

16 die, 5 survive Alaskan commuter plane crash

By DAVID FOSTER
Associated Press Writer

HOMER, Alaska — A commuter plane that crashed short of a runway and plowed through a chain-link fence, killing 16 people, tilted severely during its approach and did not have its landing gear down, a witness said yesterday.

Five people were seriously injured in the crash of the twin-engine turboprop Monday evening at Homer Airport.

Investigators battled brisk wind and freezing cold yesterday while they began sorting out the final moments of the Ryan Air flight.

"We're just securing the scene, finding out who the witnesses are," said Jim Labelle of the National Transportation Safety Board's Anchorage office. "It's a matter of looking at

everything and sifting through it."

The flight originated in Kodiak, and after a stop in Homer, was to continue to Kenai and Anchorage, 150 miles to the north.

Labelle said the pilot checked in with the airport's flight service station when the plane was about two miles from the runway, a few minutes before the crash. Everything appeared normal then, Labelle said.

"There did not seem to be any problems with the flight before the crash," Labelle said.

But witness Jon Kleine he said he watched the plane pass overhead when it cleared an 80-foot bluff near the runway and said it did not appear to be on a normal approach.

"That guy did not have his landing gear down," he said. "To my utter astonishment, the plane did half a roll. The left wing went up

beyond vertical and then right back down. And right at that same instant I could hear the engines being gunned."

The plane went down at a 45-degree angle, Kleine said.

"It was a huge thud. I could hear it augering in. A huge whumpf."

Kleine said he dashed to the plane, saw blood spattered over the cockpit's instruments and assumed, correctly, that the pilot and co-pilot were dead.

"I ran and looked in the back windows. I had no idea there were so many people in the plane," he said in a telephone interview. "I found the door behind the cockpit and opened it."

"I couldn't believe what I saw. Everybody was jammed forward into a huge pile of bodies and seats."

The 37-year-old machinist said he dragged two dead passengers aside trying to get into the plane.

"There was a girl in back crying 'Help me! Help me!' There was one other guy who was conscious who was groaning, and saying, 'What happened? What happened?' The door was just jammed, blocked with seats and junk."

"Everybody else was dead or near-dead. I knew there were people dying right then, right then, and I couldn't get in to help them."

Homer Fire District Administrator Robert Purcell said the injured, some unconscious, initially were taken to South Peninsula Hospital in Homer, a town of 2,200 near the mouth of Cook Inlet. Seven were flown to hospitals in Anchorage but two died en route, he said.

There was a high overcast but visibility

was good at the time of the crash, Purcell said.

Wilfred Ryan Jr., president of the state's largest commuter airline, referred all questions about the crash to the NTSB. He said the airline was working closely with the families of the survivors and the dead, handling their transportation and housing requirements.

Jim Michelangelo, head of the NTSB's Alaska office, sent a team of investigators from Anchorage and said others from Washington, D.C., were en route.

Although the aircraft did not break up upon impact, it was badly damaged.

The plane's red-striped seats were heaped in the snow next to the crumpled left wing Tuesday. Baggage, including hunters' sacks of meat, a rifle, and a shattered dog carrier, were piled behind the wing.

2nd big quake shakes Calif.

By LYNN ELBER
Associated Press Writer

WESTMORLAND, Calif. — The second powerful earthquake in 12 hours jolted this town near the Mexican border yesterday, knocking trailers from foundations, buckling walls and roads and injuring at least 44 people.

But experts said this sparsely populated farming region got off relatively easily from the twin quakes, which registered 6.3 and 6.0 on the Richter scale, each stronger than the quake that hit Los Angeles last month.

Power was temporarily out in 65,000 homes and businesses, fires flared in the border town of Mexicali and police were called out on both sides of the border to prevent looting.

The 5:16 a.m. quake, which measured 6.3 on the Richter scale, was centered about 14 miles west of the town of Westmorland, at the tip of the Salton sea 90 miles northeast of San Diego, said scientists at California Institute of Technology in Pasadena.

A 6.0-magnitude quake shook the area at 5:54 p.m. Monday.

Yesterday's quake was felt as far away as the Palo Verde nuclear power plant 50 miles west of downtown Phoenix, Ariz. It also jolted residents of Palm Springs, San Diego and downtown Los Angeles, 160 miles to the north.

But the damage appeared most serious in an area around the border town of Calexico and nearby El Centro.

"We got off real lucky," said state Office of Emergency Services spokesman Mike Guerin, who, like other experts noted a quake of that magnitude would likely have caused severe damage and many injuries in a city.

Police in Imperial County reported four minor injuries ranging

from broken bones to one person whose finger was slammed in a door. El Centro Regional Medical Center doctors treated 20 people and the Valley Urgent Care Center in El Centro treated 20, spokesmen said.

"We had varying injuries from sprains to people cutting themselves on broken glass," said Norman Martin, administrator of the El Centro Regional Medical Center. "Most of it was stress related, some mild heart attacks. Fortunately it happened real early in the morning, so consequently not that many people were out and about. That probably limited (injuries) a lot."

Calexico Fire Capt. Carlos Escalante said the wall of a store collapsed, crushing four cars parked outside.

Escalante said he believed the temblor had sparked a number of fires across the border in Mexicali. "From here in Calexico we have a clear view of all Mexicali, and in looking over there we saw a lot of black smoke," he said.

The quake interrupted power to 65,000 households and businesses served by the Imperial Valley Water District, but 95 percent of the outage was corrected within 20 minutes, said district spokesman Ron Hull.

Bulldozers worked to shore up crumbled banks of the district's All-American Canal, which carries irrigation water from the Colorado River to the Imperial Valley, Hull said.

Around El Centro, several house trailers were jolted from their foundations, and residents reported extensive damage to furnishings. Many stores closed temporarily to fix windows and pick up merchandise rattled from shelves.

The two quakes triggered a low-level emergency declaration at the



Food at the Safeway store in El Centro, Calif., was thrown from shelves by yesterday's earthquake that hit the Southern California desert. The quake lasted about 11 hours.

San Onofre nuclear power plant on the coast, about 100 miles west of the epicenter, said Southern California Edison Co. spokesman David Barron. The temblor caused no damage or problems, he said. Inmates at the Immigration and Naturalization Service detention

center in El Centro were awakened by toppling bookshelves and were moved into a courtyard for their safety, said INS spokesman Ron Rogers. They were returned later, after officials were satisfied the building was safe. Extra police were called out in

several cities to prevent looting, but no incidents were reported.

The main road between El Centro and Westmorland was closed because of damage and state Highway 98 was closed in Ocotillo because pavement buckled on a bridge crossing Interstate 8.

5 El Rukn members convicted

By WILLIAM C. HIDLAY
Associated Press Writer

CHICAGO — Five members of the notorious El Rukn street gang were found guilty yesterday of conspiring to blow up airplanes and U.S. government buildings as part of a terrorism-for-hire scheme to win \$2.5 million from Libya.

The U.S. District Court jury returned the verdict after six days of deliberation, which followed a five-week trial.

El Rukn leader Jeff Fort and co-defendants Leon McAnderson, Reico Cranshaw, Alan Knox and Roosevelt Hawkins had contended the El Rukns were a religious organization that planned no violence and met with Libyans only to raise money for a mosque.

According to the indictments, several members of the gang traveled to Libya, Panama and several other locations and offered "their services" to Libyan representatives in 1986, hoping to get as much as \$2.5 million in exchange.

Fort masterminded the conspiracy through scores of telephone calls from a Texas prison over a four-month period while he was serving time on cocaine charges, prosecutors said.

Federal authorities said the gang initiated the contact with the Libyans and that none of the terrorist acts discussed in tape-recorded conversations ever actually took place.

Seven members of the El Rukns, once described by police as among the nation's deadliest and most sophisticated street gangs, originally were charged.

Gang member Trammell Davis, who formerly served as security chief for the gang, entered into a plea agreement before the trial and became a key prosecution witness.

Davis also served as a translator for the elaborate code gang members used during telephone conversation.



Marisol Batills, of Miami, whose brother-in-law is in prison, held the U.S. and Cuban flags yesterday while she and about 100 other relatives of Cuban detainees went to the Justice Department in Washington, D.C., to plead with officials not to send 2,700 Mariel inmates back.

Guards, inmates' wives recount riot origins

By JOSEPH B. FRAZIER
Associated Press Writer

ATLANTA — Cuban inmates holding the federal prison in Atlanta have told their wives that they rioted after guards taunted them about being sent back to Cuba.

However, prison workers who escaped from the insurrection that started about lunchtime Monday said Cubans refused to work and then grabbed the guards.

Both sides believe the trouble should have been anticipated after the Reagan administration had announced Friday it had concluded an agreement with Cuba to send back 2,545 refugees.

Janet Lugo said her husband, Fernando, called her three times between 2:15 a.m. and 3 a.m. yesterday.

"He got to a phone somehow. He said there were wounded on both sides but did not say who," she said.

"Please tell everybody outside we

did not start this," she quoted him as saying.

Mrs. Lugo said her husband told her the trouble started in the cafeteria when guards harassed prisoners, telling them they would be sent back to Cuba. She said Lugo told her that inmates then started turning over tables and guards fired their guns.

"It was like putting a match to the fire," she said of the guard's actions.

A guard, who spoke to The Atlanta Constitution on the condition that he not be identified, gave a very different account. He said inmates stopped work for a time Friday as word of the repatriation agreement spread.

About 300 Cubans stopped work about 8 a.m. Monday at the prison industries building. After about an hour and a half, they "started grabbing the guards," he said.

"I heard (guards) yelling 'triple deuce' (the prison signal for distress) and I ran toward Unicorn," the prison industries building, he said.

The guard reported seeing detai-

nees assault another guard and take his keys and communications equipment.

"I ran to help him, but they came after me with a shank. We're not talking knives, we're talking bayonet. ... I ran."

The guard said he and about a dozen others made it to safety in the secure rear corridor behind the building.

"They took, I'd say, anywhere from 15 to 20 hostages. Then they went to AWB House (a cell block that housed American prisoners) and a house looking for more hostages," he said.

He said inmates set fire to the prison industry building, a storage building and a building that housed the prison pool table.

He said that inmates broke into A and C cell blocks with blowtorches and bolt cutters stolen from the prison industries building and then set fires there.

A number of inmates tried to escape through a gate where deliveries are made but guards fired shots and forced the inmates to retreat.

"We should have known something like this was going to happen," the guard said, adding that he believes inmates should have been locked in their cells until things calmed down.

"Everybody but the warden knew this was going to happen," said Joanna Rackley, whose husband is an American inmate at the federal prison. She said that when she visited her husband Sunday, he told her to leave early because he was afraid of an uprising that day.

Warden Joseph Petrovsky said yesterday that things appeared calm at the prison after the announcement Friday and the riot that broke out in Louisiana. As a result, he said he took no extra precautions.

"If there'd been a lockdown it would have blown up immediately," he said.

House approves abortion restriction legislation

HARRISBURG (AP) — Legislation that would restrict abortions in Pennsylvania was approved by the House yesterday after a lengthy debate during which lawmakers touched on morality and the law.

The measure would require a woman to notify her sexual partner before having an abortion and force females less than 18 years old to receive parental consent or a court order for an abortion.

The abortion measure was pro-

posed by Delaware County Republican Rep. Stephen Freind, a long-time foe of abortions, to an unrelated bill that would rewrite the state's sentencing guidelines.

The legislation now returns to the Senate for consideration of the changes.

Freind's amendment to the bill was easily approved on a 140-59 vote, with surprisingly little debate. However, the House spent hours on another amendment that would require the

abortion proposal to be approved by voters in a statewide referendum. The lawmakers twice defeated the referendum proposal.

Freind argued the abortions regulations were needed because current law allows young girls to get an abortion without parents even knowing their children were pregnant. He also said men should have the right to be informed of the decision before their sexual partners have an abortion.

Opponents of the measure said it was a violation of a woman's right to control her body.

"It's just a cruel trick on poor women and teenagers," said Rep. Ruth Harper, D-Philadelphia.

Rep. H. William DeWeese, a Greene County Democrat who chairs the House Judiciary Committee, said "the nub of the issue is where do we draw the line."

"I draw the line with the woman," DeWeese said.

Shuttle's orbit may be longer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — The space agency said yesterday it is considering a plan to modify space shuttles so they can remain in orbit for as long as 16 days.

The longest shuttle mission to date has been 10 days, but most of the 25 flights have lasted a week or less.

The plan was outlined in a report that examines key aspects of an

extended-duration shuttle, including technical aspects, impact on the shuttle flight rate and the possibility of commercial ventures.

NASA said in a statement that if a decision were made to proceed, a modification kit to provide extra fuel, oxygen and other supplies could be ready in about 45 months. It estimated the development cost at \$126 million.