



August **RUNWAY 15** 2014 EDITION

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Self-Briefings and NOTAMS... A Potential "Gotcha"!

July 15, 2014 by Pat Brown - Houston CFI

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Do you self-brief prior to departure? It's a good practice. After all, FAR 91.103 says that we should make ourselves aware of "all

available information" pertaining to our flight. But, is self-briefing good enough? Maybe...but maybe not.

Let's take DUATS for example. It's a rich source of information for pilots. If you know what you are looking AT, and what you are looking FOR, you can get a good picture of what's going on along your route of flight. But, have you ever actually printed out a DUATS briefing? Depending on your flight, it can be 30 or 40 pages or more!! It's pretty daunting to read through all of that information and it can be a challenge to spot things that may negatively affect the outcome of your flight.

So, how does all this apply to NOTAMS? Well, they're all there...usually toward the end of the briefing. But that's the problem. They are ALL there. And there can be dozens of them reporting runway or taxiway issues, tower light outages, unusable or out-of-service VORs, changes to STARS or DPs, modifications to approaches and more. Most of them have little, if any, bearing on your flight. But some of them may!

I recently flew to Iowa City, IA and back on business. The entire trip was flown on IFR flight plans with a combination of FSS briefings, both on the ground and enroute, and self-briefings. The return trip called for a landing at Lebanon, MO (KLBO) for fuel. I had self-briefed that leg.

About 90 minutes out of KLBO, my traveling companion was poking around on the iPad and inadvertently hit the NOTAMS tab for the airport. He said, "It says here LBO is closed". I took the iPad and

looked. Sure enough, it was. That was our IFR destination...
(continued page 3)



About the author: Pat Brown is a Houston-based CFII, MEI, Glider Instructor, FAASTeam member, Tow Pilot Greater Houston Soaring Association, Co-Owner and Chief CFI at Houston Light Sport Aviation (HoustonLSA.com), Cirrus Standardized Instructor Pilot, AOPA Event Pilot, and Air Safety Institute Safety Seminar Presenter. He has been flying since age 16.

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INSTRUMENT PILOT GROUND SCHOOL

Sign up for the next class. Wednesday Evening, 7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m., West Houston Airport. Call to verify course availability Licensed Jeppesen Video Presentation! Contact Hank Henry, Chief Pilot, for information, 281-492-2130.

FAA SAFETY MEETING

Fourth (4th) Tuesday 7:00p -9:00p 2nd Floor Observatory. Topic ADS-B Carol Brackley 713-301-5407 or email carolav8@att.net.

99'S MEETING

Second (2nd) Tuesday Every Month, 7:00 p.m., Terminal Building, 2nd Floor. Women's Organization of Pilots, Men welcome! Contact Sophie Thibodeaux 281-391-2958. See website www.ninety-nines.org.

COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE (CAF)

Museum open first and third Saturday of the month 10am-3pm. Meetings 3rd Sunday of the Month at 2:00 p.m., Hangar B-5. Memberships available. Call for tours. Contact 281-579-2131 or email info@houstonwing.org, www.houstonwing.org.

EAA CHAPTER 774 MEETING

Third (3rd) Thursday of the month 7:00 p.m. Terminal Building 2nd floor. For Meeting Information and Announcements Contact Rick Human 281-463-6769. Great Meetings! Large Turnouts! Join Today.

GHAFI SEMINAR (Greater Houston Association of Flight Instructors)

GHAFI quarterly Seminar October 18. Questions or comments contact Carol Brackley at carolav8@att.net, or visit website: www.ghafi.org

Texas Concealed Handgun License Class

NEXT CLASS September 6, 9-3 New 4 Hour Class plus range time, West Houston Airport, Terminal - Upstairs, 18000 Groschke Road, Houston, TX 77094. Class includes: lunch, classroom, shooting range (indoor range in the area), instruction and all paperwork. Loaner guns available at no extra charge. First time shooters taught how to shoot at no extra charge. You can bring your own ammo (50 rounds) or buy from me for \$20. Cost is \$90. For Reservations call or email (ktwinkle@hal-pc.org) Kevin Winkle 713-252-7006.

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* With quantity discount			
100LL	High	Low	Average
Southwest Region	7.79	4.45	6.51
West Houston Airport	5.84	5.32	5.58

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AIRCRAFT FOR RENT AND INSTRUCTION, Save Time Schedule Online www.westhoustonairport.com

Brown, Continued from page 1.

and our IFR flight plan had been accepted. Obviously, I had missed that very important NOTAM during the self-brief! To be sure the information was accurate, I called ATC and asked for permission to leave the frequency. A quick conversation with Flight Service on 122.2 verified the airport was, in fact, closed. So, after reporting back up on center frequency, I told them that we needed to amend our destination. They were very accommodating but asked 'why'. Time to 'fess' up. I told him that we were rechecking NOTAMS and the airport was closed. He said, "Good catch" and Cleared us to an alternate. Now, in the scheme of things, this was not a big deal, but it could have been, particularly if the weather had been a serious factor.

So, lesson learned? Self-briefings are good to a point but important information can be easy to miss. It is always a good idea to CALL Flight Service and talk to a professional briefer. That is what they are trained to do, and they can cut through all the 'clutter' to give you the information you need.

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BLAKE SMITH, Lead Supervisor Line Services, 7:30am to 7:30pm Fri-Mon; blake@westhoustonairport.com* *
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