

SILHOUETTE

A light-wind fighter kite designed by JEFF MACINNIS

A few years ago, Jeff MacInnis, a very talented fighter kite designer/maker from Portland, OR, USA, designed a kite he called the 'Silhouette'. The moment other fighter kite fans saw this 'new' kite in action, each of them wanted one!

The silhouette flew very well in winds less than about 6mph, and in Jeff's hands, this kite could do every fighter kite maneuver and then some! In addition to being an artist, writer, superb craftsman and kite maker, Jeff is an incredibly skilled fighter kite flyer and loves to show off his flying skills which of course, makes all who are watching quite envious of his abilities! ;o)

Jeff was generous enough to include the plan and details about the silhouette in the original 'NFKA' Fighter book, which is available in PDF format on www.fighterkitecentral.com However, the photos of his plan in the book were blurry. After an email from Hans Brenkman asking me about the Silhouette, I decided it was time to provide a full sized template of Jeff's wonderful kite.

I own one of Jeff's Silhouette kites that he gave me a few years ago. I used it to trace around so the template would provide as close as possible the exact shape of all the curves Jeff used in the leading and trailing edges of the kite, tracing around the perimeter of my Silhouette is how I made the full sized template.

My Silhouette has a black Orcon skin, which is quite soft and flexible, so the perimeter line is slightly wavy. Cut the sail of your Silhouette kite using a smooth curve that matches the curve of the template.

The bow is a 0.05" diameter carbon fiber rod 22-3/4" long. To measure the bow length, I laid a piece of 0.05" carbon rod on top of Jeff's bow, marked it and then measured it. It is as accurate a measurement as I can make, but it may be very slightly different from what fits the template. If that is the case, the difference would be only one millimeter or less.

Jeff is a master bamboo craftsman. And he would often spend a couple of hours to make one spine. Part of the time was devoted to splitting a 2"-3" diameter tonkin cane bamboo pole, then splitting and re-splitting until he created what he would call his 'spine blank'. From this blank he uses a plane to shave the spine to his desired characteristics. He isn't a slow worker, he just wanted specific characteristics in each spine and to get that degree of perfection it took awhile.

The spine in my Silhouette is about 1/8" wide and slightly thinner than that. However, the spine is quite stiff. And the spine is the same cross section from nose to tail, at least as best as I can tell by close observation.

The balance point of the kite is 7-1/4" from the nose, but based on the construction method, spine shape, etc., your balance point may be at a slightly different point. Jeff usually added a small amount of putty to the tail of the spine in order to get the Silhouette to fly as he wanted it to.

The Silhouette has no battens.

I also took detailed measurements of the Silhouette that follow:

Wingtip to wingtip 18-15/16"

Spine length 16-1/4"

Wingtip line to nose 8-3/16"

Nose to bow/spine crossing 2-1/2"

The nose leading edge meets the bow 4-7/8" from the center of the spine and 3-13/16" from the nose.

Upper bridle points are 7/8" either side of the center of the spine.

The lower bridle point is 4-3/16" toward the nose measured from the tail of the spine.

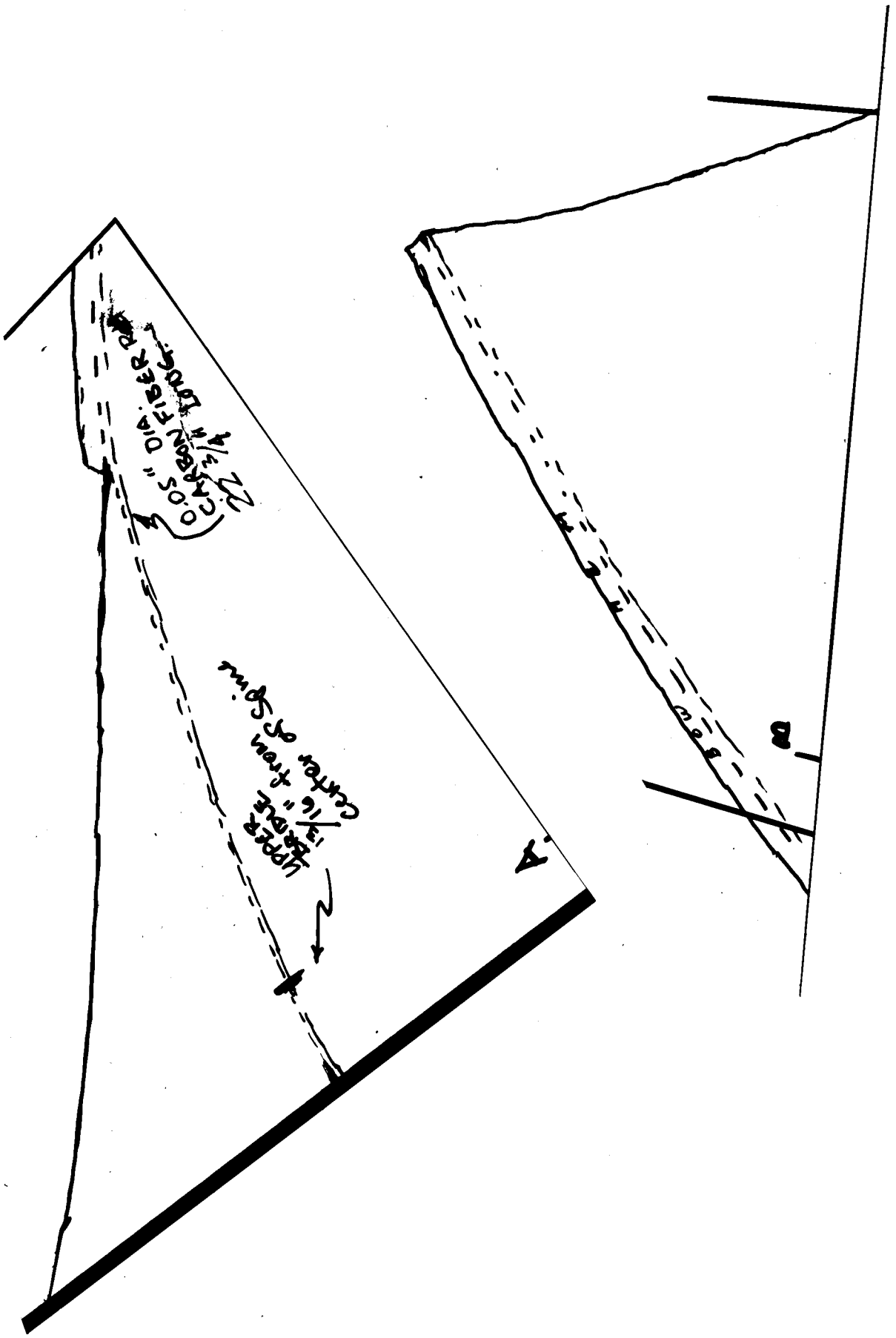
ABOUT THE TEMPLATE

A full sized 1/2 template of the Silhouette is on the following pages. To create the full sized template of the same size as the original, print the template pages at 100% and disable any printer feature that 'fits to size', increases or decreases the size, or makes any changes to the printed size.

After printing the template, cut out each piece around it's perimeter; fit the pieces together so the A's, B's and C's match, then tape together.

I hope you enjoy flying the Silhouette you make as much as I enjoy flying the ones I make!!

Biggrins, bruce



A

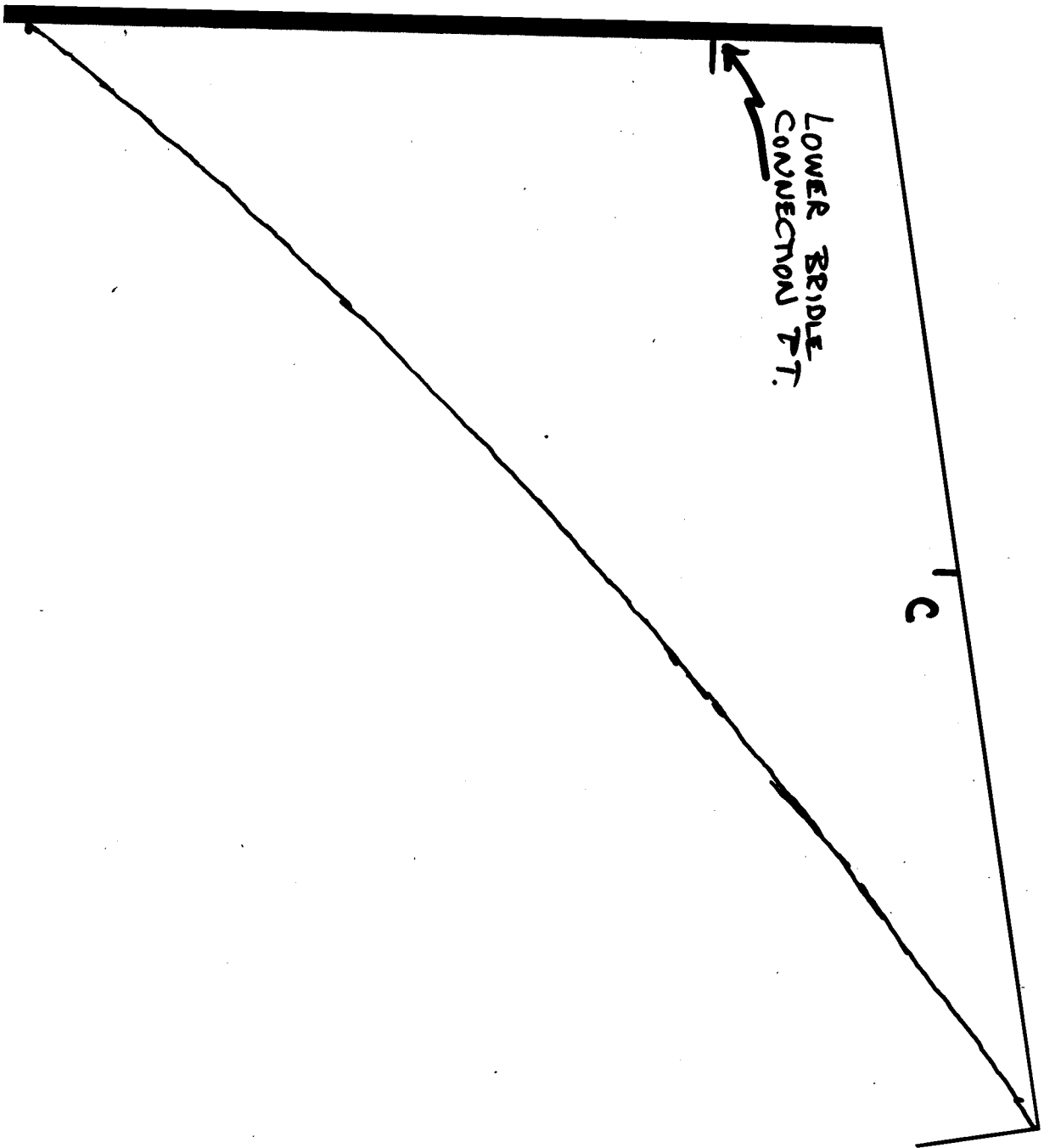
JEFF MAC INNIS'
SILHOUETTE

B

I TRACED AROUND ONE OF JEFF'S
SILHOUETTE KITES TO CREATE THIS
Template - Ben Lambert. 3/2007

← ACTUAL WIDTH OF
BAMBOO SPINE

C



LOWER BRIDGE
CONNECTION T.I.

C