Matariki Kites

Follow the instructions on the back to make your own kite!

Kites have played an important part in Māori culture for a long time, especially during the winter when they are flown to celebrate the start of Matariki, the Māori New Year.

The Māori kite can be called manu tukutuku (manu meaning either kite or bird) or pākau, which means bird wing.

Māori flew kites for fun and to communicate, but they were also used as a way to connect with those that have passed on (died) as, according to custom, they fly close to the stars.

Go Fly a Kite!

Why would an air force pilot need a kite?

During World War 2, kites were used by air force pilots in life rafts after being shot down by an enemy. Can you guess why?

A box kite was used to lift 260 feet (80m) of stainless-steel wire antenna (aerial for a radio) as a flying line. This antenna was connected to a radio called a Gibson Girl. The pilot, who needed rescuing, would launch the box kite and then try and call for help on the radio. The radio would only transmit (send a signal), which means that you couldn't listen to anything on it. In fact, it could automatically transmit an SOS (save our souls) signal in Morse Code. The Gibson Girl radios, together with its box kite antenna, saved the lives of many airmen during World War 2.

Make a Box Kite

This basic kite plan can be used to make a kite of any size.
Measurements are proportional to whatever
size you choose to make.

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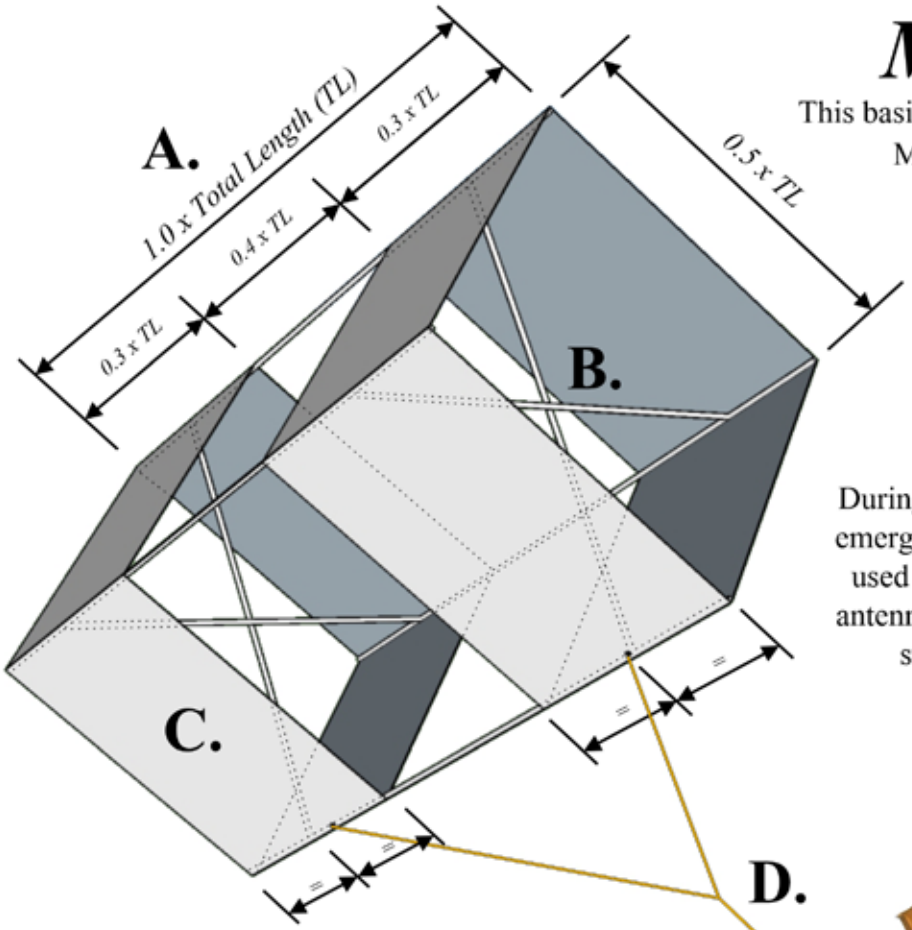
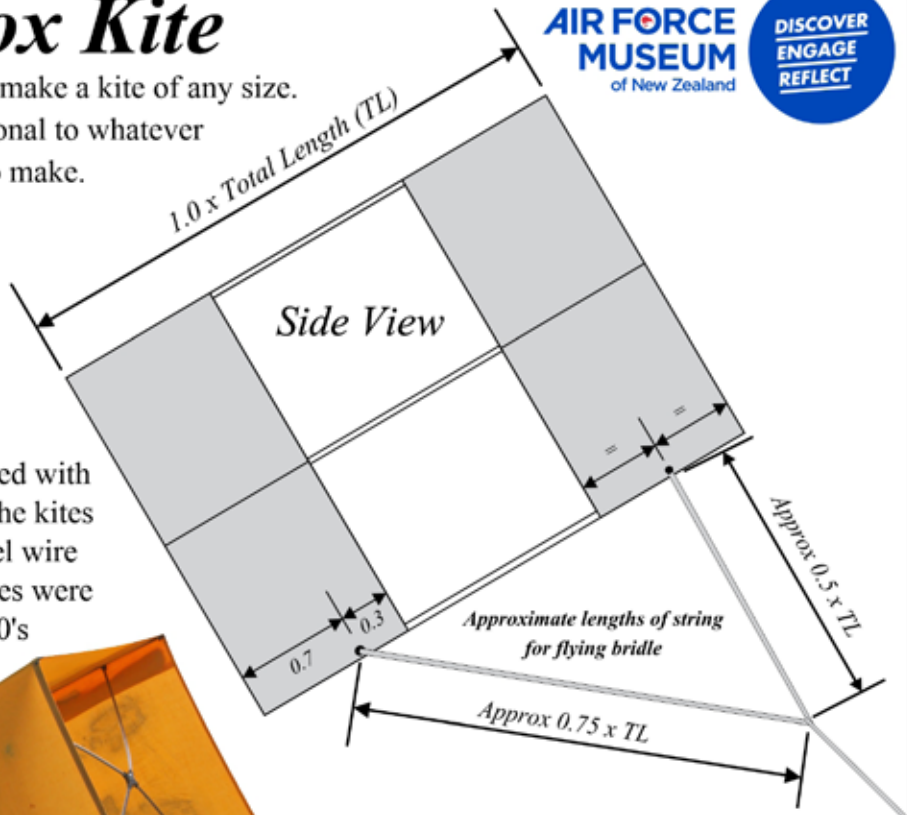
DISCOVER ENGAGE REFLECT

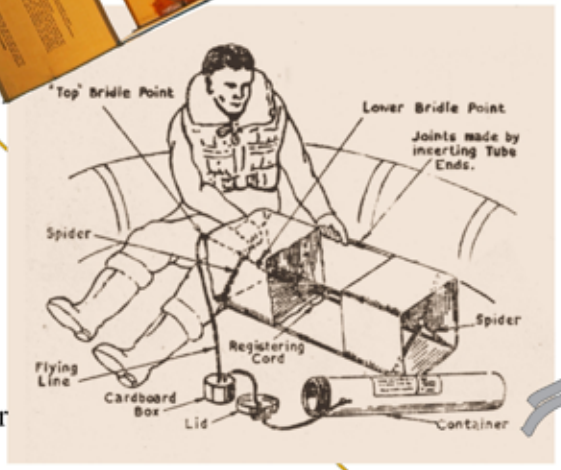




War Kites.

During WW2 box kites were used with emergency radio transmitters. The kites used 80 metres of stainless steel wire antenna as flying line. These kites were still used until the mid 1980's

Bendix Aviation Co.
M-357-A Box Kite.



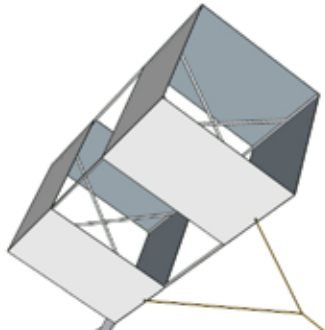
Construction Notes:

A. Main Spars: Spars can be made from anything long and straight enough, wood slats, bamboo stakes or even BBQ skewers.

B. Diagonal Braces: Made from same material as mains spars, make these slightly oversized and trim to fit before attaching to main spars. These can be taped, glued or bound with string, to the main spars

C. Sails: The sails can be made from any lightweight material, olythene, plastic bags, building wrap, paper or lightweight fabric. The sails can be stitched, glued or taped onto the spars. It pays to reinforce the sails at the ends of the main spars with extra tape to prevent the spars slipping.

D. Flying Line: Use a suitable weight string or cord as a flying line, the bigger the kite, the stronger the line.



Tails:

Whilst not always necessary, try experimenting with different tails/lengths to stabilise the kite. Use long strips and trim down until you find the best results