

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20591

A - 6919

December 23, 1968

Mr. David D. Thomas
Acting Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
Department of Transportation
Washington, D. C. 20590

Dear Mr. Thomas:

This is to confirm the telephone conversations on December 17 and 19, 1968, between our Director, Bureau of Aviation Safety, and your Director, Flight Standards Service, in which we pointed out the findings of our investigators in the Wien Alaska Airlines F-27, N4905, accident at Iliamna, Alaska, on December 2, 1968. Our investigation disclosed chordwise fatigue cracks at Station 197 both fore and aft of the inboard fuel tank access panel on the right wing. Each of these cracks was approximately three inches long.

The Board was convinced by its findings that neither the X-ray techniques utilized in complying with AD 65-24-3 nor the interpretation of the X-ray plates were adequate to assure early detection of such fatigue cracks. We understand that these findings and the preliminary findings of your inspectors resulting from your inspection alert published December 18, 1968, formed the basis for a telegraphic AD issued on December 19, 1968, to inspect all F-27 type aircraft with 5,000 hours or more time in service for such cracks before the next 25 hours of flight and to restrict such aircraft until this inspection is accomplished.

We were pleased at the FAA's response to our recommendation and are satisfied that such inspections and followup actions, which will be taken after these initial examinations, are essential to insure against similar catastrophic accidents in the future. We would appreciate being advised of the results of the inspections required by this recent telegraphic AD.

Sincerely yours,

Joseph J. O'Connell, Jr.
Chairman