

ComancheZOOM for February 17, 2022

Topic: Surviving an engine failure in IMC
with George Gratton and Lou Bragg

George Gratton was on his first flight after extensive maintenance, his plane's annual, and a full inspection. While flying in IMC with a friend, he suddenly lost his engine over northwestern Georgia. Not only did the engine quit, but, as he descended into mountainous terrain, he lost contact with ATC. A Bonanza pilot happened to be flying nearby and was able to relay communications between George and ATC.



George and Lou

George Gratton, an instrument rated private pilot, has been flying for 58 years without incident in many different aircraft. He was flying a Comanche 260 that was fresh out of annual. His passenger was Fr. Mel Hemann, President and charter member of the National Assoc. of Priest Pilots, an ATP and still current CFII (at 94 years old!), and a former DPE with over 11,000 hrs total time. Lou Bragg was an engineer with NASA and other aircraft companies, and a longtime friend of George. The mid-July flight was to be from Savannah GA to Dubuque IA for the National Association of Priest Pilots annual convention.

This is an amazing story of cool reaction to an emergency situation, and outstanding use of cockpit resources. The men on board were very familiar with the aircraft systems and capabilities. The communications with ATC were crisp and to the point. The nearby Bonanza pilot was able to relay radio calls when ATC was out of range. And it probably didn't hurt that there was a Priest on board.

To view/hear the recording of this amazing ComancheZOOM, click on the link(s) below:

- <http://meetings.northeastcomanche.org/zoom/2022-02-17/video.mp4>
- <http://meetings.northeastcomanche.org/zoom/2022-02-17/audio.m4a>

For the Chat text:

- <http://meetings.northeastcomanche.org/zoom/2022-02-17/chat.txt>

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