

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF AIR COMMERCE
Washington

STATEMENT OF PROBABLE CAUSE CONCERNING AN
AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED TO A
PLANE OF AMERICAN AIRWAYS, INC., ON DECEM-
BER 28, 1934 NEAR WILMURT, NEW YORK

To the Secretary of Commerce:

On December 28, 1934 at approximately 8:35 p.m., near Wilmurt, N. Y., an airplane of United States registry, piloted by a licensed airman, while being operated in scheduled flight carrying passengers and United States mail, was forced to land in a wooded section with resultant major damage to the aircraft but no serious injuries to persons.

The plane, a Condor, model T-32-C, bore Department of Commerce license number EC-12363 and was being operated between Syracuse and Albany, N.Y. by American Airways, Inc. The pilot, E. E. Dryer, held a Department of Commerce transport pilot's license and had a scheduled air transport rating. The co-pilot, Dale Dryer, held a Department of Commerce transport pilot's license. The pay passenger was R. Hambrook of Washington, D.C. The other passenger, J. H. Brown, a co-pilot for the company, was non-revenue. No serious injuries were incurred. However, all on board suffered from extreme cold and exposure.

The take-off from Syracuse was accomplished at 7:29 p.m. A heavy snow was falling at the time and the weather was rapidly becoming worse. The pilot expected to encounter better weather after a few minutes flying. The ground was lost to view immediately after take-off and the better weather expected was never encountered. Snow blastic rendered the ship's radio and ground aids useless and the pilot was obliged to fly by compass. About 25 or 30 minutes out of Syracuse the left engine slowed down, then stopped entirely. The carburetor had become clogged with ice in spite of the use of full carburetor heat control. A few minutes later the right engine stopped for the same reason, making a forced landing imperative. When close to the ground, the right wing passed through a tree top and the pilot pulled the plane into a stall in an effort to minimize the impact of landing.

Trip clearances for this sector were issued through the company's office in Newark, N.J. At the time this flight was cleared, there was no one on duty in the Newark office with authority to issue a clearance. It was accomplished through an assistant at Newark, who in turn contacted an authorized dispatcher by telephone and acted as intermediary. Through a misunderstanding at Newark between the man on duty and the dispatcher, clearance for the flight was issued in the face of unfavorable weather.

It is the opinion of the Accident Board that the probable cause of this accident was the failure of the company to have on duty in the Division Control Office a competent dispatcher in charge of flight control.

No recommendations for corrective measures are being made by the Accident Board due to the fact that regulations relative to dispatching and dispatching personnel are now in process and the company involved took immediate steps to protect themselves against a recurrence of an accident of this kind.

Respectfully submitted,

Eugene I. Vidal
Director of Air Commerce