



# RWR Pilot Training



## Malibu - Mirage - Meridian

*Insurance Approved, Type Specific Training Programs  
Designed to Make Your Flying Safe and Enjoyable  
Provided When and Where You Choose*

### I'm Glad You Asked

## Finding the Runway on a Visual Approach

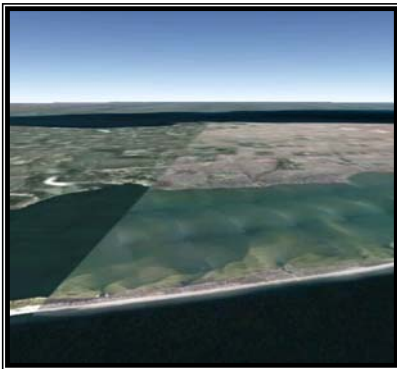
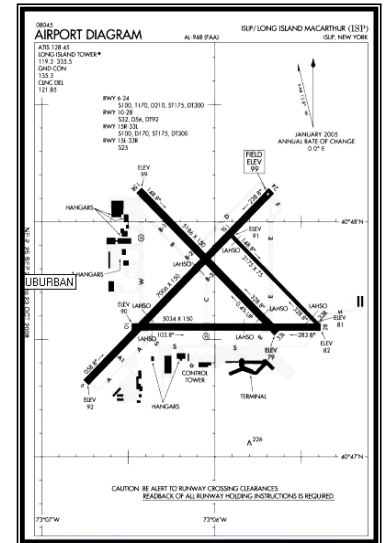
By Dick Rochfort, ATP, MCFI, CFII, MEI

**Question:** I reported the airport in sight and I was cleared for a visual approach, but I had difficulty getting lined up with the correct runway. The controller's questions added to the confusion. What is the best way to get lined up at the right altitude?

**Answer:** This is something that a lot of pilots struggle with because they are taught to use local landmarks instead of generic technique to get lined up; as a result, the struggle continues at each different airport. Here are some techniques you can use to remove the doubt and confusion and make great visual approaches every time.

Have the weather in advance and know which runway is likely to be in use. Ask ATC for lower altitudes in time to arrive at the airport in a position to make a normal landing. I use the rule of 300 feet per nautical mile; that is, pattern altitude 3 miles out, or 3000 feet 10 miles out, etc. This is just a rule of thumb and you will need to consider obstacles and minimum vectoring altitudes.

8 Miles South of ISP at 2,500 feet you have the airport in sight and are cleared for the visual approach to runway 33L. You can see the airport, but not the runway:



No worries. Given the direction of your arrival, consider weather you will be landing straight in or from the downwind or base leg. Having your Garmin or MFD set to the "north up" display will help a great deal if you are using an arrival procedure or an airport diagram, otherwise consider using the arc map (nav page one on the G530). Don't worry too much at this point about getting the runway in sight just yet.

*Fly Safely – Train Often*

Phone 410-435-3333 - Toll Free 866-870-8196 - Fax 410-435-7311

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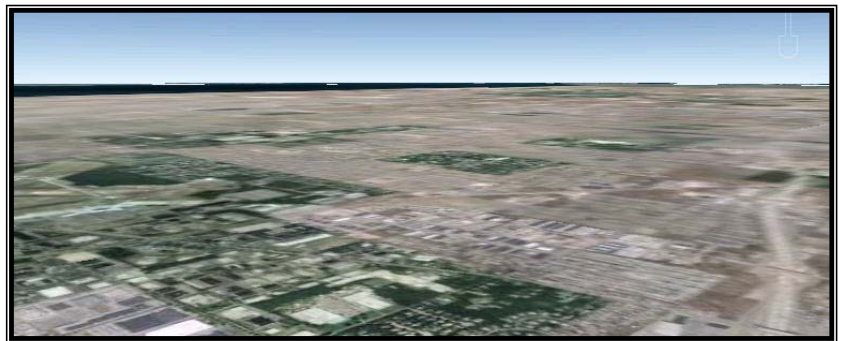


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Everyone has some sort of GPS map or MFD available to them. Use this equipment early to help with the position awareness. If you have a Garmin 530, place the heading bug on the white lubber line on the HSI and switch to HDG on the autopilot panel. This action will keep the aircraft tracking toward the airport until you can setup the final approach course and it will free the yellow course needle and the Nav function for the next step.

If the runway has an instrument approach, activate it “Vectors to Final. If not, use the OBS function to define the final approach corridor. Do this by pressing the OBS button on the Garmin (the second button from the left at the bottom) and turning the yellow course needle on the HSI to the runway heading. In this case it looks like a straight in approach, so lets set up for that.



At this point you should work toward arriving on the magenta line 3 ½ mile from the airport center (this will be approximately a 3 mile final) at pattern altitude. When you arrive at that point, begin a 500 ft/minute descent, lower the gear and add 10 degrees of flaps. Set the power to about 20 inches (300 ft/lbs for the Meridian) and look in the bottom third of the windshield. The runway will appear, you will be in a position to make a normal landing and well within the 2<sup>nd</sup> notch of flaps speed.



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Remember; when using the OBS function in this manner, the GPS will take you to the center of the airport property which is not necessarily the runway threshold, but this is still easier than trying to line up visually. It is also important to remember that YOU are responsible for obstacle clearance on a visual approach.

I hope this information is helpful.

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*“I’m Glad You Asked” is a regular column written by Master Flight Instructor Dick Rochfort. Dick answers questions which come up frequently while conducting training in the Malibu, Mirage and Meridian aircraft. If you have a question for Dick, you can send it to him at [mail@rwrpilottraining.com](mailto:mail@rwrpilottraining.com). He’ll be ... “glad you asked”.*

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## Biography

### Richard W Rochfort



A former corporate pilot and primary flight instructor, Dick is a full-time Master Certified Flight Instructor providing insurance approved initial and recurrent pilot training in the Piper PA46 Malibu, Mirage, and Meridian aircraft. He is currently flying over 450 hours per year and trains 60-80 pilots every year exclusively in these aircraft.

He holds multi-engine ATP and Gold Seal Flight Instructor Certificates with CFII, MEI and CE-525S ratings. He has been actively involved in flight training since 1991 and has trained pilots all over the US, Canada and Europe.

Dick is an Aviation Safety Counselor for the FAA Baltimore FSDO, a National Industry Member of the FAA Safety Team (FAAST) and has conducted hundreds of programs for the pilot community. He is an instructor for the M/MOPA Safety and Training Foundation and The National Association of Flight Instructors has designated him Master CFI. Less than 1% of all flight instructors have earned this designation.

Dick served as a Staff Sergeant E6 in the US Army Special Forces from 1970 until 1976 as an A team radio operator, training indigenous personnel in field communications. He worked from 1976 until 1991 as an industrial engineer training manufacturing personnel for the production of communication and navigation equipment for US military.

His education includes undergraduate degrees in Clinical Psychology and Engineering and a Masters Degree in Business Administration. Dick lives in Baltimore, Maryland with his wife and two daughters. He is a PADI Certified Scuba Diving Instructor, First Aid Instructor and an Eagle Scout.

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