

A Viking in the South Seas



Tony Skelton (left) and Steve Stackhouse (right) with a visiting pilot from another -400 operator, Trans Maldivian Airways.

On delivery of the aircraft in Australia, its total flight time had risen to 89.9hrs since leaving Victoria.

When a new aircraft is completed, the last 'act' – either by the manufacturer or the new owner – is to get the airframe to the customer's base. The OK Tedi Development Foundation (OTDF) in the South Pacific nation of Papua New Guinea (PNG) purchased two new Viking Air DHC-6 Twin Otter 400s on behalf of the OK Tedi Mining Company (OTML). Flying a non-pressurised aircraft on multiple transits half way around the world is not a simple task.

The first aircraft was to be delivered in January 2012 and the Canadian manufacturer used the trip to do a little bit of promotional work in Asia on the way. The aircraft, C-GOVN (c/n 853), left the factory at Victoria International Airport, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada on January 21, crewed by company pilots Michael Moore and Frank Harlow. It then routed via Anchorage, Alaska followed by Anadyr-Ugolny, Magadan and Vladivostok in Russia before arriving at Pusan/Gimhae in South Korea at which point Harlow

Paul Howard followed the delivery of a Viking Air DHC-6-400 Twin Otter from British Columbia to Papua New Guinea – via a sales tour in Asia.



"THE STANDARD GLASS COCKPIT FIT OFFERED FAR MORE (IN TERMS OF TECHNOLOGY) THAN WOULD EVER BE NEEDED IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA."

Tony Skelton OK Tedi's chief pilot.

DHC-6-400 cockpit with full Electronic Flight Information System (EFIS) fitted.

returned home to be replaced by OK Tedi's chief pilot, Tony Skelton.

Taipei Bound

Airliner World picked up the trip on the leg from Pusan. Departing on a southerly direction down the East China Sea, the weather was clear, offering a view of the snow-covered 6,400ft (1,950m) Mount Hallasan on Jeju Island en route to Taipei's Taoyuan Airport in Taiwan in a sector time of 5.2hrs airborne. Tony Skelton was flying the aircraft and has some 6,000hrs Pilot in Command (PIC) on classic Twin Otters out of his total 21,000hrs+. He remarked after his first experience of the aircraft that it flew beautifully and the standard 'glass cockpit' fit of TV screens offered far more (in terms of technology) than he would ever need in PNG – however it proved very useful on the ferry flights.

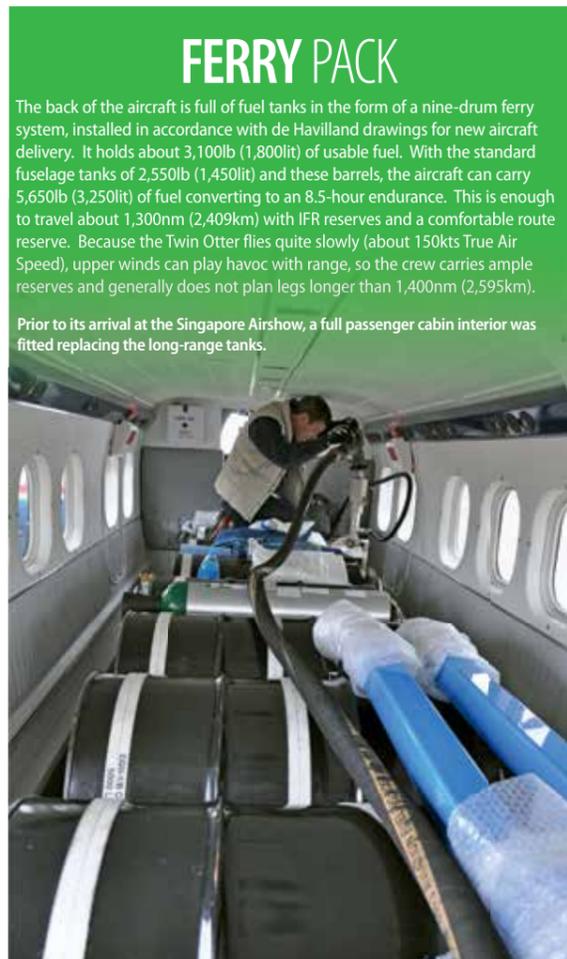
The cockpit instruments include a Honeywell Primus Apex fully integrated avionics system which replaces the analogue instrument panel of the classic model and presents four flat-screen displays, incorporating an Electronic Flight Information System (EFIS) >>



The aircraft, C-GOVN (c/n 853), left the factory at Victoria International Airport, Canada on January 21, 2012.

Below - A 'Twin Otter-Series 400' decal was applied on the forward fuselage and Viking Air sales kits and calendars were loaded for distribution at the Singapore Airshow.

Below right - Prior to its arrival at the Singapore Airshow, a full passenger cabin interior was fitted replacing the long-range tanks.



FERRY PACK

The back of the aircraft is full of fuel tanks in the form of a nine-drum ferry system, installed in accordance with de Havilland drawings for new aircraft delivery. It holds about 3,100lb (1,800lit) of usable fuel. With the standard fuselage tanks of 2,550lb (1,450lit) and these barrels, the aircraft can carry 5,650lb (3,250lit) of fuel converting to an 8.5-hour endurance. This is enough to travel about 1,300nm (2,409km) with IFR reserves and a comfortable route reserve. Because the Twin Otter flies quite slowly (about 150kts True Air Speed), upper winds can play havoc with range, so the crew carries ample reserves and generally does not plan legs longer than 1,400nm (2,595km).

Prior to its arrival at the Singapore Airshow, a full passenger cabin interior was fitted replacing the long-range tanks.

and an E-check list. Also included are a Terrain Awareness System (TAWS), a Traffic Alert and Collision Avoidance System (TCAS) with linked pulse landing lights, twin Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and an auto-pilot - in fact the only 'old money' instruments are a clock and a standby compass. The suite is similar to that as installed on other aircraft such as the Embraer 190 regional jet or the Pilatus PC-12 bizprop.

Taipei - Puerto Princesa

Following a night stop, the crew was up early the next morning to make the most of a good weather forecast. Sunrise Aviation handling agents did their job impeccably and the aircraft



was soon airborne and on its way down the South China Sea heading for the Philippine archipelago. It paralleled the west coast of Luzon Island, passing abeam the former US Navy base of Subic Bay and its associated airfield on Cubi Point. The destination was Puerto Princesa about half way down the long slim island, and the balmy air of a fine 30°C tropical afternoon greeted the crew after a 6.1hr flight. The ramp was busy with a couple of colourful Airbus A320s from Philippine low-cost carriers, Cebu Pacific and Zest.

Singapore Aerospace 2012

With the approval of the new owner, the aircraft had been programmed to appear at the Singapore Aerospace

Show, followed by a sales tour around the region, thus the next leg would be to Singapore's Seletar Airport. The route was overwater the whole way with little to affect the flight, however, on approach to the island nation, a thunderstorm was sitting over the city's airports and Air Traffic Control (ATC) directed all arriving aircraft to a holding area, for the best part of an hour, until Seletar could reopen. This leg, rounding out at 7hrs was the last one requiring the internal cabin tanks.

Parked under cover, the aircraft was prepared for display at the upcoming show, and engineers from Viking took the opportunity to give the airframe a periodic check, remove the ferry kit and install full cabin seating. A Twin

"WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE NEW OWNER, THE AIRCRAFT HAD BEEN SCHEDULED TO APPEAR AT THE SINGAPORE AEROSPACE SHOW, FOLLOWED BY A SALES TOUR AROUND THE REGION."

Otter-Series 400' decal was applied on the forward fuselage and Viking Air sales kits and calendars were loaded for distribution at the show. The Twin Otter was flown the short hop over to the show venue at Singapore's Changi Airport by company pilot Steve Stackhouse who took over the delivery so that Michael Moore could return to Canada.

Demonstration Tour

Following a successful show, during which the aircraft attracted a great deal of interest from carriers in the region, the crew departed for a demonstration tour of Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, the Philippines and Vietnam. Extra 'passengers' included the President of Viking Air, Dave Curtis; Vice President (Business Development), Robert Mauracher, and engineer Don Galbraith. The first stop was at Subang Airport in the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur. Three demonstration flights were scheduled over the next three days including a landing at the Burnam River strip, with potential customers including the local Police Air Wing.



The aircraft carried the logo of the OK Tedi Mining Company (OTML) on the fn.

Pilot Tony Skelton has a healthy snack on one of the longer transits. (All photos Tony Skelton and Paul Howard)

Over the top of Singapore Island and the main Changi International Airport.



The next destination was Halim Perdanakusuma (PK) Airport on West Java, Indonesia - via a technical refuelling stop at Johor Baru, Malaysia, which is just across the Johor Straits from Singapore Island. On departure, the planned routing was over the top of Singapore, past Banka Island off Sumatra and south over the Java Sea for a total of 4.5hrs' flying. Halim PK, once the main airport at Jakarta, is now home to many general aviation, corporate and executive jet operators, plus charter carriers, while domestic services also >>

DHC-6-400 TWIN OTTER SPECIFICATIONS

Dimensions	
Length	51ft 9in (15.8m)
Wingspan	65ft (19.8m)
Height	19ft 4in (5.9m)
Wing area	420sq ft (39.0m ²)
Weight	
Maximum take-off weight	12,500lb (5 670kg)
Operating empty weight	6,880lb (3,120kg)
Performance	
Cruise speed	150kt (278km/h)
Maximum speed (km/h)	170kt (314km/h)
Maximum operating altitude	26,700ft (8 138m)
Take-off field length	1,197ft (365m)
Landing field length	1,050ft (320m)
Engines	Two x P&WC PT6A-34
Cabin Data	
Passengers	19/20
Cabin length (m)	18.4ft (5.6m)
Cabin width (m)	5.25ft (1.6m)
Cabin height (m)	4.9ft (1.5m)





keep the airport busy. Sadly, it is also a graveyard for another generation of airliners that have been withdrawn from use in recent years including ATR 42s, British Aircraft Corporation One-Elevens and Fokker F28s and F50s.

Three demonstration flights were performed before moving on to Surabaya's Juanda Airport for more – including one for Susi Air, a large commuter operator with Cessna 208B Caravans, Piaggio P180 Avantis and Pilatus PC-6B Porters. Two days later, the aircraft departed for Brunei, tracking along East Kalimantan (Borneo) to Balikpapan's Sepinggan Airport for a refuelling stop. This airport is a hub for the nearby oil industry, and a selection of associated commuter and utility

Getting the aircraft ready for departure outside the Sabah Air facility at Kota Kinabalu.

Abeam the Cubi Point Airport at Subic Bay, Philippines.

performed for local operator Sabah Air – including landing at two rural strips. A return to Puerto Princesa was next on the agenda, before routing to Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam to demonstrate for the Vietnamese People's Navy. However, political red tape intervened and clearances were not received in time so the visit had to be cancelled. It also turned out it was impossible to obtain a clearance for a necessary technical stop at the Philippine Air Force's Rancudo airfield on Thitu Island in the Spratlys – due to ongoing political issues. Plan B was therefore instigated and the aircraft went to Manila's Ninoy Aquino Airport instead where further demonstrations – the last of the sales tour – had been booked. The day's legs totalled 3.6hrs.

Final Stretch

Continuing the delivery, the aircraft left Manila on March 10. Tony Skelton had been required back in PNG, leaving Steve Stackhouse and relief pilot Nick Harbison to fly the remaining legs to Australia. The routing was initially to Davao City's Francisco Bangoy Airport tracking south over Luzon, Cebu, Bohil, Sulu Sea and into Mindanao, a decidedly picturesque route lasting 3.5hrs. A 2.2hr leg followed that afternoon on to Manado's Sam Ratulangi Airport, wrapping up a good day's progress to the remainder of the ferry.

The following day, a leg to West Papua was planned routing via the historic island of Ternate in the



colourful Moluccas, for a technical stop after a brief (0.8hr) sector. From here it was a 3.4hr flight to Biak's Frans Kaisiepo Airport. Encountering marginal weather on departure the next day, forced a diversion into the coastal airstrip of Nabire on the north coast of West Papua after just 0.7hr

flying. When the weather had cleared, the aircraft tracked south over the mountainous spine of the country and continued to Merauke on the south coast in a leg time of 2.6hrs. Following an overnight stop, it was then just a short 1hr hop to Horn Island in the Torres Strait region of North



Above left - One of the digital cockpit screens showing the aircraft coming up to Banka Island, Indonesia en route to Jakarta.

Above - The sort of airfield that the aircraft would be used on in PNG. A rural strip visited during a demonstration flight up the coast from Kota Kinabalu.

Left - A Piaggio P180 Avanti of Susi Air at Juanda – a potential customer for the -400.

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Queensland, Australia, for a technical stop and customs clearance.

The last leg of the ferry was to Cairns, Queensland, which was flown in 2.6hrs. The aircraft was initially handled by the Cobham facility on the airport, which prepared it for service and the final delivery to OTML with the registration P2-IRM being applied. The total flight time had been 89.9 hrs since departing Victoria.

Since the delivery, OTML awarded a contract to operate the Twin Otter – plus a second example now delivered to Cairns as C-GVAQ (c/n 859) to become P2-BFW – to Hevilift (PNG). They are both now being used for feeder services from the mine site at Tabubil, PNG.

“ENCOUNTERING MARGINAL WEATHER ON DEPARTURE THE AIRCRAFT DIVERTED INTO THE COASTAL AIRSTRIP OF NABIRE ON THE NORTH COAST OF WEST PAPUA.”

aircraft, plus helicopters, are normally in attendance, including those belonging to Indonesia Air, Airfast and Pelita Air. The remainder of the day was spent flying to Brunei's Banda Seri Bagawan Airport for a total airborne time of 4.6hrs. Apart from one flight conducted in Brunei for the Coast Guard, the team took the opportunity to have a couple of rest days.

East Malaysia (and Vietnam)

The next destination was the East Malaysian city of Kota Kinabalu, where two demonstration flights were

