

CABIN CREW

First Cabin Crew Fire Trainer for India

Flywings Simulator Training Center in Delhi, will take delivery of a V7000 Brigade™ cabin crew fire trainer built by Flame Aviation from the Netherlands. The cabin crew fire trainer is expected to be delivered and fully operational by mid-October.

Capt. Sanjay Mandavia, managing director of FWSTC said: "Now, with this advanced cabin crew fire trainer from Flame Aviation, we can fulfil the airlines' demand for professional fire train-

ing equipment in the region. With the arrival of the V7000 Brigade cabin crew fire trainer, we are proud to announce the arrival of the first professional fire training equipment in India. This will not only enhance the training for both flight and cabin crew but also give them realistic fire training scenarios. This training will also be helpful to other sectors in the industry where people are exposed to the threat of fire."

A New Life (for an old DC3)

Whilst many people in the aviation world have a passion for the industry, the reality is that a sound business sense usually has to overrule sentiment. It is a therefore a particular pleasure to find a situation where both views have been satisfied by a single project.

This tale is about a Douglas DC3, an iconic aircraft type. This particular aircraft was built in 1944, and brought to Europe in 1945, where it served as one of the many workhorses in the latter part of the war and beyond.

Later still, sporting the colours of Air France, the machine began life anew in the world of civil aviation, and followed a familiar pattern of various roles, not just as a passenger aircraft, but also eventually including mail service, geo-survey and so on.

Inevitably it became outdated, and ended up neglected and corroding at an airfield in the Netherlands. A potential revival to feature it as a background prop in a movie and musical show crashed to a halt when it was being transported by road, and an accident resulted in the virtual destruction on the plane.

Revival

To most people the sight of a battered airframe which was beyond repair would simply conjure up the calculation of scrap value, but to the astute eyes of Dick Verburg, founder of EPST and MPS, there was a significant and major alternative. Verburg was aware that there are still some 300 DC3s operating around the world, involving about 100 operators. The only training presently available is that carried out on the aircraft itself - an expensive option when many pilots new to the aircraft have limited experience on a large tail-dragger. Similarly, a lot of



low time pilots are not familiar with older instrumentation and layout. In other words there are many unfamiliar elements to be mastered in operating the DC3, and a training device would have a ready market.

The decision was made to buy the cockpit and work on it to produce a flight training device. Given that the day-to-day work of MPS is to produce sophisticated fixed base training devices, principally for Boeing 737 and Airbus 320 types, there were already strong ties to a range of suppliers, and these were approached to help sponsor the project. The likes of Dell, RSI, Bosch-Rexroth, Eaton and Barco all volunteered to provide hardware, and the local bank, Rabobank, stepped up with a grant. This enthusiasm was largely because the project was also strongly supported by the Dutch Dakota Association (DDA), which acknowledges the rich background of DC3 operation in the Netherlands. The DDA was founded to operate a DC3 which had been donated by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, and, indeed, it continues to fly a DC3 today. Consequently there is a great deal of knowledge available to advise on the flying characteristics of the aircraft and the training that would be necessary to operate it safely and effectively.

Build

The vision was simple, but the task facing the technicians of MPS was something of a challenge. Not only was the cockpit in a very poor state of repair when it arrived (it had been cut away from the fuselage by an industrial cutter), but the ragged edges revealed the extent of the corrosion and damage. Technicians well versed in working with modern aircraft, systems and software had to investigate and learn skills to bend and assemble basic metal components such as external panels and window frames. Unlike the aircraft types that they were familiar with, and which were operated by the software from the OEMs, there was no data package to plug in. This was where the cooperation of the DDA came into play - they were able to measure and record performance and handling in the aircraft, and that served as the basis for developing software to drive the FTD.

Inauguration

At a recent ceremony at MPS in Utrecht, the FTD was christened the "Prince Bernhard" by Anne Cor Groeneveld, founder of the DDA, and is ready to start training. Eventually it is expected to place it with FSC at Amsterdam Schiphol airport, and once installed there the systems will be upgraded with collimated visual from RSI and a refined flight model in cooperation with the DDA; the aim is to bring it up to FTD2/FAA Level 6 standard of performance. The final part of the jigsaw is that the DDA are producing a formal training syllabus to support the device approvals.

A critical element of the once-sad DC3 has been resurrected, and will soon once again serve and bring great pleasure to those who operate a truly iconic aircraft. – *Chris Long*