



***YLL ON  
TOUR...***



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- This blook has no pretention.  
Blook? Amalgamation of blog and book. The author would like to keep herein certain things which were published in the original blog, e.g. the emoticons, which were used to sometimes attenuate or mitigate, or even accentuate some of the text 👍
- This blook has been thought out, written, framed, edited, etc, by an amateur. English is not the first, nor the last language of the author, and proofreading has only been performed by himself.
- This blook took its source whilst sorting out the 3'700+ pictures the author had taken during The Tour. From August 24 until September 8, the author published a blog which was hosted on the [EuroGA](#) internet site. Once this was done, it was realized that this material could be improved upon, and this is the result.

And now... drums please 🥁

## YLL on Tour...

Thank you, and welcome on board gals & guys, girls & boys, where shall I start?

My name's Dan, and I'm an aviationholic...

And a long dream of mine has now become reality, albeit already history by the time I write this.

Flying a single engine airplane across the North Atlantic, from the Old Continent aka Europe, to North America, and back... "VFR"... that was the dream.

The idea, later project, germinated many years ago, first as a daydreaming kid, later by reading about Charles Lindbergh, Howard Hughes, Mermoz, Walter Mittelholzer, and many other aviation legends.

My professional career later had me cross the North Atlantic, aka The Pond, many times first as an engineer, then as a pilot... riding in the comfort of the higher flight levels, blissfully surfing the jetstream on the organized track system, all whilst sipping coffee and trying to decide on which food from the menu. A hard life really, and a good thing I'm retired now 😊

Made this out of clay when still a kid ...





This book is a day to day account of the 46 days of what I have come to call The Tour. I have, according to time and mood, tried to relate some of the most important aspects that affected the flight in itself.

*Warning:* anyone fancying photos of food, aircraft wings, dogs & cats, autopilots, etc, will for sure be disappointed 😞

**Disclaimer:** The aim of this book is to share some of my adventure with fellow pilots, friends, family, and interested parties.

**It is not intended as a motivational book, nor as a reference to plan this kind of trip.**

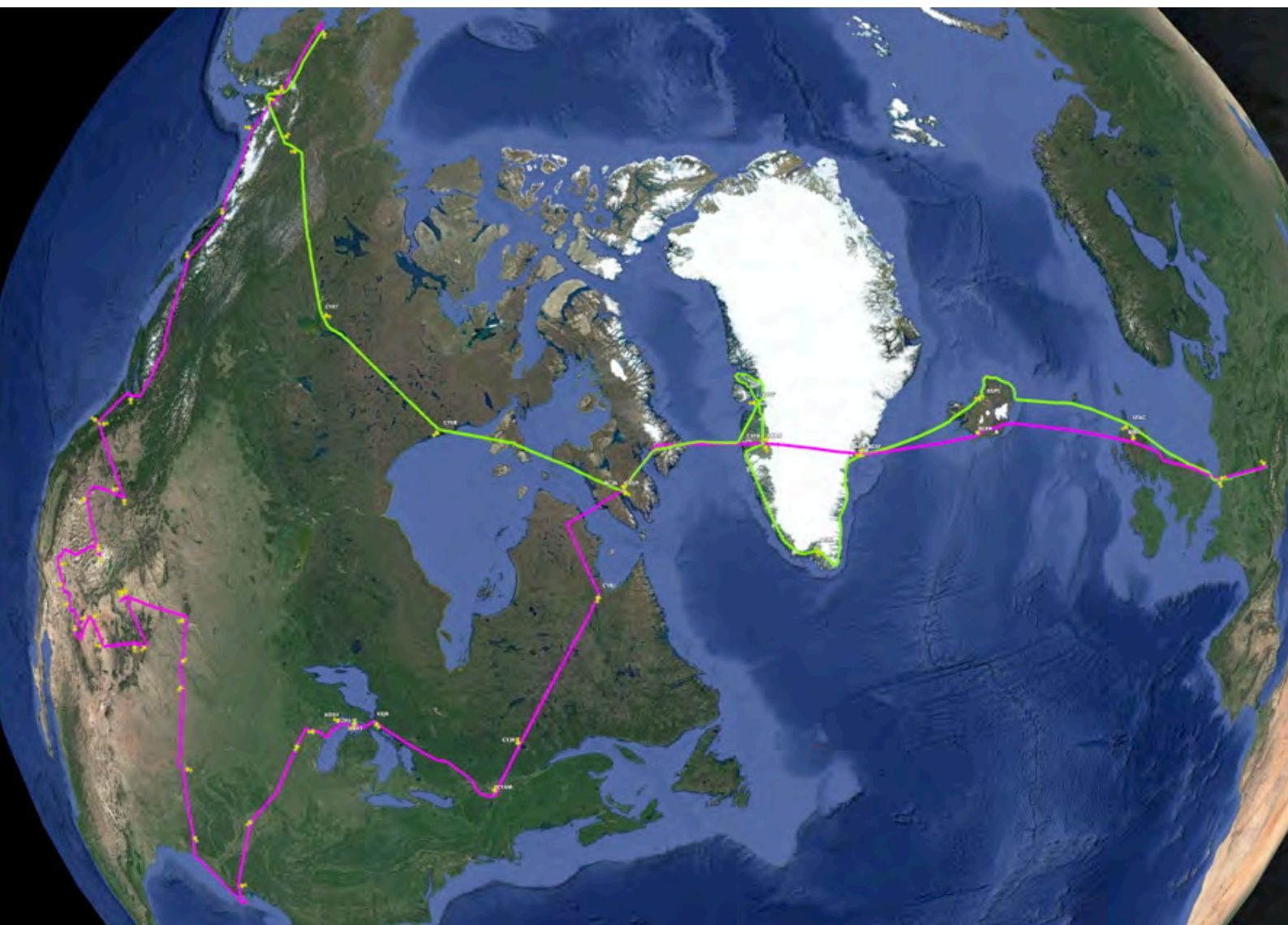
The Tour was flown on my own impulse, planning, idea, and experience only. Hindsight proved the rightfulness of the decisions taken at the time.

The most important decision was to do the tour on my own, solo. We all have different limits, and not having to worry about someone else just gave me the necessary freedom.

Flying in Canada and the US is easy-peasy. Crossing the North Atlantic isn't difficult per se, but you got to know yours, and the aircraft's, limitations. And respect them... nothing really new here.

And lest one forgets, *diligence is mother of good luck*... though some luck, as money, never hurts 😊

The route as flown, on the globe, green outbound, magenta homebound





## Quickstats:

**Timeframe:** June 20 until August 4, 2022

**Duration:** 46 days

**Hours as flown:** 132:23

**Landings:** 63 (as many as take-offs)

**Distance flown:** 19'449 Nm (36'020 Km)

**Average speed:** 143.9 Kts (267 Km/h)

**Total fuel used:** 3733 liters (986 USG)

**Average fuel consumption:** 28.2 L/h (7.45 USG/h)

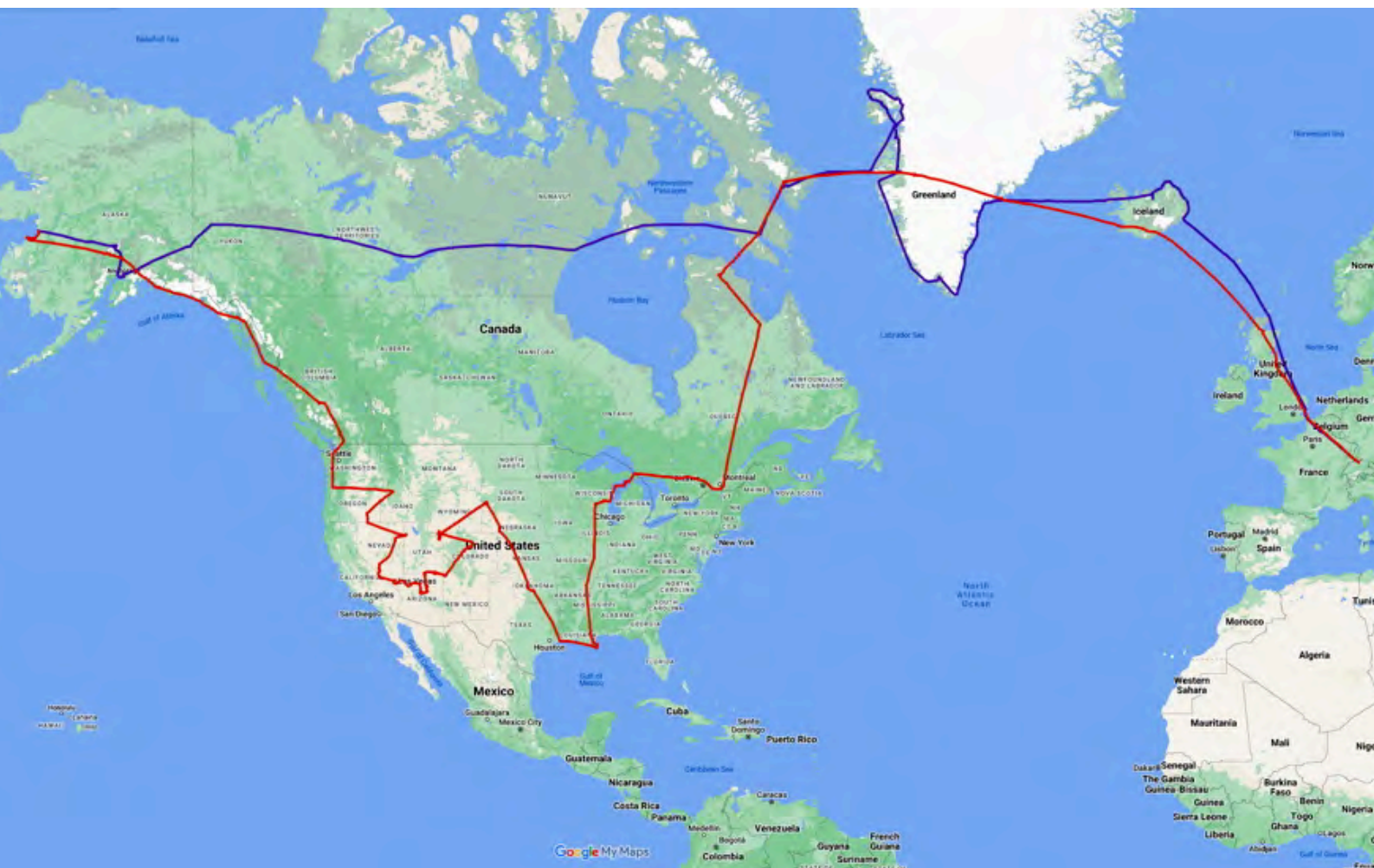
**Lowest landing:** Furnace Creek, Death Valley CA @ -210ft

**Highest landing:** Leadville-Lake County, CO @ 9934ft

**Longest overwater crossing:** Wick (Scotland) – Akureyri (Iceland) in 5:07, of which only ca 3:30h over water

**POI:** Point of Interest, no precise count, but there were quite a few, and all were defined before The Tour was started

The route flown, now “flattened” out, blue outbound, red homebound





## Thanks!

I'd now like to start this book by extending my sincere thanks to the people that either made this possible, or helped along the way. My sincere apologies to anyone not directly mentioned here, you were probably plainly forgotten 😞

I shall start with the 2 most important people:

**Tina, my Wife.** I guess she must have been suspecting something, since the 2013 version of the German "Nordatlantik Guide" has been throning on our coffee table for a quite a few years now... she watched me plan, getting organized, order necessary equipment, redo the instrument panel of YLL, etc. Since I could hear no firm opposition to the project, I took it as ok to go... A few restrictions were finalized between us, but those will of course remain classified 🙄

**Mickey, my "Watchdog".** First off, Mickey is a fantastic friend, and rightly proud of the awesome RV-8 he built, all documented on his [site](#). He fulfilled his role to perfection, many thanks! It was nice to have somebody having my InReach address, and able to follow the most challenging legs almost 24/7.

He has not been short of good advice either, one of the best being: "*when in the US, don't talk about no politics, nor sex, nor religion*". So I'll now try to abide by the same principle whilst writing the rest of this book...

Also highly appreciated was the shared room in the dorms during AirVenture at Oshkosh! And his work as a volunteer there 😎

More thanks now, in a +/- chronological order:

- ✓ **Fritz**, the builder of HB-YLL. Fritz is a long time licensed aircraft Engineer working for Swiss. He has spent about 5 years, and a few thousand hours, building YLL from a kit to a highly capable travel machine, built to the same standard as an airliner 👍
- ✓ The **Experimental Aviation of Switzerland** (EAS in the text), and all of its members. An association helping in building, flying, maintaining, and if required, modifying one's dream airplane
- ✓ The **Experimental Aircraft Association** (EAA in the text), encompassing and promoting all aviation activities in northern America, and, albeit to a lesser degree, the rest of the world
- ✓ **Wiwi** @ the Kangerlussuaq Greenland FBO, for not exploding at my impatient mood whilst desperate to get a hotel room...
- ✓ **Jonathan** of Transport Canada for guiding me through the administrative hoops necessary for the delivery of a Canadian SFA (Special Flight Authorization)
- ✓ **Ibrahim**, at Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada, for the "leftovers" fuel and excellent service
- ✓ **Stella, Mikey & Joe** from Buffalo Airways, for the personal tour of their facilities at Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada
- ✓ **David**, the owner of an RV-4 at the same location, offering to meet and help. Unfortunately only spotted his message whilst undoing my tie-downs before departure
- ✓ **The US customs** who firmly denied clearing me from Canada into the US at Northway AK, though I was on US soil already, and on time as agreed... Instead they gave me the opportunity to fly on and fit in between heavy airline traffic at the international Anchorage Ted Stevens AK airport
- ✓ **David and Richard**, of Sheldon Air Service at Talkeetna AK, for accommodating me and YLL for a 50h inspection
- ✓ **Ken & Susan, and Malcolm**, for the reception and accommodation at Anacortes 74S. And probably the only healthy meal on the whole tour 😊
- ✓ **Sterling** from Van's Aircraft Inc. He patiently answered all my questions, but for those pertaining to the RV-15 (prototype) which at the time was still being kept inside Van's Fort Knox underground facility



- ✓ **Jim & Deborah**, caretakers of Johnson Creek ID and builder/owner of an RV-8. Feeling like home on a campground, that was a novel experience. Gorgeous landscape, all comfort, friendly guests some of whom I met again at AirVenture a couple of weeks later
- ✓ **Dave** the RV-3 builder, to whom I paid a quick visit. Good progress on his project, perseverance will pay off for sure
- ✓ **Vlad**, the inspirational RV traveler, with whom I spent a few wonderful days. Top notch was not only the adventurous flying, but also the hiking, the swimming, and eating delicious mushrooms (Vlad is also a cook!). In short, hospitality at its best. Sorry for sandblasting your RV-9 on that take-off Vlad 😞
- ✓ **The not to be named FAA officer** who patiently listened to my explanations and read my report as to why I had busted Monument protection rules at Mt Rushmore
- ✓ **George** @ the Jonesboro Muni AR FBO. The place is pristine and offers 1st class services. To top that, when time came to pay for the fuel, the line boy told me that it had all been taken care of by the manager, an RV-8 owner 👍
- ✓ **The ATC guys** at KOSH, giving me the opportunity to demonstrate my crosswind landing skills in front of the crowd, by assigning me runway 36L instead of runway 27, which I had requested twice 🙄
- ✓ **All the AirVenture volunteers**. You gals & guys are running the show, fantastic!
- ✓ **Tinti and Guille**, the Argentinians flyers, and their RV-7 aka Correcaminos aka LV-X610. Though our paths must have crossed over Alaska, we only met at Oshkosh, and befriended quickly. Safe future flights guys!
- ✓ **Terry & Betty** for the hangar use during my 100h/pre-return inspection, and their hospitality. And good luck for your next projects Terry 😎
- ✓ **Mr. Fuelman**, at Kuujuaq, Nunavik, Canada, for the “leftovers” fuel and excellent service
- ✓ **Mr. Fuelman**, at Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada, on the return flight this time, for the “leftovers” fuel and excellent service
- ✓ **All the people that I got tips from**, either verbally or written, including several RTW pilots I’ve been in contact with, ferry pilots I knew, Andy, Hermann, and many more...

A small selection of my motivational reads...





## Day #1

Takeoff from  **LSZF Birrfeld** at 20 Jun 2022 06:14 Z

Landing at  **LFAC Calais Marck** at 20 Jun 2022 08:44 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 2 hr 30 m (2.5 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 330 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 5,371 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 164 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 132 kt

The big day! I fill up all my tanks with cheap MOGAS. The wing tanks hold 140 liters, the aux tank sitting on the PAX seat, another 90 liters. The first surprise, just upon rotation: YLL is a little bit too eager to fly, and I realize not having flown at MTOM, and on the rear CG for a while... the take-off trim position will be set accordingly for the rest of the trip 😊



Straight line flight to Calais, as usual, thanks to the excellent French AIS. The weather isn't perfect, some 20 minutes of reduced vis flying, headwinds up to 20 Kts, followed by a nice crosswind for the landing. No fuel needed thank you, so this is a quick turnaround. Personal defuel, landing fee, and go.

Takeoff from  **LFAC Calais Marck** at 20 Jun 2022 09:49 Z

Landing at  **EGPC Wick** at 20 Jun 2022 13:12 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 3 hr 23 m (3.4 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 492 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 8,881 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 163 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 145 kt

The flight up the East coast of the UK and Scotland is performed in good weather. After landing I'm able to enjoy the excellent services provided by [Far North Aviation](#), as YLL is put to sleep in the huge WW2 hangar, thanks guys!

Wick itself is a nice little city, and the B&B I've been booked in, charming indeed 😊



LFAC turnaround



In the hangar at EGPC





## Day #2

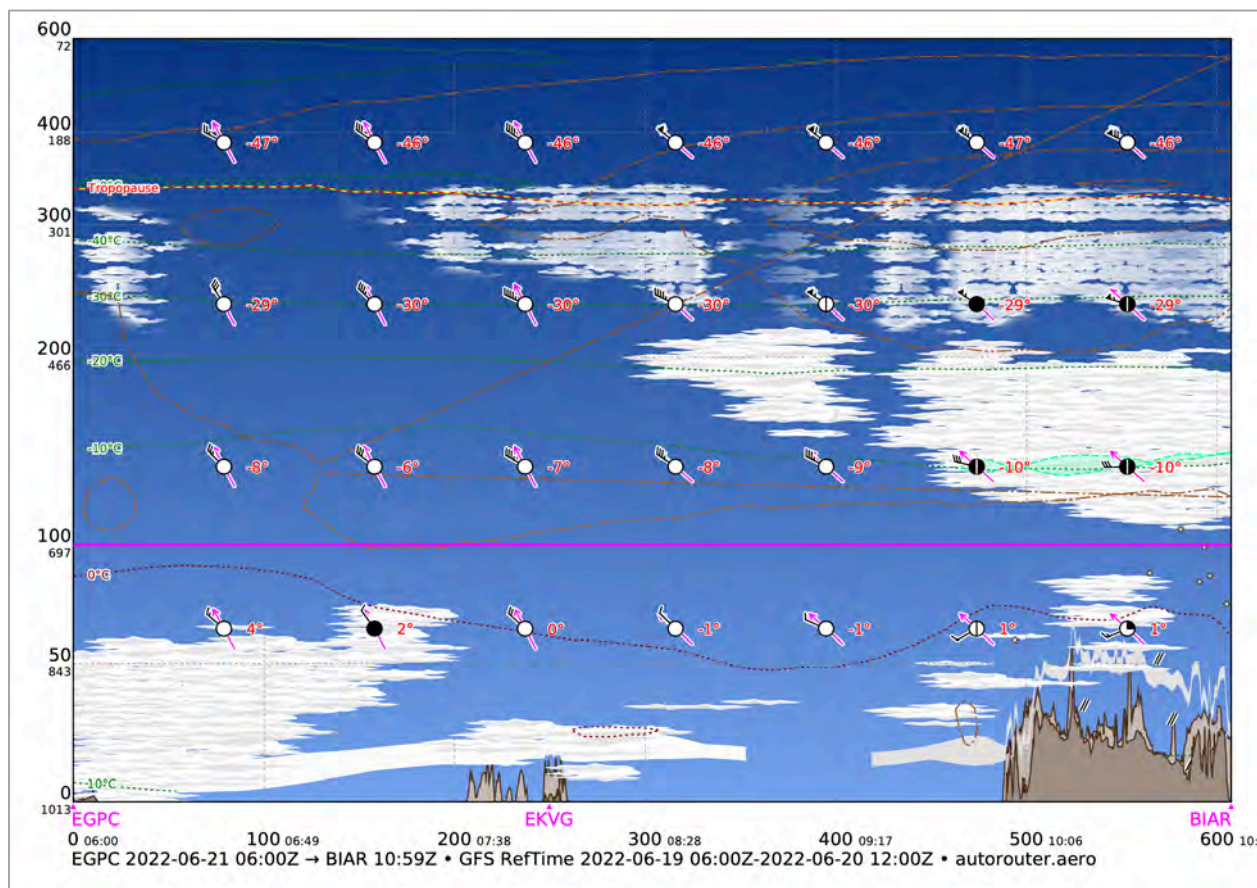
Takeoff from  **EGPC Wick** at 21 Jun 2022 06:44 Z

Landing at  **BIAR Akureyri** at 21 Jun 2022 11:51 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 5 hr 7 m (5.1 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 726 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 5,726 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 194 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 142 kt

The GRAMET forecast for today...



Haven't slept too well. For probably more than a week now... Last minute arrangements such as additional insurance, preventive maintenance, preparing and loading YLL with all the tools, camping gear, emergency gear, clothing, toiletries, etc, and weather watching, all have taken their toll. Tired, excited and nervous, not the best of combination...

In typical UK security awareness fashion, I'm issued an apron permit to be able to rejoin my aircraft, oh my... the GAR is filed, so is the flight-plan, YLL is refueled to the brim, all bills are settled, the weather is checked, all good to go.

Weather? Well, right now it is marginal for VFR flying... the tower is cooperative, and once all formalities are dealt with, I start the engine up, taxi to the runway, and lift off... to enter reduced visibility conditions for the next 25 minutes or so. Luckily the freezing levels are still high, and once on top, the sunshine, a few layers of clouds and blue skies help to relax.

A couple of hours later all radar and VHF contact are lost. I place a couple of position reports via willing airliners. Since I'm on a VFR flight plan, I'm not allowed to fly any higher than FL55: above is the holy grail, airspace class A, for IFR flying only. Blocking any climb out of possible clouds. Reduced gliding capability. Well done ladies and gents bureaucrats, another contribution to safe flying, but don't you worry, your job is safe 😊



now almost equidistant



As I approach the Faroes, I can see that they are in the clear, Vága Floghavn being visible in the distance. And for once, even the winds are light.

The Faroes are catalogued as a POI in my list, I'm tempted. But finally decide not to land...

Old NAT saying: *if the weather's good don't delay*. Ok, another time, hopefully, maybe...





Finally, Iceland's southeasterly coast comes into view. Spectacular as ever.

I had initially planned BIEG Egilsstaðir as destination, being the shortest overwater crossing. But the good weather forecasts for the day made me change my destination to Akureyri, located on the North coast, and also more to the West.

Fjords after fjords, cliffs, green pastures, glaciers, sign of sights to come...

Iceland, as always, is just amazing (some would call it awesome 🤩).

Hey, this is the eastern coast of Iceland!











approaching Akureyri





On the ramp at BIAR, tied down and ready for the strong forecast winds...



After landing, 3 customs agents surround me, the lady of them, in a friendly tone: "*are you going around the world or what?*" 🤔

The remainder of the day is spent strolling the city. And enquiring about my wife, who is on another kind of vacation (🤒). She is only some 50km away (!), and has just caught the virus 🤒  
Hope she'll recover quickly, and fully...

And that it's not going to jeopardize The Tour now, in one way or another 😞

Looking South in the bay of Akureyri





## Day #3

Takeoff from  **BIAR Akureyri** at 22 Jun 2022 08:16 Z

Landing at  **BGKK Kulusuk** at 22 Jun 2022 11:33 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 3 hr 17 m (3.3 hours)

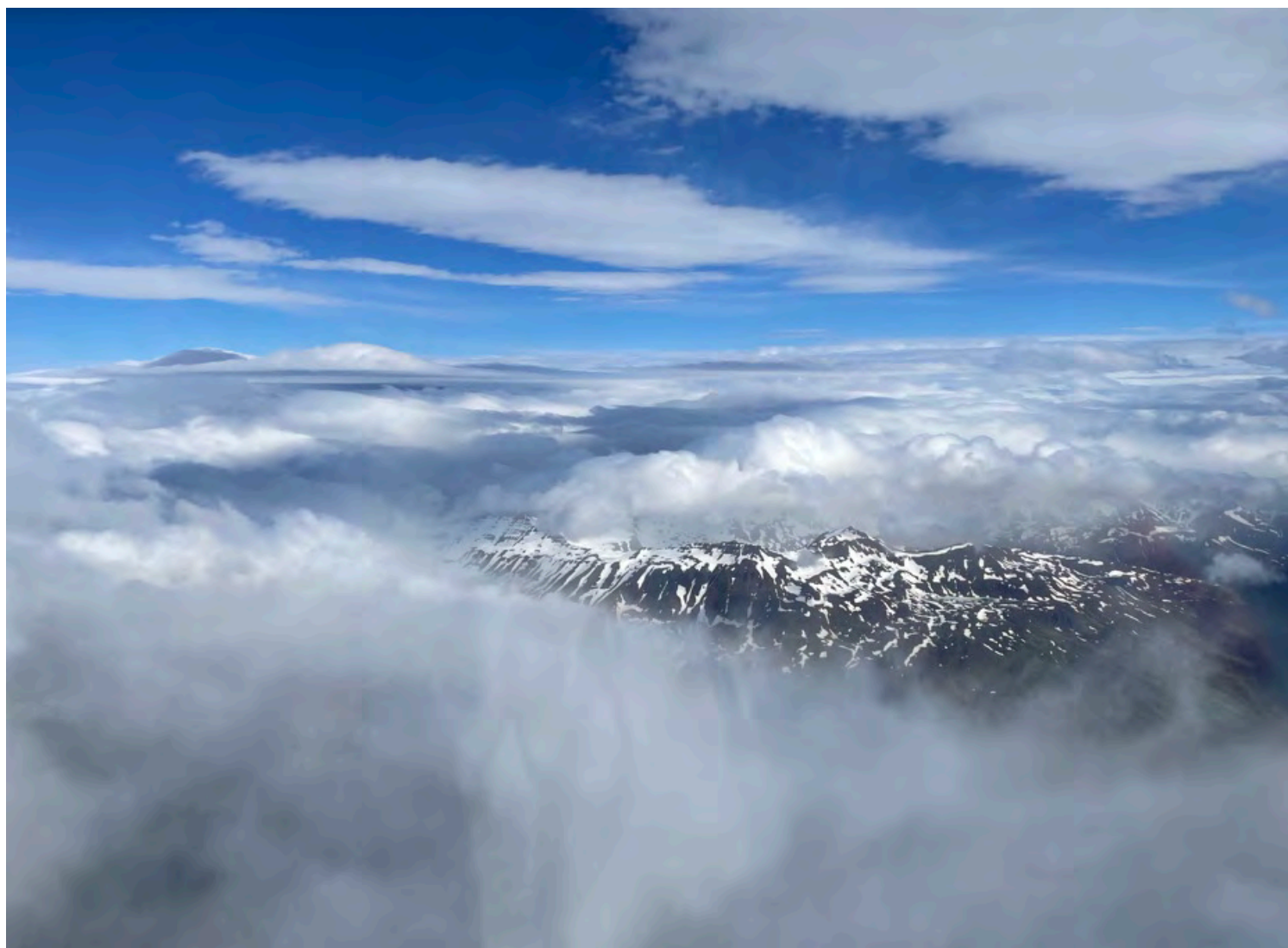
DISTANCE FLOWN: 487 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 15,045 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 188 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 148 kt

Iceland is expensive, nothing new here. Once all the bills are settled, the take-off is performed in scattered to broken clouds. And alas no one in sight to fix them.

I feel slightly sad at leaving this early and having to miss one of the POIs, Grimsey Island, and it's puffins. But the weather is not really good there. And I've also been warned about the high risk of bird strike there... sure don't want to jeopardize The Tour this early on.

Now heading West, I have to repeatedly request higher climb clearance due to rising cloud layers. At 14'000ft, the outside temperature is -18°C. Oh come on, at this low temperature no icing for sure... Wrong. Entering some clouds, ice accretion on the windscreen and wing leading edges (and probably some other parts of the airplane which I don't see nor care for right now) is immediate. T rise is very limited with an IAS of 120Kts... I pull out and don my O2 system, requests and climb to FL160. In the blue skies again, sublimation does its work, thanks 😊

Leaving Iceland westbound



Cruising at FL160



The occasional looking down at my survival gear during these overwater crossings is a must...

A reread of the ditching checklist as well.

I'm wearing my survival suit (a reinforced dry suit), the life vest, and diving boots. My InReach and a PLB are carried in my pockets. The small suitcase that supposedly (...) contains the single man raft lies on the floor, with an escape saw/knife, and a scuba emergency air bottle. The canopy quick release pins are in place. Below my knees, a survival axe.

RVs are known to have a propensity to flip on their back when ditched. Getting out of a sinking aircraft in freezing waters is an experience I can happily do without... and the reason I performed a very thorough maintenance inspection on YLL's engine prior to departure. And will do so prior to the return crossings...

I now have been flying for a while (> 2 hours) when I spot a cruise liner. All white. It is straight ahead, and 10 minutes later hasn't moved a bit, but grows in my sights. I finally realize... man, this is my first iceberg... whooah, what a sight 😊

It is a stupid chunk of floating ice, but it almost makes my cry, please don't ask as to why.

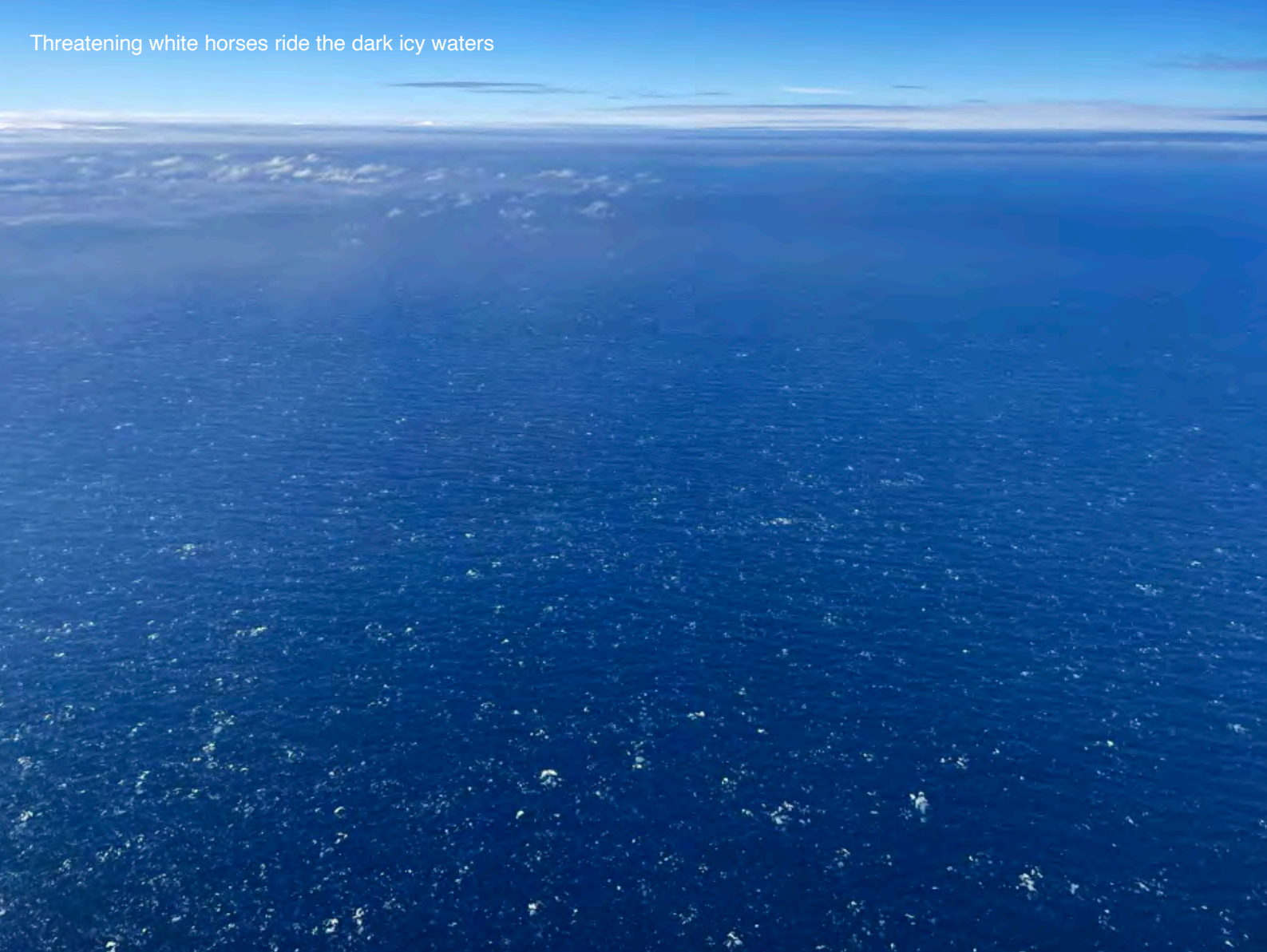
Now approaching the eastern coast of Greenland, I get a wake-up call with the Kulusuk destination METAR: Fog, broken at 100'. Say what? Well, this was half expected. All, but Kangerlussuaq, airports in Greenland are located on the coast, and therefore subject to rapid sea fog formation.

And I realize once more that having an endurance of 8:20h isn't too much. Having to either proceed to one of the alternates on the South or West part of Greenland, hoping for stable good weather there, or return to Iceland, with a couple of holding patterns or a couple of approaches thrown in for good measure, could quickly stretch those fuel reserves... the more so if any tailwind has changed its mind.

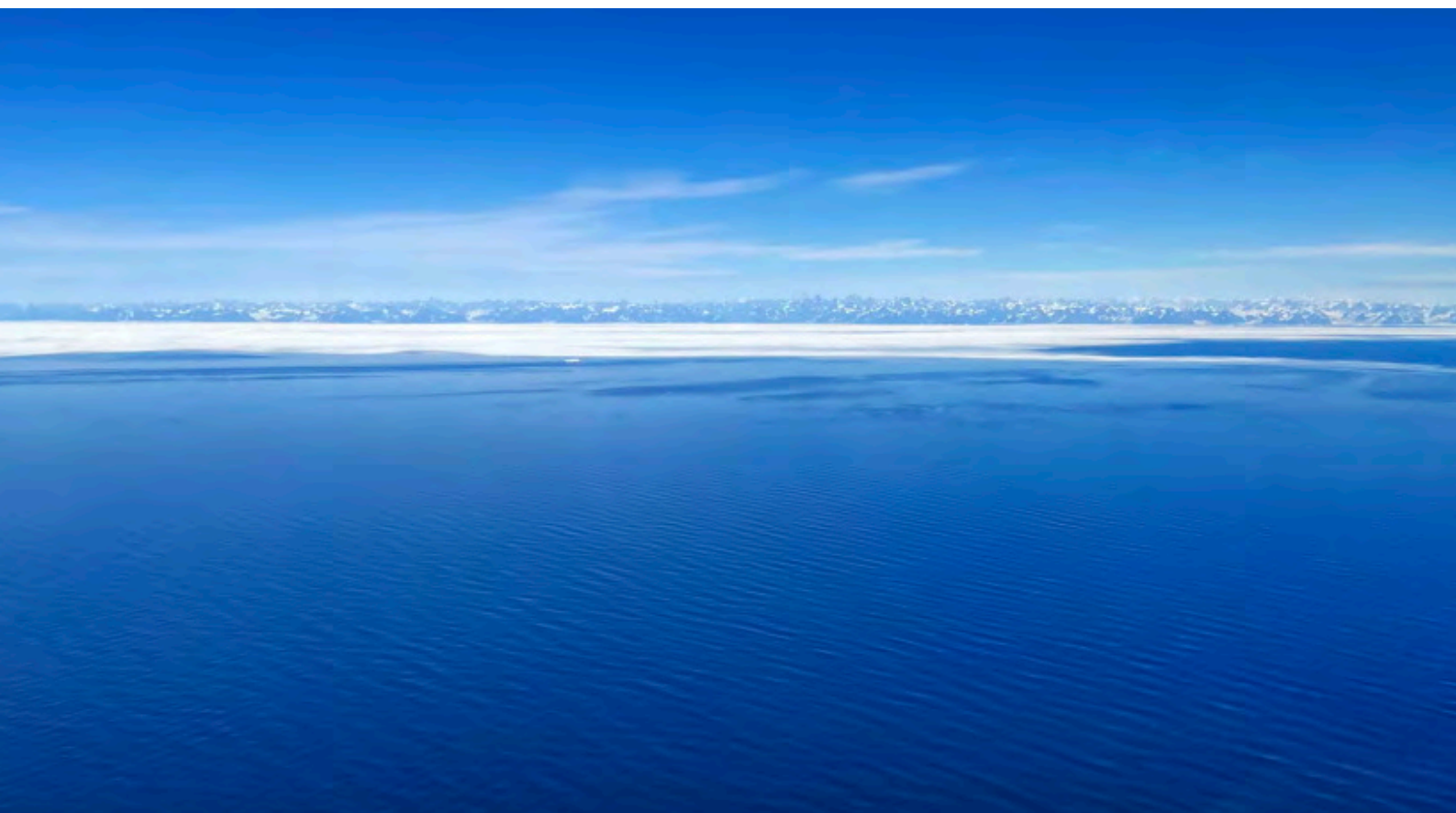
The weather report being 1 hour old, I decide not to worry too much.



Threatening white horses ride the dark icy waters



I can now make out the east coast of Greenland in a white glary line, beautiful weather lies ahead...





The view on the horizon is stunning (I'm quickly going to run out of superlative adjectives in this book...). The sea all white with pack and drift ice, dark blue waters looming in the cracks between. Over some of it, ribbons of floating shallow fog. And the massive ice cap in the background. The sights are incredible, and the fact of me being here, enjoying total freedom in my little airplane, are emotionally moving. The elation I feel is probably also a sign of relief, since "land" is now in my grasp, should the engine decide to quit...

The closer I get to the coast, the more astonishing the scenery gets 🏖️



The newest METAR brings good news: scattered clouds and light winds 👍

Soon after, I get into contact with Kulusuk's AFISO, who confirms the weather.

Approaching the gravel strip, one quickly realizes the reason for the high IFR minimums. Though the field is almost at sea level, it is surrounded by little mountains sitting on their hosting island. The one just South-East of the runway being 2'166ft tall...



A group of islands straight ahead, the airfield is now just behind the dark hill on the upper left.



The gravel runway of Kulusuk (formerly known as Kap Dan 🙄) is large and in good condition, and so is the apron. The refueling is performed quickly.

A helicopter hovers in, the air gets filled with dust. Once the turbine and blades are at rest, its pilot walks over for a quick and friendly chat. He is doing many trips a day, some only a few minutes long, transporting supply or people between the different settlements of the area.

I now climb to the "tower" and spend some time chatting with the very capable, young, and friendly Danish AFISO.

He hands me a weather brief, and in view of the perfect conditions for the route, I decide to continue and follow the coast southbound to Narsarsuaq for the night.

Of note is that the weather on the whole West coast of Greenland is fogged in, so the alternates will be few and far in between: up North on the West coast Kangerlussuaq, or back to Kulusuk, or?

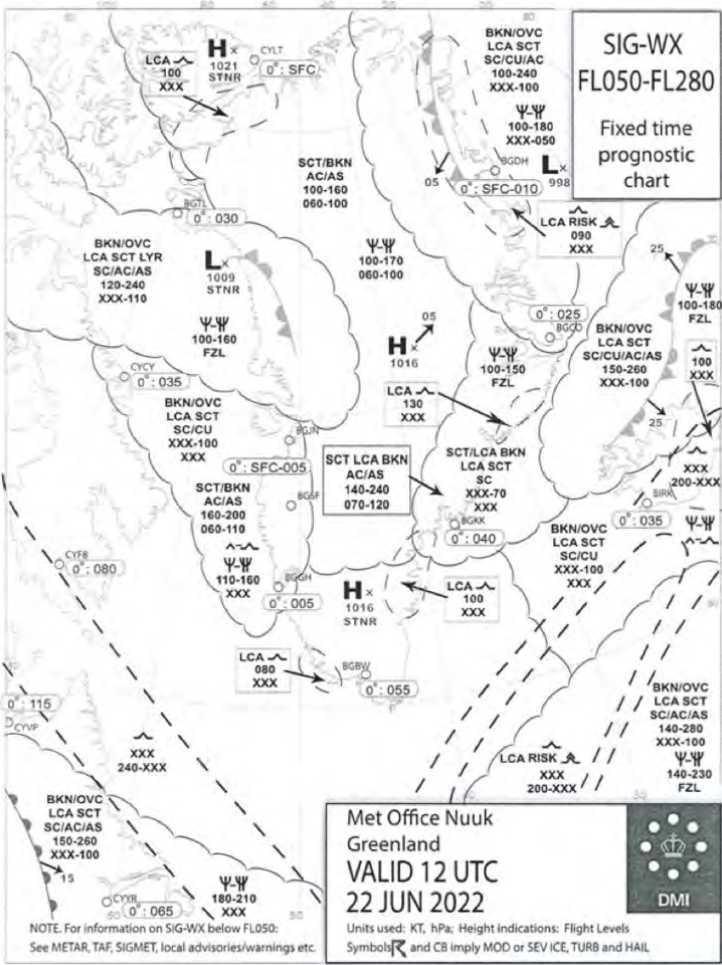
Takeoff from 🛫 **BGKK Kulusuk** at 22 Jun 2022 13:13 Z

Landing at 🛬 **BGBW Narsarsuaq** at 22 Jun 2022 16:33 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 3 hr 20 m (3.3 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 515 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 8,098 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 187 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 155 kt





The flight along the coast is sublime. I won't engage in a futile attempt to describe the beauty and serenity of what I'm seeing and experiencing. May the pictures do some of the talk...













Overflying this scenery I wonder if I'm just seeing a reflection of outer space below me.  
Is this dream or reality?

An eerie and fascinating feeling for sure.





Nearing the southern tip of Greenland I now spot the fog engulfed West coast, and make a right turn to head direct to Narsarsuaq. Call me chicken, but better safe...



Luckily the weather at Narsarsuaq holds, and is perfect for my arrival.

I arrive over the Tunulliarfik Fjord and the airport well too high, but not really a problem as I perform a lazy descending curved approach...

The winds are light, and my only reason for messing up the elusive greaser touchdown, is my lack of recent landings on large runways of this type.

But just hold on... I have another ready-made excuse this time: notwithstanding my best concentration, I have the brain completely dazzled by the sights of the day 🤩









After landing, the by now usual chores of refueling, tying YLL down, packing my overnight stuff, etc, are taken care of.

The only hotel in the village is about 800m away... and luckily has a room available 😊

Having checked-in, I go and stretch my legs, just enjoying the peace and fresh air... fresh air? It is quite warm, the temperature being around 24°C, which is unusual.

The temperatures in the whole of Greenland are very mild right now... and I was hoping to get a break from the hot European Summer

Good news for them, from now on I'll be in good company: Mosquito galore 🦟

As I walk, I can't but stop and spend some time marvelling at this elegant winged iceberg





## Day #4

Takeoff from  **BGBW Narsarsuaq** at 23 Jun 2022 12:27 Z

Landing at  **BGSF Kangerlussuaq** at 23 Jun 2022 16:02 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 3 hr 35 m (3.6 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 522 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 6,911 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 192 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 146 kt

The hotel at Narsarsuaq is pretty basic, but served its purpose well... and luckily sports effective mosquito nets 👍

Beautiful weather this morning, short walk to the airport.

Inga, the on-duty AFISO helps with the codes and filing of my FPL.

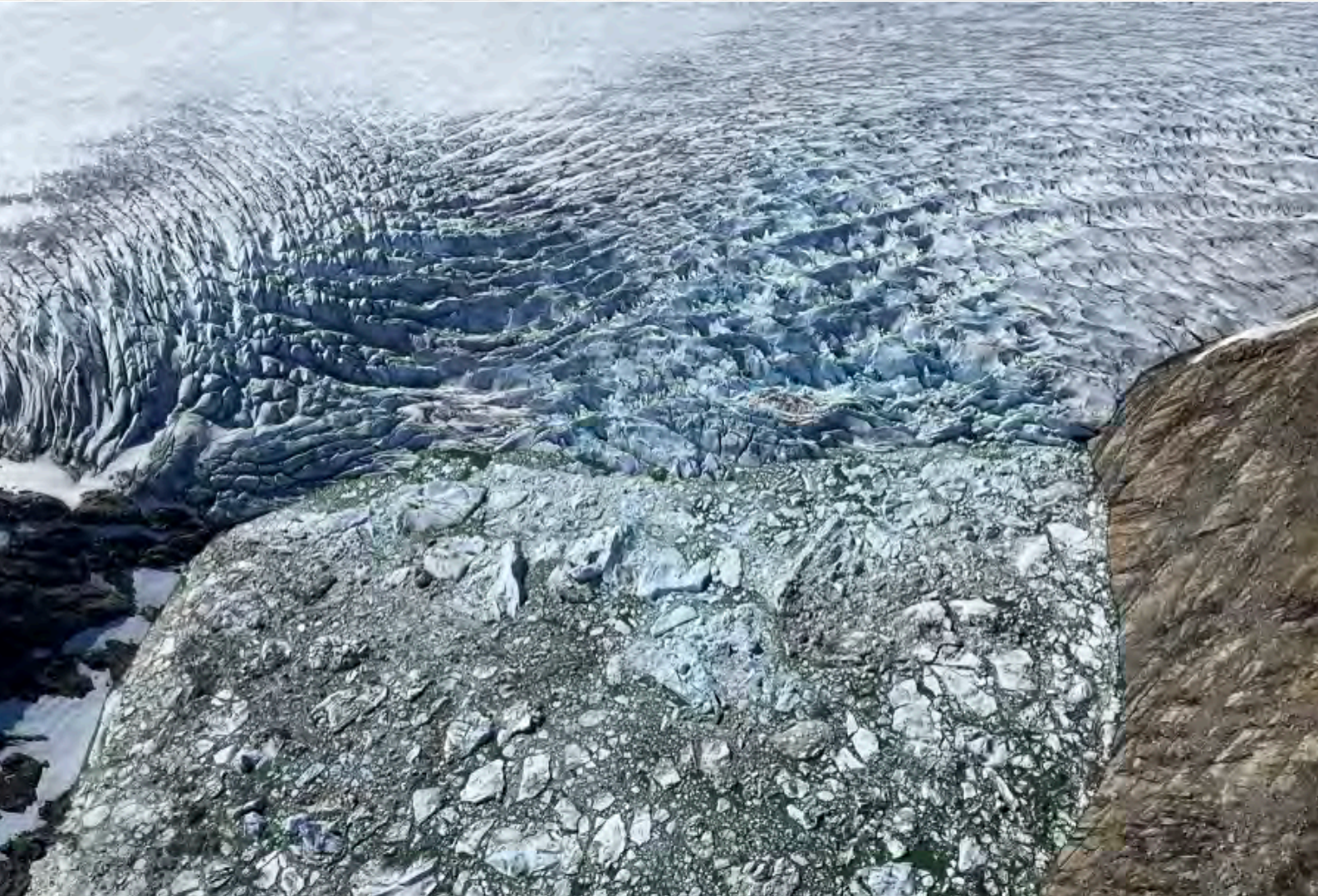
All whilst juggling with a couple of ferry and line flights. It must be the rush hour, as half a dozen aircraft arrive and depart during the time I spend in the C office. The lady pilot of a twin propeller aircraft comes in and prepares the soon to be served inflight catering... by warming up the food of 2 trays in the microwave oven. They will soon be off to Gander, Canada, a long flight for sure. Nice and friendly ambience in the "tower", as everybody seems to know everybody, a small community of pro flyers.

Also for me the time has come, farvel Inga, and mange tak for the professional and friendly assistance 😊

Once airborne, what else but to follow the coast northbound? Smiling at the, pardon me, Mr., pardon me, Sir Ice Cap

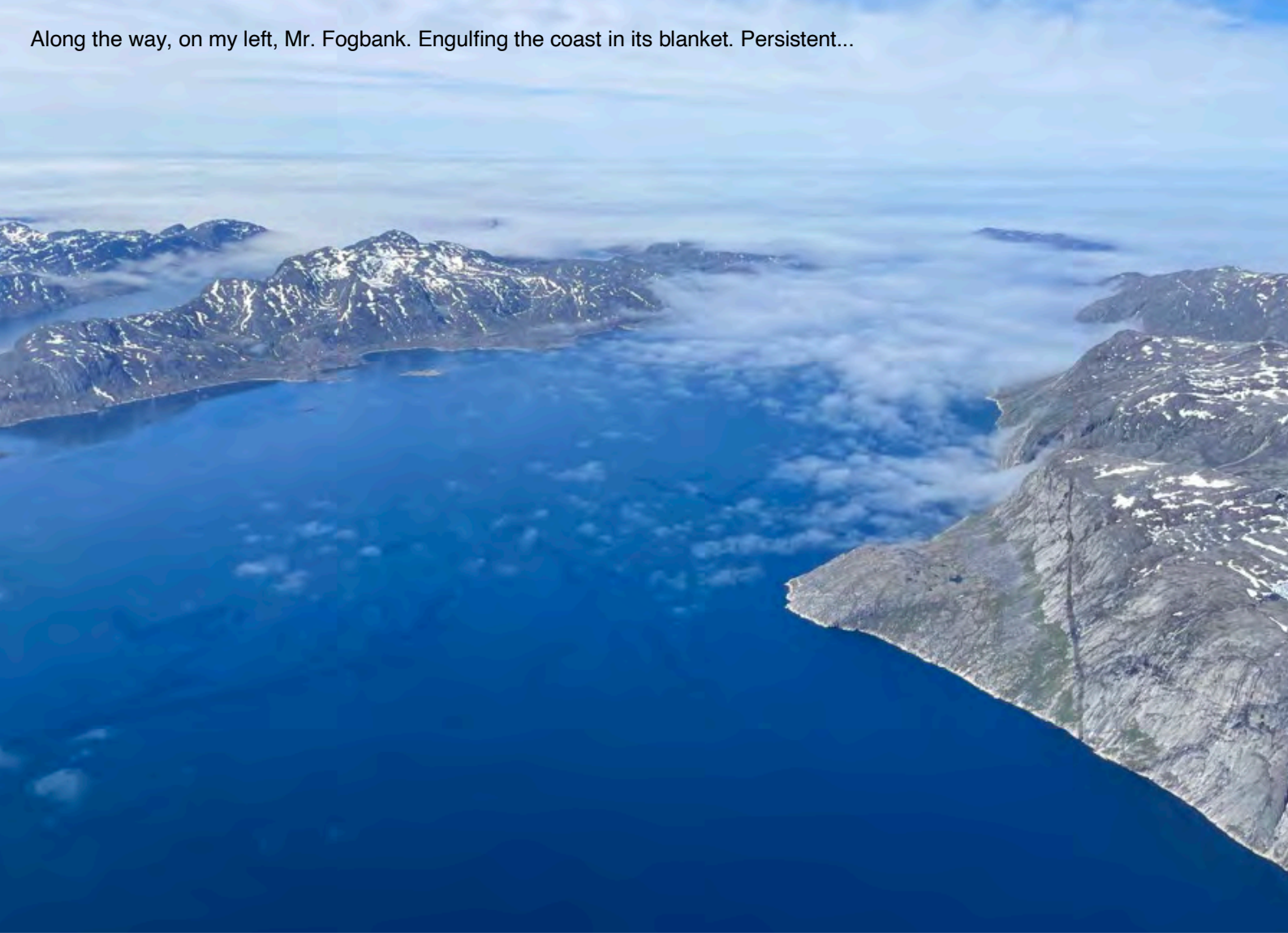




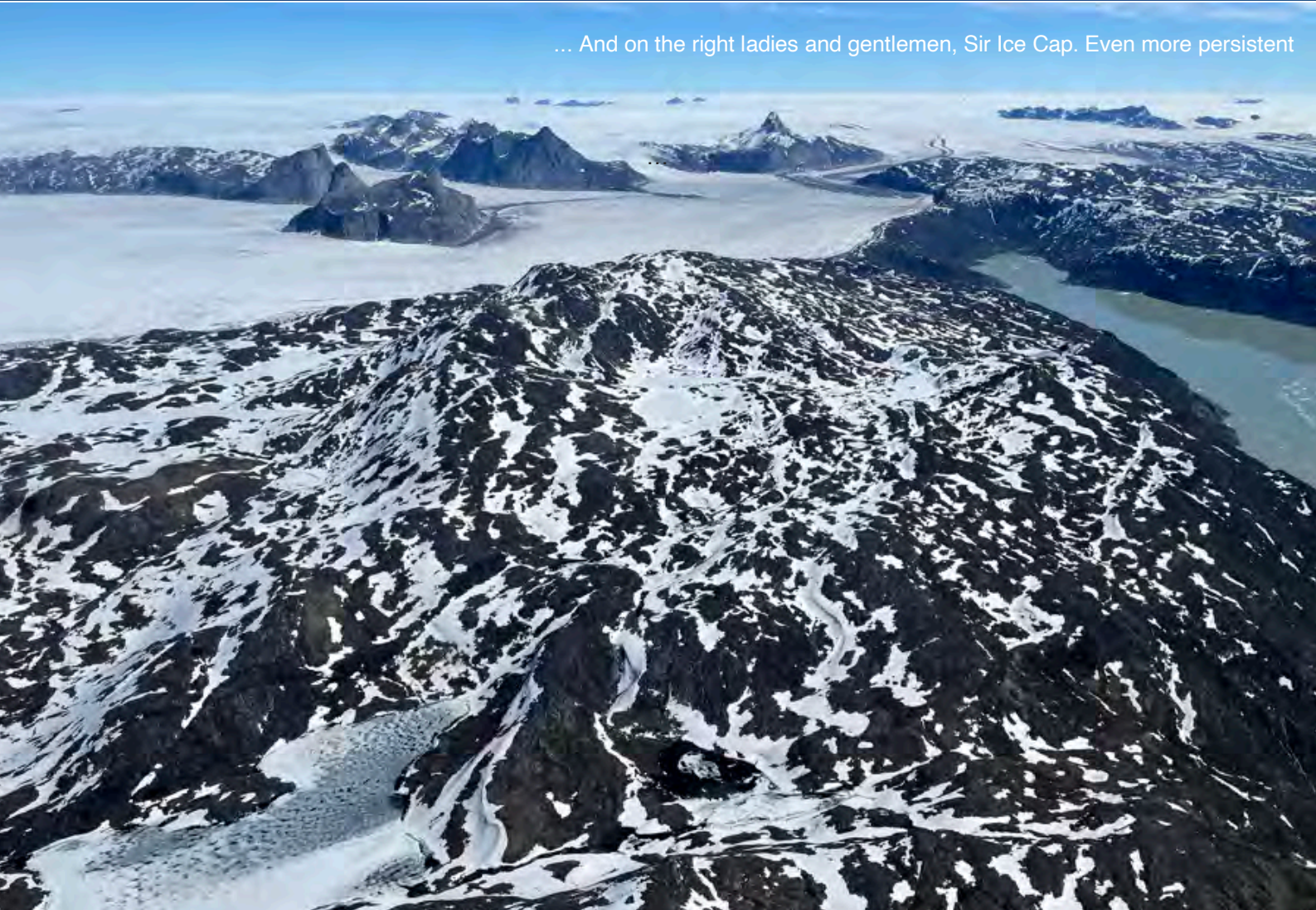




Along the way, on my left, Mr. Fogbank. Engulfing the coast in its blanket. Persistent...



... And on the right ladies and gentlemen, Sir Ice Cap. Even more persistent







A labyrinth of bays, glaciers, ice pack, frozen peaks, and more of the same. Mind boggling really... Spectacular and mesmerizing 🤩



Yes, I sure appreciate the company of my black rubber... auxiliary tank 🤩



Kangerlussuaq is reporting some 10kt tailwind for runway 09, which all the traffic, mainly Air Greenland, are happy to accept. The ILS is also on 09.

But my little bird and its small tailwheel prefer headwinds for landing, so 27 it will be.

The airport is the only one around with a control tower, the other ones being staffed by AFISO. Air-air communications also works out pretty good, as I will be experienced in Greenland and Canada.

#### Approaching Kangerlussuaq



Once on the ground and refueled, YLL is kind of secured... unfortunately there is neither hangar space nor tied-downs, so all my hopes rely on the holding power of the parking brake, and my little wheel chocks. And the weather forecasts predictions for variable light winds...

The handling agent drives me across the runway to their offices. Next the hunt for accommodation is launched...

Alas, Nuuk and all the other western coast airfields have been fogged in for a few days now. As a result, numerous flights have also been cancelled. Of the 3 hotels around, none has any room available... and the owner of the only B&B is somewhere on vacation 🙄

Some 3 hours of waiting later, and just about to ask to be driven back to YLL to get my camping gear (yes, there is a real campground 200m from the FBO...), Wiwi, the friendly FBO lady brings the latest news: thanks to a no-show there's now one room available at the best hotel... almost kissed her!

Yippee 😁





I will stay 2 nights in Kangerlussuaq, trying to breathe in some of the taste of Greenland, a place I'm really eager to discover 😊





## Day #5

**No flying day** (or what others call a “rest day” 🤔)

Curiously, the hotel is located in the terminal building in such a way that, when entering or exiting the hotel, one walks through the busy check-in area.

The weather along the coast has improved, the fog is starting to lift, and most flights are now taking place. Which means there is a lot of people and activity going on.

Today is excursion day... 🐾

Unfortunately, the one that I had foreseen, a full day hike on the Ice Cap, is sold out.

I therefore take part in the *Tundra Safari – Meet the Wildlife* in the morning, followed by the *Excursion To The Ice Cap, Point 660 – The Wonders of the Ice World* in the afternoon.

In a nutshell, the omnipresent wildlife of today will be the... mosquitoes 🦟

Desolate Summer conditions for the sled dogs...



The first tour is a bit disappointing, as we are driven on the top of a nearby hill, in the hope of spotting some of the indigenous Musk oxen. The only ones are miles away, and can barely be seen, even with the use of binoculars. On the other hand the panoramic views are impressive.



In the afternoon a 4x4 bus takes us on a 37 km (one way) drive to the very foot of Sir Ice Cap. Lucky me, we are only 5 participants, so getting a good seat is not really a problem.



We then spend an hour walking on stupendous Sir Ice Cap, surreal, magical, highly interesting.

Our Inuit guide details the changes he has observed during the 40 years he's been giving this tour... describes, demonstrates and proves the very melt away of the massive ice shield. Frightening stuff.

Well done mankind...







Sir Ice Cap is just melting away, and those can only be his very tears...





And so, poor Sir Ice Cap has no other choice but to recede... kind of reminds me of the glaciers in the Alps...



On the way back our bus has a malfunction, and another bus has been sent ahead for us to transboard. Since we are about 10 Km from Kangerlussuaq, I take the opportunity to hike back.

Half distance I spot not only swarms of mosquitoes, but a young and curious reindeer. Unfortunately a bit shy for a close picture... we play hide-and-seek for a while, nice encounter 😊







## Day #6

Takeoff from  **BGSF Kangerlussuaq** at 25 Jun 2022 12:41 Z

Landing at  **BGJN Ilulissat** at 25 Jun 2022 16:07 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 3 hr 26 m (3.4 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 489 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 5,152 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 201 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 142 kt

Had this one in my sights for a long time. Not just another POI, but The Iceberg Factory, better known under the name of Ilulissat 😊

How can anyone flying Greenland miss this one? The more I think about it, the more I realize that this place was The Goal of The Tour. Can't explain my fascination for the area. Maybe it's the dying of the Ice Cap, pardon me, Sir Ice Cap. The higher temperatures has it loosen its strength, thereby setting free the essence of its innards, the ice as in icebergs.

Tragic. The life of an iceberg is the very opposite of its enemy the human: liberated from the glacier it is enormous, then gets smaller and smaller until it vanishes... ok, enough gibberish, for now 😊

Heading North after take-off, again in very good flight conditions. The scenery is just staggering. One glacier leads to another one, fjords, mountains, islands, and icebergs. Just awe-inspiring.









Seeing this fellow, I'm tempted...

But upon reflection I judge my wingspan as slightly too large, and so decline 🙄



At some point my Garmin equipment decides it's has had enough fighting with the large declination of the northern latitudes, and the heading becomes track. No big deal, as the only thing I now miss is the wind indication...





I'm now approaching the day's destination Ilulissat, but will continue northbound before heading back...  
The gigantic Iceberg Factory, and the city of Ilulissat behind:



This flight has been planned a few days earlier, easy. [AirZafari](#), the local scenic flight operator hosts a webpage listing all their flights.

Hey, I figured these guys must know what they are doing, and so shamelessly copy/pasted their best and most expensive tour titled *Grand Master Uumannaq...* and extended it somewhat to the North and West.

Hey, thanks for the help AirZafari 🙏



Garanti for Isbjerge :-)  
**ICEBERG GUARANTEE :-)**







Once more, I shall not attempt to describe the next part of the flight. It would just be a ridiculous and ludicrous attempt, which would in no way render justice to what I'm about to experience...



Let's just say that for a couple of hours I keep attacking them icebergs... choosing one for its peculiar shape or size, diving onto my victim, then pulling up at the last second, circling them one way, then the other way, looping and rolling above some others...

Probably a dangerous game, riding on the edge of oblivion. But, let's face it, I'm unable to resist, and so just keep frolicking around those melting giants 🙄





















Flying from one bay to the next fjord then to the next bay, I spot an attractive prey and dive for it, vulture like... I then level off just a few feet, maybe only inches, over the water... dazzled but also clear-headed as to the difficulty in judging height over water... easy Dan, just take it easy 😊

























▲ Just as I've overflowed one of those icy sculpture, it breaks apart thereby creating a mini tsunami ▲

Man, I've just experienced the most megawesome flight of my life... the sheer beauty of the scenery mixed with a feeling of fragility, and yes, a graspable danger. Flying that little machine of mine, at the mercy of the elements and technology, in this environment, that is just unreal... I've just feasted with a fathomless cocktail of real surrealism 🍷

Those images and sensations have been imprinted deep into my mind, and will stay there for the rest of my life 😊

Luckily for you the reader, I finally realize that I'm still only a mere mortal, and that my fuel reserves are dwindling... so nothing left but to turn around and head back to Ilulissat.

Wikipedia excerpt:

*The city is home to almost as many sled-dogs as people. In direct translation, Ilulissat is the Kalaallisut word for "Icebergs" (Danish: Isbjerger). The nearby Ilulissat Icefjord is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and has made Ilulissat the most popular tourist destination in Greenland. The city neighbours the Ilulissat Icefjord, where there are enormous icebergs from the most productive glacier in the northern hemisphere.*

Light winds, friendly people and non-friendly mosquitoes... YLL has been put to sleep. I'm really looking forward to spend next day watching those mesmerizing icebergs drift by.

Walking to the hotel I turn around, view on Ilulissat airport and the bay





## Day #7

### No flying day (or yet another “rest day” 😞)

The expensive hotel which I booked specifically for the outside view has been a disappointment... from the room I was given, only half of the bay and its icebergs are visible, the other half covers the hotel's kitchen and dining room... with the related noise and odors. And no way to get another room since *"I'm afraid we are fully booked tonight. And yes, tomorrow as well"*.

The day boat tour to the foot of a glacier, which I had booked after my arrival yesterday, has unfortunately been cancelled due to strong forecast winds. I therefore resort to go for a 5 hour trek along the Ilulissat Icefjord.

The city itself is bigger than I anticipated, and has all of the attributes found in cities far North: colorful houses, big noisy “trucks”, plenty of toys such as boats, motorcycles, snowmobiles, kayaks, etc, all in different states of running condition, littering the space around individual houses. And a few howling sled dogs.



The hike is magnificent, as the path is laid right next to the Ice Factory. Stupefying, imposing, and inspiring. Those white frozen giants are alive: they slowly move, they emit noises, sometimes akin to snoring, at other times sound like an avalanche when one is breaking apart and crumbles into the sea.













Back at the hotel, peering towards Canada...





## Day #8

Part 3/3 of the westbound NAT crossing. The weather looks doable. The last formalities are done at the airport.

One of them is to phone the Canadian CBP to confirm my arrival time. Though being quite "current" regarding all kind of US accents, the Canadian one will take some time to get used to 🤪

Takeoff from ✈️ **BGJN Ilulissat** at 27 Jun 2022 10:49 Z

Landing at ✈️ **CYFB Iqaluit** at 27 Jun 2022 14:39 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 3 hr 50 m (3.8 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 603 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 15,460 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 201 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 157 kt

Once airborne, one last long look at The Iceberg Factory



In order to also make this overwater crossing as short as possible, I initially follow the coast southbound. Just before reaching the coastal settlement of Sisimiut, I then engage in a right turn to change to a westerly heading.

The cloud base is slowly getting lower, and I now climb, making my way through some different layers, with periods of reduced visibility. The freezing levels are again quite low, and a little bit of rime ice is forming, but nothing serious.





Finally the clouds above dissipate, and I continue the crossing on top. Oops, climb check is to go 🤔

This is the 3rd over water crossing of The Tour, and I'm still not fully at ease. I now feel my vulnerability, to the elements, of having only one engine, but above all, of being so far from any airport, airfield, or strip... the engine luckily doesn't think, but just keeps doing its job 🙌

The use of the radio during the crossing is, being on a VFR flight plan, more or less at pilot's discretion. Same for position reports. I have been given a couple of frequencies for Edmonton Canada by the amiable Nuuk Info with whom I soon loose all contact. I try to call those frequencies to no avail.

I sure could make position reports using airliner traffic which I hear on the same frequencies, but why bother?

The second frequency on my single radio set usually has 121.5 (emergency frequency) dialed, and I drilled myself at quickly getting to the present position screen of my navigator...

According to my information, the Davis Strait is under intense military surveillance, and I expect them to monitor my progress... maybe 🤔

More or less in the middle of the Davis Strait

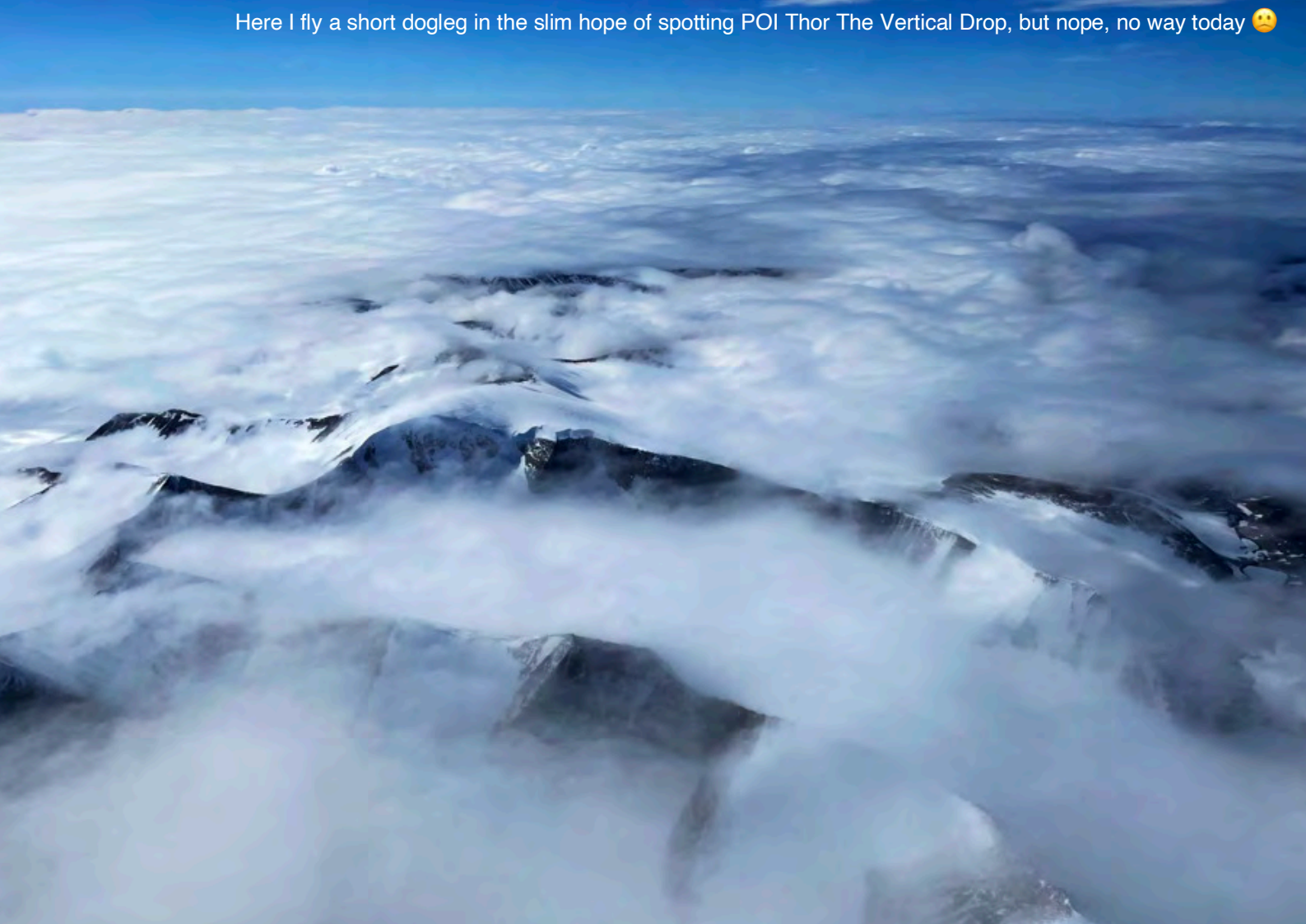




Finally reaching the Canadian coast...



Here I fly a short dogleg in the slim hope of spotting POI Thor The Vertical Drop, but nope, no way today 🙄





Approaching Iqualuit the weather clears, and the coast becomes visible. Almost as wondrous as Greenland...





In addition to my right hand iPad running SkyDemon, I now have my left hand iPad run the excellent and free app FltPlan Go, displaying airport information, procedures, weather, and sectionals, for Canada as well as for the US.

When landing at Ilulissat 2 days ago, I made a mental note to change the units on my displays from hectopascals to inches of mercury. Guess what, that will now be done after my landing at Iqaluit 😊

The weather is now nice and clear, and I turn right base to finals with a nice view on the city of Iqaluit on my right



Following my return to terra firma, I proceed to the main apron where the waiting Canadian CBP officer duly inspects my passport, my ArriveCAN and CanPass, and welcomes me to Canada.

Short taxi to the fuel pump, and against all my fear of not getting fuel at all (one shipment a year, and when it's gone, it's gone...), receive free "leftovers" from Ibrahim, thanks for the very friendly service! One advantage of having "small capacity" fuel tanks: they are quickly full with "leftovers" alone 😊

I now decide to "handle" myself, which complicates things a little bit. The airport is kind of middle sized, but since it has a few schedule flights, likes to "play big airport". Which means that to get in and out of the perimeter fence, plus some other details, without a handling company, one has to learn his way around...

Another big obstacle during my stay here: my cell phone doesn't work with any of the network providers. Despite having subscribed to a Canada/USA additional coverage 🙄  
It is at this very moment that one realizes how important that cell phone really is...



YLL has been put to bed 😊



The OAT is again surprisingly hot, 26°C... and the streets not being paved, every vehicle leaves swirls of dust in its trail.

It is now 1pm and I walk to the nearest hotel to check-in. Once in the dark room adjacent to a busy road, I realize that the Wi-Fi is of no use 😬 Back to the reception ("*ah yeah we know, it is about to get fixed... when?*"), the room is cancelled, and I'm back on the street... a while and some walking later, I'm happy to reach the hotel I should have gone directly to 😊

The view from my room is nice 👍





Kinda like that tag



One of the ~~very~~ attractive schools





## Day #9

During the whole trip, I aim for an early take-off. And from now on, all the airports visited will have a 24h operation. I want to take advantage of the usually quieter weather of mornings, and the edge of early arrivals at destination... one of the usual subject on these kind of trips being finding a hotel. Flying a "VFR" SEP according to a loose and unreliable schedule makes reservations ahead difficult. Most of the places I visit are popular, the more so during high season. Post Covid-19 euphoria makes the issue even more acute.

A different problem is that the furthest North one is flying, the more difficult it is to get fuel. Unfortunately auto gas, containing a lot of ethanol in the northern latitudes, makes it mostly unsuitable for aircraft use.

I had planned on flying North of the Hudson bay, and Rankin Inlet was the only enroute place showing fuel. But hotel reservation a week ahead proved impossible. Due to this, today was to produce the most flying of the tour, as in a total of 9:01h... yes, I did and still do love to fly 🙄

Takeoff from  **CYFB Iqaluit** at 28 Jun 2022 10:35 Z

Landing at  **CYRT Rankin Inlet** at 28 Jun 2022 14:55 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 4 hr 20 m (4.3 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 644 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 4,318 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 177 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 149 kt

This morning, following an early rise, I walk to the airport...

But getting to the aircraft in these wee hours proves somewhat challenging. My hi-vis vest is safely tucked inside the cockpit... now talking the security guard into lending me his hi-vis vest to walk 700m to YLL, then taxi back to return said vest at his gate takes some persuasion, but finally works 🙄

It is still early when I take-off 👍





The Hudson Bay is huge! Still partly packed with ice, luckily still looking very unpopulated...



Kinngait on the Dorset Island





Following the northern coast of the Hudson Bay is fascinating, islands, bays, acres of tundra, frozen land and sea, the winter just having let loose for a couple of months...







About to turn finals for Rankin Inlet





Landed alright... looking around, then asking for the pump does not produce any result, I therefore taxi in front of a big hangar and shut-down.

A fuel bowser labeled Jet-A1 comes by and its driver asks if I need fuel. I tell him yes please, but not his kind, he then disappears.

No further news... but 30 Minutes later I manage to get hold of the fuel company by phone, and yes, they have AVGAS, and yes there are coming out to the aircraft. All good then 😊

A while later a fork equipped heavy duty caterpillar rolls a 55USG/200l blue drum of the precious juice on the tarmac... and is about to drive off whilst I shoot this very picture 🤖

YLL suddenly looks smaller than she really is...



"STOP!" I'm just in time to get the driver's attention and prevent him from driving away, and instead give me a hand at setting the drum upright... then I'm on my own again.

I walk over to the onsite maintenance facility, but they have neither a pump, nor the time, nor the manpower available.

Back home, when preparing for The Tour, I became aware of the necessity of having a transfer pump as part of my kit, but trying to save as much weight and volume as I could, departed without 😞



Now is the time to get my "lost in the bush" servicing gear out of the baggage compartment... consisting of a siphon hose pump (which I call my wiggle hose 🤔 (...)) bought some 20 years ago during the Oshkosh convention from a Chinese hardware booth, a foldable plastic water canister of 10 liters capacity, and a filter/funnel.

The refueling operation is slow, but works well, and after about 1 hour all of my 3 tanks are full again.

The drum then still contains about a 1/4 of fuel, a leftover which I happily give to the owner/pilot of an amphibian Cessna parked nearby who miraculously turns up just as I'm done 🙌



Time to get airborne again, 1 leg to go...



Takeoff from  **CYRT Rankin Inlet** at 28 Jun 2022 17:27 Z

Landing at  **CYZF Yellowknife** at 28 Jun 2022 22:08 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 4 hr 41 m (4.7 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 621 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 3,994 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 173 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 133 kt

The scenery holds for a while, just beautiful, same for the weather...



When I leave the western shore of the Hudson Bay both scenery and weather change, more and more pine trees start populating the barren surface, less ice and water to be seen...

And the weather now starts to deteriorate as the rain showers multiply. But the ceilings remain high enough, so only few and little deviations are necessary.







Marsh all over... (did I write marshmallow? Nooo, I did not 🤪)



Now, as I'm slowly approaching the day's destination Yellowknife, the weather progressively worsens...

Moderate (to severe...) turbulence hits, surely produces by a couple of massive thunderstorms I spot right of my track.

I'm happy that all my stuff, including the aux tank, is nicely secured as I bump my head, or is it the opposite, into the canopy a couple of times. This in spite of the tight 5 point harness...

I've never encountered such choppiness since acquiring YLL, but have full confidence in her structural integrity!

A ship approved for aerobatics has higher load limits, and therefore these irregular atmospheric motions and accelerations should pose no threat to YLL. Should not 🤪







This stuff is encountered and the worst of it avoided some 50 NM prior to reaching today's goal... and now the turbulence abates somewhat.

And a few minutes later the landing is performed in fair weather.

Straight in approach to runway 28 at Yellowknife



My walk upon exiting YLL is akin to the drunken sailor's, the unstable motion will last for a couple of hours 🤡, the engine drone some more...

Meet the good [Det'on Cho](#) FBO staff, refuel... yes, hangar space would be available, but quoted at Can\$130 a night, and the weather outlook looking good, YLL will have to sleep outside 🤡

Ask for tie-down blocks which are quickly brought by, take refuge in the truck for 5 minutes during a heavy shower, pack-up...

I'm then driven into town, and even given a tour of the place by the FBO line guy, before being dropped at my hotel, many thanks 🙌

Thanks to Mike and his whole FBO team for a super friendly and efficient service.



## Day #10

### No flying day (and another “rest day” 🤔)

Yellowknife contains another POI of my list... it is the home of legendary [Buffalo Airways](#)

For those not in the know, the company's reputation has been made by buying, flying, restoring, and maintaining old (and some very old...) airliners, 2nd WW transport aircraft, and some other exotic models.

Part of the operations have been documented in the series *Ice Pilots*, of which I bought and watched the hires version a few years ago. Searching for *Buffalo Airways* will return a lot of details about the company, YT movies and more. They are different opinions about the (maybe 🤖...) operation and the company itself, but I will only say that I was, and still am, fascinated.

And so, being very keen on visiting their facilities, I registered myself for a tour a few days ago. So today's the day. Taking the hotel courtesy bus, I'm there at 10am. I'm taken in charge by the good looking and helpful women of Buffalo Airways. To top my luck I'm the only visitor, and can enjoy a long and personalized tour of the grounds. Thanks gals 👍

The whole place oscillates between a functioning airline, a museum, a treasure cove, or a junkyard, depending on one's point of view... there are carcasses of airplanes, antique airliners or shiny firebombers on the ramp, radial engines from newly overhauled to unsalvageable littering the workshop, and so much more.

There's also a small shop selling souvenirs and memorabilia.











A couple of Buffalo Airways t-shirts later, followed by a bus ride, and I'm back in town.

The afternoon is dedicated to visiting Yellowknife itself.

I find it sizeable and very attractive, surrounded by lakes and pine trees, modern with parks and a lot of possible outdoor activities, I sure could live here.

In the Summer...

The ice road... molten for now... with a few folks already in line for the crossing





All houses seemingly have some floatplane anchored nearby...



A view from the top of Pilot's Monument hill







Yellowknife sure seems not only to be reliant on it, but also plainly aviation friendly, me likes 😊





## Day #11

Whilst visiting Buffalo Airways yesterday, I bumped into my stars, Joe, President, and one of his son Mikey, General Manager. Hearing about my trip triggered their curiosity, and they asked me to come by before departure, so as to have a look at my steed.

I therefore now first taxi in front of their big hangar for a short chat and a photo session.

I'm also given one their beautiful embroidered cap, which I'm to wear during my stay at Oshkosh... which I later duly forget to do 😊 Thanks guys, that is super cool!

With the old man Joe



Alright, time to board, start the engine, taxi out, and take-off...

Takeoff from  **CYZF Yellowknife** at 30 Jun 2022 15:34 Z

Landing at  **CYDA Dawson City** at 30 Jun 2022 20:12 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 4 hr 38 m (4.6 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 685 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 13,022 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 193 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 148 kt

Again quite a long leg in perspective... which I like. During those I get a feel I never get whilst earthed. My mind wanders different places, fully detached from any terrestrial ties. Love of flight anyone?



I might be an atheist, but sure do love this poem:

# High Flight

BY JOHN GILLESPIE MAGEE JR.

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth  
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;  
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth  
of sun-split clouds,—and done a hundred things  
You have not dreamed of—wheeled and soared and swung  
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,  
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung  
My eager craft through footless halls of air ....

Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue  
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace  
Where never lark nor ever eagle flew—  
And, while with silent lifting mind I've trod  
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,  
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

Notes:

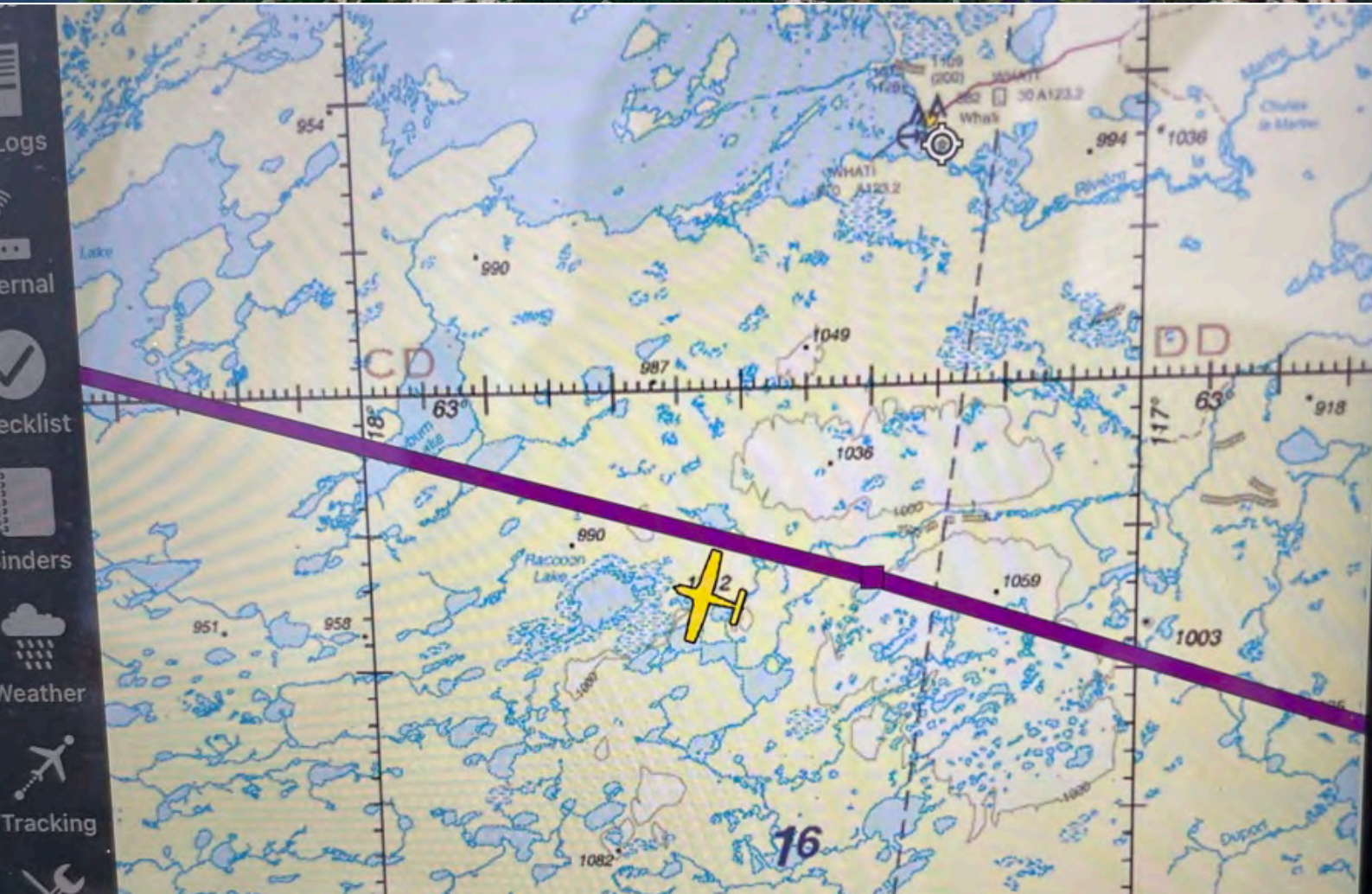
This poem is in the public domain.

Magee, John Gillespie. "Letter to Parents," September 3, 1941.

Alright, back to The Tour now 😊



Zillions of lakes interrupted by pine woods, little mining operations, and good weather







As the flight progresses, the scenery changes, living the magic of flight... hills grow into mountains, lakes become rivers.

The clouds also change, and I have to resort to circumnavigate some of the more threatening baby CBs, as cute as they are 🤔

As they rapidly multiply, I add power and climb above most of them, thereby unfortunately losing visual contact with the terrain below for the next couple of hours...









Later the clouds dissipate somewhat, but now visibility starts to drop... and I feel a smell of burnt something now... I'm slightly worried at first, until I'm sure that it emanates from the ground... and I now recall the seldom seen abbreviation FU (fume) mentioned in the weather reports I've studied before the flight 💡

It seems to be a common occurrence to have large forest fires during the Summers in northern Canada, as well as in Alaska. Though not a single live fire was to be sighted during The Tour.

The smoke becomes pretty thick now. And I'm riding on the artificial horizon indication during the latter part of the flight.

As the visibility deteriorates even further due to the setting sun, I program and "shoot" an RNAV approach into Dawson City airport, the runway becoming visible about 2 miles before the threshold.



Dawson City ramp... in varied company



Once the runway vacated, I taxi into the transient parking. There are some proper tie-down rings set in the concrete, but those are made for bigger airplane than YLL, and I find my ropes being well too short... I then meet Helmut, a nice German guy who's been living around here for a few years now. We chat for a while, and he then takes me to in his tent-hangar where more than one interesting project is stashed... he also lends me a set of ratchets straps, thanks Helmut!

The all-important US Customs and Border Protection decal is applied in anticipation of tomorrow's entry into the US of A





Good thing my hotel provides a courtesy pick-up, as the airport is located a good distance from Dawson City itself. I like to, and did a lot of walking on this tour, mainly to/from the hotel/airport, but I save myself for a city tour on this one 😊

Dawson City rides on its Klondike gold rush image... replacing the trucks, cars, motorcycles, etc, with horses and horse drawn carriages would get one transported to the end of the eighteen-hundreds in a hurry.



And that is probably reason enough as to why the city attracts all kind of tourists and travelers alike through its dusty streets. Quite an ambience really 😎

The downside being that, time come, I am shocked at the length of the waiting line in front of the Diamond Tooth Gerties Gambling Hall casino and give up, though the place had been recommended to me... Alas no can-can show for me tonight 😞

On the same note, I can't find space in any of the restaurants I fancy... so I go and take my order from a pizza parlor, and enjoy the pretty good food in my room.





The rest of the evening is spent organizing tomorrow's day.

In the final stages of planning the tour, I had spotted Northway AK, as a convenient Port of Entry into the US. Located close to the Canadian border, it is also on my way to Talkeetna, where I have arranged with Sheldon Air Service for the required hangar space and basic tooling access for a 50h maintenance inspection of YLL.

So, the evening is spent, amongst other activities, in filing the necessary eAPIS... an IT challenge on a PC (ok, a Mac) at home, close to Mission Impossible #xxx on an iPad 🤔

I then phone US Customs to agree on my planned arrival of 9am at Northway tomorrow.

By chance I check my mails one more time before going to bed, and notice a *Landing Denied* email from CBP. Stupid me, I have filed my eAPIS without thinking about the one hour time change that will occur on the forty minutes flight...

Flying due West during these days of The Tour makes tracking local time sometimes difficult, as is the fact of having changed to the other side of UTC than the one we are used to in Europe.

I refile an eAPIS with the correct time and go to sleep 😴



## Day #12

Takeoff from  **CYDA Dawson City** at 01 Jul 2022 16:06 Z

Landing at  **PAOR Northway** at 01 Jul 2022 17:01 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 55 min (0.9 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 105 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 6,807 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 152 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 114 kt

The visibility is still reduced as I set off for Northway. I fly at reduce settings in order to land at exactly the time agreed. Approaching the field and landing just before me, an American registered Husky. We both park on the designated area, as told by the guy handling the UNICOM.

Turning left base to finals for Northway, Alaska, USA



The CBP Officer drives up, and first checks out the Husky and its two occupants. My turn now. Now there's one unhappy officer... polite, but very firm in telling me that I was not supposed to come to Northway, that I had been sent a landing denial, and that I might have to fly back to Canada 🙄 I'm nevertheless allowed to exit the cockpit and set foot down on American soil...

After I tell him the whole story, including the verbal approval I had received last night, he becomes quite nice. As the place is out in the boonies, no cell phone network is available, we proceed to the briefing office where the officer now uses a land line to talk to customs headquarters.



Half an hour later I'm told that I have to now fly to the Ted Stevens Anchorage International airport to clear customs, as they are equipped for biometrics, etc.

Northway is probably reserved for registered Canadians or Americans... the whole thing is a bit strange since my biometrics must be on file somewhere in the colonials virtual vaults, as taken during previous trips to the US... but who am I to argue? And so I wear my smile 😊



I'm not allowed to refuel, probably since I'm not yet officially in the country, so I double check on the remaining fuel... and fuel required, including eventual holding allowance.

The officer also repeatedly queries if I have the necessary fuel to make the flight, and I assure him I have enough. But the inside me thinks it might be tight should anything unforeseen happen... good thing my fuel gages are quite accurate 😊

A few minutes later I'm airborne again, destination Anchorage International...

Takeoff from	PAOR Northway	at 01 Jul 2022 17:52 Z
Landing at	PANC Ted Stevens Anchorage	at 01 Jul 2022 19:47 Z
FLIGHT TIME: 1 hr 55 m (1.9 hours)		
DISTANCE FLOWN: 264 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 9,394 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 162 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 138 kt		









As I fly along, the smoky air slowly clears up, and the beauty of Alaska comes into shining.

I'm flying at a slower speed (Carson's) in order to save the precious gas. Curiously, I look forward to the challenges of flying into Anchorage, and meeting up with customs... 🤔

Anchorage is as busy as a bee hive, and I'm not sure about the controller's tone of happiness when I announce myself on one of the busy arrival frequencies...

Busy surroundings as displayed on the 8NM scale of my PowerFlarm traffic display





Nevertheless, with the usual efficiency of US ATC, I'm vectored and squeezed in between a couple of heavy jets, and can easily offer and comply with a 160 (knots) to 2 miles speed constraint.

I'll let you in a little known secret now: those RV airplanes are great 😎

On a base vector for Anchorage



Once on the ground, my app FltPlan Go, with the ship's position being displayed live, is of great help whilst I try to navigate my way on the large US airport.

N2 is my stand, and it sure looks comical parking my little bird on a stand probably more accustomed seeing jumbo jets or similar sized aircraft.

And no, they did not try to lower the air bridge to YLL 😂



I now call Customs, and a short while later two CBP officers walk over to us, and I'm allowed to open the canopy (one of the measures one better knows about before border crossing into the US...).

"Ah, you're the one from Northway" is the welcome speech... 😊

Once the biometrics are taken, I have to go through an interview by different officers. Then I'm officially let loose in the US, free to go.

One thing on which I had decided before the trip, was to never ever, whatever the circumstances, let go of my sense of humor, and keep my lack of patience under control. Whatever happens will be taken wearing the smile, being so happy and realizing just how privileged I am to be able to make The Tour 😊

Refueling done, it is time to ask for startup, and I taxi out to the "active" runway.

The traffic is intense, so some patience is required, but finally the take-off clearance is received, and I advance the power lever...

As #2 behind heavy...



Takeoff from  **PANC Ted Stevens Anchorage** at 01 Jul 2022 20:57 Z

Landing at  **PATK Talkeetna** at 01 Jul 2022 21:33 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 36 min (0.6 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 92 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 4,156 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 195 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 154 kt

 A few departure vectors later, and it is now a short and pleasant flight to Talkeetna 







A beautiful area, with Denali (ex Mount McKinley) throning in the background, finally smokeless air, a very neat airport, and David, the owner/pilot of [Sheldon Air Service](#), all are here to welcome me 😎





YLL's engine still being warm, no time is lost. She is rolled into the hangar where I can start on the 50h inspection...



Once I'm done David drives me to the hotel which is just some 700m away.

I decide on a discovery stroll through the small town boasting live music. The sun is setting down as I walk along the Susitna river shore, but now, more than ever, the ferocious mosquitos become too much of a nuisance.

I retreat to the hotel for a drink (or 2), food, and bed.





## Day #13

YLL is buttoned up, everything is fine, but for the engine driven fuel pump. I have noticed blue fuel streak marks on my left wheel pant, where the overboard hose of said fuel pump exits, for a couple of days now.

The fuel pressure is still in a normal range, and since my steed is very redundant with another 2 electrical fuel pumps, I decide to continue The Tour as is. But I do now order a new fuel pump from [ACS](#), and give [Van's Aircraft](#) at Aurora airport as the delivery address, for later pick-up and replacement.

Once this is done, I decide on a flight out to the West coast and back. The goal is Denali, then a look at the coast, and maybe even give the bird to the other side 🤔

Takeoff from 📍 **PATK Talkeetna** at 02 Jul 2022 17:32 Z

Landing at 📍 **PAUN Unalakleet** at 02 Jul 2022 19:55 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 2 hr 23 m (2.4 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 374 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 20,834 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 194 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 157 kt

As soon as I set out for Denali, I quickly realize that today's weather is exceptional.









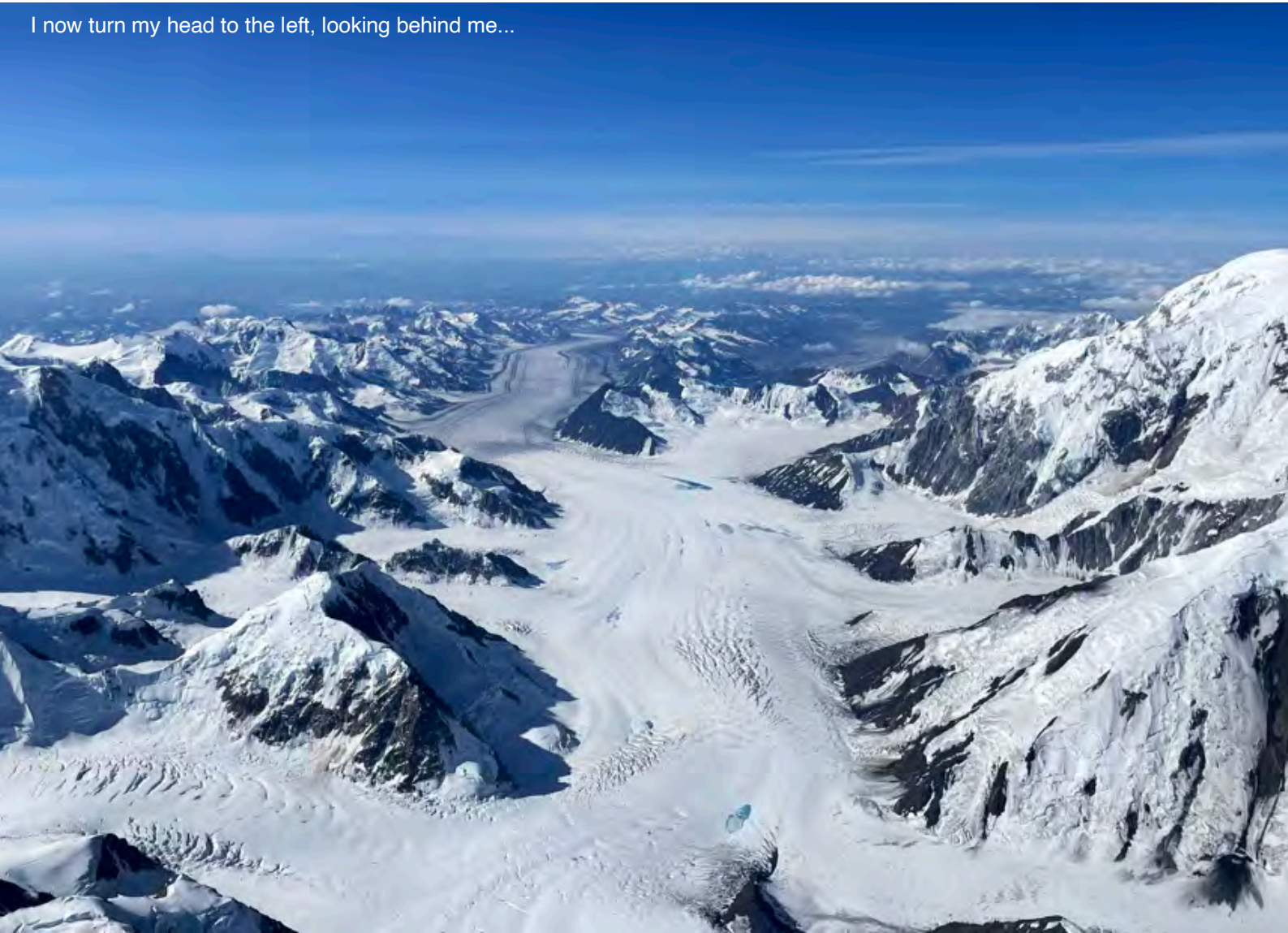
I have been around here a couple of times on previous occasions, whilst flying rentals during lay-overs at PANC, but never saw the mountain in its entirety... today all faces and adjoining peaks are visible, so I advance the levers and start to climb.

The summit has been measured peaking at 20'194 feet (6'155 m). The O2 cannula tickles my nostrils on every pulse, I continue to climb. And climb more. The air is still and smooth as silk, with the ND showing a mere 5 kts of wind, visibility unlimited. I'm still climbing. Reaching an indicated 20'500ft, I stop the climb. I'm now face to face with the summit 🙄

The non-turboed engine gasps for air, but according to Jim Petty's excellent and free app AircraftPower (using original Lycosaurus power tables), still produces 85hp, or 47% of its sea level rated power... I guess slightly less for my tired engine.



I now turn my head to the left, looking behind me...









I circle the summit once, and then start a shallow descend to the West...

The western, or coastal side of the Alaskan range is unfortunately once again subject to forest fires, and the smoke gets dense.



It gets worse when approaching the coast and the destination Unalakleet. I program an RNAV approach, but then the visibility improves somewhat, and I can fly the approach using external visual cues, good.





The shoreline and the runway...



Unalakleet beach





The town itself is well, not really attractive. The natives, and the rest of the population as a matter of fact, seem to spend their time driving aimlessly up and down the streets on their ATVs. The place is littered with plastic drums, snow mobiles or aluminum fishing boats in different state of repair... or despair...

These scenes makes me realize once more how comfortable my own situation is... I can't but wonder what the place looks like in Winter times...



Takeoff from  **PAUN Unalakleet** at 02 Jul 2022 22:19 Z

Landing at  **PATK Talkeetna** at 03 Jul 2022 01:21 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 3 hr 2 m (3.0 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 436 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 8,389 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 208 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 144 kt



A couple of hours and a pizza later, I set out for the return flight, and initially follow the coast looking at the Bering Sea...



... before making a left turn heading East now.

My smile is then fully recovered when rejoining the astounding scenery and clear air on the eastern side of the Alaskan Range...











## Day #14

Time to leave... unfortunately some weather is moving in on Alaska... the initial plan and POI was to visit the outer Aleutian Islands, but low clouds and rain now have me cancel the hotel reservation at Kodiak, and instead head down the Pacific coast. First stop will be Cordova, a place I remember with affection from being weathered-in for a couple of rainy days, many years ago, during yet another trip.

I now bid farewell to Richard and David of Shelton Air Services. I had a great time here, and it was fun and interesting to watch David run his daily business of scenic glacier flights... even the more so by listening to a few of the good stories he has in store. Thanks for everything guys, farewell 🙌

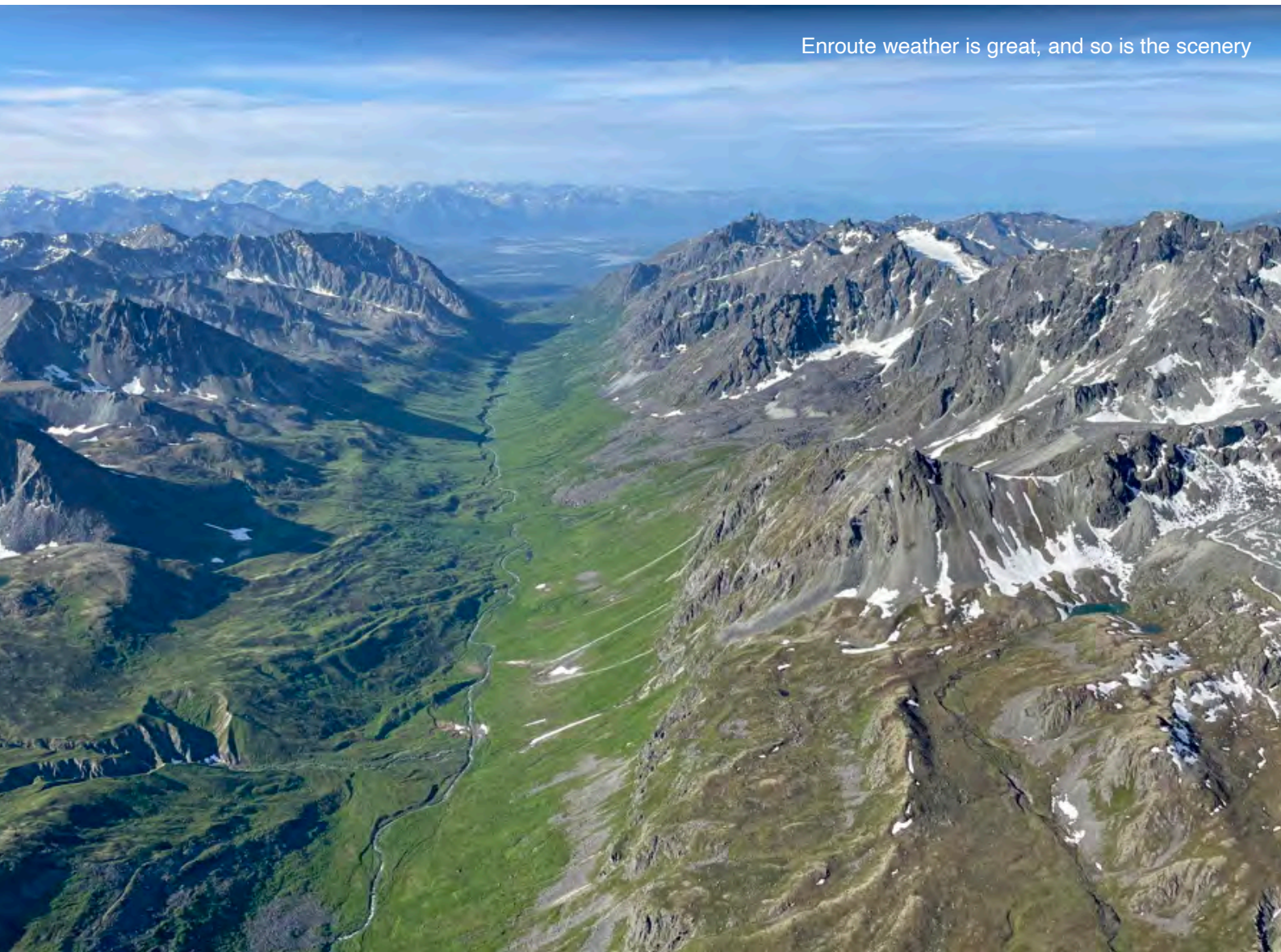
Takeoff from ✈️ **PATK Talkeetna** at 03 Jul 2022 16:38 Z

Landing at ✈️ **CKU Cordova Muni** at 03 Jul 2022 17:53 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 1 hr 15 m (1.3 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 175 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 8,689 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 190 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 140 kt

Enroute weather is great, and so is the scenery



First coastal glaciers and icebergs appear, some of the sights are similar to Greenland, but everything is scaled somewhat smaller...



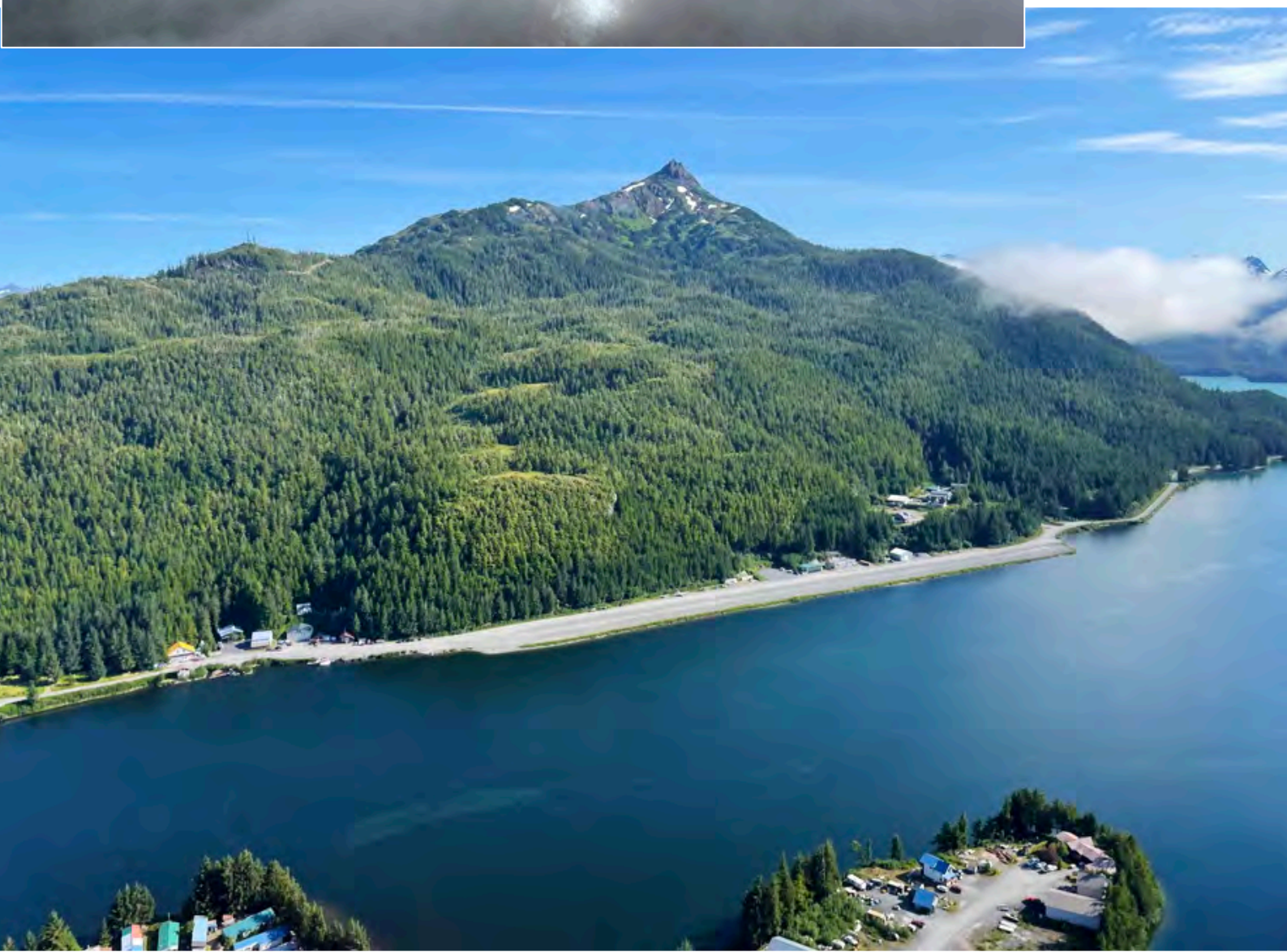




Approaching Cordova, I can see that the harbor is, as usual in the morning, covered by a blanket of fog...



but the gravel bar strip is a little bit further, and next to the lake in the clear...





After landing, the road is to be crossed to park, and yes, airplanes have priority on other traffic 🤪



A stroll to, and then through the city shows no big changes in the last years, salmon fishing still being the main occupation.





Unfortunately I'm unable to locate the B&B where we once stayed at... so I walk back to the strip, meet and chat with the pilot of a refueling twin airplane, and take-off once more, now to follow the Pacific coast, Southbound.



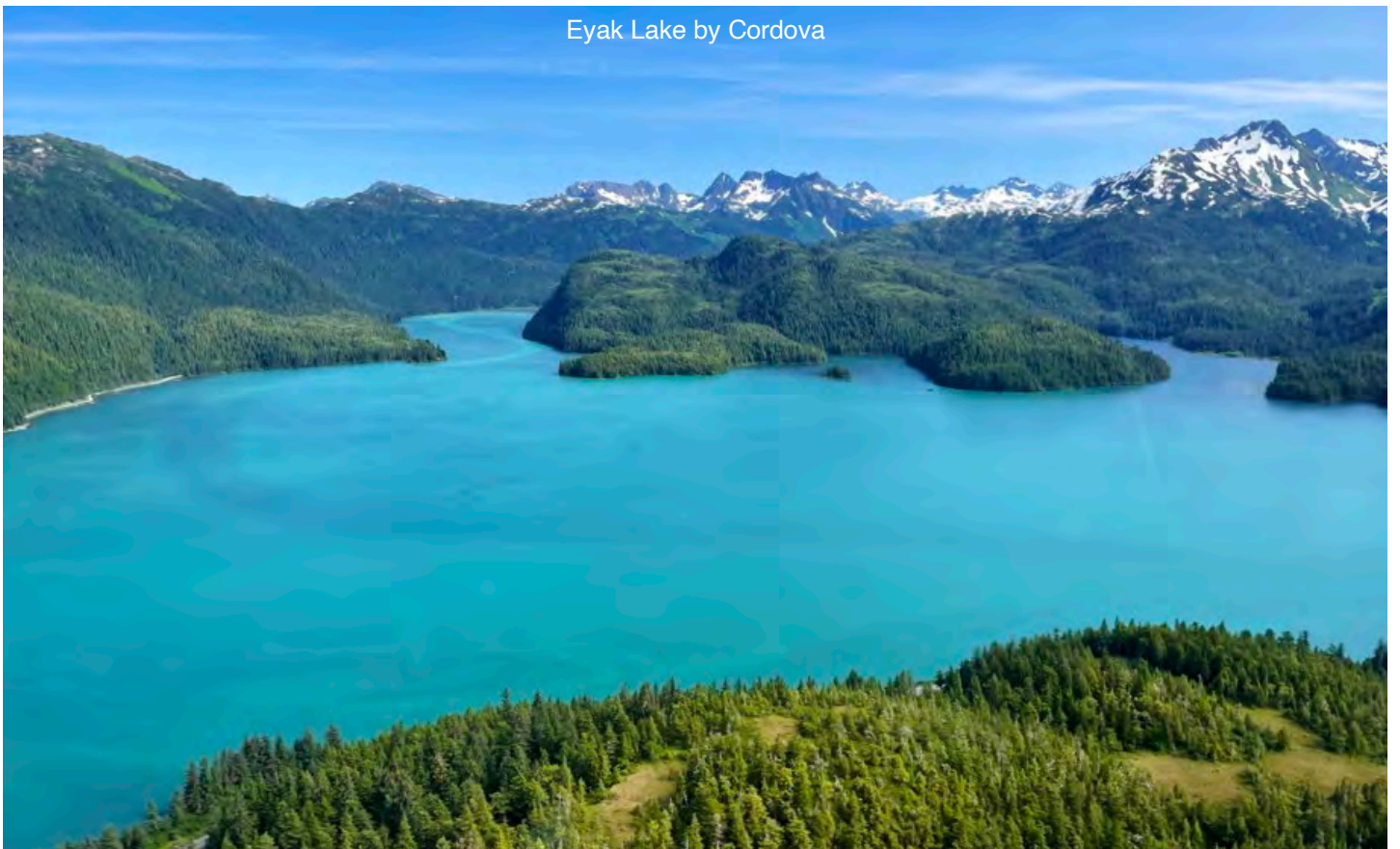
Takeoff from  **CKU Cordova Muni** at 03 Jul 2022 19:14 Z

Landing at  **PAJN Juneau** at 03 Jul 2022 22:12 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 2 hr 58 m (3.0 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 400 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 8,997 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 173 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 134 kt

Eyak Lake by Cordova



I'm now given the full Alaskan kaleidoscope of ever-changing landscape views... luckily the coast is still as intact as I remember it. It hasn't been yet reached by the eager timber companies, and the rest of the industries are discreet...

Majestic landscape, sandy beaches, huge glaciers stretching their tongues into the sea whilst spitting out small icebergs, wild green tundra, hills and mountains, marshland, ocean, you name it...













Abeam Yakutat I hear someone mentioning “*whales*” on the UNICOM frequency I’m monitoring. And this over the very area we spotted some Orca whales too many moons ago...

I descend over the water and start looking, but can only spot some shadows that dive and disappear as I try to get any close. Alas, no shot of a majestic breaching whale today 🐳

20 minutes of “whale watching” or ~~annoying the stupid animals~~ later, I resume my coastal route...

There are some shallow fog formations on the coast over some of the lower parts of the glaciers, giving an eerie feel of déjà vu to the scenery...







One of the good surprises on this leg, is having one more function of my GNX375 GPS navigator/transponder coming alive 😊

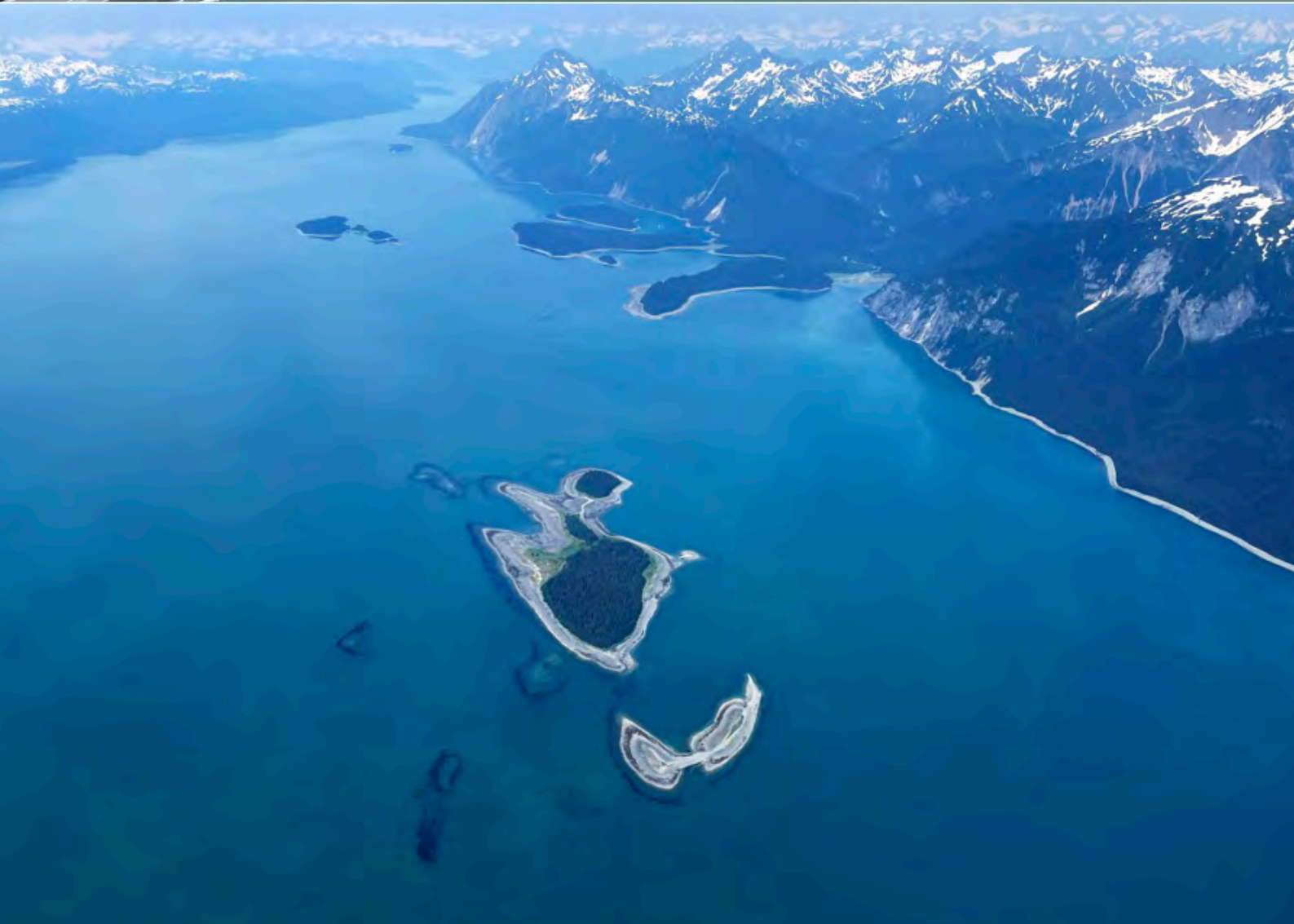
I'm now able to receive subscription-free ADS-B weather link, NEXRAD imagery, METARs, TAFs, winds and temperatures aloft, PIREPs, NOTAMs and more.



Just a pity the system only works in the US... why can't Europeans pick up the good things from the US, the more so in the aviation world? Ok, no politics in this blook...





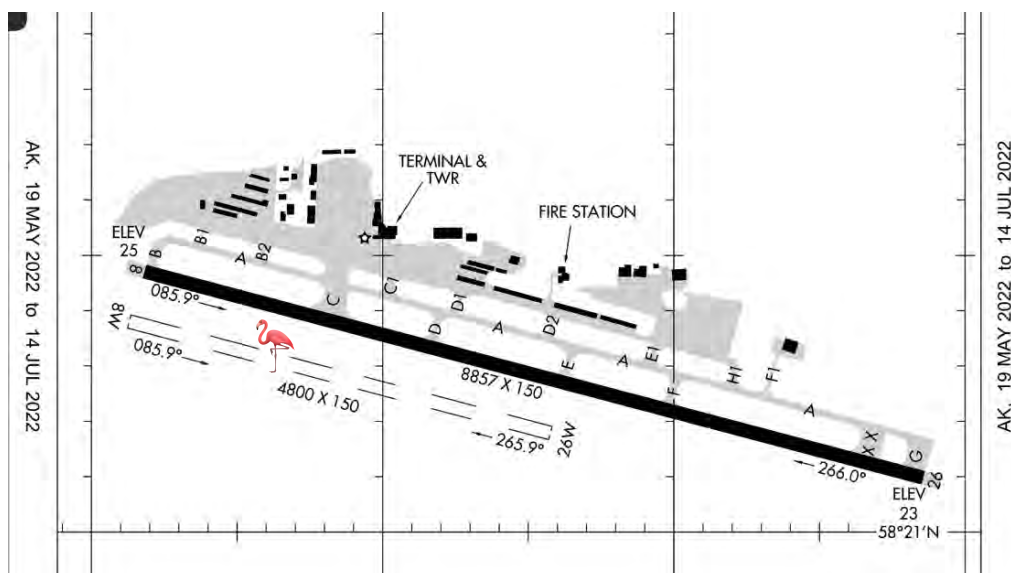




The weather stays good, and the approach into Juneau International is straightforward.



Juneau, is the capital city of Alaska, but the airport still doesn't see a lot of traffic, at least whilst I was there. Most of the traffic was heard, and seen, operating in and out of the parallel adjacent water runway 8W/26W.



There's a good hotel right next to the airport, and since I don't really fancy going into the distant town, decide to spend what remains of the day in the industrial/shopping area in the vicinity... time to buy some socks 🙄



## Day #15

And today the weather shines again. Here...

A quick walk to the airport, I then bid farewell to the FBO office, thanks for all [Aero Services!](#)

I then untie and hop into my trusty little YLL to go and enjoy myself. What a hard life I live 😊

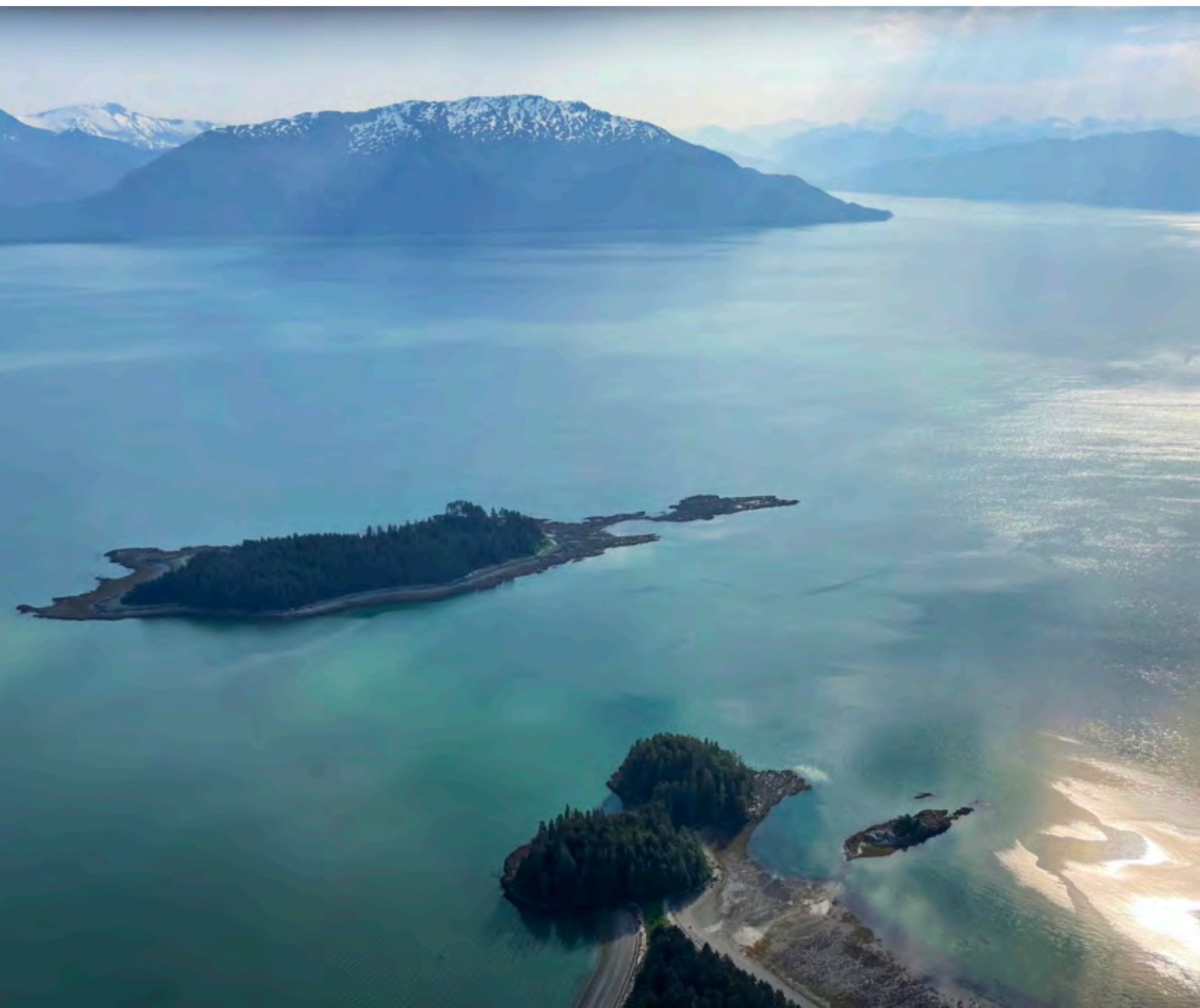
Takeoff from 🛩️ **PAJN Juneau** at 04 Jul 2022 16:42 Z

Landing at 🛩️ **PAKT Ketchikan** at 04 Jul 2022 18:08 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 1 hr 26 m (1.4 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 207 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 4,866 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 168 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 145 kt

Again a beautiful coastline to follow







The first inflight weather report for my destination Ketchikan is not very good, but the forecast is promising better.

I quickly make myself familiar with, and program an RNAV approach into the airport.



Unnecessary but nevertheless good practice, since as soon as I start the approach the low clouds lift, and I'm able to land in good visual conditions.





Long finals at Ketchikan (excuse the reflections, difficult to hold the hood against the curved surface of the windshield)





On the ground, I experience once more the typical facilities, as provided by FBOs in the US...  
Ref Wiki:

*A fixed-base operator (FBO) is an organization granted the right by an airport to operate at the airport and provide aeronautical services such as fueling, hangar, tie-down and parking, aircraft rental, aircraft maintenance, flight instruction, and similar services.*

As in quick (and cheap for European standards) refuel process, free use of Wi-Fi, restrooms, fresh donuts (way too sugary for me, thanks), coffee (sometimes a few hours old, at other times the better FBO will have a real coffee machine), pop-corn machine, pilot lounge with magazines and newspapers, customer oriented assistance, courtesy car, etc.

Some of the FBO I will encounter, such as in Las Vegas and New Orleans are catering for mostly turbine and jet customers, and are therefore quite luxurious. Others, such as here, are of the more basic kind. All the services are provided free, the more so if buying fuel.

It is nevertheless good practice to tip the line employees, especially if extra service such as being driven to one's motel/hotel, is provided.

On some of the places I will visit later, a tie-down, or overnight fee, can be levied.

Basic but more than adequate FBO services here at Ketchikan



It is midday now, and once more, decision time... as in go hotel hunting and overnight, or continue southbound. I decide to pursue as per my original plan: depart Ketchikan, then head southeast into BC Canada, and then rejoin the coast to land at Anacortes.

Why not just follow the coast? As it has been for the last 2 days, the weather around and North of Vancouver island is bad... low clouds and rain which I prefer to avoid if I can. Going inland should bypass most of it.

Another good reason is that I'm not interested in yet another round of CBP wrestling, the route will overfly Canada and therefore be a US – US flight.

One more point, I recall the Canadian BC Pacific coast as being subject to massive logging operations, and not very attractive, but for Vancouver Island itself.



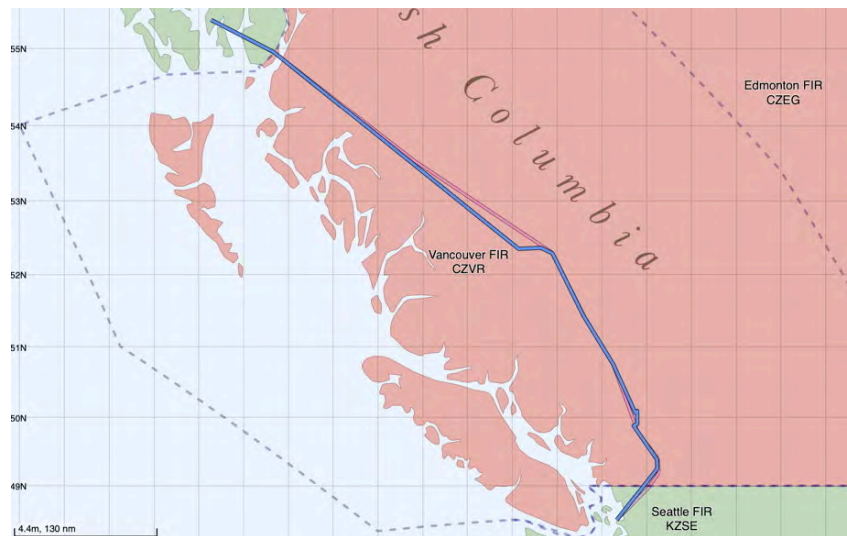
Takeoff from  **PAKT Ketchikan** at 04 Jul 2022 19:08 Z

Landing at  **74S Anacortes** at 04 Jul 2022 23:19 Z

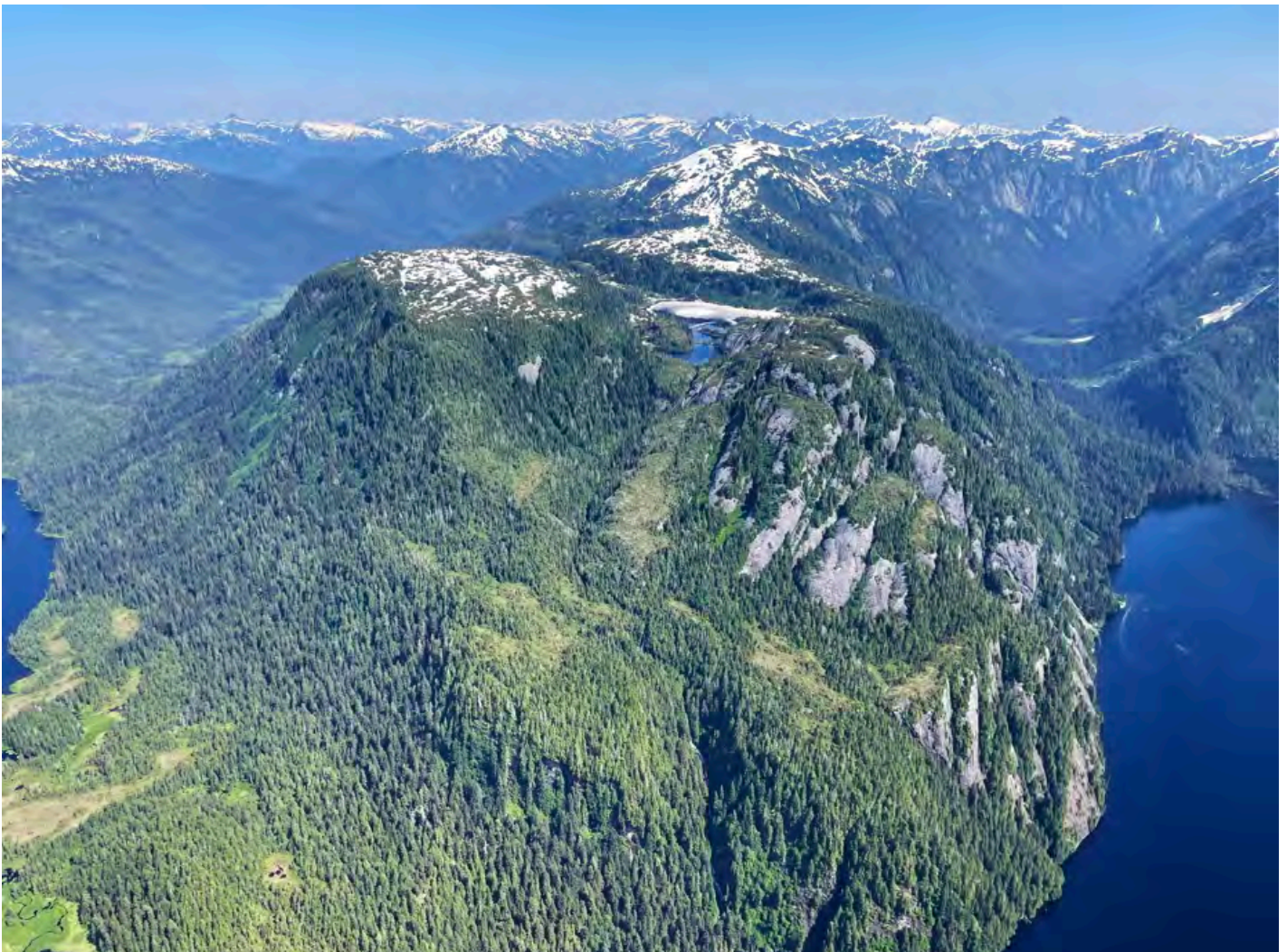
FLIGHT TIME: 4 hr 11 m (4.2 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 616 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 14,931 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 193 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 147 kt

The blue line depicts the path as will be flown on this sector, the magenta one the planned one



Initially the weather holds, better enjoy since this is going to be quite a long flight...







As I'm approaching Tweedsmuir South Provincial Park in BC, towering Cumulus galore force me to head East for a while, and circumnavigate the region of Tatla Lake...





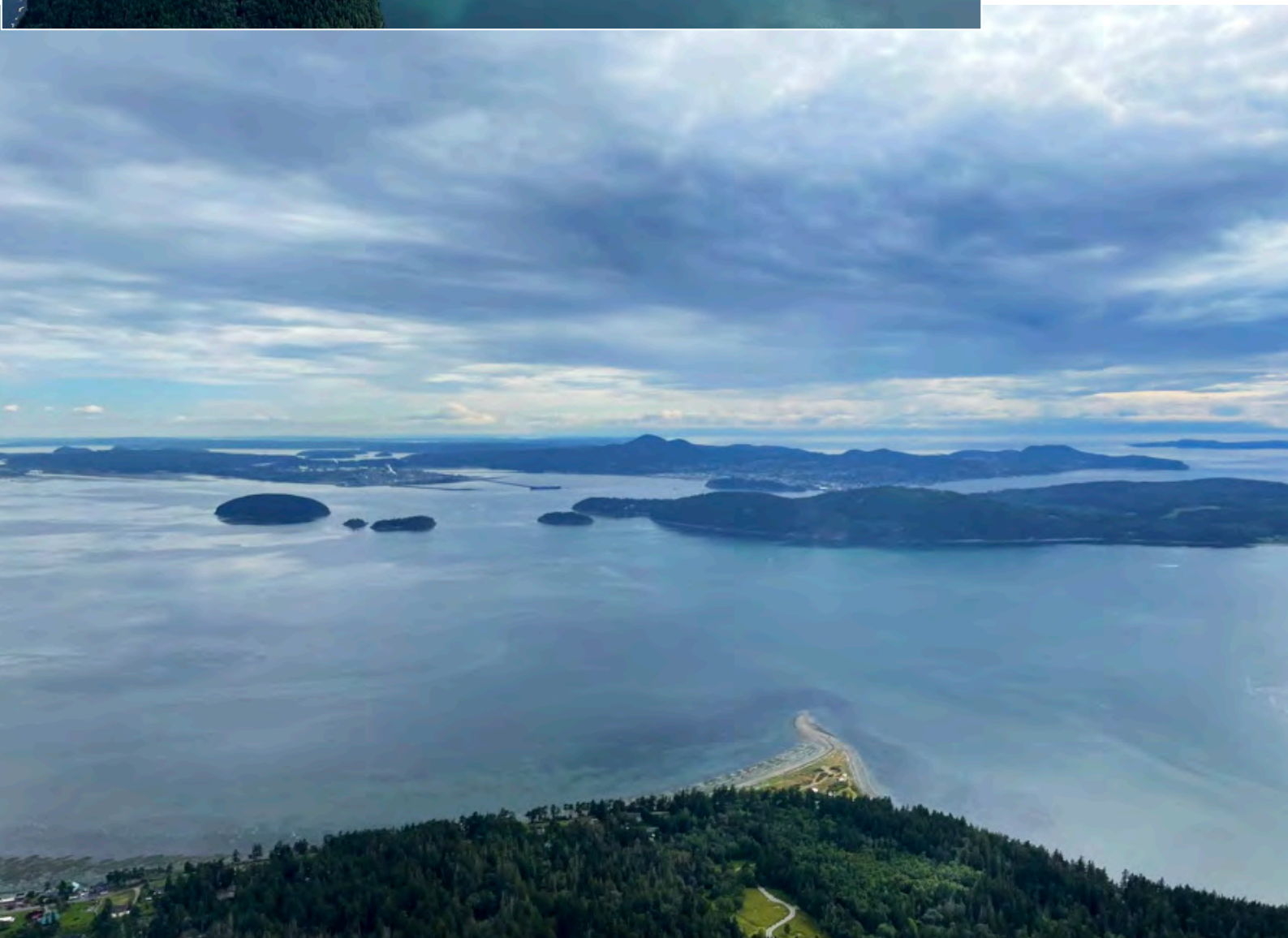




Some slaloming later, I search and find a hole to descend below the clouds in the region of the Mehatl Creek park. Now flying below a broken cloud cover, I'm able to head directly to Harrison Lake, East of Vancouver.



I now enter the magnificent Puget Sound area, North of Seattle. The San Juan Islands are absolute jewels!







Great reception committee at Anacortes: Susan and Ken are waiting for my arrival as if I was a family member, and wave as I exit the runway 🤓

Ken has been Head of Design at Van's Aircraft for many years, later designer of the Vashon Ranger, before setting up his own company [Sky Designs Engineering](#).

I was privileged to meet Ken a couple of years ago, when he came to Grenchen, Switzerland, to give a very interesting lecture about aircraft design to the building advisors of the EAS (Experimental Aviation of Switzerland).

Susan and Ken have set up table with a buffet dinner in their very hangar, and some of their friends join in. I usually just cringe at any demonstration of patriotism, but have to admit that the huge colorful different country flags add a nice touch of warmth to the tall hangar.

What better setting then, than eating and chatting with old and new friends, whilst admiring the resident RV-4, RV-7, and RV-10 located here. My first meal eating healthy food in northern America, well done and thanks guys 👍



Picture taken next morning





## Day #16

Yesterday was July 4th.

So I was going to escape August 1st, the Swiss national day, but unfortunately couldn't avoid this one.

Nevertheless, the fantastic and loud fireworks ~~which babies, nature, domestic animals, and myself love so dearly~~ were seen from a good distance, all whilst sipping some excellent beer on Malcolm's super nice patio overlooking the Rosario Strait.

Malcolm is a retired Navy and FedEx pilot, owner of the nice RV-10 sitting in Ken's hangar, and had invited me for the night, thanks a bunch Malcolm, that was really cool 😎

Now the whole gang helps in untying and preparing YLL, then bid farewell (Malcolm, not in this shot, holds the camera...)



It was too short a stay, but bye-bye and many thanks. I'll meet Susan and Ken again at the Oshkosh AirVenture show later in the month, where they will set up a booth for their products.

Takeoff from  **74S Anacortes** at 05 Jul 2022 16:11 Z

Landing at  **KMMV Mc Minnville Muni** at 05 Jul 2022 17:42 Z

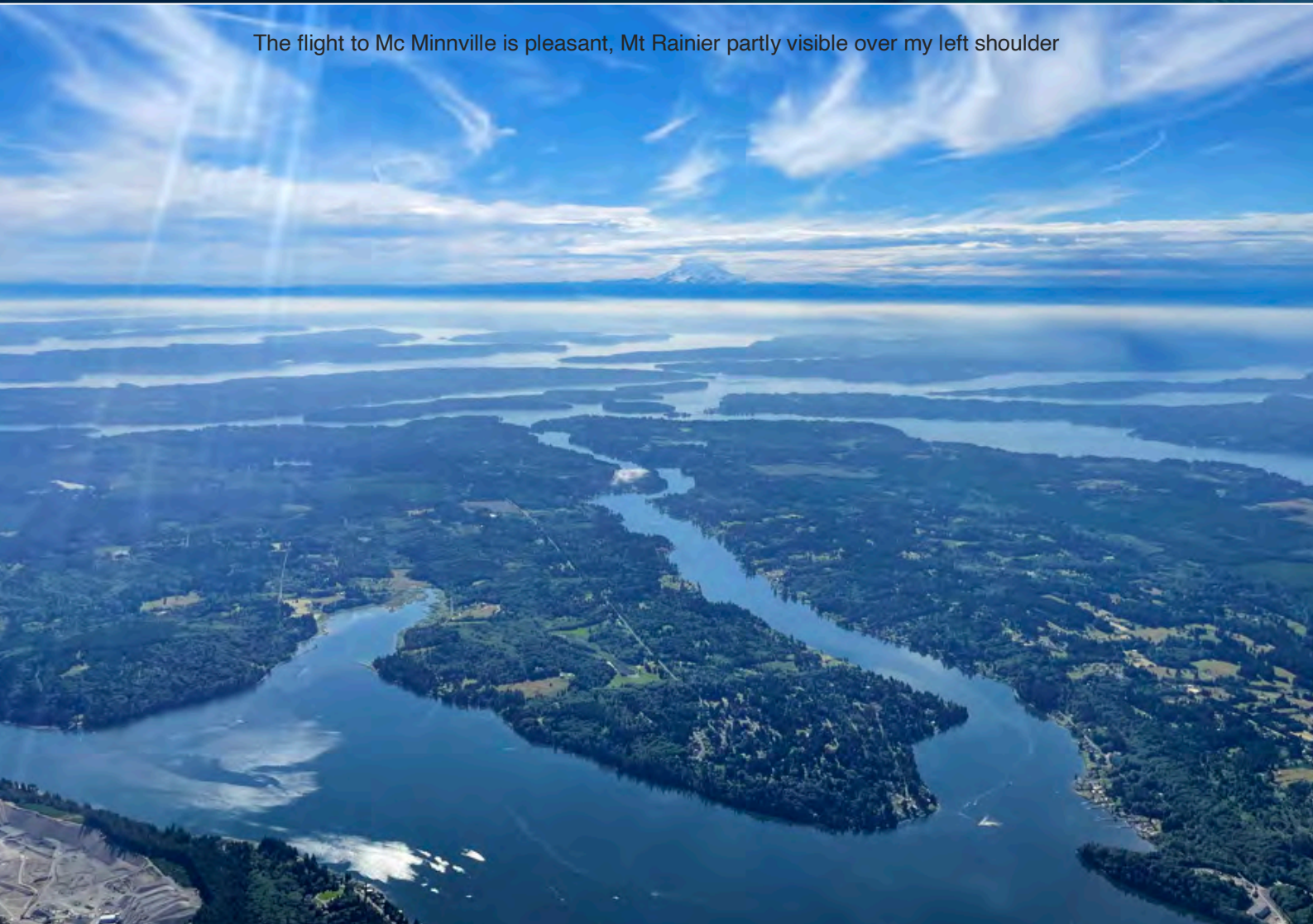
FLIGHT TIME: 1 hr 31 m (1.5 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 217 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 6,486 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 174 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 143 kt





The flight to Mc Minnville is pleasant, Mt Rainier partly visible over my left shoulder





Now you might ask: why are you going to Mc Minnville?

I guess most aviation buffs will know something about Howard Hughes and his Spruce Goose, Wiki excerpt:

The **Hughes H-4 Hercules** (commonly known as the **Spruce Goose**; registration NX37602) is a prototype strategic airlift flying boat designed and built by the Hughes Aircraft Company. Intended as a transatlantic flight transport for use during World War II, it was not completed in time to be used in the war. The aircraft made only one brief flight, on November 2, 1947, and the project never advanced beyond the single example produced.

I fell in love with that beautiful, massive but slender design, whilst reading books as a kid. My first real encounter with the Spruce Goose dates back to 1981, when visiting Long Beach CA, where she was housed inside a dome, next to the Queen Mary. I was in awe 🤩

The Spruce Goose was then acquired by the [Evergreen Aviation & Space Museum](#) and transported in what was to be an epic voyage by barges and trucks, to its present location in 1993.

My next sighting was in 1996, whilst on trip from L.A. to Alaska and back in a Mooney 201. The display hangar had yet to be erected, and we marveled at the disassembled giant sitting in the elements, only protected by some plastic sheeting flapping in the wind and rain of the day. We wondered if it would ever be put together again and survive, or discreetly be scrapped...

Approaching my destination ceilings drop somewhat, and light drizzle falls on the area whilst I proceed to land





Today's museum



Getting to the museum after having parked proves slightly challenging, as a major 4 lane highway has to be crossed. Chances of survival will increase for quick runners.

And so it is very satisfying seeing the pristine hangar housing the present museum, with many different aircraft and artifacts on display (there's even an RV-6...), and "my" Spruce Goose 🙌

What a sight! I'm still in awe 🤩





When I took the trip to Alaska mentioned somewhere above, we stopped at Portland OR, and drove to North Plains, where the [Van's Aircraft Inc.](#) factory was located. Factory was kind of a big word for it, as the company operated out of Van's garage next to his farm strip.

A few years later the company has expanded by some, with some 11'128 different RV models having been built and taken to the air as I write these lines... now I'm eager to see for myself what the modern Van's Aircraft Inc. looks like.

Takeoff from  **KMMV Mc Minnville Muni** at 05 Jul 2022 20:36 Z

Landing at  **KUAO Aurora State** at 05 Jul 2022 20:46 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 10 min (0.2 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 21 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 1,624 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 157 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 122 kt

After landing at Aurora I taxi to Van's and park in front (as seen from the airside side) of their big factory/hangar. The whole place is rather busy... reception has, despite me having sent them an email announcing my arrival and request for a factory tour a week ago, barely time to tell me that entry through the rear of the factory wasn't supposed to happen, and customers rather to use the front door... guess not that many are coming by air then?

I still manage to get hold of the parcel from [ACS](#), addressed in my name to Van's, containing the replacement engine driven fuel pump (though I'm still pondering about ACS's next day delivery option, charged \$108.21, and taking a week to deliver... for a pump value of \$376.00).



And no, I cannot park next to Van's, but better check with the FBO for overnight tie-down... as my hopes to have access to Van's maintenance hangar for the replacement of the pump definitely evaporate, I'm happy and excited to get a 10am factory tour booking for tomorrow.

On another positive note, the FBO is first class, and after some sweet talking the receptionist, one of the line guys is driving me to the Motel 6 in the next city Canby. Thanks [Atlantic Aviation](#).



## Day #17

**No flying day** (yep, another “rest day” 🤔)

My visit to the Spruce Goose yesterday killed one of those POIs. Another one is on the list for today: the Van’s factory tour.

Atlantic Aviation’s “taxi”, aka chauffeur driven courtesy car, is right on time, and lets me out to enter through the correct side of Van’s Aircraft facilities this time...



There I meet up with Sterling. Again I’m lucky, I’m the only participant.

And Sterling is a cool guy. I can ask all the questions I had pending for some time, and a few more. Only the ones pertaining to the new RV-15, of which the prototype sits in some obscure place ~~nobody~~ ~~knows about~~, are either not answered or evaded 🤔



Shelves of parts and some of the impressive machinery











One of the punching machine I watch at work... Fascinating in precision and speed!



And a set of punching dies. The change of dies to make the holes or cut sheet to size is entirely automatic, as most of you would have guessed. Impressive stuff for me...

The RV-12 factory







An almost ready to be shipped RV-x kit... yours maybe?

After that very interesting visit I'm taken back to the motel in Canby, again by the FBO driver, many thanks!

I then take a long walk and discover a rather uninteresting city, following which I spend some time for light shopping, reading and flight planning. This will kill the rest of the afternoon rather quickly.

I'm happy and relieved that my wife Tina has returned home to Switzerland, and is on the way to recovery 🍌

On the other hand, the whole group she was staying with whilst in Iceland also got infected...

News of the day...

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, U.S. NEWS Wednesday, July 6, 2022 | A3

## Omicron BA.5 Now Dominant Strain in U.S.

By JON KAMP

17% of cases, the CDC estimates.

The highly contagious Omicron BA.5 subvariant has taken over as the dominant version of the virus causing new Covid-19 cases in the U.S., the latest federal data show.

BA.5 represented nearly 54% of U.S. cases in the week ended July 2, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated Tuesday. It surpassed BA.2.12.1, the version of Omicron partly responsible for a persistent springtime surge in cases, which is now estimated to represent closer to one in four cases.

Another version known as BA.4, which is closely related to BA.5, and also ramped up recently, represents nearly

Virus experts believe BA.5 is particularly adept at evading immune protections built up from prior infections and vaccines, giving it an advantage as it takes over as the major subvariant. This adds to the possibility that people will contract Covid-19 repeatedly while facing the risk of developing complications such as long-running and sometimes debilitating symptoms.

The U.S. is immersed in a prolonged case surge that began this spring, fueled by other versions of Omicron, and appears to have at least plateaued at a high level. At the same time, hospitalizations and deaths have re-

maind at more muted levels as built-up immune protections from vaccines and prior infections help tamp down on more severe cases, even as the virus continues to easily spread.

The U.S. seven-day moving average for new Covid-19 cases has mostly hovered slightly above 100,000 a day since May, according to CDC data through last week, before the July Fourth holiday temporarily slowed reporting. These cases likely represent a

fraction of actual infections due to at-home testing that states generally don't track, epidemiologists say.

Public-health experts believe BA.5 will at least extend this trend of elevated cases, which come at a time when many people have abandoned other mitigation measures such as wearing masks in public places while also returning to more normal patterns of travel and social gatherings.

Hospitalizations remain far below levels seen in prior

peaks, but there are signs of upward pressure, the latest federal data show. Such numbers can reflect the level of virus in the community, as a portion of Covid-19 hospitalization data reflects patients who needed care for other reasons, but, tested positive during screening.

The seven-day moving average for confirmed, prior-day hospital admissions recently surpassed 5,000 a day for the first time since late February, data from the Department of

Health and Human Services show. The U.S. in early April was averaging less than 1,500 new admissions a day.

Meantime, the U.S. recently averaged slightly more than 300 deaths a day. A year ago the average dipped to slightly above 200 a day, reflecting a lull in cases as vaccinations rose and a respite before the Delta and then Omicron variants took hold.

◆ Covid-19 reinfections pose some new medical risks. A10

Estimates of U.S. Covid-19 variant proportions

COVID-19 TESTING

A prolonged surge in U.S. Covid-19 cases began in the spring, but hospitalizations and deaths have stayed at more muted levels.

Americans Begin to Draw Down Pandemic-Era Savings

By RACHEL LOUISE ENSIGN

The \$2.7 trillion question: When will Americans' pandemic savings run out?

pletely squander our savings," she said.

into his investments. Mr. Palmer is also con-


On a different subject, the question will remain open as to why, whenever vacationing in the US, I mostly do choose motels which are close to those day and night honking freight trains... 🤔

So there's one thing you quickly learn if you're a light sleeper on the move: a provision of one's favorite ear plugs is The compulsory toiletries accessory...



## Day #18

Once more my “taxi” picks me up, the receptionist herself being the driver today 🌹  
Again, thanks for the super service [Atlantic Aviation](#) 🙌

Takeoff from  **KUAO Aurora State** at 07 Jul 2022 16:19 Z

Landing at  **3U2 Johnson Creek** at 07 Jul 2022 18:23 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 2 hr 4 m (2.1 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 317 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 9,960 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 186 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 154 kt



Aurora State after yet another successful take-off

I now leave the Atlantic coast behind as I fly due East. Mt Hood is now the peak poking thru the clouds on my left...





During the flight the landscape mutates into canyon land, then agricultural fields, and then pine covered mountains







Better known as Johnson Creek, 3U2 is probably Idaho's premier backcountry airstrip destination. And another POI of mine, thanks to its good reputation and the reports I read on the net and in magazines.

All gained for a number of good reasons:

- ✓ Its accessibility, as having a long and smooth grass runway, permitting retractable and other fragile type of landing (and take-off) gear aircraft operation. A recommended SOP, which I discovered later (...), is published under [Johnson Creek guide](#).
- ✓ Then there is the scenery. Set amidst mountains covered by pine trees and small lakes, offering countless outdoor activities, such as hiking, bike riding, fishing, etc.
- ✓ Its facilities. Everything one could need is provided on site, from Wi-Fi to fresh coffee in the morning. From clean showers with warm water to courtesy car and bicycles, USB charging stations, and more... not really luxurious, but there is everything.
- ✓ It's caretakers. Deborah and Jim, ex farmers. They have been at Johnson Creek for what I think to remember is 4 years by now. Firm but friendly, they provide a fantastic service. Their chores include keeping the place in a neat and clean condition, taking care of the runway by moving and setting up the sprinkler system used almost every day to keep the runway in its pristine condition, and much more. Jim has more than one good story up his sleeve, few of which I could ever tire of hearing. He also keeps the RV-8 he built on the field, and was happy for YLL to park next to. And he even liked my harp playing 🎵
- ✓ The price. Though a donation box is set up, the stay is free. No wonder some folks stay here for weeks...



FltPlan Go remarks plate

FltPlan.com

Airports

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Tools

ScratchPad

K3U2

Wind Calc.

K3U2: JOHNSON CREEK

YELLOW PINE, ID

N44°54.7' W115°29.1'

Nearby Airports

Open A/FD

AOE.....No

Runway.....3400'

CTAF.....122.9

Elevation.....4960

Variation.....-17.0

Fuel.....

FBOs

Information

Frequencies

Runways

Procedures

Weather

MOS

NOTAMs

Fuel

Remarks

Remarks

Traffic Pattern: 17 - Left Traffic / 35 - Left Traffic

ADDNL 250 FT OF LENGTH AVBL FOR TKOF ON RY 35 END.

NO WINTER MAINTENANCE.

NUMEROUS +60' TREES ADJACENT TO EACH SIDE OF RY.

BE ALERT FOR SPRINKLERS ON RY.

RECOMMEND LAND RWY 17; TKOF RWY 35 WHEN WIND CONDITIONS ALLOW.

BIG GAME ANIMALS ON & INVOF AIRPORT.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD BE GIVEN TO DENSITY ALTITUDE, TURBULENCE, AND MOUNTAIN FLYING PROFICIENCY.

FOR CD CTC SALT LAKE ARTCC AT 801-320-2568.

TRRN CTN - 1500 FT RDG AT 4000 FT, 400 FT R (N OF RWY 17).

CARETAKER IN ATTENDANCE DURG SUMMER MONTHS.

On finals for 3U2





After my landing, Deborah and Jim walk over to meet and welcome me.

They also give me a quick intro to the facilities. Jim recommends the Warm Springs as a short afternoon hike.

I first set up camp and meet some of the friendly residents. A total of about 8 aircraft are present, but Jim later tells me he's seen up to 142 on the field... The situation as it is now suits me perfectly, thanks.



40 minutes hiking later, and I'm savoring the warm sulfur smelling water in a conveniently placed tub. Some conveniently placed hoses keeping it filled. And luckily a nice cool beer is to be had 🍺

Down at the campground that is 🤔

Early evening, Deborah, Jim, and most of the campers reunite around the central shed, sharing hangar flying and other stories, food and drinks.

As night falls, one of the pilot brings a guitar, I pull out one of my harps (blues harp = harmonica = 10 holer = diatonic) and we improvise a couple of blues tunes... with more or less success...



## Day #19

**No flying day** (just a “rest day” 😊)

Whilst some pilots fly out to nearby strips for breakfast, I start the hike to Riordan Lake. Initially following a mountain road track, the path then takes one to the lake through very nice forests, meadows, and some swampy grounds (with bog factors 3-9).





No soul is seen, but for a couple of deers, during the entire hike... yeepee, the mountain is all mine 🥳



The lake being ever so inviting, I can't resist but take a dip it's the cold waters.



Back at the camp, most of the people present reunite once more around the BBQ, and we swap flying and non-flying stories around the campfire whilst listening to music, and watch the night moving in. Another relaxed evening here, amongst cool and same minded people 👍



## Day #20

I've scheduled my take-off for 7am. Deep in the valley we still sit in the dark, but it is daylight.

I was able to use one of the on-site cabin for the night, equipped with a foldable wooden bunk. Which in return means no wet camping gear to stow away. Mostly due to its elevation, Johnson Creek is subject to large differences in temperatures between day and night. I dry the canopy from the heavy dew, start the engine, and taxi to the run-up position.

Takeoff from  **3U2 Johnson Creek** at 09 Jul 2022 14:03 Z

Landing at  **KONO Ontario Muni** at 09 Jul 2022 14:43 Z

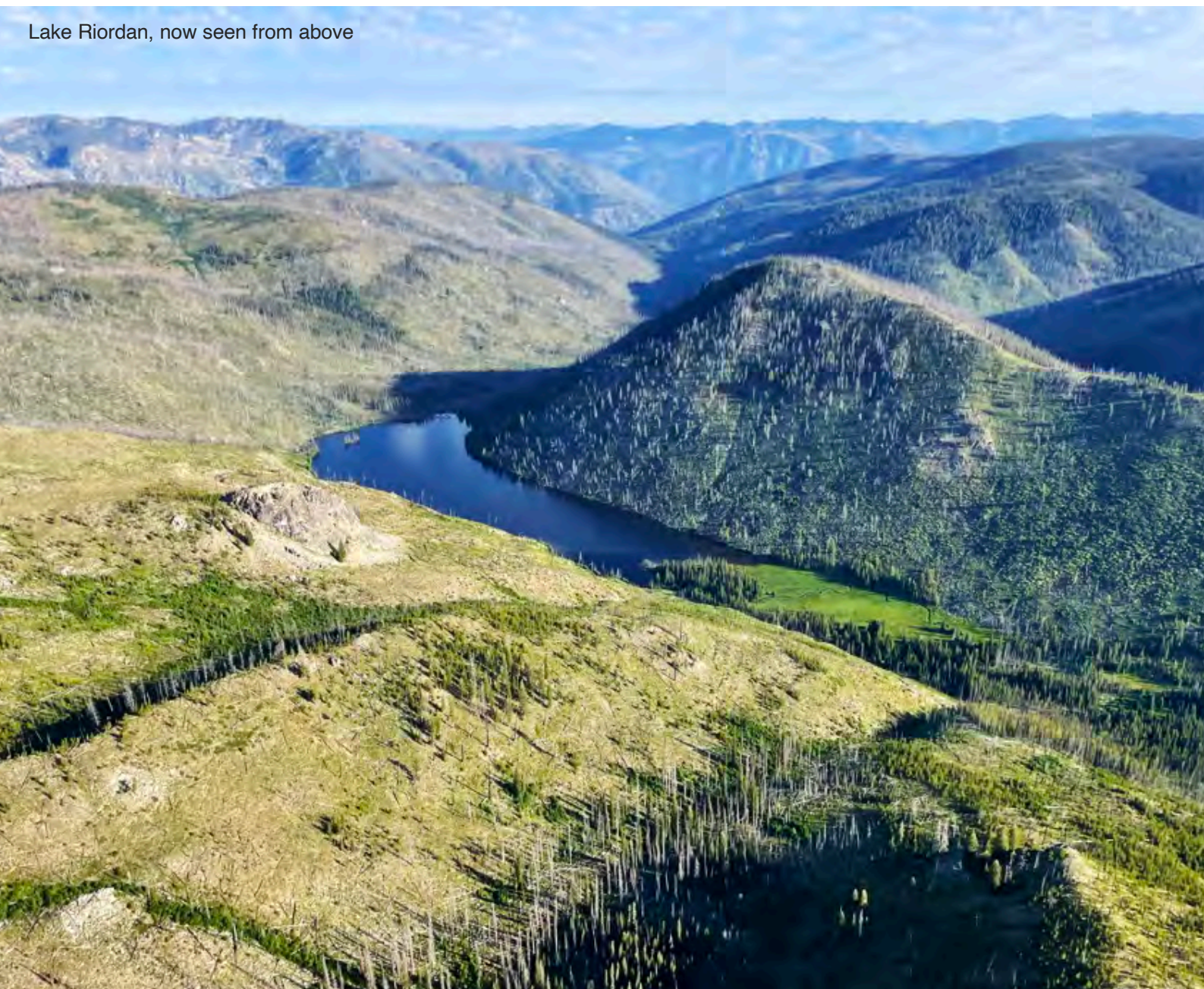
FLIGHT TIME: 40 min (0.7 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 99 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 9,019 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 193 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 147 kt

The take-off is performed with a mostly fogged up canopy (inside), certainly not the most clever decision made during The Tour...

Leaving Johnson Creek behind me, I take a southwesterly heading. Bye-bye Deborah and Jim, thanks for everything, I had a great stay. Bye-bye all the other pilots and families, some of you I will meet again at AirVenture in a fortnight. I would have liked to say longer, but still have a bunch of POIs to cover 😊

Lake Riordan, now seen from above









Ontario Muni is just a refueling stop...

Land, taxi to the pump, pay at the terminal using any kind of current plastic card, refuel, and good to go... 99% of all the fields where fuel is available in the US have this system, with the same card terminal. No landing fee is due. No flight notification to be filed.

One can turnaround in a matter of minutes... why in-hell is everything sooo complicated in Europe I ask?

Ok, no politics, nor sex, nor religion in this blook, understood 🙄

Not sure I'd fancy driving around in Ontario's courtesy car though...



Takeoff from  **KONO Ontario Muni** at 09 Jul 2022 15:08 Z

Landing at  **E85 Denio Junction** at 09 Jul 2022 16:18 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 1 hr 10 m (1.2 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 170 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 9,067 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 180 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 146 kt

After take-off from Ontario, the few green fields that were left are soon taken over by vast expanses of desert, and the first dried out lake beds become visible on the horizon.

My next POI is to land on one of them, close to Alvord Lake, listed as a backcountry airstrip. The coordinates I picked up somewhere on the net and entered in my navigation database are unfortunately wrong by about 30 miles (...). Which has me circle some meaningless cattle fields nowhere fitting my expectations. And which also puts me on the wrong side of a mountain range, hiding the Alvord desert itself. I'm well past it when I finally spot the dried out lake, but then decide to push on.

Oh well...

Let's continue and land at Delio Junction, not a POI as such, but a place that caught my eye during the planning phase last night, not really sure as to why...







approaching Delio Junction



Delio Junction radiates an atmosphere of wildness.

Wildness thanks to its location in the middle of the desert, the roughness and dust of the runway and its taxiway, motorcycle gangs riding through, a small motel/ex fuel-station one can park next to. Or in my case, taxi right next to 😎





The Coffee in the café is free, and yes, they have vacancy in the motel... but once done I taxi out trying to avoid the bulk of the bigger stones, and take-off trailing a cloud of dust behind me, then turn left to a southeasterly heading.

That was the first of a few wild places I'm eager to see and get a feel of 🧐

Takeoff from ✈️ **E85 Denio Junction** at 09 Jul 2022 16:46 Z

Landing at ✈️ **KENV Wendover** at 09 Jul 2022 18:30 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 1 hr 44 m (1.7 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 263 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 12,894 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 208 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 152 kt

I now fly into and over the vast desertic regions which I really affectionate. Infinite empty spaces, ridges, salt lakes, endless dry plains, all stretching to the horizon. Witnessing almost empty space, something which has been banned for good from Europe, many years ago.



Ever changing perspective over the desert... a sudden gloomy mood has me wonder if the whole planet will end up looking like this in a few years from now...

Some of the land I overfly displays strange lines, roads leading to nowhere, weird patterns, even here the landscape is being manipulated, military or underground exploiting cattle fencing in this case ▼











As I'm now approaching the city of Wendover, I can now spot the famous Bonneville Salt Flats, one of tomorrow's POIs 🕶️...

[Utah.com](https://utah.com) short descriptive:

## Bonneville Salt Flats

**Imagine a place so flat you seem to see the curvature of the planet, so barren not even the simplest life forms can exist.**

Imagine the passing thunder of strange vehicles hurtling by on a vast dazzling white plain. This is not an alien world far from earth; it is Utah's famous Bonneville Salt Flats.

West Wendover city in the foreground, the Bonneville Salt Flats behind on the left



Though the temperature reads 34°C, it won't feel too bad thanks to the low dew point...





The legendary Bonneville Salt Flats



Historic Wendover Airfield...







Following another good walk to the motel, I now have time to collect all the quarters needed for the washing machine and the dryer, and then make some laundry.

Windswept and amidst the hot desert, the town has, but for a couple of casinos, WW2 and racing history, little to offer, but that taste of wildness.

The Mexican restaurant opposite the main road has good food, but the waitress shows signs of a cold or worse... and a I won't days.

feel on my top for the next few





## Day #21

Takeoff from  **KENV Wendover** at 10 Jul 2022 12:25 Z

Landing at **Unknown** at 10 Jul 2022 12:33 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 8 min (0.1 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 16 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 5,659 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 155 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 130 kt

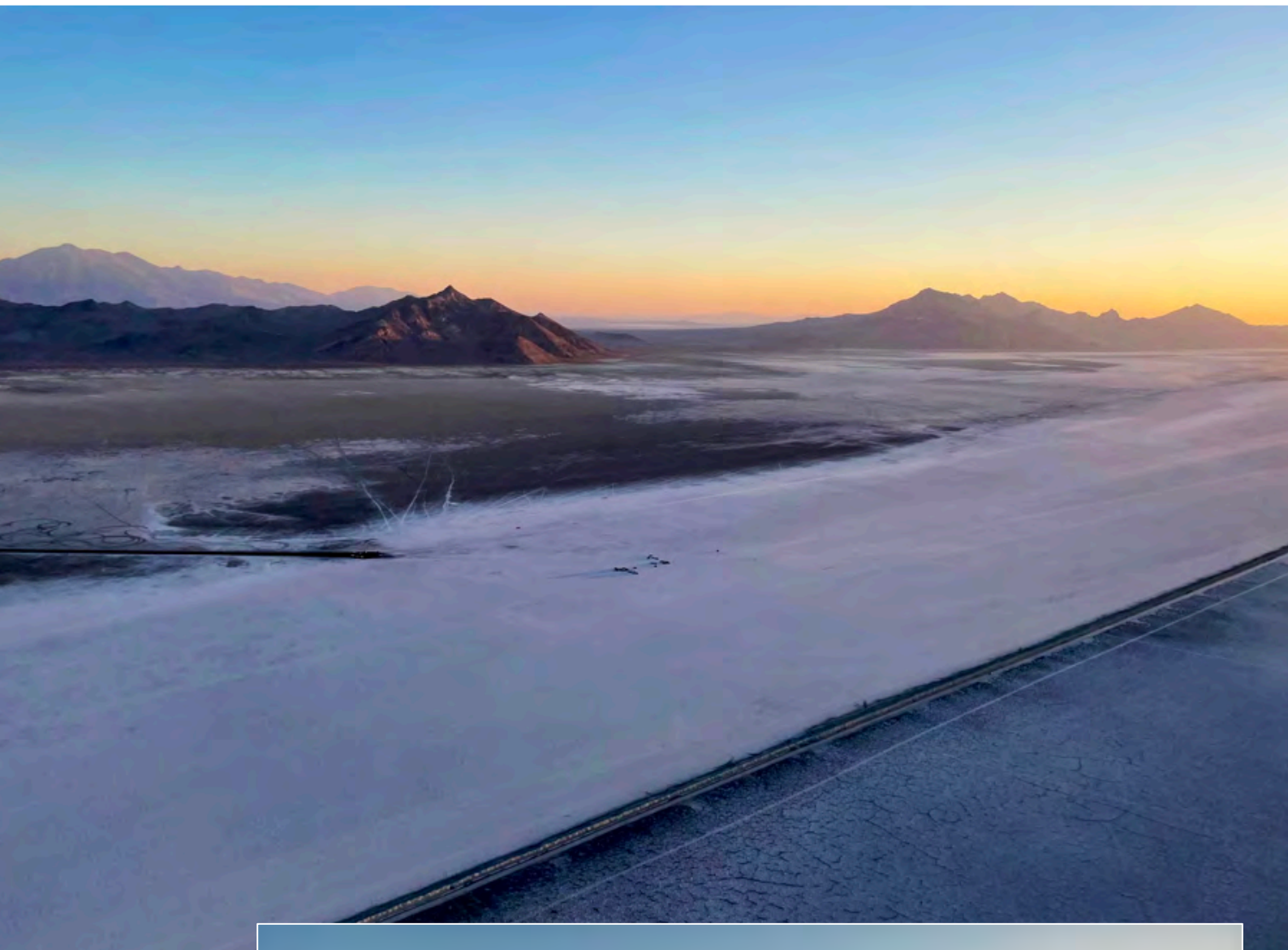
Another early rise... in order to reach the Bonneville Salt Flats during sunrise. Today, timing is of essence.



The flight to the Salt Flats is short... in order not to disturb the USFRA Test & Tune days, I select the eastern part to let down, off the main racing track. The upper crust of the salt is relatively soft and humid, and will adhere to shoes and aircraft parts, as was expected.

I just hit the right moment, and as the sun rises above the horizon, hop out of YLL to take a couple of pictures 📷











Takeoff from **Unknown** at 10 Jul 2022 12:41 Z

Landing at  **L06 Furnace Creek** at 10 Jul 2022 15:11 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 2 hr 30 m (2.5 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 369 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 11,948 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 191 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 147 kt

The atmosphere is fantastic, but once the shots have been taken, I loose no time, jump aboard, fire her up and take off.

The sun will now rapidly do its thing, and I want to avoid the worst of the heat on my next POI...

A last glance at Wendover, as I turn southwest



Again, the vast empty spaces grace my eyes and soul. The world is so pure devoid of human presence... or is this the way the Planet will look like after the Big Fireworks?













Death Valley National park fortunately unchanged since my last visit. As desolate and hot as ever





The runway is reported as in bad condition... luckily, not a real problem for the brave YLL.



It is 10:05h when I land at Furnace Creek, but the temperature is already going through 40°C...



Lucky for me, the only shadow, now in front of the hangar, is available 🙄

Brewing coffee on my portable stove whilst cleaning the salt off the flaps and tail surfaces, I take care of moving reeeal slooow, lest I start perspiring despite the low humidity.

No one is around, no wind, no sound, no nothing but sand, rocks, the airfield... and the oppressing heat.

No one? A Canis latrans, aka coyote, magically appears some 200 meters away. Unmistakably wild. Probably surviving by scavenging human trash off the oasis nearby. Trying to avoid being shot by the same humans just for fun... when I move ever so slightly to get my camera, it trots away and disappears in nearby bushes.

Time to leave...



The heat takes its toll as the density altitude reads 2'600ft... despite being on the lowest field of the US at -210ft

Takeoff from  **L06 Furnace Creek** at 10 Jul 2022 16:28 Z

Landing at  **KVGT North Las Vegas** at 10 Jul 2022 17:05 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 37 min (0.6 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 91 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 11,585 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 208 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 147 kt



A long last look down Death Valley, then meet extra-terrestrial landscapes all the way to Las Vegas





North Las Vegas arrivals is quite busy. I'm still 15NM to the West, ATC: *"RV HBYLL make a 360 to the left, you're 100 knots faster than preceding"*. I comply.

The very reason I chose North Las Vegas airport instead of the now renamed Harry Reid International, formerly known as McCarran International, was to avoid too much traffic 🤔

Las Vegas skyline in the distance, the North Las Vegas airport is in the upper left



Land, embarrass myself trying to find my way to the pump, refuel, park, tie-down, the OAT here is only 34°C. It sure feels cool after being in the Furnace...

Walk to the luxurious FBO, wait 1/2 hour for taxi to arrive, check-in at one of the oldest casinos, the Golden Nugget. I'm lucky to get a room high up with a super view on downtown Vegas 😎

After a stroll through the neighborhood, I board one of the regular line bus heading South through Las Vegas, along The Strip. At the terminal station another bus takes me back. Sure is a good way to cheaply visit a big city 👍

Since it isn't my first visit to Vegas, I just spend a couple of hours in what's now labeled the Fremont Street Experience before hitting the sack...

Yep, Vegas sure is as crazy as it's ever been.







## Day #22

Up very early today, and night just about lifts its veil when I'm dropped off at the little North Las Vegas airport terminal.



“hey dude, the tower ain’t open yet” is the reply I get after having called twice on the frequency 🙄

The sun is still low below the horizon, but I’m already late... and since ATC is still asleep, I will now, in order to avoid multiple MOAs (Military Operations Area), depart due West iso East, and then North-West-South circumnavigate the international airport before finally head East...

Ok, hope everybody is confused now 😊

Takeoff from  **KVGT North Las Vegas** at 11 Jul 2022 12:55 Z

Landing at  **1G4 Grand Canyon West** at 11 Jul 2022 13:44 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 49 min (0.8 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 117 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 6,488 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 180 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 144 kt





Hoover Dam is quickly reached







And approaching the Grand Canyon





Access to the inside of the Canyon itself has been blocked many years ago for different reasons, and one has to stay outside the GCN SFRA (Grand Canyon Special Flight Rules Area), but for a few corridors high up. Still, a sneak inside is possible...

The initial plan was to land at Grand Canyon West, then stretch my legs on a “quick” hike to the brim, yawn at the abyss, before continuing.

Following a spectacular approach, I’m now on the ground at Grand Canyon West, and there is no soul in sight.



There are high fences around the perimeter, with a couple of doors. Like on most US airports, a code is needed in order to return to one’s airplane. This code is to be found either airside next to the door's latch, or it will be given by the FBO, or found in the remarks of a briefing sheet... nothing of the sort here.

I exit and walk to a security post straddling the road leading to the brim. The guard tells me that the park only opens at 9am, which means in about 2 hours... he’s then kind enough to enquire about the code so I can return to my impatient steed. Alas sans Grand Canyon peek in the... canyon.

Takeoff from  <b>1G4 Grand Canyon West</b> at 11 Jul 2022 14:18 Z
Landing at  <b>KSEZ Sedona</b> at 11 Jul 2022 15:30 Z
FLIGHT TIME: 1 hr 12 m (1.2 hours)
DISTANCE FLOWN: 188 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 9,690 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 192 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 157 kt



The tourist trap I'm now happy to have missed



After take-off I pick-up an easterly heading, flying as close to the forbidden zone as possible...







Transit overhead of the Grand Canyon National Park airport





Sedona's weather, looks great!



The approach into Sedona's "aircraft carrier" airport is as stunning as ever...



As I approach Sedona, there is some radio exchange between helicopters engaged into firefighting ops South of the airport.

I land and park. A friendly welcome is given by [Red Rock Aviation](#), thanks, and then I take the short walk to the restaurant.

And yes, the blueberry pancakes breakfast is, as usual, delicious! Thanks for asking 😊



Yes, the beginning of this block mentions no food pictures, but there's no rule without exception(s)...

Ok-ok, I'll keep it small 🤔



After take-off I can't help it, but spend some time slaloming between the red colored buttes, terrific landscape, premise of more sights to come?

Takeoff from  **KSEZ Sedona** at 11 Jul 2022 17:10 Z

Landing at  **KPGA Page Muni** at 11 Jul 2022 19:10 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 2 hr 0 m (2.0 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 288 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 10,165 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 196 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 144 kt

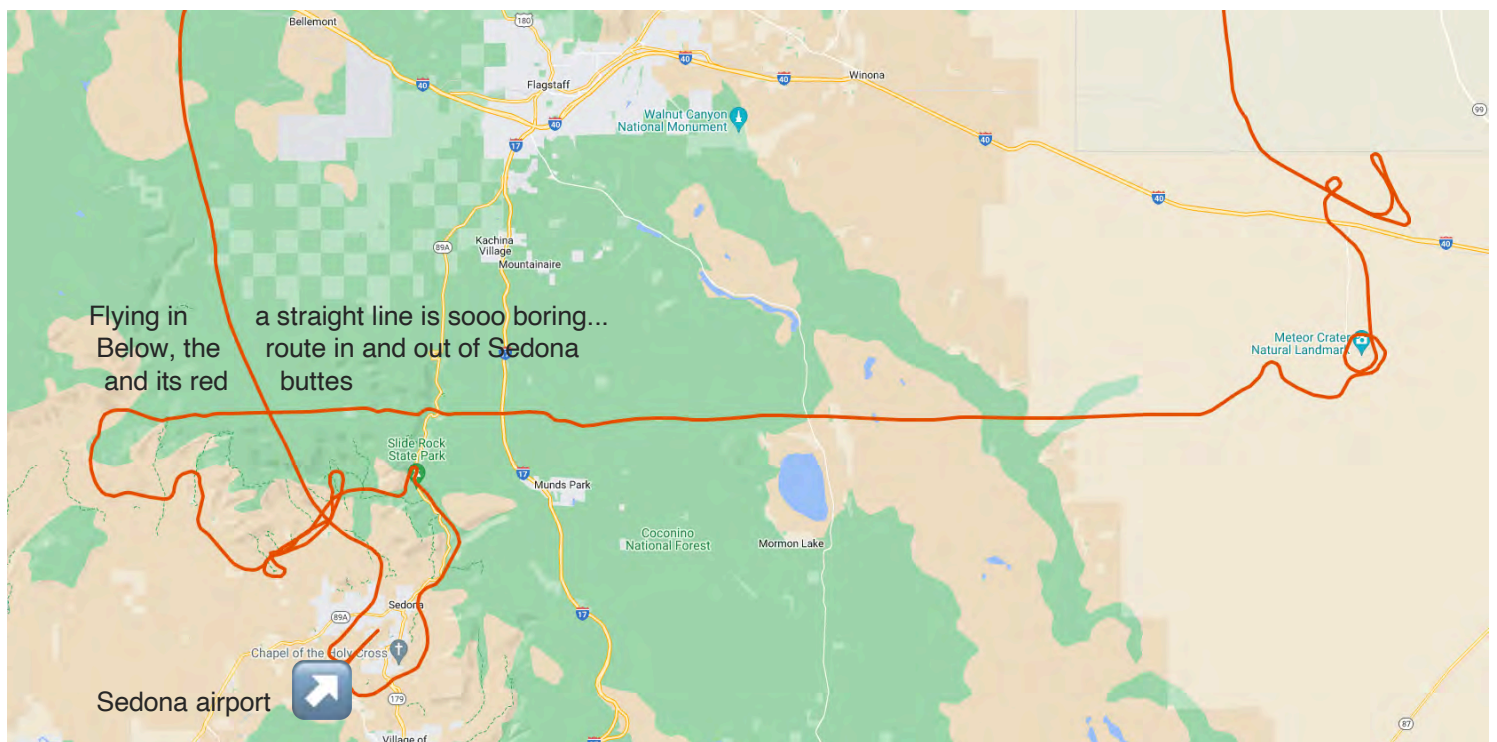












As I leave the reddish landscape behind, my itinerary now leads me to my next POI, due East...



Says the airline captain to his copilot whilst overflying the crater:

*“geez man, and that f.....g meteorite almost hit the carpark!”*



Yep, this is my POI... Meteor Crater, aka Barringer Crater, diameter 1'186 m, depth 170 m.

I circle the curiosity a couple of times.

A few miles to the North, I then dive and fly a successful freight train strafing mission, all details of which have been duly classified 🙄

Heading towards today's destination, the landscape is once more (since I'm now having trouble finding enough adjectives or expletives to describe what I'm seeing, I will now leave some blanks for you the reader to fill-in as needed) ....., and ....., even more ....., or even maybe .....













Looking ahead of me I can see thunderstorms slowly forming to the North, and the GNX375 now paints some of the lightning strikes...



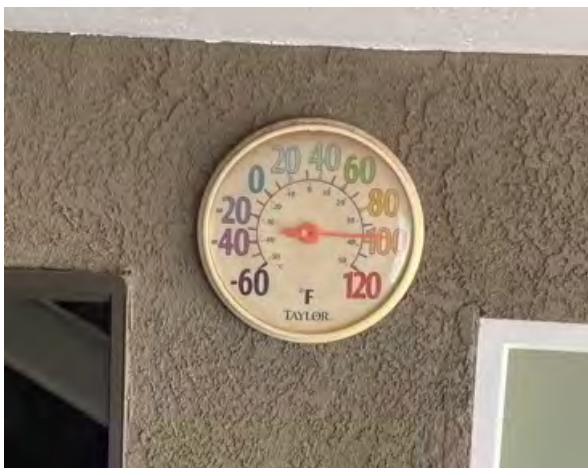








The tie-down ritual is performed, and the FBO's boss is kind enough to give me a ride to the motel.



I wait for the heat to abate some before taking a hike around the perimeter of the city. I was last there some 30 years ago (...), and the city sure has evolved into a neater place than what I recall it to be...

On the other hand, whilst Page's touristic homepage gives promises of "discovering the unique culture of the Navajo Nation", all I observe is a separate village, or camp, on the outskirts of the city. A place where the Indians are parked, keeping them at bay from the better housing quarter...





## Day #23

Once upon a time, early in the day... the temperatures have slightly abated, and the walk to the airport is short. Punching in the code, then try to jump to and open the gate , which is 2 m away, before it quickly locks again, is one of the small puzzles making a day interesting 🤔

Takeoff from  **KPGA Page Muni** at 12 Jul 2022 12:31 Z

Landing at **Unknown** at 12 Jul 2022 12:40 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 9 min (0.2 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 22 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 5,510 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 174 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 151 kt

Takeoff from **Unknown** at 12 Jul 2022 12:40 Z

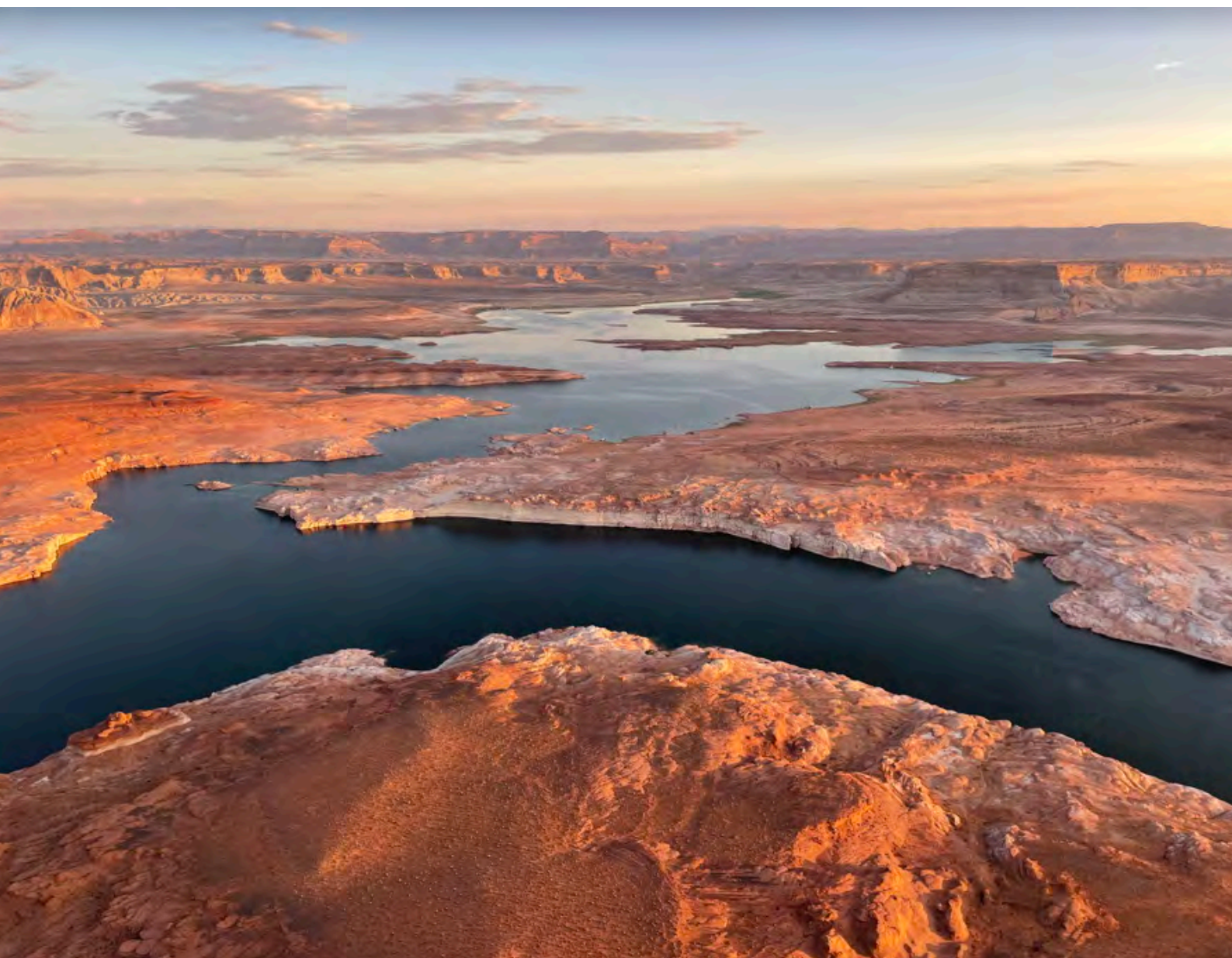
Landing at  **5V5 Shiprock Airstrip** at 12 Jul 2022 14:02 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 1 hr 22 m (1.4 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 204 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 8,334 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 178 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 149 kt

The table above is in reality a single leg. My recording navigation software has stopped working for a couple of seconds during this flight, certainly subdued by the sights... the "Merge" function is unable to fix this, so if any data is of interest to you the reader, please just interpolate as required, thanks.

As I take-off, the sun just about starts to caress the higher peaks around Lake Powell, the views are ....., or even ....., dare I even say .....









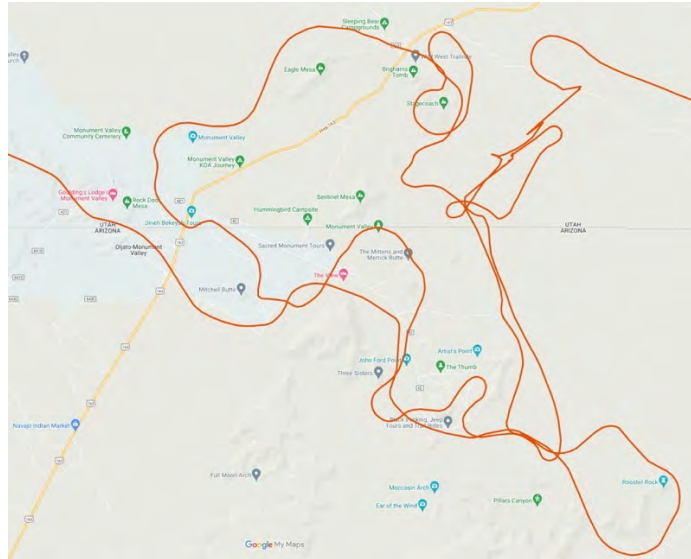


I don't spend too much time in the area, but now fly towards the rising sun, through the Rainbow Bridge National Monument, enroute to yet another POI...





My track across Monument Valley will look as erratic as the ant looking for food on my garden table...



Subdued by the sights, the light, and my state of elation, I can't but spend some time flying around the iconic sandstone buttes. It must be the 3rd or 4th time I get to zig and zag around Monument Valley, but sure is a first in my own maneuverable steed, flying solo and therefore able to bank, turn, roll, and loop at will 🤪







As was the case when playing between the icebergs in Greenland, I could spend the rest of my life in this firmament, dancing in between terrestrial stars...











Again, as a mere mortal in a mere flying contraption, I'm left with no choice but to pursue... the next POI is already waiting, a short distance away...











Once more out in the boonies. Amidst playing some blues on the harp whilst the water for the coffee is coming to a boil, a C172 drops in for a couple of T&Gs. It then lands, and the CFI and student come for a nice little chat. You're never alone out there 😊



Takeoff from  **5V5 Shiprock Airstrip** at 12 Jul 2022 15:39 Z

Landing at  **KLXV Lake County** at 12 Jul 2022 17:11 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 1 hr 32 m (1.5 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 225 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 14,420 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 201 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 147 kt

After take-off the heading is northeasterly, steering towards yet another POI, and yes, amidst some more of the ..... or whatever you want to call it landscape.







Some of the stuff I spot from my cruising altitude warrants a closer inspection, so, let's dive for it!



As I'm approaching Colorado, the scenery once more changes. The inherently dry terrain gives way to green grassland and meadows, later pine tree forests try to get a grip on altitude and steep mountains.





Getting closer to destination discloses the mining popularity of the region



The approach and landing on the Lake County airport, aka Leadville, is easy





At an elevation of 9'934ft Leadville-Lake County is the highest airport in the US. As for comparison, Europe's highest airport is Samedan, in the Engadin region of Switzerland, with an elevation of 5'600ft.

Interestingly enough I don't feel like being "in the mountains" here, probably due to the vast flat spaces around, the mountains more looking like hills, and the long runway...

One doesn't see this kind of density altitude everyday: 12'800ft, on the ground



As if the fantastic views and the good service weren't enough, every pilot flying in gets this certificate, which I think is a nice touch 👍



Though they seem to have misspelled my name... Josh? 🙄

Going direct from the US lowest Furnace Creek to the highest Leadville-Lake County, is interestingly enough a relatively short distance. It would have taken only about 3:30h at RV-6.9 speeds, as used on The Tour. I thought about it in the planning stages, but also didn't want to miss those in between POIs!



Refueling done, and in view of the menacing build-ups, I enquire about the availability of hangar space for the 2 nights I will be spending here. YLL is then tucked into the big hangar in company of a couple of spam cans for the next 2 days...

Safe , cozy, and happy 😊



An interesting license plate 😎



And on the path to the hotel...





## Day #24

### No flying day ("rest" day, really? 🤔)

Yesterday's hike from the airport to the hotel took the better part of 2 hours... but thanks to the perfect weather was very enjoyable. Save for carrying my small but heavy backpack...

Leadville was, and still is a mining town. Gold lead (pun intended) to silver, which in turn lead (oh no, not again 🤔) to today's molybdenum, the stuff used to harden steel, production. The main mine is now quite far away from the city center, which retains the colorful style of buildings used during the gold rush.







*Program of the day:*

- ✓ walk around the place
- ✓ visit the National Mining Museum
- ✓ pay a visit to the barber
- ✓ take a trip on board the Leadville Railroad
- ✓ have a good meal at the Mexican joint next door





## Day #25

Relatively late today as I'm dropped at the airport by a father/son team who were staying at the same hotel, and took pity on me... thanks for the ride guys! As most of you know, getting around without a car in the US can be challenging. Even cities like this one provide no, or only limited taxi service, and public transport is usually non-existent. Although airport courtesy cars are sometimes available, I didn't even bother.

And so I end up doing quite some walking during The Tour, which is a good thing. One can get a good feel for the place, smells, noises, people, way of life, etc.  
An obvious side benefit is keeping my 6-pack abs in shape 😊

Takeoff from  **KLXV Lake County** at 14 Jul 2022 14:55 Z

Landing at  **KBDU Boulder Muni** at 14 Jul 2022 15:40 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 45 min (0.8 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 109 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 14,776 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 197 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 147 kt

Today's density altitude reads 11'700ft with an OAT of 18°C. I use high elevation take-off leaning procedure, and YLL's O-360 engine still produces 20.3" @ 2670 RPM = 69% power. The take-off is longer than usual, but rather anticlimactic thanks to the "total performance" of my steed.

A few miles after the take-off I get a nice view of the still in use Climax mine







Used to the steep, aggressive, and jagged ridges of the Alps, most of the Colorado mountains have more rounded off shaped outlines.  
Makes flying above them feel lower than one really is...

A northeasterly course takes me just West of Denver, and then into Boulder CO. I had previously made contact with Dave, located in Boulder, through VAF, the [Vans Airforce network](#). He is building an RV-3, and having built an RV-4 myself, I was curious to have a look.



A view towards Denver



I find the airport of Boulder bustling with traffic, sailplanes and school airplanes all over the place...



A few minutes after landing, Dave picks me up and drives me to his place. Boulder seems to be a neat little city, though I haven't really seen much of it.

We then spend a nice couple of hours hangar talking, and inspecting Dave's project. I sure would fancy one of them RV-3 myself... it is one of the cutest airplane on the Planet, but during my visit I realize once more the amount of work (some call it "pleasure" or even "fun") involved, and definitely defer that idea to my next life's list.

Keep up the good work Dave, thanks for the peak, and remember with pride: you can call yourself an airplane builder 👍





Dave then drives me back to the airport, and I'm getting ready for yet another take-off.

I will now be heading towards Dutch John, Utah.

To visit yet another RVer, the [VAF](#) famous Vlad. He has done and published numerous interesting trips, amongst them one to Russia and back, and visited many of the more difficult backcountry strips in the US.

All in his famous RV-9A, accumulating short of 5'000 hours in the process, and all on the same original engine... which he is replacing with a new one as I type these words...

Takeoff from  **KBDU Boulder Muni** at 14 Jul 2022 18:43 Z

Landing at  **33U Dutch John** at 14 Jul 2022 20:12 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 1 hr 29 m (1.5 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 209 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 13,925 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 189 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 141 kt

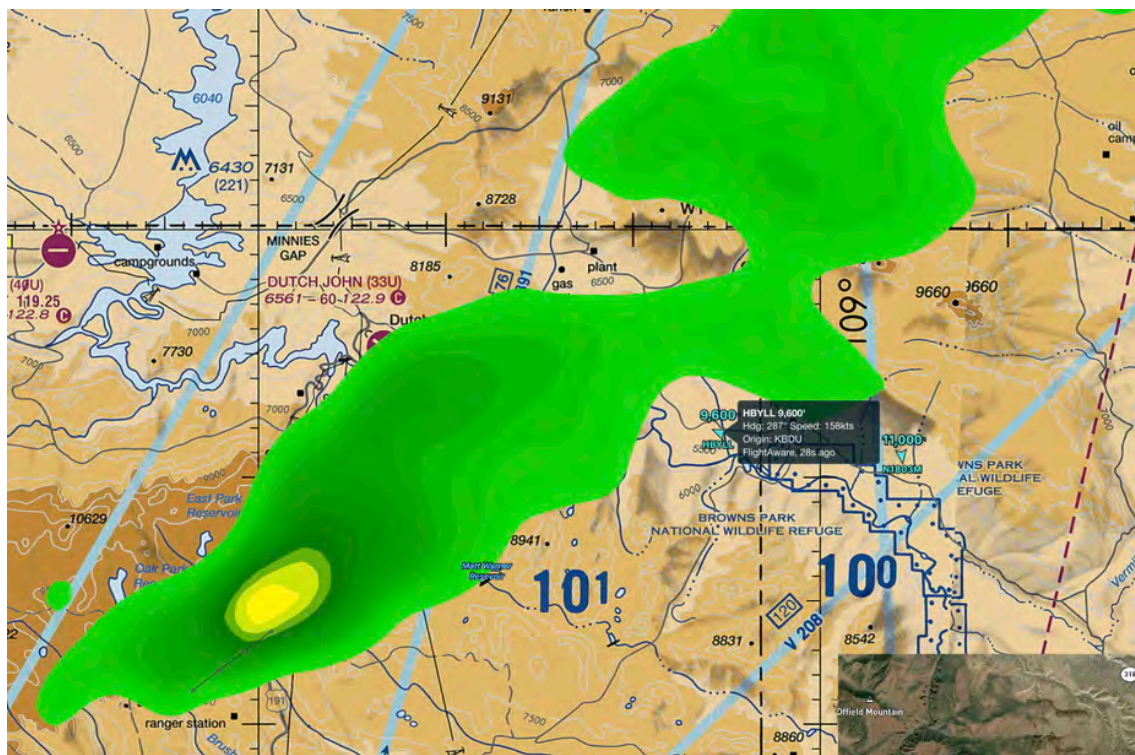
Flying northwest, the terrain again changes, irrigated parts retaining green foliage around them, but interspersed by more of the barren landscape.







Vlad's screenshot as I fly through some rain showers approaching the field







The Green River, and in the upper right of the shot, the airfield and Dutch John



Briefing sheet excerpt

NavLogs	FBOs	Remarks
External	Information	Traffic Pattern: 11 - Left Traffic / 29 - Left Traffic
Checklist	Frequencies	DEER AND ELK ON AND INVOF ARPT.
Binders	Runways	TWO CROSSING DIRT/TURF RYS APPEAR TO BE OPEN BUT ARE CLOSED & NOT MAINTAINED.
	Procedures	ACFT IN EXCESS OF 12,500 POUNDS MAXIMUM GROSS WEIGHT PROHIBITED FROM USING ARPT





Vlad is a keen photograph and has been eagerly awaiting my arrival, he takes plenty of shots of my approach, here on finals for runway 29 @ 33U...







Taking advantage of Vlad's great sense of hospitality, I'll be spending 3 nights at his place...



Vlad's home and his celebrity RV-9A



## Day #26

**No flying day** (and for once a real “rest day” 😊)

Operating off dusty runways takes its toll, and as a result the ground steering of YLL has become difficult. So YLL’s tailwheel fork is in need of a service...



The tailwheel fork is cleaned and re-greased in a short time and all is good. Until next time...

Taxi on the road leading back to the airport from Vlad's place, luckily there isn't too much traffic







The rest of the day is spent visiting Dutch John and the Flaming Gorge Recreation Area... Dutch John might be a small village, but there are plenty of possible outdoor activities such as hiking, fishing fly, boating, kayaking, etc.





*Dutch John days collage:*



Yet another activity, for those in the know, is mushroom picking...



Vlad is The perfect host to me, even acting as a cook!

"hey, that's what I call a knife" 🤔



Vlad's antlers tree

Dutch John city









## Day #27

Takeoff from  **33U Dutch John** at 16 Jul 2022 16:14 Z

Landing at  **33U Dutch John** at 16 Jul 2022 16:59 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 45 min (0.8 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 98 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 11,679 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 172 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 130 kt

Today marks the arrival of Vlad's good friend John, a retired airline pilot and A&P, in his RV-9. So Vlad and myself take-off for an in-flight reception over Naples, South of Dutch John, and later return to land.



Following that, the day goes by quickly, the afternoon being mostly consumed by a 6 mile hike to Flaming Gorge Dam, along the Green River. The water temperature is body dip tested, found perfect.









## Day #28

Early rise today, as I want to get the engine driven pump replaced before being sunburnt... the pump, ~~which thanks to utmost clever engineering is very accessible,~~ helped by some advice from John and a lot of internal and external swearing by myself, is replaced in a couple of hours.

A short run-up later, all is a ok.



Johns decides to stay put at Vlad's, whilst Vlad and myself first go to refuel our rides at Vernal, a city 30NM South of Dutch John.

Takeoff from  **33U Dutch John** at 17 Jul 2022 17:24 Z

Landing at  **KVEL Vernal** at 17 Jul 2022 17:40 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 16 min (0.3 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 34 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 9,045 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 192 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 129 kt



## The city and airport of Vernal



Takeoff from  **KVEL Vernal** at 17 Jul 2022 18:14 Z

Landing at **Unknown** at 17 Jul 2022 18:44 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 30 min (0.5 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 69 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 9,254 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 197 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 137 kt

After take-off from Vernal, we engage in some exceptional, but highly classified flying, followed by a strip landing on a gravel road. A short stroll then takes us to the Flaming Gorge Reservoir, and we take a refreshing dip in the pristine crystal-clear water. Man, this place is awesome 😎









Takeoff from **Unknown** at 17 Jul 2022 19:31 Z

Landing at  **33U Dutch John** at 17 Jul 2022 19:44 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 13 min (0.2 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 23 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 8,765 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 161 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 108 kt

After that, it's return to base... despite having pulled our airplanes apart, and my very progressive application of power, Vlad's RV-9A gets somewhat ~~sandblasted, or, even more dusty~~ 😂





## Day #29

Nothing new today, it is still very dark when I get up this morning... I want to arrive early at the next POI...

Vlad, as helpful as ever, is also up... probably also slightly motivated by the thought of returning in a real bed to sleep the night off after my departure 🤔

I readied and loaded most of my stuff into YLL last night, so after installing my 2 iPads, I'm good to go. We hug briefly, then Vlad uses the truck's headlights to point me to the very black runway... and I'm happy to discover that my landing light also doubles function as a take-off light, good stuff really.

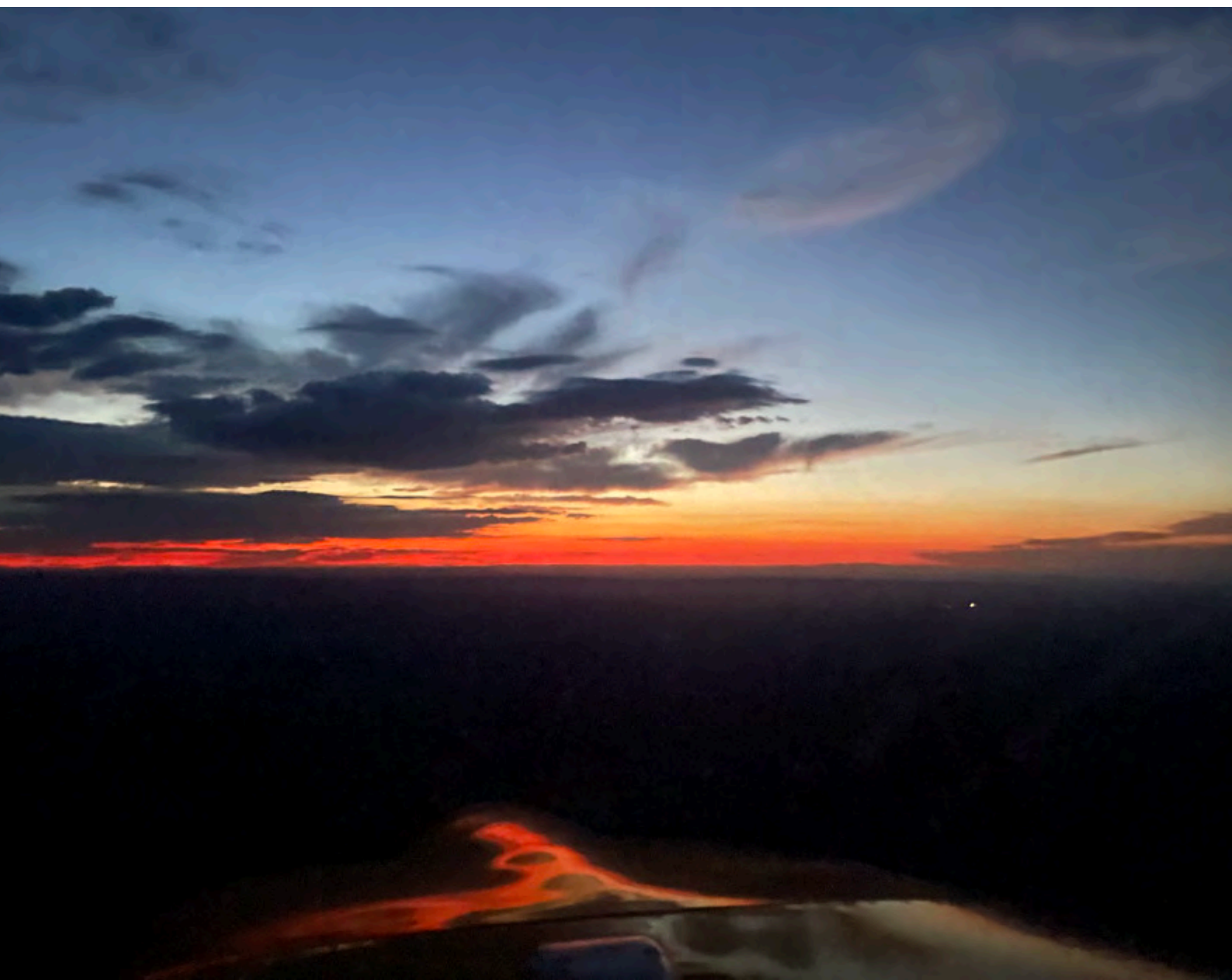
Takeoff from 🛫 **33U Dutch John** at 18 Jul 2022 11:01 Z

Landing at 🛬 **3V0 Custer State Park** at 18 Jul 2022 13:08 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 2 hr 7 m (2.1 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 351 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 11,047 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 208 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 166 kt

My stay at Dutch John has been a fantastic experience 🙏 thanks for all Vlad 🙌







A while later, I first approach the Crazy Horse Memorial Monument which is still under construction...



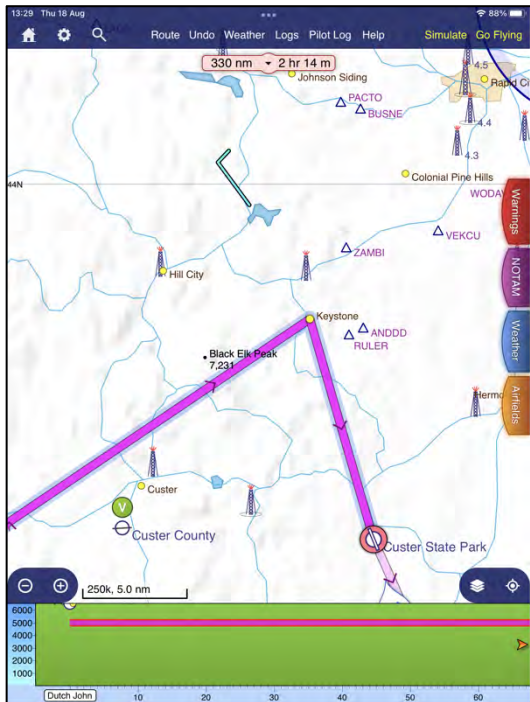


I then head towards Mount Rushmore National Memorial. It is still very early, and nobody is to be seen, the empty carpark is awaiting the visitors ...

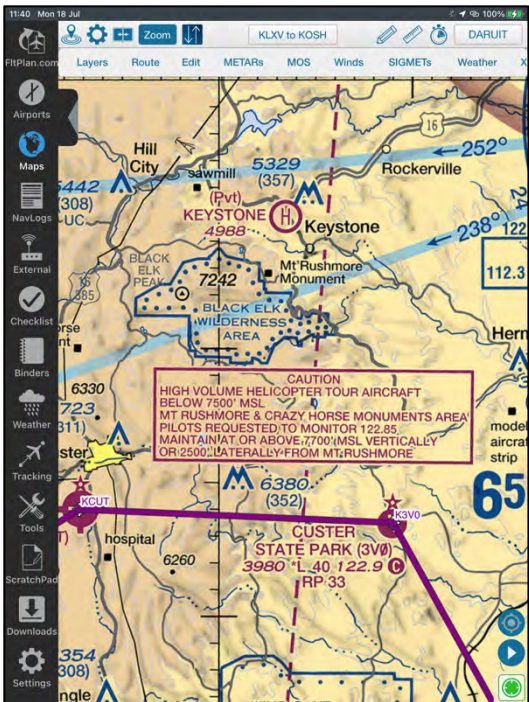


A word of caution for the pilot reader, using the navigation software SkyDemon in the US works pretty good, and all controlled airspace shows up properly... but some restricted areas and important notes which are on the US sectionals are missing... and so could easily go missed. Compare yourself:

SkyDemon



FltPlan Go





The wind is pretty strong and blustery, gusts up to 40kts, and I have to make a few passes before being satisfied with the framing, and can bow to presidents, left to right (hope I get this right 🙄): George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln.



It is now a short flight to Custer State Park, which was showing as having fuel... battling my way in a strong crosswind to landing, I find no sign of a pump on the deserted apron, and take-off again.





Takeoff from  **3V0 Custer State Park** at 18 Jul 2022 13:09 Z

Landing at  **KOGA Searle Fld** at 18 Jul 2022 14:24 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 1 hr 15 m (1.3 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 178 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 10,336 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 179 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 142 kt

View on Mc Conaughty Lake



A little while later, I land at Searle Fld, aka Ogallala Municipal, for a quick fuel/defuel stop, then continue.





Takeoff from ✈️ **KOGA Searle Fld** at 18 Jul 2022 14:51 Z

Landing at ✈️ **KMCK Mc Cook Ben Nelson** at 18 Jul 2022 15:25 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 34 min (0.6 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 78 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 8,032 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 176 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 140 kt

Mosaical landscape

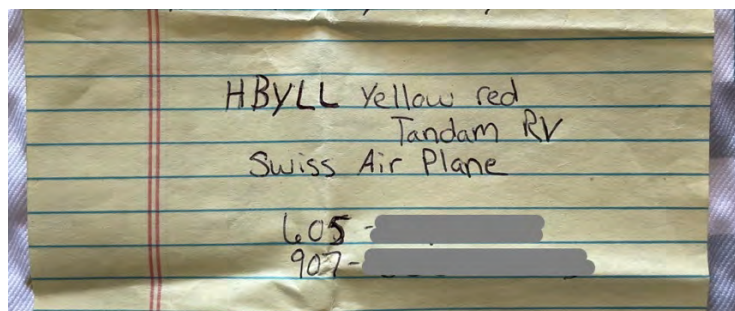


It is now a short hop to McCook, where I'm in the hope to get a decent breakfast.  
There's a small pilot lounge inside a hangar, with a coffee machine, but alas no restaurant.





I'm ravenous by now, and I try to wash one half of those sugar bombs named donut down my throat with heaps of coffee... success is within reach when a line boy spoils it all by handing me a yellow piece of paper, and tells me to call the number written on it... oh-oh 🤔



An FAA officer is on the other end of the line, polite but also firm and assertive. He explains the different violations as perpetrated over the Mt Rushmore Monument area. But he then also patiently listens to my good explanations 😊 Since I'm using a land line in the FBO's office, this clearly benefits the local CFI and some of his colleagues who can laugh their a\*\*es off for the duration of the call...

I can therefore confirm that the ADSB coverage in the area of the past presidents is excellent.

We exchange some emails in the next days, and a written report of the facts as seen from my side seems to have suspended the case...



Takeoff from ✈ **KMCK Mc Cook Ben Nelson** at 18 Jul 2022 16:34 Z

Landing at ✈ **KOUN University Of Oklahoma Westheimer** at 18 Jul 2022 18:49 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 2 hr 15 m (2.3 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 353 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 10,279 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 181 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 158 kt

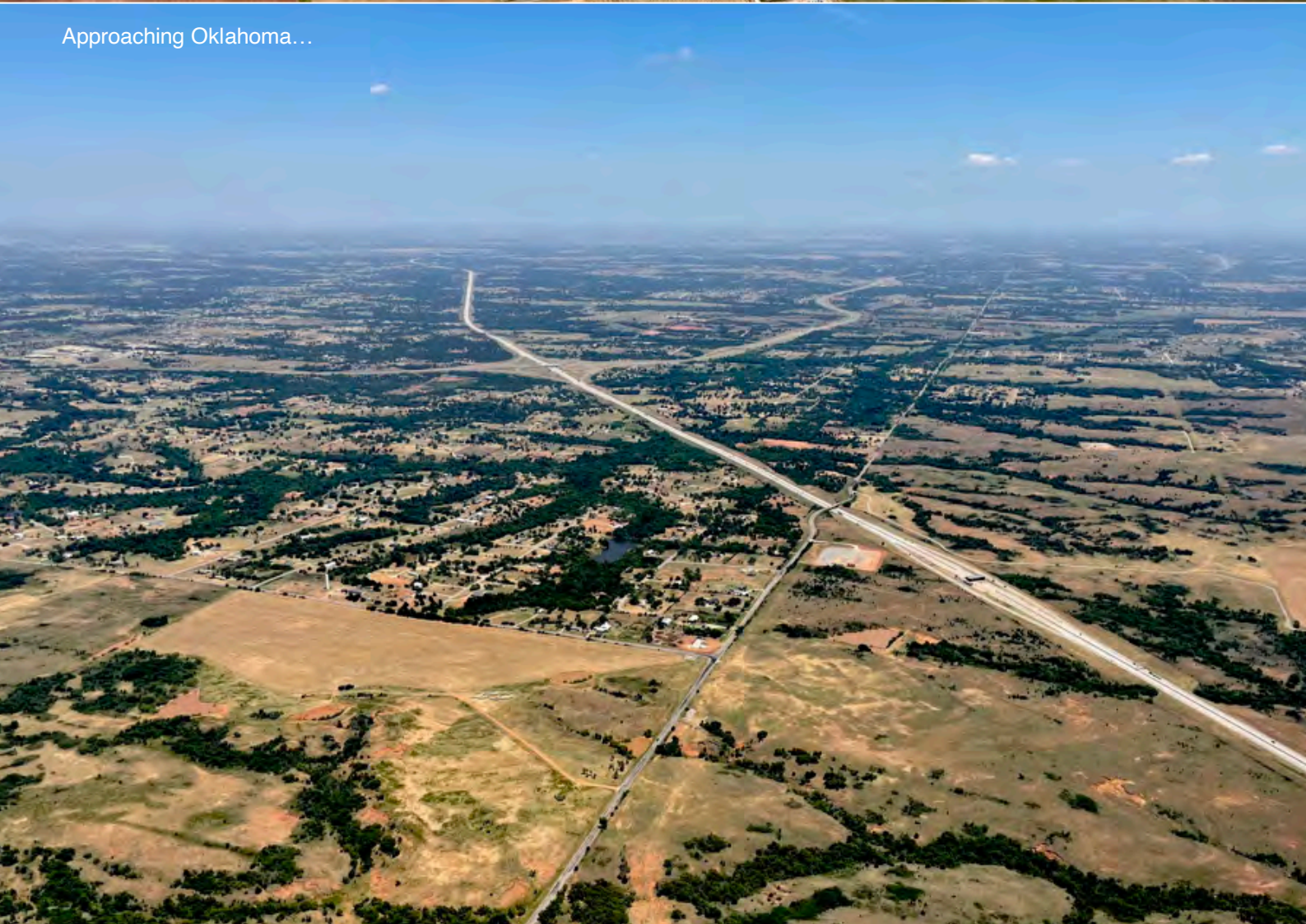
The flight continues thru Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma, vast prairies of agricultural farmland







Approaching Oklahoma...





The airport is very quiet, and I only hear one other aircraft on the frequency during the approach. The vast apron where YLL will sit alone all by herself for the night is deserted...

The University of Oklahoma Westheimer Airport is owned by guess who? Yep, good one, the University of Oklahoma. But is located on the grounds of the city of Norman. Which is in turn is located a few miles South of the center of Oklahoma city.

I'm told that the field is usually quite busy with flight training, but all students are now on Summer vacations, enjoy gals & guys 🥰



What in hell makes me night-stop here? Well, the night for one.

And the fact that by drawing a straight line from my last POI to the next one, the +/- equal distance airfield with facilities is about here... this is the kind of simplified reasoning I use during my flight planning.

Yep, surprising I'm still alive at all 🤔

Once more, I have not only misjudged the distance, but above all the complexity involved in reaching the brand new and quite "luxurious" Motel 6 I have booked.

And once more I find help in the form of a sympathetic FBO personnel driving me there, and who will be picking me up next morning. Many thanks [Cruise Aviation](#)!

Makes one feel really safer... once inside



The area around my place looks safe enough, but is not very appealing and no decent restaurant is to be seen... but I find the usual Safeway groceries store to organize an in-room picnic, thanks to the micro wave oven provided 👍



## Day #30

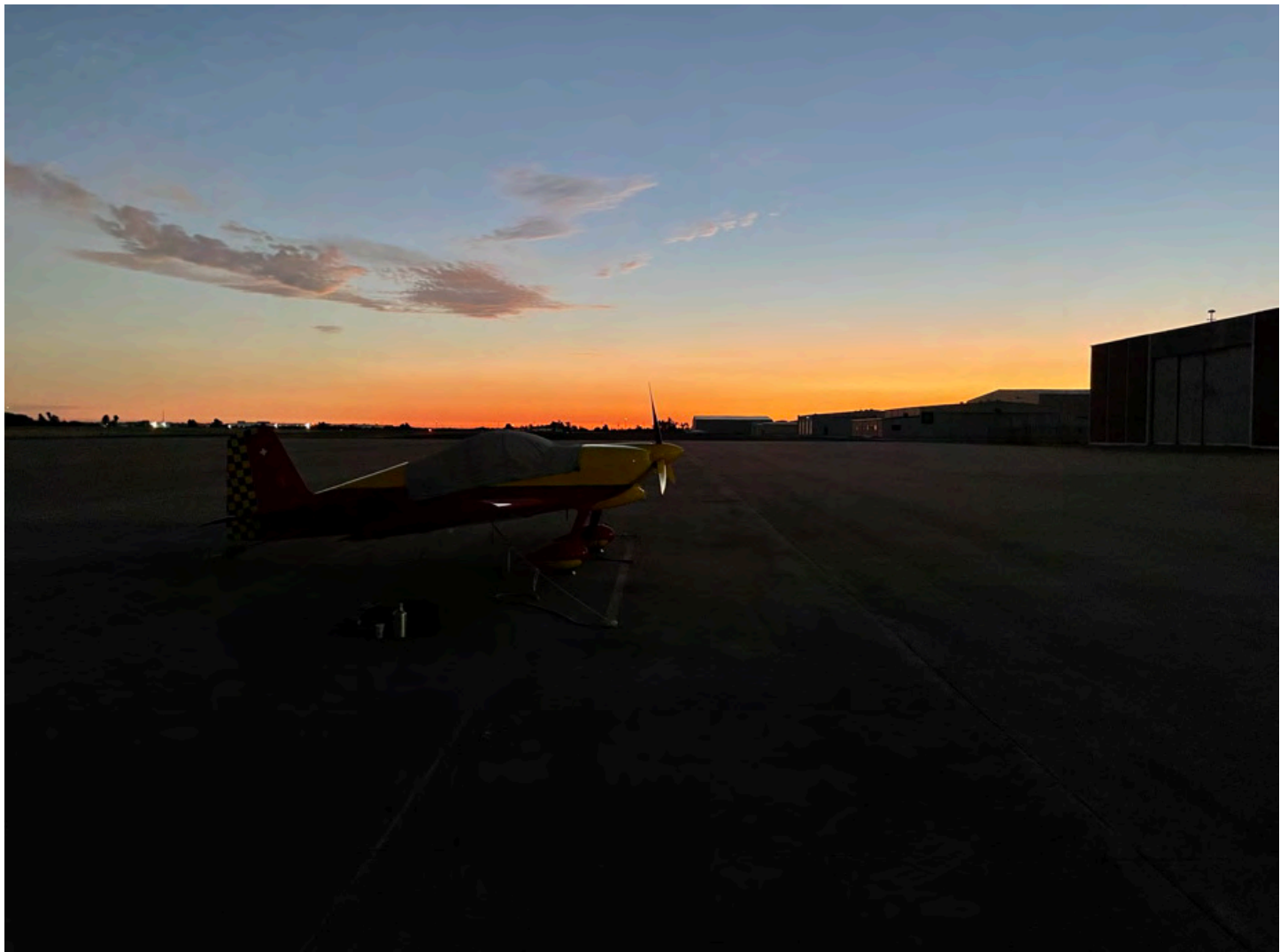
2 POIs are on the list today:

- ✓ overflying the part of the Gulf of Mexico which includes the swamps, which I haven't seen before
- ✓ New Orleans, the city as such

As mentioned at the beginning of the book, I have travelled the US some by private aircraft, car, or airliner, but never been in New Orleans...

And I'm attracted by the reputation of what some call the "Big Easy" for its music and food 😊

Dawn on the University Of Oklahoma Westheimer airport



Takeoff from  **KOUN University Of Oklahoma Westheimer** at 19 Jul 2022 11:20 Z

Landing at  **KLFK Angelina County** at 19 Jul 2022 13:12 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 1 hr 52 m (1.9 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 279 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 8,349 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 179 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 150 kt



Leaving Oklahoma city behind







On the way I decide to stop at Angelina County for fuel and breakfast...





The very typical airport restaurant provides food and coffee, but I'm rather surprised to note that the waitresses are also qualified flight instructors.

What do you know, really 😂



Takeoff from ✈️ **KLFK Angelina County** at 19 Jul 2022 14:11 Z

Landing at ✈️ **KNEW Lakefront** at 19 Jul 2022 17:15 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 3 hr 4 m (3.1 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 469 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 10,203 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 193 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 153 kt

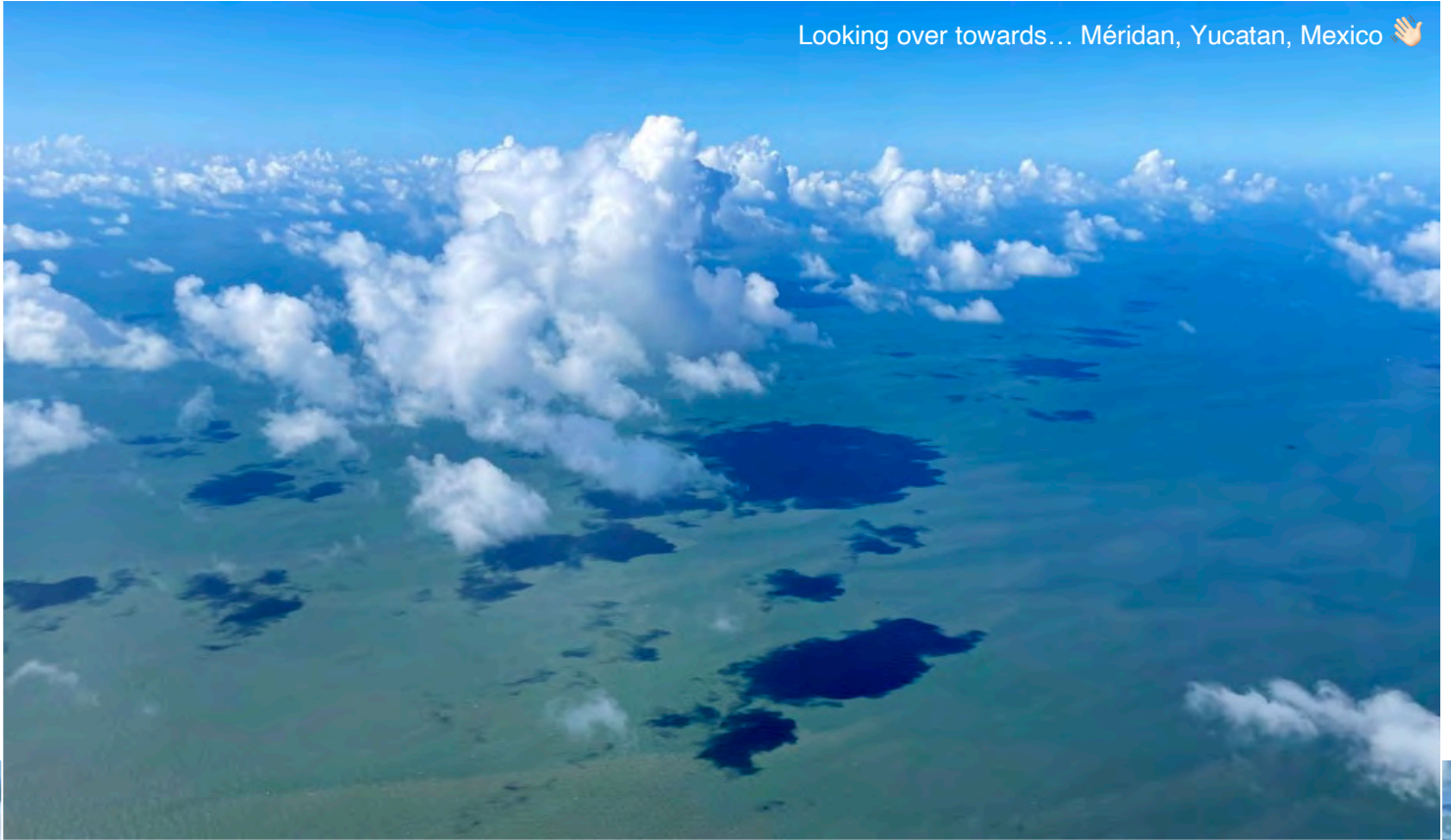


The Gulf of Mexico coast, South of Beaumont, TX

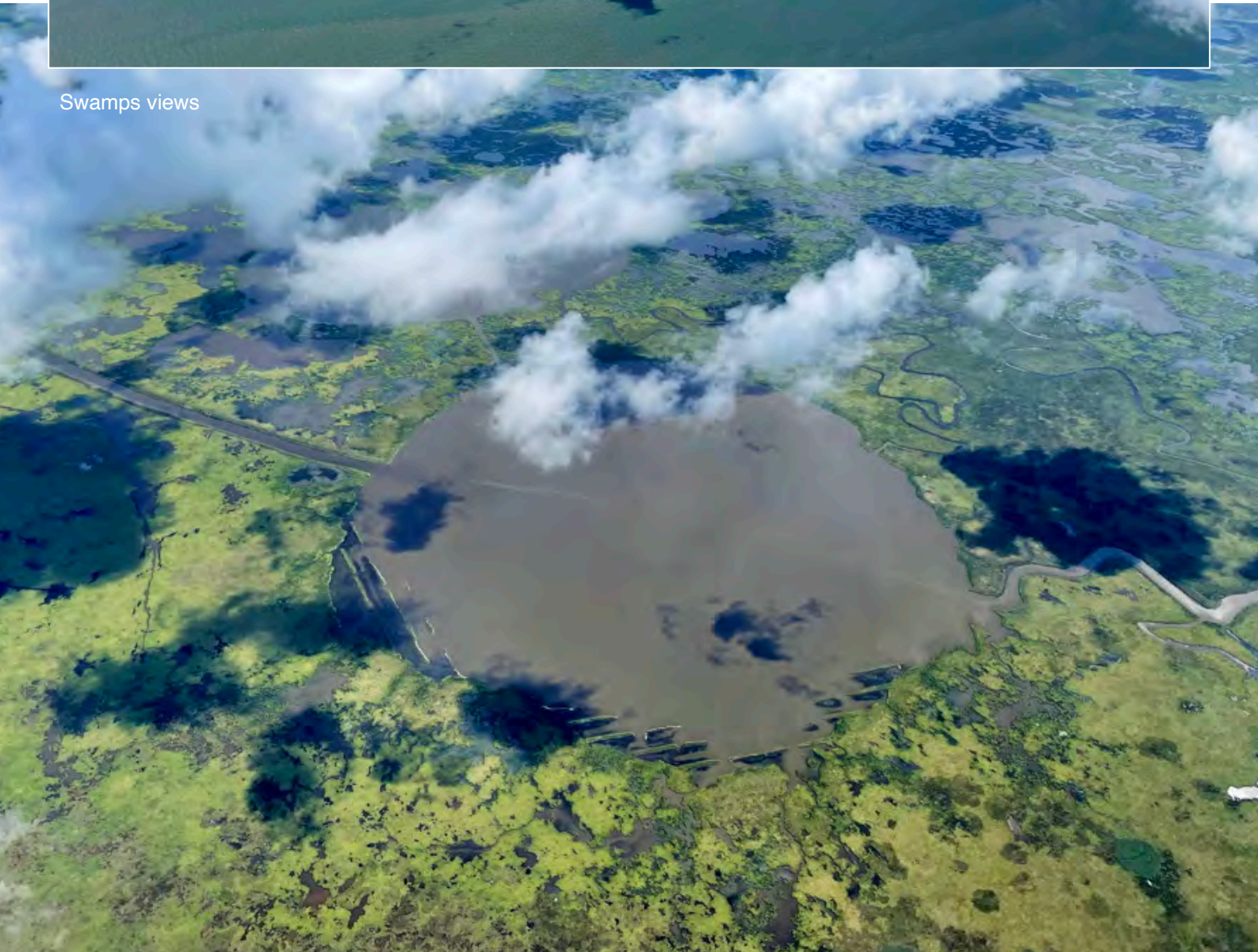


I am, for the first time since entering the US, using flight following on this leg. Not sure if dedicated frequencies would help, but it is nowadays difficult to make radio contact in the first place, and one doesn't necessarily feel welcome, as the centers already have their hands full with commercial traffic...

Looking over towards... Méridan, Yucatan, Mexico 🙌



Swamps views









The delta, the entrance into the Mississippi river, and more mesmerizing sights of the swamps...









I finally reach my destination Lakefront. The medium sized field is in a very scenic location, bordering Lake Pontchartrain. And is quite busy. Thunderstorms being big on the agenda, YLL is put to rest in the big FBO's hangar. A wise decision...



"Oh, what a cute little airplane" exclaims one of the FBO's lady upon sighting my aircraft. YLL can't help it but to blush somewhat 🙄





As we drive away from the airport I realize my mistake, well before the taxi drops me off at the motel... this neighborhood is close to the airport alright, but located in very questionable surroundings. And I now understand the reason for the low price...



Mother Luck is thankfully around as I'm able to cancel the 2 nights booking, and re-board the taxi who's been observing my whereabouts, already concerned about my safety... I've been warned numerous times, folks back home are concerned, "Big Easy" is catalogued as unsafe today. Pity 😞

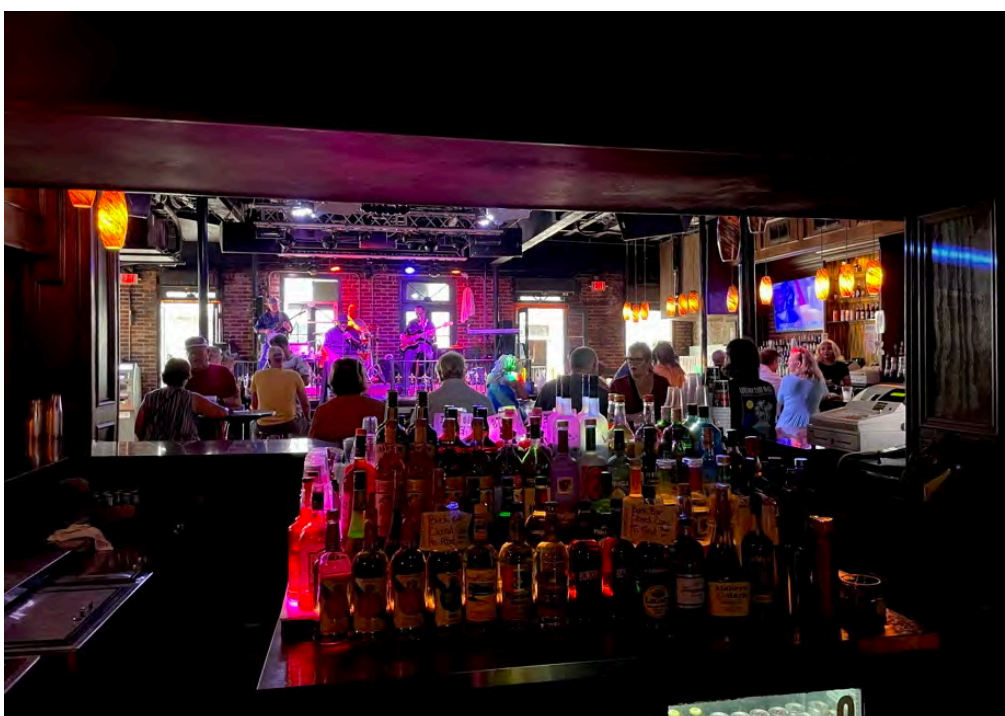
I'm now driven to, and happy to check-in, in a completely different type of hotel, a self-catered flat comprising all comfort, and nicely located in the center of the city.





My early arrival gives me time to perform a reconnaissance stroll in the old part of the city... mitigated first impressions, as nauseous smells reminding me of places in Africa or the Far East reach my olfactory sense, an abundance of homeless people in different states of misery are seen begging or just lying on the curbs... on the other hand, the music, the delicious food, the historic atmosphere, and the fascinating architecture are certainly present.

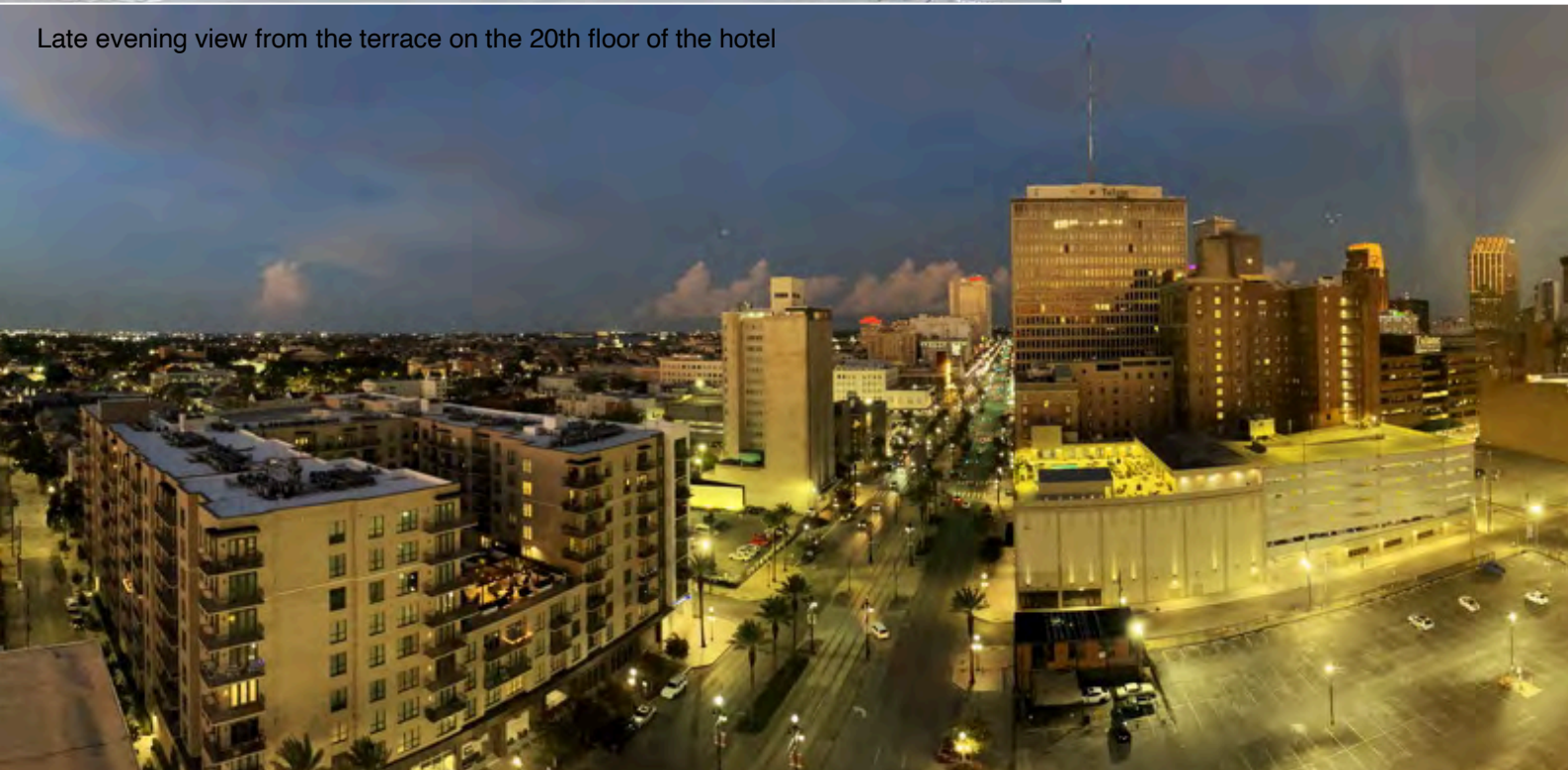
Wikipedia quote: *Housing styles include the shotgun house and the bungalow style. Creole cottages and townhouses, notable for their large courtyards and intricate iron balconies, line the streets of the French Quarter. American townhouses, double-gallery houses, and Raised Center-Hall Cottages are notable. St. Charles Avenue is famed for its large antebellum homes. Its mansions are in various styles, such as Greek Revival, American Colonial and the Victorian styles of Queen Anne and Italianate architecture. New Orleans is also noted for its large, European-style Catholic cemeteries.*







Late evening view from the terrace on the 20th floor of the hotel





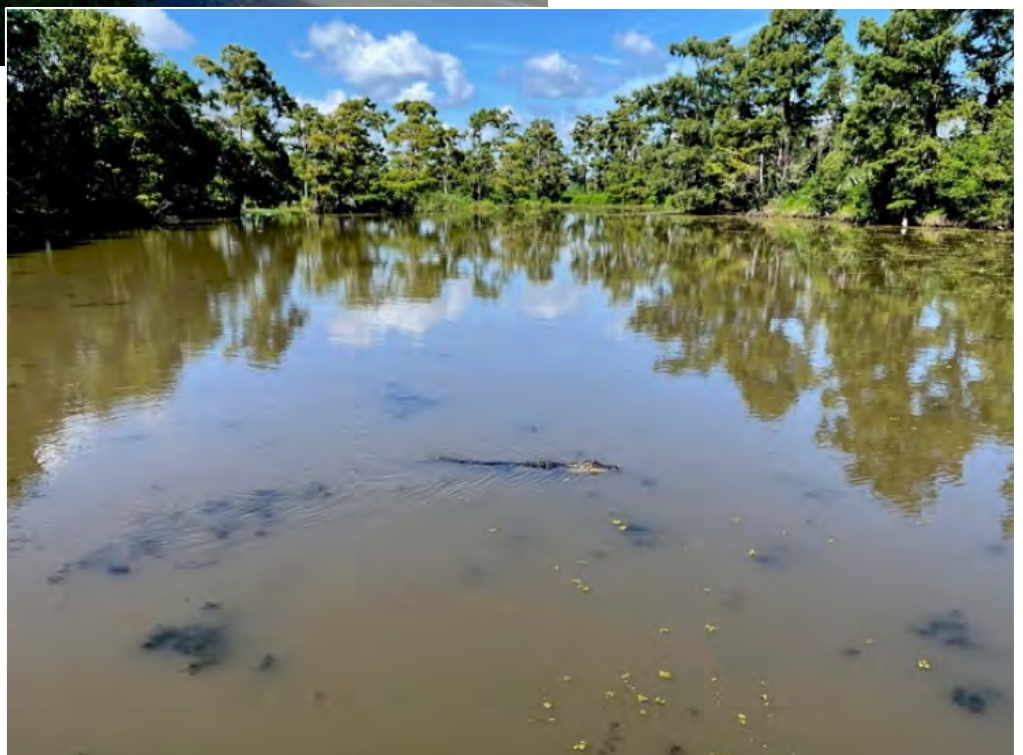
## Day #31

**No flying day** (it is “rest day” 😊)

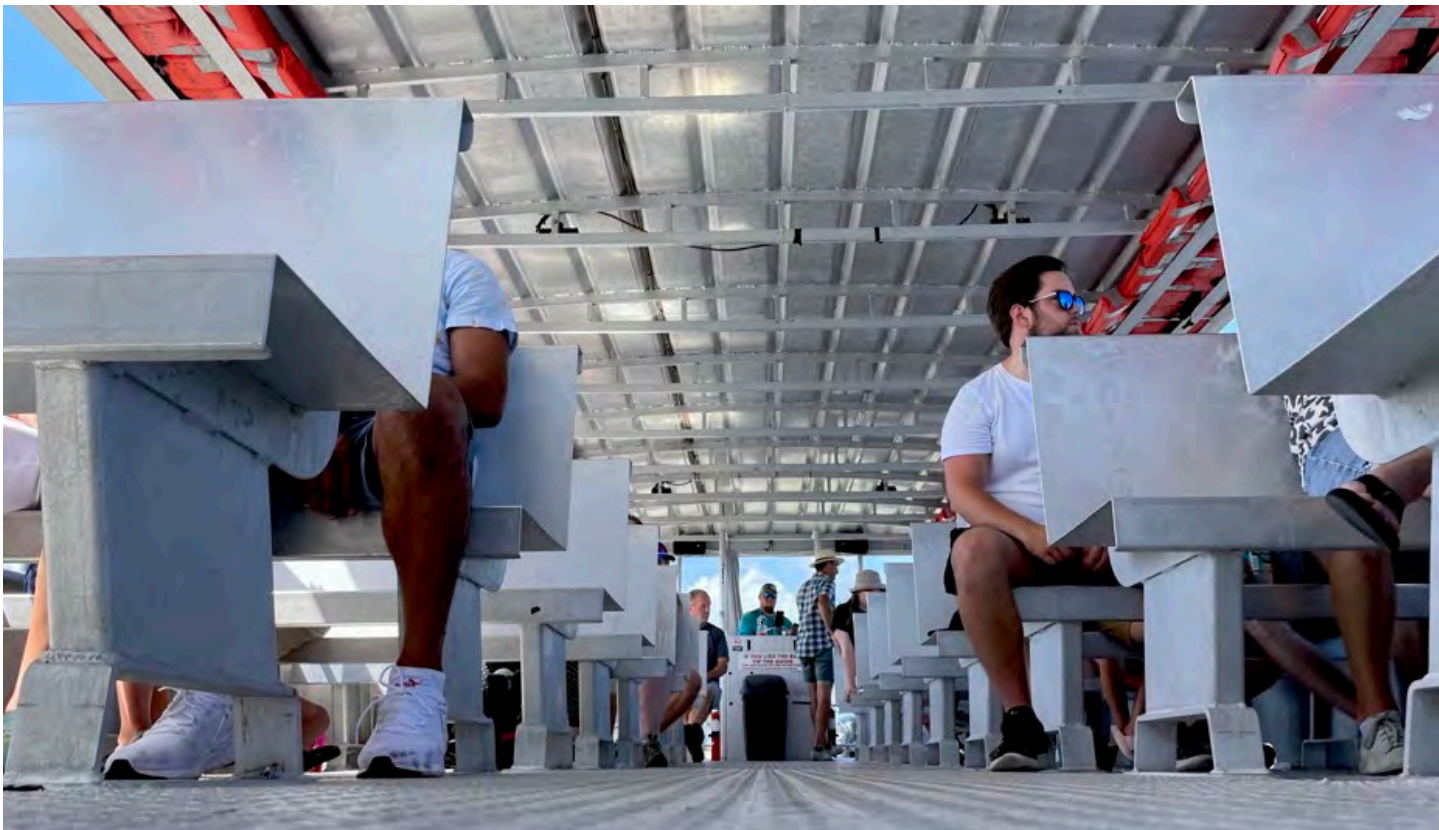
The mighty Mississippi

Today is swamp excursion day... too touristic for my liking, but an interesting excursion nonetheless.

A bus picks a group of us up on the shore of the Mississippi, and some 40 minutes' drive later, we are transferred onto the tour's flat boats at the Slidell site. Fascinating ride thru the swamps, though not too sure about the wildlife authenticity of feeding marshmallows to the alligators...







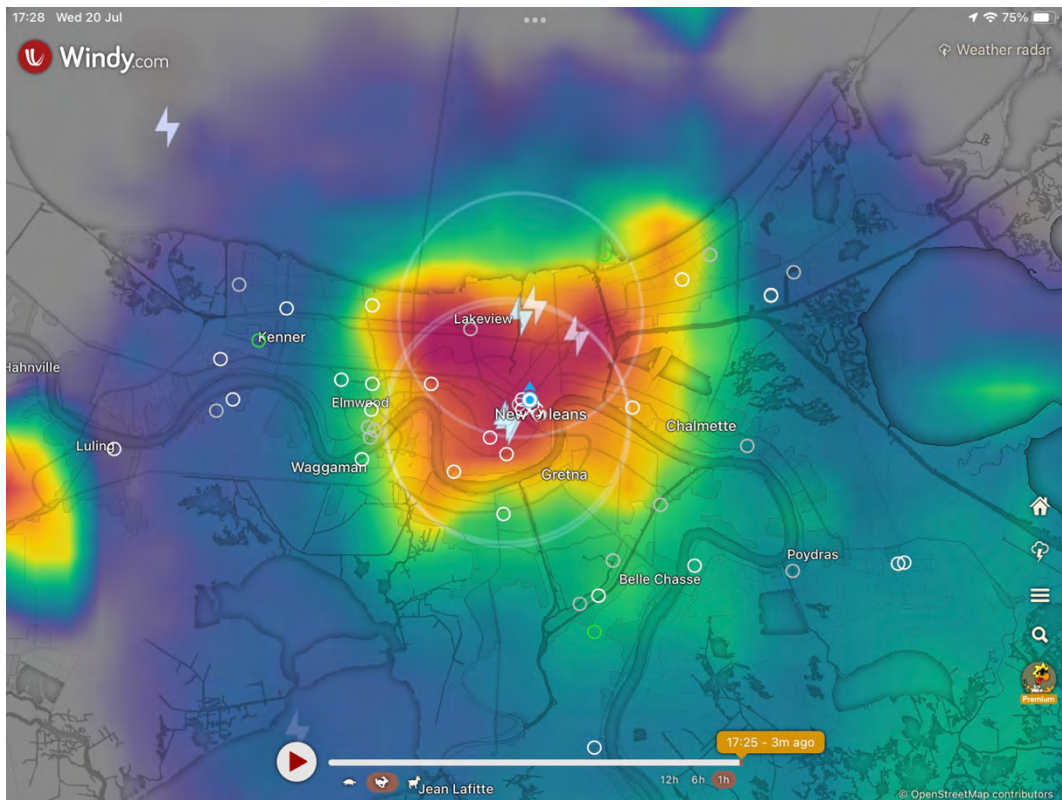




Some driving time later, and the afternoon is again spent marveling at the good things the city has to offer.







Just when I'm about to get out of the hotel after a quick change, I spot a huge thunderstorm brewing its way towards the city. As I get onto the terrace for some pictures, torrential rain and wind gusts hit hard... back in the room to call pizza delivery.  
I'm now really happy thinking of YLL nicely sheltered in the hangar 🤔





## Day #32

Oshkosh is today's POI. If arriving by private aircraft, the date and time is better set some time in advance of the show, all depending on one's need for an adrenalin rush, or not... the AirVenture, as it has been called since a few years now, officially starts on Monday of the last week of July, and lasts until the next Sunday.

In part thanks to staff ticketing, I've attended the show a few times by now. Starting 1986, some 10 years in a row... then spacing my visit some, as the show became less and less attractive to me. I'm not 100% sure of my count, but think this year's will be my 17th visit there. I've never flown in during the show, but landed at KOSH during another trip to Maine in a Piper Saratoga... on the other hand, I have flown in/out, as a passenger, on more than one occasion during the show, with friends or demo pilots.

The famous Oshkosh NOTAM, called NOTICE this year, states: **Special Flight Procedures effective Noon CDT July 21 to 6:00 AM CDT Aug 1, 2022**

I had initially planned a Friday 22nd arrival. Talking to some experienced visitors during my stay at Johnson Creek convinced me to advance my arrival by one day, e.g. on Thursday 21st...

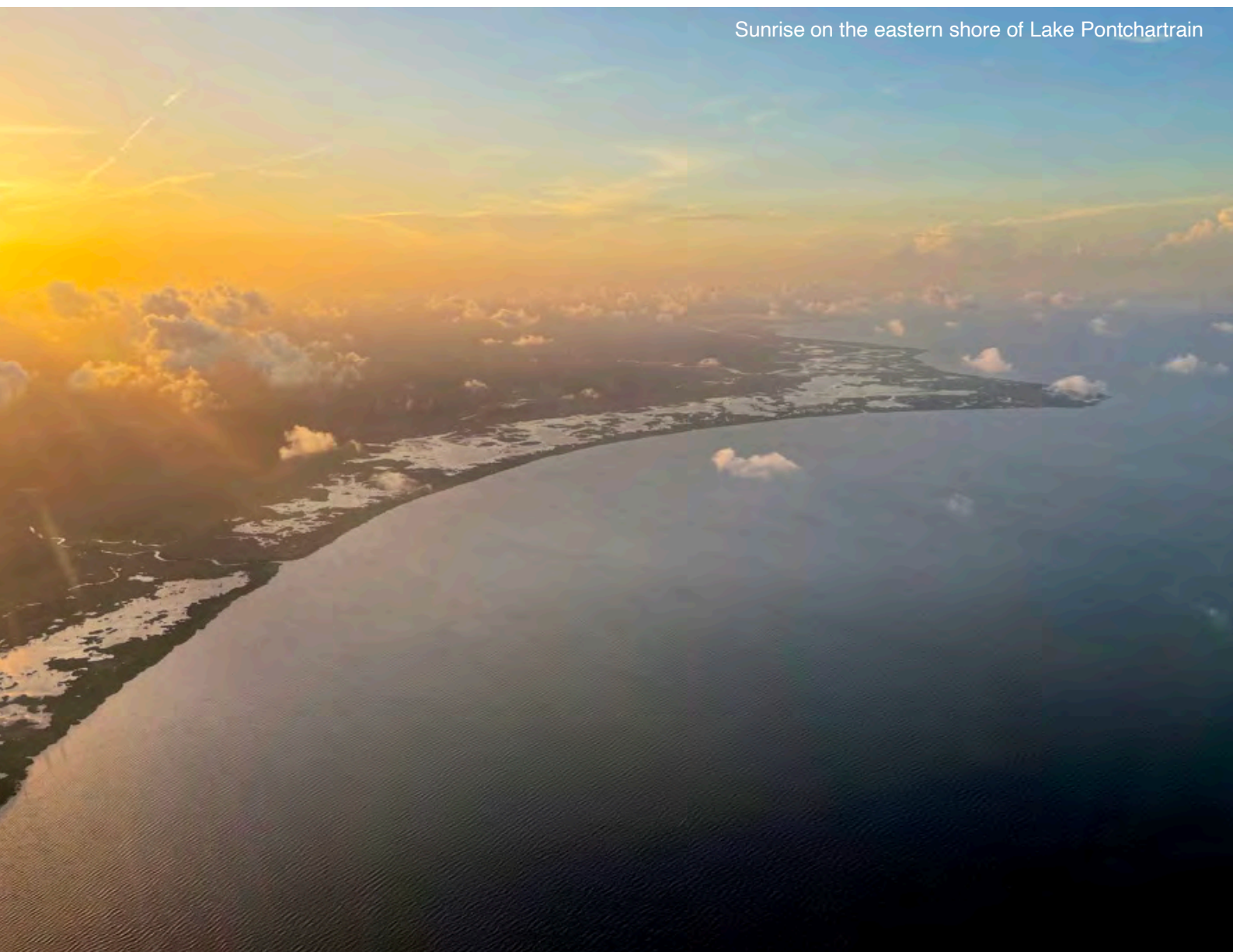
Takeoff from ✈ **KNEW Lakefront** at 21 Jul 2022 11:20 Z

Landing at ✈ **KJBR Jonesboro Muni** at 21 Jul 2022 13:43 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 2 hr 23 m (2.4 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 353 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 9,505 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 167 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 148 kt

Sunrise on the eastern shore of Lake Pontchartrain

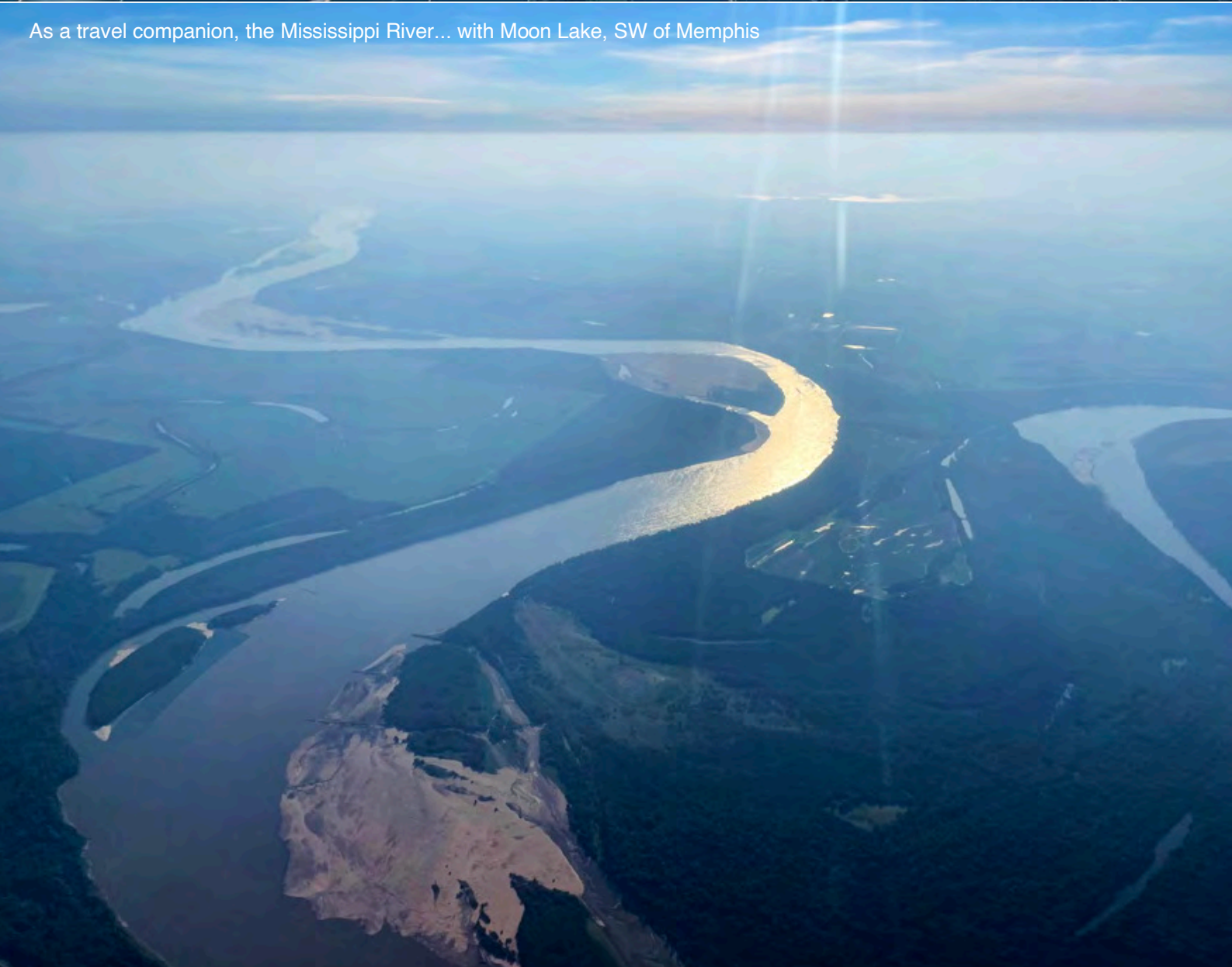




I feel as if heading home today, as my heading is almost due North now



As a travel companion, the Mississippi River... with Moon Lake, SW of Memphis







After landing at Jonesboro Muni, I proceed to the pump, and get gassed up. A pick-up car drives by and stops. Engine still running, the driver enquires “*you’ve flown in all over from Switzerland? I was in Geneva last week to pick up a business jet! Have a good trip!*” and then drives off...  
A very neat FBO greets me.

Coffee, snacks, friendly people. Pulling my card for payment is met by a refusal: “*oh no, the fuel has been taken care of by the FBO owner!*”

Thanks [Arkansas Air Center](#), the gesture sure is very appreciated 👍

Publicity pose 😊





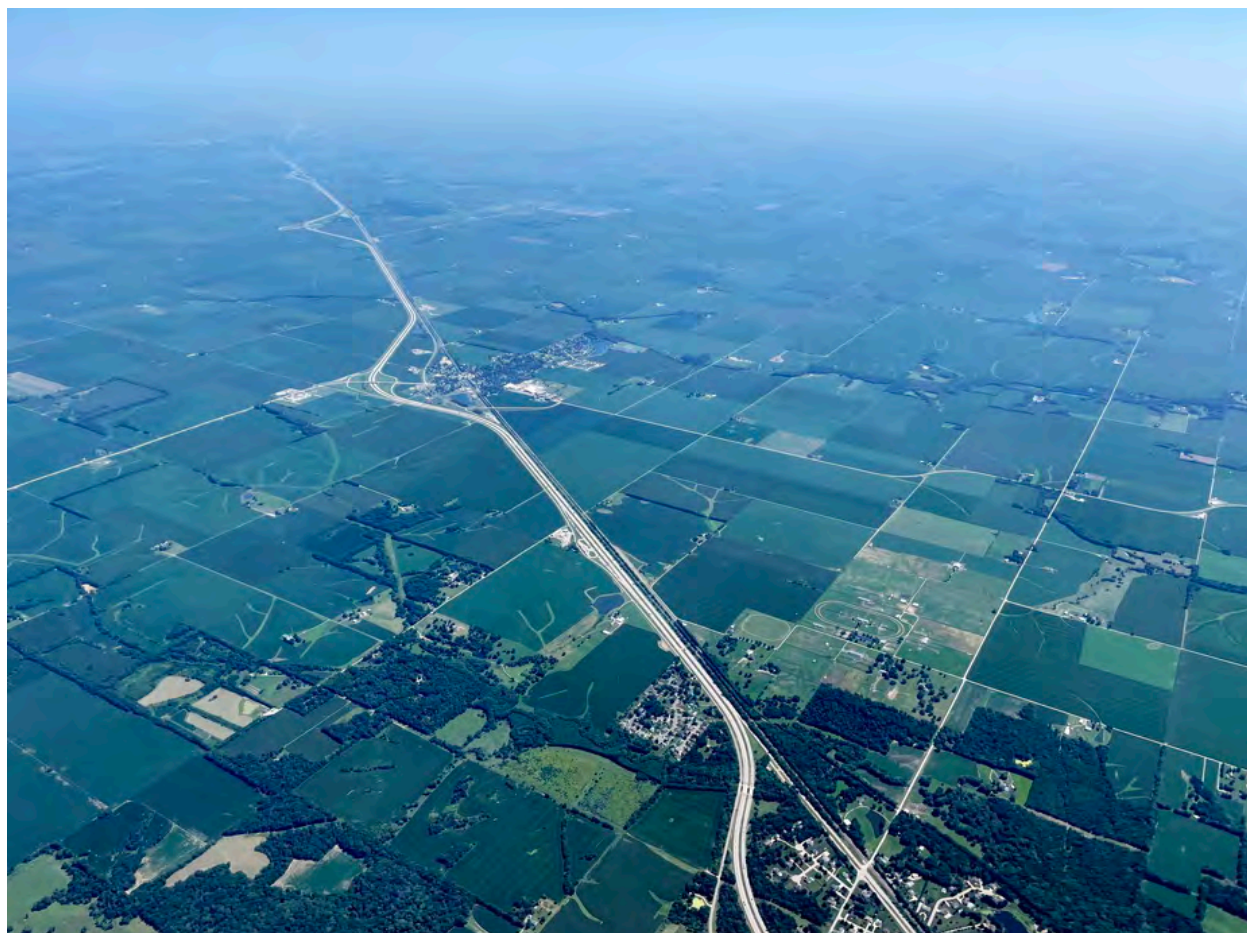
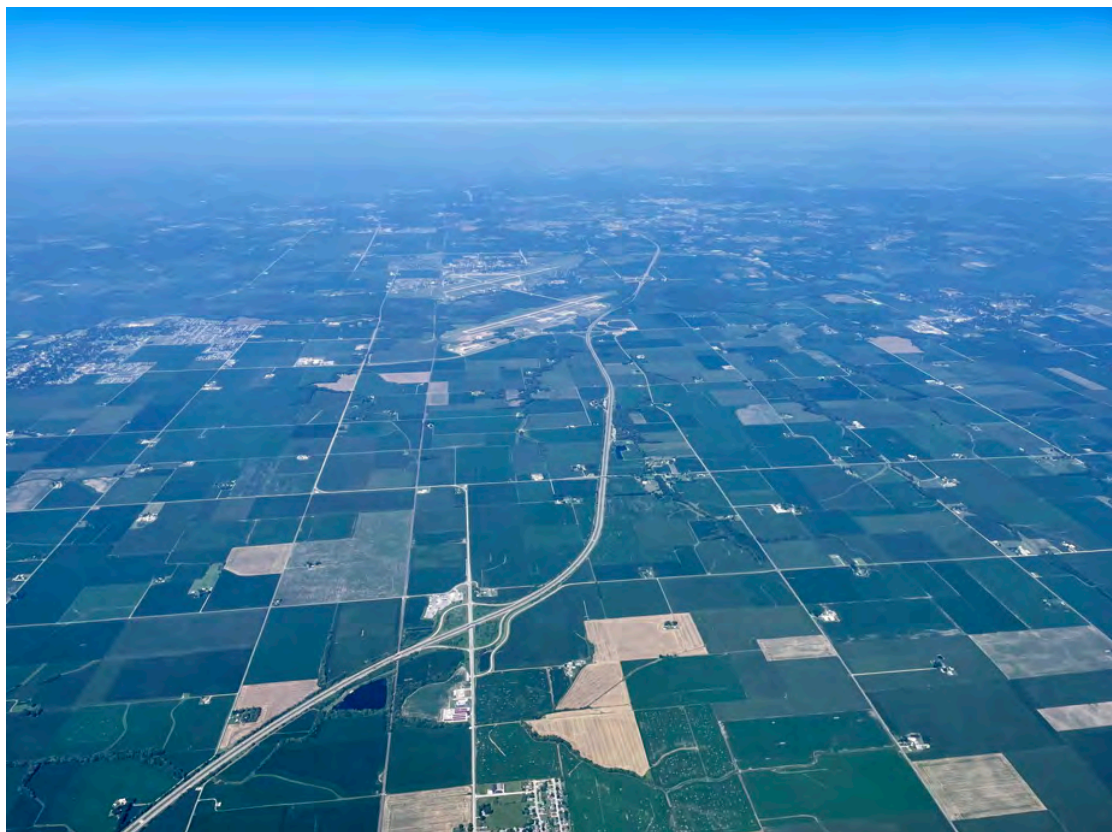
Takeoff from ✈ **KJBR Jonesboro Muni** at 21 Jul 2022 14:33 Z

Landing at ✈ **KEFT Monroe Muni** at 21 Jul 2022 17:37 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 3 hr 4 m (3.1 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 421 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 10,248 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 185 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 137 kt

Continuing North, passing East of St Louis and over Peoria.







Suddenly I'm abeam Chicago...





My landing at Monroe Muni is for fuel, and a last Oshkosh weather check... I'm also trying to guess which runway is used for arrivals, so as to arrange the NOTICE pages in the correct order.



Here and now I really become aware how small this globe called the World is... frightening in a way, exposing the fragility of the Planet.

Leaving early morning, I have flown the 2 first legs of the day, with reduced power settings, and some headwinds. And now I'm already in what I label as northern US, having come from the South! Moving at a steady pace, with no traffic lights nor other obstructions, one certainly gets moving along.

A Dutch lady, US resident, and myself spend some time chatting about green agriculture whilst her husband refuels their airplane. Another short chart with 2 bush plane pilots, also heading for Oshkosh albeit in a couple of days, and it is time for me to go.

Takeoff from ✈️ **KEFT Monroe Muni** at 21 Jul 2022 18:36 Z

Landing at ✈️ **KOSH Wittman** at 21 Jul 2022 19:32 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 56 min (0.9 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 118 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 8,048 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 186 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 127 kt



It is now a short flight to the transition starting point for the arrival into Oshkosh



I have, against the promulgated advice in the NOTICE, programmed all the waypoints of the route into both of my iPads. The philosophy of the NOTICE is to spend a maximum time looking outside, which I can fully agree with... but having to look inside to compare the routing on a chart with the outside view of an unknown countryside does not work too well on a track that is supposed to be precisely flown... far better have the autopilot (named Dan in my case 😊) fly the transition, with only quick glimpses inside to verify one's accuracy. But who am I really, to dare think anything: aviation shows not lack of experts, all levels confounded...



Excerpt of the 32 pages (...) long NOTICE, and the Homebuilt Aircraft Camping sign to show to the marshals once on the ground...



It is early in the afternoon, and luckily not too busy...

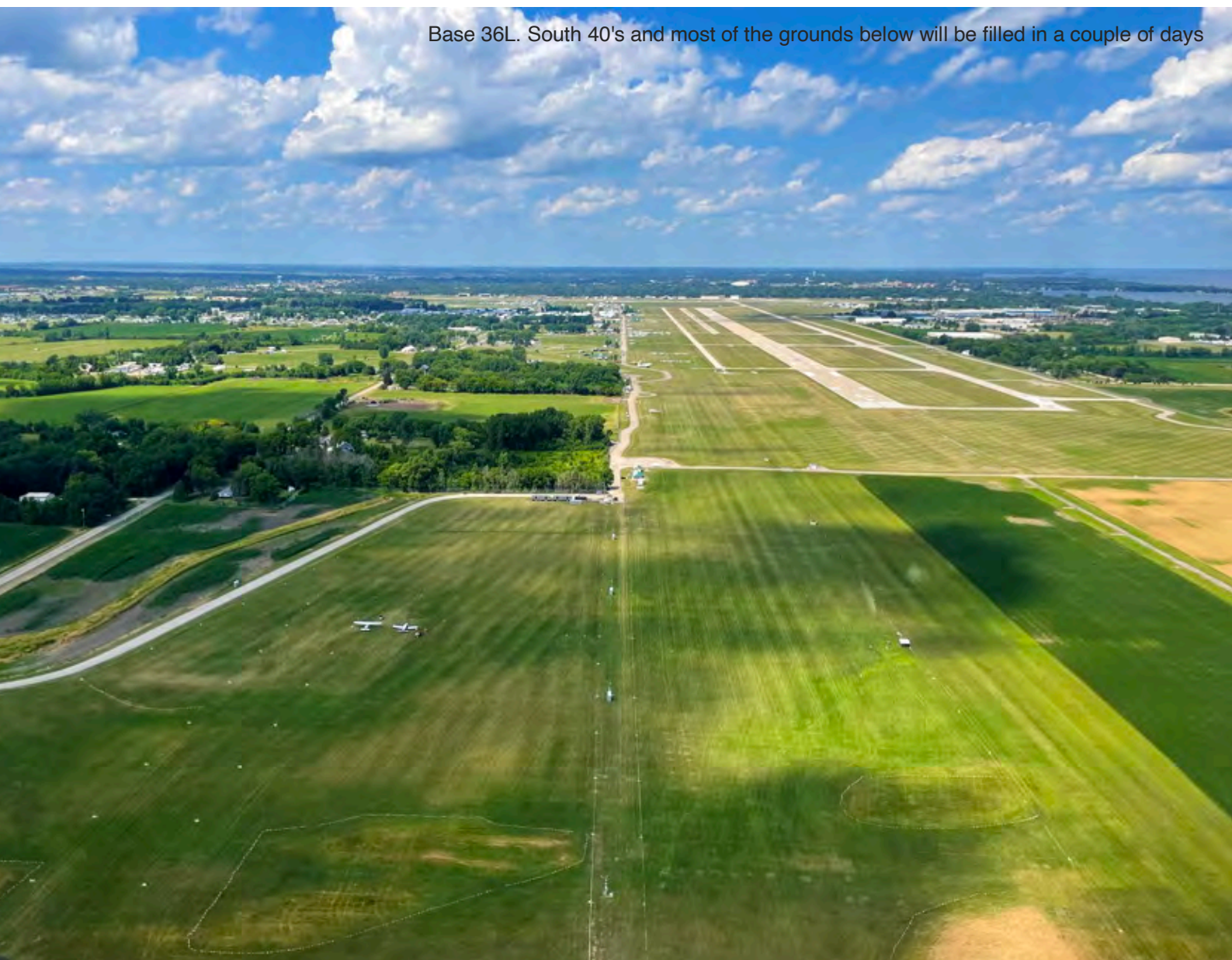
The procedure is to listen to the ATIS, then pick-up and follow an aircraft ahead of yourself, and fly the whole route at a miserly slow 90Kts whilst maintaining 1'800ft... were I to fly the approach again, I would certainly use the 2nd "offer" of the notice: 135Kts at 2'300ft labelled "if needed for safety of flight".

Approaching the first point of the transition I spot a few other airplanes converging, and pick the one closest to my position. Snailing behind my high wing reference aircraft, my ADSB detects a rapidly approaching boogie in my 6... just as the collision warning awakes, I make a sharp S turn and spot a yellow RV type aircraft way too close for comfort 😬 It's pilot probably didn't see me, certainly focused on the same high wing reference aircraft as myself... he retreats and the separation increases fast 😊

The talk on the frequency is surprising to say the least. Some pilots are not aware of the NOTICE at all, others ask ATC to explain the whole procedure on a "no talk" approach, whilst others bitch at each other, brilliant. Not.

The wind is given as westerly, 15-17 knots. Runway assignment is done approaching the famous point Fisk. The high wing type in front of me gets 27, the ex-attacker behind me 27. "*Red RV turn right at Fisk, follow East-West road runway 36L*"... my request for 27 meets firm disapproval. Twice. So I continue for 36L to "*land after the purple dot*". There goes a crosswind landing demo for the avidly watching crowd 😊

Can't say I'm positively impressed by the whole experience...



Base 36L. South 40's and most of the grounds below will be filled in a couple of days



I now taxi to the Homebuilt Area Camping. The [EAA](#) volunteers have not yet all arrived, but thanks to my previous visits, I quite easily find HBC and park next to same of kin aircraft 🤗

There are already what must be 300+ aircraft, and hundreds of pitched up tents on the grounds. On Thursday afternoon, for an event starting officially on Monday! The downside being that some of the facilities, such as food vendors, display halls, etc, are still being set up, the whole place akin to a construction site for the next couple of days.

I go and meet the neighbors, set up camp, and go register myself.

EAA Lifetime Member for a few years now, I find the \$469 I have to shell out for the week pretty steep. The camping night alone retails \$30 a night, 3 of them as a minimum charge... I'm camping only 1 night, so will get a refund alright. But \$90 for 1 night 🙄

Super friendly Ed, one of the cohorts of fantastic EAA volunteers, drives me and some of my campground colleagues to the “Red Barn” market, where we can provision on food... and beer.

And that first one sure tastes good 🍺





## Day #33 - 39

### No flying week (as in “rest week” 😊)

On the next day I meet some other travelers, Argentinians Tinti and Guille, all the way from southern South America in their RV-7. They have gone as far up as Alaska, so our paths must have somehow crossed. We befriend readily, and I help them set up for a 100h inspection at the Emergency Repair Booth, another great Oshkosh idea and place, and run again, by volunteers. For anyone interested in their adventures, please have a look at their website under [Patagonia Alaska](#).

New friends Tinti and Guille posing in front of their RV-7 “Correcaminos”



As they perform their maintenance, loudspeakers give out a severe weather warning for the end of the afternoon, probable thunderstorms, strong winds and rain, and possible hail. A quick check on the amazing Windy app confirms the incoming squall line...

As Tinti and Guille move from their previous parking spot to a more shaded by trees area, I decide to do the same. Our new spot is bordered by trees on the West and South side, and the airplanes should now benefit from a better protection for the incoming elements.

Repositioned in anticipation of forecast storms





Well, camping is always kind of survival for me... so I'm more than happy to meet "Watchdog" Mickey, freshly arrived from Switzerland, as we will be sharing a room in the dorms for the remainder of my stay here... hey Mickey, thanks for the hospitality during the week, sure was appreciated 👍

The storms hit pretty hard in the evening, as we are enjoying Mexican food in town.

I've done what I could, and I'm kind of resigned. YLL is solidly tied down thanks to the Big Screw tie-downs purchased this very morning, the gust lock is securing all control surfaces, and the canopy cover is installed.

But hail or other possible flying objects remain as my worries...

Next morning:

Seeing some of the damaged airplanes and tents is a sad sight...

## Some Damage After Storm Rips AirVenture (Updated)

By Russ Niles • Published: July 24, 2022

11



Early reports suggest there was damage to aircraft and infrastructure at EAA AirVenture when a persistent series of storms rolled through the area Saturday evening and early Sunday. EAA spokesman Dick Knapinski told local media aircraft on Boeing Plaza were damaged and some exhibits and other items blown around. Trees were blown down and vehicles damaged by falling branches. He said he thought aircraft in the parking area were mostly secured but there are social media accounts of aircraft damage. The main gate was also damaged. So far there have been no reports of injuries. The Red Cross opened an evacuation center to help attendees ride out the storm, which was packing a big punch well into the early hours of Sunday.

Show organizers had plenty of notice of the approaching system and canceled evening activities. The show doesn't officially start until Monday but there are numerous events and preparation activities on the grounds before the gates open formally. One of the casualties of the storm was an especially rare Pheasant H-10 biplane built in nearby Fond du Lac and owned by the EAA Museum

According to social media posts, the aircraft was securely tied down but was ripped from its moorings and flipped into a tree. The plane is apparently one of three left, and airport namesake Steve Wittman was the chief test pilot. It took significant damage but was mainly intact in the early evening.

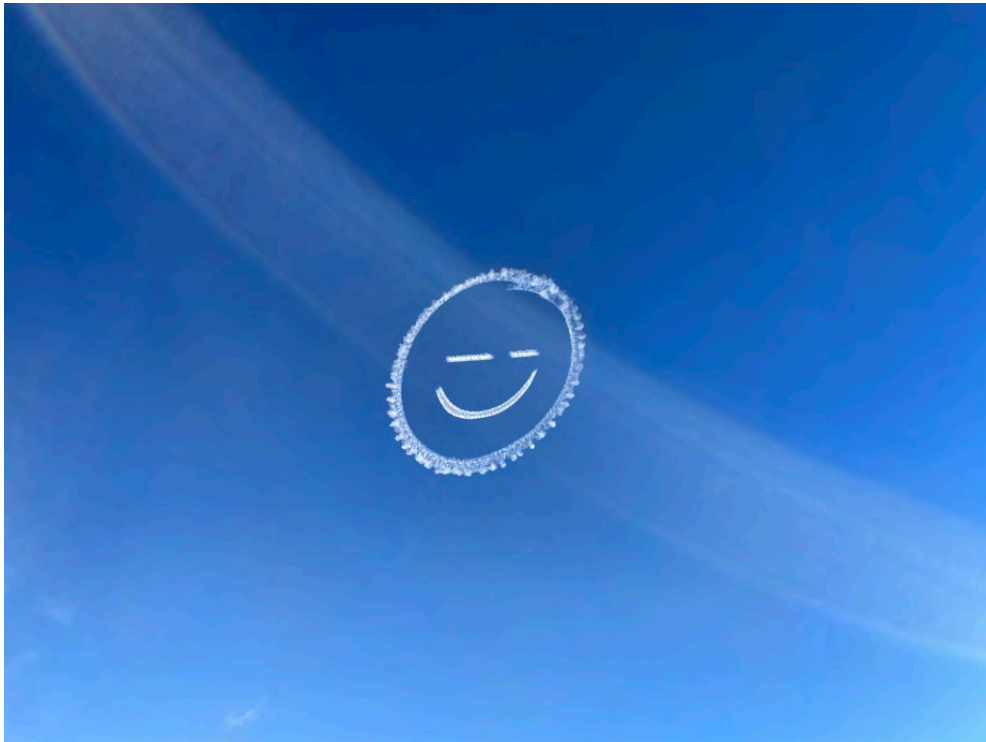




Yep, this is aluminum... one of the many damaged RV rudders around... the gust lock lets go in the heavy gusts and the rudder slams into the elevators

I really feel sorry for the guys affected, go and meet most of them. So sad, flying in with your pride and joy, only to have it damaged before the show even officially starts... I'm lucky, YLL rode out the storms unscathed.

But the show must go on...



One of the thing which I don't quit, even whilst at Oshkosh, is walking. The grounds are getting bigger by the year, and South 40's aircraft parking has now extended South of the city limits, amazing really. There I briefly meet with fellow NAT flyer German Kathrin, who flew VFR in her Grumman AA-5 Traveler. Despite speaking the same language, the encounter is rather brief... pity, as I would have been interested in sharing our experiences.





The rest of my stay at AirVenture is rather, dare I use the word, boring... Oshkosh has over the years become nothing else but a big cash cow. As priorities have shifted to military and commercial promotion, the true homebuilder is being left behind.

Oshkosh has unfortunately lost most of its shine and spirit in trade for fame and fortune...

Even the daily airshow is boring, or is it only me? Having seen so many of them, I'm not able to watch one of them in full during the week of my stay... I'm only annoyed by the noise of afterburners, whilst others stand in awe... at least they seem to have done with the "Wall of Fire" act, which in my eyes is more of an environmental affront than anything else. Yes, I do confirm, I'm a real old fart 😊

Oshkosh positives? Yes, there still are plenty. First the people, mostly aviators, having the same interest, maybe even as passionate... and very accessible. Walk the warbirds flight line, spot that shiny restored as-new-or-better-than P51 Mustang, start a conversation with the owner/pilot, and she/he will take time to share, explain, listen.

Take a seat at one of the picnic tables, and guaranteed you will be engaged in an interesting conversation with your yet unknown neighbor. Aviation sure is a strong magnet.

Of course, the real stars are the airplanes themselves. Some of the "must see" are the ultralights, the antiques, the warbirds, and the homebuilts, all displayed in their specific areas.

And there are thousands of them 😊



There are dozens of free daily forums one can attend, go and listen, learn and understand, from high speed aerodynamics to the inner workings of a combustion engine.



Not to be missed, Pioneer Airport and the very neat EAA museum, admission being included in the daily AirVenture pass.

Though I did not publicly announce The Tour, some of the folks back home were avidly following my every move 😎

And so I'm now able to meet with a few of the visiting members of our EAS (Experimental Aviation of Switzerland) association.

Even Marc, the pilot that flew the displayed Pilatus PC-24 solo from Stans, Switzerland, to Oshkosh, takes some time off to visit me by YLL. It sure is an interesting talk comparing our NAT crossings 😊

It was nice meeting up with you guys 👍

This year also marks Van's Aircraft Inc. 50th anniversary, so 50 RVs fly a celebration formation



The Vans RV-15 prototype has arrived...

and YLL is being judged







"Watchdog" Mickey has enlisted as an EAA volunteer. He participates in a course, and is then nominated as a marshaler in the Antiques area. Pretty cool I think, respect.

I would like to take the opportunity to bow to the all the **volunteers** at EAA AirVenture. Only you gals & guys, often sacrificing your vacations, make the show possible.

You are **the real spirits of Oshkosh!**

The RV Banquet is pretty dry... (but for the adventurer amongst us 😊)



On the last day of my stay, Thursday Aug 28, I meet yet another NAT flyer, father and son team Salvo and Bruno, who flew across the pond on basically the same route as I did. In their very recently completed and magnificent RV-7...



Departing as a team of 4 RV aircraft from Europe, 3 French and 1 German, they are the only ones having made it...

Tomorrow will be departure day...



## Day #40

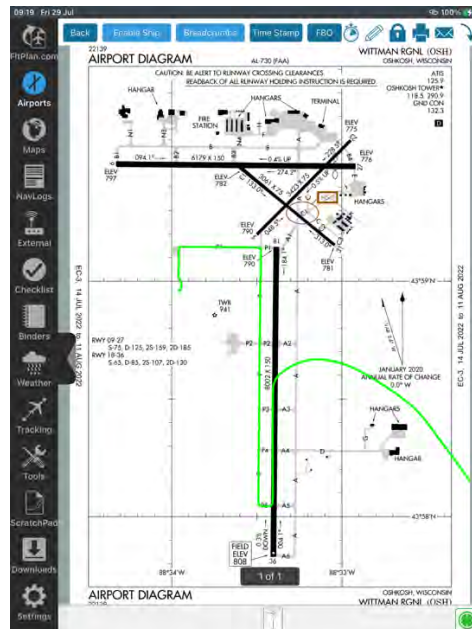
Finally I'm leaving. I realize now that I got real tired of Oshkosh... too much frenzy, too many people, too artificial, too much Americana, too much of everything and nothing 🤪

I pack up my things, untie YLL, and bid farewell to my neighbors and friends, Canadian and Québécois.

Notice departure procedures, studied and memorized



... and in green my taxi and departure paths



In the run-up position for 36L. Thanks for that shot Mickey, love it!



Takeoff from ✪ **KOSH Wittman** at 29 Jul 2022 13:51 Z

Landing at 🏝️ **2P2 Washington Island** at 29 Jul 2022 14:53 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 1 hr 2 m (1.0 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 146 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 2,739 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 182 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 141 kt



One last look, so long AirVenture... I'm sooo happy being back in the air in my little YLL, again "free as a bird"



Rejoining and following Lake Michigan's western shore, I'm once more dazzled by its size. More akin to sea than a lake really

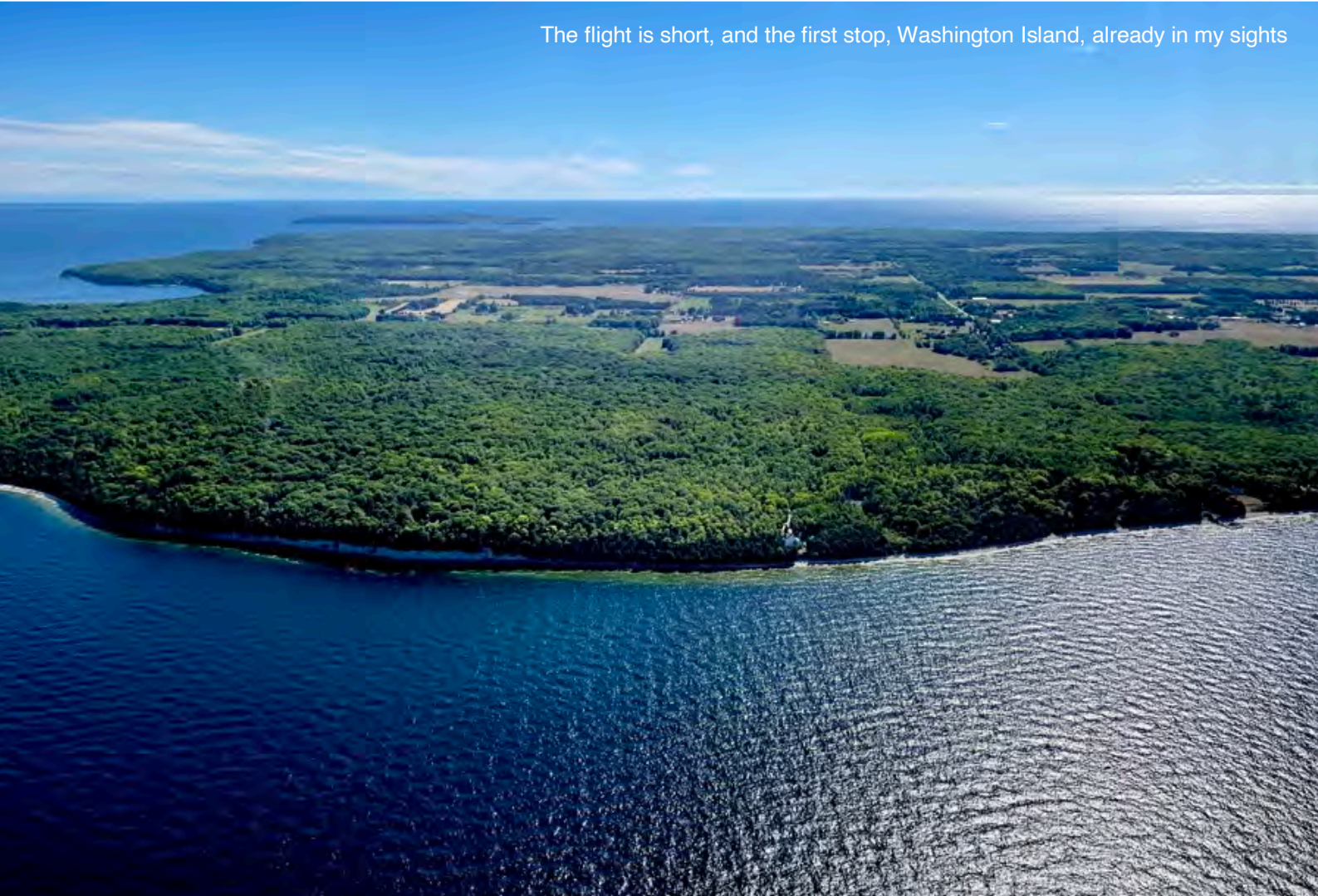




Even the different hues of the water remind one more of salty waters



The flight is short, and the first stop, Washington Island, already in my sights





Grass runways, parachute activity. No facilities but for restrooms, my ground stop is short...

Next island please 🙏



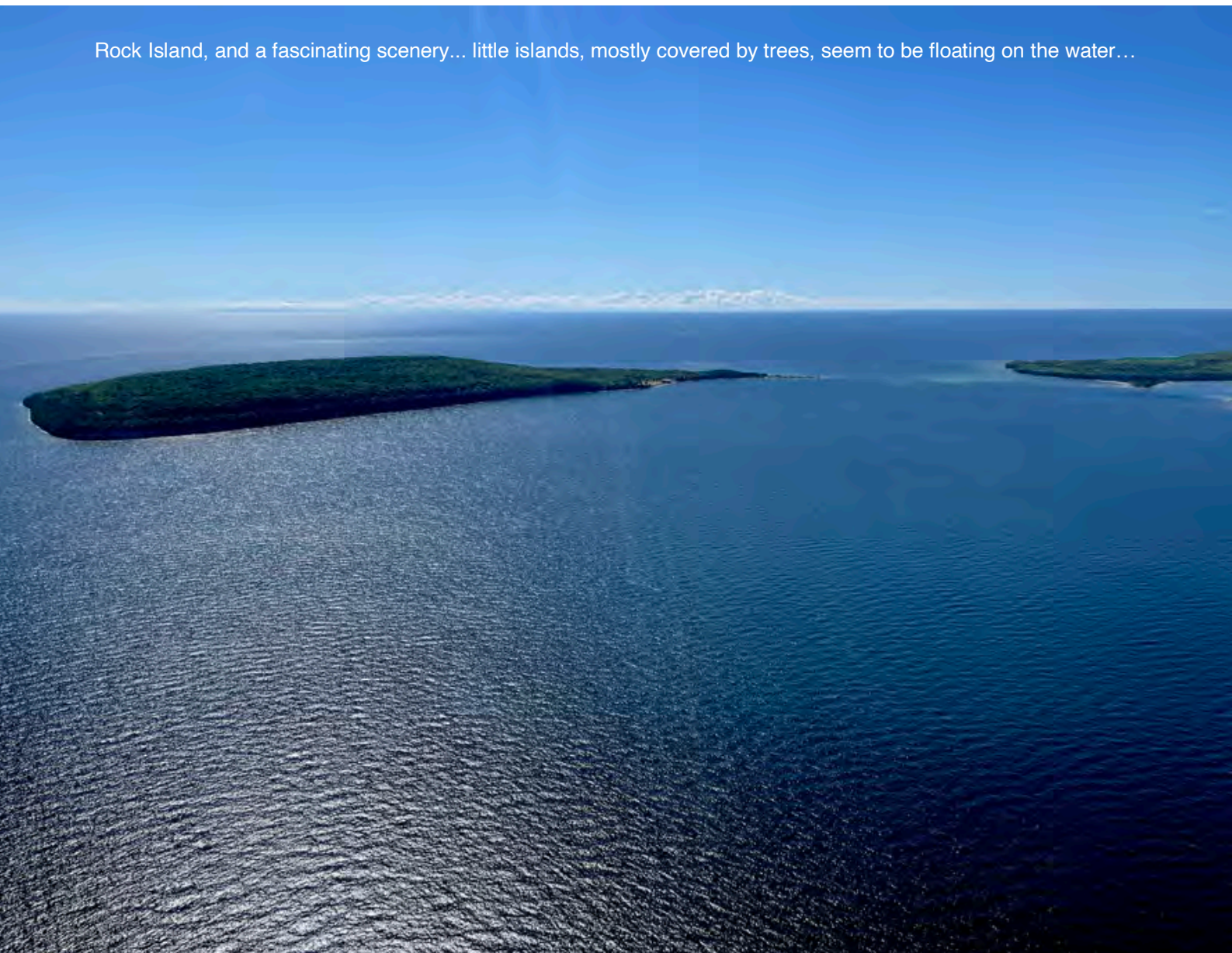
Takeoff from 📍 **2P2 Washington Island** at 29 Jul 2022 15:18 Z

Landing at 📍 **6Y3 North Fox Island** at 29 Jul 2022 15:48 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 30 min (0.5 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 67 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 2,637 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 171 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 136 kt

Rock Island, and a fascinating scenery... little islands, mostly covered by trees, seem to be floating on the water...

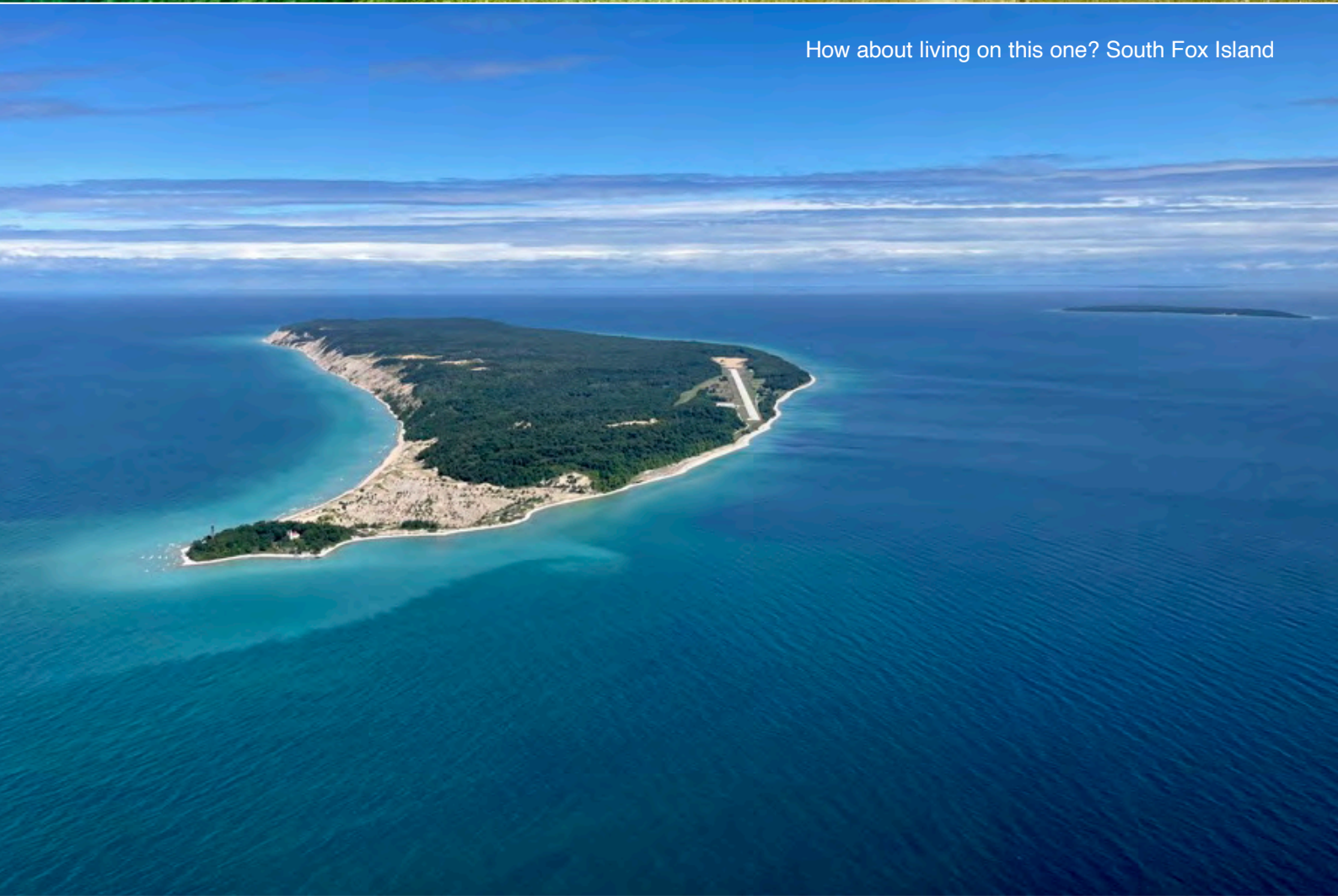




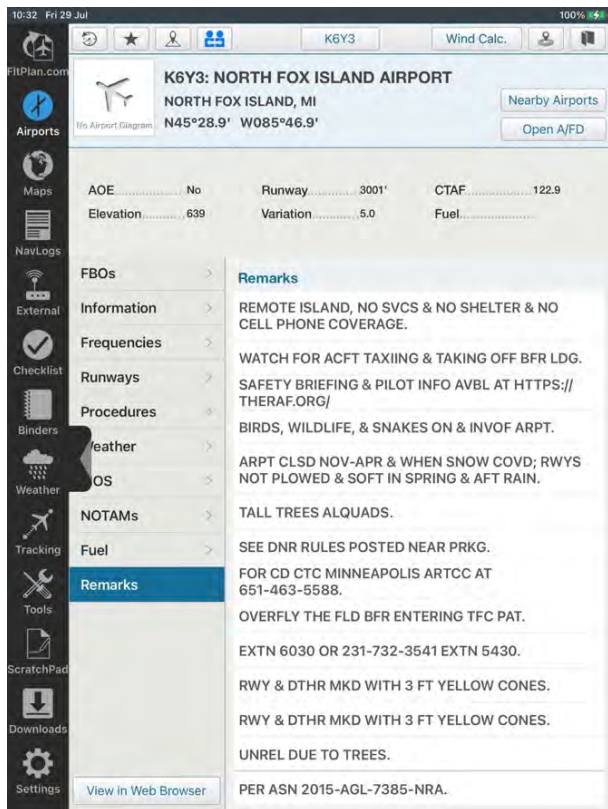
Submerged sandbank



How about living on this one? South Fox Island



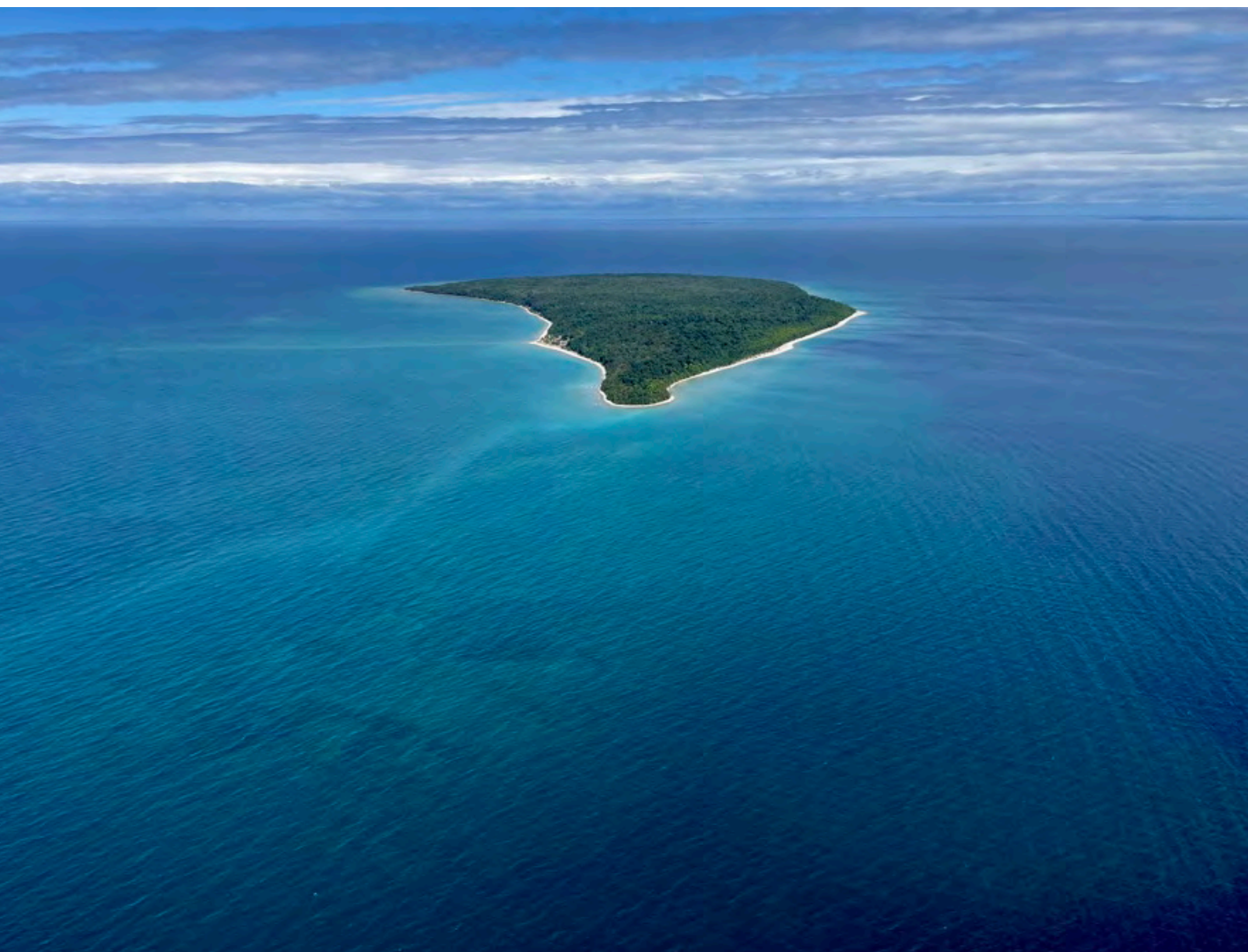




But my goal is the next one, North Fox Island. The briefing sheet shows some interesting features, as no services, no shelter, no cell phone coverage, but wildlife and snakes, and tall trees...

Is this northern America, or some bush strip in the vicinity of Borneo 🤔

Approaching the island I wonder if it's the right one... the little jewel is covered by dense vegetation



Only when on the East side of the Island can I finally get to see the trench, nestled within the jungle like forest













Descending below the high tree line is impressive and somehow makes judging the flare more difficult (a good pilot always has a good excuse 😊).

The runway itself is a bit bumpy, but quite ok. I park on the side, then shutdown... silence...

I spot 2 aircraft parked in the distance, butterflies and birds abound. The air smells of wood, the breeze is light, and the temperature just perfect 🌞

Is it that I already passed away and moved to paradise?

I walk to the other visitors, all super friendly folks, camping. I greet them, short chat. Pointing to the shoreline I kid "so, *where's the nude beach?*"

"*The nude beach starts where you take your clothes off*" is the answer 👍

There is a small BBQ fireplace. And a billboard posting, amongst other useful information, these most important "Flying rules":

The vegetation is massive... laying by the small path leading to the western beach are 2 kayaks, ready for use.

And the beach is magnificent. The clean and agreeable water is an invitation I can't refuse. Got to ask again, am I already in paradise?

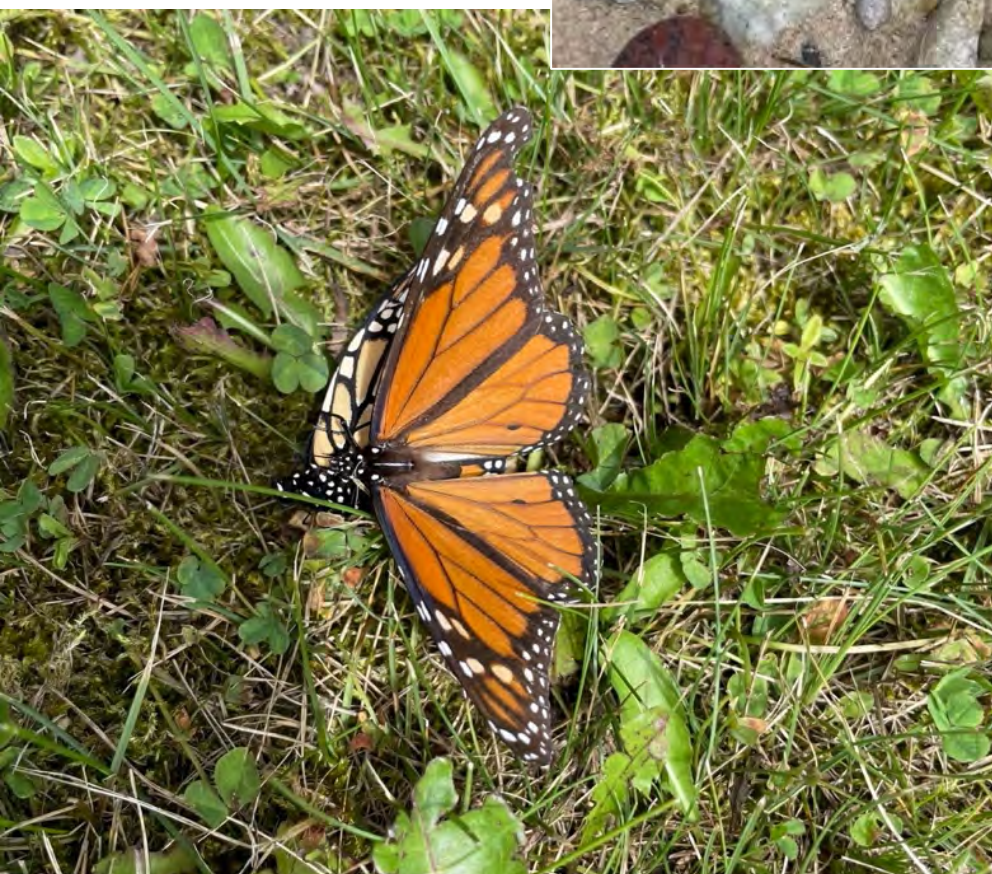






Multicolored pebbles  
lay on the beach, a  
small selection, for  
your eyes only...

... one the abundant non-  
venomous snakes...



... and fighting butterflies



Had I known about North Fox Island before... I would then have left Oshkosh 2-3 days earlier to resource myself whilst camping here. Oh well, next time then 🤔

Unfortunately it is now time to leave. I have filed my entry into Canada for 17:00LT, and still have to confirm my arrival to the CBP by telephone. Since there is no cell cover here, I have to make the short hop back to "civilization", named Beaver Island...

Takeoff from 🇺🇸 **6Y3 North Fox Island** at 29 Jul 2022 17:07 Z

Landing at 🇨🇦 **KSJX Beaver Island** at 29 Jul 2022 17:17 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 10 min (0.2 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 21 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 2,004 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 156 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 124 kt

Beaver Island looks like another inviting place...





Approaching it's neat little airport



And the FBO/terminal ramp





Once refueled, I'm put on hold for 50 (fifty) minutes on the sole number provided by the Canadian CBP before being able to speak to an officer... place and time of arrival into Canada are then confirmed.

I still have an hour to kill, which I spend reading on the comfortable sofa of the FBO. Customs requirement being to land precisely on the time as agreed...

Takeoff from  **KSJX Beaver Island** at 29 Jul 2022 19:33 Z

Landing at  **CYAM Sault Ste Marie** at 29 Jul 2022 20:18 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 45 min (0.8 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 94 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 2,358 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 166 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 127 kt

The flight to Sault Ste Marie, called "*Sut'*" by the locals, is mostly spent slaloming between islands.

In close proximity, an inviting (or not) strip on a turtle shaped island





Caribbean? Wrong 🤔

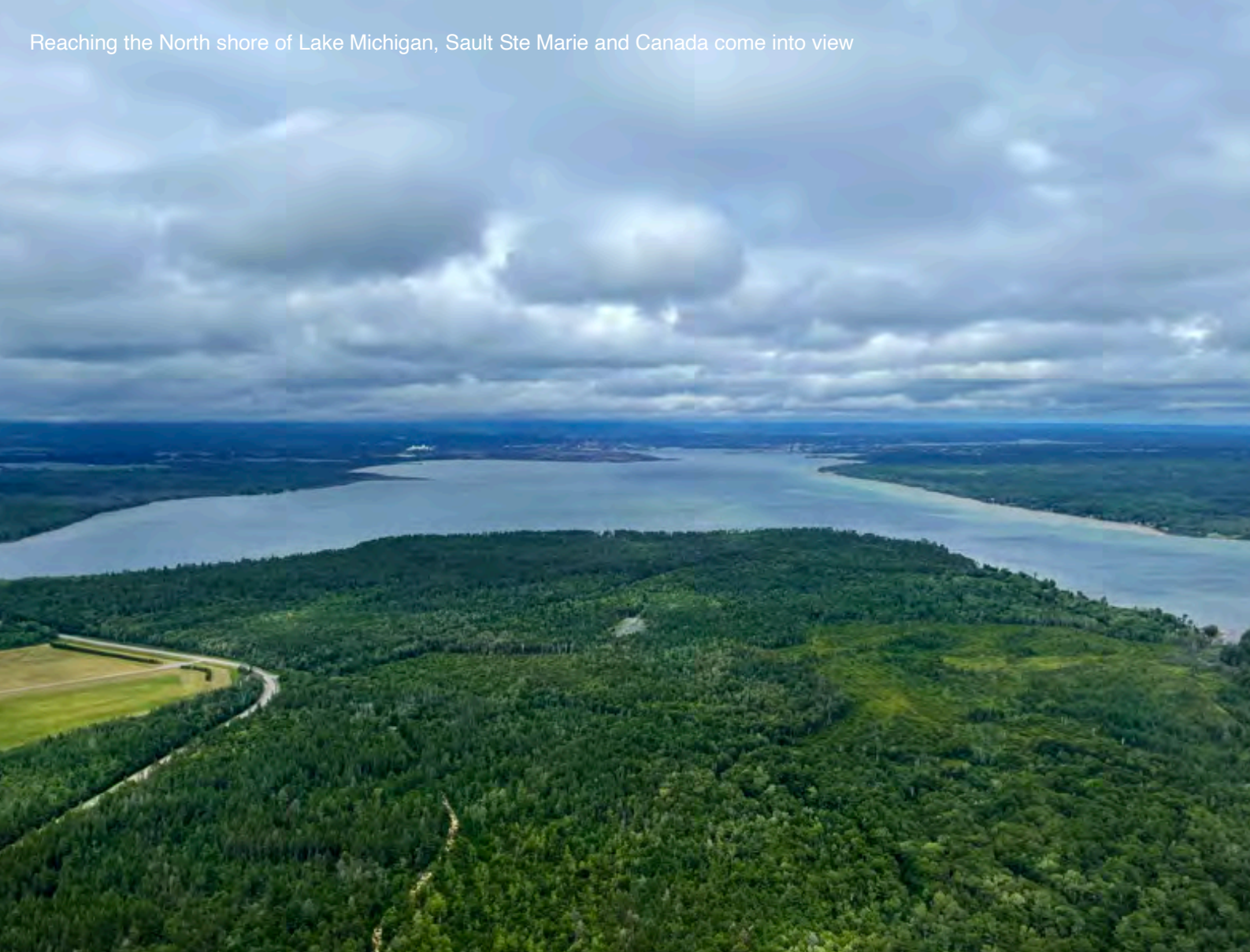


More of the same, but different





Reaching the North shore of Lake Michigan, Sault Ste Marie and Canada come into view



The airport of CYAM





And it's tower and terminal... with part of YLL's wingtip in the foreground



After landing I'm instructed to taxi next to the tower for customs clearance. Knowing about the strict rules of US and Canadian CBP, I stay put inside YLL, and start to read a book....1/2 hour later I call the tower up: *"oh, they're probably be stuck in a traffic jam on the bridge"*.

I now call CBP on my cell phone, and the same message as before informs me of a 50 minutes waiting time. In the end I now stay a full 1:03h (1 hour and 3 minutes) on line before someone deems answering... ah no, no one will come, there's your entry clearance number.

Almost 2 hours of waiting, no apologies, no nothing. Good thing I'm on vacation... so lucky to be here, I will keep wearing my stay happy smile 😊

But hey, at the moment I hang up a lady from the tower comes down to me and hands me a bottle of water... these folks were worrying about me, nice touch, thanks 🙌

Terry is one more RV builder and owner. I had previously made contact with him, and also met him during the Oshkosh week. He very kindly offered accommodation, and use of his hangar & tools for the by now due 100h/before crossing inspection.

He has been patiently waiting, and now marshals me to his hangar. I take the cowls off and start the inspection with the "hot items", before we call it a day and go into town...





## Day #41

The rest of the inspection takes the whole morning and the first part of the afternoon. Especially the engine gets a thorough look at, including borescoping all of the cylinders. YLL has been carrying all the specialized tooling along on The Tour, good girl 🥰

All is good, and YLL is pronounced fit to continue and once more cross the NAT 🙌

My dilemma now is as follows: either to fly home using the shortest way, or head towards Nova Scotia, an area which I'm keen to visit. It's already late, and I decide to initially fly East to St-Jean, which is in the direction of Nova Scotia, and once there overnight and take the decision as to the further route.

I thank Terry for his help, and bid farewell to Sault Ste Marie and its famous locks.

Takeoff from ✈️ **CYAM Sault Ste Marie** at 30 Jul 2022 18:35 Z

Landing at ✈️ **CYJN St-Jean** at 30 Jul 2022 21:33 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 2 hr 58 m (3.0 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 505 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 7,936 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 194 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 170 kt





Somewhere after having flown by Lake Nipissing...



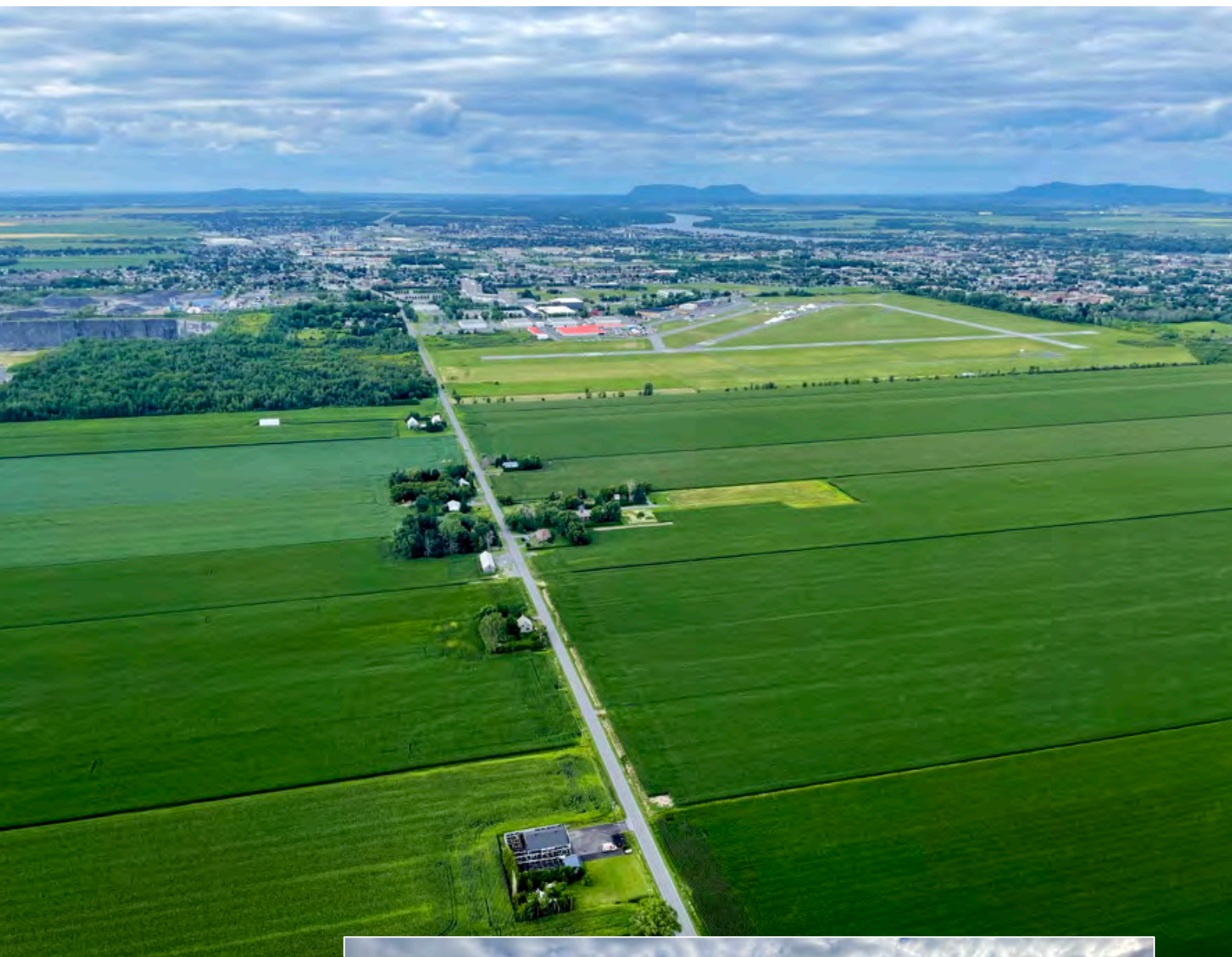
Transit North of capital city Ottawa before crossing the St Lawrence River, looking towards Montreal





I thought to be quite fluent in French, but listening to the ATC chatter in the local singing dialect makes me aware of my limitations 😊

The weather is good and the flight relaxed, and I'm soon approaching The airport of St-Jean and it's city of Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu.



No mention in the NOTAMs, but part of the field is closed for some forthcoming hot air balloon festival.

Once landed, finding a parking spot is slightly challenging, but YLL is finally secured and I walk into town...







I then spent a frustrating 3 hours looking for a room for the night. Nil B&B, and the only 3 hotels are fully booked...

I walk, ask people, get evasive directions, walk some more, make phone calls, all to no avail. I walk another 5km along the river and find an auberge/motel, but again, no vacancies 🏠



Just as my 😊 starts fading away, the nice receptionist takes pity and asks me to wait as they are looking into a solution...

An hour of waiting later, a room has been cleared and cleaned in the motel, thanks to a couple of employees agreeing on sharing one room... phew, and thanks 😊

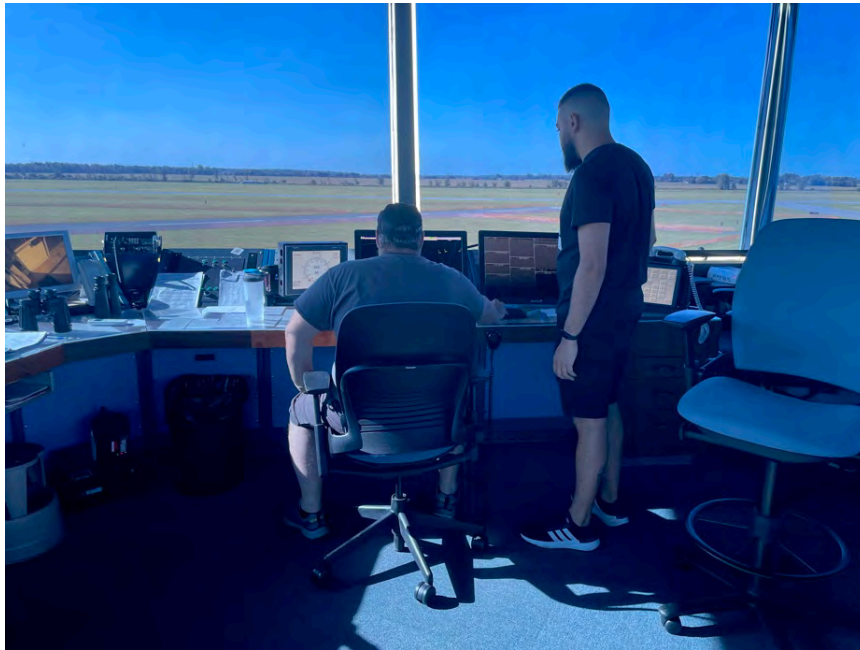


## Day #42

Today's early walk to the airport doesn't really pay off, as I find the pump locked...

I'm then told that the FBO person only arrives at 9am. But wait, this is Sunday, so that will rather be 10am... which is in more than 2 hours' time. Smile 😊

The nice controllers in the tower invite me up to their office for a chat. We talk aviation for about an hour, and when the pump is finally set free from its lock I can refuel.



The weather outlook for Nova Scotia is not really great.

I have now been "on the road" for more than 40 days, and feel fatigue creeping in. I'm just getting tired of always changing beds, having to chase people and hotels around, not being able to properly feed, and plainly start missing home.

Therefore the decision is taken to head home on a more or less direct way, save for a few remaining POIs. All whilst respecting my philosophy of the lesser exposure to risks, as in again making the shortest, or close to, overwater crossings for the Canada-Greenland-Iceland-Scotland route.

Today's destination is Kuujuaq, close to the South side of the Hudson Strait. AVGAS availability, a successful hotel booking, and closeness to one of the POIs have been the deciding factors. I will therefore cross most of Quebec's province on a more or less northerly course. Roberval lies nicely on this route, and will only serve as a fuel/stretch-one's-legs stop.

Takeoff from ✈️ **CYJN St Jean** at 31 Jul 2022 13:43 Z

Landing at 🛬 **CYRJ Roberval** at 31 Jul 2022 15:09 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 1 hr 26 m (1.4 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 206 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 7,905 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 176 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 144 kt

A northerly heading is taken soon after take-off, and I can make the outline of the city of Montreal on my left side. Weather ahead is looking good.



Overflying the Lac Saint-Pierre on the St Lawrence River



The airport of Roberval is located on the West shore of Lake Saint-Jean





The place is quite windy, and the temperature rather cool. Not much activity.  
39 minutes later, defueled and refueled, I can take-off again north-east-northbound.

Takeoff from  **CYRJ Roberval** at 31 Jul 2022 15:48 Z

Landing at  **CYVP Kuujuaq** at 31 Jul 2022 19:50 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 4 hr 2 m (4.0 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 598 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 13,763 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 208 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 148 kt

Clouds are soon encountered, and I fly on top

Later, as the clouds ahead rise, I descend to have look below them...



This works for a while. But half an hour later, as I'm forced down on the deck, I give up, enter reduced visibility conditions and climb to more than 13'000ft to be more or less in the clear again.

The OAT now shows -2°C, and I observe a light accumulation of ice on the wings and the windscreen, but nothing to really worry about... nevertheless, I start a descent into warmer air.

This is when I then notice some weird speed indications, IAS 32, TAS 40, and GS 171... I've had the same symptoms on a training flight before, I know what's in store 🤔



And sooo, a few minutes later... the AIRSPEED FAIL flag appears.

Did I mention that YLL's pitot tube isn't heated? Though not aided by trying to take pictures at the same time, flying pitch/power is not a problem, probably helped by some of the good training received in the Airbus flight simulator 👍

To make things a little more interesting, my auxiliary tank electrical transfer pump decides to pack up at this very moment too... it is not running anymore, and scorching hot to the feel. Time to pull the electrical cord... good thing that I have more than enough fuel

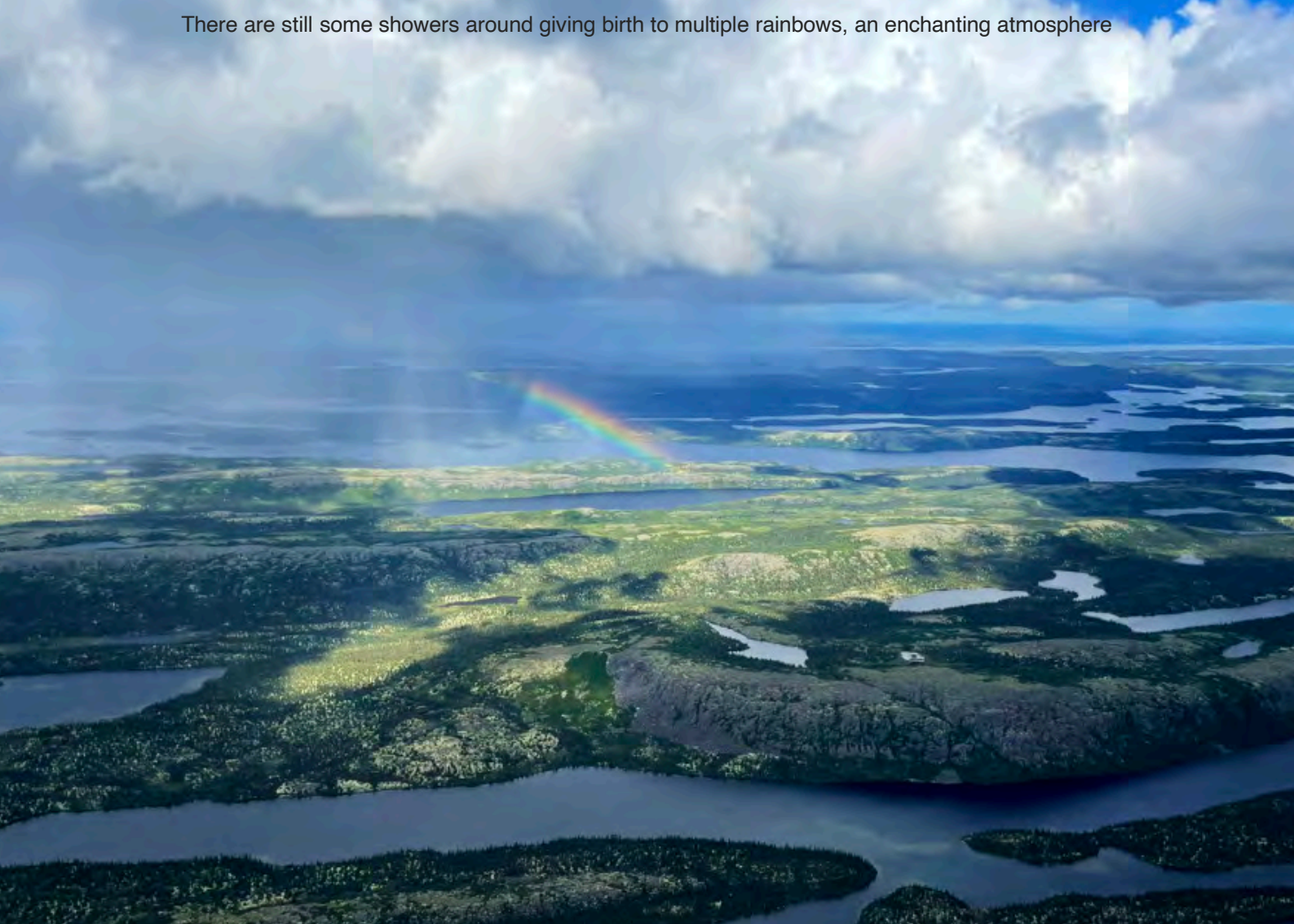




About 30 minutes later the weather starts improving, and I'm flying now flying in between layers



There are still some showers around giving birth to multiple rainbows, an enchanting atmosphere

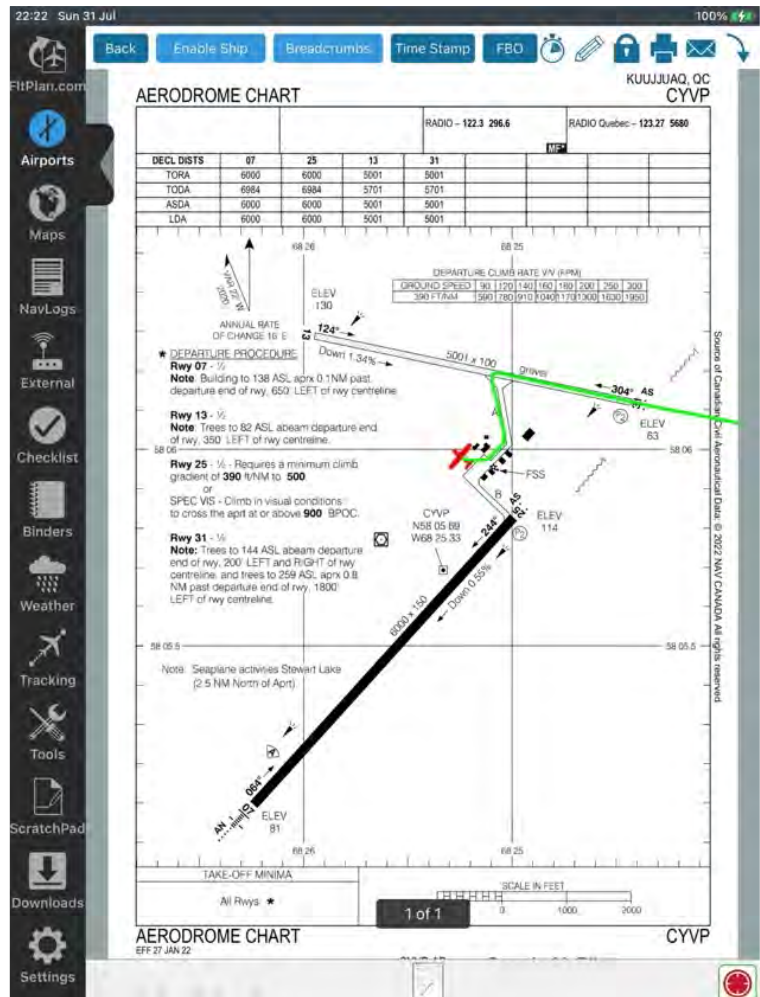




In the meantime the ice in the pitot tube thaws out, and full speed indications are recovered. Good 🍷











On the other hand, I am once more dealing with friendly and happy to help people. A barrel half full of “leftover” fuel will be good enough for tomorrow’s single sector, many thanks mister Fuel Man 😊

And so I have to again resort to my manual transfer procedure, such as wiggle, pour, wiggle, pour, etc...



Once I’m done, I remove the fuel transfer pump from the aircraft and take it to the Air Inuit maintenance shop. There it is pronounced dead due to seizure, and thrown into the recycle bin.

Just as I get back to YLL, a heavy shower hits. I jump in and close the canopy. Whilst rain batters against the Plexiglas, I now connect the fuel hoses in order to make a direct connection between the valve of the tank, and the quick disconnect of the fuel feed line.





But future operation will reveal that despite having the aux tank sitting at a higher position than the wing tank (in flight), only about half of the contents can be transferred, even when applying physical pressure on the rubber bladder tank.

This means that part of my emergency fuel is not available anymore, and I will have to take this into account...



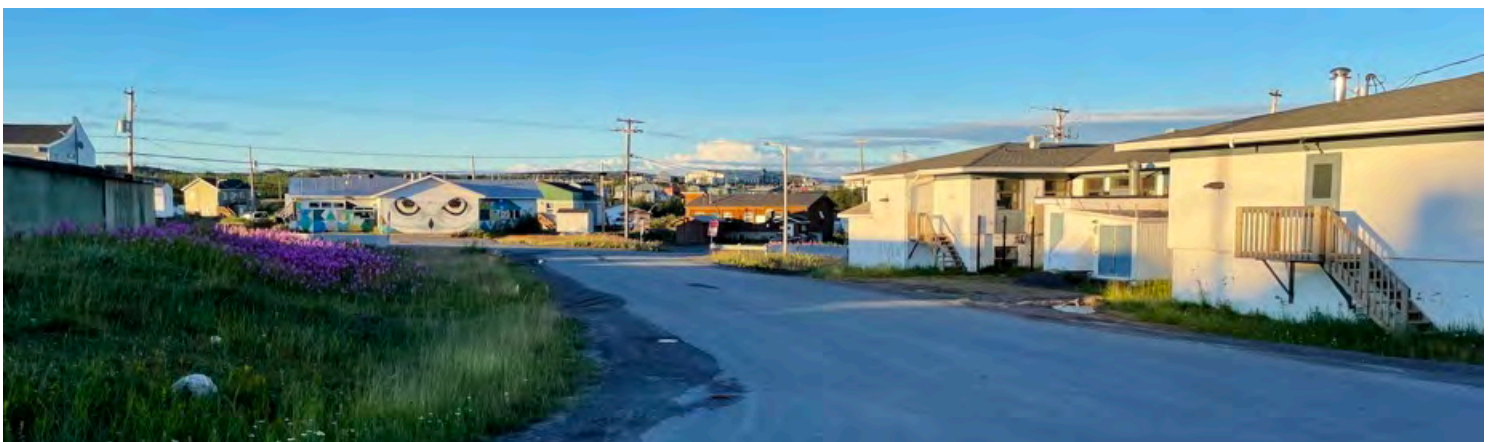


The city of Kuujjuaq, an Inuit community...



I'm dropped at the Coop (...) hotel by the head of maintenance, thanks for the ride. Later I find a restaurant, and then take a stroll thru the small settlement. Yes, I'm now back in the "wild North", quads driven by Inuit people going nowhere, stranded snowmobiles and sled dogs, "abandoned" boats.

Also of note, my trusty companions, the mosquitoes, are happy to see me again 🤔





## Day #43

Takeoff from ✈️ **CYVP Kuujuaq** at 01 Aug 2022 11:15 Z

Landing at ✈️ **CYFB Iqaluit** at 01 Aug 2022 14:50 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 3 hr 35 m (3.6 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 486 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 3,448 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 179 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 136 kt

The walk to the airport is around 20 minutes. I taxi out and take-off towards the northwest, right on track for my POI...





As can be seen, the conditions are very good, and the landscape mmmh, awe-inspiring?



Any mere mortal pilot would find it very difficult to resist the temptation of low flying that meandering river





Hey, there it is, my POI, straight ahead!



Ref Wikipedia:

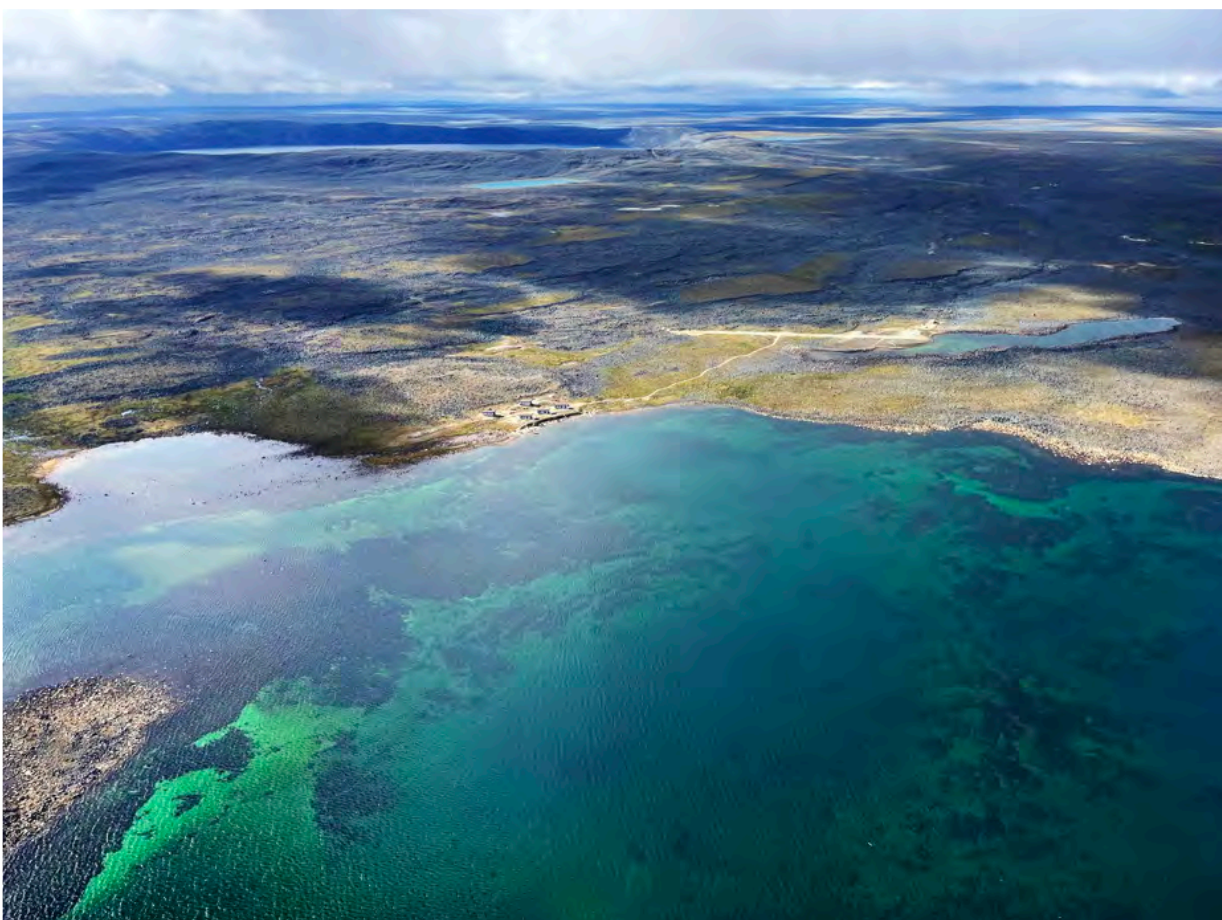
*The Pingualuit Crater, formerly called the “Chubb Crater” and later the “New Quebec Crater”, is a relatively young impact crater located on the Ungava Peninsula in the administrative region of Nord-du-Québec, in Quebec, Canada. It is 3.44 km in diameter, and is estimated to be  $1.4 \pm 0.1$  million years old.*

I fly several revolutions around Pingualuit Crater, bedazzled by its changing colors, its almost perfect round shape. It is just throning here, like a pearl in its oyster, but in reversed elements...









Not far from the crater, on the North side, there is a lake with some huts, and an inviting, but short looking runway...

I can barely resist, but manage to. And skip 🙄



After that visit I turn right, now taking a heading towards Iqaluit, the day's destination. Overflying an area which I supposed devoid of human presence, I spot a mining operation... man is definitely everywhere, changing the face of the Planet, fast...







A rock close to Double Island





I'm happily crossing the Hudson Strait at some 3'000ft, when I spot the first icebergs...  
A few of them seem interesting in shape, and I perform an attack dive in order to check them out close.

This maneuver gives the creeps to "Watchdog" Mickey, as he monitors my progress live from his home in Europe... my InReach is showing a near vertical descent, followed by a complete disappearance of the signal 🙊

Moments later the satellite communicator starts emitting again normally.

Thanks for your vigilance Mickey!



On the other hand, it is whilst I'm playing jump iceberg that I realize not wearing my survival suit... what a stupid mistake of me...

Luckily the engine hasn't noticed and bravely keeps purring away 🐱

Whilst flight planning not only had I underestimated the width of the strait itself, but also all never thought about seeing and frolicking around icebergs on this sector...

Oh well, it seems I'm just another human after all 🤔











Reaching the northeastern shore of the strait

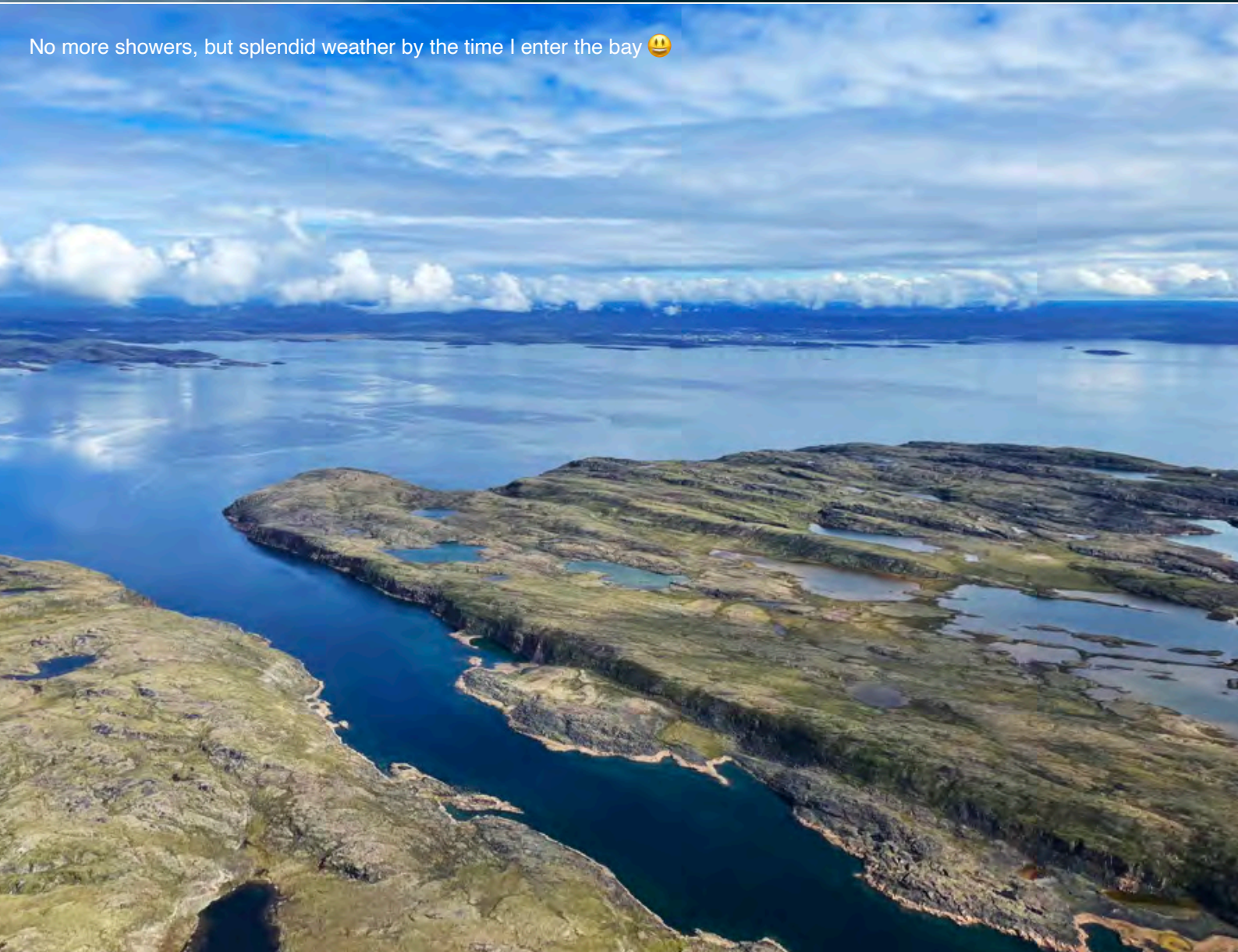




The weather is ever so changing, rain showers appear and disappear as I approach Iqaluit, but nothing serious



No more showers, but splendid weather by the time I enter the bay 😊







Nothing much has changed here since my 27 June first passage, but for the temperature which is now in a normal range of about 15°C.

I know my way around now, and taxi directly to the pump to be gratified once more by “leftovers” fuel. Thanks guys 👍





After parking YLL at her usual spot (...), I walk straight to the hotel, and enjoy the superb view out of the best room of the tour. There's even a fireplace in a corner!



I take a walk around a part of the city I had not seen before, as in behind the hotel. When on top of the small hill, one can enjoy an impressive panoramic view of the Frobisher Bay.

I'm enjoying this stay much more than the first one, probably thanks to the now familiar settings and the better, as in cooler, weather.







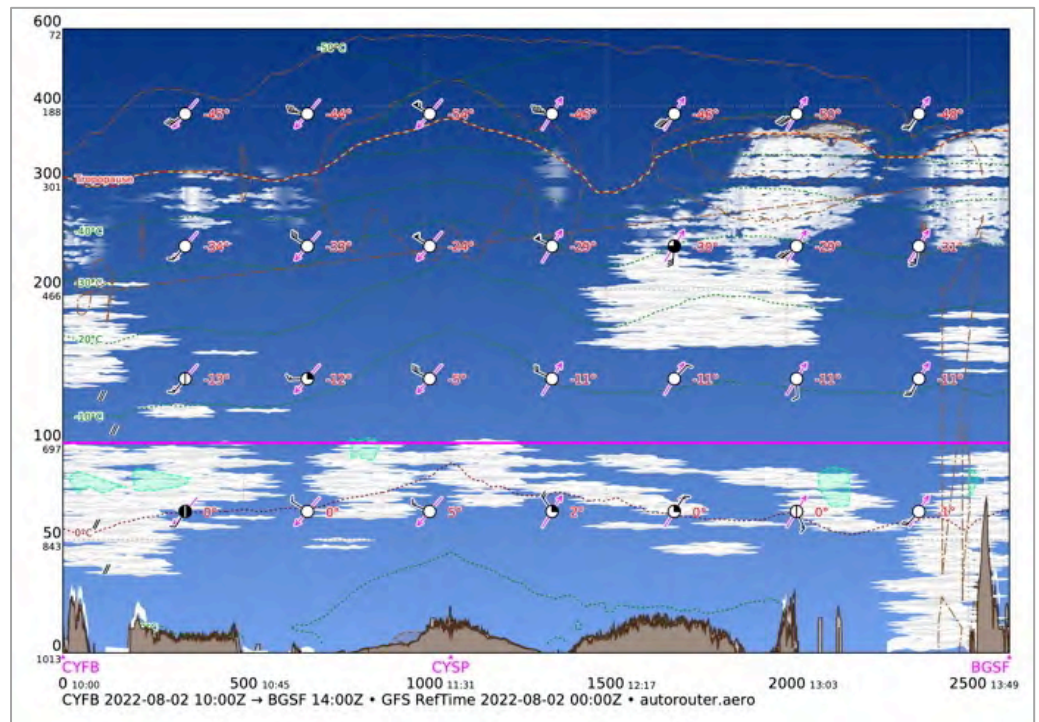


## Day #44

Using Windy and the GRAMET, the weather outlook for the crossing to Greenland looks quite ok...

The walk to the airport, as well as rejoining with YLL, this time via the cargo area (...), are now familiar and easy.

After take-off, I slightly adjust my heading to fly northeast, heading towards my next POI...



Takeoff from  **CYFB Iqaluit** at 02 Aug 2022 10:15 Z

Landing at  **BGSF Kangerlussuaq** at 02 Aug 2022 14:03 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 3 hr 48 m (3.8 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 556 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 14,194 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 186 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 146 kt





Soon afterwards the heading reverts to track, as was expected by now 🤖



The outside world grows imposing, once more...



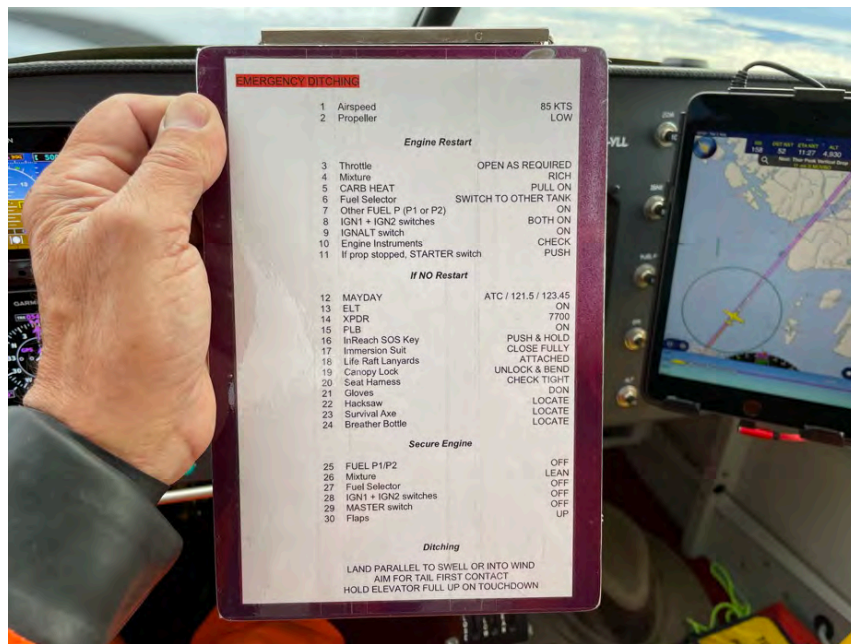




As pack ice appears again, and though I'm wearing my survival suit, a refresher read of my ditching checklist increases my state of readiness... and can't really hurt.





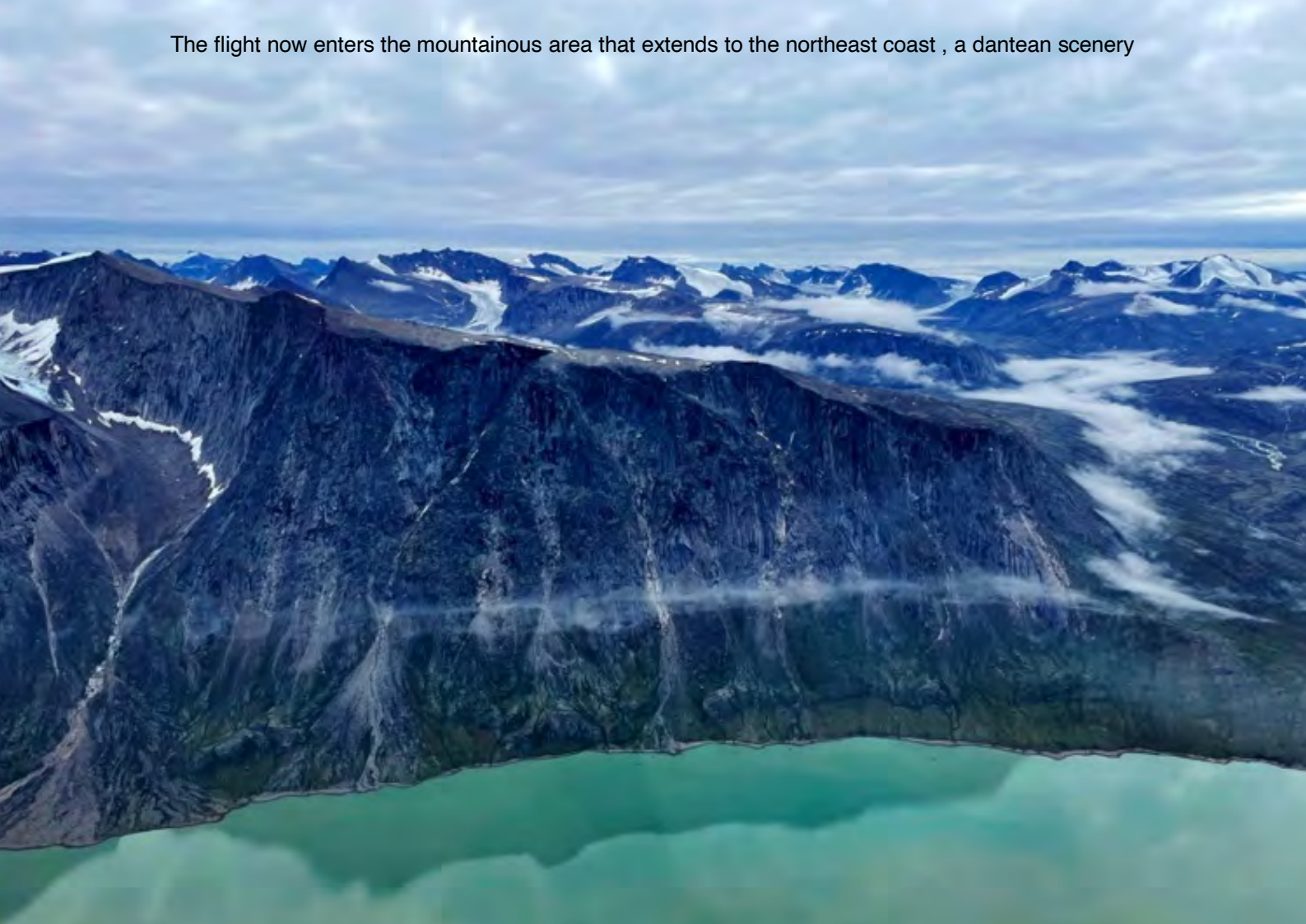


Enroute now lies Pangnirtung, which is my only enroute alternate. The fog has partially cleared as the runway is now visible next to the shore...





The flight now enters the mountainous area that extends to the northeast coast , a dantean scenery



Clouds ahead now spread the doubt in my mind... will my POI be visible, or hidden like it was about a month ago?









Yeah, there it is, straight ahead, no doubt! I feel elation and excitement rise in me as this was one of the important POIs 🏆



From the net:

*Where is the Earth's greatest vertical drop? Mount Thor (Thor Peak) is a mountain in Auyuittuq National Park. You'll find it on Baffin Island, in Nunavut. The mountain is the earth's greatest vertical drop at 1,250 metres with an average angle of 105 degrees.*

No other word than megawesome...



Ladies and gentlemen, may I present to you Mount Thor





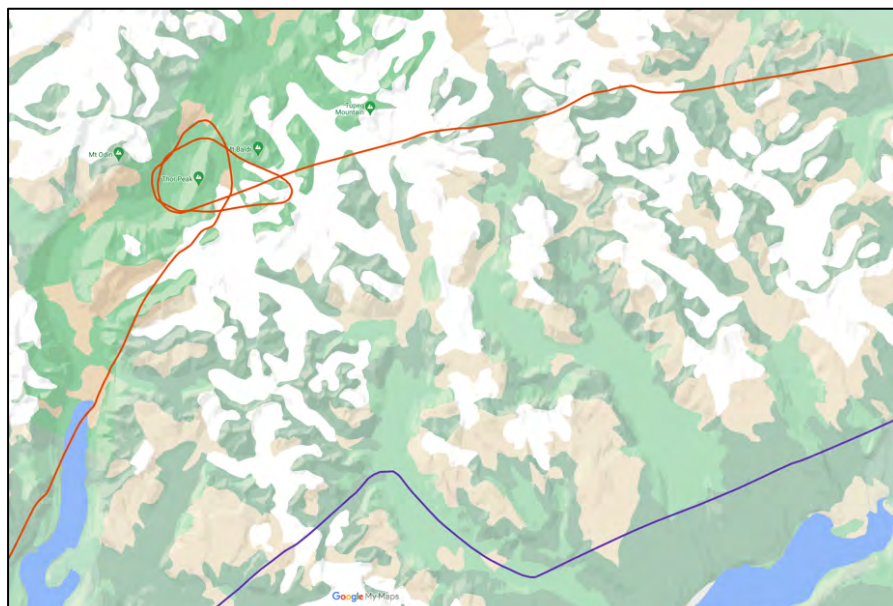






A couple of orbits later and I'm totally subdued 🙄  
But have to resume my route, once more...

The blue track shows how close I passed when heading into Iqaluit first time, and Mount Thor was hiding in the clouds...









As I continue through the daunting landscape, now heading East, the weather takes a turn for the worse. Ground fog mixes with higher clouds, and the ground all but disappears... flight conditions definitely become hazardous.



Once more, I'm left with little choice. I switch the GNX navigator to Terrain mode and start a climb into reduced visibility conditions...

Later, over the Davis Strait. Light icing. Looking up I can barely make out the sun...





Yet another climb puts me in between layers. The seas below sure don't look too inviting



A while later I catch a glimpse of land between the clouds. Yes, Greenland is still here 😊





Approaching my destination, Sir Ice Cap becomes once again visible on the horizon



Nice weather greets me in Kangerlussuaq





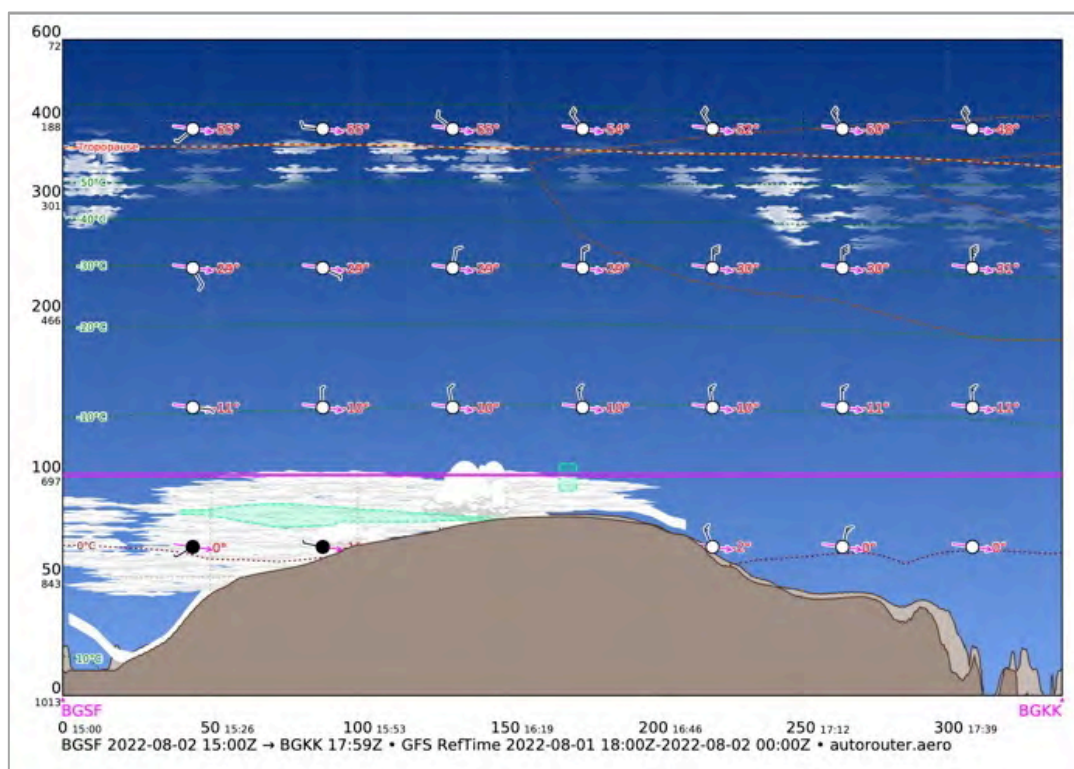
Kangerlussuaq, as I'm just about to get out of the survival suit and get YLL refueled:



The GRAMET, TAFs and METARs, Windy, all concur and predict good conditions for the flight to Kulusuk.

On a direct flight from here to the East coast of Greenland, one has to overfly Sir Ice Cap which peaks at around 11'000ft. This altitude means freezing will occur in any kind of clouds, and descent into warmer is then not really an option...

As there is room availability in the only hotel at Kulusuk, and the weather predictions are being close to perfect, I decide to continue.



Takeoff from  **BGSF Kangerlussuaq** at 02 Aug 2022 14:50 Z

Landing at  **BGKK Kulusuk** at 02 Aug 2022 17:12 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 2 hr 22 m (2.4 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 370 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 13,333 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 208 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 156 kt

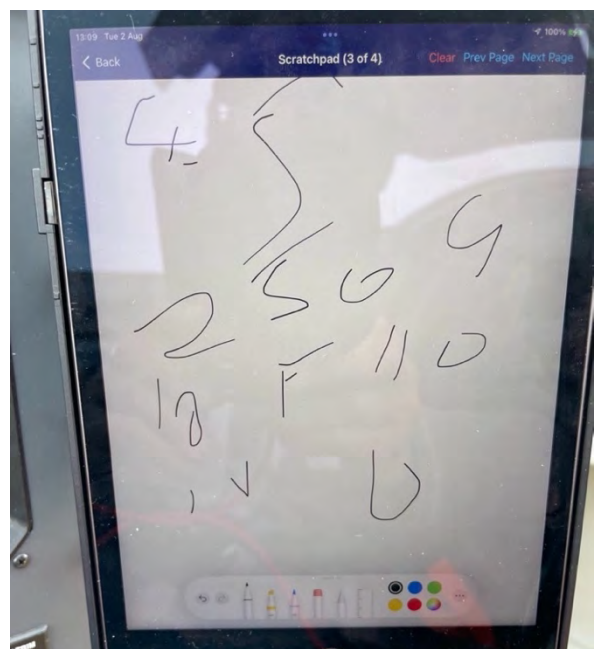


Climbing eastbound and marveling at Sir Ice Cap's many glacier tongues...



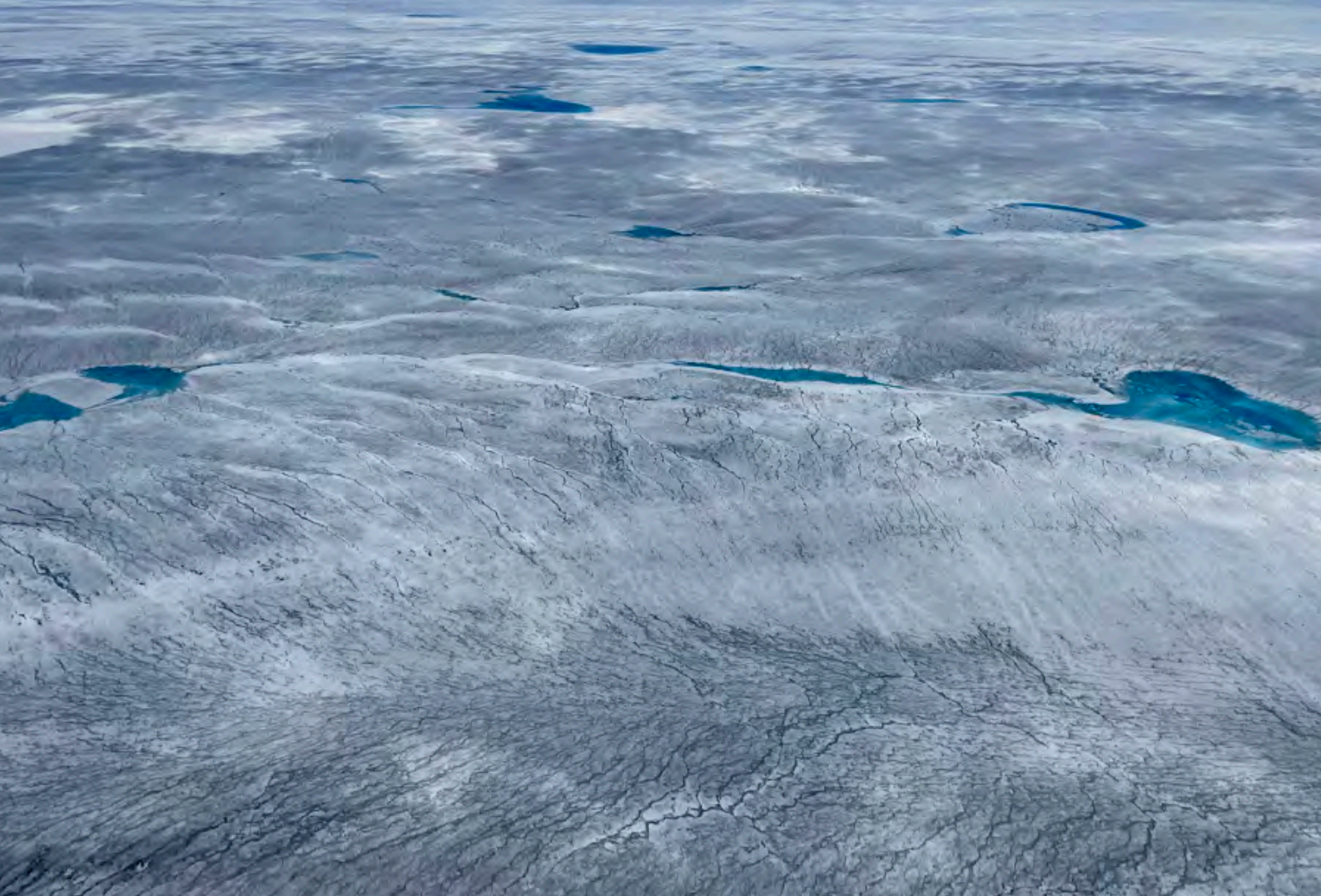
The latest observation at Kulusuk shows good weather (yes, I'm able to barely decipher my own scribbling), but right here and now we experience some turbulence.

But looking ahead, I can only see serenity skies 😊





Sir Ice Cap... blue lakes and creeks forming on its surface, the giant is stricken and just melts away...

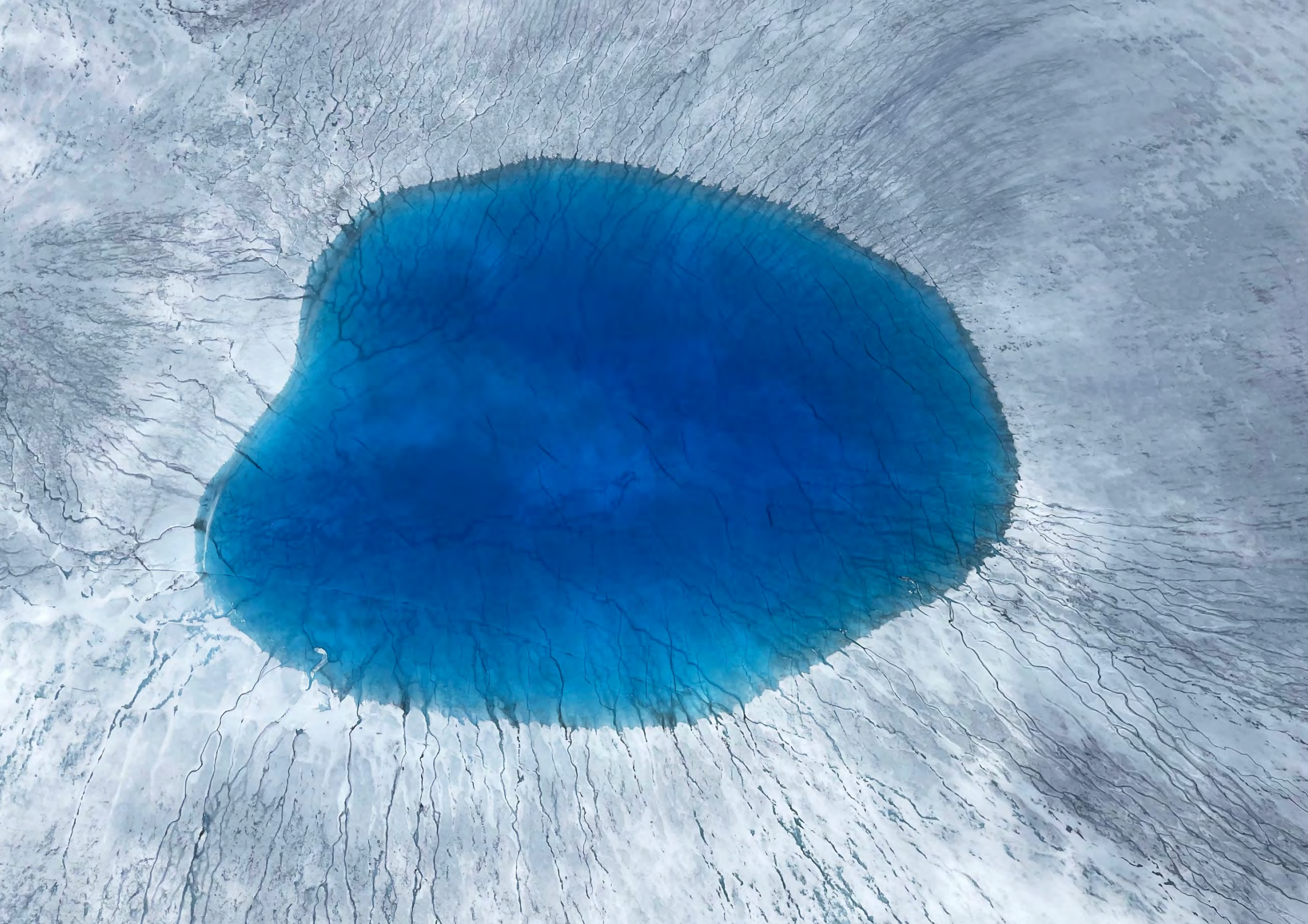


And just below me, whoaaa, look, almost missed this magnificent jewel!

Once more, I can't resist but dive for it and fly a couple of orbits 🤪

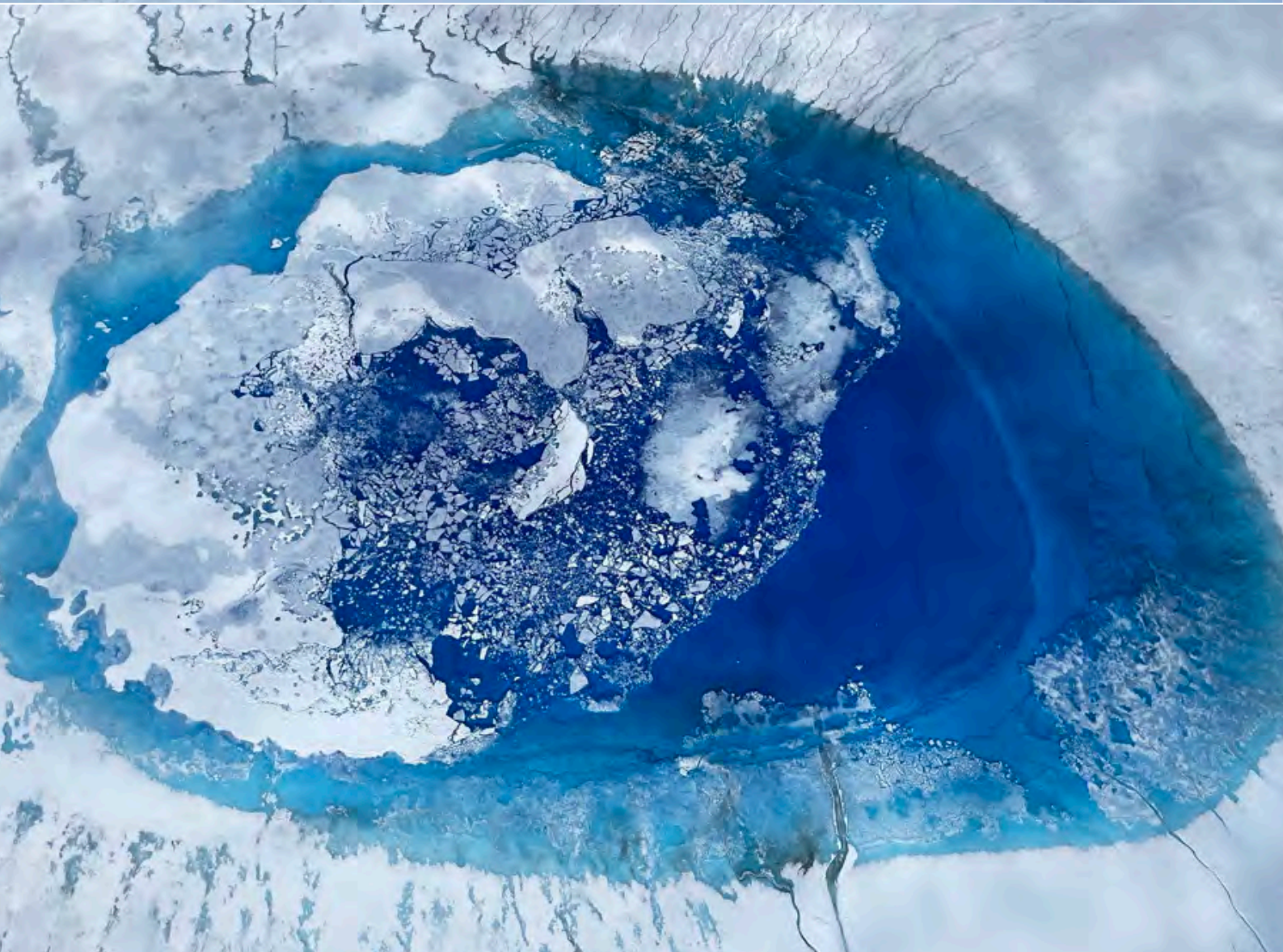








Hey look, another one... and another... and...





Back in the cruise @ 13'000ft, whilst the autopilot regains the presets (and takes pictures at the same time)



Partly covered with floating fog banks, eerie landscape, whiteout guaranteed, the surface of this world is fuzzy...





Soon Sir Ice Cap recedes, giving way to the megawesome East coast of Greenland







Kulusuk bathes in splendid weather, straight ahead





A couple of minutes later I land on the gravel strip, and taxi to the apron. The flight was quite short. We are now refueling...



As the filling of the aux fuel tank is a bit tricky, I want to do it myself. The line guy hands me the high debit hose and I fill. The tank is nearly full now...

A slight problem arises this time as the 🧑‍🔧 trigger stays stuck open 😬

The line guy loses no time and jumps on the pump's emergency shut-off, but not before about 5 liters of dino juice are doused inside the cockpit... some of it now evaporates, but most of it takes the path of least resistance and exits at the rear of the fuselage. There's yet another advantage of the tailwheel version of RVs...



Visions of a molten pile of aluminum on the tarmac at Kulusuk 🤢

But I prefer to kid around:

*"please, nobody smokes, thank you!"*

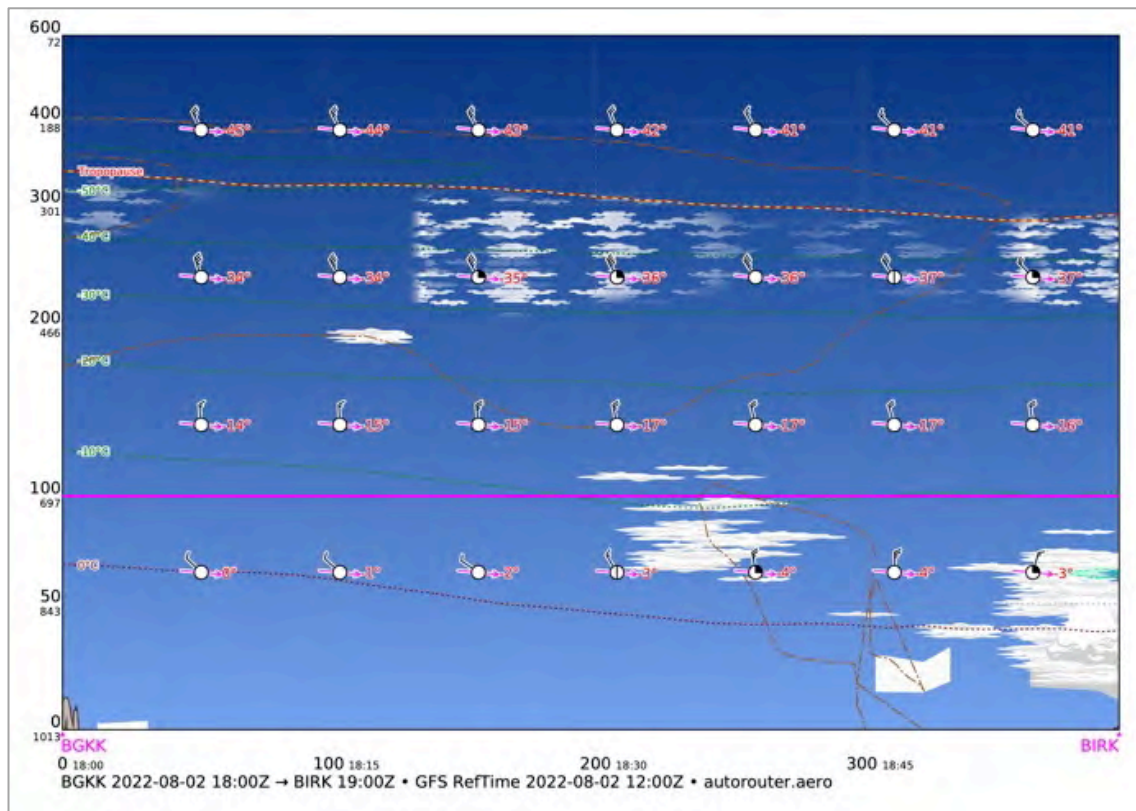
Decision, decision... stay here... or push on?



The weather and ambiance here at Kulusuk are fantastic. The place just is a fairy tale. A room awaits in the hotel, 400m away. And I more than filled up with visual, spiritual, and physical excitement for the day.

On the other hand the weather is perfect for the next crossing to Iceland. Light snow is forecast around here by Windy for tomorrow afternoon. Hans, the young Danish guy who mans the AFIS today tells me that according to his experience next morning's weather might not be that good. And that nails it...

I double check the weather, all looks good



The flight plan is quickly taken care of by the AFISO. These guys are not only super friendly and helpful, but very efficient. Thanks to all of the Greenland AFISOs, you guys rock!

Once more I jump into the survival suit and straddle YLL, then, harness untied with the canopy cracked wide open in the breeze, switch on the master switch and start the engine... as usual. No bonfire nor explosion, looks like the 1h ground time was enough to get rid of the spilled fuel and its vapors, phew 😊

Takeoff from 🌀 **BGKK Kulusuk** at 02 Aug 2022 18:18 Z  
Landing at 🌀 **BIRK Reykjavik** at 02 Aug 2022 20:43 Z  
FLIGHT TIME: 2 hr 25 m (2.4 hours)  
DISTANCE FLOWN: 402 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 5,161 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 181 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 166 kt



One long last look at Kulusuk...



... and its surroundings







Emotions run high as I see the coast disappearing behind me  
Greenland, I've fallen for you, what am I saying?  
*Greenland I love you 🇬🇩*



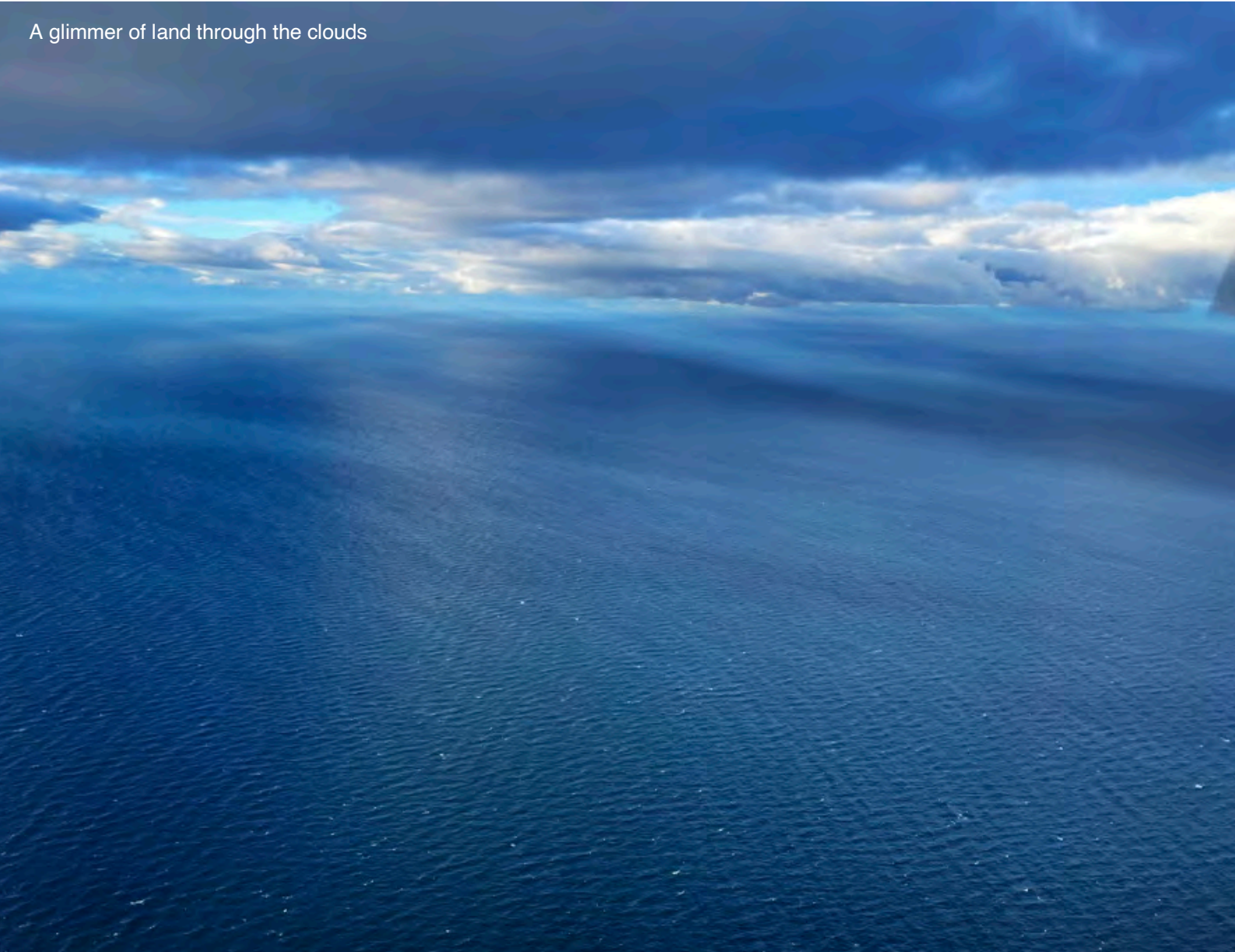




A little more than 2 hours flight ahead, lies Iceland...



A glimmer of land through the clouds







And another friendly and efficient FBO here.

Customs are present, the form has been prefilled, my passport is checked and the entry

procedures are done. The whole procedure in 3 minutes flat 🙌

And YLL is soon in her pajamas.

Not much walking to the hotel today... probably a whole of 50m from the FBO to the entrance. I am very lucky to get a room in the bonded hotel, and even more so to get the room I wished for.

As the sun slowly sets, I can reflect on the long day: amazing distances can be covered by a single engine aircraft such as this one. Canada to Iceland... easily done in one day. There is still one last crossing to go. Greenland is already far far behind, and I feel depressed 😞



But, as if to sheer me up, the night takes over and the sight out of my room is pure magic





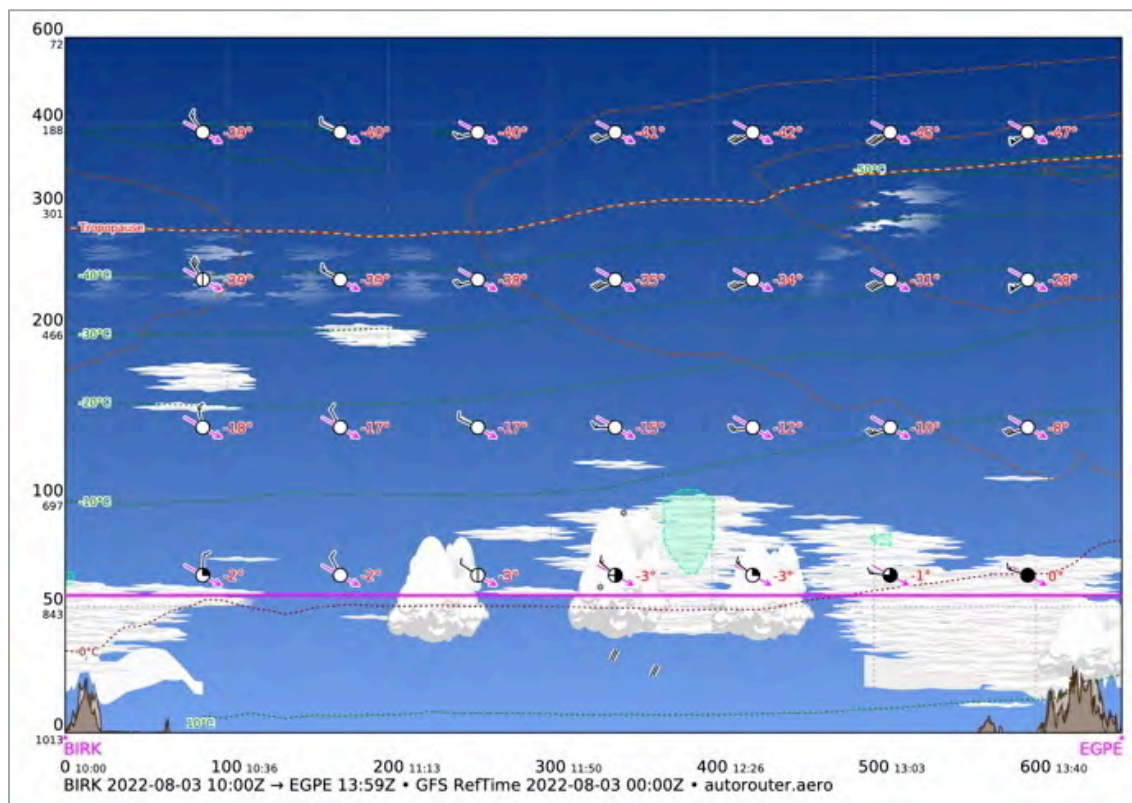




## Day #45

Looking outside the window of my room I can see YLL, tail wagging, eager to fly, as always 😊

I check out and exit the hotel. A few scattered clouds have been patched in the blue sky, the sun shines, a light fresh breeze blows, clear air, Iceland at its purest.



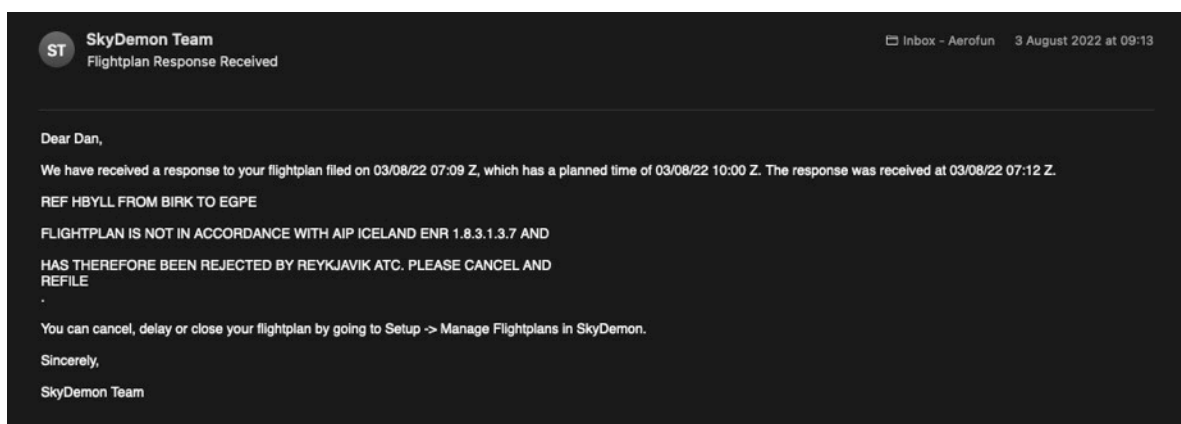
The forecasts look good as well.

Until Scotland that is...

The West Hebrides are open, but some cloud is predicted on the Highlands. Today's destination Inverness reports medium to high ceilings.

I settle my bill with the FBO, bid farewell and taxi over to the pump to refuel. Once I'm all set I contact the tower for my start-up clearance. Which is refused...

So I'm already back in Europe?



So wearing my 😊, I walk back to the FBO, study the mandatory VFR departure route (...) with the ever helpful FBO (thanks again) and refile a new flight plan.



Takeoff from  **BIRK Reykjavik** at 03 Aug 2022 09:54 Z

Landing at  **EGPE Inverness** at 03 Aug 2022 14:04 Z

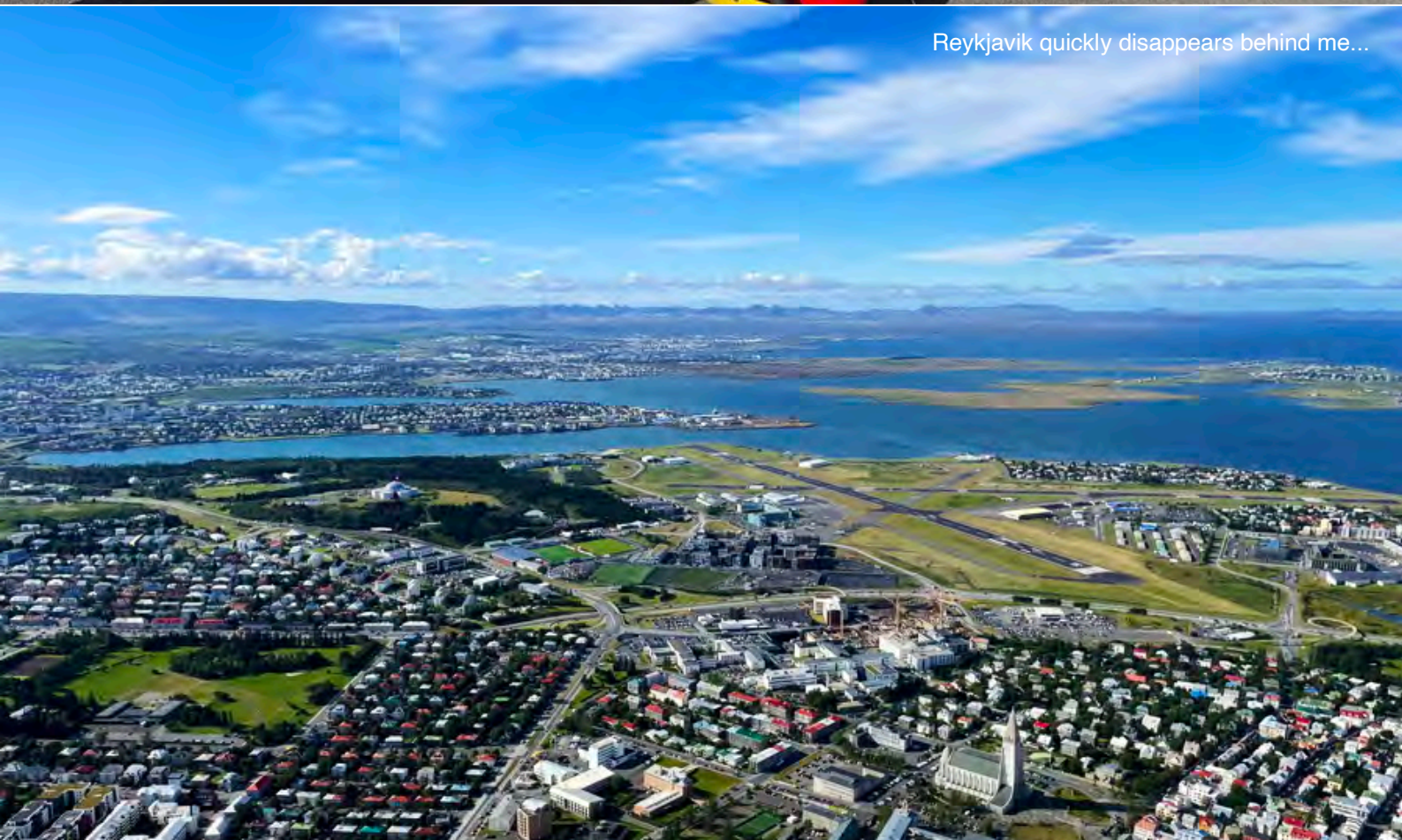
FLIGHT TIME: 4 hr 10 m (4.2 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 677 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 5,662 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 204 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 162 kt

Refueling the aux tank without spilling also works...



Reykjavik quickly disappears behind me...





Iceland's landscape is as fascinating as ever



Once more subject to constant scenery changes, as if watching some theatre act with multiple scenes

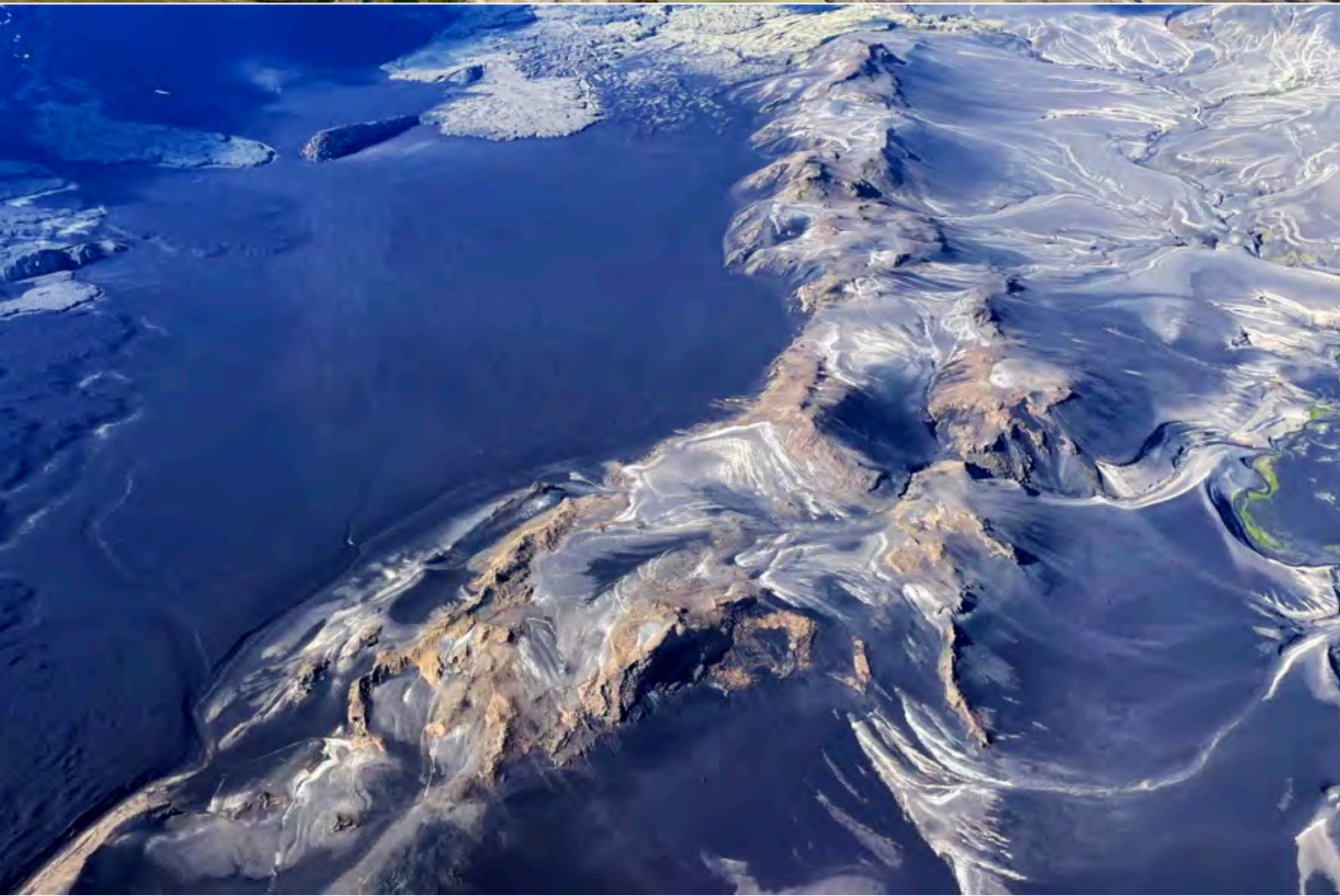








Dazzled by a display of beauty, transcendent landscapes









More of the same, but different...







Anyone bored yet?

Ok, I have to admit that the mandatory VFR departure route, now being flown as assigned, gives me the opportunity to watch some of the most spectacular landscape of Iceland, probably even more so than by just following the coast as was initially planned...

Aided no doubt by the super weather: nothing as boring as blue skies... clouds are fascinating ghosts, phantom appearances, and as a pilot they can be your playmate, or your worst enemy.

I'm approaching Iceland's southeastern coast, South of the Vatnajökull National Park, which as you probably already know, is East of Skaftárheppur and Kirkjubæjarklaustur.

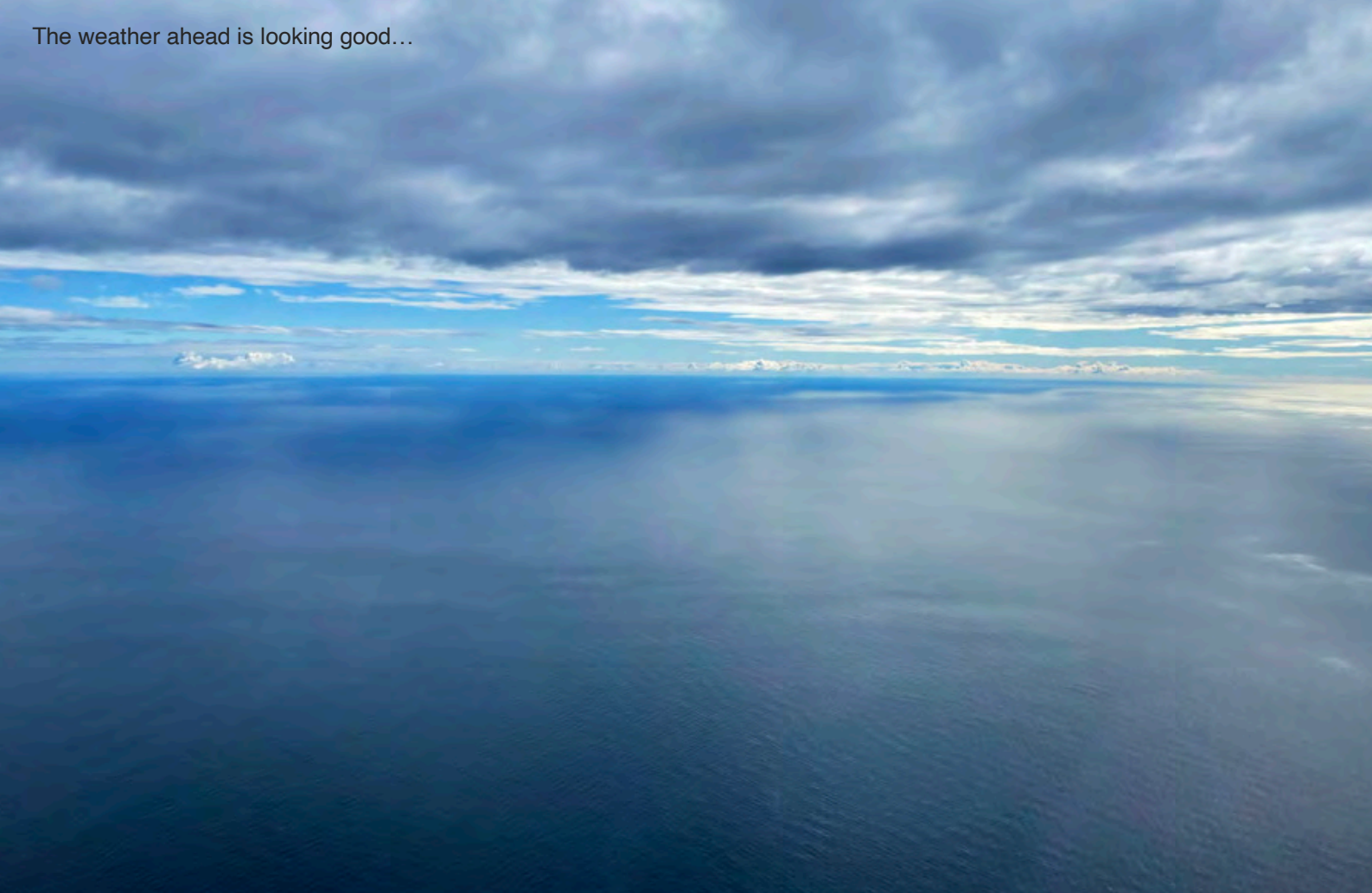
Time to definitely leave the island Iceland behind...



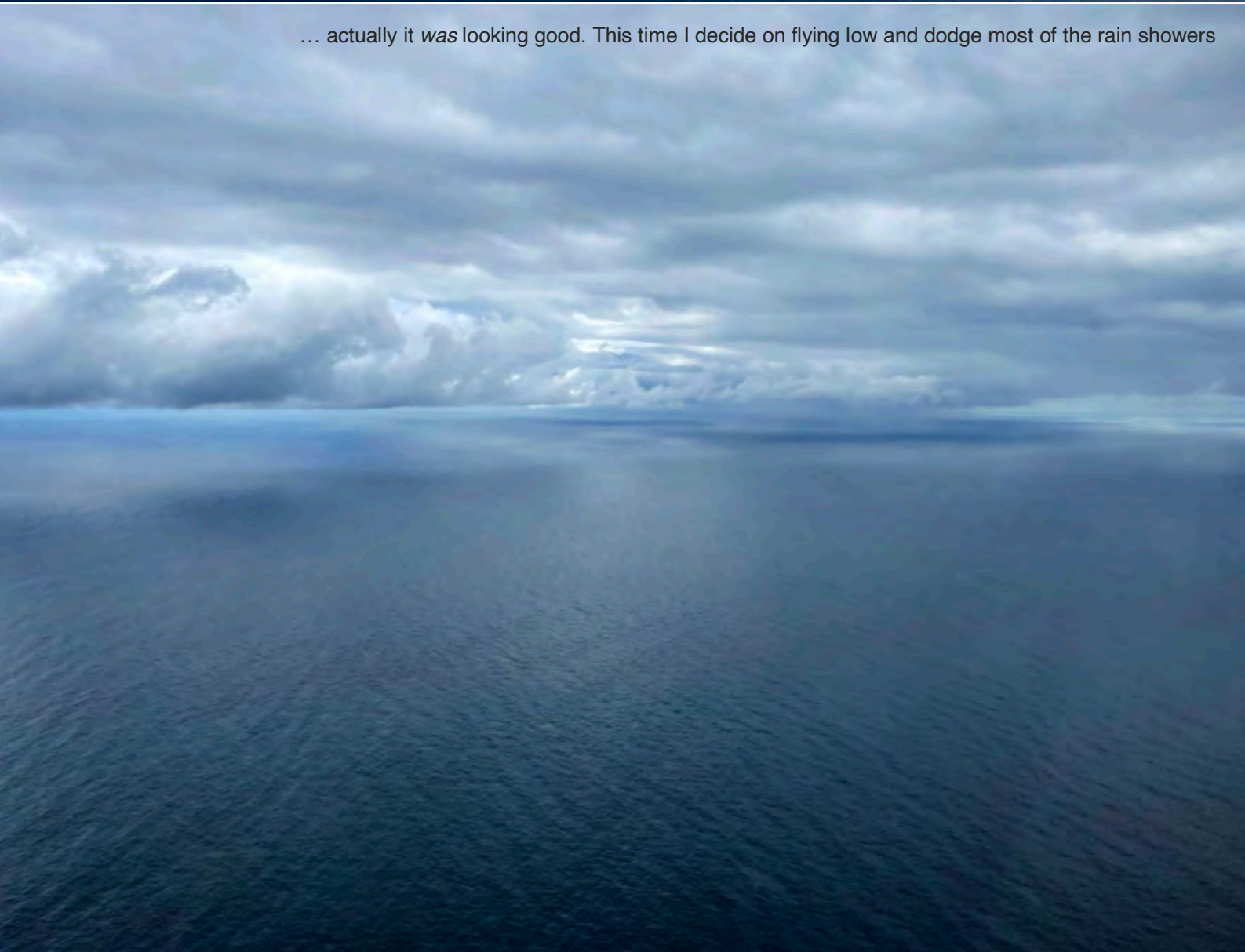




The weather ahead is looking good...



... actually it *was* looking good. This time I decide on flying low and dodge most of the rain showers





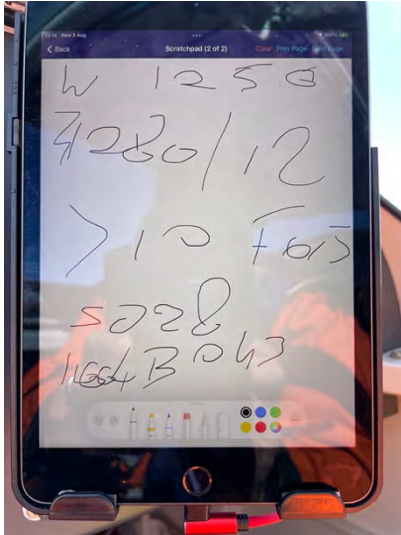


At mid-point the GNX375 only displays a rather limited selection of nearest airports...

I've been given multiple frequencies to try out, but no luck... believe it or not, with or without ATC contact, all of the aerodynamic forces and the flight equilibrium magic still do their job. Proving that Lindbergh was right after all 🤔







Enough dodging showers and reduced vis flying, I climb on top of the stuff. As an added benefit I can now also make contact with Scottish radio for the latest destination METAR, looking good 😊

Land in sight, Scotland ahoy!



The Scottish Highlands are covered by clouds. There are some holes, but I don't really fancy diving in one of them, and then low fly to destination. Checking the approach plates, I'm rather surprised to not find a single RNAV approach into Inverness. My portable ILS being reserved for emergency use, I explain the problem to ATC, and request a cloud break procedure.

A couple of vectors later and I'm below the ceiling, in beautiful Scottish weather 🍷



On finals at Inverness



For the last time of The Tour, YLL is put to bed



Again a very good service from the local FBO, thanks guys 👍

One of the reasons of my choice of Inverness as a port of call, is having read about the big hotel at a walking distance... *"oh I'm afraid we have no vacancy for tonight"* says the clerk.

Well, not to worry. I've always wanted to visit the city. I'm just in time to jump in the bus as it is about to drive off...



The small city is charming, indeed...



Leaving the bus terminal in the center of the city, I start my hunt for a room for my last night of The Tour.

Well, some 4 hours later I checked out about 15 different hotels, either by walking there, or by phone. In addition, I've also checked out about 35 different B&Bs... and 2 of the youth hostels...

The answer is always the same: No Vacancies 🙄

Unbelievable...  
with tourists...



this place is packed  
of which I'm one 🤔



Sleeping below the next bridge is not an appealing proposition... by now exhausted, I book a room in some crappy hotel in the city of Dingwall, some 24Km away. Just about able to keep the 😊 up.



◀ Seeing that kind of stuff helps, thanks to whoever for that.

To infinity... and beyond 🤖

An expensive taxi ride, but a delicious curry in the Indian restaurant next to the hotel as a reward for today's almost never ever ending pursue...

The main street in Dingwall tonight





## Day #46

Yep, day 46 out of 46... ladies and gents, girls and boys, patient reader, this is the last episode of The Tour.

The bus from Dingwall to Inverness is right on time. Having had that strong curry last night was one stupid idea... the scone, and more so the big coffee I've now taken near the bus terminal in Inverness, even more of a stupid idea.

Proof is now given in my emergency stopping the bus to the airport... and an all-time record getting into the next restrooms 🙌

Taxi – airport – pay dues – start engine – ATC clearance – runup – taxi out – fly...

Takeoff from  **EGPE Inverness** at 04 Aug 2022 08:35 Z

Landing at  **LFAC Calais Marck** at 04 Aug 2022 11:27 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 2 hr 52 m (2.9 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 460 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 9,722 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 180 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 160 kt

And finally a picture of a wing 😊 Even around here (barely visible in the shot, as clear) ice will adhere to leading edges, if given enough of a chance.





Beautiful weather along the eastern coast of Scotland...



... and England





The Channel is mostly cloudy... but today it somehow just appears to me as laughing stock. Beautiful weather awaits on the "continent".

The French coast is in the clear, with a nice view on the city and port of Calais



And it's quiet airport which I frequently use for that very reason...





Takeoff from  **LFAC Calais Marck** at 04 Aug 2022 12:23 Z

Landing at  **LSZF Birrfeld** at 04 Aug 2022 14:47 Z

FLIGHT TIME: 2 hr 24 m (2.4 hours)

DISTANCE FLOWN: 329 nm, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE: 8,086 ft, MAXIMUM SPEED: 165 kt, AVERAGE SPEED: 137 kt

This last leg is flown at eco speed, I'm in no hurry now... as a matter of fact, I'm not sure I want to arrive. Ever. No picture is taken, I just don't feel like it... I fly this stretch quite often, and it is just a straight line over "some European farmland"...

You are not playing blasé Dan, are you? No, it is just another feeling, altogether...

The weather is perfect but hot. The temperature at my homebase hovers around 27°C, the humidity is high with scattered clouds and little wind 🥵. For once I'm the only one in the circuit. As I'm flying overhead I spot a small group of people, all heads up, in front of the hangars. I fly no low pass nor victory roll, I just land...

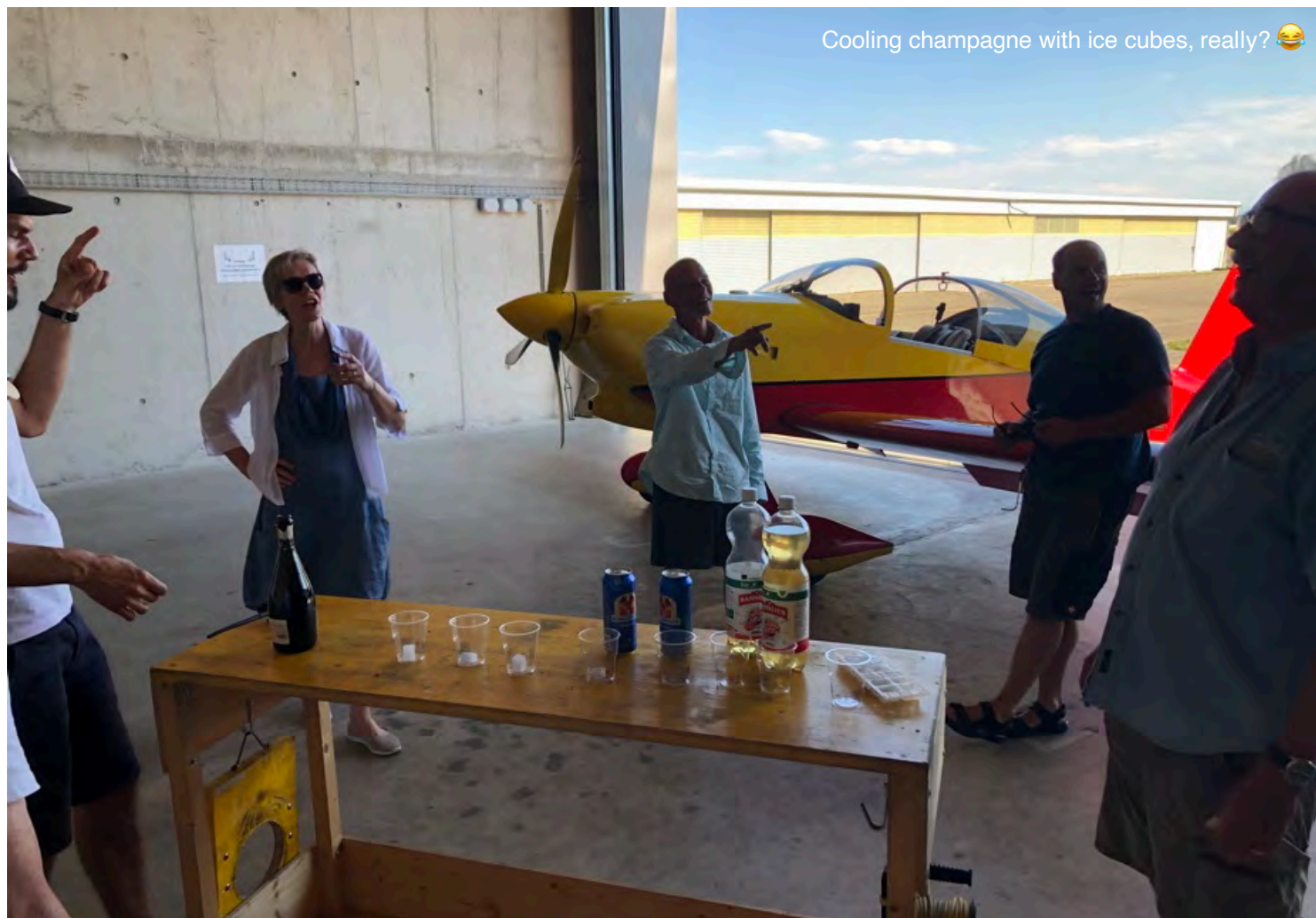
Seeing our small firetruck standing by the taxiway I now realize that my wife, the airfield and the maintenance staff, and my friends from the local chapter of the **EAS** (EAS Birrfeld) have organized a small welcome home party 🥳

I fully realize that this landing has sealed the end of The Tour... I'm back and it is all over now 😞





Thanks guys, that is super cool 👍👏



### *Epilogue...*

I've been back for a little more than a month as I write these words... still trying to recover from The Tour, somehow still feeling depressed. The flying around here is somehow tasteless now...

My head is spinning whilst I recall all the incredible sights and experiences. Writing about The Tour has been a pleasure for me, as it allowed me to relive some of its most intense phases.

And no, I will not do it again. There is an inherent amount of risk on a trip like this. Also let's not forget about the financial side of such a project, aircraft equipment, emergency gear, accommodation, miscellaneous fees, food, gas, and more, all add up. But above all, **there's always only one first time...**

Many people have come and congratulated me on The Tour. It feels a bit weird as I just have fulfilled my own dream. Many pilots have done similar trips, more will do so. Ferry pilots do these kind of flights for a living. And there was Lindbergh too 😊

It has been a fantastic experience, and I have been extremely lucky in having had the opportunity to live this dream.

**All the expectations I had were by far exceeded, The Tour was just megawesome !!!**



## Annex 1, the airplane

### General information

HB-YLL is a homebuilt aircraft, and as such first had to be built, from a kit. It takes a lot of patience and dedication, tenacity, and a certain amount of money, to bring such a project to completion. The more so for the older models of RVs, such as this one, where the builder still has to build jigs, and drill all the holes prior to riveting the structure.

Once more many thanks to the builder of YLL, Fritz 🙌

What model is it? YLL is a [Van's Aircraft](#) RV-6.9...

Well, the acute RV specialist might spot the differences... or not. Admittedly HB-YLL is officially identified as an RV-6. She is of the latter series, as in just before her successor the RV-7 was introduced. As such, she sports the tail group of early RV-8s, with the narrow chord rudder and short counterweight (none present on the -6, taller one for the -7 and -9). The engine cowling is honeycomb and is standard -7, as are the engine mount/landing gear combination, etc. Van's Aircraft had, at the time the kit was produced, bought some 2nd hand punching machines, and was testing those out, so the wing skins were, great progress at the time, "punched", the fuselage itself being standard RV-6.

Sooo, to recapitulate, 6 + 7 + 8 in different amounts, divided by 3 equates to exactly 6.9 🤔

The Van's aircraft models RV-3, RV-4, RV-6, RV-7, RV-8, and RV-14 (as of today), are approved for aerobatics.

### Engine/propeller

YLL is equipped with a Lycoming O-360-A1A, producing 180hp in its nominal configuration. It is equipped with a bigger main jet carburetor, and dual electronic ignition. This combination, aided by iridium spark plugs, permits efficient LOP (lean of peak) operation.

The 3 bladed MT constant speed wooden composite propeller is light and efficient. Its pulling power permits operation on relatively short runways, and also provide great braking power during demanding approaches or formation flying.

Benefits of this combination are good power/weight ratio, good fuel economy, and reduced noise level, the engine being typically operated at 2'050 RPM once in the cruise, but for the higher levels.

### Weight & balance

YLL's empty weight, or ZFM is 485kg, and with a MTOM of 749kg, the useful load comes to 264kg. Baggage compartment allowance is a generous 45kg. Thanks to the relatively heavy engine/propeller combination, the aft CG limit is very difficult to hit.

### Fuel system and endurance

2 tanks, each of 70 liters capacity, are located in the inner leading edge of each wing.

For The Tour this was augmented with an auxiliary bladder fuel tank (Turtle) secured on the passenger seat. It holds 90 liters, and the line is Teed into the right wing tank feed line, and equipped with a quick-disconnect fitting. An electrical transfer pump is manually switched ON to refill the right wing tank.

Running LOP gives an endurance of about 8:20 at the power setting and speeds as used during The Tour (about 66% - 150 KTAS), or 10:30 at eco speeds (about 43% - 130 KTAS).

### Instrument panel

In view of the tour, EFIS instruments (with battery back-up) and a GPS navigator/transponder (ADSB in/out) were, along with other instruments, fitted. This has made HB-YLL IFR capable, as mandated by the authorities for any airplane crossing the NAT.

On the next page the interested reader will find a view of the instrument panel, taken off the AFM, as of today...





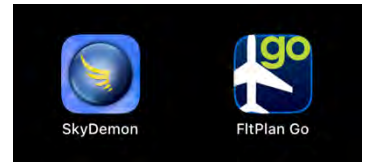
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 Multi-Function Display                    | 35 Starter CB                                  |
| 2 Traffic Avoidance System display          | 36 Avionics bus CB                             |
| 3 Electronic Flight Display 1               | 37 Traffic Avoidance System CB                 |
| 4 Electronic Flight Display 2               | 38 Starter push switch                         |
| 5 GPS Navigator/Transponder                 | 39 Master switch                               |
| 6 COM radio                                 | 40 Avionics switch                             |
| 7 Dual fuel quantity indicator              | 41 Ignition system 1 switch                    |
| 8 CO Detector                               | 42 Ignition system 2 switch                    |
| 9 RPM indication system selector switch     | 43 Alternate ignition system switch ch         |
| 10 Low voltage light                        | 44 Landing/taxi light switch                   |
| 11 Intercom switch                          | 45 Primer switch                               |
| 12 Electronic Powerplant Instrumentation    | 46 Fuel pump #1 or #2 switch                   |
| 13 COM radio CB                             | 47 Cameras power supply switch                 |
| 14 GPS Navigator/Transponder CB             | 48 Parking brake knob                          |
| 15 Electronic Flight Display #1 CB          | 49 Cabin heat knob                             |
| 16 Electronic Flight Display #2 CB          | 50 Trim display                                |
| 17 Ignition 1 CB                            | 51 Oil temperature knob                        |
| 18 Ignition 2 CB                            | 52 Carburetor heat knob                        |
| 19 Alternate ignition CB                    | 53 Trim back-up switch                         |
| 20 Interfaces CB                            | 54 MERIT socket                                |
| 21 iPad arm mounting ball                   | 55 Dual USB 5V sockets                         |
| 22 Fuel pump CB                             | 56 Air ventilation outlet (R & L)              |
| 23 Dual fuel quantity indicator CB          | 57 Storage box access door                     |
| 24 Primer CB                                | 58 Headset jacks sockets panel (R & L)         |
| 25 MERIT socket CB                          | 59 Throttle lever                              |
| 26 Landing/taxi light CB                    | 60 Mixture lever                               |
| 27 Electronic Powerplant Instrumentation CB | 61 Propeller lever                             |
| 28 Electronic Powerplant Instrumentation CB | 62 CO Detector CB (underneath)                 |
| 29 Cameras power supply CB                  | 63 Multi-Function Display CB (underneath)      |
| 30 Trim system CB                           | 64 Left rudder pedals with brakes              |
| 31 USB 5V sockets CB                        | 65 Right rudder pedals                         |
| 32 Alternator load CB                       | 66 Left control stick with PTT and trim switch |
| 33 Alternator field CB                      | 67 Right control stick with PTT switch         |
| 34 Alternator low voltage warning light CB  |  |



## Annex 2, the equipment

### Miscellaneous flight equipment

- ❖ Right iPad running [SkyDemon](#), for general route planning, and recording of the flown track in gpx and kml format
- ❖ Left iPad running the excellent and free [FltPlan Go](#), with either the approach plates or the appropriate Canadian or US sectional
- ❖ iPhone 12 mini with both SkyDemon & FltPlan Go as back-up, but mainly used to send DEP & ARR messages to my wife and my "Watchdog", and as a camera for all the pictures as used in this book
- ❖ Small fire extinguisher
- ❖ 2 liter oxygen system ([O2D2 MH](#)) with cannula
- ❖ Little John relief facility



### General equipment

Part of the stuff carried on The Tour was what one would take for any kind of trip, items such as: 3 liter canteen, camping gear, dehydrated meals, hot & cold weather clothing, toiletries, and a tool kit. No spare parts as such, but for 2 spark plugs, as YLL as demonstrated perfect reliability during the more than 1'000h I have operated her before The Tour.

### Photo equipment

All photos in this book were taken using a stupid but smart iPhone Mini 12 using an anti-reflective lens hood, or whatever it's called. Provided the rubber hood is making contact with the canopy, the solution is cheap and works pretty good. Keeping the canopy glass clean also seem to help...

The original picture has a 4032x3024 resolution in a HEIC format. Most airborne shots comprised in this book were slight adjusted to reduce brightness, some have a light color enhancement, and others just a touch of contrast.



### Video equipment

There were 3 video cameras installed on YLL during The Tour. Starting afresh today, I would not bother with any video equipment: it was a major chore thinking about switching them ON before boarding, then use a Wi-Fi connection to one of my iPads to try to control them during the flight, and then switch them OFF. I tried to record every take-off and every landing, and sometimes snapshots of the flight itself.

It will obviously be one major task of editing the material of the 3 cameras, and morphing the results into movies... if it ever gets done, the videos will be published on this [YouTube](#) channel.



### Drift Ghost 4K

Fixed power supply, with a quick disconnect barrel plug at the wing. Installed under the left wing, next to the pitot tube. I designed and manufactured an angle bracket which is held by a bolt screwed in the tie-down point. This camera was mainly chosen for its "aerodynamic" coefficient, though its Cx could still be felt in a slight yaw, and a non-measurable speed reduction, estimated at 1-3 Kts.

A problem encountered was my inability in remote controlling this camera, either via Wi-Fi or Bluetooth. As a result, it was switched on continuous running before every flight, and so used a lot of mini SD card memory. This was solved by backing up every day's flight(s) into a portable drive carried along for the purpose.



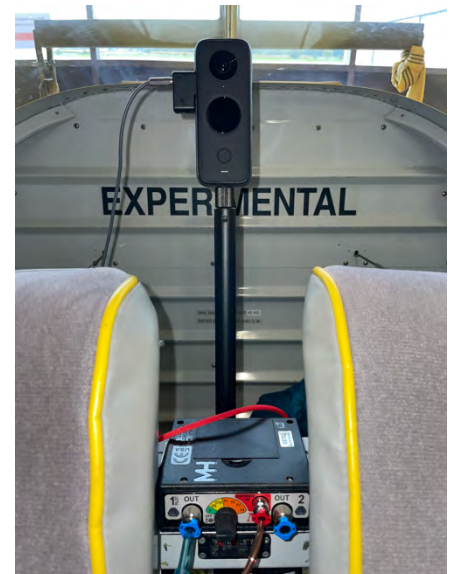
### Insta 360 ONE X

Fixed power supply, installed in the fairing on top of the vertical stabilizer. Connect the power lead, and slide in. Remote control via Wi-Fi has been working pretty good, assuming one doesn't forget to switch it into standby mode before take-off 🐶 This dual lens camera offers amazing possibilities, as I discovered during testing in the last couple of years.



### Insta 360 ONE X2

Powered by its own battery since not subjected to cold outside temperatures, switched ON/OFF manually. Installed inside the cockpit on its "invisible selfie stick", between the 2 backseats. Only the forward lens, providing a 180+° view, was used. The camera, fitted with an adapter, was connected to and recording all audio via the passenger headphone jack.





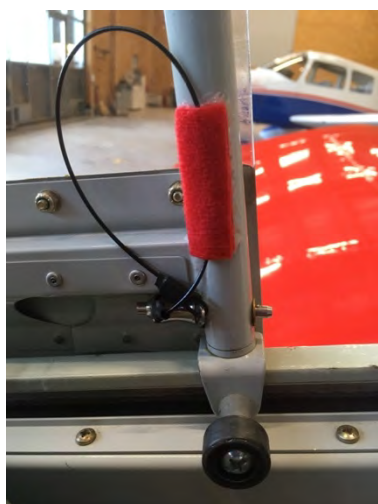
## Emergency equipment




RVs have a propensity to flip when ditched, as has unfortunately been documented a few times already... the idea of hanging in the harness, upside down in a rapidly sinking airplane, is probably no one's idea of fun... and therefore dictated a number of the choices as made.

Survival suit and life vest: trying to avoid buoyancy to facilitate egress and swim to the surface after ditching is the point. So, none of those popular thick neoprene suit would do, but a survival suit which is basically a [reinforced dry suit](#). Being though, it is made of relatively thin material, so requires warm clothing to be worn underneath. Once zipped up, a squatting position and the pulling of the neck seal will expel most of the non-wanted air.

The live vest, along the same line, is a non-automatic inflation type.



To liberate oneself from a flipped airplane, either on firm ground or in the water, one has to first open, or break the canopy away. Assuming the sliding mechanism is blocked, quick release pins are installed either side at the base of the sliding canopy.



A survival axe is installed on the left side of the spar, below the pilot's thighs.





Additional items found within good reach:

- a single person life raft (ISPLR from [Switlik](#))
- an escape saw/knife
- a scuba emergency air bottle
- a dry bag containing diverse survival stuff (mirror, portable VHF, matches, etc)



- the InReach and the PLB



- last but certainly not least, my good luck charm 🤞



That's all folks... 🙌