



**NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
OFFICE OF AVIATION SAFETY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20594**

March 15, 2006

Aircraft Maintenance Records Field Notes

A. ACCIDENT: DCA06MA010
LOCATION: Miami, Florida
DATE/TIME: December 19, 2005, 1439 (EST)
AIRCRAFT: Grumman Mallard G-73T, N2969, S/N J-27

B. GROUP MEMBERS:

Group Chairman: Pocholo Cruz
National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, DC

Member: Bill English
National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, DC

Member: Malcolm Brenner
National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, DC

Member: Dan Diggins
Federal Aviation Administration
Washington, DC

C: SUMMARY

On December 19, 2005, at 2:39 pm eastern standard time, a Grumman Mallard G73T, N2969, operated by Flying Boat Inc. as Chalk's Ocean Airways flight 101, crashed into a shipping channel adjacent to the Port of Miami shortly after takeoff. The aircraft, a seaplane, had departed from the Miami Seaplane Base (X44), and took off from the shipping channel with 2 crew and 18 passengers (including 3 infants). The scheduled flight was destined to Bimini, Bahamas, operating under the provisions of Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 121. The seaplane was retrofitted with Pratt & Whitney PT-6 turboprop engines. Witness and video recordings indicated a fire on the right wing and showed the wing separating prior to impacting the water. All 20 occupants suffered fatal injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident.

The Maintenance Records Group conducted an interview with the Chalk's Ocean Airways Principal Maintenance Inspector (PMI), Thomas Laird at the Fort Lauderdale Flight Standards District Office.

D: DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION

Thomas Laird has been with the FAA for 16 years in various positions. Prior to that he was employed by Eastern Airlines for 21 years. He has been a PMI for Chalk's Ocean Airways for the past 5 years. Prior to January 2005, the PMI was overseeing four 121 air carrier certificates, one repair station, and four Part 125/91 deviation certificates. After January 2005, his workload was reduced to three Part 121 air carrier certificates due to regional office realignments and his pending retirement.

Mr. Laird could not give the investigators an average amount of times he visited Chalk's Ocean Airways during a given month. He stated that his visits were different every month depending on the workload. He did say that he attempted to be at Chalk's during its monthly CASS meetings.

According to Mr. Laird, Chalk's possessed a Part 121 air carrier certificate and a Part 145 repair station certificate. Mr. Laird's primary contact at Chalk's was the Director of Quality (Luis Carrillo) and the Director of Maintenance (Tracy Perkins). The inspections Mr. Laird conducts are based on the FAA's annual work program (Aircraft Records, Fuel Farms, Aging Aircraft Inspections, etc.).

Mr. Laird was asked what types of issues were found during his inspections. He stated that procedural issues and training issues of mechanics and pilots, ramp inspections, GMM procedural issues are examples of these types of findings. Mr. Laird said he notes the discrepancies and brings it to management's attention to correct. When asked how soon Chalk's corrects these discrepancies, he states immediately (workload dependent within two weeks). Mr. Laird did not recall if there had been any discrepancies/issues that were recurring.

According to Mr. Laird, he was comfortable with the maintenance that Chalk's was conducting on the airplanes. When asked was the Chalk's maintenance program was adequate, he said it met all the FAR requirements. Additionally, when asked what improvement if any would be needed, he said nothing by rule.

To his knowledge, Mr. Laird stated that Chalk's used Designated Engineering Representatives (DER) to design repairs outside the scope of the manuals. He stated that he does not review the DERs repair procedures and their documentation. He had no engineering expertise to determine if the repairs were adequate. When asked if any Chalk's DERs had contacted him with concerns with the way maintenance was being conducted at Chalk's, he answered no.

During CASS meetings, Mr. Laird stated that issues with airplanes (i.e. delay/cancellations, significant schedule interruptions, chronic issues with the fleet, etc.), are brought up during the meetings. He stated that in the CASS program, if multiple entries are flagged, the Director of Quality looks at the issues and determines if a DER or outside vendors would be needed to fix the issues that their own maintenance staff could not handle.

Mr. Laird was asked about the Chalk's Corrosion Control Program. He stated that the program was incorporated into the existing maintenance program. He did recall (2 years prior) a request by Chalk's to add a water inhibitor task card to the existing program. Since then, he had not seen any other changes to the program.

Mr. Laird conducted an Aging Aircraft Review on the airplane on November 2005. Mr. Laird said that FAR 121.368 applied and that all three airplanes at Chalk's had been examined. Other regulations did not pertain although one new regulation would apply beginning in December 2007. The company was in compliance with the current regulations. On the airplane in question, he looked at the structural write-ups and non-routine work that had been generated during the airplane check. He noted issues with loose rivets, corrosion of the fuselage and surface corrosions. All discrepancies were rectified to his satisfaction.

Mr. Laird indicated that he performed after-hours inspections but that night work involved only logbook items while the main hangar maintenance was during the day.

When asked how would he describe the maintenance personnel/management at Chalk's Ocean Airways, he said excellent. The management and mechanics were extremely knowledgeable on the Mallard aircraft and took extreme pride in their work. Mr. Laird said that maintenance pay was not an issue and that morale at Chalk's was high compared to industry average. He described the size of the workforce as adequate to complete the job and the available resources as adequate. Personnel turnover in the maintenance program was negligible.

Mr. Laird indicated that he had no direct knowledge of the financial condition of the company, indicating that the company appeared to have sufficient funds to accomplish what was needed. The company cannibalized parts between different airplanes.

Mr. Laird described the relationship between the FAA and the company as excellent, saying that there were very good communications. The company routinely asked for the FAA for guidance prior to beginning projects, such as when they acquired new airplanes and asked for FAA input before starting engineering projects. When the company planned to separate a wing from the fuselage during maintenance, he advised them to carefully document everything that they did.