



808 visits 876



808 - 876



876 - 808

Well its time to go see Steve Lister (876), last time we met was at the 40/40 re-union in 2001, prior to that was graduation 45 years ago. After reading the exploits of navigating from the Midlands to the North of England to see probably one of the oldest members of the entry I thought about writing about my recent trip. As I'm probably the youngest member of the 40th Entry, I work for a living, still have 3 years to retirement.

My journey starts in Newark, New York on March 22 (Note all times GMT/ZULU) at 23:59, two hours prior to take off we leave the hotel for the ride to the Freight Area of Newark Airport..

External safety check, haul the bags up to the forward door and get some coffee brewing. Pre-flight the Engineer's panel, oxygen, cb's and check for illegal aliens.

Downstairs for the external pre-flight, 4 engines, 18 tires, check all the lights and organize the fuel. Uplift 13,306 US Gallons tonight, for a total ramp fuel of 233,000 lbs.

Total take off weight 730,000 pounds (365 Metric Tonnes)

Back upstairs to check the load, 163,000 pounds of US Mail to the Middle East, we are going via EBLG (Liege, Belgium), It's cheaper than Brussels and there is no night curfew at Liege. Program the performance computer with airport data, weather, weights, it then spits out all the numbers (V speeds) the pilot's need to get us safely off the ground.

Relax a bit now, can't leave early due to slot times but quick coffee and its time to check all the doors and read the before start checklist. I start the four engines, what a power trip, they are all mine until we reach our initial cruising altitude of 27,000 feet. We push back at 02:00 right on time, now we join the conga line for the runway, finally airborne at 02:44 long taxi, good as it all counts for pay. Departure is busy, watch the motors, check the temps, don't overheat them. 10,000 feet, call the Company on the Sat phone, ETA Liege 09:40 (6 hours 56 en-route).

Cruise is the easy time, monitor the motors, oil, temps, pressures, work with the non-flying pilot to monitor fuel burn for position reports. We are in the Atlantic tracks talking on the HF, giving position/gas remaining, etc etc.

Throw some food in the microwave; we get ours from a Mom & Pop Italian restaurant, good stuff, better than Airline Catering. Drink lots of water, stay hydrated.

Listening on London Volmet to get advance info on the weather in Europe, re-program the computer for the arrival airport, gives us the approach and go around speeds.

We arrive at Liege 3 minutes early and block in at 09:48 (7 hours 48 min block to block)

Brief the oncoming crew; write up the log book, no snags, and good to go.

Off to the Holiday Inn by the river Meuse for some Stella Artois and some kip.

March 23, 2006, Crew re-positions by road from Liege to Amsterdam, we are going to operate EHAM to OBBI (Bahrain), our normal freight service, no mail today. 166,000 fuel and 106,135 cargo this afternoon. ETA Bahrain 19:53 about 11 pm local.

Have been communicating with Steve by email, never could synchronize our schedules, we used to layover in Kuwait and only stop in Bahrain for 2 hours, our new schedule now lays over in Bahrain at the Crown Plaza, as Steve and I are POSB (learned at Cosford) he's going to share my room (twin beds).

Flight goes to plan and we arrive at the hotel to find Steve has checked into my room and he hands me my key! Great to see you again Steve, we BS for a couple of hours and sink a couple of beers.

Next day, Steve gives me the Cooks tour of Manama, and we visit Steve's favorite watering hole. We take photos together in down town Manama.

All things have to end, have to get some sleep, off again on the 24th to Hong Kong.

Great to see you again Steve, I know that you have to jump through the hoops to get a Visa and drive over the causeway to Bahrain, your efforts were appreciated.

Did I tell you all? I'm a Boeing 747 Flight Engineer (the older 100/200 classics, the new 400's have a computer in place of the FE)

**Mike Young,
40th 4 Sqdn. AWM**