Marshall Plane Crash

On November 14, 1970, a chartered DC-9 airliner owned by Southern Airways slammed into a hillside just short of Tri-State Airport near Ceredo, killing all 75 of the passengers and crew. The victims included nearly the entire Marshall University football team, all but one of their coaches, and several fans. The team was returning from a game against Eastern Carolina University which had been played that afternoon in Greenville, North Carolina. It was the first time the team had flown to a game the entire season.

The victims included head coach Rick Tolley, athletic director Charles Kautz, 37 players, and 36 other fans, coaches and crew members. Among the fans were Huntington City Councilman Murrill Ralsten and Michael Prestera, just elected to the House of Delegates from Cabell County in the previous week’s election.

At the National Transportation Safety Board hearings, conducted in Huntington a month later, the findings listed the probable cause of the crash as “either failure of the pilots to properly read their altimeters or an altimeter error.” The NTSB said it could not be specific as to what caused the crash but equipment installed at the airport a few months after the crash might have prevented the accident, according to later published reports.

The tragedy was a traumatic event, and still remains a part of the collective memory of Marshall University. A campus memorial near the Marshall Student Center, a bronze-and-copper fountain with 75 separate jets of water in memory of the 75 who died, is the scene of annual ceremonies to remember the Marshall University plane crash victims.

The crash was the subject of a 2006 movie, We Are Marshall, which told the story of the accident and the recovery of the university’s football program.

Read “Marshall Plane Crash” from West Virginia Encyclopedia

Answer the following:

1. On what date did the plane crash happen?
2. What kind of plane were they aboard?
3. Where did the plane crash?
4. What team did they play that afternoon and where is it located?
5. Had they made other flights that season?
6. How many people died in the crash?
7. Who was the head coach?
8. What was the cause of the crash?
9. What might have prevented the crash?
10. What is located near the Marshall Student Center?
11. What is the name of the movie made in 2006 about the crash?
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Sources

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