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Crash of EgyptAir Flight 990 marks year anniversary

People gather to remember the 217 victims, dedicate granite memorial

NEWPORT, R.I. (AP) — Relatives of the 217 victims of the crash of EgyptAir Flight 990 gathered Tuesday, the first anniversary of the disaster, to dedicate a memorial whose rough-hewn sides symbolize their pain.

The granite memorial stands in a seaside park in the city where families went a year ago after the Boeing 767 plunged into the Atlantic off the Massachusetts island of Nantucket.

More than 500 relatives, friends and dignitaries attended the memorial service, which began about an hour late as buses brought people to Brenton Point State Park. Some mourners held flowers and some cried as a chill wind whipped the tent shielding them.

"I hope you can draw some strength from each other and some comfort in knowing people all around the world share your grief."

— James Hall
National Transportation Safety Board chairman

National Transportation Safety Board Chairman James Hall told the mourners his agency was still working diligently to determine the cause of the crash and he hopes to release his final report by December. Hall also expressed the condolences of President Clinton.

"I want you to know that we have continually thought of you throughout this investigation," Hall said. "I hope you can draw some strength from each other and some comfort in knowing people all around the world share your grief."

The Rhode Island medical examiner, Dr. Elizabeth Laposata, told the mourners that 128 of the victims have been identified from the 6,000 tissue fragments recovered from the ocean.

Five coffins of the unidentified remains have already been buried in the Island Cemetery. A sixth was to be buried Tuesday in a private service for the families.

In Egypt, independent religious ceremonies also were held Tuesday to mourn those killed when the plane went crashed about an hour after taking off from New York en route to Cairo.

There has been no final determination of the crash's cause, but there has been speculation that copilot Gameel El-Batouty deliberately crashed the plane. Egyptians have vehemently rejected that possibility, instead favoring theories that a missile or mechanical failure were to blame.

Hall said last week that his agency has found no sign of mechanical failure.

The granite monument is roughly hewn on three of its four sides, symbolizing the families' difficult journey since the crash.

An inscription in gold lettering on a black background reads: "In loving memory of the 217 family members and friends lost on EgyptAir Flight 990. ... May God's eternal light shine upon them."

The final phrase, "They are not gone from us," is inscribed in French, Arabic and English.

On the ground before the monument are 217 bricks etched with the names of those who died.

"There's nothing beautiful about it," said Jack Afonso of Riverside Stone Co., who created the monument. "This is to commemorate the dead." Beyond the monument is a panoramic view of the ocean, the sound of the waves lapping against the rocks a few hundred feet away.

On Wednesday, the NTSB will allow families to tour the aircraft wreckage, stored in a hangar at a former Navy base.

Grim reaper



COURTESY OF BEN BRANTNER

The grim reaper, student who works in Agricultural Communication, who wishes to remain anonymous, haunts students in front of the John R. Blocker Building, the student's third year to perform

the student's third year to perform

Singapore Air jet crashes

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — A Singapore Airlines jumbo jet speeding down a runway in darkness and rain slammed into an object before takeoff for Los Angeles and burst into flames Tuesday, scattering fiery wreckage across the tarmac, witnesses said. At least 66 people were killed and dozens more were injured, an airline official said.

It was not immediately clear what Flight SQ006 hit, but the collision wreaked havoc on the plane. Video footage showed the Boeing 747-400 spewing flames and thick black smoke despite the heavy rain. Afterward, parts of the blue-and-white fuselage were badly charred, with a gaping hole in the roof of the forward section.

Airline spokesman Rick Clements said in Singapore that 47 U.S. citizens

and 55 Taiwanese were among the passengers.

"It felt like we bumped into something huge," said Doug Villerman, a passenger on the flight from New Iberia, La., who was standing outside the Chang Gung Memorial Hospital, wrapped in a hospital gown and smoking a cigarette. "It looked like the front end just fell off. From the moment it just started to fall apart, I ran to escape hatch with the stewardesses. We couldn't get it open. Two feet from me, I saw flames."

"Everyone was just panicking," said Villerman. "I tried to open the escape hatch on the top just a slit and saw a lot of smoke. The fumes were just unbearable. We were just all so scared it was going to blow up."

News in Brief

Napster gets industry help

NEW YORK (AP) — In a deal that could rescue Napster from legal limbo, Bertelsmann said Tuesday it was teaming with the Internet music-swapping service

to develop a new membership-based distribution system that would guarantee payments to artists.

The German media giant will drop its lawsuit against Napster, make its music catalog available and gain the right to buy a stake in Napster. Bertelsmann will

Microsoft tries to find hacker

SEATTLE (AP) — Microsoft security experts tried and failed to catch the

hacker in a more than weeklong game of electronic cat and mouse through the computer software giant's vast system, company officials disclosed Monday.

"We are continuing to work closely with law enforcement," said company

spokesman Rick Miller, "beyond that, we really can't say much more."

Company officials believe the hacker had access for about 12 days to the source code blueprint, for a single product that is still in the early stages of development.

Inspirations

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