

# Father of dead pilot faults crash aftermath

*Gagliano says body parts are still at site*

By CAROL WAHLEN  
of The Journal staff

An Eagle man whose son was co-pilot of the American Eagle commuter plane that crashed Oct. 31 said Wednesday that relatives of victims found body parts this week in the Indiana farm field where the plane went down.

Al Gagliano said he and other relatives of crash victims also

learned recently that the airline had held a mass burial of unidentified body parts without letting them know.

Jeffrey Gagliano, 30, was among 68 people aboard who died when the ATR-72, American Eagle Flight 4184 from Indianapolis to Chicago, plunged to the ground at a speed estimated at 400 mph.

"Some of the relatives went out to the site to plant flowers. They found part of a foot and other body parts," Gagliano said

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in a telephone interview from Indianapolis, where he is attending hearings on the crash by the National Transportation Safety Board.

"They brought the parts back here to show the other relatives what was going on," he said. The parts have been turned over to the local coroner, he said.

Marty Heires, American Eagle spokesman, confirmed that what appeared to be body parts were brought to the coroner's office.

"As we understand it, there are people who have brought what they say are body parts and they have presented them to the Newton County coroner, who will examine them. Obviously it concerns us.

"We have asked the appropriate state officials to review everything done in the site and to inspect one more time," Heires said.

Heires said the airline did not notify families of the burial of additional parts because other individual services and three group memorial services, in Chicago, Merrillville, Ind., and Indianapolis, had already been held.

"We felt that one more service would be too much for the families to go through so we did not invite the families to the service," he said. "In retrospect, we feel probably they should have been and we have told them that in a letter."

Heires did say, however, that the coroner's office performed a service as part of the burial.

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Gagliano said he was angry

that American Airlines, the parent company, had not purchased the 10-acre farm field near Roselawn, Ind., where the plane crashed to preserve it as a memorial. American had promised survivors it would purchase the land, he said.

Heires denied that American or American Eagle had offered to purchase the land. He said the farmer who owned the land had asked for a cleanup, which was done by an Indianapolis firm called PWI Environmental.

PWI dug out about 60 tons of contaminated soil and replaced it with 120 tons of clean soil, Heires said.

A spokesman for PWI said the firm did not deal with body parts, however. Dave Allison, senior project manager at the firm, said, "We picked up the aircraft itself and we did deal with the fuel issue. That's all we did."

Gagliano said the mass grave was about 25 miles from the site of the crash, instead of on the site. "This never should have happened," he said.

Gagliano said the field still smelled like jet fuel, but the farmer who owns the land was talking about putting in a crop.

PWI's Allison said trace elements of jet fuel might remain and cause an odor, but that it would be faint. He said the cleanup was approved by state officials.

Thus far, testimony at the hearings has indicated there was no pilot error in the crash, Gagliano said. He said that he and his family had not heard any of the crash victims' survivors accuse the pilots of wrongdoing.

People - AI Gagliano

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