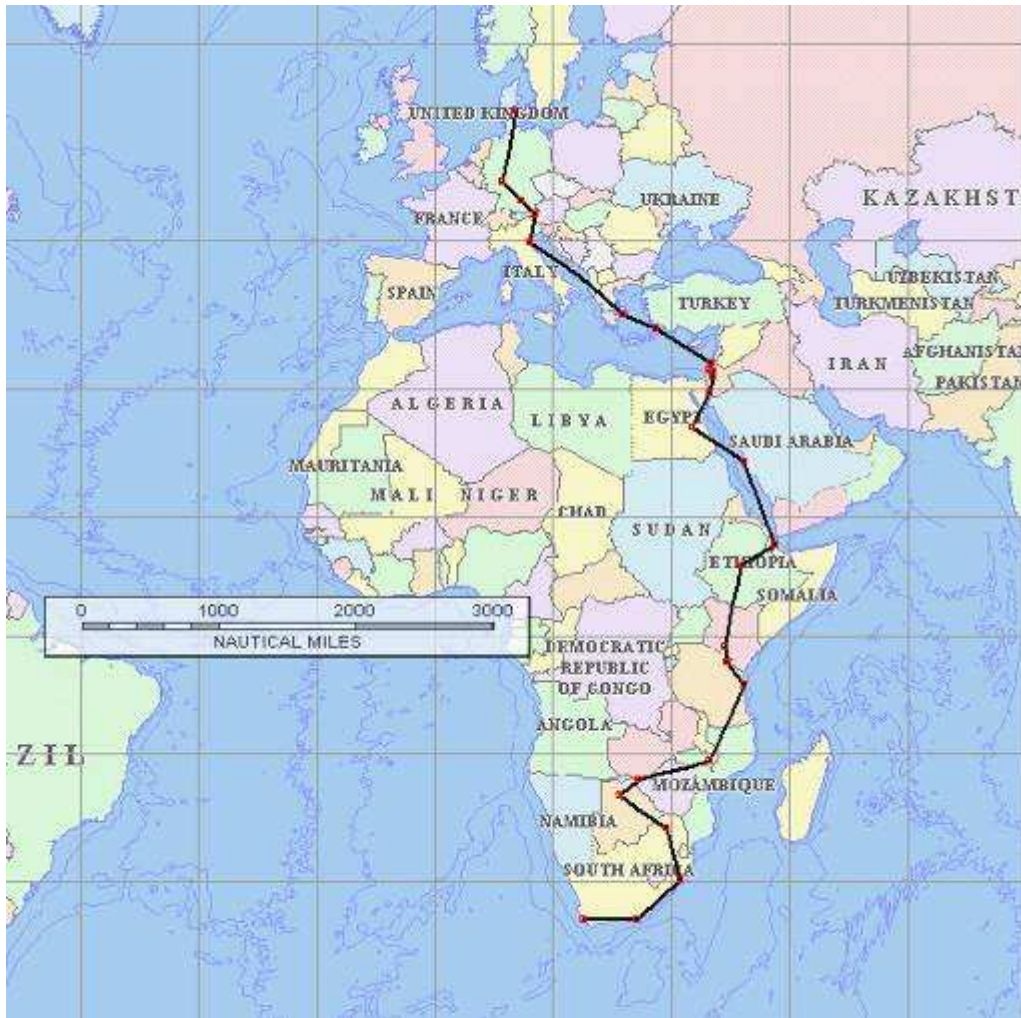


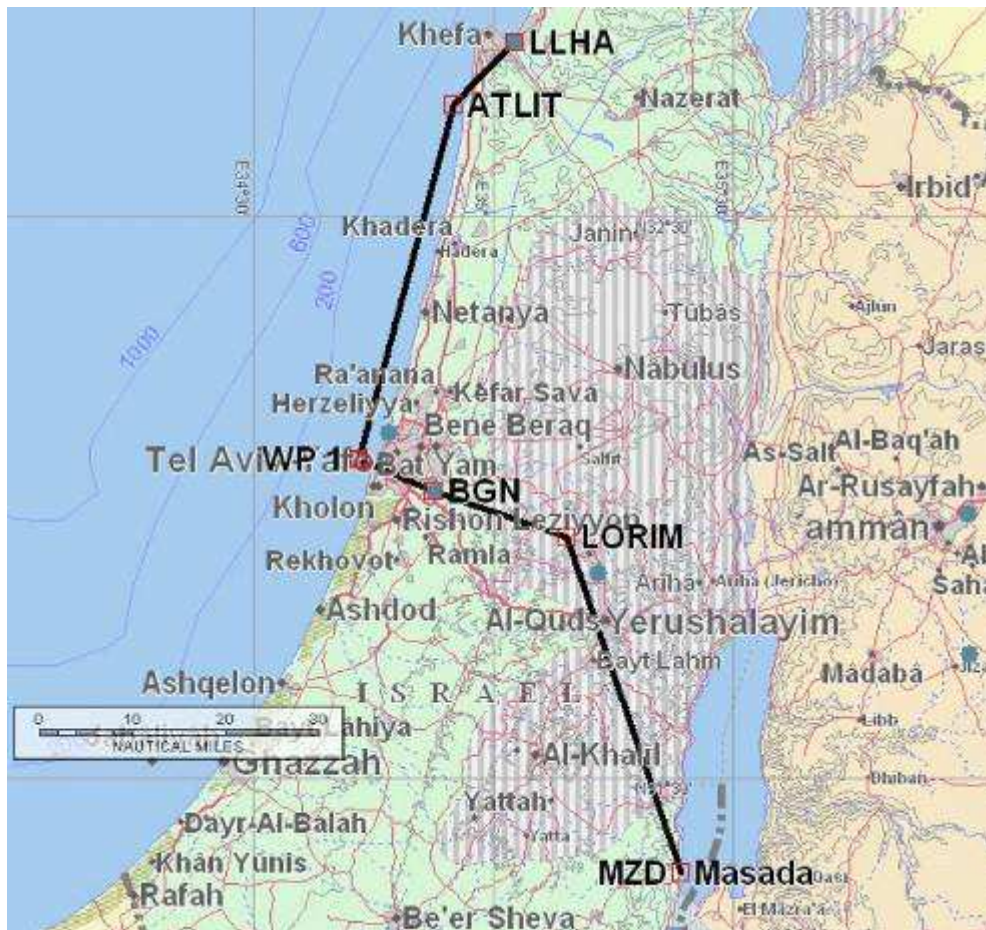
Jens Abildgaard CPL IFR owner of C182T N2217L visit to Israel 15-22.2.2010



...Next morning, after a walk in the old part of the city of Rhodes, I went to the airport to fly to Haifa in Israel. By now I had been given a code to log into ASOC's homepage where I supplied ASOC with a code of my own, and the answer to 3 questions: favored color, favorite food and the most meaningful name (?).

After filing a flight plan (through homebriefing.com), I rang ASOC, and after quoting the code and the answers to the 3 questions, I was permitted to depart!

150 NM from Haifa I called Tel Aviv and after giving them the code, I was allowed to continue to Haifa, and after a 3.5 hour flight, I landed in Haifa on a 26 degrees warm day.

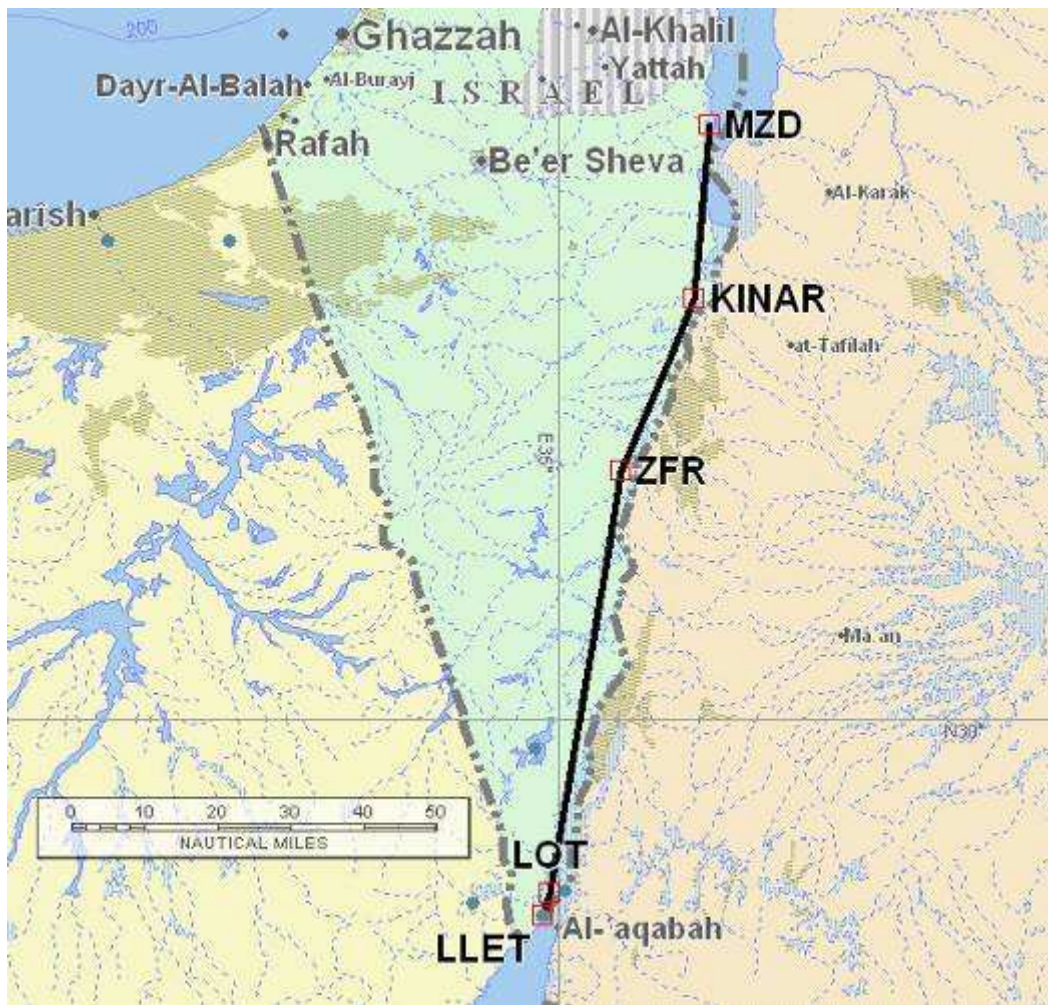


To meet me in the airport was Yigal Merav, a very helpful member of the IAOPA, Israel together with a couple of fellow pilots. In the evening I talked about, and showed pictures from, my trip around the world to about 25 pilots from the Israel part of IAOPA.

After 2 nights in Haifa, I hired a car to drive to Tel Aviv, and after a night there, on to Jerusalem.

My plan had been to fly on to Tel Aviv – but after all the trouble of getting the approval to fly into Israel, I found out, that I was not allowed to fly the so called CVFR (controlled VRF) rules. That is only allowed to Israeli pilots!

But Yigal from the Israeli AOPA, arranged that a fellow member of AOPA, would fly with me on the route from Haifa to Masada. I would have preferred to fly on Saturday – but as public transport closes down on Saturdays, it was arranged that Shlomo Zelkin, the Israeli pilot who would come with me, came up to Jerusalem from Masada where he stayed, so he could ride with me in the rental car back to Haifa on Friday.



After lots of sightseeing Thursday afternoon I ventured into the Old City again Friday morning and on to the Olive Mountain for a perfect view over the Rock Dome and the walls of the Old City. At noon I met with Shlomo, and we left Jerusalem for Haifa, driving on a road that took us through part of the occupied territory. For most of the trip Shlomo explained about the Israeli – Palestinian conflict – strong fully arguing from the Israeli point of view.

Back in Haifa we met with Yigal again, and he helped returning the hired car. The car hire office was closed for the Sabbath!

Shlomo had already, while we were on our way, made numerous calls to various air controllers, in order for us to be able to fly the route we wanted.

And he succeeded, so after takeoff from Haifa we flew CVFR south along the coast to Tel Aviv at 2000 feet, then from Tel Aviv IFR to Jerusalem at 6000 feet. Over Jerusalem we were allowed to descend to 4000 feet and circle the Old part of the town a couple of times, so I could get some pictures while Shlomo were at the controls.

Then we continued to Masada, the lowest airfield in the world, 1.240 feet below sea level! Weird to see the altimeter show a minus altitude before not showing any altitude at all!!

We landed just after sunset. We had dinner at the airfield with some local Bedouins sitting outside the airport office. I spent the night sleeping on a mattress in the same office!

The morning after landing, I went with Shlomo to explore the Masada rock. The place where more than 900 Jews had taken refuge some 2000 years ago under the pursuit of the Romans, and where they – after resisting a siege for months- finally ended up taking their own lives rather than being captured by the Romans, who built a ramp to scale the walls of the fortress.

Again I had a very knowingly man in Shlomo, but even better, a friend of his, an expert in the history of Masada, took us on a free tour of the site. Very impressive indeed!

After some hours walking around in the ruins, and a visit to the museum, we were off to Ein Gedi, because I wanted to experience the feeling of swimming in the Dead Sea. Well swimming, as it turned out is not quite possible. The only way is to lie on your back and float. It was a strange feeling.

Then it was time to hurry back to the airport, because I really preferred to get to Eilat in daylight. Again Shlomo was an indispensable help. He was unsure if I would be allowed to fly to Eilat without him accompanying me – but he knows a lot of people, so he managed to arrange, that I could take of on my own – but not before I over the phone assured a Traffic Controller, that I would not land in Aqaba, the Jordanian airport right next to Eilat.

With the written documentation, that I had landed on the lowest lying airfield in the world, I took off, and after circling the Masada Rock a couple of times flying VFR, I climbed to 7000 feet and flew IFR all the way to the Eilat VOR. Then I did the whole VOR runway 03 procedure, before landing at sunset.



I went to the airport early, in order to have time to arrange the 2 ferry tanks I need because I not will be able to get fuel between Luxor in Egypt and Nairobi (and the cost of fuel is more than half in Israel compared to Egypt). My initial plan had been to install the tanks connected

up to the fuel system of the plane, but I decided against this shortly before departure. That saves me getting all the approvals that is needed – and the tanks are easily removed again.

That means that I have to transfer fuel while on the ground – and I haven't fully thought of how to do that! I have brought a "Goat throat" pump, but I realized today, that the pump don't work well with the ferry tanks. The tanks, called "Turtle Pac", are made in Australia, and made of a collapsible fabric.

After removing the front co-pilot seat I placed a 66 gallon (250 liter) tank on the rear seat and a 37 gallon (140 liter) tank next to pilot seat. Then I placed the co-pilot seat upside down on top of the 37 gallon tank and made sure it was all secured.

Going through security in Eilat is an experience – it seems that the fact you are a pilot caused more attention in a negative way – I was questioned thoroughly by the chief of security herself, and the process took more than half an hour! But I guess it could be worse – being an Arab pilot in example?

I had been worried, that the fact that I had 100 gallon extra fuel put inside the cockpit would cause some alarm – but not so!

So after a few hours I was ready for takeoff. I took off on runway 03 and continued for about 7 NM on radial 010 on the LOT VOR before being vectored South West in the direction of Luxor....

jens@abildgaard.net More stories & pictures on Jens website at www.hosbiz.com

The plane I use, is a Cessna 182T, 2005 model, a single engine 4 seat plane with a 230 horse power 6 cylinder fuel injected engine. The plane is equipped with a Garmin G1000 cockpit, also called "Glass cockpit". This avionics system has 2 14 inch screens instead of the usual "steam instruments".

This system displays - standard from the factory – a TIS (Traffic Information System), a Stormscope (that detects lightning), and a data link that enables you to download weather information from satellites. Unfortunately the TIS system and the data link system only work in the USA.

A TAS (Traffic Advisory System) has been installed in the plane after delivery from the factory. Contrary to the TIS system, this gives to traffic warnings everywhere as long as the other traffic has a working transponder.

The plane is also equipped with an autopilot can keep a course and altitude – and that enables you to fly an approach without touching the controls!





Yigal Merav & Shlomo Zelkin Haifa LLHA



General view of Western Wall in Jerusalem



Parking in Messada LLMZ Lowest strip on the globe (-1233) ft



The fortress of Messada



Short final to Eilat LLET rwy 03



Parking at the GA apron in Eilat LLET