

Sunday, December 21, 2008
248th Cobra flight, 257th PIC, 5 landings
Mid-Valley, Double Eagle Class D, Sunset return



Belen Takeoff: 1:55pm DE Landing: 3:00pm
DE Takeoff: 4:23pm Belen Landing: 5:24pm
Today's Airtime: 2.1
Total PIC Time : 629.1 Total Logged Time 650.3

The forecast temps are in the 40's today and the wind is calm, so I emailed Frank and told him I was going flying today after it warm up a little, taking off around 2pm. I wanted to fly up to Double Eagle to check out its new Class D status.

At the hangar, I rigged up a new over the shoulder camera mount for my Aiptek, lashing an empty gas can in my back seat and attaching a RAM ball mount on the handle. The preview shot looked great (upper left).

As I pushed my trike out of the hangar at 1:30, I heard Frank enter the pattern and land. He taxied over while I made my final preparations for launch and we took off a little before 2pm.

I was also checking out a new 8Mpixel camera I picked up cheap at a Christmas sale last month. It works well, but it really drains the batteries. I did a touch and go and flew out over the Belen High football stadium.

We headed out to the Rio Grande and flew north to Mid-Valley Airport.



As you can see from the upper left picture of my approach to Mid-Valley, I need to adjust the camera mount.

We did a full stop landing at Mid-Valley, then took off to the north, flying over a plowed field that had a huge flock of birds circling over it. I turned to the north west, skirting the edge of the ABQ Class-C outer ring.

We flew low over the grassy plains. I followed Frank for a while and got some more great video of my back. Next time will be better.

I did all the talking with the Double Eagle Tower, and Frank and I landed as a flight of 2. Frank hangared his trike while I taxied over to the other side of the airport and parked my trike in a dirt tie down area near the base of the control tower.

Frank drove over and we went over to the tower for a tour. It was very enlightening to see how they do their jobs up there. No radar, just eyeballs and radio. I saw how difficult it is for them to spot low flying planes (like our trikes) when they go down low against the ground clutter.

But they have a great view up there. Frank and I climbed the ladder to the top of the tower. That's me and my trike on the right.



It was time to head back to Belen. I took off and headed out to the Rio Puerco. I circled the PPC field once, but no one was there. Then I followed the wide loop of the Rio Puerco west to the Big Red Spot and down to the railroad tracks. The eastern sky turned bright pink (upper right), then dark. Then the western sky lit up (lower left).

I entered the pattern 10 minutes after sunset and made two pseudo-night landings. I got some great video of the return flight, all blocked by my back again. The lower right picture is a frame from my video where you can see the runway on landing. The camera does work well at night. I'll just have to work on the over the shoulder mount for the next couple flights.



It was a nice little flight on the shortest day of the year. Can't wait for winter to end. Here is my GPS track.

