

+ DOUGLAS CARINS CHALLENGE

Beating the barrier

Douglas Carins and a few friends decided to fly, and land, in all 48 contiguous states in the USA in an attempt to break the previous record. They also wanted to raise money for Diabetes Research and awareness for diabetes sufferers who want to become pilots

AFTER flying around the world in 2003 to prove diabetics can be pilots, Douglas Carins decided to return to skies and break another record. This year he wanted to land in all 48 states in mainland USA in the least time possible.

Q| Why do you fly endurance missions for charity?

A| I was a pilot in the RAF and instructing on the Jet Provost back in 1989. Suddenly I was getting tired all the time, drinking loads, going to the toilet and generally not feeling myself. I went to the doctor and was diagnosed with type one diabetes and the doctor's exact words were: "You are a diabetic and you were a pilot."

I was devastated. At the time not one country allowed diabetics to be pilots, let alone have a military or commercial career.

Then in 1997 the USA introduced a scheme that would allow diabetics to fly as long as they could show that they have control

of the diabetes. You have to pass a medical, test your sugars 30 minutes before takeoff and 30 minutes before landing. And they need to be within the 'safe range'. It's a great system and I've been flying in the States since 2000 with about 2400 hours now - making up for lost time.

Q| How did you come about to do this flight for charity?

A| I was lucky enough to take five years off work. Three of those I spent in the US sponsored by an insulin company to give motivational talks to the diabetes industry and conferences and expos, which gave me a lot of time to get I the air.

I came back to London about two years ago and every two months I fly back to the States for two weeks of flying in my Beech Baron. And last year I wanted to fly another project to raise awareness for diabetes and funds for research. And, really importantly, prove that people with diabetes can be pilots. Right now only

five countries allow people with diabetes fly: Canada, USA, Israel, Australia and the UK.

Q| Did you beat the record?

A| We shaved 33 hours off the existing record, finishing in 97 hours, 32 minutes and 37 seconds total lapsed time (4 days, 1 hour and 32 minutes). We travelled just over 7000 miles and raised over £20,000, all of which goes to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, UK.

Q| Did you expect to beat the record by so much?

A| I would have liked to have beaten it by more and we would have done if we hadn't had to divert due to the weather. It was fantastic; it was an extremely intense and enjoyable experience. Our original plan was to do a loop around America and make it nice and easy, but it didn't work out that way.

We were hampered by bad weather. We started at Council Bluffs Airport, Iowa and flew west.

The weather was at its worse in the north-west so we had to divert 200 miles - but that gave us a great excuse to do some low-level flying in the Rocky Mountains.

On the second night we ran into serious storms with tornado warnings. We found a tiny airstrip called Carol and landed at 1.30am thinking there wasn't a soul around. As we taxied in the radio crackled into life with the airfield manager asking if we needed something to eat or a room. It turned out that he lived in a flat above the terminal building.

Q| How was the flying?

A| Effectively we were doing 40 hours of mid-level flying, which can be a bit of a trudge. Early on we decided we'd do as much low level as possible, which we did through Monument Valley, brilliant!

We had five people on board. The second pilot, James D'Arcy, has type two diabetes. We also had a young guy on board, Karl Beeton, who was technical



**Top: Douglas Carins
Middle: the 5-strong team and Beech Baron
Bottom: low-level flying through Monument Valley**

support and mad keen on flying but prevented due to his diabetes. Daniel O'Mara, the National Aeronautic Association observer, and finally our cameraman Dave Rafique who did all the filming. With five people on board we couldn't take that much fuel.

We flew for four hours at a time before we had to refuel, so when we landed James and I would pour over the map to try and find a way to avoid the weather and then we'd swap seats. On average we flew for just over 11 hours each per day with five hours sleep each night.

Q| What's next?

A| I have another endurance record next year. I'm not going to say too much but it will include Hawaii and San Francisco so I'll need to fit ferry tanks.

No way!

No Chance!

Not for us thanks!

Not on your nelly!!!

We don't do that.

NOX.

Never have Never will!

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