

No. 3

Polish Airlines "LOT", IL-14, SP-LNF, accident 4.5 kms northeast of Wnukowo Aerodrome, U. S. S. R. on 14 June 1957. General description of accident released by the Department of Civil Aviation, Ministry of Communications, Poland.

Circumstances

The aircraft took off from Warszawa/Okecie aerodrome on a non-stop scheduled flight to Moscow, following the normal route of flight LO/232. It carried 8 passengers, 5 crew and 819 kgs of mail and cargo. The flight was routine as far as Klimentiewo, 75 km west of Wnukowo aerodrome, and communication between the aircraft and the relevant units of the Air Traffic Control service was established. During the flight leg between Wiazma and Klimentiewo the aircraft followed its route and lowered altitude as instructed by the air traffic controller in view of the bad weather conditions (storm) in that area. Over Klimentiewo the aircraft was at an altitude of 400 m, altimeter setting 737.4 mm Hg (current QFE at Wnukowo aerodrome); the pilot reported sighting the ground and was cleared by the air traffic controller to descend to 300 m and to head for Wnukowo aerodrome. At 2307 hours local time, i. e. 5 minutes before the scheduled time of arrival at the aerodrome, the crew requested approach clearance. The air traffic controller had transferred control of the aircraft to the approach control service; the latter, having established contact with the aircraft, gave the pilot the QAM and cleared him for approach in accordance with the instrument approach procedure prescribed for that aerodrome.

Although the pilot acknowledged receipt of the approach clearance, according to established procedure, he failed to adhere to the prescribed procedure and descended to such a low altitude that the

aircraft hit the ground. The aircraft was completely demolished. Five passengers and 4 crew were killed and 3 passengers were seriously injured.

Investigation and Evidence

There is no doubt about the technical condition and functioning of the aircraft and engines during the flight. The destruction of the aircraft and engines proves that the impact occurred at a time when the aircraft was flying at high speed and engine power exceeded normal operating power.

All crew members complied with the regulations concerning the experience and knowledge required for flying this type of aircraft; furthermore, all the necessary instructions and charts were available on board the aircraft for orientation during flight and for the performance of approach procedures.

Weather conditions in the area where the accident occurred were as follows: very low ceiling, heavy turbulence, distant lightning, driving rain.

Probable Cause

The aircraft hit the ground while flying at an excessively low altitude following the crew's application of an approach procedure other than that prescribed by Wnukowo aerodrome. The bad weather conditions which set in during the night and were not forecast in the messages had their influence on the disastrous end of the flight.