

The Uspallata Pass stands about 12,500 ft (3,810 m) high, over the Andes between Mendoza, Argentina, and Santiago, Chile. A statue of Jesus (Christ of the Andes) stands in the pass on the Argentine-Chilean border. It was dedicated on March 13th 1904, and commemorates a series of peace and boundary treaties between Argentina and Chile. A tablet (added in 1937) bears in Spanish the inscription: "Sooner shall these mountains crumble into dust than Argentines and Chileans break the peace sworn at the feet of Christ the Redeemer."

The pass was used by Pan American-Grace Airways, better known as Panagra, from 1929 onwards. This airline flew extensively between North and South America and after the war was a keen user of DC-3s, 4s and 6s. The Panagra aeroplanes featured broad yellow stripes on their wings, which were designed to help in locating an aeroplane that went down in the rugged terrain. However, in the first 15 years of operations the safety record was comparable to US domestic operations under significantly more challenging conditions. In fact from early 1943 until the merger with Braniff 25 years later, there was only one Panagra aircraft lost in operations with no fatalities.

It was in this area that the British South American Airways airliner Star Dust disappeared on the 2nd August 1947. On flight CS 59 from Buenos Aires to Santiago, via Mendoza, the airliner vanished without trace. A comprehensive search of a wide area (including what is now known to have been the crash site) revealed no wreckage. The wreckage became incorporated into the body of the glacier, only for fragments to begin emerging many years later much further down the mountain. From 1998 to 2000, about 10% of the wreckage, including engine and propeller parts and the wheels (one still inflated!), has emerged from the glacier, prompting several re-examinations of the accident.

Whilst the true cause of the crash will probably never be known, it is thought that a navigational error was made due to the aircraft encountering the jet stream – which was unknown at the time. The Star Dust may have been considerably slowed down by the jet stream, which normally blows from the West or South West. The resultant reduction in ground speed may have fooled the crew into thinking that they were West of the Andes, and so could begin their descent into Santiago.

You can improve the look of Santiago aerodrome by installing scel2005.zip, which is available from <http://www.flightsim.com>.

Only make the charter flight in VFR conditions!!

From – To	Flight Description. "Allocated runways and related information may change when flying online or using Real Weather"				Course (Leg) Deg	Distance (Leg) nm	
	Dep. Rwy – 36	Init. Hdg – 181deg	Init. Alt – 15,000ft	Apt Elev. – 2,309ft			
Mendoza (SAME) Argentina To Santiago (SCEL) Chile	Departure: Before take off tune NAV1 to DOZ VOR/DME, 114.90, set the OBS to 293deg and NAV2 to SRA VOR, 116.90, set the OBS to 333deg. To Fix 03. After take off turn right to 181deg, and start your climb towards 15,000ft. Waypoint reached when the Nav 1 DME reads 14.8nm.....				175	19.3	
	Enroute: To Fix 04. Turn right to 284deg and head towards the mountains. Waypoint reached when the Nav 2 OBS needle centres.....				284	21.0	
	To Fix 05. Turn right to 334deg and head up the valley. Waypoint reached when the Nav 1 OBS needle centers. Uspallata Airport on your right wing just before the waypoint.				334	27.0	
	To Fix 06. Turn right to 220deg and continue to head up the valley. Waypoint reached when the Nav 1 DME reads 39nm				220	11.2	
	To Fix 07. Make a sharp left turn to 234deg, and head up the valley. Waypoint reached at an obvious fork in the valley ahead – Nav 1 DME will read 47nm.....				234	10.3	
	To Fix 08 (summit). Turn right to 273deg and head up the indistinct valley in front of you. As you get towards the top of the valley you will see a pass opening up to your left – Nav1 DME will read 62.5nm.....				273	15.4	
	To Fix 09. Turn left to 246deg, and start your descent to 3,000ft. Waypoint reached at an obvious "T" junction. Tune AMB VORDME 116.10 for the approach to Rwy 17L.				246	14.1	
	To Fix 10. Turn right to 293deg and head towards the open plain in front of you. Waypoint reached when the RMI reads 196deg..... To AMB. Turn left to 196deg. Direct to AMB.....				293 196	22.0 18.7	
Flight: 813-05	Approach: To runway. Turn left to 176deg for a visual approach.				176	20.5	
	Land: Arturo Merino Benitez runway 17L Length: 12,318 ft Width: 180 ft Surface: Asphalt						
Flight: 813-05	Arrival Airport Elev. – 1,551ft				Estimated totals for this flight>>>		181nm