

Flying the New York Hudson River Corridor

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There are many moments in a pilot's flying life that are memorable. The first time we leave the home airport environment flying solo, just enjoying the view of familiar landscapes below us. The sense of accomplishment we have when flying home with our brand new pilot certificate in our pocket. The first cross country trip that goes beyond the reach of our fuel tanks. The awesome experience of descending through a nighttime cloud layer to find the runway lights under the nose, just as they should be. I am sure each of us can all add to this list.

One great experience reserved for GA pilots is flying the Hudson River VFR corridor through the heart of New



York City. The commercial flights can't do it – they are restricted to ATC direction in the overhead Class Bravo airspace. We can fly at our own pace in a non-controlled tunnel bound by the shoreline on each side, the cross-river helicopter traffic at 500 feet and the Class B floor at 1100 feet. Landing lights on, stay to the right, announce your position and watch for traffic – just like flying in the pattern back home.



If you are going to fly the corridor there are some things to do before you launch. First, the weather should be good VFR. An overcast layer often means

more traffic using the low route past New York and any haze or fog makes spotting traffic harder. Second, have and be familiar with a current New York Terminal Area chart. Know the identity and location of the VFR position reporting points, the boundaries

of the restricted areas (Statue of Liberty, East River etc.), and the headroom available for each segment below the Class B airspace. Third, plan your trip. Know which frequencies to use for ATC and in the

corridor. Use a gate approach for flight planning – NYAAK intersection to the North and Colts Neck to the South. Plan



any u-turns North of the Tappansee or South of the Varrizano bridges. Fourth, do not plan your first trip as a solo flight. You will need extra eyes to watch for traffic while you pay attention to flying straight and level. Fly first, then look at the view. Finally, check all sources for TRF restrictions, particularly afternoon or evenings when the Yankees may be playing at home.



When in the corridor pay close attention to your altitude and position and keep a mental picture of other traffic. Keep your

announcements clear and concise – “Comanche 32P at Alpine, south-bound, 1000 feet.” Be aware of turbulence where the west wind rolls over the Palisades. Don't buzz the bridge towers – move toward the center of the span. Use a comfortable approach speed, not too slow but also not full bore. Don't tailgate traffic ahead - this is no place to try ad hoc formation flying. And, while you are at it, enjoy the privilege of flying your beloved Comanche through the heart of one of the greatest cities in the world.