Factual Report – Attachment 1

Interview Summaries

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

DCA19MA143

Interviewee: Matthew Hubbell
Representative: Not represented during the interview

Date / Time: May 6, 2019 / 1245 eastern daylight time (EDT)
Location: Naval Air Station Jacksonville (KNIP)
Present: Paul Suffern – NTSB and CDR Scott Morrill – United States Navy (USN)
Investigator: Brian Soper

During the interview, Mr. Hubbell stated the following:

His air traffic control (ATC) experience began in the USN where he served as an air traffic controller from 2000 until he retired from active duty in 2015. In 2015 he accepted a contract ATC job in Afghanistan for six months until he was hired by the Department of Defense (DoD) in June 2016 as a controller at KNIP Radar Air Traffic Control Facility (RATCF).

His operating initials were MH and his supervisor was LT Michael Doyle. At the time of the accident, he was working the local control (LC) position. He was current and proficient on the positions he was working at the time of the accident in accordance with facility standards. He had been involved in one operational incident (loss of separation) shortly after returning to KNIP in 2016 that resulted in a three-day suspension of his LC qualification. He was subsequently re-instated and has had no documented incidents since. He held no collateral duties and had not been on any recent details. He recalled nothing remarkable about the 72 hours leading up to the time of the accident, with routine daily activities, sleep, and meals. He stated life had been great, and that he had just purchased a new home and when he was not working at the facility he was working on his new home.

He possessed a current second-class medical certificate and his last ATC physical had been conducted in December 2018. He had no waivers or restrictions to his medical certificate. He held no other aeronautical ratings or certificates. He performed toxicology testing as a result of this accident, and the results were negative.

On the day of the accident, he was working his regularly scheduled shift and recalled no unusual distractions around the time of the accident. He recalled that the Terminal Area Forecast (TAF) had indicated VMC[1] but that they had requested the contract weather observer (CWO) conduct a Special Report (SPECI[2]) because he did not believe he had 5 miles visibility as was being reported in the current Meteorological Aerodrome Report (METAR[3]). He remembered it was raining hard, with occasional lightning, not half as bad as he had experienced in the past, but said it was "pretty windy and dark" and described it as typical Florida stormy weather. On a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the heaviest) he classified the traffic volume as 1 at the time of the accident. On

[1] VMC – Visual Meteorological Conditions - Meteorological conditions expressed in terms of visibility, distance from cloud, and ceiling equal to or better than specified minima.
[2] SPECI – Special Weather Report – An unscheduled report taken when weather conditions meet specified criteria, are observed during the period between regular hourly reports. A SPECI is used as soon as possible after the relevant criteria is observed.
[3] METAR – Aviation Routine Weather Report – The METAR has been adopted by the United States to provide surface observations of current weather conditions in support of aviation for the terminal. It is issued at fixed times hourly.

a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the most complex) he classified the traffic complexity as 1 at the time of the accident. He said that a relief briefing was conducted when he assumed the position, and that it was recorded, and a checklist was utilized.

Up until the accident, he could not remember exactly, but said they had broken down to minimum staffing between 1800-1900 EDT and had combined LC to the facility watch supervisor (FWS) position, and he signed onto the combined position. A Sun Country flight had come in before dark and before the rain. The Miami Air flight [BSK293] was a regular rotator flight that came in every Tuesday and Friday. It was his experience that Miami Air never came in at night, and on that night since he had not seen them yet by the time it was dark, he just figured maybe they were no longer coming.

There was not much going on that Friday evening, then later in the evening he received an inbound notification on BSK293 which seemed odd because they did not normally come that late. Jacksonville Terminal Radar Approach Control (KJAX TRACON) had called to ask about the weather at KNIP, and he told him that it was pretty heavy on both sides of the airport and kind of socked in. He zoomed out on the tower display workstation (TDW[4]) and could see BSK293 about 20 miles out. Then 5-10 minutes later KJAX TRACON called back and asked if he could accept the RNAV[5] to runway 10, and he said that he could.

The VISCOM[6] was working normally, and he had keyed up the radar frequency to monitor and made sure that all the lights were up for runway 10. The approach seemed normal with radar, and he made sure that radar knew that the arresting gear[7] was rigged at the approach end of runway 10. He heard the pilot ask the radar controller if it was the first thousand feet and the radar controller confirmed that.

He said the pilot then reported the runway in sight and touched down normally, then within 10 seconds "everything went south." The airplane just never slowed down, as the airplane got closer and was abeam the tower, it seemed he was doing over 100 miles per hour. He clearly remembered telling the ground controller that he [BSK293] was not going to make it. He could not see it in the dark where it went off the runway, but he picked up the crash phone and made the crash announcement and ground control made his announcement as well.

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[4] TDW – Tower Display Workstation – A tower situational display that is a part of the Standard Terminal Automation Replacement System (STARS) which displays radar data that has been collected by various sensors and processed by the radar data processor (RDP), combined with flight plan data, and then presented on a color monitor.

[5] RNAV Approach − An instrument approach procedure which relies on aircraft area navigation equipment for navigational guidance.

[6] VISCOM – Visual Communications (FSA-97) - A system used in nearly all Navy control towers that uses a sequence of push-buttons, lights, and associated aural signals to supplement intra-facility communications and to reduce the number of voice contacts between the tower and RADAR controllers.

[7] The E-28 shore-based emergency arresting gear is designed as a land-based emergency standby gear for arresting hook-equipped aircraft. It is installed on the runway for the purpose of safely arresting an aircraft in the event of an aborted takeoff or an emergency landing. It is comprised of a raised cable and an arresting engine that is a rotary, hydrodynamic energy absorber installed outside the edges of the runway. It is designed to jointly spread out the kinetic energy of a landing aircraft.

He then instructed a controller in the radar room to begin notifications that BSK293 had gone off the end of the runway. He called 9-1-1, then called KJAX TRACON as well, but still could not see the aircraft and assumed that it had gone in the river. He heard nothing from the crew, and said the approach was beautiful right up until touchdown. ARFF[8] responded pretty quickly and confirmed that the aircraft was in the water. He remembered them saying there were people on the wing of the airplane and that it was raining but seemed like the worst had passed the airfield and that it was just in the 'normal raining phase' now.

He said they could not see much from their tower because of its lower height, and poor location. He said it was designed based on 1950's operations when they had float plane operations.

It was KNIP RATCF policy to use the weather sequence from VIDS[9]. If the visibility was 4 miles or less, they needed to take a tower visibility observation, and when he saw the 5 miles in the METAR he just did not feel they really had 5 miles. He then had the ground control (GC) controller call the contract weather office see if they could do a SPECI, but it was not very long after that when the accident occurred.

He said that the CWO had been spot-on usually, but the conditions change so rapidly and the ASOS[10] could not always keep up. He said the CWO was normally good about conducting SPECIs when asked.

Weather watches and warnings were passed via base operations. As far as wind information received from the ASOS, he felt it was accurate for the most part. Historically weather flowed either west to east or east to west through the area. It used to always be east to west and they were always on runway 28, but in the last year or so, they seemed to be getting more north to south weather. Fog was also a frequent issue.

He said the radar controller was the one communicating with the pilot of BSK293, and he was only responding to VISCOMs. Winds were set up more for runway 28 than runway 10 and remembered explaining that. He also remembered the radar controller confirming that the pilot had the information on the arresting gear being rigged. His eyes were outside the tower on the operation the whole time and said he would adjust the lights once he had the aircraft in sight, but in this case just left things the way they were.

When asked about the accident aircraft's flight track, he said that the approach seemed to be a totally normal profile, and that he was "on and on." Everything appeared normal until he touched down, and then he just never slowed down. He said there was not anything off odd about the touchdown other than never slowing down. He did not recall hearing the thrust reversers at all in this case. He recalled seeing lights exactly where they were supposed to be, but could not finely

[8] ARFF - Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) is a special category of firefighting that involves the response, hazard mitigation, evacuation and possible rescue of passengers and crew of an aircraft involved in (typically) an airport ground emergency.

[9] VIDS – Visual Information Display System - VIDS is a Commercial Off-The-Shelf network integration of many small systems used in an ATC facility. VIDS is a client server-based system integrating multiple information systems into a Touch Entry display for each operating position in ATC facilities.

[10] ASOS – Automated Surface Observing System is equipped with meteorological instruments to observe and report wind, visibility, ceiling, temperature, dewpoint, altimeter, and barometric pressure.

delineate the aircraft until it became closer, then there was just an unnatural sickening feeling that he had not slowed down at all. He estimated the airplane was doing at least 100 mph when he went past him.

He said they did not have RVR there and they had not had anyone else to request braking action from. He added that they had been doing some construction in the overrun only. Transient line personnel never reported standing water…but he would still broadcast 'possible' standing water. He would send the airfield manager or transient line to conduct a runway sweep as needed.

They had only had the VHF ATIS[11] for about a month. They used to have to read the ATIS to civilian aircraft before, but not since commissioning a VHF. Controllers do, however, confirm with civilian operators that they have the current ATIS when required.

PIREPs[12], when they received them, were kept locally, and not disseminated long-line. If he received one in the tower that applied to radar, then he would pass to radar and to any aircraft that were coming to the tower. In this case he did not remember if the pilot had reported having the numbers or not.

His recollection was that that radar patterns at KNIP were limited to three aircraft in the pattern, and if they had a fourth, they had to hand them off to KJAX TRACON. KJAX TRACON had to approve multiple GCAs[13]. The MVA[14] to the east was 2,100 feet and to the west 1,500 feet. With coordination they could do a lot with Cecil Field. Overall, since 2008, traffic had seemed to decrease steadily.

RNAV with PAR monitoring was kind of new, they had only been doing it for about six months. Aircraft used to just check in with the tower, but now they monitor RNAVs with PAR at night and during poor weather.

Robbie McGrath had safety meetings every month. There would be representatives from every facility in the area where they would discuss operational concerns. In the last six months they had been doing better at getting people over to KJAX TRACON for orientation visits.

Interview concluded at 1330 EDT.

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[11] ATIS – Automatic Terminal Information Service – A continuous broadcast of current, routine information to arriving and departing aircraft by means of continuous and repetitive broadcasts throughout the day or specified portion of the day.

[12] PIREP – Pilot Weather Report – A report made by a pilot of meteorological phenomena encountered by an aircraft in flight.

[13] GCA – Ground Controlled Approach – A legacy term describing services provided by air traffic controllers whereby Precision Approach Radar (PAR), and Airport Surveillance Radar (ASR) are used to provide landing guidance to arriving aircraft. This term is still commonly used in the Navy and Marine Corps for those facilities that provide radar arrival and final approach services.

[14] MVA – Minimum Vectoring Altitude - The lowest msl altitude at which an IFR aircraft will be vectored by a radar controller, except as otherwise authorized for radar approaches, departures, and missed approaches. Vectors below the MVA were not authorized at CRG for this procedure.

Interviewee: Anthony Belicena
Representative: Not represented during the interview

Date / Time: May 6, 2019 / 1403 EDT
Location: KNIP
Present: Paul Suffern – NTSB and CDR Scott Morrill – USN
Investigator: Brian Soper

During the interview, Mr. Belicena stated the following:

His ATC experience began in the USN where he has served as an air traffic controller since July 2016. After completion of basic training in Great Lakes, Illinois and initial ATC training in Pensacola, Florida he began working at KNIP RATCF in February 2017.

His operating initials were AB and his supervisor of record was AC1 Taylor. At the time of the accident, he was working clearance delivery (CD) and radar final control (RFC) combined. This was the normal configuration for that time of night at KNIP. He was current and proficient on the positions he was working at the time of the accident in accordance with facility standards. He had no suspensions or documented operational incidents while at KNIP RATCF. He was the Airfield Vehicle Operators Course (AVOC) coordinator and had not been on any recent details. He recalled nothing remarkable about the 72 hours leading up to the time of the accident, with routine daily activities, sleep, and meals.

He possessed a current second-class medical certificate and his last ATC physical had been conducted in June 2018. He had no waivers or restrictions to his medical certificate. He held no other aeronautical ratings or certificates. He performed toxicology testing as a result of this accident, and the results were negative.

On the day of the accident, he was working his regularly scheduled shift and recalled no unusual distractions around the time of the accident except for the weather. He recalled that the general weather in the vicinity of KNIP included heavy to severe precipitation that seemed to be worse on the east side of the field and was moving west to east. On a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the heaviest) he classified the traffic volume as 1 at the time of the accident. On a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the most complex) he classified the traffic complexity as 1 at the time of the accident. He said that a relief briefing was conducted when he assumed the position, and that it was recorded, and a checklist was utilized.

He had been conducting PAR[15] approaches all night, and recalled BSK293 was coming from the south and the first to be set up for the RNAV runway 28 approach but as he got closer to the final approach fix, West Bank [KJAX approach] had called over and said that due to heavy weather to the east of KNIP the pilot requested vectors to runway 10. The radar supervisor coordinated with the tower supervisor, and the tower supervisor approved the runway change and

[15] PAR – Precision Approach Radar - The AN/FPN-63(V) PAR is used at Navy and Marine Corps air installations in conjunction with an airport surveillance radar system to provide air traffic control services for Navy, Marine Corps, and other military and civilian aircraft as required. The PAR is the Navy and Marine Corps' fixed-based primary approach aid used during conditions of poor visibility to provide radar guidance to an aircraft on final approach.

said he was turning on the runway 10 PAPIs[16] and advised that the short field arresting gear was rigged on runway 10. After swinging [aligning] the PAR to runway 10 he completed alignment checks as required.

He recalled the aircraft crossing the final approach fix and he established radar contact on the PAR at about 6.5 miles with a good blooming target. He advised the pilot of his position and that wheels should be down. The pilot seemed very direct and to the point, he recalled thinking that it seemed like the pilot just wanted to get in and land. About 4-5 from touchdown, the aircraft climbed well above glide path, and after advising the pilot he began to descend back down on glidepath. He cleared BSK293 to land and upon reaching 2 miles instructed the pilot to report the field in sight, and within 2 seconds the pilot reported the field in site. At about 1 mile from touchdown the aircraft climbed slightly and was slightly above glidepath at decision height, but not too high for safe approach. He then observed the target over landing threshold and within 2-3 seconds received the reset indication on the VISCOM. About 5-10 seconds after that he could hear the ELT[17] and about 10 seconds after that the LC controller called down to initiate the emergency checklist. He was relieved from the position shortly thereafter.

He said the approach seemed fairly normal and that the aircraft was on course most of the time until just prior to touchdown then may have went slightly right of course. His experience with Miami Air pilots had been pretty good, and he had never seen them go well above glidepath before. This was the first time he ever had to say "well above glidepath" while monitoring an RNAV approach with any aircraft. He did not recall seeing the P8's (B737 military variant) go well above glidepath on RNAV approaches either, and that if he observed them going left or right of course he might give them the winds. Looking back on this event with BSK293 he kept thinking that maybe he could have provided the winds more during his approach. Afterward, he remembered the wind moving from the west to east and that maybe he could have been more reactive to that.

He said that the tower had requested a SPECI from weather, but just never got a call back. He normally issued displayed precipitation to pilots he was providing services to, but in this case could not recall if he had done so.

When asked about PIREPs, he stated that if he received a PIREP that affected KJAX TRACON that he would call West Bank via the interphone line and let them know so they could issue the PIREP to affected aircraft. He was not aware if PIREPs were disseminated into the National Airspace System (NAS) but thought they could transmit them via general information (GI) message in the FDIO[18].

[16] PAPI – Precision Approach Path Indicator - A visual aid that provides guidance information to help a pilot acquire and maintain the correct approach (in the vertical plane) to an airport or an aerodrome. It is generally located beside the runway approximately 300 meters beyond the landing threshold of the runway.
[17] ELT – Emergency Locator Transmitter – A radio transmitter attached to the aircraft structure which operates from its own power source on 121.5 MHz and 243.0 MHz. It aids in locating downed aircraft by radiating a downward sweeping audio tone, 2-4 times per second. It is designed to function without human action after an accident.
[18] FDIO – Flight Data Input/Output - A system utilized to distribute flight plan information, weather information, and general information to associated Air Traffic Control facilities across the National Airspace System.

He did not recall hearing anything outside at all when BSK293 was landing, and said that in the radar room, there was no outside view and normally could not hear anything outside on the airfield except maybe F18's when they were operating at the field.

He reiterated that the pilot was just very short and to the point in his transmissions, and that gave him the feeling that he just wanted to hurry up and land. The pilot was very direct and sounded almost scared, maybe because of the weather or maybe he was just uncomfortable. He remembered the pilot responded pretty quickly when he cleared him to land.

He felt that runway 10 was definitely a better choice than runway 28 in this scenario because the weather on the east side of KNIP was just bad, and it was definitely not as bad on the west side.

Interview concluded at 1444 EDT.

Interviewee: Eric Jennings
Representative: Not represented during the interview

Date / Time: May 6, 2019 / 1458 EDT
Location: KNIP
Present: Paul Suffern – NTSB and CDR Scott Morrill – USN
Investigator: Brian Soper

During the interview, Mr. Jennings stated the following:

His ATC experience began in the USN where he had served as an air traffic controller since January 2016. After completion of basic training in Great Lakes, Illinois and initial ATC training in Pensacola, Florida he was stationed at several other duty stations before he began working at KNIP RATCF in August 2017.

His operating initials were EJ and his supervisor was AC1 Taylor. At the time of the accident, he was working ground control (GC) and flight data (FD) positions combined. This was the normal configuration for that time of night at KNIP RATCF. He was current and proficient on the positions he was working at the time of the accident in accordance with facility standards. He had no suspensions or documented operational incidents while at KNIP RATCF. He was the assistant duty section leader, department urinalysis coordinator, supply petty officer, and training petty officer for the ATC division. He recalled nothing remarkable about the 72 hours leading up to the time of the accident, with routine daily activities, sleep, and meals.

He possessed a current second-class medical certificate and his last ATC physical had been conducted in April 2019. He had a requirement to wear corrective lenses when performing ATC duties and was wearing them on the night of accident. He had no other waivers or restrictions to his medical certificate. He held no other aeronautical ratings or certificates. He performed toxicology testing as a result of this accident, and the results were negative.

On the day of the accident, he was working his regularly scheduled shift and recalled no unusual distractions around the time of the accident. On a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the heaviest) he classified the traffic volume as 1 at the time of the accident. On a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the most complex) he classified the traffic complexity as 1 at the time of the accident. He said that a relief briefing was conducted when he assumed the position, and that it was recorded, and a checklist was utilized.

He recalled the weather around the time of the accident included a lot of lightning and heavy rain, and that it was nighttime, and visibility was not great. He remembered that KJAX TRACON had called and was discussing the weather with the LC controller. He specifically recalled there being discussion about the weather to runway 28 and the LC controller explaining that it was basically slammed on both sides. He guessed they were trying to decide the best runway for BSK293 and remembered KJAX TRACON calling twice to discuss the runway selection. He remembered that it was first going to be an RNAV and could see on the TDW that he was being vectored to runway 28, and then seen him turning toward runway 10 and remembered someone calling from radar to say that BSK293 was going to runway 10.

He said the arrival (AR) controller talked to BSK293, then handed him off to radar final control (RF). As he listened to the approach, he recalled normal RNAV phraseology and the advisory to the pilot that the short field arresting gear was rigged. He recalled the RF controller also requesting the pilot to report the runway in sight, and heard the pilot report the runway in sight. He remembered he had been looking out the tower trying to see the landing lights and did not see them until the aircraft was about 4 miles out. Once the aircraft was cleared to land, he watched him touch down, and initially there did not seem to be anything unusual, but it was dark and hard to tell. The aircraft continued down the runway and just did not slow down. He remembered the LC controller saying he was going to go off the runway and immediately picked up the crash phone. Mr. Jennings then broadcasted the emergency on GC frequency while the LC controller was making the crash phone announcement. He remembered someone asking if the pilot had ejected and he informed them it was a passenger plane.

Shortly after that, the crash captain arrived on scene and took over. He thought that emergency services arrived on scene within about 3-4 minutes; they were coming from everywhere. He did not recall hearing any noises from the aircraft as it passed by, or when it went off the runway, it was more the "visual" aspect of seeing the aircraft go by so fast that caught his attention. He said the weather was kind of bad and was just glad he had landed but then began to realize that the aircraft was not slowing down.

Before the aircraft had arrived, the ASOS was reporting 5 miles visibility and a ceiling of 1,800 feet, and he discussed with the LC controller that they needed a SPECI so the LC controller called down to the weather office and asked for a SPECI. They did not receive a call back on that request. He felt that the weather that night had just came in really quick and remembered that the ASOS did not seem accurate which prompted him to ask for a SPECI before the arrival because the ASOS just did not seem to accurately reflect the weather conditions.

They received weather watches and warnings from the weather office. They were issued with times for which they were valid. These warnings would include winds, hail, and other

weather-related phenomena. ATC would enter these into the daily facility log. The lightning that evening seemed frequent, and he knew it was within 5 miles because he had to advise an aircraft that arrived earlier to stop the loading and unloading of passengers while lightning was within 5 miles. This was the most intense storm he had seen in a while and remembered that it came in quick and had very dark clouds.

When asked about PIREP dissemination, he said that PIREPs were passed down from the tower to radar when received. Nothing had been passed to this aircraft because they had not had any operations in several hours and had no PIREPs.

He felt that they had enough time for the runway change and that they were ready when the aircraft checked in. He did not remember seeing anything out of the ordinary, just looking for the landing lights that once he could see, appeared normal. Nothing stood out as being abnormal until watching the aircraft pass by the tower without slowing down, nor accelerating to takeoff again. When asked, he said that he did not recall seeing the PAPI lights from the tower. He was monitoring communications from the tower, and recalled the pilot having an accent, and also heard him acknowledge the advisory about the arresting gear being rigged.

He knew there had been some heavy rain and had no recent operations for potential braking action reports but thought that the runway probably had a lot of water on it from the rain they had been getting. Looking at the TDW at the time, the weather did look a little worse to the east, but either side was really messy. He recalled the aircraft initially being to the south and the weather being better there.

When asked about the controller requesting the pilot to report the runway in sight, he said that he would not say that was typical on a monitored RNAV approach, but in this case felt it was an increased safety measure and understood why the controller had done it.

When he worked a radar control position and observed an area of precipitation in front of a pilot, he was providing services to, he would provide the precipitation information to the pilot.

In hindsight, he wished that he had followed up with the weather office a little bit faster about the SPECI request. They never did do the SPECI, and therefore never really got what they were looking for. He speculated that maybe if he had received updated weather information sooner, he could have passed that information to radar sooner in order to get the information to the pilot.

Interview concluded at 1541 EDT.

Interviewee: Brandon Tuck
Representative: AC1 Wallace – KNIP Flight Planning Chief

Date / Time: May 6, 2019 / 1604 EDT
Location: KNIP
Present: Paul Suffern – NTSB and CDR Scott Morrill – USN
Investigator: Brian Soper

During the interview, Mr. Tuck stated the following:

His ATC experience began in the USN where he had served as an air traffic controller since October 2014. After completion of basic training in Great Lakes, Illinois and initial ATC training in Pensacola, Florida he began working at KNIP in June 2015.

His operating initials were BT and his supervisor was AC1 Taylor. At the time of the accident, he was the radar supervisor and also the AR controller. He was current and proficient on the positions he was working at the time of the accident in accordance with facility standards. He had no suspensions or documented operational incidents while at KNIP. He held no collateral duties and had not been on any recent details. He recalled nothing remarkable about the 72 hours leading up to the time of the accident, with routine daily activities, sleep, and meals.

He possessed a current second-class medical certificate and his last ATC physical had been conducted in November 2018. He had no waivers or restrictions to his medical certificate. He held no other aeronautical ratings or certificates. He performed toxicology testing as a result of this accident, and the results were negative.

On the day of the accident, he was working his regularly scheduled shift and recalled the facility had shifted to generator power just prior to the arrival of BSK293, and that it was a planned shift due to thunderstorms in the area. He recalled at the time he received the handoff on BSK293, the field was reporting VFR and he could hear thunderstorms from where he was in the radar room. Tower had said they thought visibility was less than 5 miles and had requested the weather office conduct a SPECI, but he never received another call from the tower about that. On a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the heaviest) he classified the traffic volume as 1 at the time of the accident. On a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the most complex) he classified the traffic complexity as 1 at the time of the accident. He said that a relief briefing was conducted when he assumed the position, and that it was recorded, and a checklist was utilized.

He said about 2125-2130 he received an inbound call from KJAX TRACON about BSK293 requesting the RNAV runway 28 approach. It was the second or third approach of the night, so he coordinated runway 28, provided the arrival frequency and advised he had radar contact. He watched as the airplane was vectored by KJAX TRACON to runway 28, then when the aircraft was about 7-8 miles south of KNIP, KJAX TRACON called and said the pilot requested runway 10. He received no reason for the change at the time but assumed it was because of the weather in the vicinity of runway 28. He stated that he would coordinate it with tower and did just that. The tower supervisor approved the change, said he would turn on the PAPIs and advised that the short field arresting gear was rigged on runway 10. Mr. Tuck then called back KJAX TRACON with the approval and aligned the PAR to runway 10.

When BSK293 was about 13 miles from KNIP, KJAX TRACON called over and requested a VHF frequency because they only had been provided a UHF frequency earlier, so he provided a VHF frequency. The pilot of BSK293 checked in loud and clear, he provided missed approach instructions and advised that the arresting gear was rigged. The pilot acknowledged the missed approach procedures and with regards to the arresting gear asked if that was for the first thousand feet, and he replied in the affirmative.

He then handed the aircraft off to the RF controller at around 7 miles out. The PAR target was initially a little faint then at about 6.5 miles it was a big blooming target that was much easier to see. The pilot was in communication with the RF controller and appeared steady. They did not withhold the landing clearance and cleared him to land at about 6 miles out, to which the pilot acknowledged immediately. He could not recall the winds when he was cleared to land. At about 5 miles out he noticed the target go well above glidepath and the RF controller advised the pilot and he descended back on glidepath. At about 2 miles out, the RF controller asked the pilot to report the field in site to which the pilot immediately responded with the field in sight. The approach was beautiful, and they received a VISCOM reset as the aircraft crossed landing threshold. Approximately 15-20 seconds later they could hear the ELT over guard frequency, and they went to look on the radar to see if they could see anything, but then the tower called down and advised that BSK293 had went into the river.

When asked, he said that they could hear aircraft operations sometimes when on runway 28, but when on runway 10 could not really hear anything from down in the radar room.

When asked about issuing weather to IFR aircraft landing KNIP, he said often pilots would not even check in with them until they were 7 miles out on final and therefore he assumed that KJAX TRACON would have already informed them of any pertinent weather at KNIP.

When asked about weather warnings and watches at KNIP, he said that every hour at 53 minutes after the hour they received the METAR, if it was below VFR the tower would call down to radar and advise the field was IFR. He said that all weather warnings, watches, and changes were provided by the weather office to base operations, then base operations would notify the tower who would notify radar.

When he received a PIREP, he would pass it to KJAX TRACON if applicable and if working any other traffic would issue it to them as well. Not sure if they were disseminated into the NAS at any point.

He said the pilot sounded like he had been working for a while, not like he had just started flying. His accent was a little heavy. He could tell he was not someone that transitioned their airspace a lot, and thought he sounded a little concerned with the weather and about the arresting gear but did not think he sounded fatigued. He had never heard that pilot's accent in radar before but can recall a similar accent when working in the tower.

With this approach being an RNAV, he said that KNIP RATCF was monitoring and providing pilots advisories only. He felt they had done a really good job of keeping the pilot informed, even going above and beyond. He did stumble a bit with the missed approach phraseology but corrected himself and the pilot acknowledged. The glidepath was the only parameter on this approach that was ever concerning, and he did not really notice the speed of his approach on this one since there was no other traffic and he was not concerned with interval.

Once they had received the VISCOM reset, he and the RF controller thought the approach was good. He did not know the accident had happened until he heard the ELT. He felt that maybe

in retrospect if they had a crash phone in radar maybe they could have assisted in getting the post-accident notifications moving quicker.

When asked about the working relationship between KNIP RATCF and KJAX TRACON, he said that it was day to day, sometimes the controllers were good and sometimes they were not. He knew there was a lot of training going on at KJAX TRACON, and sometimes their hand-offs were not the best or the safest. He had been in the room on a previous occasion when an argument between a controller at KNIP RATCF and one at KJAX TRACON had escalated but had not been in a conflict like that himself. Sometimes he felt there may be a better and safer way to do something, such as withholding releases, but did not fully understand KJAX TRACONs procedure for all of that. He said that it seemed KJAX TRACON sometimes had controllers that really knew what they were doing, and other times they really did not.

Interview concluded at 1647 EDT.

Interviewee: Anthony Swinton II
Representative: Christopher Iresabal – NATCA Facility Representative (FACREP)

Date / Time: May 7, 2019 / 1100 EDT
Location: KJAX TRACON
Present: Paul Suffern – NTSB, David Waudby – FAA, CDR Scott Morrill – USN, and Bryan Roberts – NATCA.
Investigator: Brian Soper

During the interview, Mr. Swinton stated the following:

His ATC experience began in the USN where he served as an air traffic controller from 2003 until honorably discharged in 2011. In December 2102 he was hired by the FAA and reported to the FAA Academy in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. After successful completion of initial ATC training, he was assigned to Potomac Consolidated TRACON (PCT) in March 2013 where he worked until transferring to KJAX TRACON in March 2016.

His operating initials were TA and his supervisor of record was Jackie Vanantwerp. At the time of the accident, he was working the N, R, J, E, Satellite, and W positions, all combined to the S1 position. This was the normal configuration for that time of night at KJAX TRACON. He was current and proficient on the positions he was working at the time of the accident in accordance with facility standards. He had no suspensions or documented operational incidents while at KJAX TRACON. He held no collateral duties and had not been on any recent details. He recalled nothing remarkable about the 72 hours leading up to the time of the accident, with routine daily activities, sleep, and meals.

He possessed a current second-class medical certificate and his last ATC physical had been conducted in April 2018. He had a requirement to wear corrective lenses while performing ATC duties and stated that he was wearing contact lenses at the time of the accident. He had no other waivers or restrictions to his medical certificate. He held no other aeronautical ratings or certificates.

On the day of the accident, he was working an overtime shift and recalled no unusual distractions around the time of the accident. He recalled that the general weather in the vicinity of KNIP included moderate to heavy precipitation cells both east and west of the airport and moving east. He had reviewed the audio and video replay of the event prior to the interview. On a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the heaviest) he classified the traffic volume as 3 at the time of the accident. On a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the most complex) he classified the traffic complexity as 2 or 3 at the time of the accident. He said that a relief briefing was conducted when he assumed the position, and that it was recorded, and a checklist was utilized.

When BSK293 first checked on frequency from the south, he advised the pilot to expect the RNAV runway 28 approach. The pilot initially requested runway 10 and subsequently decided to remain with runway 28. KNIP was advertising the visual approach, however he knew based on the observed weather that was likely not going to work. The pilot stated he could not retrieve the ATIS, therefore Mr. Swinton called KNIP tower to request the actual field conditions at KNIP. He expected the pilot was still going to get the ATIS, and that he only called KNIP just to get a better update of what was actually happening with the weather at KNIP. He recalled that after reporting the updated winds and precipitation information to the pilot, he asked if he would rather go to runway 10 and the pilot replied in the affirmative. Mr. Swinton then called KNIP RATCF to coordinate an approach to runway 10. He explained that RNAV approaches to KNIP during nighttime operations required a GCA monitor and therefore required KNIP to reconfigure the GCA from runway 28 to runway 10.

When asked about the weather and his decision-making process, he explained that he considered the reported wind of 350 at 4 knots and depicted moderate to extreme precipitation that was over the field and moving east and concluded that runway 10 was the better option. He added that, had he been aware of the tailwind and gust information, he certainly would not have recommended runway 10.

When asked about BSK293's approach speed, he did not recall anything out of the ordinary and stated that he had vectored the flight for a very smooth, stable approach with special consideration of the weather and other challenges. After vectoring the aircraft to join the final approach course to runway 10 and clearing the aircraft for the approach, he instructed the pilot to contact KNIP on the UHF frequency, to which the pilot stated he needed a VFR frequency. He then obtained a VHF frequency from KNIP RATCF and completed the transfer of communications to KNIP RATCF. He said the pilot sounded very confident, and never gave an indication that he was concerned about the procedure. He said that he first became aware there had been an accident when KNIP RATCF called over seeking help with search and rescue coordination.

When asked, he stated that NOTAMs[19] for KNIP were available on the NIDS[20], and he had reviewed them. He did not recall if he had received the pre-duty weather briefing on the day of the

[19] NOTAM – Notice to Airman. A notice containing information concerning the establishment, condition, or change in any component of the National Airspace System which timely knowledge is essential to personnel concerned with flight operations.

[20] NIDS – NAS Information Display System – Replacement tool for the Information Display System (IDS-4) that integrates a number of systems displaying traffic, weather, and surveillance data, into one easy-to-use and fully customizable workstation with a touchscreen display.

accident. He said that the pre-duty weather briefing was produced by the Center Weather Service Unit (CWSU) at the Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC) and did not really meet their needs in the terminal environment, and therefore he did not find them very useful. He explained that the briefings seemed to be more on the "macro" level, and that if they were localized to the Jacksonville area on more of a "micro" level, that they would be value added.

He said that at KJAX TRACON, PIREPs were handled by recording the information on a paper form and provided to the front-line manager (FLM) who would enter them into the system. When asked about the METARs for the various airports within KJAX TRACON airspace, he stated that information was provided to them via GI messages on the FDIO, and then manually entered into the NIDS for availability to the controllers. When asked about the meaning of "T1 SET" or "T2 SET" in the remarks section of a METAR, he could not recall ever seeing or receiving any training or guidance on such remarks. When it came to the currency of the METARs being displayed on NIDS, that they were at the mercy of the flight data (FD) controller, and that if the FD controller was busy with flight plans and other priorities, METAR updates were not always timely.

When asked about the runway in use and advertised approach at KNIP on that night, he explained that KNIP often advertised visual approaches, even when conditions made visual approaches impractical. When asked if he continued to monitor aircraft after handing off to KNIP, he said the responsibility was on them [KNIP] unless he observed an abnormality.

When asked to explain the general operation, and procedures regarding the co-utilization of airspace with KNIP, he provided the following information:

There was a defined "box", essentially, an area of KJAX TRACON's airspace that they would approve KNIP RATCF to provide services in for aircraft performing approaches just at KNIP. There was a letter of agreement (LOA) that covered the procedures and said that basically, aircraft were vectored toward KNIP, descending to 3,000 feet. Once KNIP RATCF accepted radar identification of the inbound, then they were responsible to maintain separation inside that designated box. KNIP RATCF could have an unlimited number of aircraft operating within the box but were required to coordinate every aircraft on the go with KJAX TRACON and were responsible for keeping the aircraft they were providing services to inside of the box separated from those outside of the box. Conversely, KJAX TRACON kept aircraft they were providing services to outside of the box separated from those inside the box. When "blending" traffic between KJAX TRACON and KNIP RATCF, if KNIP TRACON was providing services to the succeeding aircraft, then they maintained separation, and if KNIP RATCF was providing services to the succeeding aircraft, KNIP RATCF maintained separation. When asked specifically about aircraft executing go-arounds in this operation, he stated that it was covered in the LOA, and that KNIP RATCF would coordinate with them well in advance of being on the go. He recalled that the LOA spelled out that KNIP RATCF was not allowed to go above 2,000 feet within the box, except in the 2,100-foot MVA area. He said aircraft would occasionally spill outside of the box, but that the current procedures surrounding the use of this box for KNIP traffic was good procedurally, however, there were just so many variables he did not know if there was a better way to handle it.

Interview concluded at 1244 EDT.