

Factual Report – Attachment 2

Interview Summaries

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

OPS17IA003

Interviewee: Arthur E Lustenberger

Date / Time: October 31, 2016 / 1000

Location: BAF ATCT

Present: Larry Johnson

Investigator: Andy Olvis

Represented by: None

During the interview Mr. Lustenberger stated the following:

Mr. Arthur E Lustenberger began working for the FAA in July of 1974 when he began initial training at the FAA academy. After completion of training, he reported to Westfield Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT). He transferred to Bradley ATCT in September of 1981. Mr. Lustenberger then transferred to Westfield ATCT as a front line manager (FLM) and transferred back to Bradley ATCT in August of 1994 as an FLM. Mr. Lustenberger retired from the FAA in June of 2002, and was hired by (RVA) Robinson Aviation in July of 2002 as a part time air traffic controller. In September 2004, Midwest Air Traffic Control was awarded the air traffic control contract at Westfield Airport and Mr. Lustenberger was picked up as the quality assurance specialist and then as the air traffic manager. Mr. Lustenberger also served as an air traffic controller in the United States Air Force from September 1969 until September of 1973 serving at various duty stations. His second-class medical was current with a restriction to wear corrective lenses for ATC duties. He did not have any other aeronautical licenses, and was certified on all operational positions at BAF ATCT.

Mr. Lustenberger was made aware of the incident at 0830 EDT on the morning of the incident when he was preparing to leave his home for the facility. Daryl Monke, the local controller, called him to advise that an incident had occurred; he seemed to be very shaken up. When Mr. Lustenberger arrived at the tower to receive an explanation, he checked on Mr. Monke and then received a brief of what had occurred. Mr. Monke told Mr. Lustenberger there had been several vehicles on the runway after opening, including a runway sweeper. When the airport operations vehicle reported clear of the runway, Mr. Monke had removed all memory aids. He told Mr. Lustenberger that he had just forgot about the sweeper "Guard Sweeper 96."

As part of the facility review, Mr. Lustenberger conducted an internal investigation into the incident. His investigation revealed that when AAY4203 landed on Runway 20, the pilot reported a truck on the runway. The local controller had asked the pilot if the vehicle was "at the approach lights"; the pilot replied no and that it was on the runway in front of them. Mr. Lustenberger spoke with the pilot of AAY4203 who said that when he saw the lights of the sweeper, they instantly initiated more aggressive braking. According to the pilot, the aircraft stopped approximately 200 feet in front of the sweeper.

The local controller had used a memory aid "runway 20-02 unavailable" strip, but had removed it when the airport vehicle "Airport 16" had departed the airfield. To assist in reminding controllers about vehicles on the runway, the facility would normally have utilized the STARS multifunction P/V keystrokes to place "vehicle on runway" on the airport centerline on the tower

display workstation. Mr. Monke had told Mr. Lustenberger that he had not utilized the STARS multifunction P/V memory aid; that surprised Mr. Lustenberger. As part of the facility efforts to mitigate this risk, the facility now utilizes a “Sweeper” strip that indicates when a sweeper was on the runway. Mr. Lustenberger did not initially remove Mr. Monke from position, but after conferring with Midwest ATC officials, he de-certified Mr. Monke and assigned him 16 hours of remedial training. Mr. Monke was re-certified on October 25, 2016 by Mr. Lustenberger.

The BAF ATCT can combine all tower frequencies at the local control position. Mr. Monke had the local control and ground control position frequencies de-combined as was his preference; this resulted in the local controller not simulcasting on all frequencies. Mr. Lustenberger said Mr. Monke was the only BAF controller who did not simulcast the frequencies when the operating positions were combined. Mr. Lustenberger did not believe the Air National Guard vehicles had the capability to monitor the local control frequency. He believed it would be safer to have any vehicle that operated for any length of time on the runways should be able to monitor the local control frequency as a safety measure.

Mitigation actions taken by the facility have included; “when positions in the tower are combined to one position, all frequencies will be combined to that position in order to simulcast on all frequencies; a new memory aid has been created indicating when sweeper activity is on the movement area; and it is now a requirement to enter on the tower display workstation indicator “vehicles are on the runway.” Mr. Lustenberger said he “feels that they have done all they can do to mitigate this incident.”

Interview concluded at 1130

Interviewee: Mr. Daryl Monke

Date / Time: October 31, 2016 / 1330

Location: BAF ATCT

Present: Larry Johnson

Investigator: Andy Olvis

Represented by: None

During the interview Mr. Monke stated the following:

Mr. Daryl Monke began working for Midwest ATC in October 2009 when he reported to BAF ATCT. He had previously worked at BAF with Robinson Aviation (RVA) at BAF from January 2004 until September 2007. His prior ATC experience was with the FAA when he reported to Bradley International Airport (BDL), Windsor Locks, Connecticut from September 2007 until October 2009; and, Chicago Air Route Traffic Control Center from May 1968 until November 1971; and, Casper Wyoming (CPR) from November, 1973 to August, 1981.

Mr. Monke was certified at all operating positions in the BAF tower and was designated as a controller in charge (CIC). He held a current medical with a restriction to wear corrective lenses while on duty; Mr. Monke was wearing glasses when the incident occurred. Mr. Monke was also a licensed pilot and a licensed airframe and powerplant mechanic although he had not exercised

either license in about 40 years. On the date of the incident he was scheduled to work 0645 until 1445.

Mr. Monke had arrived for work prior to 0645 and conducted the opening procedures. He followed the published procedures and conducted radio checks with the fire department. The morning had been very foggy, and there was no active air traffic at the facility. After 0700 when the tower opened, the airport operations vehicles requested entry onto the taxiways and runways to conduct the surface and lighting checks. Additionally, the crash crew requested permission to enter the runway to conduct checks of the arresting cable on both ends of the runway, and, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation engineers requested permission to maneuver around the airport to conduct a survey. At 0738, the ANG sweeper, call sign Sweeper 96, requested permission to enter runway 02 and conduct vacuum sweeping operations on the first 4000' of runway 02. The first scheduled inbound to the airport was AAY4203 at about 0820.

Mr. Monke checked the ASOS and augmented the visibility observation to a reported value of $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile in fog; he could not see either end of the runway. Before AAY4203 arrived in the area, the crash crew and airport operations vehicles had reported clear of the airfield. The Massachusetts DOT vehicle had requested permission to proceed down runway 20 to taxiway A, and Mr. Monke had approved the operation; they reported clear a short time later. Because he could not see the runway ends, when AAY4203 called inbound Mr. Monke was forced to conduct a "mental" check of the runway. He had utilized a strip memory aide saying "vehicle" indicating there were vehicles on the runway but had removed it when the Massachusetts DOT vehicle had reported clear of runway 20. Additionally, he had written the call signs of all of the vehicles onto a legal pad that was kept on position. He had not removed or scratched out the call signs on the legal pad when the vehicles had reported clear. It was also standard operating practice to utilize the Tower Display Workstation (TDW) "multifunction P/V" to place the text "vehicle on the runway" on the TDW over the runway. That morning he had not utilized that function. As far as Mr. Monke was concerned, after the Massachusetts DOT vehicle had reported off the runway, it was clear and available for use.

After Mr. Monke had cleared AAY4203 to land, he was concerned about the aircraft landing in such reduced visibility. Because the crash phone was out of service, he looked up the commercial telephone extensions just in case there was a need. Mr. Monke did not see AAY4203 touchdown on the runway but remembered seeing AAY4203 as the aircraft came out of the fog and as it travelled from left to right. Mr. Monke said he lost sight of the aircraft as it went back into the fog moving towards the southern end of the runway. Just prior to him issuing taxi instructions to the pilot, Mr. Monke heard the pilot of AAY4203 report on frequency that there was a vehicle on the runway. Mr. Monke immediately thought the vehicle may have actually been off the runway and checking the approach lights. He confirmed the location of the vehicle with the pilot who told him that the vehicle was ahead about 200' and actually on the runway.

Mr. Monke immediately realized he had forgotten that Sweeper 96 was still conducting sweeping operations on the runway and considered it a failure on his part. He had been convinced the runway was clear and available for AAY4203 to land. He told the pilot of AAY4203 to make a 180 degree turn and to back taxi on the runway to taxiway A and to parking. A short time later the driver of Sweeper 96 asked the tower on the ground control frequency about the aircraft on the

runway. Mr. Monke told the driver that they had not missed any radio calls, and that the aircraft was taxiing to parking. Sweeper 96 did not have the capability to transmit or receive on the local control frequency. Mr. Monke was working the tower cab alone with all of the positions combined. However, he did not like “simulcasting” on all of the frequencies so he worked the ground control and local control frequencies separately.

The sweeper driver ended sweeping operations and returned to his base of operations. Mr. Monke immediately contacted the ATM Mr. Art Lustenberger and informed him of the incursion incident. The ATM came into work and a short time later decertified Mr. Monke pending 16 hours of retraining on surface movement areas, runway separation, and tower operations.

Mr. Monke felt bad about the incident and accepted responsibility for not confirming the sweeper vehicle was clear of the runaway before clearing AAY4203 to land. He believed the management of Midwest ATC was proactive and helpful in correcting the issues. As a result of the incursion incident, the facility implemented a few changes to mitigate future opportunities for this to happen again. The facility began using a dedicated memory aide for just a sweeper because they stay on the runway for so long. Also, Mr. Monke has moved to “simulcasting” all of the time so that the sweepers may have some situational awareness of what local control was doing.

Interview concluded at 1530

Interviewee: Mr. Ryan Ratcliffe

Date / Time: October 31, 2016 / 1000

Location: Massachusetts Air National Guard 104th Fighter Squadron Operations

Present: Larry Johnson

Investigator: Andy Olvis

Represented by: None

During the interview Mr. Ratcliffe stated the following:

Mr. Ryan Ratcliffe began with the Massachusetts Military Division as a civilian vehicle operator at Westfield Barnes Regional Airport in January 2016. On October 21, 2016 he was assigned to drive the “vac sweeper” conducting sweeping operations on the runway. His prior experience operating vehicles was with the Department of Transportation, Manchester New Hampshire, from October 2013 until October 2015.

On October 21, 2016, Mr. Ratcliffe arrived at work and conducted a vehicle check of “Guard Sweeper 96,” a 1996 International vacuum sweeper. The pre-check was conducted off a checklist and included a check of tires, lights, external equipment, and general operation of the vehicle. After completing the pre-trip check, Mr. Ratcliffe requested permission to sweep the first 4000’ of runway 02. This was the area that was most critical to the Boeing F-15 foreign object damage (fod) to the engines. Mr. Ratcliffe complied with the tower issued clearance to the runway, and to operate on the first 4000’ of runway 02.

After arriving on the runway, Mr. Ratcliffe recognized the “significantly reduced visibility” and turned on the truck headlights, strobe lights, back lights, and brush lights. He wanted to offer

every opportunity to be seen on the runway. The fog was so dense that Mr. Ratcliffe could not see from the west edge runway lights to the east edge runway lights. While he was conducting the sweeping operations, he had observed the crash crew personnel inspecting the arresting cable pits on the side of the runway. As he moved to the other side he could no longer see them. As he reached the southern edge of the sweeping pattern he turned back north along the centerline. As Mr. Ratcliffe proceeded north on runway 02, he observed an aircraft coming straight at him. He turned the sweeper hard to the right and “gunned it” to hurry off the runway. He was not able to secure the sweeper in time and vacuumed grass and rocks on the runway edge. According to Mr. Ratcliffe, the aircraft had been “breaking hard, with the reverse thrust buckets open and the spoilers raised.” Mr. Ratcliffe asked the control tower about the aircraft and was told it was making a 180 degree turn and taxiing to the ramp. He received a clearance back on the runway and completed operations on the runway. After completing the sweeping activities, Mr. Ratcliffe returned the truck and informed his leadership about the incident.

Mr. Ratcliffe said the sweeper vehicles did not have the ability to monitor the local controller position, only the ground control position. He indicated that if he had heard the local controller issue a landing clearance to AAY4203, he would have immediately cleared the runway and ask the tower about it. He felt that the idea to add the local frequency to the sweeper radios was a good idea and “did not lack any benefits.” Mr. Ratcliffe also said the idea to make blind transmissions every 5-10 minutes when the visibility drops to the point the tower is no longer visible was a great idea, and again “did not lack any benefits.”

Mr. Ratcliffe said that he had gone through the initial airfield licensing course in April 2016 after being hired by the State of Massachusetts. He had not had any infractions since that time; and had undergone a refresher airfield operator’s course the Monday following the incursion incident.

Interview concluded at 1100