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Date: July 20, 2023

Subject: ERA23LA299, Record of Conversation/Interview

Contact: Ross C. Anderson

Mr. Ross C. Anderson was contacted on July 19, 2023, at 1348 EDT. He was called at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] He provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

At the beginning of the interview he was advised that the NTSB is a federal agency mandated by Congress to investigate aircraft accidents, and NTSB has no authority to take any action against any individual. He was also informed that the purpose of an NTSB investigation is for safety only, and any person NTSB talks with has the right to representation; he agreed to the interview without representation.

He was advised by e-mail when sending this document for review that it will not be released to the public until the investigation is finished and when published, any personal identifiable information (PII) such as cell phone number, e-mail address, address, pilot certificate number, etc., will be redacted and not viewable in the released document.

He provided a home address of [REDACTED] Richmond, Virginia [REDACTED] His date of birth is [REDACTED] His last Dr.'s office visit for Basic Med was September 2020, and his last Self Certification for Basic Med was May 20, 2023. He has a limitation to wear corrective lenses for driving and flying and was worn at the time of the accident. He holds a private pilot certificate with airplane single engine land and instrument airplane, last issued May 23, 2020. He obtained his private pilot certificate in 2010, then added his instrument rating to his certificate on May 23, 2020. He has 572 hours total time including the accident flight. He has 523 hours in a Cessna 172 and 28 hours in a Cessna 182.

He was asked by NTSB the following –

Was he the only occupant on-board at the time?

His brother who is not a pilot was with him. He was in the right front seat and never touched the controls. Neither he nor his brother were injured.

NTSB Questions Continued –

What restraint was he wearing?

A seatbelt and shoulder harness. His brother was also wearing a seatbelt and shoulder harness.

Was there anything mechanically wrong with the airplane that caused the hard landing?

No, nothing wrong with the airplane that caused the hard landing on the nose. The airplane up to that point was functioning flawlessly until the 3rd landing of the day when on approach and in ground effect. He flared for landing, and the airplane abruptly nosed up, then he didn't hear the stall warning horn.

Explain what happened including any preflight inspection he did?

He did a standard preflight of the '70's airplane with a checklist. He checked the documents on-board and lowered the flaps. He checked the lights, then did the exterior preflight using the printed checklist. He did not skimp on the preflight. After departure from Richmond Executive-Chesterfield County Airport (KFCI), Richmond, Virginia, the flight climbed to 2,000 ft and he called for clearance while en route to Richmond International Airport (KRIC), Richmond, Virginia. He flew there to have avionics work done. While the work was being done, he and his brother sat down. The airplane was returned to service and he did an abbreviated preflight inspection. After engine start he contacted ground control and requested visual flight rules (VFR) flight following to Ingalls Field Airport (KHSP), Hot Springs, Virginia. The flight departed for HSP on the planned 1 hour 15 minutes long flight. After arrival they secured the airplane and spent about 1 hour. He requested and received an instrument flight rules (IFR) clearance prior to departure from KHSP for KFCI due to increasing low level clouds in the vicinity. While en route there was not much turbulence and the flight crossed the mountains. Prior to reaching the Flat Rock VORTAC (FAK) he obtained the automated weather observing system (AWOS) from KFCI and noted they were reporting 5 knot wind and visual meteorological conditions (VMC). He continued towards KFCI and after passing FAK the flight was in VMC. He cancelled his IFR clearance and he intended to perform a practice RNAV Approach to runway 15. He proceeded towards the initial approach fix (IAF) then turned right onto final approach course and was still in VMC. When at the final approach fix (FAF) which was SECOV¹ he could not see the airport. He continued towards KFCI and he then noted a rain cloud on the east side of the airport. He turned to the right and noted he could see the runway under the clouds and turned left to re-establish runway alignment. He also did a forward slip to lose altitude and re-establish on the glide slope. He proceeded on final approach to runway 15 on glide path with no turbulence and entered ground effect. He flared and abruptly the airplane pitched up, nosed down and bounced. He added full throttle and the airspeed increased and the airplane started climbing. He climbed to traffic pattern altitude (TPA) and did a right turn to go-around due to the rain cloud. He turned right and turned onto final of runway 15 for a 2nd approach. When preparing to flare a wind gust pushed the airplane across the runway. He applied full throttle and climbed out. Since the rain cloud was no longer on the east side of the airport he made a standard left turn onto crosswind then downwind while climbing to TPA of 1,000

¹ SECOV was located 5.9 nautical miles from the runway 15 threshold.

ft. He remained in left traffic for runway 15 and landed uneventfully. After landing he taxied off the runway and taxied to the ramp. After securing the airplane they noted damage to a bracket on the firewall that secures the nose landing gear.

NTSB Questions Continued –

To clarify at KRIC or KHSP were there any problem with the flight controls? None whatsoever. Everything was good until the airplane bounced on the first landing attempt at KFCI.

How was the airplane configured regarding flaps and what was the airspeed on approach for the bounced landing?

He was on a straight in RNAV approach and at the FAF he added 1 notch of flaps. At decision height (DH), he usually adds more flaps but he could not recall if he added more flaps. With respect to airspeed he typically maintains 90 knots indicated airspeed (KIAS) to DH then he begins slowing to 70 KIAS. The optimum speed is 68 KIAS.

What caused the abrupt pitch up?

I don't know. I didn't do it. I didn't execute a flare any differently from the 2 previous that day. I did not recall feeling any turbulence.

Did the airplane stall when it abruptly pitched up?

I don't recall hearing the stall warning horn. It happened rapidly. The airplane pitched up, dropped, then pitched up again.

How did the airplane hit when it dropped the 1st time?

It was so quick but it bounced off the nose. He knew it dropped and bounced. Later, they saw the nose wheel hit hard which displaced the nose wheel pant displaced up from back to front, the painted stripes on the nose wheel pant are normally parallel to the ground. After the nose wheel strike the wheel pant lines are angled upward from back to front, as though the nose landing strut had been bent. They took off the cowling later and saw the bracket that secured the upper part of the nose landing gear to the firewall was broken loose and badly misaligned.

Was there any problem with the engine during the go-around?

He did have a problem during the climb but that was because the carburetor heat was still on and the flaps were still extended.

Did you notice a problem with the flight controls after the bounce?

Yes. I really had to step hard for left rudder. It was jammed to the right, and he really had to press hard to make a left turn.

Please clarify the approach and landing at KFCI?

He did a practice RNAV approach to runway 15, bounced, went around to the right, remained in the traffic pattern and on the 2nd approach to runway 15 during the flare, a wind gust pushed the airplane across the runway. He performed a go-around, and made left turns, remained in the traffic pattern for runway 15, landed uneventfully, and taxied to the hangar.

NTSB Questions Continued –

Did you notice any damage to the floorboards in the cockpit?
No, but the firewall is buckled aft.

Have you made a written statement?
He did. He gave it to Mr. Scott, who is the flying club president².

Were you filming using a Go-Pro camera or video from a cell phone?
Neither of them were.

Do you know if the emergency locator transmitter activated?
I didn't think about that and hadn't been notified that it did.

Is the airplane going to be repaired?
That was being decided. The airplane was insured for more than the repair cost estimate³.

Did you touch down first and then bounce?
There was no touchdown before the airplane bounced. He was flying in ground effect and then the nose abruptly pitched up. The nose dropped, the airplane bounced and then he performed the first go-around.

On the abrupt pitch up had you changed the pitch trim or applied power?
No not at that point. He was flying in ground effect, it abruptly pitched up, and he added it did not feel like a porpoise.

Was the 2nd landing at KFCI normal?
Yes. "Prior to the bounce on the first approach to KFCI, Mr. Anderson had already executed two perfect landings at other airports that day. Following the bounce on the first approach at KFCI, the subsequent landing (on the third approach) was soft and uneventful."

Is there anything I need to know but not asked?
He was not physically impaired. He is a retired nuclear engineer and was well rested. He experienced mild turbulence during climb from KHSP. When the flight was at FAK the AWOS at KFCI was silent. Up until the bounced landing the rudder was functioning perfectly.

² The statement was e-mailed to NTSB the same day at 1457 EDT.

³ As of the end of November 2023 repairs are nearly complete.

Do you have any questions for NTSB?

No sir.

The call ended at 1441 EDT.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on July 20, 2023. He replied on July 21, 2023, at 1437 EDT with comments that were incorporated into the narrative. The FINAL digest was e-mailed to him for FINAL review on July 21, 2023. He replied the same day at 1654 EDT with comments that were incorporated into the digest. The digest was e-mailed to him for FINAL review on July 21, 2023. He replied the same day at 1848 EDT with, “Tim, I concur with all of your changes. Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment. Ross [Anderson].” The FINAL digest was e-mailed to him on August 7, 2023.