



End of Flight 30 from Honolulu : The stricken DC10 with its nose section sheared off lies in Boston harbour.

25/1/82

DC10 skids into harbour and 208 survive

From Our Correspondent, New York, Jan 24

Officials of the American National Transportation Safety Board today began their investigation of the incident in which a DC10 airliner carrying 208 passengers and crew slid off the end of a runway at Boston's Logan Airport into the waters of Boston harbour.

Everyone in the aircraft survived the accident, and most escaped without injury. Of the 196 passengers and 12 crew, 31 were taken to hospital, and only four were admitted, suffering minor whiplash injuries.

The aircraft skidded off the end of Runway 15R, slid over a snow covered bank of rocks, and ended with its nose in the water.

The impact sheared the cockpit from the fuselage, but because the water was shallow due to low tide, there was little flooding in the aircraft and passengers were able to get out using inflatable escape chutes.

The investigators are looking at three possible causes: bad weather, equipment failure and pilot error.

Although the aircraft, World Airways Flight 30 from Honolulu, was attempting to land in freezing drizzle with one and a half miles visibility, the conditions were not bad enough to warrant closing the airport.

There were conflicting reports from both passengers and observers on the ground of the speed at which the aircraft landed and what happened after its wheels touched the ground.

Mr Nicholas Anzilli, of East Boston, was leaving the airport as Flight 30 was about to land. "The thing was coming in low and slow. There was

white exhaust coming out of the front engine", he said.

Another East Boston resident, Mr Bill Wilson, who watched the approach, commented: "I'm surprised it made the airport."

There was also confusion among the passengers. One woman passenger described the landing as normal. "Then we ran off the runway into the water, and the plane broke apart. I was in the seventh row and a wave came in and washed over us. We could see land. Everybody was pretty calm", she added.

But another passenger, Patricia Gilson, a United States Navy electrician stationed at Pearl Harbour, Hawaii, said: "There was no change in the tempo of the plane's engines like there normally is when you land."

"We knew something was wrong because the plane wouldn't slow down."

A World Airways spokesman blamed ice on the runway for the accident. He said: "The information I have is that the plane taxied to the end of the runway, hit a patch of ice—due to bad weather conditions in Boston—skidded off the runway and a portion of the plane dropped into the water." He added that this was the first incident of this kind that World Airways had been involved in.

An official of the Massachusetts Port Authority, which is responsible for maintaining the runways at Logan airport, disputed the World Airways claim of ice on the runway.

"We feel the runway was in good condition" she said. "Another plane had landed on that runway only minutes before and had made a perfect landing with no trouble whatsoever."

"When the DC10 reached the end of the runway he was moving along pretty good. There was no way he was in a taxiing mode at that point."

She added that the air traffic controllers were in no way responsible for what happened. "Their responsibility ended the second those wheels touched the ground", she said.

The transportation Safety Board officials were also inves-

tigating claims by several of the passengers that the aircraft's engines were still roaring even after it had settled in the water. Two such passengers were Mr David Drew and his wife Tammy, of New Hampshire, who said the engines were kicking up dirt into one of the doors as they tried to leave the aircraft. "It was hitting me in the face", Mrs Drew said.

The investigation is expected to take several days, and much will depend on the aircraft's flight recorders.

World Airways Flight 30 had started in Honolulu and had made stops in San Francisco and Newark, New Jersey, before starting the final leg of its journey to Boston.

Shortly before 7.30 pm local time on Saturday, the aircraft was given final clearance to land on its designated runway, 15R, by air traffic control at Logan Airport.

At 7.35 it touched down on the runway. Just what hap-

pened between the time the wheels touched the ground and the aircraft ended up in the water, less than a minute later, and why, is not clear.

At first the stunned passengers could not believe they were still alive. "Everyone kind of looked round as if to say 'We're still here'", said Carolyn Savasta, of Massachusetts.

Then, it appears, there was momentary panic as some passengers shouted: "Let me out, let me out."

It is estimated that 10 to 15 minutes elapsed before the passengers were able to leave in orderly fashion.

According to other passengers, however, the flight attendants gave contradictory orders because the destruction of the pilot's cabin prevented radio communications between them and the pilots (AFP reports).

Inside the passenger section, some of the passengers panicked. A few who had unbuckled their seat belts were

hurled about when the airliner finally halted, while others hesitated to leave their seats, because the noise of the jets made them think the aircraft was still moving.

Captain Peter Langley, the pilot of the aircraft, was being treated at Boston city hospital today for what were described as minor injuries. His condition was said to be stable.

McDonnell Douglas called a meeting of airline operators 10 days ago, to discuss proposed changes in the DC10 wing slots. Last September a DC10's engine blew up during take-off at Miami, but the pilot managed to stop on the runway. An investigation was launched.

The worst air disaster in aviation history involved a DC10—all 346 on board a Turkish Airlines flight perished near Paris on March 3, 1974. It also holds the American record—273 died in Chicago in May, 1979, when an engine fell off.

Fewer air deaths, page 3



An injured passenger on her way to hospital