

Report No. 2980-41

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

Major damage was received by a Model DC-3 Douglas aircraft in an accident which occurred about 8:45 a.m. (EST) on June 8, 1941, at the Llopango Airport, San Salvador, Salvador. The plane, NC 25657, was owned and operated by Pan American Airways, Inc. The crew consisted of Captain Samuel T. Peters and First Officer William C. Carlton, both of whom were properly certificated and appropriately rated, a radio operator, and a steward. There were twelve revenue passengers aboard. None of the occupants was injured.

The flight, designated by the carrier as No. 501 of June 7, 1941, originated at Brownsville, Texas, with Port of Spain, Trinidad, as its destination. Numerous intermediate stops were scheduled, including Tampico, Mexico City, Guatemala City, and San Salvador. The aircraft departed Guatemala City for San Salvador approximately on schedule, with its total weight and weight distribution within the limits prescribed by the Civil Aeronautics Administration. Weather conditions over the route were good. When the aircraft was a few miles from San Salvador, a radio message was received giving weather information there which included the fact that the wind was from the southwest and at a velocity of about six to eight m.p.h. The captain elected to land from north to south and started his approach. When still about two miles from the northern boundary of the airport he observed the windsock which indicated that the wind was still from the southwest. The aircraft passed over the northern boundary of the airport at an air speed of about 80 m.p.h. First contact with the ground was made at a point about 780 feet from the northern boundary of the field and the aircraft bounced for a distance of about 540 feet before again making contact. Brakes were applied but they were ineffective on the grass-covered runway which was wet from a recent rain. The aircraft continued ahead and as it neared the edge of the field, which was bordered by a ravine, the captain attempted to groundloop. The tail wheel was unlocked, and right brake and left throttle were applied. The groundloop had progressed through about 90 degrees and the aircraft was traveling about 20 m.p.h. when the left wheel went over the edge of the ravine. The aircraft continued turning for about 90 degrees and then slid down the ravine tail first. It came to rest about 50 feet down the slope.

It was subsequently ascertained that there had been no malfunctioning of the aircraft or any of its components, including the brakes. The subject runway is 2490 feet long and the wind, at the time of the landing, was about six or eight m.p.h. from a direction about 45 degrees to the right of the approach path. Since the accident, the carrier has stopped the use of the subject runway when a wind of less than 12 m.p.h. exists.

PROBABLE CAUSE.

Action of pilot in continuing a landing after overshooting on a short slippery runway.

BY THE BOARD

/s/ Dwain Charles Brown

Secretary