

Duane Tedesco (PIC) Event synopsis:

We departed from BGR on an IFR flight plan around 2045 hours. Climbed to 8,000' and flew down to Augusta, ME where we had conducted an aerial surveillance of a target. Remained on station for about 90 minutes (estimated). Surveillance was completed, returned back towards BGR, still on an IFR flight plan. Handed off from Portland to Bangor approach and told to fly 7,000'. Began getting set up for the visual 15 and was on vectors by ATC. About 15 minutes before expected arrival I heard a loud "bang come from the engine, followed by a very loud and rapid ticking noise (almost sounded like a machine gun). The other agent on board, Jesse Remmey had heard the noise as well and asked me "what that loud noise was". I knew there was a mechanical issue with the engine. I called BGR approach immediately, stated we had an engine problem and needed the location of the closest runway. That ending up being Pittsfield, ME. While establishing best glide speed IAW the POH, I got the distance, heading and frequency for Pittsfield and began heading to that airport. The engine though still appeared to be in operation but I recall one of the cylinders being cooled down rapidly with no indication of EGT and very limited power available. Power began to diminish more but engine appeared to still possibly be running. I continued with the appropriate checklist. It was very dark and essentially required flight in reference to instruments. Other than the airport in the distance and some lights from the city of Bangor being visible farther away, no other LZ points were visible. I declared an emergency with ATC and zoomed in the Garmin GTN750 for additional SA. I then became aware of a river that had to be crossed prior to getting to the airport environment. I remember glide ratio began to diminish from what was initially established. With the dissipation of energy, it became evident that we would be landing short of the runway. I then declared a Mayday call over ATC but never heard back from them. Tree tops became visible shortly after that with use of the landing light. We came up on a very tall large set of trees. In an effort to jump over the large trees and get closer to the river bed side (hoping for smaller trees), I lowered my flaps from 0 to 30 degrees. This gave me a momentary climb of about 200' and enabled me to clear the large trees. It also allowed the airplane nose to pitch forward and give me a view of the ground. I saw a limited clearing of trees just in the distance that ran parallel to the river. With minimal glide distance remaining, I worked the aircraft into that clearing, prepped it for an offsite landing and slowed to the slowest landing speed possible. We then impacted a suspected tree in that clearing, coming to a rest shortly after that in a muddy area alongside the river, approx.. a half mile south of the airport. I do not remember much immediately following the impact but Mr. Remmey stated we hit the obstacle, spun about 180 degrees and quickly came to a rest all within a few seconds. After coming to a rest, we attempted to exit the aircraft but I was initially trapped inside the cockpit. I managed to get free of the seat and exit the aircraft. We performed an initial first aid triage. Jesse appeared uninjured and I had a bleeding injury to my face, head and eye. That was taken care of in the field as necessary. We also called 911 and AMO management at that time. The airplane was secured as best possible. We were rescued from the site by Maine State Police approx. 70 or so minutes later via boat and brought to the local hospital. Mr. Remmey was treated and released from the local hospital and I was transferred to Boston for additional treatment, released later the next day. End