

Flight 3885 operated on October 18, 2023, from EWR to ORD as a ferry flight. The only occupants onboard were the captain and first officer. The flight departed EWR at 2129L and blocked in at 2345L. The flight was a routine flight and landed ORD via ILS Runway 10C approach. Prior to landing, crew was notified that we would be parking on the maintenance ramp. After landing on Runway 10C, ground control instructed us to taxi via taxiways P to Z, holding short of Runway 10L on taxiway Z. Upon ATC clearance, we continued and crossed Runway 10L, taxied via Z, crossing both Runways 9R and 9C, then made a right turn onto taxiway D. Ground control cleared us to enter the ramp via taxiway YY1 and to contact ramp control on 129.3. Ramp control instructed us to make a left on to taxiway YY and to come to the north side of the ramp. After making the left on taxiway YY, we realized we were about to enter American Eagle ramp. The aircraft stopped short of the ramp and questioned the ramp controller as to where we were to park. He then asked us to enter the American Eagle ramp and make a 180 degree turn. Unfamiliar with the maintenance ramp, and the late night arrival, we utilized open communication between the first officer and I throughout the entire taxi and proceeded onto the ramp cautiously. Additionally, having looked at the Jepp 10-9 and 10-7 pages, I noted there weren't any wingspan restrictions within this area, and thought that a turnaround would be possible.

Leading into the ramp area, there were no lighted taxiway lights, however, there was adequate overhead lighting in the ramp location. I noted that, prior to ramp entry, there was difficulty seeing due to the lower visibility from the weather. The first officer and I had to really focus on our surroundings as it was a spot neither had been to. There were no other aircraft or vehicles in the area to avoid, just the hangars in the foreign environment.

Entering the ramp area, I asked the FO if we were cleared on the right side, which he acknowledged "yes." Within a few seconds after that while on the associated taxi line we heard a loud bang and the aircraft veered to the right. The FO confirmed this by looking out his window and stating, "we hit the hangar." Both the aircraft and hangar sustained damage. Once we realized we made contact with the building, I set the parking brake and contacted ramp control for assistance.

An added threat was the lack of aircraft marshallers and the dark nighttime arrival in ORD.

I was assigned to operate a Boeing 787 ferry flight, UA3885 from EWR to ORD. There were no passengers or additional crewmembers on board, just the captain and myself.

Prior to departure from EWR, we discussed standard pre-flight items; weather, fuel planning, no outstanding maintenance items, etc. We also discussed that we were to be arriving at the United Airlines Maintenance facility not the passenger terminal as normal, both of us interjecting that neither of us were familiar with that part of the airport and do not ever frequent that side of ORD; however, we would have the Jeppesen chart available for reference as we taxi.

The flight departed from EWR around 2130 Local and proceeded westbound uneventfully to ORD. The takeoff, climb and cruise segments of the flight were all normal and uneventful.

Prior to top of descent, we briefed the anticipated arrival/approach landing west (WYNDE2 – ILS 27R). Weather conditions were decent, just thin clouds and spotty rain showers present in the area, nothing severe or noticeably adverse at the time of arrival. As we began our descent into the terminal area, the ATIS reflected a runway change and a shift to an eastern runway configuration at ORD. ATC confirmed this and advised us to continue the WYNDE2 and expect an ILS Runway 10C at this time. We set up the FMC, briefed the change of approach, including runway turnoff, brake setting, flap speeds/configuration, etc.

We completed a normal (Visual backed with ILS) approach and landing to Runway 10C around 2345L. Upon landing and at a safe rollout speed we exited left on highspeed taxiway. We advised the controller we would not be parking at the terminal but rather the United Airlines Maintenance facility. With that information, the controller told us to proceed “west on PAPA to cross Runway 10L and Hold Short of Runway 9R and contact ground.” Crew communication and situational awareness was excellent, and we complied with the multitude of instructions. After a quick delay holding short of Runway 9R, the ORD Ground controller cleared us to cross Runways 9R and 9C, then right on taxiway D and enter the maintenance area at YY1.

Facing north on taxiway YY1, I contacted the United Airlines Maintenance Ramp frequency on 129.3. He stated to turn left on YY, proceed north of the hangar and there will be marshalls in a truck to guide you into the parking spot. The captain and I conferred and the airplane was turned left on taxiway YY, then as we were making a 90 degree right turn around a hangar, I noticed multiple blast fences on the north side of the ramp. The captain immediately stopped the aircraft and I queried the controller on 129.3 about our location. The ramp controller stated, “Oh I know where you are, make a 360, err I mean 180, you know what I meant to say and then proceed to parking.”

Upon application of power, we heard a loud noise and the nose lurched to the right from the centerline we were currently on. The right wingtip then contacted the corner of a hangar. We immediately stopped the momentum of the aircraft, set the parking brake, and shut the engines down preventing any additional movement. The incident occurred right around midnight local ORD time.

The visibility from the flight deck was limited; being dark at night, with a standing layer of rain/moisture on the windows and the bright lights shining above us surrounding the perimeter of the hangar and ramp area.