

DOES TRADITIONAL FIREFIGHTING STOP AT SOME AIRPORT FENCES?

AN INVESTIGATIVE REPORT ON AIRCRAFT INTERIOR FIREFIGHTING & RESCUE PART THREE

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fire with persons still inside is way beyond the call of duty. Money cannot compensate them for the challenges, demands, and stress they experienced during and after the incident responses discussed below.

Most of the incidents we will discuss occurred prior to 1995, when the total ARFF training focus was fuel spill fire control. Some of the incident scenarios had never occurred before, so there was no prior experience to rely on. The responding firefighters did the best they could with the training and experience they had. That is a key point. They did not have a fraction of enough training and they had zero experience with what they were dealing with. This was probably the first and last major aircraft incident they ever dealt with. Each of us, and our respective fire departments, could easily have performed in a similar manner

INTERIOR FIRE AT A JETWAY

In 1989, a 727 experienced a major interior fire while parked at a gate. This concourse has thirteen (13) gates and ten (10) of them were loading or unloading passengers. Pre-boarding of the involved aircraft was underway at the time of the fire. (19) persons were on the aircraft, consisting of (12) passengers, (4) flight Attendants, and (3) flight crew. The passengers ages ranged from 10 to 68. The 68 year old male had

The primary focus of this series of four articles will be catastrophic fires on large commercial passenger and cargo aircraft. Part 1 addressed causes of interior fires, applicable standards and requirements, traditional structural firefighting tactics, and how many responders are needed for interior firefighting and rescue. Parts 2 through 4 will attempt to identify lessons learned from most of the major aircraft interior fires that have occurred in the past twenty-five years

None of us responded to or were present during the incidents. We do not have all the facts or details regarding the situations encountered. We will

attempt to identify what happened or should have happened by reading between the lines of NTSB reports, magazine articles, conference presentations, and after action reports. It is in essence Monday morning quarterbacking.

The intent of these case studies is not to belittle the personnel that responded to the incidents. They were most likely overwhelmed psychologically, emotionally, and physically. Most airport firefighters make a decent living. The pay is reasonable for what they typically do, which includes station and equipment maintenance, inspections, training, normal emergency responses, and miscellaneous other duties. The response to a large aircraft interior