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180-Degree Side Approach to Landing

16 May 2000 Mr. Birddog reports:

The information provided in this column is for the reader's information only. It is not a procedure that is recommended by the IBDA or the author. REMEMBER that you are the pilot in command, and you are responsible for the safe operation of your aircraft. The information contain here is from the US Army's Primary Fixed-Wing Flight Manual for the O-1 Birddog, dated June 1970. The 180-degree Side Approach Definition: An approach wherein the throttle is closed at a point on the downwind leg opposite the desired point of touchdown. Purpose: To provide the pilot with a means of improving his planning, judgment, and accuracy relative to power-off landing approaches.

Execution:

1. At a point on the downwind leg opposite the point of intended touchdown, smoothly close the throttle and establish a normal glide.
2. Turn onto the base leg so as to arrive at the key point. Note: The key point is a point on the base leg at a 45-degree angle to the point of touchdown from which the remaining portion of the approach can be accomplished safely without the addition of power. The position of the base leg and the key point will vary with the wind conditions. Clear the engine on base leg.
3. The final turn may be varied to compensate for errors in judgment that may have been made up to this point; i.e. if the airplane is high, the turn to final may be delayed and a slightly steeper turn may be used. If slightly low, the turn should be shallower and started slightly earlier so the rollout is completed with the airplane aligned with the runway. Do not overshoot the final approach path, as this presents an extremely hazardous condition when parallel runways employing opposite base legs are used.
4. If the approach should require the use of 60 degree of flaps, the application of 60-degree flaps will be made after the completion of the turn to final approach.
5. Accuracy in touching down as closely as possible to a predetermined point on the runway or landing area must be stressed. Any error in judgment should be corrected on subsequent approaches.

Common Errors:

1. Failure to establish proper drift correction on any leg of the traffic pattern, resulting in a poor ground track.
2. Failure to maintain a proper gliding attitude.
3. Poor coordination in turns.

Standards of Performance and Limitations:

1. Maintain traffic pattern altitude.
2. Maintain a proper gliding attitude.
3. Landing should be accomplished beyond and within 100 feet of the designated spot.