

# Flight To The Snow

After another great flight along the Murray river, the two Pirate Ships were put to bed for the night. Time for dinner, and more importantly, time to plan tomorrow's flight.

*by Peter McLean,  
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Over dinner the plan was hatched to fly to the snow (as long as the fog didn't stop us). The plan was to be ready to depart Yarrowonga at, or as close to, 0700 hours. A done deal and two pilots and aircrew were ready for tomorrow!

At 0600 hours, no fog... you little beauty! Hangar doors were opened and the aircraft were moved out into the crisp morning air. Yes, it was cold. The sun cut itself

on the trees at the end of the runway and bled all along the taxiway. Then it put a beautiful golden glow over the two QuikR 'pirate ships'. Time to get going.

The aircrew was made up of pilot Ian with crew member Corina in one QuikR, and CFI Peter in the other. Aircrew Anne would have to stay behind today as her new hip was still not good enough for a two-hour flight in the cold. Anne's disappointment was palpable...

Engines started and warmed up, and warmed up... Gee, it was cold! It took over 12 minutes to get to 45°. The two pirate ships taxied to the holding point. One after the other, they lined up and departed into the cool but still air.

Both aircraft climbed to 2000ft where the temperature was very nice. We made our way towards Wangaratta and kept a listening watch on Wangaratta and Melbourne, but all we could hear were crickets. It seemed that no one was coming out to fly today.

The ground below us was very wet from recent rains which had fallen over the last few months. We passed Wangaratta and started a gentle climb to 7000ft. It was still quite warm as we made it over the hills leading towards the town of Bright. We climbed higher and higher on our way towards Mt Buffalo. We could see the snow on both Mt Bogong and Mt Hotham. However,

as we reached the top of Mt Buffalo we could only see a small amount of snow on it. We flew over the top of the mountain and saw a few wannabe skiers playing around in the little bit of snow there was.

After checking out the top of Mt Buffalo for a while, I decided to head down to make a low pass over Porepunkah runway. What a mistake that was! As I descended down from 7000ft the air began to get cold. very cold, then below freezing and I watched my oil temperature go from 100°C down to 50°C in a matter of seconds. So did my hands! Feeling quite cold, I climbed back up to 5000ft and headed back to Yarrowonga. I had told Ian not to follow me down as it was just getting too cold and he heeded my advice. Ian and Corinna stayed nice and warm. The flight back to Yarrowonga was just magic. The crisp clear sky let us almost see forever!



Heading home

Arriving back at the circuit, we joined for runway 01 and allowed our aircraft to gently touch down. As we taxied back to the hangar and shut down, we reflected on our flight to the snow. Sitting down at the table

in hangar 19, we looked at the photos we had taken. Another set of memories to keep.

Anne and I had done this flight a few years ago on the same date, 17 July, and we agreed there was more snow back then. Still, a great flight and soon Anne will be also be able to join us again in her PulsR.

Mt Buffalo  
Photos: Peter McLean



Winter morning sun



A crestfallen Anne



Over the snow, what little there was