

Marshall Poole

Pilot Interview

TF: Please tell us how you got started.

Marshall: I been around flight since I was born, literally. My grandfather would babysit me as an infant and put me in airplanes and helicopters and know that is when I fell in love with flying. Seventeen years later I was walking in a mall in Rhode Island of all places. The school that was soliciting new pilots had a Vidio and a Javlin 208. I took his flyer and called two years later when I graduated from high school in 1988. When my feet left the ground and I was hooked.

TF: How long have you been flying?

Marshall: 13 years and loving every minute of it.

TF: Where have you done most of your flying?

Marshall: I got started in Massachusetts with two years of bunny hill stuff. I got me first glider at Morningside in New Hampshire. I did more of the bunny hill stuff in Rhode Island. Then I moved to San Berardino, California. At Crestline I was taught by Bob McKenzie and did ridge lift and thermal flying for two and a half years. Great flying. Two days a week sometime twice a day. From

there I moved to Sedona in 1994. I was told a local carpet cleaning guy flies so I called and got a hold of Paul Whitcome and then Tim Costello. Mingus flying is great as is northern Arizona.

TF: So what's with the missile?

Marshall: Very simple. Storage. I moved into a house where I couldn't put my glider in the house so I thought a PVC drainage tube with a cap was best. But I wanted one with style so I made plywood fins, a laminated Styrofoam nose cone and a twisted rope fuse. I even have a block and tackle system to lift it off my truck. People love it especially now since September 11th. They even take pictures and say right on!

TF: What was your most memorable flight?

Marshall: That is easy, April 22, 1999, Andy Rockhold's birthday. Tim and I were to meet him at Yarnell but he went home. So Tim and I went on. Conditions didn't seem all that great when we got to launch but Tim's wife said it looks good up there, pointing to the streamer on top. So we punched off in what turned out to be a great glass off. We flew for

one and a half hours with one of the most incredible sunsets I have ever seen let alone flown in. Everything was red, the ground, the glider, the air. It was beautiful. Also at the time of landing we could see Mars, a full moon and a comet all at the same time. The Best!

TF: When people ask what is it like to hang glide what do you tell them?

Marshall: What I explain to them is that it is the freest form of flight there is. If you go skydiving you are not flying you are falling. Plain and simple. In a hot air balloon you're in an oversized laundry hamper filled with high explosives even in an airplane you're surrounded by metal, glass. And if Exxon gives out, gravity takes over, gravity becomes your fuel. With hang gliding you launch and land the same as a bird. You lay prone like a bird. Even use the same methods to go high and far not to mention it is so much fun!

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work crews at Oatman's south launch

by O.L. Lowenslow

Foreign Correspondent for the *TF*

It had been three years since my last visit to Australia and I was anxious to return. Nasty winter weather in the boondocks of Ohio wasn't conducive to flying there, so it didn't take much to tilt me in the direction of the Southern Hemisphere.

My old flying buddy, Regina, hadn't flown in a year and a half, for a variety of reasons, but she still had her glider and flying gear. I brought my own harness, but her glider was indispensable to my plans. It didn't take much persuasion on my part for her to abandon her husband and kids and go flying with me (any sacrifice is worth a good flight).

Now this summer time of year brings easterly winds, generally speaking, and these are needed to soar the seaside cliffs that abound on the eastern seacoast of Australia. But when I say generally speaking the wind is east, it can be southeast or northeast rather than straight east, so (as usual anywhere) weather forecasting and guru consulting is in order before selecting a launch site destination.

Strong northeasterlies were the call of the day for our first flying opportunity together, so we headed for Hill 60, about 60 miles south of Sydney. When we arrived, one other pilot was in the air, but the wind was both strong and too cross from the north for a takeoff from this 250 foot hill with a lovely beach and semicircular bay in front of it. Not to worry, as the Aussies say, we went to the lower bench.

The lower bench faces due north and has a launch pad that is 35 feet only above sea level. The maximum height of the cliff is about 80 feet, I estimate, and flying here requires real concentration or one will be in the rocks below, if lucky, or in the sea, if not so lucky. It is really not as difficult to fly as it may sound to the uninitiated, but mental preparedness is essential; you are only seconds away from the ground or sea at any particular moment.

So I launched first, having had the experience that Regina lacked for this site, and had a ball bouncing back and forth the few hundred yards that make the north facing cliff,

sometimes with my wing below the top of the cliff, sometimes as much as 150 feet above sea level. Then I pulled my Old Dawg trick for the benefit of observers.

At the east end of the cliff, one is in front of the previously mentioned semicircular bay in front of Hill 60. If one is to fly from the bench back to Hill 60, one must turn downwind over the pounding surf and head-on charge the hill I estimate to be 300 to 400 yards distant. With a mere 150 feet altitude to start with, it can take real grit to make that first crossing.

Once done, however, you will find it a smooth and easy crossing and wind will be found close in on Hill 60 that will allow you to climb out of the surf, sand, and brush that line the hill. The beach is wide enough for a cross wind landing, in case you bomb out, but that's not likely if you had enough wind to try this stunt in the first place.

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