

= LANSA Flight 502 =

LANSA Flight 502 was a Lockheed L @-@ 188A Electra operated by Líneas Aéreas Nacionales Sociedad Anónima (LANSA) which crashed shortly after takeoff from Quispichilla Airport near Cusco , Peru on August 9 , 1970 , after losing all power from one of its engines . The four @-@ engine turboprop aircraft , registered OB @-@ R @-@ 939 , was bound from Cusco to Lima , carrying 8 crew and 92 passengers . All but one of the occupants died from injuries sustained from impact forces and post crash fire . Two people on the ground were also killed . There were 49 American high school exchange students on board , all of whom perished . A Peruvian government investigation concluded that the accident was caused by improper execution of engine @-@ out procedures by the flight crew , aggravated by lack of maintenance and overloading . LANSA was fined and its operations were suspended for 90 days . At the time , the crash was the deadliest ever in Peruvian history .

= = Background = =

More than half of the passengers belonged to a single group , sponsored by the Buffalo , New York based International Fellowship student exchange program , consisting of 49 American high school exchange students , along with their teachers , family members , and guides , who were returning from a visit to nearby Machu Picchu to their host families in the Lima area . The daughter of the mayor of Lima was also accompanying the group . The Peruvian passengers included a couple on their honeymoon .

August 9 , 1970 was a Sunday , and Flight 502 was originally scheduled to depart Cuzco at 8 : 30 am , but since many of the members of the American group wanted to visit the nearby Pisac native handicraft market prior to leaving for Lima , the airline postponed the departure time to 2 : 45 pm .

Quispichilla Airport , since renamed to Alejandro Velasco Astete International Airport , is located about 3 miles (4 @. @ 8 km) east @-@ southeast of the city of Cusco , in a small valley high on the Andes , at an altitude of 10 @, @ 860 feet (3 @, @ 310 m) above mean sea level . Higher mountainous terrain surrounds the single east @-@ west runway airport in all directions . Since it was August , it was winter time in Peru , as in the rest of the southern hemisphere .

At about 2 : 55 pm , the four @-@ engine Electra turboprop began its takeoff run to the west . At some point during the takeoff run or initial climb , the number three engine failed and caught fire . The crew continued the takeoff and climb , per standard procedure , using power from the remaining three engines . The pilot radioed the control tower declaring an emergency , and the control tower cleared the flight for an immediate landing . The number three engine was engulfed in flames as the crew retracted the flaps and maneuvered the plane into a left turn back to the runway . The plane entered a 30 ? 45 degree bank , then rapidly lost altitude and crashed into hilly terrain about 1 @. @ 5 miles (2 @. @ 4 km) west @-@ southwest of the runway , above the village of San Jerónimo . The fuel on board lit up superbly and all aboard perished except the copilot , who was found in the wreckage of the cockpit badly burned but alive . Two farm workers were killed on the ground .

= = Investigation = =

The Peruvian government investigated the accident , and in its final report concluded that the probable cause of the accident was the improper execution of engine @-@ out procedures by the flight crew , with contributing factors of improper loading of the aircraft and improper maintenance procedures by company personnel . There was also evidence of a coverup and falsification of critical maintenance records by LANSA employees during the investigation process . The Peruvian government subsequently fined LANSA and some of its employees , and suspended the airline 's operating license for 90 days as a consequence .

= = Aftermath = =

About a year after the accident , a monument ? a large white cross with an attached nameplate ? was erected on the spot of the crash site to commemorate the victims of LANSA flight 502 . In 2006 , because of encroaching development , the Peruvian owner of the land where the memorial was originally located , under pressure from the U.S. Senator from New York , Charles E. Schumer , the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Consulate General in Peru , agreed to relocate the memorial 150 feet away to protect the site .