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The Global Voice of Pilots

news

Low Cost growth New Zealand style

Ashes to ashes: Volcano study

LRSTs meet in Toulouse

November - December 2007

Managing the low cost carrier threat - the New Zealand experience



By Kevin Henderson, NZALPA Industrial Director

Following the emergence of 'no frills' budget airlines during the late 80's and early 90's serving passengers motivated by price as opposed to convenience and comfort, pilots around the world have had no choice but to accept 'low cost carriers', which while providing work opportunities for many have been used as a tool by various managements to erode the terms and conditions of mainline carrier pilots.

Approximately 15 years ago Air New Zealand was undergoing significant internal restructuring in order to reduce its cost base and increase productivity in response to the entry of Ansett New Zealand, Air New Zealand's first domestic competitor. While airlines in Europe and the USA were opting for the no frills model Air New Zealand and Ansett New Zealand engaged in a full service competition, introducing full meal and bar services to sectors as short as 30 minutes! In 1995, in response to competition on the Tasman, Air New Zealand entered the 'low cost carrier' market with start up subsidiary 'Freedom Air'.

This paper provides some insight into how NZALPA managed the threat presented by Freedom to mainline Air New Zealand pilot's terms and conditions. It details how Freedom and Air New Zealand pilots worked together to enhance terms and conditions of employment while at the same time facilitating the growth of value based operations from within the full service airline. The results are a credit to the negotiators and pilots of both companies who not only understood the threat, but also supported their negotiators throughout the process. Credit must also be given to some 'Flight Operations Managers' who despite philosophical opposition at the corporate level, understood the benefits to the business of a transferable pilot workforce. Across the Tasman the plight of our Qantas colleagues as they grapple

with the 'Jet Star' challenge provides reason to reflect on seven years of hard work, good fortune and success.

Environment

The Tasman Sea separating New Zealand and Australia by 1200nm has been and remains the most strategically important piece of airspace Air New Zealand serves. Air New Zealand and Qantas are the major players in the area and dedicate approximately 20% and 4% of their respective capacity to the Tasman market. Both airlines have lost significant sums of money on the Tasman due to stiff competition and fare dumping as a result of an 'open skies' agreement covering air traffic crossing the Tasman. In 1995 budget airline 'Kiwi' commenced a 'nuts and cola' operation using at various times leased 727, 757 or A320 aircraft to serve secondary airports on both sides of the Tasman. In response to Kiwi's intrusion onto Air New Zealand's 'patch', and in recognition of its inability to match Kiwi's cost base, Air New Zealand started its own value based operation initially using a leased 757 under the guise of Freedom Air! In 1996 when Kiwi folded Air New Zealand continued operating Freedom services to secondary airports (leisure destinations) in order to block the entry of other competitors to its 'home market'! Despite the rapid growth of low cost carriers in Europe and the USA (from 200,000 seats/wk in 1995 to 1.5m/wk in 2003 in Europe alone) Air New Zealand mainline pilots expressed little concern about the emergence of the company's low cost carrier as it was seldom seen at mainline ports.

Air New Zealand purchased 50% of Ansett Australia in September 1996. In June 2000 it purchased the remaining 50% and promptly set about rationalizing both airlines operations.

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Air New Zealand's 2000 purchase of Ansett prompted hopes that ANZ pilots would achieve pay parity with Australian colleagues.



An announcement that the flying operations of Ansett Australia and Air New Zealand would be integrated generated considerable excitement amongst some Air New Zealand pilots who believed that because Air New Zealand had purchased Ansett Australia they would, or should, be senior to Ansett Australia's pilots and as such enjoy not only access to all Ansett positions, but also pay parity. The Ansett Australia smokescreen effectively blinded many Air New Zealand pilots to the insidious inroads being made to Air New Zealand's traditional routes, both domestic and international, by Freedom Air. At the time Freedom's pilots were largely a non union disparate mix of older experienced expatriates, and young inexperienced pilots who had paid for their own type ratings. Freedom pilots had no seniority system and were prepared to work for substantially less in terms of both wages and conditions than their mainline colleagues. Freedom, Air New Zealand's VBA, was primed and ready for rapid growth.

Collective Employment Agreement (CEA) provisions

In the late 90's Air New Zealand mainline pilots were exposed. Their security of employment provisions were limited to business conducted by Air New Zealand Ltd, not by the wider Air New Zealand group of companies, and hence the possible transfer of work to a subsidiary company, or the growth of subsidiary at the expense of mainline conditions or jobs was of concern. Freedom pilots were working on IEAs (Individual Employment Agreements) and had no effective security of employment provisions.

The challenge for NZALPA was to find a way of protecting mainline conditions while at the same time looking after the realistic career expectations of subsidiary company pilots.

Negotiations

In June 2001 NZALPA commenced negotiations for a new Air New Zealand pilot's CEA. While Air New Zealand management

focused on the issue of integrating the pilots of Ansett Australia and Air New Zealand into one group, the NZALPA team were concerned about the threat Freedom posed, and mindful of the difficulties being experienced by Freedom pilots who were keen to negotiate their first CEA, recognised an opportunity and proposed that before bringing together the pilots of two large airlines (Ansett Australia and Air New Zealand) which operate from within different countries, the company should first prove the concept and their intent by integrating the Air New Zealand and Freedom pilots. Despite the fact that this combination had the potential to save more than \$2m p.a. the Company philosophically opposed the concept, however in order to progress their planned integration of the Ansett Australia and Air New Zealand operations the Company begrudgingly accepted that they would first need to combine operations on the New Zealand side of the Tasman. This acceptance provided us with the opportunity we needed to bring the Freedom and Air New Zealand pilots closer together.

Extraordinary events

The period 2001 to 2002 was extraordinary. Notable events included the closure of Ansett New Zealand's (Qantas NZ) domestic BAE146 operation which left Air New Zealand with no domestic competitor. This was followed by the September 11, 2001 terrorism attacks, the grounding and financial collapse of Ansett Australia on the 12th of September, the near financial ruin of Air New Zealand, the sacking of Air New Zealand's Chief Executive Officer, and an injection of almost \$1 billion by the New Zealand Government to keep the airline alive. A 5 year 'strategic recovery plan' was formulated which amongst other things included plans to expand Freedom.

Prior to the closure of Ansett Australia the company had planned to combine the Ansett and Air New Zealand flying operations such that all pilots flew all aircraft to all ports. NZALPA believed that this concept, dubbed 'interoperability', if applied to the pilots of Freedom and Air New Zealand would significantly enhance security of employment for both groups of pilots. Despite philosophical opposition from corporate level managers within Air New Zealand, 'interoperability' was considered to be advantageous by some flight operations managers due to the significant financial benefits it promised.

Throughout the first half of 2002 NZALPA engaged in an edu-

cation campaign highlighting the threat we faced and the advantages to be derived from working in a cooperative manner with the Freedom pilots who also had much to gain through the concept of interoperability. Despite concerns about being sold down the road by their Air New Zealand counterparts, a core group of Freedom pilots engaged with us and a relationship of trust and understanding developed. Meetings were held in order to assure members of both pilot groups that what we sought to achieve was an arrangement such that neither individual pilots, nor groups of pilots, would be advantaged or disadvantaged as a result of bringing the two groups closer together. At one of the meetings a member, having recognised the opportunity open to us quite correctly summed the situation up by stating that “there has never been a bigger issue worth fighting for”!

By June 2002, after 12 months of negotiating it had become apparent to all Air New Zealand pilots that the company wished to use Freedom as a strategic weapon within both the passenger and labour markets. NZALPA sought

Provisions protecting Air New Zealand’s pilots from other Company pilots flying their aircraft or routes, and

Provisions enabling Air New Zealand’s pilots to operate all jet aircraft owned or operated by Air New Zealand and or its subsidiaries should such an aircraft have more than 70 passenger seats; and

Provisions such that the Air New Zealand could not contract out, transfer or sell any part of the business where an employee covered by an NZALPA agreement might be disadvantaged. Air New Zealand responded, stating that they wanted all Air New Zealand’s short haul (Domestic, Tasman and regional Pacific) operating costs to be the same as Freedoms. The company refused to give us the security of employment enhancements we sought and insisted that they should be allowed to utilize any company airline, current or future, to operate short haul or long haul, wide or narrow body aircraft types on any route or routes. They further insisted that they be able to transfer pilots with aircraft as they saw fit without regard to existing employment conditions. By way of concession the company indicated that they might allow Air New Zealand pilots limited access to some Freedom flying (with no right to return to Air New Zealand) provided NZALPA accepted a wholesale assault on conditions of employment generating a significant and sustainable reduction of operating costs.

Due to the Company’s unwillingness to address any of NZALPA’s security of employment claims, on the 1st of July 2002, notice of a 48 hour strike commencing at 0400 on the 19th of July was served. Mindful of the fact that once the public become aware of a strike significant financial damage is done, when serving the notice we advised the company that we remained available to negotiate. We further advised that we would not advise the media or our members of the strike until after the company went public with the news.

On the 12th of July (before the strike) an agreement was reached such that:

For all Subsidiary Jet Pilots (not just Freedom pilots)

Access was provided to employment opportunities within the parent company; and

Upon moving to the parent they would obtain an Air New Zealand seniority number, become an Air New Zealand employee, and work on the Air New Zealand pilots Agreement; and

All promotional rights within the subsidiary were retained; and

A seniority system based on length of service was to be introduced (imposed); and

Redundancy provisions were to be introduced

Air New Zealand Pilots obtained

An ability to be transferred to a subsidiary company on the Air New Zealand Agreement (involuntary movement); and

An ability to apply for positions within a subsidiary on the subsidiary’s conditions (pilot choice); and

An ability to retain mainline seniority and bidding rights whilst working for a subsidiary; and

An ability to return to the mainline airline in the event of the closure or sale of a subsidiary; and

Provisions to ensure that all rank and service entitlements remained unbroken

STEP 1. SHARING OPPORTUNITIES

The Group Opportunity (GOP) List

The Group Opportunity List was established as a tool for ensuring that, in the event of an interchange of pilots or aircraft between Air New Zealand mainline and any other jet aircraft operation in which the Company directly or indirectly holds a financial interest, our security of employment and job prospects are in no way diminished.

The GOP List obtained its name due to the Company’s philosophical opposition to a combined seniority list. However they were able to accept a Group Opportunity List for all group pilots flying jet aircraft with more than 70 passenger seats! In effect all full time permanent Freedom pilots were offered an opportunity to have their names added to the GOP List. Those who chose not to join the GOP List have no access to employment in the parent company (only one elected not to join the list).

Air New Zealand as the parent company was required to ensure the creation of a Freedom seniority list.

All new hires into the parent company, or into any subsidiary jet company are added to the GOP List in order of joining.

Vacancies within both the parent and subsidiary company are advertised to all pilots.

Freedom pilots were accorded a prior right (protected access) to commands within Freedom; otherwise the highest applicant on the GOP List is required to be appointed to any advertised vacancy.

Pilots applying for and appointed to positions in another group company work on the other company's conditions.

GOP List rights enable pilots to bid and return to their previous company should they wish

In the event of growth in a subsidiary while the parent shrinks, mainline pilots employed prior to the date the GOP List was formed can transfer with the aircraft and remain on most of their mainline conditions (with the exception of the subsidiary's rostering provisions). Those employed after the date the GOP List was formed go on the subsidiary's terms and conditions.

In the event of the sale of any jet subsidiary, pilots can return to mainline or go with the aircraft to the new employer with the right bid for vacancies in Air New Zealand mainline for 12 months.

Note:

No subsidiary jet pilot was forced to join the GOP List.

All subsidiary jet pilots who joined the GOP List achieved a reserved seniority position within the parent company in the order they joined the list. This reserved position became their parent company seniority position when and if they take a position in the parent.

Parent company pilots who take positions within the subsidiary join the bottom of the subsidiary's seniority list irrespective of their GOP list position. This ensures that the subsidiary's pilots are not unfairly exposed to redundancy.

All new hires into the group jet operation go on the GOP List in the order they are employed.

Specific provisions protected the realistic career expectations of Freedom pilots who expected their 733s to be replaced with A320s.

While this agreement significantly enhanced security of employment provisions, mainline pilots were exposed to subsidiary terms and conditions of employment should they apply for or be directed (transferred with their aircraft) to a subsidiary position.

Shortly after reaching the 2002 Agreement Air New Zealand announced that Freedom would follow the Air New Zealand example and replace their 733's with A320's.

In 2004 Air New Zealand pilots entered negotiations to renew their CEA. The Freedom pilots who had been negotiating for almost 2 years without reaching an agreement approached the Air New Zealand pilot leaders and requested that we work with them on a multi employer agreement. Regrettably this request was declined due to concern that the average Air New Zealand pilot did not appreciate the benefits to be derived from supporting the Freedom pilots through the negotiation process.

Interoperability (all pilots, flying all aircraft, to all ports) was again a topic discussed during both the Air New Zealand and Freedom negotiations in response to the company desire to reduce operating costs. Despite acknowledging that significant savings would be realised, the Company remained philosophically opposed to interoperability, and on each and every occasion when asked if they had any intention of bringing the two pilot groups closer together the answer was an emphatic NO.

STEP 2: SHARING WORK

Just over two weeks following ratification of three year agreements for both Air New Zealand and Freedom pilots the Company announced their 'Short Haul Strategy' which they claimed would save them in excess of \$50m p.a.. Savings of \$2m p.a. were expected through integrating the Freedom and Air New Zealand A320 operations, and crewing those aircraft with a single pool of pilots working on Freedom terms and conditions of employment.

The company entered into an obligatory 'consultation process' during which it became clear that the pooling of the aircraft and pilot resources was crucial to their plan. Despite the fact that the plan did not conform with the terms and conditions of either CEA, the company maintained they could impose their planned change with or without pilot agreement. They proposed to transfer Air New Zealand pilots and aircraft into Freedom (some on Air New Zealand terms and conditions and others on Freedom's) through utilisation of provisions covering the transfer of aircraft, however their desire to operate two brands with a single pool of pilots made this contractually impossible.

NZALPA met with Air New Zealand's CEO in order to impress upon him the need to comply with the Air New Zealand NZALPA pilots Agreement which states that "should the company decide to implement significant changes to the way it does business then a renegotiation of the relevant parts of the Agreement will take place". We successfully argued that the company plan for pilots of Freedom and Air New Zealand to share their work was a significant change, and the company reluctantly agreed to negotiate.

As time passed it became abundantly clear that the company wanted to have a single pool of pilots flying all A320's irrespective of brand, rostered to a common set of rostering rules throughout the Tasman and near Pacific under the Freedom Airline Operating Certificate. They also wanted to retain the existing cost differential between the Freedom and Air New Zealand CEAs.

For NZALPA the alternative to negotiating with the company would have been to engage in what would have inevitably been a protracted legal battle. As this would have taken the form of a rear guard action while the company proceeded with its plan, it is probable that in winning the battle we may well have lost the war! The down side to negotiating for us was that under New Zealand industrial legislation, given that we were not bargaining for a collective employment agreement (CEA), we did not have access to traditional means of industrial persuasion and therefore had to rely on the power of persuasion, time, and whatever pressure our members could exert upon their managers to impress upon them the need to negotiate meaningfully.

Joint negotiations were conducted between the Company, Freedom and Air New Zealand pilots for separate CEA variations which were ratified by members in March 2006. These variations enabled work sharing to commence.

Work Sharing

The 'A320 External Operations Work Sharing Agreement' added to the 2002 CEA's GOP List opportunity sharing provisions as follows

There are provisions such that Freedom and Air New Zealand pilots can share their work while remaining on their own CEA terms and conditions.

Because the company would not place the Freedom pilots on the same terms and conditions as their Air New Zealand counterparts

Provisions specifically prohibit the operation of aircraft by mixed crews i.e. Freedom and Air New Zealand pilots cannot operate together.

Provisions ensure that rosters are not biased in favour of one or the other pilot group.

A cap was placed on the number of Freedom pilots such that there can never be more pilots on Freedom terms and conditions than there were at the time the agreement was reached.

A limitation was placed on the rate at which Freedom pilots can be replaced should they leave or bid into Air New Zealand.

Provisions ensure that no pilot can be made redundant as a result of work sharing

Provisions ensure that in the event of a redundancy situation, affected pilots (Freedom or Air New Zealand) are identified in an appropriate manner. Air New Zealand and Freedom pilots obtained ownership rights to certain contractually identified routes.

Provisions ensured that no pilot would have their aircraft type, rank, or base affected as a result of the work sharing Agreement. Provisions ensured that career progression rights remained unchanged

Provisions ensured that the work sharing arrangement are only applicable to the A320 operation, and only while the A320 work is being shared on the Tasman and to Regional Pacific destinations.

Provisions ensure that in the event the 'Work Sharing' ceases, all pilots return to and operate their company owned and operated aircraft.

Provisions ensure that pilots have an effective influence on fatigue related issues.

Access was provided to opportunities within Air New Zealand, not just Air New Zealand Ltd

Provisions provide that pilots will not be 'unhinged' from current jet aircraft types (or derivatives) or the work they do.

Just over two weeks after the ratification of the 'Work Sharing' variations Air New Zealand announced its intention to enter into an 'open code share' arrangement with Qantas known as the Trans Tasman Network Agreement. This announcement was quickly followed by the renaming of Freedom Air to 'Zeal 320' which we were told was simply an internal name intended to generate a sense of belonging for the staff. Management assertions that Air New Zealand's A320 pilots "now work for Zeal" galvanized the pilots into a group loosely referred to as Zealots!

Following the rejection of the open code share plan by competition watchdogs on both sides of the Tasman, Qantas expanded its Tasman operation utilizing mainline aircraft as well as those of subsidiaries Jetstar and Jet Connect. Pacific Blue (Virgin) announced that it would expand its operation and fly domestically within New Zealand and across the Tasman, and a new entrant 'Kiwi Jet' announced that it would commence operations within New Zealand with 4 BAE 146 aircraft towards the end of 2008.

STEP 3: INTEGRATION

In September 2007, in response to what was described as brand confusion, Air New Zealand announced that it would no longer offer the Freedom brand to the market. Given that the 'work sharing' agreements cease when either Freedom or Air NZ stop operating A320 aircraft on the Tasman, this decision was greeted with concern by Freedom pilots who believed that their work would simply being transferred into the mainline airline, and that as a result they might be made redundant.

NZALPA, representing both Freedom and Air New Zealand pilots, was faced with a predicament. Work sharing cessation provisions triggered by the decision to remove the Freedom brand dictated that the Freedom pilots be made redundant, however the Freedom pilots could have reasonably argued that their work still existed, and that it was simply being transferred to mainline pilots. Following a number of high level meetings with Air New Zealand management the company agreed to work with NZALPA's Freedom pilots in order to ensure that Freedom pilots displaced by the removal of the Freedom brand were neither out of work or financially disadvantaged. While final details are yet to be agreed, the integration package offered will likely include:

An ability for Freedom pilots to take a flying position in Air New Zealand commensurate with their GOP list position

Agreement that the Freedom pilots will not be 'locked on' to the first Air New Zealand aircraft type they fly

Retention of income at current level for 6 years or until the rate for the job they take is greater

A leave without pay option

Provision to recompense pilots for extra living costs imposed as a result of integration

This arrangement will be offered to each Freedom pilot as an individual agreement, over and above their collective agreement. Should the Freedom pilots accept this package it will avoid possible redundancies and the inevitable court battles. There will be approximately 25 A320 Command positions available for Air New Zealand pilots and in total almost 100 seat changes.

NZALPA had been planning to engage in multi employer bargaining between Air New Zealand and Freedom as both pilot CEAs are due to be negotiated within the next 3 months. Air New Zealand's decision to announce the withdrawal of the Freedom brand, and pragmatically deal with the Freedom pilots before CEA negotiations commence was a welcome move. There is now no need to pursue multi employer bargaining as Freedom pilots will all go onto Air New Zealand mainline terms and conditions of employment as they take Air New Zealand positions.

Summary

The 'Group Opportunity List' enabled the pilots of Freedom and Air New Zealand to access promotional opportunities across both companies in an orderly manner.

The 'Work Sharing Agreement' created an environment within which the pilots of both companies could share each others work without feeling threatened.

The 'Integration Package' enabled the two groups of pilots to become one. All Air New Zealand group jet pilots will fly on mainline terms and conditions of employment

Interoperability will occur by default. All pilots will now fly all aircraft to all ports – and importantly this will be done by all on the same terms and conditions of employment.

The company remains free to start up, invest in or dissolve airlines. It can enter any market it chooses, and our pilots need not feel threatened by such initiatives all jet pilots have access to all positions in any and all subsidiary jet operations the company chooses to be involved in.

The positive results achieved are due in many respects to the fact that NZALPA recognized the Value Based Airline (LCC) threat as it emerged, and acting in a non threatening manner used



industrial muscle to establish a seniority system and access to positions in the mainline airline for our LCC colleagues. Freedom pilots were provided with choices, became interested in working with NZALPA and as a result over time a close working relationship based on trust and mutual respect developed. Through sharing opportunities and work we have managed to facilitate an orderly integration of low cost carrier pilots into the parent company.

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Airbus hosts the first pilot's LRST member meeting



Capt Rob van Eekeren reports from Toulouse

In 2003, The European Cockpit Association (ECA), IFALPA and IATA joined forces to develop practical solutions to airport safety issues. The result was the Local Runway Safety Team (LRST) initiative. LRSTs are made up of members from a variety of disciplines within the aviation industry including air traffic control officers, airport managers, rescue and fire fighting officers and pilots who, working together devise strategies and solutions to deal with airport safety issues. Three years on from the establishment of the initiative the number of teams in Europe has grown to 160. Although, at present, not all of these have a pilot member most of the teams associated with major airports do have that advantage.

The pilots active in LRSTs come from both Pilot Association and management backgrounds however in this case they are on the same side of the fence as pilot representatives dedicated to the improvement of safety at airports.

A time for review

With the third anniversary of the LRST concept reached, ECA, as the European Representative body of IFALPA together with IATA, proposed a joint meeting tasked with the development of harmonised practices across the European LRST network. Furthermore the meeting examined ways to boost pilot participation in LRST work. The meeting which took place in Toulouse 04-05 December 2007 was led by myself and Ton van der Veldt of IATA. Together, we presented the latest developments in runway safety. We were joined by Yvonne Page, Eurocontrol Runway Safety Project Manager and Michel Tremaud Senior Director safety programmes at Airbus. The meeting was also attended by Philippe Tomassello, EASA

Airports Manager, who gave an update regarding EASA's future plans for airport regulations. In order to encourage participation from as many of the participants as possible an interactive format was used and as hoped, this resulted in a number of excellent debates and discussions among the 35 participants.

The only guideline set down for the meeting was a call on the participants to answer the following two questions:

Which concrete item(s) have you achieved at your airport?

Which concrete item(s) would you like to be achieved within two years at your airport?

This was followed by peer group discussions. Ideas, best practices, encountered problems and solutions were discussed and concrete results have been achieved.

A380 plant visit

Airbus sponsored the venue and both lunches. The dinner on 04 December was jointly sponsored by IATA and the European Cockpit Association. The meeting concluded with a visit to the Airbus A380 production line. In summary the excellent discussions over the two days of the meeting combined with the opportunity to interact in the social environment has been a major step forward in the development of Europe's inter-pilot LRST network. Clearly there is a lot of benefit in this type of meeting and a number of the participants expressed their desire for follow up meetings. The practicalities of this will be examined by ECA and IATA.

Some of the results and recommendations from the meeting :

- ✈️ Keep to and comply with the ICAO Annex 14 Standards and Recommended Practices for signs, markings and lighting. This will not only guarantee world wide operational use but it also reduces the need for special training of pilots. Only if an LRST has very good reasons, to deviate perhaps a new sign or marking then a temporary trial of a new sign or marking could be carried out. This must be clearly identified and feedback must be sought regarding the effectiveness of the new sign or marking. An example of this is the “runway ahead” marking that is currently used at a number of European airports.
- ✈️ Unless used for a clearance, avoid using the phrase “TAKE OFF” to avoid compromising situational awareness. Phrases such as “cabin crew prepare for departure” or similar should be used instead of “Cabin crew prepare for take off”.
- ✈️ Include an active heading check on the runway to avoid using the wrong runway and confirm by suitable means that you are on the correct runway if there are parallel runways.
- ✈️ Follow the IFALPA recommendation regarding the use of aircraft lights to help avoid runway incursions*.
- ✈️ Follow the IFALPA recommendation for the designation of taxiways to help avoid runway incursions*.
- ✈️ Assess the results of the LRST on a yearly basis, by Safety Management System (SMS) tools.
- ✈️ Publish hotspot maps for your airport and then work to mitigate the risks associated with the hotspot or preferably remove them altogether. A thorough SMS Risk Assessment of each hotspot should be carried out to find out what mitigation measures are required. EUROCONTROL is to work on the harmonisation of hotspot maps (use of colour etc.)
- ✈️ Insist that only aviation English is used for operations on a runway. A single frequency for all runway operations is an established concept. But the advantage of this is negated if an aircraft gets a crossing clearance in a non aviation English language whilst another aircraft waits for its take off clearance in aviation English.
- ✈️ To facilitate further communication IFALPA should develop a web page for LRST pilot members at www.ifalpa.org
- ✈️ The use of perimeter taxiways should be encouraged wherever possible to avoid the need to cross runways. The use of perimeter taxiways will also help to improve airport capacity and improve operational integrity.
- ✈️ A need for training regarding airport lighting, signage, marking was identified. This should be regulated by EASA during initial training and should be included in recurrent training or part of CRM training on a regular basis to prevent runway incursions. Standardisation and harmonisation to ICAO Annex 14 should be the goal. Training could also be achieved at the local level as part of a LRST/ awareness campaign.
- ✈️ Conditional Clearances; Limited use preferred, when used, follow latest ICAO provisions. Positive acknowledgement from flight deck regarding traffic concerned is required.
- ✈️ Overrun prevention / mitigation; Runway distance available technology could help prevent an overrun. Possible options included the use of technology on the aircraft. A cheaper option was the use of distance to go signs along the side of the runway. Use of EMAS was supported, although there may be limitations in certain conditions, for example, cold climates.

**At present these are proposed policies which are expected to be approved by the 63rd IFALPA Conference in April 2008.*



Keep to and comply with the ICAO Annex 14 Standards and Recommended Practices for signs, markings and lighting except when trialling new signage or marking designs.

Case Study: Volcanic ash encounter

By Capt. Dominico Santisi and Andrew Tupper

On July 17 2006, a Gulfstream II aircraft was engaged doing survey work over Papua New Guinea, flying at FL390 near 6.2S 144.2E on a SW to NE mapping pattern, and relaying positions through a commercial passenger flight to their north on the Japan/Australia route. The Gulfstream was flying in apparently clear air. At 0518 UTC (15:18 local time, or mid-afternoon), the right-hand engine flamed out, descent was initiated, and the other engine failed a minute later. The Captain of the Gulfstream asked the passenger flight to declare an emergency, and descended towards Port Moresby. At FL290, the right-hand engine was successfully restarted, and the left-hand engine was regained at FL240, approximately 10,000 ft above the highest ground level in the area.

The aircraft continued on reduced power to Port Moresby where it landed safely. The operators and engine manufacturer immediately launched an intensive investigation, which included boroscope engine analysis and fuel analysis.

No ash or sulphurous odours were observed by the aircraft crew. The engines were performing normally prior to the failure. External inspection of the engines showed nothing unusual.

Extensive testing of the fuel was performed but the results were normal.

Boroscope inspection showed some very small amounts of a grey powder inside. Material examination by the manufacturer showed that the particles were 'mineral-based and principally composed of carbon, oxygen, calcium, sulphur and phosphorus'.

The Fuel Flow Regulators (FFRs) were removed and subject to intense analysis. According to the manufacturer's reports, 'on different components of these assemblies fine mineral rich particles measuring from approximately 5 to 300 microns in size were found. The mineral based (sulphur, potassium, calcium, silicium) particles were sulphur rich.'

The manufacturer concluded after their analysis that a cylindrical filter in each FFR may have become blocked by volcanic ash, which at that altitude could have caused an engine flame out.

On descent, the increasing pressure would have substantially cleared the filter, allowing an engine restart.

On the basis of these analyses including the elimination of any other possible causes such as fuel contamination, the engine manufacturer believes that the double-flame out had been due to volcanic ash. This is supported by partially obscured observations of eruptions from a nearby volcano, Manam Island, and the observed winds at FL390 being from the volcano towards the area where the Gulfstream was flying its mapping patterns. If the ash was coated with a thin ice layer and quite diffuse, then the pilots would have noted nothing unusual.

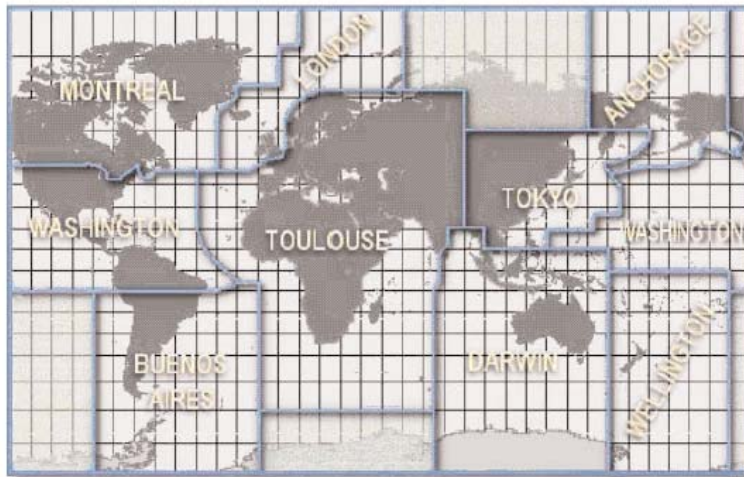


Fig. 1 - Map of VAAC areas of responsibility.

The case study described gives a preliminary analysis of another intriguing incident that may have far-reaching implications: an incident where a twin-engine jet aircraft apparently flew through cloud too diffuse to be noticed,

but suffered a double engine flame-out at high altitude, and without sustaining engine damage. For this analysis we are indebted to the engine manufacturer, the aircraft operator, and the captain of the flight, who have given extensive information about the incident and their own investigations. Although large commercial aircraft may not have FFRs as sensitive as those of the Gulfstream engines, they are still at risk of flame-out from ash melting inside the engines, and of expensive inspections and repairs for more minor encounters.

VAACs

Nine VAACs (Volcanic Ash Advisory Centres) have been designated by the International Civil Aviation Organization, in collaboration with the World Meteorological Organization, to provide their expertise to civil aviation in the case of significant volcanic eruptions. The VAACs provide a co-ordinating role, giving analyses and forecasts of ash clouds using remote sensing observations and dispersion models so that local Meteorological Watch Offices can write SIGMETs. The VAAC analyses are also



Fig. 2 Eruption of Ruang, Indonesia, on 25 September 2002.

used directly by many airlines, particularly in areas where SIGMET issuance is less than perfect. The development of the warning system, called the International Airways Volcano Watch, is being overseen by an ICAO Meteorology Divisional Meeting established Operations Group.

Remarkable progress has been made, and the aviation industry has participated in all of these processes. Volcanic clouds are complicated, however, and much more work is required before we have a truly fail-safe warning system.

Remote sensing and its problems

Sometimes, tracking volcanic ash is easy. Figure 2 shows an eruption of the remote Ruang volcano in Indonesia, a country with around 129 active volcanoes. This 2002 eruption occurred during Indonesian working hours and in clear air, and as a result volcanologists were able to give the VAAC a tip-off and the ash cloud to over FL600 was seen easily. However, although remote sensing techniques are steadily growing more sophisticated, with new satellites and new algorithms able to separately track ash-rich and sulphur dioxide-rich clouds, no eruption is really simple. In the case of Ruang, the cloud dispersed in four different directions, and some parts of it were too water-rich to be able to detect ash.

In other cases, it has been clear that neither remote sensing nor dispersion modelling can be enough to quite go the distance. Figure 3 shows the astonishing calculated path of an ash cloud from the Reventador volcano in Ecuador in November 2002, that caused an ash encounter and minor damage to an aircraft over Micronesia 20 days later, and was then observed by another aircraft 12 hours after the first incident. The cloud had been undetectable in remote sensing for 13 days prior to the encounters: it's a brave meteorologist who would keep a warning going for that long without any verification from observations.

In the tropics, ordinary thunderstorm clouds usually reach well above cruising levels, and their long lasting cirrus anvils can com-

pletely obscure satellite detection of lower eruption clouds. Even worse, tropical eruption clouds will "entrain" or suck in water vapour from atmosphere as they rise, becoming more thunderstorm-like themselves, and rising higher than they otherwise would because of the energy released from the condensing water. Mid latitude and polar eruption clouds can be mixed with cloud of developing low pressure systems. Eruptions also usually contain great amounts of water that further confound ash detection algorithms.

To overcome these problems, an increasing emphasis is being put on integrating ground-based and satellite-based detection. An added benefit of ground-based monitoring is that volcanologists can use seismic techniques to predict volcanic eruptions, potentially permitting diversionary routing to be implemented before an eruption occurs. Diversionary routing based on expert advice can save lives even when the observatory at the volcano is incapacitated, as was the case in a massive overnight 2005 eruption at the Manam volcano in Papua New Guinea described earlier. In this case, airlines had closed the route over the volcano overnight because of advice about the volcanoes unpredictable behaviour. An eruption to about FL750 destroyed a satellite phone donated by an airline to help eruption reporting, and had the observers barely escaping with their lives as hot rocks rained down upon them.

In these and other cases, volcanological agencies are up against formidable problems when predicting eruptions for aviation. They will also, understandably, be focused more on ground than air hazards, without constant liaison and bridge-building from the aviation community. Often, monitoring equipment will be deployed where the population needs are greatest rather than to service international aviation. To address this, ICAO has recently made possible the cost-recovery of volcanic observation costs from aviation, but to implement these arrangements will take solid negotiations between the major players in each country.

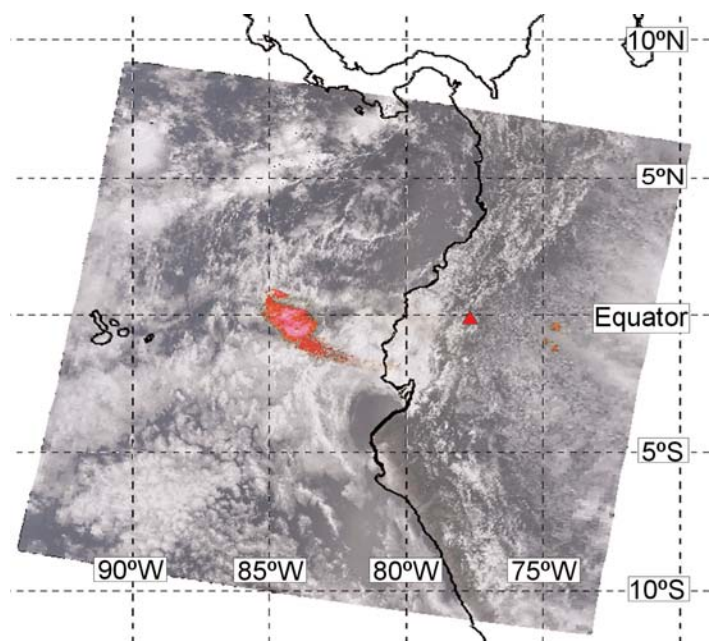


Fig. 3 - An ash cloud (shown in red) drifts westwards from an eruption of Reventador volcano in Ecuador on 4 November 2002. 20 days later, an Airbus suffered minor engine abrasion and pitot tube damage on the other side of the Pacific over Micronesia - this cloud is thought to be responsible.



Fig 4. Manam volcano, Papua New Guinea, erupts on 24 October 2004. A lower level, brown ash plume is overshadowed by a developing 'umbrella cloud' to about FL500.

A further complication is that meteorological and aviation communities have had long years of symbiotic development during the 20th century to learn to work in phase: meteorologists and aviation personnel usually talk the same language and think in terms of hours to minutes. Volcanoes, however, work in timescales from millennia to hours, and in order to manage local populations, volcanologists focus on warning times of the order of days to weeks. Many volcano observatories are not continuously staffed outside business hours, and may communicate infrequently with meteorological or aviation authorities, which are often not in the same government department.

Where funding and political support exist for volcanic monitoring focused on aviation, such as in Alaska, the results can be spectacular. Many of the world's volcanoes are, however, in relatively poor countries where, to cite examples, established volcanological observatories have had equipment stolen or vandalized and have also had their premises occupied by the military or burnt down in rioting. Moreover, communications can be a very difficult.

Cross-disciplinary, scientific and operational cooperation between meteorologists and volcanologists will result in a better warning system.

Communications problems

Perhaps the most frustrating part of any warning system is when everything nearly works properly but appropriate warnings fail to reach aircraft in the sky because of one broken link in the chain. ICAO and the VAACs are doing their best to remedy the ubiquitous problems with SIGMET and NOTAM issuance, and to work better with volcanologists.

Pilot actions

On the aviation industry side, VAACs need strong support in two ways. Firstly, with the understanding that volcanic ash is not a solved problem, operators need to be proactive in pushing for better monitoring in their own region. Secondly, in real time, VAACs desperately need every sighting of volcanic ash should be reported in real-time to the local

Area Control Centre (ACC), and preferably followed up with a written report after landing. Every encounter with ash or sulphur dioxide (a sharp, 'struck match' smell) should be immediately reported and then followed up by the operator, preferably involving the relevant volcanic ash advisory centre, meteorological watch office, and ICAO in the process. Serious incidents must be fully investigated in their scientific and aviation contexts as soon as possible, under the usual convention of anonymity for the airline. Only through intensive observations and a better definition of acceptable risk can we come to an understanding of what concentrations call for warnings to be issued.

VAAC observatories have had many experiences where pilot-reported data is the only information available for a particular eruption, or is much more timely than satellite imagery. For example, in the 1994 Rabaul eruption, the inclusion of the phrase 'mushroom format' in the description of the cloud type in a real-time pilot report was critically important for realising the magnitude of the eruption.

Currently a volcanic ash reporting form is available and is designed to be faxed upon landing.

With the rapid advance of global telecommunications, it may be appropriate to consider the development of alternative ways for pilots to file this information apart from a paper form, such as through electronic reporting systems during flight, or through the Internet on landing.

There have been several occasions where the ACC had been able to facilitate direct conversation between the air-crew and the meteorological authorities, including an occasion where the Captain had been patched through directly to the responsible VAAC to describe the eruption

Fig. 5 Manam volcano on a more normal day, snapped from an F28 by Air Niugini pilot David Innes. With the cloud cover and general murkiness, the VAAC was flying blind apart from pilot reports.





Fig 6. 1994 eruption of Rabaul, Papua New Guinea, seen from the Space Shuttle. Pilot reports were critical in establishing the height and scale of the eruption while satellite imagery was still being processed.

cloud that he was observing. Although these opportunities do not yet exist universally, they should not be neglected. Whatever way an eruption was reported – whether through a relayed message through the ACC or airlines operations centre, or a live video feed from the cockpit, the information will be appreciated not only by the VAAC but by other pilots whose lives may be saved.

Conclusions

How could a double flame-out like the one described at the start have been prevented? Volcanoes such as Manam are frequently active and the nearby airspace is only closed when there is certain knowledge that ash is at high altitudes. A significant increase in the amount of available resources, such as the provision of appropriate radar and/or volcanic ash sensing cameras deployed to detect high altitude emissions, would be required to monitor

each such volcano to the extent where we could be confident (even then, emissions lifted in cumulonimbus convection over the volcano would be undetectable). Cloud does and always will provide a strong inhibiting factor in remote sensing detection by the VAAC. However, in this case, the Manam activity had been observed by other airlines earlier in the same day, and had a pilot report been filed, the Gulfstream pilot would have been forewarned and may have chosen to fly elsewhere.

The multiple-engine flame-out is the first one to be associated with ash too diffuse to be observed by the crew. We emphasise that every eruption cloud and every single volcanic ash encounter, no matter how trivial, must be reported by aviation operators to help better define the threat. As we better understand what is safe and what is not, our warnings should get more and more accurate without either compromising safety or over-warning.



Dominico Santisi is Captain flying MD80s for Alitalia he is also a member of the IFALPA ATS Committee. In addition he represents the Federation on ICAO's International Airways Volcanic Watch Study Group.



Andrew Tupper is a Senior Meteorologist at the Darwin Volcanic Ash Advisory Centre Bureau of Meteorology, Australia.

IFALPA Safety School Attendance tops 50



Over 50 students from pilot and air traffic control groups took part in the IFALPA Safety School which took place in Bangkok at the end of November hosted by the Thai Air Line Pilots' Association. The safety school is designed to give those attending a thorough grounding in the basic knowledge they need to embark on work as a safety volunteer. Although the training also includes sessions that deal with the structure and working practices of the Federation and ICAO the bulk of the course is dedicated to accident investigation/prevention and airport liaison issues, the latter as part of the Local Runway Safety Team initiative. In addition, to the class room elements, this course also had the advantage of a field work session at Bangkok

Suvarnabhumi Airport thanks to ThaiPA and the airport authority.

Embry Riddle accreditation pending

The Safety School is at present in midst of becoming accredited by the Embry Riddle Aeronautical University. Once this process is completed attendance at the Safety School will attract credits towards degrees granted by the University. There are plans to run the Safety School at least two times during 2008, to get more information on these and other courses planned contact IFALPA's Training Consultant Brian Greeves tasco@netvigator.com

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Blakey calls for action on Runway Incursions

By Capt. Bob Perkins

In August of this year, the outgoing FAA Administrator Marion Blakey declared that the prevention of runway incursions should be a top priority for US airlines. She initiated a “call to action” and enlisted the help of all the US pilot associations, as well as US air carriers, airports, and ATS organizations to form short, medium and long term plans to combat this issue. The short term plans were to be completed in 60 days. Additionally she required that all parties to this process commit their resources at the highest level to ensure success.

While there is currently no mandate to expand this initiative beyond the United States borders, it is a fact that many of our flight crews do operate into and out of the USA. As such, on occasion, we do find crews involved in runway incursions whether by unfamiliarity with the airport layout, or a misunderstanding of the clearance or because of different phraseology and procedures. Regardless of the reason, it is incumbent on us all to ensure that our carriers and crews operate in a manner that will minimize the possibility of a runway incursion.

Some of the short term goals that the United States carriers are being asked to accomplish are to ensure that training, including simulator training, contains realistic scenarios involving airport surface operations from gate to runway and back, as well as the normal airborne items. As well, carriers and pilot associations are being asked to review their Flight Crew Operating procedures and manuals to ensure that proper guidance is being given to flight crews regarding taxi procedures and crew distraction.

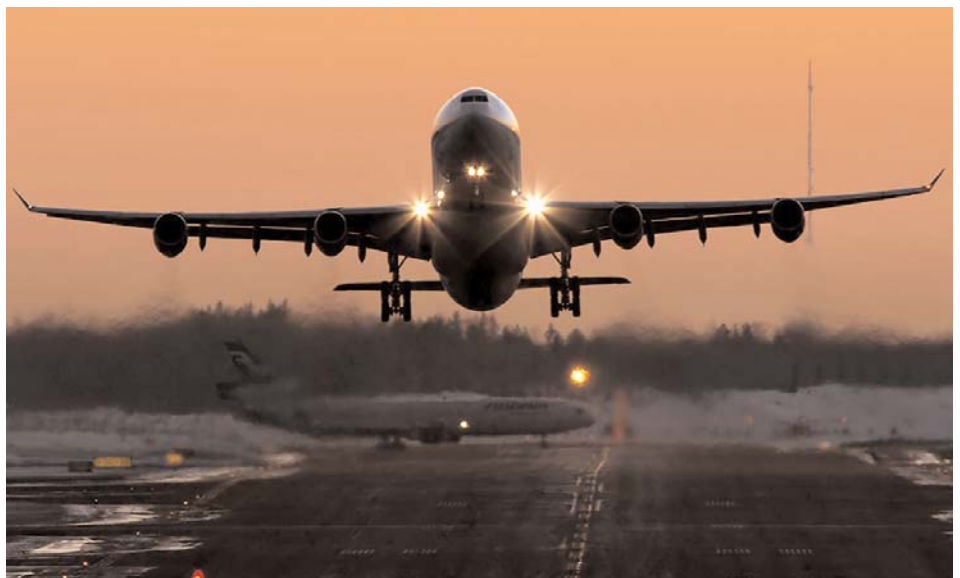
Of course, it goes without saying that a flight crew is only one of many “participants” in any incursion, there are most often other circumstances such as airport markings, signage and lighting, the air-

field layout itself, and surface movement procedures. As well, Air Traffic Services play a big role in the surface movement area as well as their own airport specific flow procedures, and phraseologies.

The FAA is also targeting airports and ATS as part of this overall incursion prevention plan.

While at the present time there is no requirement on carriers outside of the United States to participate in this initiative, it goes without saying that IFALPA supports the reduction of runway incursions, and, in fact, have an on-going project team directly targeting runway safety. IFALPA has already committed that the theme for the Safety Seminar at the Mexico 2008 Conference will be Runway Safety.

In support of the US initiative, we would ask that each member carrier review their own training programs, including properly scripted training simulations, airport qualifications, and SOPs with the goal of ensuring proper training and guidance to crews.



Current Recruitment Bans

The following airlines are currently subject to recruitment bans and or other sanctions while they are in dispute with an IFALPA Member Association. For full details please see the IFALPA website www.ifalpa.org

Israel:

Israel Air Industries (IAI)

El Al

Italy:

Italian Helicopter Companies

Kenya:

Kenya Airways

Dates for your Diary

January

No meetings scheduled

February

4

9th Executive Committee Meeting

Chertsey, UK

Contact: Heather Price heatherprice@ifalpa.org

4-7

9th Executive Board Meeting

Weybridge, UK

Contact: Heather Price heatherprice@ifalpa.org

8

Committee Chairman's Meeting

Weybridge, UK

Contact: Heather Price heatherprice@ifalpa.org

March

No meetings scheduled

April

14

10th Executive Committee Meeting

Mexico City, Mexico

Contact: Heather Price heatherprice@ifalpa.org

14-16

10th Executive Board Meeting

Mexico City, Mexico

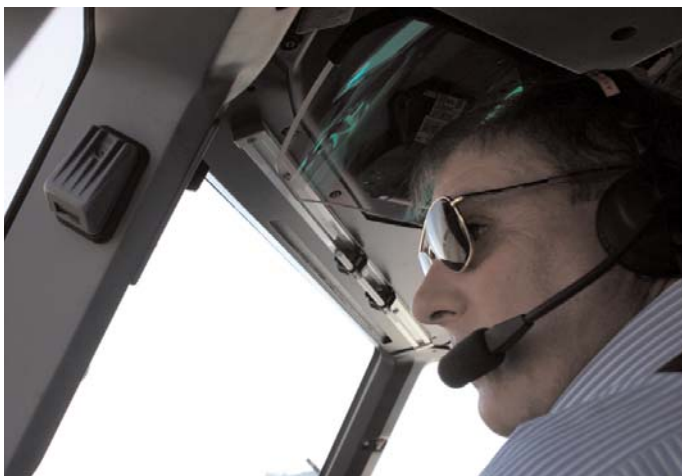
Contact Heather Price: heatherprice@ifalpa.org

18-22

63rd IFALPA Conference

Mexico City, Mexico

Contact Heather Price: heatherprice@ifalpa.org



Have an idea for an article or want IFALPAnews to cover your story? Contact Gideon Ewers, IFALPA Media and Communications Officer Tel. +44 1932 579041 or email gideonewers@ifalpa.org

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