



Timothy W. Monville
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Date: December 12, 2023

Subject: ERA24LA041, Record of Conversation/Interview

Contact: Edward Bunnell

Mr. Edward Bunnell, Airport Director of Lake City Gateway Airport (KLCQ), Lake City, Florida was contacted by phone on December 12, 2023, at 0847 EST. He was called at [REDACTED]. He provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED].

He was advised by e-mail when sending this document for review that it will not be released to the public until the investigation is finished and when published, any personal identifiable information (PII) such as cell phone number, e-mail address, address, pilot certificate number, etc., will be redacted and not viewable in the released document.

He was asked the following questions –

Who was in the airplane when it was raised from the runway and how was the landing gear lowered?

He was in the airplane. He lowered the landing gear by hand cranking the landing gear into the down and locked position. He had no problems cranking the landing gear down, and once it was down and locked it stayed there (Figure 1).

Why not use the electrical method to lower the landing gear?

He did not know if there was any fuel leakage and did not want to cause a fire by turning on the airplane's electrical power.

How can NTSB refine the reported time of the accident?

The Vir Tower LLC that he has at KLCQ has an antenna attached on a building at the airport and the taxiways and runways at KLCQ are mapped out. The Vir Tower LLC has a way to track aircraft that are inbound to the airport, taxiing to and from takeoff and landing, and also departing. Using the last target of the accident airplane during takeoff roll and Google Earth, at 1356:38 EST, or 1856:38 UTC, the airplane was located about 360 ft east of the eastern edge of the fixed distance markers. Mr. Bunnell later provided a phone number for the president of Vir Tower LLC.

Mr. Bunnell reported he was on-scene the same day between 1530 and 1600, which was before the rain came. He said the rain came as a “curtain”, and when he arrived he noted the ceiling getting worse/deteriorating rapidly. About the same time as the accident based on Vir Tower LLC data a Cessna 150 was doing traffic pattern work and did not experience any issue with windshear.



Figure 1: Photograph From KLCQ Airport Director: View of the Airplane On the Runway After the Landing Gear were Manually Lowered.

The phone call ended at 0917 EST.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on December 12, 2023. He replied by text message on December 13, 2023 at 1032 EST with, “Tim, that looks good to me.” The FINAL digest was e-mailed to him on December 13, 2023.

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Date: January 17, 2024

Subject: ERA24LA081, Record of Conversation/Interview

Contact: Josh Palacios

Mr. Josh Palacios was contacted by phone on January 16, 2024 at 1322 EST. He was called at [REDACTED] His e-mail address is [REDACTED] Upon answering the phone he was asked if he had time to discuss the accident flight and specifically to discuss prior flights in the accident airplane related to the landing gear and engines. He advised he would call back in about 1.5 hours. He returned the call the same day at 1511 EST, from the same phone number.

He was advised by e-mail when sending this document for review that it will not be released to the public until the investigation is finished and when published, any personal identifiable information (PII) such as cell phone number, e-mail address, address, pilot certificate number, etc., will be redacted and not viewable in the released document.

At the beginning of the phone call he was advised that the NTSB is a federal agency mandated by Congress to investigate aircraft accidents, and NTSB has no authority to take any action against any individual. He was also informed that the purpose of an NTSB investigation is for safety only, and any person NTSB talks with has the right to representation; he agreed to the interview without representation.

He was asked the following questions-

In the 90 days prior to the accident of flying that airplane did he experience any engine related issues or issues with the normal landing gear retraction and extension systems¹?
Landing gear issues no. He did have normal maintenance performed on the engines; however, “nothing stood and screamed at him the day of the accident.”

¹ He was asked during the call to summarize the number of flights and flight hours in the previous 90 days.

NTSB Questions Continued –

During the accident flight were the engines developing normal rpm and manifold pressure?
Yes.

Did you perceive an engine issue during the accident flight takeoff?
I did not.

Do you know the time to extend the landing gear using the normal method?
He operated a Cessna 402 and 402C which have a hydraulically operated landing gear and reported the landing gear extension in the accident airplane (421B) is “significantly longer” than the extension time in a 402 or 402C.

Does the 421B Airplane’s Pilot’s Operating Handbook specify the landing gear extension time using the normal method?

He can research. He added at this point that during takeoff of the accident flight he could have waited for the landing gear to fully extend, but if he did so it would have reduced the runway remaining to land. He chose to land when he did for the safety of people on-board and because there was a tree line ahead that also factored into his decision making.

To Recap was there anything mechanically wrong with either engine or the landing gear normal extension/retraction system during the accident flight?
“To recap, no.”

The call ended at 1526 EST.

He returned the call the next day at 1353 EST, from the same phone number reporting that in the previous 90 days, or from August 11, 2023 to November 11, 2023, he accrued 58.2 hours over 40 flights in the accident airplane.

That call ended at 1356 EST.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on January 17, 2024. On January 22, 2024, at 0350 EST, he replied by e-mail, “Tim, I have received this email. Please allow further time for review. I will contact you if any questions arise. Best, Josh.” During a phone call on January 24, 2024, at 1519 EST, he called and advised that he had reviewed the document but was having someone else review it also. He was advised that any review of the content was factual in nature and as pilot he would be in the best position to review and respond with the content. There was no further contact or comment from the pilot as of January 30, 2024 at 1444 EST. The FINAL digest was e-mailed to him on January 30, 2024.