



December 2002

ISLAND BREEZES

A newsletter for the employees of Tradewind Caribbean Airlines



Content

[Editorial](#)

[Inside TCA](#)

[Battle of the Airlines](#)

[FS Garmin Review](#)

[ATX Mango](#)

[Alternate Air](#)

[We have PIREPS](#)

[Caribbean Airline News](#)

Welcome to "Island Breezes" the Official TCA pilots newsletter. Here you can expect to find articles on real world Caribbean airline news, developments and events within Flight Simulator community as well as stories about the pilots and crew of Tradewind Caribbean Airlines and Tradewind Domestic Mail.

Happy Holidays

Contact

[Ken Malczynski](#)

(Editor)

[Rich Ellison](#)

(Assistant Editor & Webmaster)

[Kyle Ramsey](#)

(Author: Alt Air)

Terry Tyler
(Writer & Reviewer)

[*Download Previous Issues*](#)





December 2002

ISLAND

BREEZES

A newsletter for the employees of Tradewind Caribbean Airlines



Content

[Editorial](#)

[Inside TCA](#)

[Battle of the Airlines](#)

[FS Garmin Review](#)

[ATX Mango](#)

[Alternate Air](#)

[We have PIREPS](#)

[Caribbean Airline News](#)

Editorial

Contact

[Ken Malczynski](#)

(Editor)

[Rich Ellison](#)

(Assistant Editor & Webmaster)

[Kyle Ramsey](#)

(Author: Alt Air)

Terry Tyler

First off I'd like to take this time to send all the crew of TCA a very joyous Holiday Greetings from the crew at the Island Breezes.

Virtual Airline Allegiance:

Recently I came upon a post on the tradewind list of a pilot talking about another VA. After a few responses, he came back, almost apologizing for even thinking of joining another VA. This got me to wonder if other pilots think in the same way. For a fact, I have known many TCA pilots who have, and still fly for other VA's. It started for me when I was "moonlighting" for Lan Chile years ago. Since then I have been involved with a number of VA's. Some I quit. Some went defunct, and one I still fly for. The object of the game is to enjoy your flightsim experience. Me personally, would never leave TCA, only because of the great people I have become close to here. They are a great bunch of guys, and some have become really good personal friends. But I don't see it as some kind of betrayal if you fly for other airlines. My experience has shown me that this VA is totally unique, and you won't find another

(Writer & Reviewer)

Download Previous Issues

like it anywhere.

Next issue I'd like to post a "Letter to the Editor" column. If you have any thoughts or feelings about this topic, please drop me a line and I'd be glad to run it in the new column.

Ken Malczynski

Editor: Island Breezes



December 2002

A newsletter for the employees of Tradewind Caribbean Airlines



Content

[Editorial](#)

[Inside TCA](#)

[Battle of the Airlines](#)

[FS Garmin Review](#)

[ATX Mango](#)

[Alternate Air](#)

[We have PIREPS](#)

[Caribbean Airline News](#)

Inside TCA

Welcome Back Patrick Hanna!

Some words from Patrick Hanna of Tradewind Hellenic Airlines

Greetings All!!!!

Great news.. I am finally back online with the internet and have been able to update the THA site for the first time in months! I want to thank all of you for your patience while I moved my life to the other side of the world... everything here is going fantastic! I still am pinching myself.. :)

As for the latest news... As you are all probable aware.. Christian has been acting CEO of THA for the last several months.. He graciously agreed to slip into the spot when I became apparent to me that I would not be able to

Contact

Ken Malczynski

(Editor)

Rich Ellison

(Assistant Editor & Webmaster)

Kyle Ramsey

(Author: Alt Air)

Terry Tyler

(Writer & Reviewer)

Download Previous Issues

dedicate the time needed anymore to keep this division up to snuff. He has been doing a fantastic job and I am sure he will continue to do so. With Christian at the helm, THA is entering a new period which promises to be both exciting and fun! While I have been disconnected, I have not been sitting idly by.. :) I have updated the AI Traffic for THA to include all the flights for the domestic division of THA. Christian started this last spring and I have updated it to include all of the routes that THA flies. The only routes that are not included at this time are the flights to the Americas as I just completed that section today. Both the updated America's flight and the AI Traffic files can be downloaded from the site. I will be creating the THA Air Cargo routes shortly...

Also, with the new GMAX aircraft becoming more and more common, I thought that it is time to add an example of one to the THA fleet. There are lots to choose from and I will leave it up to you to decide what aircraft you wish to have added to the fleet. Fill out the selection box on the Olive Branch section of the site and we will discuss the options here.

Christian, as I have said, I have been able to get hooked up with homestead from here in Australia.. I will be able to update the rosters but will need you to send me the excel files from July on so that the page can be updated.. Thanks to you and Rich for the work that you have done keeping those updated!

Lastly.. for those of you that want to see just how badly I have it here... click on the link below! :)

<http://www.patrickhanna.homestead.com/mooloolaba.html>

Cheers!!!!

Talk to you soon



TCA
ISLAND



December 2002

BREEZES

A newsletter for the employees of Tradewind Caribbean Airlines



Content

[Editorial](#)

[Inside TCA](#)

[Battle of the Airlines](#)

[FS Garmin Review](#)

[ATX Mango](#)

[Alternate Air](#)

[We have PIREPS](#)

[Caribbean Airline News](#)

TCA Takes on Battle of the Airlines!

By Kyle Ramsey



Contact

Ken Malczynski

(Editor)

Rich Ellison

(Assistant Editor & Webmaster)

Kyle Ramsey

(Author: Alt Air)

Terry Tyler

(Writer & Reviewer)

Download Previous Issues

This year's Battle of the Airlines race claims to go where no FS2002 aircraft has gone before; to the moon. The BOTA 2003 race is titled "Mission Moon" and claims to have the last stages of this race flown in a space shuttle to the ISS and then the moon.

Now to some this might be shocking, but anyone who flew last year's race in the Far East are just shaking their heads and taking in a deep breath. That Ray, he's been at it again.

Last year's race had teams of pilots flying around the Far East in various airplanes, all provided by the BOTA crew. There were also sound and scenery files to round out the adventures. There was a new download for each stage, or leg, and one stage is flown each week. A piece of reporting software monitors the flight, penalizes you for breaking rules, the few of them there are (like don't taxi over 75 knots, please) and provides a coded report to be sent in each week. The team's total time was kept and, at the end of all eight stages, the winners were declared.

Awards were given for top VA's as well as top pilots. Last year's VA winner was SUR Air Systems Mexico Hub and the individual winner was Rodolfo Liva of Cardinal Airlines.

To give you an idea of what you might find in a BOTA race, take a look at last year's Scent of the Far East race, where pilots flew junk MD-80's that fell apart in mid air on one stage, a fast pusher prop with a carrier landing (no tailhooks here) at the end. One absurd stage had the pilots flying Beech D18S twin props to a point on Mt Everest at about 21,000 feet before racing back to the bottom.

It was very aggravating as well as very enjoyable.

This year, the fourth for BOTA, will have pilots flying around North America before taking to the space shuttle for some out of this world flying.

Your TCA is also putting together a team. The commitment requires you to be able to fly off line flights once a week for eight weeks with about a two-hour per flight time commit. You can fly it again to try for a better time score if you want, but you need to turn in one flight each week without fail.

If you are interested in this fun and exciting opportunity, contact the TCA BOTA Team Liaison, Mike Redman at email lightinf@sympatico.ca. He is putting together the TCA team and will act as communications pointman for BOTA. He will also be establishing a yahoo list so the TCA pilots can trade secrets between each other. There will be a preliminary stage released prior to the start of the race to let you get used to the software and to try out the features.

Check out the race information at:

<http://www.planetaviation.com/virtualairlines/battle/>



December 2002

ISLAND

BREEZES

A newsletter for the employees of Tradewind Caribbean Airlines



Content

[Editorial](#)

[Inside TCA](#)

[Battle of the Airlines](#)

[FS Garmin Review](#)

[ATX Mango](#)

[Alternate Air](#)

[We have PIREPS](#)

[Caribbean Airline News](#)

The FSGarmin 530

From SimSystems.com.au

I felt quite happy with FSFlightMax: until I saw the FSGarmin GNS530. I knew then I had to have it - and now I have, you'd have to prise it from my dead hands with a crowbar before I'll let it go.

Y'see, it's not just another gauge with fuzzy text and numerals that you stuff into the Panel somewhere, to lose it immediately in the clutter - it's a separate distinct panel of it's own. Unlike the FSFlightMax which you can re-size and relocate, the GNS530 is moveable - but not scaleable - at the moment. But due to this, the text on the numerous buttons and in the multiple windows is large, bold and easily readable at a glance. This is important to people like me, who are visually challenged shall we say!

It also comes with a "Trainer" - so that you can practice using it before leaping into the left-hand seat and wandering off into the blue, without a clue as to what you're doing!

Here's a picture of the Trainer:



Figure1

Control your impatience - you'll learn more about all the knobs and buttons shortly, for now just accept I've just taken off from KDEN and am following the railway track toward I-15.

This route is pre-planned, so there's little to do except follow the instructions which pop up in a message box (and can be closed/called up by clicking on the MSG button, bottom centre - or "center" if you speak other than the Queen's English). This is so that the operation procedures can be seen and understood without committing yourself to flight and any subsequent disasters!

Everything you see on the panel operates (with the exception of the "Volume" knob for Nav aids - and that's in the pipeline). Speed, Altitude and Lateral Navigation can be controlled via the three boxes below.

And so it should - this is a 100% accurate representation of the 'Real World' instrument produced by Garmin themselves, who (like Avidyne and FlightMax) have offered support and information which includes the 'Real World' Pilot's Operation Manuals for the instrument.

Now, let's take a look at the GNS530 in use. Let me say right from "Square One" that I'm still finding things buried inside the 530 that I never knew about, so this will only really be an overview, and certainly not a tutorial. First,

what do the buttons do?



1. Comms 'Flip-Flop' rocker switch
2. Power on/off
3. VOR/LOCALiser 'Flip-Flop' rocker switch
4. NAV Volume knob (currently non-operative).
5. Outer ring knob - Comms or VOR frequency units change
6. Inner knob - as above, but fractions change
7. NAV/GPS function button
8. OBS selector button
9. Message select button
10. FlightPlan selector button - two pages
11. VNAV selector - five pages
12. Procedures selector button - deals with selection of Approach/Arrival/Departure and more.....
13. Inner selector knob - multiple uses - text/numeric input, selection of menu items and more.....
14. Outer selector knob - As above, but coarse functions
15. "Enter / Activate" button (need I say more...?)
16. "Clear" button - rids screen/menu of unwanted item(s)

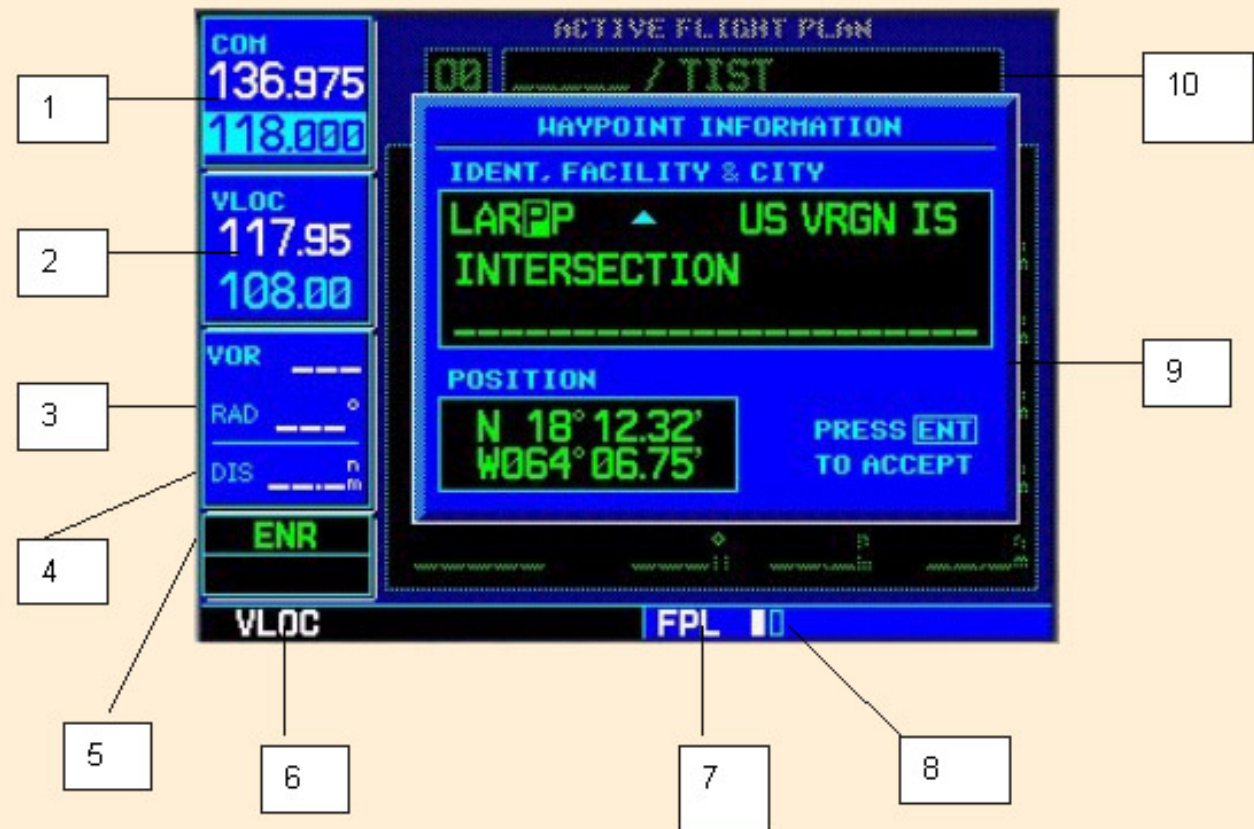
17. Menu Button (any questions?)

18. "Direct to" button - click this, set your destination (Waypoint, Intersection or Airport)

19. Zoom function flip-flop rocker - range from (IIRC) 500 nm to a few metres coverage.

20. Power on/off LED

Let's take a look at the screen next:



1. Comms frequencies - Primary and Stand-by
2. Nav frequencies - Primary and Stand-by
3. VOR name and radial
4. Distance to that VOR
5. Shows "En Route" status
6. Shows instrument has LNAV (VOR / LOCalizer) selected (in place of GPS)
7. Flightplan page(s) selected for input
8. Shows I'm on page 1 (white block).
9. Entry page for waypoint
10. (greyed out) - will show all waypoints entered for the current flightplan.

OK, Lecture Mode OFF.

What's it look like when it's all up and running?

I took a flight from St Maarten to Fort de France (TFFF) - approximately 2 hours flying using the TDS Grumman G111. And, to test out the GNS530's accuracy, I took the flight at night. I should add here that the GNS530 has as it's Nav databanks, the Jeppesen Nav data for the World, divided into 1. The Americas (including the Caribbean) and 2. International - meaning everything else. Of course, the Americas is far more detailed, but this too is being worked on by the guys at SimSystems.

So, off we go.....

Here I am, laying in my waypoints in Charlotte Amalie Harbour:

Contact

[Ken Malczynski](#)

(Editor)

[Rich Ellison](#)

(Assistant Editor & Webmaster)

[Kyle Ramsey](#)

(Author: Alt Air)

Terry Tyler

(Writer & Reviewer)

[Download Previous Issues](#)



Once all points laid in, it's into the evening sky...

(you can of course combine FSFlightMax and the GNS530 - FSFM's "Traffic Overlay" and Weather Radar make the perfect combination with the GNS530's Navigation screens). ...and we're on our way - just Shift+Left click the Flightplan button, and the GNS530 takes over all lateral navigation functions. (It's up to the Pilot to manage the vertical navigation segments...)



Right on course for LARPP, and about to leave Class D airspace.



Climbing for LARPP



Checking the Facilities a TFFP



Vertical Navigation Details



Approach Procedures Set up and on course for ANU



Approaching KAREX prior to the Autopilot turning right on to approach



Right on the nose!



Touchdown and Safe

Well, that's it - I hope the pictures said more about this instrument and the information it can display than my deathless prose ever could.

There have been some issues with the earlier versions, but the guys at SimSystems.com.au are usually on it before too much damage has been done --one very noticeable feature is that they take notice of what their users have to say and suggest, and implement changes very quickly indeed. All is not yet "Roses all the way" - starting up can be a little "character-building" at first until you've learned to treat things gently, but you'll soon settle into a routine that is most efficient - and the way this GNS530 augments your Pilotage is not to be missed!

If you're not daunted by a fairly steep learning curve at first, you really should consider testing this out - it works for IFR and VFR (you can even zoom in to follow roads/railtracks).

If you're not daunted by a fairly steep learning curve at first, you really should consider testing this out - it works for IFR and VFR (you can even zoom in to follow roads/railtracks).

I should mention that there is also a GNS430 version on offer - it has less bells and whistles, but it's from the same stable, so it too would be very much worth a look-see.

Terry Tyler
TDSS/TCA 5001



TCA ISLAND



December 2002

BREEZES

A newsletter for the employees of Tradewind Caribbean Airlines



Content

[Editorial](#)

[Inside TCA](#)

[Battle of the Airlines](#)

[FS Garmin Review](#)

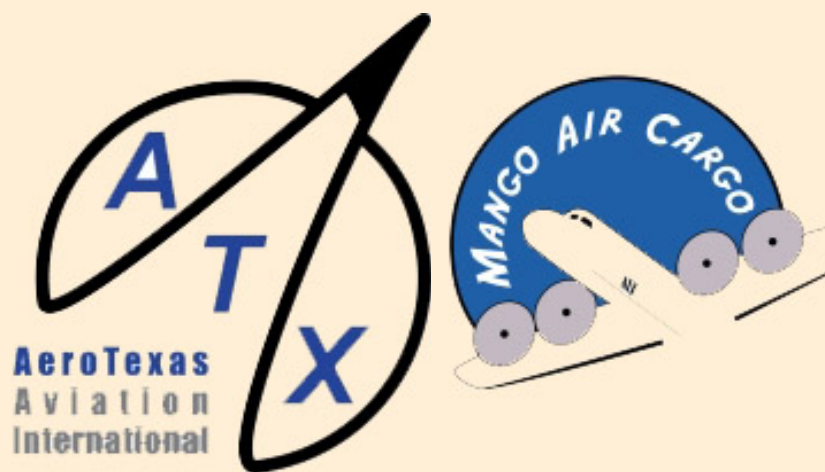
[ATX Mango](#)

[Alternate Air](#)

[We have PIREPS](#)

[Caribbean Airline News](#)

Lone Star Service to the World





Does A Cockpit Picture like This Make You Scream in Fear? Or Delight?

CAT 2 Heaven – Where Only the Best IFR Pilots Survive

In most Virtual Airlines, you will fly twenty or more flights before you get lucky enough to find a great low visibility approach that taxes your IFR Cat 2 skills to the limits. But this is Mango Air Cargo, where a landing like this is not only common; it is pretty much the norm. In fact, this approach into Shreveport is almost routine; we had a good $\frac{3}{4}$ mile that day and a 600-foot ceiling. Another flight into Midland, Texas required us to fly Yannick's great Falcon 50 panel, repainted for Mango Air Cargo, right down to the ground in zero visibility and OVC001. That will get your heart rate up, seeing the threshold disappear below and behind you, the first sign of a runway through the fog. Mango Air Cargo, Any Weather, Anytime, Anywhere.

Mango Air Cargo flights begin on the AeroTexas Aviation web site. AeroTexas is the parent airline for Mango, more about it later. A new Mango cargo assignment is produced every hour and posted on the web site. It provides information to depart a specific airport and proceed to the listed destination, almost always guaranteed to be under IFR conditions, sometimes improving, sometimes not. The cargo assignment also contains your cargo, an estimated time enroute, and a consignment code with a classification code. This is where Mango Air Cargo departs from most all VA's out there today. Your job, as a MAC pilot, is to choose the appropriate cargo aircraft type from a list including Yannick's Falcon 50, DC-10-30C, B727-200C, and a Dash-7 turboprop, all new FS2002 aircraft repainted by Tommy Wood, the Fleet Director. Then position at the departure airport, download the weather and preflight the aircraft. If you use FSMaintenance or Squawkbox, shut down your engines and start these programs now, then jump out of FS and start the Windows-based ATAVS program. You will enter your departure and arrival airport ICAO codes and select a cargo flight, which brings up another dialogue box where you paste in the consignment code from the cargo assignment. A recent flight from KVEL to KCOS (where, by the way, the METAR was KCOS 021554Z 00000KT 1/4SM FZFG SCT001 BKN060 M04/M06 A2999) had a code of E88768542, where the "E" is the classification designator and indicates how tight your time window is for this flight. The E stands for Express, which requires the pilot to land no more than 20 minutes early or no later than 10 minutes beyond the published ETE. The classifications have increasingly tighter time windows and include Standard, Priority, Express, Urgent, and Critical, the latter where you have plus or minus five minutes to make the time window or MAC doesn't get paid the premium for the flight.



Mango Air Cargo Boeing 727-200 Cargo Climbs Out Of The Overcast

Plan well, Super Pilot. After a few seconds of flight validation on ATAVS, you are released for the flight. The timer starts when you open the fuel valves. If you get behind the airplane you will have to burn extra gas to make it up, so monitor everything carefully. You get up to cruise then start the final planning for the arrival. An alternate airport is provided in the flight profile, but they are also usually not a whole lot better, but you need to be ready for a go around if things don't work out quite right, and in this weather they rarely do. The go around also cost you time and gas.

AeroTexas Aviation Validation System

Contact

[Ken Malczynski](#)

(Editor)

[Rich Ellison](#)

(Assistant Editor & Webmaster)

[Kyle Ramsey](#)

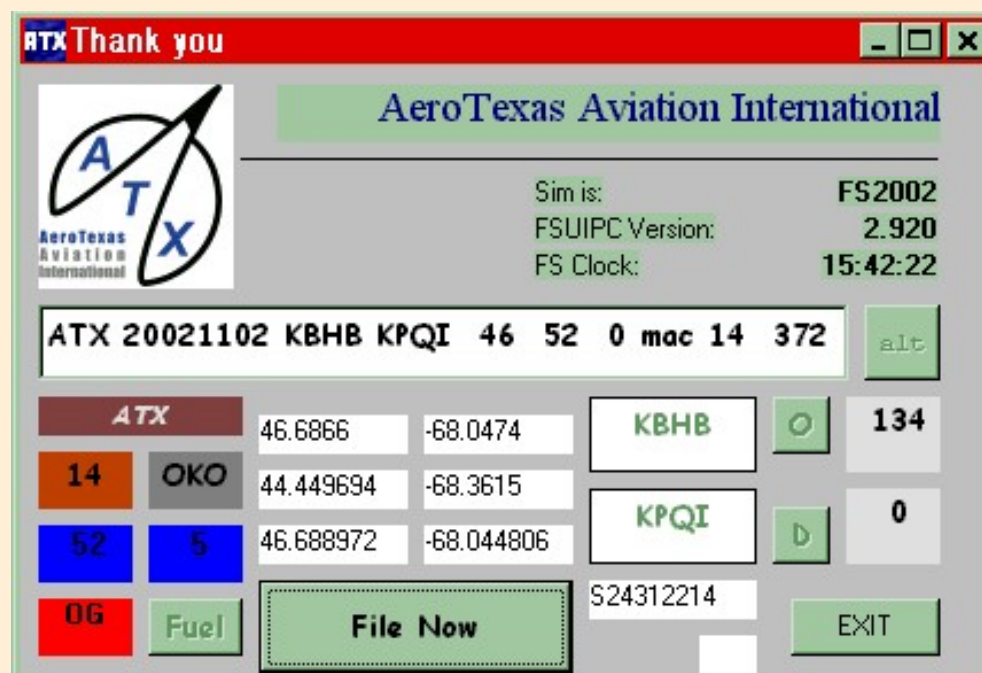
(Author: Alt Air)

Terry Tyler

(Writer & Reviewer)

[Download Previous Issues](#)

Garen Evans, the Founder and Chief Senior Partner of AeroTexas, has developed proprietary Windows software that both generates the cargo assignment and codes, but it also monitors the flights from fuel valves turned on to touch down at the destination. Values on your time enroute and fuel burn are included in a coded script provided to each pilot after each flight using the AeroTexas Aviation Validation Software, or ATAVS. The script is pasted into the PIREP page where it is decoded and your costs, revenue, flight time and on-time status are recorded and reported to you for feedback on your flight. This data is then updated on the master roster, usually within about an hour's time. If you fly well, with good discipline, and are able to plan ahead, you will learn to save money while you stay on time. If not, you may rack up the hours, but you won't make much money.



The ATAVS Program After A Successful Flight

When you look at the AeroTexas roster, every hour listed is 100% real. The ATAVS program detects slewing, pausing, and compressed time, so all filed flight plans have been verified by the program before they are accepted. The pilot also gets a breakdown of all the revenues and expenses for the flight, including taxes. And as noted before, it is compatible with flying either on line in multiplayer or just using FS2002's ATC and AI traffic. The ATAVS system is used for all levels of AeroTexas and Mango flights, from the first flight in Lone Star Turboprop Service to all domestic USA flights.

Pilot	atz35
Date-stamp	20021103
Day	Sunday
Departure Hour	8
Originating	KDEC
Destination	KOKC
Distance	492 nm
Time Enroute	1.75 hours
Avg Speed	281 knots
Fuel/Hour	2122 gph
Cargo Code	Urgent
Status	ON-TIME
Consignment	83493835
Cost/Hour	\$8187
Flight Pay	\$2036
Flight Bonus	\$307
Flight Credit	\$2344

REVENUE	
Passenger Revenue	0.00
Cargo Revenue	18593.63
On-Time Bonus	18253.00
TOTAL REVENUE:	34846.63
COSTS	
AIR CREW	
Wages	2343.55
Benefits and Pension	428.15
Payroll Tax	157.74
MAINTENANCE	
Parts	513.39
Labor	1328.94
GROUND SERVICE	
Landing Fees	653.74
Traffic Commissions	838.89
Communications	313.48
Gate Agents	1382.32
SALES	
Advertising and Promotions	250.12
Travel Agents and Reservations	0.00
FUEL	2829.98
ADMINISTRATION	2893.45
DEPRECIATION, AMORTIZATION	1102.92
PASSENGERS	
Food	0.00
Incidentals	0.00
TOTAL COST:	14326.68
NET	20519.95

ATAVS Results Decoded From The AeroTexas Web Site

AeroTexas Aviation International



New Pilots Start Here, In The Lone Star Local Service PC-12

MAC's parent company, and the route to a MAC captain's seat, is through AeroTexas Aviation International, a small Houston, Texas based VA with about two years in existence. New pilots sign up by taking the New Hire Checkride, a FS adventure file that grades a check ride and provides the verification string to send back through email to get on the ATA roster. A pilot should already have good flying experience (particularly FS2002) and some familiarity with Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) to pass the checkride. The checkride uses an adventure file derived from the ATAVS system that all pilots use at AeroTexas. It grades the checkrides, and gives the pilot a chance to see how the system works.

Once you are on the roster, you start flying turboprops, specifically a Pilatus PC-12, EMB-120, or ATR-72, all with custom paint and panels for AeroTexas. Here you will fly the dregs of Part 121 scheduled operations, short hops out and back from Houston to Austin, Dallas Love, Corpus Christi, College Station, and San Antonio. Here the new pilot collects 40 hours before he may take the checkride for Suprema Passenger Service, which flies contingency charters for the other airlines. These are flights chartered by other airlines to cover their overbooking and broken aircraft problems. This list of flights changes weekly and the route page provides ETE, flight plan, weather, and airport information for each flight. Flying the ERJ-135, B737-200, MD-90, and B757-200 passenger aircraft, the pilot gains a new tool in filling up his cabin using the ATAVS. Before each flight the pilot may elect to increase the discount rate of the ticket for that flight. He might do this due to the destination not being highly traveled or the hour of the day (ATAVS uses the real take off time on your PC, not FS time). After another 80 hours of flying passenger service, the pilot may apply for the CAT2 Checkride and, if you pass, you can begin flying the all-weather world of MAC.



AeroTexas' Boeing 757-200 On The Ramp At Shreveport On A Brighter Day Order of Avian

But that's not all AeroTexas has to offer for their pilots. For the all pilots there is 17 grade levels corresponding to the number of hours you log displayed on the roster. And for the most experienced, there is Order of Avian, a special award given in recognition of demonstrated higher navigation skills and aircraft operations for long overwater flights. The first step is the Master Navigator written test that will see if you understand the planning and calculations required to pilot large airliners over long flights. Passing this enables the pilot to fly internationally as well as taking the next step of Atlantic Elu. The Elu flight is flown from the USA to Europe using radio navigation and ded reckoning, with out the aid of GPS's or other modern electronic positioning instruments. If you pass this trial, then you may try for Pacific Elu, the same type of fight over the Pacific Ocean. So far seven ATA pilots have earned Order of Avian Awards; all have Master Navigator honors, two have Atlantic Elu, and one Pacific Elu, so far.

AeroTexas – Where Only The Best Come To Fly

As you can clearly see, AeroTexas does not strive to be the biggest VA, nor does it strive to collect the most hours. AeroTexas and MAC are designed for the serious virtual airline pilot, looking for the closest in real world airline operations. This is done by using only the best aircraft models, panels, and sound files, plus AeroTexas is the only airline that guarantee's each hour on the roster is authentically flown through the ATAVS windows software. Each flight produces a full revenue and expenses report for the pilot, including your hours and pay for the flight, based on number of passengers you entice on board with your discounting power or your on time status and superior ability to manage a complex aircraft and its systems.

If you think you are up to the AeroTexas challenge, then click over to the [ATX Website](#) and get the New Hire Checkride. We'll be waiting for you in the Mango Air Cargo Pilot's Shack with a nasty assignment, so get flying!



Mango Air Cargo DC-10-30C Descends Into the Overcast at Oklahoma City



December 2002

ISLAND

BREEZES

A newsletter for the employees of Tradewind Caribbean Airlines



Content

[Editorial](#)

[Inside TCA](#)

[Battle of the Airlines](#)

[FS Garmin Review](#)

[ATX Mango](#)

[Alternate Air](#)

[We have PIREPS](#)

[Caribbean Airline News](#)

Alternate Air

Copyright Kyle Ramsey 2002

- 15 -

San Vincente Del Caguan

"Senorita, it is a pleasure to meet one so beautiful out here in the bush."

The tall tan man lifted Amanda's left hand to his lips and brushed a slight kiss with his lips, then looked up at her eyes, letting the hand drop.

"My people tell me you are a journalist, si? What do you write, if I may ask?"

"I write for travel magazines, and I demand to speak to the American Ambassador at once. This is an outrage."

"Ambassador? We don't have no ambassador out here, lady," said one of the other men standing next to the tall man. "If we did, I'll bet we could get a nice price in ransom for him, eh, Kevin?"

"Aye, that he would, Jose. I wonder what a beautiful journalist is worth?"

"Ransom? Is that your game? Hijack Americans in the air in violation of dozens of international laws then ransom us?"

Kevin smiled broadly, "No, senorita, the ransom part is just, as you yanks say, gravy. We were much more interested in your cargo. You and the crew will simply help us pay the bills for a month."

Kevin, what a strange name for a South American, Amanda thought. Where did he come from? She couldn't place the accent yet, but she knew she would.

"Maybe you will write about us and our fight for freedom from the oppressive government in Bogota and Washington," said Jose.

"I said I was a travel writer, I don't do fiction."

Jose's eyes grew wide with shock at her words and glanced at Kevin. Kevin scowled a moment, then his eyebrows shot up and he laughed loudly, followed by the others in the room.

"Oh, that's funny. Jose, this woman has a sense of humor. Maybe I should keep her around for entertainment. You blokes have been less than humorous lately and I do enjoy a good time."

Amanda did not laugh. "Let's stick to the ransom plan. I have no intention of imposing on your hospitality any longer than I have to."

"You'll hang around as long as it pleases me, missy," Kevin's tone taking a more serious tone. He looked over at another man sitting in a chair in the corner, a large, burly man with black, matted hair and beard, black eyes peering out from under a green fatigue cap and spoke in Spanish.

"Alex, llevemos a este a la caleta de Florencia de una vez mañana. Es mas, cargelos a todos, si mejor, hagamos eso. Montelos en un camión en la mañana. Llevese algunos hombres para que los cuiden y que no se vayan a escapar. Eso me fregaría el caminao', Alex, no me vaya a joder esto." (1)

Alex looked Kevin square in the eye without any emotion. "Si, entendido, Comandante." He then stood and walked out of the room.

"Senorita, tomorrow you will go to a new place, much more comfortable. And your pilot can see a doctor."

"You mean he hasn't seen one yet? How inhumane can you people be?"

"To tell the truth, we can be very inhumane, to the wrong people. He will see a doctor tomorrow, my medic has attended to his wounds for now."

"I have some medical training, can I take a look at him?"

Kevin pursed his lips for a moment, then nodded.

"For 15 minutes, but do not talk about anything else, do you understand?"

"I understand. Can I use your medic's bag?"

Kevin sent for his medic then had him and two guards with AK-47's escort her into a small room off the larger room where the crew was sitting with two more guards. The captured crewmen had desperate looks in their eyes.

"Listen to me and don't ask questions, because I can't answer them anyway. I am Amanda Bert, your passenger. I have some medical training and they will let me look at your captain's wound for 15 minutes."

"I'm George Williston, the co-pilot, and this is Terry Gaff, our flight engineer. We're OK but Capt. Lucas is in bad shape. They stuck a bandage on him and haven't given him anything for pain or infection."

Amanda looked at the medic, "Do you have anything for pain and infection? Medications?"

"Penicillin?"

"Yes, penicillin. And for pain? He hurts, can't you see that?"

"Medication is for freedom fighters only, not prisoners."

"Yeah, well if you find any freedom fighters around here, but look, if we don't give him medications, he will die and you will not get the nice ransom from his company. And that might spoil Kevin's day, you wouldn't want to do that, would you?"

The medic thought for a second then shrugged his shoulders, digging out a smaller bag containing many small pill bottles. He pulled three from one jar and six from another.

"Give him one of these and two of these every six hours. You can get more when you get where you are going tomorrow, I cannot spare any more."

"And clean bandages? Antibiotic cream?"

"You ask for much, woman," he smiled now and dug several sterile pads, tape, and cream out of his bag and gave them to her. Amanda now turned to Capt. Lucas, lying on a couch with his eyes closed. She felt his forehead and he stirred, cracking open one eye.

Capt. Lucas, I am Amanda, your passenger. I will take a look at your wound now, and clean it up. They say you can see a doctor tomorrow. Do you understand?"

He closed his eye and nodded slightly.

"He has a fever already. You should have given him medications already."

Amanda took to the wound, unwrapping it, cleaning it carefully and then applying the cream liberally. It was starting to ooze and the cleaning was able to clear the infected fluids out, but she knew if he didn't get to a doctor soon he might lose the leg, or worse. After flushing the wound with fresh water, she carefully packed the interior of the wound with moist gauze then layered clean gauze over the top and taped it into place securely.

She had the co-pilot give him the first round of drugs as Amanda rose and handed the remaining supplies back to the medic.

"You are very good, where did you learn to care for wounds like that?"

"Girl Scouts, buddy, we were more than cookies," she said with a smile, then realizing this guy had probably never bought any Girl Scout cookies in his life. This was probably not a culturally transferable icon.

"Now you must go, you have stayed here longer than Kevin said already. Let us go," he motioned to the guards who stood up and collected their weapons and packs.

Amanda looked back at the three men and their guards.

"We'll get to see a doctor tomorrow. You just make sure he gets another dose of meds in six hours, and he'll make it."

Amanda was taken back to her room where a tray of food was waiting. She sat down at the small table and poked at the salad of fruits on a small saucer. She was worried about the pilot's leg; the wound was deep and ragged, and the lack of care given it so far really placed him at risk. It would also complicate any escape attempt trying to drag him through the thick bush. She would have to keep her eyes and ears open. She didn't want to pass up an escape attempt, but if she left them behind these bandits might kill them, so she would need a more complete plan.

Amanda thought about Kevin; what a strange person. He seemed out of place in a Colombian hide away. His skin was lighter than any of the others she had seen so far in this group, as was his hair, and his accent wasn't pure Spanish, there was something else back behind it. She knew she would get it eventually. He was a strange piece of the puzzle.

She decided to take stock of what she thought she knew or could count on. She had three other people she needed to worry about, one of whom would require mechanical means for transport. That was bad. These guys were not FARC, what she would have expected to be pulling this sort of stuff in this region. That was bad, too. She wasn't aware of another faction operating in Colombia. They were not freedom fighters either and, while she didn't have any real data to support that, she felt it in her gut. They had not discovered she spoke Spanish and she had no intention of letting on anytime soon. This was good.

Tomorrow they were going to move, which might increase her opportunities to cut out, that was good, but she would need to make sure the others wouldn't be harmed if she did, that would be bad. She wondered how far away this Florencia was, she hoped not too far. The more they kept themselves close to each other and whatever cargo these pirates swiped, the easier it would be for them all to be found. If they got spread out, it would complicate things greatly. That would be bad.

On the whole, it was bad. She finished her dinner and took a shower before she climbed into bed for the night. She didn't know when she would have a chance again, and she knew she might also need to rest. Now was the time to get ready for whatever lay next.

They drove from sunrise until lunchtime, across rough dirt roads and to the south and west of wherever they started. Amanda judged they covered under 100 miles and passed through only small agricultural villages along their route, with little to no signs that provided her with any idea of where they were. It was, however, important to keep track of any movements because when she got her first real piece of the puzzle other things could be located in relation to the movements.

The Herc crew made the trip without too much trouble, although Capt. Lucas' temperature was still high and Amanda was anxious to get the bandage changed again and get some more medication in him, maybe some real drugs. All four of them were kept in the back of a large truck with small windows along the top of the box they were riding in, but too covered with dirt to be able to see anything. They had air flowing into the box through a vent on the roof and a small opening over the top of the tailgate, but the heat was still incredible, and didn't help Capt. Lucas' situation one bit. He lay on the floor, with a thin blanket under him and another rolled up for a pillow. One of the guards had given Amanda a canteen of water, and she used it to keep Lucas hydrated as best she could. He could have used several canteens.

And his bandages needed changing, badly. Amanda's scorecard on this one dropped down a couple of notches. If this kept up much longer, she may not have to worry about getting him out anyway.

She noticed the road seemed to have gotten smoother, like they were on pavement. They made several turns before coming to a stop, then she heard voices outside as the guards started to lower the tailgate. Amanda stepped out into a courtyard first, followed by the co-pilot and engineer. She saw two men with a stretcher approaching, and Alex, the dark eyed commando walked toward them with a small, older man wearing a white cotton shirt and trousers with a baseball cap big enough to cover his ears.

"This is Ramon, he will be your 'host' while you stay here. You will be here for maybe a week, so make yourself comfortable. Ramon will show you to your accommodations."

"What about Capt. Lucas," Amanda asked. "He needs immediate medical attention."

"Yes, we have arranged that already. These men will take him to a small clinic nearby where a doctor will be

waiting. He has many modern tools and medicines, and he will take good care of your pilot."

"Can we check on him too?" asked the co-pilot.

"No, when he is well, he will rejoin you here at the villa. Until then he will stay in the clinic. One of my men will always be with him, you do not need to worry."

"I guess I wasn't worried about that," Amanda said as the two men carried Capt. Lucas through a double doorway into what looked like an alley, then she watched as two armed guards closed and bolted the doors from the inside.

She also noticed there were at least three other guards stationed at various spots overlooking the compound and its visible buildings, covering maybe about three quarters of an acre. The walls and buildings were whitewashed stucco, the walls about ten feet high and two feet thick.

"Buenas dias, I am Ramon, if you will follow me please."

The three of them fell in behind Ramon, with a guard flanking them as they crossed the courtyard and entered a heavy wooden door and followed a hallway past several other doors before reaching the end of the hallway where another large door barred further passage, until Ramon dug out a set of keys from his pocket and unlocked the door. He pulled it open then pointed to a chair leaning to one side of the doorway.

"One of my men will be here at all times. If an emergency happens, there is a buzzer in the hallway on the other side and he will come and help you."

Amanda had a hard time imagining that he was there to help them. They followed deeper into the compound and had now gone down a flight of stairs which opened into a larger room with two couches and two large chairs, with books in English and Spanish in a small bookshelf, cards, American board games, and a stack of magazines.

"As you can see, Senoir O'Malley does not treat his guests like the FARC and keep them in cages. There are six rooms off this living area and one bathroom. I will feed you two times each day as long as you behave, and it is the food that I will take away when you are bad. If you are bad enough you will be locked in your room for 23 hours each day, one hour outside. See, very civilized, very comfortable, and you may only have to endure this harsh treatment until your government is able to pay your repatriation money."

"Repatriation money?" Amanda said, "You've got to be kidding, it is ransom, plain and simple. We just want to go home, and we'll be no trouble, Ramon, and thank you for your help and hospitality. If we can do anything t help you, just let us know, and please help us keep in touch with Capt. Lucas."

"Ah senorita, si. I will check on your captain and give you daily reports, one of my men can do it if I do not make it, and his guards will come back here each night when they rotate. But Dr. Rojas is an excellent doctor, trained at your Harvard Medical School, he is very good indeed, so you really do not need to worry."

"Well, I will leave you now, and there is food coming in about an hour. Please make yourself at home, but remember there are many of our men here so trying to escape will only prevent me from making your stay comfortable. So please do not cause any trouble, because the guards, they will shoot to kill."

Ramon walked up the short set of steps and pulled the heavy wooden door behind him, then they heard the bolt slide home. They were alone for the first time since the ordeal began.

"Well, gentlemen, we seem to be in a bit of a pickle."

"That," said Terry the flight engineer, "is a huge understatement. I'm surprised they have kept us alive this far. And there is no guarantee they won't just kill us when they get their ransom."

"They are going to a lot of trouble for people they are going to kill, don't you think?" said the co-pilot, George.

"I agree, this is pretty good treatment. And these aren't the normal locals, I don't think. What did you guys think of the leader, Kevin O'Malley?"

"You on a first name basis with these guys?" said George, looking at Amanda with narrowed eyes.

"I just pay attention, and it will do us all some good for everyone to pay a lot of attention. We have got to figure out how to get out of here and get to Capt. Lucas, then get somewhere safe and phone home."

Terry walked over to one of the doors leading to a bedroom, opened it and peered in.

"Yep, these are not the normal accommodations the Colombian guerrillas are known for in the press. No cages in here."

"Other than this whole building, you mean," said George.

Amanda walked to one of the rooms and opened it, "This one can be mine. I tell you, these guys aren't FARC, they are something else. Kevin O'Malley, for instance. I've been trying to figure out what an Irishman is doing out here. I know there is a community of Irish in Argentina, moved there during the potato famine. There are probably other places he could be from, but listening to his English, he is not a native English Speaker although his English is impeccable. It sounds much more Hispanic in accent, but not quite."

"Argentina? You think he's in their army or something?"

"I doubt it, these guys are irregulars for sure, they might be on some government's payroll, but they aren't from any standing army. The way they speak to each other is one indication; too informal for a military organization. Maybe they are in cahoots with the FARC, but the lack of contact with any FARC representatives has me worried that these guys might be just a second rate bunch of bandits, although to pull off an airborne heist takes anything but

second rate operatives."

Terry walked back to the middle of the room. "Any thought on how to get out of here, George?"

"Not a clue. Anyone else?"

"Well," Amanda walked over and sat in one of the chairs, "we have a lot of factors against us, but we should organize a bit to explore some options. I can"

They all turned as they heard the main door's bolt slide back and the door open. Two older women each holding a tray entered followed by a young boy of about ten with a pitcher of juice. They were pleasant but spoke only Spanish, and Amanda didn't let on she understood them. One woman uncovered a tray to show them an assortment of fruit.

"Naranjitas su mercé?"

Amanda took an orange from the tray and smiled at the woman.

"Thank you very much."

They left the trays behind and departed while the three hungry prisoners dove into the fresh fruits and vegetables, along with a thin rice soup with what appeared to be small chunks of chicken. Unfortunately, too many other things taste like chicken, so one is never sure.

"Ok, like I was saying, we need to explore opportunities. We each need to pay attention carefully for the next day, think of plans that we think might work. Tomorrow about lunchtime we should put our ideas out and try to find one or two plans that have a chance of getting us out of here and connected with Capt. Lucas."

"Yeah, I'm worried about Dan," said George. "He didn't look very good when they took him away. I'm worried they will just let him die."

"That is a chance we'll have to take, but the sooner we get a plan working, the sooner we can get to him again."

"This won't be easy," Terry said. "did you see the size of those walls? And there were several armed guards along the walls."

"Three. I saw three of them, not counting the ones that were with us, plus there's the guy right outside our door here."

"She's right," said George, "at least four stationed guards with an unknown number just hanging around to keep an eye on us."

Contact

[Ken Malczynski](#)

(Editor)

[Rich Ellison](#)

(Assistant Editor & Webmaster)

[Kyle Ramsey](#)

(Author: Alt Air)

[Terry Tyler](#)

(Writer & Reviewer)

Download Previous Issues

"So that is an important piece of intel we need; exactly how many armed people do we have to get past? And how to get out of here.... the wall is formidable, so don't just think of ways over it, think of ways through it or under it. And we need to think of whatever they haven't thought of. Unless they are consummate professionals, I guarantee they have made a mistake somewhere, we just have to find it."

George looked at Amanda, "Do you have any idea where we are? If we get out of here, where do we go from there? We are surrounded by their people."

"I don't think so, being their people. And we'll find someone to help us, not everyone out here is a bandit, there are many hard working honest farmers around here. I expect we are in Southeast Colombia somewhere, but that's the best I can do."

"I don't think so, being their people. And we'll find someone to help us, not everyone out here is a bandit, there are many hard working honest farmers around here. I expect we are in Southeast Colombia somewhere, but that's the best I can do."

"How do you figure that? Colombia? Are you sure?"

"No, I'm not sure, just did a little ded reckoning, and listening to these people talk."

"They all speak Spanish, how can you tell?"

"Just words, dialect."

"Are you a language expert or something?"

"No, just a journalist who covers a lot in this part of the world is all. But I did major in Languages at Baylor."

"Spanish?"

"No, Arabic, as it turns out," she said with a smile. "We're a long way from anyone who speaks Arabic."

"That's not too likely to help us here."

"Probably not. Well gents, I am tired, and plan to get a little rest before, well, I don't know before what, but I am tired."

"Yeah, me too," said Terry, "I'm bushed."

The three turned and walked into their chosen bedrooms. Amanda lay down on the bed and closed her eyes. She was ready for whatever came next, she just wasn't sure what that might be.

For the Hispanically Challenged:

(1) "Alex, Let's take this one to the safe house in Florencia tomorrow for now. Why don't you take all of them, yes, let's do that. You take them in a truck in the morning. Take some men to guard them so they don't get away. That would spoil my day, Alex, don't spoil my day."

-16-

Buenaventura

"What do you mean the Gooney Bird's not coming, Aaron?"

Nick stood in the small office at the Buenaventura airport with Aaron Garcia on the other end of the phone.

"You're sitting on your cozy butt in San Jaun and you guys can't get the airplane down here?"

"I'd love to, Nick, and it was on its way, but broke down big time in Cartagena. The Number 2 engine threw a rod clean through the cylinder and punched out the top of the cowlings like a bullet. Richard Blount and Jody Hicks are cooling their jets there trying to round up parts to repair it, but we're having some trouble finding a couple of items. We'll fly the parts and a couple of mechanics down to them as soon as we can."

"Aaron, we can't afford to waste a couple of more days waiting on that airplane, can't you send something else?"

"Let me go check, I'm sure I can find something that will work, maybe not a Gooney Bird."

"It needs to have at least the useful load of the Gooney and it needs to blend into the aviation world down here, that's what we need. And I'd like to request good short field handling under load and lots of range to get us out. And a cold six-pack of beer behind the seat."

"No to the beer, you stay here at this phone and I'll call back within an hour on the rest of it, got it?"

"I thought, since you were getting a list, the beer you know. Hurry, Aaron."

Nick set the phone down and walked back outside. Gilbert was sitting behind the wheel of the rental car.

"Our airplane isn't here. It's broken down in Cartagena and won't be fixed for a couple of days."

"That is not good. We need to get into the interior tomorrow at the latest."

"That's what I told them, they are looking for another airplane now, I expect a call back in an hour."

"OK, tell you what. You stay here and get the phone call. This will give me a chance to go over to the other side of the city and pick up my associate. Then we'll both come back here. That should take a little over an hour, then we

can make a plan."

"Sounds good," Nick said as he got out of the car, "see you in an hour then."

Nick walked back inside the office and, like all good FBO's the world over, found a coffee machine and filled a cup before he walked back into the briefing area. This room was smaller than the outer office with two telephones on two desks and a couple of big charts of the area pinned on the wall. He would call for weather after he had a look at the airplane, so he sat down in one of the chairs next to a desk and closed his eyes, thinking back over the past few days since he and Gilbert had left Jamaica.

The flight from Kingston to Panama City had been uneventful, flying one of TCA's nice new Airbus 300's, a great wide body, very stable in the air. He had tried to strike up a conversation with Gilbert enroute, but he held up his hand and told him to keep it light, never know who's listening. They arrived in Panama City's Tocumen International by mid morning before the big jet started the return leg home to Hato airport, the home base for TCA. After recovering their luggage they grabbed a cab and got two rooms at a Holiday Inn west of the airport, about a mile from the harbor area. Gilbert said they would wait two days to make sure they weren't being followed before they flew to Buenaventura to meet up with his 'associate', who would have some important information to help us figure out where the cargo and hostages were located. Gilbert told Nick to act like a tourist and try to relax as there wasn't anything they could do until then anyway.

Nick did not do waiting very well. He ate too much and did a poor job of relaxing. He bought some swimming trunks at one of the local stores and spent some time at the pool, catching some sun and reading a Tony Hillerman novel, "A Thief of Time", a mystery about Navajo policemen chasing illegal artifact hunters in Chaco Canyon in his home in New Mexico. It took him back to many camping trips in the Chaco area and over into the Four Corners area, where New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Colorado all come together into a single geographic point. It was the only place like it in the United States and in one of the more desolate places as well. Much of the land in this area had been given to the Navajos and other western tribes, most of the eastern tribes driven west on the Trail of Tears stopping about Oklahoma. It was easy to see why the government would let go of this parcel of property as it lacked almost everything one needed for modern subsistence. It just wasn't worth much to white folks, yet. With the advent of Indian casinos sprouting up Nick wasn't sure that attitude wouldn't change, but the whites would need the Indian's property to remain Indian in order to keep the casinos open and running. Nick enjoyed the Hillerman story and the memories, and it burned time.

In the evenings he would chat with Gilbert on his background and more on the mission. Gilbert was pretty closed lipped but, when faced with the evidence Nick had noticed in the reports he authored, Gilbert acknowledged he might have done this before. In fact, he indicated he had been in and out of this area many times before and knew quite a bit about the countryside and people they would encounter. He explained that most of the people they would run into were honest working men and women, many farmers and ranchers trying to eke a living out of the local economy. There would also be some bad people who kind of blend into the background, not like they wore uniforms or anything. Gilbert assured Nick he would let him know if any of the bad people showed up, and also

promised to get him his own weapon in case additional firepower was required. He made it clear Nick was not to place himself in jeopardy of getting shot because they would need him to fly them out. He explained that once they made the grab, the bad guys would be looking quite hard for them and they needed to not be around, the airplane and it's requisite pilot being the one surest way to make sure they were not there.

The two days did pass before the two men, posing as fishermen picked up a Grumman G-111 Albatross at Marcos Gelabert International, Panama City's other airport. The Grumman had a non-descript paint job, worn and chipped in places, but a thorough preflight and run up of both engines prior to leaving assured Nick the aircraft was in good flying order and quite able to make the two hour flight from Panama City to Buenaventura. In fact further inspection revealed the worn look of this aircraft was recently installed, no doubt a part of the disguise they were using courtesy of the spooks running this show. By 10 a.m. they were airborne and climbing to 11,500 ft for the cruise down the coast.

Colombia once owned Panama and the coastline melded easily from one country to the other as they followed a direct route southeast. The coast stayed off their left wing, assurance of a safe place to let down if they had any trouble. There was a thin low cloud deck for the first part of the journey, with smooth air. About half way they began to pick up some bumps and the clouds began to build up at their altitude. For a while Nick rolled the aircraft round the bigger ones and punching right through the small clouds, but when they were within 100 NM the clouds thickened and Nick chose to descend to 5500 feet and below the building clouds for the remainder of the trip. The clouds might look light and puffy, but a good convective cell, known as thunderstorms to most, can rip an aircraft to shreds within the turbulence of its core. With the building clouds they only had to deal with updrafts as the cells sucked energy into itself. They would land before the clouds reached their full load and began to rain, with downdrafts then becoming the hazard of choice. The Convective Roller Coaster was alive and well as they approached Buenaventura. The landing was uneventful and the rain started as they were unloading their bags, then they threw the bags into a rental car and drove to a local hotel. They would spend one night here and pick up their DC-3 and Gilbert's help before heading into the interior.

Nick looked at the ceiling. No DC-3, now what will go wrong. The coffee had gone cold before he finished the cup so he walked back to the coffee machine and topped the cup off with the black liquid.

"Senior, you are Nick Collins?" the man at the dispatch desk said to him.

"Yes, that's me," said Nick as he walked to the extension phone on a small coffee table in front of an old couch across the room from the dispatch area.

"This is Nick."

"Hi Nick, Aaron here, we got you all taken care of. I found another airplane and hired it. It should be there in about 2 hours. You will take possession of the aircraft from a Mr. Alphonso Barela, who will be flying it in."

"And what exactly is 'it'? Did you find another DC-3?"

"Not exactly. The best I could do was an Ilyushin Il-14 twin prop. It is at Cartegena and the boys there checked it out and declared it airworthy."

"Where the hell did they dig up a Crate? This thing had better be in airworthy shape, Aaron, it has a difficult mission ahead of it."

The Ilyushin Il-14 Crate was a twin prop Russian built aircraft that succeeded the DC-3 knockoff, first built in the early 1950's. It did have short field with heavy hauling capabilities.

"You'd be surprised what sorts of things I can find when I need to, Nick. You can fly it, right?"

"I've never flown one before, but I can't imagine it being too different from the An-26's and An-2's I've flown recently. I just have to guess at a few of the gauges, he he he."

"Alright, it will be there soon, and you be careful, you hear me?"

"Yes, I do, and I will."

Nick hung up the phone and walked to the door, glancing at his watch. He saw Gilbert driving up with a woman in the passenger's seat. They pulled up and Gilbert rolled down his window as Nick walked up.

"What's the story on our airplane?"

"There will be a replacement here within two hours."

"Good, then hop in and we can talk. We'll go get a cup of coffee at that café up the street. Nick, I'd like you to meet Teresa Holguin, my associate and our travelling companion from here on."

"Nice to meet you," Nick said as he opened the back door and climbed in behind Gilbert.

"I'm Nick Collins."

"Yes, I know you are."

Teresa was about 30 years old with jet black hair that hung straight to just below her shoulders with bangs cut straight across her forehead. She had the deepest brown eyes Nick had ever seen and smooth skin. She looked like she would be more at home in a fashion magazine than running around the Colombian jungle.

"Don't let her innocent looks fool you Nick. She'll cut a man's throat in a second when she needs to."

"I am much nicer than that, Mr. Collins. I only get rough if I need to. Mostly I prefer to use my brain."

"I'm sure you do, and call me Nick, please."

They sat outside the café and drank their coffee while Teresa gave them a briefing on the situation she had uncovered so far.

The gear they want back was still at San Vincente airport, but it was heavily guarded. Nothing short of a company of soldiers would dare take it on with the thirty or so men guarding the goods. But she had news that some or all of the hostages had been moved. They were reported to be in a town 60 miles to the southwest, and there was an airport nearby. Reports were that they were guarded by less than a dozen men and were being held in a small compound in the middle of the city of Florencia. Teresa also reported she had been able to enlist about twenty locals in San Vincente to help them get the gear loaded, but they couldn't be counted on to fight very much.

"Not a problem, we want to do this without any firefights anyway. We can use them."

Gilbert pulled a map out of his breast pocket and looked it over for a few minutes while Nick and Teresa quietly sipped their coffee.

"Here's what I think we need to do," Gilbert said as he laid the map flat on his lap and set his coffee cup down.

"The big prize here is the sensor gear. They can get hostages any time they want. However we may be able to pull some of the heat off the gear's hiding place by going after the hostages first and they might send reinforcements. After we grab the people, we can head toward San Vincente and make our grab for the gear then get the hell out of here as fast as possible. You promise to be just as dedicated getting the gear as the people, right Nick? Once we have your girlfriend I don't want to lose you, you see."

"Don't worry about me, buddy. I signed on for the whole job, just don't get us all killed."

"Furthest thing from my mind. As I mentioned before, we have developed techniques that keep us out of firefights. So can you plan us a flight from here to Florencia, then we'll head to San Vincente, then where?"

"Can do. With the range of the Crate we should be able to make Bogota, how's that?"

"Bogota is no good, we need to get this gear further away from the middle of the country, can we make the northern coast?"

"Like where did you have in mind?"

Gilbert slid his finger across the map to a small town along the northern coast called Santa Marta.

"How about here? I have family here myself."

Nick looked at the distance. "Yeah, we can make that."

"Great. Once we are airborne we will contact home plate and they will meet us at Santa Marta and get us out of the country."

Nick heard the hum of twin props in the distance and shielded his eyes against the sun to see the aircraft.

"Well, there is our ride. Let's go back to the airport and I'll get the airplane checked out. You guys can load up while I get weather and flight information, including a flight plan. What shall I put down as our reason for travel?"

"We are fruit exporters, they love our money," Gilbert said with a large grin.

They drove back to the airport as the aircraft taxied to a stop in front of the office. A small man about 50 years old operated the sky stairs built into the aircraft then walked down them as Nick approached.

"Alphonso Barela?"

"Si, Nick Collins?"

"Yes, I'm Nick Collins," he said as they shook hands.

Alphonso gave a briefcase to Nick and then took him for a walk around the airplane, finishing up with about twenty minutes in the cockpit. It wasn't too weird, and Nick was able to find all the important instruments. Alfonso gave him a quick run through the performance tables and loading information, then he and Nick walked down the stairs and into the office. Gilbert and Teresa started to load several duffel bags from the trunk of the rental car to the aircraft.

Alfonso called himself a cab to go into town before his ride returning him to Cartagena would arrive. Nick completed the preflight planning and returned to the aircraft, meeting the gas truck and purchasing full tanks. He then did another walk around before mounting the stairs and hitting the switch to retract them and closed the door. He got both engines started then signaled to the lineman to pull the chocks off the nose gear. The aircraft lurched forward with a push of the throttles. Gilbert sat in the co-pilot's seat and read checklists to Nick while Teresa sat in the jump seat between them, watching the show. Nick liked Russian cockpits because they were usually roomy with lots of windows. The Il-14 did not disappoint.

"I have never been in the cockpit of such a big airplane."

"Just ask any questions you have and I'll try to answer them for you."

"OK." She sat back quietly and continued to watch. Nick thought she seemed to be watching him more than the airplane, but shrugged it off.

Nick taxied to the runway for a westerly departure. It was 2 p.m. now and the clouds were building up again, promising a bumpy ride across the mountain ridges. Nick pulled in the gear, climbed to 2000 feet, then turned left back to the east to begin the long climb over the mountains. It didn't take long for the terrain to rise significantly. They were also getting some buffeting from the building thunderstorms.

The first line of mountains only pushed up to about 7000 or 8000 feet, but the second set rose to 12,000 or 13,000 feet, requiring them to climb to 15,000 feet for the short one hour trip. The turbulence wasn't as bad as it could have been due mostly to weak winds across the tops. They crossed the last ridge and began to descend into the low area, covered with miles of trees.

Nick leveled off at 6000 feet, homing on the Florencia VOR and looking for the airport in the trees. Soon a small town hove into view, Nick first spotting it by a column of smoke rising from the city. He dropped to 3000 feet to overfly the airport and have a look, and as they got closer he could see a large building was on fire with lots of people and vehicles running about. That would keep people's eye off them, he thought, nice diversion as they slip into town. Nick set up a downwind entry heading west, then turned base and final to the east, picking up the gentle winds from the coast. He set the landing gear gently on the runway and the aircraft slowed to make the last taxiway. Nick taxied the aircraft to the east end of the ramp and shut it down, then walked back and opened the air stairs. Nick was ready for the adventure to begin.

"FIRE! FIRE!"

Amanda and Terry banged on the heavy door while George threw chairs through a couple of windows to release the smoke. Amanda looked back at the bedroom where they had set the fire, then they had waited until it was fully developed before they raised the alarm.

"FIRE!"

They heard footsteps approaching the door and the key hit the lock.

"Get ready," Amanda said. "Get behind them quickly, then we can make a break in the confusion."

"I'm ready," said George, "then we'll go find Capt. Lucas and get the hell out of here."

The door popped open and three wild-eyed men followed by Ramon ran into the room. They picked up blankets and tried to enter the bedroom and beat the flames out. Amanda had thought of that and made sure the fire had gone beyond that sort of treatment. The fire grew quickly and drove them back.

"Out! Out! Everybody out!" said Ramon as he turned to retreat.

Amanda realized they had gotten transfixed watching the men fight the fire. She turned and gave George a shove.

"Let's get out of here, this is our chance!"

The three bolted through the hallway and headed up the stairway. Everybody they saw was running into the building, which suited them just fine. They burst into the sunlight and only then noticed the volume of smoke rising above them.

"Wow, we got that sucker going hot," said Terry.

Amanda looked around the courtyard and saw a doorway in the wall and headed for it. Opening it she found herself standing on a narrow stone street with many people rushing by her, some knocking her out of the way to get into the compound. Looking up the street she saw an old fire truck with a couple of men riding in on it. Looking the other way up the street she saw the edge of the forest.

"Follow me, let's get out of sight and make our next plan."

"After you," said George.

The three slid unnoticed into the trees.



December 2002

ISLAND

BREEZES

A newsletter for the employees of Tradewind Caribbean Airlines



Content

[Editorial](#)

[Inside TCA](#)

[Battle of the Airlines](#)

[FS Garmin Review](#)

[ATX Mango](#)

[Alternate Air](#)

[We have PIREPS](#)

[Caribbean Airline News](#)

PIREPS

We received a few interesting Pireps from Sue at the office:

> **pilot_name:** JIM BARNES
> **pilot_no:** 2092
> **flight_no:** 1180
> **ifr:** X
> **date_flight:** 10/31/2002
> **plane_type:** TCA Boeing 747-400
> **dep_apr:** Rio de Janeiro Int'l, Galeao
> **arr_apr:** Cape Town, D. F. Malan
> **time_flight:** 10 hr 45min
> **comments:** This began as a terrific flight but soon turned bizzare.

Contact

[Ken Malczynski](#)

(Editor)

[Rich Ellison](#)

(Assistant Editor & Webmaster)

[Kyle Ramsey](#)

(Author: Alt Air)

Terry Tyler

(Writer & Reviewer)

[Download Previous Issues](#)

On board was a group of 163 members of the "Fat Ain't Real Tough" (FART) organization which is a focus group on eating healthy and keeping thin. They were going to Cape Town to deliver a two week training program on nutrition. However, also with us were 74 members of the "Sumo Worldwide Alliance Team" (SWAT) who were on a world tour to promote Sumo wrestling. Well ... the Sumo guys all weighted 300+ pounds and all sat together, squeezed in the seats. I was told by the senior attendant that they were so tight that they could not move an inch. So, for the first hour, they all sat motionless with grimaces on their faces. All of the FART members, being so thin, also sat next to each other and all had room to spare. Wanting to be helpful, the rookie attendant we had on board tried to get the SWATs and the FARTs to exchange seats and intersperse so that a SWAT would have a FART next to them and would have more room. Nice idea, however, the FARTS that changed seats began complaining about being crushed and the odor they thought was coming from the big sumo guys. Well ... matters got worse and the senior addendent came and got me from the flightdeck and explained what had happened. In disbelief, I went to resolve the problem. As I passed the nearly empty business class section, I could hear the sounds of FARTs coming from the middle of the coach section who were arguing with the SWATs. It was absolutely unbelievable. I glanced around the area and could see the other passengers with their hands over their mouths and were desperately trying to hold back the laughter that you could hear muffled anyway. Some of them were even tearing from watching a little FART shouting at this huge SWAT. Anyway ... I ordered them all go back to their original seat they were assigned. So the FARTS were once again pleasant with plenty of air and the SWATs were literally stuffed in their chairs. I told them that's what they paid for, however, I made them an offer. I told them ness class and if they paid for an upgrade now with a charge card, I'd let them change their seat. They agreed and I had enough SWAT takers where they all had a seat to themselves in and those that paid for the upgrade had plenty of room sitting double. It took about an hour to get everthing straightened out, however, after that, everyone had a great flight. Also, the rookie attendant learned to leave well enough alone. This flight was one for the books.

Tradewind Caribbean Airline
WIN-Airline-Reporter

Flight : 2542
Report #: REP12341.TCA
Date : 19/09/02
Name : Mike Kelly
Callsign: Moose
EMail : moose4@loxinfo.co.th
Aboard: 180
VFR/IFR : VFR
Aircraft: B-777
Depart. : CYVR
Destin. : KMSP via KBIL
Dep.time: 14:30
Enroute : 05:00

Fuel : n/a**Route1 : as per Line 2542 flight plan, no deviations.****Route2 : N.A.****Speed : 320****Altitude: 330****Remark 1: Date: Sept 18**

This was good. It was Greek Food Appreciation Day on TCA 2542 (geez, what we gotta do to stay competitive!), and this attracted a fun bunch of passengers. As everybody knows, the route to Billings Montana and then Minneapolis, Minnesota always attracts the loonies Anyhow, we got airborne and immediatly broke open the Ouzo (after the uh..safety demonstration of course) and the Retsina wine. Things really hotted up when Bongo (my copilot) went aft wearing a belly dancing costume (and believe me, he does have an impressive belly) leaving me to the flight controls. We had a few altitude variations as the entire load of passengers (and Bongo) began jumping up and down in unison doing some strange Greek dance in the aisle. Anyhow, it didnt take long before the food had run out and the majority of passengers and crew were totally smashed. And thats when the smashing began. Yup, a traditional Greek plate breaking dance ensued and this was attended to with great vigor. Not a single plate nor a drop of booze was left by the time we landed in Billings. We got on the ground and wheeled out the "appreciative" passengers and crew and loaded up for the next leg to fabulous Minneapolis ! This time around, the plane was loaded with men wearing large Kafkas on their heads and smelling faintly of goat. The large "weapon-like" bulges under their traditional robes didnt seem to attract the attention of the Billings Montana security officials (perhaps the goat smell put them off) but as a trained TCA pilot, I noticed right away. Once we got airborne, I cunningly sent Bongo back into the passenger section to distract the suspicious looking passengers. He was wearing his belly dancing costume again and there is nothing a terrorist likes more than an ample man in a belly dancing costume (aside from a goat in a nurses costume). Well we ran out of goat cheese and coffee about half way to glitzy old Minnesota, but the terrorists were so enamoured by Bongo that they forgot to hijack the plane. My cunning plan worked. When we landed and had them arrested (after a brief gun battle) I was told by the FBI that Billings was a beehive of terrorist activity with many secret training bases hidden in the nearby mountains. Well... who would have known.



December 2002

ISLAND

BREEZES

A newsletter for the employees of Tradewind Caribbean Airlines



Content

[Editorial](#)

[Inside TCA](#)

[Battle of the Airlines](#)

[FS Garmin Review](#)

[ATX Mango](#)

[Alternate Air](#)

[We have PIREPS](#)

[Caribbean Airline News](#)

Caribbean Airline News

(St. Maarten) Delta Airlines finally here, daily flights anticipated

SIMPSON BAY

Delta Airlines made its inaugural trip to St. Maarten yesterday, bringing to a close a three-year struggle to get the airline to add the friendly island to its flight itinerary.

Some 93 passengers, including representatives of the airline, arrived at the Princess Juliana International Airport on board the flight at approximately 2:50pm yesterday. The first passenger to step off the plane, James Carmichael, received a gift voucher for a three-night stay at Maho Reef Hotel. The flight was about 3 hours, a far cry from and more comfortable for travellers than the former seven-hours ordeal when there was no direct flight to St. Maarten. Delta will be making three flights - Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday - from Atlanta to St. Maarten weekly. This schedule will continue for the rest of the winter months with an increase, possibly to daily flights, in summer 2003.

Fran Arrindell, president of Arrindell Aviation Services and Delta local agent, anticipates this flight increase may

come sooner than next summer. He expects the company will soon see how lucrative this St. Maarten route is and revise its schedule. He pointed out that when Delta started to fly into Aruba the schedule was similar. However, due to demand the airline had to make that island a daily stop almost immediately. He hopes the same will happen with St. Maarten. The current price for a round-trip ticket from Atlanta is about US \$500. The three year odyssey of getting Delta to St. Maarten has been a rocky journey for Arrindell Aviation as well as Commissioners of Aviation and Tourism Michael Ferrier and Theo Heyliger, as well as the their French side counterpart Romeo Fleming. Negotiations and plans to have Delta fly to St. Maarten were almost completed in 1999 when Hurricane Lenny blew over the island, taking with it the Delta deal. Delta representative Mary Smith conveyed her company's delight at finally adding St. Maarten to its list of destinations, and the wish for a long and fruitful relationship between Delta and the island. John Tomlinson, vice president of Arrindell Aviation, noted that it had been a sentimental journey for him and his partner, helping to get Delta here, and an honour to be chosen as the airline's agent. Heyliger commended Delta for sticking with the island though hard times and finally fulfilling the deal that started in 1999. Echoing the sentiments of French side Mayor Albert Fleming, he stated that this island had to work together to get things done.

Delta will help the island gain access the Southeastern United States, an important boost for tourism, according to Commissioner Michael Ferrier. He added that a relationship between Windward Islands Airways and Delta would do a lot for the island and passengers.

The arrival of Delta is a "major step for air travel" on this island, Airport President Eugene Holiday told the gathering of government officials from both sides of the island, plane crew and other invited guests at a short ceremony in the Soualiga Lounge of the airport.

"As the main carrier at Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport - the busiest airport in the world - Delta offers St. Maarten the opportunity to tap into some 80 million passengers yearly," Holiday remarked, noting that this should aid in the realisation of an increase in movements at the airport from 1.5 million presently to a projected two million yearly. The direct air link between the island and Atlanta will provide a major boost for the tourism, trade, investment and cultural exchange, Lieutenant Governor Franklyn Richards commented in his speech. He stated, "A strong working relationship between government entities and persons is essential if we are to achieve our goal of establishing the island as a world class tourist destination."

Contact

[Ken Malczynski](#)

(Editor)

[Rich Ellison](#)

(Assistant Editor & Webmaster)

[Kyle Ramsey](#)

(Author: Alt Air)

Terry Tyler

(Saba) :

Saba Day celebrations, airport terminal opens

Prime Minister Etienne Ys, Governor Frits Goedgedrag, other overseas guests and about 200 Sabans turned out for the 28th annual Saba Day Celebration, with its specific mission to open the new airport.

(Writer & Reviewer)

[*Download Previous Issues*](#)

The airport was dedicated to Remy F. de Haenen, the first pilot who landed in Saba in 1959. The ceremony began with a welcome by Master of Ceremonies Roy Smith at 10:00am. The Saba flag was hoisted as the St. Kitts/Nevis Defense Force Band played the Saba anthem and later presented a CD recording of the music to the Island Government.

Lt. Governor Antoine Solagnier, Senator Ray Hassell and Commissioners Lisa Hassell and Will Johnson greeted the crowd and presented awards to former airport employees Thomas Johnson and G. Leo Hassell, Nurse Cassandra Wilson, the Saba University School of Medicine and Walter and Rebecca Kopzca for their contributions to the island. The undoubted stars of the event, however, were the pilots who opened up Saba to the world. De Haenen landed at Flat Point in 1959, after then-Council member Mathew Levenstone had gone to St. Barths to convince him to take on the adventure. It was to be his only landing in Saba. Four years later, Winair's first pilot Jos, "Monsieur Le Pipe" Dormoy took over the controls and made thousands of landings in Saba before he retired. Dormoy was called "Le Pipe" because of his smoking habit. Many Sabans who were well acquainted with the pilots greeted both men as old friends at the airport. Winair presented a plaque of appreciation to the Island Government. With the unveiling of the sign commemorating De Haenen's historic flight, the terminal was opened to the public for refreshments. The dignitaries attended a special luncheon. Afternoon activities included Pony League games with the St. Maarten team, a fisherman's bash at Fort Bay and an evening programme at the Sports Field.

Piarco "under control" says director (Trinidad)

BWIA Corporate Communications Director Clint Williams has said operations had resumed at Piarco International Airport yesterday. "Everything was operating back to normal," he said. "We had a full contingent of air traffic

controllers. Flights left at their scheduled time."

Piarco and Crown Point airports were shut down on Friday after air traffic controllers failed to turn up for duty. Works and Transport Minister Franklyn Khan said the air traffic controllers on Thursday's 3 pm and 11 pm shifts had called in sick. He said their grievance was "non-payment of allowances for September, October and November." One report said in some cases, those allowances make up half of a controller's salary. One airline official said the controllers provide an essential service and, thus, are barred by law from taking industrial action. If their action had persisted, it would cut the country off from the rest of the world, the official added.



December 2002

ISLAND

BREEZES

A newsletter for the employees of Tradewind Caribbean Airlines



Content

[Editorial](#)

[Inside TCA](#)

[Battle of the Airlines](#)

[FS Garmin Review](#)

[ATX Mango](#)

[Alternate Air](#)

[We have PIREPS](#)

[Caribbean Airline News](#)

Contact

[Ken Malczynski](#)

(Editor)

[Rich Ellison](#)

(Assistant Editor & Webmaster)

Back Issues

Have you missed a previous copy of Island Breezes? Previous issues are available here in Adobe Acrobat format.

[October 2001](#)

[December 2001](#)

[January 2002](#)

Kyle Ramsey

(Author: Alt Air)

Terry Tyler

(Writer & Reviewer)

Download Previous Issues

March 2002

May 2002

July 2002

September 2002

October 2002