automation at Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina.

**Q2 (PRESIDENT):** How long have you been at your current duty assignment?

**A2 (WITNESS):** I came here in 1995 and started in the automation office in late 1996.

**Q3 (PRESIDENT):** How long have you been associated with the military? Is that all of your association?

**A3 (WITNESS):** Enlisted in the Air Force in 1988, August '88.

**Q4 (PRESIDENT):** What is your general aviation experience and credentials?

**A4 (WITNESS):** Private pilot in I believe it was 2008 -- somewhere between 2006/2008 is when I started and completed private pilot, and I'm now a multi-engine commercial, instrument-rated pilot, and certificate of flight instructor single engine LAMP.

**Q5 (PRESIDENT):** And then how would you describe your air traffic control experience?

**A5 (WITNESS):** I've been an air traffic controller since I started tech school in August/September 1988, and have been working air traffic continuously since then, since 1995, here at Shaw Air Force Base.

**Q6 (PRESIDENT):** Did you know Mr. MP2 ?

**A6 (WITNESS):** I had met Mr. but that's as far as I know him. Had met him once before down at the airport.

**Q7 (PRESIDENT):** How would you describe his flight experience, if you know it.

**A7 (WITNESS):** I wouldn't really be able to say his flight experience.

**Q8 (PRESIDENT):** Or his skills, or habit patterns, or anything at all, just from being around that local county airport?

**A8 (WITNESS):** No, sir.

**Q9 (PRESIDENT):** What is your experience at Berkeley County Airfield?

**A9 (WITNESS):** Periodically. I can't really say anything closer to periodically, go down there with students when we do cross-countries. Berkeley County is 52-53 miles away, so that's perfect distance for taking a student. I take students down there and then send them down on a solo cross-country. So we'll periodically go down there.

**Q10 (PRESIDENT):** In your experience then, of that periodicity, how would you categorize the amount of traffic that's at that airfield?

**A10 (WITNESS):** For a general aviation airport, I'd say it's probably -- I can't really tell you the number of operations, but I'd say it's a low-use airport.

**Q11 (PRESIDENT):** And then the nature of the traffic, typically, when you're down there in Berkeley County, stays in the traffic pattern, accidents: do you have any sense?

**A11 (WITNESS):** A little -- I think a little bit of everything. It's kind of hard to say, you know. There's probably just as many people doing what I do there as when we go. So I know there's a good number of base assigned airplanes there, so they will come and go.

**Q12 (PRESIDENT):** Can you confirm the traffic pattern, or what you can recall, the traffic pattern out at Berkeley?

**A12 (WITNESS):** It's 1000 to 1100 feet, standard patterns and left turns. So that would put the traffic pattern on the east side of the airport.

**Q13 (PRESIDENT):** And how many solo private pilots or student pilots have you sent down there? Do you know the ballpark?

**A13 (WITNESS):** Off the top of my head, probably four. It would be the number that I'll say right now without having to go look it up.

**Q14 (PRESIDENT):** In your log books?

**A14 (WITNESS):** Yeah.

**Q15 (PRESIDENT):** Are you aware of any unreported hazardous air traffic reports, or near misses, near mid-air, at that airfield?

**A15 (WITNESS):** No, I'm not aware of any.

**Q16 (PRESIDENT):** When you're down there teaching, or sending students, what do you usually teach is the greatest traffic conflict when departing? And actually, it's probably departing from any uncontrolled airfield; what's your techniques?

**A16 (WITNESS):** Ask me that question differently. I'm not quite sure I understand it.

**Q17 (PRESIDENT):** Yeah, so when you're teaching your young pilots, or student pilots, taking off out of an uncontrolled field, arriving into an uncontrolled field, what sort of tips do you give them, or what sort of instructional methods do you use when you're teaching them?

**A17 (WITNESS):** Well, primarily, we're going to teach all of the pilots, regardless of whether it's an uncontrolled field or a controlled field, to always be cognizant of traffic while you're in the pattern, and then departing the patterns will be another area where you want to point out, look for traffic coming into the patterns, obviously. So traffic awareness and proper pattern procedures are typically what we're covering when we're doing pattern work there.

**Q18 (PRESIDENT):** What is your clearing technique that you teach then for a Cessna pilot, or for a young general aviation -- the technique that you use currently?

**A18 (WITNESS):** For clearing airspace or for clearing the pattern?

**Q19 (PRESIDENT):** Clearing the pattern, clearing airspace --

**A19 (WITNESS):** Clearing airspace is going to be the 2 90 degree turns, opposite direction. So, 90-degree turn left, 90-degree turn right --

**Q20 (PRESIDENT):** Let's go over that question again. So talk to me about traffic conflict, teaching, and the visual scanning techniques.

**A20 (WITNESS):** So clearing airspace when you're outside of the pattern, typically, you'll teach the students to clear airspace left and right. So we're going to do a complete 360-degree turn to make sure nobody's around you. In the pattern, when you're climbing out, if you're doing a continuous climb, then you want to lower the nose a little bit so you can kind of see below, and then kind of look above, if it's a high wing airplane. A low-wing airplane, you kind of tilt the wings left and right. That's the kind of best answer I've got, from my understanding of your question.

**Q21 (PRESIDENT):** I know you said you had limited experience at Berkeley County, but what type of ground track would you expect an aircraft taking off out of Berkeley County, at 2-3 runway, and departing to the east, would you say is the traffic pattern?

**A21 (WITNESS):** I would expect, were I flying down there, I would expect them to depart and start a turn to the crosswind. So a 90-degree turn off of departure heading from about 500 feet or so, and then probably depart the pattern either from the downwind or from the crosswind. So downwind would be the reciprocal of the runway heading, and then depart from the downwind, depending on where you're going.

**Q22 (PRESIDENT):** Tell me your thoughts on VFR traffic, or departing under VFR, and then getting flight following for a general aviation young pilot, old pilot. So if you're doing a cross-country from Berkeley County to somewhere --

**A22 (WITNESS):** Well, my students are required as part of my training syllabus to obtain flight following.

**Q23 (PRESIDENT):** Is that above and beyond what's asked of them?

**A23 (WITNESS):** Yeah, flight following is not a requirement. It's taught as a good idea, and it's an emphasis item that when you do your FAA recertification and two years for flight instructor, that's one of the things that's an emphasis item, is collision avoidance, and as an aeronautical decision-making and flight following and that kind of the stuff.

**Q24 (PRESIDENT):** From the FAA, that's an emphasis item?

**A24 (WITNESS):** It has been the last two times I've done my CFI recert. Those kind of things are the things that I've seen come up.

**Q25 (PRESIDENT):** Can I get a copy of that documentation, if you it somewhere, that's a recent one?

**A25 (WITNESS):** Probably not. It's an online course that I do through AOPA, or King Schools and it's a paid -- you pay for it, and once you're done paying for it, you don't get access to it anymore until the next year. I can provide some links to your team to the FAA safety website that has some stuff on there about that for flight instructors, that we can look at later.

**Q26 (PRESIDENT):** So you go above and beyond, then, on teaching them to flight --

**A26 (WITNESS):** Absolutely. My personal opinion is everybody should be required. It ought not be optional in the United States.

**Q27 (PRESIDENT):** When you teach -- or do you teach and talk to changing frequencies? You told me about what you would do, 90-degrees exit from the downwind or crosswind position; what do you talk about for changing frequencies, and then on that VFR flight following to talk from UNICOM to departure control?

**A27 (WITNESS):** Once you're clearing the pattern is when you would switch over from the CTAF to whatever ATC facility that you're going to.

**Q28 (PRESIDENT):** So from the common traffic advisory frequency, to air traffic control, to when you're exiting the pattern?

**A28 (WITNESS):** Yeah, vertically or laterally.

**Q29 (PRESIDENT):** Have you personally ever encountered a hazardous air traffic issue or incident, or a near mid-air collision in your aviation experience?

**A29 (WITNESS):** That's kind of a difficult question. There have been situations where I have been uncomfortable, but I don't know that I would classify them as a situation where they'd be a HATR, per se. There are times when things transpire, like oh, that could have been bad, but quite honestly, if I were to find myself in a situation where I was faced with a hazardous air, I would file a HATR. I have enough experience from both sides that I'm not afraid of filing of a HATR.

**Q30 (PRESIDENT):** Can you discuss, from your perspective, seeing another airplane, just under the see and avoid responsibility that we have as pilots; can you explain that to me, referencing airplanes on a collision course with you? Is that easy to do, hard to do? Task saturation required, or visual scan?

**A30 (WITNESS):** Okay, well, there's a lot of different factors. It's harder to pick out aircraft than one would think. You would expect to be able to see airplanes, and I sometimes don't see them until they're passing by, and it's regardless of altitude. You would expect to be able to see, for example, a Boeing 737 at a great distance, and sometimes that's just not the case. A lot of different factors go into whether or not you're going to be able to see another airplane: your position of the aircraft, the attitude of the aircraft, whether it's climbing, descending relative to the other traffic, haze. So many different factors. There are other times where you get a traffic call and you look out there, and sure enough, right there he is, ten miles away. So there are a lot of different factors that go into whether or not they can be seen.

**Q31 (PRESIDENT):** Under your air traffic controller hat, and your experiences, talk to me about just your experiences or your perspective on traffic alerts, traffic advisories, traffic that are close to each other, let's say inside three, two miles or so. What habit patterns, what lessons learned, what skills have you developed over the years?

**A31 (WITNESS):** Well, I've learned to issue traffic a lot sooner than I would have before, when I was a lot younger, because the phrase – in the point-65 that always sticks with me. The point-65 is our manual for rules for air traffic control, 7110.65, and that is -- traffic has to be issued in time for it to be useful. So taking into consideration the closure rates of the traffic, and where they're at, I've learned to start issuing the traffic probably sooner than I would have 25 years ago. Also, my experience has told me to expect the unexpected kind of thing, and always err on the side of caution and expect, for example, a climbing aircraft to continue climbing, or a descending aircraft to continue descending, and traffic alerts. Aircraft characteristics are going to play a big factor into what I'm going to issue with a traffic alert, and being familiar with the aircraft that are flying in your airspace. So F-16, Citation, something like that, that can climb fast, my out for a traffic situation is probably going to be a climb or a descent as opposed to trying to turn. It really all depends, and there's too many variables to look at. So the experience that you build over a long time kind of informs what you're going to do with it.

**Q32 (PRESIDENT):** In your generic statement of sooner rather than later, it's just that built over time, that experience, to give those humans time to operate, and time to find each other; is that what you're saying ?

**A32 (WITNESS):** That's part of it, and that's part of what I was trained years ago. So our training kind of dictates that.

**Q33 (PRESIDENT):** In your air traffic control experience over the years, you have a general aviation airplane taking off out of a general aviation field, not talking to you, are you going to make any assumptions there, like is that airplane staying in the pattern, is that airplane departing? As you start to look at ground track and as you start to look at the airplane climbing, what are going to be some of your generic assumptions as a controller that's on that airplane that's inside your airspace?

**A33 (WITNESS):** As a controller observing traffic departing a satellite airport, I'm going to assume that the aircraft is always leaving the pattern until I know that they're not by either the aircraft leveling off, or turning and entering what appears to be the pattern. And that's just the safest assumption to make after a number of years -- 27 years of air traffic experience, always expect the guy to climb out and be a conflict.

**PRESIDENT:** Your interview is part of an ongoing official investigation. You're to refrain from discussing your testimony with anyone without my permission until the report has been released to the public, and that's probably going to be some months from now. This concludes our interview.