

Introduction

I recently sold my C-172 and agreed to deliver it to the buyer in Brandon Manitoba, Canada. This was the most efficient way to make the transaction because the airplane could stay FAA registered until delivery to Canada and then a new Canadian Airworthiness Certificate and Registration would be obtained.

I was concerned about such a long flight at this time of the year, but decided since there was no real time pressure; I could wait for the best weather window.

The trip could be divided into four phases: Planning, My Personal Flight Limitations, Flight and Lessons Learned.

Planning

Since I was flying 784 miles almost straight north, I decided there was a need for a survival plan. I filled a backpack with boots, space blanket, candles and an old CD to use as a mirror. This CD trick was shown on a CNN program about winter survival after the event in Oregon where a guy lost his life after he left the family car and took off walking. I was reading and watching anything about winter survival.

I made sure that my handheld GPS had the current database to include the Brandon Manitoba airport (CYBR) and International Peace Gardens (S28).

I used the Sporty's flight planner website to order all the US and Canadian maps that I needed. This is a nice service because all that you do is input your departure and destination airport and route of flight and it will provide all the required maps and charts.

My Personal Flight Limitations

No IFR flight – since the airplane didn't have an Auto Pilot and since it was winter, there was the possibility of ice.

The time between stops would be around 2 ½ hours. This would allow me enough margin in case of weather that would require an alternate course of action. I also would have enough fuel to turn around and return to my departure point.

I would not fly at night since all the warm ground and potentially colder air could possibly cause fog which I didn't want to deal with. If I went down at night, I would have to survive all night before I could potentially be found.

I would file a VFR flight plan and use flight following for the route. I was concerned that if I did go down, there was a plan for somebody to come look for me. I also made plans to call home and inform my wife on each departure and arrival.

Flight

When I awoke on January 1st, I checked the weather and determined that it looked good VFR for the next three days all the way to Canada. I departed Wichita Mid-Continent Airport around 1:00 PM and flew to Grand Island, Nebraska. The flight went smoothly and I arrived around 3:30 PM. There was a lot of ice. The runway had been cleared but the taxi way was snow packed.

I departed Grand Island, Nebraska around 4:00 PM en-route to Pierre, South Dakota with an estimated arrival time of 6:00 PM (after dark). I decided to fly a little after dark since the weather was good and because I had coordinated with the FBO that the runway was clear. I arrived at exactly 6:00 PM and made arrangements to put the airplane in the hanger since it was going to be near zero in the morning.

The next morning broke with ground fog with a 100 foot ceiling. While I waited for the fog to burn off, I coordinated with the Canadian customs office at International Peace Gardens on the conditions of the runway and my anticipated arrival time.

I departed Pierre, South Dakota around 9:00 AM en-route to Minot, North Dakota with an estimated time of 2:35. The flight went smoothly under a 10,000 foot overcast. The flight actually took three hours because the winds were higher than predicted. I checked the weather to my destination of Brandon Manitoba, Canada and noticed that there was a chance of freezing rain. After several conversations with the buyer and flight service, it was determined that we would check again at International Peace Gardens.

I departed Minot, North Dakota for the 68 mile flight to International Peace Gardens (S28). The airport is in a strip of land between the US and Canada. I landed and walked down to the Canadian Customs and presented my aircraft registration and pilot certificate. The Canadian Customs officers were pleasant with only a few questions resulting in a permit to be in Canada for three days.

After determining that the destination weather had dissipated, I departed International Peace Gardens for the 45 minute flight to Brandon Manitoba. I opened my VFR flight plan on the US side and closed it on the Canadian side.

I have included pictures of the landing at International Peace Gardens and Brandon Manitoba, Canada.

Lessons Learned

Nobody flies in Canada without a flight plan or flight notification. A flight notification is a VFR flight where you notify a responsible aviation person of your departure route of flight and arrival. If you don't arrive, they will initiate the search process.

Up north the weather can change quickly. Always have an alternate course of action in case the weather changes.

During winter operations, always call ahead to determine the runway conditions. I would not plan on landing on an icy runway because this can result in loss of control with any amount of cross wind.

Final Thought

This was one of those flights that reminded me why I have a pilot license. I truly enjoyed all the flight planning and decision making resulting in an uneventful flight over a part of the country I never seen before.



LANDING AT INTERNATIONAL PEACE GARDENS



LANDING AT BRANDON MANITOBA, CANADA.