

**Maintenance Group Chairman Factual Report**

**Attachment 13 - Air Methods Dickerson Record of Conversation**

**WPR10FA371**



## **RECORD OF INTERVIEW**

**Van McKenny  
Air Safety Investigator**

**Date: July 30, 2010**

**Person Contacted: Mr. Wayne Dickerson, Aviation Maintenance Technician**

**Accident: WPR10FA371**

**Present: Van McKenny- NTSB, Elliott Simpson- NTSB, Archie Whitten- Turbomeca USA, Don Lambert- Air Methods**

The following is a summary of conversation with Mr. Wayne Dickerson, who is an aviation maintenance technician for airframe and powerplant (A&P). He also holds an inspectors authorization. He is employed by Air Methods and worked on the accident helicopter. He holds a commercial pilot certificate, single-engine land and sea, rotorcraft-helicopter, and has approximately 2,800 hours of flight time. He received his A&P certificate in December 1973. He moved to Las Vegas in 1976 and flew for Grand Canyon Airlines. Moved to Alaska in 1980 and was the general manager and pilot for Fort Yukon Air North. In 1983 he became the Director of Maintenance for Wings of Alaska. From 1984-86 worked for Grand Canyon Helicopters, and in 1986 worked at Arizona Jet in Phoenix as a pilot and mechanic. In 1987 he moved to Columbia, SC, and started working for Rocky Mountain Helicopters. In 1989 he moved to Billings, MT. He continued to work for Rocky Mountain Helicopters in Tucson, AZ, as a mechanic. In 2001 Air Methods bought Rocky Mountain Helicopters. In 2008 he became the base mechanic in the Florence, AZ, Air Methods (LifeNet) base.

Mr. Dickerson recalled that he returned from vacation on Thursday, July 22. On July 23 he heard that the N509AM engine was "coked up" and located at Marana. He helped another mechanic, Victor Reeb remove the engine from N509AM. He separated module 5 from 4, and put module 3 on the stand. The other mechanic replaced the flux valve (avionics/compass system). He then removed engine modules 2/3 from module 1. At that point they were ready to replace the fuel manifold (that was coked up) and waited for Wayne Young of Helicopter Services Nevada to arrive and do the work. The removal of the fuel manifold required a higher level of maintenance than what they could provide themselves. Friday night (July 23) it was determined that N551AM had the same coking problem. No more work was performed on Friday.

On Saturday (July 24) he arrived at 0900 and met Wayne Young at the hanger. They rolled N509AM outside. He and Mr Young removed the engine from N551AM and started to separate the engine

modules. They separated the work area in the hanger keeping the engine and parts for N509AM on one side of the hanger and the engine and parts for N551AM on the other side. In between the two areas was another airplane stored in the hanger. The parts for N551AM and

N509AM were ordered via FedEx counter to counter. The parts and special Turbomeca tools for Mr. Young for N509AM arrived on Saturday and were picked up by Mr. Young Saturday evening. He said he quit work at 1700.

On Sunday (July 25) he arrived at Marana Airport at 0900. He started prepping N551AM in the hanger and he and Mr. Young reassembled the engine for N551AM. At noon another mechanic, Steve Osborne, picked up the parts for the engine at the counter. He and Mr. Osborne installed the built up engine into N551AM. Mr. Young built up the engine for N509AM on his own. He did a ground check on N551AM with pilot Lee Waldron. N551AM was on the ready pad, they rolled N509AM into the hanger. He quit between 1930-2000.

Monday (July 26) Joel Merton, and Victor Reeb arrived at 0630. He arrived at 0800. Mr. Merton and Mr. Reeb had finished doing the ground and daily for N551AM, and he signed off the maintenance for that helicopter. Wayne Young arrived at 0815. Pilot & Area Aviation Manager Jerry Fajelka performed the functional check flight (~12 minutes in duration), and then took the helicopter to Tucson Medical Center (TMC) to pick up Aaron Todd, the CEO of Air Methods. Mr. Dickerson said that there was some pressure put on the mechanics by Mr. Fajelka to have the helicopter ready. Not only was the Air Methods CEO in the area but the Safford Base was out of service (no helo), and the backup helicopter was in use at Douglas, this was additional pressure felt by Mr. Dickerson. Mr. Dickerson then performed the prep work on N509AM, Mr. Reeb performed the daily inspection for the base helicopter. He and Mr. Young rotated the engine in the engine stand to the horizontal position and put the spline adaptor on the tail rotor drive. He hooked up and tightened the fuel supply line, and tightened the b-nut. He believes he torqued the b-nut for the line from the HMU to the fuel drain line on the lower right side of the engine. He and Mr. Merton installed the engine, he on the left side and Mr. Merton on the right side. The engine was serviced with oil and taken outside for a ground run. The pilot for the ground run was Bob Wasik, and the ground run lasted 9 minutes. The helicopter was shut down, leak check performed, restarted and a check was performed where the engine was brought up to 85% Ng and vibes checked (~4-5 minutes of run time). Mr. Young then left after the vibes were verified. The short shaft was safety wired and the vibe meter removed. Mr. Dickerson installed the exhaust drain and tail rotor driveshaft cover. Mr. Merton and Mr. Reeb disconnected HMU channel A and waited to 10 minutes, then restarted the engine. They found a fuel control leak from the shaft drive housing. At this point Mr. Dickerson said they were "dead in the water", they did not have the parts necessary to repair the fuel leak. He ordered the parts and they rolled N509AM into the hanger. He left the shop at 1700.

On Tuesday (July 27) he went to work at his normal base (Florence) and arrived around 1000.

Mr. Dickerson stated that this area has 6 bases (Marana, Wilcox, Florence, Safford, Douglas, Sierra Vista). There are 8 mechanics in the area, 6 base mechanics, and 2 rovers. Each base has one dedicated mechanic. The rovers move from base to base as necessary. The base mechanics work 10 days on 4 days off. The rovers work a normal Monday-Friday work week. The base mechanics that are on duty over a weekend will cover the other bases that do not have the weekend duty mechanic. The work days vary

from a normal 6 to 8 hour day up to a 12 hour day, depending on what the workload is. When Mr. Dickerson is working on a weekend he covers his base (Florence) and Marana.

In summary he recalled that Wayne Young signed off the deep maintenance work and build up on the accident engine, and had the maintenance manual open during that work. Joe Merton signed off the engine installation on N509AM.