

CONTRAILS

Adam Glowaski

ISSUE NO. 202

MAY 2017



Adam Glowaski

RETIRED NORTHWEST AIRLINES PILOTS' ASSOCIATION

CONTENTS

- 13 A STABILIZED APPROACH**
Learning to navigate
- 17 THE WAY IT WAS**
...I learned from flying
- 20 A CHICK IN THE COCKPIT**
Are chicks or roosters better pilots?
- 24 PHOENIX PICNIC**
Snowbirds and the regulars mingle
- 28 STRATO LAUGHS**
David Lane shows us the lighter side
- 36 A NICKLE ON THE GRASS**
A long-standing tradition explained
- 38 SHAZM**
Revisiting a great story from an earlier issue
- 41 SW FLORIDA LUNCHEON**
Always a good time for some of the FL gang
- 51 RUNNING**
Another from Darrell Smith
- 54 JOE SUTTER**
The creator of the 747 passes on
- 57 SEA STORY**
Jake Jacobson sends us one from Down Under
- 4 OFFICERS' REPORTS**
- 6 WE'VE GOT MAIL**
- 59 FLOWN WEST**

RNPA CONTRAILS



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Each Member!

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 \$45 annually for Regular Members (NWA or Delta pilots, active or retired) and \$35 for Affiliate Members.

**ADDRESS &
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Membership Application & Change of Address Form

MEMBERSHIP TYPE (CHECK ONE)

\$45/year REGULAR (NR): Pilots; active or retired NWA or Delta.

\$35/year AFFILIATE (AF): Spouse or widow of RNPA member, everyone else.

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

PAYMENT

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: "RNPA" AND MAIL TO:
**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

DATE OF RETIREMENT FROM NWA DELTA AS:

AN EMPLOYEE

A PILOT



Notices to Airmen

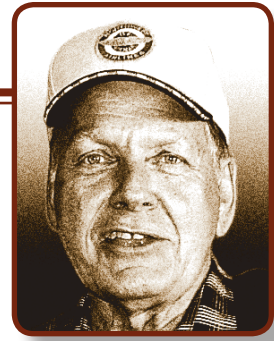
MSP Summer Cruise June 15th • Page 56

*SEA Summer Picnic
June 17th • Page 56
Don't delay —
deadline soon!*

**DEARBORN
REUNION 2017
Page 23**



President's Report: Gary PISEL



It has been 9 long years since that day in April 2008 when Delta acquired Northwest Airlines. It changed our lives forever. RNPA has been a cohesive factor in keeping the past relevant and striving to maintain venues for our retired pilots, flight attendants and others. There are several local functions that draw attendees, not the least of which is the annual Reunion. This year it is in Dearborn and the Henry Ford Museum, Greenfield Village and the LaRouge assembly plant as the tours. If you have not already signed up, please do so. AND REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR BEARS OR STUFFED ANIMALS FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT.

The primary means of communications amongst those retired is *Contrails*. Gary Ferguson has turned the Newsletter into a first rate publication. It is his efforts, along with his obituary editor and columnists, that keep all members informed and up to date with events and photos. Any help you can render with letters or articles is greatly appreciated.

On June 14, the Board will hold it's Summer meeting at the Wings Board Room. At this meeting we will be discussing the future of RNPA and its functions. Please feel free to attend or send emails or letters with your input.

The RNPA Cruise on the St Croix will be June 15, please sign up early. Phil Hallin is asking to be relieved of his duties as coordinator. If you are interested in fulfilling this important position please contact Phil or myself.



Treasurer's Report: Dino OLIVA

As of March 18th, there are 74 members, spouses and/or guests signed up to attend the Dearborn reunion. While it is still early, that number is very disappointing. The amount of time for RNPA's survival gets shorter every day. The number of people eligible to be recruited as members is finite, and unfortunately gets smaller as time passes. As for me, maintaining RNPA as long as possible is one of my main concerns. Without our reunions, RNPA's future is in doubt.

Dearborn is not Detroit. I say again, Dearborn is not Detroit.

The Ford Museum in Dearborn is a one of a kind. If you've never visited it this is your chance. It's a short ride from the hotel to the museum. Sign up today. Help keep RNPA going. I'm looking forward to seeing about 200 of you there. Come to Dearborn and lets have a drink together and then start planning our next reunion in 2018.



MOST LIKELY THIS IS THE FIRST TIME...

...I have ever re-published an article from an earlier issue.

Eleven years ago this month John Doherty's wonderful "Shazm" appeared in issue number 178. I was so impressed with his writing that I asked him to become one of our contributing columnists. Thankfully he agreed.

(Note to future editors: Always hire someone that can do your job better than you can!)

Never having been a particular fan of science fiction, I nevertheless found "Shazm" fascinating and thought provoking—and very well done. I have no way of knowing if people outside our industry would find it appealing since it is so industry-specific, but I sure did. Some things are well worth reading twice.

It's also worth noting that it first appeared twenty one years ago in the May, 1996 issue of *Air Line Pilot*. Considering the state of computer technology at the time, his fiction is quite remarkable.

SPEAKING OF CONTRIBUTING COLUMNISTS

I wrote this in the Editor's Notes in that very same issue number 178:

"It's the contributors that makes Contrails what it is. If you agree, it might be a good idea to tell each of them how much they are appreciated. Even better, you might follow their lead and contribute an article of your own."

That sentiment applies just as much now as it did then. We are much the richer for having a "stable" of such talented writers.

This issue James Baldwin's *A Stabilized Approach* reminds us that the simple act of navigating wasn't always so simple. To paraphrase a topical quote, "Who knew it was so difficult to navigate without knowing longitudes and the ability to keep time."

Erika Armstrong's *A Chick in the Cockpit* offers what may well prompt a little controversy—do men or women make better pilots? You probably won't fail to read that one!

ACTING ON PARTIAL INFORMATION

Forgive me, please, for what is possibly political. I may well be bending my own rules.

Many of you will recognize the following note from an anonymous submission to my request for stories about your recollections of 9-11 in the August, 2011 issue. By "recognize" I mean that similar events more than likely have happened to you—as they have to me.

What strikes me about this is how it could have been written yesterday rather than more than six years ago. Without complete and accurate information and the desire to *listen, understand and process* that information I guess these problems will continue for a long, long time.

Here's the note:

"I flew from DTW to LGA on the first day after 9/11 that flights were allowed into the New York airports. When I met the FAs on the pre-departure brief at DTW, one of the FAs was a young man about 21 or so and appeared to be Middle Eastern. He also seemed a bit nervous. I noticed he had an accent so I asked where he was from. He replied, "Chicago, I am Greek." I asked how long he had been with NWA and he said 3 months.

"Shortly after I entered the flight deck to start my pre-flight checks, one of the other FAs came up and said that she knew the guy and that he was Iraqi and had never lived in Chicago, as far as she knew. I called the lead FA and the Iraqi guy up to the Flight Deck to sort everything out. It turned out that he was afraid to admit that he was from the Middle East, and apologized for the deception.

"I checked him out thoroughly before allowing him to stay on board to N.Y. But that is not the point of my story. Another young FA, I'll call her Cindy, because that name fits, went to her supervisor and reported that I was a racist—that I had singled out the young man based solely on his appearance. Welcome to the NEW AMERICA. Please do not use my name, I am returning to the line next month after an extended disability and don't need that attention."

Whatchabeenupto?

We've Got M@il



JIM
HOUDEK **FL**

Dino,
Old NWA tennis tournament still going on about 40 years—now known as Delta tennis. Happening [was] 4/3-4/8 Boca Raton area. There are a few of old guys like me that participate and we extend an open invitation to all [for next year]. Yup, still trying to fool people!
Jim Houdek

JANET
GILBERTSON **MT
NV**

Dino,
Thanks to you and everyone for the hard work to keep RNPA going. Buzz continues to go down hill but is still at home; it'll continue as long as I can keep it up. Also, thanks to your wife for all of us girls know she is the force behind the force!
God Bless,
Janet M. Gilbertson



GEORGEIA
PAPPAS-JOHNSON **MN
FL**

Dear Gary, Bill & Dino,
Thank you to all of you for the beautiful job on Bob's obit for the last Contrails. I was very impressed—and then you sent the extra copies that I forwarded to all the kids. Truly wonderful and I got responses immediately that they were thrilled, too. They know it's a first-class group and this just added to your reputation. So thank you, again, from the bottom of my heart.
An additional special thank you to you all as well as Gary Pisel, Phil Hallin, & Denny Olden for the extra help in getting Bob's pension straightened out with Delta. I am receiving it now after contacting Elaine Miller, Program Manager for Delta Care, (Gary Pisel's contact) who turned me over to Linda Little and it got sorted out very quickly!!! Their phone #s: 404-715-1726 for Elaine and 404-773-8171 for Linda. (In case you get called by another widow.)
Also your RNPA form for spouses was very necessary AND MUCH

APPRECIATED. Good work, guys!
Hope to see you at the next RNPA outing! (Am now a member, myself, as I sent my check when I got the notice.)
Love,
Georgia

SANDY
MAZZU **NC**

Sandy and I have had a good year and looking forward to our granddaughter's wedding in September. It will be a big family reunion! Thanks again for all you do for RNPA. We appreciate it.
Lou & Sandy Mazzu

HARRY
BEDROSSIAN **WA**

Happy New Year Dino,
Hope you and family are well. Geri and I are still doing well with the usual ailments that come in the 80s.
Thanks to you and all the guys that make the publication possible.
Semper Fi,
Harry Bedrossian

I have organized the MSP Summer Cruise on the St. Croix for the past several years. Now I am looking for someone who would be willing to take over. I will be in charge this year and will show that person the ropes the next year and then will no longer be involved.

I will be 78 by then and feel it is time for me to step away. It has been my pleasure to be involved in this popular event that keeps us connected. I sincerely hope it will be continued.

The pay is not great but it doubles every year!
Call me or email me if you are interested.

Thanks,
Phil Hallin • 612-710-5608 • pehallin@blackhole.com

MICK
NEAL

CA

Dino,

All is well in my world. I am living in Laguna Beach, California. My health is very good and I am still playing golf; present handicap 13.

I do enjoy the RNPA news and hope that everyone is happy and healthy.

Mick Neal

MIKE
RISTOW

CA
AZ

Dear Dino,

I try not to take much for granted, but you and the rest of the RNPA leadership make it pretty easy to keep up on the good news and sad news. I often am taken by surprise and saddened by much of the news of untimely death and illness, at the same time reminded of the outstanding people we were so privileged to share a big part of our lives with. So I appreciate the work and organization required to keep the spirit alive.

Janice and I have lived in Santa Barbara long enough now to actually see it rain. We are very active playing, golf, tennis, pickleball, and lawn bowling.

I am staying busy working part-time for the Foundation For Affordable Housing, doing asset management for 45 properties in California and Oregon. Janice devotes many hours working for CALM (Child Abuse Listening and Mediation), an organization that has made an amazing difference to children in Santa Barbara and surrounding areas.

As Wayne Spohn is fond of saying, "I get up at 7 with nothing to do, and by noon I am way behind."

Thanks for everything,
Mike Ristow

WALLY
WEBER

MN

Dino,

Enclosed is my check for the 2017 dues.

On December 28th, I accompanied my son Steve on his last trip as a B-767 captain for Delta Airlines.

Also on board was his immediate family. Riding in the cockpit with him was his son, Brian. Brian is presently a B-737 pilot for a regional carrier. However, February 6, he start[ed] a new career as a Delta pilot.

I am in my 33rd year of retirement. Starting NWA on August 5th, 1942 as a mechanic, retiring on August 19th, 1983, as a DC-10 captain. A wonderful and rewarding period of time.

It was my goal to live long enough to see my son retire and my grandson to fly for a major carrier. Both of these have now occurred. So, the Weber family airline legacy continues on.

Sincerely
Wallace W. Weber

MIKE
BUCKLEY

AZ

Hi Dino,

Please find my \$45 payment to continue getting the outstanding RNPA magazine. Keep up the good work!

Mike Buckley

FIRST
LASTNAME

CO

Dino,

Thanks for the harassment. I need it, as do most of us, I'm sure.

Thanks for all you do for RNPA.

I remember back when you were negotiating with Nyrop for NWA ALPA, and I thank you again for the many thankless years devoted to so many of us you never met. I hope and trust that your RNPA work is less stressful than Mr. Nyrop was.

Best wishes for 2017, as we all move deeper into the great unknown.

My warm wishes to Karen also, one of the neatest ladies I ever flew with.

Tom Higgins

PETE
DODGE

AZ

Hi Fergie.

It is still hard to believe that I left the cockpit 17 years ago. I am thankful every day that the retirement age was 60 back then. As someone cleverly said, "The only thing I miss are the days off."

With golf, travel and grandkids there is precious little time for much else. Stephanie's health is great, as is mine. We are very thankful for that.

One of the worst parts of growing old is losing our friends all too often and all too soon. We wish all RNPA members good health and more happy years in retirement.

Thanks also to you, Dino, Gary and so many others for keeping RNPA alive and kicking. Great work.

Regards,
Pete Dodge

PRIM
HAMILTON

CA

Thanks Dino for all you do and the other Board Members as well—much appreciated. Looking forward to September and Dearborn.

As Ever, Prim Hamilton

Hi Gary—

First off, thank you for putting the quickly written obit note about Betty Houston in *Contrails*. Her God-daughter would like to have a copy of the magazine but I'm selfish and don't want to give her ours. Is it possible to get an additional copy and how do I go about it?

I mailed Mary Ann a copy. -Ed.

Even though I only flew for seven and a half years so don't know many of the contributors via letters or articles, I really enjoy the magazine and sharing articles with others. That brings up another point. Since one of those whom we share articles with is our son, can someone other than former/current NWA/Delta people belong as an associate such as that son who is a pilot for Alaska?

That is a definite yes! Anyone can join as an affiliate member. As a flight attendant, your husband—one of Northwest's finest, by the way—is an affiliate member. Although RNPA was originated as a group of retired pilots

*it has become a "Northwest family" organization, including friends of our "family." Importantly, without our affiliate members it is doubtful whether we could support *Contrails* as it now exists. There is a long-standing tradition that affiliate members pay less than regular members (NWA and Delta pilots)—usually \$10/year less.*

Your son, Mark, whom I have had the pleasure of meeting, would be most welcome. A membership application is available on page 3, and in each issue.

Lastly, has anyone ever researched/written as to how and when RNPA started and who the initiators were? Just wondering.

*The RNPA website rnpa.org has an explanation of that on the members' opening page. To log on, click the "Members Enter" button. The user name is RNPA and the password is MspSeaNrt (not case sensitive). There are more than five years of back issues of *Contrails* available with a click of the mouse.*

GREAT MAGAZINE! Thanks for all the time everyone involved puts into it!!!

Mary Ann Allmann

The Birth of RNPA (abridged from rnpa.org)

By Nippy Opsahl

In the year of 1970 many retired Northwest Airlines pilots were no longer active members of ALPA and had lost communication with many of their friends and co-workers with whom they had been so close for many years. At that time Frank "Sam" Houston was involved with IFALPA. In talking with pilots from many Domestic Airlines, as well as International Airlines, he learned that retired pilots from some of these Airlines had formed a Retired Pilot Association and were very pleased with it. Sam began to urge other retirees to organize something for the NWA retired pilots.

Harold Barnes and I began talking about approaching other retirees to see what they thought of the idea. I sent out about 25 letters to various retired pilots, who then mentioned the idea to their retired pilot friends. The idea mushroomed among the retired pilot group and a very positive response funneled back to me. I then wrote to several Airlines; UAL, PAA and some others, asking for a copy of the by-laws for their retired pilot organization. From these we began compiling a formative set of By-Laws.

We called a meeting of a few of the Northwest retirees, to be held at the Washington Athletic Club in Seattle, where we discussed this idea of forming a Northwest retired pilot group. Everyone was agreeable, so we wrote a set of by-laws, named the organization Retired Northwest Pilot Association (RENPA), (later changed to RNPA), and elected a slate of officers.

[Later yet, the name was changed to Retired Northwest Airlines Pilots' Association, but still known as RNPA. -Ed.]

Dues were to be \$5.00 per year. The duties of the Secretary/Treasurer were to be keeping a current record of membership, collecting dues, paying the bills, doing all the record keeping as well as editing and publishing a newsletter. I put out the newsletter by myself for a few years and later asked some members to help me collate, stamp and mail out the newsletters.

I kept the secretary/treasurer (& newsletter) job for nine years, then turned it over to Vince Doyle. He kept the job for two years when he passed it on to Herman Muto. Herm carried the job from 1981 until 1989. When it became such a big task, with so many members, he suggested the job be divided into two parts—Secretary/Treasurer for one and the Newsletter a separate job. The Secretary/Treasurer job was taken by Robert N. "Rocky" Rockwell. Herm has edited the Newsletter until present day. *[Not known when this was written. -Ed.]*

Ted Goodwin (not an airline pilot—just a good friend) became our "Artist in Residence." After seeing the logo on the airmail flag designed by Col. Brittin, he created the logo for RNPA, which is used on all stationery headings and newsletters *[Not now.]* He also designed the scrolls and composed the poem for the scroll in "iambic pentameter" verse, as well as designing our name tags. In respect for the hundreds of hours he devoted to RNPA with his art, totally volunteered, Ted was made an honorary RNPA member. This was an honor he truly appreciated.

Laddies in Waiting *Life after Death?*

I am not a religious person although I wish I was, I would like to believe in a life beyond the one we are now living and have tried to be open to that possibility, but, except for two situations, I have seen little to convince me that some part of our being carries on!

The two situations I mention above do provide food for thought though: One morning about a week after my mother in law died, my then wife, Matilda told me that the previous night her mother had appeared standing by the bed and called her name then just smiled at her and disappeared. She told me what her mom was wearing and was adamant that she was not asleep! Matilda had been suffering with great sadness and I feel that her mom had appeared to comfort her.

The only other occasion that allowed me to peek through a crack in the spirit world wall happened at work. In May of 1964 I was preparing for an early morning flight with Pacific Airlines, the captain and I would be flying a 28 passenger DC-3 from San Francisco south through several coastal cities to Los Angeles. With the paperwork completed we still had a little time to kill so decided to have one more cup of coffee before heading out. Just as the skipper started down the stairs to the coffee shop I was knocked to my knees by a black wave of energy, if I hadn't grabbed the stair railing I think I would have been driven to the floor, I don't remember any sound but I was overwhelmed by sadness and despair then it was over, gone as fast as it had arrived.

For some reason I looked up at the clock on the wall: 6:33 AM, we later found out that that was the moment

Pacific Airlines flight 773 with 43 souls onboard was deliberately crashed into the ground by a crazed gunman after shooting the crew to death!

Was I the only person who experienced the "black wave of sadness and despair? Was a friend or loved one on board that made me the first recipient of the bad news? All I have found out is that apparently I only knew the three crew members and I wasn't close to any of them—I must have just been "in the way!"

Aloha from Hawaii
Tommy [Tinker]

Challenger Disaster

On the morning of the Challenger loss I was flying from Miami to Detroit. It was a beautiful, clear, cold day. Our route took us along the western coastline of the Florida peninsula where we had a bright clear view of the Kennedy Space Center with Challenger sitting on the launch pad with pre-launch steam billowing from the base of the rocket. We knew the launch was being delayed because of the cold and were disappointed that we were not going to have the front seat for launch that we thought we might have. As we approached the Tallahassee area we heard a transmission that sounded like "They have launched Challenger." Another voice chimed in, "Great they have launched Challenger"—"no they lost it, it exploded!"

No other transmissions. I decided not to speak of it to the passengers, they would find out soon enough but I became aware, mostly by the stunned silence of my fellow comrades, maybe 6 or 7 aircrew in radio range for this conversation, how we, all of us Americans, share a common connection through our nation's triumphs and failures.

Aloha and S/F

To my Darling Husband,

Before you return from your trip I just want to let you know about the small accident I had with the pickup when I turned into the driveway. Fortunately it's not too bad and I really didn't get hurt, so please don't worry too much about me.

When I turned into the driveway I accidentally pushed down on the accelerator instead of the brake. The garage door is a mess but the pickup fortunately came to a halt when it bumped into your Ferrari. I missed our bikes.

I am really sorry, but I know with your kind-hearted personality you will forgive me. You know how much I love you and care for you my sweetheart. I am enclosing a picture for you.

I cannot wait to hold you in my arms again.

Your loving wife



P.S. Your girlfriend called!

Thanks to Walt Mills



JULIE
AVENSON SIGLER



Dear Sirs,

I'm the child of a retired NWA pilot. I am wondering if my father, Warren (Avie) Avenson, is the only surviving pilot of the crews based in Tokyo between 1947 and 1957. He is now 95 and resides at Emerald Heights, a senior residence in Redmond WA.

If you are familiar with the taped interviews made to celebrate the 50th anniversary of becoming Northwest Orient Airlines, my father was featured in the video made for the occasion.

Dad loved his job and flew until forced by age to retire, thirty years ago. Now, since a minor stroke two years ago, he often identifies the residence staff as his co-pilot and cabin attendants and fellow residents as passengers, preparing to fly to... well, he can't say exactly where. For him, destination is unimportant; flying a 747 was his passion and probably, in his mind, still is! His wife and children are just glad the stroke left him in a "happy" place.

My siblings and I were all born in Tokyo, living in the NWA compound of 20 houses in Shibuya-ku. After Tokyo base was closed to pilots, my parents returned to their home state, Minnesota, and Dad flew out of MSP. (Shortly after our return, we kids were featured in the NWA newsletter, because the four of us had flown enough miles to equal a trip to the moon.) I wish I'd taken notes on all the delightful "airplane stories" Dad told us at the dinner table about interesting people he'd met on his flights, such as Eleanor Roosevelt; the teasing that went on among crew members; and the special

attention he would give any blind or otherwise disabled passengers. He used his experiences with NWA crew and passengers to teach his children how important every person we met was, and how important it was that we appreciate what each person had to offer.

In 1967 Dad wanted to fly overseas again, so he bid SEA and the family moved to Seattle. One memorable trip happened when he was flying into SEA at the time Mount St. Helens was erupting. He requested and was granted clearance to circle the mountain so that his passengers could experience this once-in-a-lifetime scene. He always felt that part of his job was to give passengers a good experience that would encourage them to fly NWA again.

Robert Serling and Dad were friends. In Serling's book, *The Probable Cause*, the first chapter opens by recounting the cockpit conversation of an ordinary, uneventful trip on an ordinary, uneventful day, with my dad named as captain.

If you have knowledge of other surviving crew members (or their children) who were based in Tokyo between 1947 and 57, my mother and I would appreciate hearing from them. My email may be passed to anyone who might be interested in sharing memories.

I've already joined the Friends of the History Centre and sent a couple pieces of NWA memorabilia there. Was disappointed when I tried to find the place last Sept, only to learn it was closed. As soon as the Centre re-opens, I will plan a visit.

Thank you for letting me brag a bit about my father.

Sincerely,
Julie Avenson Sigler
juliecb@hotmail.com

BUD
TERBELL

IL

Dino,

Great publication, wonderful!

Appreciate the work that all of you do to get it published. Gifted writers, all of you. Can relate to John [Doherty's] "Small Victories" concept he referred to several issues back. Having gone thru four* type rating programs at NATCO, can certainly relate!

Best & Happy New Year.

Bud Terbell

*727, 320, 10, 400! Yikes!!

GARY
THOMPSON

MN
AZ

Hi Dino,

I just received my dues notice and thought I had best get at it. RNPA did a great job for our Christmas gathering. I got to shake hands with an awful lot of really great guys. Matter of fact, the longer I am away from "active duty" the more I realize we really had some wonderful people. I look forward to the summer cruise.

Thank you for all you do and have done.

We are in Lake Havasu City, Arizona to beat some of the Minnesota weather.

Take care my friend.

Gary Thompson

ED
TRAUTWEIN

MT

Hello Dino,

Lost my membership address book but fortunately saw your address on the Florida Spring Luncheon flyer. I only get my mail forwarded once a month. Don't want to be late so sending my dues this way. I hope \$45 is still the right amount.

Regards,

Ed Trautwein

DAVE
NELSON

WA

Howdy Dino,

As always, both Holly and I enjoy getting Contrails. We have been busy with finishing our house in Baja, Mexico. It was completed last year and now we are replacing the water shut-off valves and re-working the leaking roof tiles. Building in Mexico ALWAYS ends with repairs and killing an occasional scorpion—and last week a 4 foot rattlesnake. We're right on the water and enjoy waking up to 65 to 75 degrees with afternoon temps in the 80s.

Here in Seattle, I am busy keeping several old classic cars in shape which include a '31 Ford Model A Roadster, a '36 Cord four door, a '37 Cord Roadster and a '68 Vette along with twice a week retired NWA get togetherness—plus a couple doctor's visits thrown in for fun. We also try our best to join the group on the St. Croix River paddleboat cruise and the Montana rodeo in Townsend, Montana in August.

Both Holly and I wish to all good health and happiness.

Ens Dave Nelson, USNR-Ret PS: My most satisfying accomplishment is I've out-lived all the chief pilots who tried to fire me! PPS: I hope all my USMC buddies are still enjoying polishing their brass belt buckles and shoes. (As you was!)

SHIRLEY
OTT

FL

Just want to say "Thank You" to the whole crew for producing a great magazine.

May 2017 be a good year for all and their families.

Shirley Ott

DAN
STACK

NH

Hi guys -

I'm in the middle of a great book "Lords of the Sky." A history of combat aviation. How quickly it evolved from WW I. It is about 500 pages.

Author is Dan Hampton, a retired USAF LC. Yes, it is in paperback I think about \$17. RAF - Luftwaffe - Russia - USAF - USN. Various aces, policies and politics. Aircraft evolution and performance.

I think it is well researched. Enjoy it if you get it. Might even be on Kindle.

Cheers,
Dan

PETE
HEGSETH

MN

Dino,

I can't believe that another year has gone by. (Next month I will have been retired 20 years!)

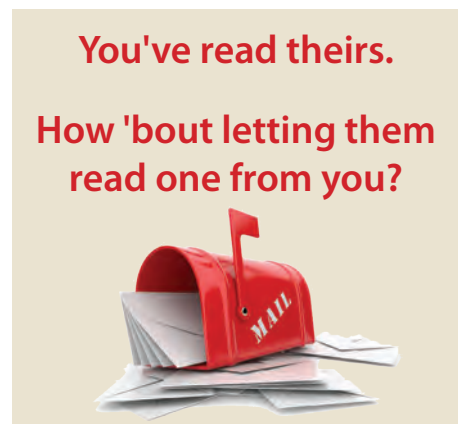
Things are the same—still live in Minnesota, still doing some farming, but life is Good!

Look forward to every issue of CONTRAILS.

We do get to Florida panhandle for two weeks in January. Air Force friends live in Panama City and Destin.

Thanks for all that all of you do to keep RNPA going.

Pete Hegseth



**You've read theirs.
How 'bout letting them
read one from you?**



Tom Schellinger reports:

PSMSF PRODUCING RESULTS

I received this message regarding one of the PSMSF Selectees from 2011. Just thought our members would enjoy hearing of how one scholarship winner put the money to good use. She is currently working at NASA in Houston at the Johnston Space Center Operations Division as a Flight Controller and RPE (real time planning expert) for the International Space Station.

Please consider a donation to the scholarship fund. My best to all, Tom Schellinger

From her original 2011 thank you letter:

Isabelle Edhlund wrote: "My name is Isabelle and I'm an Aerospace Engineering major. I graduated this year from a dual-enrollment program at Broward College that allowed me to earn my Associate of Arts in Aerospace Engineering along with my high school diploma. I'm excited to continue at the University of Florida this fall and pursue my bachelor's as well as a minor in Biomechanics!

I owe my interest in aviation and aerospace to a line of pilots and engineers in my family, including my grandpa Ken who is a happily retired NWA pilot in Alaska with my grandma. My dad is a recreational pilot also and our yearly trips to AirVenture since I was seven years old have had a tremendous influence on my career path."

I can't thank you enough, Mr. Schellinger, Wings Financial, and the NWA Retired Pilots Association, for providing this opportunity for students like myself that have big dreams. I will work hard and remember your support as I begin a new and challenging chapter in my life! Thank you!"

Isabelle is the granddaughter of NWA retired pilot Kenneth Yehlik. She finished in the top 10% of her high school class and also earned Highest Honors for her AA degree.



Although the 2017 enrollment period for scholarship applications is now closed (Feb 28), it is not too early to begin encouraging your family membersto think about applying in 2018. The application period opens in October each year and will close again the end of February. Six \$5,000 scholarships are available each year and there are usually only about 100-125 applicants. Go to the Wings web site (wingsfinancial.com) and look under "Financial Education" for the latest information. If any of this program interests you, please consider a donation to the scholarship fund. Any amount is welcome.

My best to all,
Tom Schellinger

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Be sure to stop by the ALPA exhibit booth in the Education and Career Center within Aviation Gateway Park. Also look for nightly themed activities and ALPA participation in other EAA AirVenture Oshkosh events.

For more information, contact us at ALPAOshkosh@alpa.org.
For information about Oshkosh 2017, visit www.eaa.org/en/airventure.



A STABILIZED approach



Contributing Columnist **James Baldwin**

Dead Reckoning



I can almost remember the first time my instructor used the words in the title. I was learning about aerial navigation in my Cessna 150 and his description sounded pretty much like the method I had used to get to where I was in life. As a typical teenager I had pretty much just pointed and shot. Wind correction? Drift angle? Listening to the sage advice of parents? I guess that should have come into it, but not for a 17 year old. Of course, we were invincible. We just pointed and shot. A lot of the time, metaphorically, there wasn't even much aiming going on. We just pointed and shot. Probably not ideal, I guess, but as in ages past, it worked. I was, at least, still standing there.

Not so for The Commander-in-Chief of the British Fleets, Sir Cloudesley Shovell, as he awoke uneasily to the familiar smell of spent gunpowder. The omnipresent salt laden air had long permeated the wooden walls of his quarterdeck cabin, adding to the stale, unmistakable odor. The nightmare he had been enduring in his short, fitful sleep was thankfully dashed as the jarring rolling motion from the heavy seas reminded him they were nowhere near their planned destination. Adding to his worry was knowing their exact position was indeed, unknown. The overcast sky had not allowed his navigators a fix to determine their latitude for days. And, the year was 1707, and as had been the case for centuries, no sailor in the world had ever been able to determine their longitude. Their true position was truly unknown.

It was either the death of the childless Charles II of Spain in November of 1700, or perhaps, the imperial ambitions of all belligerents involved, that placed the long contested succession of the Spanish throne into action. His deathbed bequethment to his grandnephew Philip V,



Duke of Anjou, meant the Spanish and French kingdoms would be united under the House of Bourbon. This imbalance of power, clearly unacceptable to England, Austria and the Dutch Republic, threw the continent into the thirteen year long War of Spanish Succession. The British responded in support of the continental land forces of Prince Eugene of Savoy and others with a fleet of ships sailing from England. War was formally declared that May of 1702.

It was indeed a wide war with battles across the entire continent and after numerous campaigns, it wasn't until late August of 1707 that Shovell was commanded to end his last engagement while at the Port of Toulon. He was to return a major portion of the British line of ships to Portsmouth for refitting as they had been collectively at sea or in battle for nearly three years. After sinking two major French ships of the line and damaging several others, Shovell retreated. The French fleet, either in combat or by their own hand had been effectively eliminated. Britain would rule the Med for years to come.

As he later assembled his ships at Gibraltar, Shovell was assisted by the "sailing masters" of the fleet. They were the navigators of the blue and he would depend on them for the journey to Portsmouth, trusting their guidance on whole. Of course none of those present in that fleet, or any other, would have any idea of the longitude accompanying their dynamic latitude at any given point in a voyage.

This vexing problem had plagued navigators of the sea for centuries and the two basic approaches to a solution were as different as Republicans and Democrats. Despite



Flagship *Association*, followed by *Eagle*, *Romney* and *Firebrand*, all lost on the Scilly Isles, pictured in this eighteenth century engraving.



This sextant was made in the late 18th century, but they first appeared in the 1760s. They measured latitude by measuring the sun's distance from the horizon, and calculated longitude by measuring the angle between the moon and stars.

numerous attempts at using the sun, the moon, the stars and planets as a reference, no method to determine longitude with them had yet been perfected. A prominently recognized astronomer, a young John Flamsteed, had suggested to King Charles II that an observatory be established to map the heavens. As head of the largest merchant fleet in the world the king did feel an urgency in determining a solution, wanted the solution to be British and decreed it be built. Flamsteed would spend the next 40 years of his life researching and cataloging the stars above from the new observatory in Greenwich, but in the end would be unwilling to publish the resulting catalog of stars until it met his vision of perfection.

Using a time reference for determining longitude was equally confusing and the reason was simple: no one really knew at any given moment what time it really was. Well into the seventeenth century, knowing the exact time was not possible. There was no such thing as an accurate watch or clock. Sun dials, sand vial hourglasses, water clocks, yes. Watches and clocks, no. Eventually, a Dutchman, Christian Huygens, in the year 1656, invented the first pendulum clock that kept reasonable and reliable time. The accuracy of his fragile device improved previous methods by an order of magnitude. It was now possible to reduce the amount of time gained or lost from 15 minutes per day to 15 seconds.

The reasoning of the age followed that if, at a distant location, the time of observation could be compared to the time at a reference point, it was simple arithmetic to know where you were in relation. If the time at a given

location was earlier than at a known reference point, the location would be to the west. If the local time was later, then it must be east of the reference.

At that time, the simple arithmetic began with knowing, as it remains the standard today, the planet Earth averages 21,600 nautical miles in circumference. That distance—or any great circle—was divided into 360 degrees and then further divided by 60 to make angular divisions called “minutes,” and in 1617, British mathematician Edmund Gunter assigned that division to a nautical mile. This resulted in 21,600 minutes or nautical miles. Since the earth rotates one degree every four minutes, it travels 60 miles at the equator in that time. Or, in a minute of time, 15 miles in distance, at the equator. As the lines of longitude, called meridians, narrow towards the poles, the distances per minute of revolution are easily calculated to be less, and this was well understood by navigators of that age.

But, for a mariner, the Huygens' pendulum timekeeper was no blessing; it would not have been able to work under the conditions of a sea voyage.

Sir Cloudesley had the use of neither the time nor the stars, and it was with dead reckoning that the British fleet departed Gibraltar on September 29th. The weather at that time of the year was stormy with limited visibility, worsening as they approached the more northern latitudes. On October 21st, the Admiral made an observation, probably the first he had been able to take for many days. At noon he ordered the fleet to be brought to and lay by, summoning all of the sailing masters to board the

flagship *Association*. He consulted them as to the fleet's likely position. The prevailing opinion with only minor dissension was they were near the coast of France and should take up a course to the northeast, entering the English Channel. This was the dead reckoning course Sir Cloudesley chose and he then detached and dispatched the *Lenox*, *La Valeur*, and *Phoenix* to proceed to Falmouth to accompany other merchant ships.

In actuality, their position was southwest of the Scilly Isles as they weighed anchor late the next afternoon. It was just past eight o'clock on that dark evening in high and angry seas that the spiny, semi-submerged rocks of the Scilly Isles first found the *Association*. As she crashed into the rocks at speed she was damaged irreparably and sank in mere minutes. Unable to react, she was followed by the *Eagle*, the *Romney* and the *Firebrand*. An estimated 2,000 hands were lost, including Sir Cloudesley himself. It would go down as one of the greatest maritime disasters in British history and further cause the royalty to seek an answer to this age old problem.

It wasn't until May of 1714 that a petition from merchants and seamen was presented at Westminster Palace demanding action on the matter of determining longitude. The Parliamentary committee that was assembled acted with the aid of Sir Isaac Newton and astronomer Edmond Halley. Both had been well aware of the problem and felt that the celestial method might be a more likely solution. Newton recognized and explained a time based method would work but cautioned timekeeping devices of that accuracy did not exist.

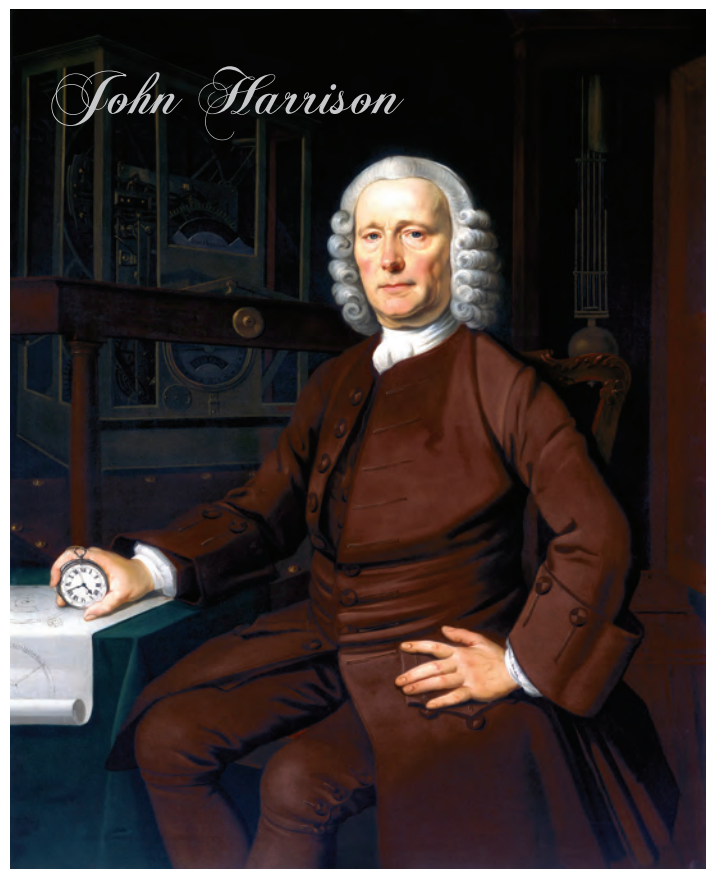
It was in July of 1714 under the reign of Queen Anne that the Longitude Act was issued. A sum of 20,000 English pounds was offered for a method to determine longitude to an accuracy of half a degree. Lesser amounts were offered for slightly less accuracy. The Act established the Board of Longitude which was comprised of commissioners from the navy, mathematicians, professors and government officials. Of course the large sum of money offered encouraged valid research and work but also attracted a plethora of odd and downright ridiculous ideas and proposals. Newton himself, now an aged 72 years, grew impatient. He and Halley managed to do the then equivalent of hacking and pirated a copy of most of Flamsteed's work, publishing their own. Flamsteed was so upset he gathered and burned most of the 400 copies. The completed catalog would not be published until after his death in 1725.

Equally understandable was the frustration of determining the time at a distant reference point without the telephone or wireless communication of today. How was it done? It wasn't. The local time could be known in several ways, even aboard a ship at sea, but the time at the reference point was unknown if an accurate clock with

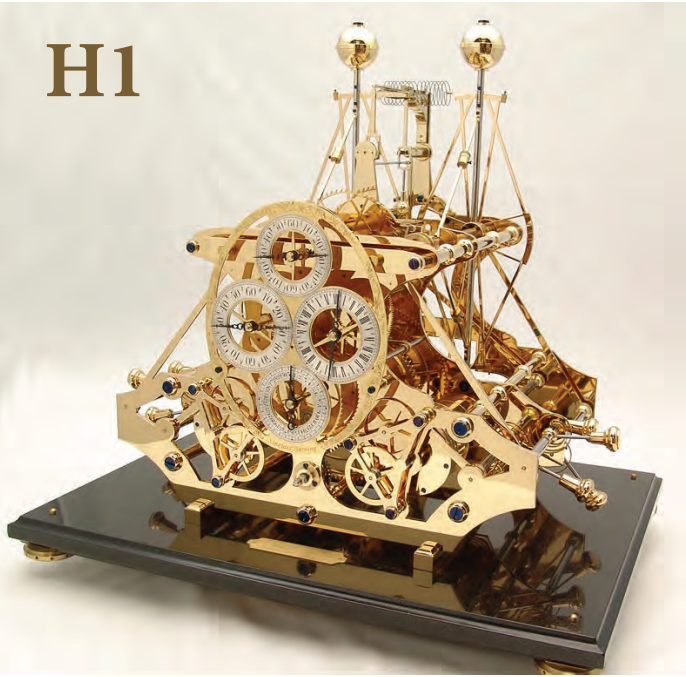
that time was not at hand. The time was needed in order to compute that difference into the present longitude of the observer.

Having been decided long ago somewhere in ancient Egypt that there are 24 hours in a day, it is convenient that a complete revolution of 360 degrees is split into equal 15 degree divisions. Each one is then an average time zone. At its rate of rotation, the earth turns on its axis 1 degree every four minutes and, at the equator, traverses 60 miles. Pretty simple: if there is a time difference of 180 minutes, the difference in longitude would be 45 degrees, west if early, east if later. Again, the problem? Someone out in the Atlantic on a voyage to the West Indies would have no idea what time it was at home. There were no accurate timekeeping devices workable at sea.

Like today's general knowledge of the need for finding a cure for cancer, the knowledge of the need in that age, especially in seafaring towns, for a longitude solution was well known by many. John Harrison, not an instantly recognizable name for most, especially outside of Great Britain, was a young man skilled in carpentry and wood joining and was keenly interested in clocks. In 1713 at the age of 20 years, he had constructed his first longcase clock, made entirely of wood. In the 1720's he continued to fabricate these freestanding clocks each incorporating ideas and improvements with accuracy in mind. Though unreported as to when, he was surely aware of the longi-



H1



tude problem even early on. In 1730 Harrison had designed his first sea clock and travelled to London to seek financial aid. So impressed was the leading clock maker of the day that he agreed to finance the young man and his design. Five years later, H1 was complete. After presenting it to the Board of Longitude and it doing well in sea trials, the Board advanced him funds for further development. He spent five more years on his second version, which he abandoned as it failed his then expected level of perfection. Almost inexplicably, it took 17 years until he was finally willing to present to the Board, the H3, his third version. In defense of the time it took to produce the device, significant technological advances were discovered and made. The use of a bimetallic strip to prevent the distortion of temperature and using caged ball bearings for losses due to friction were important advances. Harrison developed and used both before delays by the bureaucracy prevented it from being evaluated at sea.

It was well understood by all who pursued using time keeping for determining longitude the cumulative effect a small daily error had. During the typical 40 day voyage across the Atlantic, the error had to be kept to less than 2 seconds per day in order to qualify for a cumulative result of one degree or less in position. Temperature, humidity, changes in pressure and the variable force of gravity all had an effect on the accuracy of the instrument.

Harrison finally recognized the device had to be reduced to the size of a large watch for functional reasons and in 1759 the H4 was ready.

It was a confluence of events that finally led the adherents of a celestial solution to be able to announce to merchants and seamen that they had the tools and data to

allow them to make the stars and moon point to an accurate position of longitude. The invention of the quadrant and the use of a complete set of star charts had made the heavens available for use. Though not simple and requiring several complicated sightings and calculations that took as long as four hours, it was nonetheless magnitudes better than the historical guesses of their onboard sailing masters.

It was now 1759 and the donkey and the elephant had finally come face to face; the heavens and the clock could both be used to finally determine the actual position of a ship at sea. Which would prevail would be determined by those who used each and had a choice.

The seaborne tests of the watch, biased to fail by the celestial group, had all been pretty successful, in several cases surprising the commander of their actual position. The famous Captain James Cook, after using the celestial lunar distance method on his first voyage, used a reproduction of the H4 on the two subsequent voyages including his final one. Cook ended up charting much of the southern Pacific Ocean with it and his log entries mentioned its accuracy.

The “small world of aviation” we all speak of at times really isn’t all that unique. William Bligh, later to become commander of the famed *HMAV Bounty*, was sailing master for Captain Cook on his last voyage. We all know how that turned out for Cook, and it was Bligh who was able to relate the story back in England. When the *Bounty* was ready for sail, it was Bligh who had been loaned yet another copy of the H4. By its 1789 sailing date, the watch was now referred to as a “marine chronometer.” After the mutiny, it was retained by Fletcher Christian and was not recovered from Pitcairn Island until 1840. It was then passed through several hands before reaching the National Maritime Museum in London, where it resides today. Talk about a small world!

Now of course we know that wireless communication made the time based solution practical in the 20th century and was widely used. Even so, quadrants and sextants are still carried in many vessels as some sort of backup. I’m sure there are stalwarts, but when queried, my limited number of sailing friends seem to mutter the initials “GPS” pretty quickly.

The longitude problem of that age required a significant advance in technology for the eventual solution. Similar to advances made today, it was the significant amount of work by an international group that finally led to a celestial method of navigation and John Harrison, though assisted by others, is the recognized inventor of the marine chronometer.

It makes me think: Maybe the point and shoot method of dead reckoning isn’t so bad. After all, I’m still standing here! ✈



CONTRIBUTING COLUMNIST JOHN DOHERTY

The

WAY

it

WAS



Everything I Ever Needed to Know I Learned From Flying



I grew up in a small town in southern Oregon. A really small town. My life was so provincial that we never went to the big city of Portland once. I had a summer job in nearby Klamath Falls doing construction. From the roofs I worked on I could see F-101's taking off and landing from Kingsley Air Force Base. I would watch those beautiful airplanes in wonderment, knowing deep in my heart that the guys who operated those aircraft lived in a universe that was completely beyond my reach.

I flew home from the University of Oregon Thanksgiving 1962 on a West Coast DC-3, the first time I'd ever been in the air. I was stunned at the roar of the engines and the acceleration down the runway and amazed at how quickly we got from Eugene to Medford. The student fare was \$12.

Less than a year later I was in Navy flight school flying formation, doing air to air gunnery, and landing on an aircraft carrier.

I learned: Yes I can

When I was going through Navy flight school, one of the dreaded phases was basic instrument flying. Up to that point all our flying had been visual. The practice was to put the student pilot in the backseat of a T-2 or F-9 under the hood and do basic instrument drills. A hood that completely enclosed us with nothing but our instruments to look at. Even a peek was impossible. And besides our basic instrument work was usually done at night, so there wasn't much to look at outside anyway. Someone had dreamed up patterns to fly under the hood.

STAY OPEN MINDED.
THINGS AREN'T
ALWAYS WHAT THEY
SEEM TO BE.



One of them was called the “yoke” pattern. Exquisitely difficult. Then there were the timed exercises. Start the clock at the beginning of a 1000 fpm descent. Maintain heading and airspeed, and when the first thousand foot descent is complete start a 1000 fpm climb back to the original altitude. Repeat. Clock going all the time with the sweep second hand going through the 12 at the same time the altitude reversal was reached.

Got that down? Okay now do the climbs and descents in a standard rate turn completing a 90° heading change and the thousand foot altitude change right on the minute, reverse course and reverse the descent to a climb on the minute. Maintain the prescribed airspeed. Repeat. All of this with a hyper-critical instructor in the front seat looking for a reason to keep you from being a naval aviator.

Put in 12 hours of this exercise over the period of six or seven flights. Pure torture, but Dang! At the end of the basic instruments syllabus, I could fly the clocks.

There is no easy way to learn difficult things

You’ve seen those gag horn rimmed glasses attached to a big nose and bushy eyebrows, right? Kind of like the Groucho Marx look? I was boarding an airplane one dark morning. One of the flight attendants was getting her galley ready to go. At first glance I thought she was wearing such a pair of gag glasses. I was about to burst out laughing to show my appreciation when I realized there was no gag. The glasses, nose and the eyebrows were real.

Be careful what you laugh at

I was flying an F-8 Crusader off the coast of South Carolina one summer day. It was hazy with no identifiable horizon, and the sky and the sea were about the same color. There was a scattering of little flat bottomed cumulus a few thousand feet above the ocean. I had been hassling with a squadron mate for half an hour, and up-and-down had become somewhat theoretical with my focus on my opponent, speed, altitude, and Gs.

The hassle complete I unloaded the G, leveled off and started figuring out where I was. “Curious,” I thought. How come those little cues were at a 45° angle with the flat bottoms pointing up, not down. It took me a few heartbeats of twilight zone confusion to realize that the world was doing just fine and I was the one that was confused.

Things are not always as they seem

Sometime in the mid-80s the company asked that we stand by the door to say goodbye to passengers and thank them as they deplaned. During my first experiences most of the passengers replied in a cheerful way to my thanks. But not all. I remember one guy in particular who replied to my “Thank you,” by saying “Nice flight!” Then as he stepped out onto the jetway he exclaimed “NOT!” A linguistic rejoinder that was just coming into fashion at that time.

For a while I found it disconcerting to get negative responses when I knew that everyone had done their best to provide a safe and pleasant flight. As I became accustomed to the practice I noticed that on every flight most people would be at least polite. And maybe 10% would have some axe to grind. Didn’t have much to do with how the flight went.

You can’t please everyone, and if somebody is unhappy, it’s probably more about them than it is about me

The longest flight I worked in my career was a 16+05 from MSP to HKG. From the North American heartland to deep into East Asia in a few hours.

I was standing by the door in MSP one day greeting passengers. Headed to PDX. A little old lady paused to ask me how long the flight was. I replied, “A little over three hours.”

“Oh my, so long!” she muttered. My rejoinder, “Well, it used to take three months.”

The Earth is a small interconnected place. When a butterfly flaps its wings in Rio de Janeiro it creates a tornado in Alabama

Another time when I was standing by the door greeting boarding passengers, another little old lady stopped and told me that she was not a good flyer and she was worried that it would be a rough flight. I told her not to worry, I was expecting a smooth flight. She looked at me and opined, “Well you would just say that anyway.” I replied, “Okay then, it’s going to be rough.”

Some people aren’t going to believe me no matter what I say

Back in the 70s I flew a lot of mountain stations. On an intermediate stop in Missoula, I decided to go into the terminal after I had done my walk around. These were days long before security showed up, and the little terminal was full of a mix of passengers and their friends and families seeing them off.

I strolled into the terminal taking some satisfaction in the attention I was getting. Young women looking at me with an appraising eye. Little kids tugging on their mother’s skirts and saying, “Look mommy, a pilot.”

Feeling the need, I strolled into the toilet. Suddenly I realized something wasn’t quite right: no urinals! I scurried back out of the women’s room and made my way through the cluster of now laughing Montanans.

Pride goes before a fall

I was pilot flying in a 757 approaching LAX from the North. The copilot was making entries in the FMC. We were navigating through a bit of complex airspace when the FMCs decided to re-sync, and all our navigation displays went away. I’d been flying with the copilot in the previous months and felt that we had developed a rapport. Thinking in my mind that I was being clever I offered a sarcastic, “Okay, now what did you do?” (Knowing that the resync had nothing to do with the co-pilot’s entries.)

The copilot, not amused, replied “You don’t have to be an asshole about it. I’m doing the best they can.”

Sarcasm is seldom a good idea; and we can never fully know the impact of our statements

Early on I was flying sidesaddle one foggy frosty night out of Spokane. Something seemed not quite right during the takeoff roll, but I was too green to understand what it was. After a very long takeoff roll, airborne, the Captain said, “Better put on some engine anti-ice.”

Moments after the anti-ice came on, EPR dropped significantly. We had about half of full thrust on. The Cap-



tain turned to me and said, “You’ll find the EPR gauges on the 707 aren’t very reliable either.”

People usually know when someone is trying to fool them

Along with most of the readers of this column, I endured a number of strikes and the resulting loss of income. In retrospect I am glad for having had that experience.

Loyalty and integrity are more important than money

Pilots know better than most the importance of clear communication. Over the decades communication failure of one kind or the other resulted in loss of life.

I am thinking of the scripted deicing procedure as an example of what we adopted as a defense against such miscommunication. Every word specific for both the pilot and the ground crew.

Compared to the communication protocols we developed as pilots, the general population’s communication practices are sloppy and endlessly subject to misinterpretation and misunderstanding.

I can communicate clearly even though those around me can’t

Tell you what, let’s save this one for another time.

Be sure your sins will find you out





A Chick in the Cockpit



Contributing Columnist Erika Armstrong



CHICKS AND ROOSTERS IN THE COCKPIT: *Do Men or Women Make Better Pilots?*

The Answer

I wasn't searching for the answer because I really didn't think there was one. I discovered it by chance one day when I was a first officer on a B727-200. Because I witnessed the answer with my own eyes, I accidentally became a better pilot. The answer is quite simple: men and women are different. Shocking, I know, but the question to the answer is: who are better pilots, men or women?

Despite the myriad of opinions, the answer is always going to be neither, because they're different. Because of these differences, men and women pilots fly with different parts of their brain and because of that, I can prove that women can be better pilots...oh, okay, I can also prove men can be better too. It depends on the situation so focus now (just the men), and let me explain.

As a new first officer on a B727-200, I was struggling with crosswind landings. Since I'd been in the engineer's seat for a year, I had lost my touch for flying in general and was frustrated with myself that I couldn't get in

the groove of crosswind landings. I could do them, but I had to fight it every inch of the way. We were on the third flight leg of our five-leg day and I had just finished pounding another one onto the runway during a crosswind landing. It wasn't that bad, just that I didn't have the "feel" for a good crosswind command of the airplane. I would check the wind on the ATIS and during final, I'd call tower for another "wind check" while simultaneously watching all the wind socks, the tree branches blowing, the birds in the area, the weeds near the runway and if there were any horses below us on the final approach path, I'd check to see which direction their rears were pointed into the wind. I would draw in ten different inputs and make decisions on that instead of "listening" to what the airplane was speaking to me.

On the next leg, I watched my captain who had an excellent touch in crosswinds. He had a variable 40 to 70-degree gusty crosswind up to 20 knots. When we turned final, I asked him if he wanted a wind check. He said "absolutely not. That will mess me up. I just watch

this little screw that sticks out on the windshield wiper and keep it just a little to the left of centerline.” Wait, what? Really? Just one thing? Yep, he rolled it on. He tuned out all the other inputs and focused on one thing. It was like an addition problem that was figured out for him, and the answer of all that input was at the end of that screw that stuck out of the windshield wiper.

The Moment

That moment taught me how, in this case, thinking like a man might help. I learned I had to refocus on what inputs I was paying attention to. You can't focus if you're paying attention to all of them. Being able to draw in and process several environmental senses at one time is predominately a benefit in the cockpit, especially during an emergency, but you have to learn to recognize you're doing it and to also be able to shift your brain when necessary.

The Brain

The overview of the brain can be narrowed down to four primary variables: how it processes information, its chemistry, structural differences and brain activity. In general, women use nearly ten times more white matter than men, and men generally use more gray matter. According to Psychology Today, “Gray matter areas of the brain are localized. They are information and action processing centers in specific splotches in a specific area of the brain. This can translate to a kind of tunnel vision when they are doing something. Once they are deeply engaged in a task or game, they may not demonstrate much sensitivity to other people or surroundings.” This is why your husband has to turn down the radio in the car to read a road sign.

“White matter is the networking grid that connects the brain's gray matter and other processing centers with one another. This profound brain-processing difference is probably the reason you may have noticed that girls tend to more quickly transition between tasks than boys do. The gray-white matter difference may explain why, in adulthood, females are great multi-taskers, while men excel in highly task focused projects.”¹ That's why your



mom can be on the phone, cooking dinner, reading a recipe, and she can still hear when you tell your sister that if you eat the eye of a potato, you'll go blind. She'll be in the middle of a sentence on the

phone, pull the phone away from her ear, yell at you, and then complete her sentence on the phone call...all while stirring the potatoes in the pot while measuring a teaspoon of salt.

Given my lesson with the crosswind landing, it was easy enough for me to reconfigure my brain to reorder the input. I still couldn't tune out all the input, I just did like my captain and focused on one primary indicator and then used the rest to supplement the input. The result was better landings in both crosswind and normal conditions.

The Research

If you rummage through the research, you'll find that only a small percentage of brains will fit neatly into one category of male or female. There is always overlap and in the aviation world, the personality type that is drawn to aviation is a brain that has a stronger control over emotions (oh darn, our engine is on fire versus... Oh My God! We're gonna die! Our engine is on fire! What do I do?!), better spatial orientation, and the ability to keep track of multiple environmental cues at the same time—just like a girl. While flying IFR, being able to read all six primary flight instruments at the same time is a benefit, so a male brain is being forced to act like a female brain while in the cockpit. Read that previous sentence again.

A pilot brain will also have a stronger hippocampus which is also known as the map reader of the brain. While the male brain might be better at reading a map quickly, a female brain will remember the map and the routes better and are less likely to get lost. And, if the female brain feels like they're off-track, they're more inclined to recheck the map while the male brain will feel more certain that it's correct, even if completely off-track.

So that's why the answer to the question will always be neither. Female pilots are better than male pilots and male pilots are better than female pilots, it just depends on the moment and the person. In an emergency, the most critical behavior in a cockpit, the balance is that a female brain can more rapidly gather and interpret all the data while the male brain can more accurately



evaluate the primary malfunction—but there is always a sequence of malfunctions, so which brain is better? Neither. What is better is having both brains in the cockpit.

Flight Training Based on the “Man Brain” Methods

During instrument ground school, pilots are taught the “man” brain way of scanning instruments. There are dozens of questions on the written exam about it, but I tell my students I don’t care if they get them all wrong in my class. The two choices students have are the Primary/Secondary Method or the Control Performance Method. Both force the student to choose one instrument to focus on first and then sequentially use supporting information. Yes, the desired result is to create a scan, but having the brain be forced to sequence the input one at a time is the “man” way and we should be teaching pilots to not focus on anything and take it all in before making a decision. Yes, you can, if you make your brain more “female”. You have to have the ability to allow it all in, and then use the “man” brain to refocus on one answer.

The Primary/Secondary method, which was the only approved FAA method for years, makes you choose one instrument to watch for a given flight condition, and then use two other instruments for backup. Yes, they want to call it a scan, but this amplifies the male brain drawback instinct of focusing on one input even though the desired result is a balanced scan of all the instruments. For example, for simple straight and level flight, it’s pounded into your head to look at the heading indicator as your primary instrument. Start there and then go to the attitude indicator and then your turn coordinator. To maintain proper airspeed, use the airspeed indicator as your primary instrument and then the manifold pressure gauge. One thing at a time. The “man” brain way of doing a scan.

The second method (Control Performance) is a little more like the female brain way, but it was still designed by a man brain. The concept has the student setting up power and attitude combinations for specific maneuvers. In this method, for example, if the pilot wants to climb at V_y , they would raise the nose/attitude indicator 5° and increase power to 2400 RPM (for this particular airplane). The airplane should climb at V_y with that ratio and then the pilot would verify/adjust the performance by verifying the other five instruments. Of course, the variables are enormous so a generic profile like that will always have you chasing the right balance. That’s fine, because it makes you pay attention to all of it.

I vehemently oppose all those questions on the FAA exam about which “instrument would be the least appropriate for determining the need for a pitch change?” Least appropriate? No. They’re all appropriate and students should be exercising and training their brain

to take in all the information to get a big picture answer. This old fashioned thought process is what kills pilots in the clouds.

If the AF447 pilots had been trained to think like a female brain, they would have realized that the only thing wrong with their plane was that the airspeed indicator was incorrect (initially. Then they added to their problems by trying to fix the wrong thing). Their A330 entered the ocean with both engines working and absolutely nothing wrong with the airplane. The only error was in the pilot’s head because they couldn’t take in the big picture clues of the situation. Panic creates tunnel vision by instinct, so it’s our job as aviators to retrain the brain to open up to all input during an emergency. The current “man” method of training is amplifying bad instincts.

The Balance

Some of the most satisfying moments of my flying career have been a result of working through an emergency situation with my crew. Nothing is more rewarding than getting the airplane safely on the ground and looking back and realizing you did everything perfectly—not because it was textbook perfect, it was because you worked well with your crew. The checklists never go as planned, there are always an infinite number of variables, but the end result was perfection because the strengths of both brain types guided us out of danger. It’s the balance of both instincts that creates a perspective to more accurately give the situation clarity.

So, instead of me trying to gather all the information for you and letting you try and figure it out, just remember this: a pilot is good or bad because that person is a good or bad pilot. It’s not because they’re male or female, it’s because of who they are. Some pilots will have already skipped the entire article and just read this last paragraph. I know who you are. You’re more likely to be male, but in the end, you got the information you needed... ✈

From the front desk of a busy FBO to the captain’s seat of a commercial airliner, Erika Armstrong has experienced everything aviation has to offer. She is an aviation professor at MSU Denver and her articles are in seven national aviation publications. Her book, A CHICK IN THE COCKPIT can be found wherever books are sold. If you want to complain about how your brain interpreted this article, she can be reached at erika@achickinthecockpit.com

¹ 2014, Feb 27. Brain Differences Between Genders. Jantz, Gregory L. Accessed January 30, 2017. Original Article Reference: 2010, May 2. Men Are Better at Map Reading, Faulkner, Katherine. Retrieved January 30, 2017

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Bob Loveridge, Gary Pisel,
K P Haram

CW from L:
 Dick Goforth,
 KP Haram & Nancy,
 Helen & Gene Frank,
 Diane & John Andres,
 Roseanne Jones,
 Chuck Sivertson



Seated L-R:
 Nancy Haram,
 Roseanne Jones,
 Helen Frank,
 Jan Loveridge,
 Barbara Pisel

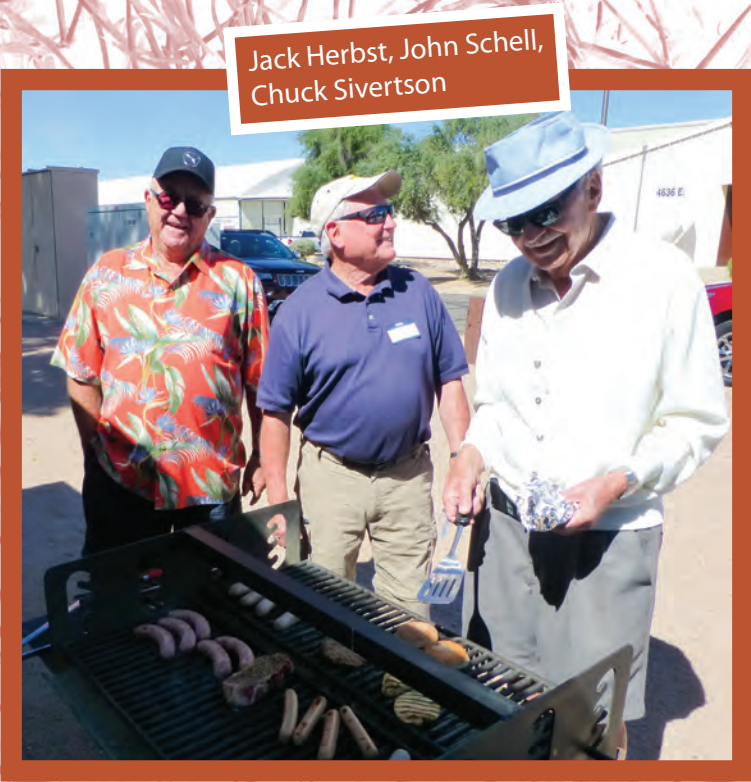
Standing L-R:
 ??,
 Kathy Byers,
 Connie Morrison,
 Sandra Cobb,
 Jane Chadwick,
 Diane Andres,
 Pam Nungesser,
 Camile Herbst,
 Lee Root



Paul Nungesser, Dick Goforth, Doug Jones, Cliff Howell, Gene Frank



CW from L: Bob Loveridge, Sue & Dick Duxbury, Gary Pisel, Paul & Pam Nungesser, Jan Loveridge,



Jack Herbst, John Schell, Chuck Sivertson



CW from L:
Lynn & Henry Muneke,
Larry Kennedy,
Georgeanne & Denny
Burton, Charlie Huffaker,
Rose Sumners, couple
Larry Kennedy brought
(he was a WWII pilot)



CW from L: Lee Root,
Jane Chadwick, Sandra Cobb,
Camille & Jack Herbst,
John & Linda Schell, Nate Cobb,
Connie & George Morrison,





From David Lane

“And here, Mr. Hunter, is a very important switch your Stratocruiser captains must not forget. It’s the one used to extinguish the NO SMOKING sign.” NWA President, Croil Hunter (left) and Boeing President William Allen during delivery ceremonies of Northwest’s first Stratocruiser, June 1949.

The Bob Hope Story

When Northwest Airlines put its first Boeing Stratocruiser on a trial run between Minneapolis-St. Paul and Chicago for the press and local dignitaries on July 25, 1949, the passenger list included the celebrated comedian Bob Hope. Northwest thoughtfully provided Mr. Hope with a pad and pencil so that he could record for posterity any philosophical comments he might have about their new Stratocruiser.

Boarding the Boeing, Hope remarked, “Gee, this is a big joint isn’t it?” On the preflight tour of the ship, Bob looked down the stairwell and asked, “Hey what do you do down there, stoke coal?” It was said that he was particularly impressed with the downstairs lounge and its variety of refreshments.





Impressed with the big ship's speed, Mr. Hope commented to Northwest stewardess Evelyn Hawke, "Boy, this plane sure travels fast. I lay down for forty-winks and at the end of thirty-nine you tell me we're about to land. Remember now, I still have one wink coming. And you know, a guy who leans back for a good, long yawn will probably end up in Manila."

"Captain Smith and I agree, these Northwest Stratocruisers are A-OK!"



Robert Johnson, Northwest Public Relations, recalls:

"On April 25, 1952, Northwest inaugurated Stratocruiser service to the Orient via Anchorage, Alaska and the Aleutian refueling base of Shemya Island. To herald the occasion, we flew a planeload of media celebrities (in those days they were called collectively, newspaper reporters) to Tokyo and back. The expectation was, afterwards, they would write or say something nice about us, which they did. It was a wild time. On the return flight from Anchorage, Captain Tom Hennessy lost an engine. On the Stratocruiser's spacious flight deck with Hennessy and the rest of the crew was George Masters, Northwest's crusty, lovable Director of Public Relations and an ex-staffer for the Minneapolis office of the Associated Press. George questioned Hennessy's deepening frown. 'Number three is getting awfully rough too!' Hennessy advised. 'What did you do, George?' a listener invariably asked as Masters related the story, time and time again. 'Hell,' Masters would say, 'I did the only sensible thing. I went downstairs, had another double shot and went to sleep.'"

Stratocruiser Captain, Ed Zimdars:

“One day in the early ’50s, after landing at Chicago’s Midway Airport, our flight engineer descended into the hold through the trap door located in the floor of the cockpit, and reemerged back into the cockpit, as if rocket-propelled. We did not know that we were delivering a pair of wild, adult Timber Wolves from Alaska to the Chicago Brookfield Zoo.

They had been chained and placed in two separate wire cages. Somebody had separated the cases by placing some baggage between the cages and separated male from female. Wolves mate for life and when the female became nervous and distressed with fear she began to whine. The male, being very solicitous and protective of his mate, chewed through the wire of the cage, chewed through his harness, and freed himself in order to sit next to her and comfort her.

When the flight engineer descended on the ladder and turned around he faced this giant male, a few feet away, hair on the ruff of his neck upright, teeth bared, emitting a deep growl, and poised for an attack. Fortunately, the post-haste and ballistic departure up the ladder by the engineer satisfied the wolf.

The captain and I were just turning to leave our seats, when he shot through the trap door. He slammed it shut and stood there white as a sheet, uttering unintelligible sounds, pointing to the floor with one hand, and feeling the seat of his trousers with the other, as if he were checking to see if it was still there.

The zoo people had arrived to meet us with a van, but nobody was about to try to cage the male without a tranquilizer gun application. While somebody went back to the zoo for the



gun, the plane was grounded. News media arrived in short order with cameras, etc. They would create another shock when the unknowing ground crew opened the door from the ground. He then parked himself at the door entrance sitting on his haunches and stared back at the crowd of people gathered on the ramp.

The vets soon returned and administered the dart and placed him in a new cage, NEXT TO HIS MATE! (Very important.) He received an antidote as soon as he was caged again and woke up in a minute wondering what had happened. The female whined continuously, while he was unconscious. The devotion of those two to each other amazed me. As soon as he woke up again she started whimpering new sounds and wagging her tail with joy!”

NWA 377 Flight Engineer, Jack Deveny:

“If there was an Achilles heel as far as the Stratocruiser was concerned, it was with the first series of engines we had called the model B-3. Personally, I experienced twenty-two engine shut-downs in the first six months of operation. Anything from fire warnings to oil leaks to the eventual one that came completely off the aircraft.

“So the term ‘losing an engine’ got to be a fairly standard phrase around my house. The night we lost the engine over Chicago, I called my supervisor (figuring this incident

would be on the news) to have him give my wife a call and explain what had happened. Well, he did so and said, ‘Mrs. Deveny, this is George Doyle. I just wanted to call and tell you that Jack’s delayed in Chicago because he’s lost an engine.’ He didn’t go any further with the statement than that. As a result, my wife was rather unaffected by the whole thing, and replied, ‘So what else is new, George?’

“It wasn’t until sometime later that she really did get the facts regarding this serious emergency. The engine had physically separated from the aircraft and was really lost. (It was later found in the drill-yard at nearby Navy Glenview).

Afterwards, she kept apologizing to my boss for the longest time saying, ‘Believe it or not, Mr. Doyle, I really didn’t mean to sound so indifferent about Jack’s engine loss that night. I really do love him, after all!’

“Around that same time I also recall a passenger getting off at Seattle-Tacoma and as he looked across the wing to an engine with its propeller feathered remarked, ‘Boy, these Boeing Tri-Motors are certainly wonderful airplanes!’”



Bob Johnson also remembers: "The fabulous Fujiyama Room was created when Northwest started to push it's Orient image, but it never really took. It didn't really conjure up the images of kimono-clad ladies, cherry blossoms or Japan's sacred mountain. To most, it was still the downstairs lounge, a place to smoke and drink and talk and have fun!"

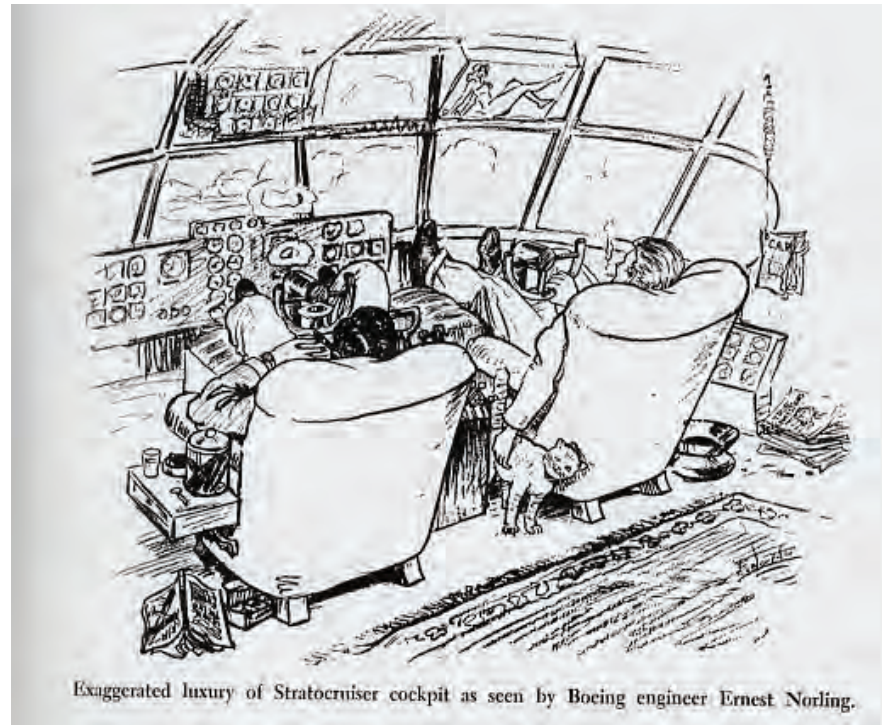


Stratocruiser Captain, Ted Lieber:

"During the summer months while flying the Washington Shuttle, I used to get really hot in the cockpit. We'd make two round trips a day between Detroit and Washington D.C., with stops in Cleveland and Pittsburgh. However, we were never at altitude long enough to get the Stratocruiser cooled down. So, what we used to do was take off with the cockpit windows open. Then, once at cruise we'd shut the windows and start pressurizing. It worked great.

"One day I had a radio maintenance man from the CAA on board riding in the observer seat behind me. He was a real polite and quiet-spoken individual. As usual, I kept my window open as we taxied out. We got take-off clearance right away and I poured the coals to it. I didn't think much about it during climb out. We got up to 5,000 feet and I slammed my window shut. Then I kind of hollered over my shoulder saying, 'Works pretty good doesn't it?'

"The poor guy could only reply with a few short gasps, while nodding his head in approval. He looked like some kind of human wind tunnel experiment. I apologized profusely, all the while wondering why he hadn't said something. I probably wouldn't have heard him anyway. The roar was pretty deafening!"



In August 1959 Stratocruiser Rudolph with the Radar Nose caught fire while parked on the passenger ramp at the Minneapolis airport. The cockpit was completely gutted as well the forward passenger cabin by the oxygen fed fire. After being written off as a total loss, Ship 707 was sold as scrap to an air cargo operator in Miami. Following a pennies on the dollar purchase, RANSA cargo sent their maintenance personnel to the Twin Cities to dismantle the Stratocruiser for shipment by rail to Florida.

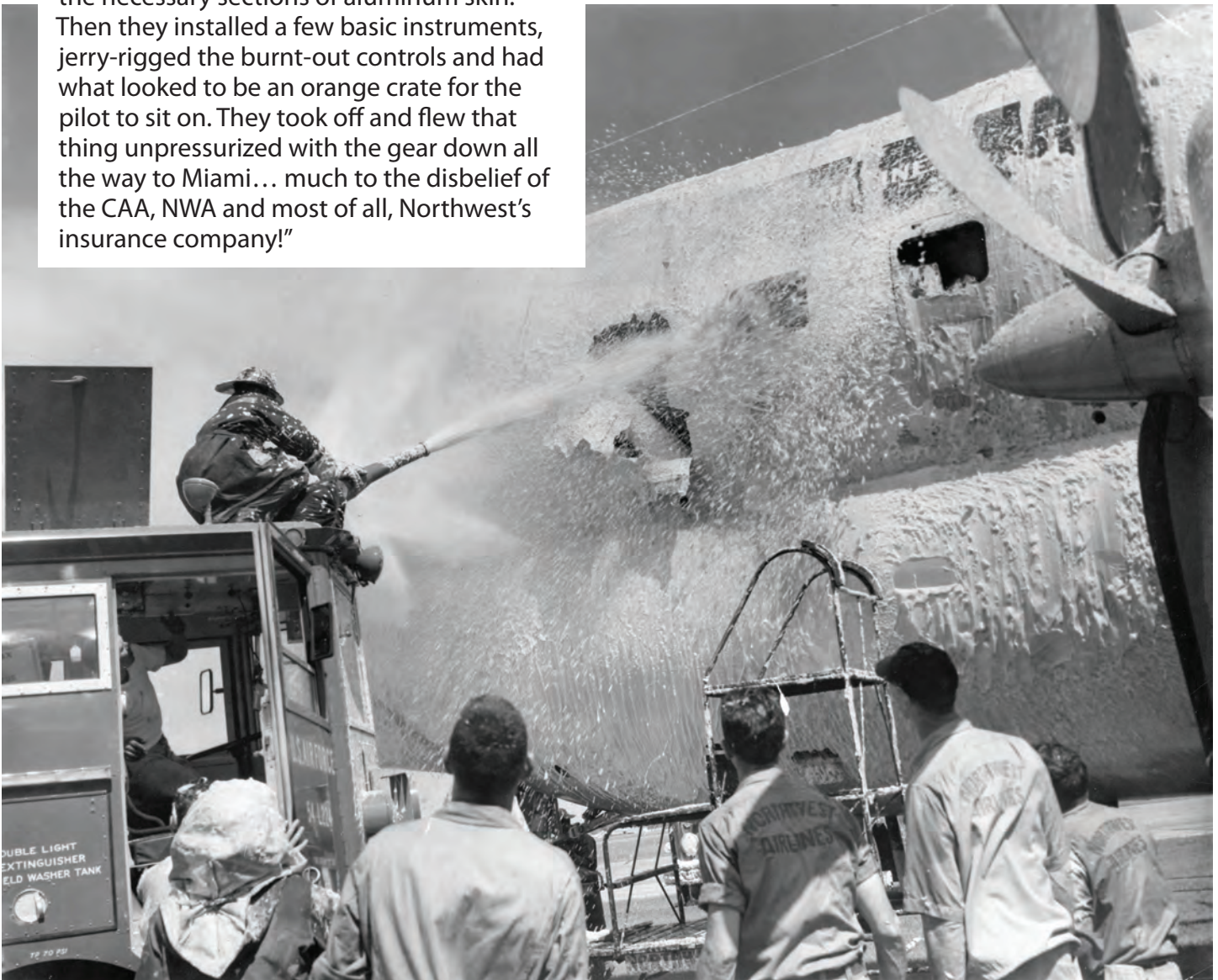
Carl Magnusen, NWA Chief Mechanic recalled the incident: "The Stratocruiser had a huge gaping hole in the forward part of the right fuselage, along with extensive smoke damage throughout the cabin. Instead of dismantling the ship, the clever group of mechanics fastened an I-beam to the exposed fuselage stringers and replaced the necessary sections of aluminum skin. Then they installed a few basic instruments, jerry-rigged the burnt-out controls and had what looked to be an orange crate for the pilot to sit on. They took off and flew that thing unpressurized with the gear down all the way to Miami... much to the disbelief of the CAA, NWA and most of all, Northwest's insurance company!"

NWA 377 Captain, Frank Fox:

"In the mid-fifties NWA decided to compete against Capital Airlines on the Washington Shuttle with the Stratocruiser. This kind of repetitious up and down type of flying was not exactly the Stratocruiser's forte. Some say it was done to justify to NWA's Board of Directors that the 377 would never make money and should therefore be replaced with something more economical.

The sad part about it was the company wasn't very affluent in those days and sometimes we couldn't get ground air conditioning for the cabin at our various stops. I remember one of those days was in August and it was really hot. When we finally got to Cleveland, I had to call dispatch about canceling the flight.

The cabin temperature was 115 degrees!"



Captain Wil Kenmir recalls:

“Because of the Stratocruiser’s heating and pressurization idiosyncrasies at high altitude, a thick layer of frost would build up inside the fuselage along the top. After cruising for a long period of time, you’d let down into the clouds in preparation for a tight approach. Finally, when you’d get down below the freezing level, all the frost that had built up on the ceiling would melt. About the time you were ready to break out on the approach, ice cold water would run right down the back of your neck. The captain would always get soaked. It was almost like some wise guy engineered it that way. In fact, it got so bad that the pilots would carry a piece of plastic and wear it like a cape while they were flying.

“Some of the more clever captains later learned to add some rudder at the appropriate time and send the water over to the co-pilot’s side.

“Well, they claim that maintenance later put some kind of a diversion channel in there. But that was quite a startling thing. You’d be sitting there and bang,



that cold water would hit you. Not only did you get wet, but the water was full of nicotine oil from all the cigarette smoke that had accumulated in the insulation. That’s something they didn’t engineer too well, that’s for sure.

“And here’s something else that occurred one day while we were cruising along. We got into a precip area and had this beautiful display of St. Elmo’s Fire dancing across the windshield. I was kind of playing with it by drawing the static electricity away from the windshield with my finger. Well, all of a sudden the field collapsed and ka-boom! I got a real sharp snap that went right into my ear along the metal tube of the headset. It was like an explosion you know. It must have been a real good charge to get through there. No harm was done, but let me tell you... that came as one, big surprise!”

Bob Brennan, 377 Captain remembers:

“A lot of the really senior guys avoided bidding the 377 because NWA was having such an awful time getting the Strato back and forth from the East coast without having to go into Buffalo or someplace with an engine failure. So, I was able to get into the Stratocruiser’s second class in 1950 as one of the most junior captains. We called it ‘Smile School.’

“Those ground instructors would spend week after week going over all the nuts and bolts of the different aircraft systems, really complex and complicated stuff. After a while, the pilots of the group would just look at them, nod their heads and smile, fully aware of the fact that as pilots, they were receiving way too much information.

Veteran Captain Joe Kimm in the first 377 class finally got fed up one day and said, ‘Hey, when are we going to get into the operation of this thing? We are not going to build it, we’re going to fly it!’”



“We were on a flight once going from Minneapolis-St. Paul to Seattle-Tacoma non-stop. We left late in the evening. It was all quiet on board when the stewardess came forward and said, ‘You know, I think there’s a couple downstairs making love. What should I do?’”

After thinking for a second, the captain replied, “I dunno... throw ‘em a blanket?”

NWA 377 Captain, Burke Frees:

“We had a number of characters flying on the Stratocruiser. One in particular was a typical Irishman, a kind of practical jokester, masquerading as a flight engineer. One day he asked the captain if he could borrow his coat to make a trip back into the cabin, saying he’d lost a button or something off of his own. Unbeknownst to the captain, he then took a wire coat hanger and pulled it up into the sleeve until just the hook was showing. He then walked down the aisle and began to talk to the passengers while gesturing with the thing. Consequently a few of the passengers wrote to the company voicing their concern about Northwest hiring disabled pilots. This, of course, earned the flight engineer a trip to meet with the Chief Pilot and even the company president.

“Well, as you could imagine, he was read the ‘riot act’ for about 10 minutes. Finally, President Croil Hunter asked him, “How could you do such a thing?” Without much of an explanation forthcoming, the engineer began to describe the look on the passenger’s faces and all. Finally, no one could hold a straight face any longer and they all began laughing like mad, but that was supposed to remain a company secret!

“This same engineer used to pull some shenanigans once he was outside the Stratocruiser too. In his flight bag he used to carry a railroad engineer’s hat plus an oil can with a long, detachable spout. After the Stratocruiser would make one of its routine stops at hometown USA, there would be the usual, attentive crowd of well-wishers, friends and family and the like. Well, he used to wear that hat while he performed his walk around inspection. All the while pretending to oil different parts of the gear and strut assemblies—just like some old locomotive engineer. Then, he would pull out his gold pocket watch on a long chain, check the time, and exclaim ‘ALL ABOARD!’ He was quite a card. You know, the captain would turn around and ask, ‘Say, what kind of fuel consumption are we getting?’ And he’d reply ‘Oh, about two gallons per acre.’ He made everybody laugh.”



NWA 377 Captain, Brooks Johnston:

“It was a beautiful Fall day in 1949 and I was flying co-pilot for Clarence “Nippy” Opsahl. The flight was eastbound between Seattle-Tacoma, and Minneapolis-St. Paul nonstop. Nippy had finished his meal and the stewardess had just taken his tray. She brought my tray up and I was just putting it on my lap when Nippy yells, ‘There it goes, there it goes!’ I said ‘what?’ as he pointed. I looked at the hydraulic gauge on the panel in front of me. The glass cover had blown out of it along with a stream of hydraulic oil. I yelled and simultaneously threw the tray right over my left shoulder and onto the observer who was sitting at the navigator’s table.

“That hydraulic stream filled my right boot with hot mineral oil. I mean talk about getting boiled in oil. That really did it! Well, what happened was that the leak released all the pressure so of course, we would have no hydraulic brakes. We didn’t want to run the hydraulic pumps without oil, so Nippy called to feather engines two and three as these inboard engines contained the hydraulic pumps. So I feathered them and we started down in a long gradual descent for Bismarck, North Dakota.

“The weather there was beautiful, so there didn’t seem to be any problem. On the way down, Nippy said to the flight engineer, ‘Get your water pump pliers and pinch off that hydraulic line so that we can get some brakes when we land at Bismarck.’ Well, the engineer disappeared and he was right behind the engineer’s panel. Minutes went by tick, tick, tick, maybe ten minutes or so. Nippy then asked ‘Hey, what happened to the engineer?’ I turned around and leaned way over the outboard side of my chair and there he was—behind the panel, down on his hands and knees with his Bible out—praying. Well, I got out of my seat and my god darn foot was just killing me and because of the suction, I couldn’t even get my boot off. I mean I was in mortal agony and mad too. So, I went back there to look for his pliers and grabbed his damned tool box. I almost pulled my arm out of the socket. The box was half full of nuts, bolts, washers, cotter keys, etc., and must have weighed 45 pounds. Anyway, by this time I had to get back in my seat since we were making an approach for Bismarck. We got in there by using the emergency (air) brakes. The mechanics capped off the lines, refilled the system and we took off for Minneapolis-St. Paul. But just imagine this guy, he said. ‘It’s all in the hands of the Lord!’ ”



When the ten Northwest Stratocruisers arrived in 1949-1950, they were not factory equipped with an anti-skid system. An aftermarket system was later installed but prior to that there was a story going around the airline about a Stratocruiser captain who was getting a reputation for repeatedly “blowing tires.” He was discussing this embarrassing situation with a fellow pilot and lamented, “And get this Bob. Our line maintenance guys not only had the audacity to write the occurrence date and ship number on the blown tires, but their replacement cost as well, and for all to see!”

His friend after listening patiently, nodded and replied, “Well, just between you and me old boy, I know of a way to reduce the chances of blowing tires like that by fifty per cent. Give your co-pilot half of the landings.” ✈



Following Northwest's inaugural Stratocruiser flight to Tokyo, Japan with the media, one deplaning newsman was heard to say, "The Boeing Stratocruiser is an absolute flying dream. But at times the air over the Pacific was so rough that I had whitecaps in my coffee!"

Greek mythology states that the ferryman of Hades, Charon, requires payment of one coin to ferry a soul across the River Styx that separates the worlds of the living and the dead. Coins were typically placed in the mouths of loved ones before burial to ensure safe passage to the underworld. Over time this has been adopted in various forms across societies. Today, a coin left on a headstone signifies that somebody stopped by to pay their respects.



THROW A NICKEL ON THE GRASS

While there are various informal military coin denomination hierarchies circulating today (a penny if you knew the person, quarter if you were present when they passed, etc.), to the Airman it is a moot point. There is only one coin that matters: the nickel. Of all the fighter pilot traditions and accompanying heritage, the phrase “nickel on the grass” is easily held in the highest regard of all. The phrase, a chorus from an old fighter pilot song, has evolved to become synonymous with remembering a fallen aviator.

In early twentieth century London, the Salvation Army worked their way through the streets collecting donations and were sometimes confronted with unruly crowds. A family of musicians found a creative solution and began working with the local Salvation Army and played music to distract the crowds. By 1915, the Salvation Army bands migrated to the United States and had grown in popularity outside the bars on college campuses. After playing songs, the band would come through the bars and pass around an upside-down tambourine while repeating, “Throw a nickel on the drum and you’ll be saved.” Eventually and inevitably, the drunken students caught onto this and the parody, “throw a nickel on the drum, save another drunken bum” became popular... more popular than the Salvation Army band’s original version. This itself inspired several colorful limerick spin-offs in the 1920s.

Years later, a F-86 pilot named William Starr became interested in the fighter pilot limericks while assigned to the 336th Fighter Squadron. Unfortunately, these limericks were seldom written down, probably as a rite of passage of sorts. During his time in Korea at K-14 Air Base in 1954, he continued to write down the songs; his notebook was appropriately titled “The Fighter Pilot’s

Hymn Book.” One day he came across an article from a military folk song singer named Oscar Brand who purported that while the other services had traditions and songs, the Air Force was much too young to have equal representation. Starr got into contact with Brand and unloaded his collection of songs... all 238 of them! In 1959, this effort produced the album “The Wild Blue Yonder” by Oscar Brand with the Roger Wilco Four. The first, and most popular, song on the album: Save a Fighter Pilot’s Ass. While William Starr didn’t write the song (the author is unknown), he is responsible for exposing it to the world.

The title of the song serves as the chorus to verses that tell varying tales of precarious flying situations that all inevitably end with the ultimate sacrifice. The verses, spanning from the Yalu River in MiG Valley to local flying training, remind us of the daily risk aviators take. The chorus embodies a mark of mutual respect and remembrance for a downed flyer. This message, combined with the melody of the Salvation Army band tune, made it an instant classic.

During the Vietnam War, these popular lyrics were changed by units to reflect their aircraft and mission of the time. In an F-4 squadron, “The Yalu” was modified to “The Mekong,” “Major” was replaced by “My Wingman,” “Pyongyang” was replaced with “Saigon,” and “Sabre” replaced by “Phantom.” Sometime after the war this chorus phrase made the leap from song to toast, immortalized by an unknown author’s closing words in his tribute to the fighter pilot:

“So here’s a nickel on the grass to you, my friend, and your spirit, enthusiasm, sacrifice and courage—but most of all to your friendship. Yours is a dying breed and when you are gone, the world will be a lesser place.”



Lt. William Starr, circa 1954, Kimpo, Korea

Robin Olds is buried at the USAF Academy cemetery. At the foot of the Rampart Range, a half mile from the Academy campus among the pine trees the rolling grass is kept neatly trimmed and carefully maintained. You could drive right past and not realize it was a cemetery since there are no headstones or monuments to the heroes that are interred in that place. There are, however, many of them buried here.

If you visit, you may want to pay your respects at Robin's resting place. You could wander through the lanes reading the flat bronze plaques that mark the graves. But, in Robin's case the irreverent fighter pilot community has created a fitting memorial of our own.

We come to throw a nickel in the grass in a long standing fighter pilot tradition. And we come to share a drink with our leader, our friend, our mentor and a great warrior. Robin enjoyed a good scotch, but the younger crop has adopted Jeremiah Weed for special toasts. Here's what to look for:



Entire subject contributed by Larry Potton



SAVE A FIGHTER PILOT'S ASS

Chorus:

Oh, Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Throw a nickel on the grass—Save a fighter pilot's ass.
Oh, Hallelujah, Oh, Hallelujah
Throw a nickel on the grass and you'll be saved.

Chorus

I was cruising down the Yalu, doing six and twenty per
When a call came from the Major, Oh won't you save me sir?
Got three flak holes in my wing tips, and my tanks ain't got no gas.
Mayday, mayday, mayday, I got six MIGS on my ass.

Chorus

I shot my traffic pattern, and to me it looked all right,
The airspeed read one-thirty, I really racked it tight!
Then the airframe gave a shudder, the engine gave a wheeze,
Mayday, mayday, mayday, spin instructions please.

Chorus

It was split S on my bomb run, and I got too God Damn low
But I pressed that bloody button, and I let those babies go,
Sucked the stick back fast as blazes, when I hit a high speed stall
I won't see my mother when the work's all done next fall.

Chorus

They sent me down to Pyongyang, the brief said "no ack ack"
By the time that I arrived there, my wings were mostly flak.
Then my engine coughed and sputtered, it was too cut up to fly
Mayday, mayday, mayday, I'm too young to die.

Chorus

I bailed out from the Sabre, and the landing came out fine
With my E and E equipment, I made for our front line.
When I opened up my ration, to see what was in it,
The God damn quartermaster why he filled the tin with grit.

Chorus



By Capt. John Doherty

Shazm wasn't pleased at all to be caught on a holiday by the COC (crew optimization computer) scanner. The COC was ready for all objections with chapter and verse of the current agreement ("as amended") displayed across the bottom of the screen.

Shazm had cross-linked the COC transmit directly to a buddy on the Scheduling Rules Committee with a plaintive trailer, "Can they do this?"

Apparently the friend was busy, because the reply was from the automated ALPA Instant Response Board. "Sorry, but the agreement was modified this afternoon in a joint effort to take advantage of an immediate growth opportunity." Shazm knew that finding the COC in error was rare, but that didn't make the confirmation easier to swallow. So now, instead of home and family for the holiday, it was work a STL-LAX segment—and who knew what after that.

On the way to work, Shazm pulled up FasQuote to check ticket prices. The North American Bundle was up on both the Board of Trade and the Beijing Merc with Commons and PacRims rising in sympathy. So that was the "growth opportunity."

Shazm's Air Commerce Trends file had several new downlinks. Commentators believed JetWatch, a consumer group, was about to release a report

claiming a down trend in the safety margin at a major carrier.

Analysts maintained that marginal passengers would leave the target carrier, driving up ticket prices at other carriers; and futures traders agreed. Now the company was trying to pick up some of the high-yield business with extra flights.

The Flight Ops board at CO didn't have much more—except that the subject carrier was a Big Five. Shazm recognized the irony that the negative rumors the company hoped to profit from might be about the company itself.

Shazm passed through the substance detector and there met the financial officer, a chap named Margaret, at the RCM (remote cockpit module).

"Shazm. How are the markets doing?"

"Well, fuel is flat-to-weaker in New England and the West with a little spike in the South. A pipeline screwed up a shipment-impact statement, and the feds are holding up some shipments back there.

"I'd imagine as soon as they've done the slap on the wrist, fuel will be flat-to-weaker there, too. I'd say to hold off fueling for 10 minutes in case we get another down-tick."

"How's the weather?"

"There's a line from Amarillo to Omaha. WeatherLine is predicting there will be usable holes until

2325, which is about 15 minutes after we run the line—if we're out on time.

"The FMC [financial management computer] is forecasting a positive fuel versus weather insurance trade until 2115, so holding off on the fuel a few more minutes should be O.K. Approach insurance at fields along the CB line is going up, so we should probably scratch them as divers. Other than that, not much."

"How about the slots?"

"Well, let me fold in PM slots. The trend line for LAX is up until about 0045, when it starts to flatten, and by 0200 it's on its way down. That's making waiting for the fuel down-tick not so attractive. What do you think?"

"Ah—let's wait five more minutes, or until we get the down-tick, and then gas up."

A CGA (computer-generated agent) hologrammed into the remote control module to inquire if things looked good for schedule.

"Where's the agent?" Shazm asked it—and instantly regretted the slight. Judging from the pained expression on the CGA's face, it was close to issuing a NonCo-op to HR.

"She's working on some hold-outs," the CGA replied.

"How's she doing?" Shazm made an effort at a friendly smile.

The CGA's face softened a bit. "Pretty good. The bid's up three-fifty in the last five minutes.

"One couple are irritated that variables are up so much over yesterday, which makes no sense because they got full disclosure with their variable," the CGA said.

"One of the holdouts is saying we have forty seats left; but I imagine the counters have it close, and most aren't figuring on a short squeeze. I project we'll be up five to ten by the time we sell the last hold-out."

Shazm asked Margaret for the fuel quote—"still flat"—and told him to override and fuel. Fuel ticked up about 20 seconds after the confirmation was issued. Sometimes a WAG worked better than System.

Shazm coupled to System just before departure time. Some of the guys still liked to taxi, but Shazm believed in System.

During climb, COC assigned them two more segments—a BNA-DCA departing 32 minutes after arrival at LAX, then a two-hour sit and an SFO-PHX segment. Now any hope of being home for the holiday evening was dashed.

The com alert interrupted Shazm's gloom, coo-

ing "Stand by for a CoComm." Shazm switched from Distract, and the company logo blinked onto the situation screen.

A company VP appeared. "Good afternoon, fellow employees. Thanks for taking some of your valuable time to keep up-to-date on our company's future.

"You may have heard that JetWatch is expected to issue an unfavorable safety report. We believe this report will severely impact the affected carrier, and the lost traffic will be going to the remaining carriers.

"Unfortunately, we believe the report will target our company. Let me make one thing very clear right now. There is not, and there never will be, a safety problem here. The report is totally unfounded; and we expect to take appropriate steps to recover any damages resulting from the poorly prepared, misleading, libelous, and inaccurate report.

"Even so, we expect to be severely impacted; and although I am confident we will recover, there are going to be a couple of tough weeks for all of us. Which brings me to my point. We are all going to have to pull in our belts a few notches if we are going to survive as a viable company.

"Our competition will have a big advantage in customer preference for the next several weeks. The only way we can counter that trend is to get customers back with cheaper tickets. The only way we can do that is to make a financial contribution to our company in the form of slightly reduced pay for the two-week duration of the existing contract."

A ComStrip appeared across the bottom of the sit screen: "From the MEC: This is news to us, folks. Stand by for an analysis of the company's proposal immediately following the CoComm."

Shazm had heard it all before. The company's Communications VP droned on while Shazm watched the real-time weather-plot probe the line ahead in coordination with the financial management computer.

System picked its way, folding together real-time weather, fuel consumption, slot prices, and weather insurance for a least-cost line penetration.

Shortly after they cleared the line (without so much as a ripple and \$287 under the preline estimate), the MEC chair's face appeared on the sit screen. "Folks, we've heard all this before. We just signed a good contract with the flexibility that the company asked for. If the company really needs relief, we're always ready to talk; but for now, let's hold the line on this."

The screen blanked, but seconds later lit up with the notation “ALPA/company negotiations in progress—stand by to vote.”

Negotiations concluded in 15 minutes—it seemed fast to Shazm (it always did)—but that was cyber-negotiation. The deals were so complex and fast that they needed computers to keep them straight.

ALPA was recommending “no,” and the company was recommending “yes.”

Shazm allowed the on-line proxy to decide, then vote “no.”

Margaret waited until the vote window was almost closed, then slowly punched in his ID, PIN, and vote.

Seconds later, the tally appeared on the screen—the company’s concession proposal had failed.

Just before top of descent, the COC called to cancel the SFO-PHX and BNA-DCA segments. Perhaps ticket prices weren’t running up—or perhaps the company was canceling flying as “punishment” for the “no” vote. Maybe—if the COC couldn’t find anything else for them—they’d be home in time for some of the holiday.

System landed and taxied the aircraft to the gate.

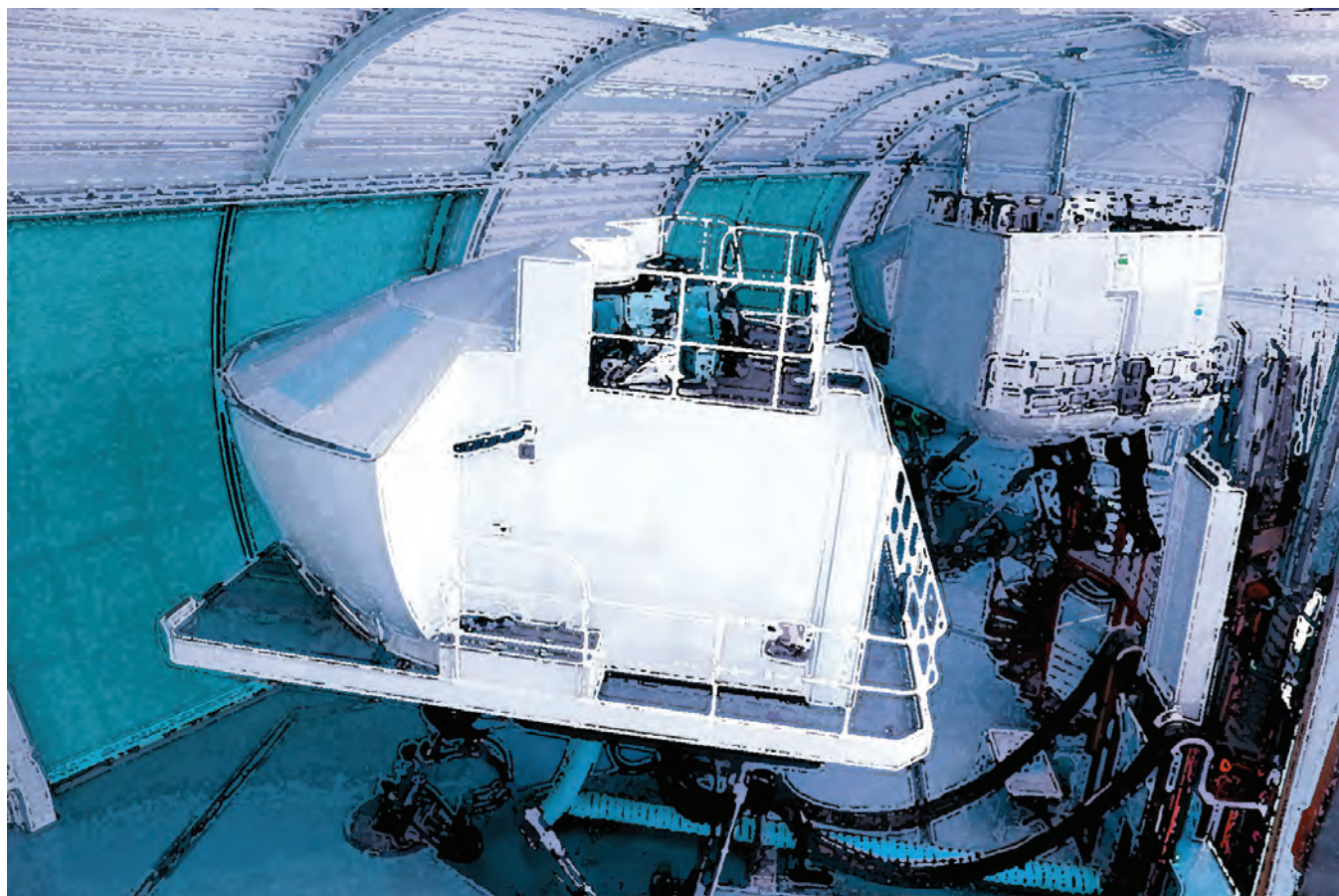
As soon as it was docked, Shazm disconnected the remote control module datalink from the aircraft, then punched the motion switch and waited. With a sighing sound, the remote control module settled on the out-of-service pad.

Shazm waited until the sit screen announced the familiar “Remote cockpit module disconnected. Off motion. Released from duty.” She grabbed her flight bag and logged off.

Shazm headed for the exit through the dimly lit RCM center. Most of the RCMs were up on motion looking like mechanical insects up on their spidery legs. Some were poised as though waiting, others gently turning in concert with the aircraft they were controlling somewhere far away.

Shazm would be in her car driving home in a few minutes—that was the thing about flying remotes, you were always home when you finished work—and she would make sure the COC didn’t catch her again until after the holiday. ✈

John’s story first appeared in the May, 1996 issue of Air Line Pilot and is reprinted here with permission.





2017 Southwest Florida Spring Luncheon



Dino and Karen Oliva hosted the luncheon one more time.



Ray and Kittie Alexander. Ray took the photographs.





Barbara & Bob Vega



Dee & Don Bergman



Valerie & Vince Catalano, Tootz Kelley, Nancy & Jim Bestul



Hal Hockett



Bill & Judy Rataczak



Bill & Katie Lund



Tim & Linda Walker



Pete & Wendy Vinsant



Al Teasley & Marlay Barbee



John & Claire Lackey



Dale Nadon, George Handel



Teresa & Fred Field



Vince & Valerie Catalano



Keith Maxwell & Kathy Zielie



John Scholl the Elder and son John



Nick & Sara Modders



Phil & Eileen Hallin



Nonie & Gary Young



Bob Vega, Bill & Katie Lund, Barbara Vega



Gene Kragness



John & Mary Woelfel



Bob & Judy Chandler



Arlen & Claudia Anderson



Arnie & Linda Calvert



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Rita & Wayne Ward



Carolyn Calloway & John Badger



Roger & Julie Moberg



Gene & Joan Sommerfeld



Colleen Blume Welmer, Sharon Kenmitz



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Karen Oliva & Tootz Kelley



Paul & Patricia Baertsch



Steve, Lori & Scott Lillyblad



Roger Moberg



Paul & Caroline Ringer



Denny Olden, Phil Hallin



Paul & Jan Sahler



Lois Haglund, Karen Oliva



Bob & Barbara Immel



Bill & Jane Backus



Dave & Jackie Good



Keith Maxwell, Bob Vega



Marilyn Leland, Bobbi Lachinski



Sandy & Chet White



Roger Moberg, Steve Towle



Jane Backus, Marilyn Leland



Marilyn & Howie Leland



Kittie Alexander, Teresa Field



Dick & Lois Haglund



Steve Hunter, Keith Maxwell



Bill Rataczak, Vince Catalano, Gene Kragness, John Scholl





**By frequent contributor
Darrel Smith**

The pain in my left knee had become abundantly noticeable as I passed the nine-mile marker and there was no indication that it would let up. My calf and thigh muscles seemed on the verge of developing cramps but I pressed on. Finishing my first marathon was foremost in my mind—at this point quitting was not an option.

Hours later, the hill ahead, about six miles from the finish line, was small but fairly steep. To this tired and stressed runner, it looked like a mountain as I struggled onward.

A grain of doubt lifted its ugly head somewhere deep in my being as the pain and exhaustion mounted. Failure now would be a terrible blow after investing so much time and effort into the preparation. My mind told my body to keep putting one foot in front of the other, hang in there, don't quit!

The concept of time and miles were lost until a spectator shouted “only two miles to go.” Two Miles seemed like a very long way and the doubt again surfaced. Could I make it? Could I make it?

I do not recall when the idea of maintaining some sort of physical fitness by running came into my mind. At some point I actually got myself out on the road and made a weak effort at jogging. I remember being slightly embarrassed when I informed a shoe sales person that I was looking for “running shoes.” I considered myself too old and too fat to be considering the sport.

My athletic endeavors up to this point had required a stocky strong body. My inherited body had served me well during my high school and college football careers but was ill suited for long-distance running.

Going about my duties as a pilot for Northwest Airlines I met several people who were runners. Somehow, their stories aroused my interest. I had no dreams of achieving any major success but had enough curiosity to give it a try. I can remember my first attempts as being painful and disappointing. How could these people run mile after mile and seem to enjoy the experience?

I knew nothing of the sport but started jogging for short distances several times a week. I gradually became a “Jogger.” Without even realizing it, my “Jogs” became longer and longer. I became more deeply involved even to the point of subscribing to the “Runners World” magazine, which contained stories that were interesting and inspirational.

In a hotel on a layover I finished a book about an unlikely man who entered and completed a marathon. He had been very overweight, depressed and emotionally he was at the lowest point of his life. He decided to depart this world by running at full speed until his heart failed from the exertion. Well, he ran as hard as possible but his body rebelled and quit before his heart failed.

Due to this extreme exertion his body produced a flood of endorphins that gave him the greatest “high” of his life. He was a changed man! He started working out, eating properly and dreaming of a new life. His efforts eventually lead to his completing a marathon.

In that now forgotten hotel room I finishing his book and with tears in my eyes, I stood and declared, “By Golly, if he could do it, I can do it!” I promised myself that I too would train for and run 26.2 miles—a marathon.

This promise was kept a secret since I felt that friends and family would laugh at this unreachable goal. How could this old guy with his stocky body even dream of running such a long distance? I quietly plodded on.

The days, weeks and months passed as I struggled through miles and miles along the gravel roads just north of Northfield, Minnesota. Many times I turned a corner knowing that it was exactly one mile to the next. It seemed so far, how could I ever run that distance?

Glenda and I were very good friends with Darrel and Jeanne Cloud who lived a few miles west of Northfield on a small farm. Darrel had been in the Air Force but now, like me, was a pilot for Northwest Airlines. It so happened that he had also taken an interest in running.

Over dinner and maybe a glass or two of wine we made a pact to run and hopefully complete Gramma’s Marathon along the shores of Lake Superior in northern Minnesota. We never ran together, he was a much better athlete and ran much faster. However, we often discussed our successes and failures as we attempted to follow our training schedules.

We gradually increased the length of our training runs and eventually felt we could be called “real” runners. I arrived in Honolulu from Tokyo on a typical day in paradise. The sun was shining and the temperature was in the low 80’s. As per my training schedule, I put on my running gear with the intent of taking a casual six mile run.

Only about three blocks from the hotel a severe pain developed in my left knee. I tried to run through this pain as I had done several times in the past. I simply could not shake it off! My pace slowed and eventually all I could do was walk slowly back to the hotel. The pain did not subside and my depression increased with every step.

Gramma’s race was only two weeks away and my knee continued to rebel. All training was stopped. I was



afraid that my chances of running the race were slipping away.

Even though my body was questionable we all went through the motions. The Clouds and the Smiths drove to Duluth together and with some difficulty found accommodations in the southern outskirts. Our sleeping quarters for the night was a suite with two bedrooms built on some sort of platform (somewhat like a mushroom). There was a stairway of about 15 steps that lead to our front door.

Well before race time Glenda and Jeanne delivered the two Darrel’s to near the starting line, which was a short distance to the southwest of the city of Two Harbors, Minnesota on the north shore of Lake Superior. There were thousands of skinny, long legged people already gathered. In this crowd, I felt totally out of place. Why did I ever dream of attempting a 26.2 mile run? Mentally, the pain in my knee seemed to make itself known.

Somehow, we were signaled that the race had begun. The mass of people slowly started to move toward Duluth and Gramma’s Bar which were miles and miles down the road and our destination. The elite runners had a mile or two under their belts before we crossed the start line.

Darrel Cloud and I stood together waiting for the race to begin. Initially we walked, then shuffled and finally settled into a slow jog. Within a very few minutes I lost sight of Mr. Cloud and never saw him again during the entire race. He was well ahead of me.

There were thousands of runners therefore it was a surprise that I began to run and interact with a relatively small group of people. I would slowly plod along but finally pass Miss Big Bloomers—after a short while she would pass me. Very early in the race I chatted with a man from Minneapolis. I saw him many times as we made our way along the course.

I remember running behind another lady who had obviously lost a lot of weight. Her “birthday suit” had not

adjusted to this major change but she was making her way along the route giving it her best effort. With no disrespect intended, I said to myself “Now, here’s a person that I can beat”. As we passed the seventeen-mile marker I finally was able to leave this woman in my dust. She was a real runner and showed extreme determination.

My knee continued to hurt but I pressed on! The last part of the race was completed with me in some sort of daze. Suddenly, I saw a large clock and a number of roped off lanes. I stumbled over the finish line as the clock displayed, four hours and twelve seconds.

Someone threw a tee shirt over my shoulder as I came face to face with Glenda. I remember saying to her “You have no idea the length of a marathon.” I was exhausted and it took several minutes before things finally came into focus.

Darrell and I were very proud that we had been able to complete this 26.2 mile run. We were so sore we could hardly climb the steps to our elevated bedrooms. What a great adventure!

This was the pinnacle of my running career. It took years for my knee to return to a healthy normal. I jogged off and on for a few years but never again got into good enough shape to “run” a marathon.

Years later, I was based in Hawaii and became aware of the Honolulu Marathon that attracted thousands (mostly Japanese) to participate. My airline duties did not allow me to train but I dreamed of taking part. I actually applied for and was accepted as a participant. I did not run even one mile non-stop in my “training”.

Two hours before race time I called a taxi for the three-mile ride to the start line. The taxi never arrived and I slowly walked through the darkness and humidity

to the area where the thousands of people were massed for the race.

My intent was to walk the entire course distance. As the race began everyone began to run. They shamed me into running but six miles into the race I could take no more—I started a pattern of walk a little, run a little. I drank a lot of water and continued my run-walk struggle until crossing the finish line in about six hours.

The day was very hot and humid even for Honolulu. Many of those tall, skinny and muscular participants gave up and simply walked away. Public address systems were hurriedly set up along the route to inform the runners of the extreme conditions. It was a horrible day.

From a runner’s point of view my performance in the Honolulu marathon would be in the “very poor” range. However, I was able to struggle through the unfavorable conditions to the finish line. The next morning The Honolulu Star published the finishing time for every runner. I discovered that I had finished ahead of about six thousand people (mostly older Japanese housewives).

The running phase of my life extended over nine or ten years. I look back with pride upon the two marathons that were actually completed. During that time running became an important part of my life. I got to the point of feeling guilty if somehow a day passed without running. I remember getting up well before daylight and running eight or so miles during a snowstorm.

All in all, running had a positive influence on my life. It gave me a bit of pride knowing that I could pull on my shoes and run ten miles or more on any given day. I do not regret any of those long runs along the lonely graveled roads in Minnesota. It was a passing moment but for that short period of time in my mind, I considered myself a runner! ✈



Joe Sutter, Who Led an Army in Building Boeing's Jumbo 747, Dies at 95



Joe Sutter and the first 747 in 1969. Juan Trippe of Pan Am said the plane would be “a great weapon for peace.”
Credit Boeing

By SAM ROBERTS The New York Times

Joe Sutter, whose team of 4,500 engineers took just 29 months to design and build the first jumbo Boeing 747 jetliner, creating a gleaming late-20th-century airborne answer to the luxury ocean liner, died [on August 30, 2016] in Bremerton, Wash. He was 95.

His death was announced by Boeing, the company where he had taken a temporary job after World War II and stayed for 40 years. He retired as executive vice president for commercial airplane engineering and product development in 1986.

His son, Jonathan, said Mr. Sutter had been hospitalized for pneumonia.

In less time than Magellan spent circumnavigating the globe, Boeing engineers transformed Mr. Sutter's napkin doodles into the humpbacked, wide-bodied behemoth passenger and cargo plane known as the 747. The plane would transform commercial aviation and shrink the world for millions of passengers by traveling faster and farther than other, conventional jetliners, without having to refuel.

It dwarfed its predecessor, the 707, which had been introduced in 1958. The 707 came in many configurations — as the 747 later did — but it was originally about 144 feet long and its fuselage was 12 feet wide. It had a range of about 2,300 miles and could carry about 110 passengers.

The 747-100, the original version of the jumbo plane, was two and a half times as big as any aircraft in regular service at the time. It stretched 231 feet (two-thirds the length of a football field, longer than the Wright brothers' first flight) and had a 20-foot-wide cabin. It could fly more than 5,300 miles nonstop and carry more than 360 passengers. (The latest incarnation can range 8,000 miles and carry nearly 500 passengers.)

Boeing has sold more than 1,500 747s since the first model, priced at \$22 million, rolled out of its hangar in Everett, Wash., on Sept. 30, 1968. The 747 was placed in service 16 months later between New York and London by Pan American World Airways, in what was called the beginning of the second jet age.

The aircraft was engineered so meticulously that before the first test flight, on Feb. 9, 1969, Mr. Sutter identified the precise spot on the runway where the wheels of the plane would leave the ground.

“Flying it was never a concern of mine,” he later said. “The real concern was landing something this large.”

But when it touched down safely after flying around Washington State for an hour and 16 minutes, the test pilot, Jack Waddell, said, “It almost lands itself.”

Before being named to lead the 747 team, Mr. Sutter had been lauded for contributing to a unique wing design to improve lift on the three-engine 727, which had been built to serve smaller cities. Working on the 737, he helped come up with a design that placed its

“You know things are going to happen... and sometimes it’s going to be severe. You still should be able to come home.” – Joe Sutter

engines under the wings, allowing for a wider fuselage and greater cargo capacity. That innovation brought him his first patent.

But with air travel booming in the early 1960s, the 747 presented Boeing with its biggest challenge. The company faced increasing foreign competition and the likelihood that its latest prototypes would be overtaken by the development of a supersonic transport, which the federal government was subsidizing (though it later abandoned the program).

Boeing had just lost the contract for a jumbo military cargo plane to Lockheed. But Juan Trippe, the founder of Pan Am, wanted a passenger version. As Boeing’s biggest potential inaugural customer, Mr. Trippe was in a unique position to influence the design.

“If ever a program seemed set up for failure, it was mine,” Mr. Sutter said in his 2006 autobiography, “747: Creating the World’s First Jumbo Jet and Other Adventures From a Life in Aviation,” written with Jay Spenser.

Armed with a plywood prototype, Mr. Sutter persuaded Mr. Trippe to abandon his preferred double-decker configuration for a 20-foot-wide, twin-aisle cabin interior (with an upper lounge) that would be more than seven feet wider than the original 707s. (Mr. Sutter’s favorite seat was 3A in first class.) He also provided space for eight-foot-square cargo containers, a size eventually adopted uniformly by freight shippers.

In 1966, when Pan Am ordered 25 of the 747-100 models for \$525 million (almost \$4 billion in 2016 dollars), Boeing had to erect the world’s largest building to manufacture the planes. Mr. Trippe predicted that the 747 would be “a great weapon for peace, competing with intercontinental missiles for mankind’s destiny.”



Joe Sutter in the cockpit of a Boeing 747-8 jet to be delivered to Lufthansa in 2012. Credit Gail Hanusa/Boeing

Adam Bruckner of the University of Washington’s department of aeronautics and astronautics later described the 747 as “one of the great engineering wonders of the world, like the pyramids of Egypt, the Eiffel Tower or the Panama Canal.”

Joseph Frederick Sutter was born in Seattle on March 21, 1921, to the former Rose Plesik, who was born in Austria-Hungary, and Frank Sutter, a Slovenian immigrant who, he said, had been born Franc Suhadolc. The father came to America as a gold prospector in the Klondike early in the 20th century, sold his stake for about \$350,000 in today’s dollars, and became a meat cutter.

Young Joe grew up not far from a factory and field belonging to a fledgling airplane company founded by William E. Boeing.

“Aviators were more than mere mortals to us,” Mr. Sutter recalled in his autobiography. “They were a different breed, intrepid demigods in silk scarves, puttees and leather flying helmets with goggles.”

After working for Boeing during summer vacations, he became the first member of his immediate family to graduate from college, earning a bachelor’s degree in aeronautical engineering from the University of Washington in 1943. During World War II he served on a Navy destroyer escort in the South Pacific. Afterward, with a job offer from Boeing, he settled in Seattle with his wife and college classmate, the former Nancy French. She died in 1997.

In addition to his son, Mr. Sutter is survived by two daughters, Gabrielle Sutter Young and Adrienne Sutter Craig; five grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

At Boeing, his first assignment was solving flight control and engine challenges on the propeller-driven Stratocruiser. He later served as the aerodynamics chief on the 367-80 and the chief of technology on the 727.

In 1986 President Ronald Reagan appointed him to a panel investigating the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger. At the time, he expressed amazement that safety standards and management controls in the commercial aviation industry were stronger than those governing NASA.

In an interview with *Air & Space* magazine in 2007, he reflected on the safety features that his team had incorporated into the 747, acknowledging, proudly, that they were often redundant.

“You know things are going to happen,” he explained, “and sometimes it’s going to be severe. You still should be able to come home.” ✈

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Sea Story

By Len “Jake” Jacobson

My parents came to this country from Sweden through Ellis Island in the early 1920s like a bunch of other people. I mention this because my little known first name is Lennart, now that’s about as Swedish as you can get except for maybe Ole and Lena. I also mention this because in those days it was common for immigrants to cluster and socialize with people of similar heritage and background being strangers in a new land. One of my parents’ good friends in this era had the strange name of Carlson. Could that be Swedish? They had a son several years older than me who joined the Army Air Corps near the end of WWII.

You’re now probably getting the idea that this might turn into a sea story, and you’re also probably thinking it will be some hairy aircraft accident story on the ship. Nope, although I have plenty of those if you’re interested. We’ll now fast forward to the mid 1960s and the early part of the Vietnam conflict. It was once again my misfortune to be the Air Group LSO on a carrier during that little peace action. And, once again, if you don’t know what an Air Group is ask a Navy (not a Marine) buddy.

Anytime you have a carrier at sea in a war time situation you’re going to have an Admiral on board to be the boss over the entire Task Force which includes many secondary ships. Our particular Admiral during this cruise was kind of a free spirit, he was refreshing, did

things his way not necessarily the Navy way. He wouldn’t have lasted 45 seconds in the Obama Navy but then again we’re a long way from 1965.

As an example of what I’m talking about consider the Admiral’s action during our ORI (Operational Readiness Inspection) out of Pearl Harbor. An ORI was a four or five-day exercise which all ships went through on their way to Westpac to grade their readiness for the job at hand. He took the carrier one mile south of the island of Maui and parked it there for the duration, steaming in circles. We were so close to the island that the abeam position was over the beach. Departure and arrival routes were direct from the ship to and from the island Kaho’olawe (Hawaii’s Chocolate Mountain Gunnery Range) at low altitude. There was no way the bad guys were going to get his ship. I have no idea what the debriefing of this exercise could have been. He made a joke of the entire war game, which gives you an idea of why I called him refreshing.

When our job off the coast of Vietnam was done and it was time to go home he had another surprise for us, we were going via Australia. Now this was a big deal because I don’t think a Task Force had visited Australia since the end of WWII. The Admiral had been a fighter pilot during the war and participated in many of the island hopping campaigns across the Pacific. He used

our transit from Yankee Station to Australia as a nostalgic journey past every island that was close enough to revisit. I have no idea how he got approval to spend the money for steaming all over the southern Pacific looking at islands but that's what we did. We even sent the Marine detachment ashore when we went by Iwo Jima, and they reenacted charging up Mount Suribachi. Iwo Jima was the first; you can add Tinian, Saipan, Ulithi, Truk, Kwajalein, Tarawa, Guadalcanal, etc, etc, to the list.

Now let's flash back to my buddy Carlson in the Army Air Corps.

We were about three or four days out of Sydney when I got the word CAG (Commander of the Air Group), my boss, wants to see me. It seems that I have personal message traffic on the Naval Communication System and he wants to know what the hell is going on. Why is a lowly Air Group pilot cluttering up the communication system with his personal crap. I of course gave him a Greek salute

because I didn't know what he was talking about. CAG gave me the message which came from the American Embassy in Canberra, Australia initiating correspondence about our upcoming visit, and about how

my buddy Carlson and I were going to be getting together. Carlson was now an Air Force bird colonel and the Air Force Attaché to Australia. I had last seen him about ten years previously when he was at Randolph AFB in San Antonio and I was in advanced flight training around Corpus Christi. How he knew I was on my way to Australia I have no clue and didn't ask, proof to me that the spook movies and books about military attachés is right on. In any case it was now OK that I could use the communication system seeing as it was dealing with the American Embassy.

Being part of the US Navy and visiting Australia in the '60s was a wonderful experience. Back then WWII was ancient history to us but in Australia it was yesterday and they hadn't forgotten. The American fleet was in and everyone off those boats was treated royally by the locals. Completely different than the "Thieves Alleys" of the Orient liberty ports. Don't hold me to this but I think we were missing four or five sailors when we left port about a week later. They'd found a new home.

I should explain a little about shipboard relations. The average aviator on a carrier can spend an entire six or seven-month cruise and never see the Admiral or

the ship Captain, they live and work in their own little world. My case was a little different in that the Captain was the CO of my very first squadron so we were friends. The Admiral was a different story. One day on the cruise CAG, my boss, told me to be outside flight deck control at 1330 because I was going for a walk with the Admiral. Seems I had written a letter requesting out of the Navy a while ago and the bosses were ganging up on me. The Admiral and I walked up and down the flight deck for a half hour and he gave me his speech. I didn't have the courage to tell him he was "whistling in the wind." I had already made up my mind that flying off his boat at night during a war was worth more than 800 bucks a month. So the Admiral and I knew each other.

I mentioned that this visit to Australia was a big deal. I just didn't realize how big a deal it was. Since the American fleet was "in port," the Naval Attaché was obliged to throw a party at his home for all concerned.

I flew to Canberra ahead of anyone from the ship as a guest of Carlson and spent four or five days playing golf and hob-knobbing with diplomatic and military hierarchy. At this time the diplomatic community was all abuzz with the fact



LBJ had just sent one of his good ole boy Texas banker buddies down as the new Ambassador to Australia. They weren't quite ready for his laid back Texas demeanor. When asked if he had met the Prime Minister, he replied, "We ain't shook, but wees howdied." His wife had a luncheon for the community and used "paper napkins" of all things. An example of the insider stuff I heard during my visit.

Getting back to the party; as a guest of the Air Force Attaché I was invited. The guest list included a Who's Who of the Australian military, and Carlson made me a list of who was there. I lost the list years ago, but it made good social story telling for years back home. The contingent from the carrier invited to the party included the Admiral, ship's Captain, CAG and all of the squadron commanding officers. They all knew me and I was already at the party when they arrived. When they came through the front door about an hour after the party started, I was sitting on a pillow on the floor next to the Chairman of the Australian Joint Chiefs of Staff, sharing sea stories. I wish I'd had a camera, their expressions were priceless. I never heard the end of it.

But it makes for a great sea story. ✪



FRED C. ELLSWORTH
1930 ~ 2016

Captain Fred Ellsworth, age 86, ‘Flew West’ on December 28, 2016. He died at his Henderson, Nevada home in the presence of wife, family and friends. Fred and his wife Zorheh were married in 2003. He married into an Iranian family who welcomed him warmly. Fred, a true renaissance man said, “We really need a less fragmented and more connected world. Kindness is a value that transcends borders, race, and age.”

Born on March 23, 1930, Fred was raised an only child to parents residing in St. Paul, Minnesota. He was a studious and methodical student. We know that Fred soloed a Stearman PT-17 on June 6, 1946 at only 16 years old. After high school, Fred enrolled at the Spartan School of Aeronautics in Tulsa, Oklahoma where he studied aviation and received flight training. Spartan was a highly respected aviation trade school loaded with post-war military veterans on the GI Bill.

After Spartan, Fred was hired by Mid-Continent Airlines as a ramp agent. He also worked in Flight Operations at Capital Airlines. Fred also enlisted in the Minnesota Air National Guard, during the time the Air Guard, and his non-flying airline jobs, he acquired pilot flight time as often as possible. It paid off, because Northwest Airlines hired Fred on February 02, 1953, the start of a 34 year career. His list of ATP type ratings is



extensive: DC-3, 4, 6B, 7, and the DC-10; the Lockheed L-188; the Boeing 707 series, and the classic Boeing 747. In addition he had SMEL, Seaplane, and Lighter Than Air ratings. The FAA awarded Fred the title of ‘Master Aviator’ in recognition of 50 years of accident free flying.

Fred was an aviator in the truest sense of the word. He was proud of his profession with the challenges and responsibilities that it entailed. His Quiet Birdman chapter friends report that Fred accumulated over 27,000 hours logged in various aircraft. Among his close friends is NWA pilot Lee Ozawa, whom he sponsored for Quiet Birdman membership. Fred was also a cousin of famed Arctic and Antarctic explorer and pilot Lincoln Ellsworth. I can testify that Fred was a real gentlemen to work with. He had a gentle touch with an airplane, he was truly a skilled pilot to be emulated.

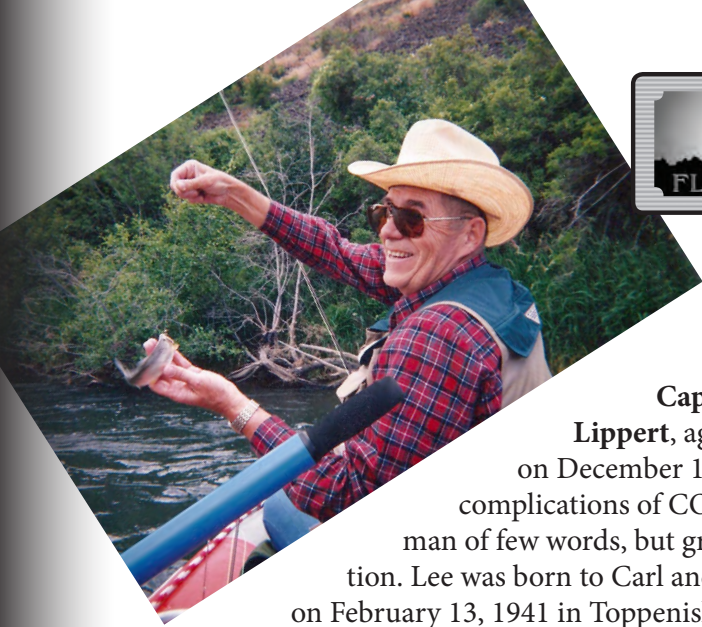
Fred medically retired from NWA on March 27, 1987. Undaunted he stayed active in aviation by restoring many classic aircraft. He always had a special interest in the Ryan PT-22 trainer, so important to military training in WWII. After a long search Fred purchased a PT-22 restoration project in the mid-west and trucked it back to Washington. “It was a fun project,” Fred says, “probably the most fun of the whole project was researching details.” Claude Ryan, the original Ryan company aircraft designer, proclaimed Fred’s restoration to be “one of the most authentically restored ones in existence.” Fred donated this airplane to the San Diego Air and Space Museum of which he was an honorary director. Col. Owen Clark, the museum director, joined Fred in flying his Ryan PT-22 from Crest Airpark in Kent, Washington to San Diego, California.

It comes as no surprise to learn that Fred’s home was reputed to be a museum in itself, with autographed photos of Fred with aviation’s greats like Jimmy Doolittle and Tex Johnson. Not many of his NWA colleagues knew that Fred was also a race car enthusiast who rebuilt and raced a Shelby built in Las Vegas.



This amazing, diverse man of many talents is survived by his wife Zorheh, his acquired family Sherry, Shahryar, and grandson Arta plus the many others who loved him and his caring heart.

(- Bill Day)



Captain Lee M. Lippert, age 75, passed away on December 18, 2016 from the complications of COPD. He was a man of few words, but great determination. Lee was born to Carl and Florence Lippert on February 13, 1941 in Toppenish, WA, the oldest of three siblings.

The family moved to Yakima, WA just before Lee's 10th grade year. He had the distinction of being a member of the first graduating class at Eisenhower High School, the class of 1958. There was no disguising that Lee was an academic nerd—the type that might carry a slide rule and have a plastic pocket protector in his shirt pocket. He played basketball and was active in the school theater, the stage manager for their production of “Our Town.” His future wife Sara lived across the street, but they only dated once in high school.

Lee acquired a full Navy ROTC scholarship to the University of Washington where he earned a degree in Mechanical Engineering. He and his former neighbor Sara Stevenson renewed their mutual interest in each other, and in time he gave Sara his Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity pin. The couple were married right out of college, spending their honeymoon like many other NWA pilots making the long journey to NAS Pensacola, FL. During flight training Sara taught school and generally became a USN wife camp follower. Following multi-engine school at New Iberia, LA, they packed up again and headed west to San Diego. Stationed at NAS North Island, Lee flew the S2F, often towing targets for USMC gunners. Lee stayed stateside and was eventually sent PCS to NAS Sausley (Pensacola) as an instructor.



An early love of flying inspired Lee to pursue his dream of becoming an airline pilot. He was hired by Northwest Airlines on April 07, 1969. Lee had a long tenure instructing in the training department at MSP. Hiring dates in his era could often mean unanticipated layoffs and major changes in lifestyles. The 1969 hires were on the bottom of the list for a long time. Lee had an variety of “layoff jobs.” One job involved leaving Apple Valley, MN and moving to Zanesville,

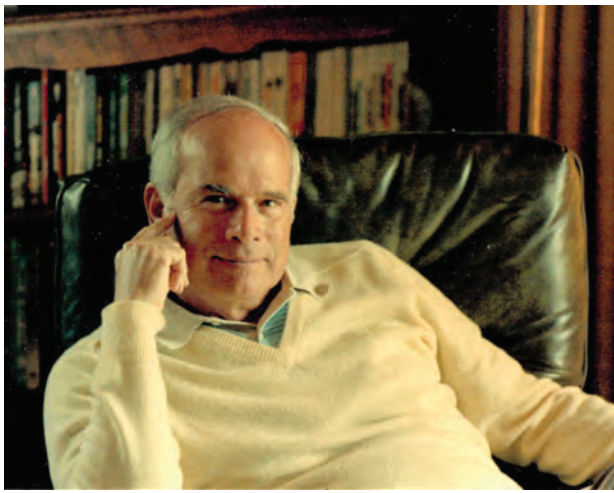


LEE LIPPERT
1941 ~ 2016

OH where he worked for the Gould Battery Company. After his time with Gould, there was no question about returning to NWA when his seniority permitted. Lee flew the gamut of NWA airplanes, starting with the Boeing 727 and ending with the 747/200. During his early years at NWA, he also acquired an additional Bachelor's degree in Business from the University of Minnesota. Lee concluded his NWA career based in Seattle on the classic 747, retiring on February 13, 2001.

Lee and Sara traveled the world together, but laid down roots in Wenatchee, WA in 1998. A true renaissance man, Lee was involved in Wenatchee Central Lions Club, Broadview Homeowners Board, Art on the Avenue, Senior Tax Aide, Red Apple Fliers, golfing, fishing, and making sawdust at home. Lions International recognized Lee for his outstanding leadership with the Melvin Jones Fellow award. He enjoyed golf, still searching for his first hole-in-one. He would always admonish others to “keep the blue side up.”

Lee is survived by his wife of 53 years Sara Stevenson Lippert, three children: Andrew, Steven, and Jessica; nine grandchildren; his brother Nick and sister Judy; plus far flung friends around the world. (- Bill Day)



**“JIM” PALMER
1922 ~ 2017**

Captain James S. Palmer, age 94, passed away on February 02, 2017. Jim was born May 29, 1922 in St. Paul, Minnesota to Dr. LeRoy and Gay Palmer, the youngest of three siblings. Jim’s father was a professor at the University of Minnesota. He grew up in the North St. Paul’s University culture.

At 13 years old Jim received his first airplane ride from future NWA pilot John ‘Jack’ Galt who at the time was dating Jim’s sister Bess. Jack let Jim handle the controls of the Rearwin Sportster aircraft—Jim was hooked. A good student and solid athlete at University High School, his 1939 football team won the state football championship.

While at the University of Minnesota in 1941, Jim enrolled in flight training with the Civil Pilot Training Program (CPT). Many of his CPT instructors became legendary names at NWA, including Vern Keller, A. C. McInnis, and Warren Avenson. Jim attempted to enter USN flight training, but was rejected for a supposed heart

murmur. He continued full term with the CPT program and worked for two years as a civilian flight instructor at the War Training Service detachment at Jamestown, ND. Late in the war Jim managed to enlist in the Air Corps Aviation Cadet pilot class 45G. Mid-way through his Multi-Engine train-



ing the war ended on VJ day. “I never got the chance to command that B-25.”

In 1946, after earning an instrument rating on the GI Bill, Jim worked a short stint as a flight instructor. He soon abandoned flying and returned to the University of Minnesota in time for the winter quarter of 1947. In December, 1949 Jim graduated with a mechanical engineering degree and was soon employed by Gamble-Skogmo in Minneapolis. In 1950 NWA began hiring for the Korean Airlift. Jim applied, was interviewed by Joe Kimm, and eventually hired on August 19, 1950. His initial qualification was copilot on the DC-4 and Martin 202; the training consisted of ground school and three landings. After a month of line flying Jim was furloughed and opted for engineering work at the St. Paul overhaul base.

In December 1950 Jim was recalled and forced to the Seattle base. Three months later the Martin 202’s were grounded and Jim was again laid off. This time he worked for Boeing in Flight Test Instrumentation. Jim had been recalled for only three weeks when he met the ‘Stewardess Brady Twins’ on a New Year’s Eve DC-4 flight to Spokane. Jim and lovely Beverly Jo Brady being well-matched were married on Fed. 22, 1953. Their daughter Joanne was born on July 16, 1954, the same day Bev and Jim chased around Mercer Island on bumpy roads to watch the Boeing 707 Dash 80 make its maiden flight.

The family put down roots in the Kent, Washington area, leaving only when ‘Dad’ had the opportunity to upgrade to Captain at Minneapolis. As seniority permitted they returned to Washington. During his thirty-two year career Jim flew the DC-3, 4, 6, 7, 8; the Lockheed Electra; the Boeing Stratocruiser, the 707-720/320 series, the 727 and last the classic 747. Jim also served as Captain Representative for ALPA Council 54. He was a skillful pilot, kind-spirited, and patient. When Jim retired his flight bag, May 28, 1982, he credited his successful career to the early guidance of Jack Galt.

In retirement Jim basked in golf and family. It is no surprise to learn that he maintained a flight simulation computer at home as a good diversion for poor golfing days.

Jim is survived by his wife of 64 years Beverly, his son Jimmy, daughter Joanne Strahan, two granddaughters and one great grandchild.
(– Bill Day)





**“CHARLIE” YOUNG
1940 ~ 2017**



Captain Charles G. Young, age 77, succumbed to pulmonary fibrosis on March 05, 2017. Charlie was born to Charles Willard and Patricia Young at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City on January 11, 1940. Charlie’s mother was the niece of the U.S. cosmetics industry pioneer, Elizabeth Arden.

Few NWA pilots experienced growing up in the upper class Ivy League world that molded Charlie Young. He attended The Lawrenceville School, a college preparatory boarding school in Lawrenceville, NJ where he was active in drama and editor of the school newspaper. Confronted one day by a dearth of school news to report, Charlie created his own by stealing an iconic campus statue. After quietly returning the statue, his abduction plot became itself campus news—the man just couldn’t be bored.

Following prep school Charlie attended Princeton University for

two years. Dropping out of Princeton he moved to Kentucky. While employed in Kentucky, Charlie had a chance occasion to observe airline operations and decided he wanted to be pilot. He enlisted in the Kentucky Air National Guard (ANG), attended Officer Candidate School, and thereafter USAF pilot training. Charlie served with the 165th TRS at Louisville’s Sandiford Field. During this era, the 165th was flying the RB-57B Canberra and received major awards for superior combat readiness and flight training



After qualifying as an ANG pilot, Charlie began the intense fray of seeking airline employment. At this time Charlie’s domestic life was in a bit of turmoil. He came home from work to an empty apartment, albeit with a ringing telephone. The call was from Northwest Airlines seeking to schedule an employment interview. Charlie Young was hired by NWA on March 15, 1965, at the beginning of the hiring boom. He began his career as a Boeing 727 second officer and in time flew the Boeing 727, the 707 series, the DC-10, and the 747 Classic and 747/400.

Many of us knew Charlie best for his role in ALPA leadership. Charlie became a regular at the ALPA office during the 1970 BRAC strike. This was the beginning of the personal computer era. Being ever inquisitive, Charlie became one of the first to purchase a PC.

Shortly thereafter NWA and Northeast Airlines (NE) entered merger talks. Dino Oliva and Norm Deshon were the NWA Pilot Merger Reps. Dino remembers that “Charlie made himself available with his computer and his skills to assist Norm and me with the merger. He could run different merger scenarios on his computer which we would have had to do by hand. Fortunately the CAB took the MIA to LAX route away from NE so NWA dropped the merger. Charlie became a regular at the ALPA office and was a great asset with all his computer skills. He never wanted to be a representative, only a worker. Whenever there was a crises Charlie was there. He was a great asset to ALPA and the pilot group.”

Charlie confronted mandatory age 60 retirement on January 11, 2000. After that he seemed to disappear, moving back home to Connecticut where he busied himself with giving back to his community and his quest for learning. Charlie’s passions were boating, diving, photography, hot air ballooning, travel and music.

He earned a lighter than air rating and owned a balloon he named Ashram. Charlie loved science and the world with its varied cultures and people. For a while he was a bee keeper. There are many quietly spoken reports of his



thoughtful generosity, often given anonymously.

When his health started to fail Charlie moved to a nursing home at Guilford, Connecticut. The nursing home environment did not slow his brain processes. Charlie zealously tracked political news, never missing a beat. At the time of his passing there were Spanish language textbooks and study notes nearby.

Charlie Young is survived by his former wife Elizabeth Young, his daughter Patricia Bell, his granddaughter Lily, and his sister Anzie Billings. *(- Bill Day)*



Lyle Prouse remembers Charlie:

I was a second officer when I flew with Charlie Young many years ago and Dwaine Ratfield was the copilot. Charlie and I did not get along and it was not a fun month for either of us. As we taxied into the gate to end the month, I said to Charlie, "It doesn't take any talent to be an asshole," and we parted ways and I never had any more contact with him.

Fast forward ten or more years to March 8, 1990, when I was arrested as the first pilot in American commercial aviation to be tried, convicted, and sent to federal prison for having flown under the influence of alcohol. I had burned my life to the ground, was totally and completely destroyed, terminated by NWA as I should have been, was immediately broke and drowning in a firestorm of pending disasters in my life. I opened the mail on one of those first days and found a cashier's check made out to me for \$10,000... from Charlie Young.

I kept trying to count the zeros but I had tears in my eyes as I saw who it was from. This could not have come from a more unlikely source. It gave us some desperately needed breathing room in the midst of an indescribable experience that was just beginning and would get exponentially worse before it was over. The magnitude of that gift was almost immeasurable under the circumstances.

Barbara visited me in prison one day and informed me that Charlie had sent a second check for the same amount. I was making 12 cents an hour in prison, \$19.20 a month, and Barbara was making \$6 an hour in a



print shop. We were in desperate financial straits but I thought long and hard about things and decided the right thing to do was return the check to Charlie along with a letter thanking him and telling him that his gesture had even more value than the amount of the check and we deeply appreciated it.

Sending that check back was one of the most difficult things I'd done but I felt I needed to do it. Not content with that, Charlie then enrolled Barbara in a gourmet food plan and she received several gourmet meals and desserts each month. When I got out of prison, our first Thanksgiving meal was from Charlie Young.

That was Charlie Young.

My first impression could not have been more wrong and I learned a valuable life lesson from it. After my return to NWA I was working at NATCO and Charlie came in for training. I had an opportunity to thank him in person and he smiled, reached down, and pulled my letter from his flight bag. He had carried it with him for several years. ✈

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THREE GENERATIONS OF PILOTS

Delta Chief Pilot Ray Baltera presents Steve Weber his retirement plaque on December 28th last year. Between those two is 93 year old retired Northwest Airlines Captain Wally Weber, Steve's father. The youngest one is Steve's son Brian, a B-737 regional pilot who began his Delta career in February. Read Wally's letter on page 7.