

Power Hour Lessons

A World Without the E6B

- And I Said to Myself, "What a Wonderful World."



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Overview

Here is my case for ensuring no more pilots are ever required to use the E6B, a plotter, and paper charts.

A little history and a tribute to the inventor and how many lives it probably saved.

The E-6B was invented by Philip Dalton in 1940, who had a Masters degree in Physics from Princeton University. He found artillery ranges and calculations problematic and wanted to help with that. He was in the Army Air Corps. After tinkering around with the concept, he produced a circular slide rule that helped with the artillery ranging problem and would help pilots and navigators. All of the pilots at the time loved the E-6B because it could do a lot, and it was only one thing to take along. It was an excellent tool for the time (Yes, I said that.) I believe that Dalton's contribution to airmen and navigators was highly significant and saved lives by providing a tool to calculate needed data quickly—hats off to Dalton.

Now it's 84 years later, and we are still using this thing. OK, if you love it, but please, for the rest of us, it goes into a museum. Pictures of the E-6B original and manual are at the "International Slide Rule Museum" if you are ever inclined to pay a visit online.

Ok, now let's get down to business, and I'll explain why the E6B has had its day and, unless you prefer it, has no real place in the cockpit any longer.

1. The argument that you can't learn to navigate without this tool is laughable. It's a tool it's not the principles.
2. Insistence on testing using these things robs flight instructors of that time that could have been used to show learners how to use current technology and develop SOPs to avoid issues.
3. Once certificated, these pilots will not use the E6B. They will teach themselves ForeFlight, and who knows how well that will go without solid flight and ground instruction - Opportunity lost.
4. The good old days of flying with paper and circular slide rules belong exactly there - In the good old days.
5. No university uses slide rules and trig tables anymore. They teach concepts and offer better tools for their learners to produce more. We didn't get our latest drugs from scientists using manual method calculations and a slide rule.
6. You can teach navigation principles with arithmetic and simple geometry to show the effect of wind and how to stop drift. A simple triangle will work fine to visually show the learner everything they need to know about drift and ground speed.
7. The E6B is handy for converting units, solving TAS and density altitude problems, making TSD and Fuel consumption calculations, etc. Still, it is subject to inaccurate interpretation because any number or time needs to be scaled correctly.

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8. What would you think of your MD pulling out something like that when determining how much Anesthesia to provide you? I believe you are happier with him looking at an up-to-date tool.
9. The argument about what if your battery dies or what if it overheats and all of that is overcome by not relying on a single source. The chances of my iPad, iPhone, and the ability to contact ATC all blowing up are lower than the door opening and all of the paper charts flying out. Learners need to be taught backups and preflight of their EFBs.
10. After the checkride, the learner will put their E6B in a flight bag. The day everything blows up, and they are left with only the E6B, they won't know how to use it. That day will be the same day the Zombie apocalypse happens or the Christians see Jesus.
11. DPEs that insist on testing pilots using this tool are either:
 - a. Set in their ways and think, I had to master this, and you do too.
 - b. Unwilling to accept the world is changing and not learning how to use or evaluate the current technology.
 - c. Are being mean (That was a joke - probably)
 - d. Believe that pilots will be over-reliant on electronic flight bags and need this tool to save the day.
12. If you want to sell aviation to people in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, they are looking for eye candy. Interesting technology, a way to turn on aviation to them in a way they know and like. Why not show them an E6B and describe how they will need to use it in their training? Where is the door may be their response. Show them ForeFlight and Sentury instead, and they may be up late at night fantasizing about being able to use them.
13. Paper charts and books are going away. Why not try to go to a "Pilot Supply Store" and get a sectional for the area right next to the one you are using currently? What, no pilot supply store? How about Amazon? Great, but what if your trip will be longer than the chart's expiration date? This is just silly.
14. What I can teach a learner about risk management, airspace, weather, and decision-making using ForeFlight isn't possible on a flat, paper 2D conic map projection. The weather is in one place, the airplane data is somewhere else, and so on. I have everything I need on ForeFlight, and so do your students if only they were taught and given plenty of time to use this tool.

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The image displays a grid of six lesson outlines, each with a title, subtitle, and date. A chat window is overlaid on the right side of the grid.

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| Airspace and Chart Review | Graduate Work on Airspace Classes | November 18, 2023, 12:00:00 PM |
| Advanced Foreflight Features | Using ForeFlights Best Features | November 11, 2023, 12:00:00 PM |
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