

CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD  
Washington

March 25, 1954

TO: Messrs. Gurney, Denny, Ryan, Lee, Adams,  
The Executive Director

FROM: Director, Bureau of Safety Investigation

SUBJECT: Accident Notification - Trans World  
Airlines, Martin 404, Midway Airport,  
Chicago, Illinois, March 25, 1954

An accident occurred at the Chicago Midway Airport, Chicago, Illinois, at 0315C, March 25, 1954, involving Trans World Airlines' Flight 411, a non-stop operation from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Chicago. The equipment was a Martin 404, N 40416. On board were four passengers and a crew of three consisting of Captain Clifford V. Sparrow, Copilot Raymond B. Fowler, and Stewardess Donna Whitmore. No injuries were sustained by crew or passengers; however, there was considerable damage to the aircraft.

An ILS approach and landing was made from the southeast over the Kedzie compass locator, which is the reverse course of the ILS facility at Chicago Midway Airport. The crew reported that all of the airport lighting system was seen prior to crossing the threshold of runway 31L.

The control tower operator and the crew reported that the aircraft made a normal touchdown on runway 31L insofar as altitude and position is concerned. The crew stated that the aircraft made a mild skip after the main landing gear had contacted the runway. This was followed by at least three cycles of the nose-wheel leaving the runway surface even though the control column was held forward.

According to the captain, the propeller reverse pitch control could not be actuated. The nose-wheel fork sheared and the aircraft slid on its nose and main landing gear, turning ninety degrees to its left and coming to rest about 100 feet to the left of runway 31L and approximately 1000 feet from the far (NW) end of the runway.

Damage reported was to the propeller blades, entire nose-wheel assembly, and forward belly of the

fuselage. The gross load was within 40 pounds of the allowable 43,650 at the time of departure from Pittsburgh, and moderate turbulence was encountered en route.

Reported weather at Chicago at 0314C was: ceiling estimated 2000 feet, overcast; visibility one mile; heavy thunderstorm, heavy rain, and moderate smoke; wind east 10 miles per hour; altimeter setting 29.53.

Investigators Powell, Stillwagon, and Hedlund of the Board's Chicago office are at the scene.

*W. K. Andrews*

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