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Eastern Region

Date: March 26, 2024

Subject: ERA24LA124, Flight Instructor Follow-up Interview

Contact: Onzem Papa Nouveau

Mr. Nouveau was contacted via telephone for a follow-up interview regarding the accident of N485DA. The following is a summary of that conversation.

Mr. Nouveau was asked to describe the events before the flight. He replied that it was normal and that the engine runup was normal. He was asked to clarify who sumped the fuel tanks and who completed the preflight. He replied that the pilot receiving instruction completed the preflight and that he sumped the wings, but they looked at the sample together.

Mr. Nouveau was asked if they refueled prior to departing. He replied that they did and that they received 34 gallons of fuel and that there was some fuel already in the wings. He was asked how full the tanks were when they departed, and he replied, "Tab plus 5 gallons" and stated that they were not full. He further commented that the fuel added was split between the two wings by the fueler.

Mr. Nouveau was asked to describe the flight and its purpose. He replied that this was an instrument flight to see if the pilot receiving instruction was ready for "stage 1". It was not scheduled to be a very long flight. He commented that they were in the air for approximately 1 ½ hours but the scheduled block was for 2 hours.

He described that as they were coming back in, they requested a practice approach under VFR. They completed that then called ATC and requested a squawk code but that they maintained a visual approach. Mr. Nouveau commented that the student was still "under the hood" and he was guiding him, helping him set up the approaches.

Mr. Nouveau stated that he requested the ILS for Runway 9L, but ATC replied to expect 9R, so they began to set up for 9R. They were then changed back to 9L and they set up again. At this point, ATC told them that 9L was unavailable and so they were given 9R again. They started to head toward 9R and everything "was good" and they were told to switch to the Tower frequency. When they switched, he then requested to switch to 9C. They began a prelanding checklist and the Tower told them to sidestep to 9C at their discretion. At this point, Mr. Nouveau had the pilot receiving instruction remove his hood to finish setting up for 9C.

Mr. Nouveau commented that at this point he told the student to simulate a short field landing for 9C. The student was still flying at this point, and they had 1 red and 1 white on the PAPI lights, however, they began to get low. He waited for the student to correct the altitude, but the student did not appear to recognize that they needed more power. Mr. Nouveau then took over the controls and added power. He stated that he was about to give back the controls of the airplane, but he felt like something was wrong because the airplane continued to sink, so he added more throttle to fix the descent, but the engine did not respond.

Mr. Nouveau was asked what the prelanding checklist consisted of. He replied, " flaps 50 and mixture full rich".

Mr. Nouveau was asked where the fuel selector was positioned and he responded that he did not remember. He stated that you have to switch the fuel tanks every 5 gallons and that the maximum imbalance is 7 gallons per side. He continued that the airplane has a manual gauge but that he relies on the MFD. Mr. Nouveau was asked if they were switching the tanks to maintain the balance and he replied, "yes". He commented that the instructor is normally responsible for that.

Mr. Nouveau was asked if the flaps were set to 50 during the approach and replied that they were at "full".

-End of conversation

Mr. Nouveau called the IIC on March 26 to clarify that he switched the tank for the last when flying west bound for ILS 9R. He was asked which tank he switched to when this occurred, and he replied that he was unsure but believes it may have been the right tank. Mr. Nouveau was asked if he saw any low fuel warnings on the displays. He replied, "no" and that the MFD only shows how much fuel you have left, not the differences between the tanks.

-End of conversation

