

# Journey to the Mecca

By Keith Kirkby

**“Piper Juliet X-Ray Victor, you are cleared to land Runway Three-Six Left on the purple dot. When able, clear the runway in the grass to the left. Welcome to THE SHOW!”.**

## Plan C, Revision 6.

Despite months of planning, this aviation adventure felt hastily contrived. With my hectic and spontaneous work schedule and with July being Mike’s (my partner-in-crime) busiest time for air-conditioning sales, we weren’t sure that we would be able to make the trip happen at all. The idea was initiated in the latter half of 2023 when my dad decided that he and his flying buddies were going to make one last trip to AirVenture in Wisconsin in the summer of 2024. Mike and I had been talking about attending for a few years and we started incubating plans to meet them there.

Once per year the small City of Oshkosh, WI, perched on the western shore of Lake Winnebago, is transformed into the largest general aviation event in the world. The EAA’s (Experimental Aircraft Association) earliest gathering began modestly enough in 1953 with fewer than 150 like-minded aviation enthusiasts, primarily focused on home-built and experimental aircraft. By the time the event was moved to Oshkosh in 1970 because of popularity, the show was attracting hundreds of show planes and thousands of visitors. Oshkosh continues to reign as the fabled ground upon which this magnificent gathering descends every year and, during that 1 week in July 2024, when Mike and I managed to cobble together the time and resources to make the trip, AirVenture logged almost three quarters of a million visitors, hosted over 10,000 aircraft, and was made a resounding success, as always, largely on the backs of over 6,000 local volunteers.

Dad and his friends (Stu and Carl) were initially patient with our lack of commitment to dates, lodging, logistics, etc. Planning must happen early for this extravaganza because of its popularity and the limited resources within Oshkosh and the surrounding towns to host such an affair. Hundreds of locals open their homes to incoming enthusiasts by way of AirBnB, VRBO and the like, and there are a few dozen hotels, but they get snapped up months in advance. Dad, having actually flown directly into Wittman Regional Airport, where the show takes place, on multiple occasions in the past, was quite done with that organized pandemonium and he, Stu and Carl decided to fly their airplanes into a neighboring town away from all the hubbub and drive in for the daily festivities.

Mike and I, however, had decided early on that if we were going to do this trip, we would do it all the way, including the world famous AirVenture arrival. As the months turned to weeks and our work schedules solidified, we became more committed but, at this late stage, had forgone any chance of finding a warm bed anywhere in or near Oshkosh (Dad and company had long given up waiting on us and had organized their own lodging in West Bend, 40 miles southeast of Oshkosh). So, in keeping with the spirit of “doing it all the way”, and it really being our only recourse, we were going to camp on site under the wings of our trusty Piper PA-12 Super Cruiser.



*Figure 1. AirVenture 2024...from Space*

## The Excitement Builds.

Flying into Wittman Regional Airport during AirVenture is not for the faint of heart. Air traffic controllers are hand-picked to work this event from the scores of men and women that routinely keep our national airspace organized. Every pilot that plans to fly into Wittman during AirVenture must download and study a special 31-page NOTAM. All “normal” aircraft separation standards, arrival procedures and communication policies are tossed out the window to accommodate the massive influx of aircraft (up to 1 arrival/takeoff every 30 seconds).

With the show officially starting on Monday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>, Mike and I thought it would be prudent to plan on arriving the Sunday before, primarily to make sure that a parking/camping spot would be available. However, after a few phone calls with the organizers, we decided that it would be too great a risk that camping spots may already be unavailable and we would have to divert to a different airport, so we planned to arrive on the Saturday instead.

We launched out of Meadow Lake Airport in Colorado Springs early on Friday morning bound for Davenport, IA for the night. Davenport would serve as our launch site for our Wittman push the next morning. Our first gas stop was at Holdrege, NE, about 160 miles west of Omaha. We sensed a difference in the air (pun intended) on this trip. As we launched out of Holdrege enroute to our next stop, another pilot on the radio randomly asked us if we were on our way to AirVenture. “Yes!”, we replied, enthusiastically. After a short discussion he recommended that we make our next gas stop at Pella, IA, about 30 miles east of Des Moines. It was a little further than we intended for our second leg, but we obliged. Pella was great! The little FBO was cozy, the fuel prices were fair, and they offered special gift-bags for AirVenture-bound aviators (including, very thoughtfully, a travel roll

of wet-wipes which us would-be campers especially appreciated). The excitement was building as we continued east!

We took off out of Pella and made the 1-hour hop over to Davenport, on the border of Illinois, where we had a hotel room booked for the night. Having used Davenport as a stop-over on previous cross-country trips, I was familiar with the airport and was confident that we would have access to a crew-car overnight, which the friendly FBO personnel were happy to provide. We buttoned down the airplane and cruised into town for a quick meal and then checked into the hotel. I was particularly anxious about the “Big Arrival” the next day and we both stretched out on our respective beds to re-read the NOTAM, commit radio frequencies to memory, and watch videos of pilots flying the initial and final approaches into the airport. There were several different arrival scenarios that we needed to be prepared for.

My sleep was not the greatest, partly because of the anticipation of the day in front of us, but mostly because Mike suffers from sleep apnea and, because we were planning to camp, we had NO room for anything beyond the bare camping essentials in the PA-12’s tiny cabin. His CPAP machine hit the cutting-room floor among many other luxury items. The snoring was heard around the world that night, I reckon, and I finally trotted down to the front desk at midnight to book into a second room to salvage what sleep I could. I awoke early and popped back into Room #1 where, you guessed it, Mike was still happily snoring away, no wiser to my absence.

Regardless of the less-than-fitful rest, I was very excited, as was Mike, to get the day going. We cleaned up and returned to the airport. I filled the airplane with gas to the top, concerned that there may not be fuel service offered to the camping aircraft in Oshkosh (boy, was I wrong!) while Mike returned the car. We loaded up and took off for the roughly 2-hour flight to The Mecca.

## The Big Arrival.

We were giddy, and anxious, but we felt as prepared as we would ever be. With the advent and proliferation of the nation-wide ADS-B technology, pilots have access to the real-time location of most aircraft anywhere within the national airspace, conveniently displayed on a simple tablet along with your navigation information and aviation charts. Mike and I immediately noticed the obvious migration of aircraft targets all heading to one location – Oshkosh! After clearing Davenport’s airspace, we tuned the radio to “FINGERS”, the common air-to-air frequency used by the general aviation community (123.45 MHz). The frequency was abuzz with excited chatter between aircraft all with the same destination in mind. The anticipation was intoxicating.



*Figure 2. Giddy and Anxious*





Figure 3. The "Conga Line"  
(courtesy of Stu Simpson)

The AirVenture arrivals NOTAM spells out a rather lengthy initial approach procedure that, depending on the density of inbound traffic, can begin as far away as 40 miles southwest of Wittman Field. The concept calls for inbound aircraft to organize themselves in a line at a set altitude, speed and spacing. For it to work, every pilot must meticulously maintain their airspeed and altitude into the initial approach fix and all the way up the line. ATC provides an automated broadcast to indicate which initial approach fix is in use at any point in time. We were relieved to hear on the broadcast that one of the intermediate fixes was currently recommended, which meant we wouldn't have to join up so far away from

the airport. However, when we consulted our map with the overlaid traffic, we were flabbergasted at the number of targets coming from all directions and already lined up in-bound to the final approach fix. We quickly decided to avoid that melee and chose one of the initial fixes further out on the inbound track where we anticipated less traffic joining in the queue.

Here we go! We approached Puckaway Lake from the south as we eyed the ADS-B data warily. We could feel the encroaching airplane traffic before we could even see it. "There's one!", Mike announced. "And I see another coming from the west", he added. We found what appeared to be a good spot to wedge ourselves in with a visual of the 2 aircraft in front of us and 1 behind. The map showed that there were many more around, but we focused on what we could see. I concentrated on airspeed and altitude while Mike's eyes darted in search of traffic. We settled in the queue and clicked off the landmarks that we had memorized from the videos we watched the night before as we made our way closer to RIPON. At RIPON we were required to identify and follow a prominent set of railroad tracks inbound to the final approach fix, FISK.

Because of the continuous heavy influx of aircraft, communication is designed to be one-way only, from ground to airplane. ATC sets up a temporary control tower at FISK and will contact aircraft by type, color, and/or tail number with the AirVenture-famous instruction to "Rock Your Wings" in acknowledgement. Approaching RIPON, we identified the tracks and turned to follow into FISK. Mike and I cringed as ignorant inbound pilots would respond on the radio to ATC instructions violating the one-way communication rule, or worse, talk amongst themselves on the ATC frequency thinking they were still on "FINGERS". Such occurrences are, however, anticipated, and ATC is patient and prepared...these are the best controllers in the nation, after all. As we spotted FISK ahead my anxiety heightened. We were next to be contacted! We would be told what to do and where to go depending on which runway ATC assigned to us. The different approach patterns were rolling around in my head as I held my breath and waited for the famous call.

"Cessna over Fisk, rock your wings!". Wait, what...CESSNA??? (insert record scratch). We weren't a Cessna. Is he talking to us? These guys are supposed to know their airplane types cold, obviously

he's talking to someone else. But...we were right over FISK and the airplane in front of us had been given their instruction and had already peeled out of line. A moment of indecision which was probably 2 seconds, but felt like 2 minutes, followed. I relented and heartily rocked the wings. "Good rock!", from ATC. Phew. "Which runway would you prefer this morning?" (second record scratch). They aren't supposed to ask that...I was momentarily stunned again. As it happened, during our inbound track, the planes in front were flying a little fast and the ones behind a little slower and we had opened up a nice 2-mile gap all to ourselves, so ATC had the time to indulge us with our choice. "Three-Six Left, if available", I blurted out. It was the pattern I was most familiar with and would put us closest to our camping spot. "Maintain one eight hundred feet and make an immediate right turn before the microwave tower. Monitor Tower South". I made my turn and blew a small sigh of relief. We reset the radio and waited for our next instruction. Obviously, Tower South was equipped with sharper eyes or binoculars because they called us by our tail number, and the correct airplane type! "Piper Juliet X-Ray Victor, make left turn to final Runway Three-Six Left now". We obeyed and fell in line with what seemed like an impossible number of aircraft to all be on short final at the same time for the same runway.

To further accommodate the rush of landing aircraft, the normal north-south runway, Three-Six, is temporarily designated as Three-Six Left and the taxiway immediately to the east is designated as Three-Six Right, making for 2 north-south runways. Further, Runway Three-Six Left is divided into 4 mini-runways lengthwise, each identified by a large colored dot that is painted in the center of the runway. Similarly, Three-Six Right is split into 3 segments with colored squares. In anticipation of having to land on a dot, literally, I had been practicing my spot landings whenever I flew the airplane for the few months leading up to the trip. I sure didn't want to be "That Guy" that blew it and caused mass chaos behind him. We continued inbound with bated breath anticipating what should be our last radio instruction.

"Piper Juliet X-Ray Victor, you are cleared to land Runway Three-Six Left on the purple dot. When able, clear the runway in the grass to the left. Welcome to THE SHOW!"

Goosebumps, followed quickly by hyperfocus on the purple dot looming in the windscreen. I overshot it, but barely. We touched down, slowed to taxi speed and exited the runway where a team of traffic marshals anxiously stood by waiting for us to display our destination sign as more landing airplanes queued up behind us. I had totally forgotten about the sign! "Nice landing, Keith. Here's the sign", Mike said calmly over the intercom as he passed it forward. Thank you, Mike!! I stuffed our big "VAC" sign up into the window indicating that we wanted to go to the Vintage Aircraft Camping area and the marshals swung into action giving us the appropriate guidance. We were directed to taxi south, with the runway to our left and endless rows of aircraft camp sites to our right, most of which were already filled up. We felt like celebrities as visitors already settled into camp chairs, with refreshments in hand, waved to us as we taxied by. One such camp with a Canadian flag hanging from their



Figure 5. The Three-Six Left Purple Dot Arrival

aircraft's wings gave us an extra-enthusiastic greeting as they identified the Canadian tail number on the aircraft. It was surreal.

Marshal after marshal directed us further south until we were instructed to turn into our row and then, finally, into our camping spot. I shut down the engine. The marshal verified that I had brakes set and the magnetos switched off before moving onto the next inbound airplane. We sat there for a minute with massive grins on our faces, stunned that the "Big Arrival" was over, then opened the door and poured ourselves out on to the soft grass with satisfied exhaustion.



*Figure 6. Vintage Aircraft Camping Please*

## Welcome To The Show.



*Figure 7. Camping at The Show*

It was Saturday, July 20<sup>th</sup>, at 10:30 in the morning. We had arrived in Oshkosh and the day was beautiful and our oyster. Although The Show wasn't scheduled to start until Monday the sheer volume of aviation activity all around us was overwhelming. A very tidy turf runway had been carved out of a field just west of our campsite to accommodate the endless ultralight activity, keeping their flight patterns very low so not to conflict with the other airport traffic. The general aviation airplanes continued to stream in just to the east of us. The acres and acres of campsites were filled with excitement as introductions were made, stories were

swapped, and aircraft were admired. We busied ourselves with setting up camp. I slyly suggested that we pitch our small tents together on the port side of the aircraft and, shortly after Mike started putting in his tent stakes, I began the process of setting mine up as far to the other side of the PA-12's 38-foot wingspan as I could. I hoped that our port-side neighbor was a heavy sleeper.

First order of business...locate the beer tent. The Sosnoski brothers have been running the beer tent at AirVenture for over 40 years. I had been introduced to one of the brothers, Al, many years ago by my good friend Jim who was from Oshkosh and had went to high school with Al. Al was always in charge of hiring the bartenders and, let's just say, we approved of his efforts. We walked through the camping areas, the aircraft display locations, and the exhibition sections in search of refreshment. Most of the exhibitors were just setting up, everything from 10 x 10 booths peddling



after-market parts, headsets, or electronics to entire buildings taken over temporarily by Piper, Cirrus, or Boeing, complete with second story observation lounges and open bars...for serious buyers only please.

We finally found the beer tent but, alas, it wasn't open yet. There was some activity as final setup and preparations were made and heck if I didn't spot Al loading ice into a gigantic cooler behind the gigantic bar. We sidled on up and I reintroduced myself. I'm not sure if Al fully remembered me, but he remembered Jim and that was good enough for both of us. He opened a couple of beers for Mike and me and we proudly became the AirVenture 2024 beer tent's first 2 customers.

Our thoughts turned to finding some supper in town. Four years earlier Mike and I had made the trip from Colorado Springs to Traverse City, MI in the PA-12 and stopped into Oshkosh for the night (AirVenture was cancelled that year because of the Corona Virus). We developed a lay of the land thanks to our friend Jim and we knew exactly where we wanted to go: Pete's Garage! Pete's was busting at the seams, but we melted right in and let the evening drift into night as we relieved the joyful stress of the day with food, drinks and like-minded companions. What would the next day hold?



Figure 8. Al Raising the Beer Tent Beacon  
(courtesy of the SOS Brothers)

## So Much Aviation...and Weather.



Figure 9. A Skywriter Happy at Work

I personally slept fitfully enough that night, likely a result of being overserved at Pete's Garage and our unfortunate lucky streak at the local bar game...Dice (i.e. free drinks). The day dawned perfectly clear and blue and Mike and I relaxed in a couple of camp chairs that the nearby convenience store had kindly, and unknowingly, lent us from their porch. One benefit to camping in the VAC section was everyone was equipped with a souvenir thermal coffee mug and could help themselves to as much coffee as one liked at the store. We indulged, relaxed and watched as a skywriter showed off his craft. Promptly, at 7:00AM, the endless flow of arrivals began again.

At one point, the arrivals seemed to simply stop. Whispers went around the campsite that “The Mooneys were coming!”. As was tradition, several hundred Mooney aircraft owners assembled at some location many miles from the airport and organized themselves into a mass arrival. The regular influx of aircraft was halted as the Mooneys came in pair after pair, landing simultaneously on both runways. This continued for about 30 minutes straight and was a sight to behold. At other times, the general arrivals would be paused for the entrance of a military aircraft...an F-16 here, an F-22 there, and they arrived in dramatic fashion with a short performance, and a lot of noise, prior to landing. Between the constant inflow of aircraft, the ultralight activity right above our heads, and all the static displays we felt like we were in aviation nirvana.

Dad, Stu and Carl were scheduled to arrive in West Bend that afternoon. Unfortunately, they were caught behind some weather between them and their destination and were not going to make it in until Monday. Mike and I spent the day looking at the static displays and exhibits, trying our hand at a rather realistic Lear-Jet flight simulator (“Can we roll this thing?”), and ended it at the beer tent that was now in full swing. It had been a great couple of days and the show hadn’t even started yet!

That night we were startled from our sleep by storm warning sirens that predicted impending doom via the very same squall line that stopped Dad and Company in North Dakota. I was satisfied that our hatches were battened down and I looked forward to returning back to sleep with the sound of rain on the tent. What we got, instead, was a regular dose of the sirens and warnings over the loudspeakers every 30 minutes for the next 2.5 hours...and not a drop of rain.

## The Show Begins...And Ends, For Us.

Monday morning Mike and I enjoyed our new routine of free coffee (which was surprisingly good), lounging in our borrowed chairs and watching the airport spring to life. I checked the Flightradar app on my phone and saw that Dad and Company were well on their way. Although the weather was little gloomy at the time, it was scheduled to clear up in the afternoon and they ended up landing in West Bend that day without any further delay.

We enjoyed a late breakfast and watched a short takeoff competition at the ultralight runway. Takeoff runs were being measured in feet. Tens of feet. Impressive! In anticipation of Day 1 of the airshow, we located a spot along the flight line and waited. And waited. Because of the weather, things were delayed but the clouds finally lifted enough for the show to kick off. We were treated to an endless variety of performances including a skydiving exhibition, competition aerobatics, a vintage Waco biplane somehow outfitted with a jet engine (?), and, of course, military aircraft demonstrations. We soaked it all in. Fortunately, we had discovered that the local store near our camp site not only had coffee, but beer for sale! We purchased a disposable cooler (which the clerk highly recommended we return for full price prior to leaving the

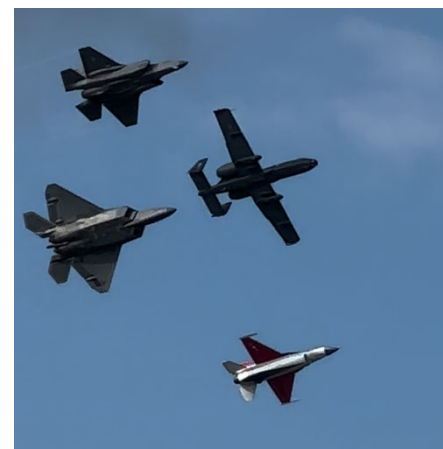


Figure 10. The Heritage Formation



show...and we did) and ice and finished the evening in our chairs making friends with the neighbors over a few cold ones.

The next morning Dad, Stu and Carl finally made it to The Show. We arranged to meet near the exhibition halls and spent the morning together perusing the endless booths. I was in the market for new earpieces for my Lightspeed headset (which I found) and Dad was looking for some gizmo for his digital engine analyzer (no luck). Soon, Mike and I were exhibited out (pretty sure Dad and Company could have attacked them forever) and beer and the airshow were calling. We separated for a while with the promise to join back up for supper. Mike and I found a great table on a large patio along the flight line from which to watch the airshow. However, the skies darkened before sheets of rain and hail began to pour down causing another delay to the start of the show. We certainly coveted our table umbrella! Toward the end of the show Dad came to fetch us and we walked a nearly impossible distance out to his rental vehicle. Having met each other on previous occasions, we all caught up over a nice Olive Garden dinner in town prior to calling it a night.

Mike and I had originally planned to leave on Thursday morning. I needed to get back no later than Friday to catch a Saturday flight to my next work project. However, as we sipped our coffee in our borrowed chairs on Wednesday morning, we heard some scuttlebutt about Thursday being a very popular day for a big exodus from the show. AirVenture was set to open to the general public (i.e. non-EAA members) Friday, Saturday and Sunday and the crowds would just get bigger. On top of that, the weather for Thursday morning looked very questionable which made my deadline to be home suddenly seem very close by. We decided there and then we would leave that day after the air show. We had breakfast and met back up with Dad and Company. That day included several impressive flyovers of massive formations of classic warbirds which I particularly enjoyed.



*Figure 11. A Fond Farewell*

Over a late lunch on a patio along the flight line, Dad suggested that perhaps we should sneak out before the air show started and avoid a mad rush later in the day. The idea had merit, so much so that the 3 of us dashed down to our campsite area knowing that the airspace would be closed soon for the show. Upon arrival I flagged down a marshal and asked him if it was too late to depart. He confirmed that we were about 30 minutes too late and that we would need to wait until the ~3-hour airshow was over. Oh well, at least we could see the show one more time. And it gave us time to pack up camp, let Dad get re-acquainted with the airplane, and return our

borrowed chairs and cooler. The marshal took a little pity on us for not being able to get out before the show and allowed us to push the plane right up to the taxi-way line so we would be race-ready when the airport opened back up for general operations. Dad had to get back to the exhibition area to meet up with Stu and Carl, so we said our goodbyes and hunkered down patiently until the show was over.

The Heritage flyover, which usually indicated that the show was coming to an end, was taking place and I was starting to get antsy. However, an impressive A-10 Thunderbolt demonstration was

apparently still on the docket with simulated bombing runs complete with pyrotechnics. Once the demonstration was finished, all fell silent, and I anticipated a signal from the marshal that we were clear to start engines. No signal came and I started feeling frustrated that we didn't get out before the show.

Of note, I had been particularly excited about attending AirVenture 2024 because it was to be the return of Royal Canadian Air Force demonstration team, The Snowbirds. It had been years since they had been to AirVenture, and the team was the highlight of the promotional material for the 2024 edition of the show. Sadly, we learned shortly after arriving that they were not scheduled to perform until Friday and Saturday of the week, long after we were scheduled to leave. I came to grips with it early on and didn't let the disappointment detract from the experience.

Thinking about this furthered my disgruntlement as I continued to wait for some sign that the airspace was going to open back up and we would be free to go. Suddenly, I noticed heads turning to the southwest. What the heck now?!! Far in the distance I made out several twinkling lights that appeared to be approaching the airport. A gigantic smile eased across my face. "I know who they are!", I thought to myself. I've seen the Snowbirds perform many times in my life, and their traditional arrival is iconic. The CT-114 Tutor jets that the Snowbirds fly have a characteristic light right on the nose, and the team makes dramatic use of this feature as part of their entrance. As the lights drew closer and brighter, I was physically shaking Mike where he stood. "It's the Snowbirds, Mike!", I exclaimed. And onto stage central they came in their classic formation. Although they were simply "arriving" into Oshkosh for the Friday and Saturday shows, they didn't arrive without flair. The 9 aircraft made several passes, showing off their signature move of completely changing formation in mid-pass and mid-bank. I was ecstatic.

The formation finally broke apart and The Snowbirds did something that I thought was, almost, cooler than their entrance show. As an acknowledgement to how long it had been since they had performed at AirVenture, each individual plane streaked across show center one after the other performing the classic "wing rock" to the audience. "Hello, Oshkosh, We Are Back!". We watched them form back up in 3 groups and land in trios on the same runway, just feet apart from each other right in front of us. It was awesome and so worth the delay!



*Figure 12. The Snowbirds Arrive*

Finally, the marshal gave us the sign and Mike and I jumped in the plane and started up. I could hear engines firing off all over the place...apparently many others had the same idea as us. As we taxied out toward the runway, we enjoyed healthy waves goodbye from the crowds of campers and onlookers. You would have thought we were part of the show. We joined a line of departing aircraft and waited our turn. Like the arrival, there were strict procedures for the departure and all in the name of efficiency. The line moved fast and before we knew it, we were cleared for take-off with an immediate right turn southwest bound among the scrum of other departing aircraft. As we climbed

out, we gawked at how many more airplanes were parked all over the airport property than when we arrived. What a show!

## Homeward Bound.



It was already late in the day, but we were determined to get to Waterloo, IA, about a 2-hour flight from Oshkosh. We would be arriving in the dark but leaving ourselves an easy 6-hour flight home on Thursday and one day to spare until I needed to leave for my work trip. Mike and I reflected on the entire experience. It had been fulfilling to say the least. We decided to make a small deviation to overfly the location where the movie, Field of Dreams, was filmed. For those unfamiliar, Kevin Costner stars as Ray Kinsella who inexplicably foregoes his corn crop revenue to build a baseball field, which is exactly what happened to build the movie set. We located the spot and flew over at dusk to find a baseball game in progress under the lights! Ahhhh, what a great picture.

*Figure 13. The Field of Dreams*

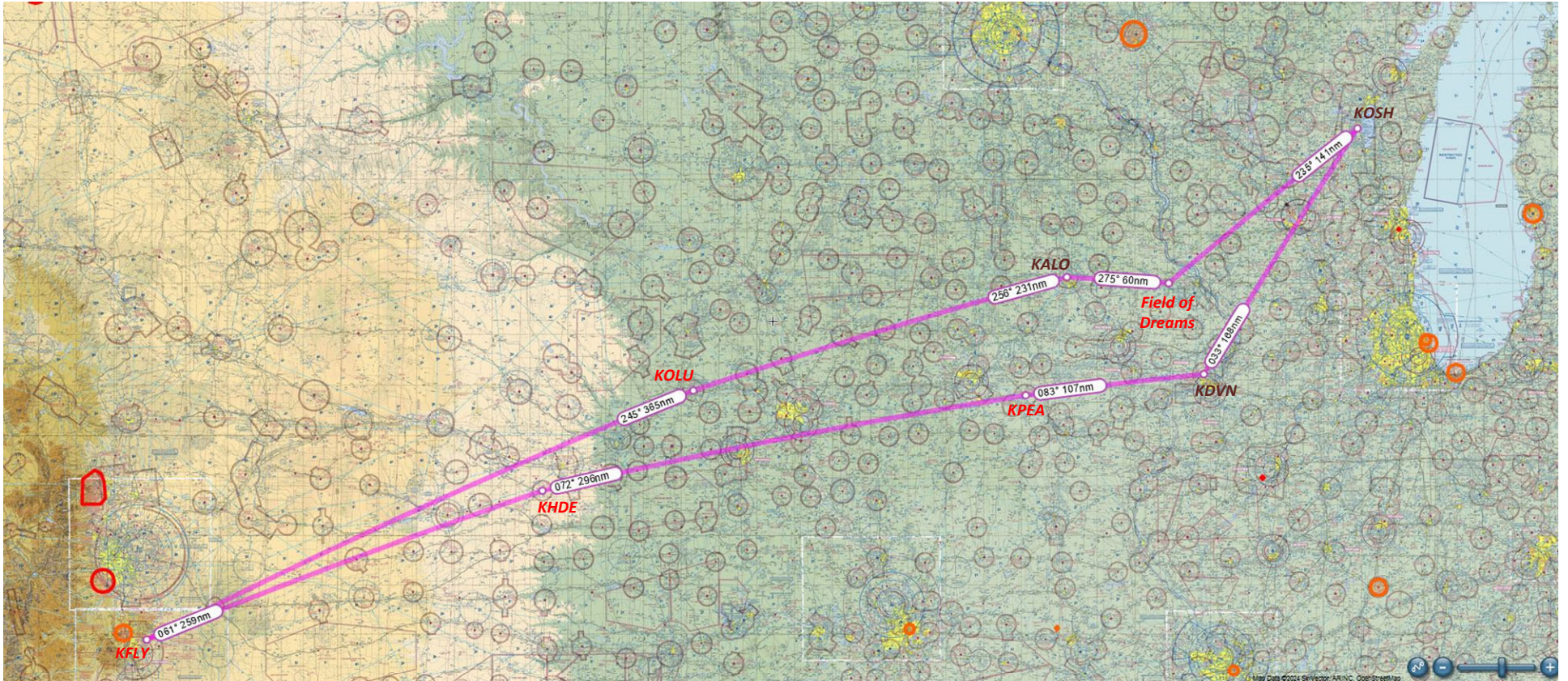
We landed at the very dead Waterloo airport and took an Uber cab to the hotel. We walked across the parking lot to an Applebee's for dinner before retiring to our SEPARATE rooms for a much-needed sleep in a warm bed.

The next morning, we got to the airport early and put in a fuel order with the old man at the front desk of the FBO. I was convinced that we had the only plane on the field. "Does that thing have a starter?", he inquired. "Yes, yes it does", I answered. After they finally coaxed the gas truck into life and deposited the fuel into the plane, we rapidly packed in and left. The clouds closed in below us as we fled westward until there was a solid layer between us and the ground (which I hate, but rarely seem to avoid). The weather reports showed skies clearing once we crossed the state line into Nebraska, and they did. We touched down into Columbus, NE, another airport that we had used as a fuel stop in the past. Absolutely everything and absolutely nothing looked familiar. These mid-west airports tend to all look the same. I checked Flightradar and confirmed that Dad, Stu and Carl had successfully left West Bend enroute to Chicago. We took our fuel, departed, and 4 uneventful hours later, touched down at Meadow Lake Airport. It was 1:30 in the afternoon, we were home and treated to a nice surprise. Mike's better half, Liz, had been up in Denver that morning and greeted us at the airport with delicious Jet's Pizza that she had brought down. Thank you, Liz!!!

And thank you, Mike, Dad, Stu, Carl, Al, and the Pete from Pete's Garage, whoever he is, for contributing to an unforgettable aviation experience.

THE END





Maroon Identifiers = Overnight Stops

Trip to EAA Airventure 2024 in Oshkosh for CF-JXV

Distances: Outbound 830nm  
 Inbound 796nm  
 Total 1,626nm

Air Time Enroute: 18 hours

Keith Kirkby and Michael Wiggins

