# **INFERNO**



0. INFERNO - 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 still shot, from historical footage recorded at the scene of the Tenerife disaster, depicts Pan Am 1736 after it was struck by KLM 4805. Both planes were fully loaded with fuel at the time of the collision.

After <u>striking the Pan Am jet</u>, 4805's landing gear sheared off. Information from flight data recorders (also called "the <u>black box</u>") tell what happened next.

The KLM 747 dropped back to the runway about 500 feet from impact and skidded another 1,000 feet, sliding to the right and rotating clockwise 90 degrees. As soon as it stopped, a violent fire engulfed the whole wreckage, utterly disintegrating the plane. No one escaped the inferno.

Seventy people were able to get out of the Pan Am plane, although nine died later. Most made it to the left wing, then jumped to the ground from there.

When tower personnel heard the explosion, they thought terrorists had blown up a fuel truck. Not until they received reports of fire on the airport's runway did they realize the explosion (this link contains an on-the-scene BBC audio/visual report) must have been from a plane.

Fire and rescue personnel had difficulty making their way through the congested, foggy airport. After they found the KLM plane completely engulfed in flames, <u>rescue workers</u> noticed another fire down the runway. They believed they saw <u>burning parts</u> from the same plane. Not until fire personnel reached <u>the Pan Am plane</u> did they realize the <u>magnitude</u> of the <u>disaster</u>. The <u>inferno</u> was not completely <u>extinguished</u> until the next day.

The <u>Tenerife crash</u> still stands as the world's <u>worst</u> aviation accident. Five hundred eighty-three (583) people died. Seven of the 16 Pan Am crew survived, including <u>Captain Grubbs</u>.

The Spanish government found that Captain van Zanten was responsible. The Dutch investigation also assigned responsibility to Tenerife's controllers. The official Spanish investigation also reports that:

It was not possible to perform autopsies on the members of the KLM crew on account of the state of the bodies.

Captain van Zanten's <u>scream</u> was the <u>last thing</u> recorded on the cockpit voice recorder. All of the KLM evacuation doors remained sealed. A likely explanation? There was either no time to attempt escape or no possibility to even try.

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

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/INFERNO-Tenerife-Deadliest-Air-Accident

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/INFERNO-Tenerife-Deadliest-Air-Accident

# Media Stream



The Collision
Image online, courtesy the PBS.org website.
View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/The-Collision



KLM 4805 Disintegrates Following Impact and Fire

Historical television footage.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/KLM-4805-Disintegrates-Following-Impact-and-Fire



**Aircraft Disintegration** 

Historical television footage.

View this asset at: <a href="http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Aircraft-Disintegration">http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Aircraft-Disintegration</a>



Escape from the Pan Am Plane

Historical television footage.

View this asset at: <a href="http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Escape-from-the-Pan-Am-Plane">http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Escape-from-the-Pan-Am-Plane</a>



Path of Escape from Pan Am 1736

Historical television footage of the crash site.

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Path-of-Escape-from-Pan-Am-1736



# **Disintegration of the Aircraft**

Image online, courtesy the <u>tenerifecrash.com</u> website.

View this asset at: <a href="http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Disintegration-of-the-Aircraft">http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Disintegration-of-the-Aircraft</a>



**Exploding Plane** 

Accident investigation photo.

 $\label{lem:view-this-asset} \textbf{View this asset at:} \ \underline{\text{http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Exploding-Plane}}$ 



Investigators Sift Through Crash Scene Debris

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Investigators-Sift-Through-Crash-Scene-Debris



#### Fire and Rescue Workers at the Crash Scene

Image online, courtesy Flight Safety, Australia Sept - Oct 2007, page 49.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Fire-and-Rescue-Workers-at-the-Crash-Scene



# Charred Remains of Pan Am Flight 1736

Image online, courtesy project-tenerife.com website.

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Charred-Remains-of-Pan-Am-Flight-1736-



### **Burning Planes in the Fog**

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Burning-Planes-in-the-Fog



# Pan Am Passengers Escape from Burning Plane

Image online, courtesy airdisasters.com website.

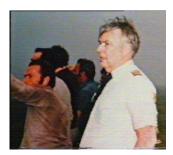
View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Pan-Am-Passengers-Escape-from-Burning-Plane



#### Plane Wreckage at Tenerife

Image online, courtesy project-tenerife.com website.



### Captain Victor Grubbs at Crash Scene

Image online, courtesy project-tenerife.com.

 $\label{thm:com} \begin{tabular}{ll} View this asset at: $$\underline{$http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Captain-Victor-Grubbs-at-Crash-Scene}$ \end{tabular}$ 



Pan Am 1736 (Victor Clipper) Burns at Tenerife

Image online, courtesy Air Safety.

View this asset at:

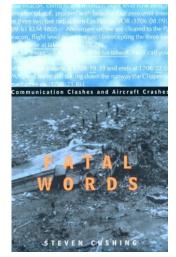
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Pan-Am-1736-Victor-Clipper-Burns-at-Tenerife



### Pan Am Debris at Crash Scene

Image online, courtesy Pan Am Air website.

 $\textit{View this asset at:} \ \underline{\text{http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Pan-Am-Debris-at-Crash-Scene} \\$ 



# The Last Communication from KLM 4805: The Captain's Scream

Fatal Words: Communication Clashes and Aircraft Crashes, by Steven Cushing.

Book cover image, courtesy Amazon.com.

View this asset at:

 $\underline{\text{http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/The-Last-Communication-from-KLM-4805-The-Captain-s-Scream}}$ 



#### **INFERNO**

View this asset at:  $\underline{\text{http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/INFERNO}}$