



EPST

## EPST Sense

By Claudine Miles

As the siren blared and I scrambled for my oxygen mask whilst desperately hoping that I could recall all the memory for a Rapid Depressurization, it was difficult to bear in mind that we were not in imminent danger – this was the simulator and this was all part of establishing our crew co-operation.

The Advanced Jet Foundation Course at EPST, based in Utrecht, is a tremendously demanding course. I was lucky enough to be awarded a place by GAPAN as I had achieved the Best Flightschool Graduate and the Best Groundschool Graduate awards from Cabair, one of two such scholarships that Dick Verburg, of the European Pilot Selection & Training centre, generously provides each year to promote a more thorough approach to the commercial development of CPL/frozen ATPL students. In his opinion, the legal, minimum hours of most MCC courses do not provide enough time to effectively transition students from single to multi pilot operations. Having already completed an MCC at the end of my integrated course, I would have to say I am inclined to agree.

This belief has led to the course now consisting of six days of groundschool before moving on to fly sixteen sorties, a total of 49 hours, flown in B737NG simulators. Before commencing the flying training, a minimum of 85% is needed in the test at the end of groundschool and, unlike ATPL theory exams, there are no multiple choice options. Once over that hurdle, there is one introductory session then the next seven sorties constitute the MCC, with the emphasis on getting the basics of SOPs, standard callouts, crew communication and checklist handling consistently right before moving onto the AJFC phase, eight sorties, where the onus is more on line



Claudine during ATPL flying training in Spain.

flying whilst dealing with complex situations such as poor weather, one engine inoperative or other failures. Although every flight is graded and reported on there is a check ride at the

end of the MCC and two, a handling check and a LOFT check, at the very end of the course. It was fantastic to have such a high level of feedback throughout the course. All of the instructors took a lot of time and care to ensure that we achieved the best that we could and to nip out any bad tendencies that started to crop up. With this support, it was rewarding to see an upwards trend in my performance over the course.

To get you used to flying with different crews we changed simulator partners between the MCC and AJFC. For both parts of the course I was paired with Dutchmen, which really emphasised how important clear communication, particularly standard calls, is to the smooth operation of the flight deck. I also found it useful to bear in mind that this is the least experienced crew that you will be part of; once on line there will be a captain to offer invaluable experience and insight to hopefully avoid those times when neither of you are sure of the best course of action. Also, we used very little automation throughout the course which really tests your capacity.



EPST Interior

There is a very real sense at EPST that they are always striving to

improve not just their students but also the instruction and the product that they deliver. One way that they monitor progression is to ask all students to complete aptitude tests at the end of the course, to compare to their results from their initial selection. Despite not having a base score as I was selected through

GAPAN, I was only two marks off the maximum score and, compared to my aptitude tests before commencing an integrated course, my hand-eye co-ordination had dramatically improved. EPST also offer use of their simulators to students who have graduated but are yet to secure a job.

Obviously, flying more hours than the minimum, in an advanced simulator, means that this is not the cheapest MCC around. On balance though, I would say that the greater confidence that the experience gives you definitely justifies the expense. It is particularly useful to have the knowledge that having passed EPST's AJFC you are likely to be successful at both a simulator check ride and line training as these are often a further expense in the current airline world which are costly if they go wrong.

Overall in aviation there seems to be a trend that the minimum is good enough, rather than seeking out excellence. EPST's AJFC course excels and I am grateful to them, and to GAPAN, for providing such a valuable foundation for my flying career.

For more information about European Pilot Selection and Training, visit [www.epst.com](http://www.epst.com).

To apply for the 2011 GAPAN JOC scholarship, complete the application form at <http://www.gapan.org/career-matters/scholarships/> and submit this before 31<sup>st</sup> August 2011.