



A NEWSLETTER FOR EMPLOYEES OF TRADEWIND CARIBBEAN AIRLINES

Breezes

Island

TCA





November 15, 2007

Volume 2, Issue 4

Comments from the Editor

Inside This Issue

- 1 Comments from the Editor
- 2 Amsterdam!
- 3 Operation Sinterklaas
- 11 Beta Testing
- 13 An Interview with
- 16 Chasing the Blue Horizon
- 18 Interesting Links

My fellow Tradewind pilots,

We have a great issue in store for you this month. Two articles by Tom Kurtz (one is seasonally appropriate!), an interview with Esa Kaihlanen of Allied FS group on the development of their fantastic Raytheon Beechcraft B300, a couple of articles from the editorial staff, and a few additions to the links.

From the Island Breezes staff to all of you, our readers, we appreciate your loyalty and your readership. We are now officially one year old, with five issues in the archives, and we're ready to begin a new year.

But at this Christmas time of year, we are going to pause with our families and enjoy this wonderful season. From your Island Breezes staff, to all of you, a most wonderful Christmas season.

The Breezes Staff



Amsterdam, the Netherlands

My fellow Tradewind pilots,

Greetings to you, and welcome to Amsterdam, the Netherlands (commonly known as Holland). That's right, wooden shoes, tulips, windmills and a great city and Tradewinds international destination, AMSTERDAM. This beautiful city is our theme for this month.

Kingdom of the Netherlands (Dutch: Koninkrijk der Nederlanden). The Kingdom of the Netherlands consists of the Netherlands and its overseas islands - Netherlands Antilles and Aruba.

Talking about the Netherlands, people often incorrectly call it Holland. In fact, only the central part of the Netherlands is geographically named Holland. This part of the country consists now of two provinces Noord Holland (North Holland) and Zuid-Holland (South Holland). This is the region with important cities as Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague (Den Haag), Delft, Leiden and Haarlem.

Amsterdam, the beautiful capital of the Netherlands, has the wonderful atmosphere of a 17th century city combined with the contemporary character of a modern metropolis. It is a treasure chest of superb and fascinating architecture and is famous for canals and museums. Highlights include its towers and steeples (lowlevel VFR pilots beware!) which are considered to be some of its finest features.

Life in the city is centered in its canals, so one of the finest ways to see the city is onboard one of its glass-topped canal boats. Look for the skinny bridge, sample the yerwtensoep (a thick, rich pea soup with sausage and pork added), in season herring is a favorite, as is Dutch apple pie. Travel past the beautiful houses, through the artist quarters, to the Anne Franke house.

The number of our airline's flights to this beautiful city is enormous, 278. Lots of international flights to this wonderful old world city and a few with long layovers.

Why Amsterdam you might well be asking? Because of the Christmas season and the deep links long held with Holland and the Dutch people.

The Breezes Staff



Flag of the Netherlands

Amstel - boat on Amstel, Muziektheater on the right





Operation Sinterklaas

By Tom Kurtz

It was a brisk, damp, cloudy first of December evening at the Mor'on Air Base near Seville, Spain. Chief Master Sergeant Jan "Dutch" Kronemeijer, originally from Holland, Michigan, with nearly 25 years service, hurried to get into the Base Headquarters Building where it was warm. *"Southern Spain is supposed to have mild weather at this time of the year, but somebody must have forgotten to tell the weatherman,"* Dutch thought as he pulled off his winter type parka. There was a light on in the base commander's office.

"You still working Colonel?" Colonel William T. Conway, USAF Academy class of 1989, senior aviator, veteran of Operation Desert Storm, Bosnia, and Iraq. He had won the Distinguished Flying Cross in Desert Storm. He was flying the B-52 bomber then and Dutch was his crew chief in those days. Now he was waiting for his first "star" and thinking about retiring in a couple of years.

"Hi Dutch, yes, I am trying to put the finishing touches on this operation order. I have to give it a name and I can't seem to come up with something catchy."

"You mean that NATO exercise we are taking part in this month, sir?"

"Yes, we have to get at least 5 of our Lockheed C-5A Galaxy aircraft fully operational in a day or two. Military Air Transportation Command (MATC) has given us the job of flying two battalions of Spanish infantry and their equipment into Amsterdam by December 5th. It's another exercise in the defense of Western Europe. The last thing I have to do is give the operation a name and I can't think of anything at the moment."

"Well, sir, I think we are ready I have had the maintenance crews working around the clock." The colonel looked up at Dutch, "Dutch, you know Murphy's Law don't you?"

Dutch shrugged his shoulders, "Yes, sir, when something can go wrong it will...or something like that...right?"

"Yes, that's the law."

"You, know it's funny you mentioned something going wrong if it could. That is why I came to the office this evening. Something personal has come up and went wrong and I need to use the computer to contact somebody about the problem. You know what I mean sir?"



Lockheed C-5A Galaxy



Operation Sinterklaas (continued)

The colonel tossed his pen on the desk and leaned back in his chair, "Dutch, you and I have been friends for a long time and I usually know what you are talking about. Right now I don't have a clue," he said.

Dutch sat down and rubbed his forehead (something he always did when something was troubling him). The colonel knew this little habit and prepared to hear something bad.

"Well, sir, remember when I took a vacation in the summer and went to Amsterdam to visit my Dutch relatives and see the house where my great grandparents lived?"

Colonel Conway nodded yes.

"Well, while there I met this wonderful girl...er...lady about my age. Her name is Sartje de Lange; I call her by her English name Sarah. I have never have been married and I found out neither had she. Anyway to make a long story short we really seemed to click. I want to ask her to get married when I retire next year..."

The colonel held up his hand, "You're thinking about retiring next year?" The colonel stood up, now he rubbed *his* forehead, turned to look at the map of Europe on the wall.

"Who will replace you Dutch?"

"Well, sir, I'll have 25 years in and I am getting tired of rushing around meeting operational deadlines and other emergencies that always come up in this business and I'd like to settle down in Amsterdam, but that isn't my worry tonight. Anyway there are plenty of guys to replace me.

"Ok, Dutch cut to the chase, what's this about?"

"Well, my girl Sarah is a social worker in Amsterdam. She works placing orphans in homes or an orphanage. We communicate by e-mail and she is on my "buddy list" and we talk back and forth every night. Last night she told me that because of a government "snafu" or red tape or something there isn't enough money for the children at her orphanage to have Sinterklass this Christmas. That's the problem; I am trying to figure out some way to give those kids a Christmas. I was going to use the computer here to talk with her about it this evening. I have some money saved up and ..."

The colonel held up his hand again, "You mean to tell me this problem has nothing to do with operational readiness or anything like that?" he asked.

Dutch raised his eyebrows in surprise, "No sir, I already said we are ready for this operation coming up," he said.



The country of the Netherlands (Holland)



Operation Sinterklaas (continued)

"Dutch, I think the guys at this base will be glad to do something for those kids. I'll put out the word and we have plenty of time this is only December 2nd there's nearly three weeks until Christmas..."

Now it was Dutch's turn to hold up his hand, "Wait, wait a minute sir, you don't understand I have to get something to those kids by the morning of the 6th because that is the day Sinterklaas makes his rounds to the Dutch children and gives them gifts," he said.

Colonel Conway turned around from the map, "Say what? You mean the Dutch don't hold Christmas and Santa Claus, or Sinterklaas, the same time as the rest of the world?" he asked.

"Let me explain, sir, the Sinterklaas started hundreds of years ago as a Dutch Christmas tradition. Kids were told that Sinterklaas, that is St. Nicholas, would sail from Spain with a load of goodies and toys. He would arrive in time to put them in his horse and wagon to begin delivering just after mid-night on December 5th and visit all the homes of the good little children by the early morning of the 6th. The kids didn't hang stockings up or put out milk and cookies like American kids, but they would set out their klompen (wooden shoes) and fill them with hay and sugar for Sinterklaas' horse; they still do this today. Then on the 25th the Dutch celebrate Christmas with their families but do not exchange gifts like we do. Here's another tradition they celebrate New Year's Day on the 26th of December. So I have to find some way to get the toys and goodies then get them to Amsterdam by the night of the 5th."

Dutch stopped lowered his head, clasped his hands together and shook his head, "I don't know what to do," he said.

The colonel rubbed his fore head again and looked up at the ceiling, "You're right Dutch. I didn't understand. Shows how little I know about Dutch culture. However, there may be something we can do and I think it will be within regulations."

"What's that sir?"

"Well, we have to fly those Spanish troops into Amsterdam for this exercise and it is supposed to be a scenario depicting the defense of Western Europe right? Well, there is a need to carry supplies and medical aid to the civilians in any area we will defend. Perhaps we can carry a load of goodies for those kids on one of the planes and list them on the manifest as necessary supplies. We can label the boxes "**Operation Sinterklaas Emergency Supplies**" that is what I will name this operation."



Klompen (wooden shoes)



Operation Sinterklaas (continued)

Dutch looked up at the colonel who was grinning from ear to ear, "Well, sir, that is a stretch, but I like it, "**Operation Sinterklass**" that should fool anybody," he said.

"I know it is a stretch, Dutch, but I think we can get away with it. I know the Spanish troop commander quite well and he has kids of his own. I'm sure he will go along with it."

"Sounds, like a plan to me, sir."

"Ok, Dutch you get in touch with Sarah and tell her we will be in Amsterdam on the night of the 5th with Sinterklass for the children at her orphanage. I'll start the ball rolling with the base officers. This is going to be fun. This operation is going to have a real purpose! By the way, how many kids are we talking about?"

"I don't know, sir, I'll ask Sarah."

Dutch went to the computer to contact Sarah and outline the operation for her. She was thrilled to hear the plan, but a little doubtful that it could be done because she had 117 children at the orphanage, ranging in age from 2 to 14. Dutch told her not to worry because when the USAF sets out to do something it is as good as done.

Dutch came back into Colonel Conway's office just as the colonel was hanging up the telephone.

"Dutch it is all set with the Spanish commander and I have notified the Squadron Commanders. Everybody is happy about **Operation Sinterklass**."

"Well, sir, I got in touch with Sarah, she has 117 kids ages 2 to 14. She is doubtful that we can pull this off by the 6th."

"Did you tell her that this is the USAF and when we decide to do something it is as good as done?"

"My very words exactly."

Colonel Conway picked up the telephone, "I am calling the squadron commanders again we have to get this effort organized. I want each squadron to shop for the different age groups to avoid duplication," he said.

Dutch smiled, "Now you're talkin' sir, it's starting to sound like a military operation. I'll get with the base NCOs (Non-Commissioned Officers) and get them started too," he said.

By the afternoon of December 5th several "Deuce and a Half" trucks (21/2 ton trucks) were lined up on the tarmac ready to unload and box the Sinterklass supplies and put them in to the designated C-5A. The guys had cleaned out the Base Exchange and some of the shops in Seville. There was



Preparing to load the C5-A



Operation Sinterklaas (continued)

any kid would want for Christmas, DVD players, two new TV sets, two X-Box 360 game players with new games for the older kids, candy, fruit, clothing, books, dolls, wagons, trucks, and anything else the guys thought they would have bought for their own kids. Everything was packed into large shipping boxes and labeled "**Operation Sinterklaas Emergency Supplies.**"

Someone had already painted "**Operation Sinterklaas**" with a good likeness of old St. Nick on the nose of the plane. Colonel Conway decided to fly the plane himself and take Dutch as the flight engineer.

Colonel Conway, much to the chagrin of the loadmasters, was supervising the loading. Dutch as walked to the plane chuckled to himself when he saw the colonel working, "Looks like you have things well underway, sir. I just heard from Sarah and she is going to meet us at the airport with a very large horse and wagon decorated for Christmas. I'll call to let her know our exact time of arrival. The presents are going to be delivered by Sinterklass himself to the orphanage on the morning of the 6th. She even has a Sinterklass costume for one or our guys to wear during the delivery. I have to find a volunteer to be Sinterklass," he said.

The colonel grinned, "I think you just volunteered for that job, Dutch"

"But sir, I can't drive a horse and wagon. Maybe the costume won't fit or something. I'll find a guy to do it."

"Dutch, I am sure they will have a driver, those costumes are usually one size fits all. You will volunteer, and by the way, that's an order Sergeant Sinterklass."

Dutch grinned from ear to ear, "Are you pulling rank on me after all we have been through together?"

"Hate to do it, but it looks that way."

Dutch laughed, came to attention and rendered a snappy salute, "Sir, yes sir, when you put it that way how can I refuse?" he said.

I was getting late by the time all the planes were loaded with the troops, vehicles and supplies. Dutch was beginning to worry about the time. He found the colonel back in the base operations, "Sir, it I getting late. When are we going to shove off?"

"Dutch, it is only a little over two hours to Amsterdam and it only 2030 now. We have plenty of time. I have already filed our flight plan and contacted ATC (Air Traffic Control) along the route to be watching for us. I am going home for a little while to say goodbye to my family and ask my wife what she might want me to pick up for her in Amsterdam."



C5-A Front Loading Ramp Fully Extended



Closing the C5-A Front Loading Ramp



Operation Sinterklaas (continued)

"Ok, sir, I am going to get aboard the plane and do some final checks."

Dutch reached into his pocket and pulled out a small ring size jewelry box, "Sir, let me show you what I bought for Sarah," he said. Dutch opened the box.

"Dutch that is the prettiest engagement ring I have ever seen since I gave one to my wife. So are you going to pop the question tomorrow?"

"Yes sir, I am. I thought about doing it by e-mail, but then I thought that wouldn't be too cool." The colonel laughed, "I am not even going there! Well, Dutch I have to get going if I am to make it to Seville see the family and get back here in time for take-off at 2300. See you on the plane," he said.

Take-off was uneventful it was over and hour into the flight when Colonel Conway got a radio message from MATC diverting his plane to Brussels National airport. He switched on the intercom, "We have just been diverted to Brussels National airport to pick up some NATO officers that need to get to Amsterdam for this exercise," he announced.

Dutch hurried forward to the cockpit, "How'd that happen sir? I hope that doesn't make us late meeting Sarah. I'll get in touch with her with the on-board computer and let her know we may be late," he said.

"Dutch, I don't know how it happened, but we have to comply. Remember, ours is not to reason why, ours is but to do or die."

"Yeah, I know sir, just like the guys in the charge of the light brigade."

"You, surprise me Dutch, I never thought you read Kipling."

"Well, sir, I did graduate from high school, and my old English teacher insisted that we read Kipling. I still think it is bunch of crap! Why couldn't somebody else pick up those guys? What's the weather like in Brussels? It can snow there anytime now and they really get a lot once in a while. Remember what happened during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II?"

The co-pilot checked the weather report in Brussels, "They are expecting snow tonight, sir," he said. Dutch turned to go back to the flight engineer's seat, "Yeah, that figures. It's Murphy's Law for sure," he said.



C5-A Flight Panel



Night Take-off out of Mo'ron



Operation Sinterklaas (continued)

It was snowing hard when they landed in Brussels and the runways were already covered with more than three inches. Colonel Conway was directed to taxi to a building away from the regular terminal. Dutch left the plane to locate the passengers. Colonel kept the C-5A engines running at idle, but the snow was rapidly building up on the wings. He would have to wait for the ground crew to blow the snow off the wings before he could take-off.

Dutch was gone for about 20 minutes when he returned, "Our VIP passengers haven't arrived yet. They are bogged down in traffic because of the snow. Looks like we will be late getting to Amsterdam. Look at the time it's already 0100," he said.

Finally 0230 the VIPs arrived and boarded the plane. The ground crews began cleaning the snow off the wings and tail of the plane. Colonel Conway called Brussels ground for permission to taxi. Ground came back with some bad news. The airport was shut down due to the heavy snow.

Colonel Conway was angry, "This is a NATO war exercise and I demand to taxi and take-off. This is also a USAF operation and we are trained to fly and fight in all kinds of weather." Ground came back with taxi instructions but with the caveat that the airport would not accept responsibility for any accident. Colonel Conway answered "Roger" and was pushed back, taxied to the active runway and took-off.

He looked over at the co-pilot and back at Dutch leaning over his shoulder, "Airport closed due to bad weather, my fanny!" He said.

Dutch smiled, "That's the spirit sir. I am going to contact Sarah with our ETA (Estimated Time of Arrival)," he said.

They landed in Amsterdam at 0530 and it was beginning to snow. The other planes of the squadron were already unloaded and the crews inside having breakfast. Dutch went to find Sarah. She was there with the horse and wagon as promised (and a driver). She kissed Dutch lightly and handed him the Sinterklass costume. He went inside to get dressed. Colonel Conway saw a lovely blonde woman who looked to be in her late 30's, "That's gotta be Sarah," he thought.

"Sarah?"

Sarah looked up from the clipboard she was holding, "Yes?" She thought, "This has to be Colonel Conway."

"I'm Colonel Conway, Sergeant Kronemeijer's commanding officer. It is so nice to meet you in person." "What a good-looking girl," he thought.



The Snow in Brussels



Preparing to Unload Operation Sinterklaas



Operation Sinterklaas (continued)

"And so nice to meet you Colonel Conway." Colonel Conway loved the musical voice and the Dutch accent.

"I want to thank you so much for helping Jan...er...Sergeant Kronemeijer to bring Sinterklass to my children."

"The pleasure is all mine Sarah. I haven't this much fun in years."

Dutch came out of the building dressed as Sinterklass. Both Sarah and Colonel laughed out loud.

"Well, I don't think it's that funny. I see you two have met. Ok, let's get this show on the road." Dutch climbed aboard the loaded wagon and Sarah climbed up and sat beside him. All the crews had pitched in loading the wagon, now they applauded Sarah and Dutch.

"It's almost daylight. Looks like we are not going to make it in time."

Sarah nodded, "Yes we will; the orphanage is not very far from here," she said.

Epilogue:

The kids at the orphanage had never had a better Sinterklass visit. Dutch was a hit with the kids. Dutch asked Sarah to marry him. She accepted and he put the diamond ring on her finger. They were married the next year at Christmas. Dutch retired from the USAF. He and Sarah are now living in Dutch's great grandparent's house. Oh, yes they adopted two of the orphans, a brother and sister. Dutch is working for the KLM Airline.

Colonel Conway got his "star" the next year and now Brigadier General William T. Conway USAF (Retired) is a corporate pilot for a Fortune 500 company (I cannot reveal which one).

The plane they flew for the operation still bears the likeness of Sinterklass.

Happy Landings!



Beta Testing

By Jim Martin

Beta testing is a term used across the computer industry to identify testing of a new product, software, etc. As it applies in our flight simulator world it denotes the testing of Aircraft, sceneries, software, navigation aids, and other aspects of our great hobby.

We often see requests for beta testers for a particular product, but not many of us step forward to be a beta tester. It is very important facet of producing something new or improved for us all to enjoy in our hobby.

One of the most familiar Beta testers, at least in our TCA world, is Freeflow Development. They are consistently developing new sceneries for us to fly into or over. Scott Gridley and his team work very hard on developing new sceneries for us, and they will occasionally ask for us to be Beta Testers. When we volunteer, we are providing a service for ourselves and the entire flight simulator community.

I asked Scott Gridley for a few thoughts on Beta testing, and he contributed the following for our education in the field.

Thorough testing is critical to finding errors. "Errors" is a bit of an arbitrary term - some consider simple aesthetic issues to be "errors", while some might be so dramatic as to cause damage to an end users' system. It should ultimately be the goal of all developers to find and fix at least some defined set of errors to reach a basic level of quality.

With respect to the generation of scenery and other addons for FS, freeware developers have few choices:

Public-beta (or "Wide beta")

Release an admittedly untested version of your package to the masses and hope for the best.

Caveats:

1. Someone will break something.
2. Few people will answer the call.
3. Some users will gain a poor first impression of your scenery and prejudge subsequent efforts.
4. Variable quality in testing.

Pros:

1. Little team management required.
2. Great way to build a team.
3. Simple.



Beta Testing (continued)

Beta team testing

Involve a team in development and testing during project creation

Caveats:

Requires management.

Team must be kept motivated.

Requires FOCUS.

Pros:

Can be very thorough, and leads to a more professional quality product.

Reliable – a team working together becomes very efficient and robust, leading to more thorough testing.

Diversity – a well-planned team has persons of various skill level and computing power.

Testing methods:

Random testing.

Simply let users have the package, and report anything that comes to their mind.

Directed testing.

Define a set of tasks and ask testers for feedback towards those tasks only.

Useful if versioning is implemented.

So, my fellow TCA simmers, when FF development, or any other of our FlightSim suppliers, ask for Beta testers, please consider contributing your time. You get a peek at what's new, you get bragging rights to the development of the new product, and you just might enjoy yourself in the meantime.

The Editor



An Interview With ...

Esa Kaihlanen of AFG (Allied FS Group)

We are honored in this month's Island Breezes to have an interview with Esa Kaihlanen of AFG (Allied FS Group), developers of aircraft that many of us have flown and enjoyed. In this interview Esa was asked about the recent release of the Beechcraft King Air B300, available in two Tradewind Business liveries (PJ-PPH- a turboprop charter) and (PJ-BUS) a crew bus for our TCA crews. If you haven't downloaded this Aircraft it is a must have for your hangar. It's available at our TCA website (www.tradewind.org) and the AFG web site (www.alliedfsgroup.com). Our sincerest thanks to Esa, and the crew at AFG, for their great aircraft, their superlative B300 King Air, and for taking the time for this interview.

1. How long have you and the AFG team been involved in Aircraft development?

I started flightsimming with FS 5.1 and got into the esign/repainting when FS2000 came out. The AFG was founded around the same time, and I was one of the first members in the group.

2. How did you and the team get started in aircraft development?

I started by making some simple repaints for existing aircraft (FS98 and FS2000). Shortly thereafter I got AF99 and updated few AF5 models into AF99 standard. One of the first were Project Freeware Group's MD-80 and MD-90 series, I believe. Next, I made a more detailed version of the MD-90 with help from PFG's Bob Klemm.

After the new MD-90 was completed, Hakon Soreide approached me and asked if I'd like to be part of the new development group he was about to set up. That sounded like a good idea to me, as I had become hooked on the aircraft design but didn't have the texturing skills necessary to produce good quality work. When FS2002 came out and Gmax was released, I started working on a model of the YS-11, another type that had been pretty much neglected by the freeware developers. I had developed an interest towards the type back in FS5 days, when I used to fly Souichiro Somma's model. It was the first ever Gmax model that I had attempted and as such the first versions were less than spectacular. The latest one I am quite happy with, but it's starting to show it's age. The current model (or a series of models, to be more exact) in developmet is the Sud Aviation Caravelle, which is coming along pretty nice.



An Interview With Esa Kaihlanen (cont.)

3. What software and other things do you use for design and development?

As a 3D model designer, I now rely on Gmax for my modeling needs. The rest of the team uses variety of programs for textures, flight model and so on.

4. How long did the fantastic Beech King Air 300 take from start to completion?

I picked up the King Air 300 project around mid-March 2007. From there on, the development was quite rapid, with the release taking place in August 2007. However, the model itself was originally started by Juri Pelkonen a long time ago, and had been sitting around waiting for completion for quite a while.

5. Where did the idea to design the B300 for flight simulation come from?

I have always liked King Airs for their looks, and I had felt for a long time that FS scene was missing a good freeware representation of one. Then, totally by accident, I noticed a post on the Simvation forums by Juri Pelkonen donating his unfinished models for someone to complete. Among them was a very nice King Air 300, which prompted me to immediately contact him and ask if he'd like to let me take over the project. The next few months were spent intensively in Gmax finishing the external and interior model, and soon after that the textures were starting to take shape.

6. What do you use for authentication of your work?

I try to find as much information from the net, books and magazines as possible. I seldom rely on a single source, I try to find as many references as possible. At times, it's not possible to find exact figures for the same model you're working on and you'll have to make educated guesses as to how thing should be. This is especially true for the flight modeling. For 3D work, I try to find as good a set of 3D-view drawings as possible, and often compare the model to two or three different set of drawings to see if the model matches them. In addition, I spend lots of time looking at photos, from all possible angles in order to figure out how the model should look. In the end, it's an iterative process that requires lot's of experimentation. The rest of the team of course help out by pointing out areas that don't look quite right and so on. If we get really lucky, someone who has first hand information from the real aircraft will come forward and offer insight.



An Interview With Esa Kaihlanen (cont.)

7. What do you see as the horizon and future for Flight simulation and for a virtual airline like Tradewind?

The VA's will likely continue to exist for a long time to come. Some of them, like TCA, have been around for years, and seen quite a few FS generations come and go. I haven't been involved with one personally, but I know many who do, and they do seem to get a lot of enjoyment from it.

As computers get more powerful and the sim itself evolves, it'll be possible to create more and more detailed models with more accurate systems etc. On the other hand, that same progress makes it increasingly difficult to make a model that matches the user's expectations. Gone are the days when one could finish off a repaint in a few hours time, for example. From a modeling stand point, the challenge is to find all the information needed... and someone to properly interpret it. The time to take on a new project and to finish it has grown dramatically, and it seems each version of the sim will extend it further as more complexity and detail can be added.

Flight sims, and simmers, will be around for as long as there are people interested in flying in general.

Esa Kaihlanen

Do you have questions regarding an article you read in an issue of "Island Breezes?"

Do you have a suggestion(s) for a future article(s)?

Would you like to contribute your expertise, experience, or passion to the newsletter?

Send an email to the "Island Breezes" editor at breeze@tradewind.org.



Chasing the Blue Horizon

By Capt. Tom Kurtz

Hi Guys and Gals,

Are you ready for some more basics? I'm going to continue with the discussion of Airspace. I know you would rather be reading about the Garmin 1000. If you are using FSX by Microsoft there is excellent and excellent set of instructions for the Garmin 1000 in the learning center. Once we are done with a few more basic things we can get into the "Glass Cockpit". Why I decided to review basics is because there are many "computer pilots" out there that don't have a clue about real flying and some cannot even properly fly the simulations. I won't mention the guy's name, but he wrote a letter to the editor of Computer Pilot magazine (I write for the magazine) and asked for some basic instructions. He said he has been flying simulations since they first came out (that has to be 20 years ago) and cannot fly anything but the Cessna 172! He says he doesn't understand how to use all those buttons, switches, and flight management computers, and stuff in the "big Iron" aircraft like the Boeing 737 and 747. Good for him he wants to learn.

So it makes think some basic instruction is needed by a lot of "Computer Pilots" but they are reluctant to admit it. It is characteristic of adults to not to admit they do not understand something. Kids are different, they ask questions and will say they don't understand.

The last time we got together the discussion was about VFR flying in Uncontrolled Airspace. Now let's take a look at Controlled Airspace.

Controlled Airspace probably began with the advent of inexpensive gyroscopic flight instruments, which made travel through clouds possible. The old "See and Avoid rule" was useless in the "soup". Procedures were needed to ensure aircraft separation. This led to air traffic control (ATC) and controlled, or Class E, airspace. The government established a system of airways (they were called Victor Airways), each eight-nautical miles wide with base altitudes of 1,200 feet above ground level (AGL), and designated the airspace within them as controlled airspace. A network of radio beacons, many of which were located at airports, defined the airway system. These were Non-Directional (NDB). Which are still in use today. Look on your sectional maps and you will find them clearly marked. The Automatic Directional Finder (ADF) radio in your plane set to the frequency given in kilohertz (KHZ). Just turn your plane until the ADF needle points straight up and you are headed in the right direction.



Chasing the Blue Horizon (cont.)

More stringent weather minimums for VFR operations were established for this controlled airspace to further separated air traffic. In poor weather conditions, pilots and aircraft had to be qualified and equipped for IFR flight; file IFR flight plans, and coordinates their positions with ATC.

Some parcels of airspace contained many airways, so in those areas, controlled airspace was established at 1,200 feet AGL to coincide with the airways, whether on an airway or not. Take a look at the maps in your flight planner screens in the Microsoft flight simulations and you can see the airways. There is tool bar across the top of the map to control what is displayed. X-Plane has a very good map screen, which may be displayed by using the Control+R key combination. I fly both simulations.

When VOR (Very High Frequency Omni-directional Radio) arrived in the 1950s they were still known as "Victor" airways and still are today. Victor Airways are also known as low altitude airways. In your flight simulations when you plan a flight you are asked to choose the type of airway you wish to fly high or low. If you choose LOW you will notice the suggested altitude will be below 18,000 feet and you will be flying on a Victor Airway. If you fly around the Anchorage, Alaska you will find the Victor Airways average about 16,000 feet.

Contrary to what many pilots believe, controlled airspace does not mean that all flights with it are controlled. It means that IFR services are available to qualified pilots who choose to use them. When you are flying along in your simulation contact ATC and request "Flight Following" ATC will give you a transponder code to "Squawk". When ATC receives your squawk they will tell you your current altitude and location. You are then essentially flying IFR. You may also file a new IFR flight plan. The ATC will follow and advise you until you leave their airspace and then hand you off to the next ATC where you establish contact.

Airport-based radio navigation facilities made instrument approaches possible, greatly improving the utility of aircraft, while also creating some traffic-separation challenges. The media reports on every close call made by aircraft. Approaches, VFR flying under weather conditions, close encounters between VFR and IFR aircraft led to the creation of transition areas. We will look into transition area in the next Island Breezes. Also I'll begin some instruction on flight management computers.

Until then I wish you fair weather, great flying, and happy landings.

Capt. Tom Kurtz



Interesting Links

Tradewind.Org

Tradewind Caribbean Airlines, our own home port-of-call!

FlightAware.Com

FlightAware is a free flight tracker that will change what you think about live flight tracking and aviation data.

FlightSim.Com

Here's the latest flight simulator news. But there's a lot more to FlightSim.Com.

Flight Simulator Software

This site has been created to provide customers with a direct link into the world around Microsoft Flight Simulator.

<http://www.projectai.com>

Complete AI additions.

<http://www.fs-freeflow.com>

Excellent sceneries with animated ships, helicopters, and more.

<http://www.editvoicepack.com>

Additional call signs for Microsoft FS ATC.

<http://portal.fsgenesis.net>

Featuring the most comprehensive and complete collection of terrain mesh products for Flight Simulator.

<http://www.fs-shipyards.org>

Sail, steam, even sink, in sailboats, ships, & submarines.

<http://www.vatsim.net>

Live ATC traffic control.

<http://www.ultimatega.com>

Flight plans, general aviation and corporate aircraft.

<http://www.surclaro.com>

Flight Simulator addons.

<http://walhalla.mine.nu/fs2004.php>

Freeware scenery.

<http://www.dusteagle.tk>

Great flight plans.

<http://www.flightsimnetwork.com/preaircraft/home.htm>

Unique award winning freeware aircraft.





Interesting Links (continued)

<http://www.simvation.com>

Great source for FS Aircraft)

<http://www.msfgateway.com>

Compilation of many FS resources arranged by topic

<http://www.flightsimnetwork.com/premaircraft/home.htm>

Premier Aircraft Design

<http://www.avsim.com>

Home page for AVSIM Online

<http://www.simroutes.com>

Sim Routes

<http://finder.asalink.net/free/>

RouteFinder - Route generator for PC flight simulation use

<http://www.skyvector.com>

Aeronautical charts, airport data, flight planning

