

0. POTENTIAL FOR DISASTER - Story Preface

1. POTENTIAL FOR DISASTER

2. KLM 4805: PRESSURE TO LEAVE

3. PAN AM 1736: MISSED EXIT

4. UNAUTHORIZED TAKE-OFF

5. TOO LATE

6. THE CRASH

7. INFERNO



This image depicts how the runway/taxiway at Tenerife Norte (TFN) airport appeared in March of 1977. The same air strip was used for airplanes to taxi and to take off. Image part of the crash investigation record.

Ill-equipped to handle increasing traffic and jumbo jets, Los Rodeos (also called Tenerife Norte - TFN) had other potential problems that spring day:

- Located near mountains - like Pico de Teide - TFN's runway could be clear one minute and completely shrouded in clouds the next.
- The airport had no ground radar.
- Its air traffic controllers had thick Spanish accents.
- The center lights weren't working.
- The pilots who were flying into Tenerife were facing long delays, threatening their "legal" flying requirements.

Taken together, the events created a potential for disaster.

But there was something more.

Jacob van Zanten, the captain of KLM 4805, had spent the last months of his career working with pilots in a flight simulator. Pilots in flight simulators concentrate more on flying planes than communicating with ground control in airport towers.

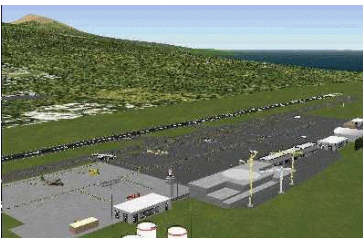
The most deadly unintentional crash in the history of aviation occurred on the ground.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/POTENTIAL-FOR-DISASTER-Tenerife-Deadliest-Air-Accident>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/POTENTIAL-FOR-DISASTER-Tenerife-Deadliest-Air-Accident>



Animation of Tenerife Airport in March of 1977

Image online, courtesy Tenerife Airport Disaster.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Animation-of-Tenerife-Airport-in-March-of-1977>



North Tenerife Airport Located Near Mountain

Image online, courtesy Tenerife Airport Disaster.

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View of Tenerife's Mount Teide From the North

Photo by Jens Steckert. License - Creative Commons Attribution ShareAlike 2.5.

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Flight Simulator

Image, courtesy NASA.

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Tenerife Crash Scene

Image from crash investigation report.

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Tenerife - Scene of Deadliest Aircraft Accident

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