



July August 2002

ISLAND

BREEZES

A newsletter for the employees of Tradewind Caribbean Airlines



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Inside TCA

The summer months are often the quiet months in the TCA calendar, many pilots take time to pursue other hobbies and this year has been an exception. The Tradewind Domestic Seaplane department has been busy with many new pilots signing up. New sceneries have been developed specially with TCA in mind and many new aircraft have been added to the HFG (Historic Flight Group) hanger.

TDS:

TDS have been very busy the new routes have been tested and completed, with more routes and bases in the pipeline. They now have a roster of around 25 pilots with more dropping in to fly the occasional route.

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SVMI Scenery

By far the most active TCA department in many ways TCA Venezuela. Their headquarters is at Simon Bolivar Intl (SVMI). Donald Maldonado their chief scenery man has created a new scenery which is an accurate representation of the airport but with TCA feel. The Scenery can be downloaded from the TCA homepage...

<http://www.tradewind.org>

or from the TCA Venezuela website



HFG Hanger

Many new planes have been added to the HFG hanger including a DC-8-55, and a YS-11. All the aircraft are in 60's livery and if you haven't been there already get over to the HFG hanger and get a feel for what TCA many have looked like in the 60's





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AFCAD & TTools

(Or, "Good Morning Doctor, my brain hurts")

Since Kyle was cunning enough to ask if I would contribute an article on the subject from the safe haven of his current vacation, it seems I have little choice in the matter.

So, without further ado (and if anyone has some ado to spare, send it to Kyle as a reward), here is a short dissertation on the use of AFCAD and Traffic Tools - learned bit by bit, and painfully as I went along.

As soon as TDS's base sceneries were produced by the Terrible Twins of TDS scenery design, I knew we Seabirds would not be content with wallowing around, looking for order out of chaos - in other words, we needed runways, taxiways, docks, ramps and gates to float our 'boats' from and to. Rainer was foolish enough to admit in an unguarded moment that he had experimented with the subject, but being perpetually busy holding everything together TCA-wise, was somewhat snowed under, so stealing things from the Boss was a no-go.

Downloading AFCAD and TTools was then my first objective - they came down and were installed post haste - FS2k2 was fired up and placed in "Top-down" view over the TDSS base at San Juan, and construction work began. Things went very well, probably because I didn't have a clue what I was doing - taxiways, the "runway" (is this correct for floatplanes and amphibians?) were set in place, docks, gates and ramps followed. It wasn't until some weeks later that my very good friend Will Gasser gently informed me that the orientation of the runway

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was...err....inconveniencing the traffic from and to nearby TJIG. Like, it was at right angles to their line of approach. And the wind direction was all wrong.

The beauty of AFCAD 1.2 is that it's relatively simple to alter minor details such as these. The runway orientation can be altered virtually with one click of the mouse button, and any other lines and objects can be re-routed and placed similarly easily - if you can click and drag a file from one spot on the desktop to another, you're a natural for TDS runway design. The latest version has far more labor saving devices to play with - the plus and minus keys grow or reduce the size of your worksheet (essential if your eyes are anything like mine - moles have been known to laugh at me when I grope my way past them). All lines can be "elastic banded" - click and hold, drag the mouse and Voila! The line(s) re-align themselves.

The whole sorry mess can be checked against the FS2k2 view by "Locking" your masterpiece to Flightsim - this means that you can see exactly where your aircraft is going to run aground during it's taxi or take-off run by using the "Jump here" facility - where you place the little red cross on the AFCAD map, can immediately show you the error of your ways when you reveal where the aircraft has got to within Flightsim. Not always a pretty sight, believe me.

Eventually after hours of blood sweat and (very often) much swearing, the epic is finished. Inserting it into your Flightsim setup is child's play (well, if I can do it, there's nothing stopping the rest of TDS/TCA). Open AFCAD and Flightsim, click on "Import Airport" from the AFCAD file drop down menu, click "Save" and it's installed. Export it (via the same menu) to a safe folder, and it's all over bar the shouting. (Unless the runway orientation or wind directions are wrong.....)

Pretty much the same system is employed for adding any other airport runway etcetera - draw, check, draw, check, (curse), erase, draw, check, (curse)....and so it goes. Don't forget to add a Control Tower, otherwise things will be very quiet when you want to get under weigh (old nautical term). With a tower in position and supplied with Comms frequencies, you'll have ATC whining at you just like the default program!

While you're not looking, or you've gone to..err..make coffee or something, something sinister happens to your carefully timed flightplans. If, like me initially, you spread the plans throughout the day so that you have something to watch while you're eating lunch or whatever, you'll wonder where the heck all your aircraft have gone. Or not. They'll be sitting on the water, doing absolutely nothing. You'll watch them like a Hawk - nothing. Nada. Zip. Take your eyes off them for a split second, and they've all gone - who knows where....? There may be a hint though - a small cloud of spray denotes the demise of a G-111 or CL215/415 - cut down in their prime before they even got to the hold short point. Some aircraft are a joy to watch as they perform exactly as you would wish them to. Others have other ideas, and tend to self destruct at critical moments - all tied in with the method used to construct them. Even Gmax - fabricated aircraft are not safe from this phenomenon it seems.

Back to the "Time" business - somehow and for some reason, between AI Traffic and TTools, these two manage to convert GMT into Standard African Midsummer Saving Time or some such. If you don't believe me, take another look at the flight times you planned with the GFE. Despite this playful little quirk, most flights manage to take

place OK, and the proud feeling you get when your first incoming aircraft manages to touch down, taxi to the gate and talk to ATC throughout makes up for the frustrations of earlier hours. And to watch as the G-111 evades the minefields of Taxiway "Alpha", gets to the start point, then roars overhead with only a few feet to spare as it leaves for distant shores makes your back hair curl.

As you have by now guessed, this is NOT another "How to" - at my present stage of development I am nowhere near qualified to write such. But if you haven't got into this fascinating side of our hobby yet, take a crack at it - you may surprise yourself (and take some of the heat off me

Terry Tyler TDS5001



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Cargo Newsletter for June, 2002

Greetings all you "Cargo Jockeys"! Now that the new TDS Division is up and running, it looks as if we'll be busier than ever now getting all the cargo loads to the various locations so TDS and TDM can deliver to the smaller islands in the Caribbean.

I'm going to try something different with this newsletter. Click on the Connie below to download a scenery enhancement for a flight from KMIA to MNMG. Sometimes a little different scenery can make the flight more interesting. If you like this sort of thing, please let me know and I'll try to do something similar occasionally. Below is a screen shot of what will greet you at MNMG.



Paquito and Wet Willie, our crack maintenance team, tell me that things are going well in the hangar, but they are

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asking that when we finish our flights that we stop putting their pet lizards in the bottom of the Marg barrels. Seems the lizards get pickled and when the boys go to cook their lunch on the tarmac the lizards don't want to lay still, but want to form a Conga line and dance!



A reminder of why we fly cargo: The difference between flight attendants and jet engines: The engines quit whining when they get to the gate. Till next time.....

Finz Up!

To send me mail: capn@comcast.net



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FS Maintenance Reviewed



The software company LAGO have been producing quality add-on software products for the Microsoft Flight simulator series for many years now. Many will remember how the hugely popular FS Traffic revolutionised FS98 bringing fairly lonely virtual aviation world to life by filling the skies and airports with aircraft from the users aircraft directory. With the arrival of FS2002 and AI Traffic FS Traffic became redundant. It was time for LAGO to think of another way to revolutionise the way we use our flight simulator. First came FS scenery enhancer, which helped bring the airports in FS2002 to life. More recently though FS Maintenance has arrived, a truly unique if not slightly controversial product unlike any other the Flight simulator has seen before.

What exactly does it do? is the question the question on most people's mind when they first hear of FS Maintenance. Well in a nutshell it brings a whole new dimension into the way we use FS2002 making us responsible for maintaining the aircraft we fly and teaching us to fly in a matter that respects the aircraft, passenger comfort factor and keeps maintenance costs to a minimum, maximising the airline's profit margin and pilots reputation. According to LAGO 20% of the money that airlines make from ticket sales is spent in the maintenance department.

I decided to spend a week testing this new product from LAGO. There is a free fully functional six hour trial available at LAGO's website.

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<http://www.lagoonline.com/eng/prodotti/pdt.asp?id=100003>

Installation is easy with the program being self-extracting, just follow the simple instructions on the screen. Once installed a new drop down menu will appear within Flight Simulator. Before you can start logging flights you must do two things, set up a fleet manager, from the drop down LAGO menu and add at least one aircraft from your aircraft directory. When this has been done park the aircraft on the ground with the engines off and select "start logging " from the LAGO menu.

From this point on the Blackbox flight recorder is recording every move you make including errors. It will be six hours until the next routine maintenance check and your aircraft has to make enough cash to pay for that and any repairs that have to be made. An alert will sound every time you make a flying error which could be anything as minor as not switching on the rotating beacon before starting the engine to something as major as slamming the aircraft down and skidding off the runway which would cause serious damage to the aircraft and terrify you passengers. This leads to expensive repairs and less revenue because the PAX are just to frightened to fly with you again! Minor errors such as incorrect altimeter setting or incorrect flight level will not damage the aircraft and it's unlikely to effect passenger comfort but they do effect pilot and airline reputation and thus reduce the revenue generated.

There is an option in LAGO menu that enables you to check on the aircraft systems status while you are in flight. Systems that appear in Green are okay and unlikely to fail, yellow systems need maintenance soon and failed systems appear in red.



The program is not without it's faults though for example while departing from St Maarten with and aircraft waiting

behind me I taxied straight out on to the runway and opened the throttle full for a rolling takeoff, a practice often done in the real world as a courtesy to the aircraft waiting behind. Trouble was that because the aircraft was not brought to a halt on the runway FS maintenance thought the aircraft was still taxi-ing even once we were airborne with the gear up and started to log excessive taxi speed every couple of minutes. 15 minutes into the flight to Le Raizet the aircraft system status indicated that the wheel brakes had failed which led to my first FS maintenance induced emergency: Landing at Le Raizet with no brakes!!!

All in all though the program is very addictive and adds new levels of interest and realism to the flight simulator experience. To quote from LAGO on their new product... It's a brand new world out there and you better shape up!



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Pilot Profile

Pilot Name: Lawrence C. Clark (Oso)

Callsign: Sea Bear



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1.. How long have you been with TCA or TDM?

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Since 1996

2.. Your current position at TCA?

Proud head of the Seabirds, Tradewind Seaplane Div, Operate the H&D. And overall loudmouth that the crew suffers, especially Da Chief, JM & Terry

3.. Your favorite aircraft to fly?

Props, and more props

4.. Your favorite division to fly with?

TDS, and all the rest

5.. In your opinion, what keeps you flying for TCA?

The closeness developed between the crew that crosses all boundaries.

6.. Comments:

All families have their misunderstandings, but the love of flying and family Transcends all. That's why we're #1. Of course not having a full deck helps.



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Alternate Air

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Last Man Standing

"Nick, wait up!"

Nick leaned out of the cargo compartment of the Cessna 185 Floatplane at the Roost pier. Three of the four Five Commandments Club were trotting down the path to the pier, each with an overnight bag in his hands. Hitchhikers, thought Nick, only just above plankton on the Scum Scale. Nick went back to stowing his own flight bag and overnight bag.

Doyle Locke arrived first and tossed his bag onto dock next to the pontoon.

"Art said you were going to San Juan for a couple of days. We've got a couple of days off and need to jump a ride, that OK, Nick?"

Robert Trahan and Ole Krogsgard threw their bags onto dock next to the pontoon, each landing with a thud.

"Welcome aboard, gentlemen, and I use the word in the loosest possible terms. Since you ballast know you're way around the airplane, find a place for you and your trash, I'll be ready to go here in about five minutes. I'm in a hurry and a good mood, so don't any of you reprobates bring me down, got it?"

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"We're ballast, Nick, think of us as 'educated cargo.'" Robert hopped onto the pontoon and started loading their bags, then climbed into a back seat. Nick watched Ole wedging his six foot four inch frame into the back seat behind Robert.

Nick stepped forward on the pontoon to check the engine oil and make sure no seagulls had built a nest in the cowl flaps, checked the prop and alternator belt, climbed up on each wing and checked the tanks, then swung down onto the left pontoon and climbed into the pilot's seat. The first drops of rain began to hit the windshield as Nick pulled the seatbelt around him.

"Afternoon squall, just what we need for takeoff, huh Nick?" Robert snapped his belt on.

"Wind and rain, just got to watch the wind shear, that's the big boogeyman, right, Nick?"

"It is just flying, Ole, but with all this dead weight in the airplane it will fly like a brick. You boys got some time off, I guess?"

"Yeah, Robert, Ole, and I have three days off and wanted to go party in the P.R. I met this girl the last time we were out there and I sent her an email saying I was coming. Ole got us rooms at the TCA hotel on Luis Munoz."

"You three guys got one girl? You're a sick bunch."

"They got to find their own girl, that one is mine."

"Ah come on, Doyle, you mean after you pass out drunk you don't want Ole and I to show your girl some TDM Hospitality?"

"Especially not the TDM Hospitality! Let me go on record, Nick you are my witness, you may NOT provide TDM Hospitality to my girl."

"You are just no fun at all, Doyle."

"Oh, I was fun in Barbados last week, now I'm not fun."

"Ole, tell Nick about you and Doyle's flight to Barbados."

"Why don't you guys shut up and let me get this airplane off the water, then you can fill me in on the exploits of you two intellectuals."

"OK, but no need to get testy, Nick, sheesh."

"Sorry. How about some music, here's Jimmy Buffett's new CD, give a listen while I get us going."

He shoved the CD into the player and clicked the switch to bring the sound into the headphones. Jimmy's voice belted out a Mac McAnally song, Last Man Standing:

*I wanna be the last man standing
Bring me the hot sauce
Bring me a beer
Gonna be the last man standing
But where do we go from here?
Gonna be the last man standing
People crashin' on the sofas and passed
out on the floor
But the Last man standing
was sayin' bring on a little bit more*

Nick cranked up the Continental engine and pushed the throttle up a bit to ease away from the pier. He pointed the nose toward the west and, after a few quick checks, pushed the throttle full forward. They bounced along until the airspeed increased enough to get them on the step of their wake. The rain had slowed down considerably now, and Nick broke the pontoons free of the water and they rose into the late afternoon sky. Nick brought up the flaps and set up a cruise at 4500 feet, aiming the nose at Puerto Rico.

Doyle broke the silence. "So Nick, on your way to the new job? Tell me about it, what do you know?"

"Yeah, you gonna fly TDM anymore or what, Nick?"

"I think I will be flying some TDM still, Robert. I don't know much yet. I have to check out the airplanes, make sure we got record keeping and maintenance set up, and check out the new pilots. John has hired a new bunch of pilots for this, he says they already have seaplane experience. And I can catch Mailservice and Cargo work out of San Juan too, should be a great assignment."

"But I thought you didn't like Johnny Issacs, why are you working for him?"

"Ole, that is one damn good question, but the job sounded so good I thought Johnny and I could find some common ground. Plus give me a chance to break him down on the St John Roost visits. He keeps popping up there and making our lives miserable."

"Oh no kidding. Last week he almost walked in on Art's 'casino' operation thinking it was a mop closet."

"It is a mop closet, the mistake is understandable. But I know what you mean. Two weeks ago Sean and I were cleaning out the Trading Post closet and Johnny came in. I just about peed all over myself trying to recover and keep him away from the closet, can you image if he had gone in there?"

The Trading Post was a large storage room in the hotel where Sean kept the items he traded, like a clandestine pawnshop. Sean had a bit of personal money and took trades on all sorts of items that he thought he could turn somewhere else for a profit. He ran a black market web site with the items offered for sale, sort of a Caribbean pirate's ebay. For the right price and situation, but mostly a cooperative TDM pilot, Sean could offer very attractive delivery terms. Unfortunately, the company books missed out on that business altogether, but all the same, it was probably better that way. The pilot's usually got a 10% cut for 'allowing' the item on their aircraft and 'allowing' it to be off loaded at its destination.

Most of what Sean took for trade was at least legal; sailboats, fishing boats, cars, livestock. But from time to time he has found himself in possession of items such as rocket propelled grenade launchers, a .50 caliber machine gun and tripod, night vision goggles, a crate of AK-47's, acoustic listening devices, satellite photos of unknown origin covering the Panama coastline in amazing detail, some Russian made Cuban radar parts, and a Piper Cub once owned by a Peruvian Air Force deserter. Sean would make a French arms trader proud. He drew the line at drugs.

"Did Sean have anything interesting in there? Never mind, I don't even want to know. I'll take my cut when he slides a box on board, enough information to make my weight and balance is all I need to know. Ignorance is bliss, that's what you need to get Johnny to see, Nick."

"Yeah, you don't want to know, I have to know because he needs my help, then I try to forget. He does get some handy stuff from time to time. Now, tell me about Barbados."

"Go ahead Doyle, Robert's only heard it four times and I was there."

"OK, well you know the new Hawker-Siddley 748 TDM bought recently?"

"Yeah, I read about it in the company news, sounds like a nice old plane. You boys get to check it out?"

"Yeah, Ole and I got assigned to pick the plane up in San Juan and fly a load of live pigs to Barbados. And I hate barnyard animals unless they are grilled well done, you know, but Ole is an old farm boy, so I'm thinking this will work out, and we get a night in Barbados."

"Don't tell me, let me guess, you guys went to the Silvery Nipple Saloon just outside the airport in Bridgetown?"

"Our Home-Away-From-Home! That was our target for sure. Those girls just like me."

"Doyle, they like any idiot who will part with their money buying them expensive, watered down drinks."

"Oh no, we got a thing going, I tell ya, its real."

"Just go on with the story."

Nick leveled off at 4500 feet and trimmed the aircraft for cruise, settling back into his seat. He tuned the St. Thomas VOR in Nav1 and San Juan VOR in Nav 2.

"Right. So we get to the dispatch office and the pig truck is already there and loading. The pigs are in small crates, looks safe enough, I thought. Just got to put up with the pig poop and smell, but the airplane had a new air conditioner system and that would help. So off we go, nice new shiny old airplane, the 748 was sweet to fly, you got to get some time in her, Nick. She just lifts off the runway as pretty as you please, gentle as those girls at the Slivery Nipple, I tell you."

"Get back to the story. Does ATC ever get frustrated with you, Doyle?"

"I'm sure I don't care if they do, Nick. OK, so we are level at 16,000 feet and got a two hour cruise ahead of us, so being pilot in command I did the only proper thing, I took a nap and left the ship in Ole's hands. Those twin Rolls Royce Dart engines purr like kittens at cruise, put me right out."

They crossed over the top of St Thomas, giving them about 75 miles to San Juan. Nick tuned San Juan Approach to get ready to enter their airspace in a few minutes.

"I get woke up by the airplane getting hit by bad turbulence and Ole is fighting to keep her level. The turbulence quits but the airplane still feels like it is shifting all over the place, kind of squishy, you know. The back end just didn't feel right, so I send Ole back to check on the cargo. He isn't gone 30 seconds when he's back in the cockpit screaming at me about loose pigs."

"Loose pigs? The pigs got loose?"

"Yeah, when we hit the turbulence, the crates broke loose from their straps and the crates started smashing together. The pigs went into a panic and started running in circles around the cargo bay in all that rubble. It was throwing the CG all over the place making the aircraft wildly unstable. I thought it would take us down, so I told Ole to go get those pigs still. He disappears back into the cargo hold again while I try to hold this flying stampede in the air. In a few minutes he's back, plops down in the seat and says he can't do a damn thing with all those pigs."

"They were everywhere Nick, and pig poop too, big, big mess, the whole thing. Yeah, I grew up on a farm, but I have never in my life faced such a mess, it freaked me out completely."

"He just sat there staring at me with a defeated look. The whole time I can barely keep the aircraft upright, those damn pigs running back and forth back. I knew it was time for action, so I told Ole to hold the airplane and I'll take care of them. He takes the yoke and I go digging into my flight bag."

"And out he comes with big .44 automatic, Dirty Harry would have been proud, Nick, but I was horrified he was going to shoot them. And our customers were expecting LIVE pigs in Barbados."

"What the hell else did you expect, Ole, I don't know what to do with wild pigs, and they were going to take us down, with NO WAY we could land with them running around the cargo area. About then Ole develops some additional backbone and decides maybe he will try one more time, so I holster my piece."

"Some great idea. We had a lot more pigs than he had bullets anyway. So I get back up and head back to face the pigs. There is now twice the mess back there. I think, what would grandpa do? Tie them up! But with what? Cargo straps!"

"So you tied the pigs with cargo straps, how did you do that?"

"Guess what I learned, cargo straps make poor rope, but I managed to get a loop around them, one by one, then when I had two of them looped up in one strap, I snapped them to the cleats on the deck on two sides then pulled the take up spool until they were as tight as my 225 pounds could pull them. Took about thirty minutes but I soon had the entire pig population in canvas lockdown."

"I could feel the airplane easing up on the handling from the front. It was a God-awful long time until Ole came back up and told me what he was doing, but the flying was getting easier and I knew whatever he was doing it was working."

"When we landed I got my first look at our cargo. Talk about pigs-in-a-poke. The shipper wasn't too happy either; he was worried we might have stressed his poor pigs out and made their meat tougher. I was just happy he got live pigs and we got us and the airplane home without further incident."

"And we made our date at the Silvery Nipple, soothing our nerves with some fine margaritas. And Maria and Carmella too, of course."

Doyle and Ole smiled broadly at one another.

"San Juan Approach, Tradewinds 016, Cessna 185 Float, 4500 feet, request to enter the San Juan Class Bravo, destination San Juan Harbor."

"What about the mess in the cargo hold, how did you guys get it cleaned out?"

"Tradewinds 016, San Juan altimeter 29.99, squawk 0322 and ident."

"0322, ident, Tradewinds 016."

"Tradewinds 016 radar contact, you are cleared to enter the San Juan Class Bravo, continue present heading and altitude."

"Tradewinds 016, present heading and altitude, roger."

"Well, let's just say the adventure continued. The dispatcher would not take the airplane back until it was cleaned, so Ole taxied over to the wash rack, I drove out and grabbed a couple of six-packs and some industrial strength cleaners and we scrubbed the airplane from top to bottom, inside and out. Took four more hours and both six-packs, but we had it like new, no smell."

"No smell?"

"OK, a different smell, a mixture of Clorox and bleach took care of everything in the cargo hold."

"You boys find breathing difficult while you applied this concoction? That mixture produces chlorine gas is why I ask."

"See Ole, I told you that stuff wasn't good for us. Ole got one of those old timey pump fire extinguishers and loaded it with this stuff, he said he would squirt it around the cargo area, then we would squeegee the whole mess out the cargo door and I could come behind him and hit it with mop. By the time I came through with the mop there was this white haze hanging from the ceiling to about waist high, took my breath away completely. We had to wait an hour for the toxic mess to clear before we could finish cleaning up."

"Well, it worked, didn't it? Yes, it did, the old farm remedies always work."

"Worked, perhaps, you guys are lucky you didn't gas yourselves to death."

Doyle and Ole looked at one another then looked at Robert and broke out laughing.

"Shoot Nick, just another day in TDM you know. It wasn't anything one of Sam's margaritas wouldn't act as an antidote for, so we went and had a few after."

Now Nick was switched to San Juan Approach who dropped them to 2000 feet and lined them up to the northwest of the harbor for the final approach. San Cristóbal and San Felipe del Morro, the fortifications built by the Spanish in starting in 1538 to protect the harbor, appeared off the left wing as they set up for their approach. They were cleared for a visual landing.

He set the power and flaps for the smooth water in San Juan harbor. The final controller vectored them so that their approach path would place them within a short water taxi of the new Tradewinds Domestic Seaplanes terminal in Antigua San Juan, the old harbor. Off on the left side of the harbor south of El Morro Nick caught his first glimpse of the Tradewinds Domestic Seaplane home base along the piers.

The aircraft touched down on the water and mushed into the water as it quickly lost speed. Nick dropped the rudder into the water then turned hard left to line up with the TDS dock. The headquarters are had three hangers and three

piers built around a slip along the northern harbor area, southeast of the old fort.

"Wow, that is a nice facility, Nick. Where's your office?"

"Ole, I'm a pilot, I don't have an office."

"No, I'll bet you dinner you have an office now. Chief pilots get an office."

"Yeah Nick, I think he's right, you gonna show us your office? said Doyle"

"You guys are full of it, there is no office. And if I had one, you think I'd tell you? It would be filled with TDM bums in no time. Nick's Empty Arms Hotel and TDM Flop House, that's what it would become."

"Nick, I'm hurt," said Robert, "with the fine pay we get at TDM, we wouldn't need your office more than three of four times a year, each, ole buddy."

Ole spoke up, "I hear there is a crew bunk lodge there, for transient pilots to flop. I don't know any pilots more transient than us, do you guys?"

"Nope, I think it must be for us, then," said Doyle.

Nick flipped the radio over to the TDS frequency he had been given in the note Johnny left for him at the hotel.

"Tradewinds Seaplane San Juan, Tradewinds 016."

"Tradewinds 016, go ahead."

"Roger, this is Nick Collins in a 185, where do you want me to park it?"

"Good evening, Mr. Collins, we've been expecting you. Please water taxi into the slip and dock at the maintenance pier, last one on your left. We'll send a cart to pick you up."

"Roger, and be advised I have three other company pilots with me."

"Copy, we can accommodate them too, sir."

"Mr. Collins?" said Doyle, smiling broadly back at Ole and Robert.

"And we can be accommodated, SIR!" said Robert.

"We are liking your new job already, Nick."

"Ole, you guys keep your traps shut, OK? Let me figure out what is going on without you guys confusing everything."

"No problem, we can be real good, you'll see. Boys, let's keep it down and see what's up here. I smell opportunity!"

"I doubt you smell squat Doyle, after the gassing you gave yourself."

Nick slowed as they entered the TDS slip. He saw the last of three piers on the left with a flagman standing at the front edge looking at them, then lifting his flag. The 185 slid along slowly until they were about forty feet from the pier Nick cut the engine and they coasted the rest of the way. Doyle climbed out on the right pontoon and caught the line thrown to him by the flagman and pulled the aircraft to the pier, tying it snugly to the edge of the pier. The men climbed out of the aircraft and on to the pier.

"Ah yes, I'm going to like this," Doyle said, throwing his arm around Ole's shoulders.

A trim young woman in a yellow sports shirt with a TDS Trident logo and blue jeans approached them. "Mr. Collins?"

"Nick, please call me Nick."

"Hi Mr. Coll..., uh, Nick, I am Karen, the Operations Duty Officer tonight, welcome to Tradewinds Domestic Seaplane Service, sir, and right this way." She motioned to a six-seat electric golf cart.

"Robert Trahan, ma'am, I fly for TDM, and these are my buddies Ole and Doyle, also famous TDM pilots, you've probably heard of us, the Five Commandments? We are going out on the town tonight and would love to have you join us, right boys?"

She looked annoyed with Robert's advance and lifted her left hand, twirling a wedding band around her finger with her thumb.

"Sorry, Robert is it? This girl is taken. But I'm sure with that approach you will have great luck in the bars tonight, and I would only get in the way."

"Please excuse Robert, Karen, he doesn't get off the island much. We just need a lift over to the big airport where we have rooms reserved at the TCA hotel there."

"Well, Mr. Issacs told me to put you up in the executive suite tonight, and we have bunks for your friends as well if they want to stay here. We have a nice new facility."

"Well great, you guys want to just stay here tonight Doyle?"

"Are you kidding, we'd love to!"

They hopped into the cart, driven by Karen and Nick in the front seat next to her. They drove off the pier using a ramp then around the other buildings. As they came down off the pier's ramp, Karen turned to Nick and pointed to a building behind the pier with two helipads in front of it.

"Your office is over there, I can take you there after we drop off these guys at the crew bunkhouse and then you at the exec suite."

"Great, I have an office."

"I told you!" said Ole from the back of the cart.

She pulled up in front of a single story building and motioned to Ole.

"This is the crew bunkhouse. It has ten individual rooms, each pair share a full bathroom, and all are connected to a common living area with TV and a foosball table, a small kitchen and an office area with a computer, complete with internet connection and a great Flight Simulator 2002 set up with yoke and pedals. Why don't you boys make yourselves at home and check it out while I get Nick settled. We'll be back in about thirty or forty minutes."

Ole's foot had barely left the cart when she stepped on the gas and the two of them sped away. She weaved back behind the first row of buildings to a small cluster of three bungalows surrounding a small goldfish pond. They came to a quick stop in front of one of them, Karen hopping out even as the cart still slid to a stop.

"This will be your room for a while I guess. Johnny said you'd be here for a while, so make yourself at home."

She opened the door and turned to hand him the key.

"Throw your bags in here and then I'll take you over to the Head Shed. I'll show you your office and where to be tomorrow at 0800 for your first meetings."

"Meetings? Ugh!"

"I understand. I'll wait here while you throw your bags down."

Nick saw the room had a small sitting area with a TV, couch and arm chair. A small kitchenette was visible as a doorway into a bedroom. He dropped his bags near the door, closed and locked the door, then got back into the cart.

Off they went back toward the pier. Karen pulled the cart to a stop in a parking spot in front of a two-story building with a TDS sign out front to the left of the door. A US Coast Guard sign was on the right side of the doorway.

"We share this building with a small Coast Guard outfit called HITRON. They chase dope smugglers around in this area, nice bunch of guys. We do maintenance work on their helicopters too. They fly MH-68 Makos, armed to the teeth and fast. Follow me upstairs."

They went upstairs. She pointed to a hallway running next to the stairway.

"Along this area is the administration offices, sales, accounts receivable and payable, payroll and personnel. You, Johnny, and Kurt Gross, the head of maintenance, have offices up here on the second floor. Johnny's assistant has an office here too, and the secretary you all share, Jeanie Riccotti."

They came to the top of the stairs.

"Down that hallway is a conference room, that is your first meeting location tomorrow, 0800 sharp, and you better be sharp. Johnny asked that you wear a tie. The next room is your chart room, where we plan routes. Your office is over here." She pointed to a door with a plaque that read Chief Pilot mounted on it.

Nick followed her into a small office with a large wooden desk and leather chair tucked under it. On the desk sat a telephone, a small desk lamp, and a pencil holder with a brass plate attached to it that said Nick Collins in large black letters. A small long table sat behind the chair looking out of the window with a nice view of the harbor. A computer and printer sat on the long table. Three smaller armchairs sat in front of the desk for visitors, and a small bookshelf and a worktable were pushed up against opposite walls, with a chart case mounted next to the table. Framed pictures of various seaplane prints were hanging on the walls, and one large map of the Caribbean took up one wall by itself.

"Wow, this is a bit overwhelming, I haven't had an office in many years. I think it was one of the things I was running from when I got here the first time."

"Well, I hope you like it, Nick. I am looking forward to working with you and want you to know that if you need anything just let me know. I am working on my commercial license now then I want to start flying for you, I already have a seaplane certificate."

"That's great, Karen, I'm sure we'll be able to work something out with you. This is great. So now you are a dispatcher?"

"Operations officer, I run the show, pier, maintenance hangers, and warehouse. I have the evening shift, 3 p.m. to closing at 10 p.m. You can start moving your stuff into here tomorrow, after the grand opening."

"Hmm, well, I don't have any stuff right now, but thanks. Where did you get your seaplane experience?"

"My dad owns a fishing fleet in Naples, Florida, and I used to do fish spotting for him. With a seaplane I could

land, grab lunch with the boat crews and save myself the long flight back for gas and grub."

"Great. Well, I better go find my friends."

"OK, let's go," she said as she snapped the office lights off and turned down the hallway toward the stairs.

They hopped back into the cart and sped back towards to crew bunkhouse. The three of them were sitting outside on a pair of wooden benches when they pulled up.

"Nick, this place is great. A private room, a stocked kitchen, cable TV, computer, phone. I may have to switch to this seaplane business if this is how the pilot's live."

"I hate to burst your bubble," Karen said, "but most of the other bunkhouses aren't quite as nicely apportioned like these, most are just a bunk and a shower, little else. And Nick is the first TDM pilot Johnny has brought over, all the rest came from outside the company, even me."

"And what's up with that, Nick? Why do you think Johnny did that?"

"I have no idea, but if I figure it out you'll be the first know, Robert."

"Gentlemen, I have to get back to work now. If you require anything else I will be on duty until 10 p.m., please drop by the operations shack and let me know."

"Thanks for everything, I guess I'll be seeing you later, Karen."

"Yes, sir, Nick, I hope you will." Karen turned on her heels and walked to the cart then sped away into the late evening light.

"She'll be seeing you later?!?!? She flashes me her ring, then tell Nick she hopes she see him later."

"She's a pilot, schmoozing for a flying job. Get your mind out of the gutter, Robert."

Ole laughed out load, "The gutter would be an elevation for him. Hey, I'm hungry and thirsty, let's go find some fun."

The group walked out of the TDS area and strolled down the narrow street leading to the old city's entertainment district. This part of the town had a higher crime rate than the rest of the city, which fit the men's style a lot better than the foo-foo fern bars in the main city. Walking along the wharfs they came to a likely candidate for dinner and drink, a medium sized bar called The Pilot House, recommended by Karen in the operations office. Robert led them into the bar and located a table. As they were sitting a waitress flew up to their table.

"Buenos Noches, seniors, mi llama Olivia. Cerveza?"

"Yeah, we'd love a cold beer, and a menu please."

"Four beers and menus, be right back."

Nick looked around the bar for the first time. It had a large wooden bar at the back of the room with about twenty or so round tables, each with three or four chairs parked under them. Behind the bar was a huge mirror with a painted golden frame around it and two men past 60 behind the bar, one talking to two sailors perched on stools and the other running a mop. Old photographs of sailing men and ships were on the walls, along with ship's wheels, bells, nets, and just about any other junk that might stay attached to the wall. The ceiling was covered with tired, stained acoustical tiles and fluorescent light fixtures currently off to create the special ambiance of the neon and black lights.

The bar itself was less than half full; most of the patrons appear to be seamen from the docks, not a tourist in sight. One table had five men wearing Brazilian Navy uniforms, another had three men wearing US Navy whites, a table with three men and two women were playing cards at a back table, the rest were just ordinary merchantmen from the many ships that dock in San Juan harbor sitting at the bar drinking and talking. Olivia returned with their beers and menus, distributed them and went to check on her other tables.

The men chose fish for dinner and Ole bought a round of rum to celebrate Nick's new job. Olivia kept their beer glasses full like the pro she was, and even talked them into another round of rum shots. A TDM pilot and his money are easily parted. Doyle got up.

"Nice meal, nice place, walking distance from the TDS area." He climbed onto his chair and cleared his throat loudly.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I do declare this to be a fine establishment and worthy of patronage by the many fine pilots of Tradewinds Domestic Mail and Seaplane Service."

The bar patrons had stopped whatever they were doing and stared at Doyle. He raised his glass over his head.

"Won't you join me in a toast to the new semi-official TDM drinking hole!"

One or two tables raised their glasses, most just went back to what they were doing before the drunk on the chair interrupted them.

"Did you say you guys are with the new seaplane outfit north of here? Sorry, Daniel Batista, I'm a local businessman."

The short stocky man held his hand out to Doyle.

"Well, actually we fly for the hard landing part of the outfit, TDM. Nick over here is the new Chief Pilot for the seaplane service, though."

"Ah, hello Nick, Chief Pilot, that's great, glad to meet you. Can I buy you guys a beer?"

Ole pushed through to shake his hand. "You can always buy us a beer, my friend."

"Great, Olivia, por favor, cinco cervezas." He dragged a chair from the next table and sat down.

"So you guys are just getting started, huh? I had heard a new seaplane business was starting, but didn't notice much until those hangers started going up. Where are you guys going to fly?"

"To tell you the truth, I don't start work until tomorrow, so I don't know a lot yet about the details of the operation. Will you be looking for seaplane service for your business?"

"Oh, I don't know, I don't do a lot of traveling myself, and most of my product comes in on ships, but who knows."

"I see. Any idea the kinds of airplanes you will be using?"

"I don't know for sure, but we'll likely use single props like Cessna 185's, 206's, Caravans and the like for the shorter hauls and between islands. We'll have some twin props, including a new CL415 turboprop, I hear. The twin props will be used for heavier cargo on short hauls."

"Ah, nice, it sounds good, I guess."

"Do you know airplanes."

"No, sorry. So you will be doing shuttle services or government contracts?"

"Sure, we'll haul freight and people. Don't know about government contracts. We have several we fly in TDM, I don't know why not in TDS, if there's a buck to be made."

"Yes, I see."

"What sort of business are you in, Daniel?"

Daniel's smile dropped a bit, "You should be careful asking that question in places like this, senior, not everyone likes to talk about that, if you know what I mean." Then he broke into a broad smile. "I import consumer electronics; you know, Walkmans, CD players, and the like, all legit, of course. I have a small office and warehouse not far from here."

"Sorry, didn't mean to push, just was interested. I was going to ask if you do wholesale or retail, but you don't have to answer."

"Wholesale, I'm just a middleman, but it pays the rent." Daniel rose from his seat. "Well gentlemen, it was nice meeting you. Welcome to San Juan and I hope you enjoy your stay, however long that is."

Ole raised his glass, "Thanks for the beer Daniel, stop by tomorrow, we're here all week."

"OK, good night, gentlemen," he said as he walked through the door.

"Nice guy," said Robert

"Lots of nice people here," said Ole

"Nick, you got to get us on here, I can fly seaplanes with the best of them, you know that. I want a piece of this action!"

"Doyle, I have no idea what the hiring is about, you'll just have to wait."

The four men ordered another round; Nick announcing it would be his last.

"Not me," said Doyle, "I'll be the last man standing tonight!"

"I don't think so," said Ole, "I can out-drink, out-fight, out-romance, and out-class any two men here."

Robert jumped up from his seat, spread his arms out to his side and began to 'fly around the table.

"I'm the baddest pilot in the Caribbean and can out-do Ole on all that and out-fly him too. C'mon, big boy, let's dogfight."

Ole jumped up from his seat, assumed a similar arm position, sweeping his back a bit more, for more speed, he said, and circled the other way around the table. They would come together and bang their chests together, then bounce off and set up for another pass. Nick and Doyle laughed at the two of them, oblivious to the six men who had just entered the bar, looking right at them.

"What the hell is this?" asked the large man standing in the front of the bunch. "What sort of pansies are you bunch? Hey, mates, looks like a bunch of pansy Tradewinds pilots to me"

Ole and Robert stopped and stared at the two men, Doyle clinched his fists and started to confront them, but Nick grabbed his shoulder and pushed him back in his chair, then turned to the man. He could not help but notice that not

one of this man's friends behind him could be regarded as small.

"Hey, we're just having some fun here, and we were here first. Why don't you boys go have a drink and relax."

"I'll relax after you apologize of acting like idiots in my drinking hole, not before. And if I don't get it I'll wipe the floor with the bunch of you."

Nick rose out of his chair and drew himself up as big as he could. "Now I don't know exactly what you're riled up about. We weren't hurting anyone and if we're bothering someone all they have to do is ask and we can deal with it. But I can't deal with pushy people. I like nice, polite people, but to be honest, I've been running short of those lately so my patience is just about out. So we're sorry if what we're doing is bugging you, now get on with whatever you came here to do, OK?"

A voice from behind the big man rang out, "To hell with that, let's take them!"

At once the group of six lunged at the pilots. Nick grabbed the first spokesman by his leather jacket and swept his legs, knocking him to the floor. He saw Doyle take two men, spinning one into a wall before taking a punch from the second and reeling off toward the bar. Nick saw the man below him struggling to get up and he dropped his knee into his lower chest, taking the wind out of the man. He felt himself being dragged off to the floor from behind, so he back rolled out of the grip and landed on his feet, spinning around with his foot high, catching the assailant right across the chin where he slumped to the floor. He caught the flying chair inbound toward his head out of the corner of his eye and hit the floor as it sailed overhead. As he stood up he saw Ole with one attacker's head locked in his left arm as he rammed the man's head into the wall, knocking him out cold. Nick smiled then frowned as another man smashed a chair over Ole's head, his knees buckled and he fell to the floor. Nick ran over and caught the man along the left jaw in a crushing fist that sent the man sprawling into a corner.

Nick heard a grunt behind him and dropped on one knee as he spun around to confront the next attacker. The man had the pickle jar from the bar over his head, aiming at Nick's head. Nick shot off the floor and took the man down at the knees, then rolled over and lined up a right fist, delivering it to the center of the man's nose, blood spurting out of the nose. The man grabbed his face and ran from the bar. Nick looked up and saw Ole still out, as was Robert, and Doyle was being held by one guy while the other kidney punched him. Nick took four large strides and peeled the punching man off, spinning him around and punching his jaw, then grabbed his shirt to hold him up for another punch, then another, until Nick was sure the man was not getting back up anytime soon. He dropped him, then felt his head explode as something heavy and wooden crashed over his head and he fell to the floor. It took all his concentration to start rolling once he hit the floor, and good thing as he felt the heavy wooden object, a chair as it turned out, crashed to the floor next to him where he had fallen.

Nick squinted to see the large man now standing over him. The man reached down and grabbed Nick by the front of his shirt and lifted him off the floor. Nick saw the fist draw back and tried to brace himself for the hit. The wait seemed forever, then he felt the man's grip release him, and his knee struggled then Nick fell to one knee. Nick strained to focus his eyes to find the attacker, locating him lying on the ground. His gaze moved up a bit to see a

pair of black sneakers standing just in the shadow. The sneakers stepped forward.

"Here you are Nick, they said I could find you here."

It was Amanda! Nick couldn't believe his eyes. No, must be the rap on the noggin, making him delusional.

"Amanda?"

"Of course, silly."

"Amanda! What the hell are you doing here?"

"I'm a journalist, Nick, hot on a story," she laughed.

"No, I mean what are you doing HERE. Not that I'm not glad to see you, just a bit surprised."

"No time for that now. Let's get your friends and get out of here before those guys start waking up."

"Right, out of here. We are staying not far from here, at a company set up."

"Yes, I know, Karen told me I'd find you here."

Nick had more questions than answers at the moment, and wanted to ask more. Then he reached out and grabbed Amanda into a hug with both arms.

"I am glad to see you."

"I'm glad to see you too, now let's get out of here."

Nick wanted to hold the hug for a long time, she felt good and smelled good, but there was wisdom in her words, so they helped Ole, Robert, and Doyle to their feet and staggered out the door and toward the TDS compound.

They got back to the bunkhouse and made sure each man was secure and Amanda tended to their wounds before she said goodnight and walked with Nick over to his suite. Nick fumbled with the keys, got the door opened and they walked inside, Nick sitting in the armchair while Amanda went to get a clean cloth and water.

"Amanda, why are you here, and you didn't let me know or anything. I have thought about you a lot. A lonely flyer has time for those things."

"I got your letters, they were great. I heard there was a new seaplane service opening up and after my visit with you and Aaron I talked to a couple of magazines and got them to finance the trip. I thought I would drop in on you

during the trip and say hello."

"You're writing about TDS? Amanda, I'm the chief pilot, just got the job. In fact, tomorrow is my first day."

"Are you going to be at the press conference at 11 a.m.?"

"I don't know anything about it."

"Well, I will be there, of course. I have also managed to get an interview with a couple of your management, including Andre Diess! I am thrilled!"

She finished wiping his face and placed a bandaide over a small cut on his right chin.

"There you go, tiger, that should hold you. I guess I better get. You should maybe keep the door locked, just to be sure."

"You can stay here if you want," he said hopefully, then caught himself feeling very bold, beyond his comfort level.

"There is plenty of room, the sofa folds out and I can sleep there if you would be more comfortable."

"Nick Collins, the offer is tempting, but I don't think so. If things work out for us, then there will come a night when I will stay, we're just not there yet, big fella. But let's keep working on it, OK?"

He managed a weak, "OK."

"I'll show myself out. Good night Nick, and I'll look you up after the press conference and maybe we can have dinner. In a quieter spot than tonight, perhaps."

He stood. "Good night." The door closed.

Nick felt the last of his energy drain out of his body and he slumped back down into the chair. Wow, Amanda was back in his life. He decided that if he weren't so sore from the fight he would be enjoying this a lot more. How the hell did they get into that fight anyway. Why did those guys get so upset about Robert and Ole's antics? And what about the comment about Tradewinds pilots, they never mentioned they were Tradewinds pilots, how did that get into the deal? And Amanda, when did she come in and did she take out that last man standing?

Too many questions, they would have to wait. Nick gathered his strength one more time, walked to the bed and set the alarm for 0630 before he collapsed on the bed and fell fast asleep.

Amanda walked to her rental car and started the engine. That was close. She wondered how much Nick might have seen. Damn, she thought, I've got to really watch it, he makes my head dizzy, and I don't think straight. If she didn't

know better, she'd think she was falling in love with this pilot.

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July August 2002

ISLAND BREEZES

A newsletter for the employees of Tradewind Caribbean Airlines



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The Nest

Artificial Seabirds and New Seaplane Bases By Kyle Ramsey

In a MSFS2002 first, our own Terry Tyler (Seabird#2) has begun to populate our seaplane bases with Lee Swordy's AI tools! In fact, Terry has duplicated the current TDS schedule in using our scenery. We aren't aware of anyone else who has achieved this level of realism for AI seaplanes.

To date, Terry has added 26 new airport locations in the NW Caribbean and Florida and nine in Hispaniola aligned to our scenery. He also has built 42 TDS flight plans, adding to the over 23,000 AI traffic movements available currently in MSFS2002. And, if this development isn't enough, Terry says he is still trying to get helicopters to work too. That would be yet another first. Terry says they can't really fly in real life (mass hypnosis, he claims) and they are a real challenge to get to fly virtually as well.

Check the TDS web page, get Terry's AI files, grab a seat and a tall margarita at your favorite FBO and watch the AI seabirds fly, then drop Terry a quick line to tell him how much you enjoy the new toy!

TDS Hispaniola Opens

Also new this month we open the island of Hispaniola with seaplane bases around this beautiful island. There are routes built by TDS Navigator-Pilot Will Gasser which connect Santo Domingo and Port-au-Prince to the main station in San Juan with our bigger seaplanes. Will has also provided trips though the island on short hops in the

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smaller props to several small support bases. There is also a seaplane base in a Dominican Republic mountain valley that will have you pulling for altitude coming off the coast. The scenery, built by this reporter, also includes a contract support mission flight to a research vessel 150 miles south of Santo Domingo, providing an open ocean landing for the more experienced pilots.

We also landed government contracts from both Haiti and Dominican Republic to supply a couple of their military surveillance bases. Funny thing is, we are contracted to both sides, supporting bases that watch each other! Maybe we can offer a new service, TDS pilots and a digital camera for pennies. Oh, and watch out for the livestock; we have landed a contract with some agriculture firms, so add a cattle prod to your flight bag. And, like the first scenery set Kyle did (TDS_PR), all locations have helipads for the rotorheads among you.

Be sure to visit the TDS web page and get the latest scenery and routes. The scenery is compatible with Toni Agramont's VFR scenery and Orlando Sotomeyer's terrain mesh for a glorious VFR flying experience. We are off to add to Orlando and Toni's scenery in Cuba and Jamaica next (will someone PLEASE make some mesh south of the BVI so we can go Down Island!).

TDS is open to all pilots currently within TCA, and those who want to join should contact either Larry "Seabear" Clark or Terry "I retired for this?" Tyler. Their email links can be found on the TDS web page. TDS,

Let's Get Wet!



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