

STEPHEN DAWSON:

AT ABOUT THE 4 HOUR MARK OF OUR PIPELINE PATROL OF THE KENOVA-COLUMBUS WE BEGAN EXPERIENCING ENGINE ISSUES. AT THE TIME WE WERE HEADED IN FOUR OUR NORMAL FUEL STOP AT I43. APPROXIMATELY 8 MINUTES OUT FROM THE AIRPORT WE HEARD A SIGNIFICANT BOOM AND BEGAN LOSING RPM'S AND THE PLANE BEGAN TO VIBRATE AND THEN SHAKE. I BEGAN A CHECK OF VARIOUS SYSTEMS TO SEE IF I COULD DETERMINE THE CAUSE, INCLUDING: FUEL SELECTOR, FUEL CUT-OFF, MIXTURE, POWER, SWITCHES, CIRCUIT BREAKERS, AND MAGNETOS. DURING THIS CHECK WE HAD AN EVEN LARGER BOOMING SOUND THAT DROPPED OUR MAX RPM'S TO ABOUT 1500. IT WAS AT THIS POINT I KNEW WE WERE GOING DOWN AND PUSHED THE POWER FULL AND MIXTURE FULL RICH. I THEN PITCHED UP FOR A BETTER GLIDE SPEED AND ASKED MY OBSERVER TO BEGIN SCANNING FOR A SUITABLE LANDING SITE WHILE I TRIED TURNING THE FUEL PUMP ON, HITTING THE STARTER, AND CHECKING THE POWER OPTIONS TO VERIFY I HAD STILL SOME POWER LEFT. WE HAD LIMITED OPTIONS DUE TO THE HILLY AND WOODED TERRAIN WE WERE OVER. OUR BEST CHOICE WAS TO AIM FOR THE ROW AND PUT IT DOWN THE BEST I COULD. WE CHOOSE A STRAIGHT SECTION AND AIMED FOR THE CREST OF A HILL. ALL OTHER SECTIONS OF THE ROW WOULD HAVE REQUIRED TURNING WHICH I WAS NOT KEEN ON DOING UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.

WE HIT THE CREST OF THE HILL ON THE MAINS WHEN I FLARED AT THE LAST SECOND TO AVOID THE NOSE GEAR, AND THEN BOUNCE OVER A ROAD INTO A BARBED-WIRE FENCE A CAME TO A STOP AT A 90 DEGREE ANGLE TO THE ROW. IMMEDIATELY, I KNEW MY BACK WAS MESSED UP, WHILE JOSH WAS ABLE TO GET OUT AND MOVE QUICKLY TO ASSIST WITH POST-CRASH ITEMS.