

The first time I saw the plane was after the annual inspection was complete. I took the top cowling off and found the generator cooling tube was not attached correctly, the carb heat box had a loose quarter turn fastener, and the top RH engine mount to firewall bolt was about a sixteenth of an inch from being tight. I noticed there was no evidence of the flight control hinges being lubed. The wheel pants were taken off and stored in the luggage compartment behind the seat. Sometime later after flying and parking, the LH main gear was locked up and grinding after releasing the parking brake. There was a wheel pant screw and countersunk washer jammed in the brakes that gouged the LH wheel half. Confidence in the quality of the annual inspection was very low, and I expected to make the first oil change early at 25 hours into a more thorough and entire aircraft inspection since the oil did not look clean or new at all either. I questioned what exactly had been done on this annual and figured the IA might just have taken advantage of the non-aviation experienced widow of the previous owner. Based on what I saw and experienced, I suspect very little was done according to the checklist. I did not suspect there was an impending engine failure at any time, but here we are.

I took off from Dubuque on the afternoon of the 24th and Eric and I headed north to Casseville for some smaller airport touch and goes practice. After departing C74 to the west in a cruise climb, I turned north after about 3 miles from the airport. I was flying from the RH tank since the fuel always transferred from left to right while parked regardless of the valve being turned off. The RH tank was full to the brim at takeoff from DBQ and the LH tank was 10-15 gallons lower despite using both tanks in previous flight and turning the valve off while parked. The engine made a loud growling noise and lost power. I shut off the mags when I saw smoke coming out near the propeller, and trimmed nose up for best glide. We were only about 1,000 off the ground at this point and there was no suitable landing area in front of us into the wind that looked survivable. There was no road to the right that looked suitable, but the road to the left looked decently long and straight, best we had within gliding distance and 180 degree turn downwind. I said " We will come over that powerline (pointing at the one abeam to us at that point of descent) and we will go under that one and that one and that one (the other ones further south and between the farm houses and barns straddling the road)." It was literally like the power off turns to landing in the commercial maneuvers I've done for decades previously, and it only took about 20 seconds until we came over the first really tall powerline. I couldn't tell at the time, but those powerlines were huge and stuck way up in the air 100 feet or more. I adjusted my turn and approach to miss them and didn't have time to use electric flaps. I was actually more afraid if I did use flaps that I'd have no time to take them back out and adjust glide to miss wires or get to the road, so no flaps made the most sense to me in the limited time I had while rapidly losing altitude.

We did come down over the road at higher speed because of the tailwind and no flaps, but as planned, we went under the next group of powerlines, dodged the buildings (the road jogs slightly between the buildings) while staying under the wires, and dragged a wing on the ground at one point to stay on the road and under the wires. We touched down just past the houses and barns and were rolling fast and downhill. I was intent on missing the bigger objects in my path, but could tell we were going to hit the 4 foot tall snowbank where the road curved left ahead of us. There were also more powerlines, so I ruddered to the left as best I could and gave full up elevator before we hit the snowbank. We hit hard and were up in the air maybe six feet from skipping on the snowbank before we came back down and flipped over and stopped within 100 feet from the road. Eric was quickest to release his seatbelt and ask if I was ok. I was feeling my face and bloody nose to see what was injured and just wanted to be left to bleed in peace for a minute. We got out of the plane and saw that we both had hit our noses on the

glare shield, and other than that, were just relieved to be walking with no serious injuries. I think we were a bit in shock at what had just happened to an otherwise normal day of going flying and how much worse it easily could have been. Had that damn engine quit a few miles earlier, we'd have been landing on the river ice and having a potentially much worse evening.

We grabbed our headsets and keys and tended to our wounds with snow and walked to the highway while waiting for our ride to come take us back. The state patrol pulled us over a few miles from the accident scene on the way back, and we told him what had just happened. I called the NTSB and county sheriff the next morning. Here we are, glad to be alive, upset we lost our plane, and filling out more paperwork than ever expected in rare free time.