

Hello Flyboys!

Today was my day to visit the local glider club, and so I showed up at 10am...

First thing, the club had to get me a TSA-badge. That's right, once any "air carrier" shows up on the field, that mandates "locking up the field" and giving control to the Transportation Security Agency.

Here's the "airline"...



The airfare Kona-Wailua (15 min flight) is **\$350**. Are you thinking ***Outrageous!*** Maybe, but the flights are sold out.

The "club" is truly a club, owns no equipment, not looking to expand in any way. Three of the 5 "club ships" on the field are motor-gliders, there is just one tow-pilot. Motorglider warming up...



The tow plane, an absolutely new/perfect 180hp SuperCub with vortex-generators **awesome...**



The TSA will not allow any more tie-down spots on the field, and “might, depending on which TSA-staff are on duty” allow a glider to be trailered-in and rigged/flown. But it would have to be de-rigged at the end of the day.

There are 5 glider pilots on the waiting list for a tie-down spot, “infinity” in practical-speak.

The club pilots were quick to point out that “anything less than a motorglider or 40:1 ship will not work” because of the ever-present inversion layer which sits 4,000’ AGL. Lift is ever-present, as long as 4,000 AGL is all you need to be happy ☹

What a 40:1 skip looks like...



Note Mauna Kea (14,000') in the background, it has never been soared from a low-tow because of the inversion-layer (note the clouds). There is a way to get up there, which is to tow over to the windward side (approx 20nm and 10kft) and ridge-lift to the summit. Land-out spots are non-existent, which is why you need a 40:1 glider or (better still) a motorglider...



The club hangar was awesome... Note the gliders are on side-pull dolly's, "slide out"...



The hangar has no "front door" and I was wondering about wind-effect but that's taken care of... In the back are 3 "blow-out-panels" which relieve air pressure in the event of head-on wind.

The hangar with blow-out doors is certified for 100mph head-on wind...



In the end, the logistics of attempting to fly here were insurmountable. The club is not open to any sort of “support of visiting pilots” (which is fair-enough). For them to fly just-themselves is a huge hassle.

And so <sniff> I (hopefully) revert to Plan-B, fly com’l air over to Oahu, rent a car, then rent a glider at Dillingham Field which is a commercial glider operation.

Enjoy the day!

Paul P.

PS>> After gliders, I attempted to summit Mauna Loa (14,000’) by Jeep. Vastly more difficult than Mauna Kea, the trip ended as one of my great adventures...