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CIRRUS PILOT

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INSIDE:

Details about E14 in Beautiful Greece
A Look at Loss of Control Accidents
Cold Weather Altitude Corrections



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Chris Leontopoulos

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Our World Mission Part 4

by AMIR and TAMRA HYSTER

Editor's Note: The following is Part 4 of Amir and Tamra Hyster's journey, as they travel the world on their way back home to Australia after purchasing their third Cirrus in the U.S. In Part 3, they flew their new-to-them SR22 via Canada and Greenland to Scotland, where they had an extended stay, then onward with stops in Croatia, Greece, Cyprus, Israel and Jordan. Read below to find where their adventure takes them next.

20 September, 2014 – Amman, Jordan to Manama, Bahrain

This was our longest international flight of the entire trip – over 870 nm with a flight time of nearly five-and-a-half hours, over-flying Saudi Arabia. We had to use the most careful and precise planning for this leg. For example, on the way to Amman, we avoided Egypt's Sinai desert due to terrorism risk, and instead of using Aqaba (which is at sea level) as our departure airport, we chose Amman, which is 3,500 AGL and thus saved us over a gallon of precious fuel. It was all about minimizing the risk in this harsh and dangerous environment. Meticulous planning of last possible turnaround or diversion points under multiple scenarios took Amir days in the making. ATC was very accommodating and gave direct routing as much as possible. Once at altitude, Amir leaned the fuel to consume between 12 and 13 gph, enabling us to fly the range that we required to reach Bahrain with over an hour of fuel in reserve.

Within a half-hour, we were over Saudi Arabia flying in some sections about 30 miles south of its border with Iraq and with good tailwind, right when we desperately needed it. The landscape was beige with swirls of imaginary rivers, dry and barren, with ground temperature of over 120° F, however there was a large span of agricultural crop circles, which looked green and lush.

Nearly three hours into the flight, we were more than halfway across Saudi Arabia in a VHF "hole" with no radio



The Cirrus parked amongst the jumbo jets in Bahrain.

communication. We were given two radio frequencies to contact – one at Tamron and, if unable to contact them, Emaro. We couldn't contact either at that time; it was very quiet in the air – no chatter from other aircraft ... nothing. It was rather soothing. We weren't worried as we were familiar with the feeling, having flown many times through the Outback of Australia, where communication is also lost. Saudi Arabia and Australia are very similar in that they both have vast remote desert, although Saudi is on a grander scale. It resembles pictures of Mars with craters and pits on red sandy dust.

Forty minutes prior to landing, the radio started to become very active, the sand dunes below us turned to light beige and civilization started to scatter the landscape. How people survive in the middle of this extreme desert is remarkable. The thermals were throwing us around a bit as we were trying to descend to 7,000 feet. We progressed over the city of Riyadh and were given a spectacular view of the coast over the Persian Gulf where the air calmed down. It was 19° C at 7,000 feet and much warmer in the cabin.

We were vectored in an arc for approach to RWY 30R, circling Bahrain over the Gulf and landed without delay amongst many Gulf Air jets. We taxied to the parking spot



A view of the architecture and city of Bahrain when taking off for the next stop.

allotted to us, a jumbo jet space that made the Cirrus look like a spec alongside the big jets. When we opened the doors, the heat hit us full force. A car was waiting for us so we sat inside in the air conditioning while we waited for the fuel truck. There were a few phone calls back and forth and we were told the fueler wouldn't accept credit cards or cash, since one of his employees took cash from a private jet and disappeared back to Pakistan never to be seen again. He wanted a prepayment direct deposit, but it was the weekend and impossible to comply with. After going back and forth for 90 minutes, we proceeded and took off to clear customs, immigration and prepaid our local agent for some fuel. This was the first stop of our trip that we were wearing our pilot and crew uniforms, and we were glad we did, as things progressed much quicker and without fuss. When you are suitably attired in this part of the world, the uniform talks. It is "Yes Captain; whatever you need, Captain." The respect is evident.



The ports of the petroleum industry in Qatar with oil tanker ships docked.

We spent two nights in Manama, Bahrain at the InterContinental Hotel. It is a modern, well-organized city. The weather at night was considered to be cool at 40° C, but we couldn't be outside for more than an hour. We visited an ancient site of an old Portuguese port and fortification, the great Mosque, and drove around the city looking at the interestingly shaped buildings. The hotels were very opulent with the best quality of everything; it was very pleasant to stay in some luxury.

22 September, 2014 – Manama, Bahrain to Muscat, Oman

The night before, we were doubtful that we were going to receive clearance to fly to Muscat. We were sitting with some new friends at the lounge discussing the problems of the world, awaiting an email for clearance from Oman. After a few calls to our wonderful agent, Mike Gray at White Rose Aviation, and Oman Air, the handler

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The Barr Al Jissah Resort in Oman had been carved out of the sandstone mountains.

in Oman, we were contemplating another day in Bahrain when the phone call came through that we were cleared for departure at 8:00 a.m. UTC. Amir interacted directly with the fuel company as they and our agents were not on good terms, three hours later we received the fuel.

We were flying over Qatar on the north coastline heading directly for UAE, mostly over the water of the Persian Gulf with Iran on our left side. The air was a little bumpy, but not unpleasant for this part of the Earth; it was blue skies, very hazy, and an outside temperature of 14° C at 9,000 feet and a headwind of 17 knots.

Our view was of the petroleum industry of Qatar and the port with many oil tanker ships docked, and the strange sight of an excess of burning torches at each dock. There were at least 10 ships offshore waiting their turn to dock and fill up. The chatter in the air, in mostly English and a little Arabic, was very busy with Qatari Airlines heading into Doha. We also heard many U.S. Navy and Air Force planes from aircraft carriers and fixed bases in the area.

Abu Dhabi came into view – a well spread out city, and as we continued through the UAE, we could see masses of housing developments. There were also small agriculture farms reclaiming a bit of the desert; it was quite amazing to see how much of the desert had become habitable thanks to Israeli made desalination plants, although even from our altitude we could see the battle they must have with the shifting sands.

We flew over the mountains surrounding Oman and were given a straight-in approach to Muscat airport, right behind a USAF helicopter with the call sign “Cowboy 6,” and floated over a beautiful green park to the runway. As we taxied off the runway, there was a “follow me” car guiding us to the parking and service area. For some reason they were directing us to a very deserted back end of the airport, where there was nothing but a tarmac to park. Amir jumped on the radio and asked why they were putting us in such a position. They were under the impression that we didn’t need any servicing, which infuriated Amir, as he was very particular the entire way that he needed the toilet and was given priority from ATC on arrival to Muscat for that reason, but unfortunately the handler was unaware of this. We were re-directed to a parking spot directly next to the terminal and the fueler. For the next four hours, we had to try to convince the fuel company to fuel us. Avgas was a problem because it needs to be imported from Spain in drums, which are then manually moved into fuel trucks to be pumped into an airplane. It was clear that the fueler was not great friends with the handlers, so he was not happy to do the job without prior arrangement of at least three days. The handler hadn’t advised them they needed to fuel avgas that day. We wouldn’t leave the plane without it being fueled up as condensation could accumulate in the tanks if they were left empty in this heat for any length of time. My sweet-talking pilot went to the office of the refueling company and after 10 minutes, magic happened and we had avgas. After further waiting and negotiation, changing of money (as they would only accept cash in their own currency), we were fueled and ready to be guided to the parking area for our four-night stay. We were escorted to the other side of the airport by a “follow me” car and a passenger bus, and then taken to customs and immigration.

Oman was beautiful! We drove out of Muscat along the coast to our hotel, the Shangri-La. Unlike UAE or the other Middle Eastern cities, Oman was spotlessly clean, with traditional style buildings and gates to every city via highways. Lush green gardens and miles of flowers and date palm trees were everywhere, along with grand government estates and the most beautiful beaches

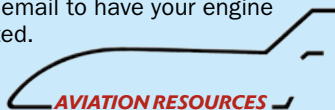
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and coastline we had encountered in the Middle East. We were truly amazed when we arrived at the Barr Al Jissah Resort – there were three resorts that had been carved out of sandstone mountains, a spectacular sight. There was a lot to see in Oman, from desert to Wadi (Valley), water holes, souqs, old forts and castles; it was a clean, safe place to explore. As Muscat was lacking nightlife, restaurants and cafes, we ate at the resort every night, although a bit expensive, it was very good food and superb service. While in Oman, we had purchased food for our next legs of the trip, as we didn't want to risk eating anywhere in Pakistan, India or Bangladesh.

26 September, 2014 – Muscat, Oman to Karachi, Pakistan

After four fantastic nights in Oman, we departed after an early rise; ATC gave us an immediate departure on RWY 8R which was not active for the other jets, saving us a lengthy taxi and waiting time. Once airborne, we were at our cruise level of 11,000 feet when we received a message from ATC that Karachi can't accept us at that level, they required us to be at FL270. We advised "negative," and they countered with FL210, we

wanted to conserve oxygen and so we again responded with "negative." It was much like a bidding auction; we eventually settled on FL150. They changed our waypoints which took us 10 miles right of Iran, over water, then to waypoint PI along the coast of Pakistan; we were wearing our life vests which were relatively uncomfortable, but we always conform to safety first. We were happy at our negotiated level as the headwind was significantly lower – at FL110, we had 27 knots of headwind, at FL150, we had 17 knots.

We arrived at Karachi and were escorted to the clearance area where they greeted us with armed guards, airport operations personnel and armed police. One person questioned us as to why we arrived at that time and especially on Friday, to which we responded that it was the time Pakistan allocated to us. Another person immediately requested the GENDEC-general aviation declaration form, which we had prepared for Muscat, but didn't know it would be required in Karachi. We were lucky we kept it and could find it. We then waited on the tarmac for one "official" to take the form somewhere (they all wanted to go pray, as it was Friday). When he finally came back two hours later and said we were cleared, we waited another two hours for the fueler. They took another hour to fuel, pumping manually from drums at 29 USD a gallon. The handlers refused to speak to me, take my luggage or even look at me; they didn't hide their dislike of us and the West – it was a very uncomfortable feeling to say the least.

Once again the handler hadn't organized the fuel prior to our arrival and they obviously didn't have a relationship with them to ensure a speedier service. It was clear that they need to pay cash for the fuel themselves and thus they had to wait for us to arrive before starting the process and getting the permissions required to bring the fuel from the depot outside the airport. There was paperwork galore. They were reluctant to even call to hassle them; if it wasn't for us doing so, the



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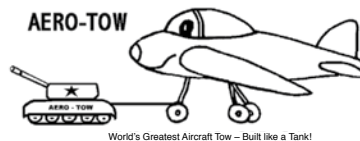


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process would have been even longer. To put it mildly, this was not the United States and service there was dismal and frustratingly lacking. After the first two hours in over 40° C temperatures with no shade, Amir convinced one of the handlers to take me with armed guards to the airport to wait in air conditioning as I was not feeling very well (always a good ploy!). We had two groups of guards protecting us, one was in blue uniforms and the other had white; the reason for two different police groups was to watch each other and prevent either of them from harming us.

While I waited at the airport, I was able to go to the restroom, if that was what you could call it, it was dirty, broken and had no supplies – one of those places you get out of as quick as you can before you catch anything. Only one flight arrived during my two-hour wait, and they all started to line up for immigration processing with only men in the seven lines. When all the men cleared out, the small group of women, all in full burka, were allowed to go to the single special counter marked as “unaccompanied children and women”. The men were able to gather however they wanted. ALL of them looked at me like I was the enemy, sitting on a chair with my white short-sleeved airline shirt on with no head scarf or burka. The hate was everywhere; we were the only two Westerners to pass through the airport in four hours. I then realized that the guards around me were not to ensure that I don't enter Pakistan without permission but to protect me from the customs officers, the “moral” police and the “moral” crusaders.

We exited the airport, passing a huge “welcome” sign saying “Death to the USA, the West and Israel.” We were driven straight to our heavily barricaded, secured hotel, the Marriott. We were the only Westerners there, and again everyone stared at us, no one acknowledged us, they just gave strange looks, and so we sat in the main area enjoying the commotion we were causing.

We visited the hotel's excellent business center and used all four of the computers, wheeling from one to the other, printing off Rocket Route's brilliant flight plans and schedules for the next legs of the trip. We didn't dare leave the safety of the hotel as Karachi and Pakistan were dangerous places, especially for us foreigners.

If you rightfully ask why we traveled there in the first place, our only reason was the avgas, as we didn't have extra fuel tanks; we should have, however, just made it a stop for fuel and continued immediately. When planning the trip, we had seen that the Australian team would play cricket against Pakistan at the same time we were going to be in Pakistan, so we assumed that if it was safe for them, it should be okay for us ... except that the cricket game was actually played in the UAE and not Pakistan, as it was deemed not safe for the Australian team to travel to Pakistan. Until conditions change in this country, we highly recommend avoiding coming to this part of the world!

27 September, 2014 – Karachi, Pakistan to Nagpur, India

We woke early to meet the handler at the airport at 5:25 a.m., but he wasn't there and we had to chase him down;

we waited for him a short time outside the terminal without security, which was a very uncomfortable situation. Security and immigration went very quickly and we were bussed out to the plane, the smallest one at the airport. ATC in Karachi was exceptionally professional, they spoke with a U.S. accent; it was obvious they had trained in the United States and knew how to serve the pilots. The early departure was needed due to our destination airport in Nagpur closing at 1:00 p.m. and we wanted to leave Pakistan as quickly as we could. We were airborne as the sun was starting to rise and were soon crossing into India and seeing the area that was affected by recent floods – the result of the same monsoonal rains that we were waiting to clear before we could fly through this part of the world. It was mainly agricultural lands, but as we continued, it looked like we were flying over water; the entire land mass was covered for at least a 700-mile radius – it was vast.

We sent an SMS via the satellite phone to the handler in Nagpur advising our arrival time of 5:15 Zulu and asked that they have the fuel ready; although we knew it would also be a pantomime, it couldn't hurt to ask. Cruising 187 knots at FL110 with a slight tailwind, the weather was clear. Three hours into the flight, we encountered clouds and could see towering cumulonimbus; we requested a higher altitude and started to divert around while still in clouds, we crested out of the clouds at FL150. Our slow descent into Nagpur saw the skies clear, but hot with hazy conditions. We landed, and the handler was waiting for us; he went right away to get the fuel drums, however it was still a two-hour affair to fill up in heat of 38° C (101°F). We were not allowed to go into the terminal or restroom, and the only source of shade was an old bus on the other side of the tarmac. I sat on this bus for a while then walked to the terminal to see if they would let me in, but the armed guard blocked the door. Without a Visa we were not permitted anywhere. We began the act of “Madam is not well,” and “The weather is not good to continue,” so our handler arranged with immigration to issue us

Fueling up in Bangladesh.





Greeted at the airport in Pakistan.

with a 72-hour TSV (Technical Stop Visa). The parking of the airplane and arranging the Visa took another hour; we were sure the process sped up because the airport closed at 1:00 p.m. and everyone wanted to go home. Our Visa was issued at 12:58 p.m. and we were on our way to the new Radisson Blue by 1:30. It should be noted that the fuel there was 11.5 USD a gallon, 70% cheaper than Pakistan, and more importantly, the people of India didn't look at us like we came from another planet.

28 September, 2014 - Nagpur, India to Chittagong, Bangladesh

We departed Nagpur at 7:00 a.m. climbing to 9,000 feet then to FL110 with a 15-knot headwind. We

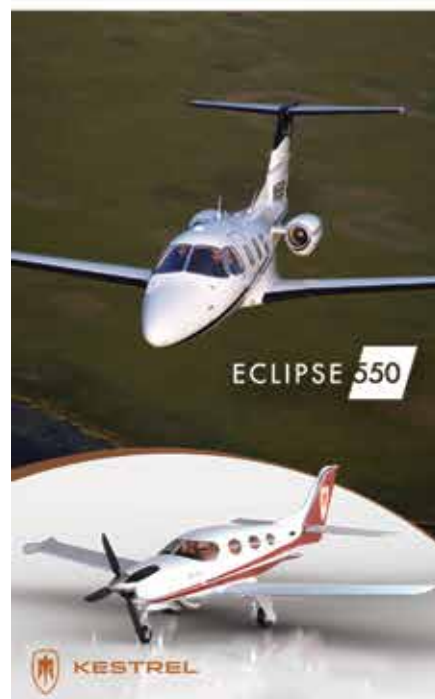


checked the winds using the Garmin Flight Data Services (GFDS) on the Perspective, and it indicated that at FL130, there was a slight tailwind of three knots and as usual, it was right. Although the view was hazy, we appreciated the boost from the tailwind and were cruising at 185 knots using only 72 percent power – conserving fuel nicely.

Nagpur tower requested to speak with us, so we changed the radio frequency back to find out what they wanted; apparently we paid short \$20, so they took the funds from the handler. What were they going to do? Everything there is cash, cash, cash and conjured to get even more cash. For example, if they say the fee is \$80 USD, they're hoping you don't have the exact amount and hand over \$100, conveniently, they have no change, so they keep the \$20. This is the process over and over. If the handler needed to pay the tower an extra \$20, then they were still on the positive side. We experienced extremely difficult processes each time we landed in this part of the world. The one thing that was consistent was the airways – in this world of highways and communications in the skies, everything was the same. It became our safe haven to be flying in the familiar world of the airspace.

Nagpur sits exactly in the middle of India; they call it zero degrees. The

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city was starting to boom and Boeing was building a maintenance center there. As we advanced across India towards Bangladesh, we saw many dozens of coal-fueled power stations helping hundreds of millions of Indians improve their lives and getting out of poverty. It was astounding how many there were – more than we had noticed in any other country. We tried to make contact with Calcutta, but were unsuccessful, even asking a Singapore airline if they would convey a message. Eventually, we were in full communication, and were in the middle of a busy airspace. Overhead, we had a view that went on for miles of what appeared to be rice fields supplied from the water of the many rivers running through the green flat land.

We approached Chittagong and the scene dramatically changed; we were in the tropics with green lushness and many ships in the port and off the coast waiting their turn to dock. The ATC was the busiest and fastest calls we had heard with distance and radius positions, being conveyed, first 20 miles and then every five miles. We were taxied to parking and immediately a truck with two fuel drums on it arrived (already we knew we were in a different culture), they immediately escorted us to the terminal where we could sit in the air conditioning. The terminal was clean and organized, and I breathed a sigh of relief as we were starting to come back to civilization as we knew it, after all Bangladesh is a thriving manufacturing country housing the sweat shops of the world.

It didn't take long to be shocked out of our daydream; thin, small cows were tied up and lined the street for miles. They were to be slaughtered for a celebration at an upcoming Muslim feast. There was filth on the streets and the poverty of the shops and people conducting their day-to-day business in tin shacks with dirt floors and piles of garbage everywhere. As a show of hospitality, our friendly handler, Mujibur, took us to the seaside where there was a market and local restaurants – again just makeshift shacks in the dirt, with filth and raw sewage running in open canals. The Bangladeshi people and those at the Hotel Agrabad in Chittagong were nice people, they accommodated our needs and provided us with warm hospitality. ☺

Editor's Note: The final edition of Amir and Tamra's world mission adventure will be in the next issue of Cirrus Pilot.

Amir and Tamra Hyster are semi-retired "SKlers" (Spending the Kids Inheritance) who live in Sydney, Australia; they have three grown children. Amir has a PPL with IFR ratings on single engine; he learned to fly 14 years ago with his daughter, Jessica, which started as a hobby and grew into a passion. He currently owns and flies an SR22T and has a position for the Cirrus Jet. The Hysters have flown around Australia several times, and in Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, Canada and United States.