

Ameristar Air Cargo, Inc. dba Ameristar Charters
Ypsilanti, Michigan
March 8, 2017
DCA17FA076

**NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

ATTACHMENT 1

Flight Attendant Interviews

4 - Pages

NTSB Accident: DCA17FA076
Interview: Jeffery Zerke
Position: Flight Attendant, (Lead) A position
Jumpseat: 1L Door Side
Date: 27 June 2017
Location: Telephone Interview
Representative: Stacy Perkins (Flight Attendant)
Present: Peter Wentz (NTSB), Tiffany LeTour (FAA), Kelley France (Boeing),
Mary Anne Cipperly (Ameristar), Paul Lacy (Zodiac)

Introductions were made by NTSB Investigator Peter Wentz.

Mr. Zerke stated he completed initial new hire training for Ameristar Charters on October 23, 2013. Prior to Ameristar Charters, he worked for 5 other airlines, Sun Country Airlines, Champion Air, USA3000, Compass Airlines and USA Jet. His most recent recurrent training was completed in Oct 2016.

Mr. Zerke stated that after closing the aircraft door, the flight attendants (FA's) completed the safety demonstration and prepared the cabin for take-off. The FA's completed their walk through and took their jumpseats. He felt the passengers were tense because of the high winds in Ypsilanti that day. The take-off roll out seemed normal, then it was apparent the pilots had rejected the take-off because the brakes came on "really strong". "It seemed like a long time passed", he recalls thinking about the length of the runway and if the airplane would be able to stop. Right about then the ground terrain changed, he was sitting at the 1L door and realized the airplane was off the runway, so he started yelling his commands along with the C-FA, "heads down, stay down". The airplane came to a stop and he initiated an evacuation at his door. He stated that he didn't hear the evacuation signal of "evacuate, evacuate, evacuate" from the pilots. He assessed the 1L door and operated it, then reached down for the slide manual inflation handle, he recalls pulling the handle twice to get the slide to inflate. He didn't recall why it took two times to inflate the slide, but remembers after the first pull the slide hadn't inflated, so he pulled again and within seconds the slide was ready. Mr. Zerke stated he didn't follow the evacuation commands he was trained to perform, once the door was opened and the slide inflated, he turned around and passengers were right there, so he just started yelling "go, go, go, get away from the airplane". He later stated he should have directed two passengers to stay at the bottom of the slide to help others off the slide, along with turning on the emergency light switch, which he forgot to do as well. He did recall one of the coaches coming back to the bottom of the slide to assist. He stated that he wished he wouldn't have forgotten to ask someone to assist before starting the evacuation. Passenger were evacuating, and he heard the C-FA yell that her exit was blocked, he stepped into the galley to help block the 1R exit and direct all the passengers out the 1L door. Mr. Zerke stated that once all the passengers had evacuated, he walked through the entire airplane, checked each lavatory and cleared the cabin. As he passed the overwing exit area, he recalls both the forward exit hatches were laying in the exit row on the airplane floor and that both aft overwing exit had not been opened. He then returned to the forward entry area and exiting the 1L door. He stated feeling that his training prepared him to command the passengers during the evacuation and check the airplane to make sure everyone got off before leaving himself. Once outside the airplane, he and the GSC walked to the right side of the airplane to gather the passengers who went out he right overwing exit. They escorted them back to the main group of passengers to conduct a head count. He stated that the passenger count was provided by the GSC.

NTSB Accident: DCA17FA076
Interview: David Ladenberger
Position: Flight Attendant, B position
Jumpseat: Tailcone
Date: 27 June 2017
Location: Telephone Interview
Representative: Stacy Perkins, Ameristar Flight Attendant
Present: Peter Wentz (NTSB), Tiffany LeTour (FAA), Kelley France (Boeing), Mary Anne Cipperly (Ameristar), Mike Kret (Zodiac), Paul Lacy (Zodiac)

Introductions were made by NTSB Investigator Peter Wentz.

Mr. Ladenberger stated he completed initial new hire training for Ameristar Charters on October 23, 2013. Prior to Ameristar Charters, he worked for 5 other airlines, Trans Meridian, Champion Air, Nomads Travel Club, USA Jet Charter and Compass Air. He attended annual recurrent training at Ameristar Jet Charter headquarter in Addison. His most recent recurrent training was completed in August 2016.

Mr. Ladenberger stated that after the passengers boarded the airplane the entry door was closed, and the flight attendants (FA'S) completed the safety demonstration and went through the cabin to make sure everything was secure. He stated that most of the coaches and families with around 10 to 12 small children were seated in the first 1/3 of the airplane. The middle of the airplane was where the players were seated including the overwing exit rows, he stated that it was his responsibility to brief the passengers in the exit row. Mr. Ladenberger recalls briefing 4 total passengers in the two exit rows before take-off. The band, a few coaches and the cheerleaders sat in the back of the airplane behind the players. He stated that after securing the cabin, he attached the red barrier strap across the airplane aisle and strapped into his jumpseat. He and the ground security coordinator (GSC), who was sitting on the aisle ahead of him had a short conversation about the upcoming service. Mr. Ladenberger stated the airplane started to take-off, everything seems normal and the airplane continued to go faster and faster until he felt the brakes being applied. He recalls securing himself and thinking the pilots are rejecting the take-off. The braking continued for longer than normal and he felt something was wrong with the airplane. He stated that he braced himself some more while the braking became harder and harder, then the airplane came to a complete stop. He looked at the GSC and thought that the braking was very firm, but felt the airplane was still on the runway. Next, he heard the pilots over the P.A. say "evacuate, evacuate, evacuate". I got up from the jumpseat and checked the door with the back of his hands to make sure it was safe to open. He stated that he was yelling "stay back, stay back" while he was opening the door. The door only opened a few inches before becoming caught on the other seatbelt that was attached to the tailcone jumpseat. The GSC yelled at him that the seatbelt was blocking the exit from opening so he closed the door, pushed up the jumpseat and un-blocked the seatbelt. He stated that the lift latch portion of the seatbelt was caught under the door. Next, he reopened the door and assessed the tailcone exit area. Mr. Ladenberger stated that the tailcone had not jettisoned from the airplane so he went to the end of the catwalk and pulled the left side tailcone interior jettison handle, the tailcone fell off the airplane and the slide inflated. The slide fell down, but extended out the back of the airplane in a horizontal position. He returned to the cabin to start evacuating passengers, but everybody had evacuated the airplane except maybe the pilots. Mr. Ladenberger stated that he evacuated himself out the 2L door and could see most passengers were far away from the airplane. He walked around the

airplane to check for any injuries to passengers and crew but found no injuries. Most groups had already formed passengers so the FA's started a head count.

Mr. Ladenberger stated that his training kicked in and prepared him to accomplish his duties, he stated that working emergency scenarios on the actual airplane during recurrent training helped him conduct his duties during this evacuation. He also stated it would have been helpful if the unoccupied seatbelt on the tailcone was buckled together so it wouldn't have blocked the door from opening.

NTSB Accident: DCA17FA076
Interview: Charita Johnson
Position: Flight Attendant, C position
Jumpseat: 1L Aisle Side
Date: 25 May 2017 3:04pm – 3:35pm EDT
Location: Telephone Interview
Representative: Tammy Windham, Friend
Present: Peter Wentz (NTSB), Tiffany LeTour (FAA), Kelley France (Boeing), Mary Anne Cipperly (Ameristar), Mike Kret (Zodiac), Paul Lacy (Zodiac)

Introductions were made by NTSB Investigator Peter Wentz.

Ms. Johnson stated she completed initial new hire training for Ameristar Charters on August 25, 2014. Prior to Ameristar Charters, she worked for 3 other airlines, Trans Meridian, Champion Air and USA3000. She attended annual recurrent training at Ameristar Charter headquarter in Addison, TX and American Airlines training center in Fort Worth, TX. Her most recent recurrent training was completed in August 2016.

Ms. Johnson stated that prior to boarding the cabin, the captain conducted a crew briefing and then passenger boarding began. After closing the aircraft door, the flight attendants (FA's) prepared the cabin for take-off and made sure all the passengers were seated, then all four FA's took their jumpseats. The captain made a P.A. announcing "FA's be seated for take-off" and she gave the lead FA a signal that the cabin was prepared. The aircraft started the take-off roll and Ms. Johnson stated she felt the aircraft lift-off a little, but then felt the brakes being applied and she felt forward and upward pressure in her jumpseat. The aircraft violently shook while it continued down the runway and Ms. Johnson and the lead FA started yelling "heads down stay down" until the aircraft came to a stop. Ms. Johnson stated she didn't hear commands from the flight crew to evacuate, but stated that she and lead FA knew something was wrong and initiated the evacuation themselves, she got out of her jumpseat and assessed the 1R door. She stated being concerned about opening the 1R door because of the high winds that they had experienced that day. Once she felt it was safe to open the door she attempted to do so, but it took more than one attempt, she felt the wind pushing on the door. Ms. Johnson stated that on her second attempt the door finally opened, and the gust lock retained the door in the open position. She stated that she reached down and pulled the manual inflation handle, but nothing happened to the slide. She still had ahold of the handle, so she pulled it again, this time the slide dropped from the door sill, but did not inflate so she blocked the exit. She stated that on the second attempt she pulled the manual inflation handle and cable all the way of the slide packing. Ms. Johnson stated she blocked her exit by holding onto the assist handle and making sure no one exited out the 1R door. She also re-directed passengers to use an alternate exit. She then remained in the exit area behind the lead FA while passengers were exiting the 1L door, she and the lead FA shouted commands

of “come this way, leave everything, jump, jump”. Once all the passengers were off the aircraft Ms. Johnson and the lead FA went through the cabin and lavatories to make sure everyone was off the airplane. They were the last two FA’s to exit the airplane and once on the ground they started to gather all the passengers together to get a head count. Ms. Johnson stated that the crew gathered passengers by separate groups, she gathered the basketball players while another FA gathered the families. After all groups were counted the FA’s gathered to determine if all the passengers were accounted for outside of the airplane, then passengers were transferred to another fixed base operator (FBO) on the airfield. She and her crew were then transported to the Ameristar offices on the airfield at YIP.