

108 DIE IN FLAMING DC-8 CRASH AT MALTON

Malton's first major air disaster

By SID RODAWAY
Staff Reporter

MISSISSAUGA — The exact cause Sunday morning's disastrous Air Canada DC-8 jet crash which took the lives of 108 people remains a mystery, but the key may lie in eyewitness accounts that the giant plane hit the runway too hard and bounced as high as 100 feet, causing an engine to fall off.

Flight 621 from Montreal to Los Angeles was making a scheduled landing at Malton Airport with 108 persons on board, including nine crew members and 22 Air Canada employees on vacation, when it bounced from the runway, dropped its outside right engine in a ball of flame and continued to fly on over the end of runway 32.

Minutes later, seven miles further north, another engine and a 15-foot piece of wingtip fell into fields near Concession 8 of Toronto Gore Township.

The DC-8-63 stretched version burst into flames, continued on for half a mile and nosed down into a hay field only 300 feet in front of a farmer's house at exactly 8:10 a.m.

BODIES SHATTERED

Bodies were scattered as far as 400 yards from the crash scene, described by one youthful onlooker as looking like "a garbage dump".

A 46-year-old trucker, Sytze Burgsma, came close to losing his own life along with his expectant wife and seven of their ten children in the nearby farmhouse. His 19-year-old son, John, saw the plane heading straight for the house just after hearing the crash on the radio.

"One side was covered in flames and I shouldn't see the right wing for fire. Then it hit with an awful roar," John said afterwards. Mr. Burgsma ran from the house after ordering his family to remain inside.

He was greeted by a hissing sound and flecks of yellow insulation floating down, but that was all. There was no screams, no calls for help. In a split second 108 persons had been torn apart.

Within 10 minutes the first police cars arrived. Reporters began to arrive on the scene only minutes later. They toured the site later to find shattered bodies and remnants of personal belongings.

The impact had dug a seven-foot hole 35 feet across in the centre of a slight slope from a tributary of the Humber River. Officials at the scene speculated a flat, stubble field to the east could have made an acceptable emergency landing field.

None of the passengers on board Flight 621 was from the Toronto or the Mississauga area. Most were Americans going home after the July 4th vacation, the rest were

(More pictures on Page 2)



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STEWARDESS' DRESS

recovery from Flight 621 dangles from a tree directly above a torn portion of a stewardess' uniform.

Pt. Credit wins safety award

PORT CREDIT — The Town of Port Credit received congratulations from the Canadian Highway Safety Council June 16 for completing 1969 without a single traffic fatality.

Councillor H. C. MacCallum attended the Highway Council's Safety Awards Luncheon and received a seal to add to the town's safety plaque hanging on the council chamber wall.

Port Credit has similar awards for 1965, 1967 and 1968 and was one of 24 Ontario towns with populations between 5,000 and 10,000 to make it through 1969 without a single traffic death.

from Quebec. All of the crew came from the Montreal area.

VETERAN PILOT

Captain Peter Hamilton, 49, was a former president of the Canadian Air Line Pilots' Association and had flown with Air Canada since 1946. He was described by Richard Bolduc, the Department of Transport's chief investigator of aircraft accidents, as a "very senior captain in Air Canada".

"I doubt if he had a record of hard landings or he wouldn't have been an Air Canada pilot," Bolduc said.

Mr. Bolduc did not rule out the possibility of sabotage but indicated there was absolutely no evidence "of a criminal act as a contributing factor".

"Forget the hay" OPP tell farmer

TORONTO GORE — Gerald Stevenson ran from his house when he heard the explosion of Flight 621 smashing into the ground only 100 yards in front of his neighbor's farmhouse.

"I ran across the fields toward Burgsma's house and the flames were higher than the nearby trees," Stevenson told the Times. He was worried for the safety of the Burgsma family but when he ran across the wooden plank bridge he saw only a few windows had been broken.

When police arrived Stevenson told them he wanted to cut his hay in the field east of the crash site. "I was told to forget the hay," he said. "The OPP officer said that there were 100 lives lost here and I would just have to forget about cutting and baling it."

Many of the mutilated bodies were thrown as far as 400 yards onto his hay field, which Stevenson had intended to cut on Sunday.

"I told him that was a tragedy but I stood to lose 2,000 bales of hay. I have to feed 25 horses next winter," Stevenson continued.

By the time the field is cleared of bodies and combed for debris the hay will be past its prime.

Besides that, all the people and vehicles moving around had trampled down most of this year's crop, Stevenson said.

Some golfers oblivious to the tragedy

TORONTO GORE — The shock of seeing 108 persons plummet to their doom proved too much for most eyewitnesses to Sunday's disastrous jet liner crash.

The realization of what had actually occurred didn't hit some until later. One woman interviewed on the Woodbridge Golf and Country Club, just south of the crash site, complained how the incident had spoiled her golf game.

"It puts you right off your game you know — the scores haven't been very good ever since the crash," she said. She continued to play golf with the rubble in plain view and an easy walking distance away.

Her husband said they saw the right, inside engine fall off after it seemed to explode. "The plane carried on for a quarter of a mile, the right wing exploded in a sheet of flames and I thought it looked like it was going to try a landing. A moment later it went down and crashed."

The man turned away after the interview and proceeded to make his next drive, oblivious to the police and emergency vehicles swarming about him.

Crash inquest began Tuesday

MISSISSAUGA — A five-man coroner's jury started its public inquest yesterday (Tuesday) into the reasons why Air Canada Flight 621 crashed Sunday morning, killing all 108 on board.

To familiarize the five jurors, they were taken on a tour of the crash site. After the tour the inquest was adjourned to await the results of investigators' probes.

Ontario's Supervising Coroner, H. B. Cotnam, will head the inquest which saw the five jurors meet Tuesday morning to be sworn in at the Peel County Courthouse.

The jury will not be allowed to tour the Woodbridge Arena, which has been converted into a temporary morgue for identification of mainly unrecognizable bodies.

Next-of-kin of passengers and crew will be asked to fill out detailed descriptions of the victims' appearance and belongings. They have been told they will not be permitted to go inside the arena morgue.

Air Canada is footing the hotel bill of the relatives arriving daily from Quebec and California. However, Cotnam said officials would be lucky if they can identify any more than half of the victims.

Most of the bodies are so badly mutilated they are virtually unrecognizable. Funeral arrangements are being made free of charge by the Metro Toronto Funeral Directors' Association according to a spokesman for the group, Tom Morrison.

Air Canada, along with the funeral directors' association will take care of the mass burial procedures for the unidentified victims.

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DC-8 CRASH SITE
One youth leaving the scene of the disaster aptly described it as looking "like a garbage dump". "You'd be scattered 400 yards away from the impact crater which reached 35 feet across and seven feet deep. Bouldering ruins of John McCauley which burned last Thursday sending a large pall of smoke. McCauley managed to get a third car out safely. The fire, which broke a neighbor. Firefighters estimated damage to the garage and contents at



EMBALMERS' KITS
The signs on the stretcher full of boxes say it all as Peel Memorial Hospital drivers carry their grisly equipment into the farm crash site.

U.S. murder suspect arrested here by ch

MISSISSAUGA — A Pennsylvania man, wanted in connection with the June 20 shooting murder of his wife, still sits in Brampton jail while authorities ponder who gets him, the Americans or the Canadians.

Thomas Trimble, 36, of Westchester, Pa., is wanted in Brockville, Ontario for threatening with intent on June 25 when Mrs. Lorraine Hughes was told to get out of her car by an armed man.

According to Superintendent Charles Robinson of the Mississauga police, Trimble will have to wait for the results of extradition hearings or until Canadian police are willing to give him up to the Pennsylvania State Police.

Trimble and a Montreal man, Stewart Whelan, 18, were stopped for a routine check on June 28 at Toronto International Airport by Constable Richard Woods.

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