

## Ephrata Encampment

Hans Sendelbach

The encampment started for me on the Thursday before the Dust Up weekend. Fred Hermanspann and Mike Talley and I wrestled the L-23 on to its trailer. On Friday Steve Baker, Gary Paulin and I put 355BA into the trailer in the pouring rain. They had rain gear, I got soaked. I drove to Ephrata that night. It took 5 1/2 hours from KAWO. Jim Gellman towed the L-23 over behind his car later that evening and Nels Peterson pulled the L-33 over the next morning. Angus towed the Apis over.

The first day of the encampment was filled with putting the L-23 and the L-33 together. The first and only task of the Dust Up happened that day also. The weather would shut the contest down the next two days. Angus worked with a few students on Saturday, Sunday and into Monday. Dave Reusch also put on his instructor hat for the first few days of the week. Nels showed everyone the Condor flight simulator and Silent Wings. There was a lot of interest shown by the more experienced pilots. Saturday through Tuesday were soarable days, but not of the type people expect from Ephrata. The plateau was green. It was cool and wet for most of the week. For me these were good practice days. The wind didn't blow too hard and I talked Dave into checking me out in the Astir and the Apis. Tuesday turned out to be a decent day with pilots making it up to Electric City and back. Most of them landed with smiles and saying, "that was a better day than expected." Roy Clark landed out.



The L-23 (265BA) trying to make Rwy 22 in a strong cross wind

photo: Kathleen McCrary

Tuesday evening everyone disappeared because the weather forecast for Wednesday was rain. Gary Paulin, Keith Pervues, Dave Reusch, and I stuck it out and spent Wednesday visiting Wilson Creek, Coulee City, and Mansfield. I was filled with apprehension. Those airports look ugly from the ground and the Coulee looks vicious. That night we went out for pizza and saw Robin Hood in the theatre. Thursday was a really fun day. Keith, Dave and I stayed local. I got in a three hour flight. We spent a lot of time over Soap Lake between six and seven thousand. Dave and Keith ranged out further than me. The thermals were mostly blue and at about 5k there was a turbulent shear layer that you had to wrestle your way through. It was all great practice. At one point Keith and I shared a thermal. It was magical to look across at the ASW-17 with its elegant wings.

Friday started with rain. I thought for sure it was going to rain all day, but by afternoon it had opened up. John Gilbert, Mark Nyberg, Tony Wiederkehr (with his father and a few flying buddies), Jeff Banks, and Mike Newgard all showed up that day. I was one of the first to launch and almost got shot down right off the bat, but climbed back up. The day was looking good. I headed for Quincy under a cloud street. I was sure I had it made, but I got stuck in a blue hole over Quincy Muni. I struggled for what felt like an hour (even if it was only 15 minutes) to get back up but I kept losing altitude. Then it was time to put the gear down and to land. No problem really, but I have to admit I was rattled. It was my first unplanned landing - great practice. Thanks to everyone who picked me up. Roy has some pictures. Many other pilots didn't make the same mistake that I did and got away. Mark and Jeff were up most of the day and so were Keith and Gary who flew Tony's DG-1000. Steak was on the menu for dinner.

Saturday was turned out to be the best day of the week. Everyone got out and ranged far and wide. John Gilbert landed at Okanagon airport. Gary beat his personal distance record and landed his DG-300 in a farmer's field for the first time. Keith Pervues killed it with a seven hour flight to Deer Park and back. It seemed like all the gliders on the flight line were in the air. It was a good sight. And I flew a few minutes short of 5 hours and over 150 km.

The main lessons I learned while in Ephrata were: first, fly even if you don't think its going to be good. The day usually is better than expected. Second, don't expect the thermals to be wide. It really wasn't until the last day that I got it. The key is to fight your way into the core. No one can hear so bust out your favorite cuss words and get your wing into the core by any means necessary and be ready to put the nose down if you hit sink. At times the sink and lift are right up against each other. Also, for the beginner like myself a chart with glide slope rings is a must.



Ephrata shower

photo: Fred Hermanspann