



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy N. Sorensen
Aviation Accident Investigator
Central Region

Date: January 10, 2011

Person Contacted: Mr. Alec Blume, Captain (Pilot Not Flying)

NTSB Accident Number: CEN11FA144 – Springfield, IL (Learjet 35A ~ N800GP)

Narrative:

Capt. Blume was the pilot-in-command on the accident flight involving N800GP. He was the non-flying pilot (PNF) at the time of the accident. He was positioned in the right pilot seat during the accident flight.

Capt. Blume reported holding an Airline Transport Pilot certificate with a multi-engine land airplane class rating, and Learjet and CL-600 (Challenger) type ratings. (The Challenger type rating was limited to second-in-command privileges.) His pilot certificate also included a single engine land airplane class rating, which was limited to commercial pilot privileges. He reported accumulating approximately 6,000 hours total flight time, with 830 hours in a Learjet. Of his Learjet flight time, 640 hours are as pilot-in-command.

Capt. Blume was employed by Priester Aviation full time since August 2005. He flew with Priester Aviation on a part-time (contract) basis from February 2005 to August 2005. Prior to Priester, he flew for Atlantic Coast Airlines and based in Dulles, Virginia.

The airplane was repositioned from Chicago Executive (PWK) to Midway (MDW) for the planned Part 135 air taxi flight to Springfield (SPI). On the flight from PWK to MDW, they climbed to 4,000 feet. They were in the clouds for most of the flight and encountered moderate rime icing. The approach and landing at MDW were routine. They parked at Signature Aviation while at MDW. They arrived about 1-1/2 hours before the proposed departure time for SPI. They decided about 1 hour prior to scheduled departure. However, it started snowing and got heavier. They decided a second time after boarding the passengers immediately prior to takeoff. A 3:00 pm departure from SPI was planned to return to MDW.

RECORD OF CONVERSATION – CEN11FA144
Alec Blume (January 10, 2011)

Capt. Blume noted that the departure from MDW was "normal." They climbed to 14,000 feet. The first officer suggested going to 16,000 feet to make the trip a little faster. The descent into SPI was "normal" and in accordance with air traffic control (ATC) instructions. Runway 31 was in use at SPI; however, the first officer suggested requesting runway 22 because it was more direct. They were cleared for runway 22 and subsequently joined the runway 22 localizer. Capt. Blume recalled that they broke out of the clouds about 2,100 feet, and 5 miles from the runway. They were in visual conditions for the remainder of the approach. He added that the first officer requested flaps early because he wanted to be able to keep the engine power up to improve the effectiveness of the anti-icing system. This seemed logical to Capt. Blume under the circumstances.

Capt. Blume stated that the master warning light came on and the stick shaker became active on short final. He was not sure of the airplane's attitude or airspeed at the time. He recalled thinking that they "didn't have room to recover." This was followed by an "earth shattering impact." He thought that might be due to an impact with the arresting gear apparatus located off the side of the runway. The airplane went over a slight rise (bump) before coming to a rest. Capt. Blume called for an evacuation. He pulled the thrust levers over the stops in order to shut the engines down. (They were already at the idle stops.) The first officer went into the cabin to assist the passengers. He recalled stepping out onto the grass and seeing smoke coming from the airplane. He moved the passengers away from the airplane. A firefighter informed him that all 6 people were off the airplane.

Capt. Blume noted that they were in clear air during cruise. The first officer managed the anti-icing system during the flight. The first officer verbally indicated changes in the anti-icing system to him during the flight. He did not perceive anything out of the ordinary in how the first officer was handling the flight.

Capt. Blume noted that they descended through a cloud layer into SPI. They entered the tops of the clouds about 5,000 feet and remained in the clouds until they broke out on the approach. He thought they broke out of the clouds about 2,100 feet and were about 5 miles from the airport at that time. He informed ATC of the cloud bases. He noted a trace of rime ice on the wing tip tank and windshield during the descent and approach. He recalled that ATC had issued a pilot report (PIREP) regarding icing prior to the approach. He noted that he had provided a PIREP to ATC upon breaking out of the clouds.

RECORD OF CONVERSATION – CEN11FA144
Alec Blume (January 10, 2011)

Capt. Blume did not recall any major deviations in the approach. They touched down left of the runway centerline, but he was not sure how far from the threshold. The airplane ultimately went off the right side of the runway "in the blink of an eye." He recalled being on the grass and not much on the runway.

Capt. Blume commented that the master warning came on first, followed very quickly by the stick shaker. He added, "The next thing I knew we were stalled." He was not aware of any other warning annunciations associated with the master warning.

Capt. Blume observed the wing and stabilizer temperature indicators in the green section; near the line between the green and red sections. He was not sure at what point during the flight he made this observation. The first officer managed the anti-icing system during the flight. As a result, Capt. Blume was not aware of exactly when the first officer turned off the anti-icing system during the approach. He noted that they encountered a trace of icing during climb out from MDW, but they were out of it quickly. He added that only the wing tip tank and the outboard portion of the wing leading edge were visible from the cockpit. Normally, the engine and wing/stabilizer anti-ice systems are off for takeoff and landing.

Capt. Blume stated that the autopilot was used during the flight. It was engaged during the descent and the approach. However, he was not sure when the first officer turned it off on the approach. He was also not sure about the yaw damper. Use of the autopilot is approved to 50 feet above ground level (agl). Typically, the yaw damper is turned off on short final; about 50 feet agl.

The reference speed (V_{ref}) for the accident approach was about 120 knots. Stabilized approach criteria required an airspeed of V_{ref} to $V_{ref} + 10$ knots to be maintained. He recalled that the airplane slowed to V_{ref} at one point during the approach. He called it out to the first officer, and the first officer corrected appropriately.

Capt. Blume reported that the airplane had about 2,500 pounds of fuel onboard at the time of the accident. This was distributed evenly – about 1,250 pounds – in each wing. That was distributed between the main wing and the wing tip fuel tanks. He was unsure of the exact distribution between each main and the tip tanks. The aft fuselage fuel tank was empty. The flight departed MDW with about 3,500 pounds total fuel onboard.

RECORD OF CONVERSATION – CEN11FA144

Alec Blume (January 10, 2011)

Capt. Blume explained that normally pilots are on for two weeks and off for one week. However, they are called on to "give a back a day" to the company during their off week. He was "giving a day back" on the day of the accident. The accident flight was his first flight of the week. He arrived at PWK about 07:00 am on the morning of the accident. He reported that he went to bed about 11:00 pm the night prior to the accident flight and woke up about 06:00 am.

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