



60 Hours of ATC: Wrap-Up

It's 6pm ET on Saturday, April 9 and I've just finished a six hour shift on Boston Center. Abnormal as that is, what I'm about to do next is even stranger: eat dinner (ok, that part is pretty normal), and go immediately to bed. I haven't been asleep by 8:30pm ET since...well, definitely since before I knew what a computer was. But it's important that I'm well-rested when I wake up in seven hours to control the second of two overnight shifts of ZBW_C. Otherwise, I'll end up suspended—or worse—like those guys at Reagan.

Of course, I'm doing this to myself because it's for a great cause. Boston Center has been staffed continuously for the past 31 hours and I'm not about to be the weak link in the chain. Every single pilot I talk to is an extra \$0.10, and every flight plan that I safely control contributes another \$1 to breast cancer research and to keeping our community alive. That's worth one night of strange sleep patterns.

As it turned out, 60 Hours of ATC was, as far as I'm concerned, the best event BVA has ever had. Over the course of the April 8-10 weekend, 141 pilots flew in our server, filing 851 flight plans and spending 298 hours under air traffic control. In both overnight periods, we had more landings and takeoffs than the real-world Boston airport. Pilots in our server also followed Boston's real night configuration (landing using the Light Visual 33L approach and departing the opposite direction from Runway 15R). And in every single shift that I controlled, I was well busier than I thought I would be, and had more consistent traffic than I had seen since I started controlling at BVA. There were multiple instances where I was on the verge of being overwhelmed...and that hasn't happened in a long time.

The event also shattered our previous Flight for the Fight donation. Because we surpassed our goal, BVA will be receiving \$750, while Susan G. Komen for the Cure will receive \$1,300.20 as a result of the efforts of the pilots and controllers of our community. In total, we raised $(1,741 \times \$0.10 + 851 \times \$1.00) \times 2 = \$2,050.20$...not bad for a weekend's work!

While every single pilot and controller that was online for the event made a major contribution to two good causes, there were several people that went above and beyond to ensure this event was as successful as it turned out to be. The event sponsor, who prefers to remain anonymous, has already contributed so much to this community that I was shocked to hear in January that he wanted to sponsor the 2011 Flight for the Fight so soon after our previous one. The monetary incentive certainly helped drive traffic to the server. While we don't know the donor's name, I believe we can all appreciate the help he has provided to BVA (in terms of money and two great Flight for the Fight events) as well as the contributions made to breast cancer research.

The idea to have Boston Center controlled non-stop for 60 hours (actually, 48 hours when it was first proposed) came from one of our controllers during a regular meeting. I was a little bit sceptical at first, but I'm glad that the idea Brandon (bcarter755) proposed became such a successful reality. I would also like to acknowledge not only the controllers who set aside long periods of time to control Boston Center (bcarter755, leadbottom1, Rogerwilco, slayer816, and SoloWingDemon) but also the large group of controllers that signed in to non-ZBW positions throughout the event. I believe having Nantucket, Boston, and Bradley staffed helped contribute to some of our busiest periods and generated the most money. A special shout-out goes to Andrew (PG158), who controlled Boston Tower overnight—both nights—entirely voluntarily.

I also would like to recognize the event's top-contributing pilots, who are:

Luke (ShyFlyGuy): 68 interactions, 39 flight plans, almost 11 hours of controlled time

Joe (serdy12): 68 interactions, 66 flight plans, 4.5 hours of controlled time

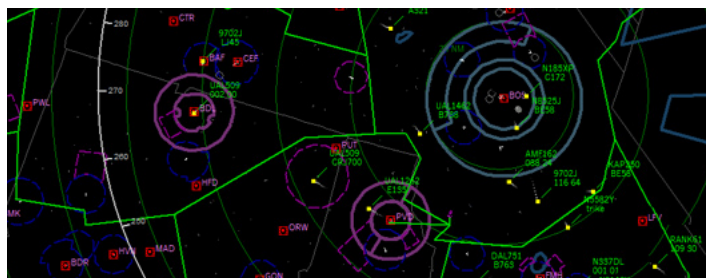
Keith (kk1582): 53 interactions, 25 flight plans, 9.5 hours of controlled time

Damian (Madman424): 54 interactions, 21 flight plans, 8.5 hours of controlled time

Brandon (bcarter755): 48 interactions, 39 flight plans, 4 hours of controlled time

I would also like to thank the STC and UALR programs for specifically coordinating additional flights during the event.

I strongly believe that there is no other community out there that can match what BVA does on a regular basis, not just in terms of events but in terms of high-quality ATC, consolidated traffic, and community determination to be the best we can. In addition to the money that was generated for two very worthy causes, BVA has proved once again that we attract the best members of the virtual flight simulation community because there is nobody else—anywhere—that could so consistently raise the bar with the limited resources we have. Congratulations BVA...now, when's the next one?



Regional Circuit



Tuesday, May 3
(8-11pm ET)

KDTW (Detroit) &
KPIT (Pittsburgh)

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



Monday, May 16
(8-11pm ET)

KICT (Wichita) &
KSTL (St. Louis)

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



Thursday, May 5
(8-10pm ET)

KLGA (La Guardia)

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



Sunday, May 14
(2-5pm ET)

Cape Cod

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.

European Tour



Saturday, July 9
(2-5pm ET)

EGPF (Glasgow) &
EGCC (Manchester)

We're taking our popular Regional Circuit concept across the pond to Europe! Our controllers will fully staff two airports 70-200nm apart. Pilots are encouraged to fly between the two airports and enjoy full ATC coverage gate-to-gate.

Getaway



May 20-30

Caribbean
(TNCM, TJSJ, TIST, TISX)

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

Pilot Tip of the Month

If You Read It Back, Do It!

Readng back an instruction is tantamount to telling the controller "I know exactly what you mean, I know exactly how to do it, and I will do it right away". If you read back an instruction, it becomes the law, and if you subsequently fail to comply with that instruction, you can get in the way of other pilots or make life difficult for ATC (except, of course, if that instruction will put you or your aircraft in danger).

When accepting instructions from controllers, be absolutely sure that you understand and are able to complete the instructions. **Never read back an instruction you are unsure of, including a departure procedure or on course instructions.** If you cannot accept or perform an instruction, ask the controller for clarification or request a simplified instruction. It will make things easier for everyone!



BVA 2011 Campagin

We made it! We reached all our financial goals for 2011. Whether you contributed with time, money, effort or goodwill, you helped BVA stay solvent for 2011 and we could not be more grateful. We would like to express our gratitude to the following people who donated a total of \$2694 in 2011 (list current as of April 25):

- All anonymous donors (\$864.73)
- 2011 Flight for the Fight (\$750)
- Pierul (\$300)
- Chuck (\$220)
- Rogerwilco (\$100)
- Mitchel Bohn (\$100)
- Bradrcii (\$60)
- Delta815 (\$55)
- PowerbandFSX (\$50)
- piperN9181W (\$50)
- Jason (UAL195) (\$50)
- Dana Atwood (\$25)
- Mark Lemire (\$20)
- C3FYC (\$20)
- Digipic (\$20)
- Spydergun45 (\$10)



Cape Air Virtual News

Abbreviated Departure Clearances

Cape Air Virtual is now simulating the use of abbreviated departure clearances at Boston, which are also used by the real-world Cape Air. The clearances are applicable to aircraft departing Boston under both VFR and IFR conditions. To use these abbreviated clearances, pilots should simply enter the desired clearance in the 'Route/Waypoints' section when filing their flight plans in FlightDesk. Cape Air Virtual pilots are not required to use these abbreviated clearances, but are encouraged to do so in order to enhance realism. Click [HERE](#) for the abbreviated departure clearances NOTAM.

Cape Air Rodeo

Join us for the first ever Cape Air Rodeo, which will take place at Nantucket Memorial Airport (KACK) on Saturday, June 11th, starting at 2PM ET!

The goal of the Cape Air Rodeo is simple: land as softly as possible within a designated landing area. The pilot that lands with the lowest vertical speed within the landing area will be awarded first place.

The event will be split into three divisions for the three Cape Air aircraft (BE58, C414, or DH8). Pilots must wait on the ramp until their division is called. It is estimated that each division will take approximately 30 minutes to compete in the event. Click [HERE](#) for the Cape Air Rodeo NOTAM.

Cape Air Virtual >> Pilot of the Month

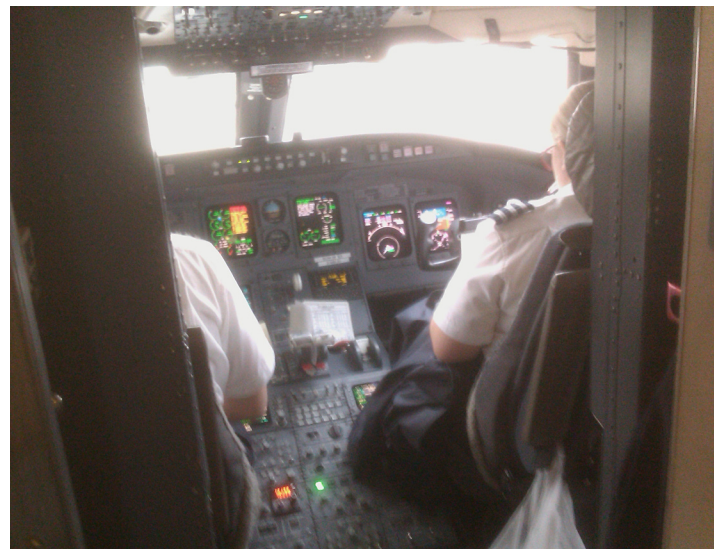
Each month, Cape Air Virtual recognizes the pilot who has the most hours for the airline. For May, that pilot is Brendan ('tankster21'), who has flown a total of 68.1 hours...and counting. Congratulations Brendan!

The Plastic Jet

It's early morning and I'm expected on a deadhead to the Capital of the Empire on a company CRJ200. This morning though I'm pretty tired from staying up too late again last night, and I'm actually looking forward to catching a snooze on this flight. Call me weird, but to me there's nothing like napping on a flight and sometimes I stay up late the night before on purpose - just to be tired enough to sleep on the jet the next day. As long as I'm not flying, of course.

This morning was a little rough though. After spending over a year with my little rocket ship E135, and after bringing her into BDL last night for perhaps the last time, I'm now leaving her in the grey, cold rain on the tarmac at Bradley. Not exactly how I imagined our parting would be. But this morning I'm off to pick up a new aircraft assignment at KDCA. I have just a few moments to give her one last long look out the concourse window, snap one last photo, and then I have to scurry off to catch my flight. While on the one hand I'm sad to let go of UAL35, I'm also looking forward to the challenge of my new assignment, as well as the prestige and adventure that comes with hanging the atmospheric processors under the wings instead of on the tail. I just hope my sweetheart E135 will understand.

I have just enough time to give the flight crew a nod and survey the flight deck as we board. They are busy with setup, but I can see the MFD and PFD and instantly know the course, the status of the aircraft, and overhear the flight officer reading back the squawk code to clearance delivery. Taking my seat I must say it's a little unnerving to be riding in back, and especially when I hear the captain announce the Flight Officer will be handling the entire flight. Is this a checkride? Oh great. Well, nothing to do but sit back and enjoy the ride. But as we roll down the field for takeoff I am echoing in my head what I know the pilots are hearing, saying, and doing. "V1... V2 ... rotate..." "United 310 contact departure on 125.35.... United 310 radar contact .. turn left to 250 and intercept victor 405 on course." Roger that. At T/O thrust, and with a light load of fuel and PAX, the little CRJ doesn't so much as lift off the runway as she does blast off straight to the stratosphere at a company approved 17 degree up angle. Me? I'm whispering "yeehaw!" and grinning ear to ear. It's a sickness I know.



The Plastic Jet (Continued)

A front is closing in on the region and the flight attendant announces that we'll be strapped down for the entire flight. "Sorry, no coffee and peanuts for you today". The little rocket jet gets tossed around a bit more as it punches through another cloud layer. I overhear a passenger in the seat in front of me say to her seatmate "you know, no matter how many times I fly I still can never get used to this." Me? 4 minutes into the flight and I'm out like a light.

We beat the rain into KDCA and have about 18 hours to kill before I officially take possession of my new aircraft. Apparently the company has been doing well, and all the old Continental MD80's we inherited have been phased out and are being replaced with brand spankin' new E175's. We are slowly but surely becoming a true regional airline, and for our medium haul routes the Embraer 175's are becoming the aircraft of choice.

To many, the Airbus A320 is affectionately known as the Electric Jet. With all of her wiz bang features the name is pretty appropriate. The Embraer E175 I think however should be called the The Plastic Jet. Honestly my first reaction upon boarding her is that



there is more plastic in this thing than any other aircraft I've ever seen. The walls are plastic, the seats are plastic, the armrests, the galley... everything. I mean, if this sucker ever crashes and burns? God help us. This jet would fill up with toxic smoke faster than a "silent-but-deadly" gets detected in a sealed cockpit at 28,000 feet. So let's just resolve right here and now to never EVER crash and burn one, mmmkay? Yea that would probably be best.

But believe me sir, I'm not complaining. The Plastic Jet is a true beauty. A looker as well as a marvel of Brazilian technical innovation. Most pilots familiar with Embraer 135/145 cockpits would be able to transition into it fairly easily. They're light, they're strong, they're powerful, and they're good on the company dollar. They're also astoundingly simple to fly. Except when they're not. It seems I'm back to getting yelled at by Betty when I set the aircraft up in ways she doesn't prefer. Back to the books I go.

Kinetic energy management is also a much bigger concern than it ever was in the E135. In the 135 you could hang out the laundry, idle the engines, aim for the ground and quite literally float down from 10,000 feet without covering hardly any ground distance at all. No so in the 175. The hardest thing about this aircraft is slowing it down and getting it to descend at a proper rate. The thing either just wants to keep flying, or it wants to drop out of the sky at 4000 FPM. Neither of which is acceptable. This jet and I are going to have to come to an understanding.

This flight is also the last day of the Fight for the Flight where air crews all across the Empire receive credit for flight plans filed toward the Susan G. Koman Fight against breast cancer. This weekend we have been flying not only for company and PAX, but also for the fight. Pilots have been very gung ho to fly as often as they can, and reporting to the dispatch center this weekend has found all the pilots slamming down Starbucks and haggling with the dispatcher to get the most efficient routes to maximize credit for FFTF.

Our first leg out of KDCA in The Plastic Jet is for Bradley. The route is filed for a 3pm departure on one of those amazingly beautiful first days of spring that only mid April can deliver. It's so nice outside that one of the gate agents has propped open a door to the flight line while waiting to load PAX into a tarmac bus. The TSA would flip their lids if they saw that, and she could easily just open the door to let people through when needed. But instead she's standing there in the sun and breeze as if basking in the light of God. At least she's guarding the door personally. I guess that counts as secure.

The flight is a one hour hop up north and it's one of those days where I'm just glad to be flying. Landing at KBDL is a visual for 33 and I'm playing it safe on this one. No hot rod turns or carrier landings today. I want to see how this aircraft is going to respond in the bright sun of daylight before I try to do it in the murk of night over KACK. We have a longer than usual changeover at KBDL, so while waiting I ask one of the flight attendants to snap a picture of me trying to look cool in my new Captain's chair, in my new Plastic Jet, while sporting the newly authorized poplin company blue jackets. More casual, comfortable, and approachable than the traditional uniform jackets I must say.

Next up is KBGR, then KALB, then finally KBOS. I'm glad to sock in the legs for credit for the FFTF, but by the KALB run I am suffering from some mild spatial disorientation. Its one thing to operate out of Bradley often and to know that there's a right turn off 6 to hit the BDL9 departure and then on to PUT and WOONS. It's an entirely different thing to be rapidly in and out of airports that you are not familiar with. My head is spinning and before too long I have no idea which way is North, which way is up, which way the runways are pointed, and where the nearest Starbucks is. I'm operating entirely on caffeine and total reliance on charts and nav equipment. There is no looking out the windows to see anything that makes sense. All that you have is headings, procedure turns, Victor airways, and flying by the numbers. When you're this



The Plastic Jet (Continued)

disoriented you had better be on your game otherwise you'll find yourself taxiing to take off from the wrong end of the runway real fast. Not that I've done that. But I know of at least one UAL pilot (remaining nameless) who did.

On the last leg out of ALB we are smooth and climbing to cruise and hearing the usual company com traffic of UAL aircraft all bound for KBOS. UAL373 is coming out of Rochester, UAL007 is out of Portland, UAL74 is out of KBGR, and if our timing is right we will all be coming in at the same time. UAL373 is constantly paging us. "Wait up he says!" Nah, you'll just have to push it and see if you can catch up.

On the GDM3 arrival there are a few other flights are ahead of us though so it looks like we'll be last in a group of 3, and then following behind that will be another group of 4 or so. But as we start the decent out of 11,000 for the approach vectors I can see there is something going on with The Plastic Jet. She just simply does not want to slow down and descend. The flight level change command is having no effect, and if we don't start getting our decent down we will be at a bad angle and altitude for approach. Kinetic energy management is getting all screwed up, I'm spatially disoriented, tired, and in a new aircraft that is not responding the way I would prefer. Dropping a notch of flaps to add some drag only results in Betty yelling at me some more. Airspeed is too high for even one notch of flaps but #2 slats is not helping much either. 4000 ft and inside 10 miles for 22L and this is looking grim. Slats on FULL and force the jet to slow down. If we can just get below 220 we can drop the flaps further. The MFD is flashing a yellow "spoilers disagree" warning but no configuration of slats and flaps seems to get the ship to slow down and descend properly. Betty is yelling at me some more and we are running out of glideslope options fast. Time to ditch the idea of landing and time to get with the go-around program.

Throttle FORWARD, slats RETRACT, flaps to #2, and a quick call to approach. "ahh, Boston approach UAL421 is a go-around, LOGAN6" Gear locks into the belly with 3 green and we are screaming above the field at less than 1000 feet with 200 knts of speed. Crossing the 4R end of 22L and I bank the ship hard over left to 140. The controller calls to check on us... "UAL421 when able say reason for go-around". Somehow I don't think incompetence is a good response. I tell the controller about the slats problem, but make up a quick excuse announcement about "traffic" for the PAX. Fix it, continue flying.

Back into the cycle we go and on the downwind leg TCAS starts pinging several ships ahead and inbound. Must be the second group that was behind us not just 5 minutes ago. Approach is suddenly a firestorm of coms as 5 inbounders plus us come under management. One of them is UAL373 and it looks like with our go-around he's caught up with us after all. The controller seems hell bent on bringing us all in within a 5 mile radius of each other too. Good thing this controller is sharp and fast. At the last minute though it appears we have more aircraft than we have runway, and the controller reassigns UAL007 for 22R and announces that

the parallel runway operations are now briefly in effect. UAL007 calls back to accept his new runway instructions with literally only a minute left to fly on the inbound. I know the Captain in that ship and I know he's sharp. He responds to the new setup with style and flair while UAL428 slips one in on the parallel in front of us. Approach announces "United 421 the field is yours, cleared to land runway 22 left". Kinetic energy management is much better this time around and I release Betty from her duties at 5 DME and set the Plastic Jet down on the first bounce with UAL373 bringing up the rear. Whew!



Pulling up to the Charlie terminal there's nothing but company paint everywhere I look. As we close out the Flight for the Flight weekend I see no less than 9 company aircraft all around. What a sight! Engines OFF, pax DISEMBARK and we are cleared to review paperwork. The final tallies are coming in regarding FTF participation and WOW we beat last year with a combined total of 839 flight plans filed in a 60 hour period! I'm basking in bravado from achievement and the sea of company paint, until soon my thoughts are drifting towards the 600 count sheets waiting for me at the Marriot.

The droid chirps. It's FO Jason on UAL195. Seems he brought his E145 into KBOS about 45 minutes ago and has found an observation window somewhere where he could watch the inbounders. "I've got something for you" his text message says. I see there's an attachment. "What's that"? I type back. "Oh, just a picture of you missing the ground half an hour ago. You know, the runway's pretty big here. Even YOU should be able to hit it if you try."

Busted!! The hazing doesn't stop at UALR. Especially not for Senior Captains. And particularly not for those with brand new Plastic Jets.

For information on United Regional please contact Chief Pilot Chuck at chuck@bostonvirtualatc.com, or visit us at www.unitedregional.bostonvirtualatc.com

