

From: Michael Migliore
To: [Shamblin, John \(FAA\)](#)
Subject: FAA Narrative N9138B
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February 6th, 2018

Received notification of a flight at 1300 out of KGAO for photography and dual instruction with photographer who is a licensed pilot (Peter Jansen: [REDACTED] in the Piper Seneca N9148B. In L31 I began the preflight getting everything ready, checking control surfaces, tire conditions, oil levels, gear condition, and fuel quantities. Noting the fuel was seen in each tank at the bottom of the sidewall, with the gauges showing 45 a side. Continuing the preflight and completing it, and everything appeared normal. Keith and I flew to GAO which was 25-30 minutes away. Landed at 12:30 and taxied onto the ramp. Greeted the passengers and let them set up the camera equipment while I figured out the destination from the coordinates they gave me. The new coordinates were 185NM SW into the Gulf of Mexico where they would photograph one of their oil rigs being moved to another location. The photographer requested the aft door be removed for the flight for photography. Flight of the aft door removed is permissible with restriction that maximum TAS does not exceed 130 kts. I filed a VFR flight plan through FSS and got a ADIZ crossing XPDR code. Filing for 3 hours of flight time and what I estimated to be 4 hours of fuel at the reduced power setting to maintain 130kts. The fuel gauges were showing right at 40 a side. Feeling I know the airplane I proceeded with the rest of the preflight. Also Noticing that we left behind the 4 person life raft at L31, Air Reldan dispatched an aircraft to deliver the raft. We departed around 14:30 and activated my flight plan in the air through FSS with De Ridder Radio. Arriving at our destination in 1 hour and 20 minutes. We circled the rig and vessels for 25-30 minutes for photography, doing a continuous left bank the whole time climbing and descending between 300 and 1500ft remaining approximately a half to 3/4 of a mile away from the rig and vessels. Upon completion of the photography we started with the fuel gauges showing 20 a side. I climbed to 4500 feet for a better tail wind component. Set up for cruise showing 1 hour and 02 minutes to our destination. Scanning the cluster and noticed fuel was showing closer to 10 a side, I tapped the gauges and they didn't really change. From that point I started leaning a little bit more for best economy, with some concern about the sudden drop of the fuel gauges. I did a bank with a small slip to look behind me and seen no trail of any fluids behind the aircraft, so I don't think I was losing fuel from a leak. Continuing with a little shaken nerves for a moment talking with my co-pilot trying to figure the best course of action. We decided to deviate 20 degrees left to KPTN which was 4NM closer and our best bet. Noticing the fuel gauges were decreasing faster than expected... At 50 minutes with 10 a side i expected to see 5 a side around 20-25 minutes left in our flight, and it was showing 5 a side when we still had 35-40 minutes left. I was leaned out as much as possible with the fuel flow showing 9.5gal per side on each engine. I contacted Houston Center on 120.35, got a squawk for flight following and advised them we were with critical fuel. As we continued flying I declared an Emergency when my right gauge showed 0, and a few minutes later the right engine failed. I feathered the engine we still had 17 minutes left in our flight and was approximately 24 miles from KPTN. To maintain my forward speed I started a small decent about 150-200fpm. Houston center Switched me to New Orleans Approach and I contacted them at 2100 feet, stating I was descending with one engine. They asked if I was going to make the airfield and I said it wasn't looking good. I leveled off at 1500 feet, 8-9 minutes later the left engine went out. Looking around I told approach control we were ditching in the canal by Atchafalaya River and they said they were following us on radar. Passengers already briefed with life jackets and raft ready, seat belts secured 10 minutes prior. I glided 48B down to the best spot where the water wasn't going to be too deep and there weren't any trees. With a clean configuration I flared a few feet above the water to bleed off some speed and held the plane off as long as possible until it descended into the water. Upon impact water rushed in and everyone was still conscious and ok. We all exited the aircraft and inflated the life raft and found we were able to stand on the aircraft. Everyone had service and called coast guard, Wildlife and fishery officers, 911. Within 50 minutes their was a helicopter on scene and rescued the passengers, the co-pilot and myself Taking us to KPTN. Air Reldan then dispatched a car to bring the passengers to a hospital to be checked out, and me home to Abita Springs.