



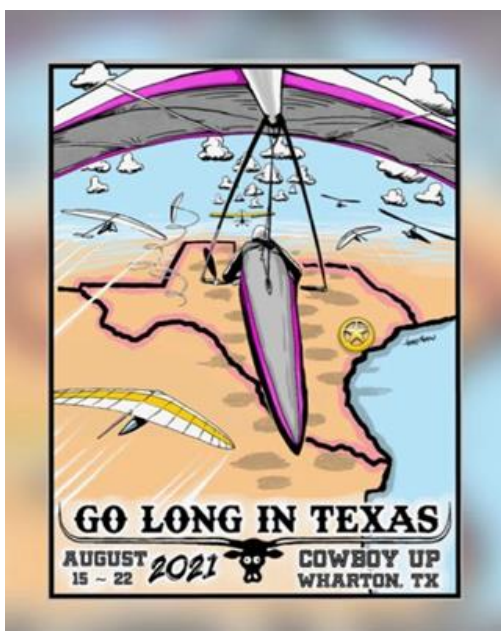
GO LONG
in
TEXAS

AUGUST 15 - 22



Summary of Mick Howard Flights

Robin Hamilton implemented his idea to introduce pilots of all experience levels to the flying conditions around the Texas Gulf Coastal Plains where summer conditions are consistent and where there have been numerous long flights. This event was open to 30 pilots to provide an opportunity to achieve personal best flights, and that objective was achieved.



Flights :: Sort by: Date									
#	Date	Pilot	Takeoff	Dur (h:m)	Open Distance	XC km	XC score	Display	
1	22/08/2021	Mick Howard	Wharton Regional Air... - US	4:53	160.7 km	174.3 km	261.42		
2	21/08/2021	Mick Howard	Wharton Regional Air... - US	4:35	185.9 km	193.1 km	289.62		
3		Mick Howard	Wharton Regional Air... - US	0:22	2.7 km	7.8 km	15.65		
4	20/08/2021	Mick Howard	Wharton Regional Air... - US	4:51	212.1 km	223.8 km	335.74		
5	19/08/2021	Mick Howard	Wharton Regional Air... - US	0:58	27.5 km	31.2 km	46.86		
6	17/08/2021	Mick Howard	Wharton Regional Air... - US	0:45	29.2 km	32.7 km	49.12		
7		Mick Howard	Wharton Regional Air... - US	0:16	2.1 km	6.0 km	12.07		
8	16/08/2021	Mick Howard	Wharton Regional Air... - US	4:41	110.4 km	122.5 km	183.72		
9	15/08/2021	Mick Howard	Wharton Regional Air... - US	0:46	3.1 km	11.6 km	17.44		
10		Mick Howard	Wharton Regional Air... - US	0:16	1.6 km	5.5 km	8.26		

Having flown from Cowboy Up's flying site in Wharrton Texas for a number of years I was keen to sign up for the Texas Go Long event. Actually Robin Hamilton who was the organiser for the XC Camps in Texas and was the initiator and driver behind the Texas Go Long event had called to encourage me to attend the Go Long, but I really didn't need much persuasion. I knew the idea would be a bit of a hard sell to my wife Joanne who was wondering why we would be making a second trip to Texas within a month when we had only just moved from Texas to Florida in November, but eventually she got use to the idea and was ok with it! The first trip was in July-21 to Cotulla Texas for what has become a our "annual" XC Camp. Unfortunately the weather didn't cooperate for that event, but I still enjoyed the experience so I was looking forward to making longer flights in the Go-Long in Texas event.

We had recently changed our vehicle so installing new racks for transporting 4 gliders (2 for other pilots) from Wilotree Park in Florida and making space for our cat and a comfortable bed for our 105lbs Labrador Gypsy, created some extra preparation when usually everything is already organized.

The first day started with a welcome speech from Tiki including information about the facilities while Ty talked about the set up and launch and landing areas at Wharton and Mark Moore our launch director briefed us on staging and launching. Robin provided detailed information about the area, the terrain, routes, flying conditions, airspace, weather for the day and task suggestions and the weather outlook for the week. I covered safety with several emphasis points and then Makbule covered logistics, (parking and retrieve vehicles and drivers), radio frequencies and events.

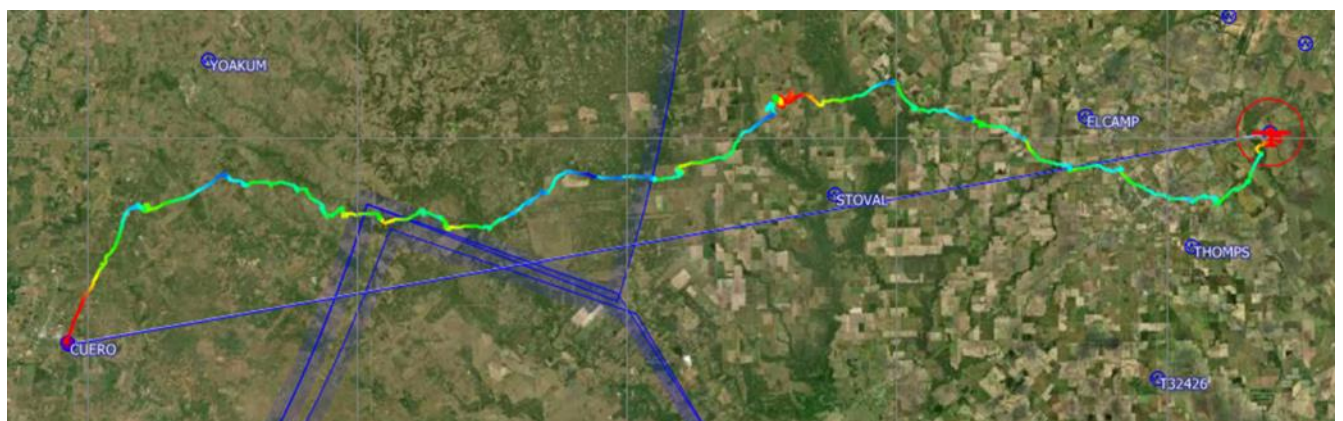
Day-1

We had light a northeast wind which was not typical or ideal for a Go-Long event, but hey, we got to fly. Most many pilots managed to get away but I was unable to stick even after two flights, but on the bright side I was able to leave my glider set up ready for the next day and able to have an early beer☺.

Day-2


The light E/SE winds forecasted favored an out and return task such as run up and down HW-59 (I-69) or a task to the West to experience the landscape, so Robin suggested a task to Cuero airport.

I made pretty good progress for the first 40Km and then I got lower and stuck in the same area for about 30-40 minutes. A little later and while still struggling along I saw Robin cruising along at cloudbase just north of me heading for some big dark clouds. I pressed on wondering if was going to make it especially since I had drifted north and somewhat downwind of goal.



Robin said on the radio that he was getting good glide ratio of averaging 15:1 for the last 15km or so heading to the airport. I was over 12km out when I left my last climb at 4100' msl to head to goal, but my glide wasn't that great, probably because I was further north and facing more of a headwind component. There were times I was

Wind



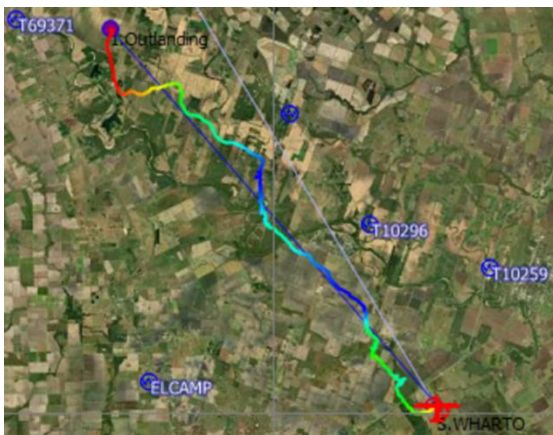
<1250	1500	2000	2500	3000	3500	4000	4250>	[ft]
3.9	15.7	14.9	22.1	54.1	94.2	59.2	11.9	[min]
54°/5	137°/2	138°/3	143°/5	146°/4	141°/3	133°/3	143°/3	[°/mph]

down to only 8:1 glide. I really thought I would need another climb to make it, but I pressed on, looking at the landing options as I was getting lower and lower. I eventually arrived at Cuero airport with about 400' above the ground. Joanne was already there waiting. Robin, who launch an hour after me arrived 15 minutes ahead of me and already drinking an ice cold beer! What a great task.



Day-3

I started out ok getting 200-300 fpm climbs to around 4000' msl. I had a major decision point at around 24km out. Do I go left or right? The clouds to the right were thinner and farther away while the clouds to my left were thicker, darker and closer. I went left and was down to 1400' msl by the time I was tracking under the dark clouds, but there was no lift and then it started raining. I had my eyes on a good looking manicured landing field as I tried to get away from the rain and find lift, but it was too late, so I landed on the freshly mowed sod field next to a driveway. One of the tractor drivers came over and offered to go get his pickup truck so that I could shelter from the rain. The folks in Texas are really awesome. Joanne arrived before I had finished breaking down.



We headed back to Wharton and since I was early I had time to set up my glider ready for the next day and also test fly a brand new WW T-3 144, which flew really sweet.

Day-4

All the forecasts had a high probability of thunderstorms so there was no flying so several people met up for a group dinner at Los Cucus in Wharton.

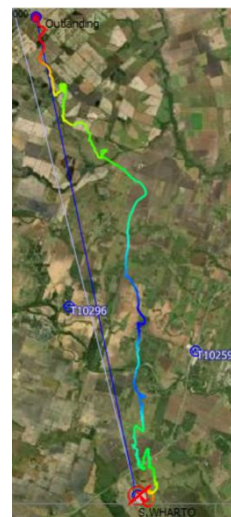
Day-5

The wind speed and direction were good for going a long way but we knew after the thunderstorms the previous day conditions could be a little soft in the beginning. I couldn't seem to connect with the climbs Robin was getting so I was leaving on glide long before topping out, which was a huge mistake. While scratching around trying to find lift while Robin was at 1500 to 2000' higher and at cloudbase I saw Nate Wreyford below me also searching. I tried to keep an eye on Nate as I knew he would find a climb but I somehow lost sight of him and bombed out

13km short of Eagle Lake while Nate went on with Robin to fly 138 miles.

Wind

	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	
<750	1000	1500	2000	2500	3000	3500	3750>	[ft]	
2.2	1.7	5.7	15.1	15.7	5.7	7.9	1.4	[min]	
162°/13	162°/12	162°/12	167°/12	166°/11	179°/14	184°/16	184°/16	[°/mph]	

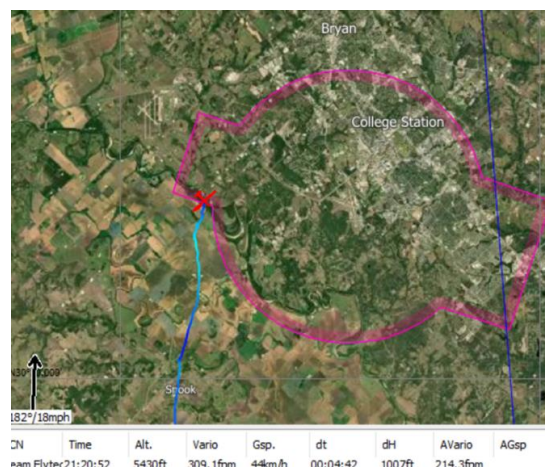


Day-6

Conditions were improving everyday and several pilots had already achieved personal best flights, so everyone was stoked and ready to go long. My plan was to fly downwind. I had waypoints in my instruments way to the north to provide a guide but I wanted to just fly the cloud lines.

Going north from Wharton, the first 55 kms to I-10 is usually the most challenging section. The farmland is mainly gumbo clay soil which holds moisture on the surface for days and weeks after rain and there's numerous rice fields which are generally flooded and also the land is very flat, plus most of the fields are green and therefore not ideal thermal generators. That said, I was getting much better and higher climbs in this first section than previous days so I was able to make longer glides and make better progress. Though having bombed out two times this week in this area I still flew more cautiously on the way to I-10. From there the farmland is different.

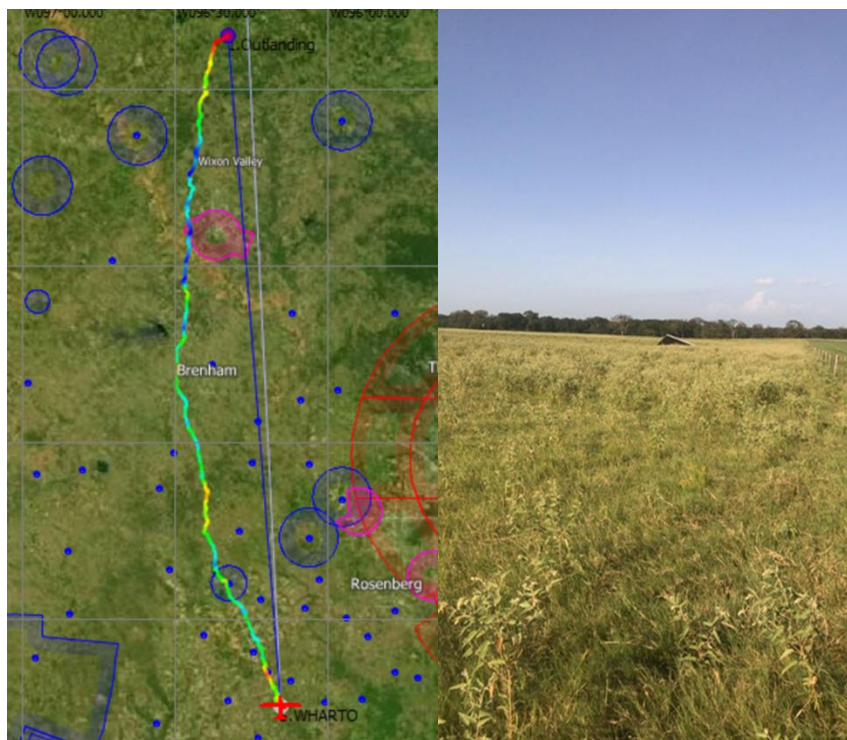
The land north of I-10 is sandy lome and more elevated and relatively undulating and lift becomes stronger, more reliable and the top of lift is higher. As I was approaching the west side of College Station Class D airspace I had the option to either track to the left (west) or fly right over it. At 14km from College Station I had already shifted slightly to the west so that I could easily skirt around the west side of the airspace if I didn't have enough altitude to over fly it. The airspace is surface to 2500'. I arrived on the edge of the airspace around 5400' and I was in a climb so I flew straight over the top and was still over 4900' as I exited the north side of the panhandle stub.



The sun was going down and the clouds had dried up but I managed to find decent lines and some soft climbs as I tracked downwind. Determining wind speed and direction was a little challenging as my 6030

and Blade were displaying different results.

I was down to 2500' when I found a weak climb at 190km out from Wharton. I hung with that for about 15 minutes climbing to 3300'. I knew that I should stay with the climb but since there wasn't enough time in the day to come anywhere close to my personal best of 203 miles, I went on glide. I wasn't meaning to glide to the ground, it was that the ground features ahead looked promising to provide one last good climb before everything shuts down.



While I found bubbles along

the way I didn't manage to connect with another climb so I landed in a beautiful field next to a road. Again Joanne arrived before I had finished breaking down.

Day-7

SSE Winds were forecasted to be lighter than the previous day but still a favorable direction. I was unable to stick on my first flight so I had to take a relight and by that time the launch line was busy, so I eventually started a little later than planned.

Just like the previous day, the climbs on the way to Eagle Lake were above 4200' but then 7km from Eagle Lake airport I was down to 1300' msl before managing to find a climb and dig out of there and climbing to 4400' as I passed just to the west of Eagle Lake airport. I was somewhere north of I-10 when Robin suggested that instead of just punting off downwind we should try to fly to Hearne airport, which was home to several US Nationals Champions and home to Texas Hang Gliding Society and HHPA's (Houston Hang Gliding & Paragliding Association's) winch tow site, so it's a familiar area.

I was down to 1500' msl by the time I got to Brenham and I hadn't been above 4500' all day. While I managed to climb out I was 13km NE of the edge of Lake Somerville before I got over 5000'.



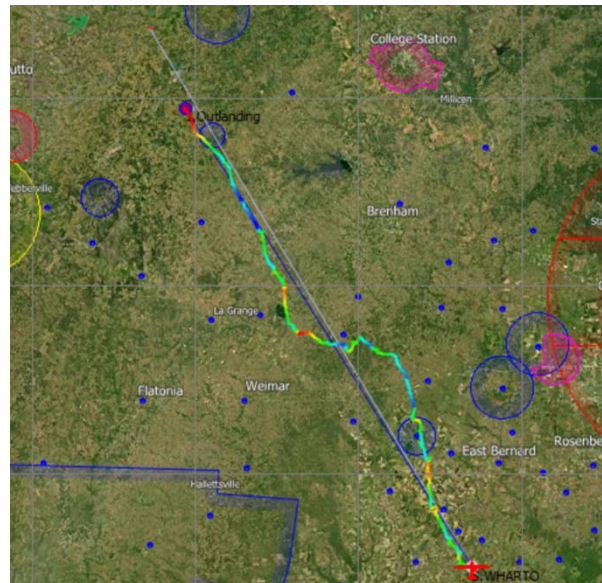
I went slightly off course to the NW to track under a couple of good looking clouds but neither cloud was working and I had counted on a climb there to get me to goal. 15km out I needed a climb so I headed over to a railroad parking station with steel tracks spread over a large area so I knew that had to be working, and I was down to just over 1200' msl at 10km from goal before finding a climb. Robin, Glen and Mike were at the airport waiting for me under a shade building next to some fuel tanker trucks. I was familiar with this huge airport so I knew where to land. I took that climb to 3200' while drifting towards goal, just to make sure and arrived there at 2000' msl. Robin (who took the shots of my landing) came out to carry my glider and I could barely finish the beer Mike gave me as Glen and Robin were breaking down my glider. What a pleasure it is to fly with friends. Joanne was there again within 5 minutes of me landing.



Day-8

Our last chance to go long but Robin convinced me to try a task to Apache Pass. Jeff Hunt (Fly Texas and Fly Mexico) had offered a free steak dinner to anyone who could fly from Wharton and land at Apache Pass, which apparently has a steak house and bar there. All pilots apart from Robin, Zippy and I were planning to fly straight downwind.

Zippy was directly behind me in the launch line so we started out flying together. We left the first climb around the same altitude but I was flying horrible lines and gliding way too fast so I was just burning altitude. I was just making one dumb decision after another. I was struggling in 100 fpm south of Eagle Lake when Zippy said he had 600 fpm in the next thermal. I was much lower so I took a risk and headed over and was rewarded with 500up. Zippy headed out while I was still climbing. I didn't see him again for the rest of the flight. I was at 4800' as I approached Eagle Lake and 6km before reaching I-10 I took a climb to 5400'. They were the highest climbs in that area all week, so conditions were definitely improving but I was already 9.5 km right of course line. Zippy was a long way ahead and also a long way right of course line. At 15km passed I-10 I made a 90 degree turn to get back to the course line. This seemed logical at the time but it was a very inefficient way to fly. Shortly after I was down to 1400' msl 8km left of course line. Why did I end up there? That was just so dumb, and I went even further off line to 10.5km left of course line while only making 24km towards goal, which was even dumber. I had actually flown 20km to the west. I think I was seeing a better cloud line and trying to get to where I could fly straight down a street towards goal but that was likely not the best path.



After getting below 2000' yet again and at around 98km from launch I seemed to finally start making better decisions and I was also getting climbs to 5800' msl but it was getting late so not really enough time to make up for the poor progress earlier. I eventually landed in a beautiful pasture running upslope towards the road and 23.6km short of goal, 3km left of course line and just short of Zippy at 19km from goal.

Joanne was there minutes later followed by the land owner who saw me fly over and go beyond the tree line. He was super nice. What a way to end the week!

Thanks to Tiki and Robin for organising and hosting this event and thanks to everyone for their hard work in all the preparation and support that made this a success. A special thanks also to the tug pilots who did a great job in getting us to lift even on the weaker days.

It was so good to see so many happy faces including Joanne's (on the last day😊).



It would be good to see a summary of all the personal best flights during the event. I didn't achieve any personal bests but I still had a great time and continue to progress along my learning curve.

Summary of Texas Go Long Flights from Wharton Texas					
Day	Date	Distance Kilometers	Distance Miles	Duration Hours	Comments
1	8/15/2021	1.60	1.00	0.26	Landed back at Wharton for relight
1	8/15/2021	3.10	1.94	0.76	Unable to stick - Landed back at Wharton.
2	8/16/2021	110.40	69.00	4.68	Flight to Cuero airport
3	8/17/2021	29.20	18.25	0.75	Bombed out
3	8/17/2021	2.10	1.31	0.26	Test flew Matt's new T3 - Sweet Glider.
4	8/18/2021	0.00	0.00	0.00	Did not fly due to thunderstorms
5	8/19/2021	27.50	17.19	0.96	Bombed out before 13km short of Eagle Lake
6	8/20/2021	212.10	132.56	4.85	Open distance
7	8/21/2021	2.70	1.69	0.36	Landed back at Wharton for relight
7	8/21/2021	185.90	116.19	4.58	Flight to Hearne Airport
8	8/22/2021	160.70	100.44	4.88	Attempted flight to Apache Pass (Steak House)
Totals		735.30	459.56	22.34	Great week of flying

Flights Uploaded to [Leonardo](#)

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