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# State

Page 10

THE BATTALION

Wednesday, September 10, 2003

## Airport procedures change after close call

DALLAS (AP) — Air traffic controllers at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, the nation's third-busiest, have stopped directing airborne and taxiing planes at the same time as a result of the most recent close call involving two jets, federal regulators and union officials say.

A west tower controller last month mistakenly ordered a taxiing Continental plane into the path of a departing Delta passenger jet, whose pilot was forced to pull up so sharply that the plane's tail scraped on the runway. The jets missed each other by 500 feet.

Until completion of the investigation into the near collision, air traffic controllers at D/FW Airport will no longer consolidate ground and airborne positions between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m., said National Air Traffic Controllers Association president Mark Mulder.

"It is the result of the last operational error," Mulder told The Dallas Morning News in Tuesday's editions.

The controller and a supervisor involved in the Aug. 16 close call have been placed on administrative duties until the investigation is over.

The Federal Aviation Administration and the traffic controllers' group made the decision to temporarily halt what was described as a common

industry practice.

Any factor of handling ground and airborne traffic at the same time — known as a "combination" — in the controller's confusion is a part of the investigation by the FAA and the Transportation Safety Board at the airport, which serves about 60 million travelers annually.

"The traffic was relatively calm," said Murphy, the FAA's air traffic manager for the Southwest Region. "It generated a close call quickly."

As many as 2,500 planes are guided through D/FW daily by 13 controllers. The trollers, using different radio frequencies, handle up to 300 planes an hour at the nation's third-busiest.

Last year, controllers committed 20 of the 431 incursions filed with the FAA. The most incursions, and most are not serious, of the most serious near collisions have occurred at D/FW Airport.

On May 12, two planes almost collided. A cargo craft accidentally veered onto a runway. American Airlines Flight 2394 was taking off two came within 10 feet of colliding. An American crew not pulled the plane up until two planes would have collided.

## Delegates back Lockheed Martin

FORT WORTH (AP) — If Lockheed Martin wins the largest U.S. military aircraft contract, Texas will get nearly 32,000 new jobs and \$2.5 billion in revenues over the next 40 years, according to a study released Tuesday.

Without it, the 59-year-old Fort Worth plant with 11,000 workers has a bleak future, company officials said.

Failure to get the contract "will seriously jeopardize a long-standing element of the production base and diminish opportunities for many small businesses" in North Texas, according to an economic impact study by the Waco-based Perryman Group, hired by the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce.

"There's a real question of survival of the operation itself" if the contract goes elsewhere, said Dain Hancock, president of Fort Worth-based Lockheed

Martin Aeronautics Co., part of Lockheed Martin Corp., based in Bethesda, Md.

The U.S. Department of Defense is expected to announce next month whether Lockheed Martin or Seattle-based Boeing Co. gets the contract for the Joint Strike Fighter program, the last major fighter design to be implemented for several decades.

The program includes a 10-year engineering and manufacturing development phase, followed by a 30-year production cycle.

The JSF contract will be worth more than \$200 billion, with production of an anticipated 3,000 fighters to begin in 2007. Assembly will be done in Fort Worth if Lockheed Martin wins the contract.

The all-in-one fighter will be used by the U.S. Navy, Air Force and Marines, as well as Britain's Royal Navy. It will

replace a range of U.S. British warplanes, including the Harrier, A-10, F-16 and F/A-18.

The Marines' version of the fighter will be able to take and land vertically, while the Navy's version must have runways for landing on carriers.

Working to get the JSF contract awarded to Lockheed Martin will be the Texas congressional delegation's priority, although "we'll have some fights on our hands" on the defense budget, U.S. Representative Louie Gohmert said Tuesday.

Congress returns from its month-long recess to finish work on the fiscal 2002 budget. Two of the largest bills, for education and defense, haven't reached the floor of either house. President Bush has pressured lawmakers not to shorten those areas.

If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. — Luke 9:23

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