

Factual Report – Attachment 1

Interview Summaries

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

CEN19MA190

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Interviewee: Marko Dorsey (Local Control (LC))
Representative: Chad Gayle, NATCA Facility Representative

Date / Time: July 2, 2019 / 1400–1435 CDT
Location: ADS ATCT
Present: Brandon Johnson and Joseph Garcia
Investigator: Betty Koschig

During the interview Marko Dorsey stated the following:

His air traffic control experience began in 2011 when he enlisted in the United States Air Force (USAF), and served for six years on active duty as an air traffic controller. He had been stationed at Langley Air Force Base. On May 17, 2018, he was hired by the FAA through the veteran’s recruitment appointment (VRA) direct hire program and had worked at ADS since May 17, 2018.

He was qualified and current on all positions in the control tower and certified as a controller in charge (CIC). His supervisor was Ken Bass. His operating initials were MD. He held a current ATC medical clearance with no restrictions.

He obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration -Management degree from St. Leo University. He served as the ADS NATCA treasurer.

On Sunday, June 30, 2019, he worked his regularly scheduled shift and was assigned to the local control (LC) position at the time of the accident. His work schedule for the week leading up to, and including the day of the accident was:

June 24, 2019 Monday: RDO
June 25, 2019 Tuesday: RDO
June 26, 2019 Wednesday: 1415–2215
June 27, 2019 Thursday: 1415–2215
June 28, 2019 Friday: 1245–2045
June 29, 2019 Saturday: 0545–1345
June 30, 2019 Sunday: 0545–1345

Mr. Dorsey was asked to give a 72-hour history of events in his life. He stated that he had been sleeping about 7 or 8 hours each night, eating fine and nothing was abnormal. He was in good health and did not smoke. The only recent big change in his life was that he bought a house in May. He stated that he liked working at ADS.

Mr. Dorsey was asked what he recalled about the accident and the events leading up to the accident. He stated that leading up to accident was just standard procedure; he requested an IFR release using standard terminal automation replacement system (STARS)¹, and while waiting for the release he had a Skylane call on the frequency stating they were ready for departure. Mr.

¹ STARS is an air traffic control automation system. STARS give controllers a complete, precise picture of the airspace, enabling them to manage aircraft they are tracking with radar or the satellite-based ADS-B.

Dorsey stated they used the STARS to request a release; they utilized the “F13” function, entered the beacon code, and then pushed “enter.” After the Skylane departed, he received a release [from Dallas-Fort Worth TRACON (D10)] for the King Air (N534FF). Before departing N534FF, he waited a little bit of time so there would not be a conflict the Skylane that just departed. N534FF was ready to go, so shortly after that he issued the pilot the standard release, 050 heading, and cleared N534FF for takeoff. The pilot read back the instructions and started to roll; everything seemed normal.

Mr. Dorsey stated that he scanned the runway as usual, looking for birds, then called for a release on a Citation. He scanned the runway again and looked for coyotes. As N534FF lifted off, he watched it make an early turn, but nothing was out of the ordinary. Then he looked on the scope to see where the Skylane was, and to formulate a plan for the Citation’s departure who would be in trail of the N534FF; if he needed extra spacing or if he needed to delay the Citation's turn. That was when the explosion occurred.

When asked to explain if N534FF’s early turnout was normal or if there was anything that he noticed out of the norm, Mr. Dorsey stated that he had worked many King Airs; some depart early and some late, and N534FF was a normal take off with an early turnout.

When asked what he recalled after the explosion occurred, Mr. Dorsey stated that the GC rang (activated) the crash phone, and D10 called up asking about the Citation that had been released. At that point, he made a blanket broadcast (over the frequency) telling all aircraft to stand by. The GC grabbed the checklist, while Mr. Dorsey informed D10 about the accident. Mr. Dorsey and the GC started running through the checklist (accident) at that time; he notified the regional operations center (ROC), manager, supervisor, agency, etc. When asked if there were any problems getting the checklist, Mr. Dorsey said no, it was handy and located by the crash phone.

Mr. Dorsey stated that the GC made some calls and the air traffic manager (ATM) was notified. Mr. Dorsey reached out and called a supervisor (Ken Bass (operations supervisor (OS))), to verify that there was nothing else they needed to do. The OS said he was coming in (to ADS ATCT). Then Mr. Dorsey called D10 and asked for their supervisor’s phone number. He got the number so he could verify with the D10 supervisor that there was nothing else that they needed them to do. By that time, the OS had already called D10.

When asked how long he stayed on the position after the accident occurred, Mr. Dorsey did not recall, but thought it was maybe 30 minutes.

When asked if he went home after being relieved from the position, Mr. Dorsey said no, he stayed at the facility for a few hours. Once he knew he was not going to be subject to a drug test, he left the facility a little after 1300.

[The ATC group had been informed by management that the tower had some issues with the crash phone intermittently not working.] When Mr. Dorsey was asked what would he have done if the crash phone had not been working that day, he stated there were alternate methods; they can use the handheld radios (one for fire department, and one for police department) or they

can use the telephone. He felt it was just by luck that the crash phone was working that day, and had it not been working there would have been a delay in the response.

When asked if he thought the response to the accident site was fast enough, he said yes.

When asked if anything sounded unusual with the airplane, Mr. Dorsey said he did not hear anything out of the norm.

When asked if he recognized the call sign of this King Air, Mr. Dorsey said no, it was not a frequent visitor.

When asked if there was anything that could have helped them deal with the emergency, Mr. Dorsey said that he had been giving that a lot of thought since the accident occurred and he did not feel there was anything else that could have helped.

When asked if he recalled seeing anything unusual, such as something fall off the airplane, leaking, fire, etc., prior to the accident, Mr. Dorsey said he did not recall anything.

When asked if any pilots or anyone else called the tower to report the accident, Mr. Dorsey said there were many phone calls, but he did not recall any calls that reported anything.

When asked if a position relief briefing (PRB) was conducted when he took the position, Mr. Dorsey stated yes, it had been done with the checklist and it had been recorded.

When asked if he had the opportunity to review the replay of the event, Mr. Dorsey said yes, the audio; he reviewed it earlier during the pre-brief for this interview.

When asked to describe on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the heaviest) how he would rate the traffic volume at the time of the event, Mr. Dorsey stated 2.

When asked to describe on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the most complex) how he would rate the traffic complexity at the time of the event, Mr. Dorsey stated 2. He stated it was normal for that time of day.

When asked if there were any distractions occurring at the time of the accident, or leading up to the accident, Mr. Dorsey said no, nothing was going on.

When asked if he recalled the weather conditions or current advisories at and leading up to the time of the accident, he said yes, and there was no precipitation; it was a sunny day.

When asked if he received a pre-duty weather briefing, Mr. Dorsey stated yes, he did one and nothing stood out. He felt those weather briefings were useful.

When asked if he had been interviewed about this accident before this NTSB interview, Mr. Dorsey stated yes, by the FAA attorney.

When asked if he filed an air traffic safety action program (ATSAP)² report on this accident, Mr. Dorsey stated no, he was unable to gain access to the system because he did not have an account set up. He called the ATSAP help line and asked them to give him an extension on reporting.

When asked if he had a cellular phone or other type of personal electronic device in the tower at the time of the accident, Mr. Dorsey said no.

When asked if he could think of anything else, he wanted to add, Mr. Dorsey said no, “it was so quick and sudden;” nothing else to add.

Interviewee: Brett Potter (Ground Control (GC))

Representative: Chad Gayle, NATCA Facility Representative

Date / Time: July 2, 2019 / 1540–1612CDT

Location: ADS ATCT

Present: Brandon Johnson and Joseph Garcia

Investigator: Betty Koschig

During the interview Brett Potter stated the following:

His air traffic control experience began on December 13, 2017 when he was hired by the FAA and attended initial training at the FAA Academy. After successful completion of initial air traffic control training he transferred to ADS where he had worked since March 17, 2018.

He was qualified and current on all positions in the control tower and certified as a CIC. His supervisor was Ken Bass. His operating initials were BP. He held a current ATC medical clearance with no restrictions.

On Sunday, June 30, 2019, he worked his regularly scheduled shift and was assigned to the combined GC/FD/CD/CIC position at the time of the accident. His work schedule for the week leading up to, and including the day of the accident was:

June 24, 2019 Monday: 0545–1345
June 25, 2019 Tuesday: 1200–2000 (Overtime shift), normally RDO
June 26, 2019 Wednesday: RDO
June 27, 2019 Thursday: 1345–2145
June 28, 2019 Friday: 1345–2145
June 29, 2019 Saturday: Leave
June 30, 2019 Sunday: 0545–1345

Mr. Potter was asked to give a 72-hour history of events in his life. He reported that he normally got at least 8 hours of sleep and had no recent changes to his sleep pattern or eating

² ATSAP is a voluntary reporting program that allows air traffic controllers and other employees to report safety and operational concerns.

habits. He was not fatigued the day of the accident. He did not smoke and only occasionally consumed alcohol. He stated that he did not have any recent major life changes other than purchasing a house 3 months prior.

Mr. Potter was asked what he recalled about the accident and the events leading up to the accident. He recalled having a couple aircraft already taxiing around the airport when N534FF called for taxi from somewhere on the west side of the airport. He remembered calling the LC on the landline³ [enhanced terminal voice switch (ETVS)] to coordinate the crossing runway 15 with N534FF. After getting N534FF to the other side of the runway, he instructed the pilot to continue via taxiway A. He did not recall telling the pilot to contact or monitor tower, he believed the pilot switched to LC on his own.

Mr. Potter stated that he did not witness the accident and did not recall anything sounding out of the ordinary prior to the accident.

He had several flight plans print out just prior to the accident, so he was looking down at the flight plans to process them when he heard a very loud boom. He snapped his head up and saw a large orange fireball, then a lot of black smoke. He reached for the crash phone and called over to dispatch. He declared an Alert 3⁴ aircraft crash on the airport and gave the operator as much information as he could. At that time the only information he had was aircraft type, callsign and location of the crash. He recalled the Fire department responded very quickly. They did not need to enter any of the movement areas, so he did not need to talk to them. After the accident, he recalled being very busy with the accident checklist, and making numerous calls. He could not recall if airport operation officially closed the airport, but he and the LC stopped operations at the airport and did not allow anyone in or out.

When asked if a PRB was conducted when he took the position, Mr. Potter stated that PRBs were required, and they utilized a checklist when controllers changed positions or went on break. He stated that after the PRB the outgoing controller did not have a set time that they had to remain at the position and monitor it; but they stayed based on the situation permitting, to ensure the incoming controller did not have any issues.

When asked if he had the opportunity to review the replay of the event, Mr. Potter said yes, the audio during the pre-brief.

When asked to describe on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the heaviest) how he would rate the traffic volume at the time of the event, Mr. Potter stated 2 to 3.

When asked to describe on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the most complex) how he would rate the traffic complexity at the time of the event, Mr. Potter stated 2 to 3.

³ ETVS contains centralized communications switching equipment that performs all control functions needed for ATC voice communications.

⁴ Alert-3: Indicates an aircraft has been involved in an actual accident or that an accident is imminent; AFD and APO personnel and equipment deploy immediately. See Attachment 7 – Letter of Agreement - Emergency Procedures - Addison Airport.

When asked if there were any distractions occurring at the time of the accident, or leading up to the accident, Mr. Potter said he did not recall any distractions in the tower.

When asked if he recalled the weather conditions or current advisories at and leading up to the time of the accident, Mr. Potter recalled the weather that day as being a pretty good weather day. It was sunny with scattered clouds and mostly calm wind, maybe 4 or 5 knots from the east.

When asked if he received a pre-duty weather briefing, Mr. Potter stated he remembered reviewing the required pre-duty weather briefing and did not notice anything standing out in it.

When asked if he had been interviewed about this accident before this NTSB interview, Mr. Potter stated yes, by the FAA.

When asked if he filed an ATSAP report on this accident, Mr. Potter stated he had not filed an ATSAP because he was not registered yet. He had called the help line but could not get in touch with anyone.

When asked how long he had been on the position when the accident occurred, Mr. Potter recalled being on position for about an hour, when the accident occurred. He had been working GC combined with FD and CIC. He stated it was a normal configuration to have two controllers in the tower cab and one on break (not in the tower); three controller in the facility was normal.

When asked if he felt that he had been properly trained for situation, Mr. Potter said he felt properly trained and well prepared and had what he needed to handle the emergency. He said, "I think we were prepared for something like this."

When asked if he had a cellular phone or other type of personal electronic device in the tower at the time of the accident, Mr. Potter said no.

When asked if he noticed anything unusual with N534FF, Mr. Potter stated that the pilot sounded competent and coherent with nothing out of the ordinary. The pilot sounded familiar with the airport, understood the instructions, and had good read-backs.

When asked if the crash phone had been working that day, Mr. Potter stated yes, everything went smoothly.

When asked had he ever had to ring crash phone before this accident, Mr. Potter said, "yeah, but nothing like this;" maybe just for someone with an issue inbound, etc.

When asked if he called the controller downstairs to come to the tower, Mr. Potter said no, they did not attempt to call him. The controller that was on break did not need to be recalled to the tower, he returned to the tower cab pretty much immediately after the accident.

When asked how often a supervisor (OS) in the tower, Mr. Potter said, half and half; there were two OS's assigned to the facility and they were typically in the tower cab when they were on duty.