



FROM THE ANNALS OF DON'T

There have been numerous submissions over the years to NASA's Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS) concerning pilot confusion in TAA's and FMS-equipped aircraft. Reports included omitting assigned routes, mis-programming approaches, mode confusion, altitude busts...you name it. Here is one professional crew's account of how it can happen.

Location: Deep in the Colorado Mountains.

Crew: Corporate Pilots.

Synopsis: CL604 Flight Crew reports not selecting the RLG transition in their FMC when cleared for the LDA DME Rwy 25 approach by ATC, which leads to a course direct to AIGLE and descent below the RLG transition MEA. A low altitude alert is issued by ATC and the crew returns to 14000 feet before accepting a visual approach clearance.

Narrative 1

LDA/DME 25 approach to EGE selected but pilot failed to select RLG transition. Aircraft flew from RLG directly to AIGLE in VPATH and bypassed fixes outside of AIGLE. Thus aircraft was right of airway and descending in VPATH to AIGLE. ATC (I believe it was Tower) announced a low altitude alert and asked pilots to climb to 14,000. Approach clearance cancelled; ATC asked if pilots wanted visual approach which they accepted. Landed without incident/ATC did not ask for report. Aircraft terrain warning system did not activate. Pilots did not confirm fixes leaving RLG prior to the approach. Pilot Not Flying [was] off the air speaking with FBO when Pilot Flying [was] cleared for the approach. Better CRM (approach briefing) and communication may have prevented the deviation.

Narrative 2

We were cleared for the LDA/DME 25 approach into EGE from RLG. The FMS was setup from RLG to AIGLE, WASHI, CIPKU, runway. The RLG transition in the FMS didn't get selected and it defaulted to vectors. Subsequently the aircraft was flying from RLG to AIGLE and bypassed two fixes outside of AIGLE; AQILA and WEHAL. As the FMS was set to and flying in VPATH, Eagle Tower issued a low altitude warning and had us climb to 14000' and informed us we were right of course. They cancelled the approach clearance and had us climb to 14000'. We had sight of the airport, informed the Tower and were cleared for the visual approach and landed without further incident. At no time did the EPGWS issue a terrain warning.

Also, the two fixes, AIGLE and AQILA both beginning with the letter "A" helped to cause the deviation as it didn't trigger a reaction from us when looking at the FMS fixes and the approach plate fixes. The FMS flew to AIGLE and not to AQILA where it should have.