

SUMMARY OF ACCIDENTGeneral:

An accident to a Douglas DC.6B aircraft operated by Pan American World Airways of 135 East 42nd Street, New York 17, occurred at Shannon Airport, Ireland at approximately 0500 hours on the 15th February, 1954. None of the occupants was injured. The aircraft suffered damage to its port wing.

Flight:

At 1800 hours on the 14th February, 1954 N.6531C with nine crew and thirty-seven passengers on board departed from Idlewild, New York on scheduled flight 070 for Frankfurt, with intermediate stops at Shannon and London. After an uneventful flight the aircraft landed V.F.R. at Shannon Airport at approximately 0500 hours on the 15th February in calm and clear weather.

While making the landing at Shannon Airport N.6531 C undershot Runway 05 by about 407 feet, and in running over rough grassland before rolling on to the runway excessive undercarriage loads were imparted to the wing structure, causing damage. The aircraft came to rest 4075 feet along Runway 05. There was no fire, and no-one was reported injured.

The Aircraft:

DC.6B, N.6531 C was constructed by the Douglas Aircraft Company in July, 1952. It is a low wing monoplane of all metal construction, with a pressurised cabin, and is powered by four Pratt and Whitney Double-wasp R.2800 - CB.-17 engines. It has a maximum permissible all-up weight of 107,000 pounds.

The aircraft was first registered in the name of Pan American World Airways on the 27th August, 1952 to whom a Certificate of Airworthiness was issued on the 28th August, 1952.

The total flight time of the aircraft at the time of the accident was 4277 hours. The maintenance release in force was issued on the 14th February, 1954.

Opinions Resulting from Investigations:

- (1) The aircraft and crew were properly certified for the flight;

- (2) The aircraft load and centre of gravity dispositions were within the prescribed limits;
- (3) There was no evidence to show that the accident was caused by any structural or mechanical failure of the aircraft;
- (4) Captain Beall and First Officer Merryman were pilots of considerable experience, and had lengthy experience as captains with P.A.W.A.;
- (5) Captain Beall had had lengthy experience as a captain on DC.6B aircraft; but First Officer Merryman, who was at the controls during the landing, had had little experience and no experience as captain on that type;
- (6) After a lengthy period as captain on Boeing 377 aircraft, First Officer Merryman had not adjusted himself fully to the different approach characteristics of the DC.6B;
- (7) First Officer Merryman was not suffering unduly from fatigue at the time of the accident;
- (8) A patch of ground fog was present between the localiser building and the threshold to runway 05;
- (9) On final approach it is possible that First Officer Merryman's view of the threshold lights to Runway 05 was obscured by the patch of ground fog.

Cause:

The cause of the accident was a misjudged approach on the part of the pilot, who was under the impression that the aircraft was 30 ft. to 40 ft. above the ground at the point of touch down.

Probable contributory factors were:-

- (a) a ground fog patch between the green threshold lights to Runway 05 and the ILS localiser building which possibly resulted in poor depth perception;
- (b) rapid transition from an aircraft with appreciably different approach characteristics and

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cockpit visibility. This could be a contributory factor, especially when coupled with the fact that this was the pilot's second night landing on the DC.6B type aeroplane.

Signature of Investigating Officer:

G.B.Probert
Inspector of Accidents

Date 3. 7. 54