

**Specialist's Report – Attachment 2**  
**Information from Pilot's Friends**

**OPERATIONAL FACTORS**

ERA17FA119

## A. Information from Gregory Page

**From:** Gregg Page [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 16, 2017 6:04 AM  
**To:** Rayner Brian [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Gregg Page [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: Mutchler Annual Inspection - ERA17FA119 Duette FL BE-60 N39AG

Included attachment...

*(Brian – I amended my comments to include Brads comments with respect to altitude in reference to the simulated stall maneuver summarized below)*

Brian,

I am an industrial engineer by education and not a pilot. I am comfortable in small aircraft and I have sat in the right seat of private aircraft many times. I flew as a passenger (mostly right seat) a considerable number of hours in my 20's in a private 402 Cessna twin aircraft. (I'm guessing 100-200 hrs).

In the past 6 months - I flew with Brad Mutchler in a single engine aircraft about 12 times for a total of approximately 20 hours. Each trip I observed his advance planning and consideration for smoke (due to heavy forest fires in NC this fall), light, weather, wind and course. He exhibited conservative and careful judgement in my opinion. From my experience and observations - I considered Brad to be an excellent pilot.

Brad Mutchler called me from his hotel room in FLA Friday night March the 3rd after his first day of training. His call was not unusual as we typically talked daily however Brad was noticeably interested in sharing his flight experience that day.

Brad repeated a number of times that he was very tired and worn out from the day and needed rest. The tone and phrasing of his comments were not typical for Brad and it seemed from what he shared that he had experienced a very stressful day.

He complained that the trainer had put him through extensive test - landings always in an approach direction opposite of "normal" in consideration of wind direction and purposefully in a direction to amplify the difficulty of landing with the days heavy cross winds. He shared - At one point the tower suggested they should select an approach from the opposite direction of their requested approach, to which he replied something sarcastic to the tower like "this is the way like to do it". My impression from his comments is he felt the landing exercises were excessive in consideration of safety.

As you know I am not a pilot, but Brad described a test maneuver where he was requested to simulate a stall of the air craft with a slight turn to (I think) the left. As he began to slow and turn the plane to induce the stall, he stated that normal procedure would be to drop the nose to regain air speed and avoid/eliminate the stalled condition. Something about the turn, he stated, technically took air off one wing??? This seemed to be a common or expected maneuver except for the request to do so was at an altitude of 3000 ft. Brad stated as he began to drop the nose to regain airspeed the trainer reached over and advanced the throttles which cause the plane to ultimately enter into a "spin" and resulted in a 1000 foot drop in altitude before regaining control of the aircraft. The recovery of full control of the aircraft would had then occurred at an approximate altitude of 2000 ft.

He was very upset with the trainer and looked at him and stated "we are not doing that again!"... He said the guys was probably 80 and was at that point "white as a sheet". Brad told the trainer that they were landing at

the very next regional airport where he said he was dripping wet with sweat and got out of the plane to remove his sweatshirt. He told me “ I sweated a gallon of sweat in 20 seconds!”.

That is the extent of any specifics comments I recall. He stated he was flying with the trainer the next day and planned to return to Raleigh Saturday or Sunday with our mutual friend John Davis who lives in Sanford FLA.

Attached is a screen shot of my last text to Brad that reflects the tone of this phone call the night before and the impression that Brad’s comments left in my mind..... On Saturday March the 4th at 1:24pm approximately (7 minutes before his crash). I was working in my shop in Raleigh NC and I had not heard from Brad... I sent Brad the following text (attached)....

*"Hey give me a call when you get on the ground interested to hear how your day is going*

*Hopefully no more barrel rolls “*

Warmest Regards,

Gregory W. Page



## **B. Information from John Davis**

To Whom It May Concern:

Subject: David Bradley Mutchler

Reference: Phone Conversation

I received a phone call from Brad on early Friday evening March 3rd, 2017. Brad was supposed to fly from where he was training in Sarasoto, FL to Apopka, FL where he was going to have dinner with my wife and myself and then spend the night. He would then return to Sarasota to continue his training on Saturday morning.

When Brad called he stated that it had been a long hard day. He went on to state how the instructor scared the living shit out of him. He used a term I had not heard before, he said “It scared me down to the core of my spine”. I asked him what had happened. He stated that they where flying at 3000 feet in slow flight preparing to do a power on stall. When the plane started to stall the instructor reached over and pulled the power on the starboard motor causing the plane to go inverted. Brad said it took him a thousand feet to get the plane gathered up and regain his composure. Brad said it took so much out of him that he had already gotten a hotel room, was

going to get something to eat and then get to bed as he was plum worn out. For the above conversation he asked if he could have a rain check on dinner and spending the night. Of course I agreed and said I looked forward to seeing him tomorrow, after he was finished as I was planning on going back to NC with him either Saturday night or he would spend the night with us and then we would fly up to NC on Sunday.

John Davis

(Mr. Davis stated he had 4,200 hours, had owned 6 Dukes and some King Airs.)

(The pilot was staying with Mr. Davis. The pilot had planned to fly Thursday, return to Mr. Davis' house and then fly back Friday morning for more training. The pilot told Mr. Davis that the instructor had, "scared the living [REDACTED] out of me." The pilot stated they were doing a power on stall at 3,000 feet when the instructor pulled the right engine throttle to idle. The aircraft flipped over and the aircraft was recovered at 1,800 feet. The instructor told the pilot he didn't expect the airplane to do that.)

### **C. Information from Hal Spencer**

#### **1. Email from Hal Spencer**

From: Hal Spencer [REDACTED]  
Sent: Tuesday, March 7, 2017 8:46 AM  
To: Rayner Brian [REDACTED]  
Subject: N39AG - Recollections of Conversations with Brad Mutchler 3/3/17 and 3/4/17

Submitted by Ernest H. Spencer, Jr. at the request of Brian Rayner, NTSB

Pilot Certificate: [REDACTED] CFI, MEI, ATP

Friday - March 3, 2017 6:04PM  
Conversation length: 11 minutes

Brad Mutchler called me from Florida where he was receiving recurrent training in the Beech Duke N39AG required by his aviation insurance company. He had flown with an instructor on this day and he called me to express concerns over the instructor's methods used for flying the Duke. Brad said he had always advanced the mixture and propeller controls full forward before landing in the event a go-around was necessary. He asked if that was the method I used and I agreed with Brad. He said the instructor told him to leave the mixture and propeller controls where they were on final because advancing the prop controls would cause the props to make additional noise and advancing the mixture would waste fuel. Brad and I agreed that the lower power setting around 20" MAP or less on final would result in the prop governors being close to

or out of their effective operating range and would not result in significant additional noise if advanced. With the throttles retarded to approximately 20" MAP or less, wasting fuel is not be a consideration. We agreed that advancing the props and mixture was one less thing to be concerned with if a go-around was necessary. I told Brad just to bear with the instructor and when he finished his training he could use the method he preferred. Brad did not tell me the instructor's name but did say with a chuckle, "this old fart must be 80 years old".

Saturday - March 4, 2017 7:49AM

Conversation length: 5 minutes

Brad Mutchler called me and said he had forgotten to tell me something else that happened on Friday while flying with the instructor in the Duke. Brad said he was doing a power off stall recovery using his usual method of first lowering the nose to break the stall, then leveling the wings while adding power. I told him this was the method I would recommend. Brad said the instructor had him bank 20 degrees to the left and recover from the on-set of the stall by applying power first, then lower the nose and wings level. I told Brad I thought this method of recovering from an imminent stall could result in a spin due to the prop wash from the right engine generating additional lift on the right wing and rolling the aircraft to the left and into a possible spin. Brad said that is exactly what happened when he used the instructor's method for stall recovery. Brad said stall recovery was being demonstrated at 3000' MSL and the aircraft entered a spin to the left. Brad said they recovered after the aircraft made 1 1/2 turns. He did not say what the altitude was following the recovery. Brad said he asked the instructor "what the hell are you doing we just went into a spin". The instructor said it wasn't considered a spin until you made 3 turns.

Hal Spencer

## **2. Notes from interview of Hal Spencer by IIC**

### Hal Spencer interview

Mr. Spencer started flying with the accident pilot in 1999. He stated the pilot had owned two other Dukes, with the first purchased in 2007. An annual inspection was completed shortly before the accident. Mr. Spencer met the pilot at the airport on Thursday. The pilot was trying to decide when to leave, either Thursday or Friday for his training.

Friday night, at 1804, Mr. Spencer was contacted by the pilot after completing a flight with the instructor. The pilot stated the instructor had told him to do a number of things that he didn't agree with. On final approach the pilot stated he normally pushed the mixture and propeller full forward. The instructor told him not to do that. The instructor said pushing the propeller control forward made the aircraft louder and that pushing the mixture forward wasted gas. The pilot told Mr. Spencer he liked to have the aircraft set up for a go around. Mr. Spencer told the pilot to do it like the instructor said until he was done with training.

On Saturday morning, at 0744 AM, the pilot again contacted Mr. Spencer. The pilot stated they were doing stalls – power off/low power in 20° left bank. The pilot stated his normal stall recovery procedure was to push the nose down, level the wings, and apply power. The instructor

told him to apply full power then to lower the nose and level the wings. The pilot stated that when he recovered from the stall using the instructor's technique the aircraft entered a spin. The aircraft spun 1.5 times before the aircraft was recovered. The pilot stated they were at 3,000 feet when they entered the spin but the pilot did not inform Mr. Spencer at what altitude they recovered. Mr. Spencer reported he would not recover from a stall that way. The pilot said that the instructor stated an aircraft was not in a spin until it had done 3 turns.

Mr. Spencer stated he had approximate 4,500 hours with about 17 hours in a Duke. He stated he was a CFII, MEI, and held an ATP.