

First the crash — then the confusion

By Laurel Loo

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The thing Nolan Brady remembers most is the confusion.

He and two friends saw the lights of the plane as it crashed. They were at the scene minutes later in their 11-foot Boston Whaler to see if they could help.

When they approached the wreck, Brady said, all they could see with the help of the moonlight and one flashlight were two men — one survivor of the crash and a Navy man — sitting on top of what was left of the wreck.

"The Navy man kept yelling, 'No smoking, no smoking,' cause of the gas. And then he kept yelling something about 'get this guy to the Marina, his leg was broken.'"

Three Navy boats were in the area and a helicopter was overhead, but no one was close to the wreck.

So Brady jumped from the boat onto the plane and pulled the survivor with him back onto the boat.

"He (Mike Salmons) kept mumbling something about 'this is my parachute in the water.'"

"Nobody mentioned anything about there being anybody else in the wreck. We thought was just this one guy."

He said the plane looked like a crumpled ball, with its tail and wing jutting out.

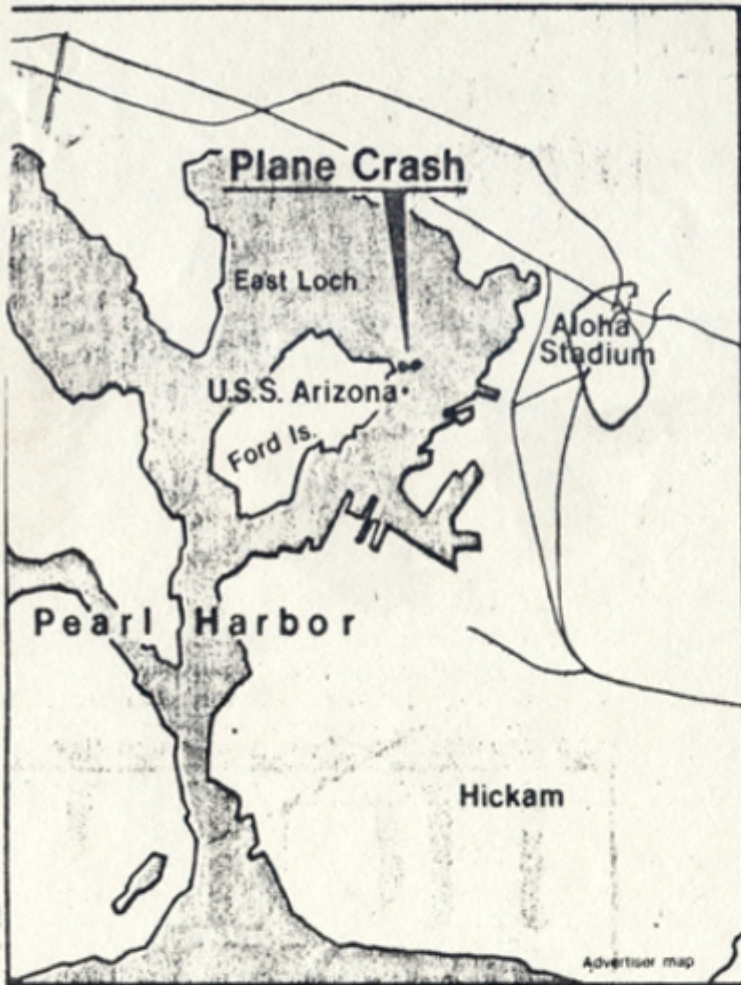
So they took the survivor to the Marina, where an ambulance was waiting.

Brady, 22, stayed with the ambulance, and his two friends, Brian Pregana and Willy Inafuku, went back to the wreck.

It was then, Brady said, that it got "pretty sick."

From what his friends told Brady later, Pregana and Inafuku went back to the wreck with two paramedics from the ambulance and helped pull three or four bodies out of the wreck. They were the only ones at the time who were helping pull bodies out of the wreck, Brady said.

"My friends were pretty upset. One was feeling sick."



Stephen Fischel, Jump Hawaii's vice president for promotions, said last night that the twin-engine Beechcraft was in "top shape and just underwent a full overhaul a week ago."

He identified the pilot as Danny Black of Mokuleia, "a veteran pilot we know very well."

He said the plane, owned by Jump Hawaii, left Dillingham Airfield at 6:30 p.m. for the stadium with Black piloting the 12-member parachuting team, led by Army Sgt. Charles Knaebel.

The skydiving team planned to jump into Aloha Stadium and unfurl a U.S. flag there to kickoff the University of

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At least 6 die as plane plunges into harbor

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Hawaii's final football game this season.

However, minutes before the scheduled 7:07 p.m. spectacular from 2,000 feet, the plane circling over the stadium "went away and never came back," said a UH official.

The plane crashed in 3½ feet of water on a reef at the exact minute of the scheduled jump over the stadium.

Ted Livingston, UH athletic spokesman at the stadium, said, "They had been circling to watch for the target."

"There's no radio contact between the plane and the stadium. So when they went away, we thought they had cancelled the jump because of cloud cover moving in."

However, witnesses said the plane suddenly went into a nose dive over the nearby harbor and spiraled into the reef, smashing onto the reef.

The stadium crowd, unaware of the crash, con-

tinued to cheer on the Rainbows and the cheering was clearly heard by friends and family of the parachutists waiting at the Ford Island landing for word of survivors.

The group was ferried at 9:30 p.m. to Ford Island, where the Navy took them to the station chapel to await further news of the search efforts.

An FAA duty officer, who said the airport control tower last heard from the craft about 7 p.m., reported it began receiving telephone calls at 7:08 p.m. from numerous persons who witnessed the crash.

A Navy spokesman said the bodies were being taken to the Ford Island dispensary, to be taken later to the city medical examiner's morgue at Iwilei. Medical investigators and Honolulu police were aiding in the identification.

The UH's Livingston said the jump team, which performs at the stadium for baseball as well as football games, often includes as many women as men parachutists. He said he had a list of those who were supposed to be aboard the plane.

"But there are often last-minute changes and the lists most of the time are wrong," he said. "Because of that, the police have asked us not to release the list until it is known definitely who was aboard."

Jump Hawaii's Fischel confirmed that there may have been last-minute changes.

"We have a list of who was scheduled to go but the plane took off at 6:30 p.m. instead of 6, so there might have been changes," he said. He said, however, that Knaebel was aboard.

Besides the Navy divers, searchers included boats reportedly from two Pearl Harbor ships as well as a Coast Guard patrol boat from Sand Island and a Coast Guard air-sea rescue helicopter from Barbers Point.

Two eyewitnesses to the crash, June Burkhardt and her husband, Grey, a Navy lieutenant, were eating dinner at the Marina restaurant.

"At first I thought it was an acrobatic display," Mrs. Burkhardt said. "The plane was flipping and going around in wide circles."

"The plane went into a nose dive — right into the water, spinning."