

midway on the runway and the Flight Crew evacuated out the left forward door and down an escape rope.

Airport ARFF responded with four ARFF vehicles, engine, paramedic rescue unit, command vehicle, and seven firefighters. The first two ARFF vehicles were on scene in under two minutes and extinguished the exterior three-dimensional and spill fuel fires with dry chemical from a turret, in less than a minute. Heavy smoke was visible from the open forward left door (L1). Three ARFF vehicles positioned around the aircraft to prevent the fire from spreading to the fuel tanks, which it never did. The IC confirmed that no one was on the aircraft. Two ARFF personnel were ordered to open all doors and hatches on the aircraft to facilitate ventilation and firefighting efforts. The batteries were disconnected and the gear were pinned.

The airport mutual aid plan was activated, as well as a callback of all off-duty ARFF personnel. No interior firefighting operations were conducted until sufficient mutual aid resources arrived and an adequate water supply was available. The aircraft was allowed to free burn for approximately (15) minutes until adequate hose lines and personnel were on scene.

Apparatus and firefighters from six surrounding fire departments responded. Many of them were volunteers. The incident occurred at 6:00 am, so most of them were available to respond in a timely manner. Most of the ARFF personnel were also volunteers in the responding departments. An additional three mutual aid departments responded for additional manpower during the overhaul phase. Obviously interior fire attack was the next logical strat-

egy. No one had ever trained for this type of situation. All previous live fire training had involved pit fires and fuel spill firefighting.

Firefighters decided this was basically a structure fire and basically the same tactics applied. The structure was a large aircraft, instead of the typical building fire. The traditional ARFF tactics of surround and drown were no longer a logical tactic. Initial interior attack was supplied by tankers. Later a 1,400 foot five inch supply line was laid to the aircraft from a hydrant located at the terminal.

The open forward door acted like a horizontal flue, drawing the fire through the upper cargo deck. Interior attack was attempted from the top of an ARFF vehicle through door L1, as well as through the over-wing hatches and the rear air stairs. The ARFF vehicle provided an excellent platform to work from. Entry crews encountered severe heat. Entry into the main cargo compartment was blocked at all entry points by cargo containers that conformed to the interior curve of the fuselage roof. The over-wing hatches could not be initially opened and removed because of the container

immediately inside. The hatch would fall inward a few inches, but there was not enough room to turn it horizontally turn it and pull it out the exit opening. The entry door at the rear air stairs opens inward.

Firefighters entering through the forward door used a circular saw to cut their way through the first container. They were able to salvage most of the mail in this container. The container in the second position had already "melted down" and heavy fire was visible as far as they could see in the interior of the aircraft. The cargo containers were constructed of fiberglass and either melted or burned down, allowing firefighters to advance further into the aircraft. The containers adjacent to the over-wing hatches eventually burned down enough to remove the hatches and begin ventilation and interior attack at this two locations.

After the first two back drafts, early vertical ventilation was established by a ladder truck and had a substantial impact on the success of the operation. The seat of the fire in the early stages of the incident was in the rear of the aircraft. This was the location

