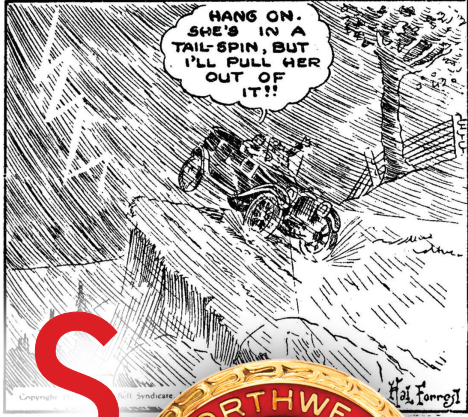


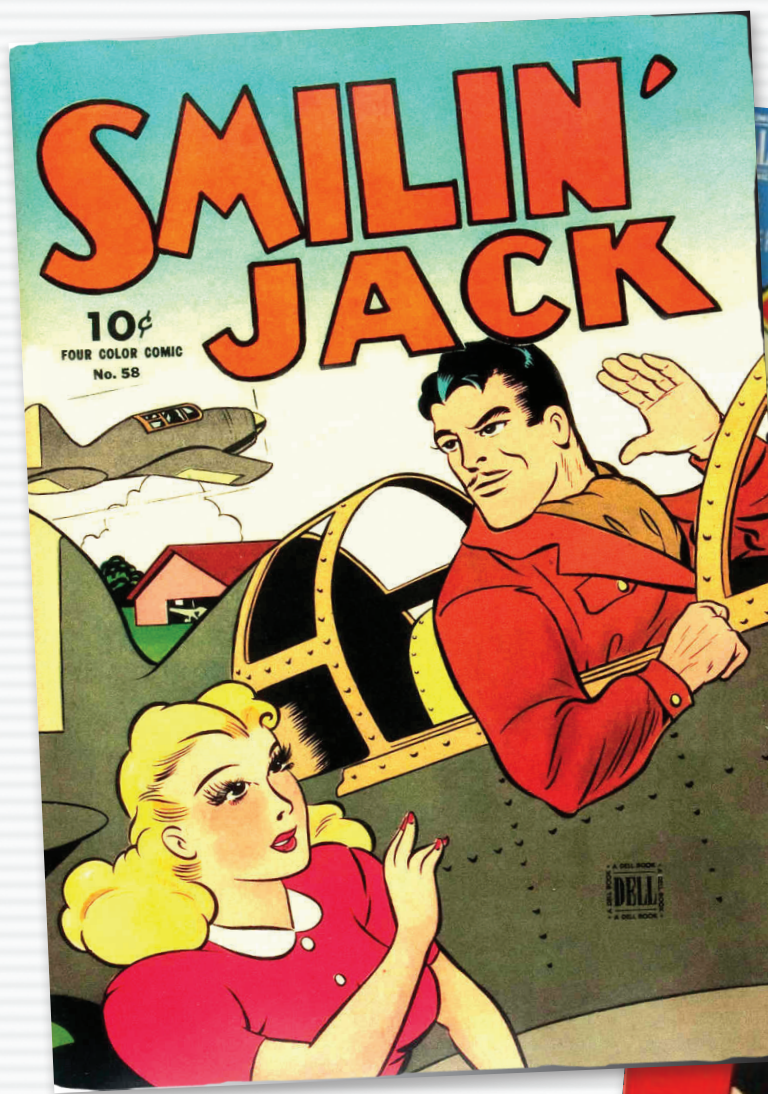
TOMMY TOMKINS' LONG CHERISHED DREAM THAT THE AIRMAIL PLANE WOULD SOME DAY STOP AT LITTLEVILLE IS ABOUT TO BE REALIZED — THE PLANE IS MAKING A FORCED LANDING —



CONTRAILS

ISSUE NO. 190

MAY 2014



Remember these?
And trying to be first to the Sunday funnies? Page 39

RNPA CONTRAILS



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The RNPA newsletter 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 \$40 annually for Regular Members (NWA pilots, active or retired) and \$30 for Affiliate Members.

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NORTHWEST *Orient* AIRLINES



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STUFF THAT MAY
INTEREST YOU

You don't get smarter as you get older.

There is just less stupid stuff left that you haven't done.

EVENT REGISTRATION FORMS

P 37 Sacramento Reunion

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WARNING

If any of your contact information needs correcting NOW is the time to correct it for the annual Directory.

Not next week or next month—NOW.

Send to Dino at the addresses on the facing page—email preferred.

(Email changes go to rnpanews@bhi.com)

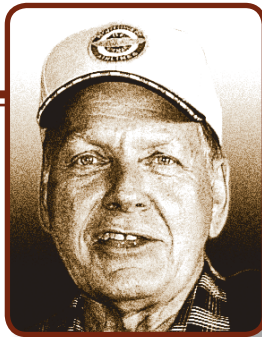
**READ
THIS**

Pen, pencil or Crayons. Email or snail mail.

However you'd like to deliver it, your Editor always welcomes stories and articles for Contrails. What other group has ever had as an enjoyable career as we have? Tell us all about it.

"Good friends, good books, and a sleepy conscience: this is the ideal life."

— Mark Twain



Dear RNPA members,

I'd like to inform you about the decisions of the Board of Directors regarding the future of the RNPA functions.

When the NWA/DELTA merger took place the common question was: How long will RNPA last? At that time we surmised it would last at least another 10 years—because of several reasons.

- The new retirees will be Delta with different loyalties.
- Most benevolent organizations are having problems getting new members, as are we.
- Our current members are aging. As we age we find it more difficult to travel and physically move about.

We are now 5 years into the merger. Our membership has remained fairly steady, but is starting to decrease and will do so even more in the next few years.

We decided at the June, 2013 Board Meeting to limit the size of the annual Reunion to 120 people after SAC and LGB. Our goal of selling 100 rooms is no longer feasible. By setting our goals lower we will still be able to negotiate favorable terms with hotels and tour agencies without risking contractual penalties. All RNPA activities are planned to be self sustaining! If we have

an unexpected loss, money does have to come from the RNPA treasury. We are very prudent and do not want to do that.

The Board also voted to eliminate the Free Room and Free Convention as an incentive to sign up early. By eliminating these two perks we can save upwards of \$1,000, thus reducing costs to the attendees.

We have a great venue planned in Sacramento and in Long Beach. We are looking at former sites where we had good attendance and great memories. This includes Albuquerque, Nashville and San Antonio. In the future we may have smaller reunions nearer to former bases. All this is in the planning stage and open to suggestions.

It was also decided NOT to raise dues for the coming year. We also decided NOT to decrease the number of Contrails issues printed per year nor eliminate the Directory. This may change in the future. Our dues are low, but we realize people are on a fixed income.

We strive to give our members the most for the least cost.

Gary



LOOKING BACK

Dave Lane tells about one of our Stratocruisers ditching in Puget Sound—news to some of us, but a remembrance to others.

Dave has been working on a book about the NWA Stratocruisers. This is just one installment of the book. We hope to have more in the August issue.

EVERYONE LOVES A PARADE

Especially one that's long overdue. Jim Anderson of the Star Tribune tells of a special one for our own Bill Isaacson.

AND...

A Nice remembrance by Ron Murdock Ten pages of letters and photo layouts for two picnics—SW Florida and Phoenix. Special obituaries for two very special members.

Whatchabeenupto?

ABOUT THE COVER

A bit different for sure—a nostalgic trip back to our childhood. As you will learn on page 39, this was all triggered by a letter from Bev Skuja. That's why member submissions are so important to this magazine. I very much doubt that I would have come up with anything like it on my own.

Keep 'em coming, please.

INTERESTING STUFF FROM THE COLUMNISTS

Both Bob Root and John Doherty are taking us back to the early days of our careers that will surely stir some old memories of your own, while Jim Baldwin presents the first part of one of his most well-crafted stories I can recall. From swigging tailgate beer, to a remedial lesson in geopolitics, then an amazing aircraft and a special pilot.

GOING BACK TO SUNNYSIDE ROAD

Although not a regular contributing columnist, our recently retired Obituary Editor, Vic Britt, is a frequent contributor. He will take you back to remember one of the most prolific and well-liked AMEs (Aviation Medical Examiners) in the entire country.

Vic's article made me wish that I had known of this clinic during my own career. I must not have been paying much attention, because a good number of Northwest pilots were clients there.

Treasurer's Report: Dino OLIVA



The 15th of April is rapidly approaching as I write this. The obvious meaning of that date is TAX time, but as your treasurer it means time

to close out our data base after dues payment time. Those members that have not paid their dues by that date will be removed from membership.

Each year it takes three and a half months to accomplish that which should be done in about three weeks. Dues notices are mailed in late December or early January. Within three weeks about 85% of our

members have sent in their payments. Our frugal members wait until the deadline to send in their dues in order to earn the interest on those funds in their checking account. I calculated the amount of interest earned on the \$40 for two months at the credit union and it comes out to one cent.

Of course most forget the dues payment notice and end up receiving a dues reminder notice along with a \$5 charge to cover the cost of the reminder notice. Next year, when the notice arrives, why not forgo the one cent of interest and pay the dues immediately like the other 85% thus saving yourself the late payment fee, and help make my life much easier.

OLD IS WHEN YOU'RE NAPPING...



BUT EVERYONE'S WORRIED THAT YOU'RE DEAD!

Letters

MERRY JO JOHNSON



Dear Dino, Thank you to all of the pilots and stewardesses who sent condolences when Herb Johnson passed away. I couldn't believe how many lives he had touched in all walks of life, especially the ones who had flown with him during his 32 years with NWA.

Herb was a great guy who helped so many others, and made me happy for 62 years!

I have moved to an apartment and am content. Scott is still flying as a captain now with Delta, and grandson Erik is now a pilot with Delta. So the Johnson tradition goes on!

I hope everyone has a good 2014.

Merry Jo Johnson P.S. I love the magazine.

SUSAN COAKLEY



Chuck (pilot) and myself (F/A). We are doing great in Texas and Montana. We spend the summers at our Montana home and reside in Georgetown (Austin), Texas throughout the winter months.

Lots of tennis and golf in our lives. Some competitive—Chuck is still a great tennis player and I am playing the stupid game of golf competitively and tennis. The normal older age issues arise from time to time but we are mostly good.

Hope you all are doing great as well.

Susan (Mattes) Coakley Chuck Coakley

Letters

NANCY DETWILER



Dino Oliva, Enclosed is my check for 2014 dues. I have just sold our home in Redding, California and purchased a smaller one. It will probably take me 2 - 3 months to move so will email new address then.

Nancy Detwiler

TOM HIGGINS



Dino, Thanks for all you guys do to keep RNPA going. Seems to me Contrails just keeps getting better with each issue. I need to pass that comment on to Gary I reckon.

Hope you and Karen enjoy a safe and healthy 2014.

Tom Higgins

JANE PARTRIDGE



No news—nothing new, still in Portland, OR. Arthur's been gone almost 3 years now. I definitely appreciate receiving Contrails. It keeps me in touch with a past life & brings back some very good memories. Keep up the excellent job you all do with Contrails and reunions.

Jane Partridge

MURIEL KOSKOVICH



Joe would hardly believe it, but I would actually welcome that miserable wrestling racket coming from his den TV if only he was there.

Muriel Koskovich

Letters

LOWELL SCHROEDER



Dino, Thanks for your years of ALPA leadership. Every time I get my full retirement check, I am grateful to you and ALPA. I remember lots of great flights with you. Never dull.

Polhamus named me : FREIGHTER SCHROEDER. Too bad he is gone.

Lowell Schroeder

PETE HEGSETH



Dino, Things don't change much, which I guess is good. Still farming, busy with grandkids, VFW and church. We are having the coldest winter in many years.

I think I stated this before, "You have to be tough to stay in Minnesota, D U M B-tough!"

Thanks for all you and others do for RNPA.

Pete Hegseth

K. P. HARAM



Thanks Dino! Not much new in our lives, but at our age that's great news. Still enjoy life and family, so we are blessed. Looking forward to our time in Arizona. This last month has been brutal here in Minnesota.

Enjoy our local RNPA boat ride and Christmas party and Arizona picnic. Nice to see old friends.

Thanks to all that make RNPA what it is. Happy New Year to all.

K.P. & Nancy Haram

DOT THRALL



Hi to all our RNPA friends and a special thank you to all of you contributing and putting out the Contrails, you do a fantastic job!

Lyle has been at Cottesmore Life Care facility in Gig Harbor for over a year now—once in awhile thinks he has to go on a trip. He had another stroke a year ago last November and has had dementia since. He gets full nursing care. And he will be 91 his next birthday in March!

I read to him from Contrails and any emails I get from RNPA, and he always listens carefully and comments. And sometimes he remembers one of the pilots' names that I mention, which is encouraging.

But he will have to stay there and not come home as it takes two people to transfer him and dress him, etc. And the doors, etc. here are just not right for a big wheelchair. But he gets very good care.

I have moved to a condo here in Gig Harbor and it is convenient to Cottesmore.

Dot Thrall

WAYNE STARK



Time sure flies in retirement. It is hard to believe that it has been 19 years since I retired from Northwest Airlines. We have been living on a beautiful golf course in Gig Harbor, WA the past 19 years. Kathy & I purchased a 2nd home in LaQuinta, CA about 3 years ago. We now spend 7 months in Washington and 5 months in California. We enjoy a yearly cruise as it is always great to get away and relax. Our two kids that are both married live near us in Washington. We have 5 grandkids that we enjoy seeing when we are home in Washington.

Wayne Stark

JANINE ROSS



Dear Dino and gang at RNPA, Happy New Year! Cap Olson and I really enjoy getting the RNPA magazine, so many stories of old friends.

We attended the St. Croix River Cruise again last June and were not disappointed. We just had a grand time with everyone, good food too and nice weather.

Cap had double heart by-pass last Septemeber, but he is on the mend and back flying this month. I am enjoying the colorado mild winters and my retirement.

Looking forward to the Florida gathering, not sure when it is so we will keep a lookout for those dates.

Enclosed our 2014 dues, again thanks for all of your hard work.

Janine Ross Cap Olson

JULIE CLARK



Hi Dino, I will email to you what took place just this week concerning the 50th anniversary of my Dad's accident. (Which actually happened May 7, 1964.)

It was Pacific Air Lines (part of our airline family tree) Flight 773 which went down in San Ramon, California, just outside SFO due to a lone gunman who shot my Dad—first ever of this sort of thing in airline history—while in flight.

The town of San Ramon set up a museum display for the month of January using a lot of my material donated for display. I will forward to you a memo written about it.

Thanks, and keep up your great work!

Julie Clark

STEVE LUCKEY



Dino, Once again I appreciate the opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to you and the other RNPA volunteers for all of the dedication, professionalism, and tireless effort in making the organization an industry leader. All of us are sincerely thankful to have you up front in the 'left seat' guiding us throughout the many years since retirement and providing some fine communication along the way. Sadly our numbers are shrinking but the quality remains.

Since flunking retirement for at least the third time since leaving NWA, life goes on in the security and manufacturing business. I spent about five weeks in Saudi Arabia in 2013 training a 7,000 man defensive force that protects the King's oil fields and Aramco's operations. Interesting work but the sandbox will never be a vacation destination. In August it was 145 in the shade, but cooled down to about 100 in the night!

We are manufacturing a totally less-than-lethal-defensive protection system called the "Defender" that I invented in 2012, and just launched it at the LAS SHOT Show last week.

Please keep up the good work! You do it very well.

Warmest personal regards, Steve Luckey

DARLENE HAWLEY



Don will have his 95th birthday on Feb. 16, 2014. Still in reasonably good health. We celebrated our 72nd wedding anniversary on Jan. 10, 2014

Our best to you and yours. Darlene Hawley

JOHN COPPAGE



Hi Dino,
Thanks for note on dues.
All's well here in the mountains of Prescott, Arizona.
JoAnn and I enjoyed another Europe cruise on Oceania's new ship the "Marina." Still busy with my aviation activities, Quiet Birdmen, Knights of the Round Engine, EAA Warbirds of America, Commemorative Air Force, etc, plus travel and trap shooting. Fun stuff.
Regards,
John Coppage

DAN LINEHAN



Dino,
Thanks for all the work and time you have given for your fellow pilots. We all have enjoyed the magazine and all the rest you have done through the years.
Thanks,
Dan Linehan

GARY THOMPSON



Hi Dino,
I think this gift membership is one heck of a good idea. I am signing my son Steve who is a First Officer 75/767 Delta.
We missed both Kentucky and the MSP Christmas gathering, however Sacramento is in our plans.
I want to thank you for all you do, my friend. I sincerely believe that NWA had the best pilots there are. I am very proud to have been a small part of the organization.
Again, thanks for all you do.
Sincerely,
Gary Thompson

BUZZ GILBERTSON



Dino,
Thanks to you and your staff for all the hard work. Janet and I celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary and brought our family of 22 to Bozeman last summer for a week of good memories.
My best to you,
Buzz Gilbertson

TY BEASON



Hello Gary,
I wish everybody a Happy New Year.
I am staying in good health, playing a lot of golf, and enjoying retirement. I get with Chris Hanks, Mick Hicks, John Badger and some general aviation pilots for lunch each Tuesday here in St. Augutine.
Good helath to all!
Tyrone Beason

CAROL JOHNSON



Hi Karen & Dino,
It's cold up here even for an old Swede like me! Heading for Siesta Key next week!
Hope to see you there.
Carol Johnson

BARB HASTINGS



Dino,
It's been almost seven years since John died.
I still really enjoy reading the Contrails. However, not many familiar names anymore.
Thank you to all who work so hard to keep us all informed.
Barb Hastings

PAT CARROTHERS



Hi Dino,
As reported earlier, Bill continues his slow memory decline since his diagnosis five years ago with Alzheimers. It's a terrible thing to watch and I'm sure, the most frustrating for him. So far I'm able to care for him, but unfortunately, that will soon change.
Thanks for all you do for RNPA.
Hugs,
Pat Carrothers

PHIL PATTIE



Hey Dino,
Many thanks for the continuing good work from the RNPA volunteers.
Still hoping for a RNPA Reunion in Mobile with a visit to the Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola.
The Navy, Marine and Coast Guard pilots among us would surely support such a venue.
Regards,
Phil Pattie

AL TAYLOR



Dino,
A huge "Thank You" to you and the others who keep RNPA going. You are appreciated!
Al Taylor

DONNA PAULY-CHETLAIN



Dear Dino,
Many huge "Thank You's" for all that you do.
I'm still flying and still love it. Really nice to turn 70 this year and start to "triple dip."
Hugs,
Donna Pauly-Chetlain

CY PETERSON



RNPA,
The news from Stanton Airfield is good. Captain Steve Towle completed his third annual nostalgia flight in Stanton's PA 18 in June of '13. Brian Weber went along to watch for red tail hawks. Brian checked a milestone in '13 taking his first airline job thus carrying on the family trade.
The Sport category of aircraft barely five years old has been a blessing. Kent sold five of them last year, a pace that will be hard to maintain. Each sale carries some downstream income possibilities in maintenance, rent, training etc. Aside from the reduced training requirements the big advantage of a Sport pilot certificate is that no Medical is required, just a driver's license. Beats jumping through the special issuance hoop. The other restrictions are minor inconveniences for VFR operations.
Keep 'em flying.
Cy Peterson
Class of '89

FRED ELLSWORTH



Hi Dino,
Enjoyed our recent phone conversation, remembering the best years we had with our airline, despite the layoffs and strikes.
During a layoff in 1954 I received a call from Russ Blaisdell (Chief Pilot) with North central. Was hired and down to Chicago the next day. I flew with them for one year then recalled by Northwest. All the DC-3 captains I knew have all gone west.
Thanks to you and all for "Contrails." May be a few more articles on Northwest History.
Best Regards,
Fred Ellsworth

JOHN ROBERTSON



Two friends flying overseas were nearing the end of their contracts, so I decided to pay them a visit while they were still abroad.
The first was an ex-USAir pilot flying for Vietnam Air in Ho Chi Minh and the second was an ex-NWA pilot in Dubai flying for Emirates.
Of the two, the one in Ho Chi Minh was having a much better go of it. He and his fellow ex-pat pilots were enjoying Saigon (it reminded me of a scaled down version of Bangkok), while the Emirates pilots didn't venture far from their compounds. Dubai skyscrapers are spread out over miles with no chance of walking anywhere.
I did fly Emirates from Dubai to Amsterdam on a 380 and was impressed with their service in steerage; nearly the equal of Delta's domestic biz class service.
John Robertson

DICK OHRBECK



About new things to write about. My #2 daughter, Colleen, sent me a wonderful book by Mr. Jack El-Hai, author of his large book about Northwest Airlines from start to finish. I'm still reading it over again. You should at least look at it awhile. I know quite a lot of the oldtimers in it, and a lot of pictures also.
I hope you like it.
Dick Ohrbeck

ROD UPTON



Dino:
Thanks for your Work with RNPA. I'm still playing poker tournaments professionally in Las Vegas

and Laughlin and have occasionally played in the same tournaments with my sons and a granddaughter. Still in decent health and no grey hair yet. 78 years young. Attached is a strange cancelled flight I had with Northwest.

THE CANCELLED FLIGHT

I was reflecting on my career with Northwest and thought of an occasional incident like we all have had, but the strangest day I experienced was in the Fall of 1974.
I was flying copilot for Larry Owen and we had landed at Washington National. The next day we were to pick up the Baltimore Colts at Albany as I recall; however, the crosswind at National was out of limits for us to takeoff so our flight was cancelled.

The company called Captain John Lagorio's crew who was landing at New York for a long layover to proceed to Albany. It was a dreary stormy night with no horizon and the same night a TWA flight crashed outside of Dulles.

I had stayed the previous night with a girlfriend and went back to her apartment for the evening. We were watching TV when it was interrupted by a special bulletin that a Northwest airplane had crashed in New York with three fatalities.

I knew it was our cancelled trip. I had just flown with the second officer, Jim Cox, the previous month and remember him bragging about being the new father of twin boys.

The next day our crew received some strange looks and questions because we were on the flight orders for that flight.

You old heads remember this accident, I'm sure, attributed to the pitot heat not being turned on.

By the way, that girlfriend and I have now been married 39 years.
Rod Upton

PAUL
BEST



Hi Dino,

I have sent my RNPA membership dues via US Mail but I'm sending this as an update to what I've been doing since last year.

First of all, this is undoubtedly the best \$40.00 that I will spend this year. I not only look forward to receiving Contrails but usually read it in its entirety the same day it arrives. I realize that it doesn't just magically appear in my mailbox and that many people work very hard to produce such a high quality magazine. For all their hard work, Thank You.

My wife and I just returned a few days ago from a cruise through the Panama Canal. I had been wanting to do this for years and the time was finally right. We started in Los Angeles (actually the San Pedro Cruise Ship facility) and after stops in Cabo San Lucas, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Columbia we made our transit from West to East.

I have always wanted to see the Canal and this was a great way to see this engineering marvel. The transit through the Canal started about 5:30am and continued until passing through the Gatun Locks

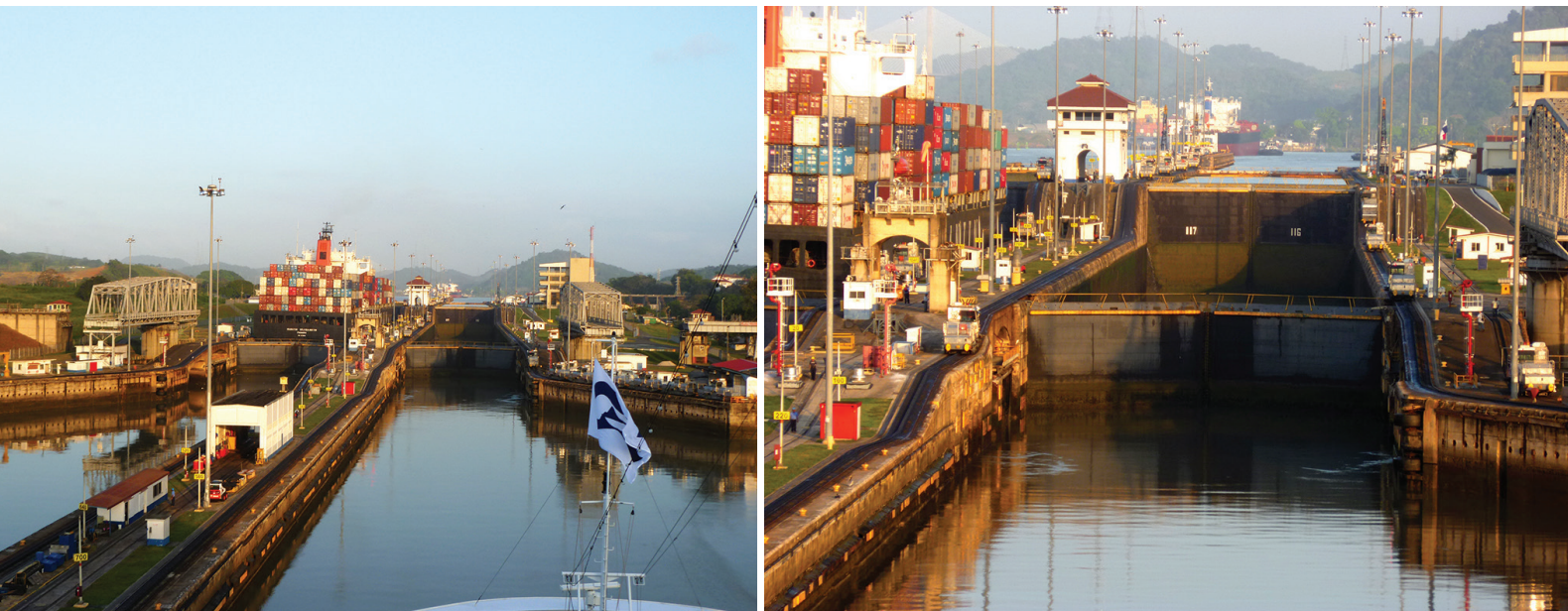
and into the Caribbean Sea at 4:00pm. The area is truly a beehive of activity. Our ship held position for an hour or so before our turn to enter the Canal. There were at least 30 other ships of all kinds waiting their turn, including gigantic container ships with their loads stacked six high and the full length of the ship, tankers of all sizes, and, of course, cruise ships.

Even with the early hour everybody on the ship was awake and taking pictures of everything in sight. Cruise ships are very large and beamy. Once we entered the locks there could not have been more than two feet clearances on either side. The new locks, already under construction, will accommodate the new fleet of Super Tankers and even bigger Container ships.

Presentations on our ship prior to entering the Canal stated that the fee for our one ship through the Canal was \$400,000.00. I don't know what the Container ships pay for the transit, but since time is money, the Canal saves these big ships over 9000 miles of sea time and they definitely consider it money well spent.

The locks themselves operate on a gravity system which is very simple and reliable. Still it was amazing to watch a gigantic ship rise up above you while in the lock just ahead of you. On the Pacific side we rose to the level of Lake Gatun and going out from the Gatun Locks we descended from the lake to the level of the Caribbean. Watching the whole operation was exciting and informative. The Mules, which are powerful Diesel engines, actually pull the ships through the Canal. Watching them work was like watching a well rehearsed and talented ballet. They had articulated pulleys on their sides that ran cables from both sides of the ship and both fore and aft. They pulled the ship into the locks, then would wait until we rose to the next level, then pull us out of one lock into the next. It was truly an amazing day and one not to be forgotten. If you have ever thought about going through the Panama Canal, my advice is don't wait, do it now. This is the 100th Anniversary of the locks and they are still going strong. A great trip both fun and exciting.

Paul Best



MIL
EITREIM



Been gonna do this for some time so here goes. Mary and I went with our adult family members on a fishing trip to Whale Pass, Alaska last August. Got a real good deal on Delta so BOUGHT tickets to Ketchikan and then on float plane to Prince of Wales island. Took off for a 2 minute trip across the bay to pick up one of the kids at the airport at Ketchikan. We were allowed 50# each for the float plane ride.

The pilot started loading cargo and bags and more cargo so I asked him how much he was going to take and he said until the mark on the float disappears! The pilot let my son Dan make the takeoff so I appreciated that.

Had a long road trip to the cabin via gravel most of the way. Salmon were running so we got all we wanted to take home.

Lots of bald eagles were our neighbors and one tried to merge with our windshield when he stalled on takeoff. Took the ferry back to Ketchikan so we could take the fish we caught at no penalty. Saw a few bears that were fishing too.

We were a long way from Mexico but Montezuma sent his aides to torment us. I think it was the rain-water we drank but the guide said the water was treated but I doubt it. We survived the trip and did enjoy it.

We are now winter residents in Bella Vista, Arkansas. Better than Minnesota but we've had it cold here too. Stay warm or cool or whatever suits you.

Milt Eitreim

JOHN
WOOD



Dear Dino,

Dues enclosed again, finally, I know—I lose track of time, myopically wrapped up in local stuff.

Food's staying down, staying close to 98.6. Got a hemi-knee implant in December, a Mako robotic procedure. A bit stiff sometimes starting out but much shorter recovery than full knee; two days using a walker.

I still remember my first month in the left seat: When I hired on I looked forward to going to work, wrenching for guys like Cal MacDonald, Ed Johnson, Terry Confer, J. J. Sullivan, Bobby Burns, etc, and realized this would be a great way to spend my work life—when not out on strike. Occasionally I worked with someone not so comfortable, their tension palpable, coaching the F/O's approaches or the S/O's panel, etc.

So I wondered, what if I check out left seat sometime and become a fretter. Things seemed to go wrong more often with the fretters. And, that meant tap dancing in the Chief Pilot's office, a dance I really didn't know and they didn't teach in Nose Wheel school.

At the end of my first month in the left seat I got my first trip into ORD. We landed on 32L, made the turnoff by our gates and were cleared in. I didn't realize I had passed our ramp until Ground came back with "Northwest, continue on the Inner to your gate—again. When the three of us quit laughing at my mistake I realized this was the worst thing that happened in my first month and my future as a captain was probably going to go okay, that we would make schedule anyway, that sharing stories and laughs [even at my expense] with every crew member I had worked with had been a pleasure, and that

I had forgotten to worry about becoming a fretter from the first day.

I think this old age thing can go the same way. A friend down the street is dealing with Parkinsons. His meds were wearing off after a late evening playing cards. As I helped him out to his car he started slowing down and urged me to go faster or he'd "lock up." I did and we made it but it was really close, because we got laughing so hard. I bought him a Tim Conway wig after that.

Thank you so much, Dino and Gary and Gary, for all that you do for us.

John Wood

P.S. I gave my Porsche to the grandkids, years ago.

MERRY JO
JOHNSON



Dear Gary,

I am always happy when I receive the new Contrails and I thank you and the others.

It was such fun to read all about the Renders. I flew with Ralph in a Martin 202 and I think Ray too. In my old log book it just says Render as pilot. I knew Mary so well I borrowed her wedding veil when I married Herb Johnson.

As a stewardess I was lucky to fly with so many wonderful pilots, one being Harry Bill. Once, in a Martin 202 we were boarding up the back stairs and didn't know the passengers had been boarded. As we came up the steps Harry says, "We have lots of takeoffs and landings and as we know, each one is a potential accident!"

I don't know how many Renders were with NWA but we Johnsons were five.

It is still lonesome without Herb and I and my family really appreciate all the condolences we received.

A big thanks to all,
M. Jo Johnson

**RON
VANDERVORT**



Hello All,

My wife Carol and I want to thank the movers and shakers that put together the Lexington RNPA function. It was so well done and great to see all those ole familiar faces. Hope to see you absentees in Sacramento in Sept.

The Vandervorts are still snowbirds between Silverdale WA(SEA) and Goodyear AZ (PHX), migrating with a 20 ft motorhome called a Pleasure Way these days. The RV-6 now remains in WA. Without the airplane we can make a leisure passage visiting people and places along the way. (Not so easy to do with the airplane.) Always a new route to travel it seems.

Our other travels have been few but impressive: We did Viet Nam, Cambodia and Malaysia with a friend who was there as an Army Officer during the war and wanted to return to some of the areas he had been assigned. Thus he served as our organizer and guide and did a great job. We did Saigon then southwest across Mekong Delta to Rach-gia, back to Saigon, then Hue and Da Nang. Flew to Hanoi... (did not stay in the Hanoi Hilton), but visited it. Cruised Halong Bay and the "Hoodoo" islands. On to Cambodia and Malaysia with an awesome stop at Angkor Wat. We used Eva Air out of LAX and were very pleased with their service. We were impressed at how friendly and happy the Viet Nam people were... without that democracy we thought they should have.

Did a biannual air tour with the Puget Sound Antique Aircraft Club last summer. Jerry Van Grunsven, retired NWA, and brother to aircraft designer Dick Van Grunsven set up a stop at Van's aircraft for a fine group tour. We visited famous Train Mt. in Chiquin OR. where

one can ride for hours on a scale train visiting rail yards, miniature villages etc. Visited and ate our way through Ashland, Albany, Burns, Pendleton, Cottage Grove OR, Richland, John Day, WA, etc.

We are a bit out of place, amongst the antiques, with our RV-6 and envy the low slow sight seeing type touring the Aeroncas, Pipers, Porterfields, Stearman's, etc. can do. On the last leg we thought; why not. So down we go to 1000 AGL to soak up the local scenery and BANGO we get a bird strike. All seemed fine as we continued on to the next stop for fuel. On the ground survey of the bird strike found the impact point right at the carb intake lip... after it first hit the prop. There was blood and feathers everywhere; cowling, wings, gear legs, wheel pants, and of course the prop. Impressive on a white airplane. What was of most concern was that some feathers and blood had gotten into the carb air box. A quick disassembly of the carb box and filter found almost nothing inside. We were lucky the prop spread it around a bit... Low and slow has some disadvantages we found.

In the summer whilst in WA I am a docent at the LeMay Family Auto Collection (450 cars) at Marymount in Tacoma. In the winter whilst in AZ I docent at the Pima Air and Space Museum in Tucson on Sundays. (Aprox 400 aircraft, WWII to present including a B-58 and B-36. (Across the street is Davis Monthan boneyard with 4300 acft. It's tour is conducted by PASM also.) The greatest part of that is meeting those vets from every branch of the service that also get their fix by hanging around airplanes..... most of the docents are vets and of course many visitors are vets as well or have stories about their veteran father or grandfather etc.

So far we are healthy (knock on wood) and work at Yoga and

Kettle Bells to keep the joints from talking back too much. Got 5 years on a 'new' hip that allows me to play tennis 3 times/week. I will try to get that same model hip for the left one when it goes. Lots to be thankful for.

Thanks to the members for helping to keep this group together. Talk to your NWA buddies (Randy—get to that Dan guy) to join and keep RNPA going as long as we can.

A great THANK YOU to the Officers, Editor and Contributors to this fine magazine.

See you in September at Sacramento!

Ron Vandervort

**B.J.
PAINE**



Hi Dino,

I know I got your envelope. I know it had a statement in it. I must have taken it out and then the trail goes cold. I am always looking for something. Had to email my daughter today to ask her to call me so I could find my phone. I think my category (widows of pilots who have flown West) dues are \$30 and the extra is for help with postage and printing which expense you must have for this annual chore. Many thanks for your conscientious hard work.

Our third generation airline pilot, grandson Michael Paine, is checking out as captain for his small airline called SEAPORT and he's based in Portland. Flies Cessna Caravans and PC-12s in their operation. His Dad, Tom Paine, flies for FedEx, often to those Asian destinations his dad did for NWA '49 to '82... and the cycle continues through the years!

Regards,
B. J. Paine
(widow of Chuck Paine)

**JOHN L.
SULLIVAN**



Since retiring, my wife, Sandra, and I have built an adobe/log house in SE Arizona (in the Gila Valley). We spend our winters there. We have two grandsons in Goodyear, AZ.

Our summers are spent in our log house in Maple Valley, Washington near our other four grandchildren.

I have stepped back in time to the 1880s—the horse and buggy days. A switch from flying jets!

I have become a blacksmith, wainwright (wagon builder) and a wheelwright (wheel builder). Restoring horse drawn vehicles (HDVs) is an interesting hobby. I try to keep all my restorations historically correct.

I have a collection of restored, or soon to be restored, vehicles; spring wagons, sleighs, stage coaches, a hearse, a freight wagon, 2 chuck wagons and a covered wagon.

Sandra and I have participated in the major parades in Arizona. We were in the Washington Seafair Parade,

**DONA
THOMPSON**



Hi Dino, et all,

Life has certainly "gone on" in wonderful ways since Dick died in June, 2009. I have been fortunate in love and life. In 2010 I married a former Air Force pilot, Phil Foley. When I met him he was working in Germany at Ramstein AFB. I was still working as a counselor for the troops at Joint Base Lewis/McChord in Tacoma.

I asked my company to place me in Europe that year. No ulterior motives. I worked in England and

Germany and enjoyed weekends touring about with Phil. We were married in Gibraltar late November, 2010. Life has been a whirlwind since. Phil was transferred to Hickam AFB in Honolulu and I took a series of assignments beginning Schofield Barracks, followed by six months with the Marines and now with the Navy Seals. We rotate around a lot to preserve anonymity and confidentiality for the service members. I've loved my 8 years as a Military Counselor and am happy that health and circumstances make it possible for me to continue to support our troops.

The Pendleton, Oregon Parade, driven the chuck wagon for the Puyallup, Washington Fair and driven on portions of the Oregon Trail three times in our covered wagon.

We cook in chuck wagon competitions in Washington and Arizona. These are events replicating the cooking for the cattle drives of the 1880s. Usually there are 6-25 wagons competing. We dress the part, cook in dutch ovens and use antique cooking utensils. There are prizes and money for the best cooks.

If you come to visit us in Arizona we will hitch up a vehicle and drive to the small town of Fort Thomas for coffee and burgers. And/or we can cook up a cowboy meal over a fire!

We have 2 RV spots and guest rooms. Just call to make sure we are around!

Bring an appetite!

John L Sullivan
12537 Desert Sage Rd
Fort Thomas, AZ 85536
Cell is 206-399-2958



We are hoping to return to the Gig Harbor area next year and think about retirement, travel, golf, photography and all the good stuff awaiting us. I also hope we can make it to a RNPA convention one of these days. Would love to introduce Phil to all the wonderful RNPA people.

I loved my years as a RNPA member and very much miss the camaraderie and good fun of those events.

Health, Happiness and love to all my Northwest Airlines friends.

Dona Thompson

**MIKE
GARRISON**



Hi Dino & Executive Board Officers:

Kudos to all of you for your selfless and tireless efforts in keeping RNPA a viable organization. I so enjoy reading Contrails cover to cover and keeping up with a wonderful group of guys and gals.

The Flying West group seems larger each year. When I joined NWA in November 1967, my initial training was on the 727. It's gone. Next was the 707. It's gone. Then it was the DC-10 (a great pilot's airplane with the fleet's best routes). It's gone. Throughout all this there was the venerable and world recognized red tail. Richard couldn't even salvage that. It's gone. I think I know what's coming down the road.

To replace a couple of the departed, please find two gift memberships included with my renewal.

Mickey and I continue to reside in Apple Valley, Minnesota, which has turned out to be position "A" for life in the Twin cities. My good neighbor and friend, Paul Parish, even saw to it to locate the corporate headquarters for the NWFCU (now Wings Financial) here.

We have not traveled a lot in retirement. Five years in the Navy and 33 years at NWA filled that wanderlust. We do the RNPASummer Cruise and Christmas party annually.

Seven years ago I got my PHD, but you needn't call me doctor. It stands for professional hearse driver. A fellow Rotarian is a fourth generation owner of five mortuaries here and recruited me to host visitations and assist at funerals as the need arises: usually once or twice a week.

We continue to enjoy our year around cabin in Balsam Lake, Wisconsin, a comfortable 1- 1/2 hour's drive via any of three routes. Kelley, our youngest at 29, and born with Down Syndrome, still lives at home.

As things have turned out, she is a delight to have around and the least problematical of the five I have raised in this and a former life.

Numerous volunteer activities and daily walks with my girlfriend Suzy (7 year old black lab) fill the voids the "honey do" list allows. Life is good. Each day is now a bonus. I feel truly blessed.

Thanks again for all you do.

Warmest regards,

Mike Garrison

**STEVE
LILLYBLAD**



Hi RNPA Officers and gang,

Just sent my dues in along with an extra \$20 for my son Scott, former NWA and now Delta pilot based in MSP. He has flown with former NWA's pilots that are interested in RNPA so I gave him some applications to hand out (some even remember working with me—don't know if that is good or bad). Hope that will get a few more to join RNPA.

A big thank you to Vic and Ray for the fine obituary they did for my wife Janet in the August Contrails and to Dino and Gary for the extra copies. It was very much appreciated by me and my family.

Those of us who have lost a spouse know how difficult the adjustment can be, especially the first year. My heart goes out to all who have lost a spouse.

My time is spent as Treasurer of our lake association in Wisconsin, MSP Christmas Party commite—more fun than work—and spending time with grandsons (7&8) who love fishing, boating, canoeing and flying in Granddads float plane.

I fly about 25 to 30 hours a year in my amphib supercub. Does not sound like much time but I get more take off and landings in that time than I did in a year at NWA.

Wishing our members a happy and healthy New Year
Steve Lillyblad

**PETE
QUORTRUP**



Dear Dino,

Here's my dues for 2014. Thanks for the email reminder. First time for me ever to send a note with my dues, so I'll begin by thanking you for the work you do making RNPA such a great organization.

I flew with you only once out of New York on a long trip on the 400. Finally got to captain that wonderful airplane out of Detroit and retired at age 60 in 2012.

My wife and I have been living with her ALS since 2007 and she has been a great lady to take care of. Always happy and enjoying life. Anyway, since retirement that's been the focus of my activity so I haven't had time to miss flying!

We have started a 501(c)(3) organization to raise money to create a long-term ALS residence here in the Dallas area called The ALS Living Fund. Not everyone who has this condition can afford to do what my wife and I have done so we want to try to help. There are ALS residences already up and running near Boston and in New Orleans, so at least we don't have to reinvent the wheel.

Anyway, its nice to get Contrails and see what everyone is up to.

Thanks again, Dino, for all your work.

Pete Quortrup

**ALLEN
BENZING**



Dino,

Contrails is an outstanding effort by you, Gary/Gary and your contributors. So much great content along with plenty of photos to put names to faces.

As for me, it's been a bit over two years since setting the brakes on my last NWA/DAL flight. Haven't missed commuting between DFW and MSP. Keeping very busy with the CAF B-29/B-24 Squadron at nearby Addison airport. Winter is a time for maintenance, updating manuals and Ground School presentations—there's always lots to do. The touring season starts early, with FIFI heading to Florida in mid-February and for the summer the B-29 will be doing California and the Northwest. I'll do a bit of the Florida tour, but most of the summer will be on our B-24, Diamond Lil, as it hits some of the Airshows in the Northeast—Reading PA, Hamilton ON, Dayton PA then on to Oshkosh, Willow Run and others.

Our mission is to educate the newer generations about these WW II aircraft and the crews who flew them. Surviving crewmembers are now in the 90's, but we still have quite a few who come to see us and ride in our aircraft. It's certainly an honor to meet them.

Best to you all and Thank You for keeping the NWA torch burning!

Al Benzing

**DAVE
WOODEN**



Hi to All,

Life has been great for Lorna and I. We have been traveling most of the time, except during the summer at the lake in Minnesota, as well as Canada.

Thanks to everyone that makes Contrails so great. Even all my friends read it, and say how interesting the articles are.

For all of you out there, take care.

Blue side up,
Dave Wooden

RIP



Margaret A. "Peggy" Christensen, age 92, of Bloomington, Minnesota passed away peacefully with her family at her side on Dec. 30th at the Presbyterian Homes of Bloomington.

Born Dec. 21, 1921 in Granite Falls, MN to parents Knute and Anne Hegge. After her mother died, she was raised by Martin and Eline Rosvold in Cottonwood, MN. She graduated from Cottonwood High in 1939 and then went to Business School in Minneapolis. She worked as a secretary in Minneapolis for ten years.

She met Melvin Christensen and they were married on Sept. 3, 1949. They spent 25 winters in Florida and enjoyed golfing and square dancing. Peggy also enjoyed cooking, baking and being active in the Naomi Circle at her church. Peggy was a devoted wife and mother and a woman of quiet faithfulness.

She will be remembered for so many things, but most of all she will be remembered with love.



RIP



Dorothy Rowe

6/14/1928 ~ 3/09/2014

Loving wife of William Rowe for 66 years.



RIP



Jean Teasley, 81, of Gulfport, Florida, died peacefully on Saturday, February 8th, 2014 after a short stay in a hospice.

An avid traveller, she was born Imogene Francis Pederson to Leonel and Agnes Pederson in 1932. She grew up in Odin, Minnesota and graduated from nearby St. James High School. Her first big travel adventure was a train trip to Pensacola, Florida for a blind date with a U.S. Marine. In 1955 she married the man, Allen Teasley, and they lived in Cherry Point, North Carolina, Edina, Minnesota, and Gulfport, Florida.

In Minnesota she was a member of the Northwest Airlines Pilot's Wives Club, was President of the Minnesota Heart Association, served on the National Board of the American Heart Association and was an active member of Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church. She also earned a realtor's license and sold real estate. In Florida she taught silk painting classes at Suntan Art Center and was on their board of directors.

She saw the fjords of Norway, the black sand beaches of Hawaii, the Brandenburg Gate in Germany, and Red Square in Moscow. She saw koalas and kangaroos in Australia, Stonehenge in England, and the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Meanwhile she raised two children and ran a household.

She is survived by her husband Al Teasley, her two children, Tonia and Brian, and two grandchildren, Justin and Morgan.





And then we

Very little has been written in this space over the years about airplanes. Recently, my wife and I attended the Phoenix area annual RNPA picnic. Some conversation there prompted me to decide that it was time to write about our work and our passion.

In order to put what follows in some understandable perspective I must summarize my life's work: I arrived at Northwest as a 29-year old ex-Navy pilot with a type rating in a Lockheed 1011 (Electra). This, of course, qualified me to begin my airline pilot career as a 727 second officer even though the airline operated Electras at the time. Slowly, my career moved me into the right seat of a 727 and DC-10 and then the left seat of the 727, DC-10, and, because I flunked preference cards, the 747-400. I served heroically as a solo 400 captain for exactly two flights, one of which was a ferry operation.

At the aforementioned picnic I was greeted by a good friend who advised me and everyone who could hear that I was his "favorite second officer." He always does this. I have heard that "once a marine, always a marine." Apparently, that applies to second officers. I want to scream: "I flew twice as a 400 captain! It doesn't even have a second officer."

As mentioned, I began my airline career in the back seat of the 727. In those days (1968) the two front seats were occupied by 23 year-old kids who knew how to fly. I was bored. When Don Abbott asked me to become a second officer instructor I accepted. It would, at least sometimes, get me away from two guys who would spend three or four days talking about nothing but sex and taxes and didn't know anything about either. (Yeah, some of those gentlemen read this but they have grown up enough by now to know a good joke when they see one.)

Second officer instructors had certain skills not exhibited by everyone. They became really proficient at saying "what does this light mean?" Or, "what does this switch do?" They learned how to teach "flow patterns." They knew what a "ground ops" was and how to teach the walkaround to new pilots. They could open cargo doors and show students what belonged inside. They could change, and teach how to change, cabin reading lights and knew how many seats or windows to count to find the place where one pulled up the carpet to visually determine if the landing gear was down.

At the time there were two simulators on Northwest property, one for the 707 and one for the 727. They were helpful for some training requirements, but most training was accomplished in the aircraft, usually very early in the morning before the machine was put to use on the line.

And so it came to pass that I spent many hours standing in the back of a 727 cockpit working with my two students while a certain instructor captain worked up front with his two students. We became friends, had some very good times and thus I am remembered as his "favorite second officer."

There were no flight attendants on these early flights. The second officer instructor and his students were conscripted to fill this vacuum. Most mornings the airplane awaited our arrival behind the hangar. Our route to work took us first to the flight kitchen where a goody box of rolls and coffee awaited. The three of us would enter the hangar at the rear with our box and three flight bags, usually passing under the huge wing of a 707-320 being cared for by loving mechanics. Our aircraft would be outside the door.

At the rear of the hangar was a flat roofed room with walls, windows and a door. This was "The Foreman's Office." One morning, as we passed through the hangar, the



noise of an angry protester came floating down from the flat roof above the foreman's office, along with an old airplane seat and a great deal of dust.

"What the (deleted) is all this old stuff doing up here?" It was 4:30 a.m. and the deleted expletives, along with the dusty seat, were the work of our CEO. We instructors frequently found him cruising up and down the ramp complaining that someone had left that new thing called an APU running in a 727 all night. (The 707s had no APU.)

One of my jobs was to teach my students how to make coffee. One day, for some reason still unknown in my mind, I decided to have some fun. While showing two students the subtleties of making coffee, I pulled out a pen from my pocket and poked a small hole in the top of the bag.

"Betty Baker, our most senior stewardess (that was o.k. then) taught me that the hole was what made good coffee," I said. Unfortunately, I would never meet Betty Baker, but did find several people making "good coffee" six months later. A thrill.

The initial check ride for a new pilot involved his check as 727 second officer and, most of the time, his check for a flight engineer license. On these occasions, we second officers had to take center stage away from the pilots up front while the landing gear was extended manually by the student being checked. Most captain instructors did not like to interrupt their work for this exercise and would put it off as long as possible. Therefore, it was nearly always done near the end of the training flight.

By this time, I had already decided the fate of my student, which was almost always positive. One day, the aforementioned instructor captain and I decided to once again have a little fun. I had determined that my student had passed his check. We then flew some circles while he cranked the wheels down. Once they were down, the student was sent to the cabin to tear up the carpet and

look below to visually ascertain that the wheels were down and locked. On this day, while our new guy was moving aft, I turned on the hydraulic pumps and the captain raised the gear. The student returned with a wry look on his face. This was so much fun that we talked about it just the other day at the picnic!

My favorite exercise became one I would use after a student had done exceptionally well on his check ride. By the time we had finished, I would have all the call lights in the ceiling of the first class cabin lighted and I would announce that "I will sign your license when all those lights are out." Most guys accepted the challenge with a smile, knowing nothing about how to turn off the lights but willing to give it a go. Almost always, the last light to be extinguished was the one calling for help in a biffy. (The reset button was adjacent to the front door.) Often, this scavenger hunt was underway while my second student was operating at the second officer's panel. No one ever took the challenge seriously until one day when the FAA was on board.

The overhead call lights included a green colored one. It was never on. On this day, Don Mather (FAA) asked:

"What's the green one for?"

"It's not hooked up," I replied. "Must be for some other airline."

"No way," he said.

We flew on, making touch- and- goes for the pilots up front. My second student was at the panel. My first student was making progress getting the call lights extinguished. Then I looked aft. Don was up on a seat with a screwdriver opening the cover for the call lights! He was totally committed to determining what the green light "called." I commenced to laugh out loud. I told the pilots up front what was happening. There was laughter all around. Always wondered if the next touch-and-go was intentionally hard.

And then we . . . ✈





ASTABILIZED approach



Contributing Columnist James Baldwin



Life at Mach 3: Part One

At the time, I didn't know it yet, but a phone call from my friend Peter, one autumn morning, would lead to an understanding of what "tailgate" really meant to ardent San Diego Charger fans. Would I like to go to the game that morning was an easily answered question even though we were departing in less than an hour and I really didn't even know who the Charger's quarterback was. I didn't care I was using his girlfriend's—who suddenly couldn't go—ticket. Didn't matter, I was down with it for sure.

Tailgate parties at Qualcomm Stadium are probably no different than those at any of the other stadiums in the football world, but for the uninitiated, they can be quite impressive. The parking lot, appropriately sized for the 70,000 plus capacity of a typical Charger's football game, was filled with fervent fans blending the technology of our modern world with proven old world methodology.

Barbeques, grills and ice chests were skillfully mixed with motor homes, Honda generators, microwaves and other electrical conveniences to create gastronomic extravaganzas seen usually only on special occasions. I guess this was pretty special for most of the fans because the food certainly was. Party on Garth.

Our group, obviously experienced from past events, knew where to gather our group of twenty or so in the parking lot with a carefully chosen spot to allow quick access to stadium entry after enjoying the combined abuse of food and, ahem, alcohol. These guys had it together and knew how to do it.

One of the guys had flown into a nearby airport with his Cessna and of course that led to conversation noting that other fans arrived in corporate jets of several sizes and descriptions. I was beginning to understand this football thing was pretty serious.

Asking for an assignment which would allow me to be "one of the boys," I was tasked with unloading the food from the back of the SUV in which we had arrived. Other vehicles disgorged their contents, people and food spilling from them, tables unfolding as, thank goodness, the few women present issued organizational instructions. This might happen after all, I figured.

After unloading enough food to feed a regiment I was slightly surprised to encounter a pretty good sized turkey. No, not a real live one but one of those you usually find in the freezer just before Thanksgiving. Really, it was mostly frozen and we all know how long it takes on that special November morning to get the bird prepared and in the oven. At our house the red plunger on the side of the bird didn't usually "pop out" for several hours. What could these guys be thinking crossed my mind as I hefted the bird and looked up in confusion.

"Hey Jim," Peter yelled, "Get that bird over here." I glanced over to see "the boys" preparing a propane powered deep frying contraption big enough to, well, deep fry a turkey. This was getting to be pretty serious.

The assemblage of food and drink was quick and efficient. It wasn't long before we were all enjoying the well practiced tradition of pre-game food and conversation. I had met people whose names I already knew I wouldn't remember when I needed to. As I surveyed the tables of food and iced coolers full of every beverage, an elderly, trim, good looking man approached.

"I understand you're a pilot," he inquired.

"Yes sir, that's true," I replied, laughingly adding "I'm a Northwest Airlines guy flying for Delta."

"I'm Bob, glad to meet you," he said, extending his hand.

I'm usually pretty unimpressed with the level of understanding I encounter when a visitor comes to the cockpit before departure or when a casual conversation at a cocktail party reveals the lack of the most basic knowledge we all take for granted. That wasn't the case

here as Bob immediately inquired as to the weight and range of what I flew. Even those acquainted with airliners are usually amazed at the numbers that define the specifics of a 747 even though they've been around for 40 some years. Bob was no exception, at least on the surface. He wasn't asking about crew meals or layovers, he wanted to know more about how high and how fast.

About that time a loud roar of approval came from the guys surrounding the deep fryer—the turkey was done! We both laughed and headed in that direction in anticipation of a new culinary experience. Forty five minutes from nearly frozen to ready to eat! I lost touch of where we ended our conversation when Bob and I were separated in the confusion of food, drink and semi-raucous conversation of the enthusiastic football fans. It didn't take long before all that was left was the carcass of a pretty good sized bird. If you've never had deep fried turkey you need to add it to your list.

Game time approached and as we cleaned and picked up the remains of our pre game celebration, a younger gentleman came up and said "I saw you were talking to my father."

"Oh, that was your dad?" I acknowledged.

"He seemed like he knew something about airplanes," I added.

He smiled, and hesitated.

"Yeah, I guess so since he was the first guy to fly the SR-71 and flew every one of the Blackbirds ever built."

I stopped. I didn't know what to say. I'm sure it's happened to you too when you are introduced to an apparent fact so astounding it takes more than a few seconds to comprehend.

He stuck out his hand and, like his father, introduced himself.

"I'm Rob, and that was my dad, Robert Gilliland who worked for Kelly Johnson."

All I could say was a lame "You're kidding!"

He laughed and nodded "I've heard that a few times





too, but no, he really is.”

I was dumbfounded in the realization that I had spent ten or fifteen minutes talking about airliners and airline life to a guy who never let on to me of his experience and knowledge in an aircraft so unique. I was red face embarrassed and quickly found Bob in the crowd a few feet away.

“I will never speak to you again Mr. Gilliland, I am so embarrassed!”

He laughed, extending his hand once again. We shook hands and both laughed. I explained my background as an engineer and my interest in the SR-71, having studied it and its capabilities. But like most of the public, I was unaware of what it was really all about. To talk to the guy who actually flew what was essentially the final iteration of a long detailed development program in the real world of atmospheric flight was, for me, an honor I hoped would be educational.

Knowing the story and lengthy history of how the SR-71 was conceived and evolved to eventually become the world’s fastest airplane was, I knew, a complicated tale. The fact that it required new methods of fabrication, the development and use of new materials and state of the art advances in technology was the result of a need for tools the intelligence community required to wage a war that Barnard Baruch, in 1947, termed the “Cold War.” It for sure wasn’t about a bunch of aeronautical hot-rodders mimicking their automotive brethren co-located in Southern California looking for new records although that regional mentality and practiced skill set would certainly come in handy and be used by those who built it.

Arguably, that need began as far back as the near end of World War Two. It was only months after the end of WWII hostilities that Joseph Stalin announced capital-

ism and colonialism would make future wars inevitable and Soviet violations of previous agreements laid bare their intentions. The post war administration of Truman, followed by Eisenhower’s, realized and documented the need for surveillance of Russian military advances as they built facilities and infrastructure in their attempt to become a major influence in the world battle for governmental method and sociological choice. In George Kennan’s words in the famous “Long Telegram” to the State Department in 1946: “USSR still lives in antagonistic ‘capitalist encirclement’ with which in the long run there can be no permanent peaceful coexistence.” The battle was defined once more.

The late 1940s and early 1950s were as formative and defining as any in history, and the battle for and choice of communism versus capitalism and free will swept around the globe. The United States supported Europe with the Marshall Plan and the Berlin airlift, civil wars raged in the Philippines, Greece, Indo China, Czechoslovakia and Romania, down the peninsula of then Malaya and for a million minds in China. The U.S. understood where the influence emanated and realized accomplishing airborne surveillance over a country as large as Russia was not an easy challenge.

The revelation during a May Day Red Square parade, in early 1954, of a new Soviet bomber called the “Hammer” followed by the successful detonation of a Soviet hydrogen based nuclear weapon panicked the U.S. intelligence community. It is now easy to understand why the then still infantile CIA requested proposals for a high altitude reconnaissance aircraft. Several firms submitted proposals or simply began design work on prototype versions of existing aircraft, but it was Kelly Johnson, the famous aeronautical head of Lockheed’s equally famous “Skunk Works,” who was chosen to supply an advanced airborne surveillance vehicle. It took only eight months for Lockheed to complete the first U2 and test fly it at Groom Lake, or as it is commonly known now, Area 51.

The manufacturing facility for follow-on aircraft was opened in a suburb of Bakersfield, California and in one year almost to the day airplanes were being delivered. CIA pilot Francis Gary Powers began ground school in May of 1956, and two months later the first operational mission was flown over Poland and East Germany by Carl Overstreet. The U2 was the tool the U.S. needed and Kelly Johnson had proven once again Lockheed Aircraft’s design and execution performance of Lockheed’s ADP or Advanced Development Projects, the top secret division.

At the turn of the decade, the challenges to the world order in the 1960s remained unabated: U.S. reconnaissance airplanes like the C130 were shot down while skirting the edge of Soviet airspace, Fidel Castro became

the leader of Cuba after a revolution, France became a nuclear power and humans began orbiting in space. The U2 was now used in the over-flight monitoring of several nations but was past its originally predicted lifetime of usefulness of just two years. Engineers at the Skunk Works knew surface to air and air to air missiles would soon put it in danger of being intercepted and shot down. Their fears were soon realized as early as May, 1960 when Gary Powers was shot down over Sverdlovsk by a Russian SAM.

1960 was also the year Bob Gilliland joined Lockheed Aircraft as a civilian test pilot after graduating from Annapolis with an engineering degree and a career in the U.S. Air Force and Tennessee National Guard. Bob had been privileged to fly nearly everything in the U.S. Air Force inventory during his assignment as a fighter test pilot at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. During his time at Ramstein AFB in Germany, Bob had met and worked with Louis Schalk and they had become friends. Schalk would later become the first man to fly the Lockheed A12, first in the long string of designs leading to the SR-71.

As a Lockheed test pilot, Bob flew every version of the then new F104 Starfighter. As his experience grew, he was instrumental in instructing other nation’s pilots in the airplane. Germany, Italy, Canada, Japan and Taiwan all had operational squadrons that used the Starfighter and Italy’s Fiat-Aeritalia produced all weather

versions for their air force under license from Lockheed. Bob flew the first F104S produced by them and continued his work with pilots from all nations flying the Lockheed product.

It’s easy to realize how career paths in aviation cross so readily, and it was no exception when Lou Schalk introduced Bob to Kelly Johnson. After acknowledging his extensive work with the F104, Johnson asked Gilliland if he’d like to join his organization. Bob readily agreed, knowing of its ultra secret nature and leading edge pursuit of aeronautical performance.

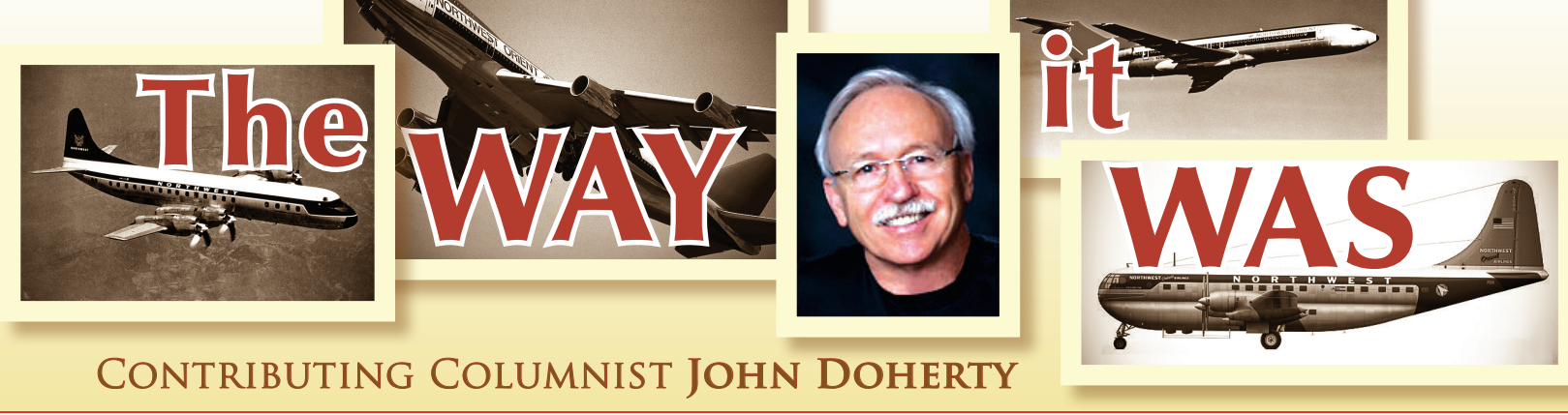
One day, Kelly asked Bob if he’d like to fly something fast. Quizzically, Bob replied, “But I already fly something fast.”

Johnson took him on a little walk. After entering a door he had never been through, Kelly paused and pointed:

“That,” Kelly said, “is something fast.”

The nearly completed Blackbird loomed large in the assembly bay, its dimension distorted by perspective as they observed it from their elevated view. It was one of those moments of stark realization: there was something going on here he wanted to be a part of. Well, as we will find, Bob Gilliland would be part of this airplane and its development. The nation needed more tools of surveillance to moderate world order and the Blackbird was going to be one of those tools. Bob Gilliland and the SR-71 Blackbird were beginning





CONTRIBUTING COLUMNIST JOHN DOHERTY



FUNNY STUFF

We have all lived the old saw “Flying is 98% boredom and 2% stark terror.” The boredom was mostly relieved with talk—bitching about the contract, exaggerated tales of seduction, and most commonly, funny stuff. So herewith a sampling.

Because of seniority and pilot base idiosyncrasies many of us spent thousands of hours flying the panel—in my case 8,800. After the initial exhilaration of becoming an airline pilot, most soon grew tired of the job—we were at the bottom of the totem pole (“loneliest man in the world is a second officer doing a parking check”), bottom of the pay scale, and the work was far less demanding than many of us had experienced prior to the airline. All leading to some salty attitudes amongst the SOs—or “wrenches” as we derogatorily referred to ourselves. (One such wrench referred to himself as “scribe on the DC10.”)

The saltiness lead to some clever amusement—and it needed to be clever since we were at the bottom of the food chain, and outright disrespect to the captain was never on the agenda.

We used to fill out a “cruise numbers” form—based on gross weight, altitude, temperature. Often the total time on the aircraft between all three pilots was 10,000+ hours and everyone pretty much new the numbers by heart. Some captains “by the book” wanted the slip of paper on the throttle quadrant. One such inquired of his SO, “Could you give me some cruise numbers?”

To which the SO (feet comfortably up on the engineer panel table) replied “Why don’t you just use the gouge?”

“Gouge? What gouge?” from the captain.

The SO pulling himself from his comfortable reverie

turned and pointed to the airspeed indicator. “When this goes down, push up on these (pointing to the thrust levers.) When it goes up (pointing again to the airspeed) pull back on these.” End of discussion.

One captain told me that one of my SO contemporaries whenever asked for something would just say, “We don’t do that any more.”

In one case I was doing a wind-whipped 30 below en route walkaround somewhere in North Dakota—my trip around the aircraft was rapid. On return to the cockpit the captain challenged me as to whether I had actually done a walkaround. “You couldn’t have done a walkaround in the time you were gone.” He was unimpressed with my protestations of innocence. Finally I said to him, “You could go out and follow my footsteps around the plane.”

After a moment’s thought he replied, “Oh never mind.”

There were characters aplenty on the line—and they provided grist for the retelling of funny stuff.

In those days the company had the practice of using pilots who had temporarily lost their physicals as simulator instructors. In one case a pilot of questionable mental stability had been sent to Mayo for 30 days of observation. He called training during his stay there with this reported conversation:

“Hello Pat, this is (let’s call him Joe) and they have me down at Mayo to see if I’m crazy, and I was wondering if I could be an instructor.”

I was flying SO with that same highly unique pilot in the right seat. This was before we started turning on landing lights below 10,000’ as a matter of procedure—often as a folk-wisdom thing we would turn on the

lights when other traffic was called by ATC. In this case it was just dusk and ATC had called traffic. Joe reached up and put two fingers, one on each runway turnoff light, and asked the captain if he could turn them on.

The captain who was pretty much the opposite personality from Joe and who had had about as much of Joe as he could take at this point emphatically declared “No!” Joe in amazement asked, “Why?” The captain delivered a 5 minute diatribe about target fixation, standard procedures, cockpit etiquette. Joe sat looking at the captain in open-mouthed disbelief throughout, fingers still on the runway turnoff switches.

At the conclusion of the lecture, Joe sat in silence for a few beats, carefully removed a finger from the left turnoff light leaving his forefinger on the right turnoff switch and asked, “OK if I turn on the one on my side?”

I was flying with a captain who was somewhat of a character in his own right—our SO was one of the “Hochbrunn Clones,” a group of pilots hired during the Hochbrunn regime supposedly selected for their mal-leability. This SO was on probation and gave off an aura of constant fear for his job, well out of his comfort zone because of the free-wheeling style of the captain we were with, torn between wanting to do things by the book and knowing that this same captain was going to be writing his probationary report.

On one of our taxi-outs the SO made the classic error of shutting down the APU while it was still supplying essential power. Most of the captain’s panel shut down, gyro tumbling. The captain threw his arms into the air, pulled his feet off the floor holding them suspended and screamed, “Nobody touch anything metal!” I followed his lead as the poor SO wondered what had happened and what he should do.

Speaking of “Hochbrunn Clones,” the genesis of this particular group of pilots started with our numerous pilot strikes and the (mostly) loyal-to-each-other group of pilots we were throughout the strikes. Bill Hochbrunn who was VP of flight operations for a period had decided to hire pilots who were less inclined to strike—or at least that was the idea.

It was common in cockpit conversations to question pilots thus hired in an effort to determine who could be trusted and who couldn’t. One such “clone” reported that during his interview Hochbrunn had asked him what he thought of unions, and his reply was something like this:

“Captain Hochbrunn, I am probably out of line saying this, but I really believe that most of the problems we are experiencing in our society are the direct result of misguided unions.” With some satisfaction, this interviewee concluded from the look on Hochbrunn’s face that he had just been hired.

As it turned out, pilots are pilots, you don’t have to be a rocket scientist to know which side of the bread the butter is on, and the “clones,” once off probation, became accepted members of our pilot community—and many later took on significant ALPA duties as their careers progressed.

Some pilots had a “trademark” style of humor making them recognizable just by their witticisms. Do you recognize who would have said this when flying into uncontrolled mountain stations? “Center, Northwest umpety-ump unable to maintain instrument conditions, cancel our IFR.”

And: back in the day the general population held to the belief that having lots of math was necessary to be a pilot. I heard the same pilot tell a wide-eyed 20 something at Eddie Websters who had opined that he must know a lot of math being a pilot, “Yep, yep, you gotta have a lot of math—you gotta be able to recite the logarithm table backwards on short final.”

Old-timers had their own brand of humor, mostly reserved for new guys such as myself. When I started flying to Asia I asked one of the old-timers whether he set his watch for each time zone. His reply: “My hat and my ass may be anywhere, but my heart and my watch are in Seattle.” (I took him at his word and from then on have always had my watch set to Seattle time – including my 15 year exile to Minnesota.)

Some of the old captains I flew with on the 727 were hiding out—just hoping to get to retirement without busting out, having never quite figured out how to fly airplanes without straight wings and props. One such pranged it in one day, probably touching down nose-wheel first. The plane lurched back into the air, and while still airborne, he snatched the speedbrake out, hitting so hard we bottomed out the oleos.

From there he ripped it into full reverse and mashed the brakes. We came to a shuddering stop in a silent cockpit. He turned to me, smiled and said, “They’ll never know we are on.”

As the schedule gods would have it, I flew with this guy often. For a long time I thought he was stupid, but over time I learned his apparent stupidity was actually drollness and that I had been had.

Having come to this awareness I decided to invite him to a “crew debrief,” having not bothered previously. On getting the invitation, he gave me an assessing gaze and asked, “Do you think there will be any Ovaltine?”

I asked one of the old-timers who was close to retirement what he was going to do after he retired. “I’m going to Miami, sit on my sailboat, drink rum and stay half numb until I die.”

Yep, funny stuff, and it only hurt when we didn’t laugh. ✈

MY THREE HISTORIC PILOTS

I have concluded that one's achievements and most interesting memories are a result solely of unplanned coincidences.

THE 1943 MOVIE STAR

One day in the summer of 1953, I wearied of working several part or full time jobs in pursuit of an engineering degree. I envied those veterans returning from Korea with the G.I Bill in their wallets. Logic decreed that I follow in a brother's steps, a former Army Air Corps/Force pilot, but the nearest pilot testing to my Cleveland, Ohio home was in Illinois. I applied for three days leave from my current summer employer at the Taylor Elevator Company.

The son, Robert Taylor, heard about my request and asked me if I had considered flying for the Navy. It was his Reserve weekend; he invited me down to the Akron NAS and would see if he could get me a ride or two. Well, I did, he did, and in several WWII planes. In July I found myself standing by an American flag with my hand up repeating some stuff. They lost my orders; I was almost drafted, but finally reported to Pensacola in December of 1953. That simple three month mistake altered the rest of my life, from bridge building to Boeings and Bonnie.

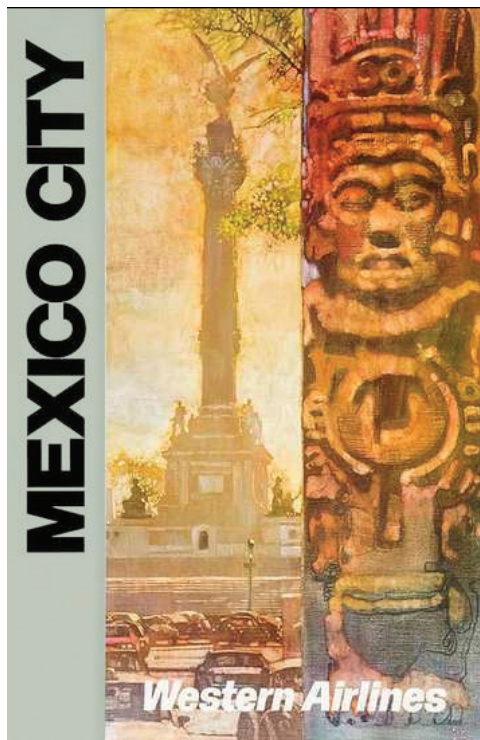
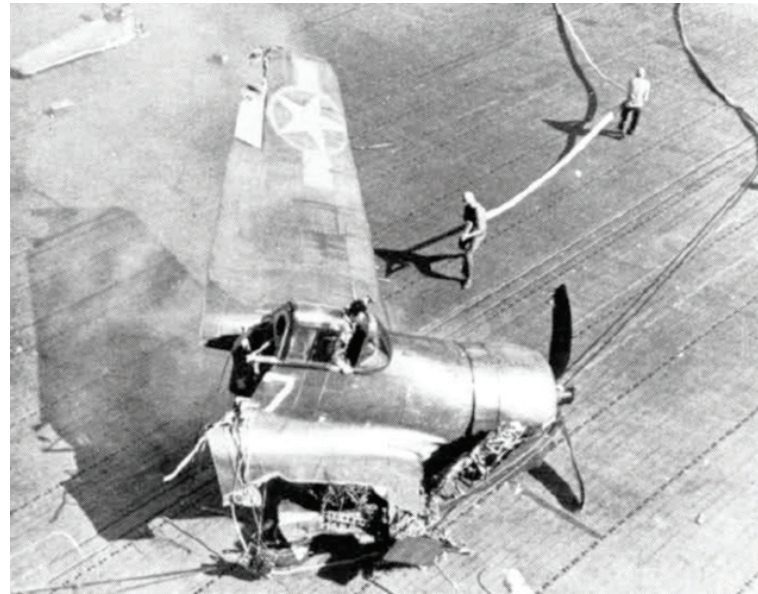
When I was finally on my way, Bob Taylor informed me he was a movie star, in the Navy. During WWII he was involved in a large air battle in the South Pacific, probably what became known as the Mariana Turkey Shoot.

"Upon returning to the ship my F6F Hellcat was so shot full of holes that on landing it came apart and swerved towards the Island but unfortunately a sailor was killed. Most squadrons have reels upon reels of landings and you will see me!"

"What pilot hasn't seen that crash landing a dozen times?"

SECOND HERO

It was early in the labor battles of 1961. As a result of an agreement between Western and Northwest Airlines, a few dozen furloughed NWA pilots are hired to help out in Southern California. I was with Western on a layover in Mexico City, back when Mexico was Mexico. I tagged along with the other pilots to a restaurant owned and operated by an ancient Italian WWI pilot. Cracked wooden props displayed on the wall... that sort of place. We were barely seated when the owner came over and asked: "Would you mind if someone joins you? He's a retired Navy pilot who lives in a nearby American enclave of retired people and visits the city for medical reasons. He spotted your group of pilots and wants to join you." He did, and he was a very, very old but interesting man. I have no recollection on how the conversation progressed onto Lindberg, but we perked up when he mentioned, "We were only a few weeks behind Lindy but had to swim ashore."



By Ron Murdock

He was referring to 1927 and Admiral Byrd's four man crew that was unable to land in Paris because France was completely covered with fog. I recorded his name, Tony Noville, and researched it as soon and as best as I could. There are some conflicts in the history books between Novelle and Noville in that time period, but either one was definitely one of aviation's originals.

A REAL HERO

Wes Shierman's Celebration of Life, held at the Boeing Museum of Flight, was a standing-room-only event. Hundreds jammed into the room: a mixture of family members, friends and pilots from every venue, as well as many former prisoners-of-war. A college roommate of Wes and former TV newsman, Bill Brubaker, served as MC. Long-time friends and family spoke at length. One Vietnam prison mate spoke in depth of those many years in prison and the persistent physical and mental tortures. He credited Wes for saving his life and others by setting an example of tough resilience. Marty Foy spoke of their long friendship and the hours Wes devoted to the "Blackjack Squadron." The Celebration ended with one very professional Blackjack-six-plane flyby followed by a second pass ending in the always spine-tingling "Missing Man" maneuver.

Please take one minute to recall the award winning film, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which takes place in a 1940-'50s small southern town. It starred Gregory Peck, as attorney Atticus Finch, nine year old Mary Badham as his daughter, "Scout," and others including a young Robert Duval. One of the most poignant scenes ever filmed occurs after lawyer Finch has lost the defense for a client accused of a sexual assault upon an obviously lying young white girl. The client, a young black boy, also obviously is not guilty, but it's still the Old South. In



Someone was punching me, but I was reluctant to take my eyes from the people below us, and from the image of Atticus's lonely walk down the aisle.

"Miss Jean Louise?"

I looked around. They were all standing. All around us and on the balcony on the opposite wall, the negroes were getting to their feet. Reverend Syke's voice was as distant as Judge Taylor's:

"Miss Jean Louise, stand up. Your father's passin'."

the emptied courtroom, Finch gathers his papers and slowly walks up an aisle that passes under the balcony. The balcony is crowded with all black observers and daughter Scout; they rise to their feet. Scout is told to stand by an elderly black gentleman. She asks, "Why?" He replies, "Your father is passing."

I never knew Wes all that well. The seniority system and what it was in those 1950-'60s years of intense employment interruptions precluded working together. I've had the pleasure of seeing him once in his home and many times around big and small airports.

Each time, I was unable to shed the urge to rise to my feet because Wes Schierman was passing. ✈

Marina Jack's Sarasota



SW FL SPRING LUNCHEON



Dave Good & Jackie



Carol Ann Turner, Lynda Long



Bill & Katie Lund



Judy & Bill Rataczak



Bob & Judy Chandler



Connie Thompson & Charles Moore



HOSTS: Karen & Dino Oliva



Hans Waldenstrom



Claire & John Lackey



Don & Edith Schrope, Mary McKeown



K. C. & Martha Kohlbrand



Patricia Glowacki & Paul Baertsch



Wendy Vinsant, Dale Nadon



Ellen & Ned Stephens



Marilyn & Howie Leland



Barbara & Bob Vega



Bill Lund, Bob Vega



Bruce & Susan Burkhard



Bill Rataczak, Dino Oliva



Verna Finneseth, Connie Thompson



Wayne & Rita Ward with granddaughters Tori & Kim



Stevie Gilbert & Steve Towle



Don & Dee Bergman



Hal Hockett, Bill Rataczak, Ray Alexander, Bob Vega, Bob Chandler



Bill Rataczak & Tim Walker



Howie & Nancy Schwend



Barbara Pauls, Jack Rattigan, Mary McKeown



Lorraine & Tony LiCalsi



Susan Scarvie, Jane Barr



Courtney & Gary Webb



Don & Evy Hunt



Ty Beason, Joe Fouraker



Teresa & Fred Field



Pete & Wendy Vinsant



Hal Hockett, Kathy Palmen



Ray & Kittie Alexander



Warren & Marilyn Cheatham, Dan Stack



Claudia & Arlen Anderson



Al Teasley, Nancy & Jim Bestul



Dave & Jane Sanderson



Bob & Kathryn Clapp



George Handel, Cortney Webb



Howie Leland, George Handel, Bill Rataczak



Carol Hardy & John Scholl



Jayne & Ken Finney



Keith & Ginny Sterling



Glenn & Ursula Houghton



Gary Young, Gary Webb



Denny Olden, Jayne Finney



Bill & Nancy Waterbury



Kathy Palmen



Phil & Eileen Hallin, George Handel



Jack Rattigan, Martha & K. C. Kohlbrand, Don & Edith Schrope



Eloise & Claude Benedict



Howie Leland, Connie Thompson, Bill Rataczak



John Scholl



George & Bobbi Lachinski



Roger & Julie Moberg



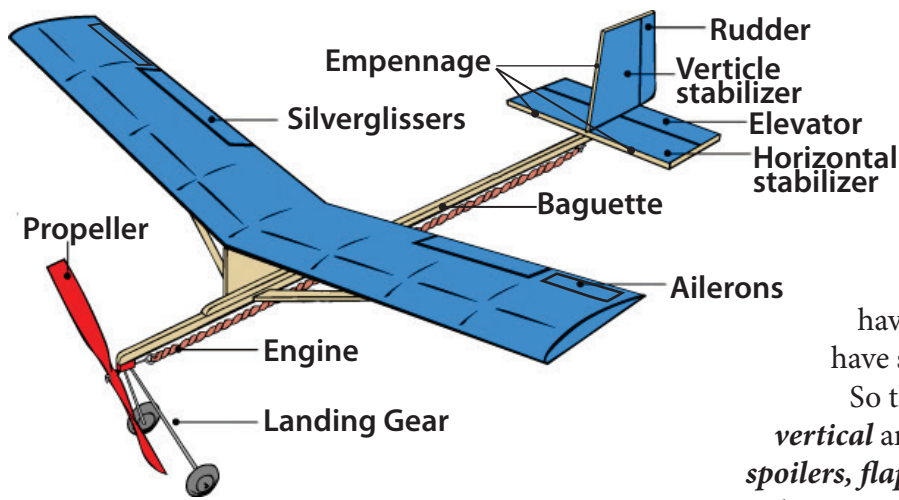
Keith Maxwell, Hugh Sims



PHOTOGRAPHY BY Bill Horne



Lorraine Licalsi and the photographer



WHO'S IN CHARGE OF NAMING THESE THINGS?

By Gary Ferguson

It occurred to me recently during a 3 a.m. session with my sleepless muses that there is considerable incongruity in naming parts of airplanes.

Apparently the French got a head start in this naming business and came up with some rather elegant ones, to our ears anyway: *ailerons*, for example. That has a nice ring to it and we feel quite smug that no other machine has anything of its equal. Most pilots, myself included, have probably been using that name most of our lives without giving it any thought. The translation is “little wings.” Who knew?

Equally sophisticated are *fuselage* and *empennage*. We all learned these names early on, of course, but I for one was too busy learning how to fly the thing to care about the origin of the name. As we might have expected, these names had definite meaning: *fuselage* was derived from the French from *fuseler* ‘shape into a spindle,’ and *fuseau* ‘spindle.’ But I think *empennage* takes the honors for the most meaningful French nomenclature to describe the directional surfaces of an airplane: from *empenner* ‘to feather an arrow,’ and earlier from the Latin *penna* ‘a feather.’ None of the words in question existed until the early 20th century and the advent of flying machines.

We are asked to believe that there was an early push to name the horizontal stabilizer a *canard*. It’s not quite clear what relationship there is between that control surface and a duck. (That term would live to resurface many years later as the small winglets well forward of the wings, the reasoning still unclear.)

At this point the English-speaking airplane designers must have had their fill of the French monopolizing the naming concession.

“We’ve had enough,” they might have said. “From now on our names will have some descriptive meaning!”

So they came up with *stabilizer*, both *vertical* and *horizontal*, *elevators*, *rudder*, *spoilers*, *flaps* and *slats*, to name a few.

Flaps? Really? What kind of aviation meaning does “flaps” connote? Nothing. Any number of other things have flaps, including long johns. Inelegant. The same can be said for slats—better used for fences.

There are flaps that are elegant in their design and function, though: Compound Fowler Flaps, for example. But they’re still labeled plain old flaps. If we wanted to elevate them to the status and prestige of the more mellifluous names we might want to start calling all of them *silverglissers*, maybe, from the French *soulever* for lift and *glisser* for drag. “Silverglissers 15, please.” Nice, huh? Four syllables for the price of one. Just rolls off your tongue.

We should probably leave *spoilers* alone. French for that is *becquets*, which would surely get corrupted to *baguettes*, and would make no sense at all. Come to think of it, *baguette* may have been a better choice for that spindly sounding *fuselage*.

Don’t think for a second that I’m going to ignore *cockpit*. Here’s what one dictionary has to say:

ORIGIN late 16th cent. From *cock* + *pit*. In the early 18th cent. the term was in nautical use, denoting an area in the aft lower deck of a man-of-war where the wounded were taken, later coming to mean ‘the “pit” or well in a sailing yacht from which it was steered’; hence the place housing the controls of other vehicles.

I’m not convinced, but then I wasn’t there when they named it. So if we are to buy that then the definition could mean *helm*, the French for which is *la barre*. Without question most pilots, given a choice, would have chosen “the bar” over any other contenders.

By now, though, it too would have been rechristened *flight deck* in today’s boringly correct world. *Blagues éculées* (corny jokes) notwithstanding, most of us will agree that it’s still and always a *cockpit*. French physicist Henri Pitot may well have had the last word, though. *Pitot tube* will live on long after there is no requirement for a cockpit. ✈



Going Back to 3920 Sunnyside Road, Edina

By Vic Britt

Thomas Wolfe said, “You can’t go home again,” and though often true it does not always hold. Recently while driving east on 66th Street in Richfield toward Southdale, some locations felt as though I had fallen into an “Alice in Wonderland” rabbit hole. Nothing was familiar. Had I not known where I was, I would have thought I was lost in a city I had never visited.

As I worked my way north on France Avenue past 50th Street in Edina, the closer I got to Sunnyside Road the more familiar the surroundings became. On the east side of France, Andy’s “Great Wall Restaurant” still stands, and on Sunnyside a line was forming for lunch at the Convention Grill. At 3920 Sunnyside the sign reads “Morningside Family

Physicians,” and nothing seems changed.

Walking in the front door is like going back in time to a familiar place where you are welcome and among friends, and where “everybody knows your name.” The only change in the waiting room in twenty years was the magazines. I’m sure the chairs are the same; you can’t get chairs like that anymore. The little “rabbit warren” room with the cutout where you check in with the receptionist has pleasant newer occupants; Karla Kapaun and Cheryl Bristol joined the “family” practice in recent years and share the receptionist duties.

Karla is Helen Hayes’ daughter and has been coming to the office literally since before she was born. Helen’s kids frequently came to the office and



Dr. Franklin Sidell

hung out in the kid's room reading books when babysitters were not available, and sometimes they brought a book out and sought a willing pilot to read to them. They still remember Mr. (Terry) Confer's willingness to read to them.

The more senior pilots may remember another office location, and that in the mid '60s and early '70s Dr. Franklin Sidell's daughters Tina and Suzy were members of the staff. Tina was on the staff first and "retired" when she got married. Suzy joined the staff as a registered nurse and left to become a certified registered nurse anesthetist, and presently is Chief CRNA at a hospital in Ft. Dodge, Iowa.

Sue Hennessy worked in the office in the early '70s as office staff before leaving to study nursing at Dr. Sidell's suggestion. He said she should get her LPN degree and three years experience in a hospital, and return to the clinic. While Sue was absent from the office Helen joined the staff as a LPN in 1976. After Sue gained experience as a nurse at Methodist Hospital, Dr. Sidell saw her on hospital "rounds" one day and asked her to return to the clinic. That was in 1980, and there have been few changes since. Sue primarily handles the nursing and lab work. Helen

works as a nurse a couple days a week, and handles the insurance and bookkeeping from an office in the basement.

Sue and Helen both said that working in the clinic has always had a feel or sense of family. Sue said her relationship with Dr. Sidell was more as a mentor, while Helen's relationship with Dr. Sidell was more personal than hers. Helen said she thought the world of Dr. Sidell and loved him like a dad. When he was away from the office and his home, probably camping out in his RV at Disney World, Helen kept her eyes on the home and on his beloved orchids. Helen said it took quite a while to water the orchids as he had hundreds, and some were hung high so she often had water running down her arm.

For a number of years Dr. Sidell was President of the Orchid Society of Minnesota, the third largest orchid society in the country, and was known throughout Minnesota for his extensive Orchid collection. Sue said she learned from Dr. Sidell that you always had to have a plan for the future. He believed, "If you do not have a plan for the future, you do not have a future." Sue also learned time management from him. She said Dr. Sidell always had a plan for the day, week, month and year, and he kept to the plan.

One of Sue's duties was keeping close tabs on the Dow Jones Average. Twice each day, at 11:00 AM and 2:00PM CST, Sue knew that the doctor's first words when he came out of an examining room would be, "What's the Dow?" She always had it ready for him, and remembers that the Dow was at 300 when she started at the clinic.

Dr. Phillip Sidell has vivid memories of his dad's first cell phone, the kind with the briefcase attached. He said the family would be camping in the wild, and his dad would drive to the top of the mountain to get cell service to check the Dow!

Sue and Helen agreed that Dr. Sidell had an amazing memory, and he never forgot anything. He was especially good with names and nicknames, and could describe every patient from memory. And Sue has a special talent for remembering also—for birth dates. Given a pilot's name, she can usually give their birth date almost before you finish their name.

Helen and Sue both felt that Dr. Sidell was the best diagnostician they have known. He would listen to his patient's description of the problem, examine them, make a diagnosis, and if necessary send them to a specialist for confirmation. And they said that Dr. Sidell was seldom wrong in his diagnosis. He was also an early Apple computer enthusiast, and one of the first physicians in the Twin Cities to bring a



"WALL OF FAME"

computer into the office. Sue had trouble learning how to operate the mouse, and Dr. Sidell claimed she was “the worst mouse driver” he had ever seen.

Sue and Helen related several humorous events that happened over the years. One pilot patient was a chiropractor and a mortician, and he would drive from Duluth in his hearse and park it in front of the clinic. Dr. Sidell finally asked that he park the hearse in back, as he felt it was bad for business. Another patient had a farm with a landing strip on it, and once when he and his wife were too sick to travel to the office Dr. Sidell flew to the farm and made a fly-in house call.

Dr. Sidell and Dr. Charles Kelly shared duties as the Minnesota North Stars hockey team’s in-house physicians. At a North Stars get together, Helen said many of the player’s expressed how highly the players held him in regard. They always felt that Dr. Sidell really cared about them as individuals. Henry Boucha and Tom Reid left sentiments in the guest book expressing their sympathies and said: “Dr. Sidell was a terrific ambassador for the North Stars, and I know he thoroughly enjoyed the game of hockey and his time spent with the players. It was an honor to sign the ‘Wall of Fame’ located in his office.” Today the “Wall of Fame” stands unchanged, and the wall opposite holds Dr. Franklin Sidell’s degrees, honorariums and pictures.

Friends of Dr. Sidell and his children left their thoughts and sentiments in the online guest book: “Like a grandfather, always so kind, always a smile on his face and nice things to say... I have great memories of a man who loved life and showed our family how to embrace living everyday, what an example for our kids! A steadying beacon, a positive and caring influence in my life... This generous man, my best friend’s father, touched my young life, altered and guided it in ways that continue to influence my adult decisions... My dad passed, but as a young child I thought, “Do Mom and Dad come here to see a doctor or visit with a dear friend?” That’s the type of man Dr. Franklin was... A trusted doctor and friend to our family for over 47 years. His smile and the twinkle in his eye will be greatly missed.”

Dr. Sidell loved to talk about aviation, and especially what was happening at NWA. Mergers and rumors of mergers with Northeast, National, Republic, Midwest or Delta, and anything related to the airline business. He saw senior and junior line pilots, management pilots, and ALPA “Reps” from each of the pilot bases almost daily. Dr. Franklin Sidell had a better handle on the “pulse” at Northwest Airlines than all of the management pilots, ALPA “Reps”,

and the “suits” on the top floor of the green G.O. at Wold-Chamberlin Field—put together!

Pilots who were patients and friends of Dr. Sidell left their thoughts and sentiments in the online Guest Book: “We have all lost a light in our lives...he was what a family physician should be... he made me feel like I was the only patient he ever had...a real advocate for “his” pilots...an excellent diagnostician...kind words of wisdom...he gave down to earth advice that healed the body and heart...a caring, gentle, professional manner...a friend and father figure...an honor knowing the good doctor...he was more than a friend... He was open, friendly, competent and professional, and I almost looked forward to my semi-annual visits to Morningside.”

Morningside Family Physicians is the only Private Family Medical Practice left in the Twin Cities. After fifty years of solo medical practice, Dr. Franklin Sidell, MD asked his son Dr. Philip Sidell, MD to join him in the 1990s. Dr. Philip Sidell now leads the Family Medicine and Aviation Medical Examiner practice into its seventh decade of service. He said, “People often asked if it was OK joining and working with my pop, and it is this kind of sentiment that makes me proud to say that it was great! It would have been hard if he was a lousy physician or poor mentor, but he was neither.

In the June, 2011 *Minnesota Medicine* Suzy Frisch wrote an article titled “Pilot Practices,” from which I quote here:

“In those years since the 1950s, aviators from all fifty states and eight foreign nationalities have come to 3920 Sunnyside Road for their FAA Aviation Medical Certificates. Today Dr. Philip Sidell’s aviation medical practice draws aviators from as far away as Australia and Hawaii, and ranks in the top three percent nationwide in terms of the number of annual flight physicals. He does about 2,000 flight physicals a year, and sees many of the same pilots regularly. Though he is not the primary physician of all the pilots he sees, he uses their visits as an opportunity to talk with them about their overall health. ‘By a pilot’s perception, we can be scary because we hold the key to their career,’ he says of the role of AMEs. ‘But if you have a problem, you need someone who will help you rectify the problem. If you have an issue, we work through it.’”


In the same vein, Dr. Franklin Sidell said to his pilots: “First we practice good medicine, then we will worry about getting you back in the cockpit.”

And that has not changed at Morningside Family Physicians. ✪


SACRAMENTO

**STRONGHOLD
OF
PIONEER
MEMORIES**
SUTTER'S FORT
MUSEUM COLLECTION

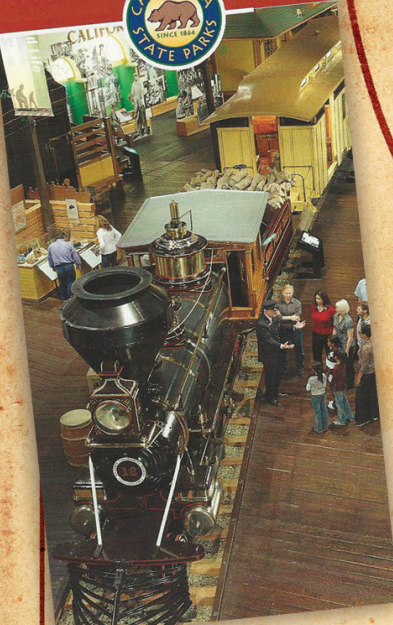

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SACRAMENTO

CAPTAIN STORM

WHAT'S THAT??! THE GOVERNMENT OF MIRADOR HAS SEIZED YOUR SHIP?

—AND EVERY MAN ABOARD! MY MATE—BUCK WHITE, HERE—AND I ESCAPED.

CAPTAIN STORM AND BUCK HAVE REACHED THE U.S. MARINE BASE AT PARABOA—

WE'LL ACT IMMEDIATELY OF COURSE— BUT WE WON'T USE FORCE UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.

USE TACTIC IF YOU THINK BEST—

TACT, HECK! WE OUGHTA BOMB TH' PRESIDENTIAL PALACE!!

SERGEANT, HAVE THE WIRELESS OPERATOR REPORT TO ME. I'M SENDING A MESSAGE TO GENERAL LOPEZ!

THE SITUATION HARDLY WARRANTS THAT, MR. WHITE—

FIVE MINUTES LATER

COME ON, BUCK—COLONEL ROCKWOOD'S SENDING PLANES TO PUERTA GRANDE, TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS. WE'RE GOING ALONG!

CAP'N—WHEN YOU TOLD HIM WHAT HAPPENED, WHY DIDN'T YOU MENTION ROSITA HAYES—I MEAN LOPEZ? SHE STARTED IT ALL, AN'—

BUCK! JUST FORGET ABOUT THAT! SHE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.

HUH?? OH!—YEAH, I THINK I UNDERSTAND—!

YOU KNOW, LEATHERNECK, I'M GETTING PRETTY TIRED OF AIR. ANES, I'LL BE GLAD TO FEEL THE DECKS OF THE SULTANA UNDER MY FEET ONCE MORE!!

THROTTLES ARE PUSHED WIDE— ENGINES ROAR—

BUT THAT SAME SULTANA IS STEAMING OUT OF PUERTA GRANDE HARBOR—DESTINATION SECRET!!



THE LAIR OF THE VULTURE

BEHAVING THAT TOMMY WAS SAFE, AFTER HAVING SEEN HIM CRIPPLED PLANE, THAT HAD BEEN SNARED BY THE HUGE BIRD-LIKE MONSTER, SKEETS DECIDED TO FOLLOW THE AERIAL FANTASY IN AN ATTEMPT TO ASCERTAIN ITS HIDING PLACE. HE TRAILS BEHIND AT A SAFE DISTANCE UNDER THE PROTECTION OF SPOTTY CLOUDS.

LUCKY FOR ME THAT TOM LEFT HIS MOTOR RUNNING BEFORE HE BAILED! NOW I CAN TRAIL 'EM WITHOUT BEIN' HEARD

GREAT CAESAR'S GHOST! NO WONDER WE COULDN'T FIND THOSE MISSIN' PLANES!

HE ISN'T GOING TO MAKE IT IN ONE PIECE!

IT'S HARRY HAWKES!

SPRING BROUGHT A PERIOD OF TORRENTIAL RAIN THAT MADE FLYING ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE. THERE WERE CRASHES EVERY DAY.

JOHNNY HAZARD

FRANK (ROBBINS)

BRANDY FINDS A TOLLING CAR ABOARD THE WRECKED NAZI PLANE, BUT DOES NOT TELL JOHNNY... ABOUT TO TAKE OFF, JOHNNY CHECKS WITH BRANDY...

YOU ALL SET, LITHE AND LENS-HAPPY? WATCH UP AND LOOKER?!

UM-HUH, TALL AN' BUZZ-HAPPY. I'M ALL SET! AN' WATCH IS WATCHED!

HE ISN'T GOING TO MAKE IT IN ONE PIECE!

IT'S HARRY HAWKES!

ROGER, BRIGHT-EYES! WE'RE OFF IN A CLOUD OF MYSTERY! FASTEN YOUR SAFETY BELT!

TERRY AND THE PIRATES

WILSON (CHIFF)

I DON'T KNOW HOW THE JAPS CAN BASE FIGHTERS IN A REMOTE MOUNTAIN VILLAGE— BUT WE'LL FIND 'EM! WHAT ABOUT THE DECOY TRANSPORT, MAJOR?

WE'VE MOUNTED EVERY AVAILABLE GUN, SIR!

GOOD! THE APPARENTLY INNOCENT TRANSPORT WILL FERRY GASOLINE TO THE DRY LAKE BED WE KNOW TO BE HELD BY THE CHINESE... THAT'S THE HALF-WAY POINT...

THE SHORT-RANGE FIGHTERS WILL PROCEED TO THE LAKE BED AND REFUEL... THE TRANSPORT WILL THEN FLY NEAR THE SUSPECTED VILLAGE— AND THE FIGHTERS WILL CARRY OUT THEIR ASSIGNMENTS! GOOD LUCK, GENTLEMEN...

LATER... POST 12 REPORTING... ONE YANKEE TRANSPORT— NO ESCORT— LOW— MOVING WEST— 200 MILES PER HOUR.

THE JAPS ARE ROLLING BACK THE BUILDINGS TO FORM THE RUNWAY... MUST BE A TRANSPORT COMING...

AND I THOUGHT OUR SHIPS MIGHT HAVE SPOTTED MY 'SOS' ON THE GROUND!

HERE THEY COME, GANG! LET 'EM HAVE IT!

OH, DADDY, I HOPE THE HOLES WE KNOCKED IN THIS GRATE DON'T CRUMBLE HER UP LIKE A TIRED MARATHON DANCER!

THE TRANSPORT CARRIES GUNS!— AND YANKEE FIGHTERS COME OUT OF THE SUN... BACK TO THE BASE! WE ARE TO ATTACK ONLY UNARMED AIRCRAFT!

THE STUPID YANKEES DID NOT ATTEMPT TO FOLLOW... WE WILL FIND EASIER GAME ANOTHER DAY!

BUT FROM THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION THE REMAINING AMERICAN FIGHTERS MOVE TOWARD THE VILLAGE SUSPECTED OF CONCEALING THE JAP BASE...

TAILSPIN TOMMY

AIR ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

10¢

WHILE MARY AND JACK WERE IN A WEATHER OFFICE, DIXIE HAVING LEARNED SHE WAS BEING TAKEN TO A SPECIALIST, SCRAMBLED OUT OF THE PLANE AND GROPPED HER WAY BEHIND THE HANGARS...

DANGER WIND TUNNEL EMERGENCY DOOR

OH— HERE'S A DOOR— AN' TH' LOCK ISN'T SNAPPED— MAYBE I CAN HIDE HERE.

MARY DISCOVERED DIXIE MISSING AND WHILE SEARCHING FOR HER FOUND THE OPEN DOOR AND DIXIE.

BUT DIXIE, YOU'RE IN A TUNNEL WHERE THEY MAKE WIND FOR TESTING PLANES. IF IT SHOULD START INTO THESE BLADES AND GROUND ALIVE!!

THAT'S A CLEVER STORY, MARY— BUT I WON'T FALL FOR IT— YOU'RE TRYING TO SCARE ME INTO GOING WITH YOU!

IT'S KIND OF YOU JACK TO WASTE MY TIME SPENDING MY EYES— I'VE GOT TO GO.

NO! LEAVE ME ALONE— YOU CAN'T FRIGHTEN ME!

I'M NOT LYING, DIXIE. YOU'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE. I HAVE TO DRAG YOU OUT!

BUT DURING THE SCUFFLE ON THE SLICK FUNNEL-LIKE SURFACE, THE GIRL SLIP—

I'M SURE THE MONEY YOU INTEND TO SPEND ON ME IS WHAT YOU HAD SAVED FOR YOUR HOME?

NON-SENSE— BEFORE THIS AWFUL THING MAKES MINCE MEAT OUT OF YOU!

MEANWHILE, IN THE RESEARCH ROOM ON THE FLOOR ABOVE...

WITH A RUSH, DIXIE'S HEADS TO GO, REAR TO GO, LEGS TO GO, AND SHE'S AT THE FOOT OF THE GIANT BLADES.

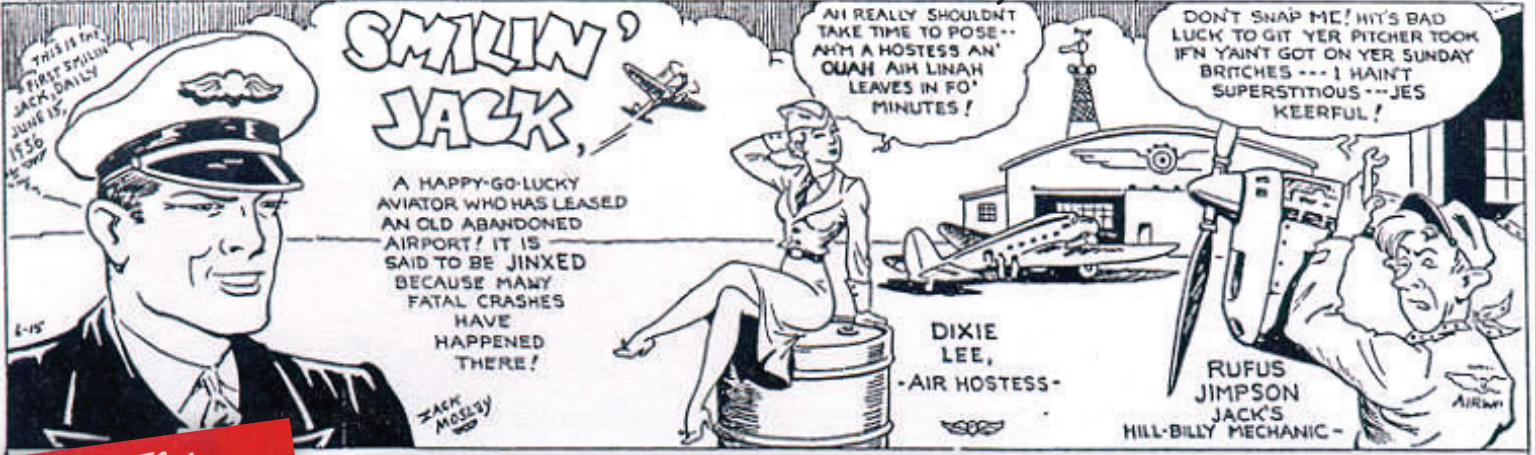
PROFESSOR, YOU SAY THE STRUTS ON THAT MODEL ARE CONNECTED TO SCALES THAT MEASURE THE DRAG AND STREAMLINING EFFECTS OF THE PLANE?

YES— I'LL SHOW YOU. I'LL START THE BLOWERS THROUGH TH' MASTER SWITCH!

NOV-5

Captain Midnight

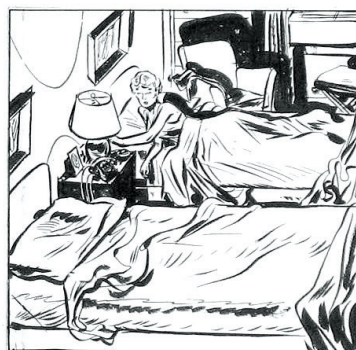
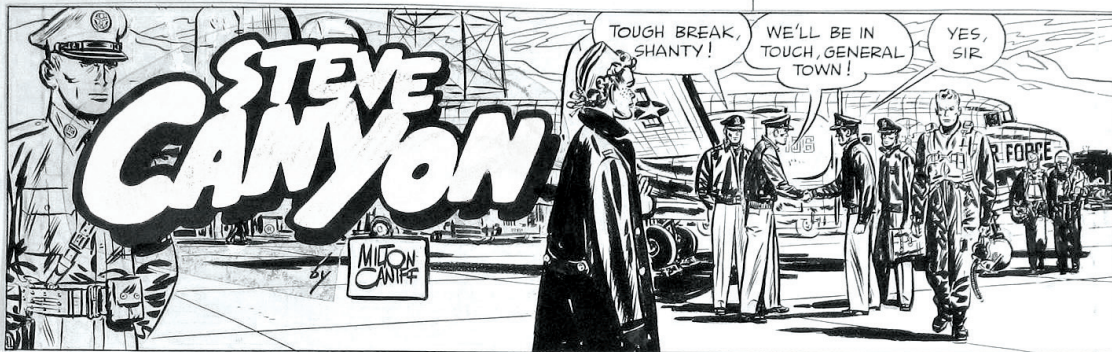
ORIGINAL RADIO BROADCAST



TAILSPIN TOMMY

Tommy to the Rescue

—By GLENN CHAFFIN AND HAL FORREST.



Vietnam veteran gets belated homecoming parade



William Isaacson, (seated, white shirt) was recognized for his service as a Marine Corps pilot in Vietnam during an event in Afton on Tuesday. Isaacson, an Afton resident, never got a homecoming after his return from Vietnam in 1967.

Photo: Kevin Giles

Article by: JIM ANDERSON, Star Tribune, May 11, 2013

“They took me by surprise — I had no idea,” said William Isaacson, who was greeted last week by a throng of family, friends and well-wishers in a long-overdue salute for his distinguished service as a Marine Corps pilot in the Vietnam War.

Isaacson was returning home from his winter home in Florida, as he always does the first week of May in time for the walleye fishing opener on Lake Vermilion, where he grew up.

His wife, Chrismarie, with the aid of the Yellow Ribbon Alliance of the Lower St. Croix Valley, a group of volunteers from five neighboring communities who aid service members and their families, began planning the event weeks ago.

“We’ve never done a ‘welcome home’ event like this before,” said Randy Kopesky, co-chairman of the alliance and mayor of Lakeland Shores. “Who is better deserving than Willie Isaacson?”

Isaacson, now 70 and battling Parkinson’s disease, always dreamed of being a pilot, and ended up spending most of his life in the air.

He flew 150 combat missions in Vietnam in the F-4 Phantom jet, earning a Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medals and other top military honors. He would go on to a career as a pilot for Northwest Airlines.

But like so many Vietnam veterans, his service was scarcely acknowledged when he returned from a war that sharply divided the nation. The only person who greeted him in 1967, he said, was his brother.

Things were decidedly different last Wednesday. It was proclaimed “William Isaacson Day.” When Isaacson was in Lakeland, approaching Afton, a squadron of about 60 motorcycles and a fire truck waited to escort him the final few miles to Afton, and the road was lined with greeters, cheering and waving flags.

Dignitaries included Maj. Gen. Rick Nash of the Minnesota National Guard. Proclamations were read from the Minnesota House and Senate, along with the Washington County Board.

“I couldn’t stop tearing up,” Isaacson said.

Kopesky said he was pleased with a turnout he estimated at more than 200.

“We’ve been looking forward to this day, really,” he said. “It was kind of like planning a wedding.”

Emotions ran high in the crowd as well, he said, especially for other veterans who share Isaacson’s bond of combat service.

“He finally got his parade,” he said.

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12 June

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Congregate at dock side
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MSP SUMMER CRUISE



PHOENIX PICNIC

Record turnout. Just keeps growing every year! Photos: Barb Pisel



Lee & BobRoot, Jane & Don Chadwick



Ron & Carol Vandervort, Diane & John Andres



Gene & Helen Frank, Sue & Dick Duxbury



Brent & Linda Wenger, Joan & Gary Baldwin



Terry Confer, Camille & Jack Herbst, Lynn Confer



Linda Wenger
The Franks
The Roots
Don Chadwick



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Rollie Baumann, Nancy Bates



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Sherry & Jerry Cooper, John Holzemer



Gary & Barb Pisel



Five experts!



Gary Roelofs, Phil Pattie, Paul Nungesser, John Lee



Eileen Halverson, Sandy Schmidt, Jane Chadwick



Norm & Lee DeShon, Gary Pisel



Jerry Wortman, Sandy Schmidt, Jane Chadwick



The Herbsts

The Karams



Paul & Pam Nungesser

Sandy Roelofs, Sandee & Ron Erickson

Stratocruiser DITCHING, SEATTLE



Many readers are probably aware that RNPA member, Captain David Lane, has spent countless hours researching and compiling a yet to be published book on the Northwest Stratocruiser. The following are the words of Northwest Captain Fred Zimmerly being interviewed by Dave. At the time of this event, Capt. Zimmerly was Chief Pilot, SEA.

We hope to publish more excerpts from the book in the August issue. – Ed.

“I had just arrived at the Northwest operations office located in our hangar at the Sea-Tac airport. At 8:10 a.m. I walked into the Flight Dispatch office to hear that Flight 2, bound for Minneapolis-St. Paul had just ditched in the Sound somewhere southwest of the field.

“My first question was, ‘Is there an airplane available?’ From my training at NWA I recalled the cold water survival time in this part of the Pacific Ocean is only 15 to 20 minutes. To make matters worse, Flight 2 was a domestic flight and therefore was not equipped with any flotation gear. (Note: This was before the days of floatable seat cushions.)

“Dispatch told me that there was a DC-4 over at the main terminal. So I ran out to the hangar balcony to alert the mechanics and saw one of our DC-3s parked just outside. As I was telling them what had happened, I also noticed a pallet on the floor which was loaded with life rafts and ‘Mae West’ life vests. I shouted, ‘Let’s get this stuff loaded in the DC-3!’ and everybody went into action. While I scrambled into the cockpit, the mechanics took a bolt cutter and began to cut the main

entry door from the plane.

“The flotation gear was on board by the time I had the engines running. I alerted the tower that we needed emergency take-off clearance on old Runway 27 from the NWA hangar and in no time we were on our way to the ditching site. It only took us three or four minutes to find it. Approaching from a distance, we could see the Stratocruiser was in the process of sinking and, as I recall, only the rear part of the plane was above water. We could also see people in the water nearby as we made a pass overhead. I turned the DC-3 around and maneuvered into position to make the drop at about 100 feet. We made two passes and were able to place the life rafts and vests among or close to the people. The rip cords were pulled as the rafts were pushed through the door so that they would inflate on the way down.

“We circled for a few minutes to make sure that everything looked OK. As we were leaving the Strato to return to the airport, we noticed a Coast Guard amphibian was just about to land alongside. I later found out that it had departed McCord Air Base at Tacoma and was

headed north when it was alerted by Air Traffic Control of the ditching.

“After we landed I noted the time, 8:35 a.m. Only twenty-five minutes had elapsed since we had first received word. I’ve often wondered how coincidental it was that personnel, airplane and survival gear were all readily available that fateful morning and on short notice, no less. Another day, another time and things could have been very different.”

“As a side note, several days later I took the ship’s captain up in one of our other Stratocruisers to try to duplicate the condition which led to the ditching—believed to have been caused by taking off with fully open engine cowl flaps. With the wing flaps extended to the takeoff position, there was not a noticeable buffeting after takeoff with the cowl flaps fully open. But when the wing flaps were retracted, quite a severe buffeting occurred. The airplane was very unstable about the pitch and roll axis due to the disrupted air flow across the tail. It was unstable enough to make you wonder if you would lose control of the plane, not knowing what had caused the instability.”



Captain Fred Zimmerly (Northwest Airlines Chief Pilot-SEA) converses with a member of the Press Corps during the Stratocruiser’s inaugural flight to Tokyo, April 25, 1952. Four years later, Captain Zimmerly was to become an “unsung hero” during this ditching.

In 1991, Lane also interviewed another Pan Am Boeing Stratocruiser skipper who recalled the Northwest ditching accident and provided this interesting summation and conclusion:

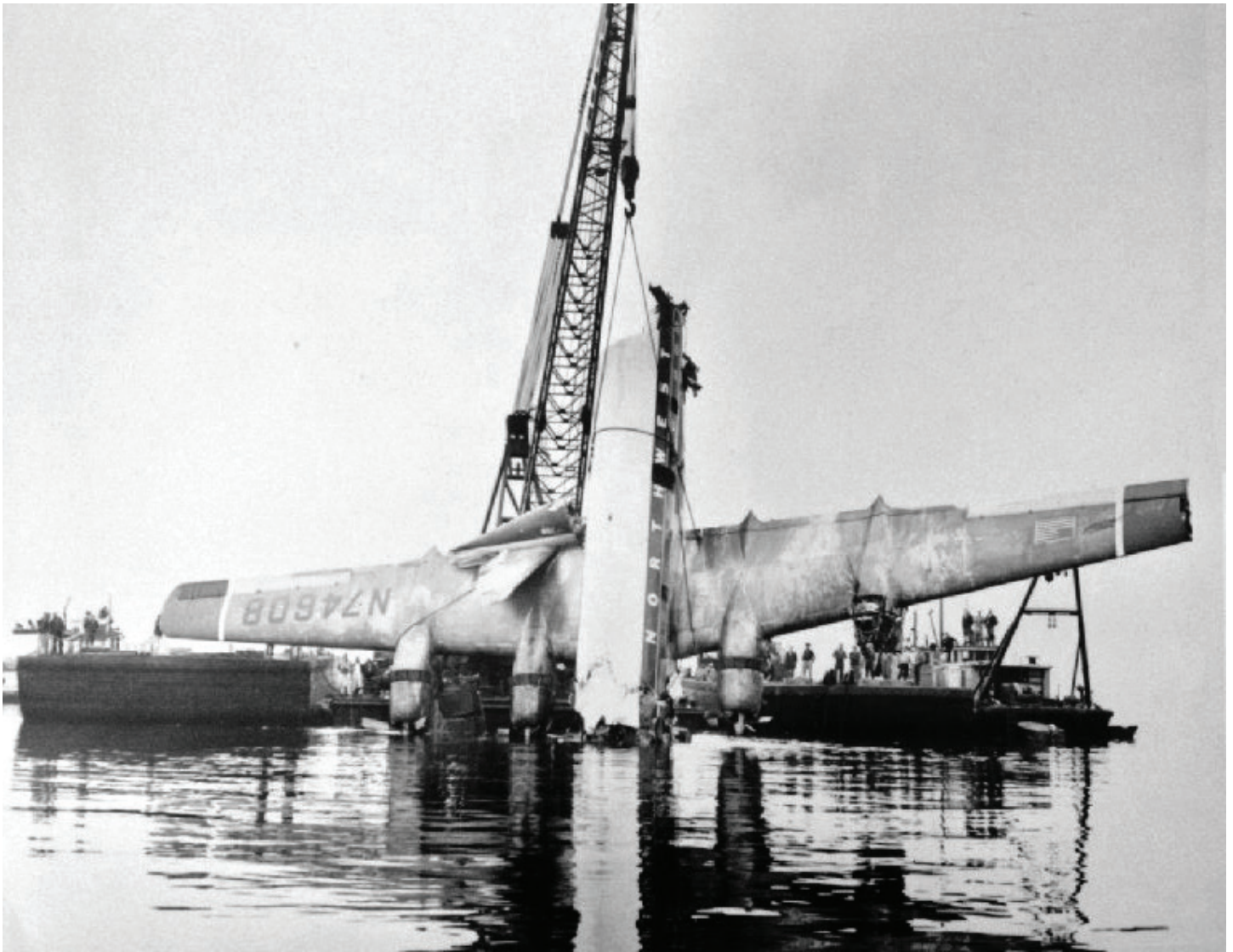
“At the time of the Northwest Stratocruiser ditching, all of us B-377 types were very aware and very concerned with the high number of blade failures that were occurring on Strats equipped with Ham-Standard hollow steel propellers.

“Prior to the Northwest accident, I think there must have been at least six or seven very serious blade failures on the Boeings, one of which caused the in-flight break-up of a (PAA) Strat over Brazil and another which led to a (PAA) 377 ditching off the coast of Oregon. Why the CAA never grounded the fleet or at least required Pan Am and NWA to modify their Strats with the trouble free Curtiss Electric props (as installed on United and American Stratocruisers) is a question that politically speaking, ran very deep at the time. They did however, require installation of Sperry engine vibration detectors in the mid-1950s while the new Dural, solid aluminum propellers were being designed, tested and manufactured which finally (in 1957) put an end to the problems we were having.

“Anyway, what I am getting to here, is this. During these numerous blade failure



The Pan Am Skipper of this B-377 stated that after an intense struggle, his first officer was finally able to regain roll control of the stricken ship after they came up with the idea to dump fuel from the right wing tanks.



Raising Northwest Flight 2 from Puget Sound.

emergencies, flight crews experienced a severe vibration followed by aircraft control difficulties. So I think it is important to note in the writing of your book that these very serious situations were not all that different from what NWA's crew experienced shortly after taking off from Seattle. Propeller blade failure had to be one of the things running through their minds as to why the ship was violently shaking and difficult to control.

"I know for a fact that at the time, we (at Pan Am) were more or less 'spring-loaded' to react very quickly to a severe (propeller related) vibration and get the damn thing feathered right away. Incidentally, before engine vibration detectors were installed, it was very difficult to immediately identify which engine/propeller on the wing was producing the vibration. We had only seconds really to do the ol' 'Identify, Verify, Feather' procedure before part of the blade would let go, possibly taking the entire engine package with it. Those hollow steel model propellers originally installed on

Strats had become virtual time bombs and we all knew it.

"It was during this dark chapter in the Stratocruiser's history that a number of our skippers got really fed up with the whole affair and decided to take matters into their own hands. Some of them, and I am not saying who, adopted an unofficial procedure whereby—if a severe vibration occurred during cruise flight both propellers on the wing would be immediately feathered. So from an aerodynamic standpoint at least, the chances of reaching an emergency airfield with two engines feathered were far better than the consequences of trying to get somewhere with a missing engine. To my knowledge nobody ever had to put this unauthorized procedure to the test, but it is a good illustration of just how bad the propeller situation had become.

"You can imagine how thrilled us senior captains were to see new 707s arrive on the property beginning in 1958!" ✈



WES SCHIERMAN
JULY 21, 1935 ~ JANUARY 04, 2014

AN EPILOGUE

Wesley D. Schierman, age 78, a retired Northwest Airlines Captain, 'Flew West' on January 04, 2014 after a short, intense battle with lung cancer. Wes's lifetime devotion to his family, country, and aviation is so exceptional as to merit special mention.

He was born at St. John, Washington and raised on a wheat farm near Endicott. Naturally, once reaching a workable age, Wes was called upon to swing his weight with farm chores but it soon became apparent that his allergies were incompatible with wheat harvest. Farm life was not his calling.

Wes enlisted in the Washington Air National Guard (WA ANG) on February 02, 1953 and entered the Aviation Cadet Program the Fall of 1954. On February 23, 1956 Wes would graduate with Aviation Cadet Class 56-I from pilot training at Williams AFB—a distinguished graduate. With new Air Force pilot wings and 2/Lt. bars, Wes matriculated onto Fighter Gunnery Training in the T-33 and F-86. In June of 1956 Wes returned to reserve status as an ANG fighter-interceptor pilot, standing alert at Spokane in F-94 Starfire and F-89 Scorpion aircraft.

Wes enrolled at Washington State University (WSU) while regularly standing fighter interceptor alert duty with the ANG. Wes joined the ATO fraternity where he set a laudable example of maturity and academic prowess for his frat brothers. One of his former roommates accredits Wes's encouragement for motivating him to complete his degree. The mental discipline and maturity acquired in the Aviation Cadet Pilot program had well prepared him for an academic experience.

Wes and Faye met in November of 1957 on campus at WSU and were married the following fall—September 1958. Wes was twenty-two years old and Faye twenty-one. Faye completed her degree and teacher certification after marriage. The two of them would be married for 55 years.

Let there be no doubt—flying was Wes Schierman's passion. Just slightly below family. While setting the curve at WSU, he also established a strong reputation with his Guard unit, serving as an instructor pilot in the T-33. By 1959 he had acquired enough pilot time to be hired by Northwest Airlines. The early sixties were the end of the prop era and just before the onset of the jet-age boom in recreational travel; seasonal layoffs were common. Wes was both flying DC-4 copilot for NWA and standing alert with the ANG at the Spokane airport (Geiger Field). Anticipating yet another layoff, in September, 1962, he volunteered for USAF active duty under a three year contract.

Returning to active duty Wes checked out in the F-100 and then the F-105. In August 1965 Wes returned to Korat AB, Thailand on what was to have been a second three- month temporary duty (TDY) assignment. But, on a 10th mission in eleven days, Wes punched out of the F-105F over North Vietnam, becoming a POW. A profoundly moving account of his POW experience is described in a lengthy article in the Daedalus Flyer entitled A Bad Day at Son La. This article is available on the RNPA website as well as the 67th Tactical Fighter Squadron website: 67tfs.org/. What is truly remarkable about Wes's POW experience is its duration, which required boundless tenacity and strength just to endure. Wes had these qualities and such strength of character that he emerged as an acclaimed leader among the POWs.

At the time of his capture Wes's permanent station was Kadena AFB, Okinawa. Faye Schierman moved the family back to Spokane and waited for nearly eight years for her husband's return. For five years the Air Force listed him as missing in action.

During the eight long years of captivity he would endure nearly endless rounds of torture, suffer horribly from asthma and allergies, and incurred a weight loss to less than one hundred pounds. There were days when, due to his asthma, his cellmates did not expect him to live through the night. In Admiral James Stockdale's

accounts of his capture, he lauds Wes's strength of character and leadership qualities despite the physical hardships he endured.

Wes was in captivity for 2,725 days. His captivity ended on February 12, 1973. That day he and a group of fellow prisoners were bussed to Hanoi's Gia Lam Airport. As the POWs previously agreed, they formed up into ranks and marched across the ramp to the exchange point. The POWs military bearing during their departure is illustrative of the military discipline and decorum they maintained during captivity, which totally baffled the North Vietnamese. Each POW was called by name out of formation, he stepped forward to meet and exchange salutes with a USAF Colonel, and then boarded a C-141 aircraft. Can you imagine what the sight of the Colonel's uniform and the USAF insignia on the C-141 must have meant to them? If you can read the Bad Day at Son La account of the departure and flight back to Clark AFB and still have dry eyes you are a tougher character than most of us.

Upon arrival at Clark AFB, Wes spoke with Faye by telephone for the first time in almost eight years. Faye quickly put Wes at ease and set the scene for his much awaited homecoming. Read about the homecoming in the Bad Day at Son La article. One tidbit needs to be shared with his pilot peers:

Wes writes, "On 16 February, I flew to Travis AFB on the same C-141 (the Hanoi Taxi) that had brought me out of Hanoi. The crew told me that when leaving Hanoi on that first day they had received a message for me from a NWA B-747 going into Manila. The airline captain said, "Welcome home, Wes. Thought you'd like to know your seniority number is 428 out of 1,550, and you could be flying captain on the 727 or a 707. Sure glad to have you back, even though you are senior to me. It was signed, Steve White"

Returning to the states, Wes spent six months on active duty before returning to Air Force reserve and civilian status. After an extended leave spent reuniting with his family, he and Faye were sent to Maxwell AFB, AL to attend a special six week course for assimilating POWs back into society. Wes attended classes five days a week reviewing the military changes and the political and cultural news that had transpired during his captivity. A specialized annualized atlas was designed to describe each year of captivity. Wes and Faye highly valued this experience.

The Air Force made him an attractive career offer,



but with it came the sure realization that what remained of his career would over time involve less flying. Wes wanted to fly and he did not ever again willingly risk being separated from his family for so long. After talk with NWA friends, Wes and Faye made the decision to return to NWA.

Wes's return to airline flying is described in the last page of the Son La article. The process started with an appointment with CEO Donald Nyrop at the NWA's General Office where Mr. Nyrop immediately put Wes at ease. Mr. Nyrop respected what Wes had endured and offered him management positions, but Wes wanted to fly. Mr. Nyrop told Wes

that he needed to pass a Mayo physical, and if he passed the physical, he would be put in the 'cub captain' program on the B-727. Wes hadn't expected as much and anticipated at least a year of copilot flying.

He was given two months of safety (IOE) time. Half way through this time, the IOE instructor called MSP to advise the program manager that Wes was ready to be signed off. Safety requirements dictated that Wes complete the full two months of IOE time. Toward the end of the time he flew 2-3 days of mountain station flying. The FAA PIO (Principal Inspector) Frode Jesspersen observed Wes during that time and signed him off for line flying. Wes summed up his NWA experience, "In my opinion, my return to Northwest could not have been handled better." He flew the B-727 for about seven years, the DC-10 for two years and the B-747 for thirteen years before retiring in 1995.

Wes Schierman was a self-effacing man and the first to acknowledge the vulnerability, the courage, and the dedicated skills of his NWA colleagues who had served both in the cockpit and on the ground during the Vietnam War. He was heard to say, "Oh, you would have done the same or more." Unless questioned, Wes never spoke openly about what he had gone through.

In 2005, Wes and Faye returned to Kadena AFB, Okinawa where they both were honored guests of the renowned 67th Tactical Fighter Squadron's POW Day ceremony. Wes almost declined the invitation because the date conflicted with their wedding anniversary. The Squadron Commander got wind of Wes's concern and set out to make this an anniversary to remember. The Wing Commander passed the word down to make it happen. Wes and Faye were accorded hospitality and honors beyond any expectation. The squadron arranged for VIP quarters, the commander's wife personally attending Faye throughout the visit, and set the scene for

their anniversary dinner.

The highlight of the Kadena visit was for Wes to finish flying, in an F-15, the 'return to base' leg of his last Vietnam flight in 1965. The squadron commander reports that Wes came to the preflight briefing with a lengthy list of questions, obviously having done his homework about the F-15, and confirmed that Wes still had that fighter pilot's touch. After landing, his host taxied the F-15 to a stop next to a red carpet and a tub filled with chilled champagne. Glasses were raised to Wes for com-



Faye and Wes after his "last landing" at Kadena.

pleting the long awaited 'last landing.' Later the entire Fighter Wing gathered to hear Wes speak about surviving a POW experience.

The POW Recognition ceremony at Kadena AFB included a formal in-ranks formation and a presentation for Wes. A young female officer stepped forward to present the award to Wes. After presenting a plaque, she pressed her hands into his and in the exact POW format tapped the coded words "God Bless You". This young officer had taught herself the POW code for this event! It becomes obvious why Faye described this visit as the most memorable of their lives.

Wes and his NWA buddy Marty Foy had a special bond, even their airplane hangars were next to each other. Faye says she could always tell that Wes was talking on the telephone with Marty by the volume of Wes's laughter. Wes purchased a basket case RV-4, tore it down to component parts and reassembled it again. The FAA recognized this work and awarded him A&P certification on this airplane, as well as the RV-12 he built. Those who recognize perfection saw it in Wes's airplanes. The word around the Arlington, WA Airport has it that Wes was also a real stick in his RV-4. He and his pal Marty Foy served as formation instructors with the Black Jack Squadron, a civilian group who seek to fly their Vans RV aircraft with precision. The Black Jack Squadron performs formation demonstrations at airshows; they performed a 'missing man' formation at Wes's memorial service.

Wes was also a generous man who eagerly shared his friends and contacts with others. He put people in contact with each other to make good things happen. In addition, he was acclaimed for his efforts to encourage young people interested in aviation, often traveling extensively to inspire and motivate them toward aviation careers.

The family was the highest focal point of Wes's life. He loved being a father. Faye describes how in their early marriage, Wes would take even the very youngest with him on errands. Stacy learned to hunt with her father. Years after the POW experience, his daughter Sandy and son Steve joined Wes in a parachute jump. Wes wanted them to better understand his F-105 bailout. The Schierman offspring traveled extensively with their parents. All three of them also earned a FAA Private Pilot's License. Today Steve is a pilot for Alaska Airlines and Stacy is a pilot for Sky West Airlines. In a bit of irony, sixteen years after Wes flew to freedom aboard the Hanoi Taxi, his son Steve would be assigned by the Air Force to fly the same airplane.

Wes was especially well liked by his airline colleagues. Early after returning from his POW experience he was asked about his feeling toward the North Vietnamese. He responded with extraordinary charity toward the Vietnamese people, holding no animosity toward them. Despite the incredible duration of his incarceration, he was not consumed by it. There has to a good lesson there.

Wes's final hours were spent with his family at his side. On January 26th the Schierman family held a memorial service for friends at the Museum of Flight at Boeing Field, Seattle. The turnout was impressive. All the speakers, and especially Marty Foy, spoke with dignity and respect for this special man. Fellow POW and retired

USMC Colonel Orson Swindle had enduring words for Wes's family. Swindle spoke to each family member by name and then pointed his finger slowly around the room at each of us, and said, "Most of you in your lifetime will not likely ever meet another person with the strength of character of Wes Schierman." That really summed up the testimonies of his fellow POWs.

The ranks of NWA pilots include many notable and courageous men. Wes Schierman's name is added to that respected list. All who knew him were grateful for the experience. Those who did not would be wise to emulate him. Thank you to Wes and Faye for sharing your lives with us. ✈

(- Bill Day)



SHIGEAKI MORITA
1929 ~ 2012

We have recently learned that Shigeaki Morita, or Morita-san as he was respectfully known, the former director of Flight Dispatch, NRT, passed away on February 5, 2012.

Morita-san was hospitalized in July, 2011 with lung cancer and finally succumbed to a stroke. Born March 22, 1929, he was 82 years old at the time of his death. He retired from Northwest Airlines in 1993.

In September, 1988, Morita-san wrote a memoir of his lifetime experiences, some of which follows:

"On April 17 and 18 of 1988, I had a grade school reunion. Our favorite teacher, who was now 80 years old, was there. To our great surprise, he remembered each of us very well. According to him, I was a little-bitty fellow, full of energy, who would never sit still in his seat and seldom paid attention to what the teacher said.

"I was born in Osaka, but I was raised in the country about 80 miles to the north of Tokyo. Each of the four seasons brought us country kids its gifts in abundance, like wild flowers and butterflies in spring, dragonflies and fireflies in summer, and honey bees and mulberries in the fall. Picking mulberries to eat on the way to and from school was a great pastime. My childhood was a most happy, innocent and peaceful one living in abundance of nature and playmates. It is rather difficult to describe, but it was like living in a dream world. Instead of taking root solidly in the ground, I felt as if I were floating in the air on a white puffy cloud.

"I was 11 years old when World War II began and 16 when it ended.

"My happy-go-lucky outlook on life continued. However, as with everyone else, it (the war) did have a great impact on my life as well, especially 1944 through 1945. Instead of going to school to study, we went to work full time at one of the main factories where army fighter planes were built, which was located in the same area where I was raised.

"February 16, 1945 was another one of those routine days for me, going directly to the factory to work. It was a relatively warm day for mid-winter. As the day progressed, an event that is not only unforgettable, but also predictive of my fate in the future, unfolded in broad daylight.

"It was early in the afternoon. Suddenly the siren sounded the first stage of alarm for an air raid. At that stage we, as school kids, would stop working and evacuate to safety. We retreated to a hill located a couple of miles away from the factory to the north, and positioned in a trench dug out on the hillside. Everyone was quiet and seemed as if enjoying the warmth of the winter sun. Before long we started hearing cracking sounds of anti-aircraft guns, which signaled the beginning of a great panorama of air raid, this time by a horde of fighter planes off the carriers.

"There appeared before our eyes Grumman F-6s and Curtis P-51s. They came up over the hill and looked like miniature planes. When they reached overhead, as an



eagle swoops down on its prey, they took a dive one after another amid the firing of anti-aircraft guns. The next thing we observed was explosions on the ground and the factory going up in flame and smoke. Immediately following the release of their bombs, they climbed right up and headed right back from where they had come from.

"Then came the greatest moment of my early life. As one of the Grumman's, in its climb out, flew right by us, I saw the pilot in the cockpit wearing his leather head gear with goggles. I was sure that he saw us too. He continued his climb and soon disappeared to the other side of the hill. Just the thought that he might turn around and come back to get us, as we say in Japanese, scared the out of me. But thank Shinto God (that was the only god I knew then), he never did come back. Anyway, who could tell then that some years later I would put up with the third kind ("Americans") for the rest of my life.

"World War II ended in the fall of 1945. The whole country was literally devastated and burned down to ashes. The entire nation was on the verge of starvation. As a new life emerges from the land of devastation, or like a plant shooting out buds of new hope, I got up for a fresh start and sailed into new challenges lying ahead. The dream of my life became to save enough money to go to the United States to see what America was like. In those days very few Japanese could afford a trip abroad.

"I was very fortunate. Only ten years later, the dream came true on June 14, 1955. I still remember today, very vividly, how overwhelmed I was. I was just astounded at the beautiful bird's eye view of the residential areas of Seattle, which was the first airport of entry to the contiguous United States. It was just out of this world, I thought. Streets were well designed, houses were all so

colorful and yards so spacious and green that I thought I was looking at a miniature.

"In 1960 I had the honor of becoming the first Japanese national to serve a U. S. scheduled airline (NWA) in the capacity of aircraft dispatcher with a U. S. FAA license in possession, sharing the responsibilities with established U. S. dispatchers in the conduct of flight operations.

"Every dog has his day. So did I. It was perfected by the invitation to speak at the Council 54 Retirement Party in Seattle on September 15, 1973. By this time I came to manage the English language fairly well."

"Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Guests, Beautiful Ladies and Gentlemen: It is truly a great honor for me to be invited to this splendid annual retirement party and to be accorded this special privilege to speak to you and to renew my acquaintances with those of you who do not come our way regularly any more. That 'victory' sign that good Sam Houston flashed at you, walking away, reminds me of a very special linguist, Captain Dick Allen, who I see here amongst you at the head table this evening. Landing at Tokyo, he used to call us on the Company VHF for pre-landing coordination. He talked to us in Japanese. I think I can say safely, he was the very first, and maybe the last, who could handle the A-No-Ne talk with native fluency. Dick would walk into the office with a smile on his face and two fingers extended forming the victory sign. He was a very pleasant person to work with, like all the others.

It also makes me recall my early days spent in the crew scheduling business. In those good old days crew members used to greet me pretty much the same way, except on occasion, when they used only one finger, instead of the usual two.

Recalling my years with Northwest Orient, I have enjoyed working with flight operations personnel, particularly with you gentlemen, the pilot group whom I hold in special esteem and appreciation for your support, your understanding, your kindness and your friendship which influenced my progress no little bit.

Twenty-one years ago, to be exact, I joined Northwest Orient in the department of crew scheduling. Prior to that time, I worked for a U.S. Army chaplain, going to college at night. Through the kind effort of this chaplain, I was introduced to Captain Bob Sparkman, then the chief pilot of the Orient Region. Bob interviewed me and I was hired. On June 27, 1952 I changed jobs, from the chapel to the crew scheduling office. My first boss was Captain Sparkman. I still remember vividly how bewildered and misplaced I felt when I first started out, largely because of the sudden change in the working atmosphere. Particularly the language used. At the chapel, for example, they would say, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' At crew scheduling they would say 'What the hell are you



trying to do to my schedule, you dumb!' In spite of the great difference in the choice of words used, I found one thing very much in common: the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ, was mentioned quite regularly at both places.

I have since picked up quite a few American slang expressions. Once I had a personal notebook full of those meaningful and appropriate expressions. Among them, there is one I can never forget. It described the situation we were in at the time very aptly, hitting, as you would say, the nail right on the head. This one I learned from Captain Harry McKee, His flight was held over Tokyo because of weather and traffic congestion. Things were just not working out right for him. He was placed behind someone every time he moved on to a new fix. Upon finally arriving, he said to me in disgust, 'Oh man I was sucking hind tit all the way in.' At first I didn't understand, but I soon got the message. The reason I brought this up is that I was so impressed by the directness of the expression and also by the cleverness of the American slang.

As for Captain Joe Kimm, he once confided to me that his flying career was 'Taihen Subarashi' meaning very wonderful, although 'Taihen Bakarashi,' meaning 'very ridiculous' it gets to be sometimes. Captain Forrest Lintner stated once the airline business to be 'Taihen Fukuzatsu,' meaning 'very complicated.' These two gentlemen I just mentioned and many others, although they were not so fluent in Japanese as Captain Dick Allen, could always manage a few words to converse with us. On this memorable occasion, to those of you recently retired from line flying and to all of you who have recently dropped gears for the last landing, I carry with me warm greetings from our gang in Tokyo. We all miss you. The remarkable feeling of fellowship generated among us through close and long association with you remains unchanged. The people at Kimpo, Okinawa, Taipei, Hong Kong, Manila and Osaka, all share this sentiment with me. One may call this sense of fellowship 'University of Brotherhood.' Through the ages, the role to achieve this goal, so that man can live in peace and harmony, has rested with religions and various kinds of fraternal, charitable or political institutions such as the United Nations. Without the dedicated individual efforts and common understanding by the common man, like you and I, this high and mighty ideal remains beyond our reach. This is, therefore, the challenge to all of us today and tomorrow.

As young men you became captive to the adventure of aviation. Your dream of becoming an aviator, your pursuit of it as a career, your enthusiasm and tenacity successfully made you and your profession what it is today. The job assigned, however, is yet to be finished. The challenge of today and tomorrow, alluded to a moment ago, stands in the horizon.

This accomplishment of yours is to me just as remarkable as that of the Spirit of St. Louis. This valuable spirit of fellowship we must continue to hug and cherish. And you must continue to assist us in the job of perpetuating this legacy of yours. In my country it is commonplace for parting friends to say 'Sayonara,' goodbye in Japanese. I prefer to say 'Mata Aimasho', till we meet again. God speed."

Looking back on my life, I feel like my encounter with America caused the wheel of fortune, in its spin, to send me off on a tangent. Otherwise, I would have pursued a life of a country boy like most of my schoolmates have, who know little about things of the outside world. But here I am at the international scene all the time. And at my workplace, I am sitting at the nerve center of airline operations in the Pacific. My life has been full of challenges and excitements, but I find it worth living and rewarding and it's all because of the people I have been associated with. I am a man of humble origin and a "Bojin the Mediocre." Yet my life has been one just as happy as the one lived by a selected few. Again, I owe this to the people. Thank you RNPA friends. I will look forward to seeing you all at the next reunion. Till then, God bless you."

Such examples of Shigeaki Morita's professionalism and dedication to duty abound. When RNPA recently requested photos of Morita-san from the membership, photos were in short supply, but testimonies to his dedication abounded. Bob Cavill, former 747 Fleet Captain, offers one such accolade:

"Morita-san was one of the most dedicated Northwest employees that I came across in my years with NWA. As we all know, pilots aren't the most liked people within the airline, Morita-san was different in that he really liked our pilots. He made a special effort to greet crews as they moved through operations, and treated us in a special way. He also attended many pilot gatherings and was an avid RNPA member. If a pilot or crew ran into a problem in the Pacific, he managed to get on the scene as soon as possible, and was trusted to resolve the problem. After he retired, he offered help through ALPA to represent pilots in the Orient.

He especially liked the many senior pilots who helped him become a dispatcher and secure his position with NWA. He knew English better than most Americans. He belonged to Toast Masters and spoke at many events. I was very honored that my good friend retired with me in 1993."

Shigeaki Morita is survived by his wife Mayako Morita, daughter Sonoko Morita, his son Takamichi and two grandchildren. Mayako is doing well and lives with her daughter in Tokyo.

Mata Aimasho, Morita-san, from your loyal and loving friends at RNPA. ✈

(- Compiled by Gene Kragness)

Robert M. "Bob" Polhamus, age 75, a retired Northwest Airlines Captain of Boynton Beach, Florida, "Flew West" on January 17, 2014. Bob was born in Seattle, Washington April 24, 1938, and Bob's twin, Richard "Dick" Polhamus, was born a few minutes later. Bob's father, Robert Grey "Poke" Polhamus and his mother Helen Ferris Mercier, met as students at Stanford University. Bob's dad joined Northwest Airways as a pilot in 1936, and during World War II served 7-1/2 years with the Air Transport Command in Brazil, North Africa, Italy, England, Iraq, Iran, India and Russia.

The twins and their mother later made their home in Palo Alto, California, and the boys often spent summers visiting their maternal grandparents in New Orleans. Southern Pacific Railway hired Bob's grandfather Armand T. Mercier as a surveyor in 1904. He was President of Southern Pacific from 1941 until retirement in 1951. The boys spent vacation time with their grandparents; Bob had fond memories of "riding the rails" in their grandfather's private railroad car that came with a private steward.

Bob graduated from Palo Alto High School in 1956 with a full baseball scholarship to Santa Clara University, graduating in 1961. While there, Bob had a tryout with a major league team, but decided the Marines appeared to be a better option. Bob joined the U.S. Marine Corps after graduation from Santa Clara and reported to Marine Corps Base Quantico for boot camp and officer training under the tutelage of Staff Sergeant Rodney G. Bacigalupo. After officer candidate training, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve and received orders to NAS Pensacola for pilot training and carrier qualification on USS Antietam, flying Grumman F9F "Panthers" and F11F "Tigers." Bob received his Naval Aviator Wings of Gold on July 1st, 1963 with orders to MCAS El Toro, California where he joined the "Tom Cats" of Marine Attack Squadron Three-Eleven (VMA-311) flying A4E "Skyhawks." The "Tom Cats" deployed to MCAS Iwakuni, Japan in March 1965 expecting it to be their "home" for the next thirteen months. Vietnam intervened, and in May 1965 Bob and VMA-311 found themselves at MCEF Chu Lai, South Vietnam. From December 15, 1965 until he returned to the USA in late April 1966 Bob flew with VMA-211, the "Wake Island Avengers." Bob was a respected sec-



**"BOB" POLHAMUS
1938 ~ 2014**

tion and division leader with both squadrons, and flew a total of 174 successful missions over Laos and South Vietnam. He joined NWA on May 9, 1966, only a couple of weeks after he left Viet Nam. He had a distinguished career at Northwest and flew the Boeing 707, 727, 747, Douglas DC-10, and was flying as a Detroit based 747-400 Captain when he retired in 1998.

After retirement he was an active member in a number of organizations including Masons, Shriners, and QBs (Quiet Birdmen). Bob became a 32nd Degree/Master Mason and even more involved in charitable work. Beyond 32nd Degree, Masons go into the "Shrine," are known as "Shriner's" and help burn victims and children by providing hospitals and medical care for free. Bob was active in Shriner's and became President

of the Boynton Beach Shrine Club. He was just as active in QBs and was the Keyman and Governor of the Palm Beach Quiet Birdmen Hangar.

Bob's friends left five pages of comments in his online Guest Book, some excerpts are: "The LSO expects his arrival and anticipates an OK3 arrested landing, Semper Fi...never met anyone that could fill his shoes... long after he is gone you will wonder why you miss him so much...always going at Mach One...flew with many great pilots at Northwest but none I enjoyed more than Bob...fabulous man, consummate pilot, a joy to be around...flew night missions with Bob dive-bombing under flares from C130s on the Ho Chi Minh Trail near Tchepone. Bob was a good stick and a good lead, and I had total confidence flying his wing...a dear friend, a longtime friend, forever missed... We should learn to get as much out of life each day as we can, as he did...lived life to its fullest pushing the envelopes limit, and then, just a little bit more...on the bus ride to the hotel in Narita he had the whole bus laughing...at Camp Narita we had a lot of laughs "down the street" when Bob was center stage...consummate gentleman, thoroughly delightful person to be around, loyal friend and an excellent aviator all wrapped in one...the quintessential aviator... he always remained a true aviation professional.

Bob is survived by Betsy his loving wife of 36 years; beloved daughter Leigh of Delray Beach, Florida; twin brother Richard of Vero Beach, Florida; brother Mac of Houston, Texas, and sister Kathi Hanson of Bentonville, Arkansas.

(- Vic Britt)



PAUL CARRELL
1932 ~ 2014

Paul Wayne Carrel, age 81, a retired Northwest Airlines captain, 'Flew West' on January 02, 2014 after an eighteen month battle with kidney cancer. He was born December 07, 1932 in Clarksdale, Missouri and at his passing resided in Escondido, California. Paul was raised as a black earth to the core farm boy from rural Missouri who throughout his life remained anchored to his farming roots.

Like a lot of farm raised lads, Paul had a penchant for hands-on mechanical skills. Starting at six years old he crafted all sorts of odds and ends into something that remotely resembled airplanes. At 16 years old, Paul purchased a near write off Aeronca Champ for \$350 which he restored to flying condition. His passion for aviation bloomed early. His only sibling, Vance, who preceded him in death, was

a pilot for United Airlines. The passion for aviation was shared by two country boys!

In time Paul would also own a Taylorcraft, Cessna 182 & 182RG, Piper Comanche, and Cessna SkyMaster (337). The last years of his career and well into retirement, he enjoyed countless hours of 'hanger flying' and fine tuning his airplanes at the Lake Elmo Airport.

Graduating with the Maysville High School Class of 1950, Paul matriculated on to Northwest Missouri University. Two years later he left college life to enlist in the U.S. Navy. During his time in the Navy he sang in a USN Cadet choir which performed on the Ed Sullivan Show. Few people knew of his interest and latent talents for music.

After active duty with the Navy, Paul returned to Central Missouri University at Warrensburg to finish his undergraduate degree. Taking advantage of his GI Bill veteran's benefits, he acquired the FAA ratings necessary for building flight time and eventual airline employment. His breakthrough into professional pilot employment with NWA came in 1958. During his 34 year tenure at NWA Paul flew copilot on the DC-4, DC-6, DC-7, Boeing 707/320/720 and captain on the L-188 (Electra), Boeing 727, 707/320/720, and the DC-10. Paul flew the DC-10 for seventeen years.

He was a delightful gentleman to work with, considerate of others, and totally professional. His cockpit demeanor was that of quiet competence. He reveled in the discovery and exploration of subjects of interest. Road trips, historical reading, genealogy, and developing computer skills were areas of learning that excited him and held his interest.

Paul's friends knew him as a devoted sportsman with a huge passion for handball. A regular at the Bloomington's Decathlon Club's 0900 gathering of NWA pilot handball players, Paul was earmarked as an agile player and played almost daily into his eighties. When Paul and Ellie moved to California one of his major priorities was to reestablish himself with a handball group. Despite the effects of cancer, he played handball until six months prior to his passing.

In 1990, just two years before retirement, he married Elena 'Ellie' a Wisconsin school teacher and education professor. They resided in Prescott, Wisconsin for the first twelve years of their marriage. He is survived by two daughters from his first marriage: Jill Carrel and Julie Battig, who with her husband Joe Battig, are the parents of Paul's three grandchildren. Paul and Ellie retired to California in 2000. ✈

(- Bill Day)



MEL CHRISTENSEN
1921 ~ 2014

Melvin L. Christensen, age 92, of Bloomington, Minnesota 'Flew West' on February 04, 2014 surrounded by his family. Born June 25, 1921 in Veblen, SD to Carl and Johanna Christensen, Mel was raised on a farm where he acquired useful mechanical skills, but had no interest in becoming a farmer. Instead he dreamed of being a pilot, but the obstacles seemed so great that he deemed it an impossible goal. After graduating from Veblen High School in 1941, he entered an airline mechanic course at the Wahpeton State School of Science, Wahpeton, SD.

Representatives of Northwest Airlines (NWA) came to the Wahpeton campus in March, 1942 and recruited Mel as a baggage handler. Shortly thereafter, a draft notice from Uncle Sam motivated Mel to hurriedly enlist in the U.S. Navy. After basic training he served as a Yeoman aboard the mine sweeper USS Starling (AM64), and the aircraft carrier USS Kalinin Bay (CVE-66), in the Central Pacific campaign. In September, 1944 Mel was a Yeoman 2nd class aboard the Kalinin Bay in the thick of the Battle of Leyte Gulf. Can you visualize sailors being called to battle by the yeoman's whistle of our own Mel Chris-

tensen? After the battle, the USS Kalinin Bay returned to San Diego for emergency battle damage repairs and then returned to the Philippine campaign before making its final Pacific crossing to San Diego on 17 January, 1946. Mel was discharged a month later.

As soon as the Navy released him, Mel reported back to NWA to train as an aircraft mechanic. In April, 1948 he met Peggy Hegge at the Marigold Ballroom at 14th and Nicollet in Minneapolis. They married on Sept. 3, 1949, setting up their home in Bloomington, MN to be mates for life and parents of three girls, Linda, Wanda, and Debra. Mel and a NWA mechanic buddy built Mel's family three homes; both were skilled craftsmen and seldom had to outsource any work. Somehow Mel also squeezed in time for pilot flight training through the GI Bill program. The FAA pilot ratings acquired would pay off for him later.

In 1953 Mel edged closer to his quest to be a pilot when he qualified as a flight engineer (FE) with NWA. Mel flew all of the NWA aircraft requiring a FE at the time and especially enjoyed the Boeing StratoCruiser. Captain Norm Midthun reports that Mel was a most competent engineer and delightful crew member. When NWA phased out professional flight engineers in 1963, Mel jumped at their offer to check out as pilot. As NWA's operations expanded Mel upgraded through the pilot ranks flying the Lockheed Electra, the DC-8, the Boeing 707 series, and finally the 727. Mel was flying his beloved Boeing 727 when he retired in 1981 after 39 years of employment with NWA.

Mel Christensen was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather. He maintained an upbeat attitude until the end of life. His children report that at any given moment he seemed to have one overriding passion in life... most often carpentry, biking, or golf. What is little known is that Mel also had a respectable voice and enjoyed singing in the church choir. And he loved dancing, especially the polka, don't forget that Mel and Peggy met at a ballroom!

Later in life Mel became a skilled gardener and boating enthusiast. His passion for golfing was a long lasting one. Mel was also serious about exercise, biking into his mid-eighties. His nephew reported that Mel was a good conversationalist and a great listener. The two would carry on long conversations while jogging in the Bloomington, Minnesota parks. Mel and Peggy built their dream home in west Bloomington, MN, but wintered in Clearwater, FL.

Peggy passed away December 30, 2013 and Mel survived her by only thirty-six days. The family suspects he succumbed to a broken heart. We were graced to have this stalwart good man with us. ✈

(- Bill Day)





“DOUG” POPE
1941 ~ 2014

Douglas Arthur Pope, age 72, a retired Northwest Airlines captain ‘Flew West’ on Saturday February 08, 2014. The cause of death was a severe head injury after a fall at home.

Douglas Pope was born November 19, 1941 in Readsburg, Wisconsin. He was the oldest of four children. After graduation from Spring Green Wisconsin High School in 1959, Doug attended the University of Minnesota for two years before enlisting in the U.S. Navy to become an aircraft mechanic. His enlistment lasted three years, thereafter he returned

to Minnesota to work as a journeyman foreign auto mechanic.

By sheer chance, one day Doug worked on a vehicle owned by NWA pilot Spence Marsh. Spence sold him on the emerging career opportunities for airline pilots. Doug soon enrolled in an intense training regime with Executive Aero at Flying Cloud Airport to acquire the necessary FAA certificates and ratings for airline employment. While at Flying Cloud, he rubbed shoulders with a number of other ‘Cessna 150 captains’ whom later were destined to become NWA and North Central pilots. While taking the airline pre-employment Stanine exam, he met Jack Herbst who became a lifetime friend. Doug was hired by NWA on June 21, 1965. He was a member of a ‘fast track’ class that would move quickly to the left seat. The roster of his classmates would include the names Jack Herbst, Ron Heitritter and Phil Hallin.

Doug was the cutoff junior pilot in his class and was forced to Seattle as a Boeing 720/320 second officer. Both Seattle and Pacific flying agreed with him. In time he upgraded to first officer on the 720/320 and in 1970 to first officer on the 747. He later opted to move back to MSP to fly as captain on the 727. This was probably a good decision, setting him up for his eventual upgrade to captain on the 747. While in MSP Doug was drawn to Mississippi River boating to the extent of becoming a partner in a river marina.

He completed a thirty-six year career at NWA in 2001 and during those years was based in Seattle, Minneapolis, and Detroit. Those who flew with him speak highly of his piloting skills.

Doug had a lot of fun with his name. He would introduce himself to strangers as, “Doug as in hole and Pope as in Rome.” He and his wife Joanne purchased a 54 ft. Chris-craft Constellation they named The Vatican. For a number of years they lived aboard their boat in a slip near Seattle.

Plying the Pacific Northwest waters in The Vatican filled many retirement years until Doug and Joanne sold their boat and moved south to landlocked Tucson, Arizona. Boating was replaced with interests in woodworking, cooking, golf and general aviation, flying a Beechcraft Travel Air.

Doug was known for being light hearted, of good humor, an optimist without enemies. He is survived by his wife Joanne, his daughter Penny, and his son Scott. ✪

(– Bill Day)



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) \$40
Pilots: Retired NWA, post-merger retired Delta, or Active Delta

AFFILIATE (AF) \$30
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

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 have been removed from the RNPA website (www.rnpa.org). To request a member's email address or to **change your own** please contact Phil Hallin at:
RNPAnews@bhi.com

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First of its kind:

At a ceremony in New York, September 29, 1997, KLM President and Chief Executive Officer Leo M. van Wijk and Northwest President and Chief Executive Officer John H. Dasburg signed a ten-year global joint venture agreement taking the successful and profitable partnership between the two airlines to its next stage of development and integration.

