

PRESS RELEASE

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IFALPA Recognises Austrian Airlines pilots for exceptional airmanship

CAPE TOWN 10 April 2005 At last night's Annual Conference Dinner the International Federation of Air Line Pilot's Associations (IFALPA) honoured Captain Jan Kurka and First Officer Markus Turk for their actions in January of last year. Early in the morning of the 5th, an Austrian Airlines service operated by Captain Kurka and F/O Turk departed Vienna on a 40 minute flight to Munich. The Fokker 70 was carrying 28 passengers and four crew as it climbed into conditions described as "deep wintery". The majority of the short flight was without incident but while descending through 13,000ft Kurka and Turk noted the right hand engine had developed a strong vibration. Following the execution of the abnormal checklist the vibrations appeared to return to the normal range. However, a flight attendant reported a loud bang from the left hand engine. This noise was audible to the flight crew too and Captain Kurka declared an emergency to air traffic control (ATC). While following ATC directions to Munich's runway 26L the crew noted that insufficient thrust was being developed to maintain the glideslope. Kurka and Turk reduced drag by retracting the landing gear and reducing flap setting but this was to no avail and the Fokker 70 continued to sink below the glideslope.

Breaking out of cloud at a mere 400ft AGL the crew advised ATC that they had visual contact with the runway but would be unable to make the airport and planned to execute a forced landing short of the runway. The aircraft landed in an agricultural field about two nautical miles short of the 26L threshold. Although the crew had selected gear down on short final only the nose gear had reached the down and locked position by the time the aircraft touched down. On the ground roll, the nose gear sheared off and the main gear returned to a retracted position. The aircraft came to a halt after sliding on its belly across the snow covered field for a relatively short 210 metres. Thanks to the exceptional airmanship and crew work displayed by Kurka and Turk all 32 occupants of the aircraft survived and only three passengers suffered minor injuries.

Notes to Editors

The Polaris Award is granted by IFALPA for acts of exceptional airmanship, heroic action or a combination of these two attributes.

The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations represents in excess of 100,000 pilots in more than 95 countries world-wide. The mission of IFALPA is to be the global voice of airline pilots, promoting the highest level of aviation safety and security world-wide and providing services, support and representation to all of its Member Associations. www.ifalpa.org

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