

General

Many thanks to our test pilots, John Achor, Bob Betts, Hoot Moninger, and Charles Wood
Please mail comments and suggestions to me, Ron Bushell (DC3-038) at.....
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General Tips

1. All flights are VFR using Real Weather. If weather is below minimums, don't fly.
2. If weather closes in enroute, you must climb into the soup and fly to any safe airport.
3. There is an approach plate enclosed for N_3 thanks to John Achor
4. There is a file of ILS frequencies for all airports that have them.

Ron:

I don't know much about Norwegian fjord country, - I do have FSN and I'm willing to give it a shot but no guarantees. I don't know about Norwegian flight reg's. As I understand it, VFR here means that you have to have a minimum ceiling of 1000' and 3 mi. visibility and it's the pilot's call although FAA issues advisories. Using "Real weather" I think it would be difficult to recognize VFR conditions when it's marginal but I'll be using the company plane and will hold you responsible if I get in trouble!

Hoot

Hi Ron,

The GENERAL rule on VFR flight is that one must be at least 500 ft above the ground and have at least 500 ft clearance to the clouds. That rule mostly applies over open terrain, and clearances are higher in urban areas.
Charlie

Ron:

Did what you said and no problem. Flew it a couple of times, real weather was no weather except the Barometric pressure was 29.21, very mysterious. So after T.O. from Haukasen at 1634', flew down in the fjord to 500' and set advanced weather to 1000' and 3 mi. flew down in the fjords until approaching Bringeland which is at 1093' and has an ILS and a 3000' runway. You then have to climb up into the soup and fly the ILS into Bringeland. Lot's of fun in the fjords. Now I've forgotten what you wanted me to do.

Hoot

Your Norway Charter is a work of art! I can hardly wait for it to be posted for use. I hope that when they are finally released that you be given credit for creating a real adventure. At the same time, it would be nice to warn pilots that they are not for beginners, yet for experienced pilots who are bored with the routine, they will offer a unique challenge that will have them sitting up straight in their seats, eyes bugged out, and sweaty palms! Not to mention the fact that the combination of flying in Norway using 2K2 and Real Weather will afford them scenery that has to be seen to be believed. They should also be told that the flight plan is just a guide and to not be afraid to deviate from it when necessary. That will happen a lot, especially due to the weather. Bob Betts

- I am afraid that the only warning I can give pilots > for these charters is that you can't follow the NDBs > or even VORs blindly. The problem is that they are > located on top of the cliffs so they have better > range. And even then I find that they will often cut > out and in. Ron Bushell

I had fun flying the first two Norway flights this afternoon. Real Weather does add a lot to the mix. Especially when it cranks out some questionable weather. I know there are some fiords coming up so the next flights will require my undivided attention that's for sure. If the weather is unsuitable, I'll just cancel and wait until it improves. The big question for me will be how to handle the fixes with no NDB or VOR. Without Navaid or GPS, the coordinates of the fix will be of little use to me. I will probably have to fly the recommended headings for the time you give for the leg. And with a crosswind of any kind I may have to adjust for drift (now where's my E6B??). It doesn't matter anyway because I haven't used one of those since my private days!! I may be busy ducking fiord walls anyway. You sure know how to get up nice and close to that nice scenery flying at such low altitudes. I think I'm going to wish I had a more maneuverable

AC in the next flights. Don't suppose there's a J-3 Airlines I could join, do you??? Well, if you liked the first two reports, hang on to your hat, because the next ones could end up being real juicy.

038-02-01 (Test Flight) ENZV-ENHD -- Real Weather: 1000' overcast, vis UL, wind 333 @ 9 kts. Departed ENZV runway 32. On climb to 1500, went into the soup at around 1000'. Descended to and maintained 700' for rest of the flight. Due to the tailwind at ENHD if runway 14 ILS was used, I choose a VFR approach to runway 32. I tried to use the VG NDB to line up with runway 32 but could not acquire it. Without Navaid, I depended on 2K2's map view a lot. The only thing I didn't know was the elevation of the surrounding terrain. Lucky for me it was only around 100' on that island (I know I won't be so lucky in future flights). With a slight crosswind and moderate turbulence, I was able to pass over the trees and make a reasonably descent landing. An interesting point about RW. The overcast disappeared about halfway into the flight and then there were high cirrus and a few scattered low level dark cumulus clouds that on at least two occasions shot a bolt of cloud-to-ground lightening. Time of day was 12:23 to 12:40 and temp was +4. Strange, but that's the fun of never knowing what to expect with RW. And the Norway landscape is beautiful and interesting. Wonder if I'll still think that after the next flights!!

038-02-02 (Test flight) ENHD-ENBR -- Real Weather: High stratus with few cumulus lower. Vis 20 miles. Temp +4. Wind 333 at 10 kts. Norway's scenery is gorgeous in 2K2. And I like the route passing to the side of hills that are higher than my 1500 cruise altitude. But I'm glad that ENBR's runway 35 was ILS equipped because all of that scenery disappeared about 10 miles out in solid overcast that I broke out of just below minimums. I was about to hit the throttles and do a missed approach when the runway came into view. Don't know where else I would have gone to other than back to ENHD!! Your flight was very routine but I should have taken your warnings about the weather in Norway more seriously. Navigation was a piece of cake even without NavAid. I can see that visibility is going to be a major issue in the coming flights. Think I'll take a break here and continue tomorrow with a fresh mind.

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038-02-01 to 04

I flew the first four as if no refueling stops were available. To simulate this, I saved a flight each time I landed. For example: at the first landing (ENDH) I saved it as "Norway-02" for the 2nd leg. That way I can continue to fly the same physical day, or I can wait till later. When I'm ready to fly the 2nd Charter leg, I open my saved flight and press on from there. Send me some more and I'll continue on my single tank of gas :-) John Achor

038-02-03

Date Flown: 3/9/02

Takeoff time: 1540

Landing time: 1633

Total flight time: +57

Real Weather: Thunderstorms, base 1515', top 2516' light precip, 1/8 clouds with unlimited visibility.

Takeoff runway/Elev.: 17 / 1634'

Enroute Altitude: 1100' (spooky down there in the fjord :-)) with climb to 2600' near airport

Destination runways: 06 / 24

Landing Runway/Elev.: 24 / 1634'

Enroute comments: pick out correct fjord - VOR FSL (115.55) at the 356 radial at 47 DME.

Landing comments: climbed to clear some terrain for landing. Messed up approach to runway from the west. I was north of the hill which is north of the runway. Flew to NDB KPG (303.0) and executed a left teardrop turn to the NW of NDB. Intercepted final heading inbound. Steep approach, full flap short field landing. Fuel Remaining: 646

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Leg 04, ENSG to ENBL

Date Flown: 3/10/02
Takeoff time: 1640
Landing time: 1730
Total flight time: +50
Real Weather: Clear, viz unlimited, wind 053/08
Takeoff runway/Elev.: 24 / 1634' (short field takeoff)
Enroute Altitude: 2500'
Destination runways: 08 / 26 (ILS: 08 - 110.7 and 26 - 109.35, they appear to be localizer ONLY approaches.
Landing Runway/Elev.: 26 / 1043'
Enroute comments: To crosscheck coast out (fix 01) use (fix 01) use VOR SOG 114.7 and the 270 radial at 57.5 DME. Pick up next heading and use VOR FLO (112.3) radial 010 at 16.5 DME to locate next fjord (fix 02). Landing comments: Again, landing the opposite direction from the approach to the runway. Crossed the rwy on heading of 080 at 3500' and flew to NDB BL (339.0), executed a left teardrop back to final approach heading. Another steep approach, full flaps and short field landing. Fuel Remaining: 576
=====End John Achor

Well, I flew 038-02-03 and I agree with Charlie, it does have problems, the mainone being a planned altitude of 1500' and you're landing on a short (3000') runway at an elevation of 1634' if I recall correctly. I found that the best solution to avoid the higher terrain was to stay over the river to Vandsnes and then climb to 2500', following the left or North shoreline until sighting ENSG which is on a little plateau or step carved out of the bluffs next to the river. It's challenging enough when the weather is good and without an approach plate for the ILS on Rwy 24 I don't know how you you would handle it properly in bad weather. I guess I'll have to review Rambow's dissertation on real weather because I don't seem to be able to generate global weather. I may start out in rain or now, - had snow and broken clouds at about 3000' for a while but then it cleared up before reaching Haukesan. Hoot Moninger

About the lights at airports: I think we have to remember that the programmers did their best, but it ain't like real life. I know I can't judge heights because the sim doesn't provide depth perception worth a hoot. On the approach to ENSG, it looks to me like I'm running through the trees at about 3/4 mile from the runway when there was several hundred feet of clearance. I think it's okay to provide a cheat (spelled tip) to lend a hand. If 1600 provides good runway lights, that's an advantage. On the other side, fly early in the day and the runway is a bit more visible.

I finished the remaining legs on your Norway charter flights. The scenery is great all around, and the last few legs sport some spectacular landscape. I don't have much in the way of comments on the legs. They are straight forward and no more approaches as bad as leg 14. I did make a note that read "nasty" for the landing on leg 13. Not as bad as 14, but requires attention to detail and terrain.

I got out of sync on the earlier flights, so my fuel consumption tracking may be off. As long as the pilot doesn't spend too much time on the ground between flights, I think it's realistic to fly the first 16 legs on a single fuel load (804 gallons). I arrived at ENMS - Kjaerstad with around 100 gallons remaining.

038-02-06 ENFL - ENSD

A near sea level takeoff in good visibility weather, which held to destination, helped to made this flight rather routine. That is, if you consider navigating through fiords routine. Relatively low cruise altitudes insure that you are below the tops of most of the surrounding mountains. I find that the navigational aids listed in the flight plan are reduced to mere general reference points and I pay little attention to them. Instead, I have a huge dependence on the Map View in 2K2 to act as a 'road map' for navigating. That, along with a good visual sighting of the fiord itself, is the reason these flights can be made at all. In overcast they can become nearly impossible and shouldn't even be attempted. You will also find that most of the airports nestled in these fiords usually have a short single runway with no long straight in approaches. Things happen fast as you prepare to land.

On this particular flight I was about to enter the wrong arm of the fiord I was flying in. A quick check on Map View confirmed that I was heading into the wrong 'fork in the road'. It was necessary to make a steep left hand climbing turn form 1500' to 2000' in order to clear the top of the peninsula separating the two arms. Once clear, I turned right and descended back to 1500' and I was back on track.

The moral of this story is to avoid bad weather and use Map View in 2K2 or any other map such a Navaid to help navigate. And be prepared for unexpected airport sightings and anything but normal approaches to a single short runway. Above all, don't even think of using ATC or VATSIM. You don't need them screaming at you for constant flight plan deviations!! With this advice you will have an excellent chance of preventing a scramble of the Norwegian Search and Rescue Service.

Bob Betts

DC3-393

038-02-11 ENOL - ENVA (2K2 + Real Wx) -- Yeah, sure!! I finally get a short flight in good visibility with no wind, a miles wide fiord with very low surrounding hills to fly through, and a straight in approach to an ILS equipped runway. So what cruise altitude did I get? 2500' instead of the usual 1500'. Pardon me if I get suspicious about the next flight!! There has to be a payback coming!! Bob