

## JAA PPL Ground Study Training Course

Individual CDs cost £49.95 for *Air Law & Operational Procedures*, *Human Performance & Limitations*, *Meteorology and Flight Performance & Planning*, £59.95 for *Navigation & Radio Aids*, and £69.95 for *Aircraft General & Principles of Flight*. The six-CD package costs £249.95, and you can get an RT component included for £299.95, an overall saving of £100. Available from Transair 01273 466000 or [www.transair.co.uk](http://www.transair.co.uk).

Fully half of all students who begin PPL training courses are said to drop out because the ground study proves overwhelming. Anything that helps them overcome the bookwork hurdle has to be a good thing for the industry, and I would venture to suggest that this multimedia CD package will go a long way to help keep them in the groove.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, an interactive CD must be good for several million. OATS and Transair have put together an ambitious, comprehensive and easy to use ground study package, and as an instructor I'd have no hesitation in recommending it to students. It's a unique and accessible medium for getting over the massive body of sometimes arcane facts they need to soak up to take their written exams. More than that, it presents the information in such an accessible way that I suspect it will stick in their minds longer than book-derived information, which has to be a bonus.

Anyone who's tried to impart Principles of Flight, Nav, Met or all the other subjects by conventional means is fully acquainted with the shortcomings of our language. To be able to

conjure up an explanatory graphic, often animated, along with the written and spoken word is a massive advantage.

The Transair JAA and NPPL Ground Study Training Course comprises six CDs which replace every book you would otherwise buy for the PPL course. They're simple enough for the technophobe to operate and give the information a whole extra dimension.

Each disk starts with the same overview, then chops the subject down into bite-sized pieces which you can access sequentially or at random. You can skip segments, go back and run them again, bookmark bits for future reference, and wander back and forth between the information and the exam questions, which are presented as multiple choices. The answers are there at the push of a button.

Occasionally I found the commentary a little lugubrious and I welcomed the change of voice when a lady took over but given the subject matter, short of getting John Cleese to narrate in a Pythonesque voice you'd be pushed to do better. The graphics are clear and sensible and the information detailed but concise. You need a PC because there's no Mac version, and if you're worried about that fact that it's a sizeable investment and it might not suit your needs, you can visit one of the Transair shops and see it in action there before you buy.

There's more than 50 hours of tuition in this package, so it would be worth mentioning to a student right at the start that they don't have to learn all this stuff in one fell swoop — they can take it one step at a time. In fact you can buy each CD separately, but if you get the entire package it's cheaper, and you get a handsome presentation case to keep it in.

More expensive than the books, but well worth the extra. There's no way anyone will ever make learning Air Law a fun experience, but these CDs take a major portion of the drudgery out of the business. *Pat Malone*



**Transair's PPL Ground Training CD-ROM package makes learning less of an ordeal**

## The Blue Max

20th Century Fox Home Entertainment '5 Star Value Selection'. Available from HMV at £5.99. 149 minutes, 2.35:1 Aspect Ratio/16:9 widescreen.

I have a horrible feeling that my boys are more likely to cite *Ali G in da House* as their childhood inspiration, but *The Blue Max* was one of the key things that long ago kindled my great passion in life; flying.

Of course, the film is riddled with historical inaccuracies, uses the wrong aeroplanes—in the best Hollywood tradition of aviation movies, and features some dodgy and rather variable accents. However, it is beautifully shot and filming the aerial scenes involved a lot of very real and very hairy flying (the only wires were the ones holding on Ursula Andress's towel in the infamous—and now very tame-looking—bedroom scene).

The production company had very good replica Pfalzes, Fokker DVIIIs and SE5s built for the film, although they did mix these with thinly disguised Stampses and Tiger Moths, as shooting demanded. Shades of pre-war *The Dawn Patrol*, there is one scene where a Pfalz-mounted George Peppard—playing Bruno Stachel—shoots down an SE5a, which transmogrifies into a Tiger when it crashes.

Not to be outdone, the (presumably not very aerobatic) Pfalz becomes a Stampe for the victory roll over the burning wreck...

On the other hand, flying scenes that once merely excited them as small children will have the hairs on adult pilot's necks standing on end. There is a fantastic amount of aerial action in *The Blue Max*, highpoints being the Fokker-Triplane-under-an-impossibly-narrow-railway-bridge scene (including a pilot's eye-view shot) and the climactic aerobatic sequence involving a Morane 230 pretending to be a German fighter prototype. Here the camera sweeps among the spectators, their heads and bodies flicking past the lens as it moves

and stops and moves again to frame the swooping parasol-wing machine with almost unreal precision. Scenes of the silver-painted 230 rolling and spinning against dramatic, high cloud are cut in for artistic effect, but the

pick-up shots from the ground are so well done that the effect is almost seamless and utterly magical. Take it from me, the DVD is worth buying for this one sequence alone. Wonderful, inspiring stuff!—*Philip Whiteman*. ■

