

Flight experience on DC10 pilots Martinair crash at Faro airport

Did the pilots of flight MP495 have sufficient flight experience on a DC-10 for landing on Faro airport in the then trying conditions? The weather was bad and even in the best of situations the runway of Faro-airport was relatively short for a heavy plane as a DC10.

A Dutch newspaper published on March 11, 1993 an article based on an assumption of the Portuguese investigators. The investigators had the theory 'that the Captain (pilot non flying) wanted to use the bad weather conditions at the airport for the First Officer (pilot flying) to gain practical experience'.

Addition by ten Hove, based on the investigation report: the Captain was also an instructor on the DC-10. The First Officer only has landed only once (in 1990 as part of his training) on Faro airport. Could it be possible that the captain was triggered into a natural teaching reflex due to the trying flight situation?

Martin Schröder, founder and then president of Martinair, reacted in the newspaper article to the assumption of the Portuguese investigators with 'it is nonsense that the First Officer would have too little flight experience: he had thousands of flying hours on a DC10.'

According to the investigation report the Captain had approximately 1.500 hours flight experience on a DC-10. The First Officer had almost 1.800 hours of flight experience, with the added remark 'Pilot Flying 860:45.

Combined the Captain and First Officer had approximately 3.300 hours experience on a DC-10. This combined total reflects better than by Mr. Schröder mentioned 'thousands of flying hours'.

Remarkable: the Captain had less experience of a Dc10 than the First Officer.

Besides this, 'flying hours' do not mean that much to me. On holiday pictures I saw that we flew with the Anthony Ruys, the name of the crashed plane, to the USA. Hours flying above the ocean also count as hours flight experience. Whether pilots gain relevant experience during these hours, I doubt very much.

Furthermore I am more interested in experience with total number of landings. Especially in landings in trying circumstances, comparable to the situation at the time of the crash. The investigation report does not provide this information.

I hope that the independent investigators, appointed in 2015 by the The Hague court, also look into the flight and landing experience of the pilots.

Another related matter for the independent investigators to possibly look into is the Cockpit Resource Management at the time of the crash.

I know it is circumstantial, but in August 1998 there was a huge unrest among Martinair pilots because of the heavy workload due to a shortage of pilots. This shortage was caused by pilots not being able to fly because of the backlog in multi day Cockpit Resource Management training that was being caught up.

Next two pages: from the investigation report the flight experience of the pilots.

1.5. PERSONNEL INFORMATION

1.5.1. Information on the Crew

1.5.1.1 Captain

Age : 56 years (DEC 92)
Licence : Airline Pilot Licence B1 no. 67-0026,
valid until 1 February 1993
Medical : 14 Juli 92 (with extension)

Flying experience (hours):
Total: 14.441
Day : 4.110 (Pilot in Command)
Night: 1.878 (Pilot in Command)
Instruments: Approx 90% of total hours
As Captain: 5.988

Experience on DC-10
First Officer: 257
Captain: 1.240
Recent experience (as of OCT 92)
Number of flights to Faro in 1992: 5

Aeronautical career

- 4 years as Navy pilot (FEB 62 - FEB 66)
- 18 months as pilot with Schreiner Airways (F.O. DC-7)
- Joined Martinair in JAN 68
- Training Captain CV640 (DEC 68)
- First Officer DC-8 (DEC 70)
- First Officer DC-10 (NOV 73)
- Captain DC-9 (MAR 75)
- Instructor DC-9 (FEB 78)
- Captain A-310 (MAY 84)
- Instructor A-310 (MAY 84)
- Deputy Chief Pilot A-310 (MAR 86 - NOV 87)
- Captain DC-10 (MAR 88)
- Instructor DC-10 (JAN 89)

23 on 24

1.5.1.2 First Officer

Age : 31 years (DEC 92)

Licence : Pilot Licence B3 no. 88-0073,
valid until 1 July 1993, including ratings for
instrumentflight and R.T.

Medical : 24 June 92

Flying experience (hours):
Total: 2.288:05
Day : 1.362:35
Night: 925:30
Instruments: 2.035:40
Captain (Single-engine): 219.35

Experience on DC-10 (First Officer):
Total: 1.787:50
Day : 917:50
Night: 870:00
Pilot Flying: 860:45
Simulator : 123:35

Recent experience (as of OCT 92)
General : 119:31
Pilot Flying: 75:35
Manual landings: 9
Automatic landings: 3
Number of flights to Faro in 92: 0
(one in 1990)

AERONAUTICAL CARREER:

- Followed the Flying Course at Zestienhoven Airport to obtain the A2-PPL/Cessna 150/Cessna 172 (SEP 82 to APR 83)
- Obtained the A1-PPL/Cessna 172 (DEC 86)
- Followed the Professional Flying Course to obtain the B3-CPL and Instrument Rating, as well as preparing for the theoretical examination for B1-ATPL at the RLS-National Flying Training School/BE33 (129.20); C-500 (67.20) (MAR 87 to MAY 88)
- Business Aviation Pilot (SAS Teuge/C172 (41:40); C182 (07.25) (JUN 88 to OCT 88)
- Pilot at MVVL/First Officer C550 (135.25) (OCT 88 to APR 89)
- Entered Martinair Holland, initial training as First Officer on DC-10 (APR 89)
- First Commercial Flight as First Officer on DC-10 (AUG 89)

24 Dec 92