Poor Training, Engine Flaws May Have Led to Pinnacle 3701 Accident

Capt. Terry McVenes (US Airways), ALPA’s Executive Air Safety Chairman, said on June 13, after the first day of the NTSB’s 3-day public hearing on the Pinnacle Airlines Flight 3701 accident on Oct. 14, 2004, in Jefferson City, Mo., “Today, we again mourn our colleagues who lost their lives on that terrible day, and we pledge to do all we can to learn and apply every lesson we can from this accident. We will ensure that their legacy is one of improved safety and training to make certain a tragedy like this never happens again.”

Both engines on the CRJ-200 flamed out after the pilots leveled off at FL410 during a night repositioning flight. Unable to restart either engine, they crashed in a residential area a few miles short of the airport in Jefferson City.

Capt. McVenes observed, “If just one of the engines had restarted, this accident might never have occurred.” He also noted that the pilots followed proper procedures and tried to restart their engines multiple times. Accident investigators are looking into the role that engine core lock may have played in this accident.

“Core lock” is a safety risk previously known only to engine and aircraft manufacturers until very recently—and about which pilots knew nothing. “While the FAA’s Special Airworthiness Information Bulletin issued on June 2, 2005, instructs pilots about how to avoid the core-lock danger,” Capt. McVenes noted, “the warning comes far too late for our lost colleagues.”

“Regional airlines across the United States are experiencing enormous growth and adding ever more sophisticated aircraft to their fleets,” Capt. McVenes continued. “This environment means that pilots often have less time to gain firsthand experience with an aircraft before assuming command. While many regional airlines are putting safety first, others still have opportunities to improve their safety cultures. These ‘improving’ carriers must provide comprehensive operational training to compensate for their lack of hands-on experience and to better prepare their pilots for the transition to jet aircraft.”

Critical proactive safety reporting programs could be put in place to help detect and correct safety issues before accidents occur,” Capt. McVenes declared. “Carriers around the world rely upon cost-effective, nonpunitive, confidential safety reporting programs such as the Flight Operations Quality Assurance Program (FOQA) and the Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP) to help ensure that air travel remains the safest mode of transportation.”

For more than a year, “ALPA has repeatedly requested that Pinnacle Airlines put both of these programs in place,” Capt. McVenes noted. “Pinnacle has very recently agreed to implement the programs,” he added, and “ALPA stands ready to work together with management to institute these programs as quickly as possible.”

The Department of Transportation’s Inspector General recently issued a report highlighting how far the FAA’s resources are stretched with regard to monitoring aviation safety. “A positive safety culture that includes active safety reporting programs is more critical than ever to helping the FAA do its job and to ensuring that aviation safety remains paramount in these times of ever-increasing numbers of flights and passengers,” Capt. McVenes argued.

“As passenger and cargo air transportation continue to grow,” he suggested, “our challenge is to make sure that the safety lessons that the legacy carriers have learned are passed on to others. The FAA and the NTSB must set the pace for progress by making certain that all airlines adhere to the same level of safety. Inadequate training, a poor safety culture, and poor procedures tell us that Pinnacle Airlines is an example of how One Level of Safety has not yet penetrated to all levels of the airline industry.”

Experience teaches that aircraft accidents usually result from a combination of several contributing factors. The Pinnacle Airlines Flight 3701 accident stands as no exception. In response, ALPA designed a multi-layered communications strategy to help ensure that all the factors that could have played a role in the accident, including pilot training, Pinnacle Airlines’ safety culture, flight crew performance, and engine design, were presented in news media coverage of the NTSB public hearing.

ALPA Issues Alert on CRJ-200 Dual-Engine Failure Checklist

On June 22, the Association issued ALPA Safety Alert Bulletin 2005-01, CRJ-200 Dual-Engine Failure Checklist, to inform pilots of this widely used airplane type about a safety issue revealed by an ongoing NTSB accident investigation. ALPA is participating in the NTSB investigation, which has “revealed potential improvements in the CRJ-200 dual-engine failure checklist used by some airlines,” the bulletin notes.

The FAA had issued, on June 2, a Special Airworthi-
## IN MEMORIAM

"To fly west, my friend, is a flight we all must take for a final check."—Author unknown

### 2004
- S/O C.M. Petersen United August
- Capt. A.R. "Satch" Hogland, Jr. United September
- Capt. Donald K. Hopkins FedEx October
- Capt. Everett W. Wood Pan Am December

### 2005
- Capt. C. Brown United February
- Capt. Jerry D. Harris United February
- Capt. Winfield H. Lippincott United February
- Capt. James K. Lockhart Continental February
- Capt. Thomas P. Mackay Pan Am February
- F/O James C. Robertson Continental February
- Capt. R.W. Tappan United February
- Capt. Robert G. Cumming United March
- Capt. Joseph B. Joyce United March
- F/O Earl W. Woodard US Airways March
- Capt. Norman T. Bradley TWA April
- Capt. William J. Cox US Airways April
- F/O Cary C. Davis Pinnacle April
- Capt. R.J. Dooley Pan Am April
- Capt. Wallace L. Young Hawaiian April
- Capt. Thomas W. Anderson TWA May
- Capt. Jack L. Baker TWA May
- Capt. Walter R. Brady Eastern May
- Capt. Robert Christiansen TWA May
- Capt. William A. Devane III US Airways May
- Capt. O.J. Dio Guardi Eastern May
- F/O William B. Downs US Airways May
- F/O Larrie B. Harlan Trans States May
- Capt. John W. Harpster, Jr. TWA May
- F/O Howell C. Hollis Delta May
- Capt. J.A. Hyde US Airways May
- S/O Joel A. Leach TWA May
- Capt. William D. McMinn TWA May
- Capt. L.H. Mouden Braniff May
- Capt. James E. Sanders III Delta May
- Capt. Joseph N. Saporito Delta May
- Capt. David W. Schirmer Delta May
- Capt. Bernard T. Stark United May
- Capt. Edward C. Wilkinson Golden West May
- Capt. Chester G. Williams, Jr. Eastern May
- Capt. Laurence Ray Wood United May
- Capt. Clifton C. Davis TWA June
- Capt. Glen J. Giles US Airways June
- Capt. David A. Harris Eastern June
- Capt. Thaddeus W. McLean Eastern June
- Capt. Refus Webb Eastern June
- Capt. F. Simmonds Altair N/A

*Date of death not available

### ALPA Offers Online Runway Safety Education Program

In July, ALPA launched an online program to educate its members about runway safety. Developed in conjunction with the FAA’s Office of Runway Safety and Operational Services and AOPA’s Air Safety Foundation, the program was created in an effort to reduce the number of incidents and accidents that occur at airports, with special emphasis on avoiding runway incursions.

The interactive program, which is based on a similar initiative offered through the AOPA website for the general aviation community, includes animations, video, and audio designed to educate airline pilots and other commercial-certificated pilots about the many potentially hazardous situations that can occur during ground operations. The program leads participants through a number of modules using scenarios that pilots frequently encounter to educate the pilots on standard operating procedures and best practices that pertain to ground operations—navigating ramps, runways, and taxiways to ensure safe operation on the airport.

ALPA will send an informational DVD to all FAA-certificated commercial operators to encourage them to incorporate the program into their in-house training. To find out more about this important educational initiative, visit www.alpa.org, where it is available to the public.