

Michelle S Gardy Personal Statement

Sunday, 7/21/2019, was a beautiful day for a VFR flight. The sky was clear. Our intentions were to fly from Georgetown, TX, KGTU to Gillespie County, TX, T82. We were flying a C-152 II, Sparrowhawk Conversion, N48410. We were planning to return from T82 to KGTU that same day. It was flying with my mother, Suzanne Azar, CFII.

We fueled at KGTU just before our flight and flew to T82 without incident. We did some sight-seeing and were took some pictures of objects en route like lighthouses and VORs for an aerial scavenger hunt. This was just for fun. We arrived at T82 and landed. The C-152 was performing well. We had lunch at the diner on the field at T82. We were then returning to KGTU.

We did our preflight, run-up and took off as usual. Everything sounded normal. We were level at 3500 ft when I asked my copilot, to take the plane so I could take a picture of Enchanted Rock. She took control of the plane and we both heard it starting to run rough. We usually have 2700 RPM at level flight at full throttle and speed of 90 knots. We both concurred that the engine sounded rough and it continued to sound rough. We looked at our distance to KGTU and considered our options. The engine was still sounding rough and our RPM had begun to drop. We went through our emergency checklist and evaluated our instruments. We decided that we should return to T82 and we turned back to T82. At this time we were losing more power and started to loose altitude as well. We established best glide for this C-152. The terrain was such that we were looking at large power lines on the top of hills in front of us. We knew we could clear the power lines but we would not make it back to T82. We started looking for a road to land on. Our first option had trees on one edge, second option had too many cars on it. We decided on the open field that we landed in. Once we cleared the power lines on the hills we proceeded to land in the field with a soft field configuration. We were rolling on the landing with full brakes when knew we would hit the barbed wire fence but we had too much speed to stop before it. We went through the barbed wire fence and continued to roll to a stop. We then pulled the mixture and shut down the engine.

After getting out of the airplane, we found our exact location on our cell phone and called 911 to report the rough landing. Luckily, neither of us were injured. The plane looked like it had sustained minimal damage. Due to the uneven surface of the field, the left wing was lower than the right.

We walked over to speak to Emergency Services and the owners of the property. When we walked back out to the plane, I noticed that the fuel was cross feeding into the left wing and was now dripping into the field through the fuel tank vent. The gentleman, who owns the property, happened to have a wrench on his vehicle. We moved the airplane so that the wings were level. Because there was not any damage to the landing gear, this was fairly easy and we chalked N48410.

There were a few factors that helped this rough landing not be worse. My copilot is an experienced pilot and CFII and we had good communication and teamwork throughout our flight. The airplane has new tires that helped on the rough surface of the field. What surprised us was that the engine lost power so quickly.