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Air Safety Investigator
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Date: 5/4/2023

Subject: ERA23LA213, Student Pilot Statement

Contact: Dan Dankwardt, Student Pilot

Mr. Dankwardt provided the following statement by email at the request of the IIC:

"That was my first flight with Michael Scott as my instructor. Prior to the flight, I spoke with Mike and explained where I was in the syllabus. I explained that I am a part 141 student and currently working on Lesson 6, primarily focusing on my landings. I performed a standard pre-flight inspection of the aircraft before departing. I noted no damage at the time. We took off and flew down to the PFTC practice area and ran through some maneuvers. I recall performing: slow flight, power on and power off stalls, and turns around a point. After that, we flew back to KAGC to practice flying the pattern and landings. My first landing was not the best, but not particularly notable as "rough." My pattern performance was fine, but I recall some excess floating during my flare/transition. For my second landing, we flew the normal pattern. I throttled back abeam my touchdown point and put my flaps in incrementally as we turned base and then final.

Note: Please note that the next few events all happened within a few seconds, and I am listing them to the best of my memory (which may certainly be flawed due to the stress and the length of time since this occurred).

On short final, I was aiming the nose at the "28" on the runway. As we got closer, I think Mike thought I wasn't going to flare (this is purely a guess on my part, however, we had already landed once, so he had at least seen me in action already). I was actually in the process of pulling back on the yoke when he shouted "FLARE, FALRE, FLARE!" The volume and intensity startled me and I pulled back sharply. I seem to recall seeing the nose slightly above the runway in my sight picture (too high, to be sure). At the time, we were probably 8-10 feet above the runway. The nose came up, our airspeed bled off rapidly. The airplane stalled and dropped the final 8 feet. The main gear landed first, then the nosewheel. We came down hard. I do not recall hearing a scraping sound, but I freely admit I was not calm and collected at that moment and certainly may have missed it. I remember Mike had to reach up to grab the yoke on his side. I do believe he was touching the controls as we came in, but not firmly. I do not recall the position of his feet (I was focused on landing). He yelled "I have the flight controls!" and I repeated "You have the flight controls." I immediately took my hands away and put them on my lap.

I started apologizing right away and telling him I didn't know what happened. I was definitely upset with my performance. I cannot recall much about taxiing back to PFTC other than the fact I kept apologizing over and over. He told me not to worry about it and we would talk once we got back into the building. I do not recall whether I was controlling the airplane during the taxi or not. I was very upset. He reiterated that it was okay and that every pilot (especially student pilots) have bad landings. As I got out of the airplane, he went inside and I performed the rest of the securing checklist rather robotically. I did look at the plane, specifically the main gear, but I did NOT perform anything resembling an inspection. I recall looking down and seeing that the tires and struts didn't appear damaged, but that is the extent of what I looked at. I cannot stress enough how rattled and upset I was (I think my hands were actually physically shaking).

As I walked back into PFTC I believe there were one or two instructors hanging out. I cannot remember who it was (possibly Kiernan and John, but I am not sure). I do remember immediately telling whoever was there that I just had a really bad landing. I don't recall how much detail I gave. I went inside and met Mike in his cubical. At the time, I was too shaken up (psychologically, neither of us was injured in any way) to even understand what I had done wrong. Mike explained to me that I had pulled too hard during the flare, and the plane stalled. This absolutely made sense to me. I apologized a few more times for my performance, and Mike again assured me

that it was okay and that it happens to everyone. I don't remember his exact words, but I remember him saying something like, go home and rest and not to beat myself up about it. I thanked him and left. Right after I got home, I texted Dave Bogguss (my primary flight instructor) and also let him know I had a really bad landing. He was not at PFTC when any of this happened (I think it was his day off)."