

Adopted: January 27, 1942

File No. 2492-41

REPORT OF THE CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD  
of the  
Investigation of an Accident Involving Aircraft in  
Scheduled Air Carrier Operation

An airline accident which resulted in major damage to a Model DC-3-G202A Douglas, NC 15596, owned and operated by Eastern Air Lines, Inc., occurred about 7:19 p.m. on June 5, 1941, at the Peter O. Knight Airport, Tampa, Florida. No injury was sustained by any of the 14 passengers or the crew of three. The latter consisted of Captain Coney and Co-pilot J. E. Haynes, both of whom were properly certificated and appropriately rated, and Flight Steward Milton Rogers.

The flight, designated by Eastern as Trip 25, originated at LaGuardia Field, New York, with Tampa, Florida, as its destination. Intermediate stops were scheduled at Washington, D. C., Richmond, Virginia, Greensboro, North Carolina, Greenville, South Carolina, Atlanta, Georgia, and Tallahassee, Florida. The flight crew from New York to Atlanta, Georgia, consisted of Captain Harold D. Harmon and Co-pilot Edward L. Foss. After departure from New York the flight, apart from slight accumulative delays, was uneventful until it reached Greenville, South Carolina. During the approach to the Greenville Airport, Captain Harmon used  $3/4$  flaps and maintained an airspeed of 90 m.p.h. The approach was toward the north which afforded approximately 4000 feet of runway. At a point about 25 feet south of the southern boundary there is a dyke which runs east and west and which is slightly higher than the airport itself. During the final stage of the approach the right and left wheels struck the dyke at points 13 and 7 inches, respectively, below its crest. The aircraft appeared to bounce and the tail to come up slightly; however, a normal landing was effected a short distance beyond. The aircraft was then taxied back to the passenger station where the Captain, the Co-pilot and a Civil Aeronautics Administration Maintenance Inspector examined the landing gear. No damage was discovered. Approximately 5 minutes later the flight departed.

Trip 25 arrived without incident at Atlanta, Georgia. Captain Coney departed Atlanta at 4:39 p.m. and landed at Tallahassee, Florida at 5:57 p.m., departed Tallahassee at 6:07 p.m. and arrived at Tampa, Florida at 7:19 p.m. The approach to the Tampa Airport was from south to north and the aircraft first made contact with the runway at a point about 200 feet north of the southern boundary. As the aircraft was decelerating during the landing run, Captain Coney saw a small aircraft landing from east to west directly across his path. He applied brakes severely and thereby allowed the smaller aircraft to pass across the path of the Douglas about 500 feet ahead of it. When the Douglas had rolled a few hundred feet beyond its location at the time the smaller airplane crossed its path, the right wing started to drop. The right landing gear collapsed and the right wing tip and the right propeller contacted the runway. The aircraft immediately started turning to the right and made a sharp 180-degree ground loop. It came to rest headed approximately opposite to the direction of the approach.

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Subsequent investigation revealed no evidence of malfunctioning of the aircraft or of any of its components with the exception of one of the highly stressed fittings of the right landing gear, which had failed. Examination of this break indicated that there had not been any progressive failure of the metal. It appears, from an analysis of the flight, that the failure was initiated during the landing at Greenville and that subsequent landings and takeoffs further weakened the member until it failed completely following severe application of the brakes at Tampa.

Although the landing gear was inspected immediately following the Greenville incident by the flight crew and a CAA Inspector, the examination must have been cursory in nature because the aircraft was on the ground for a period of only five minutes. Although the carrier does not maintain elaborate maintenance facilities at Greenville, South Carolina, it does at Atlanta, Georgia, which was the next scheduled stop. The flight crew did not report the Greenville incident when the trip arrived at Atlanta; however, other routine matters such as minor malfunctionings were recorded in the Pilot's Performance Report. Captain Hamon did not make any verbal mention of the Greenville incident to any of the carrier's Maintenance or Operations personnel or to Captain Coney.

**PROBABLE CAUSE:** Damage to the right landing gear fitting sustained in the landing at Greenville, South Carolina, which resulted in its subsequent failure upon landing at Tampa.

**CONTRIBUTING FACTOR:** Failure of the flight crew to notify the proper authorities at Atlanta of the circumstances surrounding the landing at Greenville, South Carolina.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Darwin Charles Brown

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Secretary