



## AIRCRAFT MECHANIC: BECAUSE PILOTS NEED HEROES TOO

On March 9, 2024, I flew a mission to Cagayancillo, an isolated island in the middle of the Sulu Sea. The mission aimed to transport health and social welfare officials for Medical Assistance to Indigent and Financially Incapacitated Patients, as well as for a Malaria Elimination Planning Seminar and Epidemiology Seminar. The flight was successful but with one issue: the left landing gear brake line of N81708 had a crack, possibly due to excessive movement during landing on the rough and rugged airstrip in Cagayancillo.

During ground maneuvers at the base in Aborlan and landing in Cagayancillo, I still had good brake control, including during my landing and taxi at Puerto Princesa International Airport. However, during my preflight inspection before departing Cagayancillo for Puerto



Princesa, I noticed a leak. Though it wasn't dripping, there was enough evidence of hydraulic fluid on the brake line. I cleaned it with a tissue and proceeded with the flight.

After completing the mission, I had to fly back to base, just a 15-minute flight from Puerto Princesa International Airport. Before landing, I checked the brakes and found them to be a little spongy or soft. During landing, there was little to no remaining brake effectiveness, but it wasn't nerve-wracking, as the airstrip at the base was long enough for N81708 to come to a complete stop without any brake applications after touchdown. My experience with landing gear issues and failures, both in fixed gear and retractable gear, helped me in my judgment of what to do and what not to do.

N81708 had experienced a similar brake problem before, with a crack in the right main landing gear during our maintenance flight after the annual inspection. Kyle Stevenson was able to fix it, and thankfully, there was a



spare part available at the Mission base.

I attempted to find a solution to this new problem similar to what Kyle did but to no avail. So, I prayed for a solution outside of



Palawan because there was no other option, and medical flight requests were active. God provided an idea. I decided to fly N81708 to Mactan-Cebu International Airport. I coordinated with someone I know in Cebu who owns an aircraft maintenance service company, with qualified aircraft mechanics and a lot of spare parts available.

I planned my flight, anticipated any risks, considered the hazards, and after a thorough evaluation, the flight was deemed feasible even without the left landing gear brake for my landing at Mactan-Cebu International Airport. This airport has a total runway length of 11,000 feet, and I have been flying to this airport for 10 years, so the airport layout was not a major concern.

My plan was to fill the brake fluid reservoir to full so I could have brake control for taxiing and other ground maneuvers before departing from the base. It was evident that during some brake applications on the ground, hydraulic fluid would leak out, and it continued to drip during flight, resulting in no left brake for landing. For landing at Mactan-Cebu International Airport, the distance from runway 04's threshold to the taxiway Lima intersection is approximately 2,300 feet. This is long enough to make a complete stop without

using the brakes, plus a direct headwind of 10-15 knots brought by the Northeast Monsoon on a standard short-field landing technique.

So, we filled the reservoir with hydraulic fluid, prayed for safety, and Sherlyn and I departed for Cebu from the AWA base in Aborlan. After 3 hours of flight, my landing in Cebu was safely done as planned. I taxied from the active runway to taxiway Lima and proceeded to the general aviation area. I went to the maintenance facility, negotiated with Nerio, the proprietor, and instructed the mechanic to do what Kyle Stevenson did, and everything was a success.

I would like to make an appeal to all of you who read this and to all the people who helped with the missions we do here in the Philippines: Please support local aircraft mechanic candidate(s) at the Adventist World Aviation Philippine base for additional training at an approved Maintenance Training Organization here in the Philippines for quality and safety.

Proposed Budget for aircraft maintenance training, transportation, food, and accommodations: \$3,500 USD

Thank you for your support. God bless you.

Jed Bryan Nantes

**Your AWA Mission Families serving at the AWA Philippines - Palawan Mission Project:**



Sir Ronie Fiedacan



Jed & Sherlyn Nantes



Christine Cayetano



Betchie Albaracin