



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

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Person Contacted: Carl Gegemheimer and Matthew Lambert – L3 Aviation Academy
NTSB Accident Number: WPR18FA045

Narrative:

An in-person interview was conducted with both Mr. Lambert, who was the Director of Flight Operations, and Mr. Gegemheimer, who was the Chief Flight Instructor. Mr. Gegemheimer reported that the accident flight was the students first flight in the beech C90 as part of the High-Performance Aircraft course. During the course, the flight instructor will be seated in the left seat, and pilot receiving instruction seated in the right seat, and would switch which the other student at some point during the flight. Mr. Gegemheimer stated that the accident flight initially went to Baldwin County Airport (MLJ), Milledgeville, Georgia, prior to returning to Sanford, most likely due to weather in the area. He further reported that students are required to obtain weather briefs from flight service, however, flight plans are typically filed by the flight instructors using a phone application called Flight Plan Go.

Mr. Lambert and Mr. Gegemheimer said that L3 Airline Academy is located at SFB, and specializes in training of students from various countries, from zero flight experience through their flight instructor certificate. The school was originally started in 1989 under the name of Com Air Aviation Academy and had been sold twice (Delta Connection Academy and Aerosim) before L3 purchased the company in October 2016. The company operates 92 airplanes, which include Cessna 172, Cirrus SR-20, Piper PA-28, Piper PA-44, Diamond DA-42, and Beech C90 aircraft. They employ about 120 people, which include flight instructors, check pilots, and various support staff and have about 500 students at any given time in various programs.

They added that L3 Airline Academy utilizes in-house flight tracking of their fleet with a program called OpsView. Each flight is monitored, and if delayed for any reason, they will initiate an internal overdue aircraft procedure, which includes calling local airports and air traffic control facilities prior to reporting the airplane overdue. Company personnel reported that each airplane has a discrepancy logbook, which is checked by the flight instructor and dispatch prior

to the flight being dispatched. The sheets are kept within the flight book for the respective airplane.

Mr. Lambert and Mr. Gegemheimer added the following company structure for the academy:

Academy director (Robert Luthy)
Director of Flight Operators – Matthew Lambert
Director of Maintenance – Tom Bruno
Chief Flight Instructor - Carl Gegemheimer
Manager of Flight Safety - Wade Hawker
Manager of Flight Standards - Bernard Serafinowicz
4 Group Managers various training groups (manages CFIs)

In addition, Mr. Gegemheimer stated that L3 Aviation Academy has an initial hire drug test for all employees and has a random drug test program for employees. However, the random drug test program is not actively used unless there is an incident.

When asked about aircraft maintenance, Mr. Lambert and Mr. Gegemheimer stated that the company conducts in-house maintenance on all their aircraft with the exception of the Beech C90's, which are maintained by Aeronautical Repairs, located adjacent to the school. Aeronautical Repairs employs 1 person and contracts additional mechanics as needed. The owner of the Aeronautical Repairs reported that maintenance on the C90s are performed in accordance with the Beech and Pratt & Whitney Maintenance Manuals

Mr. Lambert and Mr. Gegemheimer further reported that the training course which both students were enrolled in was a CFR 141 approved course and accredited by the CAAC. Students will typically arrive with no experience in aviation and are prescreened to verify their English is sufficient. Upon arrival, the students undergo a 1-month class that is focused on aviation related English and a second month that is divided between English classes and private pilot ground school prior to starting their flight training. Before a student is allowed to begin their flight training, the school requires the student to pass the private pilot written test. The students will complete their private pilot training, then progress into the instrument ground school. Upon completion, they are dual enrolled in the commercial and instrument flight course, which includes transition into the Cirrus SR20. Following completion of their instrument certificate, the students continue to build flight time with a flight instructor, and eventually go to their multi-engine commercial ground school, which is followed by flight training in the Piper PA-44. Upon completion of their commercial multi-engine rating, the students will transition into high performance ground school, which is about 4 weeks in length, before transitioning into the Beech C90, which is taught by 4 different inhouse instructors and 4 contract instructors.

Throughout the students training, the company utilizes inhouse check pilots for intermediate progress and stage checks. They also utilize inhouse check pilots or sometime contracted designated pilot examiners for the final exam flights, which is the issuance of the pilot certificate or rating for the respective program.

The two students involved in the accident were under contract Hainan airplanes for their flight training.

According to Mr. Lambert and Mr. Gegemheimer, the flight instructor provided training in their flight instructor and high-performance courses. The flight instructor was also a company check airman for their single-engine and multi-engine courses. In addition, the CFI was approved to provide end of course exams, which included the issuance of a pilot certificate or rating for that respective course. Company representatives further reported that the flight instructor was one of their most experienced instructors at the company and that he was checked out in all models of airplanes they have with the exception of the Diamond DA-42 airplane, which was recently acquired.