

the world

# Virgin Island crash claims lives of five Texas Baptists

United Press International  
 CHARLOTTE AMALIE, Virgin Islands — Juan Luis expressed sympathy and regrets Wednesday for the commuter plane crash that killed eight persons, including five Texas Baptists on an evangelical mission.

This is indeed a most difficult sad period for all of us in the Virgin Islands," he said. "As members of this small community, I believe the people of the Virgin Islands are touched by the sorrow you all feel and we share your grief."

The Prinair (Puerto Rico International Airlines) plane, bound for St. John, lost power on takeoff and crashed at Christiansted, St. Croix island.

All five Texans killed were members of the First Baptist Church of Clyde, Texas, including Jack Rosinbaum, Mr. and Mrs. J. O'Connell, Sharon Geyee and Steven Sapaugh.

Also killed were co-pilot William Pinerio; Inez Bradley, a native of St. Kitts, and the Rev. Godfrey Tanessee, a Guyanese believed to reside in Jamaica.

Luis also expressed best wishes for a speedy recovery to the survivors who are hospitalized. He commended all who took part in the rescue efforts for their prompt response, including government departments and agencies.

In Washington an aide to Rep. Charles W. Stenholm, D-Texas, whose 17th Congressional District includes Abilene and Clyde where 12 of the passengers lived, said that the congressman was "deeply saddened by this tragedy."

Lois Aver, the aide, said he is working closely with the airlines to assist the survivors and the families of the victims.

Aver said that Clyde, a town of 1,635, had experienced great sorrow. She said Stenholm was concerned over the "confusion and conflicting information as well as about the delay in receiving the names of the survivors." She said Stenholm himself finally telephoned the hospital in St. Croix.

Virgin Islands health commissioner Roy Schneider, in response to complaints, said health department officials "are not even supposed to deal with the press since the governor's disaster plan clearly prescribes that Government House will coordinate dissemination of vital information to the media."

Schneider said he recognized the importance of keeping the media, and through them the public, informed, but he added to primary function of medical personnel is "life saving." He said he intended to take up the matter of public communication with the governor.

After the crash hospital personnel were involved in caring for the survivors, three of whom were critically injured, and assisting Prinair in

evacuating the most seriously injured, the Rev. Riley Fugett, to Roosevelt Roads Naval Station in Puerto Rico. Although a large number of reporters were present, including two television camera crews from San Juan, no news conference was held or progress reports were given for more than four hours after the crash.

The British-made De Havilland Heron propeller aircraft of 1950s vintage smashed into the ground at 9:22 a.m. local time Tuesday.

Aboard were 12 Texas evangelists who had planned to devote 10 days for Bible school and religious services on the island of St. Kitts.

Survivors said the craft flying them to an evangelical retreat took off normally but suddenly lost power and nose-dived to the ground.

"I couldn't figure out why the pilot slowed his engines before reaching his altitude," said Murlene Porter of the Great Baptist Church of Abilene, Texas, who was injured.

"Everyone said 'Hey,' like they thought the pilot was playing, but I knew he wasn't."

Isaac F. Spinoso, a service employee at Alexander Hamilton airport in St. Croix, said he watched the plane spin to the ground after its engines failed on takeoff.

"It was going around like a snake," he said.

Mrs. Porter said in a radio interview that she was pulled out of the twisted wreckage by 17-year-old Lisa Melton, daughter of the pastor of Elmcrest Baptist Church of Abilene.

Survivors and witnesses said the plane plummeted to the earth nose first and rolled into the right wing, which was crushed under the fuselage. Rescuers reported most of the dead, including the co-pilot, were seated on the right side of the airplane.

## Earthworm squashes all competition

United Press International  
 TORONTO — A slippery slithering named Nat showed lightning speed — nearly four inches of an inch a second — as he competed for the championship of the Great Richview Library Worm Race.

Nat, a medium-sized earthworm in Transposing about seven inches at full length, easily outcrawled all opposition Tuesday in a scorching time of one second over a one-foot track.

Nat was trained and raced by other hand, 67-year-old George Yamamoto, who might have been disqualified if the rted oil-burner Etobicoke librarians who agreed to organize the event had insisted on the railed status.

Nat is a hyperactive worm. When examined after the race he attempted to strangle a reporter's finger. He was selected from thousands of creepy crawlers at a bait worm farm operated by George's father.

George's first prize was a book: "How To Find Worms."

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