



Jet crash leaves 17 dead at Dyess Air Force base

ABILENE (AP) — A military refueling jet bound for Hawaii with 19 people aboard crashed in a ball of flames on takeoff Tuesday at Dyess Air Force Base, killing at least 17 people, the Air Force said.

The plane's crew "never got it off the ground," witness Vernon Wright, 19, said. "The first thing I saw was just the mushroom of the smoke."

Military dependents were among the 12 passengers on board, said Dyess spokesman Sgt. Al Dostal, but he did not know how many. The plane had a crew of seven, he said.

Skeet Jackson, whose back yard is a few hundred yards from where the plane crashed, also witnessed the crash. "I heard the plane as it was coming down," he said. "Engines were backfiring and missing. It curved off to the left and crashed. And then I saw the ball of smoke and fire go up."

At least 17 were killed in the crash. Lt. Col. George Peck at Strategic Air Command Headquarters in Omaha, Neb., said.

Military officials said they were recording the bodies as they were found and searching for the two missing.

"Any aircraft accident is bad, but the fact that there are as many fatalities (in this crash) makes it a particularly terrible one," Maj. Dennis Pierson at SAC, said.

The KC-135A tanker plane, based at K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base near Marquette, Mich., was en route from Dyess to Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii on a training mission, Dyess

Airman 1st Class Beverly Foster, said.

Some of those aboard were from Sawyer, base spokesman Sgt. Anita Bailey, said.

"We're trying to get in touch with the families now but it's hard, because there's some confusion," she said. "We're waiting for confirmation that these people have been contacted."

The Air Force said the plane crashed at 12:10 p.m. near the south end of the Dyess runway, near U.S. highway 277 about six miles southwest of Abilene.

According to officials who asked not to be named, the initial reports forwarded to Air Force commanders at the Pentagon and at SAC suggested the pilot of the ill-fated plane experienced some kind of problem

"I heard the plane as it was coming down. Engines were backfiring and missing. It curved off to the left and crashed. And then I saw the ball of smoke and fire go up."

—Skeet Jackson, witness

during his take-off roll.

"It was toward the end of the roll and he apparently had no choice but to press on," said one source.

"But he didn't have the power to get up for some reason," added another.

The sources said the plane was carrying close to a full load of fuel — what the Air Force calls a heavy load — totaling 155,000 pounds. The tanker was scheduled to fly direct from Dyess to Hawaii and while en route, to refuel some F-16 jet fighters flying across the Pacific, the sources said.

Grass fires sparked by the crash burned for more than an hour around the plane, which came to rest tilted at about a 45 degree angle with a charred wing tipped toward the sky.

It was the second crash at Dyess in less than three months. A B-1B bomber crashed there Nov. 8., after its four-man crew safely bailed out.

The maintenance record for the plane, powered by four Pratt & Whitney jet engines, was not yet available, Peck said.

"Before this afternoon, we had 292 of these airplanes," he said. "Now, we have 291."

The KC-135, dubbed the Stratotanker, is thought of as the backbone of the Air Force's refueling fleet.

The aircraft, a military spin-off of the Boeing 707, normally takes a crew of four or five. It can carry a sizeable load of passengers even when carrying fuel.

The military began using the first KC-135As in 1956. The tankers have a range of 1,150 miles while carrying 120,000 pounds of transfer fuel. They cost \$20.1 million.

A KC-135 crashed Oct. 11, 1988, at Wurtsmith Air Base near Oscoda, Mich.

Senators: Clements ignored minorities in regent choices

AUSTIN (AP) — Senators complained Tuesday at a committee hearing on Gov. Bill Clements' three recent University of Texas regent nominees that Clements had ignored minorities and women.

Chairman Chet Edwards of the Senate Nominations Committee postponed a vote on confirming the nominees because, he said, some senators had a "very legitimate concern" over the failure to recognize those segments of the population.

"I hope this will not be interpreted as any type of personal criticism of any of you," Edwards, D-Duncanville, told Robert Cruikshank of Houston, Tom Loeffler of Mason and Chester Upham Jr. of Mineral Wells.

Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby may have defused any possible opposition to Cruikshank by recommending his

approval. "I can't imagine a better-qualified nominee," Hobby told the committee.

The three appointed by the Republican Clements, subject to Senate confirmation, would replace three active Democrats — Jess Hay of Dallas, Robert Baldwin III of Austin and Mario Yzaguirre of Brownsville, who were appointed by then-Gov. Mark White.

Sen. Hector Uribe, D-Brownsville, noted the loss of Yzaguirre, a Hispanic, and said Clements' appointments would make the regents a very select group.

"By all appearances, it would be a very select club — of men," Uribe said. "The impression that the governor has given by the appointment of three white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant males is that perhaps individuals that belong to minorities have nothing to contribute to this state at the flagship university, the University of Texas."

Uribe asked what the regents would do to dispel that notion.

Cruikshank said, "I think we would be terribly remiss to overlook any part of the population of the state of Texas, particularly when it comes to education."

"I could not live with myself if I ever felt that I was doing something that prejudiced one individual as he or she attempted to gain an educa-

tion or attempted to move forward in our state in whatever that endeavor might be."

Sen. Eddie Bernice Johnson, D-Dallas, who is a black woman, said as the 21st century draws near there has yet to be a black appointed as a UT regent.

On University of Texas campuses, she said, "(minority students) will tell you they feel isolated, unwanted, unwelcomed and that they do not belong."

"I plead with the governor, however, to be sensitive to the future of this state. It will be led by a minority that is the majority," she said. "The policies won't continue to be made by all white males, because that is not the majority, and I can assure you that all of us would rather have an educated leadership than to have an overthrow of this government," she said.

"I only warn you that equality of opportunity will be the only avenue to a safe, productive, successful state as we would all like it to be," Johnson said. "I would only say to the governor that somewhere a start has to come — the time is now, we've almost waited too long."

Johnson said her comments should not be taken as partisan or personal but rather as a concern about the future of Texas.

Judge selects 7 for jury pool in North trial

WASHINGTON (AP) — The judge in Oliver North's Iran-Contra trial chose seven people for possible jury duty during Tuesday's long opening day but said there could be problems with the "triality of the case" because so many potential jurors had seen or read of North's testimony in congressional hearings.

U.S. District Judge Gerhard A. Gesell said only 16 of the first 54 prospective jurors indicated on questionnaires that they weren't exposed to North's congressional appearances in which he supplied details about misleading Congress and shredding documents.

The former White House aide testified to House and Senate investigating committees in 1987 under a grant of limited immunity from prosecution.

North's lawyers, who contend an impartial jury cannot be empaneled, objected as Gesell picked the first seven people for a pool from which the jury eventually might be chosen. Selection will continue Wednesday.

Defense lawyers also filed a motion asking that if a jury can be empaneled, it should be sequestered immediately to minimize the potential for exposure to immunized testimony and to protect North's constitutional rights.

Gesell also heard arguments on how exposure to North's earlier testimony should affect qualification or disqualification of other potential jurors.

Able bodies put parking burden on disabled

By Juliette Rizzo

STAFF WRITER

"I'll only be here a few minutes." Or so they say.

Minutes of added convenience for the able-bodied person who parks in a space reserved for the handicapped are inconsiderately wasted minutes for the handicapped individual who needs the space to access campus and attend classes.

Dr. Charles Powell, director of handicapped student services, said people on campus need to be aware that handicapped spaces are solely for the disabled.

As of June 1988, there were 150 handicapped spaces available, but a considerable amount of these spaces have been lost because of construction.

"Many of the parking lots were wiped out and only a few handicapped spaces, as well as regular spaces, were left," Powell said.

He said campus parking officials have been cooperative in trying to relocate the spaces. The spaces were replaced based on the needs of handicapped individuals in certain campus areas.



"The campus was surveyed to find places easily accessible to the handicapped," Powell said. "We tried to find areas that are safe for vans, especially for those in wheelchairs who need to exit near curbs."

Handicapped spaces also were reserved in the new parking garage near Blocker Building. Texas law requires that for every 50 spaces there be one handicapped space, preferably located next to the building or near an elevator, he said.

Powell said the number of



Photo by Fredrick D. Joe

Enjoy it while you can

George Taylor and his 12:30 soccer class enjoy the spring-like weather Monday at Kyle Field. Temperatures probably will not be as

nice by the end of the week. A cold-weather system in Alaska is expected to reach Texas either Thursday or Friday.

Clements: Lawmakers must provide equal school funding

AUSTIN (AP) — Although an appellate court decision has upheld Texas' public school financing system, the Legislature can't "dodge the bullet" of providing equal funding to school districts, Gov. Bill Clements said Tuesday.

But several lawmakers noted that the governor didn't specify how such equity should be achieved.

"I know the Legislature will carefully consider the entire issue of school finance and equity," Clements said in his state of the state address to lawmakers. "The appellate court decision... reaffirms our responsibility to focus directly on the issue."

In the area of higher education, the governor endorsed merging the University System of South Texas with Texas A&M University and combining Pan American University with the University of Texas System.

Clements' remarks drew applause and criticism from state lawmakers. Some praised his funding goals and others said he hadn't gone far enough.

"He did not give any kind of specifics on the school finance situation," Sen. Gonzalo Barrientos, D-Austin,

and vice chairman of the Senate Education Committee, said.

Sen. Kent Caperton, D-Bryan, chair of the Senate Finance Committee, said the governor's proposals weren't clear enough.

"To the extent that he's laid out some specific ideas, it's a good message," Caperton said.

In a speech that covered a wide range of topics, the governor also called for mandatory drug education beginning at age 9, giving financial rewards to schools showing improved student performance and special programs designed to reduce dropout rates.

Clements also backed Comptroller Bob Bullock's idea to sell bonds to give poor school districts low-interest loans for classroom construction.

"I think he threw out topics and said this is the area we need to move forward in," Bullock said.

House Speaker Gib Lewis said the 1984 education reform law might need some revision to give school districts flexibility in classroom size, capital improvements and spending.

spaces on campus exceeds that number, providing the "right spaces for the right people," but the wrong people are using the spaces illegally.

"Illegal parking on campus is not so much a problem as it is," he said about parking illegally in handicapped spaces.

Linda Lively, parking administrator, said the problem would be lessened if people who weren't supposed to park in the spaces would abide by the law.

"We only have enough spaces for permanently handicapped people and we could do with several more," Lively said. "A lot of people without legitimate handicaps attempt to park in the spaces."

During a four month period beginning in September 1988, 121 tickets were written to owners of cars parked illegally in a space reserved for the handicapped.

"That's almost one per every handicapped space available," Lively said. "Potentially, 121 handicapped students couldn't find a place to park."

By law, a non-disabled person commits an offense by parking in a handicapped space and is automat-

ically subject to a \$50 fine and an on-site tow.

"It's almost not worth it, but people still do it, Lively said."

Powell said the problem is frustrating to Handicapped Student Services and to the students who need the spaces.

"The biggest problem stems from those students and faculty members who abuse the privilege of having a temporary handicapped permit," he said.

With medical verification of a mobility problem, a temporary handicapped permit may be issued to a person by the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation and then by the University. The permits, regardless of the nature of impairment, are issued for six months.

"The abuse of the temporary permit is a severe problem on campus," Powell said.

The law does not define the amount of time a person should be able to use the permit if the injury heals before the permit expires.

"The law needs to be further defined," he said. "Temporary permits have been issued for everything

from sprained ankles to breast feeding a baby. People with sprained ankles that may heal quickly, before the permit expires, misuse the privilege for the remainder of the time."

Others transfer the use of the permit to friends.

Powell said the law needs to be re-evaluated so the permits will be issued with discretion to insure permanently handicapped individuals their spaces.

He has addressed the issue to the Texas State Legislature, but to no avail.

"The law needs to be changed because people do not realize their selfishness is creating terrific problems for those who desperately need the spaces," he said.

Lively said students on campus are guilty, but they are not the only ones.

"Everyone needs to be more sensitive to the handicapped," she said. "They are doing real well to just get to school. When they find their spaces taken, their hands are tied."

"Fellow students and faculty are suffering from their misuse."