Sunday, December 19, 2004
24th Cobra flight, 34th solo
Cerro Verde, Tres Hermanos Mesa, Alomo
Band Reservation, Mesa de la Cienega
5 landings

Launched 8:50am, Landing 11:40 am
Flight time: 2:50   Total logged time: 74:05
Launch: 5 mph on runway 21
Landing: 5 mph on runway 21 thermally

Another cold morning. Took my time, got to the hanger around 7:45, set up and waited for it to warm up a bit. On my last flight I had a 60 difference on my EGT's. I had noticed a smaller difference on an earlier flight. I started up and the temp diff was still there. I wondered if the airfilter oil on the cool cylinder was getting more viscous, blocking airflow and richening the mixture. I swapped airfilters and fired it up again. The temps were balanced now. Time to fly.

Today I would repeat the first half of last week's flight to Pecata Pinta, except head south towards the Alamo Band Reservation instead of north. Robert was there so I showed him where I was headed, told him I would be back in about 3 hours. I took off, did 3 touch and goes and headed out towards the Caldron.

Winds aloft were 10 mph from the NW at 9000 ft. I planned to circle around to the north of the Sierra Lucero range, and enter the Pecata Pinta valley from the north.

Caldron of Hell

Took a close look at the cinder cone, then headed to Cerro Verde volcano.

Flew over Cerro Verde (lower left). At the summit is a perfect bowl (right). I half expected to see the remains of a old outlaw campsite in there.

I made a low pass over the abandoned airfield I saw last week. Prairie dog farms on the north end, but the south side look flat and clear. (Sorry no picts, its boring and flat)

Followed the edge of Mesa del Oro to the south.

Looked down into these deep lava crevases.

At the southern end of Mesa del Oro, I saw one last reminder of civilization, a large white water tank. Otherwise, I was in the middle of nowhere.

Last week I turned north to Acoma Pueblo here. Today I would head south along Tres Hermanos Mesa.

Partway down Tres Hermanos Mesa was this large ring, probably an ancient volcano caldera.
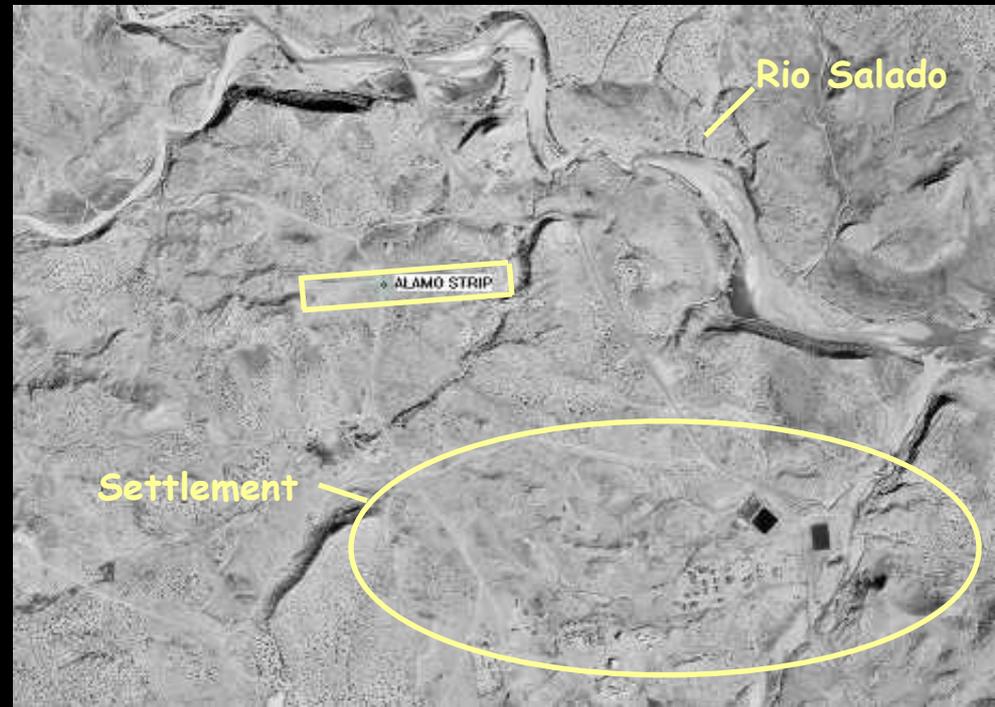
Tres Hermanos Mesa narrowed to a bridge with land out spots along the top. I followed it, saw the "three sisters" at the end, and the Alamo Band Navajo Reservation settlement a couple miles further south.

There is an "out of service" airfield shown on the sectionals here. The strip is next the bed of the Rio Salado which empties into the Rio Grande south of Ladron Peak.

Someday I'll fly up the Rio Salado, and check our the airfield. But I'll call first to avoid a hostile reception.

Rio Salado

ALAMO STRIP

Settlement

Started back home. Followed a very nice new paved road up the valley.

Ladron Peak was about 30 miles to the east.

This meandering stream flows south to the Rio Salado, visible as a faint horizontal line.

To get to Belen, I gained some altitude and crossed a rough ridge line, Mesa de la Cienaga.

I had a land out spot behind me, but I was relieved to reach the other side.

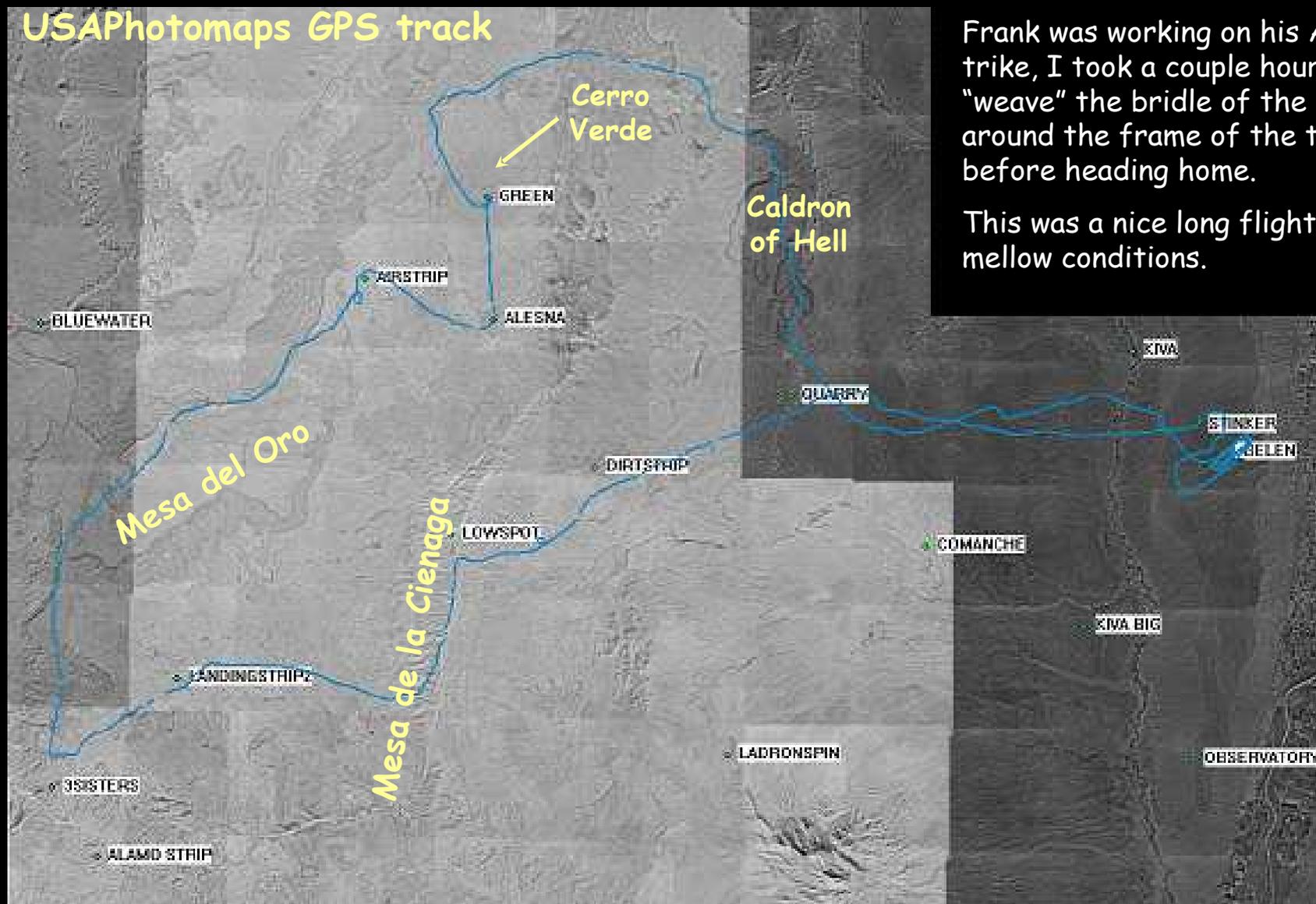Looking north over the flats past Mesa de la Cienaga.

Followed the ridge north up to Mesa Gallina, the large flat top behind the Caldron.

Finally got a good look at the quarry south of the Caldron.

It was hands off smooth all the way back to Belen. But when I descended to land I could feel the thermals. My first landing I got bounced around, but kept the power on and got back over the center line and touched down at mid-field. I knew I could do better so I did a touch and go, set up on final higher and further back and set her down right on the numbers.

USAPhotomaps GPS track

Cerro Verde

Caldron of Hell

Mesa del Oro

Mesa de la Cienaga

GREEN
AIRSTRIP
BLUEWATER
ALESNA
QUARRY
XIVA
STINKER
BELEN
DIRTSTRIP
LOWSPOT
COMANCHE
LANDINGSTRIP2
XIVA BIG
LADRONSPIN
OBSERVATORY
3SISTERS
ALAMO STRIP

Frank was working on his Aeros trike, I took a couple hours to "weave" the bridle of the BRS around the frame of the trike before heading home.

This was a nice long flight in mellow conditions.

This is a NASA World Wind view of the flight. This free program has world wide 10 meter Landsat coverage with 3D terrain. And 1 meter B&W coverage over the USA. You can overlay topomaps, do almost anything except import a GPS tracks. Click the mouse to make a hand sketch of the ground track and some labels appear.

Sandia Mountains

Manzano Mountains

Caldron

Ladron Peak

CerroVerde

Belen

Mesa de la Cienaga

Rio Salado

Mesa del Oro

Tres Hermanos Mesa