



GOLDEN CONTRAILS

April 2016

..... And oft' the setting sun is pleased to trim the Clouds with molten sails
And lace the way of passing jets with golden condensation trails



“Truk Departure” painted by retired flight attendant Marilee Krinitt



Captain Dave Streit landing Marshall Islands Circa 1970



Air Mike DC-6B unloading at Yap
Both paintings courtesy of Marilee Krinitt

The Editor's Thoughts:

First of all, I want to call your attention to the beautiful paintings on the front and inside cover. These are just some of the many Air Mike paintings done by Marilee Krinett, a now retired Continental Flight Attendant who was in the first group of CAL FAs to fly the Air Mike routes out of Guam. There were 8 CAL FAs and 8 Micronesians and they had separate bid lines to insure that there were an equal number of each on every flight. She is now living in Hawaii and sent me a great narrative of her time on Air Mike which will be published later in this issue or in the fall issue. If any of the readers flew with Marilee on Air Mike, I am sure she would love to hear from you.

Marilee Krinitt

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Gary Small has been busy updating the membership rolls (see his report in this issue) and has been contacting the surviving spouses of CAL pilots who have gone west to see if they want to remain on the active list. He has forwarded to me a reply from Ann Bell-Honan, the widow of Walt Honan and I am so proud of her for doing so. Walt Honan was my favorite Captain to fly with and I would love to honor his wife in this way. Walt was a true gentleman and looked the part of the ideal airline pilot - tall, handsome with white hair and a military posture. He was beloved by all that flew with him and was respected by management as well. I remember flying on the DC-10 with him from IAH to LAX and some woman in first class was giving the flight attendants a lot of grief so he put on his coat and hat and went back to talk to her. The conversation (according to the DPS) went something like this:

Captain Honan " Good afternoon madam, My name is Walt Honan and I am the Captain of this airplane. We are glad you are having a good time but would like to request that in respect to your fellow passengers, that you do it a little more quietly so they can enjoy the flight as well."

Drunk Lady: " Shove it up your a-- Captain"

Captain Honan: "I'm really sorry you said that madame. Have you ever been to El Paso before?"

Drunk Lady: " No. Why do you ask?"

Captain Honan "Because that is where we are making a stop to put you off the airplane."

He then came back to the cockpit and had me contact the company and ATC and inform them of our new routing request. I believe that had it been any other Captain, we would have had Red Stubben on the horn yelling at us to continue to LAX as scheduled but not a word was ever said to Walt about our unscheduled stop in a DC-10.

Now back to the wonderful letter hand written by his widow: AnnBell-Honan is, in her words, 97 years old (almost 98), and sent Gary a handwritten letter that reads as follows:

"Gary Small,

Please accept my apology for not responding to the enclosed correspondence.

One of my pleasures is sitting down at my kitchen table with a hot cup of coffee and reading my paper and mail. Walter always subscribed to your publication and I thought he would be pleased if

I continued. I tossed my computer before I knew Walter (eye problems). I have a tablet with E-mail but it is not my companion. I am pleased with your present mailing to me, but if you ever need to make me inactive, that is fine.

I am 97+ years old and in a few months 98.

Thanks,

Ann Bell-Honan”

What a lovely letter and whenever I start to wonder whether this magazine is doing anyone any good, I will remember it and keep on typing. Thank you so much Ann Bell -Honon. You and your spirit have made my day!

I have been reading through the older issues of *Golden Contrails* and it has occurred to me that one of the things that gradually vanished from the magazine is the section where members wrote in to inform everyone what they were doing, how their health is, what vacations they took and most importantly, their memories that they wanted to share with their friends at CAL. One of the categories in this section was “Memorable Flights” and I offer the following poignant excerpt from a submission by Hal Wrightson:

“My life’s autopilot is steadily taking me around to a heading of due west. The rate of turn is much too fast. The auto pilot won’t respond to my efforts to slow the turn down and the disconnect is inop, so I try and ignore the fact that fate is at work. Like everyone else who has done something for a long time, I’ve had my share of experiences, both good and bad. Naturally I remember the good ones better!”

We took off from Honolulu on a beautiful evening in a CAL 707, bound for Los Angeles. We were assigned a cruising altitude in the upper thirties, and when we levelled off we could see just a reddish orange slice of the moon

coming up over a slightly curved (imagination?) horizon. Some time early in the flight, we picked up the jet stream and rode it for several hours, giving us an incredible speed over the water. The moon rose like it was being pulled up on a string. It was like a computerized special effect that you see on the screen these days.

It’s time to close the hangar doors. One memory triggers another and I had better get back to tinkering with the autopilot. Hopefully I can get it to shallow out the turn onto final approach.”

—end—

There was another article by Norm Meyer about an elk hunt with Bob Six where he flew Mr. Six and his hunting party in a CAL DC-3 to a ranch just east of Raton, New Mexico and they landed on a grass prairie near the T O Ranch and.....well you get the idea. I would very much like to see this part of the *Golden Contrails* reinstated but it will require your help to do so. Just send me an email or a snail mail with your submission and I will do the rest. Let’s get it started in the next issue which comes out in August.

Speaking of August, that is only two months before our Annual Reunion in Las Vegas so start making your plans now. The details are all posted on our web site, [www. thegoldeneagles.org](http://www.thegoldeneagles.org). By going to the site you will be able to make reservations for the golf tournament, the ladies’ luncheon, the banquet and hotel reservations at the Tropicana Hotel and Casino.

See you in October,

Shaun

f100plt@gmail.com



President's Report

Bill Chambers

Bbob7045@gmail.com

As President and on behalf of the officers and more than 750 members of The Golden Eagles, I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome aboard any of you who have joined us within the past few months. The Golden Eagles is an association of retired, or soon to retire, pilots of Continental and United Airlines. Our organization's primary goal is to preserve the friendships and the friendly environment of our working years. We also represent our retiree members in various matters dealing with our retirement benefits. This representation was most evident in the recent past in our helping to obtain favorable pass travel privileges. We also represent retirees in many other matters and serve as a conduit for directing member concerns to the person or department where a solution can be found.

If you have chosen to receive the Golden Contrails via electronic downloaded PDF format you will not receive a copy via US Mail. You can also access previous editions of the publication and all other password protected areas of the website, www.thegoldeneagles.org, using the current password. The password is changed concurrent with the regularly scheduled publication of the Golden Contrails magazine. If you have chosen to receive the Golden Contrails via U S Mail, it is vital that you keep us informed of your current mailing address so that you can continue to receive the magazine.

The Golden Eagles also maintains a blast-email system, imparting important information and notices to the membership. Our Email Liaison is Dave Newell, davebnewell@gmail.com. Please be sure your computer's security settings will allow email from Dave.

The Golden Eagles annual convention/Reunion is nor-

mally held in one of three cities on a rotational basis; Houston, Las Vegas and Denver. The convention hosts a golf tournament, a hospitality suite with open bar and food, and a banquet with entertainment and lots of fellowship. Occasionally there are organized tours of nearby locations of interest to our members. Discounted room rates are normally available for members staying at the designated hotel. The annual business meeting of the membership is conducted during the convention.

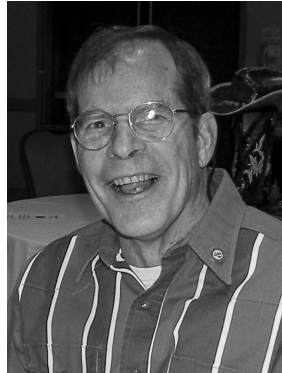
In addition to installing and maintaining our state of the art member database, our Secretary, Gary Small, smallgd@gmail.com, is working on a "Photo Roster" project on our website to make "yearbook" style pages of "faces with names" as a download under our Membership tab. Please take a look at our current progress and see if you can provide a photo to include. When you do, please send it to (a different email address for Gary) smallgd@outlook.com. Gary's "outlook" address exists just for these photos only, since combining them with his other email could create problems with his main account and prevent his access to other Golden Eagles input.

The Golden Eagles has established a network of Local Area Chapters, or LACs, which are now active in the Denver and Houston areas. In Houston the LACs are located in Conroe, The Woodlands and Kingwood areas. These groups of retired pilots, mostly Golden Eagles members, meet for breakfast or lunch quarterly or even weekly and enjoy socializing with no formal agenda. There are ongoing efforts to establish new chapters in other cities where a sufficient number of Golden Eagles members reside.

In a late postscript, we are very pleased to announce the appointment of Captain Rick Bixby as our new Membership Committee Chairman, a new position. Rick is a senior working B756 captain who will be retiring next November. (It is NOT necessary to retire before joining the the Golden Eagles.) Rick who joined the Golden Eagles before our last reunion, is wasting no time in assuming his duties. He recruits

new members in the most effective manner, by informing his fellow pilots about the benefits of joining the Golden Eagles one pilot at a time, and handing out our New Membership Brochure (located on our website.) Please join us in thanking Captain Bixby for assuming his duties as the keystone of our most critical factor for long term health of our organization, namely the new talent we attract. Thanks again, and "Welcome Aboard"

Captain Bill Chambers
(retired)
President, The Golden Eagles
bbob7045@gmail.com



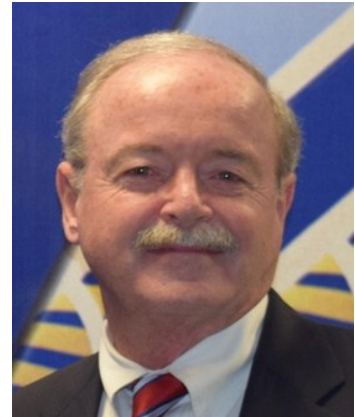
The President Elect

Greetings from sunny Naples, Florida. The past months have been very productive for the Golden Eagles officers. All have worked tirelessly to improve and modernize the internal operations of the organization and have clarified policies to help things run smoothly and efficiently.

I, as President-Elect, have been charged with planning and organizing the 2016 convention in Las Vegas. Be sure to save the dates October 3-6, 2016 for our annual event. For planning purposes, directions for making hotel reservations with the Tropicana are available now on The Golden Eagles website. Go to

the CONVENTION tab, then to Convention Details, then to Tropicana Reservations and you will find a link to make your reservations. There you will find a special rate for Golden Eagles members. Details for Golf registration and meal selections will be available on the website and in The Golden Contrails as they become available. In accordance with our new methods, all forms and payments are best made online. We look forward to a great time in Las Vegas and hope to see you there!

Tom Doherty



Attention all you old MAC flyers_
Remember these two characters?

THE GOLDEN EAGLES TREASURER / WEBMASTER UPDATE *Bruce Sprague*

HOME MEMBERSHIP LAC CARE CONVENTION TRAVEL CONTRAILS INPUT STORE CART(0)

Since the **Treasurer** and **Webmaster** functions work closely together, I will combine my updates.

Be sure to go to **CONVENTION** on our website and save the dates and make hotel reservations. The convention **forms** and **meals** are **NOT** finalized, so *disregard for now*. While you are at it, please **bookmark** our website (see address below).



The majority of members have paid their **2016 dues**, thanks! For those that still owe...you have to the end of April to pay up, *or your Golden Eagles membership will lapse!* If that happens, get with the Treasurer or Secretary, so we can get you back onboard.

Over 90% of you have paid by **credit card**, and given your contact updates via our online **Roster Update Form**. This method has greatly reduced the workload of your Golden Eagles volunteers! If you mail in a check, it literally takes us ten times the time and effort to process your check! To pay your dues, go to our website and click the "Dues" button on the home page. ***If you have any problems, I will be glad to phone you and walk you thru the process....it will only take a few minutes!*** If you do not have a computer, mail a \$35 check (\$20 Associate), with ALL your **updated contact info** (email, phone, etc), to my address (see below).

Our 2015 Financial Statement is as follows:

Money In:	\$36,245
Convention Income:	\$7984
New Membership Dues	\$930
Membership Dues	\$24775
Postage Donations	\$2556

Money Out:	\$33,650
Bank Fees	\$26
CARE donation	\$3000
Contrails Postage	\$1095
Contrails Printing	\$8907
Convention Expenses	\$15584
Credit Card Fees	\$522
Donations/Awards	\$672
Legal, Accounting Fees	\$1491
Office Expenses	\$897
P.O. Box	\$18
Postage	\$365
Printing	\$734
Website Accounts	\$339

Checking account balance 12/31/15:	\$8,650
Savings account balance 12/31/15:	\$28,116
CARE account balance 12/31/15:	\$2,087

We have completed our first **IRS tax return** (we do not owe anything)!

POSTAGE DONATIONS: (thru 2/26/16) "Thank You!"

Cliff Pleggenkuhle, Peter Linzmaier, Kenneth Stillwagon, Charles Walker, J. Michael Wade, Chuck Henry, Craig Chapman, Tom Laney, Charlie Starr, D. Duffy, Merle Dixon, Kiv Kiviranna, Bill Berkley, David Sullivan, Robert English, John Lumsden, Bill Basnight, William Sellmeyer, Ralph Rina, Robert Sykes, Larry Neglia, Max Meinen, R.V. Hemphill, Michael Lichtenfeld, Paul Curs, Angie Vascellaro, Tom Doherty, Steve Cady, Dick Hague, Jane Schuring, Don Bishop, Arthur Swanson, Lewis Aaronson, John Geiger, Frank Burch, Roy Henderson, Leslie Cook, Walter Olsen, Dick Hague, Donald Leseberg, Carter Smith, Mike Doyle, Larry Nelson, Ann Park, Jerry Dixon, James Bryant, William Broshears, Kathy Smagacz-Harvey, Carl Domschke, James Gamble, Bob Appleton, Barry Borella, Frank Longo, Robert Bergner, Ed Warnock, Ernie Killingsworth, Mitchell Inman, James Patton, Jim Hodgson, Mike Bender, Shirley Cage, Diane Gambino, Carolyn Ball, Lynn Mullins, Joe O'Neill

CARE DONATIONS: (thru 2/26/16) "Thank You!"

(United We Care Fund: *we donated \$3500 Jan 2016*)

Richard Floreani, Paul Shelton, Charlie Starr, Rene Robert, Larry Neglia, Tom Doherty, Don Bishop, Walter Olsen, Ann Park, James Gamble, Frank Longo, Mike Bender

NEW MEMBERS: (thru 2/26/16) "Welcome Aboard!"

Charles Richards, Ed Johnson, William Gander, Harold Domoney, Reed Sundine, Zane Brown, Michael McCue, Paul Carroll, John Lander, Jay Ellzey, Gary Sewell

Have a great summer!

Bruce



www.thegoldeneagles.org

brucesprague@mac.com

1310 Buckingham Way, Kingwood, TX 77339

NEW PASSWORD

solo (all lower case)

You **DO NOT** need this password to **login** to our website! It is **only** for the "Roster", "Golden Contrails" and the "Officer Documents".

The Secretary's Report and other rants...

"A child of five could understand this. Send someone to fetch a child of five." Groucho Marx

I thought I would address a couple of new subjects in this edition of the *Contrails*:

As many of you know, the Surviving Spouse of a member in good standing at the time of his or her "going west" is granted dues exempt status for the remainder of her or his life. As a result of this policy, we were rostering 98 of these surviving spouse members. While we are happy to provide any and all support that we can to these (at the present time, all are) ladies, we felt that we should attempt to reach out to them to inquire if they desired to remain on our "active" roster and to determine if their contact data was current. Accordingly, in November, I sent out an initial email to each surviving spouse that we had an email address for, or a postal letter to those that we did not. The initial contact effort resulted in a good response of ladies wishing to remain "active", a few sad replies from family members of the spouse who had also "passed" in recent years, and a couple of elections to go "inactive". In early January, I sent a "follow up" postal letter to everyone who had not responded to the initial contact effort. This resulted in several more indications of preference and contact info updates. One of these is featured separately in this issue. Prior to the publication of this *Contrails*, I will have closed the process out and moved the remaining "non-responders" to inactive. The only effect of doing this is that they will be removed from rosters, *Contrails* mailings, blast-mails, and any other ongoing correspondence. As a practical matter, I retain ALL inactive member information in the database, so that a member who wishes to be reinstated can do so with minimum effort. I also retain all of the information we had when a member "goes west" so that we honor him or her

in Gone West photo tribute on the website (www.thegoldeneagles.org). I have to say that as a grizzled veteran of "the office", I was more than a little touched by the replies that I received from these ladies. We intend to continue this "outreach" process approaching the end of each year.

The other "new" item of discussion is a description of the process of becoming a Golden Eagles officer. As you can well imagine, this is steeped in arcane ritual. While I am prohibited from revealing all of the details, I can tell you that it starts with a sealed invitation delivered under cover of darkness by one of our secret drones, purchased with your dues, for just this purpose. The final selection culminates in a ceremony officiated by one of our Past Presidents (selected at random), wearing goat horns and a loin cloth!

JUST KIDDING!

These positions are begging for volunteers! As the current board term runs until the 2017 Convention, there is plenty of time to "step up" and let us know if you'd be willing to help keep the wheels turning in this organization. Just send an email to any of us on the current board, or use one of the forms on the website (comments section). We'll also put you on our list if you let us know via other means, (carrier pigeon, smoke signals or phone calls...no collect calls please). As a matter of fact, we may put you on the list if we even THINK you are willing ...but that gets us back to the arcane rituals.

ANOTHER THING:

Just to toot our own horn a bit (if we don't...who will?) we have been successful at playing advocate for a few of our members who have had "issues" dealing with the company over pass travel, computer problems connecting to the company website and other things. We try to help in cases where the member has made good faith efforts and exhausted his or her individual options (we are NOT able to

serve as “travel agent” for everyone). I offer this as another reason to remain an active member AND to mention in conversation with fellow retirees who have not (yet) seen the wisdom of joining the Golden Eagles. We need to keep our membership levels up, not to maintain the payroll for board members (\$zero) but to have as much traction as possible when we interface with the company on issues that affect us.

And FINALLY (hold down the cheering) The Groucho quote (at the top of this rant) segues into our perpetual dull whine...

We have exhausted our (perhaps limited) combined intellect to make paying dues and updating your contact info on the website as easy as possible. As Bruce reports, the vast majority of you have helped us out by using the website for these “housekeeping” matters. We do understand that we’ll never get 100% but for those who don’t, WE KNOW WHO YOU ARE, and will put you at the top of our future Volunteer list.

Kidding again?... Maybe

Gary



*"LET THE GOOD
TIMES ROLL"*

Dear Ladies,

I am very much looking forward to seeing and working with all of you at the upcoming convention in Las Vegas. We will have a casino theme and "Let the Good Times Roll!" will be our mantra. Preparations have begun and details will be updated on the GE website as they are firmed up. Jackie Furuli, Kay Newell, and I know we can count on the wisdom and experience of all the ladies of the auxiliary and the past officers to help us continue the great success of previous conventions. We sincerely appreciate your advice, encouragement, and volunteerism as we begin this adventure.

At the last convention in Houston, we tabled a discussion on the Ladies' Auxiliary supporting a charitable cause. Penny Schuchat and Francina Gentry presented information on organizations close to their hearts for our consideration. A recommendation was made to consider alternating years so that both organizations could benefit from our donations. At this year's convention, a vote will be taken to determine how we should proceed.

Please be sure to plan on attending the Ladies' Luncheon. It is our best opportunity to catch up with each other and to enjoy a little sisterhood. If you would like to volunteer at the convention, or have any ideas to share, please contact me.

Jamie Doherty

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Editor's Note: This is the first of what I hope will be a series of articles that cover the history and significant events of the various airlines that came together to form Continental Airlines prior to its merger with United Airlines. My thanks to Charlie Starr for providing this history of Texas International Airlines and I am looking for some similar articles from those of you who came into the Continental family from other airlines in the 80's.

History of Texas International Airline

Texas International Airlines Inc. was a United States airline, known from 1944 until 1947 as Aviation Enterprises, until 1969 as Trans-Texas Airways (TTa), and as Texas International Airlines until 1982 when it merged with Continental Airlines. It was headquartered near William P. Hobby Airport in Houston

With hubs at Dallas and Houston, Trans-Texas Airways (TTa) was a "local service" airline as designated by the federal Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) in Texas and surrounding states. In August 1953 it operated scheduled flights to 36 airports from El Paso to Memphis. By May 1968 TTa flew to 48 U.S. airports plus Monterrey, Tampico and Veracruz in Mexico. The airline then changed its name to Texas International and continued to grow.

When Texas International was merged into Continental Airlines, in 1982, it had grown to reach Baltimore, Colorado Springs, Denver, Fort Lauderdale, Hartford, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Mexico City, Milwaukee, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Omaha, Phoenix, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, Tucson and Washington D.C. and was operating an all DC-9 jet fleet.

In 1949 Trans-Texas Airways (TTa) operated

only in Texas with Douglas DC-3's which the airline called "Starliners". The TTa "Route of the Starliners" in November 1949 served Alpine, Beaumont/Port Arthur Beeville, Brownsville, Brownwood, Carrizo Springs/Crystal City, Coleman, Dallas Love Field, Del Rio, Eagle Pass, El Paso, Fort Stockton, Fort Worth, Galveston, Harlingen, Houston (Hobby Airport), Laredo, Lufkin, Marfa, McAllen, Palestine, San Angelo, San Antonio, Uvalde, Van Horn and Victoria.[7]

Circa 1961 TTA added Convair 240's and a few years later began converting them to Convair 600's, replacing the piston engines with Rolls Royce Dart turboprops. Small Beechcraft C99 regional turboprops were later added to the fleet to serve the smaller cities of Longview, Lufkin, Galveston, and Victoria as the DC-3s were retired. In the fall of 1963 TTa routes stretched from Albuquerque, NM and El Paso, TX in the west to Memphis, TN; Jackson, MS and New Orleans, LA in the east.[9]

In 1966 Trans-Texas Airways introduced jet service with new Douglas DC9-10's which the airline called the "Pamper-jet". The Douglas DC9 fleet was progressively expanded and at one point included nineteen DC9-10's and seven stretched McDonald Douglas DC9-30's. By 1968 TTa was flying DC-9s into such small airports such as Beaumont/Port Arthur Texas; Harlingen Texas; Hot Springs Arkansas, Lake Charles Louisiana; Roswell New Mexico and Santa Fe New Mexico. DC-9's were also briefly operated at Clovis, Hobbs and Carlsbad New Mexico in 1977. The airline was derisively called "Tree Top Airlines" and "Tinker Toy Airlines" by competitors. When Trans-Texas Airways changed its name to Texas International Airlines in April 1969, the company ran newspaper ads showing a Tinker Toy airplane flying along treetops. The copy read "*No More Tinker Toys. No More Treetops. We are now Texas International Air-*

lines.” As Texas International, the airline standardized on the Douglas DC9 and the Convair 600. The Convair 600s would eventually be retired and Texas International would become all-jet with DC-9-10s and DC-9-30s.

In 1970 Texas International served the following destinations in Texas: Abilene, Amarillo, Austin, Beaumont/Port Arthur, Big Spring, Brownwood, Bryan/College Station, Corpus Christi, Dallas/Ft. Worth, El Paso, Galveston, Harlingen, Houston, Laredo, Longview, Lubbock, Lufkin, McAllen, Midland/Odessa, San Angelo, San Antonio, Temple, Tyler, Victoria, Waco and Wichita Falls.

Outside of Texas, in 1970 Texas International was serving Arkansas: (Eldorado, Hot Springs, Jonesboro, Little Rock, Pine Bluff and Texarkana); California: (Los Angeles); Colorado: (Denver); Louisiana: (Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Fort Polk, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Monroe, New Orleans and Shreveport); Mississippi (Jackson); New Mexico: (Albuquerque, Carlsbad, Clovis, Hobbs, Roswell and Santa Fe); Tennessee: (Memphis); Colorado: (Stapleton International Airport); and Utah: (Salt Lake City). In Mexico, flights reached Monterey, Tampico and Veracruz. At various times over the years, TTA/Texas International operated flights to other cities such as Jonesboro, Stuttgart and Helena Arkansas, Morgan City Louisiana, Colorado Springs and Grand Junction in Colorado, Burbank and Ontario in California, Washington DC, Hartfield/Springfield (Bradley International Airport) as well as to several cities in Mexico such as Mexico City, Cancun, Cozumel, Puerto Vallarta, Manzanillo, Guadalajara, Acapulco and Zihuatanejo.

The airline operated several "milk run" flights like flight 904, a DC-9-10 that left Los Angeles at 11:00am and stopped in Albuquerque, Roswell, Midland/Odessa, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Hou-

ston and Beaumont/Port Arthur before arrival at 8:34pm at Lafayette – or like TTA's DC-3 flight 60 that left Ft. Worth's Amon Carter Field at 6:52 AM with stops in Dallas, Tyler, Texarkana, Hot Spring, Little Rock, Pine Bluff, Stuttgart, Helena and Memphis.

After suffering annual losses of up to \$3 million, Texas International was acquired in 1972 by Jet Capital Corporation, headed by 32-year-old Frank Lorenzo. The airline quickly realized a \$6 million profit, largely due to aggressive wage cuts, spearheaded by Lorenzo as well as sharp marketing efforts.

During the mid-1970s, in response to intense competition from Southwest Airlines, Texas International successfully petitioned the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) to begin offering discounted fares. These fares became a staple of the airline and were advertised as "Peanuts Fares". In the spring of 1978, the airline was operating nonstop service between Dallas/Ft. Worth (DFW) and both Houston Intercontinental Airport (IAH) and Houston Hobby Airport (HOU) with a combined total of up to eighteen round trip DC-9 jet flights a day, all of which featured "Peanut Fares". The Texas International March 15, 1978 system timetable advertised "Peanut Fares" in other markets served by the airline as well.

The first modern frequent flyer program was created at Texas International Airlines in 1979. Lacking the computer resources of their larger competitors, Texas International was overtaken by American's introduction of "Aadvantage" in May, 1981.

On June 11, 1980 Lorenzo established a holding company, Texas Air Corporation, for Texas International. Texas Air then acquired Continental Airlines in 1982 and merged Continental and Texas International with the combined airline assuming the former's name. The last Texas In-

ternational aircraft were seen in 1983.

The ultimate successor to Trans-Texas Airways and Texas International is United Airlines, which merged with Continental in 2010. The airline has one of their largest hubs at George Bush International Airport (IAH), a former hub for Texas International. Dallas/Fort Worth Airport (DFW) was also a hub for Texas International before its merger with Continental.

Accidents

On February 6, 1969, Douglas DC-9-15MC N1304T collided in mid-air with a small, single engine Piper PA-28 aircraft over Harlingen, Texas; the Piper crashed, seriously injuring the pilot; the DC-9 landed safely with no casualties to the 59 on board.

On September 27, 1973, Flight 655, a Convair 600, crashed in Arkansas while on a scheduled passenger/cargo flight from El Dorado, Arkansas to Texarkana, Arkansas; all 11 on board died. This accident was the only fatal accident involving the airline's passengers as well as the only fatal accident involving the Convair 600.

On November 16, 1976, Flight 987, a Douglas DC-9-14 (N9104), overran the runway and crashed on takeoff from Denver Stapleton International Airport (DEN) due to an unexplained malfunction of the stall warning system; all 86 on board survived, but the aircraft was written off.

On March 17, 1980, Douglas DC-9-14 N9103 overran the runway while landing in rain at Baton Rouge Ryan Airport (BTR) due to pilot and ATC errors; all 50 on board survived, but the aircraft was written off. Incidentally, this aircraft hull was used as a procedural cabin trainer in the Houston training center.

Many thanks to Charlie Starr for this historical look at Texas International. Ed.

Hello—I have questions

Why isn't the number 11 pronounced onety-one?

If 4 out of 5 people suffer from diarrhea....does that mean one out of five enjoys it?

Why do croutons come in airtight packages? Aren't they just stale bread to begin with?

If it's true that we are here to help others, then what exactly are the others here for?

What hair color do they put on the driver's licenses of bald men?

What happened to Preparations A through G?

Why is it that when someone tells you that there are one billion stars in the universe you believe them, but if they tell you there is wet paint you have to touch it to check?

Is there ever a day when mattresses are not on sale?

The statistics on sanity say that one out of every four persons is suffering from mental illness. Think of your three best friends. If they are OK then it's you.

And a day without sunshine is, like.....night!!!!

I always knew pilots had too much time to think!

Editor's Note: This comes to us courtesy of Charlie Starr who started his airline career with Trans Texas Airlines. It is part of a continuing series that I envision attracting submissions from our pilots who joined us during the merger frenzy in the 1980's. We would love to hear about the history of your old airline prior to it becoming part of Continental.

TTA Proving Run

Trans Texas Airways was one of the original Local Service Airlines, like Allegheny, Ozark, and Southern. On October 10, 1947, TTA was the proud



owner of five ex-American Airlines DC-3s, 16 pilots and some five stewards. This was one day away from starting revenue passenger services and it dawned on the executives that they hadn't done a proving run. The airline had only two routes in the beginning. The southern run was Houston-Hobby, Victoria, San Antonio ending at San Angelo. The northern schedule went from Houston to Palestine, Dallas-Love, Fort Worth-Meachem, Brownwood and terminating in San Angelo. All stops were in Texas. So, Manager of Flight Operations, Hank Erdmann, rounded up all the pilots and a young woman from the executive office to act as a surrogate stewardess and they prepared to tackle the northern route for a day. No federal inspectors

were on board, which would prove to be fortuitous.

The captains and co-pilots had developed camaraderie of sorts but had little experience flying together as a crew. No cockpit management system existed; they used the checklists together and the first officer tried to learn the captain's ways of doing things. The left seater did most of the flying. The first crew selected to jump in the frying pan was Captain Bob Quin and co-pilot Bob Barrett. The cockpit door was to remain open. DC-3 N33654 (msn 4117) was selected. She was a good airplane with the name La Gansa (The Goose) written on the nose. N33654 departed from Hobby and headed north under Visual Flight Rules, 150 miles to Palestine. The pilots had never been there and couldn't even pronounce the name correctly: "Pal-es-teen'." There were no nav aids near the airport. Captain Quin came up on the town too high and too fast. Unable to get in the groove, he called for gear and flaps up and made a go-around. The catcalls and heckling began in earnest from the cabin, and it continued around the traffic pattern.

Once parked at the tiny wooden terminal, the pilots were changed out. Bill Moore and Bob Saner took over for the 100-mile leg to Dallas. They had not flown together before. The flight was routine until touchdown at Love Field. Captain Moore had his own technique of raising the flaps as soon as the main tires struck the concrete. His call of "flaps up" startled the co-pilot, diverting Moore's attention from the landing. The DC-3 took a good bounce. Co-pilot Bob then reacted to the command and raised the flaps, just as the airplane was at the apex of the bounce. Up came the flaps and down came The Goose. The flight ops chief roared: "Enough of this crap, only Hassler and Richards (the #1 and #2 seniority captains) will fly the right seat to keep you idiot captains in check." This tactic would not be enough.

Bud Downes flew to Fort Worth. He was the resident DC-3 wizard and everything went soothingly

well. It was to be the only perfect leg of the day. Pappy Jensen commanded The Goose south-westward to Brownwood. He had plenty of flying time – in C-46s. Those airplanes weren't content to stay in trim so Pappy had become accustomed to let the airplane wander a bit. The Goose's left wing would droop for a few minutes, then Pappy would respond and pick it back up. After 30 minutes of this, crewmembers moaned from the cabin: "For God's sake, Pappy, raise the left wing!" Then Jensen would jerk it level but the wing was predestined to slowly droop down again, unheeded.

After the central Texas stop at Brownwood, came the 80-mile hop to San Angelo, which was at the end of the TTA system. Bobby Carle, who drew the honors, had only minimum time in a DC-3, being a B-24 pilot. On landing, he was a tad hot over the fence and the aircraft floated teasingly above the runway. Then the inevitable bounce, followed by Carle's nudging of the throttles, which resulted in more bouncing. This was repeated liberally. The gallery sitting behind yelled in unison for him to pull the power off, put the yoke in his belly and let the darn thing die. It was kismet that San Angelo had a long runway.

After a lunch break and a scolding from the boss for everyone to stop pestering the stewardess, T.K. Lee flew the group back to Brownwood. Like several of his B-24 brethren, he found himself too high on the approach to runway 13, which was only 4,600 feet long. Not wanting to endure the jeers that would surely come like darts, he elected to land. He pushed the nose down until she trembled. The landing was long. When the mains were planted, T.K. mashed the brakes and put the yoke in his lap to keep the nose from going over the top. Smoking brake pads wafted into the cabin. With tires screeching and brakes squealing like hogs at feeding time, the sweet old Goose stopped right at the very end of the runway. However, the tail was still in the air. Suddenly, having reached

zero inertia, the tail came plummeting down like a broken elevator cab. There was a tremendous jolt. All that was heard in the cabin were 18 people exhaling in unison. A lone voice carried forward: "I am surrounded by idiots."

Bob Barrett summarized that day with this sage sentence: "The contrast between the brash young men who elbowed their way into the Goose that morning, grabbing at that poor little girl and hurling nasty remarks up to the cockpit, and the somber and humbled men who filed slowly off the DC-3 that evening back in Houston was amazing." Their thought process and maturity had taken a quantum leap.

They had an airline to start the next morning.

Addendum: Of the 16 original Trans-Texas pilots, 12 made it a full career with TTA and later the re-named Texas International. From DC-3s, Convair 240s and 600s, and the DC-9-10, most of these TTA "originals" retired off the DC-9-32.

Thanks Charlie—a great story and I am still laughing! Ed.



Meant to Fly

The story of Captain A.J. High

Submitted by his widow, Claudette Pfennig-High

“Dear Mr. Sprague,

I am interested in contributing an article in your newsletter about my late husband AJ High. Before he passed away he wrote a book about his life. It included his 40 years and 40,000 hours as a pilot, from World War 2 in the Pacific to TTA, TI, and retired from Continental.

For more information about his book it has a web site at <http://www.meant-to-fly.com>.

I have received many compliments about his book from so many retired pilots that I thought other retired pilots would like to read it.”

Sincerely,

Claudette Pfennig-High

A.J. High spent his entire life doing what he loved most, flying airplanes. He was born in the right place at exactly the right time, a time when aviation was becoming a real industry.

The temperate Texas climate, with its many clear, sunny days of unimpeded visibility, was perfectly suited for the development of aviation. The wide open skies and flat, almost treeless coastal plains of south Texas were perfect for the many early, self-taught fliers like A.J.

The field of aviation was just moving out of its infancy and flying was an exotic, thrilling occupation of which a young boy could only dream. Although flying was dangerous in those times, like so

many young men A.J., was audaciously confident.

He took his first airplane ride as a high school student in Sherman, Texas, in 1938. Two barnstormers had come to a pasture near town and were offering rides in their Travelair 2000 biplane for \$1.50. They would take a passenger up and circle the city before landing and taking off again with a new passenger. A.J. eagerly paid his hard earned money and took the ride, much to the disgust of his mother, when she learned he had wasted \$1.50 on an airplane ride. He had earned the money with a paper route and by working as a soda jerk.

His dream of becoming a pilot became an obsession and finally, during his college years, with little money, he managed to take flying lessons in a very unusual way. Even working three jobs to pay for college, he could barely afford the \$1.40 an hour airplane rental at a flying school in Temple, Texas.

His training began by persuading a couple of student pilot friends at the flying school to teach him to fly. As soon as A.J. and his friends were out of sight of the hangar, they would turn the controls over to A.J. With their collusion, he taught himself to fly.

On one memorable moonlit night in 1941 his friends helped him sneak an airplane out of the hangar for his first solo flight. For the rest of his life he remembered the feeling of handling that little Piper Cub on his own. It was a perfect night as he taxied down the grass runway and took off. What a glorious feeling as the wheels left the ground and sailed through the night for about ten minutes before landing. His friends stood at the far end of the runway providing a marker so he wouldn't overfly the runway. Upon landing, he taxied part way down the runway but just couldn't bear to end the flight yet so he turned the plane around and took off again before his friends could

stop him. After a few more minutes in the sky he landed again, picked up his friends, and taxied to the hangar, turned the engine off, and quietly pushed the plane back into the hangar. His first solo completed.

December 7, 1941 changed everything. One week after the attack on Pearl Harbor. One of A.J.'s flying friends learned the Army Air Corps had dropped the minimum age for pilots with some college to eighteen. The Army needed a lot of pilots quickly. They sought men with private pilot's licenses or college students who had flight time. A.J. was in the right place with the right qualifications. He eagerly jumped at the chance. However, since he was only eighteen, he had to have his mother's permission. She reluctantly approved his application, which was only an intent to join. He still had to be accepted.

A.J. and his friends were anxious to prepare for induction and to be sworn in together. They did not want to be rejected and they knew they had to pass an eye exam to become pilots. In those days, people thought eating carrots would improve eyesight so, while waiting to be called in, they began eating carrots, carrots and more carrots. Weight was also a factor in the selection process. A.J. was 5'10" but weighed only 137 pounds so he ate a lot of bananas to gain weight quickly. Even with all the carrots and bananas, it took him three extra days to be accepted. Another obstacle - regulations required that pilots have first and last names. A.J. only had initials for a first name. It actually took the intervention of a colonel who re-checked his birth certificate to convince the Army A.J. would be no less a soldier with only initials for a name.

In November, 1942 in Lake Charles, LA, A.J. graduated as 2nd Lt. A.J. High. At just nineteen years old, he was now an Army Air Corps pilot. After checking out in many different aircraft over the next six months he finally received orders for the Aleutian Islands. The islands were a real awak-

ing. They were strange and exotic for a Texas country boy, who hadn't even been out of the state until his military training.

The 73rd Bomb Squadron had a standing rule: They were told, if for any reason the flight formation was broken, fly back in at deck level. The old hands made it a point to break formation every time they could, so flights would be less predictable and be less of a target.

They flew regular bombing runs over Kiska, a Japanese stronghold. Kiska was full of little caves in which Japanese would hide. The pilots would come in low and skip the bombs into the caves.

During one run, a Japanese radioed asking if there was a Captain Wellwyne Dallam in the flight. Captain Dallam spoke up and said "I'm here." The person on the other end said hello and introduced himself in very good English. The man had been Dallam's roommate at San Francisco University before the war. He was now a major in the Japanese Army and stationed on Kiska. The college roommates were now locked in a deadly game of death. It was hell for Captain Dallam but both men knew they had to do their duty. After that, the Japanese major called every day, ostensibly to demoralize the American pilots with propaganda, but A.J. thought it was really his lifeline.

He and Capt. Dallam set up a gruesome little game to ease the tension. They had a bet on which one would get the other. Every day that the call came over Capt. Dallam knew his friend was still alive. It wasn't a bet he wanted to win.

The night before the invasion of Kiska the squadron leader made them all sit up and pay attention. The colonel told them "For those on direct ground support, we expect to lose about 90% of you." The men walked silently back to flight operations to look at the flight schedules. A.J. was scheduled for direct support of the ground troops. The pilots sat in their ready huts waiting to go. But, as they wait-

ed, a heavy fog set in and they couldn't get off the ground. They kept listening for reports of the invasion, which finally started coming in. At first, there was no contact. Then there was light fire on both sides. A little bit later, there were reports of heavy fire. All A.J. and his crew could do was sit and listen. They sadly felt they should have been there, supporting their buddies. Suddenly, the reports stopped - no more word. They feared the worst, but there was no way they could help. The news, when it finally came in was worse than they ever expected. The U.S. and Allied troops had landed on opposite sides of the island and had slowly advanced in the fog. The gunfire they heard was their own troops firing at each other. When the fog cleared and the troops were able to survey the island, they found there was no enemy. The Japanese had escaped the island a few at a time over the past few weeks until the last went out the night before the invasion. That invasion ended the war in the Aleutian Islands.

The aircrew was scheduled to Attu Island about two days after the invasion of Kiska. Attu was only a staging stop for the squadron. Since A.J. had just arrived as a replacement pilot, he expected to be there for a while. The squadrons continued their bombing missions. One run in particular forced him to make a very difficult decision. The fliers flew their B-25s out of Amchitka. They were scheduled to fly to Attu, fuel up, bomb up, and make a bombing raid over Paramushiro, the northernmost island of the Kuril chain of islands near Japan. They set up for "minimal lean" all the way from Attu to Paramushiro, meaning they flew low and slow to save fuel. They hoped, once they reached their target, they might have enough fuel for thirty minutes of full-throttle, high speed flight back to base. Knowing they would have to evade the Japanese Zeros, just thirty minutes of fuel wasn't enough and they likely couldn't make it back to the base .

A.J. told his navigator just to plot a route to Paramushiro and from there to the nearest friendly city -

Petropavlovsk, Russia. There they could make a forced landing and most likely sit out the war. The Russians weren't at war with the Japanese so, if they landed there, they would they would be interred for the duration of the war. The Russians would hold them and not kill them outright as the Japanese would. It was the only chance of survival.

Years later, after A.J. became an airline pilot, he learned the results of the raid at Paramushiro. He had an overnight stay in El Paso. He overheard a man in the hotel talking about being in the Aleutians flying a raid over Paramushiro. Sure enough, he was one of the B-24 pilots on the same raid that A.J. had missed. The man had flown to Petropavlovsk from Paramushiro as A.J.'s crew had planned. They then had to walk across Russia and out through Sweden. The man's plane was the one of two that survived the raid. He later found out what happened to all his buddies. Ten B-25's had made the raid - none returned. Ten B-24's made the raid - only one made it back. This man's plane was the one B-24 that made it. Anti-aircraft fire and Japanese Zero attacks had been much heavier than anticipated.

The 73rd Bomb Squadron returned to Seattle. They were to rest and then be sent to the Marshall Islands. The squadron had been in the Aleutians for just about a year. When the CO got to Seattle and learned they were to immediately head out to the Marshall Islands he called Washington. He very firmly told them he might have a squadron now but he wouldn't guarantee it on shipping date unless all received thirty days leave. This simple act saved A.J.'s life one more time. The Army couldn't wait for the squadron to take leave so they sent A.J.'s old training squadron, the 396th Bomb Squadron, instead. All were all killed in the Marshalls.

A.J. was then assigned to train combat crews in Pyote, Texas until mid-1944 when he requested a change of duty to flight testing .

All B-17's that had undergone an overhaul, engine change, or major repair had to be flight tested before being returned to operation. A lot of testing was done at night so it wouldn't interfere with the daily flying schedules and training missions. A.J. got quite a bit of night flying. Often he did the testing by himself even though the B-17 was usually flown with a pilot and a copilot. Nevertheless, he worked out an ingenious way to get the airplane off the ground by himself by having a mechanic buddy take the copilot's seat long enough to start the engines (The switches were on the right-hand side of the cockpit where the copilot would normally sit). As soon as the engines were started, the mechanic would jump out and A.J. would take off. While flight testing aircraft was an enormous responsibility, the testing itself could be dangerous.

One frightening development happened while testing a B-17 that had the control cables changed out. A.J. trimmed the airplane, rolled it forward a little to get the tail off the ground and continued, nose down, on the runway. He had just barely reached flight speed when the plane unexpectedly came off the ground. He shoved the stick forward, which should have put the landing gear back on the ground, so he could build up more speed before taking off. Instead, the nose came up and he realized immediately he had a problem - there was no more runway. He was by himself, pitch dark, trying to figure out what had gone wrong. He quickly decided the control cables had been installed backwards so he reversed his actions and pulled the stick back, got more speed, and then took the plane off the ground. After flying and testing a bit longer he called the control tower and told them of his predicament. They cleared him for a pass around. A.J. could usually make perfect three-point landings but even with a perfect plane and approach, it required concentration. Now all he had was himself, a twenty-year-old kid, flying in the dark trying to figure out what was wrong with his airplane. If he was right about the problem, he

would have to think backwards to land the plane. From that time on, he never tested a control change after dark.

As the war ended A.J. had a wife, a daughter, and forty-five days of terminal leave to find a job, which he needed immediately. He talked to Braniff Airlines and American Airlines but they were looking for C-47 and C-54 pilots. Bomber pilots didn't mean a thing to them - they were "a dime a dozen". While looking for a job and hoping to make himself more employable he got an instrument rating at Meacham Field in Ft. Worth.

Every once in a while, aviation people would come into the crew room at Meacham looking for pilots. One day a man came in looking for a pilot to fly a C-47 to Brownwood, Texas. A.J. once again was in the right place at the right time. He was happy to oblige and they took off for Brownwood. A.J. flew as copilot and the trip went without incident. Once the plane was parked, they took the bus back to Ft. Worth.

When they got back, the man escorted A.J. to the Continental Trailways Bus headquarters and told him to wait while he went to get his pay for the trip. When he returned, he had Temple Bowen, the president of Continental Trailways, with him. All at once A.J. understood. His soon-to-be new boss was the president of the bus line! Mr. Bowen asked him if he would like a job and took him to the executive offices where he spent the afternoon explaining his ideas for a new airline. He outlined a plan to start a local airline flying from Ft. Worth to Dallas and possibly to San Antonio.

A.J. flew his first flight for Mercury Airlines in September, 1946. In November of 1946, Mercury began flying a route to Houston and he was the co-pilot on that inaugural flight. Mary Margaret McCarthy, daughter of Houston Oilman Glenn H. McCarthy, christened the "City of Houston", a new DC-3 airplane, for the route.

A.J. witnessed a very interesting event towards the end of his first year flying for Mercury. On April 16, 1947, they had just taken off from Hobby Airport for Dallas when both the copilot and A.J. noticed a huge yellow cloud billowing up to a couple thousand feet over Texas City and then they felt the concussion of an explosion. They didn't want any part of whatever was going on so they turned and went on their way. They didn't find out what had happened until they landed in Dallas. They had witnessed the infamous Texas City Disaster.

In August of 1947, Continental Trailways closed down Mercury Airlines without even two weeks' notice. A.J. was out of a job. However, he did have one or two leads for other flying jobs and he knew that was all he wanted to do. He had received a telegram from Pioneer Airlines in May of 1946 asking him to work for them. He also knew that a group in Houston called Aviation Enterprises had been certified and that they were going to start a new airline called Trans-Texas Airways (TTA).

In the early days of piloting for TTA A.J. remembers flying to Ft. Stockton in west Texas as he wondered how he was going to manage financially. With a wife and daughter in Dallas, he was sending most of his money home. He often went out on a trip with no more than fifteen cents in his pocket. In those days, that fifteen cents would buy a hamburger and a coke in Ft. Stockton. The next day he would be back on the plane where, at least he would have free coffee, which was all he had all the way back to Houston.

The word "can't" was not in this early pilot's vocabulary. For instance, one of their planned stops on a new route from Houston to San Antonio was Victoria, Texas. Before they started flying the route, four of the pilots went to Victoria to build a fence around the runway to keep cows off the field. A.J. drove all over Texas in a Jeep station wagon delivering runway ramp equipment to the various stations they were going to open. They literally built

themselves an airline and created their jobs. Phil Reid, the Vice President of Personnel, even installed the runway lights at the airfield in Brownwood.

These were rough days in the airline business. On many trips they didn't have passengers or only two or three passengers. Nevertheless, they continued on until November, 1968 when the final TTA flight was made. As the TTA sign came off their Houston hangar, a new sign went up announcing to the world that Texas International Airlines (TI) had been born. The airplanes were given a bold new paint job; horizontal stripes of red, white, and blue with a large star emblazoned on the tail.

In May, 1981, Texas Air seized debt-ridden Continental Airlines and, in 1982, merged TI with Continental renaming the combined organization Continental Airlines. The last TI flights flew in 1982, the year before A.J. retired. A.J. flew the designated last flight for TI Airlines from Intercontinental Airport (IAH) to Albuquerque and then back to Midland. He overnighted in Midland and the name change happened during the night. When he left Midland the next morning, he was flying the same airplane, on the same route, but flying it as a Continental flight. He had to listen twice when the air traffic controllers at IAH radioed. The last day of the existence of TI the employees held a street party at the Lockheed Street terminal but, once again, A.J. was flying and missed the party.

After his retirement in 1983 and because he was the last surviving of the original sixteen pilots for Trans-Texas Airways, many people have prevailed upon A.J. to record his firsthand experiences during the 1940 - 1990 pioneering era in Texas commercial aviation history.

A.J. said there were several reasons for writing his book:

First he wanted to preserve a part of the history of commercial aviation in Texas, especially the history of TTA and TI. Much had been written about military aviation but little about the startup of commer-

cial aviation. The early history of commercial aviation is much like the history of computer technology today. Technology, design, and possibilities improved very rapidly from the 1940's to the 1980's and improvements in design, capacity and fuel efficiency continued to raise the standard.

Airlines had to keep up and keep changing or risk bankruptcy. On the other hand, if they committed too quickly to a new technology, they could still be left behind when an even newer, more cost-efficient aircraft was introduced by a competitor.

Many airlines came and went and their history ended up in the trash pile. This was literally the case with both TTA and TI. When TTA changed to TI and again when TI moved to IAH, most of their records were put into the dumpster at Hobby Airport. A few TI mechanics happened to see the certification papers, thought they were too important to be tossed out, and retrieved many of the records. Boxes of records were later donated to the 1940 Air Terminal Museum at Hobby Airport and those records still sit in the back room, as yet un-accessed, in unlabeled boxes.

Another reason for writing his book, A.J. said, is because of all the incredible incidents where he should not have survived but did. "I give credit to God for those as they were beyond my own common sense and ability." When you hear a pilot say "God was my co-pilot" maybe, if you read his book, you will understand better what that pilot meant and felt. (signed)

Claudette Pfennig –High

Ed. Note: We wish to express our profound thanks to Claudette for this great look at a distinguished flying career and urge those who are historically interested to check out the book written by Capt. A.J. High.

I also want to thank Captain Bill Knowles for his account of the first Viet Nam POWs being returned to Clark Field in the Phillipines.

I just happened to be at Clark Air Base PE when the first POWs from Hanoi returned...they came from Hanoi direct to Clark as Clark had the largest U.S hospital in SE Asia....I think that every resident of Clark was there for the happy event...I spied not a dry eye when they emerged, one by one...from the aircraft....what a great bunch they were....so proud, so happy...my full crew attended that happy occasion. Much later we [Continental Airlines] hired several of the POWs....were they within our age limit for hiring....hell no.....one of them told me of the departure from the POW Camp...their bus trip to the airport...there seeing the Stars and Bars on the awaiting aircraft for the first time...still not believing that they were going home..... after takeoff, still not believing it until the pilot announced [perhaps he was a USMC pilot]....as they crossed [outbound] from the shoreline "Gentlemen....our feet are wet"....with that they were believers that they were going home.....BK



Colonel Bud Day (Misty 1), Medal of Honor recipient and room mate of Senator John McCain in the "Hanoi Hilton" being welcomed home by his wife at Clark Air Base.

YOU THINK ENGLISH IS EASY?

Homographs are words of like spelling but with more than one meaning. And a homograph that is also pronounced differently is a heteronym.

- 1) The bandage was wound around the wound.
- 2) The farm was used to produce produce
- 3) The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse
- 4) We must polish the Polish furniture
- 5) He could lead if he would get the lead out
- 6) The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert
- 7) Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present
- 8) A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum
- 9) When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.
- 10) I did not object to the object.
- 11) The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
- 12) There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.
- 13) They were too close to the door to close it.
- 14) The buck does funny things when the does are present.
- 15) A seamstress and a sewer fell down into a sewer line.
- 16) To help with planting, the farmer taught his sow to sow.
- 17) The wind was too strong for me to wind the sail.
- 18) Upon seeing the tear in the painting I shed a tear.
- 19) I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.
- 20) How can I intimate this to my most intimate friend?

Let's face it - English is a crazy language. There is no egg in eggplant, nor ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple. English muffins weren't invented in England or French fries in France. Sweetmeats are candies while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat. We take English for granted. But if we explore its paradoxes, we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.

And why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham? If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth, beeth? One goose, 2 geese. So one moose, 2 meese? One index, 2 indices? Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one amend? If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it? If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught? If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat? Sometimes I think all the English speakers should be committed to

an asylum for the verbally insane. In what language do people recite at a play and play at a recital? Ship by truck and send cargo by ship? Have noses that run and feet that smell? How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites? English was invented by people, not computers, and it reflects the creativity of the human race, which, of course, is not a race at all. That is why, when the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, they are invisible.

You lovers of the English language might enjoy this. There is a two-letter word that perhaps has more meanings than any other two-letter word, and that is 'UP.' It's easy to understand UP, meaning toward the sky or at the top of the list, but when we awaken in the morning, why do we wake UP? At a meeting, why does a topic come UP? Why do we speak UP and why are the officers UP for election and why is it UP to the secretary to write UP a report? We call UP our friends. And we use it to brighten UP a room, polish UP the silver; we warm UP the leftovers and clean UP the kitchen. We lock UP the house and some guys fix UP the old car. At other times the little word has real special meaning. People stir UP trouble, line UP for tickets, work UP an appetite, and think UP excuses. To be dressed is one thing, but to be dressed UP is special.. A drain must be opened UP because it is stopped UP. We open UP a store in the morning but we close it UP at night. We seem to be pretty mixed UP about UP! To be knowledgeable about the proper uses of UP, look the word UP in the dictionary. In a desk-sized dictionary, it takes UP almost 1/4th of the page and can add UP to about thirty definitions. If you are UP to it, you might try building UP a list of the many ways UP is used. It will take UP a lot of your time, but if you don't give UP, you may wind UP with a hundred or more. When it threatens to rain, we say it is clouding UP. When the sun comes out we say it is clearing UP. When it rains, it wets the earth and often messes things UP. When it doesn't rain for awhile, things dry UP. One could go on and on, but I'll wrap it UP, for now my time is UP, so.....it is time to shut UP!



They Won't Let Me Fly Jets Anymore •

SENT BY A RETIRED FIGHTER PILOT SENIOR CITIZEN FRIEND

They won't let me fly their jet fighters anymore. The day after I no longer pulled 5-6 Gs (or more) multiple times every day, my middle started expanding. It hasn't stopped. First my toes disappeared, and then the equipment in the Nether Regions disappeared except on outstanding occasions. My feet might as well be in China. My toenails are turning into claws.

The music has faded. Twenty-five years in close proximity of screaming jet engines will do more damage to your hearing than a rock band. The VA gave me some very nice hearing aids but I don't wear the damned things. I don't want to look like an old man. However, it can be a blessing when I piss off my roommate.

My prostate started to enlarge and I have to pee every 5 minutes. Speaking of which: The pressure is too low, the hose is too short, and the nozzle is set on spray. I find it advisable to sit down to pee to avoid getting Wet Foot Syndrome. I know the location of every publicly accessible bathroom within 100 miles.

My gyro tumbled and I have vertigo. I have had it many times while flying in Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) weather but this is different. This is Visual Flight Rules (VFR) weather all the time. I walk like a drunken sailor. My golfing days are over. My back swing would put me flat of my back. A walker may not be far in the future.

If I were to find myself on the ground in the middle of an empty Wal-Mart parking lot, I would not be able to get up onto my feet. The legs are just not there anymore. I would have to crawl to a shopping cart or fence to pull myself up.

I have had to go on oxygen in order to have enough to live. It is a real bummer to have to haul a bottle of O2 around with me when I go out of the house. I wear a nose harness at home and drag a plastic tube around and an oxygen concentrator out in the garage runs 24/7. The tube is always snagging on something or someone steps on the damn thing and it almost jerks my ears off. Don't get me wrong. I like oxygen. I used to really like it after a night of serious partying when I had an early morning mission. As soon as I got into the cockpit I went on 100% O2 for startup, taxi, and weapons arming pit. By the time I had wheels up I was ready to fight.

And they won't let me fly their jet fighters anymore

Some people wonder why old fighter pilots (there are no Ex Fighter Pilots) miss flying high performance jets so much. Here is a reason.

1. I start up, taxi out and line up on the centerline of a 10,000-foot runway. I throttle up to full power, release the brakes and go into afterburner. There is a huge shove against my back that pins my helmet against the back headrest. The runway streaks under me faster and faster. At flying speed I raise the gear to get the wheels free of the earth. Flaps up. Sink down a foot or two until the end of the runway and then the field boundary flashes underneath and I pull the nose up to point to the sky and freedom. The horizon rapidly expands and after about three minutes and 6-7 miles above the earth I come out of burner, roll inverted and at zero Gs let the nose slowly drift down to the horizon. I look out the top of my canopy at the earth far below and think about all those pedestrian citizens down there that will never know what true joy is.

And they won't let me fly their jet fighters anymore.

Truck Lagoon at Sunset



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