

CENTRAL DC3 INCIDENT AT SGF

DEC 1959 or JAN 1960

Anyone know the real story concerning Sam Scott picking up a load of ice on a DC-3 and unable to hold altitude. Barely made it into Springfield, MO. It would have been Central Airlines and before we (FAL) started serving SGF.

-Phil Stallings
(1/27/00)

I was a passenger (non-rev) on that flight. Think it was Dec 59 or Jan 60. Not sure but think Frosty was F/O.

-Larry Thomas
(1/27/00)

I have some rather vivid memories about the ice incident since I was Sam's co-pilot and it was my leg to fly. And fly for my life, I did! Sam was great about splitting the flying and leaving the co-pilot alone unless he was getting things badly out of whack.

We had started out that winter day in 1960 from ACF in DC-3/C-47 #794 with the usual stops at DAL, PRX, FSM, FYV, HRO and STL. Weather was winter IMC all the way but no ice. Fuel and de-icing alcohol were serviced at STL and we launched with 15 passengers into a rainy night at 6000' for HRO, FYV and an overnight at FSM.

We started picking up ice after about 20 minutes in cruise. Turned on the prop alcohol and cycled the de-ice boots but airspeed started dropping off even though power was being added.

We tried to get a higher altitude to get out of the icing but traffic prevented it and besides, Delta had to go to 12000' to get on top and out of the ice so that was out of the question.

I would cycle the props to high RPM and back and ice would bang on the fuselage and speed would improve for a few minutes. But pretty soon there was no spare RPM to cycle with!

After awhile we found ourselves trying to maintain the minimum enroute altitude (MEA) with max. continous power on both engines and 70 knots on the airspeed indicator. (Stall speed was usually about 60)

Sam relayed to ATC through an AAL DC-6 high over FYV that we were declaring an emergency and we were heading for SGF but couldn't maintain the MEA. He also called the stew up and told her to get everything secured cause we might just have to go down short of SGF. So for 20+ minutes we ran those Pratt & Whitney's at full take-off power and I slowly descended to maintain the 70 knots. Finally I could maintain about 600' above the ground and 70 knots with full power but we were still in the clouds and waiting for the trees to start banging on us.

We broke out of the clouds in moderate snow about 15 miles east of the city. I flew a easy turn in to land north-east and had full power on the engines all the way to the runway to maintain 65 knots with the gear down. The landing was firm and the right engine kept dying while taxiing in but we made it. Sam got out of the right seat and went inside to talk to the authorities.

I just sat in the left seat for 10-15 minutes, shaking and too weak to get out of the seat. There was 5" of ice on the aircraft's nose and landing light lenses when we got it to the gate!

The cause of our travail was a plugged filter screen for the prop alcohol which let ice accumulate on the prop blades spoiling their efficiency. They were not much better than clubs. And there was no flowmeters on most of our 3's so we couldn't verify alcohol flow.

The next day we tried to ferry the airplane to ACF but the right engine failed on the first power reduction after take off.

After the engine was changed another crew ferried it to ACF. The other engine failed enroute about the time the crew called FYV and changed the ACF estimate by an hour!

Later this same aircraft was involved in two more close calls due to icing.

Bob Lockett ran out of altitude at the same time he reached the runway at Gage OK and Bob Brooks had a similar scare at Stillwater OK.

Bill Lassiter and I spent alot of time and energy on the safety committee but we finally got prop flowmeters on all the CEN DC-3's.

The first news that the Dispatcher (Gene Owens) got that we had a problem was when the local FTW radio station he was listening broke in to report that a CEN DC-3 had crashed in southwest Missouri. They told Gene they had gotten their info from an Air Traffic Control land phone line.

-Jack "Frosty" Frost

(1/27/00)

Do you remember who the stewardess was? She quit not long after that when she walked out of the hanger at GSW for her trip and saw the airplane which was coated with ice from freezing rain the night before. She later married Danny???

who later was the Station Manager at MKO and I believe, AMA.

-Jack "Frosty" Frost

(1/27/00)

<That would be Danny Johnson who flew west Jan 24, 2005. I have been unable to find out the name of his wife.>

I can still hear the ice hitting the fuselage, sounded like someone with a hammer - hitting the fuselage.

-Larry Thomas

(1/29/00)