

All Safe in Crash

OTIS AIR FORCE BASE - An Air Force C-121 Constellation crash landed about a quarter of a mile short of the runway here Friday night, spun around and nosed over. None of the 12 persons aboard were hurt but one man suffered a broken bone in his left foot when he fell from the craft.

The training plan was carrying members of the 4753d Air Defense Squadron here and was returning from Eglin AFB. Fla., when the accident happened.

A small fire developed in one engine on impact, but was quickly snuffed out by the crew.

Slipped off Rope

Capt. Adrian J. Kolton was the crewman injured in the hasty exit. He apparently slipped off the rope at the rear door which all on board used to get out.

All others were taken to the base hospital, but were released after examination.

Commander of the plane was Major David F. Collette.

Also aboard in addition to Collette and Kolton were Maj. Verrill D. Haug, SMSgt. Leo Foley, Msgt. Roy Byrd, Msgt. Delmar Taylor, Msgt. Bernard Corrigan, SSgt. Delwin Ferro, SSgt. Stephen Goulding, SSgt. David Brillard, Tsgt. Robert Larsen and Sgt. Richard Rolland.

Weather conditions were reported to be "miserable" at the time of the accident. He said the clouds were very low and the surface visibility was less than a quarter-mile. A light drizzle was falling at the time.

The huge four-engine craft was far short of the runway as it apparently came in under instrument flight rules. It actually went under power lines which are an estimated three-quarters of a mile from the runway. Judging from the tangle of underbrush, it finally settled to earth about a quarter mile short of the landing strip.

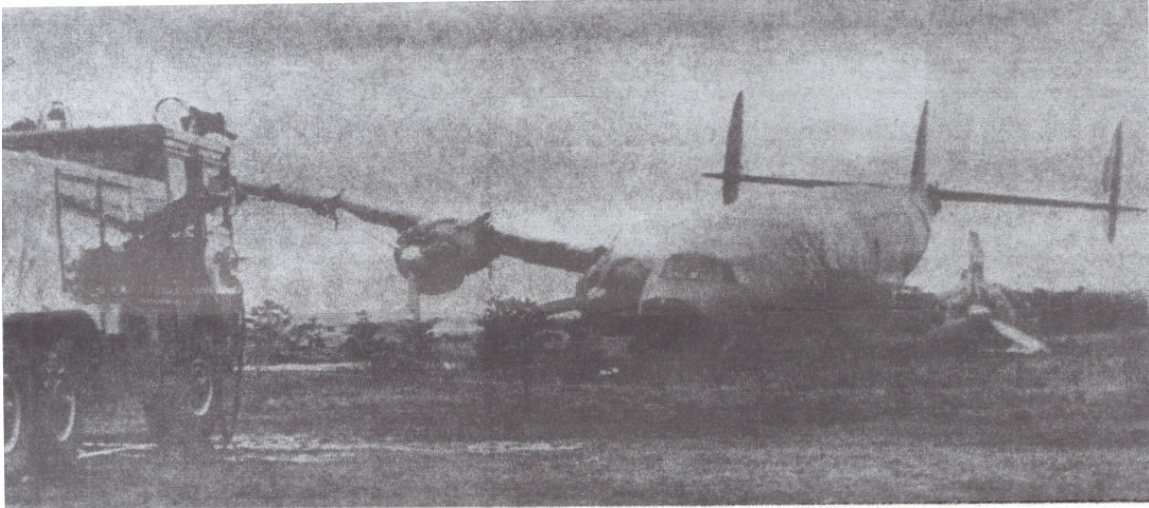
Apparently the landing at this point was good because tire marks at the touchdown point were not overly heavy in the soft, soggy ground.

Gear Collapsed

The plane continued on for about 300 feet, then spun around to the left at which point the nose wheel collapsed and it went over on its nose. At the same time, the left main gear also folded.

Base housing residents knew something had happened when lights and television sets dimmed during early evening newscasts. This apparently came about as the Connie brushed under the power lines. Although the lines stretched a little, none were torn down.

After looking down the wide swath in the underbrush made by the plane, and the bits of trees and bushes hanging on it an Air Force officer said, "The fact that they all made it safely through that ride has to be the miracle of the year."



Otis firefighters standby near the C-121 Constellation which crash-landed about a quarter-mile short of Otis runway shortly after 6 p.m. Friday. None of the 12 men aboard was hurt during the landing, but one man sustained broken bone when he exited from the craft.

(Cape Cod Standard-Tunes photo)