

Nicholas Thomas

Forced Landing Narrative

N6799P | PA-24-250

January 16, 2025

On January 16, 2025 at ~3:15 PM, while entering traffic pattern altitude and setting up landing configuration at KVB, Elemer "Steve" Logue and I experienced engine failure in N6799P. The series of decisions that were made in the ~30 seconds between engine failure to touch down not only saved our lives, but likely many others as well.

I would be remised if I didn't mention the various safety precautions that were taken prior to embarking on this flight. Steve Logue was specifically chosen to be my pilot in command of N6799P due to his extensive experience in the PA-24-250. Steve has 1,000+ hours in this particular make and model. He is extremely familiar with the Piper Comanche and well equipped to manage this airplane. In addition, a 100-hour maintenance inspection was completed on the morning of January 16, during which strong compressions on all 6 cylinders were found which you will find noted in the maintenance logs. Lastly, my father Greg Thomas, in N3712Q followed N6799P and carried VFR flight following for both airplanes as a flight of two throughout the trip.

This flight from KFAM to KVB was the second of three legs on our trip from KOVO with final destination at K50. Steve descended from cruising altitude of 6,500 to traffic pattern altitude of 2,300 as approaching KVB. He intended to enter the traffic pattern by flying ~1 mi north of the north end of the field to enter left downwind for 36 at KVB. While crossing the final approach of 18 (cross wind leg for 36) at approximate heading of 270 and ~2,300' altitude Steve began to reduce power to configure slow flight for landing procedure. Steve began to make the radio call of his intentions to enter the traffic pattern on 122.975 while simultaneously adjusting power. Upon reducing the throttle, all power was lost and we immediately went into emergency procedures. Below I summarize the steps that were taken as best I can recall:

- (1) Steve attempted to add throttle with 0 reaction from the engine
- (2) Steve requested that I flip the fuel selector
 - a. I rotated the fuel selector from the right fuel tank to the left fuel tank
 - b. Again, zero reaction to re-fire the engine

I do specifically recall that the mixture was full rich as this particular mixture control required extra pressure to pull and it was noticeable when mixture adjustments were being made.

Given that attempts to restart the engine failed, and our significantly low altitude we searched for the best spot for emergency landing. It became immediately clear that we did not have enough altitude to make runway 18. Runway 18 also posed further risk given the large bank

and water feature off of the north end of the runway. This particular part of town is extremely dense with large buildings and the heavily trafficked intersection of I street and 14th Street which also contains large power lines alongside the road. Steve found the safest, and quite possibly the only, open field within our glide range on the SW corner of the intersection of I street and 14th street.

He successfully cleared the power lines along I street and 14th street and N6799P began to stall as we crossed I street ~100' AGL. Steve nosed down to avoid the early stall and get the airplane down as far east in the field as possible. Once the street was cleared and it was evident that we were going to make the field Steve attempted to pull the nose up one last time and enter into a flare which he successfully managed to do placing us and N6799P safely in the identified field.

The field was very soft from the melting of recent snow in the Bentonville area which resulted in an abrupt stop and hard impact which caused the minor injuries to Steve and me. However, both Steve and myself were able to exit the airplane via the right-hand passenger door.

I'm thankful for the decision making and skill that Steve exhibited over the course of those 30 seconds that kept us both safe and able to walk out of that airplane.