

CONTRAILS

ISSUE NO. 203

AUGUST 2017



Over There!

Skilled Workers

**On the ground behind the lines
In the Air Service**

CHAUFFEURS WOOD WORKERS CARPENTERS
METAL WORKERS MACHINISTS TAILORS
AUTO MECHANICS PHOTOGRAPHERS MOTORCYCLISTS

AND MEN FROM 40 OTHER TRADES

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Aviation Section, Signal Corps, U. S. Army

FOR INSTRUCTIONS WRITE AIR PERSONNEL DIVISION, RECRUITING SECTION, SIGNAL CORPS, WASHINGTON, D. C.

AIRPLANES MADE FROM TREES

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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.

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Retirement News

"Covering the news whenever we feel up to it."

Retired Pilots Break With Long-standing Tradition

Anycity, USA August 1st, 2017

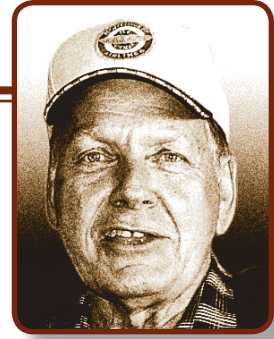
The longtime editor of RNPA Contrails, the quarterly newsletter of the Retired Northwest Airlines Pilots' Association, recently announced that he will no longer produce the print version of the magazine after this November's issue.

Amid howls of protests he promised, although details are sketchy, that it would continue in digital format as a website. More news here when it becomes available.





President's Report: Gary PISEL



Members of RNPA,

I have been bracing for this letter for some time. It is not easy to 'change' our ways from the normal. At the summer Board meeting of RNPA we had several discussions concerning our future. It has been just over 9 years since Northwest became Delta. We have had a good ride since then. However, it is noted that we are not getting the members participating as they used to. As we age it is no longer fun or exciting to board a plane or drive to a Reunion destination. We therefore voted at the meeting to NOT have a Reunion in 2018. They are expensive to set up, volunteers to run them are scarce and destinations are getting more expensive. We are considering a final Reunion, date and place to be determined.

Some of you may ask why Dearborn. Dearborn was set in motion over 4 years ago. It is a great destination with the Henry Ford Museum, Greenfield Village and the River Rouge Ford plant.

The second major action taken by the Board was the elimination of CONTRAILS as a published magazine. Read the article by Gary Ferguson for further explanation. As a result of this action we voted to suspend membership fees for one year. This will give the Board time to determine the new fee structure. All current members will be accorded membership through 2018. The new fees will be considerably less as CONTRAILS will only be on the internet, thus reducing printing and postage.

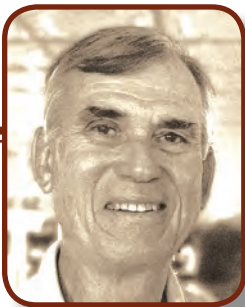
Another major action taken by the Board was to award the Northwest History Centre a donation of \$10,000.00. This is one of the best ways to continue the legacy of NWA. This award did not jeopardize our finances.

We also took action to donate \$2,000.00 to the Northwest Nyrop Fund for the bronze statue to be placed at the entrance to the Boeing Museum of Flight in Seattle.

As a result of some of the above actions, my dear friend and colleague, Dino Oliva resigned from the Board and the office of Treasurer. He worked for many years making NWA and RNPA better.

A HUGE THANKS to Dino.

Howie Leland will assume the office of Treasurer.



Treasurer's Report: Howie LELAND

This is my sixth year of serving on the RNPA Advisory Board. As I now assume the position of treasurer for the organization, I first want to thank Dino for all his years of dedicated service. He's been one of the main forces in helping RNPA become the successful organization of promoting the traditions of NWA. We strive to maintain these close friendships through RNPA, as well as ongoing support for its members.

As explained in Gary Ferguson's, "The Editor's Notes," all members in good standing for 2017 will be extended through 2018 with no additional membership dues. Membership and future dues will be determined later.

It is humbling and challenging to step into the role of treasurer. Thank you in advance for your support and continued commitment to RNPA.



A DIFFICULT DECISION

As some of you are aware I have decided to end Contrails as a print publication with the November issue. If we had been able to find someone else to take on the job we certainly would have, but this quirky little “hobby” of mine is apparently not something many pilots get involved with.

I am well aware that this will disappoint many of you. John Doherty, one of our contributing columnists, put it this way, “While I understand and support your decision I’ll go through a period of grieving too.” I may do the same as well.

WHY NOW

Fifteen years ago when I began helping Dick Schlader with the newsletter there was no indication that I would not be able to quit and let someone take over for me when I’d had enough. By now, though, I have painted myself into a corner from which there is no graceful exit. If I wait for the paint to dry it may be too late.

The simple reason to quit now is that after fifteen years I’m starting to feel some burnout.

The not so simple reason, and the more practical one, is that it needs to end with a calendar year. Otherwise, returning dues money would be a real problem for the treasurer and really unfair to all of you not to refund any excess. Maintaining my enthusiasm through four more issues in 2018 does not seem likely. And let’s not forget, as if we don’t think about it frequently, that we can’t know when our time may be up.

SO NOW WHAT?

There is a software program designed for users of the program I use for the magazine that does not require knowing or writing any code. With it I intend to create a fairly sophisticated interactive website. I have played with it enough to feel that I could become conversant with it soon. Taking this particular fork in the road may have some real advantages:

- It could contain a great deal more information.
- It could be updated frequently and therefore be much more timely.
- Unlimited photos; videos; interactive reservations for regional events, etc.
- Online dues payment without having to send a check.
- A forum to discuss things with other members (mediated to preclude controversial subjects).
- More likely that someone else could manage the website than could create the print version.
- Minimal dues.
- Surely some things I haven’t even thought about.

All members in good standing for 2017 will be in good standing for 2018 and pay no more dues.

There are details to work out about future dues, membership, etc. But all in good time—perhaps by November.

WHATCHABEENUPTO?

That question takes on some special meaning now. I frequently have people at gatherings say, “I keep meaning to write a letter to the editor but I usually don’t get around to it.” Now would be an especially good time to get around to it.

I am suggesting that each member take a moment to reflect on RNPA, the red-tails and the people of Northwest and submit at least a short note to the editor for the final issue of Contrails. Longer notes welcomed as well.

MORE ⇨

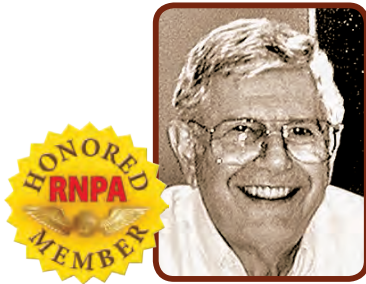
NO UNANIMOUS DECISIONS

There were more critical decisions made during our June 14th Board Meeting than any time in my memory of these meetings. Some were radical and not unanimous. I feel I need to explain why.

RNPA Treasurer, Honored Member and my friend Dino Oliva was not happy with a couple of these decisions in particular: 1) Terminating our reunions after Dearborn this September, and; 2) Donating \$2,000 to help fund a copy of the little girl statue “flying” a 747 that exists in Centennial Park in Minneapolis. This bronze copy is to be placed at the entrance to the Museum of Flight in Seattle.

You have probably read Dino’s pleas to continue with reunions for many more years. The majority of the Board felt, for several reasons, that isn’t practical. You no doubt have read those arguments elsewhere. He was disappointed.

He was a lot more than disappointed about donating to the bronze statue though. He was vehemently opposed. The statues (there is also a larger, different one in Centennial Park) were organized by John Horn to honor Mr. Nyrop and the people of Northwest Airlines. Each of these statues have a bronze plaque saying as much. That plaque, honoring Mr. Nyrop, would also accompany the statue to the Museum of Flight.



Most of the pilots reading this are well aware of the role Captain Oliva played in helping to save our bacon during the hostilities of contract negotiations in the labor/management wars. He harbors a continuing profound resentment of how he, and we, were treated by Mr. Nyrop that simply cannot be painted over in soothing colors or verbalized with euphemistic excuses.

Those of us who weren’t there may have felt the same way.
Dino has resigned as Treasurer and from the Board.

That saddens me. His long, dedicated service to RNPA as a Board Member encompassed several positions, including as president. All members of the Board depended on his sage advice and thoughtful approach that his experience provided. He will be missed by them and I will personally miss not having him there as we delve into the substantial changes on RNPA’s horizon.

A heartfelt Thank You, Dino, for everything.

IT MAY NOT WORK FOR EVERYONE

After forty some years and 204 issues of our newsletter this may be a painful transition for some. Those of you who are not electronically “connected” may feel left out. This has been a primary reason we have not gone to a digital version of Contrails sooner.

The positive view of this problem may be that it offers you a chance to spend some time with your grandchildren. They will not have any difficulty showing you how this new world works and may be happy to plunge into the website with you.

THANKS FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING

I hope to have more details in November. In the meantime...

Please send me your stories!

contrailseditor@mac.com

We've Got Mail



BOB
GOULD

HI

A Guardian Angel on my Shoulder

Gary,

I've always felt that I have a guardian angel sitting on my shoulder. I grew up on a lemon ranch in Ventura, California that was adjacent to my grandparents' lemon, avocado and walnut ranch. Nana and Grampa's house was only about a quarter mile walk from our house. I probably spent about half my time there. I always had a horse to ride and a dog to keep me company, and in 1949 my dad and grandfather bought a much larger ranch in Camarillo, California, just over the hill north of the Oxnard Air Force base. Dad and I eventually moved out there in 1957 after he and Mom got divorced. As a result, I got my driver's license when I was 14.

In the Spring of 1953, at the end of my Dad's period as president of the Ventura Rotary Club, the family went to Europe for the Rotary convention in Paris. We flew TWA, near the front of the Super Constellation, and my pointed peering into the cockpit every time they opened the door was finally rewarded on the Chicago/New York leg when the Captain invited me to come up for a look. For an 11 year old sixth grader, that was heaven! Standing there that night watching the operation was when I decided that I wanted to be an airline pilot.

I joined the Ground Observer Corps when I was in Junior High, and spent many hours on the hill above Ventura watching airplanes and reporting traffic to the Pasade-

na Filter Center. Radar coverage at the time was spotty, everyone was worried about Russian bombers and nuclear attacks, and those final years of an organization that started in WWII in England were quite satisfying. As I started High School, I joined the Civil Air Patrol.

I got a logbook, and each time one of the adult members took us flying and let me handle the controls, I made an entry. The first was in Cal Caldwell's Stinson Voyager on September 23, 1956. When I entered Stanford three years later I joined AFROTC and continued the practice there in everything from a U3A (Cessna 310) to a T-33. Due to my late graduation conflicting with flight school, I was kicked out of ROTC in 1964, and I went to work for Matson Navigation for a few months until the airlines started massive hiring. My intent to apply for an airline job after my Air Force commitment could now be sped up by about 5 years or more, so I quit my job at Matson and started full time flying lessons in November of 1964, much to my Dad's chagrin. When I started, I had about 15 hours total time already logged. While training I applied to United, who turned me down, and considered Pan Am, but they only wanted people who had completed their military obligation. A Stanford classmate of my parents, Bob Polhamus, suggested that I apply to Northwest. I had not really thought about Northwest, though I recall hearing the 'Northwest Orient... BONNGG' ads on the radio as I was growing up. I did so, and stopped by the GO for an interview on the way to Osceola, WI at the end of April,

1965 to pick up a brand new Cita-bria for delivery to an FBO in San Carlos, CA. I took my Commercial and Instrument check ride on June 8, 1965 with 185 hours total time (including those first 15 hours of stick time), and when I arrived back at my apartment my acceptance letter from Northwest was in my mailbox. I postponed my hire date by one class so that Gretchen and I could take our Hawaiian honeymoon, which we spent flying to all the main islands in a rented plane. We found out decades later that a good friend of ours had owned the FBO we rented from! We returned separately from our honeymoon; she to SFO, and me to MSP for my Northwest Mayo physical.

When we finished 727 S/O training NW told us to go home and wait until there was an airplane available for training, as NW had no simulators at the time. They told us that the next class would be going



straight to SEA on the 707, so a couple of us suggested that we go to 707 ground school and get trained on whichever airplane was first available. As a result my first base was in SEA on the 707. I flew as S/O for about a year and a half, and checked out as 707 F/O on June 16, 1967. I had 245 hours total time at the end of the checkout, and my license still said Airplane Single Engine Land. I did not have a multi engine rating until NW gave me my ATP in a 707 in May of 1972. Until then I did not have enough hours to get an ATP.

Less than two months after I finished my 707 F/O checkout I got a bid to the HNL base on the DC-7. I had put in a bid every time it came up, but could never hold it until that summer. After VERY abbreviated training we moved here in September of 1967 and flew the last year of the DC-7 at Northwest Airlines.

Art Brown and I ferried the last airplane to MSP, and I made the last DC-7 landing on NW property. All through my initial training we had been given the line about how difficult the jets were to fly, and how they would bite you, and I swallowed it hook, line, and sinker. What did I know? I was a C150 pilot! Then

I checked out on the DC-7. Whoa! When we pushed the thrust levers forward on the 707 (and especially the 720), something happened. On the DC-7 about all we got was noise. The 720 would climb out of ANC with the flaps up and the ROC pegged at 6,000 fpm: the DC-7 was lucky to make 300! It was fun flying, though; 12,000 and 13,000 ft amongst the beautiful ocean cumulus, all daytime flying, and very relaxed. As the VERY junior F/O my schedule usually consisted of a Saturday flight to Kwajalein and a return on Sunday in time for dinner, plus one Midway turnaround and one Johnston Island turnaround each month. Oh, darn!

The DC-7 base was closed in September of 1968; I predicted it would reopen a year later, and it did. In the meantime I tried to commute to SEA, but all that was available to us then between Hawaii and the West Coast were half fare tickets. I knew I would be deadheading to and from HNL to fly the Coral Run on the 707, and I asked if I could simply pick up the flights here; they said sure, but we won't pay you for the deadhead!

So we sold our house and

moved back to SEA for a year, to our old neighborhood of Kingsgate. Right on time the base reopened in 1969, and we moved back to HNL, bought our old house back, and started flying the Coral Run again, plus the west coast, ORD, MSP, and the Orient. The first time I looked at the bid list I noticed Stan Lindskog's name! Stan and I had been at Stanford together. He was a year ahead of me and went into the Air Force, getting hired by NW in 1968, about 800 numbers junior to me. The base closed again after the BRAC strike in 1971, and this time I was able to commute. Quarter fares to the West Coast and back, and then double use of our 9 allotted yearly passes by routing LAX/MSP/SEA - SEA/MSP/LAX. Since I mostly flew the ORD/TYO and later ORD/NRT nonstops as both S/O and F/O, I only had to make about 16 commutes a year, and I usually had 3 layovers at home during the trips. On holidays we would invite the crew out for dinner.

At the end of 1972, when 747 S/O pay became higher than 707 F/O pay, I checked out as 747 S/O. About a year later I checked out as F/O. I commuted to MSP and SEA for 20 years until the HNL base reopened.

I checked out as 747 Captain just before I turned 43 in 1985.

I was the first NW pilot to make the 747 my initial Captain checkout, and on my IOE flight Lowell Kegley told me that usually the new captain is not given the first landing, but since I had more time in the airplane than he did, he figured I could land in LAX on the way to HNL. It was an easy checkout because I was so familiar with the airplane and routes. I stayed on the whale until I retired (early) in 1998. When we had the SYD flights, I flew those all the time, and had we kept them I probably would have stayed til mandatory retirement. In 1998, though, I looked at the schedules and real-



ized that as the #1 Captain in HNL I could have any one I wanted, but there were none I really wanted to fly. After calculating how little extra I was making after taxes by working versus retirement, I pulled the plug in September of 1998, just in time to go to my son's wedding in South Carolina.

I invited Millie Carlson (see Millie Carlson's book *The Hard Way* for the Kindle on Amazon) out here



in 1988 to give Scott his private license in our 172, which he accomplished in 30 days!

Millie had taught me to fly in 1964-65, so she has two generations of Gould pilots under her belt. Scott now flies for Frontier, and for a few difficult years was VP of Flight Ops there. Now that he is back on the line he is much more relaxed. He had much more difficulty getting an airline job than I did, spending time after his graduation from Stanford as a flight instructor, then in the commuters (NW's partner Express 1). He had to pay \$10,000 for his own training at Express 1 with no guarantee of a job after successful completion! He came to a couple of my check rides in the sim, and we let him fly it once. After one pattern I told the instructor to pull an engine at V1, which he did. Scott

did a perfect takeoff, pattern, and landing on 3 engines, after which the instructor asked him if he had a application in with NW. I said yes, but NW would not even open it!

My other son Colin is still in the Bay Area, working at Oracle, where he has been since he graduated from Stanford. Colin's wife Shauna took it upon herself to come from her home in Wuhan, China to Memphis for graduate school and met Colin some years later when they lived near each other in Foster City, CA, but that's another story. Both kids have great families and are very happy.

I feel blessed to have flown through what I consider the real golden age of airline flying. I don't think I would want the job now, knowing what it was like in the good old days! I went from being #2 from the bottom (752 of 754 pilots) to being #44 of over 6,000 at retirement and #1 in HNL. I also feel blessed to have such a great family and friends.

Quite a ride!

Bob Gould

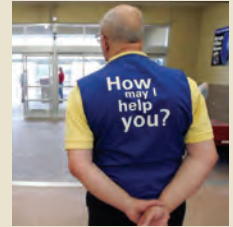
P. S. When deadheading out of MSP one time I happened to be seated next to Joe Lapinski in First Class. When they brought his meal and none to me, he asked if I were not going to eat lunch, and I told him that I was not authorized a meal. He asked what I meant, and I showed him my pass with the MEAL NOT AUTHORIZED stamp on it.

This was shortly after we had negotiated hourly meal rates in a new contract instead of being paid for each meal (other than those served on the airplane) that we would have to buy on layover.

Mr. Lapinski asked me to give him my pass, and said "We'll see about that!"

From then on those stamps disappeared and we were given meals along with the rest of the passengers!

Charlie, a new retiree-greeter at WalMart, just couldn't seem to get to work on time. Every day he was 5, 10 or 15 minutes late.



But he was a good worker, really tidy, clean-shaven, sharp-minded and a real credit to the company and obviously demonstrating their "Older Person Friendly" policies.

One day the boss called him into the office for a talk.

"Charlie, I have to tell you, I like your work ethic, you do a bang-up job when you finally get here, but your being late so often is quite bothersome."

"Yes, I know boss, and I am sorry and am working on it."

"Well good, you are a team player. That's what I like to hear."

"Yes sir, I understand your concern and I will try harder."

Seeming puzzled, the manager went on to comment,

"I know you're retired from the Armed Forces. What did they say to you there if you showed up in the morning late so often?"

The old man looked down at the floor, then smiled. He chuckled quietly, then said with a grin, "They usually saluted and said, 'Good morning, Admiral, can I get your coffee, sir?'"

Thanks to Bill Rataczak

CHUCK
SIVERTSON

AZ

Hi Gary,

Contraails just keeps getting better—good job.

Being a bit down with a cold and looking for something easy to read I came across Stephen Mills' book, *More Than Meets The Sky*, a history of NWA up til 1972 when he wrote the book. Very well researched and accurate. However, I did come across one small partially accurate, partially inaccurate item.

About the DC-3 it states the final trip, Sept. 27, 1958 was flown into SeaTac. True, the last SCHEDULED flight. However, as we all knew, under Pres. Nyrop a penny saved was a penny earned. The aircraft was to be delivered to Ozark Airlines with some modifications so it was needed at MSP. Thus it was substituted on a DC-4 flight (Flight 106 with all the stops to MSP) on Sept. 28th.

Capt. Gene Markham and yours truly flew it from BIL to MSP arriving there late evening. Wow, the last DC-3 flight for NWA.

History in the making. Maybe Mr. Nyrop, the mayor and a brass band would greet us. Well almost. Had to wait 10 minutes for someone to park us.

So we were not the last SCHEDULED flight but we

were the last REVENUE flight, and that's what matters isn't it?

M.C. (Chuck) Sivertson

DOROTHY
THRALL

WA

Gary [Pisel] and all the editors,

I just want to express my thanks to all of you who produce the *Contraails*. It has been an exceptional magazine that is a pleasure to read each time. Through the years it has just become better and better.

I know I speak for Lyle, who even with his dementia, liked to go through it. He was pleased when he recognized someone's picture. It often became a talking point for him, stirring up memories.

I appreciate the thoughtful and expressive manner that Bill Day handles the obituaries.

I enjoyed reading the comments, even though fewer and fewer of the people we knew were in there.

In short, a simply super Northwest Airlines magazine, reminding us of the remarkable airline and people that we were part of.

Thanks to all of you, and I look forward to the digital editions.

Dorothy Stone Thrall

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FIRST TIMERS?

Mail to ➡

Mary Ann Allmann
30817 21st Avenue SW
Federal Way WA 98023

Dear Diary:

For my fortieth birthday this year, my wife (the dear) purchased a week of personal training at the local health club for me. Although I am still in great shape since playing



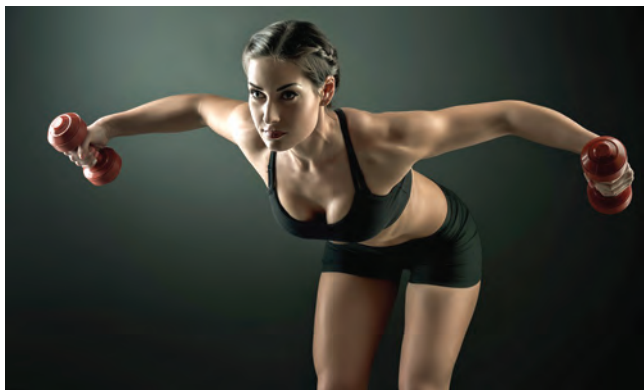
on my college football team 22 years ago, I decided it would be a good idea to go ahead and give it a try.

Called the club and made my reservations with a personal trainer named Belinda, who identified herself as a 26-year-old aerobics instructor and model for athletic clothing and swim wear. My wife seemed pleased with my enthusiasm to get started!

The club encouraged me to keep a diary to chart my progress:

Monday:

Started my day at 6:00am. Tough to get out of bed, but found it was well worth it when I arrived at the health club to find Belinda waiting for me. She is something of a Greek goddess—with shiny black hair, dancing eyes and a dazzling white smile. Woo Hoo! Belinda gave me a tour and showed me the machines. She took my pulse after five minutes on the treadmill. She was alarmed that my pulse was so fast, but I attribute it to standing next to her in her little aerobic outfit.



I enjoyed watching the skillful way in which she conducted her aerobics class after my workout today. Very inspiring. Belinda was encouraging as I did my sit-ups, although my gut was already aching from holding it in the whole time she was around. This is going to be a FANTASTIC week!

Tuesday:

I drank a whole pot of coffee, but I finally made it out the door. Belinda made me lie on my back and push a heavy iron bar into the air—then she put weights on it! My legs were a little wobbly on the treadmill, but I made the full mile. Belinda's rewarding smile made it all worth-

while. I feel GREAT! It's a whole new life for me.

Wednesday:

The only way I can brush my teeth is by laying on the toothbrush on the counter and moving my mouth back and forth over it. I believe I have a hernia in both pectorals. Driving was OK as long as I didn't try to steer or stop. I parked on top of a GEO in the club parking lot. Belinda was impatient with me, insisting that my screams bothered other club members. Her voice is a little too perky for early in the morning and when she scolds, she gets this nasally whine that is VERY annoying. My chest hurt when I got on the treadmill, so Belinda put me on the stair monster. Why the hell would anyone invent a machine to simulate an activity rendered obsolete by elevators? Belinda told me it would help me get in shape and enjoy life. She said some other crap too.

Thursday:

Belinda was waiting for me with her vampire-like teeth exposed as her thin, cruel lips were pulled back in a full snarl. I couldn't help being a half an hour late, it took me that long to tie my shoes. Belinda took me to work out with dumbbells. When she was not looking, I ran and hid in the men's room. She sent Lars to find me, then, as punishment, put me on the rowing machine—which I sank.

Friday:

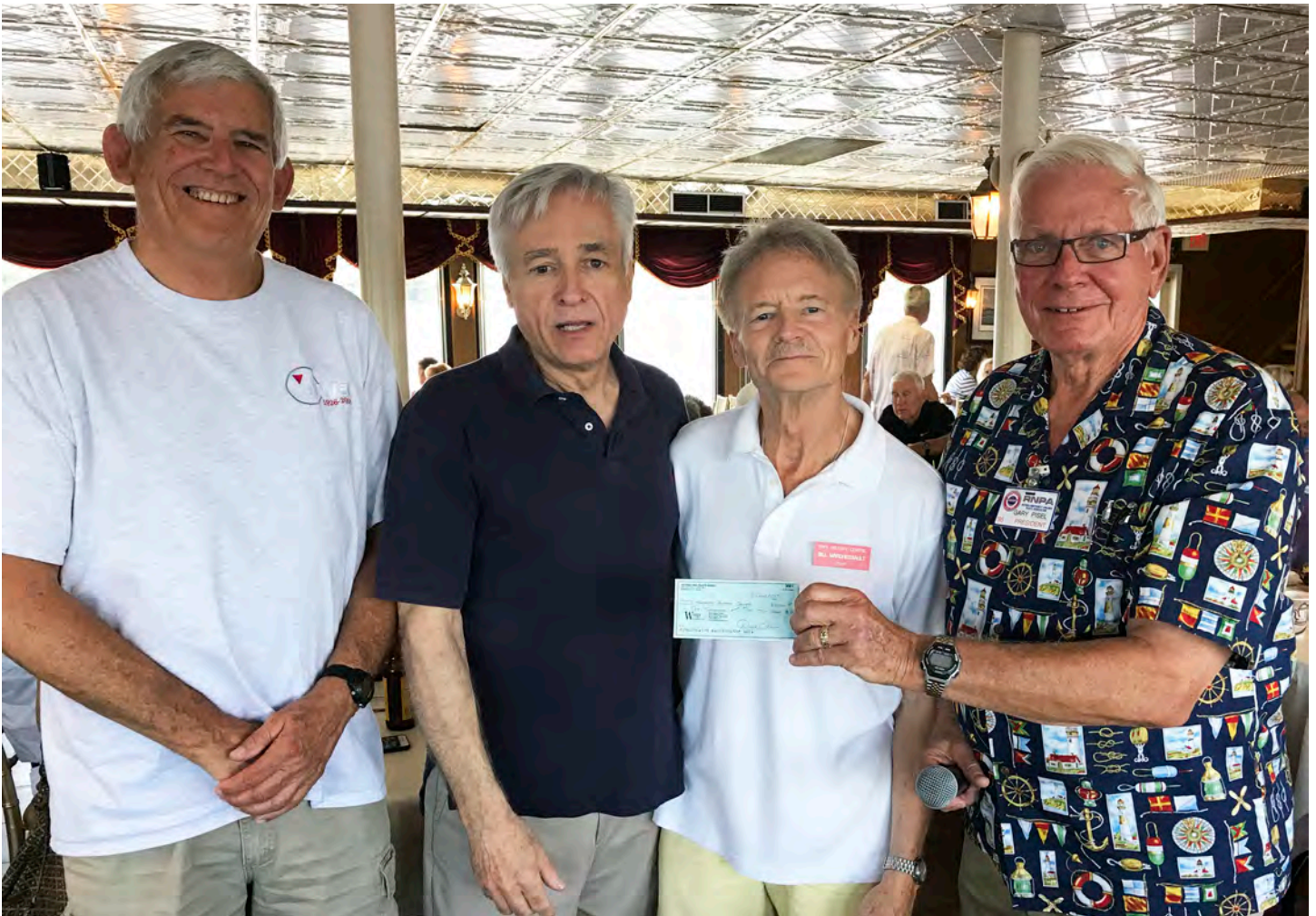
I hate that bitch Belinda more than any human being has ever hated another human being in the history of the world. Stupid, skinny, anemic little cheerleader. If there was a part of my body I could move without unbearable pain, I would beat her with it. Belinda wanted me to work on my triceps. I don't have any triceps! And if you don't want dents in the floor, don't hand me the *&%#(#&*#!@*@ barbells or anything that weighs more than a sandwich. (Which I am sure she learned in the sadist school she attended and graduated magna cum laude from!) The treadmill flung me off and I landed on a health and nutrition teacher. Why couldn't it have been someone softer, like the drama coach or the choir director?

Saturday:

Belinda left a message on my answering machine in her grating, shrilly voice wondering why I did not show up today. Just hearing her made me want to smash the machine with my planner. However, I lacked the strength to even use the TV remote and ended up watching eleven straight hours of the Weather Channel.

Sunday:

I'm having the Church van pick me up for services today so I can go and thank GOD that this week is over. I will also pray that next year my wife (the witch) will choose a gift for me that is fun—like a root-canal or a vasectomy. ✨



RNPA DONATES \$10,000 TO NWA HISTORY CENTRE

Receiving the check from President Pisel aboard the Avalon are History Centre Board Members Vince Rodriguez, Chuck Huntly and Bill Marchessault.

As the Paul Soderlind Memorial Scholarship Fund has matured and needs less from the charitable efforts of RNPA the Board of Directors is shifting those efforts toward supporting the NWA History Centre. While they prepare to move into their new location in the Crowne Plaza Aire Hotel, just next door to their old location, their needs are critical. This new location on the third floor of the hotel will expose the collection to the travelling public as well as making it easier for Northwest alumni and contributors to visit.



The RNPA Board feels that, as pilots, doing what we can to preserve our legacy in a once proud airline is important.

All of the large aircraft models on display at the Centre have been on loan from RNPA. They have now been donated to them permanently.

If you haven't been paying attention to the History Centre for a while there has been a lot going on. They have produced a slick new website that is worth having a look at. While there have a look at their terrific newsletter *REFLECTIONS*. Check it all out.

nwahistory.org

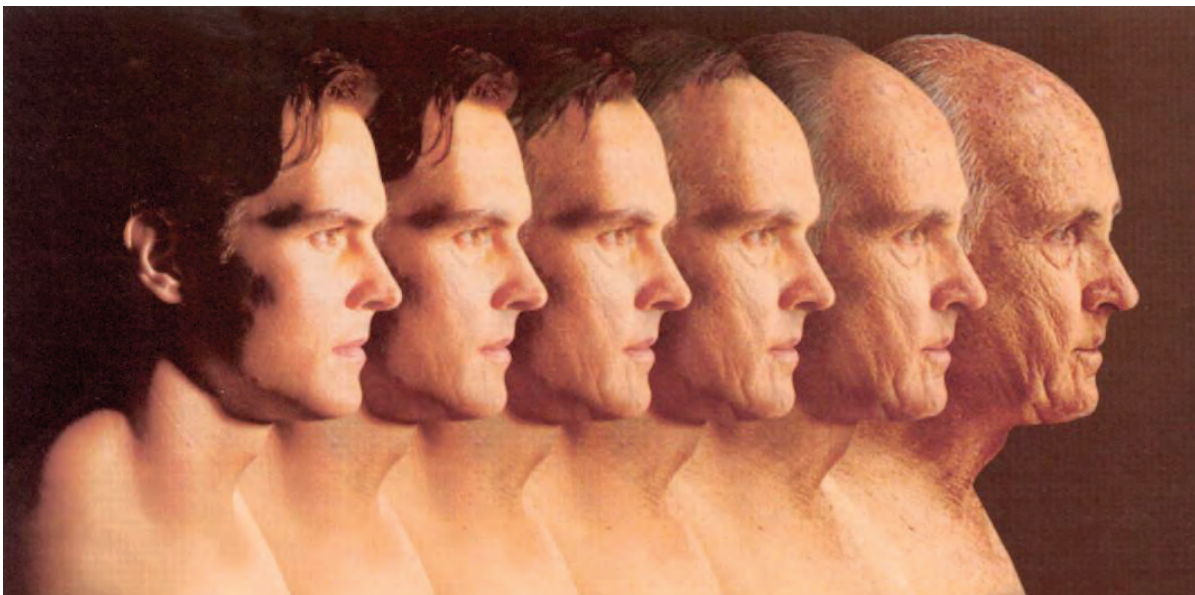


A STABILIZED approach



Contributing Columnist **James Baldwin**

man·o·pause /ˈmɑnoʊˌpɑz/



I was driving to the doctor the other day when my mind, wandering aimlessly in no particular direction, heard something on the radio which caused it to ponder some of the changes we are all experiencing in our culture and language. I can't remember what the exact terminology was but then I noted it's happening everywhere. Our language and the way we communicate is different and it seems to be accelerating. Or maybe it's been there all the time and my adoption of it was easier when I was younger. Ooh, I thought, is this old age?

Then I thought it's even happening to some extent in our previous profession due to the technological changes being incorporated. Different words and phrases for the new stuff. Even a decade ago, terms like "Next Gen ATC" and "ADS-B IN and Out" were hardly heard. Now it's the latest thing in terms of air traffic control. Progress. If you have no idea what those acronyms mean -- and I was trying to confuse -- good for you. Golf, travel and grandkids are probably more important. There are us diehards of course.

The same is true for the medical profession and all of the new tools and procedures being used to address the issues we each face. New words and phrases describe new technologies as they are incorporated. It has its own set of acronyms that need to be learned if you want to participate in a planned treatment. And we thought school was over.

And then there is the whole new found importance in social media. Some of those words I'm hearing don't seem to make much sense, let alone are they related to the way my (our) age group thinks. "Your welcome" has become "No problem." "My bad" really means you made a mistake or did something that wasn't right. "All good" well, I'm not sure what that really means exactly but "Fine" used to work. "At the end of the day" is big now even though I'm not sure if that means at midnight or 5 o'clock when most people get off of work. "Moving forward" and "Year over year" are big financial reporting phrases. The pundits use those to help them sound more important.

So even though I have, at times, wrestled with common modern vernacular, I hadn't set out on a quest to identify anything specifically. Now I'm guessing it was probably out of some subconscious need to describe why I didn't feel quite as quick today as I was yesterday, or why the obvious changes I saw in myself and my friends were happening. It was to my surprise when this word suddenly appeared in front of me. I was pretty sure it wasn't a real word and maybe I really had just made one up. After all, how would you know for sure? Google or Siri of course.

Still weaving my way through traffic, I needed an answer and I needed it now. I know, I know, texting while driving is bad, so I didn't. But in my excitement I just had to verbally ask Siri, or whoever is in there, if she had any idea of this new word. She replied fairly easily, and to my disappointed surprise told me it was already a word with a specific meaning. And, save for a different vowel, the meaning isn't much different than the more commonly used word relating to females. It's really the same for both sexes though. It is a word signifying a change in life. Apparently, men have them too. Duh. Did you guys know this?

The word "manopause," also referred to as "andropause," is related to the similar "menopause," for women. Honestly, I didn't set out to discover this, it just happened. Manifesting as a similar set of specific effects for both sexes, it involves a little different chemistry for obvious reasons. So, even though I hadn't invented a word or discovered something new, it was enlightening to learn there really are reasons things are changing rather than just shrugging with the familiar refrain of "just getting old." For those of you further along in this progression of age thing, this may not be a news flash. But, I can happily report: "We are really doing exactly what we're supposed to do!" We're getting older.

Referring to the internet, where everything published is true, it has been reported that the old 60 is now the new 70. I'm going with that because I still have a lot of things to do and this age thing is really getting in

my way. It's tougher for us men because, you know, it's not macho to admit things like this. We are having to take pause, reconsider. It's time for a new way of doing things, or, for doing new things we didn't used to think were as much fun as they seem to be now. For some it might be skiing. We don't go down the hill quite as fast or maybe even the same hill anymore. Or running. It seems now that the older I get, the faster I was. Seems reasonable. Artificial joints don't come with a mileage guarantee so my ortho guy said that was it for running. He laughed when I mentioned rollerblading.

And there have been plenty of other examples. My college roommate said he might stop climbing the big ones; the ones over 14,000 feet. I think it was after he told me he looked into a full length mirror one day and was confused by what he saw. "What on earth have you done to yourself?" he asked. The answer was pretty plain.

Andy Rooney once said he didn't get old on purpose. It just happened. If we were lucky it might happen to us too! How right he was and still is.

My slightly older friend told me he doesn't go as far into the woods to find whatever he's hunting these days and he only hits 18 holes instead of the previous two rounds. He's a pilot of course; he was getting good value for his fixed cost golf membership.

My cousin just retired from the medical profession. We were at what was left of a family reunion and he motioned over the length of my body.

He said, "See that?"

I questioned, "What?"

He said, "Your body. It's good for fifty years. After that, you're on your own." We had a good laugh but he was serious and making a point. Medical diagnostics and technology have allowed us to last longer than the life span of many of the required parts. Remember Lee Majors and The Six Million Dollar Man? That price might have seemed high at the time but is beginning to make more sense now when you look at the cost of some tests and procedures. Congress it seems, is having trouble figuring out how to do it for much less.



So, after just a little research I found the andropause effect in men can begin as early as 40 years of age. I think I beat that one! It also is responsible for erratic, uneven or disturbed sleep. I thought that was because of the 12 hour all nighters back from Narita or the o'dark thirty wake ups for the domestic guys. I can now freely admit it did get a little challenging the last couple of years after the move to retirement at 65. A guy/gal can do it, and there may even be an argument for the benefit of experience, but really.

The management of irregular sleep is quite a bit more manageable for most than the effect a lack of testosterone has on depression. "Mid-life crisis" becomes more understandable once the reason is identified and maybe even tolerated more effectively. Knowing why is sometimes all you need.

There have been other hints along the way and that brought me back to the aimless and unknown destination my wandering mind was seemingly searching for. The answer isn't denial. The choice in handling aging is fairly simple: you can regret it and fight it all the way or accept it with grace and dignity, enjoying the respect along with the wrinkles. Thank you, I'm dealing with the "Sir" thing better now.



For those ahead of us in the chronology of age, the guys who were in the left seat before we got there, you probably have all heard or considered all of this before. You'll just have to bear with the rest of us who just got into the left seat of the aging. I guess it works just like the seniority list did. No one questioned their place and we all seemed to respect those at the top. ✈

MSP CHRISTMAS PARTY



Thursday, December 7th
Social Hour: 11:00am • Luncheon: 12:30pm
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Entrée: A combination of Prime Rib and Parmesan Crusted Walleye. There is no "choice" of entree. We have combined the two most popular choices from preceding years into one offering.

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WAS



CONTRIBUTING COLUMNIST JOHN DOHERTY

THE PASSENGER WHO SMELLED LIKE ASPARAGUS



And other tales from the line

Maintenance control used to call me on short notice to fly 757 test hops. I was doing special projects at the time, had lots of hours available, I lived close by, and my spouse was a 757 first officer who was more than happy to go along with me on these missions.

On one such day, “grandma” was visiting and enjoying time with our two kids aged five and a few months. When I asked MC if I could bring my own copilot, they were happy to oblige. When I asked further if I could bring some family members along, they agreed also, apparently happy to get the flying done and not wishing to discourage me. (This was long before 9-11.)

So off we trooped to the maintenance hangar. All of us casually dressed, two of us packing flight bags, and grandma packing the baby with the five-year-old in tow.

The gripe on this particular airplane appeared to be “cold soak” related, so MC put a half dozen troubleshooting techs on the airplane and asked us to climb up to 410 and just sit there for a couple of hours to get the airplane good and cold.

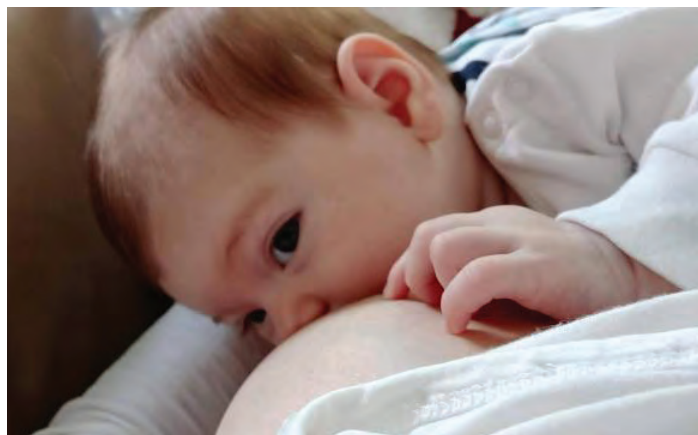
We set up a 50 mile hold on the Gopher VOR and sat there going round and round, techs crawling around in the cockpit and the cabin and grandma sitting in the first row of first-class with the kiddies.

After some time the baby began to fuss, getting louder by the minute. Tiring of the racket I called to

grandma that she better bring the baby up to mama. In short order a breast was out, baby was feeding happily, and once again peace prevailed.

Apparently the word regarding what was going on in the cockpit spread amongst the techs, because shortly thereafter they congregated and remained in the very back of the airplane as far from the cockpit as they could get.

My guess is that my son (who is now a junior at the University of Oregon) is the only person on Earth to have been breast-fed by a pilot at the controls of an air carrier in flight.





I was toodling along at 350 in a 727 headed to Tucson when open flames erupted in the cockpit. Yellow and orange flames just a few inches from my head above the sliding window. Black smoke curling up from the ends of the flames. I yelled out something about a fire extinguisher, my panicky request laden with blasphemy and taboo words.

The startled second officer grabbed the water fire extinguisher which was probably exactly the wrong one in this circumstance. The copilot, apparently the only cool head in the cockpit, reached up and turned off the window heat, and the flames stopped. A few residual sparks and it was over.



A lengthy conversation between me and MC followed with MC mostly pooh-poohing my alarm and certainly turning thumbs down on my suggestion that we might want to take the airplane into Phoenix where we had maintenance. So we landed in Tucson.

And there we sat with our airplane for three or four days while they shuttled technicians and parts back and forth from Phoenix, us enjoying the hotel pool and the congenial watering holes of Tucson, smirking all the while at MC's hubris that had given us this all expenses paid holiday in the sun.



On another occasion I was tasked with picking up a 757 from the paint shop in Greenville, Mississippi. By necessity some aircraft components are disabled during the paint procedure, and on this particular night, one of the systems couldn't be restored. Thus the aircraft was restricted from flying in IMC.

In conversation with MC and Dispatch we planned the few minutes hop up to Memphis where maintenance could be accomplished by the night crew. We arrived at the Memphis ramp around 1 AM to find after repeated calls no one at home on ramp frequency. We contacted MC and asked them to contact Memphis on the landline. They also were unable to raise anyone.



One of the guys deadheading with us was from Memphis and knew of a coffee shop outside the airport where ground crews liked to hang out. He called the restaurant on his cell phone asking if there were any Northwest people there, getting a negative on that also.

Pondering further how to get something going, I asked ground control if it was okay for us to just taxi around a little bit on the ramp, and they allowed how that would be just fine with them. I turned on all the lights we had and taxied around in the Y, shining the brights into every nook and cranny I could find, once again with no success.

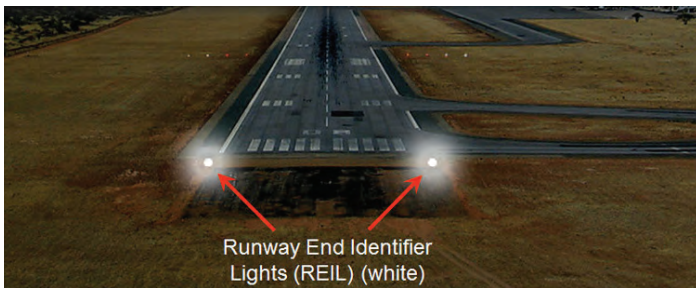
So we sat. And sat. And sat until just a little after 5 AM we got a call from the ramp tower wondering who we were and what we were doing there. Shortly thereafter we parked at a gate, the jetway came up, and a bleary-eyed mechanic walked into the cockpit. To my query, "Where have you been?" his simple reply was "I've been somewhere else." A few minutes later we were on our way to MSP.



Early in my captain career I picked up a trip to Phoenix. The flight arrived well after dark, and I expected a visual, landing to the West. No ILS going that way for confirmation, and the airport was surrounded by city lights. Not wanting to embarrass myself, I carefully studied all the details on the Jeppesen plates. In particular I was pleased to note that the north runway had runway end identifier lights.

Sure enough approach cleared us for a visual to 25R a long way out, apparently assuming that I, like the swarming Southwest and Cactus pilots could see my runway just fine. After a period of nervous uncertainty I was pleased to find the REILs cheerfully blinking in the mass of lights.

As we got closer things just didn't seem right. For one thing, it seemed that the guy I was supposed to be following wasn't headed towards the REILs. My low-level anxiety became high anxiety. Just in time I spotted the north runway that we had been assigned to. The REILs were on the south runway!



At the ramp, and stunned that I could have made such a planning error, I pulled out the Jeppesen plate, and sure enough it stated that the REILs were on the north runway, not the south where they actually were.

I called dispatch to alert them regarding the discrepancy, and the dispatcher's comment was, "Yeah, we've been meaning to put out a NOTAM on that."



Mountain station stop on a stubby 727. I strolled back to the mid-ship galley to replenish my coffee. The galley had a strong smell of not particularly pleasant asparagus. "Good grief! Where is that awful asparagus smell coming from?" I asked the FA.

The flight attendant pulled me into the galley and intoned into my ear, "It's that passenger there. He has some kind of disease that makes him smell like asparagus."

I peeked out of the galley to find the passenger looking back at me, a pained half smile on his face. I scurried back to the cockpit where I hid out until the passenger had gotten off at his stop.



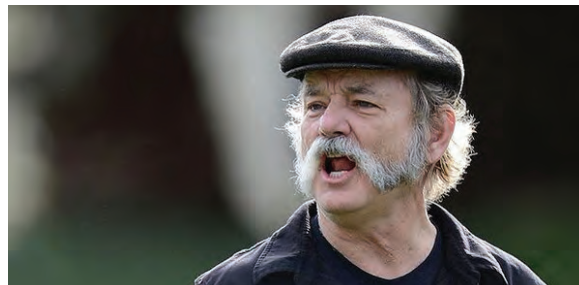
In the 70s mutton-chop sideburns were both fashionable and forbidden to pilots at Northwest. Me being an irreverent thirty-something at the time I adopted the style.

Somewhere in the midst of a four-day trip one of my buddies alerted me that the Chief Pilot was looking for me, and that there was a letter in my mailbox instructing me to see him. This particular Chief Pilot liked to rule by intimidation—I had heard him say that "fear was the best motivator," so I was dreading the visit.

I had a mid-pattern sit in MSP, and I took the opportunity to check my mailbox. Surprisingly, no note. I concluded that someone was jerking my chain.

However at the conclusion of my trip, there was the letter as advertised, followed shortly by a visit to the Chief Pilot which included a blistering excoriation—an excoriation ably backed up by the Assistant Chief Pilot. Think of a flogging where flogger B steps in to relieve flogger A when A needs a break prior to resuming the flogging.

Sometime after my "interview" and the conclusion of my eight-day suspension, I learned the explanation for the "now you see it, now you don't" note in my mailbox. My trip had operated over the end of the month, and had they "interviewed" and suspended me in mid-trip, there would have been no one to cover the remainder of my pattern. So for scheduling efficiency, the letter had been pulled temporarily so I could operate the remainder of the trip (with mutton-chops intact) and then be flogged and suspended.



Sometimes "plum" flying would show up that management pilots would grab—for instance Northwest got the contract to fly the Vikings to New Orleans for Super Bowl IX and the floggers mentioned above jumped on the trip.

As the story goes, they clipped a wingtip on their 747 while taxiing out of a tight spot on the return trip.

In those days there was graffiti all over the cockpit—one of the cleverest spots for this medium was the white dome light in the 727. The graffiti wasn't visible unless the light was turned on so it was more or less private to the pilot group—and since the writing was on the inside of the light cover, it had to be written by pencil backwards and on a curved surface. A task requiring great skill and diligence.

After word of the wingtip clip spread on the line, the following graffiti showed up in a 727 dome light: "De nut plus de bolt equals de wingtip." ✈





A Chick in the Cockpit



Contributing Columnist Erika Armstrong

Empty Cockpits Part One: Corporate Flight Departments

Part Two: The Other Operators Next Issue

Pilot shortage. These two words trigger an opinion based on your perspective, and the issues will be different depending on which side of the cockpit door you are sitting.

If you ask a corporate pilot what they think about a shortage, they'll scoff and say there is no such thing. Competition for pilot seats has been, and will always be, fierce. The aviation industry demands a higher level of qualifications for entry than most other sectors and intense competition means safer skies. But, if you ask a corporate flight department hiring manager or chief pilot, they'll admit there are pilots, but there is a lack of qualifications for the position they are trying to fill while the number of resumes to choose from has diminished. So, we'll begin to address the pilot shortage by acknowledging that we need to narrow the definition down to a qualified pilot shortage, but even that clarification is not focused enough to understand the industry's challenges.

The term "pilot" should not be culled into one category. Within the aviation industry, there are unique niches of operations, and each must be analyzed separately because each has a different solution—even though the issues are shared across the spectrum. We need to pull apart the challenges one at a time so that we can put the industry back together, see how they are interrelated, and then find solutions.

This is a series of articles, beginning with private business/corporate flight operations ruled by Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91. In this article, we will delve deeper into corporate/business aviation and the articles to follow will address charter Part 135 operations, Part 121 regional carriers, and then the major airlines because they are interrelated.



Part 91: Supply and Demand

The challenge starts with simple supply and demand. In 1980, there were 827,000 active, certificated pilots. This lumps pilots into one category (there are a variety of levels of certification), but consider that this same comparison in 2016 is 584,000 active pilots. With 243,000 fewer pilots in the pilot herd, it begins with a dwindling supply while at the same time, we have a growing demand of pilots in general.

As each generation moves through the frustrations of the industry, there are fewer pilots encouraging the next generation to follow. The image of the major airlines trickles through the industry and affects those even thinking about entering the industry and climbing the pilot ladder. The potential new pilot population born in the 1990s have grown up with the aftermath of 9/11 in



which airplanes were used as weapons, barbed wire was strung up around airports (including general aviation), and the media highlights only what is wrong with aviation; onboard fights, TSA lines, crammed seats, overbooked flights, and the simple experience of aviation being turned into cattle car transportation.

But what goes on behind the cockpit door is what matters and the industry itself needs to change the image and share with the upcoming generation the deeper experience that makes pilots' lives extraordinary. What is lost in translation is that a pilot's life is unique, filled with gratifying challenges, complex connections with other pilots, identity fulfillment, a workday that never happens twice, and a view of the world that few ever get to experience.

The majority of pilots surveyed began with the idea that they want to become an airline pilot, but something happened over the last twenty-five years that changed the destination: Business/Corporate Aviation. This sector's roots began with the idea of chartering aircraft for company travel and has evolved into corporations owning their own aircraft and employing their own flight crews. This sector is the most sensitive to economic changes because airplanes can be one of the first assets sold when the economy tightens. But for the well-established corporate powerhouses in the world, these flight departments are the new "destination" pilot jobs.

Part 91: Hiring

The feedback from hiring managers in corporate flight departments gives an interesting perspective on pilot hiring. For larger charter companies or the airlines, the filtering process is based on simple numbers in a logbook. How many total hours, jet time, multi-engine, PIC, instrument, etc. But for corporate flight departments, while experience is still important, it's more about the character of the pilot.

Most of the flight departments we talked to were more interested in finding a candidate that had the right attitude and were willing to invest in a pilot's training if

they fit the profile. The pilot shortage hasn't affected this sector as intensely since this is where many pilots begin their professional pilot life. However, this once pass-through sector has now become many pilot's destination. This filter has kept many potential airline pilots in the business aviation sector and has even lured airline pilots back into corporate aviation.

Jeff Steiger is Chief Pilot and Safety Manager for two Gulfstreams based in New York. He says that business aviation has unique hiring requirements because, "Pilots in this category must be able to handle C-suite level clients who often have high demands and little patience. These pilots must possess a high level of emotional intelligence because when you tell your boss that they must miss their meeting because of weather or a mechanical problem, these pilots must be polite yet firm. They're not just telling a customer 'no', they're often telling the owner of the company they can't go. There can be intense pressure to complete a flight despite abnormalities and these flight crews must have a high level of aviation skills as well as people skills. Our pilots help wash dishes, set up catering, coordinate ground transportation and make coffee. We are willing to put money into a pilot if they don't have a Gulfstream type rating because we can teach pilots how to fly our specific aircraft, but we can't teach them how to have the right instincts when it comes to dealing with people and egos. Our biggest challenge right now is keeping our pilots current with their training because it's hard for us to pull our pilots out for training and recurrent training."

Training was a reoccurring challenge for most of the managers we spoke to. David Marques, Chief Pilot of Bonaventure in Salem, OR says, "Hiring a pilot with the right qualifications and experience is hard to do for any flight department. I honestly believe for smaller flight departments, it's even more of a challenge. Smaller flight departments typically can't afford to train pilots in a revolving door fashion. This holds especially true for new flight departments as they often start building their foundations of the quality of their pilots and how they conduct themselves in and out of the cockpit. Hiring the right person is pivotal, not only for the safety of flight, but for the future of their flight departments."

Part 91: Solutions

The survey revealed that everything is negotiable and there is no blanket solution. The vulnerability of business aviation departments on the economy was highest on the list of concerns, but there are no solutions here for that.

A few departments mentioned they tried using contract pilots or independent pilot contractors. Once a proverbial term for unemployed pilot, this has become

a significant segment of the professional aviation community and there are now companies getting a foothold on the concept and mediating the gap between flight department and pilot. Some pilots are finding ways to pick up contract trips when their own aircraft are not in use. There are a myriad of issues with taxes, insurance, and interpretation of the rules so the industry is still oscillating on best practice guidelines, but this niche has provided solutions for both pilots and flight departments.

The budget challenge for all flight departments is training and the associated costs. While many flight departments we heard from have some variable of training contracts, many had a one-time pro-rata training contract upon the pilot's date of hire. After the first year, most departments considered training just the cost of doing business and accepted that they might lose their training investment if the pilot should leave.

Most flight departments were keenly aware of what it takes to hire and retain their pilots. They were upfront during the hiring process of what exactly the demands of the job entailed. If the pilot's position had no set schedule, which meant pilots could be traveling most days of the month, they made sure the pilot knew that ahead of time. Honesty was/is key because it's too easy for a flight department to sink tens of thousands of dollars into a pilot, but then have them leave because the job was not as advertised. The cliché work/life balance was the key to happy flight departments and there was a wide variety of options. Some departments offered hard days off to pilots, but this had to be negotiated with those who utilized the aircraft. The president of the company had to be agreeable to the idea that there are just some days that the company aircraft couldn't be used.

Even though they operate under Part 91 rules, most of the corporate flight departments we spoke to self-impose stricter rules and register with the International Business Aviation Council (IBAC) International Standard for Business Aircraft Operations (IS-BAO). IS-BAO was launched in 2002 and introduced standard operating procedures and best practices for business aircraft operators. This equates to safer pilots using more focused training.

Since most of these departments have three or fewer aircraft, their one shared challenge was keeping pilots current on required training while not adding more days to their schedule. Their solution is incorporating eLearning Modules into their training program so pilots can maintain training schedules while on the road, instead of pulling pilots in during their days off. This is a benefit for both the pilot and department since most pilots prefer the flexibility to complete training while already on a trip, and the department doesn't have to take an airplane offline while pilots finish ground training. The

captain for a flight department in Minneapolis summed up their eLearning as, "The eLearning has set a standard for our training, made it efficient and provided tracking, which is important for safety, company, regulatory and IS-BAO requirements. Crews can access the training and complete it when it works for them. When adding a new crew member, we can assign the most time critical modules first and then have them fall into the training schedule with the other pilots. Our crews typically have a busy flight schedule during a time of onboarding a new crew member, or we wouldn't be adding a new person. Using an outside source helps ease the burden on the tasks required when bringing a new person up to speed."

Looking Forward

Karen Henriques and Dave Keys (committee chairperson) are on the NBAA Part 91 Small Flight Department Issues Subcommittee (SFD) and they conducted their first survey in 2016 identifying the unique concerns for operators of three or fewer business aircraft. Nearly 200 small fleet operators representing 376 aircraft responded which helped establish two-way communication between the backbone of business aviation. By understanding the needs, the rest of the industry can step in and help provide solutions and they would like to hear from you. If you're able to help the NBAA with providing more information or solutions, Dave Keys, also chief pilot of Peace River Citrus Products, can be contacted at davidk@prcp.net.

Based on feedback from flight departments, Advanced Aircrew Academy has designed eLearning Modules to streamline pilot training and ease the burden of safety managers to help make sure they are complying with Part IS-BAO requirements and recommendations. For more information on how AAA can help your flight department with all your training needs, go to aircrewacademy.com ✈





Believe it or not This Huge WWI Lumber Mill was Created by the U. S. Army Just to Manufacture Aircraft Lumber

But the Lumber was not Intended for Building U. S. Aircraft

By Gary Ferguson

I assume most NWA pilots were aware, even peripherally, of a small airport just across the Columbia River from PDX. It was depicted on the charts as Pearson Field. Too small to be of any significance for commercial aircraft, probably like most of our pilots, I just assumed it was a small civilian airport. It was, and is—still.

But that place has a very interesting history that I knew nothing about. (Just one of the many, many things that I know nothing about!)

Today it's part of the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, administered by the U. S. National Park Service.

On a recent visit to what I knew was a small museum on this historic site called the Pearson Air Museum I was to learn that “The world’s largest spruce Cut-up Plant” (pictured above) once occupied the property. It was built there during WWI to supply Sitka spruce for aircraft construction.

It apparently was the World’s largest because, as far as I can learn, it was the only sawmill dedicated exclusively to this type of lumber. Having an interest in airplanes, of course, and being a life-long woodworker, I was thoroughly intrigued. This plant had been huge.

But why all for one species of wood?

WHY SITKA SPRUCE?

As America entered the war in April, 1917 it became apparent that the European Allies were well ahead of the Americans in aircraft technology.

“When the Americans entered the war in April, 1917, they were completely unprepared for the pace of technological change on the Western Front. European military aircraft technology was so volatile, and American aviation was so backward, that the British and French Allies asked the Americans not to build any combat aircraft. Surprisingly, the Americans agreed to build only training planes for the war. This was despite the fact that aircraft design and production facilities in Britain and France were strained to the breaking point.”

– Ft. Vancouver National Historic Site,
National Park Service

Board foot defined: 12" x 12" x 1"



The Allies had determined that Sitka spruce was lighter, stronger, more flexible and, importantly, more straight-grained than any other available wood.

Categorized by most at the time as an “obscure” timber, it was only found in significant numbers along the Northwest Pacific Coast from northern California to Sitka, Alaska. It was further limited to a band not more than 50 miles from the Pacific Ocean on the western slope of the coastal mountains’ rainforests.

These areas south of the Canadian border had been logged for some time by small independent mills focusing on the more prevalent species like Douglas fir. Since 1916 the Allies had been buying Sitka spruce from some of these mills, but the mills were only producing ten percent aircraft-grade lumber from these huge trees. Besides being wasteful, it wasn’t economical for the mill owners. If the Allies were to get their lumber something had to change.

ENTER THE “SPRUCE SOLDIERS”

To satisfy an order of that magnitude the U. S. Army Signal Corps assigned an entire division to the task and named it the Spruce Production Division (SPD). Thirty thousand soldiers, some say as many as forty thousand, would be assigned to the operation to work alongside the civilian lumber workers scattered in the mills among the spruce forests. Four thousand more would be assigned to what was to become the Cut-up Plant. (Interestingly, not once while learning about this did I come across the term “lumberjack.”)

Only through the skilled army leadership did they manage to integrate the civilians and the soldiers.



“In 1916—when the Europeans began buying Sitka spruce from Northwest mills—the tree yielded only 10% aircraft-grade lumber. The quota of 100 million board feet set for 1918 would require that one billion board feet of Sitka spruce be cut, and approximately 900 million board feet be rejected. Logging a minor species on this scale could obviously not be sustained. The old-growth forests where the spruce lived were fragile and the total accessible volume of Sitka spruce was estimated at no more than four billion board feet—four years’ supply.”

– Ft. Vancouver National Historic Site,
National Park Service

The first two decades of the 20th century were difficult times for the U. S. lumber industry and the country in general. In the face of threatened and real labor problems, the commanding officer of the SPD, Col. Brice Disque created the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen and required that his soldiers and mill owners and managers all join this union, which in fact was technically a union, along with the civilian loggers. It proved to be the key to the SPD's success.

“The situation at home in 1917 was also uncomfortable. Disruptive strikes, vigilantism, sabotage, and open violence between social classes were occurring in many parts of the country. The American public was told that their safety was threatened by “an unseen foreign hand” bent on their destruction. The Pacific Northwest was especially afflicted with political violence. The Everett Massacre in 1916 and the Centralia Massacre in 1919 bracketed the dates of World War One. On the social front, the SPD also found an effective stop-gap solution to the unrest crippling the Northwest lumber industry. By creating the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen (LLLL), the SPD got labor and management to agree to end strikes, lockouts, and sabotage in exchange for eight-hour working days, improved sanitation, health and accident insurance, and a pension fund. The arrangement did not last long, but it worked long enough to get through the war.”

– Ft. Vancouver National Historic Site,
National Park Service



Sitka spruce logs on the way to the Cut-up Mill. We can identify this photo as such by noting that the soldier in the bottom left is wearing his campaign hat.



Yaquina Bay spruce mill pond near Toledo, Oregon

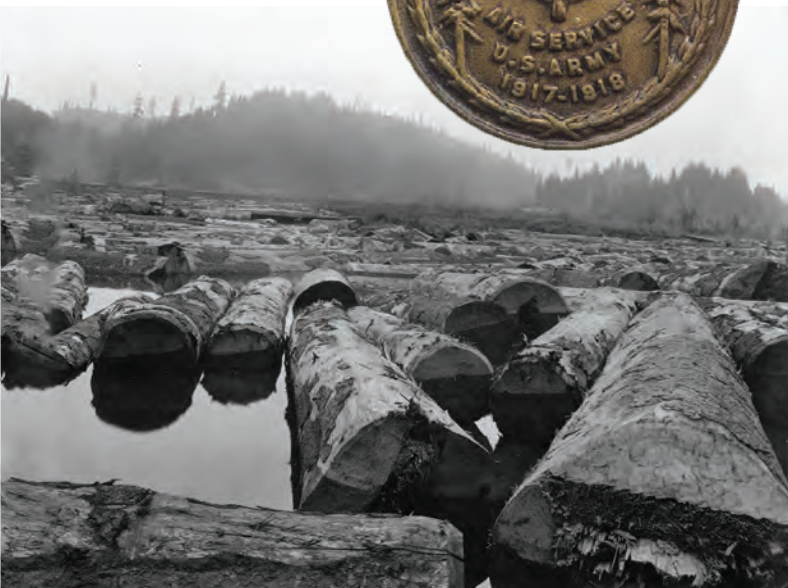
A HYBRID COALITION

So the Army got what it needed, industrial peace, by placing soldiers, on a somewhat one-for-one basis, in the logging camps to increase production. The mill owners got stability and security from the soldiers and the lumbermen got steady employment. They probably wouldn't have called the arrangement a hybrid then, but it's an apt title in the language of today. From all accounts the system seemed to work very well.

The Signal Corps placed several provisions in contracts with the mill owners, the lack of an eight hour work day having been the most onerous to the lumbermen. In normal times some of those provisions would be difficult to consider and still make a profit. But these were not normal times. Everyone seemed to benefit from better food and improved sanitation; including hot showers and clean bedding. They also needed to provide drying rooms for all the wet clothing.

We shouldn't be too surprised to learn that these hard-working lumbermen consumed 6000 to 9000 calories per day.

On the Army side the soldiers were required to wear their uniforms while working, although some apparently got harder clothing on their own. Except for the hats, from the available photos of those "uniforms," they were anything but uniform. Boots were essential and they devised a system of repairing boots efficiently. One thing seemed to be universally adhered to: soldiers were required to wear their campaign hats at all times.



"GIANT SPRUCE TREE NEAR SEASIDE, OREGON"
Note that these two soldiers are even wearing their neckties! They were expected to wear their uniforms while working and to wear campaign hats at all times.



Chow time Warren Spruce Co., Portland Oregon, October 1st, 1918—just 40 days before the end of WWI.



SPD taking delivery of a Heisler geared locomotive for logging work. These were also used for rail construction before any logs were hauled.

NOW TO START PRODUCING

There had been a lot to do in a short time: getting logging camps organized that met the Army's standards; contracting with existing lumber mill owners; acquiring forest lands; building eleven new railroads to deliver logs to the Cut-up Plant; assigning soldiers to fill all the needed positions; arranging provisioning to these far flung camps; and, most critically, getting the Cut-up Plant built and operating quickly.

It should be noted that it was then winter in the Pacific Northwest woods when everything got underway in November of 1917. Spruce trees could be difficult to get at and get out and they were huge. To get aircraft spar lengths those logs had to exceed 18 feet long, and longer if possible. The only way to get them to the Cut-up Plant was by railroad, which in the sometimes difficult coastal forests could cost as much as \$50,000 a mile. Obviously "... a substantial volume of timber needed to be cut to pay for every mile of railroad built."¹

Some tasks were accomplished very quickly. The Cut-up Plant main mill building was up and running in only 45 days and the rest of the plant continued building while producing spruce aircraft-grade lumber.

Although there were several steam drying sheds, which were intended to speed the drying, that process took time and was a limiting factor. Reportedly, some lumber was shipped green.

Although the original plan was to provide Sitka spruce exclusively for the Allies the record shows that intent was modified even though they never received their intended one hundred million board feet before the war ended. The following quote confirms that.

"The spruce mill at Vancouver produced enough material for 300 airplanes daily, averaging 500,000 board feet of lumber per three-shift day. A record day was 1,415,000 board feet of lumber. In total, the mill cut 76,653,429 board feet of lumber. Only one-third of the mill's production was assigned to American aircraft plants. Two-thirds of the production was shipped overseas for use by the Allies. Between 1917 and 1918 the U.S. manufactured more than 14,000 aircraft, and many were built with Sitka spruce taken from the woods of the Northwest and milled in Vancouver. The result was the depletion of Sitka spruce forests in the Northwest United States."

— Ft. Vancouver National Historic Site,
National Park Service

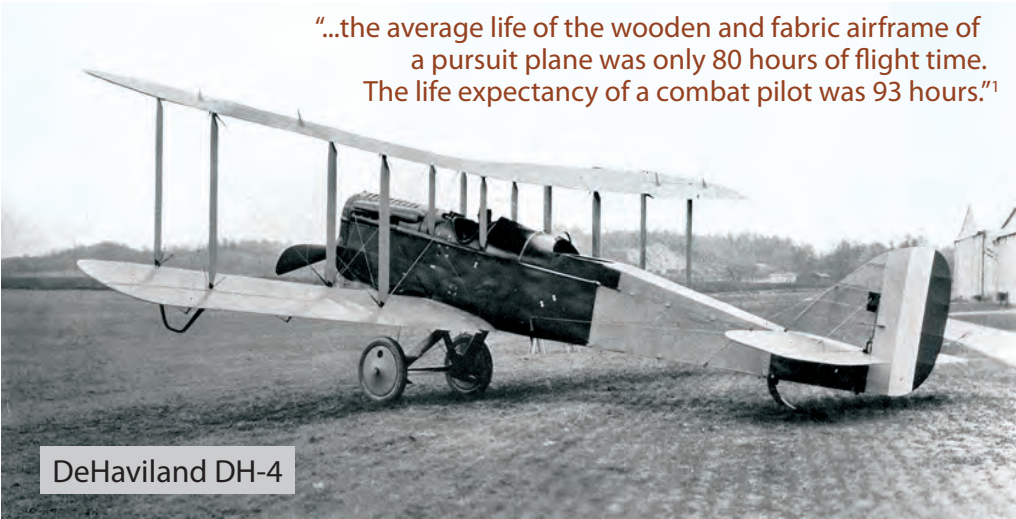


No chainsaws here, just long crosscut saws "singing" and double bladed axes chopping. Some of the crosscut saws were welded together end-to-end to be able to span such huge trees. Other photos showed single saws that seemed to be exceptionally long. Both axes and saws required raw physical power for long periods of time.

"In the twelve months from November 1917 to October 1918, aircraft quality Sitka Spruce production went from under 3,000,000 board feet/month to well over 30,000,000/month. Not only did actual logging and milling increase dramatically, but the infrastructure being built by the army was an asset of considerable future value to the region. New logging roads, bridges and rail lines opened up billions of board feet to Sitka Spruce production, but also for whatever other forest products were in the way."

The Cascadia Courier

“...the average life of the wooden and fabric airframe of a pursuit plane was only 80 hours of flight time. The life expectancy of a combat pilot was 93 hours.”¹

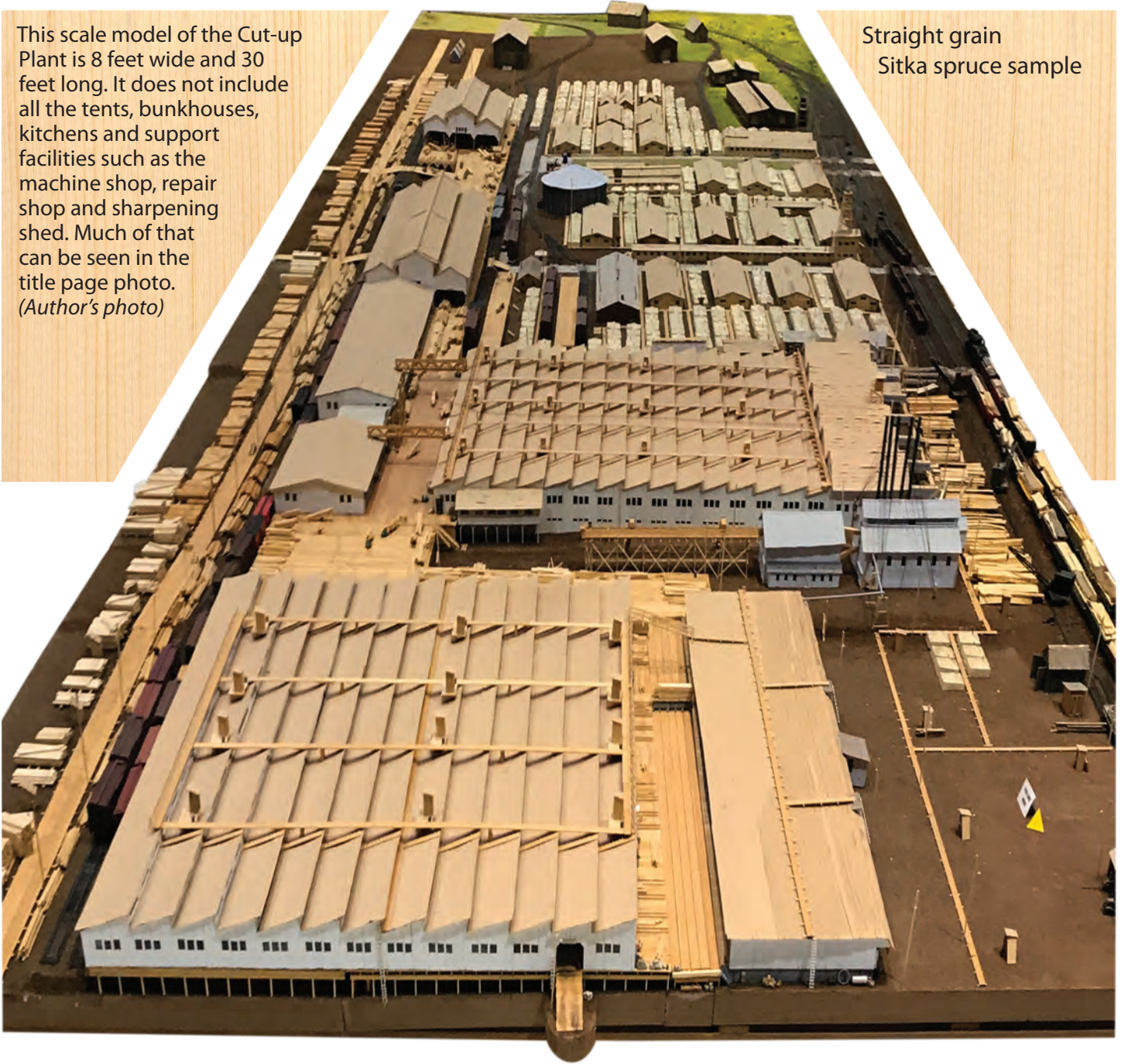


DeHaviland DH-4

DeHAVILAND BI-PLANE— LIBERTY MOTOR Quantity production of this and other models of aircraft furnish eyes for our armies and bombing facilities to annihilate the enemy, all of which was made possible only by the gigantic efforts of the Spruce Production Division, United States Army.¹ – NPS photo

America called these Liberty Planes and built more than 14,000 of them after the war, mostly for training.

This scale model of the Cut-up Plant is 8 feet wide and 30 feet long. It does not include all the tents, bunkhouses, kitchens and support facilities such as the machine shop, repair shop and sharpening shed. Much of that can be seen in the title page photo. (Author's photo)



Straight grain Sitka spruce sample



Lumbermen and loggers always seem ripe for competition. This less than perfect photo shows these men in a splitting (technically “riving”) contest in Seaside, Oregon. They managed to split this log in half in 36 minutes.

Early on, riving was done to allow the split to follow the grain, making it easier for the sawyers in the mill to get the straight grain by cutting parallel to the split face, as well as making them easier to haul.

Later in production they learned how to do that more efficiently on full logs, saving labor in the forest.

“CAME TO SEE AND STAYED TO SAW”

That was the folk humor describing now Brig. Gen. Disque. He was a man of unique abilities who is credited with the amazing success of the SPD. He “...and his Division in one single year increased the production of airplane lumber from perhaps 1,500,000 feet a month to 23,000,000 feet a month; an increase of at least seventeen hundred percent.”¹ To put that into a visual that most aviators will recognize, that’s a **stack of four inch lumber 6 feet wide and 18 feet long almost 18 thousand feet high—every month!** Or if you prefer, **almost 15 fifty-foot rail cars stacked 10 feet high every day—450 cars a month.** It’s hard to imagine. Or believe.

The mill continued to operate briefly after the war to cut the stock on hand into commercial lumber, but it had, by just days after the Armistice, become a hybrid civilian-military organization called the Spruce Production Corporation (SPC). Gen. Disque became the corporation’s president. Because an investigator submitted a report which was later discredited, Disque “and his senior officers faced a Congressional investigation during the summer of 1919. Disque and the SPD were absolved of any wrongdoing, but the process was humiliating, and he left his war service disillusioned with the Army and the government.”¹

“The storm passed and Disque supervised the biggest surplus sale of federal equipment since the building of the Panama Canal.”

The Cascadia Courier

WRAPPING IT ALL UP

What took not much time to build took much longer to dismantle and sell off.

“Small assets of the SPC were sold at the Cut-up Plant after they were gathered from the coastal logging camps and railroads. The rolling stock included locomotives, disconnected logging cars, and other railroad equipment.”¹ Miles of rails and their attachment hardware were stacked at Vancouver. Everything, including all the smaller items from the camps; tools, shovels, kitchenware, mattocks, office furniture, beds and stoves and even nails, etc., eventually made their way to Vancouver to be sold. Of course all the mill’s heavy machinery and saws had been up for sale as well.

“The larger properties were more difficult to sell. These were the mill at Toledo, the mill at Port Angeles, the mill at Lake Pleasant, Railroad I on the Olympic Peninsula, Railroad XII on the Oregon coast...”¹

Some were still quarreling over forest lands ownership right up until the beginning of WWII, but it must be assumed that there were some real bargains in land and, most specifically, in mill equipment and railroad rolling stock and gear. It’s certain that the whole operation had significant impact on future logging in the Pacific Northwest.

Finally it all sold, and in the winter of 1925, the Cut-up Plant, heroically built in 45 days, came down. I’ll never be able to look down on Pearson Field again without thinking about what happened there during “The Great War.” ✈

Notes: Careful readers will have noticed discrepancies in some of the numbers. Whether completely accurate does not seem to detract from the reality of what occurred; many sources agreed on the basics.¹ On March 1, 2013 an exhaustive 200 page report was commissioned for the Ft. Vancouver National Historic Site, which is where most of this information originated. The photos, except as noted, were found elsewhere and are in the public domain.

SUMMER CRUISE '17



Photos: Gary Ferguson



Dwaine Ratfield



Hosts Phil & Eileen Hallin



Ron Kenmir



David & Angie Lundin



Karen & Dino Oliva



Chris & Christina Nee





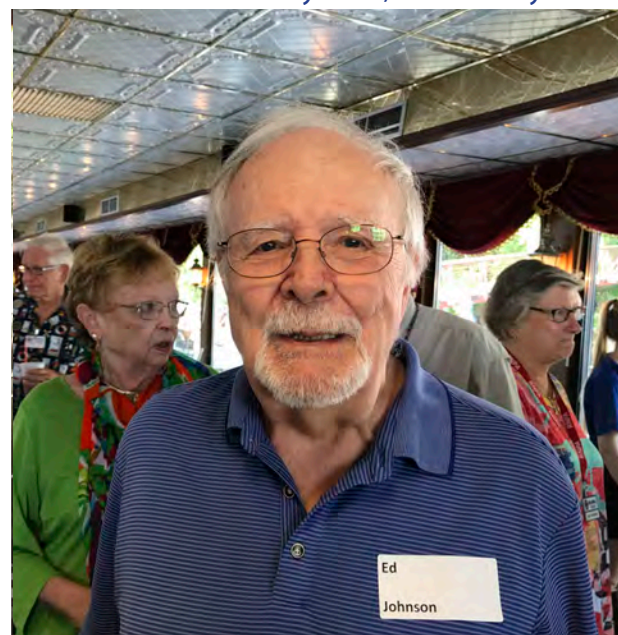
Gary & Sandy Roelofs



Gary Pisel, Ken Finney



Deb Dahl, Bob & Sue Horning



Ed Johnson



Martha



Christy Schmitz & Howard Reinhart



Ron & Carol Vandervort



Kevin & Mary O'Neill



Lois & Dick Haglund, Verna Finneseth



& K. C. Kohlbrand



Chuck Hinz, David Miley, Karen Jensen, Ed Johnson, Rowdy Yates



Tom & Judy Schellinger



Hazen Arnold, Dick & Gay Glover



David Miley



Loren & Kathie DeShon



Lois & Dick Haglund



Bill & Nancy Waterbury



Deneen & Tony Polgar



Cindy & Jim



Nadine & Sterling Bentsen



Holly & J. D. Leland





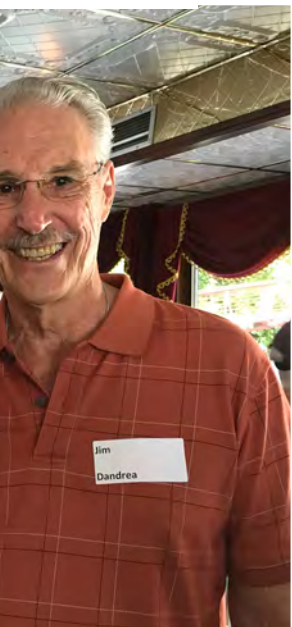
nd



Ann & Pete Brown



Dick & Laurie Lindberg



Dandrea



Patty Jo & Jim Halverson



Paul & Pamela Nungesser



Libby & Doug Baker



Luanne Nordstrom, Joan Zeisneiss



Steve Towle



Gene & Helen Frank



Howie & Marilyn Leland



Liz & Roger Bruggemeyer



Vikki & Jim Hancock



Vikki & Don Bulger



JoAnne LeMire



Skip & Kathy Foster



Kathy Palmen, Bev Ryan, Alice Bernhart



John & Borgny Lee



Gail Olsen & Bruce Armstrong



Virgil & Christine Sagness



Steve Lillyblad, Scott & Lori Lillyblad



Dick & Sue Duxbury



George Lund



Pat & George Groth



Ned Stephens, Steve Lillyblad



Jane & Dave Sanderson



Donna & Demetri Vasiliades



Mary Jane Dittberner, Marcy & Larry Dorau



Lynn Cherry, Ann & Ralph Kisor



Jerry & Linda Wortman



Dale Hinkle, Stu Helgason



Eris & Steve Hunter



Sandra Ryan, Mary Ann & Dick Robbins



Joan & Gary Thompson



Wally Weber



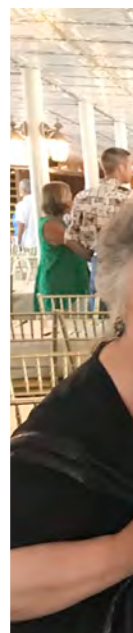
Lane &



Don & Joan Hill



Rick Radder & Diana Schutter



B



Sammy & Bill Fellingner



Claudia Waters & Pete Johnson



Steve Lapens



Nancy Littrell



Charlotte Stewart, Susan Echley



K. P. & Nancy Haram



Bonnie Wolfe, Dottie Bassett, Donna Miller, Jeneé Hannon



Sue Kostka & Hal Hockett



Steve Lapinski, Kathie & Dave Griffiths



Sara & Nick Modders



Arliss & George Williams



Julie & Les McNamee, Debbie Jensen



Kathy Nelson



Don & Evy Hunt



Dick & Marina



Andy & Vonne Danielson



Marty Ginzl, Margie Kiwala



Nancy & Jim Bestul



Elaine Mielke, Jack Cornforth



Jones



Margaret Burt, Carol Hall



Kay Parhm & Don Aulick



Dale Hagfors



Kirk Mogren, Suzanne Psyk



Dee & Rod Hald



Tom & Sue Ebner



Dennis Johnson, Jeff Johnson



Mike & Jeanette Nevin



Bill & Judy Rataczak



Geri & Louis Ferrell



Kathryn & Tim Mannion, RaNae Wolle, Connie Thompson

A Darrell Smith Sampler



In addition to the numerous stories already published in Contrails I have a folder on my computer with twenty four more from Captain Smith that have yet to be. He spends many evenings, sometimes late evenings with maybe a wee dram of whiskey, journaling his life experiences. Too bad more of us don't do that. His family is encouraging him to compile them all into a book. He has long claimed not to be a writer. You be the judge. Herein find four from my folder. – Editor

Harmon

At this point in our lives Glenda and I were homeless. We had chosen to sell our lovely townhouse overlooking the eighteenth fairway of the Lake Ridge Golf Course in Reno, Nevada. My wanderlust was the driving force in our decision to buy a forty-foot diesel-powered motor-home with the intent of exploring the wonderful sights of this great country.

Life threw us somewhat of a cruel curve. Mable and Venoy, my parents, were growing older and they dearly wanted to stay on the old family farm during their last days. My siblings and I decided to do everything within our power to honor their wishes.

Our motor home was parked in a RV and Golf Resort in Gold Canyon, Arizona. I was spending ten days of each month trying to make my parents' life as comfortable as possible.

I had struggled through my "tour of duty" with my folks and was making my way back to Arizona. On this particular day the most likely route to get home was to proceed through Minneapolis, since I was attempting to travel on a pass.

The segment from Memphis to Minneapolis had been completed with no complications but the flight to Phoenix was booked nearly full. The possibility of getting on board as a standby was questionable. In the last few minutes of the boarding process I was somewhat surprised to hear my name called by the gate agent.

I was given a boarding pass and was again surprised that my assigned seat was in the first class section. It was difficult to subdue a smile since there had been a real possibility of not being boarded at all. I climbed over an already seated passenger in my effort to get to my window seat.

This passenger, whom I immediately recognized, was friendly and helpful. I settled in, fastened my seat-belt and attempted to find some reading material. My seatmate was a famous person and I intended to respect his privacy. In my mind, famous people must surely get tired of the constant attention from the general public.



After only a few minutes, Harmon Killebrew, Hall of Fame baseball player, turned to me and asked, "So, you are going to Phoenix, what will you be doing there?" My three hours of expected boredom disappeared.

After chatting a bit, I asked, "So, have you ever been involved with professional baseball in any way?" As per his personality he simply stated that he had once played for the Minnesota Twins. The flight passed in a "flash."

We talked at length about his college career, his time with the Twins and his present association with that organization. He expressed interest in what it was like being a military and airline pilot. I kidded him as to having a street named after him. He chuckled and said that it was only a short street.

He was comfortable enough to discuss his world famous teammates. All in all, it was a very memorable three hours. The one sad moment was when he told of being the Twins' representative at the funeral of Kirby Puckett. Kirby had been a superstar for the Twins but had died much too young.

In my opinion, Harmon and I, for that moment in time, connected! I enjoyed this brief relationship and feel that he did also. During the flight, we both could not remember a certain event from the past. As I retrieved

my personal items the answer came to me. Deplaning just a few people ahead of him, I turned and blurted the information. He gave me a smile, a thumbs-up and said, “That’s it!”

Harmon is gone now but I will always remember this chance meeting and the conversation with this famous but humble man. In my mind he was a great human being.

Lunch, East St. Louis, 2014

On the 18th of June 2014 Glenda and I began yet another little adventure. I don’t remember how we came up with the idea but somehow we decided to drive the GRR (Great River Road).

The United States Government had designated a series of roads along or near the Mississippi River as a National treasure. This network of roads follow the river from its source in northern Minnesota to a place near New Orleans, Louisiana, more than two thousand miles away.

We consider this trip a success in that we learned and .saw so much! Somehow the simple event of a having lunch in the “hood” of East St. Louis stands out as the one highlight that we think of when we reflect upon this adventure.

Near noon in East St. Louis, we had lost our way; our intended route had been closed due to construction. As we slowly cruised a very questionable neighborhood (houses with boarded-up windows and lawns gone wild) looking for a street name that we would possibly recognize, we saw smoke! It was coming from a building that had once been a restaurant but now had plywood over the front windows and door. I noticed that the back door was open, there were several people standing in what appeared to be a line and the smoke was coming from the concrete block chimney.

I attempted to approach this building by turning down a one-way street but a black man in an old car blew his horn loudly and waved me away. He gave me a friendly wave and a big smile as I realized my error. Making my way back to this derelict building, I eased the car into the unpaved parking lot out back. On the door, where the people stood in line, “OPEN” was painted in block red letters.

As I approached, a very large black man asked in a rough, seemingly unfriendly, voice, “Can we help you?” I replied in my best imitation of a firm voice, “I just want to know what is going on here! I see people waiting in line, I see smoke and the smell is wonderful! There must be something good to eat around here somewhere.” The big man mellowed, gave me a big smile and said, “Just step inside—that woman probably has exactly what you

are looking for.” He was actually the driver of an eighteen-wheeler that was patiently waiting, motor running, in the street.

I ordered (through an open window) a “half slab” of ribs and two “Seven UP” soft drinks. While waiting for our food, a woman in an orange shirt came out of the kitchen and asked if everything was OK. I thought she was part of the restaurant staff. We exchanged pleasantries and I confessed that the only reason we had found this eatery was because we were lost.

She asked where we were trying to go. I told her to ask Glenda. I watched them study a map and point in every direction. As I approached with our lunch, they seemed to have come to an understanding. “Orange Shirt” started to walk away but I asked if she would allow me to take her photograph. She agreed and I now have a photo of Glenda and her smiling with their arms around the other’s waist.

“Orange Shirt” soon returned telling Glenda that there was a more direct route that we should consider. This new route in actuality was much easier, therefore we chose to use it. She then put water, food and some sort of headset and recorder into her car and waved as she drove away.

While we were eating from the trunk of our car, the restaurant owner approached us twice with extra napkins and to ask if we needed anything. Our lunch was great and with sticky fingers we continued our drive along the mighty Mississippi. After only a mile or so, as we passed a road construction site, we observed “Orange Shirt” (headset in place) working near the business end of a large digging machine.

Later, upon reading the guidebooks, we learned that East St. Louis should be avoided. It seems that gangs control the area and any outsider could immediately be in trouble. We found no hostilities but lots of friendliness—maybe we were just lucky. This little encounter was one of the most pleasant and memorable experiences of our Great River Road tour.

Our trip was a great adventure and little events like this made it even better. We loved “Orange Shirt” and the food!



I Dumped on Tokyo, 1966

United States Marine Attack Aircraft had been in Vietnam for about 13 months. I had been “in country” only about about 180 days but a month of that had been on deployment to Japan.

Day after day we flew our aircraft (the McDonald Douglas A-4 Skyhawk) to its limits. The runway was made of aluminum matting that became very rough and slippery as the underlying sand and clay settled at different rates. During and after a rain, a taxiing aircraft would cause water to squirt up through the cracks, sometimes as high as a foot or two. I flew many times in muddy boots with my flight suit wet up to my knees.

During dry times there was blowing dust and sand. On hot days and when heavily loaded, the jet blast from our mighty little airplanes would blow up sand and dust as we crossed the end of the runway struggling for altitude.

The cockpit instrument consoles became covered with a heavy layer of red dust. I remember leading a two-plane flight back to Chu Lai after a bombing mission. I chose to “horse around” a bit by flying very low and fast near some sort of hilltop fortification. The Marine occupants could easily be seen casually waving as we roared by only a few yards away. These guys were mostly teenagers but trained warriors. Any attacking enemy would be in for the fight of their lives.

Turning toward home base I deliberately flew inverted momentarily but maintained level flight which requiring some negative “G”s. Mistake! All kinds of debris, dirt, sand and who knows what came from every crack and cranny and rained down upon me. I would never do that again!



Our young but talented technicians, working mostly in sweltering tents, did a great job of keeping these mistreated jets flyable. Some maintenance could be done on the flight-line, some in the tent hangars but the major overhauls were done outside of Vietnam. The nearest

facility that could perform this maintenance was at the Naval Air Station Atsugi near Tokyo, Japan.

An aircraft in our squadron had reached the programmed flight time limitations and was scheduled for a major overhaul. It had served well in Vietnam but now needed to be in Japan to undergo this necessary procedure.

Somehow, I was chosen to fly that plane north to Atsugi. This assignment would have been a major endeavor if we were back in the States—probably not even allowed. Since we were in Vietnam our leaders simply told us to, “get it done.”

Relocating this aircraft required two long over water flights, Vietnam to the Philippine Islands and then to Iwakuni, Japan. Navigational aids and radio communications would be available for only about the first and last 120 miles of these long flights.

The date of departure arrived and I did just that. I climbed into that dirty little jet, got it airborne and turned east out over the South China Sea. The Squadron flight operations officer assured me that the Philippine authorities were aware of my flight and would be expecting me.

I tracked the course that would start me in the direction toward Cubi Point Naval Station, located to the west of Manila. The navigational signal from Chu Lai was lost at a little over 100 miles. It would be about 600 miles, all over water, before I would be able to receive navigational information or make radio contact with the Philippine Air Traffic Control. This questionable flying was in an A-4 that was nearing the end of its service life before requiring major overhaul. I just did it, never considering it to be unsafe!

Everything worked out! As I approached the Philippines my navigational instruments came to life. A needle began to spin and eventually pointed steadily in one direction. I was well north of my intended course but within range of the navigation facility at Cubi Point.

I made a radio call to the Philippine Air Traffic Control but it was obvious that they had no idea who I was or where my flight had originated. I attempted to explain but soon gave up, partially due to the language barrier. Not knowing what to do, I informed them that I was switching to the Cubi Point Approach Control frequency and thanked them for their assistance.

Approach control welcomed me into their area as if I was a local flight. They acknowledged radar contact and gave me directions to enter their airport control area. I was cleared to land and did so without incident. My lonely crossing from Vietnam to the Philippines was over and there had been no problems.

The years have taken away the details of my stay at Cubi Point. I cannot remember if I stayed overnight or

just refueled and continued. The interesting thing to me, however, was that no one questioned my point of departure, my destination, the aircraft ownership or my authority to be flying this combat aircraft around Southeast Asia. I was a Marine First Lieutenant with no official written orders flying a Marine warplane through several independent Asian countries. My fuel tanks were always filled without question or cost and I was allowed to go on my way.

My next recollection is of meeting a Marine Colonel while I was planning my flight from Cubi Point to the Iwakuni Marine Air Station in Japan. In casual conversation it was determined that we shared the same destination. I suggested that we fly as a two-plane formation and he readily agreed. We discussed the flight and he decided that I would fly as his wingman. I was happy with this arrangement. At least I would not be flying alone on this long over water flight.

The takeoff was normal and I settled into a comfortable loose position on his wing. Our planned course was to the northwest but my Colonel leader turned to the southeast—exactly the opposite direction. I waited a reasonable amount of time hoping he would realize his mistake but he seemed to be satisfied with this course. I finally radioed, “Sir, check your course.” He did not respond to my call but simply started a slow turn back to the correct direction. He never mentioned this incident and I certainly didn’t bring it up. I remember staying over night at Iwakuni, getting a good meal and a good nights sleep on clean sheets. After being in Vietnam, I had learned to appreciate the small things.

The leg to Atsugi was planned to be about an hour but the plane had been fueled for a much longer flight. I didn’t consider this to be a problem. It was a beautiful clear day and the short flight was a kick. The flight path gave me an excellent view of Mount Fuji located about 60 miles to the southwest of Atsugi, my destination.

Upon my arrival over Atsugi, the excess fuel on board put the aircraft well above the maximum landing weight. I used this opportunity to fly a long leisurely sight-seeing circuit over the sprawling city of Tokyo. This circuit completed, and still too heavy, I started another trip over the city. Growing bored with this game I opened the fuel dump valve in order to quickly bring my weight down below my legal landing weight. It never crossed my mind that this action would be offensive to anyone. Well, obviously the Japanese did not appreciate my streaming jet fuel into the air over their largest city.

The fuel dumping quickly brought the aircraft within the legal landing weight. My landing request was acknowledged and approved. The landing was uneventful and directions were given to taxi to the maintenance area.

As I was accomplishing my shut down procedures

an official looking pickup arrived at my aircraft. Immediately upon deplaning the driver informed me that the base commander wanted to see me, “right now!” After a short ride I was ushered into the commanders office. He asked, “Did you dump fuel over Tokyo?” I admitted to the dasterly dead.

I informed him that I had arrived from Vietnam and was accustomed to doing almost anything with my aircraft, including dumping fuel to expedite a landing. He informed me that there was a C-130 outside on the ramp with the engines running. He forcefully informed me to board that aircraft.

Picking up my travel bag I made a dash for the aircraft’s open door. I initially assumed that the aircraft was on a scheduled flight. I could have been wrong in that their was no other passengers and very little if any cargo. Could this base commander have quickly staged this flight to get this dumb A-4 pilot out of town before the Japanese authorities came looking for him?

This incident was never again mentioned. I, however, was forever very selective as to when to open the valve when I chose to “take a dump.”

This Old Truck

I discovered “it” abandoned, on the old home farm, out in the tractor shed. Jerry, my brother, had parked it there years earlier, assuming this would be its final resting place. This old 1984 Nissan Pickup, with 276,000 miles showing on the odometer, had faithfully carried him back and forth to work for a very long time.

It looked really bad, primarily because it was really bad. It sported flat tires, junk filled bed, broken windshield, torn seats with bad springs and weeds were growing beneath the entire truck and into the engine compartment. A more rational person would have said “It’s dead,” and that would be the end of the story. Not I!

Mable and Venoy, my parents, lived and toiled on this small west Tennessee farm during their entire married



life. They had enjoyed fairly good health but now he was 90 and she 80, and age was taking its toll. They desperately wanted to remain on the farm and in that house. My sister, brother and I decided that we would do as much as possible to honor their wishes.

Their physical condition made it necessary that someone be in or near the house at all times. My home was in Reno, Nevada therefore I tried to stay at least 10 days during each visit to keep the commutes to a minimum. The job was tedious, and at times I would escape from the house for a few minutes in an effort to maintain my sanity. It was during one of these short breaks that I discovered the “Silver Bullet.” Actually, friends, EK and Marianne Whiting, gave the truck this nickname several years later.

I ignored this old wreck for a while, however, every time I walked near the truck it seemed to beg for help. Finally, I asked Jerry, if he would give me permission to tinker with it. He surprised me when he answered “Have at it, as a matter of fact I will give it to you, I’ll bring the title.” As he was walking away, he sort of half turned and said, “I don’t remember that there was much wrong, it was running.” This comment sparked a glimmer of hope?

My “sanity” breaks now had a purpose and I will have to admit they probably came a little more frequently. Not being very knowledgeable about auto mechanics, the simple jobs were done first—aired the tires, cleaned out the trash, wiped grease, checked fluid levels. Someone suggested that, considering the age, the vacuum lines should be replaced—I did that.

The simple chores completed, a decision had to be made, spend money or not. What the heck, I bought a battery. After pumping the gas pedal a few times, with a shaky hand I turned the key and to my surprise, it started! Holy Cow, it was running, not smoothly, but running.

The tinker stage continued with small adjustments here and there. It started to run better and better and I drove it more and more in the local area. The title was transferred into my name.

Several months later I happened to be near a Nissan Dealership and it was convenient to stop at their service

department. I explained that when I adjusted the mirror just right a small amount of smoke could be seen coming from the exhaust pipe. I asked the service manager if he had any suggestions. Remember, this truck had 277,000 miles on it and looked pretty shabby. The service manager paused, looked at the truck then back at me, scratched his head and said, “As a matter of fact, I do! Do not adjust the mirror so that the exhaust pipe can be seen!” I replied, “Got ya! You are absolutely correct, thank you for your help.”

It was time for “This Old Truck” to put up or shut up! I finished my current 10-day tour of duty with my folks and decided to engage in an adventure. With no special preparation, I fired up the truck, determined to find out how much life (if any) remained.

I drove about 1800 miles in the next three days. Tennessee has more bordering states than any other and my intent was to visit them all. The route chosen allowed the tires to touch: Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky and Missouri.

Rolling back into the farm yard, I was completely exhausted, body and head aching. The little truck seemed defiant, not even breathing hard. I think I heard it say, “Ya want to do it again?” This was the first of many adventures involving “This Old Truck.” As it had for my brother, it served me well during the 4 or 5 years that I owned it.

The details have been forgotten but somehow this old Nissan was driven from Tennessee to Reno, Nevada. During this drive I devised a plan to drive this, once abandoned, old truck to every state except Hawaii. In the past I had been accused of attempting some pretty strange adventures. This old truck “lived” to touch it’s wheels to the ground in every state except Hawaii. I have pictures of it in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska.

I love things that last a long time and are reliable. I loved that old truck! With about 325,000 miles showing it was sold for \$600. The engine just purred on the test drive, the buyer was enthusiastic. I wonder if it continued to serve? ✈



Northwest Airlines—a look back at its long history

Martin Moylan St. Paul, Minn. Oct 30, 2008

Among Minnesota companies, few can match Northwest for its longevity or impact on the state's economy and citizens. Northwest is in the same league as a 3M or Cargill.

Of course, Northwest has been often ridiculed by many of its customers and employees. The airline's failings have always been very public, making Northwest a favorite target of comedians—and the media—who've lampooned the airline for everything from boozing pilots to a flight that ends up at the wrong airport.

Who can forget Northwest's advice to laid-off employees, in the form of a tip sheet on how to cut living expenses—rummage through other people's trash.

Northwest apologized for the suggestion. Profusely.

'AN INCREDIBLE ASSET'

Sometimes Northwest has deserved scorn. Sometimes it hasn't. But Northwest has arguably been often under-appreciated, especially by Minnesotans.

Northwest's hub airport in the Twin Cities has given the region an extraordinary level of air service, particularly overseas. Far better than what most other comparably-sized markets in the country enjoy.

Northwest is an extremely valuable asset," said former Minnesota Gov. Arne Carlson. "It has to be certainly one of our top five."

Former governor Arne Carlson says Northwest's air service has been very important to Minnesota's economy as business has grown more global.



Northwest, 2008 MPR Photo/Tom Weber



Northwest, 1927 Photographer: Hibbard Studio, courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society

“You can literally leave Minneapolis and be in Asia, be in Europe, via a direct flight. And that’s an incredible asset,” said Carlson.

In addition to providing an essential service, Northwest has provided tens of thousands of Minnesotans with good-paying jobs.

The airline has been an industry pioneer in the deployment of everything from oxygen masks to radar. And attention, non-smokers, Northwest was the first airline to snuff out smoking on all domestic flights, back in 1988.

From the Twin Cities, Northwest flies to La Crosse and London, Tulsa and Tokyo, Portland and Paris, and some 150 other destinations. All non-stop.

Many travelers have grouched about Northwest’s fares. But most choose to fly Northwest even when they have cheaper alternatives.



Lewis Brittin Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society

FIRST FLIGHT

Northwest got started in 1926, when Col. Lewis Brittin founded Northwest Airways with operations based at Speedway flying field, now the site of Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport.

Northwest started out carrying airmail from the Twin Cities to Chicago. The carrier’s fleet consisted of two rented, open-cockpit biplanes.

In July 1927, Northwest’s first passenger flight took off for Chicago. A one-way ticket cost \$40, which would be nearly \$500 today. The flight took 12 1/2-hours, including stops in La Crosse, Madison, and Milwaukee.

Back in those days, pilots wore goggles, leather hats and long leather trench coats. Flying was a true adventure.

“We had no radio. We had nothing,” recalled Joe Kimm, one of Northwest’s first pilots. “We had an airplane we knew how to fly, and that was it.”

Kimm was 18 years old when he started to fly for Northwest in 1930.

“We were on our own. If the weather got bad, we just had to stop where we were and wait until it got better. We would usually fly into a farmer’s field, circle it to make sure there wasn’t a haystack in the middle of it, and land,” said Kimm. “Take our mail and put it on the train. Passengers if we had any, also on the train. And we would sit it out for a day or two till the weather got better and we could get out of there.”



Pilot Joe Kimm [L], Photo by Northwest Airlines, courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society

TO THE ORIENT

In the summer of 1947, Northwest began service from the Twin Cites to Tokyo, Seoul, Shanghai and Manila. Northwest would grow to become a major player in the Pacific. And the airline took on a new name—Northwest Orient.

The expansion to Asia and launch of trans-continental service marked the start of a golden era for the airline. One that ran from the 1950s to the ‘70s.

But the airline industry changed radically in the late ‘70s when it was deregulated. Federal regulators lifted restrictions on routes and pricing, creating an intense battle for customers.



Northwest in the Orient Photo courtesy of Geoff Jones



Northwest plane Photo by Leo J. Kohn, courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society

New airlines were born. Old ones died. Many looked to find partners to strengthen themselves.

By 1984, Northwest was the leading U.S. carrier in the Pacific. But Northwest executives felt they had to get bigger. They wanted a stronger domestic route system that could feed passengers to Northwest's Pacific flights.

Steve Rothmeier, Northwest's CEO at the time, said the need to act was urgent.

"The world is changing quickly. The competitive marketplace is dictating a lot of action that, in the past, probably would have been considered rather unusual for Northwest," said Rothmeier at the time.

MERGER NO. 1 DID NOT GO WELL

Rothmeier found a partner right here in the Twin Cities—Republic Airlines.

At the time, Northwest's \$884 million purchase of Republic was the largest merger in airline history. The combination of Northwest and Republic assured the Twin Cities would have extensive air service. Without the merger, neither airline may have survived.

But the merger was hard for employees, passengers and the airline, especially for the first five months or so. The airline ran into a series of operational snafus and employees bickered constantly.

In a video prepared for sales managers, vice president of ground operations Brent Baskfield acknowledged things were going pretty badly.

"Our on-time performance started out very poorly. It was running at 42 percent," said Baskfield. "We've had some real problems with

lost bags. We've had problems with unions vs. unions. Unions vs. supervision. Northwest vs. Republic. But maybe worst of all, we've had a serious attitude problem."

Before the merger was a year old, catastrophe struck. In August 1987, a Northwest MD-80 jet crashed in Detroit as it attempted to take off. An eyewitness described the scene.

"Within seconds the flames got bigger, and the plane was on fire, and seconds after that it exploded. Great big explosion. It was airborne, but it was having troubles, and we looked and it was on fire."

It was the worst accident in Northwest's history—156 people died in the crash. One child survived.

Still, by the end of the 1980s, Northwest was firmly established as one of the country's big international airlines. And its potential was getting noticed.

THE AL CHECCHI ERA

"Just think what we can do with this company if we start to increase its service levels," said Al Checchi in 1989.

In June of that year, Checchi's investment group acquired Northwest for \$3.5 billion and took the airline private.

In an in-house interview, Checchi was very optimistic about Northwest's financial prospects and turning around its historically stormy labor relations.

"It'll be a whole lot more fun for employees. One thing I've learned about the service business and service employees is they want to serve—

they want to make customers happy,” Checchi said at the time. “And if you can give customers better service, you’ll have employees who are much more excited.”

But the next few years weren’t very much fun at Northwest.

In both 1990 and 1991 Northwest lost more than \$300 million. In 1991, the airline launched an all-out lobbying campaign for state financial assistance and guarantees.



Mechanics on strike MPR Photo/Bianca Vazquez Toness

THE STATE STEPS IN TO SAVE THE AIRLINE

With Christmas of 1991 less than two weeks away, a legislative commission approved the final elements of a deal amid heated debate. Supporters hailed the package, But critics decried it as a fraud, a bailout and blackmail.

Ultimately, the deal wasn’t enough to shore up the airline’s finances. By 1993, Northwest was threatening to file for bankruptcy because of a crippling debt load from the buyout.

Employees gave wage and other concessions, which planted the seeds for more labor unrest. In August and September of 1998, a pilot strike grounded the airline for more than two weeks.

Northwest recovered from the strike. But its fortunes started slipping again in 2000, as the dot.com bubble popped and business travel plunged.



Anderson at the top Photo courtesy of Delta Air Lines

2001 BEGINS A DIFFICULT PERIOD

Then came 9/11. The Sept. 2001 terror attacks sent Northwest and other carriers into a steep nosedive. The demand for air travel fell even more.

Northwest’s CEO at that time, Richard Anderson, cut 10,000 jobs, about half them in Minnesota.

“Next to watching the horrific events of Sept. 11 on television, the next most difficult thing for all of us at Northwest is the impact it has on the people’s lives at Northwest,” said Anderson at the time.

The following years were some of the most difficult in the airline’s history. They included billions of dollars in losses, a strike that crushed the mechanics’ union, and a bankruptcy filing in 2005.

Northwest used the reorganization process to slash wages and other costs, dump unwanted planes, and otherwise reinvent itself. It emerged from bankruptcy in May 2007.

At the time, CEO Doug Steenland said Northwest Airlines’ Twin Cities headquarters and hub were here to stay.

“We sort of re-said our vows. We are blessed to have the opportunity to be an airline in the Twin Cities,” said Steenland at the time. “It has a strong economy, and our customers here have been very good to us. We have no intention to do anything here but hopefully be able to grow the hub.”

THE DEAL WITH DELTA ENDS AN ERA

By last fall though, with fuel prices soaring, Steenland was talking about the possibility of merging Northwest with another airline. That deal—with Delta—was announced in April.

Despite Northwest's turbulent history with its customers and employees, former Gov. Arne Carlson gives the airline high marks.

"Northwest overall has done as good a job as could be done under very, very difficult circumstances," said Carlson. "If somebody said, 'Arnie, we'd love you to be a CEO; I'll tell you, I'd pay anything not to be a CEO of an airline.'"

For Delta CEO Richard Anderson, the job is likely to be even more challenging.

Anderson, who used to run Northwest, has to combine his new company with his old one and avoid the pitfalls of the Northwest-Republic merger of two decades ago.

With Delta closing its acquisition of Northwest this week, it is now the world's biggest airline. Northwest's signature red tail will start disappearing from the skies in 2009, as the planes are repainted in Delta's colors. ✈

SEA CHRISTMAS PARTY



DECEMBER 7TH
10:30 TIL 3:00



This year in lieu of the wrapped raffle baskets we are asking guests to bring an **unwrapped** toy which will be donated to Hopelink, a non-profit agency that serves North and East King County assisting families who are less fortunate. We thank you!



Meal Choices: SEARED SALMON with Horseradish Marmalade
HERBED CHICKEN with Pomegranate Balsamic Glaze
both include salad, rolls, coffee or tea and cheesecake with berry sauce

NAME _____
NAME _____
email _____

Amount enclosed: \$35 x _____ = _____

Checks payable to "Sunshine Club"

Registration DEADLINE: December 1st

Chicken **Salmon**

Mail to:
Kathee Nelick
13208 Muir Dr NW
Gig Harbor WA 98332
253-514-8786
knelick60@comcast.net

\$35
per
person

2017 PSMSF AWARD WINNERS

2017 proved to be a very successful year for the Paul Soderlind Memorial Scholarship Fund. There were 140 applicants for the six \$5,000 scholarships offered by the Fund.

Once again this year Wings Financial Credit Union made the initial selection of awardees with final review by the PSMSF Board of Directors. The selection committee accomplishes each selection with all applicants names redacted. It is only after the final selection has been made that the Committee knows the applicants name.

Thanks again to all who have contributed to the fund this year. Anyone else who might be interested in contributing would be welcome and you can be assured that your contribution will be acknowledged for tax purposes and given to a most deserving student.

Applications for 2018 will be available in October, 2017. Applicant must be;

- an employee of the former Northwest Airlines or related either as child, grandchild, or great-grandchild to a former Northwest employee. Stepchildren and significant others are also eligible.
- attending or accepted for admission to an accredited college or university or vocational/technical school.
- a member of Wings as the primary member on their own account.

Check the Wings FCU web site in October for more information regarding the scholarship. All eligible applications are welcome. – *Tom Schellinger*



Mikeila McQueston is a sophomore at LSU pursuing a degree in vocal performance, studying with Dr. Lori Bade. Mikeila plans to pursue a master's degree and possibly a doctorate in music as well. The Paul Soderlind Memorial Scholarship will help Mikeila pay for her undergraduate music schooling. LSU has a renowned Opera program; attending school out-of-state increases the cost of tuition and singing often requires paying for a collaborative pianist and pay-to-sing opportunities in order to gain performance experience. This summer, Mikeila was accepted into the Opera in the Ozarks. It is an eight week program where she will gain experience performing as a studio artist. It is through performance experiences, degrees and young artist programs that Mikeila will gain the skills to become a professional classical singer. Mikeila's goal is to perform in various oratorios, operas, symphonies, and other works.



My name is **Evan Hesselbacher**. I was born and raised in Sun Valley Idaho. I grew up fishing, dirt biking, skiing, camping and enjoying the outdoors. Aviation has always been a part of my life and ever since a young age I have dreamed about becoming a pilot. My parents, both former Northwest Airlines employees introduced me to the wonders of aeronautics. They took me on flights in their Cessna 182, took me to faraway lands using their airline benefits and bought me diecast airplane toys. As I grew older I became more serious about pursuing aviation as a career. This fall I am attending Gallatin Community College in Bozeman Montana to earn my flight ratings and to follow my dreams. Hopefully I will have earned Private Pilot through CFI ratings after this two year program. I will then be able to instruct flight while earning a Bachelor's Degree in Business at Montana State University which is also in Bozeman. After I graduate on June 2nd I will be working at Sun Valley airport for Atlantic Aviation as a ramp agent. I will use the Paul Soderlind Scholarship money along with the money I will earn this summer to help pay for flight lessons and achieving my lifelong goal. Thank you so much for this opportunity!





Sofia Robinson is a Senior at Pioneer High School in Ann Arbor, Michigan. At Pioneer, she was a four year yearbook staff member. Her roles during yearbook included Business Manager, Senior Editor, and Editor-in-Chief. Her favorite activity in school was yearbook. Along with yearbook, she participated in Student Council, Rising Scholars, Girls Group, and Black Student Union.

Outside of school, she was involved in the Neutral Zone. The Neutral Zone is a diverse, youth-driven teen center dedicated to promoting personal growth through artistic expression, community leadership and the exchange of ideas. At The Neutral Zone she was an SCORE (School and Career Opportunities aRe Endless) Intern. After interning for one year, she was nominated to be on The Board of Directors. From there, she served on the board for two years.

Sofia has always had a love for Sign Language starting at a young age. She plans on getting her degree in Professions in Deafness, at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. From there, she will go on to be a Sign Language Interpreter. Sofia is going to use this scholarship money to help pay for her tuition at UNCG.

Sofia would like to thank the scholarship committee for awarding her this scholarship. She looks forward to using it to further her education.



Caleb Nilsson

As long as I can remember, I have loved aviation. When I was little, all I could think about was being a pilot. I had more model airplanes than a museum, and knew them all just by their silhouette. My grandfather played no small part in this. Larry Daudt flew 747s for Northwest until his retirement in 2001. His passion was passed on to me, and we have attended many an airshow together. Today, my friends lovingly refer to me as a plane nerd, and I'm honored. However, I'm even more honored to have received the Paul Soderlind Memorial Scholarship. He was a great man, and it is my hope that through my scientific and engineering studies at Letourneau University in Longview, Texas that I may contribute to the aviation world like Mr. Soderlind. I plan to study engineering physics, so that I can understand the laws that govern the natural world and how to practically apply those concepts to life. This scholarship money will allow me to complete my regular studies while also pursuing my private pilot's license; fulfilling my lifelong dream of flight. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to pursue my dreams.

Katherine “Katie” Ernste is a college junior from Faribault, MN who will be attending the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities this upcoming fall to major in Physiology. She plans to pursue a career in the medical field, in large part due to inspiration from her grandfather Darrell Cloud. Darrell was a Captain for Northwest Airlines and when Katie was 4 years old, was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a rare form of cancer possibly linked to Agent Orange, which Darrell was exposed to from his time serving in Vietnam. Katie went to visit him during his treatments, and knew she wanted to pursue a career that would allow her to help people like Darrell.

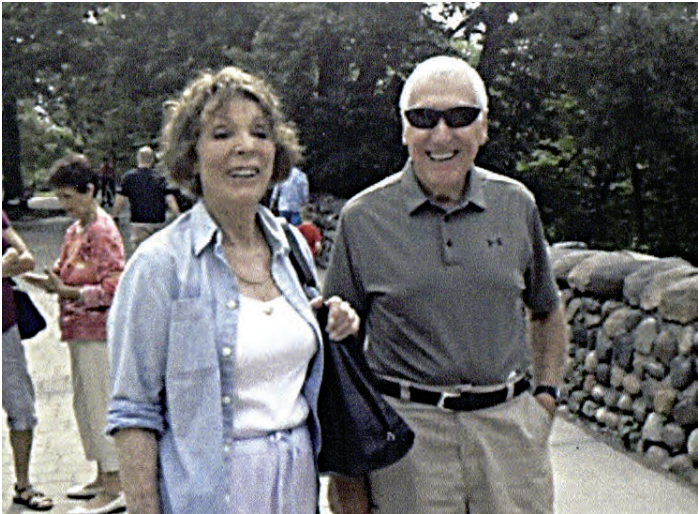
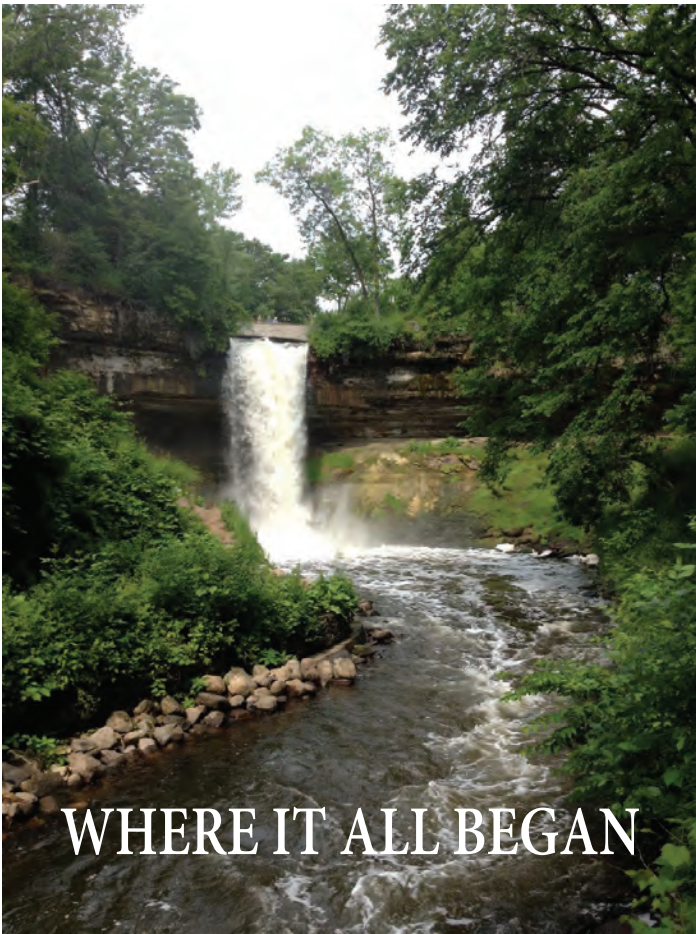


Katie spends much of her free time engaged in volunteer opportunities, including cardiac research and an assistant opportunity at Hennepin County Medical Center. Katie is passionate about her academics, spending much of her time studying to ensure her academic success. Because she is paying for school primarily on her own, the Soderlind Scholarship money will go towards tuition and books to continue her education career. She extends her deepest thanks to the Paul Soderlind Fund for giving her the opportunity to pursue her dreams.



With the assistance of the Soderlind scholarship, **Emily Davich**, from Kansas City, MO, will be attending Kansas State University to obtain a degree in computer science from the college of engineering. Two of her grandparents worked for Northwest Airlines. Her grandfather was a pilot for 36 years primarily based out of SEA. He flew DC-10s, and finished his career as a Captain on the Boeing 747. Her grandmother was a stewardess in the later 1950's, back when the Stratocruisers were around. Emily plans to pursue a career in software development or cyber security. She chose the field of computer science after taking several programming courses at her school. To further support her interests in computer science, during her senior year, Davich led a team constructing a silent auction web application for a local city business council, and also worked a web development internship. Outside of school, she continues to work building websites and applications for a variety of businesses. Aside from working toward her degree at K-State, Davich plans to join numerous engineering clubs and pursue research opportunities. Emily is particularly interested in research regarding global environmental challenges. She sees a potential for technology to aid in the resolve of these issues and is looking to develop software to track data specific to unsustainable consumption and production of goods.





Lynn Cherry, Ralph Kisor

Thunderbird Motel, Eddies Websters, and the Decathlon Club. A change that was surprising to us pilots who have not flown into MSP for several years was runways 29L and 29R now designated as 30L and 30R. Also gone were several of the big Northwest hangers and the old parking lot for the employees. Expansion of the airport parking, new roads, and construction of a hotel at the airport entrance were the visual signs that a lot of changes had taken place during the last several years. The addition of light rail from the Mall of America near the hotel to the airport and on to downtown Minneapolis made for easy safe travel and at a price us seniors liked.

Day two followed with a private coach tour of the Twin Cities. After all these years of living in the Cities most of us thought that this would be anti-climatic but to our surprise it turned out to an informative and great tour. Our first stop was Minnehaha Falls with a large amount of water flowing indicating the wet winter and spring for the area. This was the first time that many of us had visited the falls even though we had spent considerable time in the Twin Cities. The city of St Paul with it's older buildings and narrow streets was a big contrast to the modern city of Minneapolis. The RiverCenter in downtown St Paul has replaced the St Paul Civic Center and in it's place the Roy Wilkins Auditorium, Touchstone Energy Place, and Xcel Energy Center have enliv-

By Demetri Vasiliades

NWA Class 6/12/67 and wives gathered in Minneapolis/St Paul on June 12th 2017 for their seventh reunion. This auspicious date was 50 years since their date of hire with Northwest. The class started with twenty five pilots. Twelve members, wives and Lynn Cherry widow of Royal of the original class were present to renew old acquaintances and memories over the next four days.

Day one was check in at the Embassy Suites Hotel near the old NWA Credit Union building. The hospitality room we had gave us a chance to share photos, stories, and update the lives of our families. Numerous changes in the Bloomington area were a surprise, gone was the





The wives performing



Ralph & Ann Kisor



Jim & Patty Jo Halverson



George & Pat Groth



Dick & Laurie Lindbergh



Dick & Gail Dodge



Loren & Kathie DeShon

en downtown. This complex has received many awards for setting a model of sustainable practices. The State Capital had been renovated and it is spectacular and considered the number two most beautiful capitol in the states. The art work, the legislative chambers and the unsupported massive dome gave us a new appreciation for this structure. The light rail and Northstar Commuter Rail systems connects the northwest suburbs as far as Big Lake to downtown Minneapolis, St Paul, U of Minn, International airport and the Mall of America. The system is planned to expand to the western suburbs and beyond in the near future. It has revitalized many old industrial areas and new housing has sprung up along the lines. It also connects the homes of all four Twing- Cities major league sports teams. Super Bowl LII will be played in the inclosed Vikings stadium built on the site of the old Humphrey Metrodome. The new Guthrie Theater built in 2006 in the old mill district along the Mississippi houses three theaters and has wonderful views of the river and St. Anthony Falls. The four hour tour showcased the Twin Cities and how the downtown cores have been revitalized as well as the outlying areas-both great livable cities.

The next day's planned tour of the NWA History

Center was unavailable due to remodeling of the Crown Plaza Aire Hotel which will house the NWA History Centre later this year. The hotel is near the old NWA Credit Union building. It will have an aviation theme on each floor with an accent on commercial, military, civil aviation and space technology. The hotel is providing a space for the History Center which the public will be able to visit. Some of the archives will be housed in a shared space at Flying Cloud Airport in Eden Prairie as part of the Wings of the North Air Museum. There is a group of dedicated employes from all departments of NWA who are volunteering and preserving the history of our airline. I would encourage all to become members of the NWA History Center and keep that history alive. If any of you have any memorabilia of our airline I would suggest that you send it to the museum where they will put it on display or archive it. The website is nwahistory.org.

During our flight career there was always need for an alternate on the flight plan and Bruce Kitt, Executive Director of the NWA History Center provided that by arranging a special tour for the class of the Wings of the North Air Museum located at Flying Cloud Airport. Its director Bob Jasperson and his wife Judy provided us



with a informative history of the museum and a physical tour. A replica of the Spirit of St. Louis that had formally hung in the Minneapolis-St Paul Airport is now housed there. The museum has a AT-6D Texan, TBM-3E Avenger, P-51D and numerous military and civilian aircraft.

The evening banquet at the Embassy Suites gave us one more chance to share memories and catch up on the lives of our classmates. The wives entertained us with one of their songs which has now become a tradition at our reunions.

The following day the RNPA cruise on the St. Croix River was a great chance to meet many of our fellow pilots and their wives. Thank goodness for name tags. Ann and Ralph Kisor generously opened their farm near Eau Claire for those who were able to continue the reunion for the next few days.

We all thank our lead flight attendant Deneen Polgar and her husband Tony for putting this successful and great fun reunion together as they have done so many times in the past. ✈



Tony & Deneen Polgar



Demetri & Donna Vasiliades



Jim & Cindy Dandrea



John & Borgny Lee



Mike & Jeanette Nevin



FLYING INTO HISTORY AGING 747 IS READY TO RETIRE



Jeremy Dwyer-Lindgren
Special for USA TODAY

Suggested by Hugh Sims

A Kalitta Air Boeing 747-200 delivers a soft puff of white smoke as the jet completes its second-to-last landing ever April 20 at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. A day later, the jet and its crew will shuttle the airplane back to Kalitta Air's home base in Michigan, where the airplane will be retired for good by the cargo carrier.

In a time when the iconic jetliner has been disappearing from fleets across the globe at an astounding rate, another 747 biting the dust may not seem particularly remarkable. Yet this particular airplane stands out among the crowd: It's one of the last airworthy 747-200s.

"This is a nice airplane. It's old-school," Capt. Scott Jaykl says.

Built in 1987, Jaykl's jet was among the last "-200" variants of the 747 to come off the assembly line. The model was replaced by the updated 747-400 in 1989, and the -200 variant—which made its debut in 1971—ended production a few years later.

Indeed, many of the features on the jet hark back to the early days of the 747. The engines—Pratt & Whitney JT9Ds—look, sound and perform differently than the engines on today's planes. The 747's distinctive upper-deck hump is smaller on the -200 than on the more common (and newer) -400 and -8 variants of the jet. For pilots, there are a lot more buttons and not much in the way of automation.

"It's a pilot's airplane," Jaykl says from the plane's antiquated flight deck. "You have manual control over everything."

The captain and crew sit surrounded by a dizzying array of analog gauges, dials and knobs that seem plastered across every available surface. Save for a handful



of digital display panels added around 2010, virtually nothing has changed on the flight deck since 1987.

The jet was converted from its original use as a passenger plane for United Airlines to a **freighter for Northwest Airlines in 2000**, a transition that was especially common for older 747s.

Capt. Scott Jaykl:

"It's more work" than today's largely automated airplanes," Jaykl says of the -200 variant of the 747, "but it's a lot of fun."

So much more work, in fact, that the airplane still uses a third member of the flight crew—known as a "flight engineer."

Seated behind the first officer, the flight engineer handles a number of duties, mostly related to the engines and fuel. The position was ubiquitous for decades of flight, found in everything from the old prop planes of the 1950s to later jet aircraft such as the Boeing 727 and Douglas DC-10. Since then, technology has decreased the need for three-person crews. Cost-saving measures did the rest, and by the turn of the century the position largely was obsolete.

That leaves Lance Pruitt, a Kalitta Air flight engineer, facing an uncertain future.

"It's kinda melancholy for me," Pruitt says. "This is all I've been doing for the last 38 years."

Pruitt previously flew as a flight engineer aboard Douglas DC-8s and Lockheed L-1011s. He joined Kalitta in 1993.

"It's the end of an era," he says.

Pruitt half-jokingly warns the next to fall to automation might just be the captain.

But while Pruitt contemplates retirement, his airplane won't have the same luxury. Barring any change, Friday's flight was most likely its last. With it, another chapter will close in the history of the 747 line.

"It's pretty special to me that we get to do this," Jaykl says. "It is to all of us."

"It's a pilot's airplane. You have manual control over everything." ✈



Captain Dennis Edward Swanson, age 79, 'Flew West' on April 19, 2017. He succumbed to lung failure with his family was at his bedside.

Born on April 25, 1937 in the eastern Oregon town of Ione to Irene and Gar Swanson. Dennis grew up on a family owned wheat ranch, the second born of three brothers and a sister. He excelled as a student, athlete, and musician. In high school he played football, basketball, the trumpet in the marching and dance bands. Incidentally Dennis was his class valedictorian. As a football player, he was named his team's MVP in the 1955 Shriners East-West All Star game.

As a young man Dennis constructed model airplanes and then employed various barn cats as pilots story which may be truer in family imaginations than reality. He matriculated to the University of Portland where he studied industrial engineering. Concurrently he was enrolled in Air Force ROTC which sponsored his acquisition of a FAA private pilot license at Troutdale, Airport. While at the University of Portland friends introduced Dennis to Joann Ingram and a romance blossomed. Dennis and Joann were married after his graduation in 1959.

In 1960 Dennis was sent to Lackland AFB, TX for preflight training and there he incurred a shoulder injury that automatically washed him out of pilot training. Perhaps the only good thing to come from Lackland AFB was their son Mike, born at the base hospital. Dennis was thereafter assigned to Strategic Air Command as a personnel officer. He searched SAC for a flight surgeon to assist him in obtaining a waiver needed for pilot training, that flight surgeon was at Minot AFB. Waiver in hand, Dennis and family were off to Williams AFB, Arizona and pilot training class 62H.



DENNIS SWANSON
1937 ~ 2017

"Willy" was good for Dennis and Joanne, Dennis departed the base with his silver wings and their new born daughter Toni. The next stop was Pope AFB, NC. The Vietnam War was heating up and soon Dennis was sent to Vietnam as an "advisor" flying C-123s. Soon after returning to Pope AFB, he was reassigned to the 7th Air Commando Squadron in Germany where their daughter Kellie was born.

Having nearly maximized his entitlement to Air Force pediatric medical services, Dennis separated from active duty in 1967. He was hired by Northwest Airlines on August 07, 1967. Initially trained in Minneapolis, Dennis moved to Seattle when he could hold a bid there. The Swanson family planted deep roots into the Auburn area, forcing Dennis to commute for years to maintain a household there. Daughter Erin was the first born in Washington state.

Many of us define stages of our careers by our layoff jobs. Dennis worked at a fiber board plant in Sumner, WA, along with Howard Parks and Mike Tovey. Mike was management. Dennis

never let Mike forget that although he might be in charge of the plant, he was still junior to Dennis at NWA. After recall to NWA Dennis logged extensive hours in the Boeing 727, Douglas DC-10, and classic Boeing 747. Rumor has it the 727 was his favorite. His airline career was a fruitful one from which he retired at age sixty on April 25, 1997.

When each Swanson child arrived at Grade 6, Dennis took them on a USA/Mexico trip of their choice. The family had a penchant for fishing at Sekiu, WA and for family reunions; the reunions were held either at Bend, or on the Oregon coast. The Swanson family sawmill gained fame in the Auburn area. There is a YouTube video of Dennis being interviewed at the mill: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vaSUK5EPA7Y>.

Dennis spent his retirement doing good for his family and community. He was a long time Kiwanian, serving the Auburn Food Bank while delivering food with his grandchildren, a substitute teacher for the Muckleshoot Tribal School, Hearing Officer for the Auburn SD, CASA, Juvenile conference Committee, Auburn Citizen of the Year. When not cutting word to specs in his sawmill, he raised a small herd of cows, and revelled in the time with his family playing the piano, trumpet and guitar.

This fruitful life came to closure on April 19, 2017. Dennis is survived by his wife of 58 years, Joann, and their four children: Mike Swanson, Toni Swanson, Kellie Kutkey, and Erin Dickinson; along with brothers John and Jim, plus eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

(– Bill Day)



WARREN AVENSON
1921 ~ 2017

Captain Warren “Avie” Avenson, age 95, flew west on April 01, 2017. Warren was born in Hibbing, Minnesota to William and Ida Avenson. His only sibling was his sister Doris, 5 years younger, who preceded him in death.

Warren grew up in Hibbing on Minnesota’s Iron Range where he assisted his father in caring for his invalid mother. He worked the iron mines to earn income for flight training and college. Warren was known as a good student despite his ardent attempts

to hide the fact. His teachers recognized him as thoughtful, dependable, and efficient. His one black mark in high school came when he was thrown out of the band for faking it as a trombone player.

Warren earned his initial pilot ratings in Minnesota and built flight time as a CPT and military contract flight instructor in Minnesota and Illinois. He was hired by NWA on March 03, 1943, job classification: co-pilot at \$150/mo. Warren acquired considerable large aircraft flight time at NWA.

Due to his extensive civilian flight experience, Warren was recruited by the USN Air Service. He entered active duty on 10 May 1944 and was commissioned an Ensign on July 07, 1944. After being ‘Winged,’ Warren was assigned to VR-11, the largest squadron in the Naval Air Transport Service (NATS). NATS relied heavily on personnel with airline experience. At one time, VR-11 had 47 officers and 10 enlisted men who previously worked for 15 different airlines. Warren’s primary duty as a R5D (USN DC-4) aircraft commander was the evacuation of Navy and USMC wounded from combat zones.

Throughout the war Warren remained smitten with his high school sweetheart Dorothy (Dotty) Sinamark, then working in Los Angeles after graduating from college. Given the Navy’s numerous airfields in the LA basin, Warren would wrangle flights to the area in order to court Dotty.

Discharged from active duty, Warren returned to Minnesota and NWA flying. He and his sweetheart Dorothy Sinamark (the ‘Iron Range’ couple) married on September 28, 1946 in their hometown of Hibbing, Minnesota.

About the same time NWA began contract operations at Tokyo, Japan. Warren was one of an initial cadre of six captains and six



“Want to drive it?” The trooper did and that allowed Warren to keep his perfect driving record.

It is not widely known, but many retired airline pilots like Warren Avenson volunteer as van drivers for the disabled and the elderly. Warren’s courteous manner and youthful spirit delighted his riders and the agency staff as well. Most of all, his grandchildren were awed that their pilot grandfather could even drive a bus.

Warren and Dotty’s family includes daughters Julie Sigler and Sally Avenson, one son Paul and six grandchildren. Two sons, Billy and David, and one grandson Erik, predeceased Warren. With much gratitude Warren and Dotty celebrated their 70th anniversary last year with the family at their senior residence in Redmond, Washington.

(– Bill Day)

copilots to start up the Tokyo Operation. The newlyweds thrived in Tokyo for ten years, while Warren flew the DC-3 and DC-4 for NWA and other contract airlines. When NWA closed the Tokyo crew base Warren, Dotty and the four Tokyo-born children returned to Minnesota where he flew domestic for the next ten years. His career expanded, as testified by his FAA ATP certificate listing type ratings in the L-188 (Electra), DC-3, DC-4, DC-6, DC-7, B-377 (Stratocruiser), B-707, B-720, B-747. There always lingered an infatuation with Asian life and culture. Seeking to fulfill his quest for Asian flying, in 1967 Warren bid captain at Seattle and the family moved from Minnesota to Mercer Island, WA. After six great years of Asian flying as captain on the classic 747, Warren was age 60 FAA mandatory retired on December 20, 1981. However, when the opportunity arose he returned as a Second Officer (flight engineer), adding two additional years to his tenure at NWA

Aviation writer Robert Serling and Warren were friends. In Serling’s book, *The Probable Cause*, the last chapter recounts a cockpit conversation on an ordinary, uneventful trip on an ordinary, uneventful day with Warren as captain.

Warren enjoyed working with engines and served on a race car pit crew for his NWA friend Captain Bob Bates. Warren drove his own vehicle until age 90 without ever receiving a ticket—barely. In the early 1960s Warren owned a red Alfa Romeo. One day he opened it up on a seemingly deserted highway in Northern Minnesota until stopped by a Minnesota state trooper. The trooper openly admired the car and Warren offered,



I have come to realize when someone you love dies the continuity of life is a difficult surprise. The birds still sing, the flowers bloom, people are in love and the one thing that skips a beat is the heart of the broken-hearted...

– Mary Rethlake, NWA Flight Attendant



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So you think you're having a bad day.

Then you step outside of your house and look up into the gloomy grey sky and see this!

All of a sudden that smile comes back to your face and things don't seem quite so bad.