

Executive Summary

Date, time, and location of accident: 10 December 1999, 2306 Zulu/0206 Kuwait local time; at Ahmed Al Jaber Air Base, Kuwait.

Mishap Aircraft: C-130E, Tail Number 63-7854, 61st Airlift Squadron, 463rd Airlift Group, Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas. The aircraft was assigned to the 9th Air Expeditionary Group, Al Salem AB, Kuwait, at the time of the mishap.

Summary of Events: The mishap aircraft, call sign Flash07, departed Al Salem AB on 9 Dec 99 with 6 crewmembers and 80 passengers. It arrived at Kuwait City International (KCIA) and discharged its passengers. The aircraft next flew to Al Jaber AB, picked up passengers and returned to KCIA. These three sorties were accomplished without incident and there were no aircraft problems. At 0157L, 10 December, the mishap aircraft departed KCIA with 86 passengers bound for Al Jaber AB. The crew initiated a visual final approach descent from 2600 feet AGL approximately 4.5 miles (two minutes) from the approach end of the runway. The pilot began with about a 3-degree of glide slope, at about 640-fpm rate of descent. He soon transitioned to a 6 to 7-degree glide slope with a 1600 to 1700 fpm rate of descent for the remainder of the approach. The pilot never recognized his landing picture, with reference to the runway, and failed to transition to a normal visual glide path for landing. At about 125 feet AGL, descending at 28 feet per second, the aircraft entered a fog bank. The flight engineer called "Go Around" one to two seconds after entering the fog bank (70 to 100 feet AGL). The pilot initiated the go-around procedure (full power and nose up) about a second after the flight engineer's "Go Around" call. The aircraft was too low (approximately 50 feet AGL) to break its descent rate and start a climb. As a result, it impacted the ground 2890 feet short of the runway threshold.

Number of Injuries/Deaths: Three fatalities, seven injuries—two were serious.

Damage Description: The aircraft sustained approximately \$3.8 million in damage, primarily to the main landing gear assemblies and associated fuselage. Non-U.S. property damage included destruction of an ILS antenna belonging to the Government of Kuwait; cost of damage is yet unknown.

Statement of Opinion:

Under 10 U.S.C. 2254(d), any opinion of the accident investigators as to the cause of, or the factors contributing to, the accident set forth in the accident investigation report may not be considered as evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding arising from an aircraft accident, nor may such information be considered an admission of liability by the United States or by any person referred to in those conclusions or statements.

I find, by clear and convincing evidence, that the cause of the mishap was the crew's failure to follow governing directives and complacency in flight operations. As a result, the crew suffered spatial disorientation at a critical phase of flight; thereby, resulting in the crew's loss of situational awareness and failing to recognize an unsafe descent. The following factors contributed to the cause of the mishap: lack of pilot leadership and discipline; lack of support from the copilot, navigator, and flight engineer; and overall lack of sound judgment by the flight deck crew.

Dated this 20th day of March 2000.


FRANK LARAS, Colonel, USAF
President, Accident Investigation Board