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Date: December 30, 2024

Subject: ERA25LA084, Flight Instructor/Safety Pilot Interview

Contact: Nicolas Carder

Mr. Carder was contacted via telephone to discuss the accident of N76NN. The following is a summary of that conversation.

Mr. Carder confirmed that he was the “safety pilot” onboard the airplane at the time of the accident. He was asked if he received any injuries as a result of the accident, to which he replied that he did. He confirmed that he went to the hospital the following day, and at the hospital it was discovered that he had a small fracture in his vertebra.

Mr. Carder was asked to describe the events leading up to the accident. He stated that they departed from Melbourne, Florida after completing a preflight and everything was working as it should on their way to Rock Hill, South Carolina. He commented that Rock Hill is where Blake, the pilot, was from. Mr. Carder stated that this was a time building exercise for Blake for his next rating and that he only needed 7 more hours. They flew to Rock Hill with no issues, had lunch, and came back to the airport. Once back at the airport in Rock Hill, they go fuel and paid for it. They once again completed a preflight of the airplane before departing back to Melbourne. Mr. Carder stated that once they were over Lake Washington, which is just outside of the Delta airspace, the right engine started to “sputter out”.

Mr. Carder commented that Blake was flying the entire trip, but Mr. Carder described starting to troubleshoot the engine for him. He stated the troubleshooting efforts did not correct the engine problem, so he brought the throttle and mixture “back” and secured the engine. The right engine stopped, and they continued to fly the airplane when they realized that they were getting close to the Delta airspace. At this point, Blake called ATC to let them know that they were single engine and needed to land immediately. The tower cleared them to land they headed directly towards the

runway. Just after that, the left engine began to sputter but they did not want to secure it immediately since they were already single engine. Mr. Carder described the left engine as "going out, coming back in, and going back out". They realized that they were losing altitude quickly and simultaneously the engine stopped completely. The propeller was feathered, and they advised the tower that they would not make it back to the runway.

Mr. Carder stated that Blake and himself are both flight instructors for the flight school, so they know the area around the airport well. They turned the airplane towards the highway to the west, but immediately realized that there was too much traffic on it to land there. They then saw a large open parking lot adjacent to the highway that they elected to land on. Mr. Carder continued that once they turned the airplane to get parallel with the parking lot, the landing light lit up the powerlines in front of them that they did not see until that point. He stated that the left wing hit the powerlines first. He had closed his eyes at this point and felt like the airplane was upside down as they fell to the ground. Once he opened his eyes, he realized he was on the ground and safe. Both he and Blake were able to exit the airplane quickly. Mr. Carder noted a small fire on the right wing, but it quick extinguished itself. Both pilots met at the back of the airplane where they were able to call 911.

The IIC asked Mr. Carder how much fuel they received in Rock Hill after lunch. He responded that Blake had requested up to 30 gallons on each side, 60 total. The IIC asked Mr. Carder if he watched them fill the fuel tanks. He responded that he did watch them fuel the tanks and that he and Blake verified that the tanks each had fuel to the 30-gallon tab marks. He noted that Blake also sumped the fuel tanks while he added 1 quart of oil to the left engine.

Mr. Carder was asked how much fuel they had aboard the airplane when they had initially departed Melbourne. He replied that the fuel tanks were full, which is 50 useable gallons per wing for 100 gallons total of useable fuel. Mr. Carder was asked to clarify again how much fuel they had when they departed Rock Hill on the return flight to Melbourne. He replied that the fuel levels were brought up to the 30-gallon tabs in each tank equating to 60 gallons total when they departed. Mr. Carder explained that Blake had the physical fuel receipt.

Mr. Carder was asked if Blake told ATC that he was having a fuel emergency. He replied "yes, I think". Mr. Carder stated that they had indications of fuel and that the gauges showed that they were above the yellow arc, though they were not far above the yellow arc.

Mr. Carder was asked if they had any problems with the airplane prior to the right engine quitting. He replied that everything was good for the whole flight. He also

commented that the cylinder head temperatures on the right engine was warmer throughout the flight compared to the left engine, but not by very much. He commented that the "left engine was $\frac{1}{2}$ on the gauge and the right engine was $\frac{3}{4}$ on the gauge" for the majority of the flight. He also commented that the exhaust gas temperatures looked the same with both engines leaned. Fuel pressure was in the green arc for the entire flight. Mr. Carder commented that when they secured the right engine. The left engine showed "the same" as it did for the flight, in the mid to upper range, even when the engine was sputtering. He commented that the fuel pressure confused them since they continued to have fuel pressure indications while the engines sputtered out.

Mr. Carder was asked if he had any questions for the IIC. He asked if Blake and himself could fill out the NTSB 6120 form together. The IIC replied that they could fill out the form together. There were no additional questions.

-End of conversation