



Silver Eagles Newsletter

September 2016

Silver Eagles,

We have two new members this month, AND we have news! YEAH!

New Members:

Vernon Grose (Former Member appointed by Pres Regan)

Roger Cox (finally got back to us, thanks to the Misenciks!)

(See contact list)

Board News: None

Member News:

Bob Benzou - For what it is worth, Susan and I are doing fine. Six-months-and-a-day in Florida for the tax dodge and six months back up here in Fredericksburg, VA. Works out well for us.

I am finally divesting myself from the NTSB. For many years before my retirement and since retirement in 2011, I taught a couple of classes at the NTSB Training Center out in Ashburn. Very rewarding, but the outdoor accident exercise became a bit much. So, your great web efforts to keep us all in touch will be much appreciated.

Joe Kris - I'm heading to Scotland in a few weeks for a few days of golfing with the guys.

Also I'm back in DC about once a month for the next 7 months as part of a DHS SES development program. If you are up for a trip into the city perhaps we can meet up for dinner and call in a few other NTSB alum (i.e; Chris and John) too. (*Sounds like a plan! Any other Joe Kris fans that want a heads up when that happens?*)

Vern Grose - As for something informal to share, I just published my 4th book, DEATH Is Not FATAL, that contains several NTSB stories that might interest group members. It's what caused me to try and locate Les Reingold . . . Link: <http://tinyurl.com/gu6kerz>

Roger Cox - I retired from NTSB in March. I dropped by to see Paul and Sally Misencik today and Paul reminded me about the website you maintain. I'd like to give you my contact information so you can include me in the retiree group. Right now, I don't have much to report, but I may have some travel news to pass on one of these days. If anyone in the group is planning any meet and greet events I'd like to be on the mailing list for that. Please let me know if there is anything else I can provide to you. Thanks for volunteering to run the site.

Danielle Elizabeth Roeber Wolfe – said, “I forgot. My last name changes to Wolfe after I got married December 12, 2015.”

(See contact list)

Misc:

This request from **Vernon Grose** through **Bridget Serchak**:

We had a couple of suggestions for location **Les Reingold**. Bob Benzon said that he wrote a couple of articles for the Smithsonian magazine Air and Space. A query to them might yield a contact point, and **Brent Bahler** said there is a Lester Reingold living in Silver Spring. He is in the phone book (anywho.com) if Vern wants to call and see if he's the one. (*I passed this onto Bridget. My last contact with Vern indicated that he hasn't been able to contact Les.*)

This bit of news from **Carol Roberts**:

Real-Life Investigators Object to Portrayal in 'Sully' Movie

By JOAN LOWY

Investigators say they object to their portrayal in a new movie based on the "Miracle on the Hudson" river ditching of airliner seven years ago after striking geese.

Losing thrust in both engines but still managing to land an airliner full of people in the Hudson River without the loss of a single life is plenty dramatic. But the drama in 'Sully,' the movie about the "Miracle on the Hudson" ditching of U.S. Airways Flight 1549, doesn't stop there.

And that's a problem, say the former government accident investigators involved in the real-life investigation into the 2009 accident. The public, as well as pilots and others in the aviation industry, who see the movie may get the wrong impression that investigators were trying to smear the pilot, Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger, they said.

"We're not the KGB. We're not the Gestapo," said **Robert Benzon**, who led the National Transportation Safety Board's investigation. "We're the guys with the white hats on."

The film, scheduled for release in theaters on Friday, portrays investigators as more like prosecutors looking for any excuse to blame Sullenberger for the mishap.

Could the plane have made it back to LaGuardia Airport if Sullenberger, portrayed by actor Tom Hanks, had turned it around? Did the thrust in both engines quit after the plane struck a flock of geese or was there still some power in one? Was the US Airways captain's performance affected by other factors? When was his last alcoholic drink? Was he having problems at home?

It's true that those questions were asked, and many more, over the course of the 18-month investigation, but that's just part of NTSB's meticulous investigation process that is intended to find all possible flaws that contribute to a crash, investigators said. That way the board can make safety recommendations to the government, industry, labor unions, aircraft makers and others in an effort to prevent future accidents. Thirty-five safety recommendations were ultimately issued as a result of the Flight 1549 investigation.

Investigators recalled Sullenberger and co-pilot Jeff Skiles, portrayed by actor Aaron Eckhart, as comfortable and cooperative. Pilot union officials representing them were present during all the interviews and at later public forums.

"These guys were already national heroes," said Benzon, who is now retired. "We weren't out to embarrass anybody at all."

But that's not how it comes across in the film, directed by Clint Eastwood.

"Until I read the script, I didn't know the investigative board was trying to paint the picture that he (Sullenberger) had done the wrong thing. They were kind of railroading him into 'it was his fault,'" Eastwood said in a publicity video for the Warner Bros. film.

Hanks told The Associated Press in an interview that a draft script included the names of real-life NTSB officials, but Sullenberger - who is an adviser on the film - requested they be taken out.

"He said, 'These are people who are not prosecutors. They are doing a very important job, and if, for editorial purposes, we want to make it more of a prosecutorial process, it ain't fair to them,' " said Hanks. "That's an easy thing to change."

Malcolm Brenner, a human factors expert who was among the investigators who interviewed Sullenberger the day after the ditching, said he recalls being extraordinarily impressed at the time with both pilots and how well they worked together in the midst of the crisis. He said he's also been impressed since then with how Sullenberger has used his fame to promote aviation safety.

"I think there is a real integrity there," said Brenner, now an aviation consultant. "I happen to be a big fan of the man."

Tom Haueter, who was the NTSB's head of major accident investigations at the time and is now a consultant, said he fears the movie will discourage pilots and others from fully cooperating with the board in the future.

"There is a very good chance," said Haueter, "that there is a segment of the population that will take this as proof of government incompetence and it will make things worse."

[I must say that I haven't seen the movie, but the trailer makes us appear sinister.]

Don't forget the Silver Eagle Website: www.precisionwrite.com/SilverEagles.html

Happy ummm... hopefully I'll get my next one out before Halloween... ahh... Al-Hijra (Islamic New Year – something to do with using the moon instead of the sun.) – or Rosh Hashanah! In spite of all of this news, remember, this newsletter still needs NEWS!!

Jim Henderson