

Michael Cooper - Pilot - N1800M
Emergency Landing/Crash 6/22/17, 20:10 local time

I took the plane to Texas on Wed the 21st. Direct flight from KCGI to KILE (Killeen Tx). We topped it off with the fuel truck outside of Commander hangar at KCGI. Foreflight Flight time said 4.3 hours. Majority of the flight was at 7,500'. ATC flight following the entire trip.

Today, weather looked a bit challenging, but doable in VFR. Decided to fly home.

Self Serve fuel up. Filled the driver tank first(20 gallons). Moved to the passenger tank, it took the rest, ended up with 47.5 gallons pumped. Forgot to grab receipt. I think fuel was \$3.58, so once I see the charge hit my card we can do the math. Also planning to verify with the FBO in Killeen tomorrow their fuel price.

In short, according to my flight on the 21st, I burned 47.5 gallons in 4.3 hours. Right at 11 gallons per hour, aligning perfectly with our fuel flow meter on the dash.

Flying home on the 22nd, beautiful flight. Couple rainbows, lots of cloud dodging, multiple altitudes. Started at 7500 off Killeen, stayed there for a while, went up to 9500 for a while, came back down for a while, ended up back up at 10,500 dodging cloud tops next to the huge storm band around Hot springs and little rock. Ended up diverting north a few miles to get clear of all that. Stayed up for a little longer, then started to descend to 5500. More clouds in the way, so descended down to 3500, figured I'd stay there for the remaining 30 min of the flight. Hung out there for a while, when suddenly the engine started to flake out. I had just passed Doniphan airport(X33).

To be clear, the engine never actually stopped, the prop never stopped spinning until it hit the wall.

Upon engine power loss, I immediately checked the fuel selector, pushed the mixture full rich, nothing. Declared emergency to Memphis Center, he advised of Doniphan airport being 5 miles behind me, so I decided to turn 180 and try to get it if I could. Started the glide, made it about 2.5 miles before I ran out of both airspeed and altitude, chose a nice open (ish) area where there weren't round hay bails, power lines, etc. Wasn't able to fully line up with the direction I wanted to go, which avoided the 2 houses and a detached garage shop. Clipped the fence bordering the property, put the wheels on the ground and slammed brakes until coming to a stop by hitting the detached garage shop. There were two trees that I trimmed, apparently, but I didn't even see them until I got out of the plane and started walking around. I'd say the tree is what broke the left wing strut, but it could have been the impact with the building as well I suppose.

I called my wife immediately, then St Louis radio (quickest number I could find in foreflight). Didn't know what to do really. Then our previous partner in the airplane, who was still registered as the contact for the ELT called, as he had been reached out to by air force rescue.

Funnily enough, 911 never crossed my mind, I guess because I wasn't hurt.

Police showed up about 45 min later I think, I had already made contact with the home owners, filled out police report, cleared out the personal belongings and paperwork from the plane. Phil Dixon called, happened to be in close by Poplar Bluff that evening, wanted to come say hi. Waiting for Phil to show up, we took pictures, I declined to do a written account of everything at that moment, as it was already 11pm, and I didn't think I would give it enough detail. This is being typed at 2am.

The fuel caps. This has been an issue since I bought into the plane last January. The passenger wing fuel cap has been known to allow fuel to be siphoned out of it. It is not consistent in any form or fashion, just whenever it decides to leak I guess. This was one of those days. It didn't do it yesterday on the way to Texas. I personally check the caps before each flight, as I know that this is a possibility. It hasn't done it in months either. Today, I checked fuel level twice, to make sure I did it right. I rarely fuel the plane myself, so I took extra care in making sure they were full. It was apparently too full, as fuel started to leak out of the vent tube right after fueling. I sent a video of this to my mechanic, who advised to let the tanks vent by taking the cap off. I did to the drivers side tank, and fuel came out of it and ran off the back of the wing. I'd say about 20 ounces. Then I put the cap back on and stowed the ladder and taxi'd out to take off.

The caps have been looked at, parts replaced, on a couple occasions, will have to pull maintenance log.

Also, to be clear, I let the fuel run out of the DRIVER side tank, which is also the side with the vent tube. I didn't tamper with the other side at that time. The PASSENGER side tank cap is the one with consistent issues. Wings were both cleaned yesterday before the flight TO Texas. There is blue fuel dried on the Passenger side wing. There may be a little as well on the other wing, from after venting the fuel cap per Brian, but the passenger wing was spotless when I took off.

That's all I have for now.

Thanks

Michael Cooper
Date 6/23/17 - 2:20am