

Dusting Off The Hat

Indeed it should be dusty. It's been a long, long time since my last Angel Flight mission. What with my Milwaukee vacation flight last July/August and then flying in December to San Antonio to trade 6827V in on 5807T and this and that, it has been over a year since I flew John (Ranger) Lay to Lompoc on my last Angel Flight. I started feeling the bug a month or two ago and went online looking for a weekend flight.

Two weeks ago I found a Saturday mission from Fresno Yosemite International (FAT) to Yucca Valley (L22) and requested it. AFW awarded it to me and I have been waiting in anticipation ever since! I called Lori, my passenger to let her know someone had volunteered to fly her, and she gave me (this is the important part), her brand new cell phone number.

I went through the week waiting in anticipation, as I mentioned. You know how, when you were a kid, you waited for the day when you were going to get to go to a birthday party? Or to the circus? Well, it's kinda' like that.

For those of you who remember reading about my very first Angel Flight mission titled "I Wore the Hat", it was about taking Tom Ivy from Fresno Yosemite back home to Yucca Valley. He has a bone disease that he got from Agent Orange in Viet Nam. His wife Lori got it from him. They both go for treatments in Fresno. This time, I get to fly her. It's the very same route.

On several nights last week, I worked up my flight plans for the three legs. Pencil lines were drawn on the chart connecting the airports. The flight plan was entered into the GPS. The navigation papers were filed in my book. Homework was complete.

I checked the weather forecasts Friday. Oops, there was a hitch there. We were right in the middle of three days of treacherous #*\$#! Northeast Santa Ana winds at Corona. This is the actual weather forecast text for Corona from www.weatherunderground.com on Friday night, 3/2/2007.

Saturday

Mostly sunny. Warmer. Highs 72 to 82. Winds east 30 to 40 mph with gusts to 60 MPH, becoming 20 to 30 mph with gusts to 50 mph in the afternoon.



Everything was all staged to go anyway.

There was no reason to get up early on Saturday, as the surface winds were to subside, not get worse. A call to flight service before leaving home confirmed that clouds were not going to be a factor but something else was. There was an Airmet for moderate turbulence along my route of flight below 15,000' and a Sigmet for severe turbulence along my route of flight below 10,000'. Not words I wanted to hear but this was a mission so I gathered up my things and headed to the airport.

When I got there, there was no activity at all, at least not from pilots flying. It was too dicey for most of them. The only activity was coming from the windsock, which was merrily dancing all over the place.



It would blow strong out of the east



Then 5 seconds later, suddenly quit - Wind shear



Then suddenly come from the northwest - Wind shear

After preflighting and loading 07T, I gave Lori a quick call on "her brand new cell phone number" to tell her that I had held back because of the winds and would be about ½ hour later than planned. She said "Oh there is a pilot already here to take us back home." You could have knocked me over with a feather. I suppose I have a voice message from AFW on my phone at work, which I will hear on Monday. Something weird must have happened. Oh well, we're all human. The new title to this story is now:



All Dressed Up and No Place to Go

Ed Shreffler
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