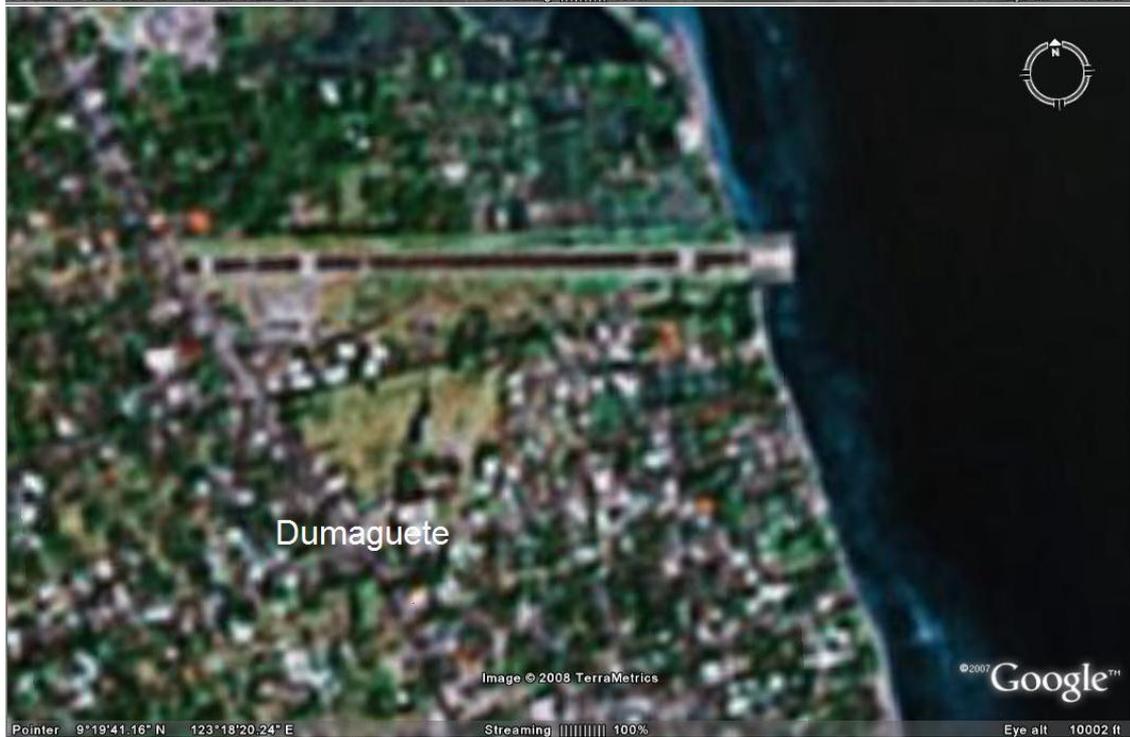


**Rambling about airports and planes, after an email exchange on a hard landing.**



Google Earth images comparing airport lengths, all viewed from about 10,000 ft altitude. Dumaguete is apparently not important enough to the US military to deserve a high resolution scan of the terrain.



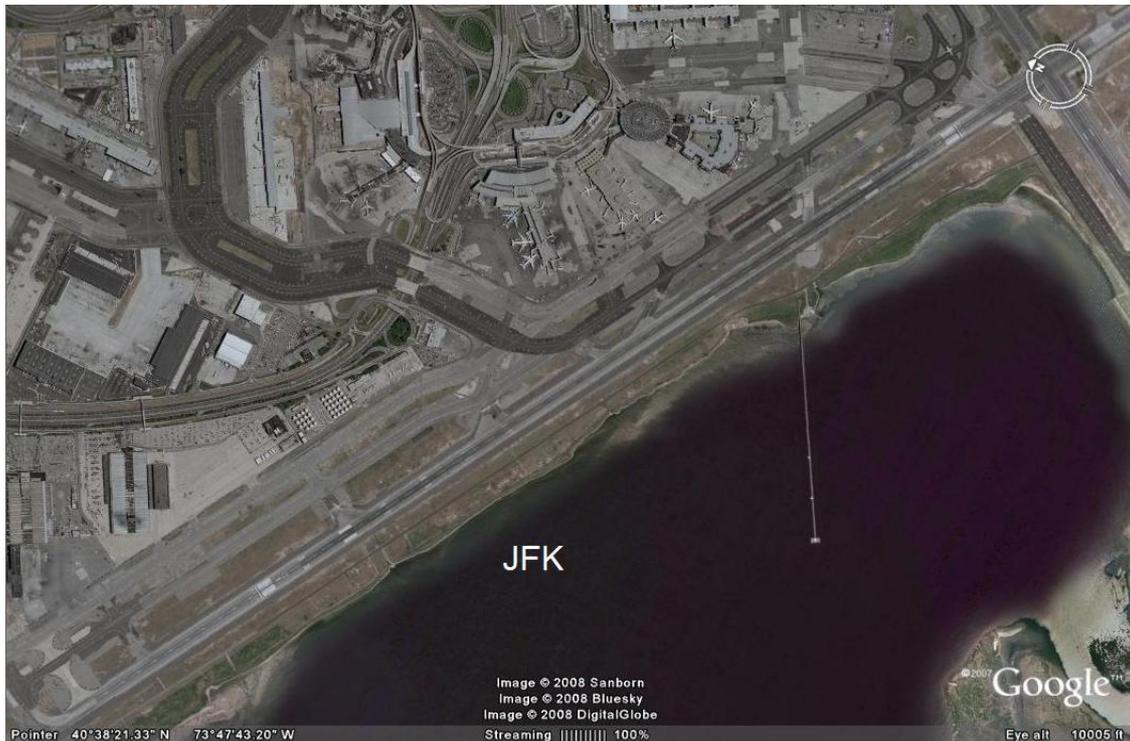
Laoag International airport is just slightly shorter than Cebu's which originally was designed to service Vietnam era bombers.



I have never landed at the Baguio airport, but they say it is scary: wending your way down between the mountains on this 5000 ft high valley. I wonder if the proportionality of scale to the other near sea level airports is skewed as all these images are taken at 10,000 ft?



Manila's airport seems even longer than LA's main runway. But LA's is so much busier; witness the blackened runway – skid marks where the rubber hits the road.



JFK's longest runway above cannot be accommodated in the picture unless it is zoomed out, but that then loses the proportionality to the other pictured airports. Its website indicates this runway is the second longest in the US at 15,472 ft. Most international airports have runways of about 12,000 ft, a little over 2 miles.

Whenever I am on a plane taking off, I invariably count the number of seconds it takes from start (when the pilots gun the engines) to lift-off (when the wheels leave the ground), and it varies from 30 seconds to about 45 seconds. I guess this is dependent on such various factors such as type of plane, how full it is (with passengers/cargo/fuel), headwind, and of course length of runway. At short runways, the pilots would gun the engines more. I still haven't researched on how fast an average commercial jet has to be for lift-off, but I know that during landing, they slow down to about 160 mph.

I'd like to dust off those physics formulas on length, time, acceleration and speed and figure out what sort of acceleration one experiences on take off. Doesn't seem to be any faster than when dragging in a car. Best is to be on a navy plane taking off an aircraft carrier, accelerated by steam catapult.

'Nuff said.

Danny Gil  
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