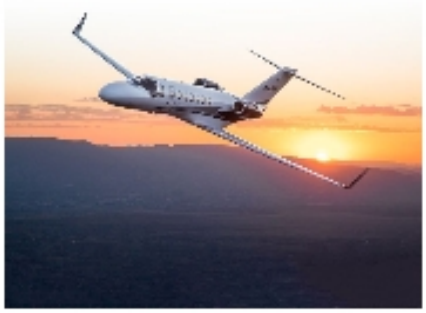
NTSB REVERSAL ON INDIANA CITATION JET ACCIDENT - INTERVIEW WITH JACOB KLINGINSMITH, TAMARACK AEROSPACE GROUP

News / Business aviation



Following the announcement that NTSB has reversed its previous conclusions regarding the cause of the crash of a 2018 Cessna CitationJet near Memphis, Indiana, it was a natural move for 50skyshades to reach Jacob Klinginsmith for more information.The original investigation blamed Tamarack's active winglets as the cause of the accident, but the FAA and NSTB reversed that position after evaluating new information and correcting factual errors highlighted in a petition for reconsideration submitted by Tamarack Aerospace Group. You can find the essential points of our discussion here:

T.O. Usually 50skyshades are not discussing accident reports etc. just because we are not aviation experts and whatever happens, we always are waiting for the final decision, the report to see why and how and what happened. The case with Tamarack is the reason we needed to reach out to you. You were waiting for some years to have the primary decision or report, and then you got some years more to wait for the right decision. Obvious question, was it complicated, how much time you spent the first time, how much time you spend the second time? And what was the reason you got that force to wait and fight for your technology?

J.K. You're right. it's a complex situation, but unusual. The NTSB has earned all of our respect for their good work over the years with experts and doing really good work investigating accidents of all kinds across all industries. And so, this was a very unusual situation where they reversed a position. They took about three years to do the initial investigation, and Tamarack really wasn't involved for a lot of that, and I think that's part of the problem. There were some issues, some factual elements that our system is unique, our equipment is unique, and that wasn't clearly understood for some reason. And so, after the three-year investigation, the report came out, and we quickly filed a petition or reconsideration on the basis of erroneous findings based on incorrect data that was used in that evaluation. So, there was a very solid foundation for our petition for reconsideration just correcting matters of fact which helped our petition have basis and merit and then it took two years for the NTSB to review that petition and come out with their conclusion. A little over two years. And our petition was very thorough. The initial report was something like 20 pages. And our petition, all by itself was 40 pages, a little over 40 pages. It was very thorough. And we are aviation experts. We're engineers and pilots. And so, we were able to go very detailed and provide extra analysis in some cases. The petition was well received, I think, because of how thorough we were in that petition. And we're really happy to see the reversal. All of us are interested in genuinely understanding the facts the best that we can. Not that that's always a clear answer, but it has to be based on engineering data and facts to have any hope of having a solid safety conclusion. So, we're really happy to see this reversal. it took a long time and we're thankful to our customers who have stood by us and continued with our fleet, has continued to grow because the customers understand this is a very good product, a very reliable product, and offers big safety improvements on every flight. I think that's the reason that Tamarack has been able to move forward even with some question marks hanging out there for a couple of years. It's a very good product, and that's how we are still here today.

T.O. That's exactly what I was thinking. When something like that happens obviously it affects sales and marketing and everything. I have the pleasure to know personally some of your customers who could be named Tamarack ambassadors, in fact, because they're flying for so many years with your technology that they could speak for hours and tell what exactly it gives, what are most important savings and what is the emotional perception and so on. But the problem is that when something like that happens, potential customers could have questions and could, if they were ready to sign an order, then with some information like that coming out, they will think, no, I will wait. Were you impacted by that?

J.K. Of course, yes, we were impacted by that. There were several potential customers who wanted to wait and see and that's understandable. But our customers today are entrepreneurs in many cases. And so, they are doing their own research. They're not only believing headlines and many of them read the report, the initial report, and then they reached out and asked questions, very blunt questions, and we were able to talk through that from an engineering perspective, and they were able to talk to other customers who were already using the product, flying, and seeing the benefits for safety on every single flight. And so that's how the fleet has continued to grow over

the last several years. But we are expecting the fleet to grow more quickly now. We have several installations booked right now. I'm happy to say that with a backlog going into the spring. So, it's a very good product and we're happy to see it continuing to grow for the citation market. But also, now we're talking with the military, we're talking with regional airlines we're talking to some of the other airlines. This technology was always meant to be taken into other platforms, not just business aviation because it has big benefits for operational savings and safety, and of course, sustainability, too.

T.O. If we talk about growing bigger. I had the pleasure to meet with Nick Guida last summer during Paris Air show. When first regional airline, SkyAlps, were opting for sustainable operations with Tamarack technology. When we could expect some news from that side, because I know it's a very long process and it involves years of testing etc. The point is we need technology like you have on the market now. What exactly can be done to accelerate that?

J.K. Well, that's a good question, and it is a lengthy process. That's another reason that we had so much confidence even with some of the questions with the NTSB investigation, is this was very thoroughly vetted in the initial certification process, which took years to work through with extensive testing in the air and on the ground. And so, we're in that process, that early process on other programs, like you mentioned, with SkyAlps on the Q 400 which is going to be very good for that airplane. But it is a lengthy process. The certification itself is about 18 to 24 months, at least. But there are some important engineering steps before that and also some important funding steps. So, the acceleration to a certain degree, can come from funding. We're working with SkyAlps to get the funding together for that program. And we're talking with folks who are interested in sustainability and putting investment into sustainability for aviation. And so we would welcome those discussions not only for the Q 400, but we recently were talking about our A320 program. We would love to find partners to be able to take this technology to the A320 where we can have really significant operational improvements for fuel savings. So, there's a commercial benefit, which is really important, but also a sustainability benefit. So we're always looking for partners who want to advance those initiatives.

T.O. You're talking about Airbus A320. What about Airbus A220? Will you be looking for some partners for this aircraft?

J.K. Sure. Yeah. If there's an airline out there operating A220 that's interested in fuel savings, in emissions reductions, safety improvements, ride smoothing for passenger comfort- all of those benefits are part of our technology. Our technology has always been meant to be deployed into various markets and various aircraft platforms. We’re open to those discussions.

T.O. I think from our side we can facilitate some of them. My last question is an obvious one- after you got first report, first conclusion, you had to wait for two more years for the final decision. What was the support from guys from industry? Did you feel a positive support, or you had to face that basically everyone was waiting for the final decision. Not really telling that, okay, this is good, or this is bad. Because the waiting process is one of the most complicated things, at least for me.

J.K. Yeah. For all of us, I think. We had very good support from industry. I think, folks who had looked at the initial report and knew about Tamarack equipment. We also have a free online course where you can learn about Tamarack equipment. For example, people who are familiar enough could look at the initial report and say, this is impossible. There's no way that they could come to that conclusion based on a solid understanding of the facts and about how our equipment works. So, for folks who had looked at that initially, we had their support. We also had support

from other aviation accident investigators who looked at the initial report and knew that it wasn't up to par. It wasn't a typical 100% work from the NTSB that we've all learned to appreciate. And so, we did have support from former NTSB members and former accident investigators. Even a former astronaut supported us with the petition. And so we had good confidence, not only from a technical perspective, but industry support for the petition. And, of course, now that the petition has been granted and this conclusion has been announced industry is very supportive. So all of those folks are happy to see us succeed and move forward with this very good product.

T.O. I think that you are lucky and you are more than resilient, because waiting for five years, this is something amazing. But I have to say that the NTSB as well. To admit that the primary report was not the right one, this is something I rarely saw in industry. Bravo. It's amazing when people are capable to say: you know what, we missed this point, this point and this one. So, we were wrong. In fact, this is the right decision.

J.K. Exactly, And I think that's probably the best part of this, is that the reason we appreciate the NTSB is that they're so objective. That's their job. And this is another very solid example that they can be objective to say this wasn't right. We're going to make a correction. So not only from a technical perspective, being objective, but from a bigger picture, being objective. very important. And we certainly applaud the work that they put in. They did their diligence on this. So we applaud them for being professional making the changes that were necessary so that this whole investigation could be based on a very good foundation.

T.O. There are some I wish more Tamarack technology in Europe; If Tamarack would come more often to see European market, it would be perfect. From our side, we will do everything possible to spread the message.

J.K. You certainly appreciate what we have to offer. So if you can help us see the European opportunities, we're all yours to come.

T.O. Keep us posted on next news from Tamarack and we will work on bringing Tamarack to Europe.

J.K. Appreciate that. Thank you,Tatiana!

26 MARCH 2024

ARTICLE LINK:
https://to.50skyshades.com/news/business-aviation/ntsb-reversal-on-indiana-citation-jet-accident-interview-with-jacob-klinginsmith-tamarack-aerospace-group