

NARRATIVE HISTORY OF FLIGHT

This was a trip to Addison, TX, (KADS), 1/14/2022 to pick up a musical instrument left for repair the previous week. Outbound flight leg was planned for one leg because of favorable winds, Return flight was planned for two legs, with stop for fuel at Stamford, F-56. I did file & activate a VFR flight plan. The morning flight from Hobbs (KHOB) was uneventful, with flight following, landing in ADS @ early afternoon. Got the instrument and returned to the airport.

Planned return trip, sitting in FBO. Because of adverse wind, kept the planned stop for gas in Stamford, TX, (F56) approx. half way home, and to fly in G airspace ~1,000-1,200'agl, which appeared to have lesser headwind than at my favorite VFR cruise altitudes. As I expected to remain in uncontrolled airspace, I did not ask for flight following. Departed ~1600 (if ADS kept tower tapes for 1/14/2022, would have T/O time). While enroute, Stamford (and I) came under an area marked on Foreflight as "unspecified meteorological conditions" (something I'd never seen before). At worst, I experienced light to moderate turbulence (occasional strain against seat belt and harness, but nothing moved in front or back seats, or off the hat shelf behind the rear seat). I reduced airspeed to maneuvering speed. I got over Stamford about dusk, VMC, still in the unspecified... I thought about diverting to Abilene, TX. (I was monitoring Abilene approach, and accidentally called them, so if they keep tape it may establish the time I was over Stamford). I decided to climb to 4,500' and continue to Lamesa (KLUV).

Here's where I think things started to unravel. I checked the distance to Lamesa, TX, (KLUV) and determined that I had plenty of fuel left (although I expected to get into a bit of the night time reserves) to continue to LUV, which was outside the "unspecified meteorological conditions" area. I'm pretty sure I called Flight Service to modify the flight plan (which may have involved the accidental call to Abilene Approach). LUV automated weather as I recall was VFR but with erratic wind and reduced visibility. Flight service advised against VFR flight, but I was not experiencing any more turbulence than what I considered light-moderate, and at 4,500' the turbulence was on the lighter side, maybe even light/moderate chop, with little altitude or heading excursions. I had visual contact with the ground, if the horizon was less than definite. I KNOW I scratched off F56 and overwrote LUV, and changed the runway orientations, on the AOPA kneeboard format airport chart that I had on my kneeboard. I know this because I distinctly remember noting that the runways were 1° different from F56 at LUV. I am not as certain that I changed the pattern altitude. I did take note the MSA for the rectangle containing LUV was 3,600' msl.

When I cleared the unspecified meteorological conditions area, the lights of Lamesa were in view, if distant. I knew I had a strong headwind, but I considered it moderate chop at worst, nothing loose moving in the cockpit, only occasional strain against the lap belt and shoulder harnesses, and no significant attitude, altitude, or heading excursions. I commenced the descent, in the dark, ~300' min. I did not look at the foreflight chart and did not check my descent at 4,000'. The lights suddenly disappeared, impact came about the time I was thinking, "where'd the lights go".

I sustained only slight injury. The airframe incurred all the impact forces, and I was restrained by the lap belt and the shoulder harnesses. I called 9-1-1, and flight service. I briefly activated the ELT which had not gone off. There was no fire. The electrical system was still functioning, so I shut off the master switch, gathered items I considered necessary for survival, leaving the rest. I put on extra clothing from my flight bag (already had jacket on), took cell phone, ipad, 3 flashlights, personals such as ID and wallet, and ETREX. I walked due south toward the closest highway, in contact with Emergency Services, Borden & Dawson Counties, Texas. At first I tried walking out following "maps" on cell phone, but succeeded only in circling back to the crash site. Then I started using the ETREX, heading south to US180 where EMS had gathered. EMS was able to instruct me how to "pin" my location to them; about the time I reached a lease road and a barbed wire fence, they had me located and had me wait for them. We walked West on the lease road maybe another half mile to a lease site where EMS vehicles were waiting.

I was taken by ambulance to the Lamesa Hospital emergency room; I was treated for minor injuries, observed, and later released.