

Stamp Flight

Written by Sigmund
Thursday, 20 December 2012 10:19



Photos of Gavin Stephens and his DG600M participating in a Glider Mail Flight and landing and delivering postage stamps at Progress Airfield, Eastern Cape, on 13 October 2012.

Gavin took delivery of the 200 stamps at the Uitenhage Airfield (home to EPGC) and then self-launched his DG600M flying to the Progress Airfield located 16km south of Uitenhage and underneath the Port Elizabeth TMA.

When he was within gliding range of Progress he turned off the engine and landed. The stamps were then handed over to Dave Brown and then Gavin self-launched and headed back to Uitenhage.

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Dave Brown Receiving Post Office Bag from Pilot Gavin Stephens



Pilot Gavin Stephens signing the covers, as seen below, with the back stamp and number superimposed on right.

Centapex 2012 Glider Mail

The Centapex 2012, celebrations included a glider mail flight to commemorate our centenary.

The Eastern Province Gliding Club in Uitenhage were willing to nominate a pilot and his glider for the occasion. It was later discovered that the flight could not end at the Port Elizabeth Airport due to restricted air space for gliders. The closest airport was Progress Aerodrome, situated on the outskirts of Port Elizabeth. The weekend before the opening of Centapex was chosen as the most convenient time for the flight. Pilot Gavin Stephens was most helpful. He provided the photograph of the glider (a DG 600M with a wingspan of 18 metres), licence number ZS-GYZ, flying over the Drakensberg Mountains. The cover bears this photograph as well as an aeronautical chart of the area as a backdrop. 200 covers were cancelled at the Uitenhage Post Office on 12 October and then handed to the pilot by Dave Brown, representing the PE Philatelic Society in a post office mailbag. As a result of space restrictions in the glider, Gavin told me later that the bag had to be placed in the small space behind his head. He had to tilt his head forward for the duration of the flight!

On landing at Progress Aerodrome, the bag with the mail was handed back to Dave Brown who was present when the pilot signed each cover to confirm that they were carried by him. Dave then had the covers back-stamped at the Hunter's Retreat, Post Office being the closest Post Office. The covers are numbered on the back 1 to 200. A small number are still available from the Society.



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Taking off from Progress Airfield