ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY

November 14

On November 14, 1970, a chartered plane carrying the Marshall University football team and supporters of the program crashed near Huntington, killing 75 people.

CSO: SS.8.18, ELA.8.1, ELA.8.30

Investigate the Document: (The Herald-Advertiser, November 15, 1970)

1. Where was the Marshall University football team returning from the night of their fateful flight back to Huntington?

2. Who was the governor of West Virginia present at the scene of the crash?

3. How was the crash described by the Federal Aviation Agency spokesman?

Think Critically: How did the 1970 Marshall University plane crash impact the city of Huntington? How does Marshall University continue to honor those who lost their lives? What significance does the tragic event have in West Virginia history? Identify Huntington and Cabell County on a map. Also find the relative location of Huntington compared to the community from which the flight originated. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions concerning the 1970 Marshall University plane crash, (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners, using texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing ideas clearly.
Marshall Team, Coaches, Fans Die In Plane Crash

75 Believed Aboard Plane; Airline-Silent

A chartered jet airliner carrying the Marshall University football team, coaches and a number of prominent Huntington residents crashed in flames on its approach to Tri-State Airport Saturday evening.

There were no survivors.

Southern Airways of Atlanta, Ga., said its two-engine DC-9 was carrying 70 passengers and five crewmen.

The plane was returning the Marshall football players, most of the coaching staff and a group of supporters from Greenville, N. C., where East Carolina University defeated the Marshall team Saturday afternoon.

The crash occurred about 7:05 p.m., less than a mile west of Tri-State Airport. Weather conditions were poor and light rain was falling.

The Herald-Advertiser's Jack Haney, the first reporter at the scene about 200 yards east of W. Va. 15 south of Kerrow, said:

Flaming Debris All That Remains... ...Of Chartered Airliner
Gov. Moore Declares At Scene:

‘Tragedy Of Highest Degree’

By JACK BARNARD

A tragedy of highest degree.

Gov. Arch A. Moore Jr., standing at the scene and being asked by a member of the media, said: "This is a very sad time."

"There’s nothing here but charred bodies. It’s terrible."

Bodies and wreckage were scattered over a wide area.

Gov. Arch A. Moore Jr. and Dr. Donald N. Desman, Marshall’s acting president, rushed to the scene.

Handin reported a piece of the plane was found on a hillside about a half-mile from the principal crash site. He said witnesses of bodies also were reported found there. Searchers were combing the hillside today, following the trail of oil from the crash site.

At 12:10 a.m., the first bodies were placed on National Guard trucks. They were being taken to the National Guard Armory at the airport, where a temporary morgue was established. Handin said recovery crews were running short of bags to hold the bodies.

Southern Airways at Atlanta said it did not have a passenger list, and refused to identify the crewmen pending notification of next of kin.

The tragedy was described as one of the worst in aviation history involving an athletic team.

The crash site was the worst in West Virginia aviation history.

Charles Daddil, president of Tri-State Airport Authority, said if the plane were in its normal approach pattern coming into the airport, it would have had its nose slightly up, traveling at a speed of about 160 miles an hour at the point where it crashed.

A near relative, Mrs. Larry Bailey of 1920 Peach Branch Road, said Handin saw the jet coming down. She said she heard an explosion and "the plane seemed to come down flat."

The Herald-Dispatch’s David A. Peynter reported radio-teletype that he had walked completely around the scene and everything is charred beyond belief.

Peynter said it appeared an area about 200 feet in diameter had been leveled and small fires were still burning. He said only the plane’s two jet engines and a section of wing were recognizable. "Wreckage is scattered all over the place. People were here when it happened said they heard one big ‘thud’ and that was all.

The heat from the wreckage was hampering recovery efforts. The scene was described as chaotic. Great numbers of people swarmed through thick underbrush to reach the scene during the first two hours. State police were clearing everybody, including newsman, from the area by 10 p.m.

A Tri-State Airport employee returning from the scene said, "Bodies are stacked in a big heap, all of them charred. There can’t be anyone alive."

Police said every ambulance within a 10-mile radius was alerted. Cuball—Huntington Hospital asked visitors to leave, and sealed off its entrance for the remainder of the day, but it soon became apparent there would be no survivors.

Handin and Peynter described the scene as horrifying. "There are charred pieces of bodies all over the place," Handin said. Peynter said he had counted 12 forms that were recognizable as bodies, but that he had pieces of bodies, bones and limbs scattered throughout the area.

Many of the bodies had been covered with white plastic, by friends and other emergency authorities at the scene.

Gov. Moore arrived at the scene shortly after 10 p.m.

A special investigative team from the National Transportation Safety Board was dispatched from Washington late Saturday night, according to board chairman John H. Reed.

Less than two months ago, on Oct. 3, one of two chartered planes carrying the Wichita, Kansas, football team, coaches, boosters and others, crashed in the mountains of Colorado, killing 31 persons, including 13 football players.

Traffic was being turned away from the airport at the foot of the road leading up the hill to the terminal.

Southern Airways released a statement at 12:30 p.m. indicating there were 70 passengers aboard. Southern said it was the first crash in its 21 years of operation.

Fifteen bodies were found near a section (Photo: Time to Page 4).

25 Fans, Officials On List

Some 25 persons not on the normal Marshall University football team travel list were believed to have been among the victims of Saturday’s tragic crash. Three reportedly included:

Charles E. Kautz, the MU athletic director.

Michael R. Proctor, 206 Forest Blvd., a former president of the Big Green Club and a delegate to the West Virginia legislature.

Dr. Herbert D. (Pete) Proctor and his wife, Courtenay, 206 Miller Blvd.

Dr. Ray B. Hagler and his wife, Shirley, 204 Mountain Terrace.

Dr. Joseph C. Chambers and his wife, Peggy, 1751 Woodcrest Terrace.

E. O. (Happy) Brimley, 474 and Oak Lane, 301 W. Kanawha Ave.

Dr. Green R. Pederson and his wife, Phyllis, 118 Woodway Drive.

City Commissioner and Marcella Standard and his wife, Mary, 1109 Washington Blvd.

James R. Jarrell and (To Be Felt 1st)