

Specialist's Report – Attachment 4
Controllers Statements

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

WPR20FA034



**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
57TH OPERATIONS SUPPORT SQUADRON (ACC)
NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE NEVADA**

MEMORANDUM FOR Air Traffic Investigations, Office of Aviation Safety, National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)

FROM: HD

SUBJECT: N7GA Controller Statement

1. When I was briefed into Thule Approach (TA), Sunrise Approach and Assist (SA and ASA) were simultaneously briefed which decombined the terminal side of the room. I suggested HH be Thule Assist (ATA) since he had very recently been awarded the radar facility SEI and this may have been his first opportunity to work unmonitored. I was watching a trainee in block 3 or 4 of TA training which is towards the end. Since the departure phase is fairly light traffic, I decided to have RD who was still in his initial phase (preparing to officially begin training) of TA sit in position with me so he could get some experience talking on live frequencies.

2. N7GA checked in at 6,500 MSL requesting an ILS approach to North Las Vegas (VGT) airport. When we weren't making transmissions, RD and I were discussing the transmissions he would make, practicing phraseology, and building a plan for the traffic. N7GA was given traffic on and vectored away from fighter-type aircraft departing Nellis (LSV) runway 03. I recall him reporting that traffic in sight. He was then given traffic on fighter-type aircraft departing runway 21 and issued a vector to deconflict the aircraft from each other. When that flight of fighters took off, I gave them an expedited climb through 7,000 MSL and traffic on N7GA. I also issued a more north-bound turn to N7GA to ensure separation was maintained and N7GA was issued "ALTITUDE YOUR DISCRETION." Additionally, there was a Medevac aircraft southbound to LAS. RD and I discussed deconflicting the fighters from the Medevac; he issued a turn to the fighters and continued into a traffic call. I overkeyed him at this point just to ensure that the fighters took the turn. RD and I went back to discussing the transmissions he was going to make for the Medevac, the fighters, and N7GA. The fighters and the Medevac were handed off and issued frequency changes. N7GA was given a turn back to the west to set up for the ILS approach. When discussing vectoring N7GA for the approach, RD used the *T function which allowed him to see a heading to issue to N7GA. As we were discussing the heading, N7GA made a transmission of which the only word I understood or heard was "TERRAIN." RD issued the heading we had already decided on with my approval and N7GA read it back. Very soon after, the data and primary target dropped off the radar scope. I immediately told RD that in 10 seconds we need to call N7GA "RADAR CONTACT LOST" because I believed the target had went into "coast" mode, as targets often do on our equipment, and that protocol would have been in accordance with NATCF Operating Instructions 13-204.

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3. As I was watching the clock, before 10 seconds was up, somebody in the room said that an aircraft had reported an ELT. I did not believe the ELT could have been from N7GA because it was reported so quickly and I had just observed the aircraft at 6,800 MSL. Although the MVA in the area is 8,000 MSL, I did not believe that the aircraft was at an unsafe altitude because regulations dictate that MVAs in mountainous areas are 2,000 feet above the highest obstacle. In another couple of seconds somebody in the room said another aircraft had reported a flash of light. I reached out to N7GA several times but never received a response. All trainees were removed from position and I continued to try to reach N7GA on frequency. The supervisor said METRO2, a law enforcement aircraft, would likely be calling soon. When they called up, I radar identified them and gave a bearing of the last known location of N7GA. A CAP aircraft departed VGT VFR; I instructed this aircraft to ident and briefed the controller relieving me.

HD



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MEMORANDUM FOR Air Traffic Investigations, Office of Aviation Safety, National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)

FROM: HH

SUBJECT: N7GA Controller Statement

1. I had just got into the Thule Assist position about 20 minutes prior to the incident. The scope controller was HD and the trainee in position with her was RD. N7GA entered our airspace at 6,500ft through the "east gate" as procedurally stated in our LOA with LAS. He was vectored towards Nellis runways to deconflict from an opposite direction departure off of runway 3. Once N7GA was deconflicted from that departure he was then turned north to deconflict from a regular runway 21 departure off of Nellis. The departure was a flight of 4 F22's and the callsign was Satan. N7GA was deconflicted from traffic and given VFR altitude his own discretion. Once he was deconflicted he was given a downwind vector for a practice ILS approach into North Las Vegas on his own request. I inbounded N7GA to North Las Vegas. The last I saw of N7GA was that he was at 6800ft in an 8000ft MVA just west of GAS PEAK before he disappeared from our scope. An ELT alarmed and tower called to confirm the ELT. HD made several radio checks to N7GA to reestablish radio communications but we failed to receive any reply. Shortly after Tower called to notify us that they saw a flash at GAS PEAK. METRO2 was notified and went to investigate. I was then relieved from controlling and taken to the hospital for testing.

HH

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2 Dec 19

MEMORANDUM FOR NTSB

FROM: PR (Controller-in-Charge)

SUBJECT: Aircraft Mishap N7GA (SR22/G)

DATE: 26 Nov 19

To whom it concerns,

Tuesday November 26, I was working as the Controller-in-Charge (CIC) of the Nellis Air Traffic Control facility (NATCF). At the time of the incident we were in the departure phase of the Weapons School Large Force Exercise (LFE). We had all positions de-combined for training.

I was at the CIC desk monitoring the terminal side as well as the enroute side of the facility. We had departures departing both runways. Runway 21 was the active runway and we also had opposite direction departures off of Runway 03.

N7GA was handed off to us from L30 (Las Vegas TRACON), through the East Gate at 6500'. He was on a westerly heading returning to North Las Vegas (VGT) airport (VFR). The pilot requested a practice VFR-ILS approach.

We had a flight of F35's released opposite direction Runway 03 on a Dream6 departure. In sequence we also had a flight of 4/F22's released Runway 21 on a Dream6 departure. I questioned the controllers in Thule Approach as well as Thule Assist on this procedure.

Thule Approach vectored N7GA to the southwest to avoid the Runway 03 F35's, then gave a westerly heading to N7GA reference the Runway 21 F22's. It was at this point where I said N7GA needed a northbound turn to avoid the F22's, Thule Approach issued two subsequent vectors to the north to N7GA reference the departing F22's. Once the situation was cleared up, N7GA was given a vector to the west to get him towards the final approach course of VGT. I returned back to the CIC desk at this point.

I heard Thule Approach issue two to three transmissions to N7GA with no-reply. The Thule Approach controller issued another transmission and told N7GA that RADAR contact was lost. Shortly after these transmissions we had another VFR aircraft inform us of a large flash in his eleven o'clock position. We asked the aircraft if he could fly over the site. Once over the site, we asked the pilot and he confirmed that it was a downed aircraft. We also received another report from Metro 2 (LVMPD HELO) that confirmed the crash site.

It was at this time that I called and informed the facility chief controller of the situation and that we were starting our emergency action checklists.

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PR
Controller-in-Charge (NATCF)



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MEMORANDUM FOR Air Traffic Investigations, Office of Aviation Safety, National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)

FROM: RD

SUBJECT: N7GA Controller Statement

1. After I got briefed into the position there were a few departures proposed just waiting for releases. Around 1720L N7GA came in from the east wanting a practice ILS to North Las Vegas, that's when HD and I discussed the most safe and efficient way to keep N7GA separated from the departures. We decided to keep him north of the airport, the departure then came off on a DREAM departure, I was told to keep him going north to separate from the departure. I issued a vector then HD turned him on a more northbound heading. He was then given "VFR Altitude your discretion." Once they were separated N7GA said something which I wasn't able to hear, HD told me it was about terrain, I was already going to turn on a 250 to get him more west bound, and closer to his destination. We then saw his tag start to coast, I was waiting to call him "Radar contact lost" when his tag disappeared, HD began to try and contact him and after several tries we got no response. After about 30 seconds we heard an ELT go off and an aircraft that Sunrise was talking to said they had seen an explosion off in the distance. At this point the coordinator at the time, told all 3 levels to get out of position.

RD

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