This pilot ignored it| Vietnam airlines flight 815

Hook/Intro

Hello and welcome back to our channel!

This was taken on **September 3, 1997**. Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, is served by an airport located very nearby. In bad weather, **flight 815** crashed just short of the runway.

To understand how this tragedy killed many people, examine the plane, the pilots, and the airport.

Today's video concerns an airplane we have yet to discuss. Soviet engineers created the regional jet known as the **Tupolev 134**.

The plane was built in the early **1960s** and is a remnant of a bygone age in aviation. The only airline still operating the aircraft is a North Korean carrier named Air Koryo.

Even after the Soviet Union's fall, the plane survived. With over **800 aircraft** constructed, they were initially easy to find on the used market. One of these nations was Vietnam, where the Tupolev 134 was stationed.

In the 1990s, Vietnam's aviation underwent significant reform. The Vietnam Civil Aviation Administration owned and ran the country's national airline, just like it did in China. The Vietnamese government spun off Vietnam Airlines as a state-owned enterprise in 1993.

The airline owned nine Tupolev 134s in the middle of the 1990s. However, the fleet was retiring these older Soviet planes. However, this procedure would take years to complete. The aircraft received the **VN-A120 registration in 1997** and was still in service with Vietnam Airlines.

The early afternoon flight from Ho Chi Minh City to Phnom Penh was scheduled for September 3.

The Tupolev 134 needed three to five pilots, unlike similar aircraft. Three people were on flight 815. **Captain Phnam Van** Tieu, 59 years old, His **11,000 flight hours** he was primarily spent piloting Soviet aircraft like the Tupolev. But he did possess a type rating for the **Boeing 707**.

Hoang Van Dinh, a 49-year-old first officer, had slightly over 6,000 flight hours, about 4000 of which were in this plane. **Luu Thanh Tan**, the flight engineer, and third crew member was a veteran pilot in his own right. In contrast to his coworkers, he had put in fewer hours in the previous months. The cabin held 66 people, including the pilots, **60 passengers**, and three crew members.

At roughly **1 p.m**. local time, the Tupolev 134 took off from Ho Chi Minh City, flying as Flight 815.

The flight was uneventful for the majority of the time. The closer the jet got to Phnom Penh, the more strange things seemed to happen. The VOR equipment at the airport was designed to help the pilots navigate appropriately to the Cambodian city.

Airports use VOR (Very High-Frequency Omnidirectional Range) technology that shows the beacon's direction relative to the jet. Pilots can track it using its radio frequency. Many countries are phasing out this antiquated technology. The DME, which measured distance, was also on this VOR. Two months before the disaster, airport equipment was seized.

The runway lighting, meteorological equipment, and VORDME system were among these.

The accident report states that the runway lights were generally working at the time of the accident. The airport and local government needed help to afford replacements. Pilots used even earlier non-directional beacons to navigate.

Like VORs, NDBs transmit radio waves. Unlike VOR, it does not independently provide directional information, as suggested by its name. Pilots may still tune into it and decipher its Morse code identification.

Because of this, **NDB navigation** in aviation is frequently referred to as having two components: the NDB transmitter and an automatic direction finder, or ADF, on board the aircraft.

By just pointing in the direction of the transmission, it would be possible to determine where the NDB is broadcasting from. It's outdated by modern navigation standards, but in this situation, it was essential.

Flight 815's pilots tuned Phnom Penh's NDB station. The flying crew asked controllers for lower altitudes as they drew closer. Communication between incoming aircraft and air traffic control was crucial due to the lack of navigational aids. Once the plane was **5,000 feet** above the ground, the pilots made a request and began approaching the airport.

As previously mentioned, items other than the VOR navigational equipment were taken from the airport. The equipment for observing the weather had also been taken.

That day in Phnom Penh, the weather was terrible. Following the incident, there would be a dispute between the authorities of Vietnam and Cambodia, with Vietnam blaming Cambodia and claiming that the weather would have been bad as a result.

The controllers inquired as the plane descended as to whether they could see the airport, to which the answer was no, they couldn't. The number of missed approaches at the airport increased during the rainy season, which can last into September.

Flight 815's pilots informed the controllers that they had trouble finding the airport and needed help from the ground. The pilots initially intended to make a southerly approach to **runway 23.**

However, according to air traffic control, runway 05, which faces northeast, was to be used. The last communication between the jet and the ground occurred after the pilots acknowledged this and that.

Strangely, the controller's advice should have been taken into consideration. **According to eyewitnesses**, the jet was said to have been approaching from the east. At **2000 feet,** the plane was in the air. Despite not having visual contact with the runway, the aircraft descended into the airport. Without spotting an airfield or runway, flight 815 would fall to 200 feet.

The **Captain proposed** that he draw up and abort the landing because neither he nor the first officer could see the runway when looking from the outside. It's also thought that the flight engineer voiced his concerns about how risky the approach was.

In reaction, the Captain would disregard the advice of the other members of the flight crew and keep going with the approach. He would use flight 815 to descend to just 30 meters or 100 feet.

The runway was not visible, even at this low altitude. The aircraft had deviated from its intended path and was now hundreds of meters from the runway. First Officer **Hoang Van Dinh** requests the Captain once more to take a missed approach into account. The first officer's words were spoken four seconds before calamity struck.

At that point, the Captain neglected to assess the circumstances and take corrective action. A palm tree was struck by the left wing of the aircraft just **14 meters** above the ground.

The collision also caused the left-side engine to stop functioning. The plane's right wing had also scratched a house's roof since it was flying so low to the earth.

Sources that presented in-depth eyewitness descriptions claimed that flames were seen from the initial impact. The plane crashed and skidded over the ground before exploding due to its now uncontrollable state following the hit with the tree. Numerous rice fields were damaged when **Flight 815 crashed, killing many people**.

Local law enforcement and the military apparently entered the crash site and started looting. The local villagers then proceeded to do so.

Only five of the survivors who were helped were found alive and saved and sent to the hospital. Two were kids, and one was a fourteen-month-old Thai baby.

In the end, the small kid would be the only one to recover from his wounds, making him the only one to survive the collision. Four more passed away in the hospital. It appears that the resources needed to save more people were unavailable to the rescuers on the scene.

That situation was made worse by the continued looting of the plane and the deceased. The looting proved to be a barrier to the inquiry in figuring out what happened. Among the stolen items were the flight recorders, three on aircraft 815. The objects were retrieved with the promise of a reward for their return.

As stated in the Cambodian report, the investigation directly linked the Captain's conduct to the crash. They should have obeyed the controllers' directions regarding the usage of the runway, which is a sign of poor communication between the controllers and the other pilots. In their safety recommendations, the researchers emphasize the significance of pilots abiding by visual flight rules to avoid flying into bad weather in their safety recommendations.

Additionally, Phnom Penh's navigation was observed. The tragedy of Flight 815 is Vietnam Airlines' last fatal accident to date.

That's all for today's video. Thanks for watching! Remember to subscribe to the channel and press the bell icon to stay tuned!