

## Witness Statement

| ERA13FA139 Thomson, GA beech 390

Saturday Feb 23, 2013

Taken by Pete Wentz – NTSB AS-60

Mark George – NTSB AS-60 present

Witness: Kevin Perry Fire Fighter/Rescue

Kevin Perry was a Captain for the McDuffie County Fire/Rescue assigned to Station #2, located at the HQU airport in Thomson, GA. He was a 53 year old male and had worked for McDuffie County for 15 years as a fire fighter. He had 25 years of fire/rescue experience and 35 years of EMT experience. Captain Perry was working in Station #2 on the night of the accident (Feb 20, 2013 at approximately 8:10pm). He was sitting in the kitchen of the station working on a laptop computer when he heard a jet pass behind him (Captain Perry stated that the center of runway to the edge of Station #2 is 499 feet 11 3/4 inches). He had heard this airplane land numerous times before, and said he could usually tell if the jet was “heavy” or “light” depending on the sound the wheels made when they touched down on the runway. Captain Perry said that on this night, he heard the jet approaching in the normal manner, but he never heard the wheels touch down. At the time the sound of the jet was directly behind Station #2, he heard the power advance and the jet continued past the station to the east. He stood and walked “about 15 feet” to the east entrance door of Station #2, and looked out the window. He saw a “fire ball” coming from near the Milliken building located across the street from the departure end of Runway 10. Captain Perry noted that at the time he saw the fireball, the lights went out in the station and he heard the generator for Station #2 start up. He headed into the station truck bay, donned turnout gear, and drove out of Station #2 in an E-One pump truck. Captain Perry radioed the Sheriff’s dispatch as he was making the S-turn on Tech Drive headed east toward the Milliken building. He estimated it took him 2 minutes from the time he saw the fire ball to when he made the radio call to dispatch. He then called the Augusta airport tower to report a possible aircraft accident. Captain Perry continued on Tech Road, turned left on Washington, and drove north looking for fire or smoke in the vicinity of the Milliken building. He realized that the smoke was behind him, so he turned the truck around and drove back south. About then, he heard fire fighter Jimmy Williams on the radio say that an injured person had been found at the crash site and was being transported to the staging area. The staging area was located where the power lines crossed Edmonds road. Captain Perry parked in the staging area and went on foot to the crash site. He took a position at the southwest corner of the site near a manhole cover, and assumed on-scene commander duties. He dispatched additional firefighters with handheld extinguishers to extinguish hot spots around the site. Captain Perry also called for the Forestry Commission to assist by plowing a fire break around the crash site. Captain Perry asked his men to conduct a primary and secondary search of the area, and to locate and tag each fatality. Once the site was controlled, he returned to Station #2.