

987 Investments, LLC  
Brookshire, TX  
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**NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**SURVIVAL FACTORS GROUP CHAIRMAN FACTUAL REPORT**

Attachment 1. Passenger Interview Summaries

(10 Pages)

Passengers are identified based on their seating position in the airplane as shown in figure 1.

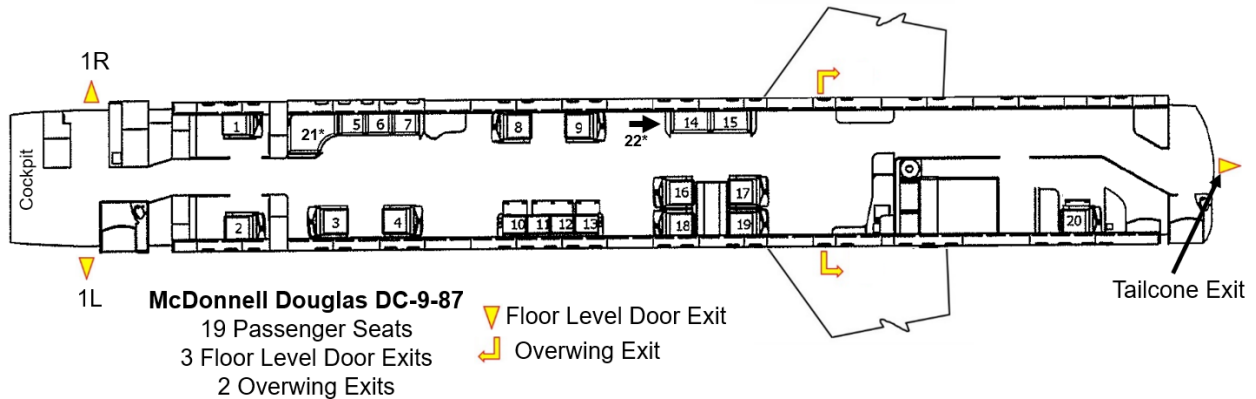


Figure 1. N987AK cabin configuration with passenger seat positions and exits.

Passenger 1 and 2<sup>1</sup> interviews were transcribed and are provided in attachments to the operational and human performance report. Draft summaries of the interviews conducted by a single investigator were provided to the passengers for approval.

**Interview:** Passenger 3

**Date:** October 27, 2021

**Start Time:** 1351

**Location:** Phone

**Present:** Amanda Taylor (NTSB)

During the interview passenger 3 stated the following:

He arrived at the airport that morning and talked in the hangar area for about 15-20 minutes. He met other passengers also travelling to the event. Some of them he knew and some he met for the first time that day. The only luggage he had with him was a bag with various personal items.

He boarded through the front left door and found a seat toward the front of the airplane on the left side in an aft facing reclining seat (seat 3). There was another reclining seat facing forward across from him. Passenger 3 was restrained in his seatbelt. In between the two seats was a video monitor linked to a camera at the nose of the airplane that enabled him to see outside. Just forward of where he was seated were two private areas with doors. He estimated he was about 20 feet back from the front left door he entered.

He remembers getting a safety briefing from the airplane owner who invited them. The briefing covered that everyone should have seatbelts to put on, but the owner did not go into full detail on how to operate the exits, or the seatbelts like you get on a commercial flight. He remembered that the owner went through the cabin and looked to see if everyone had put belts on. To the left of his seat was an L-shaped couch with four people seated. He remembered the airplane owner sitting in one of the private areas in the front of the airplane. Seated across from him on the L-shaped couch was a 10-year-old girl and, with her

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<sup>1</sup> Passenger 1 was the airplane owner, and passenger 2 was the aircraft mechanic.

father. To the left of her was a woman and a gentleman. The gentleman was a passenger who was taken to the hospital in an ambulance.

He described takeoff as feeling different and attributed it to facing aft. Shortly after takeoff he remembered the brakes “hitting”. He was not sure if the rear of the aircraft got off the ground, but he felt the front come down as the braking began. He could see out of the window to his right. About that time, passenger 10, who was seated about 10-feet aft, flew forward. He realized this was serious and saw the end of the runway on the video screen. He felt that the airplane was not slowing enough as the fence came into view, and knew they were going to go through the fence.

He could see the left engine catch on fire out the window and stated that it became clear to him the situation could be fatal. When the plane finally stopped, he took off his seatbelt and headed for the door he had entered through. He did not remember any exit lighting but knew which way to go. He ran in the opposite direction of the fire. He opened the door, saw the engine on fire, felt the heat on the left side of his face, and jumped out slightly forward toward the cockpit. He knew how to open the door because he had traveled many times commercially and there was a red arrow pictured on the left side pointing clockwise and had the word “open.”

After he opened the door, he did not see a slide deploy. He saw was the engine was on fire. He was not going to wait for the slide and immediately jumped out of the plane. He says he did not see a slide or see one inflate. He did not want to wait because he thought the plane might explode. When he hit the ground, he felt pain in his right ankle, but pushed himself up and ran away from the plane. He was the first person out of the airplane and remembered people running past him. When he was about 400 yards away, he turned to look back and saw mostly black smoke. He remembers hearing loud high-pitched noises that he associated with the engines.

He did not go to the hospital by ambulance from the scene. He hurt his ankle and thought it was sprained. A colleague picked him up from Houston Executive Airport and took him to the Houston Methodist emergency room in Katy, Texas where he received X-rays, and found his right ankle was fractured.

**Interview:** Passenger 4

**Date:** October 23, 2021

**Start Time:** 1549

**Location:** Phone

**Present:** Amanda Taylor (NTSB)

During the interview passenger 4 stated the following:

He was seated in a forward-facing reclining seat (seat 4) toward the front of the cabin across from a single aft facing reclining seat. Across from them was a L-shaped couch. Once on the airplane, the airplane owner asked everyone to be seated and he provided a safety briefing. Passenger 4 described the briefing as

very casual. As the airplane started to takeoff, everything seemed normal. Halfway down the runway he could feel the deceleration and braking. He looked at a monitor that was located between the two recliners that provided video out the front of the aircraft to the cabin. He saw a fence at the end of the runway and braced himself by putting his feet on seat three in front of him. He did not recall what he heard when the airplane was skidding, but later when he looked across the field, he saw they had crossed a road and impacted trees. While airplane was coming to a stop, he saw flames on the wing on the left side. He thought about which exit he should use if there was fire outside the front exit. He remembered the airplane hitting something and two passengers behind him thrown to the front of the cabin between the couch and the two reclining seats. The airplane continued to skid, then the tilted and stopped.

He did not remember hearing anything after the airplane stopped. He unbuckled his seatbelt and “grabbed” passenger 21\* and went toward the front of the airplane. He saw the slide inflating. He believed he was probably the second or third out of the airplane. He stated he “threw” passenger 21\* out the door and onto the slide and followed her out. He ran into the field.

**Interview:** Passenger 5

**Date:** October 25, 2021

**Start Time:** 1345

**Location:** Phone

**Present:** Amanda Taylor (NTSB)

During the interview passenger 5 stated the following:

He arrived with his daughter around 0915 in the morning. They talked with others in the group and took photos of the outside of the plane. They were flying to a baseball game in Boston. They did not have a lot of luggage, a cooler, backpack, and iPads. They sat on the L-shaped right couch with passenger 5 in a seat facing sideways towards the left, and his daughter in seat 21\* facing toward the back of the airplane.

He remembered the airplane owner providing safety protocols; seatbelts, location of exits, and “stuff like that”. They were told it would be a three-hour eleven-minute flight and a truck would pick them up in Boston. He put on his seatbelt and ensured his daughter had her seatbelt on too. As they taxied, he could see the runway from the airplane nose camera. He had been on the airplane before so was familiar.

At one point during takeoff, he thought to himself “seems like we should have left the ground by now,” then saw dirt on the video footage followed by a barbed wire fence that enclosed the airport. At that point they lost video feed. He described violent motion with various impacts. When they came to a stop, he remembered seeing fire outside several of the left side windows. He said some shades may have been down, but he was unsure.

Once the door was opened, passenger 5 could feel the heat from the fire. He knew something was wrong. He believed it was a crew member who opened the door, and he heard the airplane owner yell “get out of the plane”. He remembered everyone being seated at takeoff and was happy with how the seatbelts

performed. He stated he and his daughter had no issues with removing their seatbelts. Passenger 4 was out of his seat first and grabbed passenger 21\* to start pushing her forward. Passenger 5 said he believed his daughter evacuated first, followed by passenger 3 and passenger 4. He evacuated after passenger 4. Passenger 5 recalled the airplane owner at the front of the airplane during evacuation but moved toward the back of the airplane to ensure others were out. He felt like it was less than a minute for everyone to get off the airplane.

He remembered the slide was inflated when he exited, however he stated he jumped too far out. He said the ground was saturated and muddy. He lost one shoe while exiting the airplane and running through the field. He stated it “felt like running on marshmallows”. He could hear the engine running and was concerned about an explosion. Passenger 5 and his daughter ran through the field.

He remembered the windows on his side being opened to watch the takeoff, but his back was to them, so he could not see out. He felt like the airplane tilted when they exited. He guessed the height of the airplane was about ten to twelve feet when they exited, which was higher off the ground than when they boarded at the airport. He also remembered the lights being on when the airplane stopped and personal items being everywhere. Passenger 5 stated he went into shock seeing the fire outside the airplane. It looked like a “blowtorch” shooting from the rear of the airplane forward. When he exited, he said he jumped into black smoke.

He stated he did not see emergency services on scene for about 20 minutes. The plane was so far out in the field they could not get out there. The fire trucks had to unravel a lot of hoses to get to the airplane. He had begun to hyperventilate and was in shock. His daughter was also in shock, crying but otherwise fine. They spoke to troopers who took their information. They were taken back to the airport where they waited until his wife arrived. He stated his daughter was physically alright but was unwilling to talk about the event.

**Interview:** Passenger 8

**Date:** October 23, 2021

**Start Time:** 1339

**Location:** Phone

**Present:** Amanda Taylor (NTSB)

During the interview passenger 8 stated the following:

He was seated in an aft facing reclining seat about halfway toward the back of the airplane, on the right side across from a couch. He said it was “weird” to takeoff backwards. He felt the nose of the airplane rise but then go back down and the tail come up. Shortly after, the lights went out and he described it as “a wild ride”. He was holding on to the arms of his seat as the airplane swerved left and right. The airplane hit a ditch and he saw other passengers fall to the floor because they did not have their seatbelts on. He said it felt like the airplane was going to flip over before finally coming to a stop. He heard screaming “get off, get off, get out, get out” and did not realize the airplane was on fire until after he ran to the front left door and jumped on the slide. He ran away from the airplane.

He recalled the safety briefing that was given by the owner of airplane. The briefing covered exits, slides, seatbelts, and exit doors. He was not friends with the owner but worked for a contractor that was who invited him. Many passengers onboard worked in the home building business.

Passenger 8 stated his seatbelt and the passenger's across from him were fastened. He thought most passengers had their seatbelts fastened. When it came time to evacuate, he had no issues with his seatbelt or using slide. He said the slide was inflated and had correct position for the height of the airplane. After the airplane came to a stop it was dark inside for a moment until the front door was opened. After he was off the airplane, he ran away and did not look back until he was far from the airplane.

**Interview:** Passenger 10

**Date:** October 23, 2021

**Start Time:** 1631

**Location:** Phone

**Present:** Amanda Taylor (NTSB)

During the interview passenger 10 stated the following:

He felt like initially everything was fine. He was seated at the forward most position on the left-hand four-person couch (seat 10). Everyone had a seat and he had flown on the airplane before. He was watching the monitor to see the front of the plane on the runway. He saw the runway end and he realized they were not in the air. He felt the entire airplane go into reverse and went off the end of the runway. He stated it was a "wild and crazy ride." He stated the airplane hit a road which broke off the wheels.

He was thrown forwards towards the cockpit because he was not wearing his seatbelt. He had taken it off while the airplane was taxiing. He was laying on the floor when the airplane came to a stop. He went back for his father who was seated at the end of the left-hand four-person couch (seat 13). His father was unbuckling his seatbelt. He saw someone open the back door and saw smoke and fire. He saw light forward so ran that way. He said everyone evacuated in a single file line, the slide was inflated, and he used the slide with no issues. Passenger 10 helped move an older gentleman that was injured a couple hundred feet away from the airplane. He does not remember seeing any lights in the cabin. He said it happened so fast he was unable to brace.

**Interview:** Passenger 11

**Date:** October 23, 2021

**Start Time:** 1408

**Location:** Phone

**Present:** Amanda Taylor (NTSB)

During the interview passenger 11 stated the following:

He boarded the airplane about 0930. The airplane was already running, and other passengers were already onboard. He introduced himself to the other passengers and looked at the interior of the airplane. He sat on the left-hand four-person couch, in a position second from the front. He remembered hearing the airplane owner talk about the bathroom, exit doors, and seatbelts. Then remembered the owner stating, “this is information I have to tell you but hope not to need.” Passenger 11 took photos of the inside of the cabin toward the front, rear, and right side prior to takeoff.

He said the airplane accelerated completely normal, but he felt “weird” seated sideways. From his experience flying, there was nothing wrong with the feeling of thrust and engine sounds. He felt the nose come up, and maybe one bounce before the nose came down very quickly. He felt reverse thrust and brakes, and noted the airplane felt like it had a tremendous amount of stopping power. He said there was a camera at the front of the airplane that provided a live feed so he could see as they went off the end of the runway. He saw a tree line and a ditch. When they hit the ditch, passenger 10 was thrown out of his seat and towards the front of the cabin. There was a second massive hit, which caused passenger 11 to be thrown forward as well. Neither passenger was restrained with a seatbelt. They both took their seatbelts during the taxi out to the runway. He stated it felt as if the airplane was not on wheels and it was twisting sideways.

The airplane came to a halt, and he heard a loud bang. He immediately thought he heard two fire extinguishers being discharged. He said it was dark on the inside of the airplane until the door was opened. He did not see any smoke in the cabin. He heard someone yell “get out, get out, we are on fire.” He grabbed his bag and ran to the front door. He saw flames close to the slide. He had to wait for a gap in flames to get out. He jumped down on the slide and ran approximately 100 yards. He heard one explosion and witnessed another after he was further away.

His father-in-law was a pilot, so he thanked the pilots for their help, and then asked them what had happened. He stated the older pilot appeared to be in shock and the younger pilot said, “we had no lift, kept pulling back and got no lift, like something with the elevators.”

He felt like there were no issues getting out. The center aisle was massive which made it easy. He described it like running down a school hallway. He felt he was out of the airplane in approximately ten seconds from the time the airplane stopped. He heard someone open the back door and flames came in, but he did not see. He noted the engines were running for a long time, even after they evacuated.

**Interview:** Passengers 14 and 15

**Date:** October 23, 2021

**Start Time:** 1652

**Location:** Phone

**Present:** Amanda Taylor (NTSB)

During the interview the passengers 14 and 15 stated the following:

They boarded the airplane and were told to be seated. They were invited on the trip because passenger 14's brother knew the airplane owner well. They received a safety briefing pointing out the doors, lavatory and how to work the seatbelts. Passenger 15 was seated on the aft right-hand three-person couch in the aft most seat, with passenger 14 in the middle, and passenger 22\* next to her, furthest forward. They recalled the couch seated three people and all were restrained with a seatbelt. As they were taking off, the airplane accelerated like normal but then there was hard braking. Passenger 15 thought they would stop and head back to the terminal. There was an abrupt impact. The airplane started getting bumpy.

Passenger 15 started thinking about where the exits were and how to get out. He felt the airplane start to slide sideways. Once they were stopped, they could see flames out the left overwing exit. A female passenger started to open the door, and he yelled not to open the door. Both passengers 14 and 15 went to the back of the aircraft to exit. They opened the interior door that leads to the tailcone exit and saw smoke, but no fire. They stopped, turned around, and made their way forward. As he walked by the overwing exit he saw it had been opened, the door was on the floor, and flames were coming in. When they got to the exit, he noticed the slide was deflated and useless. They had about a ten-foot drop. Passenger 15 stated he was the last passenger out prior to the pilot.

They walked away from the airplane toward the road and within minutes they stated the fire really got going. First responders arrived "really quickly." They both estimated that everyone was off within two minutes or less once the airplane stopped. Neither sustained any injuries.

**Interview:** Passengers 16 and 19

**Date:** October 22, 2021

**Start Time:** 1505

**Location:** Phone

**Present:** Emily Gibson (NTSB), Amanda Taylor (NTSB), and Bruce Wallace (Boeing)

During the interview passengers 16 and 19 stated the following:

Passengers 16 and 19 were seated at a four-person table on the left side in the aft portion of the cabin just forward of the left overwing exit. Passenger 16 was in an aft facing inboard seat, and passenger 19 was in a forward-facing outboard seat. This was not their first flight on this airplane, they had flown earlier in 2021 to Cabo, as well as another time in the past. They were friends with the owner and when offered seats on the airplane to attend the baseball game in Boston they accepted. They remembered the safety briefing given by the airplane owner. The briefing consisted of exit locations, bathrooms, and seatbelt function. They were not paying much attention to the briefing as they were looking at food options at the destination.

Passenger 19 stated that she fastened her seatbelt, saw the door closed and safety briefing started. She opened her window to observe the takeoff, however she noted that most of the windows were closed. She felt the airplane taxi and speed up as expected. Shortly after she felt the brakes being applied and the ride became bumpy. The lights went out. They ran off the runway fast, across a road and into a field. The



passengers seated across the table from her had a bad look on their faces, and the passenger next to her screamed.

Once the airplane came to a stop passenger 19 struggled to unlatch her belt but she attributed that to being in shock. Passenger 17 went to the left overwing exit to open it. Once she opened it and she saw flames she attempted to close it. Passenger 16 tried to help her close the exit. Passenger 17 ran to the front left door to get out of the airplane. Passenger 16 then proceeded to the right overwing exit and opened it. He began to exit when passenger 19 shoved him out the door and followed behind, stating the drop was approximately 8-10 feet. There were lots of tree and wing debris around the right side of the airplane as they exited.

Passenger 16 stated that he felt the takeoff but was looking at a phone at the time. Food and other items began to go everywhere, and he felt the brakes being applied. Most of the windows were closed but he could see out the window by passenger 19. As the plane was traveling, he could see dirt out the window, felt a bang, and the front of the airplane pitch down and fishtail. Out the window he could see sparks and the left engine catch on fire prior to the airplane coming to a full stop.

Passenger 16 observed passenger 17 jump up and go to the left overwing exit, he attempted to stop her since he could see the flames outside, but she had already opened it. They shut that exit and passenger 16 ran to the right overwing exit and opened it. He said he had no issues opening and was a frequent traveler so did not have to stop and read directions. As he was exiting, he felt passenger 19 push him out the door. He received some scrapes on his hands and knees from the fall out of the exit. He did not think the wing was close but could not remember if it was completely separated or not. He remembered meeting up with passengers 17 and 18 before walking to the closest road. Emergency services arrived shortly after.

Passengers 16 and 19 stated they were the only two that exited out the right overwing exit and said that they did not see any smoke in the cabin until after the left overwing exit had been opened. They did not hear anything from the cockpit, or any individual, just lots of screaming. After they exited passenger 16 did not remember hearing the right engine running but did not look to confirm. They left their phones in the airplane during the evacuation.

**Record of Conversation:** Passengers 17 and 18

**Date:** October 22, 2021

**Start Time:** 1051

**Location:** Phone

**Present:** Amanda Taylor (NTSB), Emily Gibson (NTSB), Bruce Wallace (Boeing)

During the conversation passengers 17 and 18 stated the following:

Passengers 17 and 18 were seated at a four-person table on the left side in the aft portion of the cabin just forward of the left overwing exit. Passenger 17 was in a forward-facing inboard seat, and passenger 18 was in an aft facing outboard seat. Seated directly across from her on the aisle facing aft toward the tail of the airplane was passenger 16, a friend of hers and her husband's. Passenger 18 was seated next to him in the window seat and passenger 19 was seated next to the window facing forward. This was

not their first flight on this airplane. She and her husband both traveled on this airplane in April 2021 to Cabo.

Both passengers 17 and 18 said a safety briefing was provided. They remembered being briefed on the seatbelts, emergency exits, and the bathrooms. She remembered being briefed on location but not operation of the exits. The briefing was provided by the owner of the airplane, who was also a passenger. Passenger 17 stated she was not listening closely to the safety briefing as she was on the phone with her daughter. She said once the airplane was moving down the runway it felt like it had taken off or gave the sensation of lifting. She put her phone down and looked up because her drink was splashing around and thought it was weird. She said things were getting worse, not normal. She started to get concerned and the look on the passenger across from her also showed concern. The airplane was shaking and then fishtailed a lot like it was hitting something. The lights were flashing then went out.

She stated when the plane came to a stop she jumped up and ran behind her seat and opened the left overwing exit. She thought she remembered hearing someone yelling "get out, get out!" She was immediately hit in the face with smoke, and a flame came at her like a backdraft. She stated she still had the door in hand and held the door in the frame for a bit. She felt like she made things worse. She dropped the door and ran forward and exited out the forward left door. She stated the slide was not inflated. She jumped and rolled. She was in cowboy boots and fell a few times running away. She said passengers 16 and 19 opened the right overwing exit and exited through it.

Passenger 18 stated he exited through the forward left door. He travelled a lot on these planes. He did not have his seatbelt on, he was not buckled. As they were going down the runway ready for takeoff it was getting bumpier. He was trying to keep his iced tea from splashing around and eventually gave up on it. It felt like they hit a ditch and the lights were flashing. The interior of the airplane went dark. They crossed into a field with trees. He saw a spark of flames out the corner of his right eye. The airplane fishtailed and stopped. He immediately got up and by that time the forward left door was already open, and he exited the plane. He stated he was in survival mode. He ran toward the exit and jumped into the "inflatable thing". He knew there was fuel onboard and the airplane was "going to explode any minute." He ran as far away as possible. His mind was working faster than his legs and he fell a couple times. He ran back and saw his wife in the field, and they continued to run until they saw firefighters and first responders. Passenger 18 stated he thought it took him about 30 seconds to get out of the airplane.

Passenger 17 was taken to Memorial Herman Katy for smoke inhalation and a sprained right ankle which she mentioned was from hitting the ground. She stated the slope of the slide did not seem effective. She did not think it was fully inflated, maybe 25-30%. She thought the slide was about ten feet from the ground. Passenger 18 stated he was happy to see something he could jump into and land on.

They said the passengers on the airplane were all friends of the owner, but they did not really know anyone else on this trip, other than the other passengers seated at the table with them. Passenger 18 said the lights were flickering and then the lights went out. The shades were closed.

Passenger 17 thought she was one of the last few people out. When asked if anyone had assisted them out, any fellow passengers, they did not recall. She stated that one passenger, who was taken to the

emergency room, was exiting after her and was getting some assistance off the airplane. He was carried by five people through the field, four men and his wife. When she was talking to a firefighter, he told her she needed to get checked. They stated first responders arrived fast and heard later 27 different agencies had responded. There was no shortage of first responders. Media had reported the airplane had not flown since December of 2020 but six of them had flown in April 2021 to Cabo.

Passenger 18 stated his dad had flown into the airport the day before and saw the airplane being serviced. His dad had commented he did not think it looked ready to fly.

**Interview:** Passenger 22\*

**Date:** October 26, 2021

**Start Time:** 1404

**Location:** Phone

**Present:** Amanda Taylor (NTSB)

During the interview passenger 22\* stated the following:

About 0945 the passengers boarded the airplane, and everyone found a seat relatively quickly. It seemed like it took no time before they were instructed to buckle their seatbelts. She was unable to remember a safety briefing but remembers being told “let me know if you need anything, I probably have it.” She was seated on a 3-passenger couch located on the right side of the aircraft at the forward most location (seat 22\*). She stated there were three seatbelts, and she was on the couch with two other people located across from a table with four people. This was her first time on this airplane.

Shortly after they began to taxi, she felt the brakes and everything on the counters and shelves fell to the ground. She assumed they would stop and go back to the terminal. She began to feel bumps and the plane shifted sideways. There was one hard bump and she looked out the left side windows across from her and saw flames. She remembered it being very dark. She removed her seatbelt, reached down, and grabbed her boyfriend’s backpack, but did not have her phone with her. She felt like the slide had not completely inflated when she jumped. She was positioned with her feet in front and landed “hard on her butt.” She believed she saw someone at the entrance to the door but is not completely sure. She ran out into the pasture and remembered speaking to the younger pilot. She asked what happened and he said, “the plane wouldn’t, couldn’t get in the air, wouldn’t lift off.” She remembered meeting up with local firefighters and emergency medical personnel.