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Air Safety Investigator
AS-ERA

Date: 1/13/2026

Subject: ERA24FA136, Pilot Familiar with the Accident Airport Statement

Contact: Joe Garst

Mr. Garst contacted the former NTSB IIC via electronic mail on March 29, 2024. He detailed his experiences at the accident airport below:

"Adam thanks for taking the time to reply to my email. I know you are extremely busy and I'm well aware of your endeavors as I spent a lot of time at the NTSB Headquarters in Washington D.C. pursuing my PhD. I hope I can give a little insight into what it is like operating in and out of Ingalls Airfield. I was the Director of Flight Operations/Chief Pilot for Cambata Aviation for eight years operating from Ingalls Field (At the time Cambata Aviation owned the hanger to the left of the terminal). We operated a Beechjet 400A for eight years and a Hawker 700 at times. I have operated in and out of Ingalls Field under all types of weather conditions. Ironically, I think the most challenging conditions are what prevailed the day of the accident (10 mi vis, no ceiling reported, and high winds gusting to 38K). High winds coupled with the geography of the airfield create a very dangerous environment. The runway sits on top of a mountain with a cliff just prior to runway 25. What this does on windy days is produce a tremendous updraft on very short final. What I would like to do is walk you through an approach to runway 25 under conditions that prevailed the day of the accident. I have observed this on numerous occasions both flying the approach and also on the ground waiting number one to take off. I have seen everything from Gulfstreams on down executing this approach on windy days.

First, here is what you see in the cockpit. It is a beautiful day and you can see the runway 10 miles out as you turn on final. As you come down final you get configured and established on a stable approach; throttles set, airspeed right on, 3

degree glide path nailed. Piece of cake and the scenery is beautiful. All is well until you hit short final. All of a sudden you feel the airplane climbing and the VVI reads 1000 fpm climb. Instinctively you yank the throttles to idle and push the nose over. Seconds later you fly out of the updraft with the nose down and the throttles at idle, finding yourself sinking below the runway. You slam the throttles full forward, but of course gas turbines take a few seconds to spool up. If you are lucky, you catch it in time, if not you are looking at what happens. I have seen it both in the cockpit and from the ground and fortunately most pilots recover. Overall experience doesn't matter much (this pilot had over 13,000 hrs.). Pilots experienced with Ingalls Field know to go against their instincts and not pull the throttles to idle when they hit the updraft on short final. If this was the cause of the accident it is going to be hard to prove without an eye witness and cockpit communication. The best clues might come from the data recorder (VVI readings and throttle settings). My guess is that you are going to find that the airplane was functioning perfectly. Another issue is that we don't really know the updraft wind speed (I'm sure that 38K gust reading was on the airfield). Good luck Adam! It is a sad scenario.

Best regards from an old pilot.

Joe Garst"