FLIGHT-WATCH

VOLUME 136 By: Alan Armstrong, Esq. SEPTEMBER 2003

A TOUR OF FLIGHT SAFETY IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA

I.

FLIGHT SAFETY AND THE AERO-CLUB OF ATLANTA

The Flight Safety Training Center in Atlanta recently hosted members of the Aeroclub of Atlanta to a tour of the Center. We were allowed to receive 30-minute orientation flights (and sometimes longer) in a number of flight simulators. I was fortunate to get hops in the following simulators:

* The Beech King Air 200;
* The Canadair Regional Jet ("RJ");
* The Learjet Model No. 45; and*
* The Learjet Model No. 60.

The exposure to these fantastic training devices gives one an appreciation for the advanced technology available in today's modern jet aircraft.

II.

SIMULATORS AVAILABLE FOR MY HOPS

A. THE KING AIR 200

The King Air 200 was a relatively straightforward aircraft in handling qualities. However, in applying takeoff power, one had to be mindful of the torque required as the throttle was advanced. The layout of the cockpit controls was conventional. However, for a pilot accustomed to reciprocating engines, the engine performance instruments required scanning a number of instruments, such as N1, N2, and torque. The flare for landing was relatively flat. It was not particularly difficult to fly in a VFR pattern. During the short time I spent in the simulator, there was no time for V1 cuts, or for VMC demonstrations.

B. THE LEAR 45

I sat in the right seat in the Lear 45 and did not manipulate the flight controls. We were given two TCAS alerts. The time interval from the moment we received the TCAS alert until the intruder closed on us from a 12:00 position was very short. The use of spoilers to dissipate airspeed was a new experience for me. The speed with which the aircraft accelerates, together with the difficulty in bleeding airspeed,

gives one an appreciation for planning descents below 10,000 feet, without exceeding 250 knots.

C. THE CANADAIR REGIONAL JET

I got two hops in the left seat of the Canadair RJ. The airplane felt substantially larger than the Learjet 45 I left just before getting into the RJ simulator. The RJ sat significantly higher above the runway. The feeling of mass or weight was apparent in the initial slowness of acceleration after takeoff power was applied. However, after momentary hesitation, the power took effect, and I had to avoid overcontrolling the rudder pedals during the takeoff roll. Fortunately, the RJ talks to you with warnings, such as "bank angle," and altitude callouts as you descend below

100 feet on final. It would also call out "minimums" at 200 feet.

Becoming accustomed to reading airspeed and altitude from a tape display on either side of the attitude indicator was a new experience. In fact, the glass cockpit display was all new to me. However, glancing to the right and reading the N1 gauge and the effect power reductions had on airspeed became quite easy, just like flying any other airplane. If I understood correctly, below the diamond on the airspeed tape was a red bar, indicating the trend the airspeed would take, based upon the existing power application. There was not time during my two brief hops in the RJ to learn more about how the bar graph below the red diamond on the airspeed indicator worked.

D. THE LEAR 60

The highlight of my day was receiving instruction from Alan Murray in the Learjet 60 simulator. The features of the glass cockpit were thoroughly discussed before takeoff. The systems and procedures were covered, together with V1 (takeoff decision speed), as well as V2 (takeoff safety speed). We climbed to 10,000 feet through a 1,000-foot overcast and shot the ILS approach into Wichita, Kansas. We also did steep turns at altitude. The aircraft was extremely responsive. After being properly trimmed, the aircraft was flown

with fingertip touch. The Lear 60 was the most exciting and responsive aircraft to fly during the day at Flight Safety. It was remarkably responsive and had an abundance of features, such as a flight director, a flight management system, and a glass cockpit.

III.

CONCLUSION AND SPECIAL THANKS

The Flight Safety tour gives one and understanding of why Flight Safety is held in high regard in the aviation community. The instructors are bright, courteous, and knowledgeable. The facility is immaculate. If the pilot flies a bad approach or does not understand a procedure, the simulator can be immediately "backed up" to the position where the maneuver began, and the exercise can be conducted again. This is a terrific learning tool for a pilot transitioning to a new airplane. Also, the visuals depicted outside the cockpits were quite realistic.


Bill Bell's Grumman Cheetah

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Special thanks go to the following people:

Edward J. Klonoski, Jr., the Center Manager for Flight Safety International in Atlanta;

Alan J. Murray, my Learjet 60 instructor;

Vahid "Rod" Momtahah, one of my instructors in the RJ;

Jack Stanton, my instructor in the King Air 200;

Matthew Higgenbotham, my instructor in the Learjet 45;

Glenn Johnson, my other instructor in the Canadair RJ;

My good friend Bill Bell, who insisted that I attend this event and who loaned me his camera (complete with film!) to take the pictures appearing in this article;

Donald R. Anderson, Esq., President of the Aeroclub of Atlanta;

Heather Fuentes, the receptionist at Flight Safety who was so courteous during my visit;

All the members of the Flight Safety staff who made the event possible; and

All the members of the Aeroclub of Atlanta, who made this event possible.

Special thanks go to my "stick buddies" who participated with me during hops in various simulators, i.e., Don Anderson, Ellyn Yeung, Bob Toxen, Leonard Goldstein, and April (last name unknown).

Please visit Flight Safety's website at:

www.flightsafety.com

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