

# CROSSING THE ATLANTIC

## (A Mooney Returns to NA)

Heroic or Mundane?

The flight was superb, the aircraft fantastic, the educational experience beyond all that preparatory measures, simulation and anticipation could provide. Total distance was computed at 6,036.5 miles and total flight time was 22 hours. Total elapse time from Tarbes, France to Houston, Texas was 46.5 hours. (Not too shabby for a small town, weekend pilot.)

*When a former High School classmate, at age 48, bought a sea-going sail boat, learned to sail it and soloed the Atlantic, all friends & classmates took note. It was newsworthy... something beyond the classroom, yes, extreme human endeavor! Relatively few have the courage to embark on such venture. Getting his PhD. was O.K., being a Medical Doctor for 20 years was O.K. But sailing the Atlantic was monumental! The author's conjecture is that every solo Atlantic crossing is significant! Exemplary human endeavor is worthy of recognition.*

*You can imagine how surprised I was when fellow Canadian Pilot, Art Paetkau, casually commented he was going to cross the Atlantic on a weekend in a single-engine Socata TBM700 aircraft. I was astonished! How many single or twin-engine-rated, light aircraft pilots do you know personally who have done this?*

Does this mean we've reached the stage where anyone can just jump in an airplane and cross the Atlantic? Not exactly, but it is less complicated than the way Charles Lindberg did it 86 years ago. Sure, according to 'Executive Travel' statistics, more than 425,000 flights crossed the Atlantic in 2007, that's 1,164 aircraft crossings each day. Yet only 158 single engine (non-jet) aircraft crossed the Atlantic in 2012, according to Transport Canada. Many required over a week to complete the potentially perilous ordeal.

So how did this Manitoba, Super Cub restorer get to complete this amazing feat over a weekend? Well, first of all, he's a bit more of a pilot than just hopping around in his back 40 acres with a restored, balloon-tired 200 HP Super Cub. He also owns four single-stage turbine-powered crop-spraying aircraft and pilots a twin Beach. In the second place, he had a factory-approved co-pilot, Margirit Waltz ("Ferry Pilot Extraordinaire"/"Queen of the Skys"), who was considerably knowledgeable about the Socata TBM 700 2-stage turbine aircraft and the 3 Northern routes connecting Europe to North America. (Aerospaciale, Socato's parent co., purchased Mooney from the USA mfg. co. in 1985 from what is now a Mooney service facility in Kerrsville, TX, and moved it to Tarbes, in S. France. The TBM700 was the first purpose-built, pressurized, single engine turbo-prop ever designed.)

Here is what a pilot should know in pre-flight planning...

1. The most Southern passage from Portugal via Azores Islands to St. John's Newfoundland:
  - Most favorable weather but a range of 2,000 nautical miles.
2. The middle route from Scotland via Faroe Islands over Iceland and Southern tip of Narsarsuaq, Greenland to Goose Bay, Newfoundland:
  - Range of 675 NM but requires high frequency radio and extra fuel unless appropriate STC & ferry permit
3. The most Northern route - Scotland over Iceland, Greenland, Baffin Islands, Iqaluit, Nunavut & St. Louis:
  - Route is 650 NM longer without high frequency radio requirements but Greenland ice caps are 10,000+ feet.

Fortunately, the Daher-Socata TBM ("TB" stands for Tarbes & "M" stands for Mooney) has a service ceiling of 31,000 feet and takes only 15 minutes to climb to 26,000 feet. FL280 was the choice for this trip.

Since it is unlikely to fly VMC throughout the flight, both pilot, co-pilot and airplane are certified and current IFR. Best times to fly the N. of 60° route are July/August because freezing levels are higher than 5,000' and often over 10,000'. The TBM 700 has the power, range and 290+ mph cruise speed for the job (305 mph was cruise setting for this trip). Furthermore, it has the avionics and Garmin 1000 GPS with ILS approach plates.

The flight left Tarbes, France on Friday, July 12<sup>th</sup> at noon. The trip to Glasgow, Scotland had supreme visibility with scarcely a cloud in the sky. The TBM has a 291.6 US gallon capacity. Refueling is part of being equipped for Kevlavik, Iceland where overnight accommodations were needed (to avoid Greenland's huge Air-Service fees). The crew did carry an emergency kit (a life raft, rubber suits, and 4,000-calorie food rations). The pilots decided not to wear the rubber immersion suits since a descent from 28,000' to ocean level would provide ample time to put them on before ditching. They also concluded the TBM 700 was unlikely to survive the impact. From Scotland-on, the ocean was never visible but the oceanic markers spaced 100 to 200 NM apart served as a highway beacon in the sky. Baffin Island was socked-in and needed an ILS approach but the Chibougamau, Quebec and St. Louis were VFR. Parked in St. Louis over-night, the morning 2.5 hr. flight to Houston, TX landed the TBM there at 10:30 A.M. thus, logging 22 hours Total Time. There is an advantage flying from factory to factory in terms of being equipped.

Again, why did this every-day, coffee-drinking, crop-spraying, Manitoban cross the Atlantic on a weekend? He didn't need an adrenaline rush, God knows he's got enough of that every day keeping 4,000 customers happy in 5 provinces and 4 families fed, flying his turbos. This is not to mention up to one dozen employees in his manufacturing company producing new concept permanent and portable structures. His Steel Insulated Panel manufacturing facility ([www.EMSIPS.com](http://www.EMSIPS.com)) is a housing solution for military, extreme weather (hot/cold) residential housing, including exploration and mining/oil-gas industry applications. So, why did he do it? Money! Yes, he thought he could buy and sell this TBM 700 and earn a reasonably-quick dollar! Alas, plans got foiled ... it appears he fell in love with the Mooney! Can you imagine??? Now he can't part with it. How horrible! All this effort, practically knocking himself out to earn a buck only to find he can't part with it. Anybody want to buy a Beach? A Super Cub with floatation tires? A Turbo crop sprayer?

### *So, is the flight Art Paetkau (EMSIPS/Arty's Air Service) took heroic or mundane?*

Most pilots have an opinion. Express your opinion of this entrepreneurial, Mooney/Socata-flying, weekend-Atlantic-crossing Manitoban... and win a free flight with Art Paetkau.

1. Call 866-944-1401 and say, "*heroic*"; or go to: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/27HD5PL> and comment.
2. Call 866-944-1401 and say, "*mundane*"; or go to: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/27HD5PL>

NOTE: Someone on either side of the heroic/mundane quandary wins a free ride in his Beach or Super Cub. (Yes, you must make your way to Winkler, Manitoba for the free ride.) (*Why not the TBM? It is still in Texas and not cleared to land in Canada at this point.*)

#### Stats

- Mooney/Socata facility in Kerrsville, Texas (30°2'47"N99°8'26W) - Population (2012) 22,347
  - 58 miles (93 km) NW of San Antonio + 85 mi West of Austin
- Pratt & Whitney Canada PT6A64 - 700 shp; built since 1990
- Acquired by Socata Aerospatiale in Tarbes, France
- Max Cruise is 320 Kts; At 290 mph - Range 1,784 miles; Ceiling 31,000 ft.
- Rate of Climb 2,380 ft/min., Time to climb to 26,000 ft. is 15 minutes

P.S. Art Paetkau hails from a heroic, hard-working, progressive-thinking, success-based family who raised him near one of Manitoba's most entrepreneurial and flourishing communities – Winkler, MB. Upon his return from France, he was enthusiastically greeted and congratulated by the Mayor and prestigious business acquaintances and friends. Once his new concept buildings have penetrated the intended, housing-shortage Northern communities, he will likely be applauded as the noteworthy citizen

inconspicuously inscribed in his DNA. The flight was referenced as 'an experience of a life time' and Art gives special thanks to co-pilot, Margrit Waltz for the training and the experience she provided during the trip. He says the aircraft is amazing, just as advertised and an absolute joy to fly.

Enjoy the flight vicariously.

Go to blog: <https://artpaetkau.wordpress.com/author/artpaetkau/> or  
<https://artpaetkau.wordpress.com/author/artpaetkau/page/3/>

Socata website: [www.tbm850.com](http://www.tbm850.com)

Please cast your vote: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/27HD5PL>

Submitted by Ben Hoepner  
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