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Office of Aviation Safety, Eastern Region

Date: July 12, 2024

Subject: NTSB# ERA24FA301

Contact: [REDACTED] (Mechanic, A&P)

The individual noted above provided the following information in an in-person interview near the accident site. The below contents are a summary of what was reported:

Phone: [REDACTED]

- The mechanic assisted the pilot with his preflight. The mechanic had worked on the airplane in the past and had extensive knowledge of the airplane's background and the pilot's purpose of flight.
- The pilot planned to complete a flight from his home airport Aguadilla BQN to San Juan, Puerto Rico (SJU Airport) to address several maintenance discrepancies with the airplane and engines. The maintenance discrepancies were identified by Mr. Hernandez.
- The mechanic reported that during preflight that the four fuel tanks were found near empty or about one third full.
- The mechanic told the pilot, if you are going to take it un-airworthy to San Juan, you are going to need more fuel.
- The mechanic reported that the pilot obtained 14 gallons of 100-low lead fuel from the fixed base operator - Western Aviation. The pilot had pumped fuel into jugs and driven it via vehicle to the airplane
- He observed the pilot add the fuel from the jugs to the fuel tanks.

The mechanic reported that following the fuel addition, he estimated the below fuel load.

Left Main: 15 gallons
Left Auxiliary: 20 gallons
Right Main: 6-8 gallons
Right Auxiliary: 15 gallons

- It was clarified that the “main” tanks are outboard on the wings, and the AUX tanks are inboard. He described that it was his operational knowledge, pilots must use the main tanks for takeoff and landing.
- He reported that he did not observe the pilot sump the fuel tanks during the preflight and the correct fuel measuring dip stick was not present with the airplane.
- The mechanic described that the right main tank, after the fuel addition, remained “super low” in his estimation. He reiterated that there was no correct dip stick that was present with the airplane to be utilized.
- The mechanic stated that the pilot stated to him during preflight, he planned to use the main tanks just for the takeoff, and then would use the fuller auxiliary tanks while enroute to San Juan.
- The mechanic observed the pilot start the engines and complete a run-up, which he described as normal. He did not witness the takeoff. He described the start up as the engines “started great.” He said that he heard the pilot feather the engines during run-up, which he said also sounded normal.
- The mechanic was asked about one flight observed on ADS-B, that occurred in June 2024. The mechanic was aware of this flight, which was conducted by the accident pilot. The mechanic described that the flight was a “test flight” and the pilot was aware of the several maintenance discrepancies with the airplane.
- The mechanic reported that the left engine was leaking fuel after this flight, and the fuel air mixture control was adjusted to stop the leaking.
- The mechanic provided all maintenance records he had that belonged to the accident airplane.
- The mechanic informed the accident pilot during an April 2024 annual and 100-hour inspection of 3 pages of aircraft “squawks.” Some of the items had been addressed, which he denoted on the squawk page. Most items had not been corrected to his knowledge. The endorsements labeled the airplane as un-airworthy, and he informed the pilot verbally the plane was not safe for flight.
- The mechanic reported that the pilot planned to fly to SJU, to get another mechanic to fix the work, due to cost. The pilot told the mechanic that accomplishing the maintenance needed at BQN was too expensive. The mechanic was informed by the pilot, that someone at San Juan was going to help him with all of the discrepancies.

- The mechanic reported that the biggest issue, in his opinion, was the low compression on the right engine.
- The mechanic reported that the airplane was not hangered while it was based at BQN.
- The mechanic reported that the pilot planned to get more training in the accident airplane, after the airplane's maintenance issues were corrected.
- The mechanic told the pilot three times that he needed to get a Ferry Permit from the FAA in order to fly the plane to San Juan. He also described the process to the pilot, which he stated the pilot did not accomplish prior to flight.

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