



What Did You Do Last Weekend?

Evan ('Evanet')

BVA Administration Team

BVA Administrator and event participant Evan Reiter's take on Flight SimCon 2013, an aviation and flight simulation conference held on March 23-24, 2013 in Hartford, CT.

Have you ever heard someone try to tell a story that doesn't sound all that interesting and then end it with "I guess you had to be there"? That's a little bit how I feel setting out to explain in words what users on our [forums](#) and even the pictures that have been posted on [Facebook](#) haven't really been able to express just yet: just how epic Flight SimCon 2013 really was. (For those of you who recently joined BVA, Flight SimCon 2013 was a flight simulation convention for pilots and aviation enthusiasts held in Hartford, CT on March 23-24, 2013. As an event sponsor, BVA is proud to have been involved with the inaugural event.)

Firstly, I need to say that I recognize that in-person attendance wasn't practical for some and was impossible for others. One of the neat things about BVA is that we have a truly global member base; unfortunately, that does make it difficult for many of us to make it to a town that soon won't even have a Class D airport in Connecticut. I know—I drove for about 18 hours and almost 1,000 miles round trip to make it there!

But being unable to attend in person didn't stop our members from participating. In fact, the support we had from members logging in at home made this event what it was. Ask anyone from the LAN Team what it meant to have 246 flight plans and a collective 246.7 hours of flight time over the two days at Flight SimCon 2013. There were 30+ pilots compressed into the airspace between KBDL, KHFD, and KBOS for just about the entire event. Then there were the controllers who dedicated their Saturday and Sunday to supporting the event from home and providing continuous staffing of KBDL (Ground, Tower, and Approach) during convention hours. I can say without a doubt that the traffic levels on the server—as a direct result of the people who couldn't make it in person but who still participated their hearts out—were what made this event a success for our community. Of course the LAN Team was loving it, but attendees definitely took notice of how busy BVA was. Even IVAO (one of the other exhibitors) was impressed...and so were the 17 new members who applied.

That being said, I know there's a group of people out there who will do to me what they did to Pac-Man if I don't at least try to give you an idea of what attending the event in person was like. So without further falsely built-up expectations, here's my attempt: three short stories that sum up my experience at what I hope was the first annual Flight SimCon.

Calling Up The Landline

Between meeting people from as close by as down the street to as far away as Detroit, Florida, and Georgia, helping out with the technical set-up and strike, giving a breakout presentation, and being interviewed by the convention staff and Sky Blue Radio, I really valued the few and far between moments I managed to get away and get some ATC time in. I worked BOS_A (from Jeremy's computer) and ZBW_C (from Dan's setup) intermittently on both days.

Tom walks over to my radar setup and asks if two aircraft (each of which have two pilots crowded around two computer screens right across from me) can get simultaneous approaches on the 4's at KBOS. I turn to my left and ask Jeremy if he can accommodate that—yep. Oh, now I have to call up ZBW to ask a question—look across the table, yell at Dan...yes, he'll help with some spacing. Gotta call BDL_A...he's not sitting beside me in the radar room ...call up the landline and talk to Skylar across the country in Arizona. Loving the realism.

Chuck checks in on frequency as UAR35. He's flying his Embraer beside me and doesn't bat an eyeball as I start to give him instructions. Here I'm staring at him and watching as he reads back the instructions, moves the controls to comply...and he's laser-focused on nailing his instructions. I vector the two simultaneous approach aircraft onto their respective approach courses and get visual separation—stealing glances above my screen to watch the four pilots on both computers complying with the instructions and fighting over who gets to read them back.

Time for a controller switch. I'm physically pointing to aircraft on my scope as I explain what instructions I've given to the controller taking over so I can grab lunch. I point out the two aircraft on simultaneous approaches to the 4's that are a few miles off the field and cleared to land. Time for a descent for UAR35—I give it to him, and turn my head to watch as Chuck visibly becomes alert and instantly starts scribbling down my instructions on his branded Flight SimCon notebook. Jeremy's ready. I pass over my headset, confirm that he's in control, and then run around the table to watch the two aircraft land on Runway 4R and 4L, proudly declaring to the gathered conference crowd that I was the one who vectored them on that nice approach. Okay, that was cool... now, time for lunch.

Fitting In While Breaking Out

There were four breakout sessions that really looked interesting on the event schedule but due to a combination of factors I wasn't able to attend any except my own. Presenting to an interested group of flight simulation enthusiasts just like me was VERY cool.

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Regional Circuit

Rc

Tuesday, April 2
(8-11pm ET)

KEYW (Key West) &
KFMY (Fort Myers)

Our controllers fully staff two airports and provide complete ATC coverage for flights between the two; pilots are encouraged to file preferred routes and can expect multiple handoffs and busy frequencies throughout the event

Domestic Journey

Dj

Thursday, April 18
(8-11pm ET)

KSLC (Salt Lake City) &
KLAS (Las Vegas)

The Domestic Journey provides BVA pilots with the opportunity to enjoy medium-haul flights across North America with air traffic control coverage from gate-to-gate.

Pack the Pattern

Pp

Sunday, April 7
(3-5pm ET)

KSTL (St. Louis)

Pilots are encouraged to fly into the event or fly IFR or VFR circuits of a busy Class Bravo airport, with full ATC coverage for the entire evening (including Clearance, Ground, multiple Tower and Approach controllers, and maybe even a Center!)

Fly-In

Fi

Sunday, April 21
(3-6pm ET)

San Diego
(KCRQ, KRNM, and KSNA)

Tower (Local) Controllers will feature several small airports designed for General Aviation aircraft. Fly IFR or VFR within controlled airspace; general aviation aircraft (anything from a Cessna to a LearJet) are preferred.

Challenge

Ch

Thursday, April 11
(8-11pm ET)

Uncontrolled Airport
(KMHT, KPWM, and KSFM)

BVA's Challenge event will test your piloting skills in the realistic atmosphere of BVA. This event is about exercising your multi-tasking ability in challenging and unfamiliar situations—something pilots have to do all the time.

Getaway

Ga

April 24 - May 11

Southern California
(KLAS, KLAX, KPSP, KSAN)

BVA's Getaway Event takes pilots and controllers for a change of scenery, and features various airports across North America. Join BVA as we 'Getaway' to explore new airports and destinations

Controller of the Month

Evan ('evanet')

BVA Administration Team

Each month, one member of our controller community is selected by ATC Instructors for special recognition for outstanding performance and ongoing dedication. As essential frontline service providers, controllers play the most important role in ensuring the satisfaction and enjoyment of our membership.

We're proud to say that **Collin ('studentpilot6264')** is this month's Controller of the Month as the result of some consistent and

exceptional efforts in his own training to achieve a Class B Tower certification this week. This "over the shoulder" exam is one of the most difficult to achieve for controllers at our community and is the gateway to beginning work at the Approach level. Collin has shown impressive dedication to achieving this certification by both practicing on his own as well as making time in a busy schedule to work with our ATC instructors and complete the exam process. Collin's frequency presence and overall attitude toward pilots and controllers are all excellent, but most impressive is his team-based mentality toward coordinating with other controllers and making sure our pilots to the best of their abilities. Congratulations Collin!



What Did You Do Last Weekend?

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It's not often you ask "who loves aviation?" and have every hand in the room shoot up. You're laughing about, discussing, and sharing the stuff that your friends roll their eyes at and your family is tired of hearing about. (We will be posting the video of my presentation on what the FSX world needs now to YouTube in the unlikely event you are interested in watching or re-watching it.) The reactions I got in the room to my presentation were definitely consistent with the rest of the event. People attended Flight SimCon because they saw the event and said to themselves: "I just have to be there". They said "this seems like such a great way to share my passion with others who feel the same way". I sure did.

Sharing the Airplane

I'm standing by the Volair Sim home cockpit talking to two now BVA members who used to spend most of their time connected to their own server doing formation flights. I ask if they've ever tried sharing their airplane and flying together. "How do you do that?" one of them asks. "Come over here, I'll show you," I tell him. We walk over to the LAN Team, I grab Garrett, commandeering Max's PC, and set up a shared BE58.

Before I know it, they're both sitting right and left seat, sharing the plane, talking to one another, and flying circuits at KHFD under Dan's watchful eyes. I point across the table at Dan who's busy giving instructions to another aircraft. Dan leans over to Alex and says something to him. A few seconds later Dan comes back on the frequency. Handoff to BDL_T. I point to Alex—"now you two are talking to him."

An Epic Experience

Finally, and on a more personal note, it was really neat to put names to the voices I've come to know so well over the past 6 years. Going for dinner with members of the LAN Team and community on both nights, pointing out traffic as I vectored on

the radar screen, and spending 18 hours in the car with Jeremy on the drive from home to Hartford and back (we were supposed to fly but winter weather and more than just the potential for ice got in the way—the car was actually picking up some ice driving SE of SYR) were all amazing experiences. I definitely have a newfound respect for the GDM4 arrival (since I basically drove it) and the speed of aircraft after this trip.

Chuck (perhaps better known as UAR35 or UAR421) along with our official event planner Nicole made this event happen. From the crew badges we received on registration to our BVA LAN Team polo shirts to event staff dressed as flight attendants, this event was beautifully done. They deserve all the credit and thanks for making this dream a reality for us.

I think Jeremy's 3:38am e-mail after finishing 12 hours of driving (I was on board for about 8 of those) sums up the trip nicely:

And on that note, after:

40 oz of Monster Energy drink

32 oz of water

2 red bulls

Some tasty chicken and cookies from Evan's grandparents

12 hours of driving

And over 650 miles...

I've pulled the old wagon back into the garage for the night.

...and I'd do it again in a heartbeat. What a great trip!

A great trip indeed. Everyone who participated now has a great set of memories which will last well beyond what I hope is another event next year. Those of you who participated from home made this event special and the folks at the event know that they made it memorable. See you again soon.

Uh Oh...Now What?

Evan ('evanet')

BVA Administration Team

Realizing that you've just made a flying mistake is rarely a good feeling. What you do after making a mistake is critical. Recognizing the mistake is the first in a series of steps that you need to take to ensure the continued safe operation of your aircraft. When you're flying on the server, you are almost always surrounded by other pilots, controllers, and hazards like weather and terrain. Your actions affect not only your flight but the experiences of the other BVA members with whom your flight will interact.

BVA's pilots are some of the best that fly online and as such, mistakes are rare. As a result, it's important to remind ourselves of the best practices for getting out of uncomfortable situations and learning to avoid them in the future.

How Do Controllers Treat Mistakes?

BVA is a learning community—for both pilots and controllers. When working traffic, ATC is expecting compliance with the instructions that are issued. Furthermore, ATC bases instructions to other aircraft using the expectation that pilots will comply with instructions they accept. As a result, when an aircraft makes a mistake and does not follow assigned instructions (a "deviation"), other aircraft that would normally be operating a safe distance away can be at risk. Making a wrong turn, changing to the wrong heading, deviations from assigned altitudes, and similar mistakes seem small but can very easily impact other aircraft and very quickly become more serious.

And that's why controllers are quick to point out even seemingly-minor mistakes. BVA is a learning community—and you can't learn from mistakes you don't recognize. Our controllers want to ensure that if they see a bad habit or a mistake, they can point

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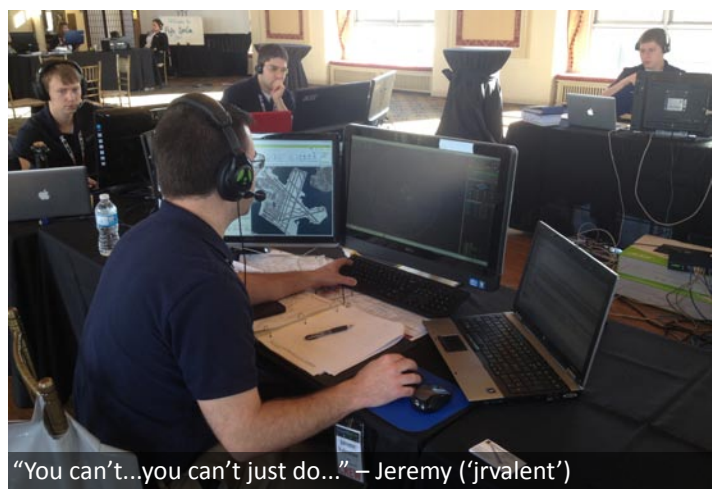


Photos From Flight SimCon 2013

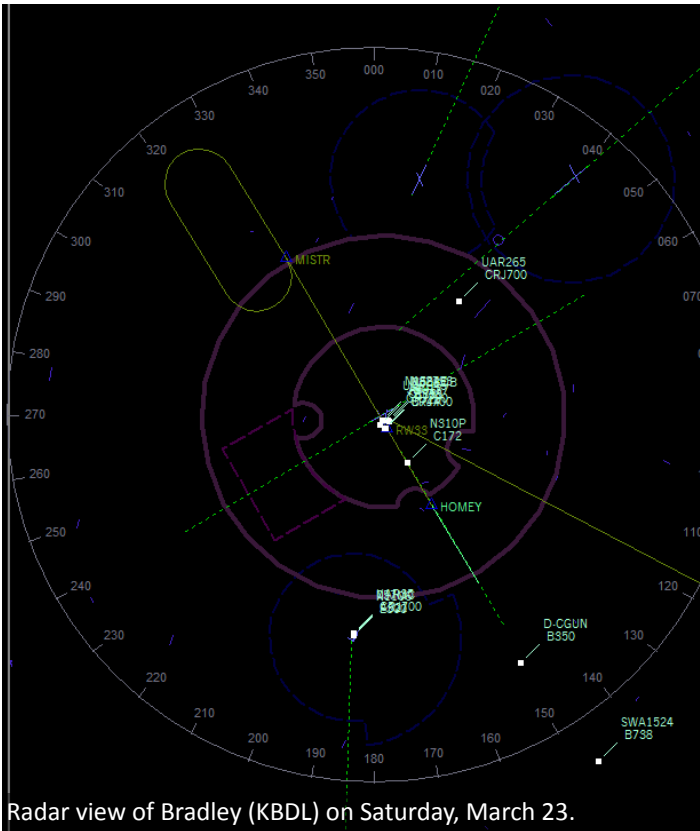
Shown below are photos taken at Flight SimCon 2013. Credit is due to Alex ('pilotalex91pf'), Cody ('Bluewarrior4185'), Jim ('digipic'), Jon ('Chickiee88'), and Niko ('aviationmedias') for helping us document the event!



"You got a problem with this?" – Jon ('Chickiee88')



"You can't...you can't just do..." – Jeremy ('jrvalent')



Qualifications for Google Hackathon 2014.



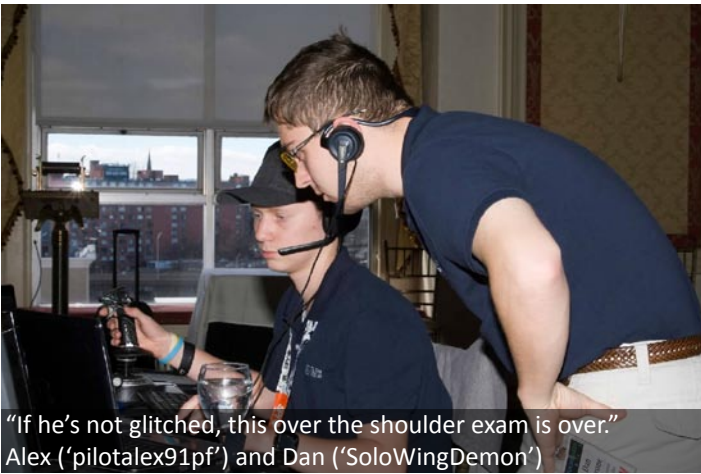
Photos From Flight SimCon 2013



"Look! There are the remnants of our other ERJ."
Back Row Left to Right: Paul ('skylark184'), Jeremy ('jrvalent'), Jake ('Kuba0823'), Rob ('regs695'). Sitting: Chuck ('chuck')



"American 102 Heavy, for the third time, Boston Center. Are you still on frequency?"
Tom ('Tom_G_2010'), Alex ('pilotalex91pf'), and Max ('ameri767300').



"If he's not glitched, this over the shoulder exam is over."
Alex ('pilotalex91pf') and Dan ('SoloWingDemon')



"Where can I get some maple syrup around this place, eh?"
- Evan ('Evanet')



Too anti-social to look at the same camera, there's a reason we all hide behind our computers.
Back Row Left to Right: Rob ('regs695'), Evan ('evanet'), Dan ('SoloWingDemon'), Alex ('pilotalex91pf'), Jeremy ('jrvalent')
Front Row Left to Right: Max ('ameri767300'), Jon ('Chickiee88'), Brad ('topgun268'), Garrett ('firstpilot97'), Tom ('tofutwich11'), Paul ('skylark184'), and Chuck ('chuck')



Photos From Flight SimCon 2013



How not to fly the Canarsie Climb.
Jon ('Chickiee88') and Max ('ameri767300').



"Looks like I picked the wrong week to quit sniffing glue."
Jon ('Chickiee88'), Jake ('Kuba0823'), and Robert ('regs695')



Low resolution: Making BVA members look good since 2006.

Left to Right: Rob ('regs695'), Paul ('skylark184'), Brad ('topgun268'), Max ('ameri767300'), Jon ('Chickee88'), Tom ('tofutwich11'), Dan ('SoloWingDemon'), Alex ('pilotalex91pf'), Garrett ('firstpilot97'), Chuck ('chuck'), Evan ('evanet'), Jeremy ('jrvalent')

Pilot Tip of the Month

"Checking In"

When "checking in" (making initial contact) to a new frequency, there are a few things to say and do that help ensure clear, efficient communication. An initial contact means the first radio call you make to a different controller. On initial contact:

1. Listen before you transmit. If you hear someone else talking, then keying your microphone will be futile; you will probably just jam other receivers, causing others to repeat messages. If you have just changed frequencies, pause, listen, and make sure the frequency is clear before you key your microphone.
2. Think before you transmit. Know what you want to say; if it is a lengthy message, jot it down.
3. Make your initial contact with the following information:
 - Name of the facility being called
 - Your full aircraft identification as filed in the flight plan
 - When operating on an airport surface, your position
 - When operating in the air, your current altitude (and, if necessary, your position)
 - Your message, or the type of message to follow if it is a long request

Note that extraneous phrases such as "with you" are discouraged. It is also a good practice to state any ATC instructions you may have received if you have been vectored off of your flight plan (i.e. "Albany Approach, N322KR, 6,000, heading 360").



FAA To Close 149 Contract Air Traffic Control Towers

Evan ('evanet')

BVA Administration Team

On March 22, 2013, the FAA announced plans to close 149 contract Air Traffic Control Towers across the country, beginning in April. The FAA also plans to close further FAA facilities later this year. As a result, many smaller airports that currently have on-airport Air Traffic Control facilities will go from being controlled airports to uncontrolled airports. That means that many pilots used to flying with ATC—including commercial aircraft—will need to familiarize themselves with procedures at un-towered fields and become proficient with the “see and be seen” mentality of VFR pilots.

The full list of ATC Tower closures may be found on our [website](#). It includes several airports in our featured airspaces, including:

- KBDR
- KDXR
- KGON
- KHFD
- KHVN
- KOXC
- KBYV
- KEWB
- KLWM
- KORH
- KOWD
- KITH
- KRME
- KTTN
- KLNS

As the FAA closes the ATC facilities at these airports, so too will they become un-towered fields at BVA. The data on the default

GPS won't be updated, so you will need to check the sectional charts (at places like www.skyvector.com) and airport NOTAMs to identify when the changes have taken place.

To help familiarize you with uncontrolled airport operations, BVA will be holding two events featuring uncontrolled airports over the next few weeks.

The [Uncontrolled Airport Challenge](#) on Thursday, April 11 from 8-11pm ET features KSFM (always an uncontrolled field). The KSFM UNICOM will be staffed by a controller who will listen to aircraft position reports and traffic calls and provide live feedback to pilots. VFR and IFR operations are encouraged as both flight types require different procedures when the field is uncontrolled.

And on Sunday, April 14, we'll be featuring the Boston area in a VFR Challenge. The event will give pilots an opportunity to practice VFR operations a mix controlled and uncontrolled fields (along with navigation without the use of instruments).

You can find more information about operations at uncontrolled airports in BVA's [Uncontrolled Airport Operations NOTAM](#). The FAA has also issued [guidance](#) regarding contract tower closures.

Uh Oh...Now What?

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it out to make you a safer pilot, both online and in real life. But more importantly, controllers are paying close attention so that a pilot who is following instructions doesn't have a bad experience caused by a pilot who has deviated. Of course, controllers should be polite and professional at all times. Report any controller that does not act in a manner befitting this community on the [Controller Feedback Form](#).

What Should I Do After Making A Mistake?

It can be embarrassing to be identified on frequency as a pilot who has deviated from an assigned instruction. The natural inclination might be to hit the big red “X” button and end your flight. But ending your flight after a mistake is one of the worst things to do. For one thing, you don't have that option in real life (by ending your flight, you are missing out on an important development opportunity). For another, you are an aircraft, a piece of traffic, and a member that the controller you are talking to (as well as the next controllers) is expecting. Don't deprive yourself of the opportunity to learn or other members of the opportunity to interact with your flight—that's why we're here!

When a mistake is made, and especially when the controller points it out, stay calm! Fly the airplane first and get to the point of positive control. It is perfectly fine to tell a controller to “standby” while you sort out a technical issue, re-establish control, or set the autopilot to have your hands free to write down information.

Only once the airplane is sorted out should you talk to the controller. Try to understand what happened. Be clear about

mistakes that you made (don't lie) and make sure you are clear on what the correct procedure is (don't pretend to know what you don't). If the server is busy, you can always tell a controller that you would prefer to discuss an issue on a side frequency, via private message, or after you are on the ground. Whenever and however you follow up, make sure that you understand what happened and what you should do in future situations. Asking further questions after your flight is over can also be very helpful. You can post questions in the FlightDesk chat, private message the Member Support Team, or post your story to the forums.

Making a mistake is a decision: you can treat the next few minutes as a learning opportunity or let that opportunity go to waste. Faced with this choice, we know BVA members will make the right choice.



Introducing Monthly Pilot Meetings

Max ('ameri767300')

BVA Administration Team

I'm Max, one of BVA's frequent fliers and your newest Administrative Team member (you've probably seen me flying AAL102 Heavy on the server). I'm pleased to introduce a new way of connecting with fellow pilots to share tips and tricks, provide feedback to our controllers, and share your ideas with our server administrators.

Starting this month, we'll be holding Monthly Pilot Meetings on Boston Virtual ATC's Office Hours TeamSpeak server. The events

will be focused BVA's pilots: we'll break down complex instrument procedures for upcoming events, talk about feedback you have for controllers, discuss the latest developments in the flight simulation and aviation worlds, and talk about what BVA can do to improve your pilot experience. As a BVA pilot myself, I'm looking forward to connecting with you and learning more about what makes BVA such a great place to fly.

If you have ideas for discussion items or you'd like to get involved by making a presentation to the group, please [e-mail me](#). And for now, keep your eyes on the forums and in each Logan Informer for dates and details about our monthly pilot meetings.

Thanks For Your Suggestions!

Tom ('tofutwitch11')

Social Media

BVA would like to thank everyone that posted their suggestions for how BVA can improve our member experience on Facebook. As you know, feedback is an important part of our community. Many of our best software features, website designs, and events started as ideas from members.

One suggestion was made abundantly clear—BVA needs an app for mobile devices! We agree: we'd love to be able to provide our members with an app that allows pilots running FSX in full screen mode file flight plans, track themselves on the moving map, and send private messages in FlightDesk.

BVA's developers are already overextending themselves in their efforts to improve the multiplayer environment and BVA's member experience. If you or someone you know is able to develop a mobile app that can parse XML/HTML reports and/or is willing to develop a mobile flight planning app please contact us.

Between now and the time someone volunteers their efforts to develop a mobile app, type [66.109.25.244](#) (our server IP) into a mobile device browser to view active pilots, controllers, and flight strips on any internet-enabled device.

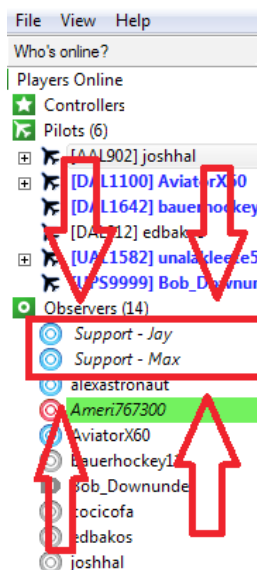
Have a Question? Just ask 'Support'!

Max ('ameri767300')

BVA Administration Team

If you fly or control on our network regularly, you have probably already seen BVA's Member Support Team (MST) signed in to FlightDesk answering private messages or responding to questions in the global chat. Members who sign in to FlightDesk with 'Support' next to their name are available to answer any questions you may have through FlightDesk's text messaging functionality. So the next time you have a question for a controller or administrator, consider asking a member of our support staff:

- Support - Max ('Ameri767300')
- Support - Cameron ('Cameron32')
- Support - Gilles ('airtangofive')
- Support - Jason ('AviatorX60')
- Support - Jay ('JKLovelace')
- Support - Josh ('TheNavyReapers')
- Support - Robert ('regs695')



Each of the above contacts is a knowledgeable and experienced BVA member who volunteers time to help with technical and aviation/operational questions. You can use FlightDesk's private message system or the global chat to ask the Member Support Team about technical issues, the community, administrative matters, or flying/controlling on the server.

Of course, if no MST contact is logged in, you can always get support in the ways you are familiar with today:

- Checking the website
- Searching and posting on the forums
- Posting a question in the global chat of FlightDesk
- Private messaging a controller or administrator
- Sending an e-mail to support@bostonvirtualatc.com

Cape Air Virtual >>

Pilot of the Month

Each month, Cape Air Virtual recognizes the pilot who has the most hours for the airline. For March, that pilot is Jimmy ('touchandgo1957'), who has flown a total of 26.0 hours!

