

THE GOLDEN EAGLES



Golden Contrails

August



2017



Front Cover "Peter Max" 777 photo by Karl Novak



Trans Texas "Stewardesses" - courtesy of Charlie Starr

PRESIDENT'S LETTER – August 2017 Golden Contrails

This issue will be my last as Golden Eagles President, since my declining health precludes the ability to effectively communicate. I will step down to serve as past president effective October 21, 2017 leaving Dave Newell as the temporary Pass Travel Liaison until such time that this vitally important post is filled.

I am grateful to have had the chance to attend to the pass travel needs of the Golden Eagles members as a whole and many of you in particular. I also wish to thank Michelle Prichard, Janet Tyce, the Employee Travel Center staff and others who helped our retirees with problems that we helped resolve after the merger and continuing to this day. I wish to thank all of my fellow retirees, Golden Eagles leaders and friends who my work has made close buddies as we tried to make life better for all UAL pass riders or discounted ticket buyers.

We picked up several vibrant, jovial Local Area Chapters since 2009 when I started Kingwood's LAC, adding one more way to enjoy the full benefits of membership. My good friends in North Houston, The Woodlands, Conroe, Denver and hopefully several new East Coast chapters continue to astound us with average turnouts of 25 or more retired or soon to retire pilots from United or Continental Airlines with gatherings on every Tuesday, every Monday, quarterly or some other regular basis. As those of us who have retired already can attest, retiring from the lofty occupation as airline captain or first officer is often a bittersweet lifestyle change at best. The Golden Eagles provides a place to go where many retiring airline pilots have, a place with old and new friends to enjoy the camaraderie of friendship that we knew as airline pilots.

Life is short, and too much of mine will have been spent on issues that in the long run are much less important than children, grand children and spouses. My wife of 42 years, Linda, has continued to be my caregiver, my closest companion and the love of my life. She tolerated my vagaries and late night work on Golden Eagles topics. I shall cherish the extra time that we will spend on more of the good stuff during the years ahead.

Captain Bill Chambers



THE PRESIDENT-ELECT

Greetings from New Hampshire. Summer is well underway and we just celebrated the Fourth of July with the annual concert and fireworks display on the Esplanade in Boston. What a spectacular event!

I have been very busy organizing our convention in Houston at the Hilton Houston North Hotel to be held October 19-22. The venue is very attractive and has a large lobby with many opportunities for food and drink. The ballroom where the banquet is to be held is impressive yet intimate and will make for a festive evening. There will be a delicious buffet including three entrees, various side dishes and a selection of desserts. As usual, the Hospitality Suite will be the place to be to catch up with old friends and share a drink or two. Music will be provided by a DJ with dancing after dinner. There will also be a raffle and auction with many great prizes. Be sure to check out the website for all the details and to make your reservations and online payments.

At the convention we will present a check to UAL for our annual charitable contribution. Our members have been extremely generous this year and we expect to have a sizeable donation for the United We Care program.

The meeting on April 12 in Chicago with Oscar Munoz and retiree group representatives was delayed until July. When that meeting does take place, I will have more to report on the state of pass travel discussions with UAL management.

Once again I am asking for retired and over 50 years of age UAL/Continental pilots to consider joining the Golden Eagles. It's a great opportunity to catch up with old friends and co-workers. Also I am asking for anyone interested in volunteering to contact any of the officers.

I will be assuming the position of President at the convention in October after Bill Chambers completes his term. Bill has done a great job leading the Golden Eagles. Thanks to him and all the other officers and volunteers who make the organization work as well as it does.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the convention in Houston October 19-22.

Tom Doherty



LADIES' AUXILIARY



Dear Ladies,

Our Fall Fling at the Hilton Houston North October 19-22 is quickly approaching. The new venue is bright and beautiful and we are looking forward to a long weekend filled with fun and friends. Plans are underway for our "dressy casual" event which includes golf, our Ladies' Luncheon and a Dinner Buffet with music and dancing.

The Hospitality Suite will be open Friday, October 20 in the afternoon for returning golfers and anyone arriving at the hotel that day. Beverages and snacks will be available in the afternoon. Saturday, October 21, the suite will open in the morning prior to the day's meetings for coffee and breakfast snacks and again after dinner. On Sunday, the suite will be open early for coffee and farewells. As always, help is needed to set up the suite and decorate the ballroom for the dinner dance. Please e-mail me if you have any suggestions or questions.

At the ladies' luncheon we will discuss the charitable donations that were made at our last meeting in Las Vegas and make a decision on how to disperse the funds.

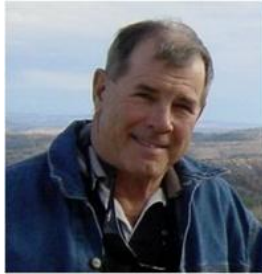
Looking forward to see y'all at the Fall Fling!

Jamie Doherty jkated@gmail.com



Email Notification Program Report Summer 2017

*Dave Newell – Executive Vice President/Email Liaison
davebnewell@gmail.com*



The Email Liaison report for this issue of the Golden Contrails will include a reminder that our members can access a statement of policy regarding our email notification program on the Golden Eagles website. This statement of policy is found under the Membership section and the Email Notification Policy subsection. Our regularly published monthly updates and reminders normally keep our members fairly well informed of current items of importance and any changes to our email notification policy will normally be posted there.

Since it is such an important issue, our members are reminded to keep their contact information updated by using the Roster Update form in the Membership section of our website. This allows all of the officers concerned with maintaining the membership records to be informed of any changes. Your cooperation in this regard is greatly appreciated. We would like for you to be able to continue to receive all communications from the Golden Eagles and keeping your contact information current will enable us to keep you “in the loop”.

As our members likely have noticed, our email notices are now being sent using a new email program that was put in place by our Secretary Gary Small.

This new program enables us to send out notices to all our members in one email rather than having to send them out in several groups due to the restrictions in the previous email provider used. You probably have noticed the appearance of the notices has been upgraded with better graphics and formatting. This new program was obtained at no cost to the Golden Eagles and not only has it resulted in a better product, it also has reduced the workload of your volunteer worker bees! Thanks to Gary Small for his efforts in obtaining the new program.

One other item that should be emphasized again is the fact that members who do not pay their annual dues by May 1 of each year will be placed on an inactive status and will no longer receive Golden Eagles communications. We feel that it is important to mention this in the Golden Contrails as the message will also be available to those who receive the magazine by mail rather than electronically. The reminder of our policy on delinquent members is posted frequently in our email notices, but members who do not access our email notice program are often caught unawares when they become delinquent with their dues. Hopefully the notice in the magazine will remind them of the policy.

PLEASE use the online order process for the Convention AND payment.
We will be VERY disappointed in anyone making us process personal checks.
Thanks!

THE GOLDEN EAGLES TREASURER / WEBMASTER UPDATE *Bruce Sprague*

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

As I write this, I am sure that all of you are now in the throws of another hot and fun summer, with family and friends. We are now at a Galveston beach house having a family reunion for the week. By the time you read this in August/September....I will be in sunny South Korea, working for Boeing, teaching Korean Airline pilots in the B737NG simulator. Hopefully Kim Jung Un will not cause any trouble. I will be in country for about half of each month. In fact, there is a distinct possibility that I may not be able to make the Convention in October.....we will see. Don't worry...my laptop over in Korea will keep up with all the Golden Eagles Treasurer and Webmaster duties...it is all a matter of simply connecting to the internet.

Talking about the Convention.....yes, it won't be long until our Houston Convention begins in October! The all important Business Meeting, Ladies Luncheon, and Banquet are set for Saturday, October 21st (and golf is the day before on Oct 20th). You can go right now to our website under the CONVENTION menu and find out all the details. Please go online to our Golden Eagles website (www.thegoldeneagles.org) to 1. fill out the **Convention Form**, and 2. make your **payments via the STORE** with your credit card.

A word about payments. The vast majority of our members are following our plea for all payments to be made via our STORE and credit card (*thank you*). This saves your beleaguered volunteer officers a **lot** of time and effort! However, we still have a small percentage of folks that still mail in checks, which literally takes us **more time** to deal with than all the credit card submissions combined! *We have considered making all future payments **only** via the STORE (ie..no checks),* but realize there is a **very** small percentage of folks that literally have no internet access at all (and who do not even have an *email address*). These folks are literally **only** getting Golden Eagles information from the three Golden Contrails magazines mailed to them each year. We can handle those very few cases that truly need to mail in a check. *But for those of you who **do have** internet access (we have your email addresses)please use our STORE and your credit card!* While you are there, go ahead and get ahead on your 2018 dues due Jan 1st! *Thanks!*

Our **Bank of America** accounts have about \$47,841 on hand, and the CARE account has about \$3,017 in it (a good cause to donate to). We plan on donating a check to the United CARE at our October convention in Houston.

POSTAGE DONATIONS: (thru 7/1/17) "Thank You!"

Ray Brendle, Rick Masterson, Peter VanDerlofske, Kathy Smagacz-Harvey, Wesley Coss, Don Griffin, Frank Burch, Steve Zavitz, Edward Warnock, Ernie Killingsworth, Mitchell Inman, Dewitt Davidson, Paul Grover, Carolyn Goodwin, Sal Liguori, George Bowlus, John Crouch

CARE DONATIONS: (thru 7/1/17) "Thank You!"

Rick Masterson, Walter Olsen, Dick Floreani

NEW MEMBERS: (thru 7/1/17) "Welcome Aboard!"

Thomas Burk, Thomas Lusk, Michael Garland, Kaye Riggs, Kevin Stevens, Andrew Cassetta, George Bowlus, Tom Allee, Steven Fisher, Thomas Ward, Frank Freeman, Robert Steider, Bill Vaughn

Hopefully many of you will make it to the Convention, and everyone have a great upcoming Fall and holiday season,

Bruce



www.thegoldeneagles.org

brucesprague@mac.com

1310 Buckingham Way, Kingwood, TX 77339

NEW PASSWORD

wing (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"!

A Transpacific Mac Flight

by Dave Newell

It was a routine transpacific Continental Airlines MAC flight from the west coast of the US to Saigon, South Vietnam sometime during 1967. The captain of this particular Boeing 707-320C flight was Harry Watson and I was the Second Officer in charge of the panel. The “cargo” on this particular flight was a couple hundred eager Marines heading to Vietnam to do their duty for their country.

We had been airborne for several hours on the long transpacific flight and the enthusiasm of the Marines was beginning to wane as the long flight droned on westward toward an uncertain future for these brave men. The flight attendants always did their best to cheer these guys up and keep their spirits on a positive note, but the Marines knew what they were facing; and in spite of their can-do attitude and typical Marine spirit, as we drew closer to our destination they invariably grew more sullen and withdrawn, absorbed in their own personal thoughts.

As MAC cockpit crews we also did our part to try to improve the spirits of the guys in the back of the aircraft. Most of us were veterans and fully appreciated what these brave guys were facing. On this particular flight Captain Harry Watson had an idea for cheering these guys up, and it was a beaut! As we were approaching the Island of Iwo Jima Harry made an announcement to the Marines in back. He told them we were approaching Iwo Jima, which of course is a sacred location to all Marines because of the major battle fought and won there by thousands of Marines during the Second World War. Harry told the Marines in back that we would be passing the island in a few minutes and if anyone wanted to look out of the right side of the aircraft there would be an excellent view of the island.

Well! Can you imagine that any one of these Marines would not want to see this inspiring sight? I can assure you that not one of them considered not going to the windows and viewing the island. Not one!! The thing was, they all scrambled to the right side of the aircraft to get a view, even the ones seated on the left side of the plane, and they all did it at the same time! Harry of course had anticipated this when he made his announcement and had alerted us in the cockpit and the flight attendants in the back what to expect. When all 200 of these guys rushed to the right side of the aircraft for the view of the island, Harry did the two things he had planned on all along that made this episode a classic. He rolled the aircraft into a sharp thirty degree bank to the right and at the same time shouted over the PA “NOT ALL AT ONCE!...YOU WILL TURN US OVER!”

Well, as brave as these guys were, they were not all that familiar with the workings of a large passenger jet, and they were certain that if they didn't get back over to the other side of the aircraft quickly, the big jet was for sure going to capsize! The enthusiasm with which these guys rushed to the right side of the aircraft to get a good view of the island was exceeded only by the panicked mad scramble to get back to the left side to equal out the terrible imbalance they had caused and to remove the resulting deadly threat to the aircraft's ability to stay airborne.

Needless to say the crew got a hell of a laugh out of this little prank, and once the Marines figured out what had been done to them in good fun, being Marines they laughed their butts off and really seemed to appreciate the gesture...and of course they did get a good view of Iwo Jima in the process.

*This article is a reprint of a story in the Golden Jet from 1975.
We thank John Clayton who was Editor at the time for this piece of nostalgia*

WHAT'S INSIDE

- ☛ LAX Flt. Kitchen, pages 8 and 9
- ☛ 12 Tail Movers Questions, page 12
- ☛ Washing Planes in IAH, page 15

THE GOLDEN JET



Vol. 16, No. 2, February, 1975

Published by Continental Airlines

It's 5:45 a.m. at the general office. Darkness and...(continued on page 6)



Walking upstairs to the crew scheduling office. Lee notes the fog and wonders if it will delay the 0700 departure of flight 68. Signing in, he meets his crew-1st officer Mickey Finnegan and 2nd officer Steve Martin. In the operations control center, Lee talks with CAL meteorologist Roger Buckman who tells him



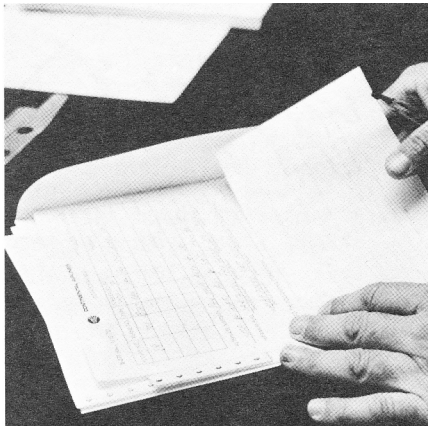
Early morning check in at 0600

It's 5:45 am at the general office. Darkness and a thick, swirling fog, blanket everything. Lee Lipsky, Continental Airlines 727 captain, strides out of the

blackness and walks up to the flight crew office. At 8:05 pm tonight, Captain Lipsky and his crew will have completed their day. In between they will have flown trip 68 from LAX to PHX, ELP, MAF and IAH. There they'll change planes and take flight 420 to MSY, where after a stop of about an hour they'll board another plane for flight 251 to Denver, scheduled to arrive at 2005 local time.

about the weather sequence for his trips that day, together with the news that the fog looks like it will be holding at LAX for some time. Lee then goes through the pages of 'The Airmen's Book.' This tells him of any problems or unusual things along the way-maybe there's some ground equipment working on one of the runways in Houston, perhaps one runway at PHX in inoperable, whatever it is, this book keeps all captains advised of on-route

situations. Lee and his crew then move to the final part of his preflight check-in, their flight plan.



The 'Dispatch Release' showing the cities served, the fuel taken on board at each station, and what the alternate airports are.

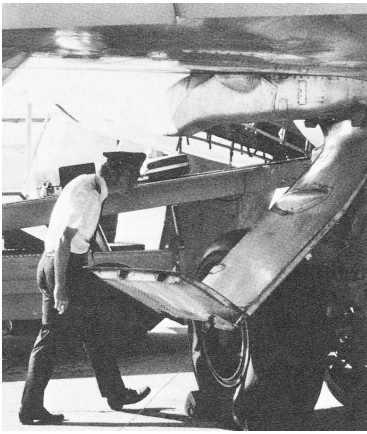
These papers show the route they will be taking, the flying time from one city to another, how much fuel he will have on board and what the alternate airports are in case of any emergencies. Agreeing with the plan, Cptn. Lipsky signs his name, and walks out to take the bus to the satellite. At 0650 the bus arrives at the airport, and the fog is as thick as ever. It seems unlikely that 68 will leave as scheduled. Climbing on board, the crew sit down in the cockpit and go over their preflight checks. Cptn. Lipsky explains; 'the crew has a list of checks that have to be made, and after they've been

carried out, a verbal check off is done - all instrument panels are checked, warning lights must be operating and controls etc. functional, does the mach speed indicator work (this tells the crew if they are going too fast for this type of equipment), has the aircraft been left in a landing mode of operation by the previous crew, what problems if any, exist. This aircraft must meet all company and FAA safety rules and regulations before I'll taxi out onto the runway." "Safety is the hallmark of the airline industry, and," says Lee, "there are minimum visibility standards set not only by FAA, but also governed to some degree by each different airline. Right now the minimums are too low for CAL, so we can do nothing but wait here on the gate." While aircraft #701 sits on the gate, Cptn. Lipsky talks about progression to the captain's seat. "Getting here can take a long time. It starts out by getting hired, going through company training and then starting as the flight engineer or 2nd officer working the panel there on the right. From there you move to the right seat the position of 1st officer. (the captain always sits in the left hand seat.) In this capacity you get the opportunity

to assume many of the responsibilities that will be yours when you make the rank of captain - a long process that comes only with seniority." Because of this, Cptn, Lipsky has decided that Mickey Finnegan, the First Officer, will do the take off from LAX this morning. Finally, at two hours past departure time, the fog begins to lift and flight 68 has been cleared for push back from the gate ready to move into the flight line. 2nd officer Steve Martin calls out the taxi check, Lee Lipsky gives the CAL "salute" to the ground safety "director - and aircraft 701 is pushed back from the gate.

Finnegan checks the weather outside. A gap appears in the fog and one of the waiting planes up ahead, zooms off down the runway. "It's sort of like watching molasses drip off a wall," says Mickey, ". . . a break appears in the fog, it's there for a moment or two, then it closes up again." Then the sun bursts through, and Continental flight 68 is ready for take off. The big bird surges ahead in a great thrust of power. Thundering down the runway the plane reaches 80 knots. Up in the cockpit, Cptn. Lipsky calls out the V1 speed of 124 knots, then almost

simultaneously he calls out the VR speed, and with first officer Mike Finnegan at the controls, the 727 lifts off the runway and noses up into the blue skies overhead. 50 feet off the ground, the aircraft has reached a speed of 140 knots.

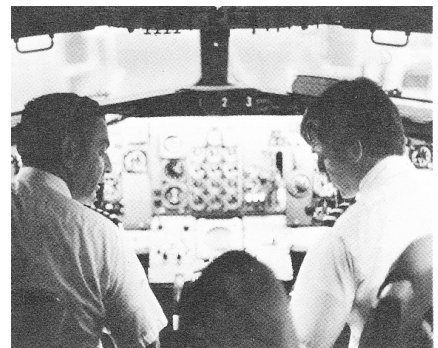


A 'must' at every station is the 'walk around,' a thorough visual inspection by 2/O Steve Martin.

What do V1, VR and V2 mean? Captain. Lipsky later -explains; "Up to V1 speed, it is still possible to safely stop the plane should anything unforeseen go wrong. At, and beyond V1, the aircraft must rotate (take off) and perform with the knowledge that the most critical engine has, or could fail. Five seconds after VR (rotation) has been called, the nose of the plane should be 9 or 10 degrees up in the air, and

able to clear a fifty foot obstacle beyond the far end of the runway. On take off all three engines are used, but all figures for determining V speeds, are based and predicated on the fact that one engine might fail. So there are tremendous safety features built into this particular aspect of a take off. In addition, all V speeds are different for each rotation. It depends on such things as the runway, the winds, the airport and passenger and cargo loads." Cptn. Lipsky came to CAL from being a civilian trained pilot -- a large majority of airline pilots come from either the U.S. Air Force or Navy. With the company since 1958, he has flown as 2nd officer on DC 3's, Viscounts, 707 s and, with the advent of 727 s, Lee moved into the left hand seat and the rank of Captain, where he has been for the past 9 years. Phoenix is ahead and the 727 begins to descend. Moments later the plane is on the ground and taxi's to a halt at the gate. Mobile stairs are pushed up to the aircraft, the hostess 'de-arms' the doors which are then opened, and the Phoenix passengers deplane. "A great many people,"

says Lee, "ask about the braking systems. Although we use both the brakes and the thrust reversers on every landing (to save wear and tear on the tires and brakes plus the overall safety aspect), all airplanes are designed to stop just by the brakes alone ... the braking power of these things is enormous, particularly when you consider the speed at which planes land and the weight of the aircraft. The reversers on the engines, are the clam shell type scoops that come out just after touchdown, and the power of the jets is simply reversed, pushing the air forward instead of backwards - so that you get a double braking action. In flying today, there are safety backups for safety backups." Phoenix gives the plane a quick turnaround and moments later aircraft 701 is once more airborne and on its way to El Paso.



Lee and Mickey go through their pre-flight check list.

The clouds in the heavens whoosh by the 727, while below the red and brown land mass of Arizona slide beneath the plane like some huge patchwork quilt. Once more the plane noses downward, and Cptn. Lipsky starts his second landing of the day - the second of seven. Once at the gate, Lee waits until all passengers have deplaned and, as he does at every station, goes inside the local CAL operations office to find out if there is anything else he should know about conditions down the line. El Paso ops tell him that due to the LAX late departure caused by the fog, trip 68 will be terminating in San Antonio. In terms of scheduling it looks like this; Lee and his crew had been meant to fly 68 to IAH, then take 420 to MSY, then from there take 251 to DEN. Now, 68 would be terminated in SAT, where Lee and his crew would take over flight 255 to DEN.

With his new flight plan under his arm, Lee re-boarded aircraft 701 and soon he and his crew were airborne once more and on their way to Midland/Odessa. Set out in the middle of the dry desert, the wind whipped up a small sandstorm as the airplane came in for a landing at this oil rich city. Touching down on the

runway at about 150 land miles per hour, Lee brought the plane to a standstill by the gate and got off to check with the local CAL Ops people. Later, he talked about fuel. "Another safety factor in flying today, is the amount of fuel we have on board. We have more than enough jet fuel to get us to SAT, but we've got to have 6,000 pounds in reserve, plus an additional amount to go to an alternate airport should the need arise. Everything is planned on the theory, "we don't actually need it, but if anything unusual happened, then we've got to have a large safety margin - and we do, with everything."



Another quick turnaround for Lee and flight 68 and the aircraft rolled out to the runway and took off for its next stop, SAT.

In San Antonio the crew rested a while and then went back outside to the same airplane, 701, and took off yet again - but this time as flight 255 bound for Denver. At 2005, local Denver time, Cptn. Lee Lipsky and his crew touched down in the Colorado "Mile High City," and clocked in at the gate right on time - a feat

made possible by the flight planners in LAX. Airplane 701 was scheduled to go out with another crew somewhere else on the CAL system that night, but for Cptn. Lipsky, First Officer Mickey Finnegan and 2nd Officer Steve Martin, this was the end of their flight day. Tonight they would rest in Denver, and the following morning they would check in at the airport an hour before flight time, and at 11.30 am they would lift off the ground in another 727, flying trip 721 to Seattle.



Checking in at MAF operations, Lee requests some information about their next stop, San Antonio, as CSA Charles Bock works on the flight papers for Lee and STO George T. Brickey calls San Antonio.



Armadillo Man

Back in March, 1983, I was flying co-pilot with Captain Jerry and S/O John. My flight log shows us doing 4 day trips with a Mexico City layover in the middle. When departing Mexico City one morning, I was out greeting the passengers with the Flight Attendant while the other guys were finishing up their tasks. One passenger came on board with a very life-like looking stuffed armadillo. Any southerner knows how cute they “ain’t”. He asked the F/A if there was a place for his little friend and I quickly volunteered to put him in the cockpit for safekeeping till Houston. I tucked him into the coat area.

All proceeded normal to cruise and the Seat Belt sign was off when I had the need to make a head call. When I came back to the cockpit all was quiet and cool. The other guys had not seen our little guest yet who was tucked neatly in the corner behind the bags. I picked him up and motioned to John to be quiet. I then held him up near Jerry's right shoulder and said, “Hey Jerry, what do you think of this little guy?” Little did I know that Jerry seemed to have a strong aversion to armadillos. He turned and then over reacted with a stiff right leg on the rudder, causing the aircraft to enter a sudden, heavy duty right wing down as the auto pilot kicked off and alarms began to sound. Jerry soon recovered and got things back to normal while the F/A call bell was ringing in our ears. The F/A told John they had food and drinks everywhere back there, and wondered what happened.

Jerry was never known to utter a cuss word but he articulated some words I had never heard before, least of all from him. After he settled down, he said, “O.K. Masat, you caused this. You tell the folks something.”

I gathered my senses and then told the folks, “Ladies and Gentlemen, we are sorry for the interruption, but you often hear us warn you to keep your belts fastened while in your seat in the event of unexpected clear air turbulence, and that is just what we experienced.” No follow up complaints.

Lesson learned. Be careful about surprising El Capitan.

FAMOUS ACTOR:

On a flight from Houston to Denver we had a stopover in Oklahoma City. After take off one of the flight attendants came up all excited and informed us that she had Robert Redford in first class. Our Flight Engineer interrupted her to say that was Bill Smith (ed. fictitious name substitute), explaining that he enjoys fooling a lot of people because he looks like Redford. She said, “Well he even has that scar on his face and everything.” Our F/E responded with, “Yes, Bill has that too.” She left the cockpit mumbling something that sounded like disappointment. The Captain and I immediately inquired if that was true, and the F/E said, “I don’t know, let’s check the paperwork.” Since any time there is a celebrity on board we are always informed via the latest paperwork that we pick up from ops during the stop. We looked, and sure enough, Redford was on the manifest. We heard nothing more until the end of the flight when we asked after everyone deplaned how it all went. She said “Fine, but we stiffed that guy “Smith” the rest of the flight and didn’t even offer him a drink!” No, we did not have the heart or nerve to tell her the truth.

INTERRUPTED NAP

On a departure out of El Paso one early morning, the F/E and I were all strapped in and ready but the Captain was still missing as the ground crew signaled engine start. We nervously stalled as we tried to call the hotel when Captain (name withheld) hurriedly arrived much to our relief, signed the papers and took his seat. (Bill was known to stretch his layovers to the limit.)

After leveling off at cruise, Bill leaned back and started to doze. I got the second officer to run the fuel gauges down and then pull the breaker. We were over an undercast as we detuned his Tacan and radio. While needles spun and his radio hissed, we asked the Flight Attendant to ring her call button in one minute. We then pretended to be asleep ourselves as the call button rang. We stayed playing possum until Bill awoke to answer the call. He immediately assessed what appeared to be a grave situation, lost with no fuel, and shouted for us to wake up. Naturally we came up smiling as he knew he had been “had”.

The letter below from Captain Floreani is an introduction to the following story of American Valor

I flew as a Navy aircraft carrier pilot in the Vietnam War many, many years ago. Our targets were almost all in the North. Dangerous country!

Recently three Coral Sea shipmates and I shared a meal on Veteran's Day. We reminisced as old people do, and wound up focusing on the incredible life and death story of the first pilot in our squadron, and on our ship to die in combat, Lt Ed Dickson. This along with the attachments is his story. I believe it is unique and interesting enough to share with you even though you may not have had the privilege of experiencing the unequalled joys (and fears) of piloting.

The attachments were written for Naval Aviation publications. Do not let the jargon distract you from the story.

A navy aircraft squadron is a small unit. In our unit VA-155, we had 14 A-4 aircraft and 16 pilots. It was small enough that in short order we all got to know each other very well, especially while living within the confines of an aircraft carrier. Because of "the needs of the Navy" while underway, our cruise length was doubled, and we ended up spending one year together on that carrier, the USS Coral Sea. And almost all of it in combat conditions! When we left on cruise in late 1964 the world was peaceful and when we returned war was raging in Vietnam. That cruise set a record for the longest combat cruise of any aircraft carrier in Navy history. That record still stands.

Our ship lost 30 aircraft to hostile fire during that time, 11 pilots were killed and 2 taken prisoner. We would have had many more pilots captured or killed if not for the fact that our Navy controlled the sea. If we ejected over water, and the parachute opened, we would be rescued.

Our closeness and our war time experiences tightly bonded we pilots who survived, We are a band of brothers who remain emotionally close to this day.

Attached are two segments in the life story of one of us 16 pilots, Lieutenant Ed Dickson. His story is incredible and unique. Even if you are not a pilot you will get its sense. Ed was in one moment the most incredibly lucky person in the world. He ejected at high altitude, his chute did not open, and he lived! His picture was on the front page of newspapers nation wide. He was even getting proposals of marriage from beautiful women he did not know! They considered him that lucky. Then almost exactly one year later, very soon after his rapid recovery and return to flight status, and on our ship's very first mission, he experienced a twist of fate. His luck turned and it killed him.

His story is told in the two attachments by our squadron mate Ernest Mares in articles he wrote for a Navy publication several years ago. It is written inverse as to how the events happened but you will quickly figure that out. A parachute plays a key part in the story of Ed's life and death. In the first instance we know for sure what happened, in the second we do not. My personal belief is that the second time it also did not properly function. At best I think it only streamed. That rescue package we all wore on our backs, a parachute, is center to the story of Ed's life and death.

Ernest Gann wrote a famous pilot book entitled, "Fate is the Hunter." Ed Dickson lived out those words.

And such is life...

"daVinch" / aka Richard Floreani

Lieutenant Edward Andrew Dickson, USNR

First A-4 Pilot awarded the Navy Cross (posthumously) for aerial action in Vietnam

By LCDR Ernie Mares, USN (ret)

Flaming Dart I was the first major air strike over North Vietnam in reaction to a VietCong attack against an American compound at Pleiku in South Vietnam.

On Sunday, February 7, 1965, planes from USS CORAL SEA's two A-4 attack squadrons (VA-155 and VA-153) struck the North Vietnamese army barracks and port facilities at Dong Hoi. Weather in the target area was a 1,500 thick solid overcast with base at 100 feet and a few miles visibility in rain.

Ed Dickson was flying an A-4E Skyhawk as section leader (#3) in the VA-155 skipper's division. The strike aircraft were armed with MK-81 250 lb. bombs equipped with Snakeye retarding fins. These retarded weapons allowed laydown delivery at extremely low altitude.

The first division's initial run was aborted due to their being too close behind two A-4E flak suppressors armed with CBU-2s. The four aircraft performed a 360-degree turn about five miles south of the target area, and as they approached the final run-in to the Dong Hoi Citadel at 480 knots, Ed reported that his aircraft had been hit by ground fire.



flames. Passing the beach, Ed was told to eject and the canopy and ejection seat were observed to leave the plane just as he pulled up and entered the overcast.

Because of the high rate of speed his aircraft and masking by clouds, no one was sure that his parachute actually deployed. The crippled A-4 crashed into the Gulf of Tonkin approximately one-half mile off-shore. The two flak suppressors remained in the area for roughly 15 minutes and searched the vicinity of the crash site. They were unable to

locate their downed comrade and left when ground fire from the beach became too intense. Ed was listed as Missing in Action, presumed dead. However, because of his earlier experience we all wondered if his parachute actually opened.

About three months later, intelligence sources provided our squadron with a copy of a North Vietnamese newspaper (accompanied by a translation). The news article described how Ed's body was trapped in a fisherman's net and pulled ashore. There was a picture of his ID card and another showing his body being dragged onto the beach while still attached to his chute. The article reported that Ed was shot during his parachute descent.

The memory of our fine shipmate, and the gallant service he rendered to his country, will remain in our hearts for-ever. By his inspiring and courageous devotion to duty-by staying with his burning aircraft to complete the mission---Lieutenant Dickson upheld the finest traditions of the United States Navy and was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross. It was the first instance of the award of the Navy Cross for aerial action in Vietnam.

Just prior to reaching the bomb release point, Dickson's left wing burst into flames...but he continued on and dropped his ordnance on target. Upon completing the bombing



run, the flight made an immediate turn to head for the sea. As the flight continued to the coastline it was noted that Dickson's aircraft was now completely engulfed in

Dickson's loss was indeed symbolic of the deadly business of naval aviation. One year earlier on February 22, 1964, Ed narrowly evaded death after ejecting from an A-4 during a training exercise over the Sierra Nevada range in California. His parachute failed to open, but Dickson landed in a thirty-foot snow-drift and survived. I was leading that flight of four A-4E strike aircraft plus a buddy store tanker flown by our Marine exchange pilot. We were on a Sandblower and in the process of topping off over the Sierras at angels fifteen. Two of us finished refueling and were flying on the tanker's port wing when Ed plugged in. Almost immediately, fuel began gushing from the drogue into his starboard intake as he began under-running the tanker. He popped speed-brakes and managed to disengage from the buddy store.

Ed later told us his engine experienced compressor stalls, flamed out and he tried for a relight. By that time he was down to about angels ten point five and flying at about 200 knots when he said, "No joy-I'm punching out!" Immediately thereafter the canopy left followed by the seat. Shortly after he separated from the seat we lost sight of him.

His A-4E crashed near the top of June Mountain, and my wingman and I circled the smoking crash site while the tanker and dash four climbed to high CAP at Angels 20 to call the Mayday. Dickson popped the day smoke end of a MK 13 distress signal and was immediately spotted in the snow near a pine tree a couple hundred feet down from the mountain top.

As we circled Ed, who was lying on his back, he looked up and waved, but did not stand up. About that time we got a radio call from Packsaddle (VA-125's AD-5N) who

happened to be enroute from Fallon to Lemoore. I asked them to assume low CAP, and if they could, drop a jacket or blanket since Ed was wearing only a summer flight suit and was probably very cold by then.

A few minutes later the Spad came back with bad news. "Something's wrong, we dropped a flight jacket and it landed less than 20 feet from him-he made no attempt to get it!"

We knew Ed was alive because I definitely saw him wave, but this was the first indication that he was injured.

Apparently, June Mountain Ski



Patrol saw us circling and sent their rescue patrol up to check out what happened. We later found out his parachute did not open until they put Ed in the snow mobile and started down the mountain. During the trip down the chute popped of its own accord.

Since the seat separated normally following his ejection, Ed calmly waited for the 15,000 barometric setting to take effect and made no attempt to pull the rip cord. We believed that our barometric openers were set for 15,000 feet.

We later found out that the barometric setting spec was actually $10,000 \pm 500$ feet. The spot where he landed on June Mountain was 9,600 feet above sea

level. The lesson learned from this was to always try to beat the seat's automatic function.

An Air Force HH-43 helicopter arrived on scene, and he was taken to Oak Knoll Naval Hospital in Oakland where he underwent treatment for a broken femur and a fractured ankle of the right leg.

Fuel from the tanker drogue was ingested into the starboard intake causing the auto acceleration that produced the under-running situation, even with the throttle lever at idle. The only way Ed was able to break away from the tanker was by popping the speed boards. In the wreckage they found that

compressor blades had melted away, and that's why he couldn't get an air start. Dickson's moderately broken femur and fractured ankle injuries kept him grounded for nearly eight months, and it was the ankle fracture that kept him on crutches or using a cane. Ed had his cane painted to resemble a tailhook, and he made a colorful sight hobbling around NAS

Lemoore and the 1964 Tailhook Reunion with his pseudo hook.

He finally got an up chit from the flight surgeon in October 1964. This immediately led to a couple of fam hops with VA-125 and a short, single-plane weapons deployment to Fallon. He was able to rejoin the squadron in time for the ship's departure from Alameda on December 7th. Coral Sea's Commanding Officer let him bag a couple extra traps during routine recoveries that occurred enroute and at Yankee Station prior to February 7th.

Remarkably, Ed responded well to his abbreviated training sessions and carquals which reflected favorably upon his positive attitude and ability as a naval aviator.

Where to Retire

You can retire to Phoenix Arizona where....

1. You are willing to park three blocks away from your house because you found shade.
2. You've experienced condensation on your rear-end from the hot water in the toilet bowl.
3. You can drive for four hours in one direction and never leave town.
4. You have over 100 recipes for Mexican food.
5. You know that "dry heat" is comparable to what hits you in the face when you open your oven door at 500 degrees.
6. The four seasons are: tolerable, hot, really hot, and ARE YOU KIDDING ME?

OR

You can retire to California where...

1. You make over \$450,000 and you still can't afford to buy a house.
2. The fastest part of your commute is going down your driveway.
3. You know how to eat an artichoke.
4. When someone asks you how far something is, you tell them how long it will take to get there rather than how many miles away it is.
5. The four seasons are: Fire, Flood, Mud and Drought.

OR

You can retire to New York City where...

1. You say "the city" and expect everyone to know you mean Manhattan.
2. You can get into a four-hour argument about how to get from Columbus Circle to Battery Park, but can't find Wisconsin on a map.
3. You think Central Park is "nature."
4. You believe that being able to swear at people in their own language makes you multilingual.
5. You've worn out a car horn. (IF you have a car.)
6. You think eye contact is an act of aggression

OR

You can retire to Minnesota where...

1. You only have three spices: salt, pepper and ketchup.
2. Halloween costumes have to fit over parkas.
3. You have seventeen recipes for casserole.
4. Sexy lingerie is anything flannel with less than eight buttons.
5. The four seasons are: almost winter, winter, still winter, and road repair.
6. The highest level of criticism is "He is different," "She is different," or "It was different!"

OR

You can retire to The Deep South where...

1. You can rent a movie and buy bait in the same store.
2. "Y'all" is singular and "all y'all" is plural.
3. "He needed killin" is a valid defense.
4. Everyone has two first names: Billy Bob, Jimmy Bob, Joe Bob, Betty Jean, Mary Beth, etc.
5. Everything is either: "in yonder," "over yonder" or "out yonder."
6. You can say anything about anyone, as long as you say "Bless his heart" at the end!

OR

You can move to Colorado, where...

1. You carry your \$3,000 mountain bike atop your \$500 car.
2. You tell your husband to pick up Granola on his way home, so he stops at the day care center.
3. A pass does not involve a football or dating.

4.The top of your head is bald, but you still have a pony tail.

OR

You can retire to Nebraska or Kansas where...

- 1.You've never met any celebrities, but the mayor knows your name.
- 2.Your idea of a traffic jam is three cars waiting to pass a tractor.
- 3.You have had to switch from "heat" to "A/C" on the same day.
- 4.You end sentences with a preposition; "Where's my coat at?"

OR

FINALLY you can retire to Florida where...

- 1.You eat dinner at 3:15 in the afternoon.
- 2.All purchases include a coupon of some kind-even houses and cars.
- 3.Everyone can recommend an excellent cardiologist, dermatologist, proctologist, podiatrist, or orthopedist.
- 4.Road construction never ends anywhere in the state.
- 5.Cars in front of you often appear to be driven by headless people.

The Old Chief

The rain had stopped and there was a big puddle in front of the bar just outside the American Legion Post. A rumpled old Navy Chief was standing near the edge with a fishing line in the puddle. A curious young Marine fighter pilot came over to him and asked what he was doing.

"Fishing," the old Master Chief simply said.

"Poor old chief," the Marine officer thought to himself and invited the old Navy Chief into the bar for a drink. As he felt he should start a conversation while they were sipping their spirits, the young jet pilot winked at another pilot and asked the Chief, "How many have you caught today?"

"You're number 14," the old Chief answered, taking another sip from his double shot of 12-year-old Scotch, "2 Air Force, 3 Navy and 9 Marines."

Will I Live to see 80?

I recently picked a new primary care doctor. After two visits and exhaustive Lab tests, she said I was doing fairly well for my age. (I am well past Seventy).

A little concerned about that comment, I couldn't resist asking her, 'Do you think I'll live to be 80?' She asked, 'Do you smoke tobacco, or drink beer, wine or hard liquor?'

'Oh no,' I replied. 'I'm not doing drugs, either!'

Then she asked, 'Do you eat rib-eye steaks and barbecued ribs?'

'I said, 'Not much... My former doctor said that all red meat is very unhealthy!'

'Do you spend a lot of time in the sun, like playing golf, boating, sailing, hiking, or bicycling?'

'No, I don't,' I said.

She asked, 'Do you gamble, drive fast cars, or have a lot of sex?'

'No,' I said...

She looked at me and said, 'Then, why do you even care?'

30 Years Ago: People Express Merged into Continental Airlines

reprinted courtesy of the RUPANEWS

Who said that flying in this day and age does not offer some amount of nostalgia that flyers back in the 1980s relished? Sure, today's college student, seated in 13B, may be wearing sweat pants instead of a coat and tie, but he may have just taken advantage of a recent Spirit deal—"What Will He Tweet Next"—in which roundtrip airfares were as low as \$70. Even if he paid for a cup of coffee and to check a bag, it can still be a very good deal compared to other airlines.

Sure, People Express may not have had cheeky ads like Spirit, but it had something else in common with today's Ultra-Low-Cost-Carriers (ULCC) like Spirit and Frontier—the cost of airfare is/was typically much cheaper than its competitors. People Express quickly became known for slashing airfares and making it more affordable to fly; for example, it was praised by Philadelphia Daily News in September 1983 when the airline announced it would begin flying five daily round-trip flights between Newark and Houston at 70% less than the existing ticket prices.

Cheap right? Guess, what? People Express has a little bit more in common with today's ULCC.

Customers had to pay extra for soft drinks and snacks on-board. Plus, if they wanted to fly with more than a garment bag and one piece of luggage, it would cost them \$3 for each additional bag. People Express was a bit of a different airline and embraced it. All other airlines in its ads were referred to as "ordinary airlines" because People Express believed that it was "the first airline that's smart enough to respect your intelligence."

When a customer purchased a ticket on People Express, they just got a ticket at a low price as well as the ability to bring on a carry-on and personal item. However, if they wanted any other frills, they had to pay for it, which basically made it an unbundled fare. Even when it came to its employees, the airline was different. There were no unions, and it offered a bit of a different culture. Many people who were recruited to join the company did not have much, if any, airline experience, and the employees also rotated and performed other jobs in addition to their normal jobs. Even with an unorthodox work culture, people jumped on the People Express bandwagon, and it became the fifth largest airline in the United States by early-1986, and it was one of the first airlines to offer customers an unbundled fare.

THE BEGINNINGS: People Express was born in the wake of the Airline Deregulation Act of 1978, which spurred the creation of more than 150 new air carriers, although most of these did not survive more than a few years. In 1980, several former key people from Texas International Airlines (TIA) came together through a joint-venture to form People Express. The airline was based out of Newark, and commenced operations on April 20, 1981 to Buffalo, Columbus, and Norfolk. Over the next several months, the airline continued to grow more, focusing on avoiding head-to-head competition with larger carriers and keeping its fares low. Once again, the airline made headlines as tickets started at just \$149 one-way, and the airline was filling its flights left and right.

THE CHALLENGES: People Express was growing rapidly, and was planning to have a fleet of 76 aircraft by 1985. Donald Burr, the CEO and founder of People Express, believed that growth was key, but analysts began to focus more on how the growth was going to push the airline further into debt and cause issues in the long run. But the low fares helped stimulate demand for air travel immensely. For example, Harold Pareti, People Express's president and chief operating officer, told the New York Times in 1984 "that when the airline began to fly to Boston in 1981, airlines on the New York-Boston route carried 1.4 million passengers a year. [in 1984], 3.8 million [began flying] the route." The airline began entering into larger markets such as Chicago, Los Angeles, and Minneapolis/St. Paul all from Newark; this meant it began going head to head with bigger carriers, which marked a significant change in the carrier's strategy. When the airline commenced Newark-Chicago service in 1984, other airlines such as American and United started matching People Express' fares, but not just out of Newark. Both airlines matched People Express' fares on their own flights to Chicago from LaGuardia, Kennedy, Islip, and White Plains, and they offered many more flights than People Express, which posed a challenge for the carrier. With airlines trying to out-price People Express and still make money, many airlines started investing a lot of focus into developing stronger revenue management systems. This immensely hurt People Express due to its basic fare structure.

AIRLINE ACQUISITIONS: In October 1985, it was announced that People Express would purchase Frontier Holdings for \$300 million dollars. At the

same time, Texas Air Corporation also bid to purchase Frontier for a lower price, but the labor unions at Frontier and others backed the People Express deal which meant that Burr defeated his former colleague Frank Lorenzo. Plus, Denver was believed to be a good location for People Express to focus on growing in the western half of the United States. After its acquisition of Frontier, the carrier faced many issues trying to integrate Frontier's employees as they were unionized. The airline was also challenged with trying to switch the former Frontier customers to the no-frills state of mind. Also in 1985, People Express acquired Britt Airways and Provincetown-Boston Airlines; these acquisitions opened up more of the Midwest, New England, and Florida for the carrier. Trying to integrate the carriers was costing the airline a lot of money, and the airline was feeling more pressure from the debt it added to the books with its acquisitions. The airline clearly over stretched itself growth wise, and it became known as "People Distress." So, the airline changed its philosophy once again. Although the airline was known as the "backpacker's airline," the airline started going after business travelers. It began offering first class service on its transatlantic, transcontinental, and Newark/Denver flights operated with 747s, and the airline also began installing first class on its other aircraft. People Express also added a frequent-flyer program and switched to a more traditional form of pricing like its competitors were using. However, the airline continued to feel more pressure from its debt, and it was still facing many issues trying to integrate Frontier.

FLYING INTO THE SUNSET: The airline attempted to sell Frontier to United in 1986, but the deal fell through. However, the airline continued to search for a buyer to buy all of itself or just parts. In August 1986, Frontier Airlines filed for bankruptcy and ceased operations. The following month, Texas Air Corporation purchased People Express and also gained Frontier's assets. Both carriers (and New York Air) were merged into Continental, and it helped strengthen Continental's route network quite a bit as the airline emerged from bankruptcy just a few months earlier. On February 1, 1987, Frontier, New York Air, and People Express ceased to exist as they were officially part of Continental Airlines.

THE DISTRESS CONTINUES: Even with the three carriers being merged on February 1st, Continental faced many issues in the proceeding months. They had to integrate more than 300 jets, maintenance schedules, service standards, and employees. In a Chicago Tribune story from 1988, it points out that when the carriers merged that the "fleets had 32 galley arrangements and 75 seating arrangements that complicated the training of flight attendants and scheduling of crews." Plus, there were many weather problems that caused lots of operational issues. The airlines' costs rose as it tried to integrating the airlines, and it had to raise fares to try to re-coup some of the loss; this caused the airline to lose its low-fare image. By mid-1988, things started looking up for Continental. The FAA deemed that the airline was operating within safety standards, revenue was up, and it was able to move into a new home in Terminal C at Newark.

A FAILED ATTEMPT TO TAKE OFF AGAIN: Back in February 2012, People Express was founded by Michael Morisi who once worked for the original People Express back in the 1980s, but the two airlines were unrelated. However, they did share some similarities. The new People Express was also planning to target no-frills, budget flyers, and the airline made a home at Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport. The airline had some trouble getting off the ground initially with getting an operating certificate. When it commenced operations, it would be operated by Vision Airlines doing business as People Express. On June 30, 2014, the airline took to the skies flying between Newport News and Newark, NJ with Boeing 737-400s. The airline added several destinations over the next few months, but on September 26, 2014, the airline announced that it would have to suspend operations. It targeted to be back in the air by October 16, but the date came and passed. It was announced that the airline was evicted from Newport News / Williamsburg International Airport on November 12 as the airline owed \$100,000 in passenger facility charges to the airport, and it never took to the skies again. Lots of furloughed UAL pilots flew at PEOPLEExpress and lots of PEX pilots, who merged with CAL, wound up at United after that merger.

There is a People Express reunion planned for October 6-8, 2017, at the Newark Marriott. As of the date of this publication, the reunion is fully "subscribed" with over 1000 attendees.



Tall Tales

When flying every day was different! I could have added another about two F-100s that landed at Chu Lai about midnight during the kick-off of TET, did a hot pit refueling, jumped the chocks to get Marine ground crew attention, and took off during a mortar attack. Just another day.

That story reminds me of two stories that happened at Chu Lai in the summer of 1966. Then there was only the expeditionary field of 4,000 feet of shifting metal. All takeoffs were with JATO bottles (lots of things went wrong with these-especially at night) and all landings were arrested.

One day we taxied in to VMA-223 from a mission and noticed an Air Force C-123 parked at the main ramp. It had made an emergency landing at Chu Lai. That night at the club, the only passenger from the C-123 was there. He was an F-100 pilot in his flight suit on crutches and with two broken legs. Of course, we wanted to know how he broke his legs. He told us that he was an F-100F (two seater) Misty Fast FAC. They took turns flying front and back seat. He said that it was his day to go up North in the back seat. They found the target for the F-105s and marked it with 5" WP rockets. Then, after the 105s were done, they were supposed to fly low and fast and take an after-action picture of the target. He was the guy with the hand-held camera. Of course, the NVA knew the routine and began shooting the shit out of them. The front seat guy did a lot of "jinking" and somehow, the lens came off the camera and disappeared.

They safely got "feet wet" and in-flight refueled for their return trip home down south to Tui Hua (or wherever). Our guy said that he kept looking for the lens but the front seater said to forget it. They would find it after landing. Upon landing and taxi back, the front seater called "Canopy Clear" and raised the canopy. The lens had landed near one of the actuators for the ejection seat. He said that he heard this tremendous explosion and realized what had

happened when he got seat separation about 250 feet up at the top of the arc and saw a miniature F-100 below him missing a canopy. He said that it was like a "Wily Coyote" cartoon. There was a point where you stop going up, a pause, and then a rapid going down thing. The F-100 didn't have a zero/zero seat either (needed 100 kts and 100 feet). So, he said that he had always heard that in a long fall, one dies of a heart attack before one hits the ground. So he said he kept shouting: "Come on heart attack." The drogue chute had deployed and that kept his feet straight down. It was real steep near the taxiway, they had been doing a lot of excavating and it had rained. He hit feet first. The un-deployed chute saved his back and kept it straight. He skidded down the embankment into a large pool of water. He had two simple fractures. Needless to say, he couldn't buy another drink that night.

The second story is the single funniest thing that I have ever seen. It was around September 1966 and they had just completed the installation of the land catapult (Oh good-no more JATO). We had operated out of there for about 3 weeks with the land cat and it worked great. Anyway, there was to be a change of command for Marine Air Group 12. Col. Les Brown was about to hand over MAG-12 to the great, one and only Jay Hubbard. The change of command ceremony was to coincide with the official inauguration of the first combat tactical SATS (Short Airfield Tactical and can't remember the S) field in the history of the Marine Corps. A real dog and pony show. The guests of honor were the Secretary of the Navy, FMFPAC Lt. General Krulak, 1st Marine Air Wing Commander, MGEN Robinshaw (a great guy by the way-he always flew with 223 and was the world's best wingman because he could hardly see). All pilots not flying were to put on their dungarees for formation in the sand for the change of command. The program then called for all troops to fall out and observe four A-4s to be launched from the land cat. That was the planned program. Someone (no one would

admit who) suggested the day before that two F-4 Phantoms be brought in the night before to be launched after the A-4s. Wouldn't that be a great idea. Well, of course, with a 4 thousand foot strip and 50' wide taxiways, no F-4s had ever been to Chu Lai. But, in the late afternoon the day before the ceremony, two F-4s landed and took the arresting gear. They folded their wings and proceeded to very carefully taxi into the biggest two revetments. And, of course, the familiar F-4 engine wailing sound followed them everywhere. That night there was much harassment of the F-4 crews in the club about flying an aircraft that needed a committee to perform (2 seats instead of 1). Furthermore, we took to calling the RIO 's (backseat guys) "hare-lipped dogs" because their only job was to shout "MARK MARK" when the pilot reached bomb release altitude. Anyway, the next day those of us not on the flight schedule put on our dungarees and fell in for the ceremony. VMA-123 was led by the world's greatest Squadron Commander and my personal hero to this day, Lt. Col. Bob Sinclair (I was the world's saltiest 2nd Lt. at the time with 125 combat missions and Col. Bob's assigned wingman). The ceremony went off without a hitch and Jay Hubbard was now our new Group skipper. The dignitaries lined up on the high ground (read sand dune here) with the SECNAV on the right then FMFPAC "The Brute" General Krulak, then General Robinshaw, then the old Group CO, Les Brown and finally Jay Hubbard. Sure enough, they launched four bomb laden A-4's off the land cat. This was ho hum stuff for us because we had been doing it for three weeks already. Next the first F-4 taxied up with folded wings.

The distinctive two F-4 engines were doing a lot of wailing. Up went the F-4's nose wheel on the dolly. The wings were extended and locked. The nose wheel was attached to the dolly with the frangible metal breakaways. The hold-back for the tail was installed. All was ready for the run-up. The two J-57 engines powering the land cat were run-up. The two F-4 engines were run-up to 100%. Man, there was something in this show for everyone. Tremendous noise from 4 jet engines, dust and smoke. Nothing could go wrong now. The

CAT Officer received the salute from the F-4 pilot and he dropped his hand. BOOM the CAT fired. BOOM BOOM both F-4 engines went into afterburner. Now about 60,000 pounds of F-4 and bombs are hurtling down the 1,500 foot CAT. At this point I must interject a minor technical point. About the frangible metal devices holding the F-4's nose wheel to the dolly: Well, you see, they break away at the end of the 1,500' CAT ride. This, of course is not a problem for an A-4 because it has a long nose wheel and sits up at a pronounced angle. Unfortunately, the F-4 sits parallel to the ground. In order to not make this too technical, both nose wheel frangible devices did what they were supposed to and broke off. One went into the left intake and one went into the right intake. This was problematic for the Phantom. BOOM, the left engine exploded. BOOM, the right engine exploded. The show got much better. Flaming metal parts and discs slicing through the side of the F-4. Then total involvement of flames of the aircraft from the intakes back. BOOM went the ejection seat of the back seater. BOOM went the ejection seat of the front seater. And KABOOM went the F-4 into the sand southeast of the runway. Then the Three Stooges part: The SECNAV looks to his left at FMFPAC who looks to his left to 1st MAW CO, who looks at the old MAG-12 CO, Colonel Brown, and finally they are all looking at Jay Hubbard. We laughed so hard that some of us fell down. Both F-4 crew members lived but it would have been almost as funny if they hadn't.

By the way, the second F-4 refolded his wings and slowly taxied back to the revetments. They down loaded the bombs and de-fueled him and he flew back to Danang the next day with a very short takeoff roll. Now, I don't know if this helps you, but it's what I remember. And, to quote Anthony Swofford author of "Jarhead" about the first Gulf War when asked whether his book was fact or fiction, he responded: "I don't know. It's what I remember."

This true story is from a pilot who was in VMFA 314 at Chu Lai in '69...Just another day at the office! You Vietnam F4 guys will appreciate

this amazing story...Lancer That was an interesting story. Here's another 'bad day' from Chu Lai:

I was one of a half-dozen replacements who checked-in with MAG-13 on August 2. We were not all assigned to VMFA-314 though. There were two other combat squadrons in the Air Group: VMFA-115, the Able Eagles, and VMFA-323, the Death Rattlers. All three squadrons flew the McDonnell Douglas F4B Phantom II and shared common living areas. Although we may have been in different squadrons, eventually we all got to know each other very well.

The first thing we six rookies did was attend an Air Group briefing in an underground bunker protected by a thick layer of sandbags. This bunker served as our group intelligence center. Suddenly, an urgent radio call interrupted our briefing. We listened as one of VMFA-115s aircraft radioed-in to report a problem. The aircraft had been hit by enemy ground fire and could not lower its landing gear. The pilot was going to attempt a belly landing on the runway. At that news, we all raced outside near the runway to grab a good spot from which to watch the crash landing.

Crash crews raced to cover the runway with a layer of fire retardant foam while the damaged F4 circled overhead, burning down its load of fuel. Two arresting cables were strung across the middle of the runway. The cables were anchored on each end by a chain made with heavy, 40-pound links. The plan was for the F4 to lower his tail hook, to belly-land in the foam, to catch one of the arresting wires, and to come to a screeching halt. It did not quite happen that way.

After burning off most of his fuel, the pilot gingerly lowered the airplane onto the foamed runway. A spark set off the fumes in the jet's empty wing tanks and they erupted into flames. All one could see racing down the runway were two wingtips protruding from an orange and black ball of fire heading toward the arresting cables. The F4 hit the first arresting

cable. We watched the cable snap and hurl its 40-pound chain links skyward. Then the plane hit the second arresting cable. It also parted and flung its chain links. The aircraft was now just a ball of fire heading toward the end of the runway. Then we heard, Boom! Boom! The pilot had lit his afterburners. He was attempting to take-off without wheels! As the aircraft roared toward the end of the runway, it slowly struggled skyward. It got airborne and began to climb nearly vertically. Then, both the pilot and his back seater, the radar intercept officer (RIO), ejected.

We stared in wonder as the aircraft crashed into the nearby ocean.? The two crewmen slowly floated down in their parachutes. The wind carried them over the ocean and they too soon splashed down. A rescue helicopter was on the scene immediately. Both of the F4 crewmen, treading water, raised their right hand. This was a signal to the chopper that they were unharmed. The helicopter slowly lowered itself and plucked the pilot out of the water and into the safety of the helicopter. The helicopter then turned its attention to the RIO. As the helicopter slowly lowered itself over the RIO, the helicopter pilot suddenly lost control of his chopper, and he crashed into the water atop the? RIO. As soon as the chopper hit the water, its pilot regained control, got airborne again, and yanked the RIO from the water. Although the RIO was rescued safely, his leg was broken when the helicopter crashed atop him.

That night at the Officers Club, the? RIO sat with his leg elevated and encased in a full-leg cast. As he imbibed a few, he related his story: "First, we got the daylights shot out of us. But, hey, that okay. We weren't hurt. Then, we survived a belly landing. But, that was okay too. We weren't hurt. Then the pilot decided he'd take off without wheels, but that worked out well too. Then we survived an ejection and a water landing, but that was also okay. We weren't hurt.? Then the damn rescue helicopter crashed on me and broke my leg!"

Blue Skies & Tailwinds...

The Perfect Husband

Several men are in the locker room of a golf club. A cellular phone on a bench rings and a man engages the hands-free speaker function and begins to talk. Everyone else in the room stops to listen.

MAN: "Hello"

WOMAN: "Hi Honey, it's me. Are you at the club?"

MAN: "Yes."

WOMAN: "I'm at the shops now and found this beautiful leather coat. It's only \$2,000; is it OK if I buy it?"

MAN: "Sure, go ahead if you like it that much."

WOMAN: "I also stopped by the Lexus dealership and saw the new models. I saw one I really liked."

MAN: "How much?"

WOMAN: "\$90,000."

MAN: "OK, but for that price I want it with all the options."

WOMAN: "Great! Oh, and one more thing... I was just talking to Janie and found out that the house I wanted last year is back on the market. They're asking \$980,000 for it."

MAN: "Well, then go ahead and make an offer of \$900,000. They'll probably take it. If not, we can go the extra eighty-thousand if it's what you really want."

WOMAN: "OK. I'll see you later! I love you so much!"

MAN: "Bye! I love you, too."

The man hangs up. The other men in the locker room are staring at him in astonishment, mouths wide open.

He turns and asks, "Anyone know who's phone this is?"



Old Golfer Speaks out:

We had a power cut at our house this morning and my PC, laptop, TV, DVD, iPad & my new surround sound music system were all shut down.

Then I discovered that my mobile phone battery was dead and to top it off it was raining outside, so I couldn't play golf.

I went into the kitchen to make coffee and then I remembered that this also needs power, so I sat and talked with my wife for a couple of hours.

She seems like a nice person.

The 72nd Reunion of Honor at Iwo Jima - 25 March 2017

By Dot Prose/RUPA Member – Reprinted courtesy of the RUPANEWS



United Airlines was the contract airline for the annual trip to Iwo Jima hosted by Military Historical Tours (MHT) which led the yearly trip for the Joint Reunion of Honor on Iwo Jima and included add-on tours to Guam, Saipan and Tinian – all islands in the Marianas.

This year's trip on 25 March 2017 had been approved by the U.S. State Department and Government of Japan. It included 200 people including six World War Two Iwo Jima veterans, other military veterans



and retirees (included myself as a U.S. Navy retiree), legacy families with relatives who served there, and military history enthusiasts. All had the singular objective of actually stepping on the island of Iwo Jima and seeing Mount Suribachi from which the famous photo by AP photographer, Joe Rosenthal, captured the flag raising on top of the 550 foot volcanic mound on 23 Feb 1945.

Our package tour started in Los Angeles with a flight to Guam with a stopover in Honolulu and a short 35 minute flight from Guam to Saipan, all on United Airlines/United Express/Cape Air. The Pre-Tour group consisted of only 18 people as it was optional but it provided a much better picture of what occurred prior to Iwo Jima's capture in 1945 and established what difficulties there were in capturing Saipan and Tinian and why they were so important. Our Pre-Tour group was provided comprehensive history synopses by MHT of the surrender of Guam to the Japanese (December 1941) and its liberation (Aug 1944), the U.S. assault on Saipan and Tinian (July 1944), and the U.S. Marine Corps seizure of Iwo Jima (March 1945).



The terrain was formidable on Saipan with many caves, ridges and volcanic cliffs. Both U.S. and Japanese monument memorial sites were evident. The most spellbinding sites on Saipan were the 800 foot cliffs, named Suicide Cliff and Banzai Cliff, from which the defeated Japanese soldiers, women and children still left on the island jumped into the sea below rather than be captured by the invading U.S. forces, all in the name of the Emperor.

Tinian island was much less populated than Saipan with about 1,200 residents currently, but today is becoming casino land as is Saipan, with significant investment by the Chinese. Increases in the minimum wage (a U.S. mandate) have forced businesses to move elsewhere in Asia where wages are much lower. Casinos will provide employment. One is currently under construction (providing more jobs) in Saipan with a Las Vegas appearance but seems entirely out of place amidst the local markets.

Tinian is significant for Runway Able, rebuilt and extended by the Navy SEABEES in 1944, from where the B-29 Enola Gay took off with the A-bomb, Little Boy, for its Japanese target of Hiroshima, on 6 Aug 1945. The Superfortress used all 8,400 feet of runway with nothing but the beach and the Pacific Ocean at the end. It was a very close thing. There is a marker placed at the end of this runway where Enola Gay actually lifted off. The second B-29, Bockscar, took off with its A-bomb, Fat Man, three days later for Nagasaki. Close to Runway Able is the bomb pit where each bomb was encased so that



1st LT Fiske (USAAF) at Runway Able, Tinian, from where he flew B-29 bombing missions over Japan and was subsequently shot down and captured.

they could be hoisted into the fuselage of the B-29s. This pit had been in disrepair over time, but cleaned up and enclosed in a Plexiglas viewing encasement for visitors to see firsthand. Down the road there are two replicas of Little Boy and Fat Man, which amazed us as being much smaller than one envisioned. Tinian is only three miles from Saipan and a nine minute flight provided for us by a fleet of Piper Cherokees.

Iwo Jima was a very solemn highlight. Two other tour groups joined ours, expanding the group to about 200 people. We had a contract United Airlines flight consisting of two B-737s for the two hour flight to the Iwo Jima Motoyama Airfield #2 from Guam. As it was located on Japanese territory, returned by the U.S. to Japan in 1968, there were the usual immigration forms and passport stamp formalities. It currently is considered a part of the city of Tokyo, 660 miles away. There are 400 permanent Japanese military personnel stationed on the island, no one else. The island is open only once a year for the Reunion of Honor Ceremony in March. The ceremony was two miles away from the airfield requiring travel on a mostly dirt road to the Memorial site. To get to the top of Mount Suribachi, either before or after the ceremony, one had to hike up the two mile Navy SEABEE built road to the memorials at the top. The weather was chilly and drizzled off and on. The attendees were positioned under two separate tents – one side for the Americans and the other side for the Japanese. A number of U.S. Marines were flown in from Okinawa and were able to offer logistic support and actually participate. We were very close to Red Beach landing site of the 5th Marines and a short walk to the shoreline.



The ceremony was an hour long. It was jointly orchestrated by the Japanese Iwo-To Association and the Iwo Jima Association of America (IJAA) and had a very formalized program with wreath laying by each side. Both U.S. and Japanese Iwo Jima veterans were in attendance. Probably the oldest was a 102-year-old Japanese soldier who fought on Iwo Jima. The Japanese are still in the process of searching for the 11,000 remains still on the island. The number of veterans each year is diminishing.



A brief word on two of the U.S. Iwo Jima veterans who were more than willing to share their experiences of 72 years ago: 1stLT Fiske Hanley (U.S. Army Air Force) and PFC Ed Hershberger, USMC. Fiske now 97 years old, was a flight engineer on B-29s with seven bombing missions from Tinian to Japan in 1945. On the 7th mission on 27 Mar 1945 his aircraft was shot down by the Japanese battleship Yamato with only two survivors of the 11 man crew. He was captured by the Japanese and imprisoned at Kempeitai prison in Tokyo. He survived and to this day still doesn't know why. He commented in no uncertain terms that "we really needed Iwo!" Ed Hershberger, now age 90, was 18 when he landed on Iwo Jima, Day One. He said they wore cold weather gear because it really was cold. He faced a very "strange" first impression upon landing where there was a lot of smoke, mist and fog. The only thing he could make out were silhouettes in the distance. He commented that it was very "spooky" like something out of an Alfred Hitchcock movie. He doesn't know why he survived either given all the bullets flying around him. Each of the vets had incredible stories to tell with much detail still in memory.

The real heroes were those older veterans who made the long haul flight to return to their battle grounds of 72 years ago. The MHT staff flooded us with as much information as possible including local history of Guam, Saipan and Tinian, the Chamorro culture, rugged landscape and both Japanese and American memorial sites and museums. All participants departed the trip with a sense of pride in those who served and awe at their survival memories. As a final memento we were provided by United Airlines a small vial to collect a small amount of the "black sands" (volcanic ash) from the beaches of Iwo Jima – a lasting memory from one of the most historic battles of World War Two.

*THE FRENCH ISLANDS OF SAINT-PIERRE & MIQUELON , Atlantic Ocean And
THE ISLANDS OF MICRONESIA, Pacific Ocean*

Bill, will you come into my office please?"

The voice on the other end of the inter-phone belonged to my boss, Fred Briggs, President of Curran and Briggs Construction, Chairman of the board of Maritime Central Air Lines, veteran pilot of the RFC/RAF in World War 1 and a good friend.

I was Mr Briggs personal pilot.

After being "demobbed" from the Royal Canadian Air Force at war's end I entered the University of Toronto to study Civil Engineering. I had met Mr. Briggs one day at Toronto's Malton Airport where we were introduced and we talked, for it seemed like hours and hours about his experiences as a wartime WW1 pilot, my own Father's experiences , also as a WW1 pilot, in Mesopotamia and France and my experiences as a 19 year old pilot with the wartime Royal Canadian Air Force.

Some weeks later, after a call from Mr. Briggs followed by dinner at his Toronto home I started flying for him, on a part time basis, with his own multi engine aircraft. Months later, as it became apparent that I could not do justice to both my studies at U of T and flying for Mr Briggs I made the decision to leave school and devote my time to the position, most enjoyable to me, that of a full time pilot. I have never regretted that decision.

"Sit down, Bill, I had a call from Carl Burke in Charlottetown this morning and he told me of a surprise meeting he had recently with a gentleman from the French island of Saint-Pierre/ Miquelon; I would like to share this with you. It seems that, we [Maritime Central Airways] has been invited to come over to the French Islands of Saint- Pierre and Miquelon ,in the Gulf of St Lawrence , to discuss the possibility of providing air service for the inhabitant to destinations in the Maritimes and Newfoundland....an interesting thought when you factor in our forthcoming plans to begin service within Newfoundland."

Carl Burke was the Managing Director and part owner of Maritime Central Airlines , a regional airline flying throughout the Maritime provinces of Canada; a superb pilot and manager of the airline that had grown, under his management, to be the third largest in Canada following Trans Canada and Canadian Pacific Airlines.

"Bill, would you dig up some information on these islands, distances from Moncton and Charlottetown and from there to St Johns, Newfoundland and whatever else seems appropriate and then give Carl a call in Charlottetown and discuss the whole thing with him....I

will be out of the office the balance of today and all day tomorrow and would like your's and Carl's thoughts when I get back."

I had flown over these same islands previously on a trip to Newfoundland, I mused, as I returned to my office where I extracted, from my flight kit, a chart that included these French owned islands.

During the boss' absence the next day , after a trip to a local Toronto library and my head filled with information about Saint-Pierre and Miquelon Islands I began to put a report together for Mr Briggs and Carl Burke.

"Saint-Pierre is the main island in the group, Miquelon being the next largest.....the islands were originally an outpost of Portugal dating back to 1500 and in the 17th century they became a territory of France and remain a French possession to this day. The French used the islands as a headquarters for their Grand Banks Cod fishery and a extensive salting operation that lasted to this time; as we know, the so called Newfoundland Grand Banks is the largest of the Atlantic cod producing grounds.

The "Grand Banks fishing grounds extend in a northerly direction, generally following the shape of Newfoundland, for some 300 plus miles and extend to the east about the same distance. For centuries fishing fleets from Europe fished these grounds however getting the fish [mainly cod] back to Europe in an eating state was almost impossible. It was the Portuguese, one of the predominate fishing countries of the world who, with the aid of their own salt water salt banks, came up with the idea of sending great quantities of salt and wood barrels , with their fishing boats, for preserving the fish for the return voyage (sailing ships) to Europe. This revelation put Portugal on the world map and for the first time in history "salted fish" coupled with the demand for "cod" resulted in an increasing demand for the product. It was here at Saint-Pierre that the Portuguese and most certainly the French established their "cod packing/ processing facility." This facility remained in use , on an active basis , until about 1990 when the world's fishing fleets decided that the Grand Banks were over fished and something must be done to save the "banks" for future generations. A ban on fishing for cod was instituted and remains to this day.

I unearthed information that suggested some sort of runway had once existed on Saint-Pierre but have not found any information that suggests the facility is existent/ or used in recent years.

During the war years the islanders suffered greatly from the German submarine operations in that area [the Gulf of St Lawrence]; supply for the islanders was problematical at best and the population had decreased in the years 1939-1945. The German sub fleet bottled up the entrance/exit to the St Lawrence waterway during WW2 and pretty much closed that important avenue to the British Isles.

Carl supplied me with a contact in Saint-Pierre and I was able to contact him but his lack of English and my command of my school French made the info less than adequate for our purposes. "I will repeat that call tomorrow when Jan ,one of our secretaries [French speaking], will be with me."

The next day's phone call, despite the quality of the phone service, and with Jan on another phone, proved satisfactory and more information for the project was forthcoming. It does, in fact, appear that there existed the remains of some type of landing strip on Saint-Pierre however it's present day condition was uncertain.

When Mr Briggs called me into his office ,on his return, I was able to relay the information he required. The French were requesting that we come to Saint-Pierre to discuss their requirements for air service to mainland Canada, Newfoundland or both and to ascertain the condition of the once used landing strip. He asked for my thoughts on getting to Saint-Pierre. I told him that I had discussed this with Carl Burke and we both agreed that taking the Maritime Central's PBY [flying boat] there was the most suitable way. It was obvious that the "former" strip was not suitable for operation of one of our aircraft at this time.

The next day, Mr Briggs gave me some dates suitable for his participation.

Over the following week a plan was hatched....he and I would take his aircraft from Toronto to Charlottetown and then, accompanied with a few of the construction company's engineers and Carl Burke I would fly the group to Saint-Pierre in our PBY. If conditions at Saint-Pierre for keeping the PBY on station there were not satisfactory I would drop off the party and take the aircraft back to Charlottetown or, most likely, St Johns, Newfoundland and await further communication from them.

As planned we flew to Charlottetown, the following week, and the next day swapped the Beech for a PBY, loaded some 6 passengers aboard the PBY plus a copilot for the PBY and departed [on wheels] for a water landing at Saint-Pierre ,the available charts indicated a rather large and open harbor , no taxi-up land ramp but an abundance of docks and buoys. The trip over was uneventful and the harbor, on our arrival, indicated

that the landing area was clear of obstacles with little wind blowing and no appreciable ocean swells. As I circled the area of intended landing it appeared the total population of the area was there to greet us on our arrival.... one extensive dock appeared satisfactory for a temporary stop to [at least to unload my passengers]. If, on closer examination the dock proved unsuitable I planned to shut down offshore and lighter everyone ashore, as earlier discussed with Mr Briggs and Carl. I landed in an onshore direction, taxied toward the dock area, retracted one wing float so that I could straddle the dock....and ten minutes later the Boss and all were being received with great pomp from the welcoming committee on the dock. The PBY mechanic, copilot and I stayed with the aircraft.....food was brought to us and later in the afternoon Mr Briggs came down to the dock.....he had been shown the intended landing strip, the construction company's engineers had ruled that they could make a landing strip suitable for the DC3 out of it...Carl Burke [temporarily] approved the plan from an operational viewpoint.....the local French person in charge promised to supply labor.

It appeared that we had a "go" for the project!

As the sun began to move close to the horizon all passengers were boarded on the PBY engines started and I taxied, briskly, away from the dock...the takeoff and flyby over the crowd was initiated and the nose pointed back to Prince Edward Island. We landed [wheels] at the Charlottetown airport.....it had been a long day but a rewarding one.

Mr Briggs and I departed, three days later, for Toronto.....an agreement had been agreed upon...later our construction engineers returned to Saint-Pierre with the PBY, Carl flying, and a dirt runway was constructed suitable for DC3 operations in the coming weeks ahead. The local inhabitants were most enthusiastic and, as agreed, provided the bulk of the required labor.

Weeks later Mr Briggs and I returned , once again, to Saint-Pierre ,this time aboard the first DC3 flight being flown by one of the Maritime Central crews, for a landing on the new strip....we were wined and dined as only the French can do and three days later returned to Prince Edward Island and home to Toronto.

Another project launched successfully!

We had, earlier, been asked by the Newfoundland government to give consideration to starting a new airline in Newfoundland. Prior to WW2 the English had operated an internal airline in Newfoundland but success was limited and after WW2 the Brits showed no interest in resuming the operation. Mr Briggs had given an affirmative reply and so the

airline plan had been underway for almost a year. We were, at this time, purchasing 7 Norduyn Norseman aircraft which would be equipped with floats and skis [it was not contemplated that we would put the aircraft on wheels account the lack of runways in that area and the numbers of water areas available.] The operation was based at Gander airport and seaplane operation at nearby Deadman Pond. In addition we would use one or possibly 2 PBV aircraft for patrol work and longer charters As I had been actively engaged in the planning phase of the new airline I had requested of Mr Briggs that I be given the opportunity to manage the fledgling airline.

At a meeting in Ottawa, where we had received the “blessing” of the Canadian government, Mr Briggs announced that I would have the position of manager of the start-up operation. I was most pleased that his trust in this 22 year old was offered.

Newfoundland Airways was hatched, twelve pilots were hired along with mechanics, office staff, etc.....the aircraft were flown to Newfoundland and operations began. In the late 1940s and 1950s Newfoundland had few roads and highways connecting the main city of St Johns with the numerous towns built up along the coast of the country. Most of the available labor was involved in fishing and pulpwood production for newsprint and most of the product was destined for Great Britain and Europe.

The new airline supported both of these industries and the families associated with same. We never looked back!

The route was operated for many years until the Islands formed their own airline; all in all, it was a successful endeavor , put into fruition without the help of complicated machines, by people wielding picks and shovels and without the, often, ability to understand each other account the language barrier and then followed by a group of pilots operating under, often, less than favorable conditions. The thought of the whole Saint-Pierre project brings forth an inner smile and a “glad that I was there in the year 1947”. For the first time, in history, the airplane was now adding to the transportation mediums available in the approximately 400 year history of these delightful islands in the Western Atlantic ocean.

20 years later, after emigrating to Texas to join my Mother and Brother, and joining the pilot ranks of Continental Airlines, another set of

Islands....another Ocean..... beckoned.

I would be given the opportunity to be a part of a, somewhat, similar operation but this time the islands rested on a different ocean and the runways were constructed of coral from nearby salt water lagoons laid upon coral earth filled with sky seeking coconut bearing palm trees and the labor force was aided by diesel trucks, tractors and compacting equipment. The aircraft, utilized, would have no, visible, propellers adorning the front of their engines and the noise emitted would be entirely different but the problems of construction of the “strips” was akin to the other.

Similarities....yes, they were numerous in number in the effort to provide safe harbors for airborne navigators traveling over both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans over a 21 year time envelope. I feel blessed to have been a part of both.

The Pacific airline was named “Air Micronesia” I was in charge of flight operations of the Boeing 727 portion of this new airline while Captain Don Leseberg managed the DC-6 and SA-16 flight operations. The DC-6 was utilized where island runways would not support the Boeing 727 operation and the SA 16 was used to service islands without runways; flying Boeing 727 jet aircraft from several runways [Truk and Majuro] with 5000 foot long coral runways was, to say the least, interesting. Coral runways that were partially destroyed from the jet blast of every departing takeoff and required repair before each landing was a constant reminder of the problems associated with such runway surfaces. Sharing the runways with the local pigs and chickens was yet another hindrance.

Electronic radio navigation aids were minimally available as was general communications between the aircraft and ground.

Started in 1968 “Air Mike” is still a viable airline serving an area larger than the whole United States; our beginning flight crews completed flights with expertise and a willingness to serve their fellow man.....one could compare them, most favorably, with those floatplane pilots flying in Newfoundland/Labrador some 20 years earlier.

Birds of a feather; born of a common mould. The very best of all those who wear wings on their chest.

Captain Bill Knowles,

Flight Manager [International] [Retired]



To VOLUNTEER

**We need NEW Officers and other Volunteers to help
us keep the "Blue Side Up".**

Please contact any current Officer if you are willing to help in any way

Bill Chambers	bbob7045@gmail.com
Tom Doherty	jkated@aol.com
Dave Newell	davebnewell@gmail.com
Bruce Sprague	brucesprague@mac.com
Gary Small	smallgd@gmail.com

Thanks!

United speeds up shift from small, regional planes to larger planes

*Reprinted courtesy of the **RUPANEWS***

United Airlines has been quietly shrinking its regional jet operations for some months. But the Chicago-based airline made its most public declaration to date that it is speeding up the move to expand its mainline operations and reduce the number of flights on smaller aircraft operated by the airline's regional carrier vendors. And it appears the United hub at San Francisco International Airport (SFO) is now ground zero for the move to offer more mainline flights. The carrier plans to convert select regional jet flights to larger mainline aircraft in no fewer than 10 markets the carrier is servicing from SFO. Noted Mike Hanna, vice president of United operations at SFO: "These additional flights and larger aircraft to new cities and those already part of our network will offer customers even more convenient flight options and easy connections to popular destinations around the United States and Canada."

The flights from SFO on larger mainline aircraft will come in two waves. The first start June 8 putting larger aircraft on flights from SFO to 10 markets ranging from Calgary, Canada to Minneapolis, Bozeman, Sacramento, Kansas City, Dallas, Palm Springs, Santa Barbara, Fresno and Burbank. These flights are operated on Boeing-737 and Airbus-319 and -320 aircraft.

Additionally, United is increasing service to eight destinations from SFO in August — again using mostly larger mainline aircraft. Those markets include Seattle, Albuquerque, Baltimore,

Indianapolis, Kansas City, Nashville, Philadelphia and Portland, Oregon. Most of this additional service will be on Airbus 320 and 319 aircraft.

The move to expand mainline operations could potentially help United improve its on-time performance. The regional vendor carriers that work with United have struggled to provide the consistent on-time performance that customers demand. United's sometimes problematic regional vendor carrier relationships were thrust into sharp focus last month when David Dao was dragged off of United Express Flight 3411 operated by Republic Airline.

United appears hopeful the move to mainline more of its service from SFO will boost traffic in the market. Added Hanna: "Every day in San Francisco we proudly welcome more than 30,000 customers aboard United."

Delta Air Lines testing facial recognition technology

*Reprinted courtesy of the **RUPANEWS***

Delta Air Lines is introducing four self-service bag drop machines at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport this summer, a \$600,000 investment that allows customers to quickly, securely and easily check their own bags. One machine will be equipped to test facial recognition technology to match customers with their passport photos through identification verification, a first for US carriers.

"We expect this investment and new process to save customers time," said Gareth Joyce, Delta's Senior Vice President — Airport Customer Service and Cargo. "And, since customers can operate the biometric-based bag drop machine independently, we see a

future where Delta agents will be freed up to seek out travelers and deliver more proactive and thoughtful customer service." The airline's introduction of self-service bag drops and facial-recognition technology is a natural next step in its work to streamline airport processes and is complimented by Delta's industry-leading radio frequency identification technology. Previous self-service innovations like ticketing kiosks and check-in via the Fly Delta Mobile app have transformed congested lobby areas and drastically improved customer satisfaction scores.

Delta also worked with the Transportation Security Administration to implement the first automated screening lanes in the U.S. at the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. Other innovations include developing a groundbreaking app that helps pilots avoid turbulence for a more comfortable flight, launching the industry's most interactive airport wayfinding maps on the FlyDelta mobile app and strategically enhancing its boarding process.

"This is the next step in curating an airport experience that integrates thoughtful innovation from start to finish," Joyce said. "We're making travel easier than ever for our customers and continuing to deliver a leading customer experience."

The airline will collect customer feedback during the trial and run process analyses to ensure that this lobby enhancement improves the overall customer experience. Studies have found that self-service bag drops have the potential to process twice as many customers per hour.

French military using winged warriors to hunt down rogue drones

Reprinted courtesy of the [RUPANEWS](#)

Following incidents of drones flying over the presidential palace and restricted military sites – along with the deadly 2015 Paris terror attacks – the French air force has trained four golden eagles to intercept and destroy the rogue aircraft.



Aptly named d'Artagnan, Athos, Porthos and Aramis – an homage to Alexandre Dumas' "The Three Musketeers" – the four birds of prey have been honing their attack skills at the Mont-de-Marsan in southwestern France since mid-2016.

The use of hunting birds – normally falcons and northern goshawks – by militaries around the globe is common practice in the fight to scare other critters away from runways and so cut the risk of accidents during takeoff or landing. But it wasn't until 2015 when the Dutch started using bald eagles to intercept drones that other militaries started to see the benefit of these winged warriors.

The French bred the four golden eagles – three males and one female -- using artificial insemination since eagles are a protected species and harvesting wild eggs is strictly forbidden. They chose the golden eagle because of the birds hooked beak and sharp eyesight.

Also weighing in around 11 pounds, the birds are in a similar weight class as the drones they're sent to destroy and clocking in at a top air speed of 50 miles per hour, with the capability of spotting its target from over a mile away, the eagles are deft hunters.

To protect the eagles from drone blades and any explosive device that might be attached the them, the French military designed mittens of leather and Kevlar, an anti-blast material, to protect the bird's talons.

China's first domestically-built large passenger jet

Reprinted courtesy of the [RUPANEWS](#)

The C919, regarded as China's answer to the Boeing 737 and Airbus 320, made its maiden flight on May 5, from Shanghai's Pudong International Airport. It is China's first domestically-built large passenger jet. Engineers have completed over 118.



The twin-engine C919 was unveiled last November at a roll-out ceremony in Shanghai. It can carry up to 168 passengers and has a range of 4,075 kilometers. A longer range version can fly up to 5,555 kilometers.

COMAC has received 570 orders from 23 foreign and domestic customers, according to the Chinese media. However, the vast majority of orders is from local carriers.

According to CNN, though the C919 is regarded as a home-made plane, many of the components are made in the US, France, and Germany. This includes the electrical system and landing gear, which are produced in the US by Honeywell International. The engines are designed by the US-French joint venture CFM International.

Before China's C919, only the US, Russia, Brazil, Canada, the UK, France, and Germany had developed large homegrown airliners.

China's experience in large aircraft construction was limited by a four-engine narrow-body jet airliner known as the Y-10, which resembles the Boeing 707. The plane was developed in the 1970s by the Shanghai Aircraft Research Institute but never got past the prototype stage.

According to Airbus' 2016-2035 Global Market Forecast, Chinese airlines will need about 6,000 new jets worth \$945 billion over the next two decades.

China has a plan to overtake the US by 2030 as the world's largest commercial aviation market.

***THESE ARE REAL COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY “THOMAS COOK HOLIDAYS”
FROM DISSATISFIED CUSTOMERS***

1. “On my holiday to Goa in India, I was disgusted to find that almost every restaurant served curry. I don’t like spicy food.”
2. “They should not allow topless sunbathing on the beach. It was very distracting for my husband who just wanted to relax.”
3. “We went on holiday to Spain and had a problem with the taxi drivers as they were all Spanish.”
4. “We booked an excursion to a water park but no-one told us we had to bring our own swimsuits and towels. We assumed it would be included in the price.”
5. “The beach was too sandy. We had to clean everything when we returned to our room.”
6. “We found the sand was not like the sand in the brochure. Your brochure shows the sand as white but it was more yellow.”
7. “It’s lazy of the local shopkeepers in Puerto Vallarta to close in the afternoons. I often needed to buy things during ‘siesta’ time — this should be banned.”
8. “No-one told us there would be fish in the water. The children were scared.”
9. “Although the brochure said that there was a fully equipped kitchen, there was no egg-slicer in the drawers.”
10. “I think it should be explained in the brochure that the local convenience store does not sell proper biscuits like custard creams or ginger nuts.”
11. “The roads were uneven and bumpy, so we could not read the local guide book during the bus ride to the resort. Because of this, we were unaware of many things that would have made our holiday more fun.”
12. “It took us nine hours to fly home from Jamaica to England. It took the Americans only three hours to get home. This seems unfair.”
13. “I compared the size of our one-bedroom suite to our friends’ three-bedroom and ours was significantly smaller.”
14. “The brochure stated: ‘No hairdressers at the resort.’ We’re trainee hairdressers and we think they knew and made us wait longer for service.”
15. “When we were in Spain, there were too many Spanish people there. The receptionist spoke Spanish, the food was Spanish. No one told us that there would be so many foreigners.”
16. “We had to line up outside to catch the boat and there was no air-conditioning.”
17. “It is your duty as a tour operator to advise us of noisy or unruly guests before we travel.”

18. “I was bitten by a mosquito. The brochure did not mention mosquitoes.”

19. “My fiancée and I requested twin-beds when we booked, but instead we were placed in a room with a king bed. We now hold you responsible and want to be re-reimbursed for the fact that I became pregnant. This would not have happened if you had put us in the room that we booked.”

The Golden Eagles Annual Convention / Reunion

October 19-21

At the Hilton Houston North

Sign up NOW!!!

www.thegoldeneagles.org

Russia claims new MC-21 jet is “faster, cheaper than Boeing 737 and Airbus A320”

Reprinted courtesy of the RUPANEWS



Russia's -21 jet has left the assembly line at the Irkutsk aviation plant and is being prepared for its maiden flight, Izvestia daily reports. Developed by the Irkut Division of the United Aircraft Corporation (UAC) group, the aircraft left the assembly plant on April 28, according to the newspaper. Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin has said the test flight is scheduled in May. “This is a fundamentally important event for any aircraft. There is no doubt that the first flight will take place. The only question is whether the aircraft will meet the calculated

characteristics. The test flight will show that,” aviation expert Aleksey Sinitsky told Izvestia.

The Irkut MC-21 is a twin-engine short- to mid-range jet airliner with a capacity of 150–212 passengers. The plane is intended to compete with the Airbus A320 and Boeing 737 MAX and replace the remaining Soviet-era Yakovlev Yak-42, Tupolev Tu-134, Tupolev Tu-154, and Tupolev Tu-204/214 airliners.

The first operator of MC-21 aircraft will be Russia's largest carrier Aeroflot. Delivery of 50 aircraft is expected to start in late 2018, or early 2019.

The UAC intends to sell the jets to areas that have traditionally bought Russian jets – India, China, Southeast Asia and Latin America.

The developers claim that MC-21 will be faster and cheaper than the Boeing 737 and Airbus A320. The Russian jet will have a cruising speed of 870 kilometers per hour, while the competitors reach only 842 and 828 kph. Costing up to \$85 million, MC-21 will have a significantly lower list price than its competitors.

An Experience To Recall

This 1967 true story is of an experience by a young 12 year old lad in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. It is about the vivid memory of a privately rebuilt P-51 from WWII and its famous owner/pilot.

In the morning sun, I could not believe my eyes. There, in our little airport, sat a majestic P-51. They said it had flown in during the night from some U.S. Airport, on its way to an air show. The pilot had been tired, so he just happened to choose Kingston for his stop over.

It was to take to the air very soon. I marveled at the size of the plane, dwarfing the Pipers and Canucks tied down by her. It was much larger than in the movies. She glistened in the sun like a bulwark of security from days gone by.

The pilot arrived by cab, paid the driver, and then stepped into the pilot's lounge. He was an older man; his wavy hair was gray and tossed. It looked like it might have been combed, say, around the turn of the century. His flight jacket was checked, creased and worn-it smelled old and genuine. Old Glory was prominently sewn to its shoulders.

He projected a quiet air of proficiency and pride devoid of arrogance. He filed a quick flight plan to Montreal ("Expo-67 Air Show") then walked across the tarmac.

After taking several minutes to perform his walk-around check, the tall, lanky man returned to the flight lounge to ask if anyone would be available to stand by with fire extinguishers while he "flashed the old bird up, just to be safe." Though only 12 at the time I was allowed to stand by with an extinguisher after brief instruction on its use -- "If you see a fire, point, then pull this lever!", he said. (I later became a firefighter, but that's another story.) The air around the exhaust manifolds shimmered like a mirror from fuel fumes as the huge prop started to rotate. One manifold, then another, and yet another barked-I stepped back with the others. In moments the Packard built Merlin engine came to life with a thunderous roar. Blue flames knifed from her manifolds with an arrogant snarl. I looked at the others' faces; there was no concern. I lowered the bell of my extinguisher.

One of the guys signaled to walk back to the lounge. We did. Several minutes later we could hear the

pilot doing his pre-flight run-up. He'd taxied to the end of runway 19, out of sight. All went quiet for several seconds. We ran to the second story deck to see if we could catch a glimpse of the P-51 as she started down the runway. We could not. There we stood, eyes fixed to a spot half way down 19. Then a roar ripped across the field, much louder than before. Like a furious hell spawn set loose, something mighty this way was coming. "Listen to that thing!" said the controller.

In seconds the Mustang burst into our line of sight. It's tail was already off the runway and it was moving faster than anything I'd ever seen by that point on 19. Two-thirds the way down 19 the Mustang was airborne with her gear going up. The prop tips were supersonic. We clasped our ears as the Mustang climbed hellishly fast into the circuit to be eaten up by the dog-day haze. We stood for a few moments, in stunned silence, trying to digest what we'd just seen.

The radio controller rushed by me to the radio. "Kingston tower calling Mustang?" He looked back to us as he waited for acknowledgment. The radio crackled, "Go ahead, Kingston." "Roger, Mustang.

Kingston tower would like to advise the circuit is clear for a low level pass." I stood in shock because the controller had just, more or less, asked the pilot to return for an impromptu air show! The controller looked at us. "Well, What?" He asked. "I can't let that guy go without asking. I couldn't forgive myself!"

The radio crackled once again, "Kingston, do I have permission for a low level pass, east to west, across the field?" "Roger, Mustang, the circuit is clear for an east to west pass." "Roger, Kingston, I'm coming out of 3,000 feet, stand by."

We rushed back onto the second-story deck, eyes fixed toward the eastern haze. The sound was subtle at first, a high-pitched whine, a muffled screech, a distant scream. Moments later the P-51 burst through the haze.

Her airframe straining against positive G's and gravity. Her wing tips spilling contrails of condensed air, prop-tips again supersonic. The burnished bird blasted across the eastern margin of the field shredding and tearing the air. At about 500

mph and 150 yards from where we stood she passed with the old American pilot saluting. Imagine!

A salute! I felt like laughing; I felt like crying; she glistened; she screamed; the building shook; my heart pounded. Then the old pilot pulled her up and rolled, and rolled, and rolled out of sight into the broken clouds and indelible into my memory.

I've never wanted to be an American more than on that day! It was a time when many nations in the world looked to America as their big brother. A steady and even-handed beacon of security who navigated difficult political water with grace and style; not unlike the old American pilot who'd just flown into my memory. He was proud, not arrogant, humble, not a braggart, old and honest, projecting an aura of America at its best.

That America will return one day! I know it will! Until that time, I'll just send off this story. Call it a loving reciprocal salute to a Country, and especially to that old American pilot:

the late-JIMMY STEWART (1908-1997), Actor, real WWII Hero (Commander of a US Army Air Force Bomber Wing stationed in England), and a USAF Reserves Brigadier General, who wove a wonderfully fantastic memory for a young Canadian boy that's lasted a lifetime.



Nine Important Facts To Remember As We Grow Older

9. Death is the number 1 killer in the world.
8. Life is sexually transmitted.
7. Good health is merely the slowest possible rate at which one can die.
6. Men have 2 motivations: hunger and hanky panky, and they can't tell them apart. If you see a gleam in his eyes, make him a sandwich.
5. Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day. Teach a person to use the Internet and they won't bother you for weeks, months, maybe years unless you give them your email address.
4. Health nuts are going to feel stupid someday, lying in the hospital, dying of nothing.
3. All of us could take a lesson from the weather. It pays no attention to criticism.
2. In the 60's, people took LSD to make the world weird. Now the world is weird, and people take Prozac to make it normal.
1. Life is like a jar of jalapeno peppers. What you do here, today, may be a burning issue somewhere else, tomorrow.

Thoughts To Ponder

1. Law of Mechanical Repair

After your hands become coated with grease, your nose will begin to itch and you'll have to pee.

2. Law of Gravity

Any tool, nut, bolt, screw, when dropped, will roll to the least accessible place in the universe.

3. Law of Probability

The probability of being watched is directly proportional to the stupidity of your act.

4. Law of Random Numbers.

If you dial a wrong number, you never get a busy signal; someone always answers.

5. Variation Law

If you change lines (or traffic lanes), the one you were in will always move faster than the one you are in now.

6. Law of the Bath

When the body is fully immersed in water, the telephone will ring.

7. Law of Close Encounters

The probability of meeting someone you know INCREASES dramatically when you are with someone you don't want to be seen with.

8. Law of the Result

When you try to prove to someone that a machine won't work, IT WILL!!!

9. Law of Biomechanics

The severity of the itch is inversely proportional to the reach.

10 . Law of the Theater & Hockey Arena

At any event, the people whose seats are furthest from the aisle, always arrive last. They are the ones who will leave their seats several times to go for food, beer, or the toilet and who leave early before the end of the performance or the game is over. The folks in the aisle seats come early, never move once, have long gangly legs or big bellies and stay to the bitter end of the performance. The aisle people also are very surly folk.

11. The Coffee Law

As soon as you sit down to a cup of hot coffee, your boss will ask you to do something which will last until the coffee is cold.

12. Murphy's Law of Lockers

If there are only 2 people in a locker room, they will have adjacent lockers.

13. Law of Physical Surfaces

The chances of an open-faced jelly sandwich landing face down on a floor are directly correlated to the newness and cost of the carpet or rug.

14. Law of Logical Argument

Anything is possible IF you don't know what you are talking about.

15. Law of Physical Appearance

If the clothes fit, they're ugly

16. Law of Public Speaking

A CLOSED MOUTH GATHERS NO FEET!

17. Law of Commercial Marketing Strategy

As soon as you find a product that you really like, they will stop making it OR the store will stop selling it!

18. Doctors' Law

If you don't feel well, make an appointment to go to the doctor, by the time you get there, you'll feel better.
But don't make an appointment and you'll stay sick.

THE BOEING BUTTON

It has recently been announced that all new generation Airbus aircraft are to be retrofitted with a large red button in the middle of the forward instrument panel. This button is to be named The Boeing Button. In future, when an Airbus fails to respond to normal input and the pilots lose control, the pilots are to push the Boeing Button.

This action will have the follow effects;

Two normal aircraft control sticks will rise from the floor and take over control from the dopey side sticks installed by Airbus. Design philosophy will automatically change from “The Airbus flies the pilot” to “The pilot flies the aircraft.”

All Airbus Laws, such as Normal Law, Alternate Law etc etc will revert to what has been in use for 100 years, i.e. “Pull back to go up”. The throttles will move corresponding to power output. All the way forward gives full power, and all the way back is idle thrust.

The aircraft then can be safely flown without a constant battle for control with onboard computers. After landing, it can be put up for sale, or scrapped. Funds thereby realized may then be used to purchase a real pilot's aircraft, any Boeing.

Even a Douglas Dial would be nice.

STAGE 4 – Part 1 A Very Personal Story

On December 7, 2016, I went to a doctor's appointment late in the afternoon. Towards the end of the conversation, I asked what stage my cancer was, and he said Stage 4. Excuse me? I felt great, so what was I supposed to do? Go home and get my affairs in order and call in Hospice? No way. When I left the doctor's office, he wanted me to take pills, one a day, and one every 21 days, and if I was out in the sun, wear a hat, long sleeved shirt, long pants and socks. Obviously, I don't live in the north or north east.

Next day, I received a call from the Melanoma Clinic I had previously visited, had a nice chat with the Planning Coordinator, and then she wanted me to talk to the Nurse Practitioner, Mike. Mike and I got along, turns out he had been a F/A with AA before changing fields. He did not agree with the regimen of pills, as I didn't, so I decided to go with the Clinic, and do Infusions with a drug called KEYTRUDA. Same drug that fixed up the Peanut Farmer from GA.

A little history is in order. Fall of 2015, a quarter sized melanoma was found on the left rear quadrant of my scalp. So I went to my dermatologist, and he had the younger doc in the office remove the melanoma. When the old doc found out it was malignant, he said go see Dr. B. I called and Dr. B was not in that office anymore. Mistake #2. Mistake #1 was when offered to go to the Melanoma Clinic, I chose not to. Why, because the margins were good. Then 25 radiation treatments on the scalp, and I now have a baseball sized bald spot, and the hair will never grow back. (another option missed was to have a plastic surgeon do a transplant) Oh well, I just buzzed the rest of the hair off, just like so many many years ago in the service.

Even had an ENT doc inject radioactive material in the scalp, where the melanoma had been removed, looking for a melanoma that might have slipped away. Did not find anything. Again, looked good, sounded great..

Went back to the radiation doc, and she asked if I had seen the oncologist, and I said no. She told me very politely to "get my ass back to see the oncologist." I did, and in May, had a half body PET scan. Found a 3mm nodule on the top of the right lung. No biggie. Now it gets interesting, as I am proactive with my body, and if some things not right, I go and find out what's up. If nothing, I am out the co-pay, and if it is something, I get it fixed.

My right shoulder was bothering me, so I called the shoulder doc, and had an X-ray. Nothing showed up on the X-ray, and I asked what was the next step? Arthrogram, they said. Inject fluid into the shoulder, take a picture or two, and if the fluid leaked, then you have a tear in the rotator cuff. Nope, not torn, but the 3mm nodule was now 9mm. The oncologist now schedules a full body scan, and lo and behold, the 9mm is now 11.5mm.

Over the next two months, I have been subjected to two needle biopsies, and one Bronchoscopy, and a brain scan. This confirmed that the melanoma is in the lung and in a lymph node on the outside of the trachea. Nothing in the brain, smile!

The first infusion was on 19 December, and the second was on 9 January, 2017. My understanding of remission rates with the pills was 10-15%, and with Infusion treatments, 50%.

After my third Infusion on 2 Feb, a CT scan was also done. And now, the doctor is changing the plan, as the melanoma has become "advanced", and a different line of treatment is in store. Going from infusion, to pills. Side effects can be vicious.

Bottom line of this story is, if your dermatologist finds a melanoma, please, run, do not walk, to the nearest Melanoma Clinic. And you youngsters out there, do not give up on sun block.

Stay tuned for the next report, hoping I am not in the obits. I know, just my morbid sense of humor.

We present this "Very Personal Story" as a "heads up" to anyone who may be or know someone who is not heeding the sound advice contained herein.

STAGE 4 – Part 2 A Very Personal Story

If you remember reading the first part of the saga, page 38 of the March 2017 RUPA News, good, if not, the patient did not die, and is in remission. That's the good news. The bad news is that I will continue taking the "Molecular Targeting Therapy" until the body is clear of those bad little melanoma cells. And as one said, who is in a similar situation, we might die from something else, but the Oncologist will say that the cancer didn't kill them. But they cannot say that the treatments worked, as there won't be any proof.

What has transpired? After three infusions of Keytruda, with zero side effects, and a CT scan on 2 Feb 2017, Dr. Katy told me that we had three options. Oh wonderful. First was the Ketruda, the next was the chemo pills, Tafenlar, and Mekinest, those molecular targeting guys who go after the mutated melanoma cells. And last, if those two did not work, then clinical trials. Although she did not say it, the fourth would be go home and get your affairs in order. Avoided that bullet so far.

Started the chemo pills on 16 Feb, and for three weeks, taking those pills, kicked my butt. Went to the ER three times in six days, for headaches and high temps. The word from the clinic, go to the ER if it's over 102 degrees F. Never went over, but got close. And of course, the ER doc not knowing, wants to do everything they can to a) get you well, and b) run up the charges. Did I say that?

After the third week, Dr. Katy cut the Tafenlar dosage by half, and I survived. Side effects still happened, temperatures and headaches, but not to the degree taking a normal dose.

May 22, I had what I called the Tell Tell PET/CT scan, and on May 25, Dr. Katy told us that I was in Remission, and that the tumors had either been reduced, or had disappeared. But I will continue taking the meds, and continue to have a PET/CT scan every three months. And as I told one and all, I am not out of the woods yet. One friend replied that "Leon, we are all in the woods". Have to agree with her, but some are closer to the edge.

Annual Golden Eagles Convention sign up process:

www.thegoldeneagles.org then click.....STORE

Scroll down to the BOTTOM photos of the 777 landing

(looks like a good one so it was probably mine)

Click on Banquet, Ladies' Luncheon, Golf etc as desired then choose quantity,

Then "Add to Cart" ...then click "Checkout" (again)... then complete the "Secure Checkout" process.

Being Green the old fashioned way

Reprint courtesy of the RUPANEWS

Checking out at the store, the young cashier suggested to the much older woman, that she should bring her own grocery bags because plastic bags weren't good for the environment.

The woman apologized and explained, "We didn't have this 'green thing' back in my earlier days."

The young clerk responded, "That's our problem today. Your generation did not care enough to save our environment for future generations."

She was right -- our generation didn't have the 'green thing' in its day.

Back then, we returned milk bottles, soda bottles and beer bottles to the store. The store sent them back to the plant to be washed and sterilized and refilled, so it could use the same bottles over and over. So they really were recycled. But we didn't have the "green thing" back in our day.

Grocery stores bagged our groceries in brown paper bags, that we reused for numerous things, most memorable besides household garbage bags, was the use of brown paper bags as book covers for our schoolbooks. This was to ensure that public property, (the books provided for our use by the school) was not defaced by our scribbles. Then we were able to personalize our books on the brown paper bags. But too bad we didn't do the "green thing" back then.

We walked up stairs, because we didn't have an escalator in every store and office building. We walked to the grocery store and didn't climb into a 300-horsepower machine every time we had to go two blocks. But she was right. We didn't have the "green thing" in our day.

Back then, we washed the baby's diapers because we didn't have the throwaway kind. We dried clothes on a line, not in an energy-gobbling machine burning up 220 volts -- wind and solar power really did dry our clothes back in our early days. Kids got hand-me-down clothes from their brothers or sisters, not always brand-new clothing. But that young lady is right; we didn't have the "green thing" back in our day.

Back then, we had one TV, or radio, in the house -- not a TV in every room. And the TV had a small screen the size of a handkerchief (remember them?), not a screen the size of the state of Montana. In the kitchen, we blended and stirred by hand because we didn't have electric machines to do everything for us. When we packaged a fragile item to send in the mail, we used wadded up old newspapers to cushion it, not Styrofoam or plastic bubble wrap. Back then, we didn't fire up an engine and burn gasoline just to cut the lawn. We used a push mower that ran on human power. We exercised by working so we didn't need to go to a health club to run on treadmills that operate on electricity. But she's right; we didn't have the "green thing" back then.

We drank from a fountain when we were thirsty instead of using a cup or a plastic bottle every time we had a drink of water. We refilled writing pens with ink instead of buying a new pen, and we replaced the razor blades in a razor instead of throwing away the whole razor just because the blade got dull. But we didn't have the "green thing" back then.

Back then, people took the streetcar or a bus and kids rode their bikes to school or walked instead of turning their moms into a 24-hour taxi service in the family's \$45,000 SUV or van, which cost what a whole house did before the "green thing." We had one electrical outlet in a room, not an entire bank of sockets to power a dozen appliances. And we didn't need a computerized gadget to receive a signal beamed from satellites 23,000 miles out in space in order to find the nearest burger joint.

But isn't it sad the current generation laments how wasteful we old folks were just because we didn't have the "green thing" back then?

Please forward this on to another selfish "old" person who needs a lesson in conservation from a smartarse young person...

We don't like being old in the first place, so it doesn't take much to piss us off. Especially from a tattooed, multiple pierced smartarse who can't work out the change without the cash register telling them how much.

Rail journeys: A classic way to travel

Reprint courtesy of the [RUPANEWS](#)

These are some of my top picks for train trips around the world. The list is in no particular order – simply journeys added to my bucket list. Enjoy!

Rovos Rail Pride of Africa: Considered to be one of the most luxurious trains in the world, Pride of Africa takes guests between Cape Town, South Africa and Cairo, Egypt with magnificent journeys to the east and to the west also available. Pride of Africa combines the golden age of rail travel with modern amenities. Suites are ultra-deluxe, decorated in Edwardian period features. A well-stocked mini-bar is available, as is 24-hour room service. Lunch and dinner are multi-course affairs served on lovely china, silver and crisp linens. Fresh local ingredients and traditional dishes are on the menu. All meals are served in one of two Victorian-era restaurant cars.

The Ghan: Named for the Afghan cameleers who once traveled this route, The Ghan has been traversing Australia for more than 80 years, taking guests from Adelaide to Darwin, in comfort and luxury. Large panoramic windows provide optimum viewing of the ever-changing Australian landscape. In the restaurant car, onboard chefs prepare menus that feature Australian and International cuisine.

The Danube Express: Headquartered in Budapest, Hungary, all itineraries through central Europe either start or go through Budapest. The Danube Express serves only 50 passengers in a combination of modern conveniences and traditional style. Deluxe sleeping carriages offer private compartments with en-suite washrooms, and two lower beds that fold up into seating

during the day. There are windows that open throughout the train for maximum views. All meals are freshly cooked onboard by experienced chefs using local and seasonal ingredients.

Golden Eagle Trans-Siberian Railway: Need to see Siberia? This is the way to do it. Launched in Moscow in 2007, the Golden Eagle Trans-Siberian is an all-suite luxury train. Its route is the famous Trans-Siberian between Moscow and Vladivostok. Covering 9,258km (6,152 miles) and taking seven days, it is the biggest train ride in the world. For luxury travelers, two Imperial suites were added in 2012, providing 120 square feet of space, a fixed king-sized bed, en-suite shower, a dedicated dressing table and lounge area. Dining takes place in one of two restaurant cars offering a central buffet.



The Eastern and Oriental Express: This train runs 1,262 miles between Singapore, Malaysia and

Bangkok and is one of the most beautiful in the world, conjuring up images of a bygone era filled with glamour and opulence. Dining on board this train is a highlight. Its French chef has developed dishes that have received international accolades for blending Western and Eastern culinary styles. Breakfast is served in your compartment, while high tea can be enjoyed wherever you prefer.

We always NEED more of of YOUR stories to keep our pages fresh.

Please consider sharing some of YOUR favorite experiences by sending to Gary at "smallgd@outlook.com"

A little History about Spin Recovery

Reprint courtesy of the RUPANEWS

In the pioneer days of aviation, pilots lived in fear of the mysterious spiral dive (known today as a spin). No one understood how, or why, an aircraft would inadvertently begin an uncontrollable spiraling decent—partly because no one had ever lived through such an ordeal to share it. No one, that is, until 22-year-old Lieutenant Wilfred Parke of Britain's Royal Air Force (RAF) survived a spin from traffic pattern altitude with several onlookers witnessing his actions.

Lieutenant Parke found himself at the controls of an experimental biplane, called the Avro G, on a windy, summer morning in 1912. Parke had a passenger that day, a fellow RAF pilot, who sat out the three-hour flight in the front seat of the Avro G. The aircraft was one of the first to feature a completely enclosed cabin. Without a functioning windscreen in the cabin, forward visibility was limited to looking out one of the side windows.

To compensate for his lack of windscreen and improve his visibility of the landing area, Parke was experimenting with higher than normal bank angles in the final turn. From an altitude of only 600 feet above the airfield, Lieutenant Parke throttled back and commenced a steeply banked descent. As his aircraft began the turn, Parke felt the aircraft shudder as one of the wings unintentionally dropped, twisting the biplane into the dreaded spiral dive. The young lieutenant found himself thrown against the right side of the cabin as his airplane spun violently to the left. Not knowing what to do, Parke opened the throttle and pulled back on the stick—exactly the wrong thing to do—this served only to tighten the spiral dive.

The centrifugal force of the spin caused Lieutenant Parke to release the controls as he desperately reached for anything in the cockpit to stabilize himself. It was during that desperate flail that Parke had the wild idea of applying full rudder in the direction opposite the spin. Parke managed to get his feet on the rudder pedals and apply what would be a life-saving control input. The aircraft immediately recovered from the spin and Parke regained control by the time the Avro G was a mere 50 feet above the ground.

Onlookers were stunned and rushed to greet the shaken, yet jubilant, Parke and his passenger. Word spread quickly of Parke's spin recovery, and an article documenting the experience was published in Flight Magazine. Thanks to Parke's recollection of his actions and the observations of the onlookers, the veil over the mysterious spiral dive began to lift. Spin recovery techniques were further honed, and less than five years later, spin recovery training was a standard part of each RAF pilot's flight education. The RAF began building a culture of safety by propagating critical flight safety knowledge throughout their flying community.



Ed & Norma

Ed and his wife Norma go to the state fair every year, and every year Ed would say, " Norma, I'd like to ride in that helicopter "

Norma always replied, " I know Ed , but that helicopter ride is fifty bucks, and fifty bucks is fifty bucks! "

One year Ed and Norma went to the fair, and Ed said, " Norma, I'm 75 years old. If I don't ride that helicopter, I might never get another chance" To this, Norma replied, " Ed, that helicopter ride is fifty bucks, and fifty bucks is fifty bucks"

The pilot overheard the couple and said, " Folks I'll make you a deal. I'll take the both of you for a ride. If you can stay quiet for the entire ride and don't say a word I won't charge you a penny! But if you say one word it's fifty dollars."

Ed and Norma agreed and up they went.

The pilot did all kinds of fancy maneuvers, but not a word was heard. He did his daredevil tricks over and over again, but still not a word...

When they landed, the pilot turned to Ed and said, "By golly, I did everything I could to get you to yell out, but you didn't. I'm impressed! "Ed replied, " Well, to tell you the truth I almost said something when Norma fell out,

But you know, Fifty bucks is fifty bucks! "

Boeing Launches 737-10 At Paris Air Show



Boeing will officially launch the 737-10 on the first day of the Paris Air Show, marking the go-ahead of the fourth major member and fifth derivative of the MAX family.

Featuring an additional 66-inch fuselage stretch over the 737-9 as well as modified main landing gear, the 737-10 is a response to the Airbus A321neo and will extend single class seating capacity to 230. The aircraft will enter service in 2020 following the debut of the 737-9 in 2018, and the entry-into-service of both the 737-7 and 200-seat MAX 200 in 2019.

Though details of the launch customers were yet to be released as Show News closed for press, the initial order book is expected to be in the 100-plus aircraft range. The first group of orders is expected from lessor China Aircraft Leasing Group Holdings, as well as Indonesian-based low-cost carrier Lion Air. Indian airline Spice Jet is also expected to be among the launch group. Boeing is also understood to be in talks with European carrier Ryanair over the 737-10, though it is not known if these have been finalized in time for any announcement at the show.

Boeing Commercial Airplanes president and CEO Kevin McAllister says, “the airplane looks great. We have a lot of customers very interested.” Speaking on the eve of the show, McAllister says “customers told us they wanted it bigger and this airplane offers the opportunity for up to 230 seats. But they want it better. The opportunity to offer the extra seats but also maintain the cost per seat-mile advantage and trip costs of the MAX family was very important for our customers.”

The additional stretch takes overall length to 143 ft. and increasing two-class capacity to 189 passengers, compared to 193 for its arch-rival the Airbus A321neo. The fuselage extension also means Boeing has to incorporate a modified main landing gear design to enable adequate clearance of the longer body for rotation on take-off and landing, and to ensure the aircraft remains stall – rather than pitch – limited. The MAX already incorporates an 8-in. nose leg extension to increase ground clearance for the larger diameter CFM Leap-1B, and is still reviewing final options for the -10 main gear changes.

The “Crew Room”...or...What are they Up To Now?

We are introducing a new regular “feature” in the Golden Contrails to (hopefully) provide a venue for members to provide an update on their current activities, employment, interests, travel, health or anything else that would have normally been mentioned in the Crew Room. Accordingly, this section will depend on your input, so we invite and encourage you to send us an update to be used in future editions at your earliest convenience.

Please understand that these updates may be edited for appropriateness of content or to accommodate space considerations. You can either use the newly available Crew Room form on the website: (www.thegoldeneagles.org - **Contrails tab – Crew Room**) or simply send an email to smallgd@outlook.com.

We think this has the potential to be of great interest to your fellow members, but it won't happen unless you take a couple of minutes and give us YOUR update.

PLEASE send a short "status update" to let your friends know what you've been doing. Literary proficiency is neither required, nor expected.

Future Golden Contrails Content

In addition to our hopes of success for The Crew Room feature described above, and the sharing of recent experiences with your friends, we have to "point out" that the entire content of this publication relies heavily on contributed material from our members. Dave, Shaun and Charlie have been a great source of scouring up material to include in these pages, but they are not a "bottomless well" of material (at least GOOD material...)

If you wish to see a certain type of content, or less of a certain type, then that will only happen if you give us something to work with. As Dave said, "No one wants to be the first on the dance floor" (although I think Don Gentry does), but it's time to hitch up those "big boy pants" and send us a story or a Crew Room update.

Continental Airlines historic posters to be auctioned

Your Executive Committee has some "retro" posters donated by Terry Owens that will be available for auction during this year's convention banquet.

We have had some of these professionally mounted and will set a "reserve price" to cover the cost of mounting. As usual, any proceeds above this cost will go to the United Airlines We Care fund as a donation from the Golden Eagles.

A continuation of the details and explanation of our new blast email process

We are enjoying an “almost” perfect deployment of the new email process, which uses the free functions of MailChimp. We have had a very limited number of “bounces” from a handful of members, which accounts for some review and additional explanation here.

As previously described, there was a desire to find a solution to the previous practice of having to split Dave’s updates into “chunks” of addresses for emailing in separate “batches”. Dave had been “soldiering” with this for quite some time, and finding that the various email providers were becoming increasingly more restrictive in the number of addressees per “batch”. This involved a continuing manual modification of his address book “batches” to keep from getting shut down by either of his email providers. By way of review from our initial announcement of this new system, all of this is driven by compliance with anti-spamming federal law. As we all know from our years of dealing with a certain government “agency”, they like to keep changing the rules in order to justify their existence (or maybe not...but I think so).

The process begins with creating a “list” of members and email addresses. That data naturally comes from our membership database, so “garbage in – garbage out” if you do not keep us updated of any changes in your email address. In the past, little private email notes to Dave were manually entered in his “address books” but not necessarily in the database, although we tried to stay in sync. We only store one email address for each member, so if you do not actually check the email address we have in the database (and consequently in the published rosters), you will not see these Updates. (This is where I IMPLORE you to use the Roster Update form on the website www.thegoldeneagles.org to provide us with these changes. (We know who has been trying to sneak in without using these forms and you don’t want us to “call you out” on it.)

The other thing that happens is the drafting of the message content. Dave works on this during each month to compile a list of newsworthy items. When that message is “sent”, instead of going out via Dave’s (or my) personal email account, it goes to MailChimp, and is “delivered” via their servers, possibly in “batches” but transparent to us. If any one of these emails “bounces” (is rejected) by YOUR personal email provider or YOUR internal email program on YOUR computer, we receive an “unsubscribe” notice and we can’t use that email address until you send us a form. Let me repeat...we can NOT fix this on our end. We will send you a private email from either Dave or Gary with a link to an “opt in” form. YOU will need to click on that link, fill out the form (name and email address at a minimum) and SUBMIT that form, which goes back into the “system” and permits your address to be included in future mailings.

While this sounds complicated (and is), the process is working almost flawlessly for all except a very few cases. If this happens to you, Dave or I will send you the “opt in” link as described above and try through our clever and crafty wording to convince you that we are really who we say we are and are trying to help you. I know the FAA and IRS say the same things...but really...you can trust US.

Thanks to all for the positive comments on this system. Since we are paid even less now than in the ‘80s, we basically work for compliments.

gary

The Secretary's Report and other rants...

"A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth gets its pants on"...

Winston Churchill

As the novice Editor of the Golden Contrails, my biggest challenge is to find enough interesting material to keep these pages alive and avoid a shower of rotten tomatoes. This quote from Sir Winston seemed fitting when thinking of many of the crew room stories I heard over the years, so keep those stories coming, even if they happen to be true! On another note, we have been pleased

EATING IN THE FIFTIES

Reprint courtesy of the RUPANEWS

Pasta had not been invented. It was macaroni or spaghetti.
Curry was a surname.

A take-away was a mathematical problem.

Pizza? Sounds like a leaning tower somewhere.

Bananas and oranges only appeared at Christmas time.

All chips were plain.

Oil was for lubricating; fat was for cooking.

Tea was made in a teapot using tea leaves and never green.

Cubed sugar was regarded as posh.

Chickens didn't have fingers in those days.

None of us had ever heard of yogurt.

Healthy food consisted of anything edible.

Cooking outside was called camping.

Seaweed was not a recognized food.

'Kebab' was not even a word, never mind a food.

Sugar enjoyed a good press in those days, and was regarded as being white gold.

Prunes were medicinal.

Surprisingly, muesli was readily available. It was called cattle feed.

Pineapples came in chunks in a tin; we had only ever seen a picture of a real one.

Water came out of the tap. If someone had suggested bottling it and charging more than gasoline for it, they would have become a laughing stock.

The three things that we never ever had on/at our table in the fifties...was elbows, hats and cell phones!

with the reception our new blast mail system has received. As always, Dave is doing a superb job of getting anything newsworthy out to our membership in a timely manner.

As mentioned elsewhere in this edition, our annual convention is not very far off, and we are hoping for a good turnout.

We have a fresh new venue this year at the Hilton Houston North, (formerly a Sofitel) and Tom has been setting things up for a repeat of last year's superb event in Las Vegas.

gary





GOLDEN EAGLES, OCTOBER 2016-PRESENT

Jim Steinmetz, Dec 7, 2016
Andy Arthur, Feb 1, 2016
Ted Herbert, April 6, 2017
Denis Duffy, April 10, 2017
Wayne Fischer, April 10, 2017

NON GOLDEN EAGLES, OCTOBER 2016-PRESENT

Bruce Tessmer, Nov, 2016
Joe Hegidio, Jan 27, 2017
Jerry Huerta, Feb 18, 2017
Jocko Harris, Mar 5, 2017
Dale Haas, April 5, 2017
Glenn Fox, April 22, 2017

High Flight

John Gillespie Magee Jr.

"Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth,
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth
of sun-split clouds -
and done a hundred things You have not dreamed of -
wheeled and soared and swung high in the sunlit
silence.
Hovering there I've chased the shouting wind along

and flung my eager craft through footless halls of air.

"Up, up the long delirious burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace,
where never lark, or even eagle, flew;
and, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
the high untrespassed sanctity of space,
put out my hand and touched the face of God."

Golden Contrails

*C/O Gary Small
5504 Luna Del Oro Ct. NE
Albuquerque NM 87111*

www.thegoldeneagles.org



Sangre de Cristo Mountains near Los Alamos New Mexico