"The Dirty Dozen" Method of Hold Visualization

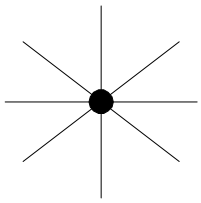
Do you remember that movie *The Dirty Dozen* where the heroes are so prepared for their mission that they have each step in the plan sequenced such that they could on command produce that step seven was "over the fence" or whatever it was? Be similarly prepared for visualizing IFR holds and never botch one again! The formulation of these seven steps are based on the premise that good holds start with good visualization. Each of the seven steps below has a four-syllable "tag phrase" attached to it as well as a pictogram of the essentials of that step. In our experience, if you can learn the seven steps such that if somebody says "four," you think "which way to turn," you will do well with holds. This is a form of a hold checklist--and of course for any flight, IFR or not, systematic thought and action will yield consistently good results.

1 the point to hold

Visualize the point in space where you have been assigned to hold (holding fix) as a dot. This dot will typically represent a VOR, NDB, or intersection.

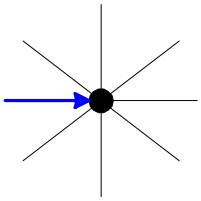
2 the asterisk

alternately: "the compass rose"



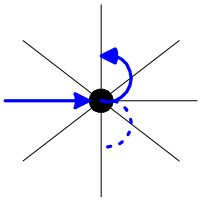
Mentally draw an asterisk, or compass rose around your point. Think about where north, south, east, and west are.

3 the radial



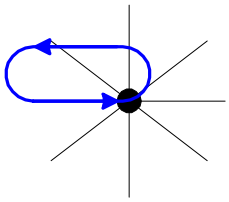
Translate your holding instructions into a radial as if you were just asked to identify the radial of a VOR. "Hold west" or "hold on the 270 radial" mean the same thing. Here's the crucial part: imagine an arrowhead on your radial going INTO the point.

4 which way to turn



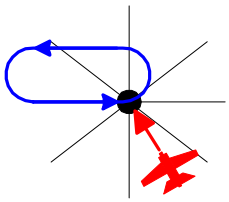
Very simply, think whether you were told "left turns" or not. If so, imagine a turn to the left from your inbound radial. If not, imagine a turn to the right.

5 there's the oval



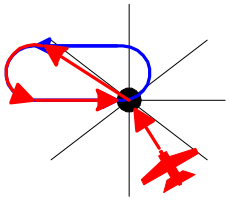
With the inbound radial and the direction to turn visualized, you now can get a clear picture of the entire holding racetrack pattern.

6 my position



What is your position with regards to the point? If you're heading to the fix, look at your DG or compass for a wind-uncorrected approximation. Think of your position as a vector heading towards the point.

7 the entry is ...



When you have properly visualized your inbound vector compared to the racetrack you are to fly, you can easily determine what the entry is by picturing what the most natural way would be to get on that inbound radial.

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