

Planning The Badge Flight

This article is intended as a guide for the preparation for badge flights and applies to cross-country flying in general as well.

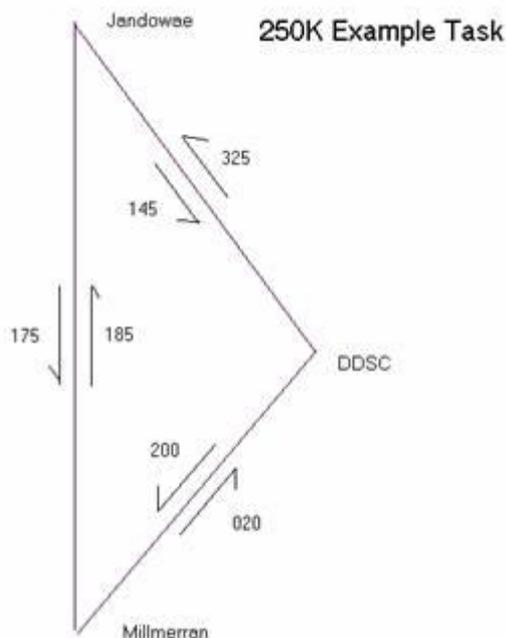
Prepare your map

I suggest you splash out and buy a couple of WAC charts, cost approx \$10. These are available from Airsupport. You will need the Brisbane section and possibly the Armidale section. The Brisbane section covers most of the area we normally fly in. The Armidale section covers an area starting just north of Warwick south to Port Macquarie. These maps are 1 million to 1 scale making measuring tasks easy with a centimetre ruler.

Once you have your map, cut out the section you need, write important things you may need on the back, things like your name, your telephone number and the club telephone number and get it laminated. For example my Brisbane section covers an area that goes as far West as Wallumbilla, East to Toowoomba and North to Gayndah and South the edge of the map and is only about 1 square foot.

On the front draw circles at 1cm intervals to 6cm around DDSC using a permanent marker. Cover this with a piece of clear plastic. These circles allow you to see instantly how far away from your intended finish point which you will need to use in conjunction with a final glide computer. Also, for Silver distance you can quickly choose a turn point more than 50km from the club.

Task planning



- There are two types of tasks associated with badge claims: Distance task flown around up to 3 pre-declared turning points in any order. Goal task flown around up to 2 pre-declared turning points in the order declared.
- If you have computer there are several programs available that make task planning very easy.
- You can plan your cross-country tasks at home. Create a number of tasks and draw (or print) them out on a piece of paper. Include the name of the turning points, distance, and the compass headings for both directions around the task. Most turn points are towns, airfields or grain silos all of which are clearly marked on a WAC chart.
- Having prepared tasks for the distance you want to achieve will save you time, leaving you with just a decision of selecting a task appropriate for the day. This preparation is better than messing around with maps and rulers on the day trying to find something for the distance you want to achieve.

Other things to do

- Prepare an outlanding survival kit. Briefly this should contain a torch, a note pad and pen, emergency food and money.

The night before

- The aim here should be to do as much preparation as you can so that there is less to do the next morning. This includes:
- Fill your water carrier and put it in the fridge if you want ice cold water.
- If using a logger upload or clear all traces so that there is no danger of running out of memory. Check that the pilot and glider details are complete leaving you with just the declaration to make the next morning.

On the day

- Try to select a task such that the 'into wind' leg will be flown in the best part of day, early to mid afternoon, and the starting and end leg have a down wind component. Try to avoid a long final leg into a strong wind.
- How far can you go? First you need an idea of how fast you can go in the expected conditions. Early cross-country pilots will probably be able to achieve 70-80kph on a good day. This means that you will need around about 4 hours to do 300km. If you want to be home by 5pm you'll need to get going by 1pm. Using your expected speed and duration of the day (or the maximum time you want to spend on task) you can come up with rough time table of when you can expect to be at your turn points. You need to exercise some judgement here. If you find yourself at your second last turn point 5 minutes behind later than expected that's ok. But if you find yourself 30 minutes behind and battling to get to the next one you may want to consider abandoning the task and making your way home.
- Find an official observer and make your declaration.
- Carry plenty of water.
- Don't forget to arrange a crew before you go.

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