

No. 22

Maritime Central Airways, Consolidated PB Y-5A, CF-FAN
made a wheels down landing in Sandwich Bay near Cartwright
Harbour, Labrador - 18 May 1952

Circumstances

At 1317 hours on 18 May 1952, the aircraft took off from Gander, Newfoundland, with a crew of three, and a cargo of freight, on a charter flight to Cartwright, Labrador.

The aircraft was seen approaching to land in Sandwich Bay near Cartwright Harbour with the main undercarriage extended. The aircraft appeared to come to a sudden stop immediately after the wheels touched the water and the tail of the aircraft was seen to rise to a vertical position and settle back at an angle of about 45 degrees. The crew were killed.

Investigation and Evidence

The aircraft was operating under a temporary authority pending the issue of a Certificate of Airworthiness. There was no evidence of malfunctioning of the airframe, engines or controls.

Weather was not a factor in the accident.

The aircraft departed from Gander without filing a flight plan but the Air Traffic Controller was informed that the destination was Goose Bay, Labrador. The only radio control with the aircraft was the normal taxiing and take-off clearances and receipt of the aircraft's ETA at Cartwright by a private radio station.

Eye witnesses, who had some aviation experience, saw the wheels-down approach and landing of the aircraft but had no means with which to warn the pilot of the danger.

It was established that the all-up weight of the aircraft was within the prescribed limits at the take-off but at the time of the accident exceeded the authorized landing limit by about 500 lbs.

Probable Cause

The aircraft crashed on the water through failure on the part of the pilot-in-command to ensure that the main undercarriage was retracted.