

RNIPA CONTRAILS

ISSUE NO. 173

FEBRUARY 2010



Ben Wang/www.airliners.net

Final flight, the last of the 747-200s • See page 14

RETIRED NORTHWEST AIRLINES PILOTS' ASSOCIATION



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Each Member!

The newsletter *RNPA Contrails* is published quarterly in February, May, August and November by the Retired Northwest Airlines Pilots' Association, a non-profit organization whose purpose is to maintain the friendships and associations of the members, to promote their general welfare, and assist those active pilots who are approaching retirement with the problems relating thereto. Membership is \$35 annually for Regular Members (NWA pilots, active or retired) and \$25 for Affiliate Members.

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24, 25 & 26 RAPID CITY REUNION						

FUTURE REUNIONS

OMAHA:

SEPT. 25-27, 2011

ATLANTA:

SEPT. ??, 2012

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SEATTLE
CHRISTMAS
PARTY

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FEATURE STORY 30
REMEMBER US,
FOR WE WERE SOLDIERS
ONCE AND YOUNG

AN OUT OF THE
ORDINARY
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MINNEAPOLIS
CHRISTMAS
PARTY

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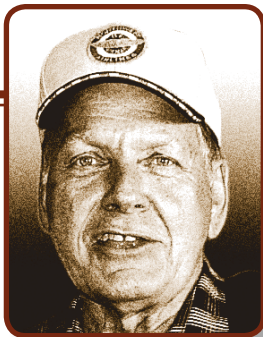


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President's Report: Gary PISEL



Greetings,

RNPA is alive and well, we have gained some new members, new attendees at the functions and a lot of interest. At ABQ we had the Northwest LOGO cup in our welcome bag. This was a great hit and we were asked for more. So we were able to make a deal with the distributor and ordered more, some 15 dozen. Those sold almost overnight, so another order of 12 dozen was placed. I am happy to say they are almost (or will be by publication time) sold out also. Arrangements are being made to see if we can order more.

As of Jan 4, 2010 there is NO LONGER a NWA benefits department. All calls made to those numbers in your retirement package are referred to MYDELTA. I have not personally tried to obtain information, but I understand it is not easy. Be patient, keep track of your calls (date and time), and record if possible. We all expected a transition period. The survivor's list in the back of the Directory remains valid, except for the company contact.

The upcoming Reunion in Rapid City promises to be outstanding like all the previous ones. Phil has secured a fantastic room rate at a first class hotel. Don't forget to plan to stay over for the Buffalo Round-Up the day following the Banquet. For those of you attending in RV's, plan to stay at the hotel for the Reunion, much more fun.

At this year's Reunion your Board of Directors, including all officers will be up for election. If you would like to become a candidate please contact David Pethia with your intentions. The election will occur at the General Meeting on Sept 26 in Rapid City. Qualifications are simple; all you have to do is want to be a guiding member of RNPA.

As I close this letter, I want to ask you to remember those who are in ill health. Drop them a card or give them a call, it means a lot to them. Life is short, time is dear, and friends are worth having.



Treasurer's Report: Dino OLIVA

This year we waited a few days before sending out the dues notices. I wanted to enjoy the Holidays before getting started with the task of recording your deposits. Apparently it helped you too—as in the first four days I have received over 500 responses. Thanks to all of you that replied in a timely manner. It makes my life much more pleasant.

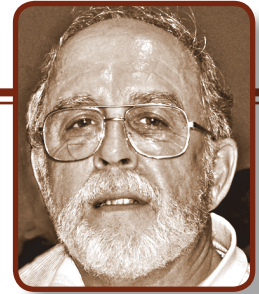
As a child I listened to a sportscaster on the radio, I think his name was Bill Sterns. At the end of each broadcast he handed out onions and orchids to individuals that earned recognition either good or bad. I want to hand out orchids to those of you who replied with your payments in a timely fashion. Thanks.

I also appreciate all the thank you notes that you send. I accept them for the entire RNPA board as It takes all of us to keep RNPA the first class organization we are. Each member of the board has his own area of responsibility. I am forwarding your thanks to each and every one of them.

Dino



Editor's Notes: Gary FERGUSON



IS IT A MAGAZINE OR A NEWSLETTER?

It sure looks like a magazine, but the real purpose of this thing is to bring *news* of the membership through *letters*: i.e., a *newsletter*.

No, the distinction is not important. What is important is to have this effort do what it's intended to do. I bring this to your attention because the volume of letters in the mailbag has been continuing to shrink month after month and year after year.

Of the more than 500 responses that Dino mentioned, there had been only ten people who had enclosed letters. As of January 9th I had received only three letters via email.

While the "Letters" section is several pages long in this issue, a lot of that is what could be considered "filler" and NOTAMS of coming RNPA events. If this section were to shrink to two or three pages of real letters I would be disappointed. I think you would be too.

I realize that what I consider the "core group" of members keep up to date through live conversations at our various gatherings. But that leaves some thousand of you who are unable to attend these functions that we never, or seldom, hear from.

For those of you who do attend these things, you may want to consider that some of those other thousand or so would like to hear what you've been up to as well.

So please allow me to plant a big guilt trip on you: If you haven't written recently, please consider doing so. And think about it each time you receive an issue of *Contrails*, not just at dues time.

Projects? Adventures? Grandkids' accomplishments? Your own marvelous accomplishments? Hobbies? Travel experiences? How you're handling the so-called "golden years?" Whatever it is, your friends of all these years would like to hear about it.

I just realized that this sounds like a public radio pledge drive. That's good: a pledge drive that doesn't cost you anything more than the dues you're already paying, except for the extra cost of a stamp.



FEATURE ARTICLE

You may have noticed that I have included a feature article in each of the last several issues.

By mid-December I had no idea what to feature this issue and was about to panic. Along came David Schneebeck, one of my NW classmates, who sent me the wonderful article you will find within, just when I needed it the most. With a couple of Google searches I had found some images of the crew to go with the article and I was saved. I'm just livin' right, I guess.

Although I'm certain that most everyone will find it interesting, those of you with military backgrounds will find it especially so. It is reminiscent of how so many of us got into the flying business as young men, even though not many of us had missions comparable to this story. I'm betting you will enjoy it.

IN APPRECIATION

To echo what Dino has said about thank you notes: I, too, appreciate all the kind compliments for what I do. Many of you have been quite generous with your comments about the full-color format, and I appreciate those very much. I am pleased that it has been so well received.

As Dino also said, this is a very vibrant and dedicated group of volunteers who are equally deserving of your praise for their efforts. It's just that I get to make the only outward manifestation that we exist look "purty." That doesn't mean there isn't a lot going on that you never see keeping this organization on the rails and steaming ahead.

SICK BAY

We don't deal with such things much here, mostly because it would take up too much space for a group like ours. But there are many of us suffering. Mike Lubratovich and Doug Wulff come to mind, to name just two.

I would, however, like to make special mention that my friend and former mentor in this editing business, little Dickie Schlader, is recovering from heart valve replacement surgery and has been home for two days as I write this. I expect he'll be greeting everyone at the SW Florida Luncheon as mean as ever.

Heal quickly, Sir.

Whatchabeenupto?

Letters

LARRY RAKUNAS

MILT EITREM

Sent my dues to Dino and Lowell and now a short memo on 2009.

Mary turned 75 so we splurged and took all 16 of us on an Alaskan cruise for a week. Didn't overeat but didn't undereat either. Great trip was enjoyed by all. We will put our house in Sun Lakes up for sale and if it sells will spend summers in MN and go south for the "cool" months, probably Texas where Debbie lives.

Went to the Insight Bowl yesterday and saw the "Golden Gophers" get edged by Iowa State by one point. Had to buy the pizza and beer for the ISU "friends?" Stay cool or warm whatever suits you.

Enjoy the remaining years!!

Milt Eitrem

MARCINE POLLARD

Thank you for your fine publishing of the RNPA news.

I was hired in 1949 and retired in 1991 after having eight different jobs with NWA and NWA Credit Union in MSP and SEA.

I personally knew many employees and their families so I enjoy the pictures of parties and interesting articles.

I live near my children in California and enjoy the sunshine in Escondido. My name is in the North County phone books. Come on down for a chat.

Marcine Pollard
(760) 740-2486

TERRY BROWNE

Gary,

The new color Contrails is superb! Way to go!

Deb and I are still cruising the Med aboard "WINGS." Finally dragged ourselves away from Turkey last spring, crossed Greece and the Ionian Sea to Sicily, then headed north via Sardinia and Corsica to Genoa, Italy. From there, we followed the coast west across Italy and France to Marseille, where we crossed the Gulf du Lyon for a landfall in Barcelona, Spain.

Here, we are tied up, hooked up, and wired in to all those amenities those on land take for granted! Located at a marina right in the downtown area, we have transportation, shopping, museums, even a retired American pilot with whom to BS. I have updated the blog to reflect this summer's travels. I think it's kind of "blah, blah, blah" but if you want to check it out, go to www.sailingwings.blogspot.com. I hope somebody besides my sisters reads the damn thing!

Our plan is to cruise the Med again next summer while trying to avoid visa and tax problems, then head out the Strait of Gibraltar and turn left for the Caribbean, with a few stops on the way.

Cheers,
Terry Browne



Hi Gary,

I hope that your sources have already forwarded you these pictures but if that has not happened here they are and I hope they bring to you the same feelings that they brought to me. I feel very privileged to have flown the -200 and being able to call myself a FREIGHTER DOG even though I was a MSP based 747 pilot and not ANC.

It is sad that so many other pilots will not be able to experience what we have flying this great airplane. I will never forget the great crews I flew with navigating the Orient. I am very thankful for all the help of these fine airmen and their interesting stories. Hopefully you will be able to publish a story about this last freighter flight in *Contrails*.

I know you've heard this before but the November 2009 issue is the best ever with all the very interesting stories. My first experience with RNPA was at RNO in 2007. I was wondering what the seniority date of the most senior pilot there would be and then I met Joe Kimm. We are so blessed to have him still with us and writing for *Contrails*. Captain Steve Bowen's article was very good as were Peter Greenburg's, Bob Root's and James Baldwin's.

Please tell Dino that the check is in the mail and thank you and thanks to all the hard working individuals that keep RNPA a vibrant organization.

Have a safe and healthy New Year,
Larry Rakunas

I have been deluged with emails and photos documenting the last of the 747-200s. A representative sampling can be found within. - Ed.

PAUL BEST

Hi Gary,

I have just finished reading the Contrails magazine on-line. You have done a beautiful job and should be very proud because you have obviously worked on it for untold hours.

I wanted to ask if anyone else has had problems opening the Flown West pages, because, although I could see the logo, the pages themselves were blank. I have a new computer that is giving me fits but doesn't seem to be the problem in this case. The rest of the magazine came through just fine.

Please understand that this is not a complaint because after looking at your wonderful work I wouldn't do that. Merely wondering!

Thanks and sincere regards,
Paul Best

Thanks for the kind words, Paul. That's the only problem I've heard with the ISSUU site. Maybe it was your computer after all.

The August Contrails is still on the site if anyone would like to use it as a recruiting tool:

issuu.com/contrails/docs/contrails171
– Ed.

ROD UPTON

Thanks, Dino for the work that you are doing. I hope you are in good health.

I spend most of my time on the poker circuit playing at Laughlin and Las Vegas. Cashed in the last world series last summer. We have lived in Arizona for the last ten years. We miss the greenery in Washington, but not the rain.

Best wishes for the new year.
Rod Upton
(74 and no grey hair yet.)

GARY THOMPSON

Hi Dino,

The news people report that effective yesterday, 1/1/10, Northwest Airlines is a thing of the past. That is a tough pill for me to swallow and I sincerely believe that as long as there is a RNPA the airline will always be here for us.

Thanks to you and all the others involved for your un-ending dedication and hard work for our benefit.

We had a great time both on the Summer Cruise and the Christmas Party. We are looking forward to Rapid City.

Hope to see you there Dino.

Sincerely,
Gary Thompson



CHRIS CHRISTENSEN

Dino,

Am still President of Republican Mens' Club in Sedona and on the board of directors for the fire district.

One has two things that happen in life—we were all bullet proof when we were young military pilots, and as we grow older we become bullet proof again, either through jobs like the aforementioned, marriage, or senility.

Take your pick!

Regards,
Dayton "Chris" Christensen

JOE KIMM

Hi Gary,

Just had to write and tell you what a great job you are doing. The RNPA Contrails keeps on getting better and better. It's been so long since I have contributed anything I thought I'd better get to it again.

Life goes on very well for me—looking forward to #98 coming up middle of August. An episode of tachycardia last December did some damage to heart muscle. However, I enjoy good health with no aches or pains, just slowed down a bit. Still deliver Meals on Wheels to homebound seniors every Monday morning—have been active at that for over ten years.

Your article in the May 2009 contrails regarding Mal Freeburg getting the [Civilian Air Mail Medal of Honor] brought to mind a story I had written about that particular flight. I don't remember ever sending it to you, so have attached it herewith.

My thanks to you and all the staff for the splendid job you are doing for our retirees—your efforts are well appreciated by many, I am sure.

With kindest regards,
Joe Kimm

Joe's article was published in the last issue of Contrails. There just wasn't room for this letter. – Ed.

ROGER MOBERG

Dino:

Thanks for all you do on our behalf. RNPA wouldn't be as strong as it is if not for yours and the rest of the Board's efforts.

You are appreciated!

See you at the luncheon.

Thanks,
Roger Moberg

LINDA MCKAY

THANKS FOR ASKING AND CARING

Don and I recently attended the 747-200 retirement party at Boeing Field, Seattle, WA. We had so many people ask about our son, Cory. We would like to fill people in on his story and current plans

Cory, Don and Linda Mackay's 19 year old son, had just finished his first year at Washington State University. He is a red-shirted football player—position Defensive End. May 7th of this year he woke up early for his last final, packed all day, and started his drive home around 4:00 pm. From Pullman, WA to Redmond, WA takes about 5 hours on HWY 26. Near Washtucna, at 5:20 pm he nodded off at the wheel and rolled his mid-size truck three times. He broke his back in two places. Thank God he had his seatbelt on.

He was flown to Harborview Medical Center. May 8th he had surgery to fuse his vertebrae and was diagnosed with a spinal cord injury. Cory has no feeling from the waist down and the doctors give him no hope to walk. But thru prayers and Cory's determination we hope he does. "Miracles do happen." For the Fall semester he is home taking on-line classes and plans to return to WSU in January. Cory has been attending an exercise therapy facility called "Pushing Boundaries." He goes three times a week two hours each time. It is an amazing place close to our home.

Unfortunately, our insurance does not cover this expense. P. Boundaries

costs \$2,200 a month. Due to donations and a few fundraisers he has been able to use this facility. There has been a fund set up at any US Bank or donations can be mailed to Cory Mackay Fund, PO Box 814, Redmond WA 98073-0814. If you wish to contribute any amount to his fund it is so much appreciated. Down the road we plan on a foundation to help other people with this type of injury. We know with the economy times are tough, if unable to contribute, then just say a prayer for Cory. Prayers can go a long way!

Thank you,
Don and Linda Mackay



Cory McKay

NICK MODDERS

Many thanks to the RNPA staff who cause good things to happen on time, like copies of *Contrails* and the dues due notice. Dues are paid and now to finish the assignment of advising that I, and family, are doing well.

Finally, after ten years, I seem to have perfected retirement. Absolutely no outside income was generated in 2009. It was a glorious year. We finally got smart enough to get out of Minnesota during the cold months and spent six weeks on the road doing VFR things (Visiting Friends and Relatives).

From Minnesota to Florida to California to Nevada to Utah and Colorado and then home. 8006 miles, lots of pictures, lots of visits, a fire truck convention and plenty of good memories.

Did some railroading on the Minnesota Transportation Museum excursion operation. Had our fire trucks in a number of parades. Made three trips to New York to spoil grandchildren and see the sights. Another road trip took us west to Wyoming for a USAF Pilot Training Class reunion.

For a glorious finale we had the whole family home in Minnesota for the Christmas season.

Nick Modders

BILL ROWE

Hi Dino,

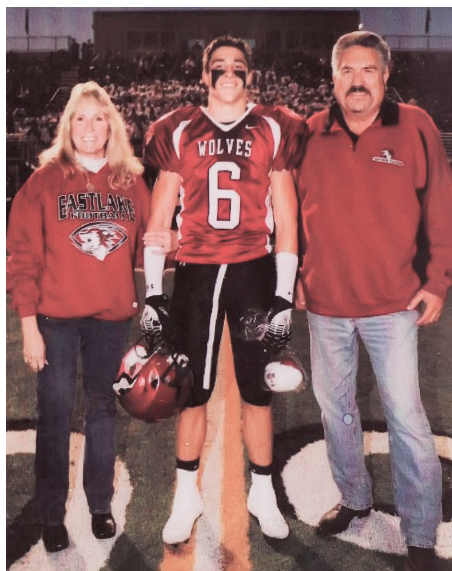
You guys are still doing a great job.

Dorothy and I just celebrated our 62nd wedding anniversary. We are still playing golf and tennis.

Dorothy had a touch of lung cancer last year but after surgery and chemo she is OK now.

Keep up the good work.

Bill Rowe



Linda, Cory & Don McKay

JIM WELLS

Hello Gary,

Two months ago, I joined RNPA and thoroughly enjoyed reading the Nov '09 Contrails publication, which I received shortly thereafter. On November 22nd, I had the honor of flying the last ever check ride in a Northwest 747, which I have chronicled below.

Thank you for the fine publication. I look forward to enjoying it for many, many years to come.

Jim Wells

THE FINAL CHECK RIDE

I have no knowledge of the first check ride in a Northwest Airlines 747. In 1970, I was a 15 year-old pilot wannabe growing up in the suburbs of Chicago, listening to Northwest Orient "gong" commercials on WGN radio every morning over the breakfast table.

A lover of all things aviation who lived under the final approach to runway 22 at ORD, I knew every aircraft type passing overhead by the sound of its engines, but never in my wildest dreams could I have guessed that my future included three decades of flying the Redtails, or that the last 10 years of my NWA career would find me flying to four continents in command of the 747. Thirty-nine years after that first check ride, accompanied by First Officer Jim Gutman, Second Officer Curt Leatherwood and Line Check Airman Loren Halverson, it was an honor and privilege to fly the last check ride ever flown in the Classic Whale at Northwest.

Aircraft 6743 (Boeing serial number 22245) flown as Northwest flight 901/22 November, rolled down Anchorage runway 32 at 0843 local time as a flaps 20, Q powered departure at 803,000 pounds, in-



cluding 211,000 pounds of freight. At 600 feet AGL, we turned westbound toward NODLE, the North Pacific and far off Tokyo. Our flight was smooth, quiet and uneventful, just as it should have been. Moderate turbulence, which was forecast for our descent, (the famous "Tokyo Wakeup Call" frequently briefed by long time Dispatcher favorite Darrel Oberg) never materialized. Separated enroute from sister ship 6739 by mere minutes, the two freighters lifted 414,000 pounds of freight to Narita that morning. With the two graceful giants loaded within 30,000 and 38,000 pounds of capacity (based upon maximum landing weight) for their westbound flights, two great truths were verified that day: (1) There is "no profit" to be made flying freight; and (2) you cannot fight city hall.

Post flight, the crew of flight 901 gathered on the ramp in Narita. Pictured (l-r) are Captain Loren Halverson, Second Officer Curt Leatherwood, Captain Jim Wells and First Officer Jim Gutman. (Note the button missing from Capt. Wells' jacket. The new Delta uniform completed a total of four trans-pac's before the button fell off that morning... hopefully not an omen of things to come.)

Seven hours and thirteen minutes after lifting off from Anchorage, 6743 rounded Choshi Point and touched down early on runway 34L in Narita at a landing weight of 600,000 pounds. Flight 901 was the 22,130th cycle (take off and landing) for ship 6743. At that moment in time, she had logged 97,132 hours and 46 minutes, more than 11 years of continuous operation. Those of us who flew the Classic Whale to the very end salute all of you with whom we flew over the preceding years for your friendship and your professionalism. You set the bar very high, and we honored your legacy to the last. Sadly, there was no future generation of pilots wearing golden US Air Mail wings for us to hand the keys to. We left them in the ignition. Blue skies... Jim Wells

Those of us who flew the Classic Whale to the very end salute all of you with whom we flew over the preceding years for your friendship and your professionalism. You set the bar very high, and we honored your legacy to the last. Sadly, there was no future generation of pilots wearing golden US Air Mail wings for us to hand the keys to. We left them in the ignition. Blue skies... Jim Wells

Blue skies...
Jim Wells

BILL RATA CZAK

Hi Gary,

Enclosed is a copy of an old photo I found in my dad's "stuff" after he passed away a few years ago. I am sending it to you because I thought you might care to put in the next issue of *Contrails* under the heading: "Who, What, Where: Does anyone out there know who "Jimmie" & "Barbara" are/were?"

Were they early members of NWA?; another airline?; actors?; and what about the bank of instruments behind "Jimmie": What type of aircraft was it?

Notice the credit in the lower right hand corner, "Compliments of Skelly Oil Co."

Here's some personal background: I was born & raised in south Mpls (about one mile north

of the old primary runway 18/36 that had aircraft flying right over our house at about 300-500 feet. If it was during dinner time, we all would hold on to condiments, etc to keep them from vibrating off the table!

Anyway, it was during this teenage period (the late 50's) that the new (and current) terminal was built. So I grew up with the old school brick two story terminal on the west side of "Wold-Chamberlain Airport." Across the street from this terminal was a Skelly gas station owned by the father of an NWA pilot named, appropriately, "Skelly" Wright. (Skelly's dad was, as I recall, also nicknamed "Skelly," and may also have been an NWA pilot.)

Ergo, my gut tells me that there may be a connection with the station, "Skelly" Wright (father & son) NWA, and the photo and its credit.

I trust there is some NWA historian(s) among us that can shed some light on this photo. Therefore it may be interesting to see what reactions you get when this is published. I would print them all; if there be different recollections, it will only add to the mystery.

My best,
Bill Rataczak



KEN KELM

Dear Retired NWA Pilots;

If you have ever attended one of our functions, or even have a "passing interest" in your former classmates/cockpit buddies you may find your name and/or picture in one of the *Contrails* issues! This is a class publication which I guarantee will get your attention when you first open it up.

You will not want to put it down until you have read every page of this fascinating "reminder" of Greater Moments in our history! From the opening pages of comments by our magnificent RNPA leadership, to the very last pages with the "obits" (which are difficult to read at times, but oh so important to know what is going on amongst the "ranks" of our former pilots), these pages of "Letters to the Editor" (themselves worth the price of admission), stories by our members, historical articles which are really something to read, and the various notices of upcoming events like Christmas parties, RNPA get togethers, picnics, river cruises and so much more, that you really can't afford not to subscribe to this terrific publication and all the benefits that come with it!

Thirty five bucks (\$35) a year is about the price of one dinner out for two at a decent restaurant and a small price to pay for all that the [RNPA] membership has to offer! Please give it some careful thought if you are not already "signed up!" You will find that you can't live without it, I'm sure! (I have a copy of the "July 2009 Directory" in front of me right now that I am using to provide some information to one of our "brothers"!)

Keep 'em flying!

Ken Kelm

Clerk Typist 3rd Class

SOME FEEDBACK ON THE MAGAZINE

Gary,

It arrived yesterday & I have to say, it was a major surprise to see the new product. Thank you again for all the hard work & effort you have put into our magazine. It is VERY much appreciated. – Jay Jorgensen

Gary,

I am totally impressed with the all new Contrails. You have singlehandedly taken 10 years off every RNPA member whose picture shows up in the magazine. Instead of pale and paler gray there is living pink and fleshtones. Very nice change. I will be happy to pay more dues if necessary to keep the color in. Would you perhaps have any hair restorer technology up your sleeve? – Doug Harrison

Hello Gary,

Well Done and Then Some! Love the color. Cheers,

– Neal Henderson

Greetings Gary,

Bill Day here from NWA far past. I want to commend you on the quality of the Contrails publication. That last printing was truly professional in organization, illustrations, and quality of print. I had little insight into your “other skills” when we flew the line together. Well done Gary. – Bill Day

Thanks Gary,

For all your good work. Don't recognize many of the names I see in Contrails these days but plan to continue subscribing for good articles and memories of John's years with NWA. Hugs, – Chloe Doyle, (widow of John - retired in 1993)

Gary,

You are doing such a wonderful job and I appreciate all the work that goes into Contrails. It is truly a great mag and I look forward to each issue. – Joe Fouraker

Hi Gary:

It was great to finally meet you on the cruise last month. Everything you foretold about the new color format of *Contrails* is true and eye-popping. I love the paddleboat photos especially. And I'm really trying not to be jealous! – Anne Kerr, Editor, NWA History Centre Reflections

Hello:

I am a sister to John Dittberner and a sister-in-law to the incredible Mary Jane Cronin Dittberner. I write to thank you for John's “Flying West” obit in your Contrails magazine, and also to comment on what a very readable publication you have put together. My husband and I are not in the NWA “family,” so it was especially interesting to us when Mary Jane introduced us to this extraordinary well-written professional/personal publication.

Nice job, from outsiders.

– John and Dorothy (Dittberner) Scanlan

Gary and Vic,

What a wonderful publication and a superb obit! And what a complete picture you painted of John. I am a brother-in-law. And I knew he was a pilot and didn't know him as a pilot. He was such a modest and unassuming man, who never spoke of his accomplishments. I knew of his interest in, and excitement about the program for alcohol abusing pilots. I didn't know of his active part in creating it. I knew of his pride in the NWA leadership role in airline safety, and never knew of his leadership there. I knew he was an active member of RNPA, and did not know of his leadership roles there. His humor. His broad ranging interests. His humanity. His interest in people. His generosity. His love for Mary Jane. You caught them all. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to know more about him. It is a solace in a time of grief. – John M Scanlan, MD, FAPA, FACPE

SAIL THE MAJESTIC STAR

On our annual summer cruise

STILLWATER, MN
JUNE 10TH, 2010

Price of \$29.50 includes a delicious lunch and a 2½ hour boat ride on the beautiful St. Croix River. Cash bar on board.

**Registration deadline
June 3rd**

11:00AM – Congregate at dockside (just south of downtown)

11:30AM – Boat sails promptly!



NAME(S): _____
& _____
_____ people @ \$29.50 each = _____

Please make checks payable to:
"Vic Kleinsteuber"
and mail this form to him at:
**15258 Curtis Ave
Monticello MN 55362-6250**

Your phone contact: _____

JOHN BLAIS

Hi Ron [Bockhold],

I saw your letter in the November 2009 issue of Contrails regarding who might have the most B747-200 time in their career. I definitely qualify for that list.

A little background about myself. I was hired at NWA in August 1966, during a long IAM strike, my first warning of what I was getting into. Over the years, I flew on the Lockheed Electra, B-727, B-707, DC-10, and finally the B747-200. I was extremely fortunate to avoid layoffs during my career, having been on military leave during the long BRAC strike. However, I was around for all of our strikes—long and short. I was MSP based my entire career until the B-747 base was closed late in 2003. I transferred to the ANC base, commuting for the first time. That was NOT for me, so I decided to retire at the end of March 2004, a little over a year early. Had I not

retired early, my B747 hours would have been even more. I had 38 years at NWA, which is long enough anywhere, but never regretted any of it. Great people, great airplanes, and a love/hate relationship with management. Two out of three ain't bad!

Now about the B747-200. It was like I had found a pair of old shoes that you don't want to ever throw away. She was solid, honest, and cub-like, and never let anybody down ever. I've absolutely loved that airplane, and wouldn't leave it for another. A major factor in my decision to retire, as well as the commuting.

My hours do not reflect anything but actual—no training, simulator, or DH time. My first flight was on 6 March 1975, and my last flight was on 13 March 2004, for a total of 29 years and 7 days! My total time on the airplane was 18,482:50 hours.

I hope this helps you. Good luck Ron, and share your results with us.

John Blais

RON BOCKHOLD

Hi John Blais,

Thanks for your letter. I will end my search right now and declare the contest out of reach for anyone else. Your total of 29 years and 18,482 hours on the classic whale has hit the ball out of the stadium. Please forward your letter to the editor of the NWA retired pilots magazine for publication next issue. I am also copying our present Fleet Training Captain Lane Litrell. He is organizing a farewell party for the B747-200 fleet and pilots in the twin cities in January. Your commitment to flying the classic whale is truly extraordinary and deserves recognition.

Best regards,
Ron Bockhold



**ATTENTION:
THOSE ATTENDING
THE REUNION IN
RAPID CITY**

At our Reunion in Rapid City, RNPA would like to make known our generosity. The Fire Department in Rapid City, as in many towns, carries Teddy Bears on their trucks for the many children they encounter at fires and accidents. It helps to ease the stress of the situation.

Fire Chief Mike Maltaverne says the RCFD would be most appreciative of any gifts.

I am asking that everyone bring one or more Teddy Bears to the Banquet on Sept 26th. They should be no larger than 8 to 10 inches. That size is more adaptable to being carried on the fire trucks and in the EMT units.

Chief Maltaverne will attend the Banquet to receive the Teddy Bears.

Let's make this a huge event.

Thanks,
Gary Pisel
Head Bear



Southwest Florida Spring Luncheon



March 2nd, 2010 Marina Jack's Restaurant Sarasota, Florida

**LIMITED TO 150 GUESTS · REGISTER EARLY
REGISTRATION DEADLINE FEB. 24TH, 2010**

DIRECTIONS:

From I-75 N or S take Exit 210.
Go West on Fruitville Road about 5 miles to US 41.
Turn Left on US 41 to second signal.
Turn Right into Marina Jack's.
(Valet parking available - not included in price.)

- Briefing 1100
- Lunch 1230
- Debriefing until 1500

MENU CHOICES:

- ① Herb Crusted Baked Grouper
- ② London Broil
- ③ Chicken Marsala

Entrées include salad, vegetable, potato, dessert and coffee or tea

I've marked the calender for March 2nd at 1100 hours.

NAME _____

SPOUSE/GUEST _____

\$23 X ____ = _____ INCLUDED

MENU CHOICE:

① ____ ② ____ ③ ____

① ____ ② ____ ③ ____

Checks payable to

"Dino Oliva"

and mail to:

**Dino & Karen Oliva
3701 Bayou Louise Lane
Sarasota FL 34242**

Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2009 8:38 PM
Subject: A Different Perspective from Narita

Hi Lane,

As we got out of our black taxi the day after Christmas we knew that we were flying the last Northwest Cargo flight out of Narita. What we did not know but would soon find out from the Manager of Maintenance is that we were also flying the last scheduled 747-200 of any air carrier out of Narita. As we completed the paperwork in the crew lounge, F/O Shannon Pastewicz, S/O Kathy Obrien and myself could not help but reflect upon the significance of this final departure. For decades this proud bird had defined Narita. It was not uncommon to see a flock of twenty 747-200 red tails nosed up to the terminal at one time. In fact it was uncommon to see anything but a 747-200 at any gate in Narita back then. It was the international aircraft of choice and for good reason. It was impressive... reliable, safe, fun to fly, comfortable, solid, efficient, massive and just a beautiful airplane. Everyone knew of the 747. The adjectives go on and on... It was the mother of all airplanes. But today it was headed for retirement to the warm desert sun like so many of the retirees who used to fly them. The difference though is that these birds can still do the job just as well as the they always have. It is just that the younger generations require less food... and that is all.

As the crew bus approached 6732 [shown below] parked on the cargo ramp we could not help but scan the other newer airplanes on the ramp for signs of any other 200's to confirm what the Manager had told us. That is when it really hit us that good ole 6732 and its sisters were sadly being muscled out by a more youthful generation and now oddly enough, seemed out of place in its own home. When we turned the corner and pulled up to the stairs, there was a larger than normal group of service folks lingering. We soon learned that we as pilots were not the only ones taken by the significance of this final departure. Cameras were flashing on the ramp, in the cargo compartment and in the cockpit as all of these handlers wanted to record a memory. We joined them in pictures and in sharing fond memories of the proud bird. There was a certain somberness to the procession of "spectators." However, these were not ordinary spectators. These were the behind the scenes load planners, weight and balance people, the cargo loaders, the DG handlers, the mechanics, the dispatchers, the caterers, the fuelers and even the ramp security people... anyone who had had a part in the decade after decade of servicing the grand old lady. As the word had gotten out many more had come from all over the airport and perhaps even from home. As we all said our good-byes and thanked these fine people that had as much a connection to this airplane and its history as any of us, we prepared for departure. The impromptu crowd had grown quite large as we began our push back. As the plane retreated from the crowd on the push back the crowd waved continuously. There was no cheering, just a melancholy wave. You could feel the deep admiration. We flashed the landing lights on and off repeatedly. One could sense the sadness and at the same time the proudness of these behind the scenes folks who were as touched by the significance of this departure as anyone and had come to pay their last respects. Some had spent their entire career on the 747 as it had been flying here for over thirty years! There was no ceremony or parting speech, just the sadness of a bygone era which everyone dealt with privately. As we disconnected and started our taxi, the waves from the crowd never let up. It had been a magnificent era. But it had come to an end. As we climbed out of Narita it was the clearest night I have ever seen over Tokyo. The lights sparkled in a way which seemed to symbolically bid the -200 a fond adieu from the people it served so proudly for decades.

Bruce Correll
747-200 Captain
Anchorage



A STABILIZED approach



Contributing Columnist **James Baldwin**

Father Knows Best

Dateline: August 25, 2009

North Latitude N 14 30.6

East Longitude E 121 00.8

You guys have been here as many times as I have. You know what I'm talking about and even if you're sitting in your Barcalounger in Seattle or Minne you still know what it feels like. Yep, we're still out here doing it just the way you taught us.

It's late, just minutes from midnight. We plunge into the darkness at 500 knots True, the vastness of the Philippine Sea providing the visual effect of diving into a barrel of the darkest crude imaginable. But really, it's early. My brain is still hooked into the west coast time zone in which it usually resides; its circadian clock unconfused. The mental fatigue so often referenced faces me directly. I feel like a stern father resisting the child; my eyelids ask to be left alone, for just a moment. I am quietly questioning every single assumption and every element of the decisions I am making. I know I am not in top form yet this is the way we are forced to operate in a part of the world 17 time zones away from home. I relish the entire challenge, yet very distinctly understand how quickly things can go wrong at these speeds. I am wary.

The ride is as smooth as the glossy texture of the black ahead. There are no lights, anywhere. There is no moon; the stars have departed for galaxies unknown. We are alone and the gap in communications adds to the eerie aura. I know Manila is always tardy in their target acquisition and the first officer is relieved when I assure him our whereabouts are known and they will check in with us when they please. After all, the country was founded by the Spanish and things will happen when they do and not much earlier. "It is what it is" translates to "they do what they do."

We know tonight there are special challenges lurking near our destination.

Even at this hour the tropics are like that: busy, with convective action and confusion leftover from a day under a blazing sun. And tonight, there is an apache loose: a member of a gang of tropical depressions waiting to mature into the ruffians we call typhoons. This one will eventually dump prodigious amounts of moisture onto a people ill equipped to handle nature's perturbations in an existence already challenged. Given the choice over clean air and unseen phenomena, it is a type of weather challenge I am forced to prefer—at least I can see the towering cumulus visually, or the radar screen off my left knee will peel back the night to show me where they hide. But tonight is a little different. We have been briefed on the position of this yet unnamed but virile and active bad boy and he has placed himself in a position to deny us entrance to our layover in Manila at the Makati Peninsula. Others ahead have already settled for alternates I have no interest in visiting.

My rookie partner, a brand new first officer fresh from the schoolhouse, is masking his apprehension, obviously content with his deferral of my offer for him to do the flying tonight. It was graciously fun to allow his comment, "You can show me how," because I will, just like I was shown by those before me.

But his eyes are wide, riveted ahead, considering and questioning every nuance, every one of the proverbial "bumps in the night." It is important that I respect his inexperience and I do it with a smile. I do not mock or kid; we are a team, assigned to bring this collection of human mass and aluminum to its destination. We will not only do it safely, but with style and alacrity.

As we near the Philippine archipelago the scratchy, discordant sounds emitted by the very high frequency radio finally begin to make sense. The other end of the string is attached to a troubled voice shouting out, wondering our whereabouts. Shaking my head, I smile having answered the same query countless times in the past. Our position checks with their verbal estimation and the debate begins as to how best to position ourselves to remain free of the tentacles of the now fiery beast ahead. I choose to remain high, topping the easiest yet lowest cumulus ahead and delay our descent. We have the fuel



onboard to allow us to divert to whatever is left of what Mount Pinatubo did to Clark Air Force Base but I want to close the deal on this journey we promised the four hundred three souls riding in back. I push the nose over now and aim to use the square function of the profile drag equation to my advantage: our high speed and high rate of descent in this relative zone of smooth, clear air will disambiguate our intention. We will skirt the edge of the troublesome area our radar identifies and we will sneak under the next element of threat where the turbulence will again increase. The beast doesn't allow us a moment of peace.

The lightning reaches out to us like arrows falling short of their target. He is angry yet again that we have navigated over and under the multiple threats only possible at these latitudes. The brilliant streaks of white hot light hang in the ether, long enough for me to see the expected arrowheads and feathers. It is obvious Mother Nature is simply ridding herself of the atmospheric static cling she lives with. If Proctor and Gamble were paying me like Kobe or Tiger I might suggest big sheets of Bounce, but then again...

We are enjoying the box seat view of a show few will ever see from these heights. The incandescent intensity off to our right indicates to me our choice of positioning us to its upwind side was correct despite the disadvantageous path to touchdown. I'll deal with that later. He is angry we have made the right choice and threatens again, jabbing and punching our airframe with currents of air in all directions. They didn't teach us how to deal with this at the airline schoolhouse—this is the payday for those times we watched and learned from those before us. Our descent continues as we seek a position to the southwest of the worst activity. The amber glow of Manila comes in and out of view through the low, pillow like billowy clouds. Their appearance, to an experienced eye, is more than a clue the ride will be rough all the way to touchdown.

I have had the flight attendants seated since we began this roily jarring descent and in this instance I believe even the passengers are heeding the signs illuminated to keep them in their seats. I have interrupted more important duties to make sure my gals, and guys, in back are informed and are aware of what we are about to attempt.

ATC, as usual, doesn't quite "get it" but are willing to accede to our semi-demanding suggestions when they issue instructions that simply won't work. The first officer learns they need to be told that, "No," we won't turn towards what might be an embedded cell we can't see and, "No," we won't take a delay vector in that direction and, "No," politely, we will not be able to make that

crossing restriction. But, “Yes,” we will tell you when we have the traffic in sight.

With his inexperience, worn like a fabric mea culpa on his sleeve, my right seater is now aware of my intimations before he answers when ATC asks or delivers an instruction. You don’t talk to these controllers the way we do it in the United States. Now he looks over at me before answering and I nod knowingly as I gently suggest the verbiage to use. How short a time, it seems, that it was I looking over at the guys in the left seat for similar approval.

ATC, other traffic, airplane configuration and speed, weather and what’s going on downstairs all occupy portions of my attention. I am busy on several fronts and yet am comfortable. I can see this is going to work out well still thirty miles from touchdown, as we prepare to configure the airplane for an approach and landing. The renegade we have battled for the last forty minutes will eventually take its anger out on the population below with deadly results further south. Free of those concerns I begin to mentally rehearse the callouts and visual clues I’ll need to roll this airplane onto the undulating surface of runway 06.

The vector from ATC to intercept the final approach is good, the radar is no longer required and the auto pilot is off. The auto throttles are battling the expected wind shear, and, in anticipation of the wind at touchdown blowing directly across the runway at limit speeds, I relieve them of their duty and give them the rest of the night off. This one will be flown by hand. Looking out the front window now, at about 700 feet above the ground, the airport is nowhere to be seen. But look 30 degrees to the left, and there it is: the sequenced flashers and REILs flashing brilliantly through the mist. We are slow enough now to hear the pelt of rain as it attacks the windscreen. “No thanks,” I reply, I don’t need the wipers. A lot of this one will have to be done by feel. Once again, right before the 500 foot callout, I mentally rehearse the mechanical movements I’ll need to accomplish to get this thing on the ground. The goal tonight is different from what might be required on a sunny morning with no weather to consider; there will be no time to “finesse” it on. The airplane needs to be on the ground within the bounds of the touchdown zone and we need to begin the process of slowing immediately. It’s not good enough to just “get there.” I want it smooth and I want it accurate.

The gear is down and green, the flaps are 25,25, green and the spoilers are armed. We are cleared to land. We don’t make that 200 foot callout anymore—we’re Delta now you know—but there it is on the radio altimeter and I begin to apply rudder to straighten the

airplane. It never requires as much “wing down” correction as my RV-8 taildragger does but I have corrected with the nose straight ahead and I can see it all coming together as the final aural tone from the radar altimeter goes off at 20 feet. I raise the nose and the upwind bogies touch, the only clue is the speed brake handle automatically moving aft in its slot while the spoilers deploy and compress the massive oleos on the four main struts. We have arrived, the reversers are deployed and the next task is to “land” the nose wheel. I will not allow it to crash onto the runway—the flying isn’t over till the chocks are in and I will hold full aileron into the direction of the wind until we are truly slow. The rollout across runway 13-31 leads us to the poorly lit E1 turnoff. If you were to follow the only yellow line visible you might find a bill for taxiway lights in your mailbox. I know the correct path and give the sixteen wheels 100 feet behind me plenty of room.

“Flaps up, after landing checklist,” I command. We make the turn onto the parallel and are cleared to recross the perpendicular runway. I am cautious in the limited visibility. I know they do use the runway for regional flights and it wouldn’t be the first time I have been startled by landing lights illuminating in the distance as another aviator prepares for departure. Satisfied we’re safely across, I am already looking into the distance for the marshallers who will guide us into Bay 12.

I remind we need to stay on ship’s power for now but make sure the APU is started and we are ready for a smooth electrical power cutover. I want the passenger deplaning to go as smoothly as the good result my team has achieved thus far. I am still very busy obeying the wands the guy standing on top of the tug is showing while making sure the system four hydraulic pressure is adequate for the brakes. We are slowing to a crawl and...

...it’s a funny time for it to happen, but my mind flashes to a recent experience: just last week I was looking at my first logbook stuffed away in a drawer and to an entry made 46 years ago by an instructor in Hillsboro, Oregon. I was thirteen years old and it was for the 15 minutes my dad could afford for me in a Piper taildragger. It was the first of many hours of instruction I would eventually receive to get me to where I am right now. It occurs to me I should write about it and let him know there are a bunch of people seated in back who are unknowingly glad he got me started at an early age. He must have known even then I’d need it someday. I guess I’ll wait ’til I get this thing parked to tell him.

Thanks Dad.

JBB

Contributing Columnist **Bob Root**

THINGS TO DO (OR NOT) IN RAPID CITY AND OTHER THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

I hear we are going to Rapid City. The Root Cellar is proud to provide information which may help you enjoy your visit.

Located just east of the Black Hills of South Dakota, Rapid City is the second largest city in the state. Nearby is Ellsworth Air Force Base, the third largest city in the state.

There is at least one song of which you should be aware. Here are some lyrics:

*“ . . . and when I get that lonesome feeling,
and I’m miles away from home,
I hear the voice of the Mystic Mountains,
calling me back home,
take me back to the Black Hills,
the Black Hills of Dakota,
to the beautiful Indian Country that I love.”*

Rapid City has a long and colorful history. In 1972, there was a flood caused by a lingering thunderstorm system over the Hills which brought water gushing down and through the city. Five thousand automobiles, and 1,335 homes were destroyed. Three thousand people were injured and 238 lost their lives. The city was rebuilt with care and pride.

In 1956, there was a small snowstorm in the Hills on a Friday afternoon. Traveling through the Hills that day in a caravan of autos was the Rapid City High School basketball team, heading south to play a conference game in Hot Springs. In the right front seat of one of the autos sat the player who wore number 24 on his uniform. Behind the wheel was the varsity football coach, acting on this day only as chauffeur. Somewhere on the road from Rapid (use of the term “Rapid” is locally acceptable, by-the-way) to Hill City the aforementioned car left the road in a skid, smashing rather unceremoniously into a ponderosa pine tree.

Number 24 was uninjured. In fact, all six occupants of the car were only shaken, not hurt. Later that evening, although he was just 16 years old, number 24 learned a valuable life lesson:

Next time you are a teenager on the bas-

ketball court as a player for the team which has just trounced the home team, beware of a basketball tossed your way by a cowardly member of the opposition. While your hands are busy catching the ball, your breadbasket is unprotected from a solid punch delivered by the coward who can then promptly run to the safety of his locker room.

Later in life, Number 24 learned that a minor automobile accident when one is the football coach of a high school in South Dakota does not prevent that coach from becoming the head coach at the University of Colorado, then president of Idaho State University, president of the University of New Mexico and other prestigious positions on the way to becoming chancellor at LSU.

There were more life lessons to be learned in Rapid City. For example, Number 24 turned in his red and white uniform and graduated from Rapid City High in June of 1956 at age 17. For his entire senior year and part of the previous one, he could be found with a steady girl friend named Phyllis. He was quite fond of Phyllis. In the fall, still 17, he went off to college in Colorado. She headed to Brookings, South Dakota. It wasn't long after the first college semester began that Thanksgiving brought an opportunity for both to return to Rapid City. Once there, he rushed to her door:

“I have found someone new at school,” she said. Appropriately crushed, he returned to his parents home at 30 S. Charles Street, determined to never fall in love again.

In 1981, now the father of four with several years experience as a 727 copilot, he returned to Rapid City for a 25-year high school reunion. The former coach was not there, but Phyllis was! She sat to his left at dinner. Across the table his wife was seated beside Phyllis' husband. Others sat to the left and right. A long, white tablecloth protected the dinner table. The conversation around



the table was cheerful and benign when suddenly, without warning, he felt a hand on his left thigh beneath the tablecloth.

Stunned, he leaned in her direction and heard:

“I’ve always wondered what would have happened if I hadn’t done that.”

Which, of course, is when he uttered the most profound words of his life:

“I guess we will never know.”

Naturally, we hope for good weather when we visit Rapid. However, should it rain while we are there, drop everything and rush to Mount Rushmore! There you will have the opportunity to witness former presidents cry. When the rains come down, the tears flow and another story can be created with which to impress your grandchildren.

If you take a drive through “the hills,” you will encounter many places to stop and spend your money. The Root Cellar recommends skipping most of them, however, if you like items created for the Christmas season, be sure to visit the Christmas store near Hill City. The favorite here, however, is The Rochford Mall, otherwise known as The Small of America. (Unless my editor has other ideas, elsewhere in this issue you will find the story of The Rochford Mall.) Should you go, use your map. The FS on your map (or a small, white square with a number in it) means Forest Service road, which may or may not be paved and/or populated with a variety of animals. Do not become discouraged—PRESS ON!

Of course, the variety of animals in The Black Hills includes buffalo. Should you desire to see them, the best opportunity will be in or in the vicinity of Custer State Park.

Here is a buffalo story, part of the unknown but continuing colorful history of the area:

By the year 1972, the young-basketball-player-turned-broken-hearted-college-student had matured somewhat. He was a husband, father, eight-year Navy veteran and a bona-fide second officer. He lived in a place called Edina, Minnesota. His mother and little sister lived in a place called Alliance, Nebraska, and his mother-in-law lived in Rapid City. He owned a large, square motorized vehicle called a Ford Club Wagon, blue in color. At one point during 1972, he drove his Club Wagon to Alliance, visited his family and placed a cumbersome piece of furniture in the back of the vehicle for transportation to Edina. He then drove to Rapid City to add his mother-in-law to the vehicle and deliver her



to Edina for a visit.

While driving from Alliance to Rapid on U.S. Highway 385, he rounded a curve in the highway and spied a very large buffalo up ahead beside the road. The buffalo was, in fact, scratching its head rather vigorously on a highway sign. Having acquired his first driving instruction in the hills, he immediately slowed to a creep, planning a slow passage of the spot which contained the itchy animal. As the Club Wagon neared the road sign, the buffalo apparently became aware of a large, blue thing approaching. It reared up on hind legs, ceased the sign attack, and began moving its front legs indicating the definite intention to charge the Club Wagon. WHICH IT DID!

Fortunately, the temporarily grounded aviator was ready. When the charge began, he floored the van and the buffalo passed behind in a classic “failure to lead.”

The remainder of that trip went well and quickly. So quickly, in fact, that it was only one day before work took the second officer to a layover in New York. That evening the entire crew enjoyed a dinner in Manhattan, during which he told his “buffalo story.” When he finished, another crew member commented:

“Look around. There isn’t one other person in this restaurant that would believe you were charged by a buffalo in South Dakota yesterday.”

Oh, and if you don’t like buffalo, there are real snakes at the Reptile Gardens and fake dinosaurs on Dinosaur Hill.

Bob Root

(Please note that I was not consulted in any way regarding the location for our upcoming convention.)

RNPA 2010 REUNION



RAPID CITY & THE BLACK HILLS

SEPTEMBER 24, 25 & 26

Rapid City is proud to host more than 2 million visitors each year who come to see and experience the awe inspiring mountain carvings of Mt. Rushmore and Crazy Horse, the Badlands and the magnificent Black Hills National Forest.

We are planning on making that about 2,000,250 or so near the end of September this year. Make plans now to meet old friends and new as part of that two hundred and fifty.



TOTAL COST

\$170 Per Person

👉 \$200 After June 1st 👈



Model of what Crazy Horse is intended to look like when finished.

HOTEL

RUSHMORE PLAZA HOLIDAY INN
505 N 5th St, Rapid City

For reservation call:
(605) 348-4000
and tell them you're with
RNPA (Code RPA)
Hotel info:
www.rushmoreplaza.com/

HOTEL RATES:

Standard or King Leisure	\$89
King Executive	\$99
Suite	\$119

Price good for two days before & after

SCHEDULE

FRIDAY Registration and evening reception

SATURDAY Historic train ride, Mt. Rushmore & Crazy Horse
Lunch with the Presidents included

SUNDAY General meeting and banquet

RESERVATION

Send this form with check payable to "RNPA" and mail to:
Terry Confer, 9670 E Little Further Way, Gold Canyon AZ 85118

Name: _____

Name: _____

email: _____ OR phone _____

Amount enclosed: _____



Barbara & Doug Peterson
 (shown right) once again hosted
 the annual Seattle Christmas
 Party at Emerald Downs
 Race Track on December 9th.
 Doug also shot all the great
 photos you see here.



Joanne Aitken &
 Chuck Carlson



Katie & Dave Pethia



Barbara & Jerry Burton



Dick & Marge Haddon



Joyce & Mike Tovey



Mary & Roger Sorenson



Alayne & Jack Hudspeth



Becky & Will Harris



Sandy & Curt Bryan



*Montie Leffel,
Holly & Dave Nelson*



Myron & Gayla Bredahl



Gary & Nancie Russ



Mavis & Larry Stears



Joe Kimm



Ruth Mary & Bob Fuller



*Joanne Swanson,
Carolyn Cheney*



Gladys & Andy Anderson



Mike Orecchio



Mary Gauthier,
Bob Chernich



Dave Hall, Bud Cheney, John Upthegrove, Jens Houby, Gus Diem



Pat & John Hansen



Beverly & Jim Palmer



Mary Gauthier,
Myron Bredahl



Pat Rieman & Dave McLeod



Sterlin & Nadine Bentsen



Howie Parks, Rex Nelick



Ardie & Erling Madsen,
Alison Ellison



Montie & Rae Leffel



Linda & John Schell



Eileen Halverson,
Jean Freeburg



Judy Everson,
Bev & Jvars Skuja



Danny & Ruthie Dumas



Wayne & Kathy Stark, Jim & Beverly Palmer, Bob Chernich, John Schell (profile view)



Skip Eglet, Ron Heitritter, Will Harris, Curt Bryan



Jim & Pat Harrington



Jens & Adrianna Houby, Bill & Mary Ann Noland



*Sandy Schmidt, Mike Orecchio,
Pam Beckman, Kelly Cohn*



*Andrea Schneebeck,
Kathee & Rex Nelick*

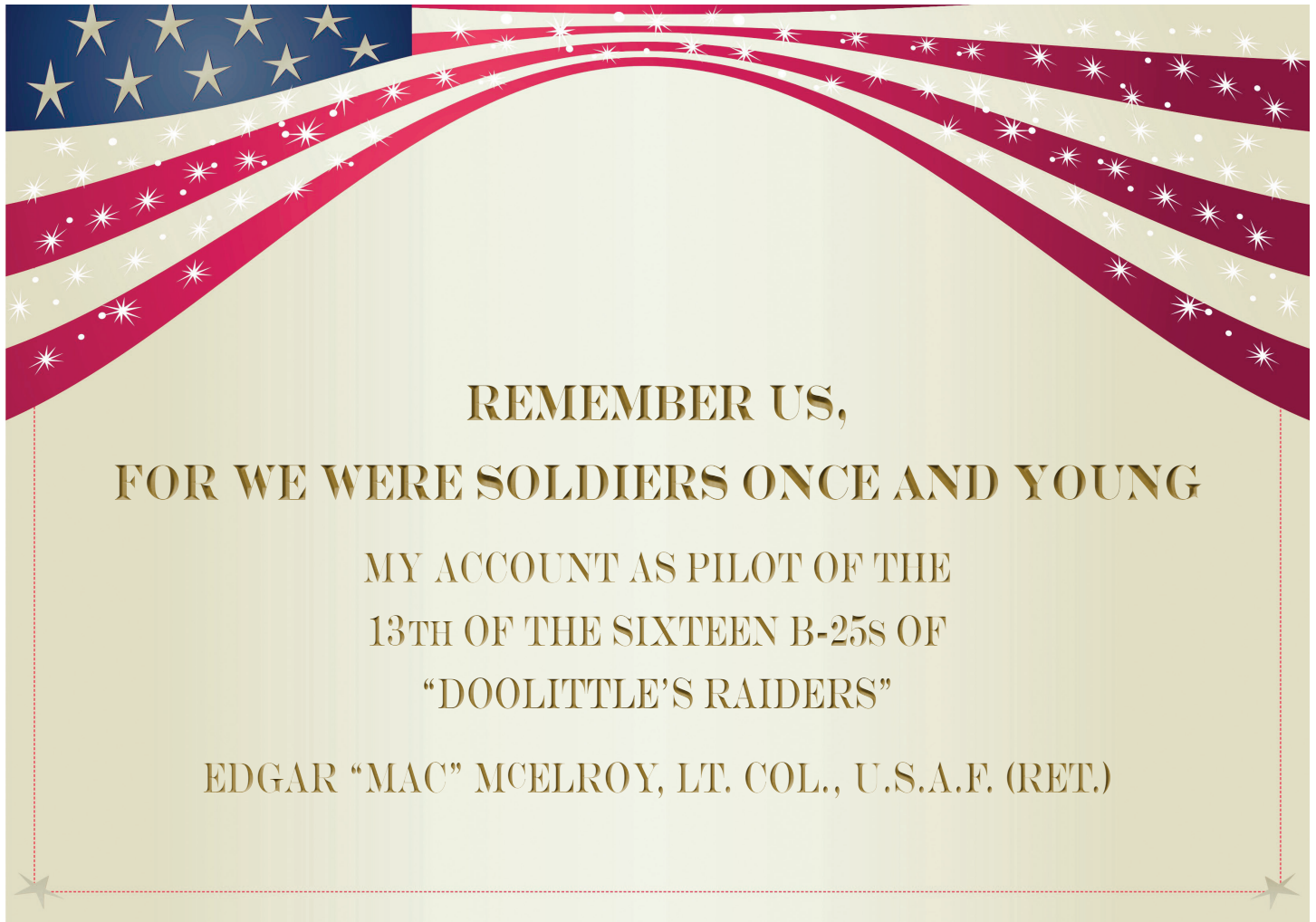


*Eileen Waller & John
Grimm*





NanSea & Charlie Welsh, Walt & Jan Mills



**REMEMBER US,
FOR WE WERE SOLDIERS ONCE AND YOUNG**

**MY ACCOUNT AS PILOT OF THE
13TH OF THE SIXTEEN B-25s OF
“DOOLITTLE’S RAIDERS”**

EDGAR “MAC” MCELROY, LT. COL., U.S.A.F. (RET.)

My name is Edgar McElroy. My friends call me “Mac.” I was born and raised in Ennis, Texas, the youngest of five children, son of Harry and Jennie McElroy. Folks say that I was the quiet one. We lived at 609 North Dallas Street and attended the Presbyterian Church.

My dad had an auto mechanic’s shop downtown close to the main fire station. My family was a hard working bunch, and I was expected to work at dad’s garage after school and on Saturdays, so I grew up in an atmosphere of machinery, oil and grease. Occasionally I would hear a lone plane fly over, and would run out in the street and strain my eyes against the sun to watch it. Someday, that would be me up there!

I really like cars, and I was always busy on some project, and it wasn’t long before I decided to build my very own Model-T out of spare parts. I got an engine from over here, a frame from over there, and wheels from someplace else, using only the good parts from old cars that were otherwise shot. It wasn’t very pretty, but it was all mine. I enjoyed driving on the dirt roads around

town and the feeling of freedom and speed. That car of mine could really go fast, 40 miles per hour!

In high school I played football and tennis, and was good enough at football to receive an athletic scholarship from Trinity University in Waxahachie. I have to admit that sometimes I daydreamed in class, and often times I thought about flying my very own airplane and being up there in the clouds. That is when I even decided to take a correspondence course in aircraft engines. Whenever I got the chance, I would take my girl on a date up to Love Field in Dallas. We would watch the airplanes and listen to those mighty piston engines roar. I just loved it and if she didn’t, well that was just too bad.

After my schooling, I operated a filling station with my brother, then drove a bus, and later had a job as a machinist in Longview, but I never lost my love of airplanes and my dream of flying. With what was going on in Europe and in Asia, I figured that our country would be drawn into war someday, so I decided to join the Army Air Corps in November of 1940. This way I could finally follow my dream.

I reported for primary training in California. The training was rigorous and frustrating at times. We trained at airfields all over California. It was tough going, and many of the guys washed out. When I finally saw that I was going to make it, I wrote to my girl back in Longview, Texas. Her name was Agnes Gill. I asked her to come out to California for my graduation. And oh yeah, also to marry me.

I graduated on July 11, 1941. I was now a real, honest-to-goodness Army Air Corps pilot. Two days later, I married "Aggie" in Reno, Nevada. We were starting a new life together and were very happy. I received my orders to report to Pendleton, Oregon and join the 17th Bomb Group. Neither of us had traveled much before, and the drive north through the Cascade Range of the Sierra Nevada was interesting and beautiful.

It was an exciting time for us. My unit was the first to receive the new B-25 medium bomber. When I saw it for the first time I was in awe. It looked so huge. It was so sleek and powerful. The guys started calling it the "rocket plane," and I could hardly wait to get my hands on it. I told Aggie that it was really something! Reminded me of a big old scorpion, just ready to sting! Man, I could barely wait!

We were transferred to another airfield in Washington State, where we spent a lot a time flying practice missions and attacking imaginary targets. Then, there were other assignments in Mississippi and Georgia, for more maneuvers and more practice. We were on our way back to California on December 7th when we got word of a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. We listened with mixed emotions to the announcements on the radio, and the next day to the declaration of war. What the President said, it just rang over and over in my head, "With confidence in our armed forces, with the un-bounding determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph. So help us God." By gosh, I felt as though he was talking straight to me! I didn't know what would happen to us, but we all knew that we would be going somewhere now.

The first weeks of the war, we were back in Oregon flying patrols at sea looking for possible Japanese submarines. We had to be up at 0330 hours to warm up the engines of our planes. There was 18 inches of snow on the ground, and it was so cold that our engine oil congealed overnight. We placed big tarps over the engines that reached down to the ground. Inside this tent we used plumbers blow torches to thaw out the engines. I figured that my dad would be proud of me, if he could see me inside this tent with all this machinery, oil and grease. After about an hour of this, the engines were warm enough to start.

We flew patrols over the coasts of Oregon and Washington from dawn until dusk. Once I thought I spotted a sub, and started my bomb run, even had my bomb doors open, but I pulled out of it when I realized that it was just a big whale.

Lucky for me, I would have never heard the end of that! Actually it was lucky for us that the Japanese didn't attack the west coast, because we just didn't have a strong enough force to beat them off. Our country was in a real fix now, and overall things looked pretty bleak to most folks.

In early February, we were ordered to report to Columbus, South Carolina. Man, this Air Corps sure moves a fellow around a lot! Little did I know what was coming next!

After we got settled in Columbus, my squadron commander called us all together. He told us that an awfully hazardous mission was being planned, and then he asked for volunteers. There were some of the guys that did not step forward, but I was one of the ones that did. My co-pilot was shocked. He said, "You can't volunteer, Mac! You're married, and you and Aggie are expecting a baby soon. Don't do it!" I told him that, "I got into the Air Force to do what I can, and Aggie understands how I feel. The war won't be easy for any of us."

We [who] volunteered were transferred to Eglin Field near Valparaiso, Florida in late February. When we all got together, there were about 140 of us volunteers, and we were told that we were now part of the "Special B-25 Project."

We set about our training, but none of us knew what it was all about. We were ordered not to talk about it, not even to our wives. In early March, we were all called in for a briefing, and gathered together in a big building there on the base. Somebody said that the fellow who's head of this thing is coming to talk to us, and in walks Lieutenant Colonel Jimmy Doolittle. He was already an aviation legend, and there he stood right in front of us. I was truly amazed just to meet him.

Colonel Doolittle explained that this mission would be extremely dangerous, and that only volunteers could take part. He said that he could not tell us where we were going, but he could say that some of us would not be coming back.

There was a silent pause; you could have heard a pin drop. Then Doolittle said that anyone of us could withdraw now, and that no one would criticize us for this decision. No one backed out! From the outset, all volunteers worked from the early morning hours until well after sunset. All excess weight was stripped from the planes and extra gas tanks were added. The lower gun turret was removed, the heavy liaison radio was



The crew (l-r): Lt. Clayton Campbell, navigator; Lt. "Mac" McElroy, pilot; Sgt. Adam Williams, flt engineer and gunner; Lt. Richard Knobloch, co-pilot; Sgt. Robert Bourgeois, bombardier.

removed, and then the tail guns were taken out and more gas tanks were put aboard. We extended the range of that plane from 1000 miles out to 2500 miles.

Then I was assigned my crew. There was Richard Knobloch the co-pilot, Clayton Campbell the navigator, Robert Bourgeois the bombardier, Adam Williams the flight engineer and gunner, and me, Mac McElroy the pilot. Over the coming days, I came to respect them a lot. They were a swell bunch of guys, just regular All-American boys.

We got a few ideas from the training as to what type of mission that we had signed on for. A Navy pilot had joined our group to coach us at short takeoffs and also in shipboard etiquette. We began our short takeoff practice. Taking off with first a light load, then a normal load, and finally overloaded up to 31,000 lbs. The shortest possible take-off was obtained with flaps full down, stabilizer set three-fourths, tail heavy, full power against the brakes and releasing the brakes simultaneously as the engine revved up to max power. We pulled back gradually on the stick and the airplane left the ground with the tail skid about one foot from the runway. It was a very unnatural and scary way to get airborne! I could hardly believe it myself, the first time as I took off with a full gas load and dummy bombs within just 700 feet of runway in a near stall condition. We were, for all practi-

cal purposes, a slow flying gasoline bomb!

In addition to take-off practice, we refined our skills in day and night navigation, gunnery, bombing, and low level flying. We made cross country flights at tree-top level, night flights and navigational flights over the Gulf of Mexico without the use of a radio. After we started that short-field takeoff routine, we had some pretty fancy competition between the crews. I think that one crew got it down to about 300 feet on a hot day. We were told that only the best crews would actually go on the mission, and the rest would be held in reserve. One crew did stall on takeoff, slipped back to the ground, busting up their landing gear. They were eliminated from the mission. Doolittle emphasized again and again the extreme danger of this operation, and made it clear that anyone of us who so desired could

drop out with no questions asked. No one did.

On one of our cross country flights, we landed at Barksdale Field in Shreveport, and I was able to catch a bus over to Longview to see Aggie. We had a few hours together, and then we had to say our goodbyes. I told her I hoped to be back in time for the baby's birth, but I couldn't tell her where I was going. As I walked away, I turned and walked backwards for a ways, taking one last look at my beautiful pregnant Aggie.

Within a few days of returning to our base in Florida we were abruptly told to pack our things. After just three weeks of practice, we were on our way. This was it. It was time to go. It was the middle of March 1942, and I was 30 years old. Our orders were to fly to McClelland Air Base in Sacramento, California on our own, at the lowest possible level. So here we went on our way west, scraping the tree tops at 160 miles per hour, and skimming along just 50 feet above plowed fields. We crossed North Texas and then the panhandle, scaring the dickens out of livestock, buzzing farm houses and a many a barn along the way. Over the Rocky Mountains and across the Mojave Desert dodging thunderstorms, we enjoyed the flight immensely and although tempted, I didn't do too much dare-devil stuff. We didn't know it at the time, but it was good practice for what lay ahead of us. It proved to be our last fling. Once we arrived in

Sacramento, the mechanics went over our plane with a fine-toothed comb. Of the twenty-two planes that made it, only those whose pilots reported no mechanical problems were allowed to go on. The others were shunted aside.

After having our plane serviced, we flew on to Alameda Naval Air Station in Oakland. As I came in for final approach, we saw it! I excitedly called the rest of the crew to take a look. There below us was a huge aircraft carrier. It was the USS Hornet, and it looked so gigantic! Man, I had never even seen a carrier until this moment. There were already two B-25s parked on the flight deck. Now we knew! My heart was racing, and I thought about how puny my plane would look on board this mighty ship. As soon as we landed and taxied off the runway, a jeep pulled in front of me with a big "Follow Me" sign on the back. We followed it straight up to the wharf, alongside the towering Hornet. All five of us were looking up and just in awe, scarcely believing the size of this thing. As we left the plane, there was already a Navy work crew swarming around attaching cables to the lifting rings on top of the wings and the fuselage. As we walked towards our quarters, I looked back and saw them lifting my plane up into the air and swing it over the ship's deck. It looked so small and lonely.

Later that afternoon, all crews met with Colonel Doolittle and he gave last minute assignments. He told me to go to the Presidio and pick up two hundred extra "C" rations. I saluted, turned, and left, not having any idea where the Presidio was, and not exactly sure what a "C" ration was. I commandeered a Navy staff car and told the driver to take me to the Presidio, and he did. On the way over, I realized that I had no written signed orders and that this might get a little sticky. So in I walked into the Army supply depot and made my request, trying to look poised and confident. The supply officer



Takeoff testing at Eglin Field

asked, "What is your authorization for this request, sir?" I told him that I could not give him one. "And what is the destination?" he asked. I answered, "The aircraft carrier, Hornet, docked at Alameda." He said, "Can you tell me who ordered the rations, sir?" And I replied with a smile, "No, I cannot." The supply officers huddled together, talking and glanced back over towards me. Then he walked back over and assured me that the rations would be delivered that afternoon. Guess they figured that something big was up. They were right. The next morning we all boarded the ship.

Trying to remember my naval etiquette, I saluted the Officer of the Deck and said, "Lt. McElroy, requesting permission to come aboard." The officer returned the salute and said "Permission granted." Then I turned aft and saluted the flag. I made it, without messing up. It was April 2, and in full sunlight, we left San Francisco Bay. The whole task force of ships, two cruises, four destroyers, and a fleet oiler, moved slowly with us under the Golden Gate Bridge. Thousands of people looked on. Many stopped their cars on the bridge, and waved to us as we passed underneath. I thought to myself, I hope there aren't any spies up there waving.

Once at sea, Doolittle called us together. "Only a few of you know our destination, and you others have guessed about various targets. Gentlemen, your target is Japan!" A sudden cheer exploded among the men. "Specifically, Yokohama, Tokyo, Nagoya, Kobe, Nagasaki and Osaka. The Navy task force will get us as close as possible and we'll launch our planes. We will hit our targets and proceed to airfields in China." After the cheering stopped, he asked again, if any of us desired to back out, no questions asked. Not one did, not one. Then the ship's Captain went over the intercom to the whole ship's company. The loudspeaker blared, "The destination is Tokyo!" A tremendous cheer broke out from everyone on board. I could hear metal banging together and wild screams from down below decks. It was quite a rush! I felt relieved actually. We finally knew where we were going.

I set up quarters with two Navy pilots, putting my cot between their two bunks. They couldn't get out of bed without stepping on me. It was just fairly cozy in there, yes it was. Those guys were part of the Torpedo Squadron Eight and were just swell fellows. The rest of the guys bedded down in similar fashion to me, some had to sleep on bedrolls in the Admiral's chartroom. As big as this ship was, there wasn't any extra room anywhere. Every square foot had a purpose. A few days later we discovered where they had an ice cream machine!

There were sixteen B-25s tied down on the flight deck, and I was flying number 13. All the carrier's

fighter planes were stored away helplessly in the hangar deck. They couldn't move until we were gone. Our Army mechanics were all on board, as well as our munitions loaders and several back up crews, in case any of us got sick or backed out. We settled into a daily routine of checking our planes. The aircraft were grouped so closely together on deck that it wouldn't take much for them to get damaged. Knowing that my life depended on this plane, I kept a close eye on her.

Day after day, we met with the intelligence officer and studied our mission plan. Our targets were assigned, and maps and objective folders were furnished for study. We went over approach routes and our escape route towards China. I never studied this hard back at Trinity. Every day at dawn and at dusk the ship was called to general quarters and we practiced finding the quickest way to our planes. If at any point along the way, we were discovered by the enemy fleet, we were to launch our bombers immediately so the Hornet could bring up its fighter planes. We would then be on our own, and try to make it to the nearest land, either Hawaii or Midway Island.

Dr. Thomas White, a volunteer member of plane number 15, went over our medical records and gave us inoculations for a whole bunch of diseases that hopefully I wouldn't catch. He gave us training sessions in emergency first aid, and lectured us at length about water purification and such. Tom, a medical doctor, had learned how to be a gunner just so he could go on this mission. We put some new tail guns in place of the ones that had been taken out to save weight. Not exactly functional, they were two broom handles, painted black. The thinking was they might help scare any Jap fighter planes. Maybe, maybe not.



USAAF B-25s aboard USS Hornet enroute to attack Japan, April 1942

On Sunday, April 14, we met up with Admiral Bull Halsey's task force just out of Hawaii and joined into one big force. The carrier Enterprise was now with us, another two heavy cruisers, four more destroyers and another oiler. We were designated as Task Force 16. It was quite an impressive sight to see, and represented the bulk of what was left of the U.S. Navy after the devastation of Pearl Harbor. There were over 10,000 Navy personnel sailing into harm's way, just to deliver us sixteen Army planes to the Japs, orders of the President.

As we steamed further west, tension was rising as we drew nearer and nearer to Japan. Someone thought of arming us with some old .45 pistols that they had on board. I went through that box of 1911 pistols, they were in such bad condition that I took several of them apart, using the good parts from several useless guns until I built a serviceable weapon. Several of the other pilots did the same. Admiring my "new" pistol, I held it up, and thought about my old Model-T.

Colonel Doolittle called us together on the flight deck. We all gathered round, as well as many Navy personnel. He pulled out some medals and told us how these friendship medals from the Japanese government had been given to some of our Navy officers several years back. And now the Secretary of the Navy had requested us to return them. Doolittle wired them to a bomb while we all posed for pictures. Something to cheer up the folks back home!

I began to pack my things for the flight, scheduled for the 19th. I packed some extra clothes and a little brown bag that Aggie had given me. Inside were some toilet items and a few candy bars. No letters or identity cards were allowed, only our dog-tags. I went down to the wardroom to have some ice cream and settle up my mess bill. It only amounted to \$5 a day and with my per diem of \$6 per day, I came out a little ahead. By now, my Navy pilot roommates were about ready to get rid of me, but I enjoyed my time with them. They were alright. Later on, I learned that both of them were killed at the Battle of Midway. They were good men. Yes, very good men.

Colonel Doolittle let each crew pick our own target. We chose the Yokosuka Naval Base about twenty miles from Tokyo. We loaded 1450 rounds of ammo and four 500-pound bombs... A little payback, direct from Ellis County, Texas! We checked and re-checked our plane several times. Everything was now ready. I felt relaxed, yet tensed up at the same time. Day after tomorrow, we will launch when we are 400 miles out. I lay in my cot that night, and rehearsed the mission over and over in my head. It was hard to sleep as I listened to sounds of the ship.

Early the next morning, I was enjoying a leisurely breakfast, expecting another full day on board, and I noticed that the ship was pitching and rolling quite a bit this morning, more than normal. I was reading through the April 18th day plan of the Hornet, and there was a message in it which said, "From the Hornet to the Army—Good luck, good hunting, and God bless you." I still had a large lump in my throat from reading this, when all of a sudden, the intercom blared, "General Quarters, General Quarters, All hands man your battle stations! Army pilots, man your planes!!!" There was instant reaction from everyone in the room and food trays went crashing to the floor. I ran down to my room jumping through the hatches along the way, grabbed my bag, and ran as fast as I could go to the flight deck. I met with my crew at the plane, my heart was pounding. Someone said, "What's going on?" The word was that the Enterprise had spotted an enemy trawler. It had been sunk, but it had transmitted radio messages. We had been found out!

The weather was crummy, the seas were running heavy, and the ship was pitching up and down like I had never seen before. Great waves were crashing against the bow and washing over the front of the deck. This wasn't going to be easy! Last minute instructions were given. We were reminded to avoid non-military targets, especially the Emperor's Palace. Do not fly to Russia, but fly as far west as possible, land on the water and launch your rubber raft. This was going to be a one-way trip! We were still much too far out and we all knew that our chances of making land were somewhere between slim and none. Then at the last minute, each plane loaded an extra ten 5-gallon gas cans to give us a fighting chance of reaching China.

We all climbed aboard, started our engines and warmed them up, just feet away from the plane in front of us and the plane behind us. Knobby, Campbell, Bourgeois and me in the front, Williams, the gunner was in the back, separated from us by a big rubber gas tank. I called back to Williams on the intercom and told him to look sharp and don't take a nap! He answered dryly, "Don't worry about me, Lieutenant. If they jump us, I'll just use my little black broomsticks to keep the Japs off our tail."

The ship headed into the wind and picked up speed. There was now a near gale force wind and water spray coming straight over the deck. I looked down at my instruments as my engines revved up. My mind was racing. I went over my mental checklist, and said a prayer? God please, help us! Past the twelve planes in front of us, I strained to see the flight deck officer as he leaned into the wind and signaled with his arms for Colonel Doo-



Lt. Col. Doolittle wires Japanese medals to a bomb

little to come to full power. I looked over at Knobby and we looked each other in the eye. He just nodded to me and we both understood.

With the deck heaving up and down, the deck officer had to time this just right. Then I saw him wave Doolittle to go, and we watched breathlessly to see what happened. When his plane pulled up above the deck, Knobby just let out with, "Yes! Yes!" The second plane, piloted by Lt. Hoover, appeared to stall with its nose up and began falling toward the waves. We groaned and called out, "Up! Up! Pull it up!" Finally, he pulled out of it, staggering back up into the air, much to our relief! One by one, the planes in front of us took off. The deck pitched wildly, 60 feet or more it looked like. One plane seemed to drop down into the drink and disappeared for a moment, then pulled back up into sight. There was sense of relief with each one that made it. We gunned our engines and started to roll forward. Off to the right, I saw the men on deck cheering and waving their covers! We continued inching forward, careful to keep my left main wheel and my nose wheel on the white guidelines that had been painted on the deck for

us. Get off a little bit too far left and we go off the edge of the deck. A little too far to the right and our wing-tip will smack the island of the ship. With the best seat on the ship, we watched Lt. Bower take off in plane number 12, and I taxied up to the starting line, put on the brakes and looked down to my left. My main wheel was right on the line. I applied more power to the engines, and I turned my complete attention to the deck officer on my left, who was circling his paddles. Now my adrenaline was really pumping! We went to full power, and the noise and vibration inside the plane went way up. He circled the paddles furiously while watching forward for the pitch of the deck. Then he dropped them, and I said, "Here We Go!" I released the brakes and we started rolling forward, and as I looked down the flight-deck you could see straight down into the angry churning water. As we slowly gained speed, the deck gradually began to pitch back up. I pulled up and our plane slowly strained up and away from the ship. There was a big cheer and whoops from the crew, but I just felt relieved and muttered to myself, "Boy, that was short!"

ing feeling, and I felt as though the will and spirit of our whole country was pushing us along. I didn't feel too scared, just anxious. There was a lot riding on this thing, and on me.

As we began to near land, we saw an occasional ship here and there. None of them close enough to be threatening, but just the same, we were feeling more edgy. Then at 1330 we sighted land, the Eastern shore of Honshu. With Williams now on his guns in the top turret and Campbell on the nose gun, we came ashore still flying low as possible, and were surprised to see people on the ground waving to us as we flew in over the farmland. It was beautiful countryside.

Campbell, our navigator, said, "Mac, I think we're going to be about sixty miles too far north. I'm not positive, but pretty sure." I decided that he was absolutely right and turned left ninety degrees, went back just offshore and followed the coast line south. When I thought we had gone far enough, I climbed up to two thousand feet to find out where we were. We started getting fire from anti-aircraft guns. Then we spotted Tokyo

"...I felt as though the will and spirit of our whole country was pushing us along."

We made a wide circle above our fleet to check our compass headings and get our bearings. I looked down as we passed low over one of our cruisers and could see the men on deck waving to us. I dropped down to low level, so low we could see the whitecap waves breaking. It was just after 0900, there were broken clouds at 5,000 feet and visibility of about thirty miles due to haze or something. Up ahead and barely in sight, I could see Captain Greening, our flight leader, and Bower on his right wing. Flying at 170 mph, I was able to catch up to them in about 30 minutes. We were to stay in this formation until reaching landfall, and then break on our separate ways. Now we settled in for the five hour flight. Tokyo, here we come!

Williams was in the back emptying the extra gas cans into the gas tank as fast as we had burned off enough fuel. He then punched holes in the tins and pushed them out the hatch against the wind. Some of the fellows ate sandwiches and other goodies that the Navy had put aboard for us... I wasn't hungry. I held onto the controls with a firm grip as we raced along westward just fifty feet above the cold rolling ocean, as low as I dared to fly. Being so close to the choppy waves gave you a true sense of speed. Occasionally our windshield was even sprayed with a little saltwater. It was an exhilarat-

Bay, turned west and put our nose down diving toward the water. Once over the bay, I could see our target, Yokosuka Naval Base. Off to the right there was already smoke visible over Tokyo. Coming in low over the water, I increased speed to 200 mph and told everyone, "Get Ready!"

When we were close enough, I pulled up to 1300 feet and opened the bomb doors. There were furious black bursts of anti-aircraft fire all around us, but I flew straight on through them, spotting our target, the torpedo works and the dry-docks. I saw a big ship in the dry-dock just as we flew over it. Those flak bursts were really getting close and bouncing us around, when I heard Bourgeois shouting, "Bombs Away!" I couldn't see it, but Williams had a bird's eye view from the back and he shouted jubilantly, "We got an aircraft carrier! The whole dock is burning!" I started turning to the south and strained my neck to look back and at that moment saw a large crane blow up and start falling over!... Take that! There was loud yelling and clapping each other on the back. We were all just ecstatic, and still alive! But there wasn't much time to celebrate. We had to get out of here and fast! When we were some thirty miles out to sea, we took one last look back at our target, and could still see huge billows of black smoke. Up until now, we

had been flying for Uncle Sam, but now we were flying for ourselves.

We flew south over open ocean, parallel to the Japanese coast all afternoon. We saw a large submarine apparently at rest, and then in another fifteen miles, we spotted three large enemy cruisers headed for Japan. There were no more bombs, so we just let them be and kept on going. By late afternoon, Campbell calculated that it was time to turn and make for China. Across the East China Sea, the weather out ahead of us looked bad and overcast. Up until now we had not had time to think much about our gasoline supply, but the math did not look good. We just didn't have enough fuel to make it!

Each man took turns cranking the little hand radio to see if we could pick up the promised radio beacon. There was no signal. This is not good. The weather turned bad and it was getting dark, so we climbed up. I was now flying on instruments, through a dark misty rain. Just when it really looked hopeless of reaching land, we suddenly picked up a strong tailwind. It was an answer to a prayer. Maybe just maybe, we can make it!

In total darkness at 2100 hours, we figured that we must be crossing the coastline, so I began a slow, slow climb to be sure of not hitting any high ground or anything. I conserved as much fuel as I could, getting real low on gas now. The guys were still cranking on the radio, but after five hours of hand cranking with aching hands and backs, there was utter silence. No radio beacon! Then the red light started blinking, indicating twenty minutes of fuel left. We started getting ready to bail out. I turned the controls over to Knobby and crawled to the back of the plane, past the now collapsed rubber gas tank. I dumped everything out of my bag and repacked just what I really needed, my .45 pistol, ammunition, flashlight, compass, medical kit, fishing tackle, chocolate bars, peanut butter and crackers. I told Williams to come forward with me so we could all be together for this. There was no other choice. I had to get us as far west as possible, and then we had to jump.

At 2230 we were up to sixty-five hundred feet. We were over land but still above the Japanese Army in China. We couldn't see the stars, so Campbell couldn't get a good fix on our position. We were flying on fumes now and I didn't want to run out of gas before we were ready to go. Each man filled his canteen, put on his Mae West life jacket and parachute, and filled his bag with rations, those "C" rations from the Presidio. I put her on auto-pilot and we all gathered in the navigator's compartment around the hatch in the floor. We checked each other's parachute harness. Everyone was scared, without a doubt. None of us had ever done this before! I

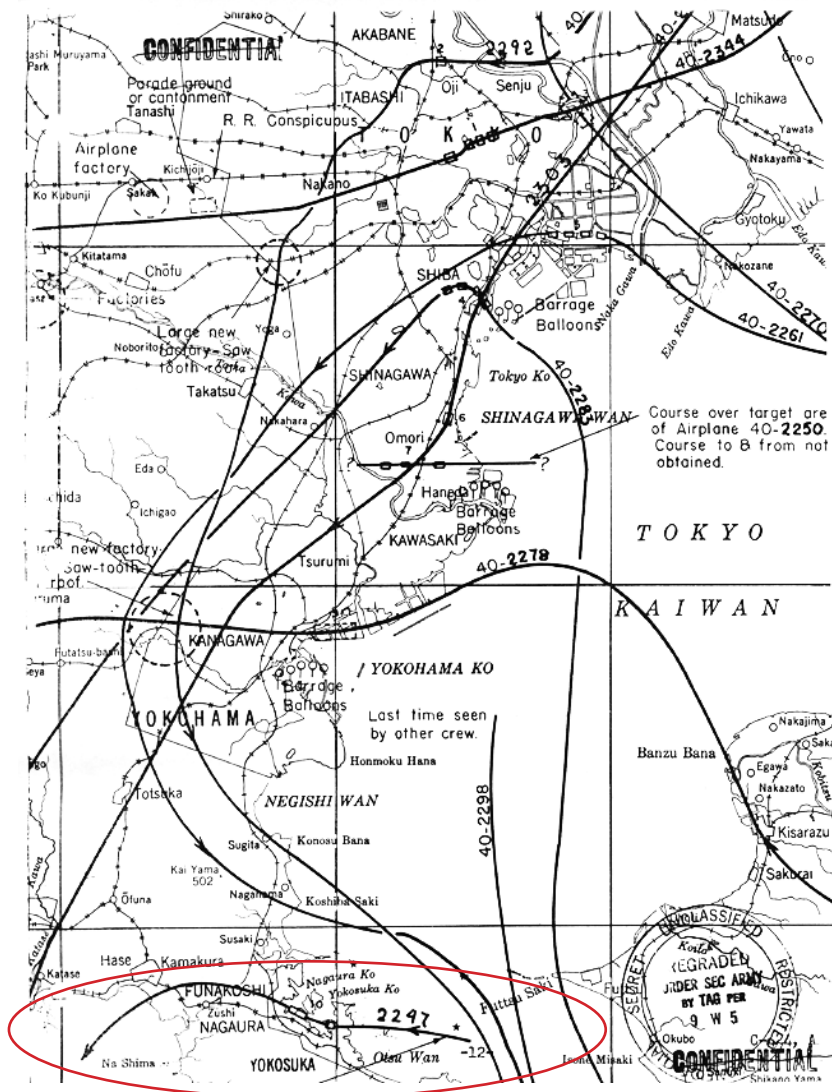
said, "Williams first, Bourgeois second, Campbell third, Knobloch fourth, and I'll follow you guys! Go fast, two seconds apart! Then count three seconds off and pull your rip-cord!"

We kicked open the hatch and gathered around the hole looking down into the blackness. It did not look very inviting! Then I looked up at Williams and gave the order, "JUMP!!!" Within seconds they were all gone. I turned and reached back for the auto-pilot, but could not reach it, so I pulled the throttles back, then turned and jumped. Counting quickly, thousand one, thousand two, thousand three, I pulled my rip-cord and jerked back up with a terrific shock. At first I thought that I was hung on the plane, but after a few agonizing seconds that seemed like hours, realized that I was free and drifting down. Being in the total dark, I was disoriented at first but figured my feet must be pointed toward the ground. I looked down through the black mist to see what was coming up. I was in a thick mist or fog, and the silence was so eerie after nearly thirteen hours inside that noisy plane. I could only hear the whoosh, whoosh sound of the wind blowing through my shroud lines, and then I heard a loud crash and explosion. My plane!

Looking for my flashlight, I groped through my bag with my right hand, finally pulled it out and shined it down toward the ground, which I still could not see. Finally I picked up a glimmer of water and thought I was landing in a lake. We're too far inland for this to be ocean. I hope! I relaxed my legs a little, thinking I was about to splash into water and would have to swim out, and then bang. I jolted suddenly and crashed over onto my side. Lying there in just a few inches of water, I raised my head and put my hands down into thick mud. It was a rice paddy! There was a burning pain, as if someone had stuck a knife in my stomach. I must have torn a muscle or broke something.

I laid there dazed for a few minutes, and after a while struggled up to my feet. I dug a hole and buried my parachute in the mud. Then started trying to walk, holding my stomach, but every direction I moved the water got deeper. Then, I saw some lights off in the distance. I fished around for my flashlight and signaled one time. Sensing something wrong, I got out my compass and to my horror saw that those lights were off to my west. That must be a Jap patrol! How dumb could I be! Knobby had to be back to my east, so I sat still and quiet and did not move.

It was a cold dark lonely night. At 0100 hours I saw a single light off to the east. I flashed my light in that direction, one time. It had to be Knobby! I waited a while, and then called out softly, "Knobby?" And a voice replied, "Mac, is that you?" Thank goodness, what a relief!



The track of McElroy and crew over Yokosuka

Separated by a wide stream, we sat on opposite banks of the water communicating in low voices. After daybreak Knobby found a small rowboat and came across to get me. We started walking east toward the rest of the crew and away from that Japanese patrol. Knobby had cut his hip when he went through the hatch, but it wasn't too awful bad.

We walked together toward a small village and several Chinese came out to meet us, they seemed friendly enough. I said, "Luchu hoo megwa fugi! Luchu hoo megwa fugi!" meaning, "I am an American! I am an American!" Later that morning we found the others. Williams had wrenched his knee when he landed in a tree, but he was limping along just fine. There were hugs all around. I have never been so happy to see four guys in all my life!

Well, the five of us eventually made it out of China with the help of the local Chinese people and the Catholic missions along the way. They were all very good to

us, and later they were made to pay terribly for it, so we found out afterwards. For a couple of weeks we traveled across country. Strafed a couple of times by enemy planes, we kept on moving, by foot, by pony, by car, by train, and by airplane. But we finally made it to India.

I did not make it home for the baby's birth. I stayed on there flying a DC-3 "Gooney Bird" in the China-Burma-India Theatre for the next several months. I flew supplies over the Himalaya Mountains, or as we called it, over "The Hump" into China. When B-25s finally arrived in India, I flew combat missions over Burma, and then later in the war, flew a B-29 out of the Marianna Islands to bomb Japan again and again.

After the war, I remained in the Air Force until 1962, when I retired from the service as a Lt. Colonel, and then came back to Texas, my beautiful Texas. First moving to Abilene and then we settled in Lubbock, where Aggie taught school at MacKenzie Junior High. I worked at the S&R Auto Supply, once again in an atmosphere of machinery, oil and grease.

I lived a good life and raised two wonderful sons that I am very proud of. I feel blessed in many ways. We have a great country, better than most folks know. It is worth fighting for. Some people call me a hero, but I have never thought of myself that way, no. But I did serve in the company of heroes. What we did will never leave me. It will always be there in my

fondest memories. I will always think of the fine and brave men that I was privileged to serve with. Remember us, for we were soldiers once and young.

With the loss of all aircraft, Doolittle believed that the raid had been a failure, and that he would be court-martialed upon returning to the states. Quite to the contrary, the raid proved to be a tremendous boost to American morale, which had plunged following the Pearl Harbor attack. It also caused serious doubts in the minds of Japanese war planners. They in turn recalled many seasoned fighter plane units back to defend the home islands, which resulted in Japan's weakened air capabilities at the upcoming Battle of Midway and other South Pacific campaigns.

Edgar "Mac" Mc Elroy, Lt. Col., U.S.A.F. (Ret.) passed away at his residence in Lubbock, Texas, early on the morning of Friday, April 4, 2003.

Thanks to David Schneebeck for contributing this article for Contrails.

AN OUT OF THE ORDINARY FATHER-SON TRIP

By Doug Sameit



Leaving the Amazon River behind as we climb out of Belem

In the fall of 2008 my son's company, Jetpool LLC, received a contract to deliver and manage a new Embraer Phenom 100 aircraft. Paul had joined two partners in founding Jetpool LLC, an aircraft management company located in Charlotte, North Carolina, in January 2006. They had enjoyed considerable success, soon receiving a contract to manage a new Citation XLS for a large steel company. Within a year that company had added a Citation CJ-1+, and in another year they had traded the CJ in for a new Citation X. Jetpool had also received their Part 135 certification and Wyvern safety certification. ISBAO certification is imminent, a safety recognition that is no small feat for any company. Paul is the company's President, and the Phenom 100 would bring Jetpool's stable of aircraft up to three.

When Paul called us in Virginia Beach with the exciting news he mentioned that he was looking for a co-pilot. I volunteered that if he couldn't find another pilot I would agree to go along. I had the flexibility to make that offer because I had just accepted an early retirement

offer in August from Northwest Airlines, where I had been an instructor on the A-319/320. I don't know how hard Paul tried to find another pilot, but soon it became clear that I was locked into the delivery, which was to occur sometime in the first quarter of 2009.

The Phenom 100 is Embraer's perceived entry into the once-hot Very Light Jet market. An approximate description of a VLJ is an aircraft with a maximum takeoff weight of 10,000 pounds or less designed for single-pilot operation with advanced flight and systems management features incorporated into the flight deck, able to operate off runways 3000ft or less in length and selling for less than \$3 million. No less than a dozen manufacturers have designs on the drawing boards or aircraft currently flying. Some are established aircraft manufacturers like Cessna, Piper, Cirrus, Diamond and Embraer. Others have just entered the arena, like Adams, Eclipse, Honda, and Spectrum. Some have already fallen into Chapter 11 or Chapter 7 bankruptcy.



The Phenom 100 on the ramp in St. Maarten

Embraer was founded as a government entity in 1969 in Sao Jose dos Campos, Brazil. It was privatized in 1994, and has delivered hundreds of commercial, military and executive aircraft. The name Embraer is derived from the company's full name, Empresa Brasileira de Aeronautica S.A. The Phenom 100 was developed in a relatively quick time frame and received certification in December 2008. It can't strictly be called a VLJ, as its maximum takeoff weight is slightly over 10,000 pounds and its pricetag is slightly north of \$3 million. "Entry-level jet" is a better description. BMWGroup-DesignworksUSA participated in the cabin design and it is a beauty. For an aircraft that seats 2 pilots and 4 passengers and has a lavatory, this is about as good as it gets. We were picking up aircraft number 20 off the production line.

Paul got his type-rating in the Phenom 100 in February. He did some pre-study in the manuals before a week of ground school in Dallas. He then had two weeks of flight training at Alliance Airport in a pre-production aircraft with Embraer test pilots, as a simulator was not yet available.

In late February Embraer gave Paul an inspection date of March 25. We scrambled to get Brazilian visas (good for 5 years but must be first used in 90 days) and Paul worked to assemble all the necessary documents on

his 60-point checklist. He ordered the trip kit of maps and charts from Jeppesen and rented a satellite phone for the trip. The delivery process would take three days, and we anticipated the flight home would take another three days. I listed for the flight on Delta from Norfolk to Sao Paulo via Atlanta and Paul and his Director of Maintenance, Alan Hyde, booked flights from Charlotte to Sao Paulo. The flights to Sao Paulo are redeyes, arriving there between 7-9am. We planned to fly down on the night of the 23rd, taking the 24th to rest and recover. Time zones wouldn't be a factor, as Sao Paulo is only one hour ahead of the eastern US.

A few days before we were scheduled to leave we found out the post-production test flights weren't going as planned, and the inspection date was moved to early April. We canceled flight reservations and stood by. As that date approached we heard the plane had "flap issues" and the inspection date was pushed further into April. Finally, Paul was told that the plane would need to be rewinged and the inspection date was moved to May 18. On May 7 we got confirmation that the aircraft would be ready on the 18th, a Monday.

Now I had a problem. I had been following the passenger loads on the Delta flight to Sao Paulo and noticed they were very heavy on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights. From May 15-17 they were almost-full to

overbooked. Paul and Alan flew down on the 16th, but I had to wait until the 18th. I awoke that morning to find out the sixteen available seats Norfolk-to-Atlanta had evaporated overnight and I had to buy a ticket through Charlotte on another carrier. This made the trip even longer, but you gotta do what you gotta do.

The flight to Sao Paulo is about nine hours, scheduled to arrive at 7:55am. Naturally, on the morning of May 19th the airport was fogged in, so we held for an hour waiting for the visibility to come up to one-half mile. I quickly cleared customs and found my driver for the one-hour drive northeast to Sao Jose dos Campos. I had hoped to go to the hotel for a quick shower, but the last bus from the hotel to the delivery hangar went at 10am and I had missed it. The driver spoke no English, so I just hoped he knew to take me to the hangar.

My first impression of the countryside (limited by fog) is that level ground is at a premium. Tall, rounded hills are surrounded by narrow valleys and ravines several hundred feet deep. The four-lane highway was a good one, with a speed limit of 120kph. The driver kept to about 100kph due to the much slower traffic we were passing. Nearing SJ we passed through three tunnels, after which the visibility improved considerably. We tried

several entrances to the Embraer complex before finding the correct one for the delivery hangar.

Embraer maintains numerous room-sized offices for the delivery crews on the second and third levels of the hangar. I found Paul and Alan in number 16, up to their elbows in documents, manuals, and computer programs. The office had a conference table, two desks, a cabinet, internet connections, world-wide phone service, a small refrigerator stocked with soft drinks and water, and a table of cookies and goodies replenished by attendants twice a day. One wall had a large window that looked down into the hangar bay. I could see 3 Phenom 100's as well as several 190-series commercial jets destined for regional airlines all over the world.

I now had two days to familiarize myself with the Garmin Prodigy flight deck, Embraer's modification of the Garmin 1000. It consists of two Pilot Flight Displays separated by a Multifunction Flight Display. They are all interchangeable if one fails. All flight instruments, aircraft systems, and flight computer functions are displayed on the screens. The amount of data stored by the Prodigy is incredible. The map not only shows water and land, it shows terrain, rivers, national boundaries, and warning and restricted areas in addition to the expected

display of airports, airways, and intersections. It labels countries, islands and bodies of water. Aircraft position is continuously computed by GPS whenever power is on the system. We used to joke about how much typing it took to enter a flight plan on the Airbus. There's hardly any typing on the Prodigy! Just enter the four-letter identifier of your departure airport and maybe the first point if there's no SID and a drop-down menu shows every airway from that point. Highlight your selection with a small knob, and it then shows every intersection on the airway. Highlight and select and repeat the process all the way to your destination. Typing



Paul enters the Phenom to continue the inspection process. Embraer technicians wore paper boots and hairnets when entering.



The MFD and my PFD. We are cruising at 40,000 feet north of Hispaniola.

is necessary only if there is a direct involved. The system stores 100 flight plans, so Paul was able to program upcoming legs while we were in cruise. A push of a button will reverse any flight plan in the event you are going back the same way you came. Entering the destination elevation or any descent crossing restriction automatically computes a Top of Descent point and a vertical deviation display in the descent.

I can't say that my tired brain absorbed much after lunch that first day. I didn't sleep well on the 767 and fatigue caught up with me. I caught the first bus to the hotel at 4pm for a shower and a nap.

Let me make a few observations about the Caesar Business Hotel in Sao Jose dos Campos. They are way ahead of us in terms of energy conservation. The hallways are unlit until you activate the motion detectors, and your room is unpowered until you insert your key card into the reader once inside your room. That means no air conditioning, lights or TV while you are out of the room. (Somehow the bedside clock keeps time). There are no ice machines on any floor. A full breakfast buffet is included in the room rate. And there is no USA Today outside your door in the morning.

Paul and Alan returned just before 7pm, having stayed late to complete the closing transaction. We piled

into a cab and rode about 10 minutes to a recommended fish restaurant, where we were introduced to Pintado. It is a large freshwater fish caught in the rivers in Brazil. Huge chunks of the succulent white meat are seasoned and cooked on the large skewers characteristic of Brazilian cuisine. Waiters pull the fish off of the skewers for you as you eat them with rice and vegetables. After dinner we called it an early night as Alan had to get up early the next day to fly home to Charlotte.

Embraer assigns two employees to act as liaison for each delivery. The process dictates that you spend a lot of time

with them, even having lunch with them each day in the cafeteria. Andrea Mustafa is an attorney and handled documents and legal and administrative issues. Marco Trinidad is an engineer and oversaw technical issues and mechanical work. Alan had found a couple dozen mechanical or cosmetic discrepancies during his very thorough inspection and Marco made sure Embraer technicians fixed each one. We also dealt extensively with Janine Gama, who has an office on the third floor but works as an Operations Specialist for Lider Aviacao. Lider has representatives at most Brazilian airports to meet transiting or overnighing aircraft, and a dispatch office in Sao Paulo to create and file flight plans. They drafted our flight plans for the five legs to Fort Lauderdale as well as requesting our overflight permit from Brasilia. You don't just land at an airport and ask for fuel like I did in airline flying. Fuel prices, quantities and method of payment were analyzed in great detail. For instance, fuel was much more expensive in Palmas than in Brasilia, so Brasilia became our first stop.

On Wednesday afternoon we met Ivan Silva, the Contract Engineering Manager of Embraer Executive Jets. He presided over a brief delivery ceremony in the Historical Exhibit Room accompanied by champagne and confections.



Paul and Janine work out fueling and flight plan details

It was our hope to get into the air around 1pm on Thursday in order to arrive at our first overnight in Belem before dark. But first ANAC, the Brazilian counterpart of our FAA, needed to reinspect the airplane. They had inspected the airplane before it ever flew, but now they needed to do it again on behalf of the FAA, since the FAA was acquiring jurisdiction. Think red tape.

The inspection lasted from 9am until just after noon, when we fueled the aircraft for the first leg. Now we're ready to go and burning daylight, and the days are getting shorter in Brazil. Marco and Andrea gave us a cooler of sodas and water, a basket of sandwiches, and two baskets of confections for the trip. But wait... Janine hasn't received the overflight permit from ANAC yet. We cool our heels until it finally comes in around 3pm. We fire up the jet and I call for our clearance: "Ground, Northwest 73DB looking for a clearance to Brasilia." It won't be the last time I make that mistake; after all, the first word out of my mouth on the radio has been "Northwest" for almost two decades, ever since I had my last flight in a Navy A-4F just before my change-of-command ceremony. Even though we

had proposed off a couple of hours prior, it takes almost 30 more minutes for the clearance to come in.

Finally we're airborne, with Paul flying on the auto-pilot and yours truly calling us "Northwest" every time I key the mike. Paul threatened to cut my pay in half if I didn't stop saying "Northwest."

I realized that I hadn't flown with Paul since I gave him a currency check in a Schweitzer 2-33 sailplane when he was fifteen. He had since graduated from the Naval Academy and completed flight training. As a P-3 aircraft commander, he had flown over most of the world and been in combat. He also had flown the C-130 and had experience in flight test and evaluation.

It was a short flight to Brasilia and we landed on runway 11L and taxied to the FBO. We were met there by the Lider rep and the fueler. After a quick top-off of fuel and a bathroom break we're ready to head for Belem, up on the Amazon estuary. But... not so fast. Again we had to wait about 30 minutes for ANAC to give us a clearance as the last of the daylight faded to black. We taxied to runway 11R in the pitch dark, waited for the wake turbulence of a departing TAM A-320 to subside, and launched for Belem.

Neither of us are happy to be flying this leg at night, but we had to try and stick to our plan, as you will see later. The stars were much brighter without any lights on the ground. The Big Dipper was in our windscreen; of course, the North Star was below the horizon. We were



Andrea, Paul, the author, and Marco at the delivery ceremony



The jungle reclaims what man abandons in Belem

out of radar contact and a couple of times feared we were losing radio contact, but after about three hours we descended out of high clouds to see Belem. Surrounded by black jungle and river, it seemed to shine as brightly as Las Vegas on a clear night approach. We landed, taxied to the FBO and were met by the Lider rep. He had a taxi waiting to take us to the Hilton, and took care of putting the Phenom to bed.

Friday morning we had breakfast in the hotel and then walked nine or ten blocks down to the riverfront and the open-air market. The temperature was in the low 80's, the humidity in the high 90's. Paul purchased some souvenirs for my two granddaughters and we walked back to the hotel. We both felt like taking showers again, but the taxi was coming. We used the same



Paul can't get the grin off his face as we head for St. Maarten

driver so that he could deliver us to the same spot he had picked us up the previous night.

Our first priority this morning was to taxi the plane across the airport to customs. There the customs official inspected the interior and baggage compartments, signed off our export paperwork, and put exit stamps in our passports. This time it was only a short delay receiving our clearance to our next fuel stop, Trinidad.

With both wings full of fuel, we were looking at 2710lbs on engine start. Climb speed was 170-200kts to intercept .50-.55M. It took 500lbs and 32 minutes to climb to 40,000ft with just the two of us and our baggage onboard. Fuel flow at 40,000ft was about 550lbs/hr and cruise speed was .60-.62M or 340-345 knots groundspeed. Redline is .70M, but we never approached that in level flight, even running at Max Cruise power. This flight took us out of Brazil, over French Guyana, Suriname and Guyana, and out over the Atlantic Ocean. This was our longest leg yet at 1055 miles, and would be a good test to see if we could make it non-stop to Ft. Lauderdale with some headwind on Saturday. The descent into Trinidad was bumpy as we passed through numerous cumulus clouds.

After clearing customs and refueling we were airborne for the short flight to St. Maarten. Princess Juliana airport is world famous, with the runway starting just a few feet past Sunset Beach, and many images and videos of landing aircraft can be found online and at YouTube. On our landing one of the weaknesses of the

Phenom caused us some embarrassment: it has no nosewheel steering and uses differential braking to turn. At the end of our landing roll tower asked us to do a U-turn and backtaxi to the large parking ramp. We couldn't complete more than 90 degrees before encountering the runway edge. (There is no parallel taxiway in this area.) All we could do is take a very narrow taxiway into a small parking area in order to clear the runway. There wasn't enough area to turn around, so we had to shut down, climb out, disconnect the nosewheel torque link, and, with the help of some locals, push the nose around to point out the narrow taxiway. Then Paul restarted the engines and, with tower clearance, backtaxied down the runway to our parking ramp. Our hotel, the Sonesta Maho, was just to the left of the runway threshold, and we were soon enjoying a shower and the cocktail hour.

The plan for the final day of the trip was more complex. Just before he left for Brazil Paul found out that the very patient owner of the Phenom would be transiting Miami about 6:45pm enroute from Belize to Charlotte. The Executive Team at Jetpool decided that, since he had had to wait so long for his airplane, we should pick him up at Miami and fly him to Charlotte. That meant that we wouldn't be leaving St. Maarten until noon to keep the crew-duty day reasonable. We intended to get some serious beach time in the morning.

Well, you just know it had to rain. It didn't just rain, it poured. With the beach out, we amused ourselves in the lobby (for wireless access) looking at the winds aloft. Why didn't we just fly to Miami? Because Paul had done all the paperwork and hired an agent to do the import in Ft. Lauderdale.

Around noon we launched and headed up to 40,000ft. Now was a good time to look at the Phenom's weather radar, as several cells topped out above us. I would rate it very good. It is one of several displays on the MFD, and if you don't have it selected and it detects returns ahead it gives you a message on your PFD "Strong storms ahead", more than a subtle hint to look at the radar.

The winds turned out to be exactly as predicted, and as we approached a very soggy southern Florida we heard numerous commercial flights going into holding for 30-40 minutes for Miami. We got right into Ft. Lauderdale, cleared customs for the fifth time, and found out that the owner's flight from Belize was going to be an hour late (no surprise, given all the holding at Miami.) Once he was on the ground we hopped over to Miami and waited 30 minutes while his taxi got lost trying to find our location on the north side of the airport.



Breakfast in St. Maarten, just before the sky opened up.

The flight to Charlotte was uneventful and we touched down around 10:30pm.

Would I do it again? You bet, especially if someone buys a larger executive jet like the Legacy. The Phenoms are scheduled to be assembled in Melbourne, FL, starting in 2010, so there won't be too many more of them coming from Brazil. Depending on what useage he experiences on the Phenom over the summer, Paul may get me type-rated in the Phenom when I get back from Montana this fall. In the meantime my efforts will be directed to getting my golf handicap down to a single digit.

For your additional reading pleasure:

<http://flyjetpool.com/index.aspx>

http://www.embraerexecutivejets.com/english/content/aircraft/phenom100_home.asp

FLYING magazine, May 2009, "Embraer Phenom 100"
by J. Mac McClellan



Approaching Miami International Airport

MSP CHRISTMAS PARTY



Mindy Schenck,
Sara Modders,
Charlie & Kathy Horihan



Norm Midthun,
Judy Schellinger,
Terry & Susan Marsh





Lowell & Joi Kegley,
Gary & Sandy Roelofs,
Lowell Williams



Carl & Marilyn Simmons,
Marilyn Olson,
Diane & John Andres



Pete & Carol Hegseth,
Pat Watson, Tim Olson,
Beverly Watson,
Keith Maxwell, Terry Marsh



Margo Bertness, Jeanne Wiedner,
Jane Chadwick,
Kathy Hogan,
Eileen Hallin





K P Haram,
Lowell Stafford



Ellen Stephens,
Margo Bertness,
Norma Driver,
Kathy Zielie



Loran & Lucie Gruman,
Phil Hallin



Ed Johnson,
Tom Dummer,
Elaine Mielke





Rod Hald,
Andrea & Jack Casey,
Judy Summers,
Tom & Judy Schellinger



Roger Grotbo, Rita Hald,
Rosie Grotbo, Ranae Wolle,
Julie McNamee,
Rod Hald



Kathi & Tim Mannion,
Sue & Tom Ebner,
Les & Julie McNamee



Barb Erlandson,
Pete Schenck,
Dianne McLaughlin,
Ray Dolny, Larry Derau





Joel Long,
Bob & Maureen Burns,
Faye & Billy Brown



Don Aulick, Les McNamee,
Greg Gillies,
Lowell Kegley





Dick Haglund, Norm Midthun,
Lois Haglund,
Jim & Nancy Bestul



Earl & Dottie Scott,
Carl Hegseth





Red & Dorothy Sutter,
Neil & Lorraine Potts,
Glady Holton,
Randy Potts



Gay Glover,
Mary Jane Dittberner,
Eileen Hallin



Paul Jackman, Jean Kiernan,
Dick & Cookie Bihler,
Dick Erlandson



Tom White,
Al & Catherine Spotke,
Ken Kreuzmann





Vic Kleinsteuber,
Jim McLaughlin,
Jerry Stellner,
Bob Blad, Ned Stephens



Pam & Bill Buckingham,
Bob & Barbara Vega,
Kittie Alexander



Don Wiedner, Lowell Williams,
Don Chadwick, Chuck Bartlett,
Larry Dorau



Audry Stafford, Dee Dolny,
Lois Abbott,
Lowell Stafford





Jerry Leatherman 1932 ~ 2008

Jerry Frank Leatherman, age 77, a native Minnesotan, “flew west” for a final check on Thursday morning, January 29th, 2008 at Methodist Hospital, St. Louis Park, Minnesota. Jerry had been at Regency battling pneumonia for the three weeks prior to his 77th birthday, on the 6th of January. On that day Jerry sang an operatic lyric at the top of his voice, disturbing the entire I.C.U. floor. Born in Minneapolis on January 6, 1932 he grew up in southwest Minneapolis and was in the first class to attend then brand new Southwest High School in the late 1940’s. His senior year at Southwest Jerry and a friend skipped out of class and were going out the door to the street when they were stopped by a teacher. The teacher wanted to know where they were going, and Jerry replied that they were on their way to marching band practice. The teacher asked what instruments they were playing

(since they were carrying none), and Jerry replied, “Piano and Bass!”

Jerry joined the Naval Aviation Cadet Program and reported to Pensacola for pre-flight training in 1951, just as the Korean War was getting underway. He completed initial carrier qualification in the North American SNJ on January 25, 1953, and was commissioned an Ensign and received his Naval Aviator Wings on April 24, 1953. While on active duty Jerry served with VP-34 where he was promoted to Lt(jg) in April 1955 prior to being transferred to VP-812, where he was promoted to full Lieutenant in May 1957. He joined Air Transport Squadron 7 in 1960. Jerry flew the Martin P5M “Mariner” on active duty, and at some point in his career managed to get checked out in one of the old WW II “Flying boats,” the PBV “Catalina.” At the end of his active duty tour Jerry had some involvement with test flights of the Martin P6M “Seamaster” which was the first, and to date the only, U.S. Navy attempt to develop a multi-engine jet seaplane.

Steve Leatherman, Northwest Airlines B-757 FO: My dad, Jerry Frank Leatherman, was a boisterous and generous person, and a great mentor to my brother Dave, my step-brother Josh and me. Jerry lived his life without regret and certainly to the fullest. Living vicariously is something others did. He leaves behind three grand-kids (and one on-the-way) who are glad to have known such a colorful and cantankerous individual; my brother, Dave Leatherman and Josh and Danielle Anderson, his younger siblings David Leatherman and Linda Grosz.

Jerry served the country he loved as a Navy pilot, captained the Boeing 747 in Asia for Northwest Orient Airlines and leaves a legacy of memories and stories to be shared for generations to come. Pam, his wife of many years and primary caregiver for the years that really mattered, wished for Jerry to be cremated and he had no service.

A memorial donation in Jerry’s name is available with the Humane Society of Minnesota. Use the link, www.networkforgood.org and go to “Donate”, and dedicate in Jerry’s name. Dad, you will be missed.

Love,
Steve



Ken Speer 1924 ~ 2009

Kenneth D. "Ken" Speer, age 85, of Emerald, Wisconsin, a longtime pilot and cattleman, and a retired Northwest captain, "flew west" for a final check on Sunday November 22, 2009.

Ken was born March 18, 1924, in Sioux City, Iowa, to Clayton and Lucille Speer. He spent much of his youth in Leeds, Iowa, and lived in California, Washington, Hawaii, and Wisconsin. Emerald Township, Wisconsin has been his home since 1993.

Aviation was Ken Speer's life. He was a B17 captain flying lead for the Mighty Eighth Air Force while based in England during WWII. During the Korean War Ken flew out of Japan, and he flew private contract during the Vietnam conflict. Ken joined Northwest Airlines in 1950 and flew as captain until mandatory retirement in 1984. Ken was proud to fly for Northwest and had a great respect for the airline. He always appreciated the

friends he made while at NWA. Ken had many memorable experiences with NWA, including participating in the Aviation Medical Acceleration Laboratory Human Centrifuge Project, and flying the first Boeing 747 non-stop service to Tokyo.

After retirement from Northwest Airlines, Ken continued his aviation career as a corporate pilot for Hubbard Broadcasting (St. Paul, Minnesota- KSTP TV). While with Hubbard, Ken flew corporate trips in a Convair 580, a Hawker and in the Gulfstream series. He also flew news trips in a Helio Courier (his favorite airplane), and enjoyed the use of a Decathlon and an Arctic Tern. During his time off, Ken and his wife Renè spent many happy hours flying low and slow over much of the United States in the Tern. Ken retired from Hubbard in 1999, and hung up his wings for good, after over 50 years in the cockpit.

Ken's other passion was raising and promoting Black Angus cattle, which he began raising while living in River Falls, WI. He and his wife René continued to raise Black Angus breeding bulls and seed stock after they moved to Emerald Angus, their farm in Emerald Township, Wisconsin.

Ken's parents, and a young son, Kenny, precede Ken in his journey. He is survived by his wife René; children Nan Branch, Jana (Bill) Brown, Lisa Speer, and Kemer Speer; stepchildren Kate Hammarback and Sam (Katie) Hammarback; and extended family and friends.





Membership Application and Change of Address Form

NAME

SPOUSE'S NAME

PERMANENT MAILING ADDRESS

STREET

CITY

STATE **ZIP+4** **PHONE**

EMAIL*
Leave this blank if you do not wish to receive RNPA email news. (See note)

SECOND OR SEASONAL ADDRESS (for RNPA annual directory only)

STREET

CITY

STATE **ZIP+4** **PHONE**

DATE OF BIRTH (Optional for affiliate member)

DATE OF FIRST EMPLOYMENT WITH **NWA** **DELTA AS:**

AN EMPLOYEE **A PILOT**

DATE OF RETIREMENT FROM **NWA** **DELTA AS:**

AN EMPLOYEE **A PILOT**

IF CURRENTLY EMPLOYED BY DELTA INDICATE:

BASE **POSITION**

IF RETIRED, WAS IT "NORMAL" (Age 60/65 for pilots)? **YES** ___ **NO** ___

IF NOT, INDICATE TYPE OF RETIREMENT: **MEDICAL** ___ **EARLY** ___ **RESIGNED** ___

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF HOURS LOGGED

AIRLINE AIRCRAFT TYPES FLOWN AS PILOT

REMARKS: Affiliates please include information as to profession, employer, department, positions held, and other relevant info:

CHANGE: This is a change of address or status only

MEMBERSHIP TYPE

REGULAR (NR) \$35
Pilots: Retired NWA, post-merger retired Delta, or Active Delta

AFFILIATE (AF) \$25
Spouse or widow of RNPA member, pre-merger Delta retired pilots, other NWA or Delta employees, a friend, or a pilot from another airline

PAYMENT

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
"RNPA"
AND MAIL TO:
Retired NWA Pilots' Assn.
Dino Oliva
3701 Bayou Louise Lane
Sarasota FL 34242-1105

MAILING NOTES

U. S. POSTAL SERVICE: We are unable to change mailing addresses seasonally. Instead, Contrails and all other mail is sent First Class to your permanent mailing address, which provides for forwarding, unlike our previous mailing system. If desired, please arrange forwarding through the U. S. Postal Service.

***EMAIL NOTE:** To protect email addresses they are published only on the RNPA website (www.rnpa.org), which is password protected. You must send any future change to Phil Hallin:
RNPAnews (at) bhi.com

RNPA TREASURER:
DINO OLIVA
3701 BAYOU LOUISE LANE
SARASOTA FL 34242



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FIRST CLASS



Ship 6743, the very last of the NWA 747-200s, on it's final touchdown at the boneyard to be cut up for scrap.