

Friday, October 1, 2004
8th Cobra flight, 18th solo
Mid-Valley
Big loop around Manzanos

Launched 7:15am, Landing 9:45am
Flight time: 2:30 hour Total time: 36:45
Dead calm on launch, Dead calm on landing
4 landings: two T&G at Belen, one T&G at Mid-valley, final landing

Launch Code Double Eagle predicted calm the night before. Left home at 5:40am. Got to Belen at 6:15am. Set up cigarette lighter adapters for radio and gps. GPS log shows wheels up at 7:15am.

Took off initially on Runway 21. Did 2 touch and goes, then headed for Mid-Valley airport. There were 2 other planes in the pattern. This was my first time to land at Mid-Valley. I had heard about how skinny the runway was. It was. Plus the pattern altitude as 1000 ft (not 500ft for ultralights like at Belen). Made an uneventful good landing at Mid-Valley. I have been working on making micro-corrections on the last part of final to get perfectly lined up (instead of resorting to a long low altitude cruise). I am getting better at it. Engine on idle landing a little to left, but crossing a tiny bit to the right. Good landing. Took off and headed towards Tome Hill. There were some flags on top showing a 10 mph breeze out of the north.



After Tome, I headed south across the empty plains with street patterns everywhere.



Approaching Abo pass.

I was cruised up low, at about 6000 ft. These mountains are big. I gained some altitude.



A huge wall like mesa, blocking Abo Gap.



Inside the canyon was this cool looking
railroad bridge.



Just past the gap, are the ruins
of Abo Pueblo.

Abo Pueblo



After Abo, the trees started to get thick, and the terrain slowly rose. Time to gain some altitude.

I saw these red cliffs in the side of the mountain.

I flew on to the Quarai Ruins.





After Quarai, I had to decide what to do. The winds seemed to be blowing from the west. I occasionally got felt some bubbles of turbulence from the rotor behind the mountain. This made me wary about crossing the Manzanos at the center of the range as I had planned.

Looks like I was going to have to extend this leg of the trip fly around the north end. I pressed on, slowly gaining in altitude as the ground rose. There were plenty of emergency landings zones around, plus I had a downwind glide to get away from the mountain, but I had to keep reminding myself to "relax, relax."





The final climb over the ridge. The triangular shape of Guadalupe Peak looked mean.

The clear spot was my last emergency LZ on the way up as I climbed up to 9000 ft to clear the rotor.

Relax, Relax.

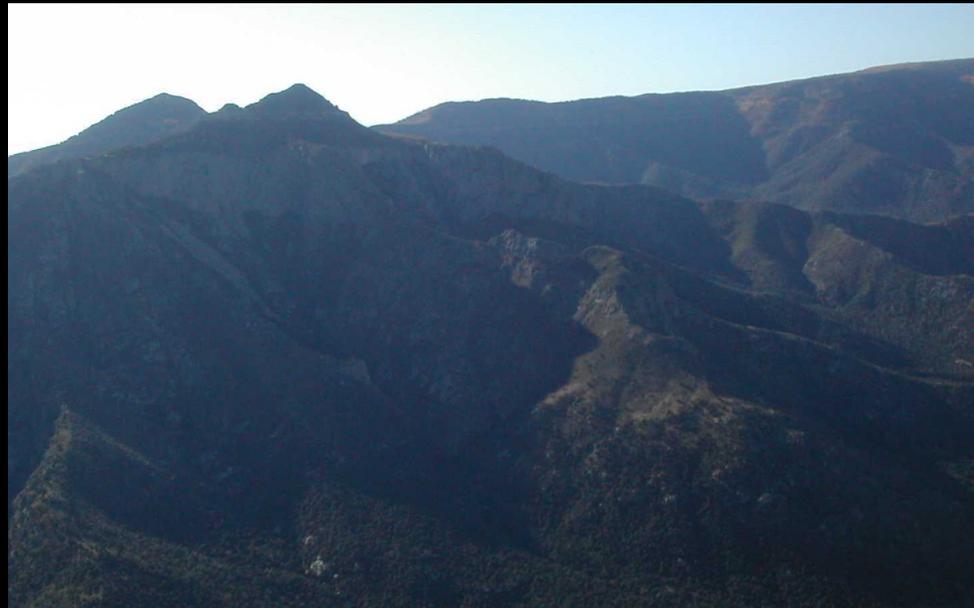
The winds turned out to be from the NW, so headed to the lower section of the ridge, north of Guadalupe Peak. I climbed to 9000 ft to avoid any trace of a rotor. The ridge was at 8000 ft. Engine was working hard up here turning at 6000 RPM just to maintain altitude.

Way to the north I could see the Sandias.



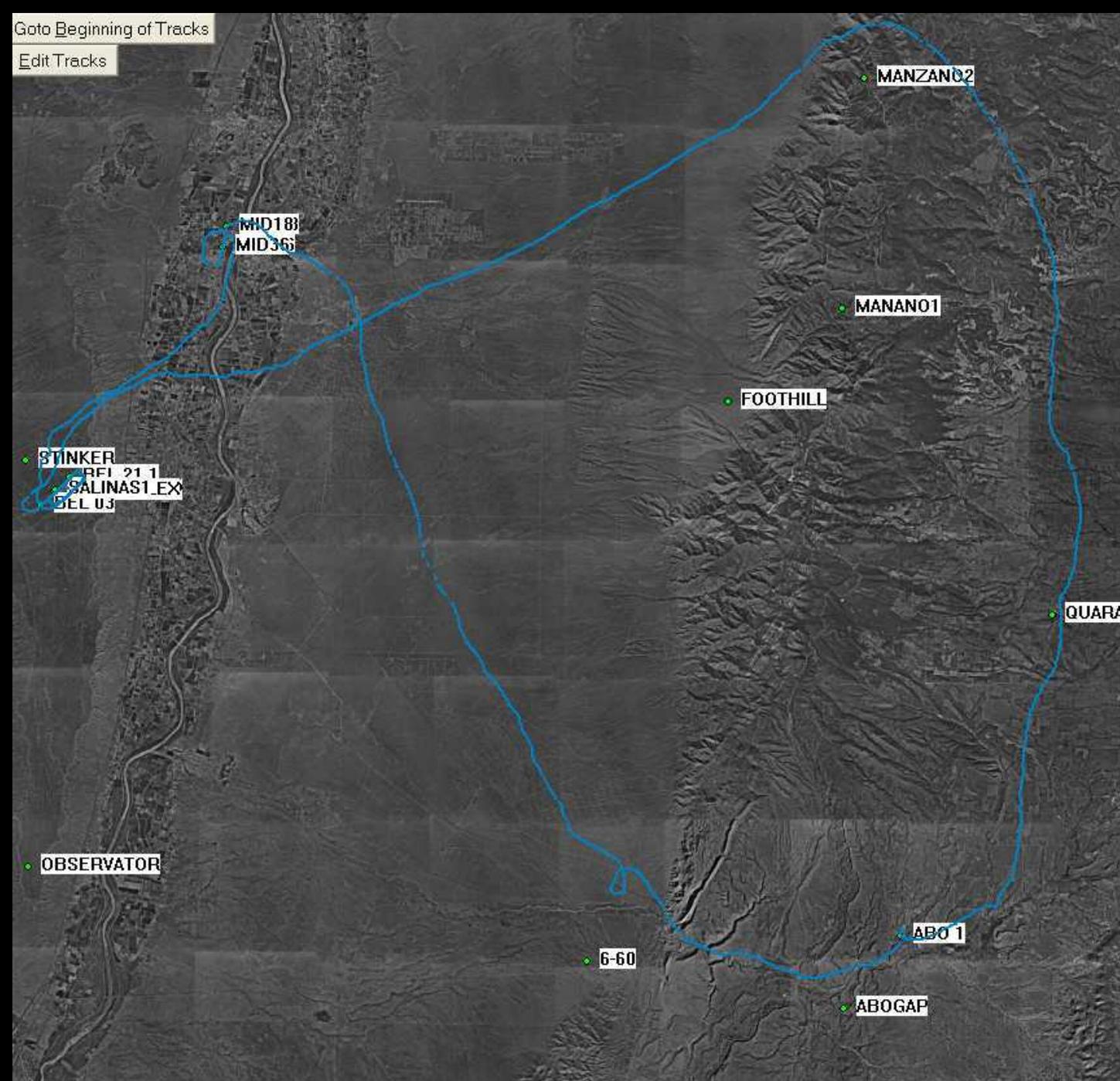
Finally, I crossed over relaxed. Celebrated by bring the engine RPMs back to 3000 and gliding down. It was cold, I was glad to get back down to a decent altitude (6000 ft)

Took on last pict of the Manzanos and headed back to Belen.



Goto Beginning of Tracks

Edit Tracks



Headed across the flats, past Mid-Valley and landed on runway 03.

The winds were very light for landing, used runway 03. Total flight time: 2 hours, 30 min.

Very nice flight. Picked a good day to circle and cross the Manzanos. I would not want to try this if there were any winds present.