**1) “In the Corridor’s Traffic”**

I chose this picture as the first image of this series because, by luck, it is not spoiled by a smudge of the propeller. It was taken in June 2009. You can see me entering the Hudson “corridor” – a tunnel of airspace over the river which general aviation pilots use for transits or sightseeing. At the time of the flight, the tunnel’s ceiling was set at 1,100ft (335m), the space above it reserved for airliners touching down or taking off from NYC’s three major airports: La Guardia, JFK and Newark. The Hudson serves a role similar to a highway; it imposes the right traffic pattern: planes flying north do so over Manhattan’s side, while those flying south, over the New Jersey side. Pilots transiting the “Hudson traffic” frequently announce their altitude and position on a frequency assigned to the corridor. Shortly before taking this picture, I could have announced, for example, “Hudson traffic, white Cessna 172 on Manhattan side, north bound, 900ft, approaching Governor’s Island.” These announcements alert other pilots of your presence in the area. Unfortunately, two months after this flight, 9 people died about two miles north from this location in a midair collision between a small plane and a sightseeing helicopter.

**2) “On My Way”**

**Version 1:**

This panorama shows Brooklyn and Queens on the right, followed by the East River, Manhattan’s financial district, the Hudson River, and on the left, Wall Street’s offshoot in Jersey City. It was taken shortly after I flew over the Verrazano Bridge on my way north, along the Hudson. &nbsp;&#x2666;&nbsp;

Majority of summer days in New York are hazy and humid making contrasty pictures virtually impossible to take (the squashed flies on the windshield are another story:-). A few landmarks can be made out, however (after clicking on the picture): the Brooklyn Bridge, the distant Empire State Building, and the three buildings of the World Financial Center. The new World <em>Trade</em> Center tower which dominates downtown’s skyline today (i.e. in 2013) had not been started yet. &nbsp;&#x2666;&nbsp;

Lesser known is the tallest building in New Jersey on the left, built by Goldman Sachs after the September 11 attacks. The firm’s rationale was to spread its operations so that infrastructure failures in one place (lower Manhattan) did not cripple the whole company. A few major Wall Street firms have their [recovery](http://abcnews.go.com/Business/goldman-sachs-sprays-jersey-city-office-bed-bugs/story?id=10917635) sites in that area and, in fact, conducted their trading operations from there in the aftermath of the attacks. During that building’s construction two people safely parachuted from its roof and, once on the ground, disappeared avoiding capture.

The darkening in the lower part of the image is due to the plane’s propeller.

**Version 2:**

This panorama shows Brooklyn and Queens on the right, followed by the East River, Manhattan’s financial district, the Hudson River, and on the left, Wall Street’s offshoot in Jersey City. It was taken shortly after I flew over the Verrazano Bridge on my way north, along the Hudson. &nbsp;&#x2666;&nbsp;

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Lesser known is the tallest building in New Jersey on the left, built by Goldman Sachs in 2004. During that building’s construction two people safely parachuted from its roof and, once on the ground, disappeared avoiding capture. (The darkening in the lower part of the image is due to the plane’s propeller.)

**3) “The $1 Island”**

According to the <a href=<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/25/nyregion/25governors.html>>New York Times</a>, in 1637, Dutch settlers bought what is now Governor’s Island, for two “ax heads, some beads and a few iron nails”. The island’s unique location resulted in its serving military functions for most of its American history. The last of those roles was to house US Coast Guard <a href=<http://www.govisland.com/html/history/history.shtml>>base</a> which it did for 29 years, closing in 1995. President Regan even invited Mikhail Gorbachev here for a US – USSR summit in 1988. &nbsp;&#x2666;&nbsp;

The New York State and the City of New York got a much better deal than the native Americans three and a half centuries before. In 2003, they purchased the island from the federal government for ... <strong>$1</strong>. That despite the Congressional Budget Office estimating the islands’ value at

<a href= <http://observer.com/1999/06/governors-island-deal-on-ropes-after-feds-withdraw-1-offer>>$500 million</a>. The critical requirement attached to the transaction was that no commercial developments take place on the islet. As a result of that limitation, the redevelopment of the landmark has been proceeding with difficulties. The good news is that the island is now open to the public during summers (follow the links for sources).

**4) “Ground Zero”**

A part of the square hole of “Ground Zero” can be seen on this picture between the plane’s strut and the WFC 1 tower (the building with a green cupola in the shape of a truncated pyramid). Anyone living or working in the area at the time, as I did, was often stopped by people asking for the way to “Ground Zero”.

Naturally, the place no longer looks as it did in June 2009, when this picture was taken. Missing are the commemorative twin pools now forming the 9/11 memorial; the WTC 1 (the Freedom) tower had not started its growth yet. &nbsp;&#x2666;&nbsp;

Flying alone in the “corridor” is not conducive to taking pictures; often, the priority to maintain safety leaves time only for random shots. As a result, I did not manage to take a snapshot of the entire Ground Zero on that day. But the experience of the flight is unforgettable—a surreal passage through a park of giant square rocks radiating heat of the bustling City. None of the pictures I’ve ever taken captured that perspective; I can only view it in my mind.

**5) “West of Central Park West”**

Central Park is a conspicuous landmark on this picture. Many celebrities live in the area; the two towers in front of the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Reservoir (the largest body of water in the Park) belong to the famous <em><a href=<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Eldorado>>Eldorado</a></em> – the apartment building where famed personalities like Alec Baldwin, Michael J. Fox, Garison Keillor and others live or lived at certain times.

Harder to see is the flat silvery roof of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, below the Reservoir, on the other side of the Park. Haze interferes more and more as one takes a longer view on the Upper East Side and Queens. For example, the ligher, foggy patch to the left of the strut, just below the horizon is the LaGuardia Airport. &nbsp;&#x2666;&nbsp; The rotunda at the exit of the 89th Street (bottom of the image) is the <em>Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Monument</em> dedicated to the Union Army heroes who fought in the Civil War.

**6) Landmark after Landmark ...**

Manhattan is a place where distance could be measured in landmarks. At the center is the Riverside Church, the tallest church in the United States. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke here in 1967, as did Bill Clinton in 2004. Take two block south (i.e. to the right), and two blocks east (away from the plane), and you are in Low Memorial Library at Columbia University (the beige cupola at 2 o’clock from the church). President Barack Obama and a Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg are just two of the eminent graduates of that esteemed school. The circular monument in the park in front of the church is the tomb of General Ulysses Grant, the 18th President of the United States, and the Union military leader who brought the end to the Civil War. &nbsp;&#x2666;&nbsp; As a pilot I have to look upwards, towards the horizon, where just above the East River, 5 miles away are the two perpendicular runways of LaGuardia Airport.

**7) “Traffic and Transit Report”**

My flight through the “corridor” is nearing the end. In a moment I will turn left (west) and cross the Hudson to return to Coldwell, NJ, 10 miles away. &nbsp;&#x2666;&nbsp; One of the things which have changed in the City since I took this flight is the dramatic increase in use of bicycles. Last spring and summer (2012), I made a few bicycle trips across George Washington Bridge myself (fun!). On a couple of occasions I was able to compete with the vehicular traffic which was slowed down by traffic jams. Here, in 2009, one can’t see a single bicycle on the pedestrian pathways at the edges of the Bridge. The gridlock, however, is the same ...