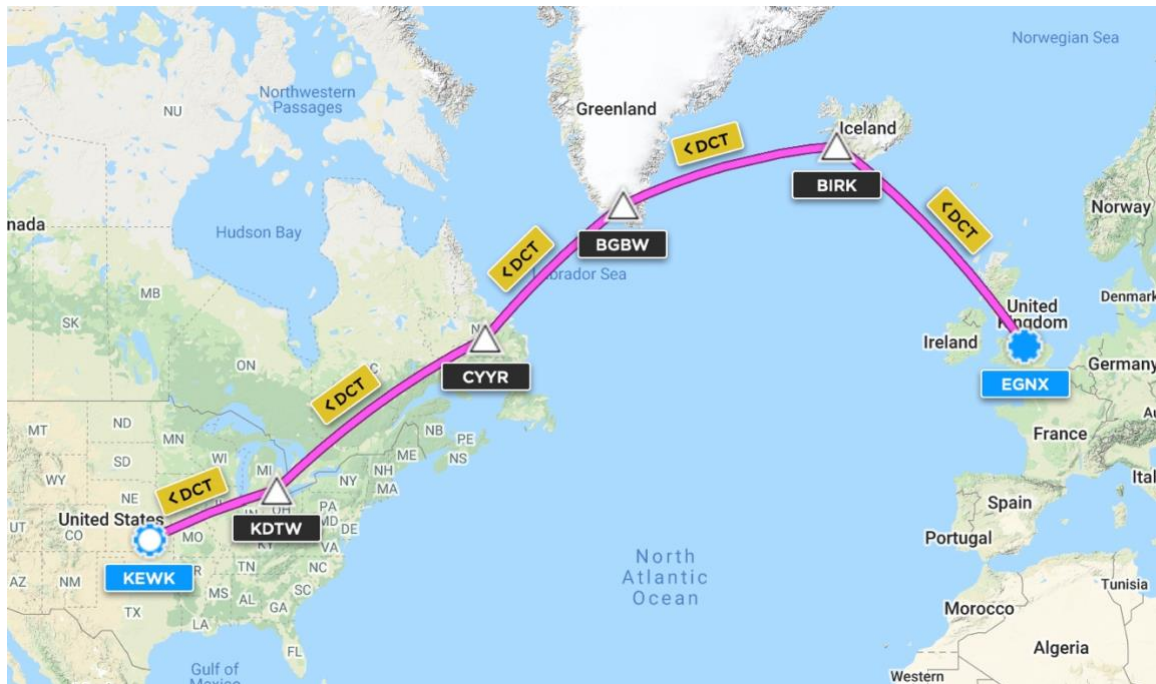


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RVL KING AIR FLIES TO KANSAS FOR SPECIALIST CAPABILITY UPGRADE



A 20-hour flight across the Atlantic, connecting five countries and covering almost 4000 miles aboard a twin turbo-prop is no run-of-the-mill undertaking. All in a day's work though for the team at RVL Group, whose pilots Stuart Carmichael and Frazer Conway have just returned from the flight of a lifetime.

Their mission was to ferry one of RVL's fleet of aircraft, a Beechcraft B200 King Air, to the home base of aircraft modification expert Avcon Industries in the central US state of Kansas. Which happens to be 3840 miles, as the crow flies, from the East Midlands Airport HQ of specialist aviation services provider RVL.

The modification will support the maritime missions RVL performs on behalf of customers who will benefit from this upgrade.

The best and most efficient way to get the King Air from East Midlands to Kansas was, clearly, to fly. Planning the trip took longer than the actual flight. In addition to all the usual legal niceties to be met, and paperwork to be organised, there was the Covid-19 situation and an ever-shifting sea of travel restrictions to be factored in.

"With all the regulations and Covid complications it was a minefield," said RVL Chief Pilot Stuart Carmichael. "Fortunately we were able to get one of very few visas currently available for entry into

the US but there was a constantly changing landscape as to what each country would allow. We planned to stop in Iceland, but we could stay no longer than 24 hours, and Canada is mostly shut unless you follow strict rules...”

The journey began with a five-hour flight from East Midlands to Keflavik Airport in Iceland. “The Iceland leg was the hardest,” says Stuart. “We had headwinds the whole way, and though we had a generous margin of safety it was still just about as far as you would want to go in a King Air.”

It was not until they reached Iceland that Carmichael and Conway could be sure they’d be able to tackle the next leg, to Narsarsuaq on the southern tip of Greenland. “The weather in Greenland is so changeable that you can only get an accurate forecast six hours in advance. Effectively that meant that we did not know if we could get there until we landed at Keflavik. In the event everything was fine and we enjoyed perfectly clear weather and some amazing views of the ice caps during the three hours down to Greenland.”

The first day of the jaunt closed with a three-hour flight from Greenland to Goose Bay Airport in Labrador, Canada, where the two-person crew was escorted from aircraft to hotel room, where they had to remain overnight under Covid restrictions.

“The following morning we set off from Goose for the five-hour flight down to Detroit Metropolitan Airport, where the air traffic was as busy as Heathrow, so that was good fun. After an hour there to clear customs and refuel we were off on the final leg, the three hours down to Newton, just north of Wichita, where the whole Avcon team came out to welcome us when we jumped from the aircraft.

“It was an amazing trip, my longest flight by a considerable margin. The planning had to be meticulous and of course the guys at RVL Engineering did a fantastic job to prepare the aircraft. We had a plan B, as well as plans C, D and E, but in the end we couldn’t have asked for a smoother trip. Everything went perfectly.”

Richard Baker, Head of Flight Operations, added: “It was a great team effort; ops provided planning support and flight watch, and the crew executed the trip brilliantly.”

Dean Simpkins, RVL’s Head of Engineering, said: “Being ready for the unusual is part of the daily routine for the engineers at RVL. Preparing an aircraft for a transatlantic flight is well within the skills of our experienced engineering team, and they worked very hard not to leave anything overlooked and unaccounted for, ensuring the crew had the best possible journey.”

The aircraft will remain in the USA for approximately three months, and planning is already underway for the return trip, which will have the added difficulty of winter weather conditions.

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About RVL Group

RVL Group is a specialist aviation services provider based at East Midlands Airport. Formed after a management buyout in 2007, the company relocated its core business from Coventry Airport to East

Midlands Airport in autumn 2010 following completion of its state-of-the-art purpose-built hangar and maintenance facility.

Operating and maintaining its own fleet of 16 aircraft, RVL Group provides services to a range of private and public sector clients and offers expertise in areas as diverse as aerial surveillance and survey, passenger and cargo ad hoc and long-term charter, temporary and permanent aircraft modifications for project work and aerial spraying of pollution dispersants. RVL Group and its wholly-owned operating subsidiaries are holders of various UK, European and US regulatory approvals to conduct almost all types of aerial activity and full maintenance on a wide range of aircraft and components. These include EASA AOC and CAA Type A Operating licence, Part 145, Part M, Approved Training Organisation and Dangerous Goods approvals.

Contact information

W: <http://rvl-group.com>

E: media@rvl-group.com

RVL House

Building 21, Anson Road

East Midlands Airport

Derby DE74 2SA

Switchboard: +44 (0) 1332 819 830

- Dave Connor, Managing Director
- John Blauth, Communication Director

High Resolution images of the RVL fleet, Air Tech hangar operations and Management team are available. Please email media@rvl-group.com

