Attachment 1

to Operations Group Chairman's Factual Report

Interview Summaries

DCA08MA076

INTERVIEW SUMMARIES

A summary of the interviews conducted during the Field Phase of the accident investigation by the Operations Group follows:

Interview:	Randolph J. Brooks, B-767 Captain, ABX Air
Represented By:	Self
Date:	July 2, 2008
Time:	1700 PDT
Location:	DHL Office Conference Room, San Francisco, California
Present:	Operations Group

During the interview, Captain Brooks provided the following information:

He stated that his age is 54. He is a line pilot on the B-767. He has a general aviation background and was a flight instructor. He became Assistant Chief Flight Instructor for Midwest Air Charter, which turned into Airborne Express and then ABX Air. His date of hire is August 21, 1978. His total flying time is about 19,000 hours, including 1,800 hours as B-767 captain. He is a line pilot and not a check airman.

He had a layover at Washington Dulles international Airport (IAD) on Friday, June 27, 2008, arriving there about 0600 local time. He spent the day there and departed IAD at 2055 local time on flight 502 to Airborne Airpark (ILN), Wilmington, Ohio, arriving about midnight. He departed ILN at 0424 on a flight to SFO, arriving there Saturday morning, June 28, 2008, about 0630 to 0700 and spent the day there. He was to fly flight 1611, the accident flight, from SFO to ILN with a scheduled departure time of 2230.

The airplane was completely loaded with the cargo doors closed when he arrived at the airplane. They did a preflight. About 2215, the first officer closed the L1 door. About 2215-2220 is when he heard a “pop.”

The captain felt rested for the flight. There were no other crewmembers on the flight besides the two pilots. This was the third time that he and First Officer Hughes had flown together. He stated that First Officer Hughes is a sharp guy.

At 2215, they were ready to go; all the paperwork was done. He gave the DHL representative the paperwork and turned off the external power. The airplane was now powered by the APU. They had their ATC clearance.

The first officer went back to check the lavatory and close the L1 door. He has no duties to perform in the supernumerary compartment. He came back to the cockpit and returned to his seat and fastened his seatbelt and shoulder harness. About that time, they heard a “pop” and then a “rumbling” noise about 10 to 12 seconds later. The noise was heard not more than 30 to 40 seconds, definitely less than a minute, after the first officer returned to the cockpit. When they heard the “pop,” they looked at each other and said, “What’s that?” The captain heard a “crescendo” of sound. He shut off the air conditioning

packs. The first officer went back and opened the cockpit door and then closed it again. The first officer told the captain that "we have a fire and got to get off the airplane." The captain was thinking cargo fire. There were no lavatory smoke detector or fire warnings. Smoke came pouring into the cockpit. The first officer called ground control and reported the fire. The captain did the evacuation checklist but he did not open the outflow valves. The first officer exited through his window. The captain was still fumbling for the escape tape. He heard the first officer call to him that he has to get out of the airplane. The captain discharged the engine and APU fire bottles, which shut down the APU. He observed the ground crew pushing the airstairs to the L1 door but the first officer told them to push it to the captain's window. The captain jumped out through his window onto the airstairs.

The captain saw how fast the fire was propagating and there was no way they could have fought the fire with a portable halon bottle.

They were originally going to tow the airplane from that parking spot, "Plot 11" on the DHL ramp.

It was a quick response for the emergency personnel to arrive, maybe a couple of minutes.

The airplane was plugged into the external power cart with the APU running. When they switched to the APU, it powered up normally. Nobody was using oxygen at the time. They had called ground control for pushback. There was nothing unusual at all going on.

The supernumerary heater is not supposed to be powered because it is connected through the "squat switch." There is a heating element in the duct. The switch was selected to high. The heater is only marginally effective in flight.

The pilots had checked the oxygen system in the cockpit. He pushed the passenger oxygen switch and tested his oxygen mask and verified pressure on EICAS. They are not required to don the oxygen mask but he did. There was nothing unusual about it. Oxygen was flowing during the test and then it stopped at the completion of the test. Pressure was about 1,300-1,400 psi. It checked normal. It was not stuck in the emergency position.

The captain never went back to observe the fire. Smoke was getting very bad very quickly. It was seeping through the cockpit doorway. The captain stated that the first officer's judgment was totally correct. The captain could smell the smoke and he got a "gulp" of it. After the event, medical personnel took his blood pressure and administered an EKG.

It was very dark and visibility was poor. He closed his eyes because his eyes were burning. He exited out through his window onto the airstairs, then moved away from the airplane and watched it burn. About 45 minutes later, he received a medical checkup in the ambulance.

Response time for the emergency personnel was two to three minutes. "They brought every piece of equipment they had." He stayed there for about four hours, leaving about 0200 local time to go the hotel.

The fire fighters first aimed hoses into the cockpit. Then they tried to open the L1 door but it would not open. They chopped a hole in the side of the fuselage. They moved the airstairs to the L1 door and went inside through the hole they had made. They did not enter through the cockpit windows. There was a hole on top of the fuselage from the fire.

When the captain was in the cockpit, he did not feel any heat from the fire. Smoke was increasing at a high rate. After he got out he observed black smoke pouring out of the airplane.

When he heard the "pop" and "rumbling" sound, he initially thought it was a pneumatic problem. He did not know if the cargo door had let loose or if a seal had blown. He turned off the packs but he did not look at the pressure gauge. The sound did not go away. He switched off the APU switch, although it had already shut down. Initially there were no smoke detector or cargo fire warnings. Later he heard an intermittent cargo smoke detector warning sound after the fire had been roaring. There were no unusual warnings or annunciations leading up to the fire. He did not know what the problem was but he knew he had to get out of the airplane.

The captain first smelled smoke when the first officer came back into the cockpit, maybe within 15 to 20 seconds, but certainly within 30 seconds.

One pack had been running and he shut it off. The recirculation fan was not running. No air was circulating in the cockpit from air in the airplane's belly.

The first officer used his escape rope to exit the airplane.

Recapping the event, he said

- Heard door close
- Seat belts on
- "Pop," "rumbling" increasing
- First officer back in seven to eight seconds
- Have fire, have to get off
- Smell smoke
- Call ground control
- Fire the bottles
- Checklist
- First officer gone
- Saw smoke billowing in
- Captain out the window

Smoke was coming in higher; he had trouble seeing the overhead panel. It was dark; no power. He had a problem seeing. The airplane was powered by the APU until he discharged the bottle and the APU shut down. The captain also discharged the bottles to the engine.

He thought it would be a good idea for FAR Part 121 air carriers to pay attention to this event and train operating fire bottles in a dark cockpit, which they normally do not do.

Interview:	David L. Hughes, B-767 First Officer, ABX Air
Represented By:	Self
Date:	July 2, 2008
Time:	1825 PDT
Location:	DHL Office Conference Room, San Francisco, California
Present:	Operations Group

During the interview, First Officer Hughes provided the following information:

He stated that his age is 42. He is a line pilot on the B-767. He grew up loving aviation and had most of his pilot certificates before he attended college at Middle Tennessee State University. He has 200 hours of instruction given. He flew about 1,200 hours in the right seat on the DC-3s and Convair 240, 340, and 440s for Rhoads Aviation in Columbus, Ohio. He flew in Africa. He also flew DC-3s from Nashville to Indianapolis six nights a week for the U.S. Postal Service. He was then hired by Ryan Aviation flying B-727 flight engineer (672 hours) before moving to the right seat (300+ hours). He was then hired by Airborne Express as a DC-8 Second Officer (126 hours) and then moved to the right seat on the DC-9 for 11 months. He has flown as first officer on the B-767 for 10 years. His date of hire is July 30, 1997. He holds an SIC type rating on the B-767. His total flying time is 9,843 hours, including 4,300+ hours as B-767 first officer. He is a line pilot, not a management pilot.

When they showed up at the airplane in SFO on June 28, 2008, he observed that the cargo doors were closed and the airplane was already loaded. He did a walk-around and then went inside. He and the captain did their interior checks and the loader handed the captain the "tape." The captain crosschecked the load plan (cargo position, weights, etc.) to the numbers on the "tape." The first officer signed the weight data record and the captain signed and dated the "tape."

The first officer closed the L1 door, checked the lavatory to make sure nobody was in there, perhaps turned the galley light on, went into the cockpit, closed the cockpit door, sat down in his seat and buckled up. He heard a pack valve noise, or something, cycling. It sounded different but not bad. The captain was talking to the person on the ground. About 30 to 45 seconds after he sat down, he heard a "muffled bang," immediately followed by the sound of air flowing. It "crescendoed" up loud, like something banging together. He thought it might have been a ruptured duct. He looked up at the pneumatic panel and the captain turned off the packs. The noise was coming from behind them and it did not go away.

He then unbuckled his seatbelt and opened the cockpit door. Dark smoke was coming down from the ceiling. He could see the back of the supernumerary area. There was a glow on the upper side of the area (airplane right) in the same plane as the PSION computer (used by ground personnel for weight and balance). He peeked around the corner and then closed the door. He told the captain that we have a fire. Smoke entered the cockpit, not a great deal, but some. He sat down in his seat to make it easier to open

his sliding window. He reached for the escape rope, fumbling around but getting it in a few seconds, tugged on it and then he threw it out the window. He also got a couple breaths of fresh air out the window. The smoke was pungent. He called ground control to report the fire but he did not declare an emergency. He told ground control that he needed "CFR" [Crash Fire Rescue]. He talked to the captain about getting out of the airplane. The first officer had been a volunteer fire fighter growing up. The captain was very professional; he did the evacuation checklist. The first officer went down the rope. "It was absolutely a non-event." Later, his leg was sore from hitting pitot tubes. He then walked to the left side of the airplane and observed the captain's window moved inward but not opened. He yelled to the captain to get out. The ground personnel were pushing the airstairs carefully under the L1 door. He told them to move it "smartly" to the captain's window instead. The captain opened his window and jumped onto the airstairs. Within seconds, the "CFR" were there.

There had been no airplane systems problems, no annunciations or warnings. The lavatory smoke detector did not activate at first but he later heard it when he was going out the window.

For whatever reason, he looked out the window and yelled "fire, fire, fire." The CFR were very fast to respond. He and the captain walked away from the airplane and within seconds, here come the fire engines. There was a DHL person there and the airport police. The CFR pulled up to the front of the airplane. They used a penetrator to pump foam into the first officer's window. He told someone (perhaps a mechanic) if they want to ram it, ram it in through the door where the fire was. The mechanic then told the fire personnel that the fire was in the supernumerary area. They were spraying straight up. They ran out of water/foam. He observed a tall fire fighter yell something about a key to the gate. The fire fighter told the first officer to grab the line. He could not get the gate open so the fire fighter jumped over the gate with barbed wire on the top. Water eventually started flowing again.

The first officer was taken to the hospital in the ambulance. He was examined but they found nothing wrong. He came back to the airport in a cab.

He has had experience with engine fires in DC-3s and Convairs but nothing like this. There is no real training for this kind of event. They are trained to use the PELS [Personal Environmental Life Support] hood, fire extinguishers, etc. but they do not practice fighting fires with the PELS hood on in the simulator.

It was a bad situation, and they needed to get out of the airplane.

He did not recall if he turned on the coffee maker. He turned off the lights in the supernumerary area except for one map light. His normal procedure is to turn the galley light on if the airplane has one. He does not recall if it had a galley light. He observed that the cargo compartment lights were off.

He looked at the pneumatic duct pressure and it was normal.

Observing from outside the airplane, no smoke was coming down from the E & E compartment. In fact, he did not see smoke coming out of any hole except the first officer's window.

He thinks that some smoke came into the cockpit when the cockpit door was opened. After he looked in the back, he closed the door. The supernumerary area filled up with dark brown smoke.

The first officer stated that their training is very good at ABX Air. They covered the emergency equipment, where it is and how to use it. They also watch an emergency evacuation video.

There was HAZMAT on board. CFR asked for the paperwork and he told them that it was located behind the captain's seat. CFR also asked how many people were on board.