

# Transcript created by Epiq

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Speakers: 2Excel Pilot  
Jacob Lugg  
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JACOB LUGG: Operations, Jacob speaking.

DOMINIC GOLDEN: Hi Jacob, it's Dom down the ARCC.

JACOB LUGG: Hi, you all right?

DOMINIC GOLDEN: Can I just reaffirm, where are we going with any Eos flying in the early hours of the morning? Is yours still playing the -- is the diversions ashore? That is the problem.

JACOB LUGG: Yeah. And it's the weather in the tasking area. I'll just put you on speaker a second with the crew.

DOMINIC GOLDEN: Yeah.

JACOB LUGG: Yeah, you're on speaker now.

2EXCEL PILOT: The weather is not great in the tasking area.

DOMINIC GOLDEN: No. Okay, I'll go for transmit. So, I'll throw out the variables that are looking at the decision process we've got here. So surprise, surprise, the French are now reporting to us that are upwards of at least 11 vessels are on their way across, some of which have been on their way across since nine o'clock. But they forgot to tell us until just now. So some are beginning to enter our side of the region, but we don't know. So Heli brief is showing awful weather visibility over land on both sides, but at the moment, as of 30 seconds ago, Dover Coastguard are saying they can still see the lights. So the horizontal

visibility is, is at their level. -okay we'll caveat that - they can still see the lights on France.

So we are now going down a decision matrix here of what we want to do. We've got no recognised maritime picture out there. Clearly, we've got yourselves as the normal de facto solution. But if you are unable to go, and this is a gauging opinion discussion phone call of what the thought process is. And just before I give you a chance to speak, I'm thinking now about calling the SAR captain at Lydd to get him out of bed to give his thoughts as to the weather. As to whether I send a helicopter out to start doing a sort of a two hour sweep along the boundary line between the two.

So we're beginning to get the 999 calls now from the guys in the boats claiming they have no idea where they are. But that's just the normal SOP. Right. I'll pause for breath. Thoughts from your end please.

2EXCEL PILOT: Our issue, we're looking at the weather here and all the forecasts are showing the fog that is over France at the moment, is going to be creeping north over the next couple of hours.

DOMINIC GOLDEN: Yeah.

2EXCEL PILOT: There will be -- it's all layered cloud, so we would be safe to fly, but I think there's going to be a layer of cloud beneath us, IR camera won't be able to see through as soon as it hits (Several inaudible words) signal.

DOMINIC GOLDEN: Yeah, I think, I'm just looking at Heli brief now. It's suggesting that it's almost overcast at a thousand feet and your limit at night is 3000 foot, isn't it? So the cloud base has to be 3000 foot above sea level or something, is that correct?

2EXCEL PILOT: We can go down to a thousand feet above sea level, but we need a thousand feet of cloud above us to achieve that. So 2000 is kind of the minimum.

DOMINIC GOLDEN: Sure.

2EXCEL PILOT: The weather is kind of, from reading between the lines, it looks as though it's layered clouds all the way up. The next solid cloud base is to be around 5,000 feet. So there is a (Several inaudible words) potential break but I don't know, without getting airborne to see it.

DOMINIC GOLDEN: No, indeed. And I'm not going to press, and again, I'm only using the fast forward button on Heli brief and however good that is. I'm estimating from that, that it only gets worse, I think, between the hours of 4, 5, 6. So, it doesn't look like it's going to burn off, if that's the right expression, until about 10 o'clock, so ...

2EXCEL PILOT: 9 o'clock it starts to break again, and then we'll definitely be able to see. My current train of thought is if I get airborne, I'm going to be wasting four or five hours of flying because Doncaster has, annoyingly got a NOTAM with the runway closing tonight.

DOMINIC GOLDEN: Yeah, of course it is. Yeah. And yeah, and I suppose down south there's, as I said, the weather over land is what Southend, they're getting worse, so yeah, they're all shutting down, aren't they? Okay. Now, that's a good conversation. And I'm happy with that. I just wanted to gauge opinion. I think --

2EXCEL PILOT: My other concerns as well are available airfields for diversions.

DOMINIC GOLDEN: Yes. Yeah. Acknowledged. Yeah. I get that. And that's, that's only going to get worse. Yeah.

2EXCEL PILOT: Getting worse and going out of limits. And Manchester is the only one that is legally within limits, but it is classed as a diversion because (Several inaudible words)

DOMINIC GOLDEN: Yeah. No, no. There's an element here, and I appreciate this is a recorded line at my end, but there's an element here of ticking boxes that we've asked the question. I think that's a reasonable answer. I think my conclusion I'm coming to, I'm going to look at using my helicopter. Because at a -- well, rather I'm going to have a chat with the aircraft captain at Lydd and see what his thoughts are. Because I know he gets very nervous about smearing himself over the side of a ship flying down low level. Okay. Okay. That's fine. I'm happy. What are your thoughts looking ahead at six hours to the aircraft at standby down on the South Coast? Do you think that is possibly viable? Again, I suspect getting in anywhere is going to be the challenge.

2EXCEL PILOT: The challenge is getting into Southend, I believe. Their forecast is looking to improve from 9, 10 o'clock.

DOMINIC GOLDEN: Yeah.

2EXCEL PILOT: It's currently yellow one. So visibility is reduced in mist. But significant cloud is still relatively high. But it's forecast nine o'clock clearance. There's also a temporary in there that it could fog out at any stage (Several inaudible words)

DOMINIC GOLDEN: I get it. I'm not going to waste and take risk if it's a, you know, the return for the effort is minimal risk versus reward. No. Okay. I'm happy. I think we don't know yet whether this is going to be an all-day armada, or whether it's just going to be a wave that's coming across now, and the rest of them are going to wait for tomorrow. So we can reassess, not for you, but your follow on duty crew during the day, whether we want to bring the aircraft down or not. And we can -- my replacement can have that discussion later on this morning. No, that's fine. I'm content with that. I've got an answer. I'll discuss that with my maritime colleagues here and I'll go down the route of, I think, a similar conversation we're about to have now with the duty captain at Lydd as well. No, that's really helpful. Thank you from me.

2EXCEL PILOT: No, I can get airborne, but I don't think I'll be able to give you the product you require.

DOMINIC GOLDEN: No.

2EXCEL PILOT: I would be turning air hours into noise, which isn't going to help you or  
(Overspeaking)

DOMINIC GOLDEN: No, and then the (Inaudible) I think there's an element here of, I think people were thinking, dangerously to put it, but we've not got lax but we've dropped back into the assumption that we're always going to get aircraft, and they're always going to give us the recognised maritime picture. And you know, life's a good one. And surprise surprise, you know, the plan doesn't always work. So what's our plan B?

2EXCEL PILOT: At this time of year as well, the reason we've got good weather for the – or good crossing condition is the high pressure, the high pressure at this time of year.

DOMINIC GOLDEN: Yes, of course. Yeah. Yeah.

2EXCEL PILOT: Cloud and fog, it's a vicious circle.

DOMINIC GOLDEN: Yeah. Yeah. And it's not hot, I have to say off the record, our French colleagues have sat on some information, and they were in a position to do something about it and they're ...

2EXCEL PILOT: Yeah.

DOMINIC GOLDEN: We are where we are. Okay. I'm sure the Home Secretary has got a great plan for dealing with it. I'll let her know personally that you

were, you were unpro -- no, no, I've got it. All right. Okay. I'm going to hang up. That's great. Thanks very much.

2EXCEL PILOT: No problem. Thank you. Thank you. Bye-bye.

DOMINIC GOLDEN: Bye.