

Helios Flight 522: How a Single Switch Killed 121 Passengers...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_Rr6-HV3as&ab_channel=RealHorror

On the 14th of August 2005 at 7 30 a.m
Helios Airways flight 522 - a flight scheduled to travel from Cyprus to _____ via Athens was stuck on a loop 35 000 feet in the sky and there had been no communication from the plane for over an hour.

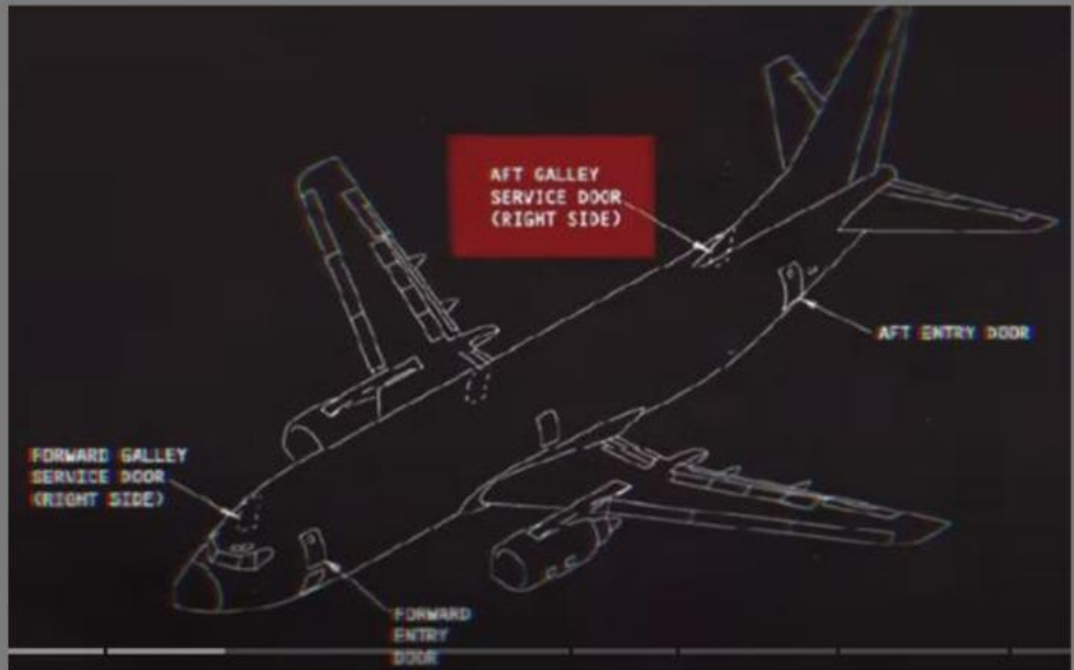
In a state of _____, the Greek army sent two F-16 fighter jets to investigate but as one of the pilots glanced a view inside the aircraft they saw that disaster was about to _____ because the pilots were nowhere to be seen. They were about to _____ one of the worst airplane disasters in European history and it left everyone on the ground with one question—
“What happened to Helios flight?”

*unfold
witness
confusion
Prague*



Part 1

A Loud Banging Noise



The story of Helios flight 522 began at 9 pm on Saturday the 13th of August 2005 when a Boeing 737 aircraft nicknamed Olympia _____

London Heathrow for Larnaca Cyprus.

The plane was owned by Helios Airways, a low-cost Cypriot airline that charted flights between Cyprus and the rest of Europe. The flight was initially fairly _____ but then the crew heard something strange - a loud banging noise was coming from one of the plane's doors. Upon further inspection, it also seemed that the seal around the door was _____.

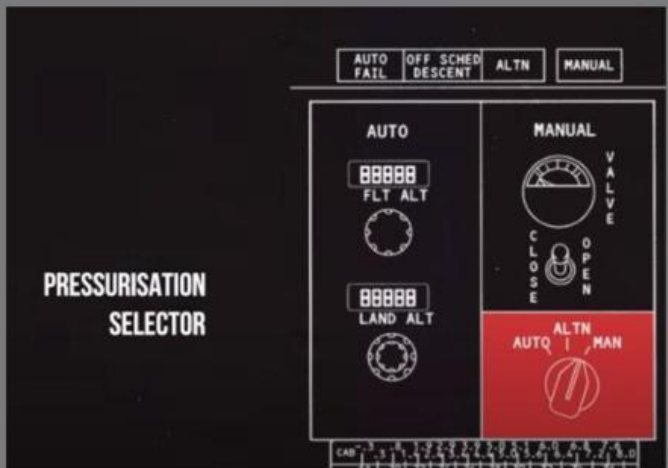


*uneventful
carried out
defect log
frozen
departed*

Following procedure, one of the flight's crew members made a note of the incident in the aircraft cabin _____.

And when the plane landed at Larnaca airport at 1:25 am local time, those notes were passed to the captain for review, who personally spoke to the ground engineer team to ensure a full inspection was _____. And with that, the crew left and a full inspection began.

The man in charge of the inspection was 44-year-old Alan Irwin, a well-liked and _____ engineer from the UK, who had been hired by Helios Airways on a six-month contract. Following standard operating _____ for a Boeing 737, Allen carried out **a cabin pressurization leak check** to test the _____ of the door.



*integrity
cockpit panel
procedure
hands-on*

To do this, he

and his team needed to manually pressurize the plane while it was still on the ground. As part of that process, Allen switched something known as the **pressurization mode selector** located on the _____ from auto to **manual**.

It's important to remember that a plane's onboard pressurization system ensures that the plane is adequately _____ as it gains altitude. This is something that is always done automatically but a manual option is available in order to perform _____ tests. However, going through this process, Allen and the rest of his team were unable to recreate the problem. So after carrying on with other routine checks, he noted down that **there were no known defects, no _____ and no abnormal noises.**

*oxygenated
leaks
on-the-ground*



Alan and the rest of his team felt that the on-board pressurization system was working just fine. This is the moment that starts off a chain of events that will

fill in
seal the fate
briefing
released

_____ of everyone on board, because the pressurization mode selector had not been set back to auto.

Part 2: *A Catastrophic Chain of Events*

On Sunday the 14th of August 2005 at 3:15 am local time, the aircraft was _____ for its 6am flight to Prague via Athens. **Fast forward to 5am**, the crew for flight 522 arrived an hour before departure to complete a standard pre-flight _____. **Due to** staff sickness, there had been some difficulty in putting together a full crew. Luckily, two attendants Louisa Volterra and Andreas Prodromo were able to _____ last minute. Initially, Andreas was **reluctant** to join the crew but would eventually agree after discovering that his girlfriend, also a flight attendant, was serving as a member of the cabin crew on that particular flight.

The four flight attendants would join 59-year-old captain Hans-Jurgen Merton and 51-year-old first officer Pamos Harolambos. Two _____ pilots with a collective 23 thousand hours of flying experience between them. Together this crew of six would serve 115 passengers around _____ of whom were children.

fired
references
a third
employment
experienced

As the cabin crew were preparing for takeoff, they knew that this would be an easy and short flight with experienced pilots. But what they didn't know is that Hans was _____ three months earlier by British Airline jet 2 for repeated failures to **comply with** standard procedures.

In fact, nobody knows this, not even Helios themselves because Han's _____ were never asked for. On top of this, first officer Pamos also has a record of rushing through checklists and, **to make matters worse**, the two pilots don't exactly **see eye to eye**. In fact, Pamos had complained multiple times about Han's attitude and was actively seeking new _____.

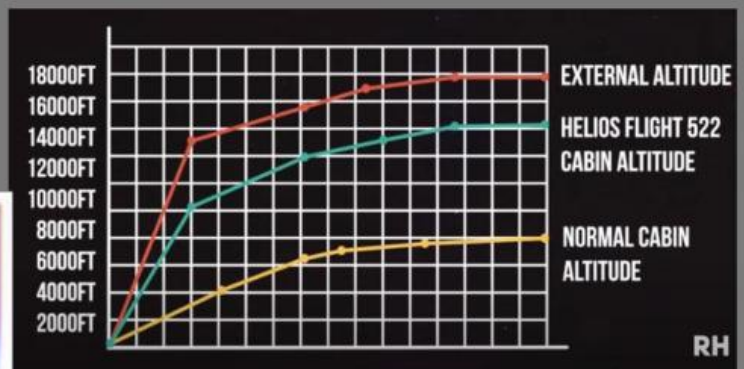
Nonetheless, as passengers began to board the plane, Pampos and Hans worked through their standard pre-flight checklist. It is here that **the string of** catastrophic errors _____. Pre-flight checklists are lists of tasks that should be **performed by** pilots and aircrew _____ takeoff. In the cockpit, pilots will be working through multiple lists designed to ensure that all **switches**

*seemed
prior to
testimony
cruising altitude
continued
failed*

and indicators are in the correct positions. But flight 522 was slightly behind schedule. And so as both Hans and Pampos rushed through their checklists, they both _____ to register that the pressurization mode selector was still on manual.

At 6:07 am, seven minutes behind schedule, the aircraft took off from Larnaca Airport. For the first few minutes, everything _____ perfectly normal. Four minutes after takeoff at 6:11 am, ground control cleared flight 522 for a final _____ of 34 000 feet and the plane began its climb through the clear blue **Cypriot** sky.

It should be said at this point that only the last few hours of in-flight cockpit recordings are actually available and so much of this story has been pieced together using the in-flight data recorder, on the ground recordings and _____ as well as clues from the **crash site**. And what this all shows is that due to the pressurization mode selector still being set to manual the cabin was not auto-



atically pressurizing, meaning the air was getting thinner and there was increasingly less oxygen.

Even though multiple indicators on the cockpit dashboard clearly showed that the altitude inside the cabin was _____ high, for some reason, neither

Hans nor Pampas, two pilots with tens of thousands of hours of flight experience between them, noticed. At twelve thousand feet and climbing yet another fatal and _____ error was made when a loud alarm started sounding in the cockpit. Because the pilots had missed the earlier signs that the cabin was not adequately pressurizing, they _____ this loud alarm as an erroneous takeoff configuration warning. In other words, a glitch.

inexplicable
abnormally
erroneous
misread

This was, in fact, the cabin altitude warning alarm. While the two sound exactly the same where the alarm sounds indicates which it is and when it sounds off in the air, it means one thing and one thing only - that there is an immediate and _____ issue with the cabin pressurization and that oxygen masks should be worn immediately.

Neither Hans nor Pampas did this. Instead, at 6 14 am Hans made a call down to the Helios dispatcher on the ground. At first he mentioned the _____ takeoff configuration warning which was sounding in the cockpit. This confused the dispatcher because a takeoff configuration alarm cannot sound at twelve thousand feet in the air and so he _____ the call over to Alan Irwin, the on-duty ground engineer, who had performed the plane's inspection earlier on in the day. But things became even stranger when the captain began to radio down about a ventilation _____ system error. He stated that, "the ventilation cooling fan lights were off". Then, moments later, he directly contradicted himself. To alan, who

cooling
urgent
bizarre
handed
erroneous

was listening in on the ground, the conversation was as confusing as it was _____.



But perhaps Alan thought Hans is confusing two lights that sit closely together and it was at this point that he asked the captain about the pressurization mode selector to which he received no_____.

*suffering
deprived
reply*

Allen didn't realize it at the time but Hans was behaving strangely because he and his co-pilot were both _____ from rapid onset hypoxia - a condition whereby the body is _____ of oxygen.



EFFECTS OF HYPOXIA

VISION WORSENS

CONFUSION & DISORIENTATION

LACK OF COORDINATION

MOOD CHANGE



Hypoxia

the effects of hypoxia
on the human body
are strange

To be continued