

Contact reported

Pilot heard before crash

SHREVEPORT, La. — The crew of a Pan American World Airways plane carrying Louisiana State University football coach Robert "Bo" Rein, The Shreveport Times reported today.

The Times quoted a spokesman with the Federal Aviation Administration in Fort Worth, Texas, as saying the Pan Am flight reported very weak radio contact on an emergency frequency with the Cessna Conquest turboprop carrying Rein and pilot Lewis Benscotter.

The plane wandered 1,500 miles course without explanation and crashed in the Atlantic Ocean off Virginia as Air Force chase pilots

watched.

The nature of the bizarre crash has led to official speculation that Rein and the pilot bled out from a lack of oxygen due to their high altitude and the plane flew east on autopilot until it ran out of fuel and crashed.

The report of the Pan Am radio contact with the Cessna was the first indication Benscotter or Rein knew something was wrong in the light plane.

Burlage said FAA controllers asked the Pan Am jet to attempt to contact the Cessna. Its last radio contact with Fort Worth traffic control was at 9:30 p.m. Thursday, when Benscotter was given and acknowledged a new altitude assignment. Eight minutes later, control-

lers tried unsuccessfully to contact the plane when they observed it climbing above its assigned altitude.

At the controllers' request, the Pan Am flight tried to call the Cessna on normal frequencies at 9:42 p.m. but received no response, Burlage said. Just after 9:45 p.m., the Pan Am crew reported contact on an emergency frequency with the plane, which was supposed to return to regular frequencies.

Four minutes later, just before 9:49 p.m., the Pan Am crewmen again reported they could still hear weak transmissions from the Cessna on an emergency frequency.

The plane was at 29,600 feet at the time, nearly 5,000 feet above its assigned altitude.

A Pan Am spokesman said the crew members were out of the country and no report on the incident was filed with Pan Am operations officials.

Brad Dunbar, a spokesman for the National Transportation Safety Board in Washington, said an NTSB investigator would compile records of the accident but the study would probably take a long time.

"We investigate 4,500 civil air accidents a year but very few are as bizarre or as difficult as this one," Dunbar said.

Aggie Shorts

Aggie football stars Curtis Dickey and Jacob Green were honored by participation in the Shrine East-West game over the holidays. Green was named "Defensive Player of the Game" in that one then ventured to Japan to play in the Japan Bowl. Dickey is training for 60-yard dash competition at the indoor track meets to be held in Philadelphia on Jan. 18 and Madison Square Garden on Jan. 19. Head football coach Tom Wilson has awarded 60 letters for the 1979 season. Forty of those earning them will be in uniform come spring training which opens March 25.

The annual football banquet is scheduled for March 22 and the speaker will be A&M grad Jack Pardee. All Aggie basketball games are carried on the A&M basketball network. Participating stations are KTAM, Bryan; KSIX, Corpus Christi; WFAA, Dallas; KPRC, Houston; KMAC, San Antonio; KIVY, Crockett; KISM, El Paso; KIUN, Pecos. The A&M track team will forego the Drake Relays this year to enter the Florida State Invitational at Tallahassee. The meet is set for the weekend of 26 April

and included will be teams from Alabama, Florida, Tennessee and Auburn. A&M will host the SWC baseball tournament the weekend of May 16-17.

Aggies Dave Elmendorf and Pat Thomas will have Aggies (at least a few) pulling for the Los Angeles Rams come Saturday's Super Bowl. The Thomas-Lynn Swann matchup has been billed as the best in Pro FB this year.

The women's basketball team plays at Sam Houston State University tonight in hopes of upping their record to 9-7. They return for a Saturday evening date with North Texas State at G. Rollie White. Game time is 7:30 p.m.

Non-conference football opponents for 1980 are Ole Miss, Georgia and Penn State. A&M's 1955 SWC championship baseball team will be honored between games on April 25 when the Aggies host Rice in a SWC doubleheader. Although the Aggies were rained out of 13 home games last year, this year it shouldn't happen. A&M has purchased a 160 square foot maroon tarpaulin to cover the infield.

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Tracksters in meets

Four Texas A&M trackmen will compete in the Vitalis U.S. Olympic Invitational indoor meet in New York City's Madison Square Garden Saturday night.

Representing A&M will be Randy Hall, a 17-6 pole vaulter; Leslie Kerr, a 48.2 runner in the 400 meters and Jimmy Howard, a 7-3 high jumper. Curtis Dickey, a world-class springer, will be in the 60-meter dash but will be competing on an unattached basis, pending completion of a make-up in a fall meet before becoming eligible to represent A&M. Coach Ted Nelson will accompany the group.

Coach Bill Nix's A&M women entrants:

Cindy Bartlett: 60-yard dash, 60-yard hurdles, 300-yard dash. Sandra Brown: 880 and mile. Jan Chesbro: high jump. Early Douglas: shot put; Lynne Gamble: 60-yard dash and long jump. Paula Lake: 60-yard dash, 300-yard dash and long jump. Sande Lambert: 60-yard hurdles and long jump. Annie Muniz: mile and two-mile. Beverly Porter: 600-yard run. Lorie Scott: 880 and mile. Ellen Smith: 60-yard hurdles and 600-yard run. Evelyn Smith: 440. Iris Tipton: shot put. Julie White: 600 and 880. Karyn Wooten: 300 and 400.

Teams are limited to three entrants per event. Thomas said he will have a team in the mile relay but will have to wait to see who is available to run on it.



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