

THE NATIONALS



TRUE STORY

SHIELDING THE CANOPY IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE SOME OPEN CANOPIES ACT AS A MAGNIFYING GLASS THAT CAN MELT PLASTIC IN THE COCKPIT (SEE BELOW).

A FAST DAY

The forecast for Competition Day Four was for possible afternoon thunderstorms. The day started with visible storm clouds in the distance. The task was shortened to two hours. Every pilot was keen to get in the air early in order to get home before the weather went foul. Chad came 4th.

Watching aircraft take off usually stops people in their tracks. Watching 6 "tow" planes launch 60 gliders is an amazing experience. Precision plus.

Once the gliders are airborne they are very hard to see from the ground. Heavens knows what it must be like when you are up there. Dozens of planes jockeying around seeking the same thing - rising air. No wonder they call a group of circling gliders - a gaggle.

Yet despite there being so many gliders in the air at the same time there appears to be few serious mishaps. There are rules that pilots must obey when circling. Otherwise there would be problems. Serious problems.

Likewise there are rules put in place for landing. At the beginning of the day these rules are discussed at length. Each pilot must abide by these rules. Any transgressions (no matter how small) are highlighted by the safety officer (and dutifully enforced by Mohammed).

Landings may appear to be very chaotic, especially when there are lots of gliders coming in to land at the same time. But when rules are obeyed there are seldom any problems.



MOHAMMED ON THE OFFENSIVE

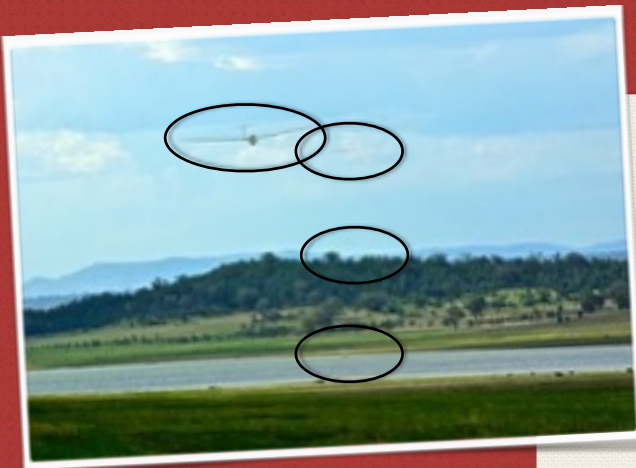
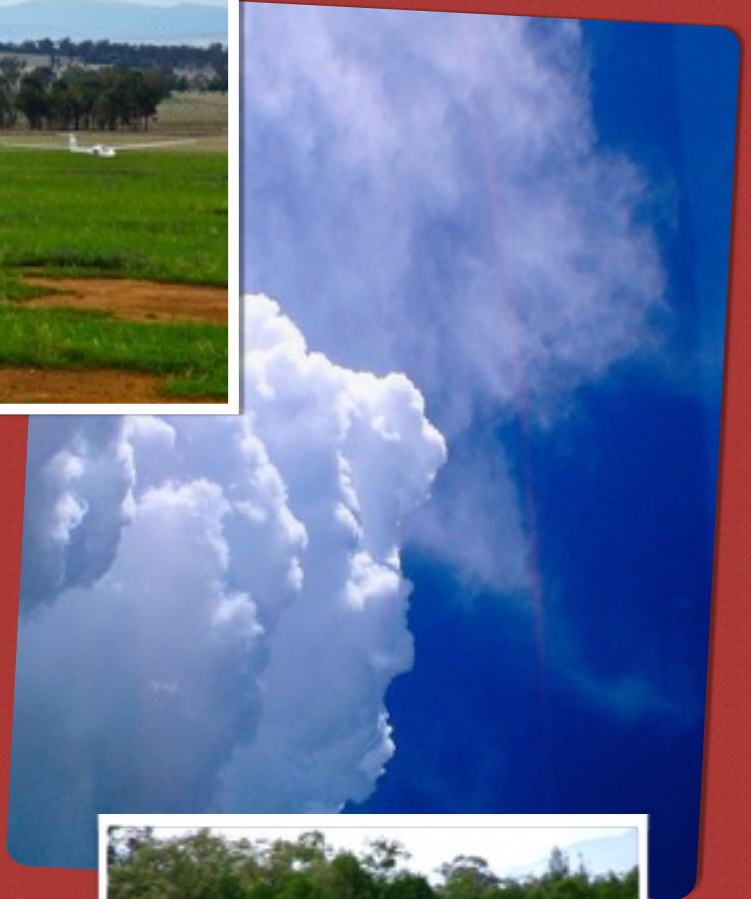
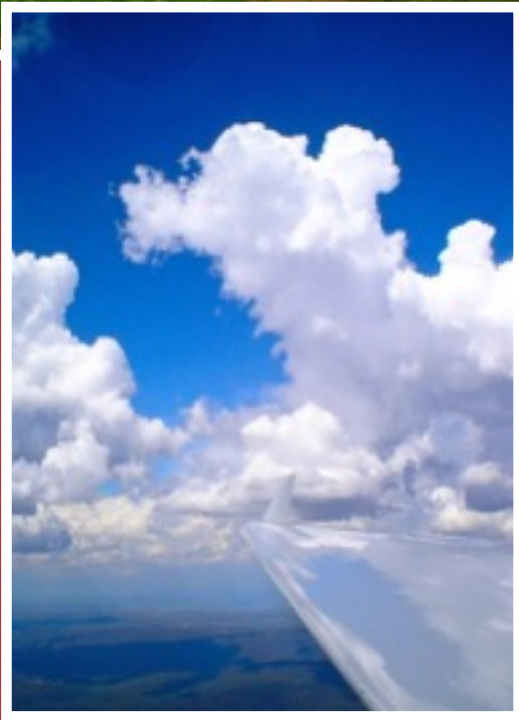


OPEN CANOPY BURNS A HOLE



POLISH HERITAGE ON SHOW

PHOTOS



PHOTOGRAPHS IN THESE NEWSLETTERS ARE TAKEN ON THE GROUND WITH A TELEPHOTO LENS AND WITH A SMALL CAMERA IN THE COCKPIT OF ONE OF THE GLIDERS.

IT IS DIFFICULT FOR THE PILOT TO TAKE PHOTOS BECAUSE HE HAS SO MANY THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BUT IT IS WORTH IT. THE PHOTOS FROM THE AIR ARE PRICELESS.