

Factual Report – Attachment 2

Interview Summaries

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

ERA16LA225

Interviewee: Rowland Gove – Local Controller (LC)
Date / Time: August 12, 2016 / Approximately 1200 EDT
Location: Punta Gorda, Florida Air traffic Control Tower (ATCT)
Present: Dan Bartlett; NTSB, Andrew Johnson: FAA and Tim Keck: NATCA.
Represented by George Harper, PGD NATCA representative
Investigator: Dan Bartlett

During the interview Rowland Gove stated the following:

Mr. Gove served 21 years as a U.S. Air Force air traffic controller. After retiring from the Air Force, he was a Department of Defense (DoD) controller at Hurlburt Field in Ft. Walton Beach, Florida. He started working for Robinson Aviation as a contract tower controller in 2011 at Naples Municipal airport, Florida. He had been a controller at PGD since 2012. He was certified on all positions and was qualified as a controller-in-charge (CIC). He held no other FAA certifications. His class II medical certificate was current with no waivers or restrictions.

His work schedule consisted of regular days off on Monday and Tuesday, 1300 to 2100 on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday and 0700 to 1500 on Saturday and Sunday. He worked overtime once or twice a month extending a regular work day to 10 hours or an occasional full shift.

His supervisor had been Richard Reid since his arrival at PGD. His operating initials were RG.

When asked to describe the accident, Mr. Gove stated that he had been working the local control position for approximately three and a half hours. He had reported for work at 1300 and after working for 45 minutes, was provided a 45-minute break by the off-going crew. This is the only break afforded the controllers at PGD. Mr. Norton was working the flight data/ground control (FD/GC) position combined and was conducting self- study training.

Allegiant maintenance called for a standard engine run-up. Normally the tower will ask where they want to conduct the run-up and attempt to accommodate. 85% of the run-ups were conducted on taxiway A between taxiway A2 and C or A2 and B. Allegiant maintenance always asked the tower for permission prior to running up the engines during the run-up evolutions. There were no established procedures in place for turn-ups at PGD. Mr. Gove directed the MD-83 to taxi to taxiway A. When the MD-83 got to the taxiway, the winds were not compatible to a run up so the MD-83 requested to taxi to taxiway A2 via the approach end of runway 22 and then down the runway. The winds were 270 to 280 at 8 to 10 knots. Mr. Gove approved the request. There was no other traffic. Shortly thereafter, N8161X called from the north for landing. He was directed to plan for right traffic to runway 22. The MD-83 had reached taxiway A2 and was in position. Mr. Gove verified with binoculars the MD-83 was well clear of runway 22. N8161X reported his position and was issued a landing clearance. The MD-83 and N8161X were the only aircraft on the frequency. After N8161X landed and was rolling out, he appeared to stop on the runway. Thinking the aircraft had stopped on the runway, Mr. Gove queried the pilot if he was a full stop or touch and go because if the aircraft had stopped on the runway after being cleared to land, the pilot may have misstated his intention to land, and may have been conducting a touch and go or stop and go. The pilot responded that he had lost a tire and was off the runway in the grass. Mr.

Gove advised him that help was on the way and started emergency notification procedures by activating the crash phone. Mr. Gove then called N8161X to check on the status of the passengers but did not get a response. The maintenance crew of the MD-83 advised the tower that there were people walking around N8161X. Shortly thereafter the pilot of N8161X called the tower and advised that he had not lost a tire but thought he had been blown off the runway by the MD-83. Mr. Gove asked the MD-83 if he had had his engines above idle and the MD-83 crew responded that they had not.

ARFF and airport operations responded to N8161X.

Mr. Gove stated that Mr Norton, acting as the CIC, stopped his training when the accident occurred, made the tower log entry initiating the mandatory occurrence report (MOR) and completed the appropriate entries. Mr. Norton was aware that the pilot of N8161X had alleged that he was blown off the runway by the MD-83.

Mr. Gove did not believe that the MD-83 blew N8161X off the runway but stated that in the future he will provide additional traffic information to landing aircraft if a similar situation occurs.

The interview concluded at approximately 1300 EDT

Interviewee: Brian Norton – Flight Data/Ground Control/Controller-in-Charge (FD/GC/CIC)
Date / Time: August 12, 2016 / Approximately 1300 EDT
Location: Punta Gorda, Florida ATCT
Present: Dan Bartlett; NTSB, Andrew Johnson: FAA and Tim Keck: NATCA.
Represented by George Harper, PGD NATCA representative
Investigator: Dan Bartlett

During the interview Brian Norton stated the following:

Mr. Norton began his ATC Career in the US Navy. He was stationed at NAS Mayport (NRB) for approximately 4 months in 1984 followed by USS America (CV-66) from 1984 to 1989. He then went to NAS Key West (NQX) for 4 months prior to leaving active duty. He was hired by the FAA to Miami Executive Airport (TMB) where he worked from 1990-1995. He transferred to Fort Lauderdale (FLL) from 1995-1997. He transferred to Miami ATCT from 1997-2005, and then to Fort Myers (RSW) through 2011 where he retired from the FAA. From 2011-2015 Mr. Norton worked as an Airframes and Power Plant Mechanic (A&P) at Punta Gorda airport. In October 2015 he was hired by RVA as an air traffic controller at Punta Gorda Federal Contract Tower (PGD).

Mr. Norton was fully rated at PGD including Controller in Charge (CIC). His class 2 medical was current with the requirement to have corrective lenses in his possession while performing ATC duties. He had corrective lenses in his possession during this accident on June 17. He had a commercial instrument pilot certificate which was not current. He also had an A&P Certificate with Inspection Authorization which was current.

Mr. Richard Reid was his supervisor. His operating initials were BC.

Mr. Norton's work schedule consisted of regular days off on Wednesday and Thursday, 1300 to 2100 on Friday, Saturday and Sunday and 0645 to 1445 on Monday and Tuesday. He occasionally worked overtime, maybe once per month.

At the time of the accident, he was working the CIC and the FD/GC positions combined.

When asked to describe the accident, Mr. Norton stated that it was very slow with no traffic. He turned his speaker up on the ground control position (GC) and moved to the back of the tower to accomplish computer based training requirements. He said that Rowland Gove was working the LC position with his headset on. He heard Rowland say to someone that they were on the tower frequency. He then heard Rowland taxi an aircraft out. He said he didn't recognize the call sign so he assumed it was some maintenance aircraft. He said he looked up from the computer as the aircraft was crossing runway 15/33 and he scanned the runway for conflicts as he always does. He then heard Rowland clear a PA28 (N8161X) for runway 22. The next thing he saw was Rowland reaching for the crash phone. He heard Mr. Gove ask the PA28 pilot if everyone was ok. He said Rowland then turned to him and said I think the aircraft blew a tire on landing. When Mr. Norton looked out the window, he saw an MD80 on A2 for a run-up and the PA28 off to the side of the runway. He didn't see the actual aircraft go off the runway. He got up to the GC position and started directing OPS and ARFF vehicles.

Mr. Norton heard the LC frequency on the speaker and the PA28 say he got blown off the runway. When asked, the MD80 crew stated on frequency that they were still at idle power. He thought the PA28 just lost control since the MD80 hadn't begun to do the engine run yet, he didn't think the MD80 was a factor at all, which is why it wasn't included in the MOR.

Once he knew everyone was ok, Mr. Norton began making notifications to the ATM, ROC and RVA staff.

Mr. Norton found out later from an FBO vehicle that there was damage to the aircraft. He thought it was not a big incident especially since the aircraft was towed to the FBO so quickly. He told the ATM, Mr. Reid about the damage discovery Monday morning when he saw him.

When asked, he stated that there is frequently a west wind; tail draggers and light sport aircraft ask for runway 27. The airport changes runways many times throughout the day, much more than he had seen over his career at other places.

When asked about his previous tower experience, he said MIA and FLL had designated run-up areas and PGD could probably improve their procedure for run-ups. When asked, he thought a good place would be on runway 15/33 and ask airport operations to close the runway.

Mr. Norton was familiar with the PA28 as he used to own one. After observing the playback from N8161X's belly-cameras playback Mr. Norton offered that he would not have raised the flaps on the PA28 as the pilot of N8161X did on landing. He stated that he would not have raised the flaps until after he was off of the runway after landing. He said he was also taught to keep in crosswind landing control inputs until off the runway as well.

The interview concluded at approximately 1415 EDT.