

CHRIS ROBERTS
NTSB RESPONSE TO NARRATIVE HISTORY OF FLIGHT

I am a student pilot and was flying a long solo cross country on September 24, 2019. Before I started the flight, I had 30 gallons of fuel (14 right, 16 left). I departed 47N about 9:30. I contacted flight following shortly after passing Princeton Airport (39N) and contacted McGuire approach around 10:00AM. My cross country was from 47N to Cape May (KWWD) to Atlantic City (KACY) and back to 47N, which is 187 NM. I expected to use 15 gallons for the trip so there should have been 15 gallons in the plane when I arrived back at 47N.

At the end of the cross country at about 12:05 PM, I was in-bound to land at my home airport, 47N on runway 25. The DigiWx reported winds were 310 @ 6 knots.

I had a normal pattern. When I was abeam the runway numbers, I pulled the carb heat on and set the power to 1,500 RPM, and added 10 degrees of flaps. On the base leg, I added another 10 degrees of flaps and increased power to 1,700 RPM like I normally do. Once I turned to final, the PAPI's indicated I was on the correct glide slope. Because there was a crosswind, I elected to use only 20 degrees of flaps. My power setting was 1,700 RPM.

As I was turning from base to final, I had the first indication of engine roughness. I made a radio call that I was on final and indicated that I was experiencing a problem. My instructor responded to my concern about the roughness. During the conversation, the engine stopped and the propeller stopped spinning. The propeller was moving, but very slowly. I would estimate that it took three seconds for half of a turn.

I began to troubleshoot by checking that the fuel selector was on both and the mixture was rich. The carb heat was on, and the master switch was on. I turned off the carb heat and attempted to restart the engine. The engine did not respond and the propeller did not move.

I determined that I was not going to make the runway and opted to land in the trees. I pulled the mixture out, turned the fuel selector to off, turned off the master switch immediately before impact. I maneuvered the aircraft away from the larger and thicker branched trees. I landed in the tree tops, which resulted in the airplane becoming wedged into the trees about 70 feet off the ground. Once the plane was stationary, I turned the master switch on so that I could use the radio and began communicating with a CFI who was already in the pattern.

The airplane was wedged in the trees and tree limbs had pushed through both wings, and fuel was leaking from both sides of the plane.


Signed By: Christopher Roberts/Pilot