

S T A T E M E N T
National Weather Service Forecast Office
Little Rock, Arkansas
June 3rd, 1999

The following is a written report concerning the accident involving American Airlines Flight 1420 at Little Rock Adams Field (LIT), Arkansas. The accident occurred on June 1st, 1999, at approximately 2351 Central Daylight Time (CDT).

My name is Gregory S. Meffert. I am employed as Senior Forecaster at the National Weather Service Forecast Office at Little Rock, Arkansas. I was on duty as Aviation Forecaster during the period from 2200 CDT to 2359 CDT on June 1st, 1999. During that time frame, the Central Weather Service Unit (CWSU) in Memphis Tennessee was closed. My duties included monitoring and amending (as necessary) the International Aerodrome Forecast (TAF) for Little Rock National Airport (LIT).

On the evening of June 1st, 1999, I assumed aviation forecasting responsibility around 2200 CDT via re-delegation of duties during an on-going severe weather episode. By 2250 CDT, it had become apparent that a line of thunderstorms with very heavy rain would make it into the Little Rock vicinity within the next hour. Upon checking the TAF for Little Adams Field Airport, I realized that the following conditions were forecast: variable winds sustained at 25 knots with gusts to 40 knots, 3 miles surface visibility with a thunderstorm and light rain, and a ceiling of 1500 feet. These conditions were covered in a TEMPO group (greater than 50% probability of occurrence, lasting an hour or less in each instance and, in the aggregate, covering less than half of the time period) from 2300 CDT to 0300 CDT.

I decided, given the WSR-88D Doppler radar characteristics between 2200 CDT and 2300 CDT, that the line of thunderstorms was likely going to be stronger than reflected in our current TAF. I therefore amended the TAF at 2258 CDT to reflect a much lower visibility (1 mile) and very heavy rainfall with a thunderstorm. Recent storm reports from amateur radio operators and phone calls from the general public indicated the current wind forecast was very reasonable. I therefore left the previous wind forecast unmodified. I did, however, modify the time period of the TEMPO group to 2300-0100 CDT based on past storm movement and extrapolation.

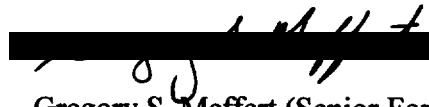
Since the line of thunderstorms was expected to come through relatively quickly (i.e. lasting less than half an hour), I decided that a TEMPO group was the most acceptable way to cover the conditions described above. The chances of occurrence were greater than 50%, but the duration would be less than half of the time period defined in the TEMPO group.

I received an automated weather observation of a wind gust to 76 knots at 2356 CDT. Upon receiving this information, I called to advise the Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM) of our forecast office, who I knew was monitoring the severe weather situation at his home. While advising the WCM of the wind gust, he heard a report on his scanner that a fire vehicle at Little Rock National Airport was in search of a crashed aircraft.

At approximately 0005 CDT, I briefed the next aviation forecaster of the situation and the

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aviation weather forecast. He then assumed aviation forecast responsibility, and I assumed the public forecast responsibility.

A black rectangular redaction box covers the signature of Gregory S. Meffert. The signature is written in cursive and is partially obscured by the redaction.

Gregory S. Meffert (Senior Forecaster)