

LISTEN TO THE WIND

Against the blue
a sailplane turned lazily
on a delicate wing tip
and a white gull
rode the same air
by its side

*"Pull the tow-line release
so he can hook on . . . and
close the canopy."*

the thin nylon rope went taut
and before the tow plane left the ground
we were airborne
in a wide arc we followed
tethered
by a slender line

*"Keep the attitude you have
and you won't get caught
in the turbulence
from the prop wash."*

most people spend their lives trying to change
their attitude
what if you like the one you have?

*"Release the tow and bank away
to avoid the chance of getting tangled.
Now you're free."*

what does it mean to be free
listen to the wind

*"You have to be able to hear the wind
to maintain the right attitude.
That is a forty-mile wind
along the cowlings. . . . Drop the nose
and listen to a fifty."*

pull up and it quiets
*"Easy, not too quiet.
Don't stall
or go into a spin."*

sunlight reflects from the great mirror
of San Francisco Bay
fog spills over the hills
to the west
the wind
sings
the right attitude.

SAM WRIGHT

Quotable Quotes

It sounds a little strange to hear soaring pilots talk glibly of thermals of 10 fps, 15 fps, or even 30 fps, and then refer to their sport as flight without power. Maybe it is a little hard for the average person to grasp the meaning of going straight up at the rate of 30 fps. The boys at the San Diego Club put a variometer in an auto and ran some tests. The best climb they could register while taking a 60-mph run at a steep hill was 7 fps.

The easiest way for Mr. Average Man to gauge the power available overhead is to try to pick up a barrel of water and then remember how many of them have been dumped on him out of the sky.

— THE THERMAL, December, 1940

MAY . . . 1966

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THE MACNICOL NOMOGRAPH FOR SILVER-DISTANCE FLIGHTS

A useful tool for Silver-badge distance flights is a nomograph utilizing the three variables of distance flown, release altitude above the take-off site, and differential elevation of take-off and landing site. Given any two of these parameters, the third is easily found.

For flights up to 100 km. (62.14 statute miles), the 1% rule can invalidate many an otherwise successful flight. This is particularly painful when a little simple preplanning or in-flight reference can allow one to easily evaluate the situation.

This minimum-distance concern has been brought to light particularly in the activities of the New England Soaring Association. Here we operate at a field elevation of 600 feet with a prevailing westerly wind toward the ocean and its generally lower terrain to the east.

The use of the nomograph is simple. Locate the two known parameters, place the straight edge upon them, then read the unknown figure at the intersection and/or cross-over point. If you find that you're uncomfortably close, figure it out longhand or use the formula given above the nomograph.

As a practical example, a cross-country pilot decides that a 52-mile flight from Hiller Airport, South Barre, Massachusetts, (600 feet asl) to the Northeast Gliderport in Salem, New Hampshire, (130 feet asl) will easily fulfill his Silver badge distance requirement. Beware of the differential between airport elevations. In this case exceeding the minimum 50-km. (31.1 miles) distance by over 20 miles could still result in an invalid flight, if the tow is over 2300 feet above the take-off site.

This would be an example of knowing two parameters (distance, D, and differential elevation, DE), and looking beforehand for the unknown maximum allowable tow release altitude (ATR) above the take-off site.

* * * * *

Now, another side to the story. On this same flight our aspiring pilot lands only 42 miles out. Fortunately, the release was made at 1500 feet, a much lower altitude than the maximum for the planned 52-mile attempt. We now know A and ΔE (though finding accurate field elevations of off-airport landings is sometimes difficult). Is our D sufficient? In the same case knowing D and ΔE , was ATR low enough?

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