

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Aviation Safety
Washington, D.C. 20594

Attachment 3 - Witness Statements

OPERATIONAL FACTORS

DCA11MA075

A. ACCIDENT

Operator: Omega Aerial Refueling Services, Inc.
Location: Point Mugu Naval Air Station, California
Date: May 18, 2011
Airplane: Boeing 707-321B, Registration Number: N707AR

B. NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD (NTSB) OPERATIONS GROUP

Captain David Lawrence - Chairman
Senior Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'Enfant Plaza East S.W.
Washington, DC 20594

Captain John Banitt
B707 Flight Standardization Officer
Omega Air Refueling
700 N. Fairfax Street, Suite 306
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Mr. Tony James
Air Safety Investigator
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
800 Independence Ave. S.W.
Washington, DC 20591

Mr. Michael Coker
Senior Safety Pilot
The Boeing Company
P.O. Box 3707 MC 20-95
Seattle, Washington 98124-2207

C. SUMMARY

On May 18, 2011, at approximately 1727 pm local time (0027 UTC), Omega Air flight 70, a Boeing 707-321B (N707AR), crashed on takeoff at the Point Mugu Naval Air Station¹, Point Mugu, California. The airplane impacted beyond the departure end of runway 21 and was destroyed by post-impact fire. All three flight crewmembers aboard escaped with minor injuries.

¹ Naval Base Ventura County.

D. WITNESS STATEMENTS

1.0 Jonathan Mendoza, Omega Air Mechanic

Jonathan Mendoza

flight mechanic

I've been a A&P mechanic for 7 yrs, since 2004

I've worked for Omega/Seven Q Seven for 6 yrs, since 2005

What I saw : I was working on N707MQ at the time the N707AR was taxiing, when I heard N707AR taking off, I went and stood on the stair truck to watch N707AR takeoff. As they were rotating I just saw a ball of fire on the left side of the airplane, then didn't see them anymore because the hangar blocked my view.

~~Jonathan Mendoza~~
A&P

21/may/11

3.0 John Banitt, Omega Air Captain

John Banitt Ground Observer

I was located on the other Omega Tanker. Aircraft completed normal engine start, taxi & take off roll from runway 21 Pt Maguea.

Aircraft started a normal rotation with a normal climb attitude. Shortly after departing runway on climb out I saw flames & the number 2 engine seemed to depart. Aircraft stopped climbing and continued forward disappearing behind buildings near base tower. Short delay and saw billowing smoke. Called Ops officer enroute to aircraft. Met crew at Hospital to make sure they were ok.

John E. Banitt

[REDACTED]
Cell: [REDACTED]

Position: Captain

5.0 Ron Kanoff, Omega Flight Engineer

OMEGA, Flight Engineer (Ground Observer)

Ronald Kanoff

on May 18th, 2011. I was sitting in the cockpit, left seat of N707MQ. I was sitting in this position for the sole purpose of watching the departure of N707AR. I was able to see the initial takeoff run and rotation of N707AR over my left shoulder. I witnessed a large flame appear after rotation and then my view was obstructed by my seated position. I got out of the cockpit and moved to the Forward Entry door. I could no longer see the aircraft (N707AR). Shortly thereafter I witnessed smoke and flames toward the departure end of Runway 21 (RWY 21).

Cell [REDACTED]

[REDACTED].com