

**News on My Home Front**

**WHAT'S FGA DOING NOW?  
SMELLING THE ROSES**



**LONG RANGE?  
LET IT RIP - BUT WHAT?**



**WEEKEND FREE?  
SPEND IT WITH ME**



**MEMORIES?  
SHOW ME WHAT YOU GOT**

# FGA PATREON NEWS

## What's Up With Me?

This year has meant some big changes for me. A new career, a new relationship, a new home and a new life. I moved in with my girlfriend and have been enjoying the companionship it brings. It has taken quite a long time but I think I am finally over the feeling of not feeling at home where I am. The constant traveling over the last 3 or so years made my body feel it was normal to not be in the same place for long periods and to not have my "own" place. Most of 2018 I still lived out of my suitcase because it didn't feel right to unpack permanently. It also took about 8 months to get my body clock back into "normal" mode. I've spoken to long haul international pilots and they all nod their heads when I explain the weird sense I had for so long. Constant timezone changes and jet lag can really take its toll on you long term. It's nice to finally settle down, have a consistent and normal sleep pattern and finally feel like I'm home.

In 2018 I began talks with a commercial drone company about what we can offer each other and have slowly been increasing my work with them. My roles in the company vary and I do find it quite interesting, apart from the required increased interaction with the Australian regulators CASA which has always been frustrating and increasingly hard to deal with. I've never been involved with a more difficult organisation and it only solidifies my thoughts that it's the regulators, not the pilots that are to be blamed for the terrible state of affairs we face in the UAV industry.

My roles at work are varied. My main role presently is running RePL (up to 7kg weight) courses. RePL licenses are similar to Part107

commercial licenses in the USA but it is more involved being a 4 day intensive course with practical flying training included. These courses are usually run at our training location but since many of our customers are from the larger mining industries in inland Queensland we also organise onsite training at the mine sites which involves travel. Courses are also organised at an international level to some other undisclosed countries.

On top of RePL courses I also help to run ReOC courses, Heavy lift (up to 25kg weight), maintenance courses and fixed wing UAV courses. Behind the scenes I work on course material and updating the content to keep up to date and within regulation which constantly change. I also build custom drones for the company as well as maintain and repair customer aircraft. Other roles are also commercial work for hire of course but this mostly involves bigger contracts. An example would be surveying railway lines and so forth.

You might think that it all sounds a bit boring compared to my old life and in some ways the may be true, but to be honest I don't really miss it. Sure there were some amazing highs but nature always requires balance so there were also many extreme lows. It's really satisfying to feel useful and know I'm actually contributing to people who are not only grateful but also are prepared to pay me for my efforts for a change. On the FPV front, I hardly fly at all these days and I don't have the urge to change that right now. Most of my FPV flights are during RePL courses as demonstration flights to show the students what is capable when all the automatic features are turned off. Instead of simply ticking boxes like the regulators only care about, my goal is to teach people to be smart pilots that think ahead and my focus is to teach

them without all the extra features so they not only appreciate what they do, but also understand what their limitations are and have the ability to still fly when they fail. I still occasionally fly FPV in parks with friends but it's more of a social experience now. I just cruise around now and rarely crash. My freestyle skills have suffered immensely but I just don't care. I don't care about being the best pilot. I don't care about outdoing the next guy on YT and I don't care about the fame and hate that comes with it. Then again, I never have. I'm just happy doing my own thing. Doing that got me to a point where people wanted to follow my journey so I'm not going to change it just because the pressure increases. I'll leave that to all the "top" pilots who can't stop taking pictures of themselves because they truly believe in their own fame.

With the passion of FPV put to one side (at least for now) and the fact I am a person who needs to hyper focus on something, I have been asking myself what is next. Of course the obvious answer is to get back into my one true love which is gliding. I only ever gave that away because I had to when I decided to chase after this crazy dream making a career in FPV and I have always intended to get back into it one day. Although there is nothing I would love more than to get back into gliding, I cannot at this stage justify the cost or time required to invest into it. I'm the type of person that jumps head first into something and doesn't do things in halves, so knowing that, I had to tell myself to wait a little longer. Maybe next summer when I am more financial I will but for now I wait and instead just look at the sky.

Instead I decided to chase after another area of aviation that after the initial setup cost has a lower ongoing financial cost and gives me much more freedom time wise and that is an aircraft simulator setup. In the 90's I remember installing "Falcon" on the computers in my parents computer store and playing with friends. I always wanted to get into flight sims myself but never could justify the initial cost considering my other hobbies at the time. I guess now I can. I've almost finished setting up my sim rig which has been quite fun and challenging and I look forward to actually flying with it in the next week or so when the final parts arrive. The setup has been built around using DCS (Digital Combat Simulator) but I also intend to use it for others programs such as Condor (Soaring Sim) among others. I also intend to use it to teach my boys to fly as well. The computer itself is pretty much a high end setup and I have designed and built a cockpit to house everything and sit in. I have had the cheaper joysticks before and rather dislike the terrible feel so I decided to spend a decent amount on good gear. Hopefully its worth it. So I apologise to those who have no interest in flight sims but you can probably expect some flight sim videos coming up on my YT channel. I have some plans to talk about the gear I have decided to purchase, the mods I'm doing on them and the design and build of the sim cockpit I built as well as general flight videos should I feel inspired to do so.

Maybe I'll see you at the park one day or if you are a sim pilot maybe online soon...



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## Long Range?

I touched on this subject in a previous newsletter but people continue to keep asking me for my input. Do I have any suggestions about going long range? Is there a quad setup that I would recommend for distance flying? Is it true, as some celebrities keep claiming, that batteries have become substantially better today.

Let me answer the last question first. Battery technology has changed little in our hobby in the last few years. The major thing that separates them all is the marketing hype. Understanding the benefits of using a 4S, 5S or 6S and so on is essentially about balancing the size of your quad and the power required from the setup you've chosen. There are many combinations and variables at work here and there are no simple answers - certainly no solutions that demonstrate a marked improvement in performance of one particular battery over another brand irrespective of the size.

The essential question you have to ask yourself is what are you trying to achieve with long range? Is it just to fly a long way over landscape etc to experience that adrenaline rush (and hopefully have your quad come back)? Is it to produce classic video footage of

terrain etc - without jello? Or is it simply to build yet another quad to add to your fleet and want to know what is the most efficient combination/components to use when flying long range?

The short answer is that you have to have an appreciation of the following conundrum first. Do you want a smaller, nimble, more robust quad that has shorter flight time or a larger, more expensive, less nimble quad that has more mass. They both have their positives and negatives.

So what am I saying? If you are keen to build a long range quad to add yet another quad to your fleet then go for it. I haven't spent much time getting into flying long range quads so I can't give you any serious recommendations. There is not many wrong ways to do things as usual. It's more case of what suits you

My advice? Why not give wings a try if you are thinking of a long range experience. It's cheaper, you can go further, flight time is longer, and there is just as much fun flying an FPV wing as a quad. Try it and see for yourself.

## What Next?

**Controls are being introduced thick and fast.**

**If you believe these sort of rules will not affect your quad then you are a fool.**

**Watch this space. More restrictions coming.**

**Taken from a recent BBC report:**

*Drone-maker DJI has pledged to add plane and helicopter "detection" features to its consumer drones, to reduce the risk of collisions. They are pushing for this detection system to be introduced across the board for all drones.*

*Some of DJI's industry-focused drones already have the feature built in but it has now pledged to add it to all drones weighing more than 250g (9oz). Its AirSense system picks up location signals broadcast by other aircraft. The drone pilot will then be warned that a plane or helicopter is nearby so they can take any necessary action.*

*AirSense uses an existing technology called automatic dependent surveillance-broadcast (ADS-B). Aircraft transmitting ADS-B signals send out their satellite location data, altitude and other positioning information. ADS-B receivers can pick up these signals, allowing them to track an aircraft without radar or a visual sighting of the plane.*

*"AirSense can detect airplanes and helicopters from miles away, farther than a drone pilot can hear or see them, and displays their locations on the screen of the pilot's remote controller." AirSense will not force a drone to land if a plane is detected. Instead, the operator will be alerted on their remote control handset.*

*The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) wants all planes and helicopters (and drones) to transmit ADS-B signals in controlled airspace by Jan 2020. Other countries will probably follow suit.*

*DJI's latest drones already have safety features such as geo-fencing, which stops the drone flying into restricted airspace such as an airport.*

*In 2018, a drone sighting on the airfield at Gatwick airport caused major travel disruption. The pilot of the drone has not been found (**probably because there was none!!!!**).*

*DJI stressed that "there has never been a confirmed collision between a drone and an airplane" but said drones had struck low-flying helicopters "at least twice".*

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