

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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TAQUAN AIR DHC-2 METLAKATIA * Accident No.: ANC19FA019

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Interview of: MICHAEL O'BRIEN
Senior Pilot/Check Airman
Taquan Air

Thursday,
May 23, 2019

APPEARANCES:

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JON PERCY, Principal Operations Inspector
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MICHAEL O'BRIEN, Senior Pilot/Check Airman
Taquan Air

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2 MS. PRICE: Okay, good morning. Today is May 23rd, 2019.
3 I'm Noreen Price with the National Transportation and Safety
4 Board. We're here interviewing personnel from Taquan Air. The
5 accident number is ANC19FA019.

6 So, let me introduce the folks in the room. I'm an aviation
7 accident investigator with the NTSB in Anchorage Region.

8 MR. PERCY: And I'm Jon Percy from the Juneau Flight
9 Standards District Office of the FAA.

10 MR. O'BRIEN: I'm Mike O'Brien, senior pilot and check pilot
11 for Taquan Air.

12 MR. GERD: I'm Brian Gerd, attorney and legal counsel for
13 Taquan Air, and its employees.

14 MS. PRICE: Great. Thank you.

15 So the National Transportation Safety Board is an independent
16 agency that's charged with investigating accidents to determine
17 probable cause and make safety recommendations so we don't have
18 these accidents in the future.

19 We are independent. We have no legal authority, and strictly
20 the investigation's for safety purposes. A transcript will be
21 made from this recording today and that transcript will become
22 part of the public docket when the investigation's published.

23 You're allowed to have one representative with you during the
24 interview, Mike. Who would that be today?

25 MR. O'BRIEN: That'd be Brian Gerd.

1 MS. PRICE: Okay. Very well.

2 During the interview if you need to take a break to confer
3 with him, go ahead and just say so and we'll just take a break
4 from the interview.

5 MR. O'BRIEN: Understood.

6 MS. PRICE: All right. So let's get to the questions.

7 INTERVIEW OF MICHAEL O'BRIEN

8 BY MS. PRICE:

9 Q. Mike, how do you spell your name?

10 A. M-i-c-h-a-e-l, capital O, apostrophe, capital B-r-i-e-n.

11 Q. And what's your position in the company?

12 A. I am a senior pilot and a check pilot.

13 Q. Okay. And how long have you been with Taquan?

14 A. I have -- this is my 13th summer, which includes about 6
15 years full-time. So I started in 2007 as a seasonable pilot, and
16 then, as of spring of 2013, I think it is, I've been here
17 basically year-round.

18 Q. Okay. And which model of airplanes do you fly for the
19 company?

20 A. I fly the DHC-2 de Havilland Beaver, and the DHC-3T Turbine
21 Otter.

22 Q. Okay. And if you could give me a brief summary of your
23 aviation background. So where you got your -- when you started
24 flying, where you got your experience, and who you've worked for
25 in the past.

1 A. I began flying out of San Carlos Flight Center, long ago,
2 late '80s. I ended up getting my private pilot in 1991, I
3 believe. Instrument rating in 1992 out of San Jose, California.
4 Then I ended up flying off and on throughout college. I got my
5 commercial certificate with Sheble Aviation in 1996. I got my
6 certified flight instructor certificate with Sheble Aviation in
7 1998. And that's out of Henderson, south of Las Vegas, Nevada.

8 Then I got a seaplane rating, single engine sea, out of
9 Kenmore in 2001. And I got a multiengine seaplane rating out of
10 La Placa Flying Services in Lake Havasu, Southern California. And
11 then I spent a summer in Juneau in 2001; that was my first
12 seaplane experience, in Juneau, for Wings of Alaska. And then I
13 got hired to fly Learjets in 2003. I typed and got an ATP at a
14 recurrent in 2004, in the Lear 35, 55. And then returned to
15 Alaska in 2007, where I began work at Taquan Air.

16 Q. And you're currently at full-time?

17 A. Currently a full-time employee of Taquan Air.

18 Q. Okay. Are you on a salary or do you get paid by the flight
19 hour? How is your compensation?

20 A. We get paid by the day.

21 Q. So by the day that you're scheduled to fly?

22 A. Yeah. Scheduled to fly, we come in, we fly, we get paid for
23 that day.

24 Q. Okay. And if you don't fly or it's cancelled, do you still
25 get paid?

1 A. If we cancel for weather and we don't come in at all, we
2 don't get paid. If we come in and it turns out to be too bad to
3 fly and we go home early, we get paid for a half day.

4 Q. Okay. So if you could take a little time to describe the
5 initial training that you had when you were first an employee at
6 Taquan and then describe what initial training is now.

7 A. Not much difference.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. I received -- of course, I came to them with a floatplane
10 rating already and some experience. But I did get some training
11 in the Beaver, just the basics of -- basically off the 8410. Then
12 there was some procedures and all that, couple hours of that. I'd
13 have to look at the exact number, I'm not sure. Probably, I don't
14 know, 5 hours, 10 hours, something like that.

15 And then after that, I was observed giving a tour and signed
16 off for that, for nonscheduled. And then I also received IOE for
17 the commuter flights, for the mail flights.

18 Q. And how long -- and you said you had Beaver experience,
19 right?

20 A. I had -- before I came to Taquan, I had about maybe 350 hours
21 of Beaver time.

22 Q. Okay. All right. You said the training process now looks
23 similar, if not the same.

24 A. It looks very similar.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. What's your approximate total flight time?

3 A. Oh, my personal flight time, probably 11,000 hours.

4 Q. And how much Beaver time do you have, roughly?

5 A. I'm going to estimate close to 7,000 hours.

6 Q. Okay. So, if you would, describe for me a typical summer's
7 day at Taquan for a pilot. Describe, like, right from arrival
8 here to the entire flight, how all the process happens: the
9 dispatch, the preflight, the --

10 A. Pilot shows up, usually the first thing is to go down to the
11 airplane and begin preflight procedures. Getting off the dock
12 into the water. Everyone kind of pitches in to help with that
13 process on a busy summer day.

14 Once the airplane is preflighted, pilot will come and check
15 or recheck weather, get a manifest from dispatch, whether it's a
16 mail flight or a tour, and then they'll collect their passengers
17 and go down and begin the flight. And a flight -- a typical
18 summer day may involve maybe four or five tours; so Misty tours,
19 maybe a mail flight as well.

20 So you might finish a Misty tour at, you know, 3 or 4, or
21 something like that, and then go do a Craig flight or a Thorne Bay
22 flight or Metlakatla. So they try to schedule in the mail flights
23 around the tours. That's what dispatch will do.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. And then after that, it's putting the planes -- powering the

1 planes back up on the dock and making sure they're all secured for
2 the night.

3 Q. And then is there a risk assessment process prior to flight?
4 Flight risk assessment?

5 A. Yes. There's supposed to be a risk assessment given. They
6 usually give us risk assessments for every tour, and then also for
7 every mail flight, unless the conditions haven't changed that
8 much.

9 Q. Okay. So every time it goes out, there's another risk
10 assessment?

11 A. Usually with the tours, every time it goes out there's a new
12 risk --

13 Q. For each tour.

14 A. -- assessment, yes. For each tour.

15 Q. How about the scheduled flights?

16 A. Scheduled flights, as I said, if it's -- the conditions
17 haven't changed much, they may not give another one.

18 Q. Okay. And then flight time per day, on a nice day, when all
19 the flights go, what kind of --

20 A. I'm going to say between 5 and 6.5 hours.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Sometimes more.

23 Q. How much flying do you guys do in the wintertime?

24 A. Maybe a little over half that. So maybe 3 to 4 hours a day,
25 maybe 2 or 3 commuter flights. Especially in the deep of

1 December.

2 Q. And are there any differences between who can do a tour
3 flight, a scheduled flight, a mail run? Do they categorize pilots
4 at all? New, old, experienced or --

5 A. Yes. The newer people, you usually started out on tours
6 first. And then as they get used to it, they're moved to mail
7 flights. And when they go to mail flights, they will do the
8 simpler destinations, the closer destinations, like Metlakatla,
9 Thorne Bay, Craig, Hydaburg.

10 There are certain destinations that we won't send people to
11 until maybe they've been here at least maybe half a summer, places
12 like maybe Edna Bay or Coffman Cove. Then there's places that we
13 won't send them here at all on their first summer, like Port
14 Protection and Point Baker.

15 Q. Why is that?

16 A. Because that's probably a little bit more of an advanced
17 person's purview, if you will. They're a little more treacherous.
18 Port Protection and Point Baker can be a little more trickier, the
19 conditions can change faster. The water is fairly exposed out
20 there on the western tip of the island, so the waves can be an
21 issue, the wind can be different than the waves. It's a confined
22 space. Especially Point Baker.

23 So the first year seasonals never go to places like on their
24 own. They might ride along or they might, maybe, do an IOE flight
25 there, but it's never on their own.

1 Q. Okay. And when you say seasonals, are you referring to the
2 summer pilots?

3 A. I guess I'm referring to the newer pilots, yes.

4 Q. Oh, newer, yeah.

5 A. Because seasonals are typically newer pilots.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. I don't think -- I think it's been pretty rare when you've
8 actually hired somebody straight off full-time. I mean, even I
9 didn't really become interested in full-time until like 5 or 6
10 years after I was -- several summers here.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. So it's -- seasonal people typically are newer people anyway.
13 Not always, but --

14 Q. Okay. So, for the -- you said that the first type of flights
15 that new pilots do would be the tours and then they would progress
16 to mail and then to scheduled flights; is that correct? That's
17 what you said?

18 A. Well, mail flights are scheduled flights.

19 Q. Oh, okay. The scheduled mail --

20 A. Yes. Correct.

21 Q. All right. Got you. Do you carry passengers --

22 A. (Indiscernible).

23 Q. -- on the scheduled mail flights as well?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Back and forth to -- yeah.

1 A. Yeah. Scheduled flights involve mail, freight, cargo,
2 whatever.

3 Q. Whatever goes, okay. I understand. All right.

4 So are the tour flights easier for pilots? Is that why they
5 get assigned?

6 A. The tour flights are simpler, more repetitious, and usually
7 -- and they go in large groups, often mixed with people who are
8 also senior. So that's kind of the idea behind that, is that
9 there's --

10 Q. I see.

11 A. -- more than one plane going together, usually.

12 Q. Oh, okay. Okay.

13 A. So, the idea is that they're going to have a wingman, so to
14 speak.

15 Q. Okay. So where do pilots get their weather from? Does
16 anybody in the company provide them weather or preplan information
17 or --

18 A. We get weather from a multitude of sources. We get weather
19 from Wunderground, online sources, NOAA, Flight Service Station.
20 We get weather from -- a large chunk of weather comes from
21 competent observers in the field, people that are trained. Some
22 of them are actually officially trained weather observers.

23 So we get calls from the field, we get calls from weather
24 stations, we get calls from other pilots, too. We'll call other
25 airlines, and hey, what was the weather in so and so?

1 Q. And do you guys make the call or does dispatch have a process
2 in those calls to get weather from observers or --

3 A. Dispatch will call and get weather for us.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. It's up to us to ask, of course, but they're the ones that --
6 they often will do that for us.

7 Q. Do you know Metlakatla, what weather sources you would check
8 if you were headed to Metlakatla?

9 A. I would check the FAA METARs. I would check Wunderground,
10 and we also call and get a report from our reliable weather
11 observer over there. We have one over there.

12 Q. Who is your reliable weather --

13 A. A woman named Rosa. And I forget her last name.

14 Q. It's okay. Thank you.

15 So back to training. When you went through initial training,
16 did you practice crosswind landings?

17 A. I believe so.

18 Q. Do you remember practicing downwind landings, tailwind
19 landings? Is that -- was that part of the training process?

20 A. I do not remember.

21 Q. Okay. How about underwater egress? Does the company train
22 pilots for underwater egress?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Did you feel well prepared when you first started flying for
25 the company as far as your training went?

1 A. I had the usual apprehensions of a new pilot, but yeah, I
2 think I was prepared.

3 Q. Does the company provide any information about destinations,
4 like a binder or something a pilot could go to say, gee, I've
5 never been to that lake, or --

6 A. Yes, we do. There is a binder that the pilot can look at,
7 and it's always being improved and compiled. But we also refer
8 them to someone who's been there. To the senior pilot or the
9 chief pilot or somebody who's actually been there. And when I
10 give such instruction to the newer people, I usually draw a map.
11 I show them where it is on the official map, but then I also draw
12 them a map of the location. The dock is here, this is the --
13 watch out for rocks over here, you know. Et cetera.

14 Q. Okay. And at Metlakatla Harbor, are there any particular
15 operational challenges that you would brief to a new pilot?

16 A. Well, I guess I would brief the winds. The winds could be --
17 are often a problem in there. Especially if they're coming off
18 the mountain.

19 Q. Can you describe them for me? I know we have talked about it
20 ourselves --

21 A. Yes, absolutely.

22 Q. -- but I need it --

23 A. For the thing.

24 Q. Yup, thank you.

25 A. You bet. I guess the most treacherous winds in Metlakatla

1 have -- I have encountered and hear of other people encountering
2 is coming off the mountain because there's downdrafts near the
3 mountain and it can cause gusts and swirls on the water kind of
4 out in front of the dock.

5 Q. And would a pilot be able to see those on the water if they
6 were reading the water?

7 A. Typically, yes, they would.

8 Q. And do you know what the prevailing winds are in that area?

9 A. Prevailing winds in this whole general area are from the
10 southeast, usually. So that would probably put it more off the
11 town -- not off the mountain, but off the town typically, usually.

12 Q. So what direction then would a typical approach into the
13 harbor for a landing be?

14 A. A near straight line from the driest point toward the dock,
15 with variations for traffic or maybe possible wind, to get a more
16 direct headwind, perhaps.

17 Q. So I showed you a picture of the preliminary track that we
18 have on the accident airplane. He was headed westward in the
19 harbor there. Do you have any explanation for why a pilot would
20 make an approach in that direction? And we don't know, but you
21 might be able to explain it better than I can see it in a picture.

22 A. Well, wind could certainly be a factor. If the wind is
23 blowing into the bay. The only other thing I can think of is
24 traffic, low traffic. Maybe to land, you know, further from a
25 group of (indiscernible) or a, you know, a boat group. Sometimes

1 you have to predict where the boat's going to be when you're going
2 to get there. So boat track might be a part of it.

3 Q. Okay. Would you typically land into the wind or do you think
4 pilots or do you yourself land with a tailwind to get to the dock
5 faster or make it more expeditious?

6 A. Usually in Met, I find that I can land into the wind.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Usually.

9 Q. So, what flap configuration do you normally land in? For a
10 typical load.

11 A. Landing flap configuration.

12 Q. Landing flap. And that is -- is that what the company
13 teaches?

14 A. That's what we've been teaching, yes.

15 Q. Okay. Have you ever experienced a float digging in on a
16 landing, where you felt like you might lose control?

17 A. Almost. In other words, I was able to keep control at all
18 times, but there were a few landings that kind of got my attention
19 a little bit, kind of scared me a little bit.

20 Q. Do you remember what the conditions were at the time?

21 A. Well, one of them was at Met, and it was -- the water was --
22 there were some winds that were kind of swirling a little bit, it
23 looked like. And it was one of those things where you kind of
24 looked -- I kind of felt after the fact, oh okay, that little --
25 that swirl on the water is something to watch out for. So I kind

1 of -- one of those things where you kind of -- I kind of learned a
2 lesson there.

3 Q. Was there any pressure on company pilots to complete flights
4 on time?

5 A. Not from any source involving operations. The only pressure
6 I can think of is just kind of the general pressure of trying to
7 get the job done and, you know, meet the schedule and complete the
8 mission and all the stuff that typically is part of the job.

9 Q. So, who puts that pressure on the pilots?

10 A. I don't think anybody in particular puts pressure on the
11 pilots.

12 Q. So themselves?

13 A. Because --

14 Q. Self-induced pressure to get the job done?

15 A. Perhaps it might -- it might be self-induced. It might just
16 be -- like I said, it's kind of generally induced by the, you
17 know, go, go go. But I'm pretty impressed with this company as
18 far as not -- being very specific about not, you know, kind of
19 reiterating over and over again not to rush things. I know -- I'm
20 aware that some companies are not like that.

21 Q. Okay. So did you know the accident pilot?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Can you describe his personality?

24 A. I only flew with him two times, but what I remember about him
25 was he seemed like a competent individual. You know, happy to be

1 here, you know, excited to get involved in the job.

2 Conscientious, and he flew relatively well too, as I recall.

3 Q. So how would you rate his proficiency as compared to other
4 pilots that -- new pilots that you have trained? Average, above
5 average, below average?

6 A. I'd say above average.

7 Q. Is there anything particularly you can remember about his
8 training flights that struck you --

9 A. Unfortunately, no.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I don't recall much. I've had -- I looked at my notes and I
12 didn't have a whole lot of notes. So that tells me that he was --
13 that I was satisfied with what I saw. So, as I recall, seemed
14 like he did have good command of the aircraft.

15 Q. When you train somebody, do you -- are you aware of what
16 their background is? Their flight hours, their experience?

17 A. I am. But when you have a lot of trainees, it's hard to
18 remember which is which. So I don't remember -- I don't recall
19 exactly what his background was.

20 Q. I know. But typically when you meet someone for the first
21 time, a new employee, do they talk about, or do you get any piece
22 of paper -- does a chief pilot brief on, this person has 5 hours
23 of floatplane time?

24 A. Not always, no.

25 Q. No. Okay.

1 A. No.

2 MS. PRICE: All right. That's all the questions I have for
3 right now. I have some follow-up ones but I'm going to take a
4 break and --

5 MR. O'BRIEN: Okay.

6 MS. PRICE: -- pass it to Jon, if you have questions?

7 MR. PERCY: Sounds good.

8 BY MR. PERCY:

9 Q. Couple of the ones I had initially were if you did crosswind
10 training, and you said that you think you did. And then any noted
11 deficiencies or difficulties, and you said no. One of the
12 questions on that was -- as we move on, these are just going to be
13 follow-ups from Noreen.

14 You said the risk assessment was completed, you know, mostly
15 before every flight or unless there's changes. Who completes the
16 risk assessment?

17 A. The dispatcher completes it on the computer.

18 Q. Does the pilot have any input on the risk assessment?

19 A. The pilot can if they want to. They can certainly say, let's
20 select this, this is risky too, and this is --

21 Q. Are there any human factors at all in the risk assessment?

22 A. I believe so.

23 Q. Like how the pilot's feeling --

24 A. Well, for instance, at this time there's a distraction --

25 Q. Right.

1 A. -- that they're being checked off --

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. -- worth so many points. I forget. I have to look, I don't
4 know. But there -- yeah, certainly different factors. I remember
5 there's also, I think there's a thing on there that says last
6 flight of the day, which is -- that brings up fatigue and do we --

7 Q. Sure.

8 A. -- think that's going to --

9 Q. Now are there any questions that fatigue even -- like the
10 middle of the day, how much sleep they got or --

11 A. I don't know if there's a sleep question on there.

12 Q. Or how much rest?

13 A. I don't think so.

14 Q. Don't think so.

15 A. I don't recall a question like that being on there.

16 Q. Okay. So, and another follow-up, you said that usually we
17 start the pilots off on air tours, and we go to -- newer pilots
18 start with air tours and they progress towards the scheduled
19 flights. How many tours did Mr. Rash conduct prior to him being
20 assigned to schedules, roughly, or maybe even how many days?

21 A. Actually, I have information. He flew -- let's see. He flew
22 three Misty tours, the -- where are we here, the 12th, and two
23 George Inlet Lodge tours on the 12th. And then he did a lot of
24 ride-alongs during that week, and then flew two Misty tours on the
25 19th. And then on the accident day he flew one Misty tour prior

1 to the Metlakatla flight. So that's six Misty's and two GILs, two
2 George Inlet Lodge, so 8 tours total.

3 Q. And then --

4 A. Prior to.

5 Q. How do we judge then or how does the company judge that the
6 pilot's had enough experience doing the air tours to progress then
7 on to -- what's the basis for determining that the pilot's ready
8 to move on to a more advanced flight?

9 A. I believe that's it's been competency. But I think I
10 remember something about wanting the pilot's to fly a month of
11 tours prior to their flying freight or commuter flights.

12 Q. And so, in -- yeah, in this case it was just a couple of
13 days.

14 A. Correct. So in this case, I don't know what the basis was
15 for his getting that Met flight. I don't know what it was.

16 Q. Got you. The other one, do you have any -- just in your
17 training and experience as a seaplane pilot, what would cause an
18 aircraft to flip on landing?

19 A. What would cause an airplane to flip on landing? In my
20 experience, excessive speed at touchdown, certainly the smoother
21 the water is at touchdown could be a factor, unpredictable winds
22 at touchdown could be a factor.

23 Q. And would possible poor crosswind technique cause it -- for a
24 plane to flip?

25 A. I'm not sure.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. I suppose in extreme conditions, it could.

3 MR. PERCY: I think that's all -- that was all the follow-up
4 questions that I had.

5 MR. O'BRIEN: Okay.

6 MS. PRICE: Okay. Just back to a follow-up on one of his
7 questions.

8 BY MS. PRICE:

9 Q. The ride-along piece, he said he did a couple ride-along
10 fights. What's the purpose of a ride-along?

11 A. Oh, that just helps the newer pilots observe other pilots,
12 more senior pilots, in the typical day-to-day operations.

13 Q. So after IOE and they're ready to go, they still do ride-
14 alongs?

15 A. They're still welcome to ride along, absolutely.

16 Q. And who initiates that? Is it them or is it the company?

17 A. They are encouraged to initiate that themselves.

18 Q. Okay. And how do you know on the forms that it's a ride-
19 along with PIC. Is there some way they document that or --

20 A. It's documented on the dispatch sheet.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. We use the term rider.

23 Q. Okay. Thank you. Did you fly the accident airplane, 67667?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Do you recall the last time you flew it?

1 A. Yes, I do.

2 Q. And did you have any --

3 A. The date, I don't remember -- the date must have been -- oh
4 wow.

5 Q. It doesn't have to be exact.

6 A. A few days prior to the accident.

7 Q. Okay. Did you have any mechanical issues or performance
8 issues with the airplane?

9 A. The only issue I had was during the operation in which we
10 power the planes up onto the dock, there was a difficulty in
11 returning the throttle all the way to the idle position. The
12 issue was addressed and fixed, and neither I, nor anyone else had
13 any other issues immediately before or after that incident.

14 Q. Great. Does the company have an SMS, safety management
15 system?

16 A. I believe so.

17 Q. Do you know if it's a safety program or an SMS? Are you
18 aware of --

19 A. I'm not sure what the difference is between those two terms.

20 Q. It's okay. And do you have a role in that program at all?

21 A. I do not specifically have a role in that program.

22 Q. Do pilots go -- are there any safety meetings as part of the
23 safety program?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And are pilots invited to safety meetings as part of the

1 program? Or have you ever participated at any safety meetings --

2 A. I have. I filled the role of safety manager for a short time
3 and was involved. I don't remember specifically of pilots being
4 invited to those meetings, but we did have meetings with pilots
5 that involved obviously safety issues.

6 Q. Right.

7 A. But I don't recall them actually being connected to the SMS.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. I don't know if it was connected or not.

10 Q. So with this company, how would you report a safety concern
11 as a pilot?

12 A. Besides just verbally reporting it to the chief pilot, which
13 is encouraged also.

14 Q. Well, yeah, that's a form --

15 A. Obviously.

16 Q. -- of reporting, so --

17 A. So during preparations also, we also have what we call the
18 S-1 program. It's a written form that a pilot can fill out with
19 details about any incidents or concerns or mishaps or whatever,
20 even if it's something that did or did not happen. So that's the
21 formal way to do it. And then that report is reviewed by the
22 director of operations, chief pilot, and then there's a whole
23 system about whether it's urgent or it can wait 10 days or
24 whatever. There's actually -- they kind of categorize them. It's
25 a whole system that they got.

1 And we're always refining that as well. But there is a
2 formal way to report that if you want. And it can be anonymous.
3 If they want it to be anonymous, it can be.

4 Q. Okay. If somebody makes a report directly to the chief
5 pilot, do you know if then it would go -- a formal report would
6 also be made or is it?

7 A. I do not know. I mean, maybe it's a case-by-case basis.

8 Q. Since last year's accident, have any changes been made to
9 operations, the way you operate here?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. What are those changes?

12 A. The changes, and again, always being refined still, we've
13 made changes on our minimum visibility requirements for certain
14 types of flights. For instance, the tour, I think as an example,
15 the FARs say 2 miles and 500 feet ceilings. If you're on a tour
16 or if you're in the Fjords, it's 4 miles visibility for us.
17 That's company policy.

18 Can I add something to the previous question?

19 Q. Absolutely.

20 A. Anytime that there's a mishap or a concern, I and pretty much
21 every other senior person at the company will encourage the pilot
22 to fill out a formal S-1 report.

23 Q. Yes, okay.

24 A. Even if it's something like, oh, a passenger tripped on the
25 dock or something.

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. They say, oh, fill out an S-1, fill out an S-1. So the
3 program is certainly encouraged. And --

4 Q. Thanks.

5 A. -- you know, advertised.

6 Q. Have there been any changes to the way you operate since last
7 week's accident?

8 A. Yes. We are in the process of implementing higher company
9 hour requirements for IOE.

10 Q. Have they -- do you know if they've finalized those? And I
11 can ask the chief pilot --

12 A. Yeah, I'm not sure.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. They're -- like I said, it's in progress.

15 Q. Okay. In progress.

16 A. And I've seen it written down on paper, they're doing rough
17 drafts and copies of it and --

18 MS. PRICE: Okay. Those are all the questions I have.

19 Do you have any?

20 MR. PERCY: I don't have any further follow-up questions.

21 MS. PRICE: All right. Well, thank you Mike. Appreciate
22 your --

23 MR. O'BRIEN: Certainly.

24 MS. PRICE: -- time. And that concludes our interview.

25 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: TAQUAN AIR DHC-2 METLAKATIA
 Interview of Michael O'Brien

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC19FA019

PLACE: Taquan Air

DATE: May 23, 2019

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.




Lindsey Kahnke
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

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TAQUAN AIR DHC-2 METLAKATLA * Accident No.: ANC19FA019

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Interview of: CHUCK PERKINS
Line Pilot, Taquan Air

Taquan Air Offices
Ketchikan, Alaska

Thursday,
May 23, 2019

APPEARANCES:

NOREEN PRICE, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

JON PERCY, Principal Operations Inspector
Federal Aviation Administration

MICHAEL O'BRIEN, Senior Pilot/Check Airman
Taquan Air

BRIAN GERD, Esq.
Richmond & Quinn
(On behalf of Mr. Perkins)

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MS. PRICE: Okay, it's May 23rd at Taquan Air. It's almost 9
3 a.m. in the morning, and we're here conducting interviews for
4 accident ANC19FA019.

5 Thank you, Chuck, for being here today and helping us out.

6 The NTSB is an independent federal organization that's
7 charged with investigating accidents, determining probable cause
8 and making safety recommendations. We're independent. We don't
9 work for DOT; we don't work with the FAA. We're independent, and
10 our goal is to make aviation safer.

11 Today we'll be recording this, and the recording will be sent
12 to a transcription service, and that will be put in the public
13 docket.

14 Do you have any questions about the conduct today?

15 MR. PERKINS: No.

16 MS. PRICE: Okay. You're allowed to have one representative.
17 Who will that representative be for you today?

18 MR. PERKINS: Well, this is who the company likes to work
19 with, so --

20 MS. PRICE: Company. Okay.

21 MR. PERKINS: Yep.

22 MS. PRICE: And let's go around and introduce everybody on
23 the recording. I'm Noreen Price, NTSB aviation accident
24 investigator and investigator in charge of the accident.

25 MR. PERCY: Jon Percy. I'm an FAA investigator from the

1 Juneau Flight Standards District Office.

2 MR. O'BRIEN: Mike O'Brien, senior pilot and check pilot,
3 Taquan Air.

4 MR. GERD: Brian Gerd, attorney and legal counsel for Taquan
5 Air and, today, for Chuck Perkins.

6 MS. PRICE: Okay, great.

7 INTERVIEW OF CHUCK PERKINS

8 BY MS. PRICE:

9 Q. Okay, so Chuck, if you could spell your full name? Say it
10 and spell it.

11 A. Charles, C-h-a-r-l-e-s, Perkins, P-e-r-k-i-n-s.

12 Q. Great. And how long have you been with the company?

13 A. This company, I started in 2016.

14 Q. Are you a seasonal pilot or a full-time pilot?

15 A. Full-time.

16 Q. And what's your title? Do you have a title here at the
17 company?

18 A. Line pilot.

19 Q. And you conducted the accident pilot's IOE check; is that
20 right or --

21 A. I believe there were five flights that were conducted, and I
22 believe I did four of those.

23 Q. Okay. But not the check?

24 A. No. He had gone through his check ride. I'm new at this
25 role as far as IOE, and so there are others that are higher up the

1 food chain than myself that do initial training and check rides.

2 Q. Okay. If you could give me just a brief description of your
3 aviation background, how many hours you have, who you worked for
4 in the past?

5 A. Okay. I started flying in Ketchikan in 1996. I worked 4
6 years for Jerry Scudero at the original Taquan Air. Then I worked
7 for 2000-2001 for Kevin Hack, who is the operator of Promech.
8 2002, I went to Anchorage, worked for an air service there for the
9 summer. That was Alaska Air Taxi. 2005, I worked in Juneau for
10 the summer for Alaska Seaplanes with Craig and Aral Loken.

11 2007, '08, '10, '14, '15, I worked for Promech again. It had
12 changed ownership, so I was working under the Waterfall Group,
13 Kendall and Mark O'Sessoms (ph.). That was a seasonal company in
14 the latter years. They had given up their mail contracts and
15 their focus was on mail -- or was simply on tour with the cruise
16 ship industry.

17 My original home is Vermont. And so many of those years I
18 gave you, I was a seasonal pilot, other than the late 1990s and
19 into -- and early 2000s with Jerry Scudero and Kevin Hack.

20 Q. And about how many hours do you have?

21 A. 11 and change.

22 Q. Beaver experience?

23 A. Beavers, Otters.

24 Q. About how much? Is it half your experience, most of your
25 experience? It doesn't need to be exact, just a general idea

1 of --

2 MR. GERD: Are you asking him for Beaver time --

3 MS. PRICE: Yeah.

4 MR. GERD: -- specifically?

5 MS. PRICE: Um-hum.

6 MR. PERKINS: These are not exact numbers.

7 MS. PRICE: No, and I don't need --

8 MR. PERKINS: These are estimates.

9 MS. PRICE: Yeah, I don't --

10 MR. PERKINS: Approximately 3500 in a Beaver and 5,000 in an
11 Otter.

12 MS. PRICE: Okay. That's fine. That's all we need. Thank
13 you.

14 MR. PERKINS: Yeah.

15 BY MS. PRICE:

16 Q. And how are you paid? What's your salary? Meaning are you
17 paid by the hour, by the day, on salary?

18 A. Traditionally in Ketchikan, with all the operators I've
19 worked with, there is -- you are paid on a daily rate.

20 Q. All right. Thank you.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Can you describe what your initial training -- in 2016, you
23 started with Taquan here, how the initial training went for you.
24 Now you came to the company with Beaver and Otter experience,
25 turbine Otter experience, right? So just briefly describe how you

1 were trained when you got here.

2 A. Pretty much the same as any other operator. Usually pilots,
3 especially seasonal ones, arrive the third week of April. You go
4 through a week of ground school, company policies. And then,
5 following that week, students are then working in pairs, typically
6 with a flight instructor, company instructor pilot. If you have
7 two, it's a little bit more efficient, and one can be riding in
8 back and one can be riding, you know, in the left seat with a
9 company instructor in the right seat. It's an efficient way to
10 learn, and you can learn by observing even if you're riding from
11 the rear, and kind of comparing your performance with your fellow
12 colleague up front.

13 Q. I know how pilots love to do that, yes.

14 A. Oh god, yeah. Love doing that.

15 Q. Okay. Let's see. During your training with Taquan regarding
16 Beaver, did you ever do crosswind landing training or tailwind --
17 quartering tailwind type of training?

18 A. Yes. You go out and you do your training, and eventually you
19 conclude with a check ride in which you're asked to perform
20 various maneuvers. You'll be doing stalls, steep turns, as well
21 as steep -- short, steep approaches, and then of course a step
22 taxi, and then -- you basically cover all the maneuvers.

23 Q. Okay. But would you ever have the opportunity to land with a
24 tailwind, though, in a training scenario? Do people take new
25 pilots out or initial pilot, and say, let's just land with a

1 tailwind today so we can get a feel for it? Or is that an unusual
2 training event?

3 A. That's kind of a difficult question to answer. I came up
4 through riding with a lot of senior people. I started off on the
5 dock. And so I had a lot of opportunity to learn, when I first
6 started in the late -- in the 1990s with, I would say I had
7 20,000-plus hours. You're observing, and they will land downwind.
8 And as a dock rat at that time, you're riding with these people
9 and you're learning from them verbally, watching their skillset.

10 And so the idea of, as a seaplane pilot, that we are able to
11 land into the wind in all situations, is not realistic. You have
12 to learn how to land with a tailwind. And frequently, I'll do
13 that all the time here. If you got a 6-knot wind and you've got
14 west routes and you're coming in from the west, well, you're 6
15 knots; that's workable. The limit has always typically been, you
16 know, 10 miles per hour, was what I was taught that you could land
17 with as far as a tailwind.

18 And so yes, there has been training in the past, either by
19 observing senior pilots or by going out and doing a check ride
20 where those issues are brought up. Because we operate in too many
21 places where it's a one way in, one way out, like Point Baker.
22 And the (indiscernible) we use the surveys going to Lyman
23 Anchorage a lot with an old piston Otter. And of course you have
24 west routes and -- or west winds that day, but you're going and
25 you've got a quartering tailwind.

1 So any pilot in a seaplane community has to be prepared that
2 you have to work with the area that you have available, and
3 sometimes that entails a tailwind or a quartering tailwind. So
4 that is conducted during training.

5 Q. Great, thank you. And before you go out on a flight, what
6 sources do you check to find out what the water conditions and
7 wind conditions are at the destination?

8 A. This has been a huge increase in the amount of information
9 available for pilots in the last 7 years, and the internet being
10 really the main avenue for that. So the FAA has weather cams.
11 There are METAR reports. There are other pilots that you can ask.
12 There are station agents that dispatch and can call and get a
13 weather report. Rosa over in Metlakatla, who is our station
14 agent, has been superb as far as calling and saying, I got water
15 crashing over the face of the dock; I wouldn't come. And so our
16 flights would be put on hold. And so there are -- those are the
17 sources of predominant information.

18 Q. Okay. And then once you're at the destination, describe --
19 and I know a lot of these questions are elemental and you've been
20 doing this a long time, but for the interview purposes, I need to
21 document some of this stuff. So your answers have been awesome.
22 Thank you very much.

23 A. No worries.

24 Q. So you get your preflight weather and you look at all these
25 sources, and then you take off. Then it's time to land. Can you

1 describe for me how at that time you make a decision what
2 direction to land and what you're looking at?

3 A. All sorts of different resources. One, if you take off to
4 the west here in Ketchikan and you got westerly routes, you can
5 kind of almost realize that it's going to be similar conditions at
6 your destination, especially Metlakatla. I mean, it's a 12-minute
7 flight from here. The weather hasn't changed that significantly
8 between here and there.

9 So you're -- and, of course, you can listen right to ATIS and
10 they'll tell you what the routes are, and you'll hear what the
11 winds are. And so you've already got some information. You can
12 just look out and see the waves. We got a windsock hanging at the
13 top of our flag, of our -- one of our pilings down on the dock.
14 And so those would be immediate sources. Before you even got in
15 the airplane, you already should have a clue. Because you have to
16 listen to ATIS before you can take off, and you're going to be
17 walking down to your plane; there's a windsock sitting right
18 there.

19 Q. Is the weather between -- I know Met is close. But it's
20 Alaska and there's a lot of microsystems. Is the weather there --

21 A. The weather there can come in from multiple directions
22 because you have a series of mountains that ring that, Annette
23 Bay. But as new pilots, and especially when you're talking about
24 in ground school, you're taught that there's islands that are
25 sitting in the middle of Annette Bay and it's smooth water from

1 the direction the wind is blowing because it's in a sheltered
2 portion of the trees that would be lining that island. So you can
3 simply look and see where the smooth water is around an island and
4 that's the direction the wind is blowing.

5 Q. Are there any special hazards in Met for landing? You would
6 brief a new pilot. So this new pilot, what would you tell them
7 about -- other than what you just mentioned, is there anything
8 else that is special about landing there?

9 A. The center part of the bay has numerous small islands, rocks
10 and reefs. There are green cans that basically go from -- on a
11 west to east that would mark the outer area of where there are
12 rocks on the west, and then you would end up with a similar marker
13 on a -- mounted on a rock, a pole with a green navigation aid.

14 And then when I get ready to take off from Metlakatla, there
15 is a green can that we taxi out to. If the wind is blowing off
16 the shore, off the town, you taxi out to the green can, which gets
17 you far enough away to give you a decent takeoff run. And if you
18 aren't going to -- if the wind isn't blowing off the town, the
19 wind is, say, blowing from the west, that's pretty much just taxi
20 out, take off directly to the west. If it's blowing from Purple
21 Mountain, then you're going to be coming in along the shore off
22 your right-hand side past the boat harbor, and then you'll be
23 touching down.

24 So there's really three different ways that you could operate
25 out of Met. And it's a large bay. There's plenty of room to

1 maneuver, to circle, to do an observation pass. That's encouraged
2 with new pilots, that these are new areas; you are not expected to
3 land straight in or to just conduct a landing. You should overfly
4 your landing zone, look for obstructions, debris in the water.
5 We've had some high tides. We had some floating debris in the
6 water the other day. And so there are ways to assess the wind
7 looking at the islands and the smooth water, the white caps.

8 And in the airplanes, we have a Chelton. You have in the
9 multifunction display, in the top left corner you have a little
10 black box there. That happens to have a wind needle that will
11 point in the direction the wind is blowing. It gives you
12 crosswind as well as the, you know, wind component. If you feel
13 that the needle is incorrect, you still have true airspeed and
14 ground speed, and you can simply compare those two numbers. And
15 if your ground speed is higher than your true airspeed, well, I
16 guess you've got a tailwind, you know?

17 Most people who are flying have had enough experience flying
18 around with electronic navigation equipment that -- and this
19 Chelton is a very simple unit to operate. The information is
20 there, whether you -- and the -- you've got eyes. You've been
21 taught in ground school what to look for. And it comes now down
22 to the individual pilot.

23 Q. In your opinion, would there be a reason to land with a
24 tailwind or quartering tailwind at Metlakatla, or are there plenty
25 of approach angles to land there?

1 A. Metlakatla's huge as far as the bay. There is no reason to
2 land with a quartering tailwind. Now I'm not saying you might not
3 have a crosswind. But a quartering tailwind, there is no excuse
4 for having to land in that direction.

5 Q. Okay. So you did fly with the accident pilot?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Yes. Can you describe his personality for us?

8 A. Ron was a fairly -- was a calm, fairly quiet individual. I
9 don't have a lot of -- you know, I didn't have any interactions in
10 a social aspect to be able to kind of, you know, determine what
11 his hobbies were or his, you know, personality. We weren't -- you
12 know, we didn't go down to the bar and, you know, knock a few down
13 and discuss, you know, the situation.

14 I basically was asked to be able to fly with pilots on
15 initial operating experience. By this point they've already been
16 through ground school. They've already been through training
17 flights. They've already been given a check ride. I'm now given,
18 basically, somebody that's supposed to have their ducks in a row
19 and I'm now taking them to places that we fly mail.

20 And the reason we take them to where we fly mail is it
21 introduces them to a variety of different landing situations.
22 It's a cost-effective means of training, because we already have
23 mail going there. And if we got an empty seat, especially when we
24 got two dual-control airplanes, I sit in the right, you sit in the
25 left. You fly.

1 You know, these are places frequently that, you know, they
2 have never been before. So they're relying a little bit on, okay,
3 when you come in, watch this; circle over. Okay, this is where
4 we're going to end up sometimes with some gusts, because you got
5 the hill up there and you got a west wind, you're getting the
6 rotor effect that's coming over the hill. These are where the
7 shallow areas are; I would start my approach out here, and be sure
8 that you get your -- you're configured up and you have, you know,
9 plenty of room to work. Realize that you need to touch down
10 before this point because there are rocks beyond that like in
11 Hollis.

12 Or I've done some -- so for these folks, it's typically their
13 first time -- with me, it's their first time going to a mail run
14 destination. And so they are flying, but I'm in the right seat in
15 a role of providing some information that they may not have
16 because they haven't been exposed to these areas before. But it
17 introduces them to a variety of different landing conditions,
18 weather patterns, wind, waves. So the idea is to increase their
19 knowledge.

20 Q. Okay. And so he would be flying as the PIC, and you're
21 providing supplementary information about the areas and the routes
22 that you're going to.

23 A. Correct.

24 Q. So during the four flights that you flew with him, did you --
25 can you characterize his flying abilities?

1 A. For a person of his flight time and experience, he was
2 comparable to any other pilot of those hours. It's difficult, you
3 know, to take a person that's here for their first season from a
4 place where there's no ocean -- Pennsylvania is where he came from
5 -- and expect that he is going to show up with the same skillset
6 that I've put together, you know, going back to 1996. And when I
7 wasn't flying in Alaska during those years I told you, I flew
8 gliders. I worked in Vermont. I had real estate, apartments
9 there. That's kind of what was my main income that supported me
10 when I wasn't -- flying was at that point more of a hobby. But I
11 would be up, you know, flying gliders, and you're always looking
12 for where's the wind, where's the lift.

13 And so I'm bringing a skillset that I've accumulated over the
14 years, and it's not fair for me to expect a new hire is going to
15 be flying at my, you know, ability; nor, if you put me in a
16 multiengine airplane with somebody who had been doing it for 20
17 years, would my skillset be equivalent for them in a multiengine
18 IFR. So I have to be realistic in what I can expect out of a new
19 hire as far as their skillset. We are all learning as we go, and
20 it takes time.

21 Q. Did you have any safety concerns with any of those flights?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Did you go to Metlakatla with him on any of those IOEs? Do
24 you remember?

25 A. I'd have to pull out a -- I've been through four other --

1 others, so I would have to defer to the company records of the
2 individual pilot.

3 Q. Okay. Did you see him on the day of the accident?

4 A. No. It was my day off. Yeah. I got a phone call at a
5 little -- about 4 o'clock. I had stopped in, and I saw things
6 were kind of like -- well, okay, maybe this is -- maybe they're
7 busy and this is -- I ought to just split.

8 And so I only live seven-tenths of a mile up the hill. And
9 so I thought, okay -- because usually I like to stop in. Okay,
10 I'm flying the next day, you know, what am I -- what's dispatch
11 kind of got me, you know, scheduled in, what plane, are we getting
12 the Otters going again, and stuff. But at this point I kind of
13 came in, saw things looked kind of a little chaotic, I was like,
14 okay, I'd better disappear.

15 So I went back to the -- my apartment, and I walked in the
16 door and about 2 minutes after I walked through the door, the
17 phone rang and it was Tiger in dispatch. Yeah, where are you? I
18 said, well, I'm at home. He said, well, how fast can you be here?
19 Five minutes. Yeah, I need you right away. I've got two EMTs; I
20 need you to take them over to Metlakatla, you know, right now. I
21 was like, okay, I'm on my way.

22 So I came down. They had 397 that was sitting down on the
23 ramp. John Brest (ph.), one of our pilots who has flown here
24 other years -- he had flown quite a few years here. Anyhow, he
25 was cleaning his stuff out of the airplane, and they -- I plugged

1 my headset in and started up, and about 2 minutes later, the
2 paramedics came associated with Guardian. They loaded up. You
3 know, I did a quick briefing and headed on over to Metlakatla.

4 The report I received was that there was, you know, someone
5 trapped in the airplane, they'd been underwater for 20 minutes or
6 so, and these folks were the, you know, specialists that were
7 going to try to, you know, revive this person, hoping that cold
8 water conditions had, you know -- would give them an opportunity
9 or at least a fighting chance to be able to resuscitate them.

10 So my role that day was simply to fly two paramedics from
11 here to Metlakatla, allow them to do their, you know, rescue
12 attempt of this person who was brought to the dock by boat
13 probably 8 minutes or so after we arrived and tied up. And then
14 the paramedics jumped in the ambulance that was waiting, and that
15 was the last I saw of them.

16 We had three people I flew back to Ketchikan. The pilot,
17 John Brest, said, do you want me to ramp your plane? I said,
18 yeah, I think probably since I've been, you know, through a little
19 excitement over there, yeah, probably yeah. You know, a clearer
20 head would be better as far as the ramping. And that was the end
21 of my activities here that day.

22 Q. Okay. All right. All right, back to -- you have a vast
23 amount of experience so I have some floatplane questions for you.
24 Have you ever dug a float in or lost control on landing that made
25 you nervous? And if so, under what conditions?

1 A. Oh, I think I have --

2 Q. Maybe many times, if not -- too many times to talk about?

3 A. No, I'm still here and, you know, I've -- so I've -- you
4 always end up getting a whole slew of things, you know, involving
5 weather or fuel or flight conditions that you would, you know --
6 as I said, it's a learning experience as we go. So have I dug a
7 float? Yes. Usually the -- usually, you know, the reaction is,
8 one, you yank back on the yoke. Usually the airplane porpoises
9 into the air, and so now you're flying again at low speed. And
10 usually you thud down, you know, kind of tail first or tails and
11 the floats first. Your passengers give you all a dirty look and
12 say, that was a crappy landing. And you kind of sheepishly try to
13 not say much, hurry them on their way, and think, okay, that
14 sucked.

15 So when I'm with these guys and during IOE -- and I'm glad
16 you brought that topic up. I mention that a lot. You're on --
17 you're getting ready. You're getting down. I want you to run 4
18 trims up: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. The trim wheels up here. I want you to
19 have -- I want to make sure that you got nose-up trim before you
20 touch down. Better to touch down the tails, you know, and go
21 with, kind of, a thud than it is to dig the bows in. And so that
22 is something that I am very -- stressed with everyone. Because
23 I've dug it. Didn't flip it, but, you know, I embarrassed myself.
24 And this is a way of trying to pass on some of my personal
25 knowledge on to a person that's joining the company.

1 So when we're flying and they're, you know, established on,
2 like, okay, you have a little bit of flap in. Okay, you know,
3 shoot for 80. You know, okay. A little more flap; we're getting
4 closer to our destination. All right. And then, you know, when
5 we're within a couple hundred feet of the water, at that point
6 it's like, hey, you're getting -- you know, you're going to be
7 flaring here a little bit. You know, I want roll in trim. I want
8 that nose-up attitude for when you touch down.

9 Q. And then what are some of the conditions that would cause a
10 plane to flip on landing?

11 A. I think what you mentioned, digging a bow in, would be the
12 most, you know, appropriate answer.

13 Q. And is it more likely on a crosswind landing than a head-on
14 landing?

15 A. I would have to agree.

16 MS. PRICE: Okay. I am -- thank you. That's most of my
17 questions.

18 Jon, do you have any questions?

19 MR. PERCY: Yeah, I've got a couple of them.

20 BY MR. PERCY:

21 Q. So you said, did you normally include crosswind in training.
22 Does a downwind landing, that training formally included in the
23 training program?

24 A. I don't --

25 Q. Because you said you do it all the time. That's the only

1 reason why, like is it a normal --

2 A. It's a good question you asked. I'm not involved in the
3 training. That would be a better question for those pilots that
4 conduct that training with new hires. As far as myself, do I do
5 downwind landings, yes. But is that taught to a person that's
6 coming in, you know, who's a newer pilot? I don't know what is
7 taught in that position.

8 Q. Were you trained in downwind landings here?

9 A. I can't recall. I mean, I came here with quite a few years
10 of experience, and I kind of was acquired -- one minute Promech
11 was going to be sold and then it wasn't, and Clark was the one who
12 had hired me. And I remember 2015, and it was end of March/early
13 April, I was already talking to other carriers because I didn't
14 know if the sale of Taquan acquiring Promech's assets was going to
15 go forward. And so -- but I was already bringing, you know, some
16 other years of experience that I had picked up from other
17 operators.

18 So as far as a, you know, introductory training program that
19 talked about downwind landings, I think because I was already a
20 known quantity and I had worked with Clark at the old Taquan --
21 Mike O'Connor had worked down there, who was the other chief
22 pilot. I think there are certain things like, yeah, I know you
23 know how to do this, you know.

24 Q. Sure. But you completed the formal -- all of the training,
25 right?

1 A. Um-hum.

2 Q. Is there a different technique for landing downwind than
3 there is for an open landing?

4 A. Good question. It's just kind of one of those -- it's kind
5 of like, you know, what, do you put your left pant in your, you
6 know, your jeans or your right leg? I don't really know.

7 MS. PRICE: How about flaps? Is the flap configuration any
8 different, or the trim?

9 MR. PERKINS: More up trim, more nose-up trim. Because
10 you're trying -- you've got a tailwind, your ground speed is going
11 to be higher. So when you touch down, you're going to have a
12 greater resistance between the water's the surface and your
13 floats. You're going to have, you're going to have a pitching
14 forward aspect to it. So yeah, your idea is to keep your ground
15 speed by using, you know, a significant amount of flap, within
16 reason. But at the same time, you want to increase nose-up
17 pitching because you're still -- your ground speed is going to be
18 higher.

19 So is there a difference? Yeah. Full flaps, nose-up trim,
20 and be prepared that the plane is going to want to pitch forward,
21 and you're going to want to be quick on the yoke in order to, you
22 know, arrest that with the elevator.

23 BY MR. PERCY:

24 Q. And then what about -- what would you -- what would a normal
25 flap setting be for a crosswind landing?

1 A. Typically in our pilot training, full flaps is usually the
2 recommended procedure. You kind of try to keep it fairly simple,
3 and that is a very simple airplane. So you got a flap setting for
4 takeoff, you got a flap setting for cruise, you got a flap setting
5 for landing.

6 Q. Now you said full flaps. Did you mean landing flaps or full
7 flaps?

8 A. The landing flaps. It would be -- yeah, I apologize. I used
9 to have a 180. So whether I'm coming with 30 degrees of flaps or
10 40 degrees of flaps, I kind of -- that was a tail aircraft, I'd
11 treat that a little differently. Am I landing on asphalt, which
12 is trying to grab my tires? So that's -- I apologize for
13 getting --

14 Q. I figured that was what you meant.

15 On another note, did -- you talked about previous experience
16 with, like, a glass cockpit like Chelton. Do you know if Mr. Rash
17 had any previous experience with any glass cockpits at all where
18 he might --

19 A. I don't know. But Mr. Rash said that he used to fly a
20 Caravan and he used to haul skydivers. Now a Caravan is a fairly
21 modern airplane, you know, compared to what we're flying. You
22 know, we're kind of flying some antiques around here, but they
23 have a great history behind them. So I would think that Mr. --
24 based on the equipment that he told me he flew, being a Caravan,
25 that the equipment would be probably as good if not maybe a little

1 bit more modern than what we're flying.

2 I mean, think about it. I first got introduced to Chelton in
3 2005 flying at Alaska Air Taxi. And so -- and we've had, you
4 know, Garmin 430s and stuff, which have been around a long time.
5 You usually find similar equipment like that in a Caravan.

6 Q. Okay. And then lastly, did you have -- did you ever note any
7 deficiencies during IOE or have to correct any poor decisions or
8 poor performance?

9 A. None that came to mind, because normally, you know, the --
10 Clark is going to want to say, hey, how'd it go? You know, and it
11 went okay. You know, no red flags that came up.

12 Q. Okay. And then also, did you ever observe any crosswind
13 landings when you were doing IOE with him?

14 A. Most of the times when I've gone out, it's usually been more
15 what I would term tame conditions. You know, the idea of these
16 pilots, especially seasonal, isn't to be going out in the more
17 challenging type of weather. They're hired simply to fly from
18 Ketchikan Harbor to Misty Fjords and back. And so they're doing a
19 takeoff in the Ketchikan Harbor where there are designated routes,
20 there is weather and stuff that they're gaining off ATIS. They're
21 seeing other airplanes fly by or there are other operators.
22 They're seeing their own company airplanes take off. So they
23 already have that knowledge base.

24 And then when you go out to Rudyerd Bay area, you know, the
25 first-season hires are all limited to being on saltwater. They

1 aren't to land on lakes. And so they typically are going to be in
2 pairs or fly as a group. And you'll go in and you'll see
3 Punchbowl Cove, and you'll see, you know, three or four Taquan
4 Beavers sitting on the water in Punchbowl Cove. You go to do the
5 cruise fly, where the floating dock is in Rudyerd Bay. Well, that
6 holds four airplanes. So again, you've got kind of, shall I say,
7 safety in numbers, of being able to observe and talk on the radio
8 and say, yeah, you know, there's a gust from this area; avoid that
9 area.

10 And so these seasonal pilots are being brought in to
11 basically just fly from point A to point B and back, and they
12 might do that four to six times a day because that is really the
13 bulk of the business during the summer season.

14 Q. So just to clarify, so you don't evaluate them in more
15 challenging weather? So if you've got a gusty day, you're not
16 going to go out there and fly with them to make sure they can
17 handle the conditions or -- I think you had said that, you know,
18 it's mostly tame conditions and we don't take them out in
19 challenging weather. They don't actually evaluate their
20 performance maybe in gusty winds or maybe a strong crosswind?

21 A. Remember the -- we've had a fairly mild spring. You know, if
22 I'm going to talk about challenging weather, okay, let's roll it
23 back to, you know, November. We're at the time of year -- when I
24 say challenging weather, it doesn't necessarily mean that we are
25 trying to avoid it.

1 Q. Right.

2 A. It means that, when you look at whether the -- you're going
3 to have your year-round people flying in during the winter season
4 when you've got 28 knots and you're going across Clarence Strait.
5 We aren't going to send passengers out in 28 knots on a tour where
6 everything's, you know, getting bucked around, because you don't
7 want to start filling sick sacks in back. You're trying to make a
8 pleasant experience in a tour situation. We're not simply hauling
9 boxes and I'm going from here to Edna Bay. The boxes aren't going
10 to complain about being tossed and turned; passengers will.

11 And so I'm trying to clarify in that manner. The idea isn't
12 to not train these pilots. The idea is that, because it is a
13 tour-based situation that they are going to be participating in,
14 the type of weather that would be where the flight is called off
15 is going to be different than what it would be if I was flying
16 boxes during the winter season.

17 Q. Okay, yeah. I guess the initial question was did you observe
18 any crosswind landings, and then that was where -- I wasn't
19 necessarily saying, did we take them out into, you know, the
20 middle of the ocean and work with 10-foot swells, et cetera. It
21 was just did they observe -- did you observe crosswind landings?
22 And we can always get in a pretty strong crosswind, especially
23 right in the harbor, right, where the winds are -- they'll blow
24 pretty strong in there even on a --

25 A. You still got winds pretty much running, you know, east

1 routes/west routes.

2 Q. Right.

3 A. I didn't run into any situations where I would feel the
4 conditions were what I would term -- where I'd want to have a, you
5 know, 2500-hour seaplane pilot.

6 Q. I guess, especially with IOE, you're not really evaluating
7 crosswinds, so you'd rather see them take off and land.

8 A. And where I'm going -- well, okay. Thorne Bay. And Thorne
9 Bay is fairly nicely protected. And without going to the records
10 and being able to try to pick out flights and -- which we can get
11 the records if you want. But Thorne Bay is a pretty sheltered
12 area. Hollis is a fairly sheltered area. Craig is a large area
13 with multiple ways. They're asking, you know -- and for many
14 times, these are the people who are going out for their first time
15 to these locations. And I'm going to say, okay, yeah, you got the
16 wind coming from this way, so I would make my approach from that.
17 That's kind of where I'm leading.

18 Q. And then do you know what determines whether when a pilot is
19 advanced from just doing air tours to -- in your own experience,
20 not as a check airman, but to -- because you do IOE, but when they
21 move from air tours to scheduled flights?

22 A. I think a lot of that is dependent on the chief pilot, what
23 he's observed. You know, chief pilots are out flying. They're
24 able to assess what the skillset, from what they hear from other
25 pilots: Hey, you know, that guy really bit that landing, or you

1 know, he didn't seem to be making radio calls. Usually you're
2 going to get some type of feedback from the pilot community to the
3 chief pilot, who will then use that information saying, okay,
4 maybe we ought to hold off on that guy.

5 MR. PERCY: All right, that's all I've got.

6 MS. PRICE: Mike?

7 MR. O'BRIEN: No questions.

8 MS. PRICE: I have a couple follow-up questions.

9 BY MS. PRICE:

10 Q. How long have you been doing IOE flights again? The season
11 or --

12 A. This is -- I don't know if I ended up doing some last year.
13 I'm a little fuzzy. Yeah, the best thing is to go through -- ask
14 Clark for my pilot records and to, you know, ascertain from that.
15 Predominantly this would be the -- my main season this year. So
16 I'm relatively new at this.

17 Q. Okay. How about -- have you observed any deficiencies in the
18 other new pilots that you've been flying with?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Are those pilots still flying with the company?

21 A. No. Some of them have been relieved of duty and have gone
22 home.

23 Q. And is that a result of the input that you gave to the chief
24 pilot?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And were there deficiencies in landings or other places?

2 A. No. Those folks were going through the new hire -- they were
3 -- some of those people I led to -- were released because they
4 weren't even going as far as doing well in a check ride, so I
5 didn't end up dealing with them. Though you would see them, you
6 know, turning an airplane out; you'd see them coming into dock.
7 You'd say, yeah, that guy looks pretty green.

8 And so one, Jonathan Hinson, his wife -- he was a new hire,
9 and his wife called him. And after the first crash and he kind of
10 -- he left. There were two others that I was making a lot of
11 noise about to Clark. It's like, this guy is pretty weak.

12 And I look at pilots from another vantage point. Are they
13 eager learners? Are they down there on the dock helping load
14 airplanes, fuel airplanes, moving carts, putting stickers on as
15 far as the destinations we go to? Or are they the guys that kind
16 of hang out in the lobby and are really non-contributors? Where
17 then I'm thinking, you know, if he doesn't want to contribute now
18 and he's trying to get a job here, you know, is this really the
19 right guy?

20 And pilots, we're subjective. You know, when I look at a
21 person -- I'm going out to 2015. We had a guy who came up from
22 Florida. He drove his car up. He had -- already had lined up a
23 rental apartment. And you're getting that first day that you're
24 looking at all your new hires. Of course, I've just showed up
25 from Vermont, so I'm sitting in the same parking lot with these

1 other guys. And when you see a guy with a potbelly and brand new
2 white shoes with Velcro straps to hold them on, the first thing
3 you said before you even saw him is, like, I don't know if this
4 guy can get in and out of the airplane himself. You know, you
5 don't even have to see him fly; you've already begun to look at
6 just his physical build, how he moves.

7 And of these, you know, two particular people that were
8 recently released here, and the point that we can't work with you.
9 You know, one was fairly frail. He rode with me over on a flight
10 to Craig, and the dock agent we had there -- his name was Chris or
11 -- anyway, Chris and Mike, they were both there. But one of them
12 was helping him get out of the airplane, and it's like, I thought
13 he was a passenger; he's a pilot? And so, you know, these -- this
14 information comes about, and that led to their dismissal.

15 And so the company is not trying to employ someone that would
16 be in a -- not appropriate. They've got to be -- it's not just a
17 mental state. You've got to have a certain physical skillset, you
18 know, for working with airplanes. Can you turn it out yourself?
19 Can you help passengers in and out? Can you turn your plane at a
20 dock? Can you load the freight? You're on your knees, you're
21 crouching, you're walking across guy wires between the bows.

22 And so you're -- when you end up getting a new pilot to show
23 up, you get a résumé, you might get a photo, but until you
24 actually see him walking and moving, you don't really have a clear
25 idea of what you got until they're on site.

1 In this case, one was weak and he knew it and he left. And
2 then two others were let go. So you don't want to try to train
3 everybody through. You got to, sooner or later, say this isn't
4 working; let's cut our losses.

5 Q. Thank you. Have you ever had underwater egress training with
6 any of the operators that you flew with? I understand you don't
7 do it here, but --

8 A. No. I used to kayak. So I don't know if bailing out with my
9 spray skirt is actually underwater egress or not, but -- and I
10 used to do a lot of canoeing as well. But as far as actually
11 taking people and putting them in a dunk tank, no, that's not been
12 done.

13 Q. Okay. And are you familiar with the company's safety
14 program? Is it an SMS program; do you know? A safety management
15 system, or is it a safety --

16 A. That is outside my paygrade. I'd have to defer to another
17 department on that.

18 Q. Are you involved in any safety committees or anything like
19 that in the company?

20 A. They do have -- the closest thing I would have to say
21 regarding safety would be that we have what are called S-1 forms.
22 And that's -- outside of the breakroom, there is a box mounted on
23 the wall. There are forms in there. So if you see -- and it
24 comes down is there an incident, is it an injury, is it a hazard,
25 is it something -- you know, a property-oriented issue like, you

1 know, a nail sticking up or a dock hazard, if somebody is going to
2 slip and fall. And so there are -- there is a safety form that
3 can be filled out, and it ends up being reviewed by John Dorward,
4 the DO. And so there are ways that employees can communicate with
5 management in terms of safety utilizing that form.

6 Q. Okay. And do -- are there any all-pilot safety meetings to
7 talk about flight issues and concerns that pilots have?

8 A. Yes. If you go downstairs, just outside of dispatch there is
9 a pilot read file. And pilots are -- this was set up back with
10 Mike O'Connor. Actually was it Mike O'Connor or was it Kevin Roof
11 that --

12 MR. O'BRIEN: I think it was before that.

13 MR. PERKINS: Before that? Again, I'm -- I only got a few
14 years here.

15 MR. O'BRIEN: It's been around a while.

16 MS. PRICE: Yeah. That's true. Yeah, I've heard.

17 MR. PERKINS: But in that is all sorts of information: you
18 know, engine operation, rocks or hazards in a certain landing
19 area, cold weather operations as far as icing; no aircraft is to
20 be, you know, dispatched unless it is completely clear of, you
21 know, any accumulation.

22 But you could go down. You'll find that there's probably 50-
23 plus topics in that binder that discuss various issues that would
24 be worthy of a pilot reading. It's right outside dispatch. Any
25 pilot can go down and read it. And it is let -- management lets

1 people know that that book is there. And we had to -- each of us
2 has a name, and we have to go through and, you know, initial that
3 we had read that particular publication.

4 MS. PRICE: Okay. Great. That's all the questions. You
5 have anything else?

6 BY MR. PERCY:

7 Q. The only other one that I had was, have you ever extended IOE
8 due to deficiencies? Or recommended, I guess, because you
9 wouldn't be the one to make that call, probably, but --

10 A. Yeah, that -- I basically just pass on my findings to Clark
11 and, you know, other check airmen or people who conduct IOE.
12 There's basically four of us. It's kind of like, hey, you know,
13 you may want to watch this guy on this. You know, it's more of a
14 verbal interaction.

15 But eventually, it goes, you know -- everything has to
16 eventually flow, you know, to the person making the decision is
17 this person going to be put on line? Am I going to dispatch him?
18 And that's, you know, above my paygrade.

19 Q. Right. So you probably don't know how much time they have
20 when they get to you, you're just assigned a flight with them,
21 right? You're not really --

22 A. Um-um.

23 MR. PERCY: Okay. That's all I have.

24 MS. PRICE: Anything, Mike?

25 MR. O'BRIEN: I don't think so.

1 MS. PRICE: Thank you very much, Chuck.

2 MR. PERKINS: You're very welcome.

3 MS. PRICE: You've been a great help here. That concludes
4 the interview.

5 MR. PERKINS: Thank you.

6 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: TAQUAN AIR DHC-2 METLAKATLA
 Interview of Chuck Perkins

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC19FA019

PLACE: Ketchikan, Alaska

DATE: May 23, 2019

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Eileen Gonzalez
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

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TAQUAN AIR DHC-2 METLAKATLA * Accident No.: ANC19FA019

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Interview of: GARRETT POINT
Pilot, Taquan Air

Taquan Air Offices
Ketchikan, Alaska

Thursday,
May 23, 2019

APPEARANCES:

NOREEN PRICE, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

JON PERCY, Principal Operations Inspector
Federal Aviation Administration

MICHAEL O'BRIEN, Senior Pilot/Check Airman
Taquan Air

BRIAN GERD, Esq.
Richmond & Quinn
(On behalf of Mr. Point)

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MS. PRICE: It's May 23, 2019. We're here at Taquan Air
3 conducting interviews for accident ANC19FA019. This is Noreen
4 Price with the NTSB, accident investigator and investigator in
5 charge. I'm going to introduce the rest of the team in the room
6 now.

7 MR. PERCY: Jon Percy. FAA accident investigator, Juneau
8 FSDO, Flight Systems District Office.

9 MR. O'BRIEN: Mike O'Brien, senior pilot/check pilot, Taquan
10 Air.

11 MR. GERD: Brian Gerd, legal counsel for Taquan Air and its
12 employees.

13 MR. POINT: Garrett Point, pilot, Taquan Air.

14 MS. PRICE: Thank you, Garrett. Thank you for being here. I
15 appreciate your participating in the investigation.

16 The NTSB is an independent federal agency that's charged with
17 conducting accident investigations so that we can determine
18 probable cause and make recommendations so that these tragedies
19 don't happen in the future. And interviews are part of that fact-
20 finding phase.

21 Today I'm going to be recording the interview. It's going to
22 go to a transcription service in Washington, D.C. They're going
23 to type it up, send it back. We'll be destroying the recording,
24 but that transcript is going to be part of the public docket, we
25 call it.

1 their safety culture.

2 It's no secret that there -- you know, what we do up here is
3 a lot of fun. It's certainly the portion of aviation that I'm
4 attracted to. But there's also -- there's many operators that
5 don't operate like Taquan does, and so this is where I wanted to
6 be. I have a wife. I want to be around to do this for a long
7 time. So I -- you know, after our conversations, as well as their
8 preceding reputation, I was really excited to come on board.

9 Q. Okay, thank you. If you could give me a brief description of
10 your aviation background? So your total flight hours, float
11 hours, Beaver time before you started here at Taquan. Who you may
12 have worked for before.

13 A. So total time is approximately 800 hours. Float time
14 approximately 325. Before I came to Taquan, I was a floatplane
15 flight instructor for Alaska Floats & Skis in Talkeetna. I have
16 approximately 25 hours of Beaver time.

17 Q. And what did you get your initial rating on?

18 A. I got my initial rating in a Super Cub. I have -- most of my
19 time as a flight instructor was in Piper Pacers on floats. And
20 then I had flown a Beaver on floats up in Talkeetna prior to -- I
21 mean, not at length, but prior to coming to Taquan.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. I have various time in -- I had a little bit in like a Cessna
24 180 and so forth, but --

25 Q. So at Alaska Floats & Skis, you were doing training?

1 A. Yes, I was a floatplane flight instructor.

2 Q. Okay. What was your impression of the training program here?

3 A. Quite honestly, I was very impressed. We showed up. The
4 ground school was well organized. I mean, there were handouts for
5 each of us. They had that television screen queued up with maps
6 of the area.

7 Time and time again, it was -- so to backtrack, you know,
8 when you speak on the phone with virtually any operator, you know,
9 it's the standard -- they're trying to get you to come work for
10 them. Well, you know, we don't push the weather, safety is our
11 priority, so forth. And certainly after, you know, really the
12 first day of ground school, I remember going back home and telling
13 my wife that I really was pleased to be here because it was clear
14 that it wasn't just rhetoric, that this was the culture. I can't
15 tell you how many times during our ground school that it was,
16 look, you know, safety is our top priority; if you are
17 uncomfortable with something, absolutely turn around. You will
18 never be in trouble; you'll get a pat on the back.

19 You know, if -- we went over the S-1 safety reporting forms
20 and what to do if there is anything, even something as simple as,
21 you know, something on the dock that we felt to be a tripping
22 hazard. And John Dorward came in, spoke about, again, the safety
23 culture. If there was ever anyone here that pressured you to do
24 anything that you felt you were either uncomfortable with or
25 compromised safety in any way, to get in touch with him. And

1 passionately explained that it would -- I mean, that this was not
2 anything that would fly here. Mr. Salazar came in, addressed our
3 class, reiterated the same thing.

4 And so it was -- that's what I mean, I really -- and it made
5 me realize that it's, like, no, this -- I had heard good things
6 about this company, everything that -- leading up to my accepting
7 a position with them. Because I had offers with other operators,
8 and actually closer to areas in Alaska that I was familiar with.
9 But there -- you know, I didn't know anyone down here. I
10 actually, I chose to come here because I recognized that this type
11 of outfit is not universal.

12 So the ground school, we started out with, you know, area
13 familiarization. Everyone was, you know, brought around, shown
14 the facilities. We had, again, copies of the FLM we went through.
15 The hazmat was in depth. It wasn't just, you know, there's --
16 here, here's the packet of information. You know, work through
17 it; why don't you go take a break and we'll meet back in an hour?
18 No. It's like we practice filling out the hazmat forms. We went
19 through the hazmat books.

20 Kevin Roof has a wealth of knowledge of the area. He's
21 obviously been in many managerial positions with Taquan in the
22 past. Shared, you know, multiple personal anecdotes, made sure
23 that everyone was up to speed on all the topics we covered. Even
24 something as simple as the weight and balance, using these -- we
25 use these whiz wheels; they're called CG wheels. They're a great

1 little tool. Again, you know, a lot of places you see, even
2 flight schools, like, well, this -- here's the whiz wheel. Here's
3 the numbers. This is how to use it. Maybe there's a
4 demonstration. You know, we took the time, went around the room,
5 made sure everyone was comfortable with it.

6 This is obviously a very congested area, so initially the
7 traffic patterns can be kind of confusing. They had pre-prepared
8 diagrams, you know, superimposed on a satellite image from Google
9 Earth. And we talked about, you know, various situations and non-
10 standard -- you know, if this occurs and this is how you do it --
11 I mean, it really -- quite honestly, it was the most put-together
12 ground school that I've ever attended.

13 Q. But how many ground schools have you attended?

14 A. Never a formal one like this. But obviously I have --

15 Q. I mean, I know you were a flight instructor, but you said
16 other operators --

17 A. Yeah, never a 135 ground school. But other flight
18 instruction-based ground schools, if that makes sense.

19 Q. Okay. Yeah.

20 A. I've attended many ground schools, but --

21 Q. Yes, I understand. Yeah, instructional ground schools.

22 A. Right. Instructional ground schools.

23 Q. 135 ground school is, yeah, different.

24 A. Right.

25 Q. And then how about the flight training? When you started

1 that, how many flight hours did you have -- how many flights
2 before you got your check ride?

3 A. I would have to, I would have to look. I'm not entirely sure
4 on that.

5 Q. That's okay.

6 A. I mean, is it okay if I -- I mean, yeah, I'm not --

7 Q. We'll call it an estimate. Because (indiscernible).

8 A. Right. Okay. Yeah, I mean, I don't know. So approximately
9 4 hours, I believe is correct. We would go out -- let's see.
10 There was -- we'd have -- at least when I was doing it, there
11 would be, like, three of us in the airplane. And it was --
12 actually it was valuable, especially in an airplane as big as the
13 Beaver, when, you know, you got -- you have the instructor, the
14 pilot-in-training, and then two of you can sit in the seats behind
15 that. And you can learn quite a bit observing from the rear seat.

16 And so then when it's your turn to go, you know, you've --
17 it's like anything, right, you learn from others. And so it
18 wasn't just -- so I had, what, approximately 4 hours of time in
19 it, but I mean many times more of that observing. Because we
20 would go out for -- you know, as a group. And so by the time
21 that, you know, it was your turn to go, three other guys had gone,
22 and so you've been watching and learning all that. So that was
23 very helpful.

24 Q. And did you practice crosswind landings on each training
25 evolution; do you remember?

1 A. I don't know if on each -- we certainly practiced crosswind
2 landings. I don't know about each revolution, but they were --

3 Q. How about downwind or tailwind landings?

4 A. Not to my recollection.

5 Q. Do you recall anybody ever talking about those downwind or
6 tailwind landings during ground school or flight training?

7 A. Not at depth. Maybe passed -- you know, something to avoid.
8 It's a -- you know, I think, certainly, I mean, as a seaplane
9 instructor it's definitely something you impress upon your
10 students as a maneuver to be avoided for obvious reasons. But I
11 mean, there wasn't -- it wasn't gone over in depth, but it may
12 have been brought up in that regard.

13 Q. In your experience as a floatplane pilot instructor, did you
14 ever perform any tailwind landings, downwind landings, that you
15 can remember?

16 A. Well, you know, there's a difference between a tail breeze
17 and a tailwind, right?

18 Q. Yeah.

19 A. And quite honestly, back to your question regarding -- now
20 that I think about it, tailwind landings were addressed. Talking
21 about the southeast and, you know, west routes, at one point --
22 you know, because at times here in the harbor, it can be -- you
23 know, what they're calling southeast routes because of the harbor
24 winds and, you know, you may be going out to Prince of Wales
25 Island, so taking off west. Well, if there's just a riffle of a

1 wind, I brought up, you know, what's company policy regarding just
2 departing -- you know, telling flight service that you'll be
3 sliding west as long as there's not a traffic conflict. I mean,
4 and again, the differentiation is -- you know, there's a
5 difference between a tailwind and just -- and a light breeze.

6 And Mr. Roof, Kevin Roof, actually said to the class, he
7 said, you know, I see what you're saying. He said, however, let's
8 always take off and land into the wind. You know, let's just
9 avoid the tailwind takeoff/landings at all costs. So even at that
10 -- and so that was about the only time that I remember
11 specifically having that conversation.

12 Q. And that was in ground school?

13 A. That was in ground school.

14 Q. And the accident pilot was in that class with you? Do you
15 remember?

16 A. Yes, ma'am. He sat next to me through it. So even in that
17 instance where it was -- and he -- and Kevin reiterated to me that
18 he understood what I was talking about. It's like, look, I'm not
19 talking about taking off with a strong tailwind, but there are,
20 you know, times when it's -- and he, again, erring on the side of
21 just being conservative, he said, look, just take the additional
22 time; take off into the wind, come back around, park to the west,
23 or vice versa.

24 Q. Okay. Once you passed your check ride, what kind of flights
25 were you scheduled on after that?

1 A. I believe I did Metlakatla, and then Misty Fjord and George
2 Inlet tours.

3 Q. Is that -- was that part of IOE or was that --

4 A. Yes. Yes, I had done -- I had been to Metlakatla during IOE.
5 And then -- also then observed on the tour. I'm not sure if
6 that's called IOE or what, but I had been with someone with --

7 Q. You were a ride-along?

8 A. A ride-along. Yes.

9 Q. So you were a ride-along on tours.

10 A. Well, an observed tour with -- I had ridden along on multiple
11 tours before I -- I mean, as -- during my time there, any downtime
12 I had, I was trying to hop on flights to learn the area. So I had
13 ridden along on many of these. But then before we were turned
14 loose, at least in my case, Mr. O'Brien here did an observed ride-
15 along with me. So it was more of a structured --

16 Q. On a tour?

17 A. Yes. But then also -- but again, then, like, you know, I had
18 flown to Metlakatla after I passed my check ride. That was
19 also -- but I had been there during IOE beforehand, so --

20 Q. Okay. Anything special about Metlakatla that the other
21 senior instructors and whoever you rode along talked about?
22 Metlakatla?

23 A. Yeah. Certainly. They just -- it can be a very challenging
24 place because of the winds. You know, they -- you know, the way
25 you approached in the morning may not be the way you approached an

1 hour later or 2 hours later and so forth. But that's like any
2 seaplane approach and landing. But because of the topography of
3 the area, you know, winds can certainly be dynamic, and that was
4 explained.

5 Q. How do you know what areas you are permitted, as a new pilot,
6 to go to? Can they -- like can dispatch assign anything to you
7 or --

8 A. No.

9 Q. -- do you have limitations?

10 A. We have limitations.

11 Q. And what are those limitations?

12 A. To my knowledge, it was Metlakatla and tours. Because I have
13 not been anywhere else, nor am I aware of any of the other new
14 hires going anywhere other than those -- I mean, that was --

15 Q. And why do you think the new hires are allowed to go to
16 Metlakatla and no other scheduled locations?

17 A. I assume because of its proximity. And again, I know -- so
18 as far as, like formally, there's -- I know the idea is that the
19 new hires are there for tours. I wouldn't -- just to clarify, I
20 wouldn't launch somewhere without the approval of, you know,
21 dispatch, who had talked to the chief pilot, et cetera. I mean,
22 so it's -- I guess maybe I don't understand your question.

23 Q. No, you do, because you're answering it. So dispatch has
24 lists and rules they follow for what flights they can assign
25 people. The chief pilot has policies that he has for assigning

1 certain people on certain flights. And then as a pilot, you
2 should probably know, right, what flights you can and cannot go on
3 because -- just to make sure that we're all on the same page.

4 A. Right.

5 Q. So I'm trying to get a feel for how you know what it is
6 you're allowed to do, you know. But to your knowledge -- which is
7 just knowledge; there's nothing in writing -- you are allowed to
8 be assigned to Met and tour flights, correct.

9 Did you socialize at all with the accident pilot?

10 A. I mean, at work and maybe a -- you know, here and there, but
11 nothing of significance.

12 Q. Did he -- was he excited to be working for the company?

13 A. Yes, he was.

14 Q. Did he talk about any concerns that he had with the training
15 or operations with the company or his readiness for the flights
16 that you heard?

17 A. Not to my recollection.

18 MS. PRICE: That's all the questions I have for now.

19 Jon, do you have --

20 MR. PERCY: Just a couple of follow-ups.

21 BY MR. PERCY:

22 Q. So immediately after IOE, what was your first flight?

23 A. I believe Metlakatla was my very first scheduled flight.

24 Q. How many --

25 A. After IOE, that was my first.

1 Q. How many air tours have you done since then?

2 A. I couldn't answer that accurately. A handful. I would have
3 to look.

4 Q. How about, do you know are all -- do you know if some of the
5 other new hires in your class, were they -- are they all on the
6 same schedule? Have they all been assigned mail flights too?

7 A. No. In fact, I don't know that anyone has been -- any of the
8 new hires have been assigned mail flights, other than I was
9 assigned -- I've been assigned Metlakatla, I believe, only once.
10 And Ron. But not to my knowledge. No one else has done any other
11 mail flights to any other destinations.

12 Q. Have they completed their IOE; do you know?

13 A. The ones -- certainly the ones that have -- yeah. Yeah, the
14 ones that I'm talking about are ones that have completed IOE.

15 Q. Sure. And I think I just have one more. So you mentioned
16 that you know that new hires are here just for tours, is a
17 statement that you made. Why do you think that is?

18 A. Not just -- the idea is the tours. Why do I think that is?
19 Well, it gives new hires a -- you know, the ability to become
20 comfortable with the operating environment and maybe a more
21 structured route segment, if that makes sense. You know,
22 floatplane flying is inherently dynamic, and I think that's what
23 attracts most of us to it. By doing the tours, you certainly cut
24 back on a bit of that, because you have -- I mean, the destination
25 is -- you know, departure and destination remains the same for the

1 most part.

2 Q. And then just kind of brings me to another one. You know,
3 you being an instructor, you have a little background. And you
4 stated that it gives new hires the opportunity to get comfortable
5 and more of a structure.

6 Do you think Metlakatla is a good place for people to gain
7 comfort in a new airplane, in a new type of operation?

8 A. I'll be honest with you. I do not believe -- so coming from
9 instructing up north where we don't have these large, landable
10 bodies of salt water, everything is very confined. And there's
11 actually been a few instances where I've been with, you know, been
12 with instructors and so forth, and they've, you know, described an
13 area or an approach, said this may -- you know, this is more
14 advanced and that -- you know, as time goes on. And I think, you
15 know, that in fact -- man, wouldn't it be nice to have the luxury
16 of, you know, these big clear landing areas up north for the
17 student?

18 I look at it as -- you know, the hazard with Metlakatla is
19 certainly the wind. Could be some ocean swell, you can get some
20 big water. Those dialed in, I don't find that the area in itself
21 is inherently hazardous more than -- you know, if -- how do I say
22 this? You know, if you're using your whole bag of tools, no, I
23 don't find that there's a particular hazard with Metlakatla.

24 Q. Right. No, and I get that your bag of tools is bigger than
25 somebody with 5 hours, right? You have a 300-hour bag of tools

1 versus a 5-hour bag of tools. But the tools of somebody that's
2 just learning floats, would -- do you think Met would be a good
3 place to learn and get comfortable in a new airplane and in a new
4 -- in a whole new class of airplane? Not only just a new
5 airplane, but --

6 A. I'll be honest with you. I don't have -- I have not operated
7 in and out of Metlakatla enough to accurately say if that -- you
8 know, I've -- do you know what I mean? I just, I have not been
9 there under any, you know, challenging conditions. The times that
10 I've been into Metlakatla haven't been such that I feel like I
11 could accurately evaluate that.

12 Q. Okay. Yeah, it was only because I think you had made a
13 statement before that said Metlakatla can be a very challenging
14 place because of the winds, but --

15 A. I'm sorry. Maybe to reiterate with that, that's -- you know,
16 well, it can, because -- yes, the -- of the topography and so
17 forth, and how the winds can swirl in there. And it's -- again,
18 going along with the conservative nature of the culture here, it's
19 been said, you know, that that -- right, like I said before, that
20 it's just -- keep an eye on it. But there's -- you know, that's
21 anywhere that you fly a floatplane. I mean, it can change from,
22 you know, one hour to the next, 30 minutes to the next. That's
23 the entire nature of -- every place poses a hazard, a potential
24 hazard.

25 You know, there's hazards that exist down here in southeast

1 that don't exist up north, if you fly in Minnesota, Florida, et
2 cetera. And there's also hazards up there that don't exist to the
3 degree that they do down here, so --

4 MR. PERCY: That's all I have.

5 MS. PRICE: Mike?

6 MR. O'BRIEN: Yeah.

7 BY MR. O'BRIEN:

8 Q. You mentioned that you finished your IOE and then you went to
9 Metlakatla.

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. How long between the time when you were signed off for IOE
12 and the time you went to Metlakatla? Was it 5 days? Was it right
13 away? An hour later? What was it?

14 A. I'm not sure, Mike.

15 Q. Okay. Was it, like, a week later? I mean --

16 A. Yeah, it was --

17 Q. Did you go the next day? Was it --

18 A. No, I believe -- maybe a day or two.

19 Q. A day or two.

20 A. Yeah. A day, or couple days.

21 Q. Can you give us approximate dates when you were sent to
22 Metlakatla?

23 A. Do you mind if I look at --

24 MS. PRICE: No, yeah, no. Look it up. Yeah.

25 MR. POINT: Okay. It looks to be May 8th.

1 MR. O'BRIEN: May 8th. Okay, great.

2 MR. POINT: May 8th.

3 MR. O'BRIEN: Thank you.

4 MR. POINT: You're welcome.

5 MS. PRICE: Anything else?

6 MR. O'BRIEN: That's all I have.

7 BY MS. PRICE:

8 Q. As a result of this accident, are you going to do anything
9 different?

10 A. Maybe not in my flying here. I may, as a flight instructor
11 or if I'm -- yeah, if I'm working in any capacity in an
12 instructional environment with floatplanes, which I certainly hope
13 to do -- it's something I enjoy doing -- I will use this as a
14 teaching experience, something to emphasis the importance of and
15 danger of tailwinds, quartering tailwinds, the ability that -- why
16 it's so important to be able to read the water, spend the time
17 doing a high recon. You know, spend as much time as possible. I
18 mean, you got -- do as many laps around as it takes to determine
19 the appropriate approach and wind direction. If that makes sense.

20 Q. Yes.

21 A. I mean, that would -- it's certainly something that I would,
22 be one of my -- it'll be one of my special emphasis areas as a
23 CFI.

24 Q. Did you ever have a student or you yourself dig a float in on
25 a landing?

1 A. Yes. And we say "dig a float." So I -- a lot of -- right,
2 it's like a float, land flat. Yeah, I have had a student do that.
3 In the Pacer, it's actually -- they can get much stickier than a
4 Beaver. If someone even -- god forbid, when you touch down, if
5 they're not -- if you're not bringing the yoke back -- because
6 initially, everyone, right, they want to just, as soon as they're
7 down and touch down, they just let it go, right? They relax. And
8 now you're, you know, getting sticky. And so in the Beaver, you
9 know, they're not nearly as sensitive. A smaller floatplane,
10 especially -- most Pacers have a forward -- on floats, have a
11 forward center of gravity to begin with.

12 So yeah, actually. Just about every single student does
13 that. And in fact, if they don't do it while I'm training with
14 them -- I prefer that they do, because it will happen, and there's
15 no better way to emphasize -- I mean, obviously I don't allow it
16 to progress into an unsafe situation, but I like them to see how
17 that gets uncomfortable while I'm there to mitigate any potential
18 hazards. Because you can talk about the importance -- and again,
19 before I even go on the first flight with them, we talk about the
20 importance of this. And like I said, it's not even getting the
21 yoke forward; it's failing to apply back pressure. So yeah,
22 everyone, every single student that I've been with will attempt to
23 do that, if allowed.

24 Q. In any of your experience with Alaska Floats & Skis, did you
25 do any underwater egress training?

1 A. No, ma'am. I mean, in the sense -- in a realistic
2 environment?

3 Q. Yeah. In the --

4 A. No, we never --

5 Q. Learn to return or any of the, you know --

6 A. Never had a dunk tank or anything like that.

7 Q. Land and seas. Yeah.

8 MS. PRICE: That's all I have. Any --

9 MR. PERCY: I just had a couple more.

10 BY MR. PERCY:

11 Q. And this is all just your opinion, and you can answer it if
12 you want to or don't. But do you -- you were saying that you were
13 going to use it as a teaching experience and the importance of
14 reading the water. Do you think he misread the water? The wind,
15 I mean?

16 A. You know, I wasn't there. I can't speculate on that.
17 There's obviously people that were there, from what I understand,
18 that observed it. Would probably be better to answer that
19 question.

20 Q. Right. I mean, because, you know, you said you were going to
21 use it as a teaching experience.

22 A. Well, I would certainly -- oh, right. I would imagine,
23 right? Because I can't imagine a person intentionally landing
24 with a quartering tailwind, right? And so --

25 Q. And just going with that, so have you heard it discussed that

1 he landed with a quartering tailwind? Was it people are talking
2 about it? Or what makes you think that he landed with a
3 quartering tailwind, besides all of our questions about tailwinds?

4 A. Yes, I -- yes, there was a -- I mean, there's been a
5 number -- there were a number of observers, from what I
6 understand, and that seems to be the consensus, that it was a
7 tailwind landing. But I don't have -- I have not seen anything to
8 prove that.

9 Q. Right, no. That'd be good. I was just asking for your
10 opinion.

11 MR. PERCY: No, that's all I've got.

12 MS. PRICE: Okay. Nothing?

13 MR. O'BRIEN: Nothing further.

14 MS. PRICE: Hey, we're done. Thank you very much. We
15 really --

16 MR. POINT: Oh, absolutely.

17 MS. PRICE: -- really appreciate your time. That concludes
18 the interview.

19 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
20
21
22
23
24
25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: TAQUAN AIR DHC-2 METLAKATLA
 Interview of Garrett Point

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC19FA019

PLACE: Ketchikan, Alaska

DATE: May 23, 2019

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.

A black rectangular redaction box covers the signature of Eileen Gonzalez.

Eileen Gonzalez
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

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TAQUAN AIR DHC-2 METLAKATIA * Accident No.: ANC19FA019

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Interview of: ADAM WEILAND
Company Instructor/Check Airman
Taquan Air

Taquan Air Offices
Ketchikan, Alaska

Thursday,
May 23, 2019

APPEARANCES:

NOREEN PRICE, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

JON PERCY, Principal Operations Inspector
Federal Aviation Administration

MICHAEL O'BRIEN, Senior Pilot/Check Airman
Taquan Air

BRIAN GERD, Esq.
Richmond & Quinn
(On behalf of Mr. Weiland)

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I N T E R V I E W

1
2 MS. PRICE: Okay. We're here to -- it is May 23rd, 2019, at
3 Taquan Air conducting interviews for investigation for accident
4 ANC19FA019. My name is Noreen Price. I'm the aviation accident
5 investigator and IIC of this investigation.

6 Thank you very much, Adam, for being here today,
7 participating in the interviews. The NTSB is an independent
8 federal organization. We are charged with investigating accidents
9 to determine probable cause and make safety recommendations, so
10 these things don't happen in the past [sic]. And, you know,
11 company personnel are a big part of that.

12 This will be recorded and transcribed and be part of the
13 public docket. The investigation is solely for safety purposes,
14 we have no legal powers, no enforcement powers, but we can't
15 protect you from any litigation as well. Not that I think that
16 will be an issue.

17 I'm going to go around the room and introduce the rest of the
18 group here. Go ahead.

19 MR. PERCY: Jon Percy, FAA investigator, Juneau Flight
20 Standards District Office.

21 MR. O'BRIEN: Mike O'Brien, senior pilot/check pilot, Taquan
22 Air.

23 MR. GERD: Brian Gerd, legal counsel for Taquan Air, and for
24 its employees.

25 MS. PRICE: And if you could say and spell your name.

1 MR. WEILAND: Okay. It's Adam Weiland; A-d-a-m,
2 W-e-i-l-a-n-d.

3 MS. PRICE: Okay.

4 MR. WEILAND: Company instructor/check airman.

5 MS. PRICE: Okay. And Adam, you are allowed to have one
6 person with you during the interview. Who do you choose to have
7 here? Brian. Okay.

8 MR. WEILAND: Brian, yeah.

9 MS. PRICE: Okay, yup. Great, thank you.

10 All right. So, we'll get started with the questions.

11 INTERVIEW OF ADAM WEILAND

12 BY MS. PRICE:

13 Q. What is your title with the company? Your position.

14 A. I guess I already gave it to you. That's --

15 Q. But that's okay.

16 A. -- company instructor and check airman.

17 Q. Okay. And how long have you been with Taquan?

18 A. I started flying for them in June of 2007.

19 Q. And how long have you been a check airman?

20 A. So I first became a check airman in -- without looking at my
21 records, it was probably 2011.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. And flew for a different company a couple of years ago so it
24 lapsed, and then I recently reinstated that status this year
25 again.

1 Q. Oh, okay.

2 A. So --

3 Q. If you could give me a brief description of your aviation
4 background. So about how many hours do you have and where did you
5 work before Taquan Air here?

6 A. Okay. Well, I've got about 10,500 total hours; 9,000 of that
7 on floats, about 8,000 of that here in Alaska. Before I flew with
8 Taquan, I was a flight instructor down in Florida for Brown's
9 Seaplane Base. And not a whole lot before that. My end goal was
10 to fly up here, fly floatplanes up here. So just a couple
11 instructing jobs and built that float time and that instructor
12 time, and here I came.

13 Q. Okay. Let's see. And do you fly both airplanes? The Beaver
14 and the --

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. -- Otter? Okay. So we reviewed the pilot's training record
17 and you're listed as the check airman who gave him his check ride.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Did you fly with him on any other occasions other than the
20 check ride?

21 A. Just the check ride.

22 Q. Can you describe his personality? I know you don't know him
23 very well, but just from your initial impression of --

24 A. Initial impression he seemed real down to earth. He didn't
25 have a big head on his -- or, you know, didn't get a big head over

1 anything. He wasn't cocky or anything like that. He was pleasant
2 to be around.

3 Q. And how about his flying abilities?

4 A. Based on the check ride it was satisfactory.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. I didn't notice any issues at all.

7 Q. And compared to other new pilots, how would you say he was?
8 Average, above average, below average?

9 A. He was average to slightly above average.

10 Q. Were you aware of his flight experience? His, you know,
11 floatplane experience time when you flew with him?

12 A. I didn't know his exact amount of time, but I knew he didn't
13 have a ton of it, you know. I was getting the impression he had
14 somewhere around 10 hours.

15 Q. Did he talk about it or did you just -- how do you get that
16 impression that --

17 A. Well, basically what he told me is he's low time. That's the
18 quote that he gave me, "I'm pretty low time on floats."

19 Q. Okay. I got you. Did he seem competent during the check
20 ride?

21 A. He did.

22 Q. During the check ride, did you observe him performing any
23 crosswind landings?

24 A. Yeah, that's part of the check ride. That's one of the items
25 on the list, is crosswinds.

1 Q. And what -- do you remember what -- how strong that crosswind
2 was?

3 A. It was about 8 knots.

4 Q. And how about downwind? Do you typically --

5 A. No.

6 Q. Okay. So you did not do any downwind landing?

7 A. None at all. That's not an item on the list. And I don't go
8 over it and it's not something I'd ever recommend they do.

9 Q. Why is that? Not do at all, or not check or not train?

10 A. Not do at all. It's added risk to the landing situation.

11 Q. So you don't do tailwind landings at all?

12 A. No, I emphasize land into the wind. And if the landing area
13 doesn't allow for that, pick a different one.

14 Q. And why is -- what are some of the elements? You have a lot
15 of float time, so if you could describe why landing with a
16 tailwind, downwind, is too risky, in your opinion?

17 A. So planning with a tailwind increases your speed over the
18 water, and of course the airplane doesn't experience anything as
19 far as hydrodynamic drag until it touches that water. It
20 increases exponentially with that speed. So touching down with a
21 heavier tailwind is a ton of drag all at once.

22 Q. Have you ever experienced a float -- did you ever dig in a
23 float on landing?

24 A. When I was learning. When I was initially getting my float
25 training, I landed with the nose just a hair low and didn't enjoy

1 that. Of course my instructor, that's lesson learned, right?
2 That's the -- that's why I emphasis that -- I would much prefer
3 somebody land on the aft end of the floats than land with the nose
4 too low, for that reason.

5 Q. And regarding the flap configuration, how do you -- do you
6 land -- a normal into the wind landing, how do you configure your
7 flaps?

8 A. Landing flaps.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. And how about for a crosswind?

12 A. For a crosswind, if it's a gusty crosswind, I may have
13 slightly less but it's -- it's about the same.

14 Q. Okay. And then if you were forced to make a downwind
15 landing, tailwind, would you -- what would be used for flaps, do
16 you think?

17 A. If I was absolutely forced, I'd probably pass up the landing.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Thank you. Thank you. Do you think --

21 A. I shouldn't even say probably for that one. I would most
22 definitely --

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. -- because I do not like downwind landings. I just --

25 Q. Is that because you had experiences with difficult landings

1 yourself or other friends landing that way or just word of mouth,
2 or --

3 A. Well, where you get the sensation of what it's like to land
4 with a higher water speed is a no-flap landing --

5 Q. Yeah.

6 A. -- and you're touching down about 10 knots faster, and it's a
7 lot of drag all at once.

8 Q. Yeah.

9 A. And the lesson taught to me is, okay, well, now put yourself
10 downwind with 10 knots, it's going to feel the same. Now put
11 yourself down with 15 or 20, and it's going to be even worse.

12 Q. Did you see the accident pilot on the day of the accident?

13 A. Negative.

14 Q. Did you fly the accident airplane anytime recently?

15 A. Well, what kind of time frame would recently be?

16 Q. Recently would be in the last 2 weeks.

17 A. No, no.

18 MS. PRICE: That's all the questions I have right now for
19 Adam. Jon?

20 MR. PERCY: I guess I just had a couple and they're not too
21 relevant, but just kind of getting what some other pilots around
22 here might do and what other pilots might have observed.

23 BY MR. PERCY:

24 Q. So does Taquan have any locations where it's a one way in,
25 one way out?

1 A. One that is -- that comes to mind is Point Baker, way out on
2 the north end of Prince of Wales Island.

3 Q. So, in that situation, a pilot might land downwind at the
4 company?

5 A. They may possibly. So, what I have done is there's a
6 approach from the back side, if the wind is blowing that strong.
7 Because I, again, I hate downwind landings. I can't stand them.
8 And so, I will make that approach from the backend.

9 Q. So that one's not really one way in, one way out then?

10 A. Yeah, there are technically two ways in. But there's still
11 one way out. I would never take off back in that direction.

12 Q. Towards the mountain, sure. Have you observed pilots landing
13 downwind? Like even say coming back here, maybe a 5-knot, 7-knot
14 downwind, something light. I think the limit that Clark mentioned
15 was 10 miles per hour to do --

16 A. Personally, no.

17 MR. PERCY: Okay. I guess that was -- I guess that was it.

18 MS. PRICE: Anything?

19 MR. O'BRIEN: No questions.

20 BY MS. PRICE:

21 Q. Do you -- in regards to Metlakatla, any specific hazards
22 associated with landing there?

23 A. Well, what kind of landing area dimensions are we talking?

24 Q. Well, let's, for instance, say you have a new pilot and he's
25 like, hey, tell me about Metlakatla; what should I know about it?

1 Now I don't mean go through everything right now, but --

2 A. Sure.

3 Q. -- what are the bigger hazards associated with that and the
4 "gotchas" at that harbor?

5 A. So the reefs, the rocks in the middle of the bay are
6 absolutely a concern. They're also quite far away from the dock,
7 so it's only a hazard if they land really long or have an
8 extended-extended takeoff. And then with the wind blowing heavy
9 from south/southeast, terrain at the, you know, at the departure
10 end of your takeoff path.

11 Q. Do you think sending new pilots to places like Metlakatla is
12 a good decision?

13 A. Yeah. That's typically the one of about three places that
14 they get sent to for their initial mail flights.

15 Q. So for a new -- so your understanding of a new pilot, once
16 they passed IOE, what type of flights do they normally schedule
17 them for?

18 A. A lot of times they will see Metlakatla, Thorne Bay, and
19 Craig are the three places that they'll typically get sent to
20 initially.

21 Q. On scheduled routes?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And then at what point do they start doing other type flights
24 like lodge flights and then tours? When do the tours start?

25 A. I can only go from my own personal history with this.

1 Q. And that's what I'm asking you, like what you know.

2 A. Okay.

3 Q. I know this may not be the company policy.

4 A. So my first year here, I did no mail flights whatsoever. I
5 didn't even receive any IOE until the second year. So they sent
6 me on tours out to the Misty Fjords and the George Inlet Lodge.
7 And it was -- 99.9 percent of the time, it was with another pilot
8 or several other pilots, and you were all keeping in sight of each
9 other so you could keep track of each other.

10 Then year 2, that's when they began and completed my IOE, and
11 my first flights were all Metlakatla, Thorne Bay, Craig, until
12 about halfway through the summer and they started to let the leash
13 out a little further, and I could, you know, fly to Whale Passes
14 and other destinations. Coffman Cove became one.

15 And then the following year, they started to let me go to
16 Naukati and Edna Bay, and some of the more technical places.

17 Q. Okay. And at that time, did you feel like the training that
18 you received was adequate for --

19 A. Absolutely.

20 Q. -- the flights that you were doing?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. The risk assessment process in dispatch before flights; do
23 you typically participate in that risk assessment process or does
24 the dispatcher hand you a piece of paper to sign?

25 A. So they'll give you the risk assessment, you'll look it over.

1 If there's anything you disagree with, you can discuss with them
2 or if there's anything you'd like to add. Typically, though, when
3 I look at it, it's pretty accurate.

4 I think only one or two times it just -- and again, this is
5 -- no hard numbers here, but one or two times in the past I've
6 said, are you sure about this one? What about this one? But it
7 was a difference of maybe one or two points on the assessment
8 number.

9 Q. And do you have a conversation about the weather and wind
10 conditions at the destination at all or is it just the piece of
11 paper that they hand you?

12 A. No, I ask them, what is it doing?

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Then I look at -- if there's a camera available, which, you
15 know, those weather cameras are a godsend -- I'll be looking at
16 the cameras, talking to the people that live in that particular
17 location, what do you see out there?

18 Q. Okay. Have you seen a change over the years -- you've been a
19 check airman since 2011 -- with the proficiency of the new pilots
20 that come in?

21 A. I have.

22 Q. Can you expound on that a little bit?

23 A. So one thing that I have noticed is each year, you know, as
24 the fleet expands, as you gain more aircraft, you are required to
25 find more pilots to fly them, and you can only find so many that

1 have a good level of experience to fly them. So, eventually, you
2 have to start digging deeper into the barrel to find people, and
3 that means they're less experienced.

4 Q. And as a check airman, have you ever not passed somebody on a
5 flight because they didn't meet the standards?

6 A. Well, not to my current -- excuse me -- current recollection.

7 Q. So is it safe to say that while the pilots are less
8 proficient when they come in, when you give them a check ride,
9 then they are ready --

10 A. Right. Correct.

11 Q. -- because people aren't failing that check ride?

12 A. Right. What we -- I typically have done in the past is I
13 will give somebody a -- the instructional period goes over all of
14 the items that you would do on the check ride, and then we call
15 that the instruction. And then I will recommend, okay -- hand
16 them off to the check airmen, and then they complete the actual
17 check ride with them.

18 MS. PRICE: Do you have any other questions?

19 MR. PERCY: I do actually that came up.

20 BY MR. PERCY:

21 Q. So, I know you said that you didn't fly any scheduled runs
22 for a year, in that whole first year, that you did just air tours.
23 Why was that? Why do you think they had that policy?

24 A. So I was new. I was the new pilot. I came up here with
25 about 600 hours on floats and 1200 total hours, and had never

1 flown in Alaska before. And to ease me into it, I guess is a good
2 way to put it, tours, you typically do those -- I shouldn't even
3 say typically. You're always going to want to do those on a nice
4 day, you know, because people want to see the scenery.

5 So it's a good way to get you used to the aircraft, get you
6 used to how it handles and how the weather likes to behave around
7 here, and you're always flying with another aircraft so you can
8 talk amongst yourselves on the radio while we're --

9 Q. All right. So why do you think that Taquan changed that
10 policy? Because you had 600 float hours and they limited you to
11 air tours, and he had 20, and then they put him on mail runs.

12 A. I don't know.

13 Q. And then on the other one, I guess in the same -- they went
14 right -- you said your IOE wasn't completed for a year. Why do
15 you think there was such a rush to complete Mr. Rash's IOE
16 immediately after his check ride?

17 A. I don't know that either.

18 Q. Are you not involved in that process?

19 A. No, I'm not involved in that, deciding when they begin that.

20 Q. And the only one I have in the end is, you know, you
21 mentioned when they expand the fleet and we have to find -- and
22 it's harder to find experienced pilots. In your opinion, do you
23 feel that Taquan has expanded too much, too fast?

24 A. I do.

25 MR. PERCY: That's all I've got.

1 MS. PRICE: Mike, do you have anything?

2 MR. O'BRIEN: I don't think so.

3 MS. PRICE: One last question.

4 BY MS. PRICE:

5 Q. Are there any forums -- or how many check airmen are in the
6 company? Do you know?

7 A. Well, let's see. I know there is Mike, there's me, Kevin
8 Ruff, Clark Hassell. And if there's any more, I can't think of
9 them off the top of my head. But that's --

10 Q. Do you -- are there any forum/meetings for check airmen with
11 the chief pilot to discuss on a regular basis or, you know, early
12 in the season the progress of the new pilots in regard to training
13 and readiness for flights?

14 A. Yeah, sorry, could you repeat that one more time? I missed
15 the first half of that.

16 Q. That's okay. No, that's fine. Is there a forum, a meeting
17 that you do with all the check airmen and the chief pilot, where
18 you talk about the progress of --

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. -- the new hires or maybe last year's hires in regards to
21 their readiness and proficiency?

22 A. It's more informal, but we do discuss with each other how all
23 the guys are doing. All the new crew.

24 Q. Okay. So, informally, maybe, you might go, well, how'd he
25 do?

1 A. Yeah, you know --

2 Q. Yeah, he did okay, or no, not so good, or --

3 A. Right. Catch somebody and I'll even ask, you know, I'm
4 flying with so and so, I haven't flown with them before, how are
5 they doing so far? You know, what do they need to work on?

6 Q. Okay. And there were other new hires that came on this
7 season that aren't with you anymore. Did you fly with any of
8 those guys?

9 A. I did.

10 Q. And how did that go about? How --

11 A. Well, what are you looking for? I'm --

12 Q. Well, you know, you have -- the accident pilot was a new
13 float pilot, and you have these other people that were new float
14 pilots. He made it through the process --

15 A. Okay, so --

16 Q. -- these folks didn't, and I'm just wondering --

17 A. The --

18 Q. Was it knowledge based? Was it skill based? Was it --

19 A. It was skill based.

20 Q. -- decision-making based? Okay.

21 A. It was skill based and decision-making based. They struggled
22 with it.

23 MS. PRICE: Okay. I don't have any more questions.

24 MR. PERCY: I don't either.

25 MS. PRICE: Do you have any questions for us or things you

1 think we should be looking at that might help the investigation?

2 MR. WEILAND: No.

3 MS. PRICE: Again, thank you, for helping us out here,
4 appreciate it.

5 MR. WEILAND: No problem.

6 MS. PRICE: I know it's tough. You know, you give someone a
7 check ride, and this isn't a good way to have that end. But we do
8 appreciate it. This is a great help to us. So, thank you very
9 much. That concludes our interview.

10 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: TAQUAN AIR DHC-2 METLAKATIA
 Interview of Adam Weiland

ACCIDENT NO.: ANC19FA019

PLACE: Taquan Air

DATE: May 23, 2019

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Lindsey Kahnke
Transcriber