

THE GOLDEN EAGLES



Golden Contrails

April



2021



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If you haven't grown up
by age 50,
You don't have to.



I'VE REACHED THAT AGE
WHERE MY BRAIN GOES
FROM "YOU PROBABLY
SHOULDN'T SAY THAT." TO
"WHAT THE HELL, LET'S SEE
WHAT HAPPENS."



Editor's Notes

Welcome to the first all DIGITAL edition of the **Golden Contrails**. It was a difficult decision to end our print versions, but as was discussed last year prior to the change in business model, the cost savings, along with “twilighting” the formal convention events allowed us to discontinue dues indefinitely, except for a one-time fee for new members.

It's nice to report that the December volume was apparently well received based on the number of requests that I've had for extra copies. Unfortunately, we did not authorize the printing of additional copies to satisfy an unknown demand.

The format of this edition and all future ones for the foreseeable future will remain as if it were printed, which means an even multiple of 4 pages which in fact CAN be printed if one desires at a local FedEx Office or similar outlet. In fact, if one is sufficiently comfortable with doing business “online”, the PDF file that comprises the magazine can be uploaded to one of these facilities for print, resulting in a one-stop shopping experience to retrieve the printed and stapled product.

I am pleased to be able to return to our normal compliment of contributed articles, along with the exploits of our fellow members via the Crew Room, and of course, an attempted sprinkling of “humor”. In fact, I am playing “catch up” on some material that I had to hold over due to the unique format of the December edition. Included is (former **Golden Jet** Editor) John Clayton's tribute to Wes Coss and we note the passing of Red Stubben (among others).

I want to thank our featured “authors” for their contributions this month, along with Kathy Haynes for the continued permission to reproduce her father's timeless wisdom and humor in the Len Morgan series. Additional appreciation goes out to former Editor and Past President Shaun Ryan and to Karl Novak for providing photos that I use from occasionally to “dress up” the visual appearance of these pages. So...become a DONOR and send photos, along with your articles, recollections and “sea stories” for future editions!

*(for those unfamiliar with naval jargon, a “sea story” is any Tall Tale that begins with “now, this ain't no sh*t”.)*

Gary

All past editions of the Golden Contrails are available at:

www.thegoldeneagles.org

Golden Contrails Downloads

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Reports

President

As mentioned in my Editor's Notes, this edition begins a new era for the Golden Eagles with the discontinuation of the printed magazine, formal conventions and of course...dues. As predicted, this has resulted in a tremendous (and very welcome) reduction in workload for your volunteers. While doing the magazine layout is actually the same as before with respect to time and effort, it has always been more enjoyable than the "grunt work" of collecting and recording dues with the added vexation of having to "remind" a fairly high percentage of members repeatedly.

From all accounts, the Hill Country sponsored Reunion" in October was a huge success, which included all of the fun of a convention without the trappings of an "Officer's Club formal dinner dance, nor the ever popular business meeting which was never attended by much more than about 20 members. For future events, however, we will try to get Don Gentry some rolls of raffle tickets to play with, so he doesn't feel left out. We are hopeful of more reunion style events to be held once the covid restrictions start to fade away and members become comfortable as a result of the vaccinations. The concept remains that these are locally organized events with some administrative and partial funding by the Golden Eagles, provided they are open to the entire membership and feature a venue for camaraderie beyond a local burger joint.

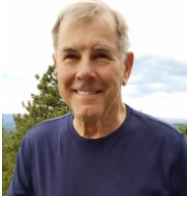
As the covid vaccines roll out in their indecipherable ways from state to state, I hope we'll be able to resume normal lives and continue to enjoy the bonds of friendship built up over the years in the cockpits and crew rooms.

Gary



1. The dumbest thing ever purchased was a 2020 planner.
2. I was so bored I called Jake from State Farm just to talk to someone. He asked me what I was wearing.
3. 2019: Stay away from negative people. 2020: Stay away from positive people.
4. The world has turned upside down. Old folks are sneaking out of the house & their kids are yelling at them to stay indoors!
5. This morning I saw a neighbor talking to her dog. It was obvious she thought her dog understood her. I came into my house & told my cats. We all had a big laugh!
6. Every few days try your jeans on just to make sure they fit. Sweatpants will have you believe all is well in the kingdom.
7. Does anyone know if we can take showers yet or should we just keep washing our hands?
8. I never thought the comment, I wouldn't touch it with a 6-foot pole would become a national policy.
9. I need to practice social-distancing from the refrigerator.
10. I hope the weather is good tomorrow for my trip to the Backyard. I'm getting tired of the Living Room.
11. Never in a million years could I have imagined I would go up to a bank teller wearing a mask & ask for money.

Executive Vice President/Email Coordinator Report



Greetings everyone,

As the Email Coordinator guy for the Golden Eagles, my job is to keep our members informed of current events affecting us as retirees and soon to be retirees. The nightmare that was 2020 is now behind us and it seems that 2021 now offers us an opportunity to start fresh. In spite of the effects of the virus and whether you were happy with the results of the election or not, we as Golden Eagles members have an opportunity to renew our friendships with LAC meetings, reunions and just simply staying in touch with our friends. We hope that our regular communications with our members will further enhance their ability to maintain their friendships in the organization and will continue to keep them informed about current airline issues of interest.

The Golden Eagles provides former Continental, and more recently, United, crew members with a unique method for staying in touch with our old friends and maintaining an awareness of issues that affect our retiree status and aviation/airline interests. With your continued advising us of any contact information changes we will be able to keep you in the loop. To facilitate this, the Membership section of the Golden Eagles website contains a Roster Update form which you can complete and submit online. This will enable us to keep your records up to date and will assure the accuracy of your information in the member rosters.

Here's hoping for a much better year in 2021!



Dave Newell



Welcome to our first *Golden Contrails* in 2021.

I hope all of you and your families have survived the great pandemic, and that most of you by now have had your Covid vaccinations. Hopefully this year we can all get back to some normalcy in our lives.

With my Treasurer cap on....I can report that all is well with our Golden Eagles finances!

Here is our 2020 financial report:

Income: \$10,493

Expenses: \$17,239

- *Golden Contrails* printing and mailing: \$12,061
- October Hill Country Reunion: \$1,367
- CARE fund to United: \$1,300
- Website accounts paid up thru 2024: \$1,221
- Misc business expenses: \$1,290

From here on out the huge *Golden Contrails* printing and mailing costs will be over, and we can hopefully soon have some more reunion activities.

Our IRS tax return has been filed for 2020, and we now have about \$43,374 in our Bank of America checking account. Remember, you no longer have to pay annual member dues!

With my Webmaster cap on...I can also report all is well with your Golden Eagles website! As always I recommend you bookmark our website, and check things out regularly.....there is a lot of information on there! You can download a copy of the member Roster, update your information, review past blast emails, see what is going on with the LAC's, information on upcoming reunions, and much much more. Of course, you can also download copies of all the *Golden Contrails*. One final suggestion...under the CONTRAILS website menu is the "Crew Room" section. Go there to see what everyone has been up to, and be sure to send in the form with your information...everyone will be glad to read what you have been doing since retirement.

NEW and RE-JOINED GE MEMBERS:

(July 8, 2020 thru Mar 16, 2021)

Robert Haven, Keith Thompson, Art McIntee, John Jasch, Anthony Vandermolen, Alan Minnig, Tim Gamble, Christopher Dyer, Shawn McBride, Kathy Grant, Charlie Hill, Jim Davis, David Salvesen, Paul Zimmerman, Bill Vaughn, David Little, William Davis, Mario Sojo, Hap Wilson, Michael Machemehl, Michael Fortune, Gerald Carley, Joseph Dentz, William Ebert, Frank Burch, Phil Landry, Peter Bartelli, Chris Hickman, Gary Peterson, Robert Greer, Will Jackson, Bob Campbell, Robert Kinsey, Michael Stach, Tobias Pechanec, Frank Mills, Tobias Pechanec, Frank Mills, Paul Carroll, Leonard Reinsmith, Frank Freeman, Tom Kosh, Bill Beno, Pat Garrison, Andrew Whittlesey, Thomas Kratt, Thomas Goyette, Rick Shoemaker, Clyde Domengeaux, Georgine Mavrakis-Meissner, Charles Doughty, Michael Bronner, Peter Krueger, Steven Johnson, Mickey Wagner, Jack Sosebee, William Schneider, Dorothy Clegg, Edward Neffinger, Richard Rittenhouse, Kaye Riggs, James Patton, William Poarch, Thomas Colucci, William Nixon, Scott Schulze, Mike Boom, Fred Buhl, Vince Scotto, Mike Hatten.

"Welcome Aboard!"

Everyone have a great summer!

Bruce



www.thegoldeneagles.org

email: brucesprague@mac.com

NEW PASSWORD: *heading* (all lower case)

- > You **DO NOT** need this password to *login* to our website!
- > It is **only** needed for the "Roster", "*Golden Contrails*", "Officer Documents", and the "Archived Blast Emails".
- > The password changes three times a year.

Saint Peter is watching all of the new arrivals trying to go through the pearly gates in Heaven. The first applicant of the day explains that his last day was not a good one. "I came home early and found my wife lying naked in bed. She claimed she had just gotten out of the shower. Well, her hair was dry and I checked the shower and it was completely dry too. I knew she was into some hanky-panky and I began to look for her lover. I went onto the balcony of our 9th-floor apartment and found the guy clinging to the rail by his fingertips. I was so angry that I began bashing his fingers with a flower pot. He let go and fell, but his fall was broken by some awnings and bushes. When I saw that he was still alive I found super human strength and dragged our antique cedar chest to the balcony and threw it over. It hit the man and killed him. At this point the stress got to me and I suffered a massive heart attack and died." Saint Peter thanked him for his story and sent him on to the waiting room. The second applicant said that his last day was his worst. "I was on the roof of an apartment building working on the AC equipment and I stumbled over my tools and toppled off the building. I managed to grab onto the balcony rail of a 9th-floor apartment but some idiot came rushing out on the balcony and bashed my hands with a flower pot. I fell and hit some awnings and bushes and survived, but as I looked up I saw a huge cedar chest falling toward me. I tried to crawl out of the way but failed and was hit and killed by the chest." Saint Peter couldn't help but chuckle as he directs the man to the waiting room. Saint Peter is still chuckling when his third customer of the day enters. He apologizes and says "I doubt that your last day was as interesting as the two fellows that arrived here just before you." "I don't know," replies the man. "Picture this, I'm naked, hiding in this cedar chest..."

I talked with a homeless man this morning and asked him how he ended up this way.

He said, "Up until last week, I still had it all.

I had plenty to eat, my clothes were washed and pressed,
I had a roof over my head,
I had HDTV and Internet, and I went to the gym, the pool, and the library.
I was working on my MBA on-line. I had no bills and no debt. I even had full medical benefits coverage.

I felt sorry for him, so I asked, "What happened? Drugs? Alcohol? Divorce?"

Oh no, nothing like that," he said. "

"Because of Corona virus, I was unexpectedly paroled".

I REMEMBER BEING
ABLE TO GET UP
WITHOUT MAKING
SOUND EFFECTS...
GOOD TIMES.

John Lear on John Lear

Ed. We received this from Bruce Harris and Carl Domschke

Bill Lear's son John Lear gave this talk on July 9th, 2004 to a group of fellow pilots in Las Vegas called the "Hangar of Quiet Birdmen."

One of the anguishes of advancing age is losing old friends. The upside of that, though, is that I get to tell the story my way.

I learned to fly at Clover Field in Santa Monica when I was 14.

However, before I got to get in an actual airplane Dad made me take 40 hours of Link with Charlie Gress. I can't remember what I did yesterday, but I guarantee you I could still shoot a 90-degree, Fade-out or Parallel radio range orientation.

When I turned 16 I had endorsements on my student license for an Aero Commander 680E and Cessna 310.

I got my private at 17 and instrument rating shortly thereafter. The Lockheed 18 Lodestar was my first type rating at age 18. I went to work for my father and brother flying copilot on a twin beech out of Geneva Switzerland after I got out of high school. Dad was over there trying to peddle radios to the European airlines.

However, just after I turned 18 and got my Commercial, I was showing off my aerobatic talents in a Bucker Jungmann to my friends at a Swiss boarding school I had attended. I managed to start a 3-turn spin from too low an altitude and crashed. I shattered both heels and ankles and broke both legs in 3 places. I crushed my neck, broke both sides of my jaw and lost all of my front teeth. I managed to get gangrene in one of the open wounds in my ankles and was shipped from Switzerland to the Lovelace Clinic in Albuquerque where Randy Lovelace made me well.

When I could walk again, I worked selling pots and pans door to door in Santa Monica. In late 1962 Dad had moved from Switzerland to Wichita to build the Lear Jet and I went to Wichita to work in Public relations until November of 1963 - about 2 months after the first flight when I moved to Miami and took over editing an aviation newspaper called Aero News.

I moved the newspaper to El Segundo in California and ran it until it failed. I then got a job flight instructing at Progressive Air Service in Hawthorne, California. From there I went to Norman Larson Beech in Van Nuys flight instructing in Ercoupes.

In the spring of 1965, I was invited by my Dad back to Wichita to get type rated in the model 23 Learjet. I then went to work for the executive aircraft division of Flying Tigers in Burbank who had secured a dealership for the Lear.

In November of 1965, my boss Paul Kelly crashed number 63 into the mountains at Palm Springs, killing everybody on board including Bob Prescott's 13-year-old son and 4 of the major investors in Tigers. I took over his job as President of Airjet charters, a wholly owned subsidiary of FTL, and flew charters and sold Learjets. Or rather tried to sell them. It turns out that I never managed to sell one Learjet in my entire life.

In March of 1966, 2 Lear factory pilots -Hank Beaird and Rick King - and myself set 17 world speed records including speed around the world - 65 hours and 38 minutes - in the first Lear Jet 24. Shortly after that flight I got canned from Tigers and moved to Vegas and started the first 3rd level airline in Nevada, Ambassador Airlines.

We operated an Aero Commander and Cherokee 6 on 5 stops from Las Vegas to LAX. This was about the time Hughes moved to Las Vegas and I was doing some consulting work for Bob and Peter Maheu.

The money man behind Ambassador was Jack Cleveland, who I introduced to John Myers in the Hughes organization. Cleveland and Myers tried to peddle a Part 135 certificate to Hughes without success and Jack ended up selling Howard those phony gold mining claims you all may remember. I went back to Van Nuys and was flying Lear charter part time for Al Paulson and Clay Lacy at California Airmotive, the Learjet distributor.

That summer I started a business called Aerospace Flight Research in Van Nuys, where I rented aircraft to Teledyne to flight test their Inertial Guidance Systems. We had a B-26, Super Pinto and Twin Beech. I think we lasted about 4 months.

I then went to work for World Aviation Services in Ft. Lauderdale ferrying the Cessna O-2 FAC airplanes from Wichita, fresh off the assembly line to Nha Trang in Viet Nam with fellow QB Bill Werstlein. We were under the 4440th ADG Langley, VA, and hooked up with a lot of other military pilots ferrying all manner and types of aircraft.

Our route was Wichita to Hamilton, Hickam, Midway, Wake, Guam, Clark and then in-country. The longest leg was Hamilton to Hickam - an average of 16 hours with no autopilot, no copilot, and one ADF. We also had 3 piddle packs. Arriving in Nha Trang we would hitch a ride to Saigon and spend 3 days under technical house arrest each trip, pay a fine for entering the country illegally (that is being civilians and not coming through a port of entry), catch an airline up to Hong Kong for a little R&R and straight back to Wichita for another airplane. I flew this contract for 4 years.

During some off time in 1968 I attempted to ferry a Cessna 320 from Oakland to Australia with the first stop in Honolulu. About 2 hours out from Oakland I lost the right engine and had no provisions for dumping fuel. I went down into ground effect (T effect for you purists) and for 3 hours and 21 minutes flew on one engine about 25 feet above the waves and made it into Hamilton AFB after flying under the Golden Gate and Richmond bridges. An old friend, Nick Conte, was officer of the day and gave me the royal treatment. Why did I go into Hamilton instead of Oakland? I knew exactly where the O-club was for some much needed refreshment.

In September of 1968, between 0-2 deliveries, I raced a Douglas B-26 Invader in the Reno Air Races. It was the largest airplane ever raced at Reno and I placed 5th in the Bronze, passing one Mustang. It was reported to me after the race by XB-70 project pilot

Col. Ted Sturmthal that when I passed the P-51, 3 fighter pilots from Nellis committed suicide off the back of the grandstands. In the summer of 1970, I helped Darryl Greenamyer and Adam Robbins put on the California 1000 air race in Mojave, California. That's the one where Clay Lacy raced the DC-7.

I flew a B-26 with Wally McDonald. I then started flying charter in an Aero Commander and Beech Queen Air for Aero Council, a charter service out of Burbank. They went belly up about 3 months later and I went up to Reno to work for my Dad as safety pilot on his Lear model 25. After my Dad fired me, I was personally escorted to the Nevada/California border by an ex-Los Angeles police detective who worked for Dad and did the muscle work.

I went back down to Van Nuys and was Chief Pilot for Lacy Aviation and was one of the first pilot proficiency examiners for the Lear Jet. In the summer of 1973 I moved to Phnom Penh, Cambodia as Chief Pilot and Director of Operations for Tri Nine Airlines, which flew routes throughout Cambodia for Khmer Akas Air.

I flew a Convair 440 an average of 130 hours a month. We had unlimited quantities of 115/145 fuel and ADI and were able to use full CB-17 power (which was 62" for any of you R-2800 aficionados). In November of 1973 I moved to Vientienne, Laos and flew C-46's and Twin Otters for Continental Air Services, Inc., delivering guns and ammo to Gen. Vang Pao and his CIA supported troops.

We got shot down one day and when I say we, Dave Kouba was the captain. We were flying a twin otter and got the right engine shot out. Actually, the small arms fire had hit the fuel line in the right strut and fuel was streaming out back around the tail and being sucked into the large cargo opening in the side of the airplane and filling the cockpit with a fine mist of jet fuel.

I held the mike in my hands, "Should I call Cricket and possibly blow us up or...?" (Some of you may remember "Cricket" - "This is Cricket on guard with an air strike warning to all aircraft".)

But Davy found us a friendly dirt strip and we were back in the air the next day. When the war came to an end in 1973, I moved back to Van Nuys and started flying Lears for Lacy again until October when I went up to Seattle and sat in on a Boeing 707 ground school for Air Club International on spec.

Three weeks later I ended up in the left seat of the 707 with a total of 8 hours in type. Air Club begat Aero America and we flew junkets out of Vegas for the Tropicana and Thunderbird Hotels. I left Aero having not been fired and, in the summer of 1975, I was Director of Ops for Ambassador Airlines "2" flying 707 junkets also out of Vegas. After that airline collapsed, I moved to Beirut, Lebanon in September of 1975 and flew 707's for 2 years for Trans Mediterranean Airways, a Lebanese cargo carrier.

It was a very interesting job in that they had 65 stations around the world, and you would leave Beirut with a copilot that had maybe 200 hours in airplanes and fortunately a first-rate plumber and off you'd go around the world. My favorite run was Dubai to Kabul, Afghanistan with a stop in Kandahar. Kabul is a one-way strip: land uphill and takeoff downhill, and it was 6000 foot elevation with no nav aids.

During those 2 years I made many round the world trips and many over the pole trips. In 1977 I moved back to Vegas and was Director of Operations for Nevada Airlines flying DC-3's and Twin Beech's to the Canyon. In September of 77 I was called to Budapest for another CIA operation flying 707's loaded with arms and ammo to Mogadishu.

Leaving Budapest, then refueling in Jeddah, we flew radio silence down the Red Sea trying to avoid the MiGs based in Aden, whose sole purpose on earth was to force us down. The briefing was simple: If you guys get into trouble DON'T CALL US. Back to Vegas in December of that year, I was hired as Chief Pilot for Bonanza Airlines "2" operating DC-3's and a Gulfstream 1 from Vegas to Aspen.

After that airline collapsed, I was hired by Hilton Hotels to fly their Lear 35A. In my spare time I flew part time for Dynalectron and the EPA on an underground nuke test monitoring program. I flew their B-26, OV-10, Volpar Beech and Huey helicopter. I also flew the Tri Motor Ford part-time for Scenic Airlines. **In 1978 my Dad passed away and left me with one dollar**, which incidentally, I never got.

In 1980 I ran for the Nevada State Senate District 4. I lost miserably only because I was uninformed, unprepared and both of my size 9 triple E feet were continually in my mouth. I got fired from Hilton shortly after that and moved to Cairo, Egypt, to fly for Air Trans - another CIA cutout. After the Camp David accords were signed in 1979, each country - Egypt and Israel - were required to operate 4 flights a week into the other's country. Of course, El Al pilots didn't mind flying into Cairo, but you could not find an Egyptian pilot that would fly

into Tel Aviv. So, an Egyptian airline was formed called Nefertiti Airlines with me as chief pilot to fly the 4 flights a week into Tel Aviv. On our off time we flew subcontract for Egyptair throughout Europe and Africa.

All this, of course was just a cover for our real mission, which was all kinds of nefarious gun running throughout Europe and Africa which we did in our spare time.

And now that our beloved 40th president has passed on I can tell you that in fact (with my apologies to Michael Reagan) the October Surprise was true. The October surprise - for those of you that don't remember it - happened during October of 1980 when Reagan and Bush were running against Carter and Mondale. George Bush was flown in a BAC 111 one Saturday night to Paris to meet with the Ayatollah Khomeini.

Bush offered the Khomeini a deal whereby, if he would delay the release of the hostages held in Tehran until Reagan's inauguration, the administration would supply unlimited guns and ammunition to the Iranians.

In order to get Bush back for a Sunday morning brunch so that nobody would be alerted to his absence, **he was flown back in an SR-71** from Reims field near Paris to McGuire AFB.

Of course, Reagan won, the hostages were released and one of my jobs in Cairo was to deliver those arms from Tel Aviv to Tehran.

Unfortunately, the first airplane in, an Argentinean CL-44, was shot down by the Russians just south of Yerevan and Mossad, who were running the operation, didn't want to risk sending my 707. The arms were eventually delivered through Dubai, across the Persian Gulf and directly to Tehran.

During the 2 years I was in Cairo, I averaged 180 hours a month with a top month of 236 hours in a 31-day period. I also spent a 6-week tour in Khartoum flying cows to Saana, North Yemen in an old Rolls Royce powered 707.

Back in Las Vegas in December of 1982, I sat on my ass until I was out of money - again - and then went to work for Global Int'l Airlines in Kansas City (another CIA cutout run by Farhad Azima, an Iranian with a bonifide Gold Plated Get Out of Jail Free card) flying 707's until they collapsed in October of 83. During the summer of 1983, the FAA celebrated its 25th Anniversary at the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center in Oklahoma City. There was much fanfare and speech-making and 2 honored guests: Bill Conrad

from Miami, Florida, who had the most type ratings (I think over 50), and myself. I had the most airman certificates issued of any other airman.

After Global's collapse, I went to work for American Trans Air flying 707's. I wrote their international navigation manual as MNPS for North Atlantic operations was just being implemented and became the first FAA designated check airman for MNPS navigation. ATA then added 727's and then Lockheed L-1011's. For a very brief time I was qualified as captain in all three.

After getting fired from ATA in July of 1989 I became a freight dog flying DC-8's for Rosenbalm Aviation, which became Flagship Express, and after that airline collapsed, I was hired as Chief pilot for Patriot Airlines out of Stead Field in Reno, flying cargo 727's from Miami to South America. After getting fired from Patriot, I went to work for Connie Kalitta flying DC-8s then the L-1011, on which I was a check airman. Kalitta sold out to Kitty Hawk International, which went bankrupt in May of 2000.

I was 57 at the time and nobody is going to hire an old ---- for two and a half years except to fly sideways, so I turned in my stripes and ever-present flask of Courvoisier... Except for one last fling in March of 2001, where I flew the Hadj for a Cambodian Airline flying L-1011's under contract to Air India. We were based in New Delhi and flew to Jeddah from all throughout India. There was absolutely no paperwork, no FAA, no BS and for 6-weeks we just moved Hadji's back and forth to Saudi Arabia.

One final note. In October of 1999, I had the honor and extreme pleasure to get checked out in a Lockheed CF-104D Starfighter. My instructor was Darryl Greenamyer, and the airplane was owned by Mark and Gretchen Sherman of Phoenix. It was the highlight of my aviation career, particularly because I survived my first and only SFO in a high- performance fighter.

One other thing – somehow, I managed to get the following type ratings: 707/720/727, Convair240/340/440, DC-3, DC -8, B-26, Gulfstream 1, Lockheed Constellation, Lear Jet series, HS-125, Lockheed L-1011, Lockheed L-18, Lockheed P-38, Martin 202/404, B-17, B-25, Grumman TBM and Ford Trimotor. I also have single and multi-engine sea, rotorcraft helicopter and gyroplane, and lighter than air free balloon. I never got all categories, having missed the Airship. And in case you are interested, many, many airmen have lots more type ratings.

What I did get, that no other airman got, was most FAA certificates, These are the ATP, Flight Instructor with airplane single and multi-engine, instrument, rotorcraft (helicopter and gyroplane), glider, Flight Navigator, Flight Engineer, Senior Parachute Rigger, Control Tower Operator, A&P, Ground Instructor, Advanced and Instrument and Aircraft Dispatcher. I have 19,488 hours of total time, of which 15,325 hours is in 1, 2, 3 or 4 engine jets. I took a total of 181 FAA (or designated check airman) check rides and failed 2.

Of the thousands of times I knowingly violated an FAA regulation, I was only caught once - but never charged or prosecuted.

The farthest I have ever been off course was 321 miles left of course over the South China Sea in a 707 on New Year's day in 1977, on a flight from Taipei. The deviation was not caught by Hong Kong, Manila or Singapore radar and I penetrated six zero-to-unlimited restricted areas west of the Philippines. I landed in Singapore 7 minutes late without further incident.

How, you ask, did I get so far off course? The short answer is I was napping at the controls. I have flown just about everywhere except Russia, China, Mongolia, Korea, Antarctica, Australia, or New Zealand. I am a senior vice-commander of the American Legion Post No.1 Shanghai, China (Generals Ward, Chennault and Helseth - operating in exile) and a 21-year member of the Special Operations Association.

Now some of you may be asking why so many airlines collapsed that I worked for and why I got fired so many times. My excuse is simple. I am not the brightest crayon in the box, I am extremely lazy, I have a smart mouth and a real poor attitude.

The Days of the Week

Sunday: Sun's Day. The Sun gave people light and warmth every day. They decided to name the first (or last) day of the week after the Sun.

Monday: Moon's Day. The Moon was thought to be very important in the lives of people and their crops.

Tuesday: Tiw's Day. Tiw, or Tyr, was a Norse god known for his sense of justice.

Wednesday: Woden's Day. Woden, or Odin, was a Norse god who was one of the most powerful of them all.

Thursday: Thor's Day. Thor was a Norse god who wielded a giant hammer.

Friday: Fria's Day. Fria or Freya was a Norse goddess of spring, love and rebirth.

Saturday: Seater's Day or Saturn's Day. Saturn was a Roman god. (The only Greek~Roman name that made the cut).



RED SKELTON'S RECIPE FOR THE PERFECT MARRIAGE

1. Two times a week we go to a nice restaurant, have a little beverage, good food and companionship. She goes on Tuesdays, I go on Fridays.
2. We also sleep in separate beds. Hers is in California and mine is in Texas.
3. I take my wife everywhere, but she keeps finding her way back.
4. I asked my wife where she wanted to go for our anniversary. "Somewhere I haven't been in a long time!" she said. So I suggested the kitchen.
5. We always hold hands. If I let go, she shops.
6. She has an electric blender, electric toaster and electric bread maker. She said "There are too many gadgets, and no place to sit down!" So I bought her an electric chair.
7. My wife told me the car wasn't running well because there was water in the carburetor. I asked where the car was. She told me, "In the lake."
8. She got a mud pack and looked great for two days. Then the mud fell off.
9. She ran after the garbage truck, yelling, "Am I too late for the garbage?" The driver said, "No, jump in!".
10. Remember: Marriage is the number one cause of divorce.
11. I married Miss Right. I just didn't know her first name was 'Always'.
12. I haven't spoken to my wife in 18 months. I don't like to interrupt her.
13. The last fight was my fault though. My wife asked, "What's on the TV?" I said, "Dust!".

A Spanish Delicacy

A Frenchman visiting Spain stops at a restaurant in Pamplona. While sipping his sangria, his attention turns to a mouthwatering dish served at the next table. Not only does it seem tasty, but it also gives off an aroma that is divine.

He, therefore, inquires from the server:

"But what is this wonder that you have just served?"

The server answer:

"Ah Señor, you have a nose! These are the testicles of the fighting bull that die this afternoon. A dish of a delicacy called the Spanish Delight."

French, a bit dumbfounded:

"After all, I'm on vacation, so serve me this treat."

But the boy answered:

"I'm sorry Señor, we can only serve this dish once a day because there is only one "Mise a Mort" per afternoon. If you come back earlier tomorrow and you are the first to order, then we can reserve this great treat for you."

The next day, the Frenchman returns, reserves his menu, and a little later, he was served this one and only delicacy of the day.

After sniffing his plate, examining the presentation and enjoying a few small bites, he calls the boy back and says to him:

"They're delicious, but they're much, much smaller than the ones I saw you serve yesterday."

The boy shrugs and says:

"Si Señor, but sometimes it is the bull who wins! ..."

Captain Wes Coss

Tributes to his heroism

The Last Flight of the B-17 “*Stardust*”

(and the amazing, hard to believe WW2 escape of its pilot, Wes Coss)

Words and photos by John Clayton



You're celebrating your 20th birthday as the pilot aboard a Flying Fortress. But two German fighters, ME-109s, are doing all they can to kill you or, at the very least, shoot you down. Only half way to your target in occupied France, it's obvious your B-17, *Stardust*, that'd racked up an incredible 84 combat missions in Europe, is on her last flight. Its midday, when you thought you'd be enjoying your birthday back at the Foggia, Italy, but Flight Operations said there was a “Must Destroy Target” and so you were off on your 21st mission. It was January 27th, 1944, and you, Lieutenant Wes Coss and his 9 crew, were headed off to an airfield at Salon de Provence, France -- used by the Germans as a base to reinforce their troops fighting at the Allied beachhead in Anzio, Italy.

At 12.23pm, and nearing the target, they encountered German fighter activity as the Messerschmitt 109's came roaring in to attack *Stardust* at the 11.30 position. The fighters were completely inverted as the B-17 navigator began firing his twin 50 caliber guns from the upper turret. Only milliseconds after they'd passed by, Lt. Coss saw that the #2 engine (*the one nearest to the fuselage on the left hand side*) had been hit, and had to be shut down. The brutal reality of intense aerial combat had begun for *Stardust*, and the crew's adrenalin was really pumping as two more 109s came thundering in at the same 11.30 position.

Aging *Stardust* could not keep up. Coss knew she could not reach the target, and she sure was NOT going to get back to base. She was going down. Fast. Hitching his parachute onto his harness, Coss told the crew to bail out, saying to himself, *“this is a hell of a way to celebrate my birthday.”* He'd never done any practice parachute jumps, but now was **NOT** the time to worry about what to do. Now was the time to actually jump. Which he did, but delayed opening his chute, noting *“We'd heard stories of German pilots shooting our crewmen as they parachuted earthwards.”* From the time of the first attack to leaving *Stardust*, just 8 minutes had passed. When Wes Coss landed on French soil it was 12.29pm.

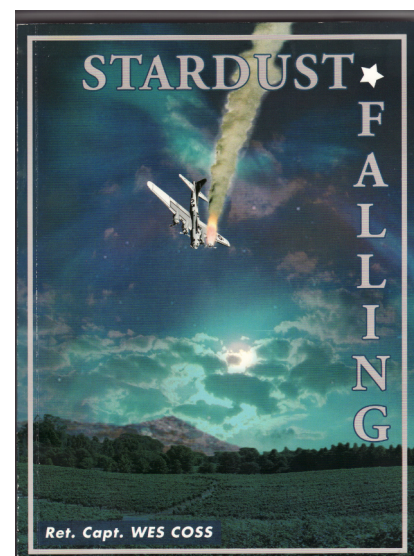
Getting out of his parachute (*and burying it*) he prayed he'd not be taken prisoner. Instead of sleeping soundly after a wonderful birthday party that'd been planned at his base, Lt. Coss found himself spending his 20th birthday sleeping in a haystack. Morning arrived and Coss made contact with French citizens from the Resistance. Aggressively questioned by a woman, she wanted to know much more than just rank, name and serial number – the Resistance had to be sure he wasn't a plant by the Germans to infiltrate the Resistance.

Satisfied he was “the real deal” he was told they'd try to get him to neutral Spain. Lt. Coss was asked if he knew how to ride a bicycle. *“Of course,”* he said, as he and his French “Guide” rode off together. They came to a steep hill and, when Coss got to the top, the view that met his eyes gave him heart palpitations. At the bottom, blocking his passage, was a throng of German soldiers! The Frenchman had said not to worry, but to keep him, his French guide, in sight – so Wes kept pedaling and, when he was almost on top of the Germans, the soldiers parted to let him pass with the comment, in French *“you crazy Frenchman!”*



Part of his escape involved taking a train to Perpignan. *“We passed through the barrier to our train,”* said Lt. Coss, *“and as we did so, the attendant said, in English, ‘Thank you,’ when we showed him our tickets. We were scared as all get out, that our cover had been blown, but it was OK.”* They boarded their train. German soldiers entered their compartment, Lt. Coss (now dressed as a local villager) pretended to be asleep. As they neared Perpignan Coss was told to get off the train before the station. They did, but other members of Wes Coss crew, also on the train did not, and were arrested by the Gestapo!

Lt. Coss made it home to the USA and, after the war ended, joined Continental Airlines for a 37 year career as a pilot. Whether as a Continental Airlines Captain, or a Lieutenant in command of a B-17 called *Stardust*, Lt. Coss is a genuine American hero. Captain Coss, we salute you!



WESLEY "WES" COSS

Life Member John Bailey advised us that Captain Wes Coss passed away on August 11 in Redondo Beach CA. He was 97. Wes, an ARECA Member, was born in Paw Paw IL on May 1, 1923. By the age of 20, he was a pilot in the U.S. Army Air Corps flying a B-17 in WWII with his 10 man crew.

Wes joined CO on May 10, 1946. He flew our DC-3, Convair 340, Boeing 707, 747, and DC-10. While flying for CO, he also flew covert surveillance missions over the Soviet Union during the Korean Conflict (1950s), and later transported injured and deceased U.S. troops back home from Viet Nam (1960s). Wes was #1 in seniority when he retired from CO on May 1, 1983, after 37 years of CO service.

After retirement, Wes wrote and published a book, "Stardust Falling", which included his WWII experiences. Stardust was the name of the B-17 he was flying in 1944, when on his 21st mission, his aircraft was shot down over southern France. Wes survived, and avoided capture aided by the French Resistance. He crossed the Pyrenees Mountains into Spain during the winter, and was able to make it back home in time for his 21st birthday. Wes became an instructor on the B-17s and B-29s. ARECA Member George Frauhiger recently purchased the book and recommends it. While George has yet to finish it, he said it starts out when Wes was 18 and walked to the airport every day.

In addition to writing the book, after retiring Wes also became a commercial fisherman, an avid sailor, an active member of St. Lawrence Martyr Catholic Church, and a volunteer cook for the Union Rescue Mission.

Wes is survived by a son, Casey Coss, daughter Nancy Pohlig, and one granddaughter.

The Flight West of Captain Red Stubben

CLAYTON "RED" STUBBEN

ARECA Life Member Bill Champlin has advised us that ARECA Member Captain Red Stubben passed away on July 29. He was 94. Capt. Stubben was born in Verdigris NE on October 30, 1925. He was a 60 year resident of Rancho Palos Verdes CA.

Red was a career aviator. He began by flying crop dusters, and towing banners. He flew the A-26 in WWII, and after the war he was hired by CO as a pilot on January 10, 1951.

We made many attempts to reach a member of Red's family in order to obtain more information, but were unsuccessful. Following are comments from our ARECA members.

Former secretary to Sr. Vice President Richard Adams, Tam Johnson said "Since Dick Adams and I shared the same office suite with Red's Flight Operations staff, I had the pleasure of getting to know all of them. I credit Red, with his demeanor and skills, for making it fun to come to work each and every day. He was a true gentleman".

Retired Capt. Cliff "Pleggie" Pleggenkuhle said "I knew Red very well. He flew everything from our DC-3 to the DC-10. He even flew the Concorde when we had an option for 3 aircraft. He was very instrumental in having all CO aircraft have a standard cockpit layout. Red was a great leader and a pilot's pilot".

Former LAX Maintenance Control Supervisor, Bill Champlin said "Red was a very nice person. I found him to be sensible and open minded. He was one of our very best pilots. I flew with him on some of our Boeing "Acceptance Flights".

And, former Director of Passenger Service and Vice President of ARECA, Wayne Cooper said "I flew many flights with Red. He was a great Captain, always took good care of his crew, and was highly respected by those in flight. He was Captain on our first 747 flight to record a zero visibility take off, and we had Bob Six on board".

Red's position when he retired from CO on August 1, 1983 was Vice President of Flight Operations.

Red and Luddy were married for 53 years before she passed. He is survived by three sons, David, Larry, and Mark, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

A private burial at sea is planned.

Submitted by Mary Hess

Chuck Yeager, first pilot to break the sound barrier, dies at 97

Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Charles “Chuck” Yeager, the World War II fighter pilot ace and quintessential test pilot who showed he had the “right stuff” when in 1947 he became the first person to fly faster than sound, had died. He was 97.

Yeager died Monday, NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine said in a statement, calling the death “a tremendous loss to our nation.”

American Air Force Colonel Charles “Chuck” Yeager holds a model of the Bell X-1 aircraft he flew 15 years ago to become the first person to break the sound barrier on Oct. 18, 1962 in New York City. Yeager has died at the age of 97.

“Gen. Yeager’s pioneering and innovative spirit advanced America’s abilities in the sky and set our nation’s dreams soaring into the jet age and the space age. He said, ‘You don’t concentrate on risks. You concentrate on results. No risk is too great to prevent the necessary job from getting done,’” Bridenstine said in his statement.

“In an age of media-made heroes, he is the real deal,” Edwards Air Force Base historian Jim Young said in August 2006 at the unveiling of a bronze statue of Yeager.



Citroen's WW II Sabotage

You’re likely unaware that this year is the 100th anniversary of Citroën. While doing some research I happened to stumble upon a fascinating bit of wartime Citroën lore. It involves screwing with Nazis in a genuinely clever and subtle way that nevertheless had big repercussions.

So, when France was occupied by the Germans in 1940, major French factories like Citroën were forced to produce equipment for the Nazis. Citroën president Pierre-Jules Boulanger knew he couldn't just refuse to produce anything, but he also knew there's no way in hell he's going to just roll over and build trucks for a bunch of filthy Nazis. Pierre had a plan.

John Reynold's book Citroën 2CV describes Boulanger's sabotage efforts. Of course, he instructed workers to set a nice, leisurely pace when building trucks (likely Citroën T45 trucks) for the Wehrmacht, but that's fairly obvious. What was brilliant was Boulanger's idea to move the little notch on the trucks' oil dipsticks that indicated the proper level of oil down just a bit lower.

By moving the notch down, the trucks would not have enough oil, but German mechanics would have no idea, because, hey, the little notch on the dipstick says its just fine. Then, after the truck has been used for a while and is out deployed somewhere crucial, whammo, the engine seizes up, and you've got a lot of angry, stranded, vulnerable Nazis, balling up their little fists and madly barking curses in German.

It's such a fantastic act of sabotage: it's extremely cheap to implement, it's subtle, there's no way to see something amiss is happening as the trucks are being built, and it delivers its blow away from the site of the sabotage and when it will cause the most inconvenience and trouble.

That's some mighty good sabotaging, Pierre.

Happy 100th Anniversary, Citroën.

The Free World thanks you.

The Aeroplane Black Box

On Friday 19 October, 1934, the passenger plane Miss Hobart fell from the sky to the sea. Eight men, three women and a baby boy fell with her, swallowed - it's believed - by the waters of the Bass Strait that lies between Tasmania and mainland Australia. The plane's wreckage was never found.

One of those on board was a 33-year-old Anglican missionary, Rev Hubert Warren (pictured at end), who had been travelling to his new parish in Enfield, Sydney. His wife Ellie and four children had stayed behind, intending to follow by boat. The reverend's last present to his eight-year-old son, David, had been a crystal radio set that the boy treasured deeply.

As a boarder at Launceston Boys' Grammar School in Tasmania, David Warren tinkered with the machine after lessons, learning what made it work. He charged friends a



penny to listen to cricket matches, and within a few years was selling home-made copies at five shillings each. By his mid-twenties, David Warren had studied his way to a science degree from the University of Sydney, a diploma in education from Melbourne University and a PhD in chemistry from Imperial College, London. His specialty was rocket science, and he went to work as a researcher for the Aeronautical Research Laboratories (ARL), a part of Australia's Defence Department that focused on planes.

In 1953, the department loaned him to an expert panel trying to solve a costly and distressing mystery: why did the British de Havilland Comet, the world's first commercial jet airliner and the great hope of the new Jet Age, keep crashing? He thought it might be the fuel tanks; but there were dozens of possible causes and nothing but death and debris as evidence. The panel sat down to discuss what they knew.

"People were rattling on about staff training and pilots' errors, and did a fin break off the tail, and all sorts of things that I knew nothing about," Dr Warren recalled more than 50 years later.

"I found myself dreaming of something I'd seen the week before at Sydney's first post-war trade fair. And that is - what claimed to be the first pocket recorder, the Miniphon. A German device. There'd been nothing before like it..."

The Miniphon was marketed as a dictation machine

for businessmen, who could sit at their desks (or on trains and planes) recording letters that would later be typed up by their secretaries. David, who loved swing music and played the clarinet, only wanted one so he could make bootleg recordings of the jazz musician Woody Herman.

However, when one of his fellow scientists suggested the latest doomed Comet might have been hijacked, something clicked for him.

The chances that a recorder had been on board - and survived the fiery wreck - were basically nil. But what if every plane in the sky had a mini recorder in the cockpit? If it was tough enough, accident investigators would never be this confused again, because they'd have audio right up to the moment of the crash. At the very least, they'd know what the pilots had said and heard.

The idea fascinated him. Back at ARL, he rushed to tell his boss about it.

Alas, his superior didn't share his enthusiasm. Dr Warren said he was told: "It's nothing to do with chemistry or fuels. You're a chemist. Give that to the instruments group and get on with blowing up fuel tanks."

David knew his idea for a cockpit recorder was a good one. Without official support, there was little he could do about it - but he couldn't get it out of his mind.

When his boss was promoted, David pitched his invention again. His new superior was intrigued, and so was Dr Laurie Coombes, ARL's chief superintendent. They urged him to keep working on it - but discreetly. Since it wasn't a government-approved venture or a war-winning weapon, it couldn't be seen to take up lab time or money.

Dr Warren said the chief superintendent had cautioned him: "If I find you talking to anyone, including me, about this matter, I will have to sack you."

It was a sobering thought for a young man with a wife and two children.

But his boss's backing extended to sneakily buying one of the precious new dictation recorders, and chalking it up as "an instrument required for the laboratory..."

Encouraged, Dr Warren wrote up his idea in a report, titled "A Device for Assisting Investigation into Aircraft Accidents", and sent it out across the industry. The pilots' union responded with fury, branding the recorder a snooping device, and insisted "no plane would take off in Australia with Big Brother listening".

That was one of his better reviews.

Australia's civilian aviation authorities declared it had "no immediate significance", and the air force feared it would "yield more expletives than explanations".

Dr Warren was tempted to pack it all in. However, Dr Warren took to his garage and assembled his 20-year-old radio parts. He'd decided the only way to overcome his critics' mockery and suspicion was to build a solid prototype. It would be the first ever "black box" flight recorder.

One day in 1958, when the little flight recorder had been finished and finessed, the lab received an unusual visitor. Dr Coombes, the chief superintendent, was showing round a friend from England.

One day in 1958, when the little flight recorder had been finished and finessed, the lab received an unusual visitor. Dr Coombes, the chief superintendent, was showing round a friend from England.

"Dave!" he said, "Tell him what you're doing!"

Dr Warren explained: his world-first prototype used steel wire to store four hours of pilot voices plus instrument readings and automatically erased older records so it was reusable.

There was a pause, then the visitor said: "I say Coombes old chap, that's a damn good idea. Put that lad on the next courier, and we'll show it in London."

The courier was a Hastings transport aircraft, making a run to England. You had to know somebody pretty powerful to get a seat on it. Dr Warren wondered who this man was who was giving away tickets round the world to somebody he'd never met.

The answer was Robert Hardingham (later Sir Robert), the secretary of the British Air Registration Board and a former Air Vice-Marshal in the RAF.

In David's words: "He was a hero. And he was a friend of Coombes, and if he gave away a seat, you took it."

A few weeks later, Dr Warren was on a plane bound for England - with strict instructions not to tell Australia's Department of Defence what he was really doing there, because "somebody would frown on it".

In a near-unbelievable irony, the plane lost an engine over the Mediterranean.

Dr Warren recalled: "I said, 'Chaps, we seem to have lost a donk - does anyone want to go back?' But we'd come from Tunisia and it was about 45 degrees overnight. We didn't want to go back to that hellhole."

They decided they could make it if they ploughed on.

He recorded the rest of the flight, thinking that even if he died in that limping transport plane, "at least I'd have proved the bastards wrong!" "But unfortunately we didn't prang - we just landed safely..."

In England, Dr Warren presented "the ARL Flight Memory Unit" to the Royal Aeronautical Establishment and some commercial instrument-makers. The Brits loved it. The BBC ran TV and radio programmes examining it, and the British civil aviation authority started work to make the device mandatory in civil aircraft. A Middlesex firm, S Davall and Sons, approached ARL about the production rights, and kicked off manufacturing.

Though the device started to be called "the black box", the first ones off the line were orange so they'd be easier to find after a crash - and they remain so today.

Peter Warren believes the name dates from a 1958 interview his father gave the BBC.

"Right at the end there was a journalist who referred to this as a 'black box'. It's a generic word from electronics engineering, and the name stuck."

In 1960, Australia became the first country to make cockpit voice recorders mandatory, after an unexplained plane crash in Queensland killed 29 people. The ruling came from a judicial inquiry, and took a further three years to become law.

Today, black boxes are fire-proof, ocean-proof and encased in steel. And they are compulsory on every commercial flight.

It's impossible to say how many people owe their lives to data captured in the death throes of a failing plane - to the flaws exposed, and the safety innovations that followed.

David Warren worked at ARL until his retirement in 1983, becoming its principal research scientist. He died on 19 July, 2010, at the age of 85.



A letter from Kenneth Lawrence

December 9, 2020

Dear Gary,

In the first paragraph of your "Reports, From the Editor" in the last paper version of "Golden Contrails" you made reference to the beginning of the publication. I have some knowledge of the history of the publication.

Sometime in 1959 or maybe 1960, Operations management decided to publish an "information newsletter" for the pilot group. Two senior Captains, "Dick" Grigsby and "Barney" Barnwell were involved in starting the publication. I was not privy to who actually published the first issue.

As a little bit of history, I was hired by Captain Jack Weiler and Raoul Cote' in July of 1957. I started as the "Link Trainer" operator in the Training Department, but since this did not keep me busy 40 hours a week I was soon "promoted" to teaching DC-3 Ground School. This promotion resulted in me receiving the largest single pay raise, percentage wise, I ever got (from \$200/mo. to \$300/mo.).

The next airplane added to the Continental fleet was the Vickers Viscount. I collaborated with Mr. Cote' in creating the Flight Manual and taught the Ground School courses. Subsequently the DC-9 and B- 707 aircraft were acquired and I performed the same functions for these airplanes.

In 1960 Captains "Red" Stubben and Don Ballard moved to Los Angeles to establish the LA crew base. They asked me to move to Los Angeles to conduct B-707 Ground School courses in 1961, which I agreed to.

As time went on the base and aircraft types (B-707, B-720B, B-320C, B-727 100/200, B-747, DC-10, Sabreliner) grew as did my responsibilities. I ended up as Manager, Flight Crew Ground Training. One of the responsibilities that I "inherited" was the publication of the Golden Contrails. At one point in time I sent Golden Contrails to Operations people at most of the major airlines in the world, in exchange for copies of comparable publications by their companies. The more than fifty Continental Vice Presidents, and Directors were also on the "mailing list", as was RF. Six. I did this in my "spare time" as apparently no one else wanted to do it.

After Texas Air took Continental over, my position was deleted, as was my employment. As I had almost 25 years of non-contract employee "seniority" I was able to request and ultimately get "early retirement" benefits. As far as I know Golden Contrails was no longer published after I was terminated. When I left the company I kept a personal library copy of every issue of the Golden Contrails.

I found employment at North American Rockwell working on the B-1B program. There was no future at Rockwell so I applied for employment at Martin Marietta (Lockheed Martin) in Denver. In 1984 they moved me to Denver and hired me to create and present launch vehicle (Peacekeeper, Titan, and Atlas) technical training courses at Vandenberg AFB in California and Orlando Florida. I retired from Lockheed Martin on December 31st of 1999.

Sometime in the mid-2000s I attended a funeral service here in Denver for a Continental pilot, while there I talked with several pilots I had not seen for many years, and ended up petitioning Captain Dick Grigsby to sponsor me for membership in the Golden Eagles. At this time Dick was the Golden Eagles Historian so I bundled up my entire collection of Golden Contrails and sent it to him. I do not know what happened to the collection after Dick passed away.

In 2012 I started working with Captain Bill Leeper. Among other things, he was involved with the United Airlines Heritage Foundation who had amassed a huge collection of UA memorabilia, some of which was displayed in the hallways of the United Airlines training facility. Bill's mission was to collect and create displays of Continental material. Several ex-Continental employee volunteers and I worked with Bill collecting material and creating displays until 2016 when United dismantled all of the "museum" displays in preparation for major revamping of the training facility.

One of the things I did while working with Bill was to catalog a large number of pictures and other miscellaneous items that Captain "Bud" Battley salvaged when the Houston office was in the process of shutting down. I scanned around 2000 images, some of which date from the early '30s, and described them in an Excel workbook. I can give you some more information regarding this material some other time if you are interested.

Kenneth Lawrence kenlawrence@q.com

IN CASE YOU DIDN'T ALREADY KNOW THIS LITTLE TIDBIT OF WONDERFUL TRIVIA.....

ON JULY 20, 1969, AS COMMANDER OF THE APOLLO 11 LUNAR MODULE, NEIL ARMSTRONG WAS THE FIRST PERSON TO SET FOOT ON THE MOON. HIS FIRST WORDS AFTER STEPPING ON THE MOON, "THAT'S ONE SMALL STEP FOR MAN, ONE GIANT LEAP FOR MANKIND," WERE TELEVISED TO EARTH AND HEARD BY MILLIONS. BUT, JUST BEFORE HE RE-ENTERED THE LANDER, HE MADE THE ENIGMATIC REMARK "GOOD LUCK, MR. GORSKY." MANY PEOPLE AT NASA THOUGHT IT WAS A CASUAL REMARK CONCERNING SOME RIVAL SOVIET COSMONAUT. HOWEVER, UPON CHECKING, THERE WAS NO GORSKY IN EITHER THE RUSSIAN OR AMERICAN SPACE PROGRAMS.

OVER THE YEARS, MANY PEOPLE QUESTIONED ARMSTRONG AS TO WHAT THE 'GOOD LUCK, MR. GORSKY' STATEMENT MEANT, BUT ARMSTRONG ALWAYS JUST SMILED.

ON JULY 5, 1995, IN TAMPA BAY, FLORIDA, WHILE ANSWERING QUESTIONS FOLLOWING A SPEECH, A REPORTER BROUGHT UP THE 26-YEAR-OLD QUESTION ABOUT MR. GORSKY AND THIS TIME HE FINALLY RESPONDED BECAUSE HIS MR. GORSKY HAD JUST DIED, SO NEIL ARMSTRONG FELT HE COULD NOW ANSWER THE QUESTION.

HERE IS THE ANSWER TO "WHO WAS MR. GORSKY?":

IN 1938, WHEN HE WAS A KID IN A SMALL MID-WESTERN TOWN, HE WAS PLAYING BASEBALL WITH A FRIEND IN THE BACKYARD. HIS FRIEND HIT THE BALL, WHICH LANDED IN HIS NEIGHBOR'S YARD BY THEIR BEDROOM WINDOW. HIS NEIGHBORS WERE MR. AND MRS. GORSKY. AS HE LEANED DOWN TO PICK UP THE BALL, YOUNG ARMSTRONG HEARD MRS. GORSKY SHOUTING AT MR. GORSKY, "SEX! YOU WANT SEX?! YOU'LL GET SEX WHEN THE KID NEXT DOOR WALKS ON THE MOON!"

It broke the place up.

NEIL ARMSTRONG'S FAMILY CONFIRMED THAT THIS IS A TRUE STORY.

A senior citizen drove his brand new Corvette convertible out of the dealership. Taking off down the road, he floored it to 80 mph, enjoying the wind blowing through what little gray hair he had left. Amazing, he thought as he flew down I-94, pushing the pedal even more. Looking in his rear view mirror, he saw a state trooper behind him, lights flashing and siren blaring. He floored it to 100 mph, then 110, then 120. Suddenly he thought, What am I doing? I'm too old for this, and pulled over to await the trooper's arrival. Pulling in behind him, the trooper walked up to the Corvette, looked at his watch, and said, "Sir, my shift ends in 30 minutes. Today is Friday. If you can give me a reason for speeding that I've never heard before, I'll let you go."

The old gentleman paused. Then he said, "Years ago, my wife ran off with a state trooper. I thought you were bringing her back."



A Mother knows... Ben invited his mother over for dinner. During the meal, his mother couldn't help noticing how beautiful Ben's roommate was. She had long been suspicious of a relationship between Ben and his roommate and this only made her more curious.

Over the course of the evening, while watching the two interact, she started to wonder if there was more between Ben and the roommate than met the eye. Reading his mom's thoughts, Ben volunteered, "I know what you must be thinking, but I assure you, Beth and I are just roommates."

About a week later, Beth came to Ben and said, "Ever since your mother came to dinner, I've been unable to find the beautiful silver gravy ladle. "You don't suppose she took it, do you?"

Ben said, "Well, I doubt it, but I'll write her a letter just to be sure."

So he sat down and wrote: "Dear Mother, I'm not saying you 'did' take a gravy ladle from my house, and I'm not saying you 'did not' take a gravy ladle. But the fact remains that one has been missing ever since you were here for dinner."

Several days later, Ben received a letter from his mother which read:

"Dear Son, I'm not saying that you 'do' sleep with Beth, and I'm not saying that you 'do not' sleep with Beth, But the fact remains that if she was sleeping in her own bed, she would have found the gravy ladle by now. Love, Mom"

1941 First Allied jet-propelled aircraft flies

On May 15, 1941, the jet-propelled Gloster-Whittle E 28/39 aircraft flies successfully over Cranwell, England, in the first test of an Allied aircraft using jet propulsion. The aircraft's turbojet engine, which produced a powerful thrust of hot air, was devised by Frank Whittle, an English aviation engineer and pilot generally regarded as the father of the jet engine. Whittle, born in Coventry in 1907, was the son of a mechanic. At the age of 16, he joined the Royal Air Force (RAF) as an aircraft apprentice at Cranwell and in 1926 passed a medical exam to become a pilot and joined the RAF College. He won a reputation as a daredevil flier and in 1928 wrote a senior thesis entitled *Future Developments in Aircraft Design*, which discussed the possibilities of rocket propulsion.

From the first Wright brothers flight in 1903 to the first jet flight in 1939, most airplanes were propeller driven. In 1910, the French inventor Henri Coanda built a jet-propelled bi-plane, but it crashed on its maiden flight and never flew again. Coanda's aircraft attracted little notice, and engineers stuck with propeller technology; even though they realized early on that propellers would never overcome certain inherent limitations, especially in regard to speed. After graduating from the RAF college, Whittle was posted to a fighter squadron, and in his spare time he worked out the essentials of the modern turbojet engine. A flying instructor, impressed with his propulsion ideas, introduced him to the Air Ministry and a private turbine engineering firm, but both ridiculed Whittle's ideas as impractical. In 1930, he patented his jet engine concept and in 1936 formed the company Power Jets Ltd. to build and test his invention. In 1937, he tested his first jet engine on the ground. He still received only limited funding and

support, and on August 27, 1939, the German Heinkel He 178, designed by Hans Joachim Pabst von Ohain, made the first jet flight in history. The German prototype jet was developed independently of Whittle's efforts.

One week after the flight of the He 178, World War II broke out in Europe, and Whittle's project got a further lease of life. The Air Ministry commissioned a new jet engine from Power Jets and asked the Gloster Aircraft Company to build an experimental aircraft to accommodate it, specified as E 28/39. On May 15, 1941, the jet-propelled Gloster-Whittle E 28/39 flew, beating out a jet prototype being developed by the same British turbine company that earlier balked at his ideas. In its initial tests, Whittle's aircraft—flown by the test pilot Gerry Sayer—achieved a top speed of 370 mph at 25,000 feet, faster than the Spitfire or any other conventional propeller-driven machine.

As the Gloster Aircraft Company worked on an operational turbojet aircraft for combat, Whittle aided the Americans in their successful development of a jet prototype. With Whittle's blessing, the British government took over Power Jets Ltd. in 1944. By this time, Britain's Gloster Meteor jet aircraft were in service with the RAF, going up against Germany's jet-powered Messerschmitt Me 262s in the skies over Europe.

Whittle retired from the RAF in 1948 with the rank of air commodore. That year, he was awarded 100,000 pounds by the Royal Commission on Awards to Inventors and was knighted. His book *Jet: The Story of a Pioneer* was published in 1953. In 1977, he became a research professor at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. He died in Columbia, Maryland, in 1996.



Homeschool Marching Band

Winglet Wonders

10 billion gallons of fuel saved - by D.M Chan, Asia Times



Through the company's partnership with JV Aviation Partners Boeing, their blended and split scimitar winglet technology is now being used on several Boeing models, including the Boeing Business Jet, and some variants of 737, 757 and 767 airliners.

Seattle based API's high-tech winglets have been installed on almost 9,000 commercial and business aircraft worldwide. Aviation Partners, Inc. based in Seattle, Wash., recently announced that its unique (and trademarked) Blended Winglet and Split Scimitar Winglet technologies have saved the world's commercial and business jet operators more than 10 billion gallons of jet fuel, resulting in a corresponding global reduction of over 105 million tons of CO2 emissions, Flying Magazine reported.

To put that amount of fuel savings in perspective, API looked at U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics for 2018 and found that 10 billion gallons of fuel would operate Alaska Airlines' entire fleet of aircraft for nearly 14 years, or power roughly 450,000 cars in the city of Seattle for 34 years.

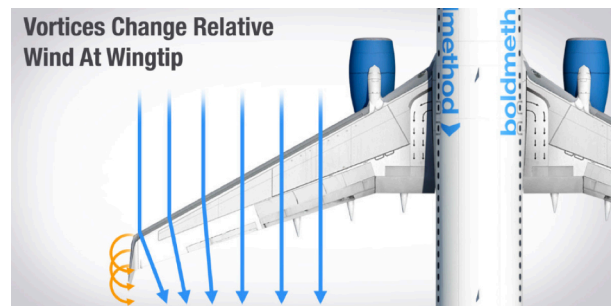
Blended Winglets using Aviation Partners technology have now been installed on almost 9,000 aircraft worldwide, including the Dassault Falcon 900/2000/50 series, Hawker 800 series and Gulfstream II, Flying Magazine reported.

Through the company's partnership with JV Aviation Partners Boeing, their blended and split scimitar winglet technology is now being used on several Boeing models, including the Boeing Business Jet, and some variants of 737, 757 and 767 airliners.

"We've kept an exhaustive database of every delivery of a shipset of winglets on every business and commercial airplane," said Gary Dunn, Aviation Partners, Inc. Vice-President of Sales & Marketing.

"The data used to calculate the fuel savings worldwide is constantly being updated as new aircraft are put into service. For each type, we know how many were delivered, as well as the type's average energy utilization and typical average stage length.

"After running our algorithm, the database tells us the worldwide fuel savings across all the airplanes using winglets with API technology," Dunn said. The API **winglet technology saves fuel by reducing wingtip vortices, resulting in less drag**, a lower fuel burn and superior climb and cruise characteristics. Joe Clark, founder and chief executive officer of API first introduced the company's patented winglet technology for the Gulfstream II in 1992, Flying Magazine reported.



An Aussie trucker walks into an outback cafe with a full-grown emu behind him.

The waitress asks them for their orders.

The trucker says, 'A hamburger, chips and a coke,' and turns to the emu, 'What's yours?' 'Sounds great, I'll have the same,' says the emu. A short time later the waitress returns with the order 'That will be \$9.40 please,' and he reaches into his pocket and pulls out the exact change and pays

The next day, the man and the emu come again and he says, 'A hamburger, chips and a coke.' The emu says, ' Sounds great, I'll have the same.' Again the trucker reaches into his pocket and pays with exact change.

This becomes routine until the two enter again.

'The usual?' asks the waitress. 'No, it's Friday night, so I'll have a steak, baked potato, and a salad,' says the man.. 'Same for me,' says the emu. Shortly the waitress brings the order and says, 'That will be \$32.62.'

Once again the man pulls the exact change out of his pocket and places it on the table. The waitress cannot hold back her curiosity any longer. 'Excuse me mate, how do you manage to always pull the exact change from your pocket every time?'

'Well, love' says the trucker, a few years ago, I was cleaning out the back shed, and found an old lamp. When I cleaned it, a Genie appeared and offered me two wishes. My first wish was that if I ever had to pay for anything, I would just put my hand in my pocket and the right amount of money would always be there.

'That's brilliant!' says the waitress. 'Most people would ask for a million dollars or something, but you'll always be as rich as you want, for as long as you live!' That's right. Whether it's a gallon of milk or a Rolls Royce, the exact money is always there.' says the man.

Still curious the waitress asks, 'Then what's with the emu?!?'

The trucker pauses, sighs, and answers, 'My second wish was for a tall chick with a big rump and long legs who agrees with everything I say.'

I tried to make a salad... I failed



A personal account of the Doolittle Raid

My name is Edgar McElroy. My friends call me "Mac". I was born and raised in Ennis Texas, the youngest of five children, son of Harry and Jennie McElroy. Folks say that I was the quiet one. We lived at 609 North Dallas Street and attended the Presbyterian Church.

My dad had an auto mechanic's shop downtown close to the main fire station. My family was a hard working bunch, and I was expected to work at dad's garage after school and on Saturdays, so I grew up in an atmosphere of machinery, oil and grease. Occasionally I would hear a lone plane fly over, and would run out in the street and strain my eyes against the sun to watch it. Someday, that would be me up there!

I really like cars, and I was always busy on some project, and it wasn't long before I decided to build my very own Model-T out of spare parts. I got an engine from over here, a frame from over there, and wheels from someplace else, using only the good parts from old cars that were otherwise shot. It wasn't very pretty, but it was all mine. I enjoyed driving on the dirt roads around town and the feeling of freedom and speed. That car of mine could really go fast, 40 miles per hour!

In high school I played football and tennis, and was good enough at football to receive an athletic scholarship from Trinity University in Waxahachie. I have to admit that sometimes I daydreamed in class, and often times I thought about flying my very own airplane and being up there in the clouds. That is when I even decided to take a correspondence course in aircraft engines. Whenever I got the chance, I would take my girl on a date up to Love Field in Dallas. We would watch the airplanes and listen to those mighty piston engines roar. I just loved it and if she didn't, well that was just too bad.

After my schooling, I operated a filling station with my brother, then drove a bus, and later had a job as a machinist in Longview, but I never lost my love of airplanes and my dream of flying. With what was going on in Europe and in Asia, I figured that our country would be drawn into war someday, so I decided to join the Army Air Corps in November of 1940. This way I could finally follow my dream.

I reported for primary training in California. The training was rigorous and frustrating at times. We trained at airfields all over California. It was tough going, and many of the guys washed out. When I finally saw that I was going to make it, I wrote to my girl back in Longview, Texas. Her name is Agnes Gill. I asked her to come out to California for my graduation and oh yeah, also to marry me.

I graduated on July 11, 1941. I was now a real, honest-to-goodness Army Air Corps pilot. Two days later, I married "Aggie" in Reno Nevada. We were starting a new life together and were very happy. I received my orders to report to Pendleton, Oregon and join the 17th Bomb Group. Neither of us had traveled much before, and the drive north through the Cascade Range of the Sierra Nevada's was interesting and beautiful.

It was an exciting time for us. My unit was the first to receive the new B-25 medium bomber. When I saw it for the first time I was in awe. It looked so huge. It was so sleek and powerful. The guys started calling it the "rocket plane", and I could hardly wait to get my hands on it. I told Aggie that it was really something! Reminded me of a big old scorpion, just ready to sting! Man, I could barely wait!

We were transferred to another airfield in Washington State, where we spent a lot of time flying practice missions and attacking imaginary targets. Then, there were other assignments in Mississippi and Georgia, for more maneuvers and more practice.

We were on our way back to California on December 7th when we got word of a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. We listened with mixed emotions to the announcements on the radio, and the next day to the declaration of war. What the President said, it just rang over and over in my head, "With confidence in our armed forces, with the un-bounding determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph. So help us God." By gosh, I felt as though he was talking straight to me! I didn't know what would happen to us, but we all knew that we would be going somewhere now.

The first weeks of the war, we were back in Oregon flying patrols at sea looking for possible Japanese submarines. We had to be up at 0330 hours to warm up the engines of our planes. There was 18 inches of snow on the ground, and it was so cold that our engine oil congealed overnight. We placed big tarps over the engines that reached down to the ground. Inside this tent we used plumbers blow torches to thaw out the engines. I figured that my dad would be proud of me, if he could see me inside this tent with all this machinery, oil and grease. After about an hour of this, the engines were warm enough to start.

We flew patrols over the coasts of Oregon and Washington from dawn until dusk. Once I thought I spotted a sub, and started my bomb run, even had my bomb doors open, but I pulled out of it when I realized that it was just a big whale.

Lucky for me, I would have never heard the end of that! Actually it was lucky for us that the Japanese didn't attack the west coast, because we just didn't have a strong enough force to beat them off. Our country was in a real fix now, and overall things looked pretty bleak to most folks. In early February, we were ordered to report to Columbus, South Carolina. Man, this Air Corps sure moves a fellow around a lot! Little did I know what was coming next!

After we got settled in Columbus, my squadron commander called us all together. He told us that an awfully hazardous mission was being planned, and then he asked for volunteers. There were some of the guys that did not step forward, but I was one of the ones that did. My co-pilot was shocked. He said "You can't volunteer, Mac! You're married, and you and Aggie are expecting a baby soon. Don't do it!" I told him that "I got into the Air Force to do what I can, and Aggie understands how I feel. The war won't be easy for any of us."

We that volunteered were transferred to Eglin Field near Valparaiso, Florida in late February. When we all got together, there were about 140 of us volunteers, and we were told that we were now part of the "Special B-25 Project."

We set about our training, but none of us knew what it was all about. We were ordered not to talk about it, not even to our wives. In early March, we were all called in for a briefing, and gathered together in a big building there on the base. Somebody said that the fellow who head of this thing is coming to talk to us, and in walks Lieutenant Colonel Jimmy Doolittle. He was already an aviation legend, and there he stood right in front of us. I was truly amazed just to meet him.

Colonel Doolittle explained that this mission would be extremely dangerous, and that only volunteers could take part. He said that he could not tell us where we were going, but he could say that some of us would not be coming back.

There was a silent pause; you could have heard a pin drop. Then Doolittle said that anyone of us could withdraw now, and that no one would criticize us for this decision. No one backed out! From the outset, all volunteers worked from the early morning hours until well after sunset. All excess weight was stripped from the planes and extra gas tanks were added. The lower gun turret was removed, the heavy liaison radio was removed, and then the tail guns were taken out and more gas tanks were put aboard. We extended the range of that plane from 1000 miles out to 2500 miles.

Then I was assigned my crew. There was Richard Knobloch the co-pilot, Clayton Campbell the navigator, Robert Bourgeois the bombardier, Adam Williams the flight engineer and gunner, and me, Mac McElroy the pilot. Over the coming days, I came to respect them a lot. They were a swell bunch of guys, just regular All-American boys.

We got a few ideas from the training as to what type of mission that we had signed on for. A Navy pilot had joined our group to coach us at short takeoffs and also in shipboard etiquette. We began our short takeoff practice. Taking off with first a light load, then a normal load, and finally overloaded up to 31,000 lbs. The shortest possible take-off was obtained with flaps full down, stabilizer set three-fourths, tail heavy, full power against the brakes and releasing the brakes simultaneously as the engine revved up to max power. We pulled back gradually on the stick and the airplane left the ground with the tail skid about one foot from the runway. It was a very unnatural and scary way to get airborne! I could hardly believe it myself, the first time as I took off with a full gas load and dummy bombs within just 700 feet of runway in a near stall condition. We were, for all practical purposes, a slow flying gasoline bomb!

In addition to take-off practice, we refined our skills in day and night navigation, gunnery, bombing, and low level flying. We made cross country flights at tree-top level, night flights and navigational flights over the Gulf of Mexico without the use of a radio. After we started that short-field takeoff routine, we had some pretty fancy competition between the crews. I think that one crew got it down to about 300 feet on a hot day. We were told that only the best crews would actually go on the mission, and the rest would be held in reserve.

One crew did stall on takeoff, slipped back to the ground, busting up their landing gear. They were eliminated from the mission. Doolittle emphasized again and again the extreme danger of this operation, and made it clear that anyone of us who so desired could drop out with no questions asked. No one did.

On one of our cross country flights, we landed at Barksdale Field in Shreveport, and I was able to catch a bus over to Longview to see Aggie. We had a few hours together, and then we had to say our goodbyes. I told her I hoped to be back in time for the baby's birth, but I couldn't tell her where I was going. As I walked away, I turned and walked backwards for a ways, taking one last look at my beautiful pregnant Aggie.

Within a few days of returning to our base in Florida we were abruptly told to pack our things. After just three weeks of practice, we were on our way. This was it. It was time to go. It was the middle of March 1942, and I was 30 years old. Our orders were to fly to McClelland Air Base in Sacramento, California on our own, at the lowest possible level. So here we went on our way west, scraping the tree tops at 160 miles per hour, and skimming along just 50 feet above plowed fields. We crossed North Texas and then the panhandle, scaring the dickens out of livestock, buzzing farm houses and a many a barn along the way. Over the Rocky Mountains and across the Mojave Desert dodging thunderstorms, we enjoyed the flight immensely and although tempted, I didn't do too much dare-devil stuff. We didn't know it at the time, but it was good practice for what lay ahead of us. It proved to be our last fling. Once we arrived in Sacramento, the mechanics went over our plane with a fine-toothed comb. Of the twenty-two planes that made it, only those whose pilots reported no mechanical problems were allowed to go on. The others were shunted aside.

After having our plane serviced, we flew on to Alameda Naval Air Station in Oakland. As I came in for final approach, we saw it! I excitedly called the rest of the crew to take a look. There below us was a huge aircraft carrier. It was the USS Hornet, and it looked so gigantic! Man, I had never even seen a carrier until this moment. There were already two B-25s parked on the flight deck. Now we knew! My heart was racing, and I thought about how puny my plane would look on board this mighty ship. As soon as we landed and taxied off the runway, a jeep pulled in front of me with a big "Follow Me" sign on the back. We followed it straight up to the wharf, alongside the towering Hornet. All five of us were looking up and just in awe, scarcely believing the size of this thing. As we left the plane, there was already a

Navy work crew swarming around attaching cables to the lifting rings on top of the wings and the fuselage. As we walked towards our quarters, I looked back and saw them lifting my plane up into the air and swing it over the ship's deck. It looked so small and lonely.

Later that afternoon, all crews met with Colonel Doolittle and he gave last minute assignments. He told me to go to the Presidio and pick up two hundred extra "C" rations. I saluted, turned, and left, not having any idea where the Presidio was, and not exactly sure what a "C" ration was. I commandeered a Navy staff car and told the driver to take me to the Presidio, and he did. On the way over, I realized that I had no written signed orders and that this might get a little sticky. So in I walked into the Army supply depot and made my request, trying to look poised and confident. The supply officer asked "What is your authorization for this request, sir?" I told him that I could not give him one. "And what is the destination?" he asked. I answered, "The aircraft carrier, Hornet, docked at Alameda." He said, "Can you tell me who ordered the rations, sir?" And I replied with a smile, "No, I cannot." The supply officers huddled together, talking and glanced back over towards me. Then he walked back over and assured me that the rations would be delivered that afternoon. Guess they figured that something big was up. They were right. The next morning we all boarded the ship.

Trying to remember my naval etiquette, I saluted the Officer of the Deck and said "Lt. McElroy, requesting permission to come aboard." The officer returned the salute and said "Permission granted." Then I turned aft and saluted the flag. I made it, without messing up.

It was April 2, and in full sunlight, we left San Francisco Bay. The whole task force of ships, two cruises, four destroyers, and a fleet oiler, moved slowly with us under the Golden Gate Bridge. Thousands of people looked on. Many stopped their cars on the bridge, and waved to us as we passed underneath. I thought to myself, I hope there aren't any spies up there waving.

Once at sea, Doolittle called us together. "Only a few of you know our destination, and you others have guessed about various targets. Gentlemen, your target is Japan!" A sudden cheer exploded among the men. "Specifically, Yokohama, Tokyo, Nagoya, Kobe, Nagasaki and Osaka. The Navy task force will get us as close as possible and we'll launch our planes. We will hit our targets, and proceed to airfields in China." After the cheering stopped, he asked again, if any of us desired to back out, no questions asked.

Not one did, not one. Then the ship's Captain then went over the intercom to the whole ship's company. The loudspeaker blared, "The destination is Tokyo !" A tremendous cheer broke out from everyone on board. I could hear metal banging together and wild screams from down below decks. It was quite a rush! I felt relieved actually. We finally knew where we were going.

I set up quarters with two Navy pilots, putting my cot between their two bunks. They couldn't get out of bed without stepping on me. It was just fairly cozy in there, yes it was. Those guys were part of the Torpedo Squadron Eight and were just swell fellows. The rest of the guys bedded down in similar fashion to me, some had to sleep on bedrolls in the Admiral's chartroom. As big as this ship was, there wasn't any extra room anywhere. Every square foot had a purpose... A few days later we discovered where they had an ice cream machine!

There were sixteen B-25s tied down on the flight deck, and I was flying number 13. All the carrier's fighter planes were stored away helplessly in the hangar deck. They couldn't move until we were gone. Our Army mechanics were all on board, as well as our munitions loaders and several back up crews, in case any of us got sick or backed out. We settled into a daily routine of checking our planes. The aircraft were grouped so closely together on deck that it wouldn't take much for them to get damaged. Knowing that my life depended on this plane, I kept a close eye on her.

Day after day, we met with the intelligence officer and studied our mission plan. Our targets were assigned, and maps and objective folders were furnished for study. We went over approach routes and our escape route towards China. I never studied this hard back at Trinity. Every day at dawn and at dusk the ship was called to general quarters and we practiced finding the quickest way to our planes. If at any point along the way, we were discovered by the enemy fleet, we were to launch our bombers immediately so the Hornet could bring up its fighter planes. We would then be on our own, and try to make it to the nearest land, either Hawaii or Midway Island. Dr. Thomas White, a volunteer member of plane number 15, went over our medical records and gave us inoculations for a whole bunch of diseases that hopefully I wouldn't catch. He gave us training sessions in emergency first aid, and lectured us at length about water purification and such. Tom, a medical doctor, had learned how to be a gunner just so he could go on this mission. We put some new tail guns in place of the ones that had been taken out to save weight. Not exactly functional, they were two broom handles, painted black. The thinking was they might help scare any Jap fighter planes. Maybe, maybe not.

On Sunday, April 14, we met up with Admiral Bull Halsey's task force just out of Hawaii and joined into one big force. The carrier Enterprise was now with us, another two heavy cruisers, four more destroyers and another oiler. We were designated as Task Force 16. It was quite an impressive sight to see, and represented the bulk of what was left of the U.S. Navy after the devastation of Pearl Harbor. There were over 10,000 Navy personnel sailing into harm's way, just to deliver us sixteen Army planes to the Japs, orders of the President.

As we steamed further west, tension was rising as we drew nearer and nearer to Japan. Someone thought of arming us with some old .45 pistols that they had on board. I went through that box of 1911 pistols, they were in such bad condition that I took several of them apart, using the good parts from several useless guns until I built a serviceable weapon. Several of the other pilots did the same. Admiring my "new" pistol, I held it up, and thought about my old Model-T.

Colonel Doolittle called us together on the flight deck. We all gathered round, as well as many Navy personnel. He pulled out some medals and told us how these friendship medals from the Japanese government had been given to some of our Navy officers several years back. And now the Secretary of the Navy had requested us to return them. Doolittle wired them to a bomb while we all posed for pictures. Something to cheer up the folks back home!

I began to pack my things for the flight, scheduled for the 19th. I packed some extra clothes and a little brown bag that Aggie had given me, inside were some toilet items and a few candy bars. No letters or identity cards were allowed, only our dog-tags. I went down to the wardroom to have some ice cream and settle up my mess bill. It only amounted to \$5 a day and with my per diem of \$6 per day, I came out a little ahead. By now, my Navy pilot roommates were about ready to get rid of me, but I enjoyed my time with them. They were alright. Later on, I learned that both of them were killed at the Battle of Midway. They were good men. Yes, very good men.

Colonel Doolittle let each crew pick our own target. We chose the Yokosuka Naval Base about twenty miles from Tokyo. We loaded 1450 rounds of ammo and four 500-pound bombs... A little payback, direct from Ellis County, Texas! We checked and re-checked our plane several times. Everything was now ready. I felt relaxed, yet tensed up at the same time. Day after tomorrow, we will launch when we are 400 miles out. I lay in my cot that night, and rehearsed the mission over and over in my head. It was hard to sleep as I listened to sounds of the ship.

Early the next morning, I was enjoying a leisurely breakfast, expecting another full day on board, and I noticed that the ship was pitching and rolling quite a bit this morning, more than normal. I was reading through the April 18th day plan of the Hornet, and there was a message in it which said, "From the Hornet to the Army - Good luck, good hunting, and God bless you." I still had a large lump in my throat from reading this, when all of a sudden, the intercom blared, "General Quarters, General Quarters, All hands man your battle stations! Army pilots, man your planes!!!" There was instant reaction from everyone in the room and food trays went crashing to the floor. I ran down to my room jumping through the hatches along the way, grabbed my bag, and ran as fast as I could go to the flight deck. I met with my crew at the plane, my heart was pounding. Someone said, "What's going on?" The word was that the Enterprise had spotted an enemy trawler. It had been sunk, but it had transmitted radio messages. We had been found out!

The weather was crummy, the seas were running heavy, and the ship was pitching up and down like I had never seen before. Great waves were crashing against the bow and washing over the front of the deck. This wasn't going to be easy! Last minute instructions were given. We were reminded to avoid non-military targets, especially the Emperor's Palace. Do not fly to Russia, but fly as far west as possible, land on the water and launch our rubber raft. This was going to be a one-way trip! We were still much too far out and we all knew that our chances of making land were somewhere between slim and none. Then at the last minute, each plane loaded an extra ten 5-gallon gas cans to give us a fighting chance of reaching China.

We all climbed aboard, started our engines and warmed them up, just feet away from the plane in front of us and the plane behind us. Knobby, Campbell, Bourgeois and me in the front, Williams, the gunner was in the back, separated from us by a big rubber gas tank. I called back to Williams on the intercom and told him to look sharp and don't take a nap! He answered dryly, "Don't worry about me, Lieutenant. If they jump us, I'll just use my little black broomsticks to keep the Japs off our tail."

The ship headed into the wind and picked up speed. There was now a near gale force wind and water spray coming straight over the deck. I looked down at my instruments as my engines revved up. My mind was racing. I went over my mental checklist, and said a prayer? God please, help us! Past the twelve planes in front of us, I strained to see the flight deck officer as he leaned into the wind and signaled with his arms for Colonel Doolittle to come to full power. I looked over at Knobby and we looked each other in the eye. He just nodded to me and we both understood.

With the deck heaving up and down, the deck officer had to time this just right. Then I saw him wave Doolittle to go, and we watched breathlessly to see what happened. When his plane pulled up above the deck, Knobby just let out with, "Yes! Yes!" The second plane, piloted by Lt. Hoover, appeared to stall with its nose up and began falling toward the waves. We groaned and called out, "Up! Up! Pull it up!" Finally, he pulled out of it, staggering back up into the air, much to our relief! One by one, the planes in front of us took off. The deck pitched wildly, 60 feet or more, it looked like. One plane seemed to drop down into the drink and disappeared for a moment, then pulled back up into sight. There was sense of relief with each one that made it. We gunned our engines and started to roll forward. Off to the right, I saw the men on deck cheering and waving their covers! We continued inching forward, careful to keep my left main wheel and my nose wheel on the white guidelines that had been painted on the deck for us. Get off a little bit too far left and we go off the edge of the deck. A little too far to the right and our wing-tip will smack the island of the ship. With the best seat on the ship, we watched Lt. Bower take off in plane number 12, and I taxied up to the starting line, put on my the brakes and looked down to my left. My main wheel was right on the line. Applied more power to the engines, and I turned my complete attention to the deck officer on my left, who was circling his paddles. Now my adrenaline was really pumping! We went to full power, and the noise and vibration inside the plane went way up. He circled the paddles furiously while watching forward for the pitch of the deck. Then he dropped them, and I said, "Here We Go!" I released the brakes and we started rolling forward, and

as I looked down the flight-deck you could see straight down into the angry churning water. As we slowly gained speed, the deck gradually began to pitch back up. I pulled up and our plane slowly strained up and away from the ship. There was a big cheer and whoops from the crew, but I just felt relieved and muttered to myself, "Boy, that was short!"

We made a wide circle above our fleet to check our compass headings and get our bearings. I looked down as we passed low over one of our cruisers and could see the men on deck waving to us. I dropped down to low level, so low we could see the whitecap waves breaking. It was just after 0900, there were broken clouds at 5,000 feet and visibility of about thirty miles due to haze or something. Up ahead and barely in sight, I could see Captain Greening, our flight leader, and Bower on his right wing. Flying at 170 mph, I was able to catch up to them in about 30 minutes. We were to stay in this formation until reaching landfall, and then break on our separate ways. Now we settled in for the five hour flight. Tokyo, here we come!

Williams was in the back emptying the extra gas cans into the gas tank as fast as we had burned off enough fuel. He then punched holes in the tins and pushed them out the hatch against the wind. Some of the fellows ate sandwiches and other goodies that the Navy had put aboard for us... I wasn't hungry. I held onto the controls with a firm grip as we raced along westward just fifty feet above the cold rolling ocean, as low as I dared to fly. Being so close to the choppy waves gave you a true sense of speed. Occasionally our windshield was even sprayed with a little saltwater. It was an exhilarating feeling, and I felt as though the will and spirit of our whole country was pushing us along. I didn't feel too scared, just anxious. There was a lot riding on this thing, and on me.

As we began to near land, we saw an occasional ship here and there. None of them close enough to be threatening, but just the same, we were feeling more edgy. Then at 1330 we sighted land, the Eastern shore of Honshu. With Williams now on his guns in the top turret and Campbell on the nose gun, we came ashore still flying low as possible, and were surprised to see people on the ground waving to us as we flew in over the farmland. It was beautiful countryside.

Campbell, our navigator, said, "Mac, I think we're going to be about sixty miles too far north. I'm not positive, but pretty sure." I decided that he was absolutely right and turned left ninety degrees, went back just offshore and followed the coast line south.

When I thought we had gone far enough, I climbed up to two thousand feet to find out where we were. We started getting fire from anti-aircraft guns. Then we spotted Tokyo Bay, turned west and put our nose down diving toward the water. Once over the bay, I could see our target, Yokosuka Naval Base. Off to the right there was already smoke visible over Tokyo. Coming in low over the water, I increased speed to 200 mph and told everyone, "Get Ready!"

When we were close enough, I pulled up to 1300 feet and opened the bomb doors. There were furious black bursts of anti-aircraft fire all around us, but I flew straight on through them, spotting our target, the torpedo works and the dry-docks. I saw a big ship in the dry-dock just as we flew over it. Those flak bursts were really getting close and bouncing us around, when I heard Bourgeois shouting, "Bombs Away!" I couldn't see it, but Williams had a bird's eye view from the back and he shouted jubilantly, "We got an aircraft carrier! The whole dock is burning!" I started turning to the south and strained my neck to look back and at that moment saw a large crane blow up and start falling over!... Take that! There was loud yelling and clapping each other on the back. We were all just ecstatic, and still alive! But there wasn't much time to celebrate. We had to get out of here and fast! When we were some thirty miles out to sea, we took one last look back at our target, and could still see huge billows of black smoke. Up until now, we had been flying for Uncle Sam, but now we were flying for ourselves.

We flew south over open ocean, parallel to the Japanese coast all afternoon. We saw a large submarine apparently at rest, and then in another fifteen miles, we spotted three large enemy cruisers headed for Japan. There were no more bombs, so we just let them be and kept on going. By late afternoon, Campbell calculated that it was time to turn and make for China. Across the East China Sea, the weather out ahead of us looked bad and overcast. Up until now we had not had time to think much about our gasoline supply, but the math did not look good. We just didn't have enough fuel to make it!

Each man took turns cranking the little hand radio to see if we could pick up the promised radio beacon. There was no signal. This is not good. The weather turned bad and it was getting dark, so we climbed up. I was now flying on instruments, through a dark misty rain. Just when it really looked hopeless of reaching land, we suddenly picked up a strong tailwind. It was an answer to a prayer. Maybe just maybe, we can make it!

In total darkness at 2100 hours, we figured that we must be crossing the coastline, so I began a slow, slow climb to be sure of not hitting any high ground or anything. I conserved as much fuel as I could, getting real low on gas now. The guys were still cranking on the radio, but after five hours of hand cranking with aching hands and backs, there was utter silence. No radio beacon! Then the red light started blinking, indicating twenty minutes of fuel left. We started getting ready to bail out. I turned the controls over to Knobby and crawled to the back of the plane, past the now collapsed rubber gas tank. I dumped everything out of my bag and repacked just what I really needed, my .45 pistol, ammunition, flashlight, compass, medical kit, fishing tackle, chocolate bars, peanut butter and crackers. I told Williams to come forward with me so we could all be together for this. There was no other choice. I had to get us as far west as possible, and then we had to jump.

At 2230 we were up to sixty-five hundred feet. We were over land but still above the Japanese Army in China. We couldn't see the stars, so Campbell couldn't get a good fix on our position. We were flying on fumes now and I didn't want to run out of gas before we were ready to go. Each man filled his canteen, put on his Mae West life jacket and parachute, and filled his bag with rations, those "C" rations from the Presidio. I put her on auto-pilot and we all gathered in the navigator's compartment around the hatch in the floor. We checked each other's parachute harness. Everyone was scared, without a doubt. None of us had ever done this before! I said, "Williams first, Bourgeois second, Campbell third, Knobloch fourth, and I'll follow you guys! Go fast, two seconds apart! Then count three seconds off and pull your rip-cord!"

We kicked open the hatch and gathered around the hole looking down into the blackness. It did not look very inviting! Then I looked up at Williams and gave the order, "JUMP!!!" Within seconds they were all gone. I turned and reached back for the auto-pilot, but could not reach it, so I pulled the throttles back, then turned and jumped. Counting quickly, thousand one, thousand two, thousand three, I pulled my rip-cord and jerked back up with a terrific shock. At first I thought that I was hung on the plane, but after a few agonizing seconds that seemed like hours, realized that I was free and drifting down. Being in the total dark, I was disoriented at first but figured my feet must be pointed toward the ground. I looked down through the black mist to see what was coming up. I was in a thick mist or fog, and the silence was so eerie after nearly thirteen hours inside that noisy plane. I could only hear the whoosh, whoosh sound of the

wind blowing through my shroud lines, and then I heard a loud crash and explosion. My plane!

Looking for my flashlight, I groped through my bag with my right hand, finally pulled it out and shined it down toward the ground, which I still could not see. Finally I picked up a glimmer of water and thought I was landing in a lake. We're too far inland for this to be ocean. I hope! I relaxed my legs a little, thinking I was about to splash into water and would have to swim out, and then bang. I jolted suddenly and crashed over onto my side. Lying there in just a few inches of water, I raised my head and put my hands down into thick mud. It was rice paddy! There was a burning pain, as if someone had stuck a knife in my stomach. I must have torn a muscle or broke something.

I laid there dazed for a few minutes, and after a while struggled up to my feet. I dug a hole and buried my parachute in the mud. Then started trying to walk, holding my stomach, but every direction I moved the water got deeper. Then, I saw some lights off in the distance. I fished around for my flashlight and signaled one time. Sensing something wrong, I got out my compass and to my horror saw that those lights were off to my west. That must be a Jap patrol! How dumb could I be! Knobby had to be back to my east, so I sat still and quiet and did not move.

It was a cold dark lonely night. At 0100 hours I saw a single light off to the east. I flashed my light in that direction, one time. It had to be Knobby! I waited a while, and then called out softly, "Knobby?" And a voice replied "Mac, is that you?". Thank goodness, what a relief! Separated by a wide stream, we sat on opposite banks of the water communicating in low voices. After daybreak Knobby found a small rowboat and came across to get me. We started walking east toward the rest of the crew and away from that Japanese patrol. Knobby had cut his hip when he went through the hatch, but it wasn't too awful bad.

We walked together toward a small village and several Chinese came out to meet us, they seemed friendly enough. I said, "Luchu hoo megwa fugi! Luchu hoo megwa fugi!" meaning, "I am an American! I am an American!" Later that morning we found the others. Williams had wrenched his knee when he landed in a tree, but he was limping along just fine. There were hugs all around. I have never been so happy to see four guys in all my life!

Well, the five of us eventually made it out of China with the help of the local Chinese people and the Catholic missions along the way. They were all very

good to us, and later they were made to pay terribly for it, so we found out afterwards. For a couple of weeks we traveled across country. Strafed a couple of times by enemy planes, we kept on moving, by foot, by pony, by car, by train, and by airplane. But we finally made it to India .

I did not make it home for the baby's birth.

I stayed on there flying a DC-3 "Gooney Bird" in the China-Burma-India Theatre for the next several months. I flew supplies over the Himalaya Mountains, or as we called it, over "The Hump" into China . When B-25s finally arrived in India , I flew combat missions over Burma, and then later in the war, flew a B-29 out of the Marianna Islands to bomb Japan again and again.

After the war, I remained in the Air Force until 1962, when I retired from the service as a Lt. Colonel, and then came back to Texas , my beautiful Texas. First moving to Abilene and then we settled in Lubbock , where Aggie taught school at MacKenzie Junior High. I worked at the S & R Auto Supply, once again in an atmosphere of machinery, oil and grease.

I lived a good life and raised two wonderful sons that I am very proud of. I feel blessed in many ways. We have a great country, better than most folks know. It is worth fighting for. Some people call me a hero, but I have never thought of myself that way, no. But I did serve in the company of heroes. What we did, will never leave me. It will always be there in my fondest memories. I will always think of the fine and brave men that I was privileged to serve with. Remember us, for we were soldiers once and young. With the loss of all aircraft, Doolittle believed that the raid had been a failure, and that he would be court-martialed upon returning to the states. Quite to the contrary, the raid proved to be a tremendous boost to American morale, which had plunged following the Pearl Harbor attack. It also caused serious doubts in the minds of Japanese war planners. They in turn recalled many seasoned fighter plane units back to defend the home islands, which resulted in Japan's weakened air capabilities at the upcoming Battle of Midway and other South Pacific campaigns.

Edgar "Mac" Mc Elroy, Lt. Col., U.S.A.F. (Ret.) passed away at his residence in Lubbock, Texas early on the morning of Friday, April 4, 2003.



How I survived a plane crash

Juliane Koepcke was flying over the Peruvian rainforest with her mother when her plane was hit by lightning. She survived a two-mile fall and found herself alone in the jungle, just 17. More than 40 years later, she recalls what happened.

It was Christmas Eve 1971 and everyone was eager to get home, we were angry because the plane was seven hours late. Suddenly we entered into a very heavy, dark cloud. My mother was anxious but I was OK, I liked flying. Ten minutes later it was obvious that something was very wrong. There was very heavy turbulence and the plane was jumping up and down, parcels and luggage were falling from the locker, there were gifts, flowers and Christmas cakes flying around the cabin. When we saw lightning around the plane, I was scared. My mother and I held hands but we were unable to speak. Other passengers began to cry and weep and scream.

After about 10 minutes, I saw a very bright light on the outer engine on the left. My mother said very calmly: "That is the end, it's all over." Those were the last words I ever heard from her.

The plane jumped down and went into a nose-dive. It was pitch black and people were screaming, then the deep roaring of the engines filled my head completely. Suddenly the noise stopped and I was outside the plane. I was in a free-fall, strapped to my seat bench and hanging head-over-heels. The whispering of the wind was the only noise I could hear. I felt completely alone. I could see the canopy of the jungle spinning towards me. Then I lost consciousness and remember nothing of the impact. Later I learned that the plane had broken into pieces about two miles above the ground. I woke the next day and looked up into the canopy. The first thought I had was: "I survived an air crash."

I shouted out for my mother in but I only heard the sounds of the jungle. I was completely alone. I had broken my collarbone and had some deep cuts on my legs but my injuries weren't serious. I realized later that I had ruptured a ligament in my knee but I could walk.

Before the crash, I had spent a year and a half with my parents on their research station only 30 miles away. I learned a lot about life in the rainforest, that it wasn't too dangerous. It's not the green hell that the world always thinks.

I could hear the planes overhead searching for the wreck but it was a very dense forest and I couldn't see them. I was wearing a very short, sleeveless mini-dress and white sandals. I had lost one shoe but I kept the other because I am very short-sighted and had lost my glasses, so I used that shoe to test the ground ahead of me as I walked. Snakes are camouflaged there and they look like dry leaves. I was lucky I didn't meet them or maybe just that I didn't see them.

I found a small creek and walked in the water because I knew it was safer. At the crash site I had found a bag of sweets. When I had finished them I had nothing more to eat and I was very afraid of starving. It was very hot and very wet and it rained several times a day. But it was cold in the night and to be alone in that mini-dress was very difficult. On the fourth day, I heard the noise of a landing king vulture which I recognized from my time at my parents' reserve.

I was afraid because I knew they only land when there is a lot of carrion and I knew it was bodies from the crash. When I turned a corner in the creek, I found a bench with three passengers rammed head first into the earth. I was paralyzed by panic. It was the first time I had seen a dead body. I thought my mother could be one of them but when I touched the corpse with a stick, I saw that the woman's toenails were painted - my mother never polished her nails. I was immediately relieved but then felt ashamed of that thought.

By the 10th day I couldn't stand properly and I drifted along the edge of a larger river I had found. I felt so lonely, like I was in a parallel universe far away from any human being. I thought I was hallucinating when I saw a really large boat. When I went to touch it and realized it was real, it was like an adrenaline shot. But [then I saw] there was a small path into the jungle where I found a hut with a palm leaf roof, an outboard motor and a liter of gasoline.

I had a wound on my upper right arm. It was infested with maggots about one centimeter long. I remembered our dog had the same infection and my father had put kerosene in it, so I sucked the gasoline out and put it into the wound. The pain was intense as the maggots tried to get further into the wound. I pulled out about 30 maggots and was very proud of myself. I decided to spend the night there.

The next day I heard the voices of several men outside. It was like hearing the voices of angels. When they saw me, they were alarmed and stopped talking. They thought I was a kind of water goddess - a figure from local legend who is a hybrid of a water dolphin and a blonde, white-skinned woman. But I introduced myself in Spanish and explained what had happened. They treated my wounds and gave me something to eat and the next day took me back to civilization.

The day after my rescue, I saw my father. He could barely talk and in the first moment we just held each other. For the next few days, he frantically searched for news of my mother. On 12 January they found her body. Later I found out that she also survived the crash but was badly injured and she couldn't move. She died several days later. I dread to think what her last days were like.

Juliane Koepcke told her story to Outlook from the BBC World Service



Koepcke returned to the crash scene in 1998

A woman, cranky because her husband was late coming home again, decided to leave a note, saying, "I've had enough and have left you...don't bother coming after me". Then she hid under the bed to see his reaction.

After a short while, the husband comes home and she could hear him in the kitchen before he comes into the bedroom. She could see him walk towards the dresser and pick up the note. After a few minutes, he wrote something on it before picking up the phone and calling someone. "She's finally gone...yeah I know, it is about time, I'm coming to see you, put on that sexy French nightie. I love you...can't wait to see you...we'll do all the naughty things you like." He hung up, grabbed his keys, and left.

She heard the car drive off as she came out from under the bed, seething with rage and with tears in her eyes. She grabbed the note to see what he wrote.

"I can see your feet.
We're outta bread; be back in five minutes."

What Makes An Aircraft An “ER” Plane?

Commercial aircraft today can cover some seriously impressive distances without the need to stop to refuel. As airlines have looked to expand their long-range operations, aircraft manufacturers have developed ER (‘Extended Range’) variants of their planes to increasingly facilitate their customers’ needs. But what exactly goes into developing an ER variant?

A popular development with Boeing
Since the 1980s, American manufacturer Boeing, in particular, has become known for developing ER versions of certain variants of its airliner families. The first family that it introduced ER versions to was the 767, its medium to long-range widebody twinjet airliner. The original model, the 767-200, entered service in 1982 with US legacy carrier United Airlines. However, the -200ER followed with Israeli flag carrier El Al just two years later, in 1984. As Boeing developed stretched versions of the 767, it also produced corresponding ER sub-variants. In the case of the -300, it was, once again, only two years between the original (Japan Airlines, 1986) and ER (American Airlines, 1988) versions being launched. The longest model of the 767 was the -400ER, which Continental Airlines launched in 2000. In this instance, there was no standard -400, and the -400ER, therefore, became the only version of this variant.

Other Boeing models also received the ER treatment, even if only on a small scale. The iconic 747-400, for example, also saw a very limited -400ER sub-variant. Boeing produced just six of these for Australian flag carrier Qantas in the early 2000s. The extended range provided the airline with a safety net on its lengthy transpacific routes. Qantas retired its first 747-400ER last February, one of the first of a series of high-profile 747 retirements throughout 2020. Meanwhile, the Boeing 777-200 had both ER and LR (‘Long Range’) variants developed from the standard model. The -200ER entered service with British Airways in 1997, three years after the original -200 first took to the skies with United in 1994. Meanwhile, the stretched 777-300 had its first delivery to Air France in 2004. This has since become the best-selling 777 variant.

Not just a widebody phenomenon
Boeing’s ER models are not solely confined to widebody designs. Indeed, the largest and newest

model of its 737NG (‘Next Generation’) family is none other than the 737-900ER. Boeing developed this variant to give airlines a narrowbody aircraft with a similar range and capacity to the now-discontinued 757. It also developed and launched the 737-700ER in the mid-2000s. This aircraft has similar specifications to the Airbus A319LR. One can also find ER aircraft in certain regional jet families. One example of this is Brazilian manufacturer Embraer’s ERJ series. On a basic level, jets from this family are split into ERJ135, 140, and 145 models. However, all of these also have both ER and LR variants. This gives operators an edge when operating longer regional routes with lower demand levels.:

But, now that we have seen the sorts of aircraft that can have an ER version, what exactly is it that manufacturers do to a plane to certify it as ‘extended range?’

Additional fuel tanks

Perhaps the most obvious way of increasing an aircraft’s range is to correspondingly increase its fuel capacity. This is generally achieved by installing additional fuel tanks, and it can have a significant impact on an aircraft’s overall range.

Using the example of the 767-200ER, Boeing’s first extended range model, we can see that, rather than adding auxiliary fuel tanks, the American manufacturer instead utilized the space it already had in the existing design. Specifically, this entailed using the center tank’s dry dock as extra space for carrying fuel. The result was an increased range of 12,200 km (6,590 NM). This represented a 5,000 km (2,700 NM) increase over the standard model.

Meanwhile, the Boeing 747-400ER can partly attribute its extended range to the presence of an additional 12,300-liter fuel tank in the forward cargo hold. Boeing did give customers the option of a second additional tank, but Qantas was the only customer for the -400ER, and chose one.

The result was an 800km (430 NM) increase in the -400ER’s range. While this is not as significant an increase as the 767-200ER, the aircraft could also carry nearly seven tonnes of extra cargo compared to the standard 747-400. This brings us nicely onto a crucial aspect of developing extra range models. With the burden of the additional fuel to consider, how do manufacturers increase an aircraft’s maximum takeoff weight?

There are many ways in which an aircraft manufacturer can increase its MTOW to safely carry the weight of additional fuel and tanks. Staying with Qantas's 747-400ER aircraft, we can see that Boeing strengthened areas such as its fuselage and wings. It also reinforced the landing gear, as well as fitting it with larger tires. The result was an increased maximum takeoff weight of nearly 413 tonnes, compared to around 397 tonnes on the standard -400.

The Boeing 737-700ER also features structural modifications compared to the standard model. Specifically, it is fitted with the same wings and landing gear as the larger 737-800. These alterations allow it to safely bear the weight of the additional fuel.

Structural modifications to the 777-330ER's landing gear and wings increase its MTOW. This allows the aircraft to safely carry more fuel, and thus increases its range.

Meanwhile, the 777-300ER features structural modifications in these areas as well but also benefits from raked and extended wingtips to increase its efficiency. Therefore, aerodynamic factors also play a significant role in extending an airliner's range.

Finally, an aircraft's range can also be increased with a lower-density seating configuration. To briefly touch upon a different long-range variant, Planespotters.net reports that Singapore Airlines operates seven examples of the Airbus A350-900ULR ('Ultra-Long Range'). According to SeatGuru, this features a premium-heavy configuration, seating just 161 passengers, freeing up weight for additional fuel. Consequently, the airline was able to operate the world's longest scheduled commercial flight, directly connecting Singapore and Newark in just under 18 hours.

Emirates is the world's largest operator of the Boeing 777's -300ER variant. It operates 129 examples, the most recent of which was delivered in November 2018. Photo: Getty Images



The Embraer ERJ145ER is a regional jet with an extended range sub-variant.



Lofty Perch

Imagine strapping on 400 tons of airplane and Jet-A by Len Morgan June 1981



IT'S LIKE FLYING a three-story house from the front porch swing, said someone of the 747. It's an apt description if the porch is on the third floor. The 747 is big and you do sit way up there. In fact, it's awesome. Eleven doors, 186 windows, 420 seats, nacelles fatter than a B-17 fuselage, 775,000 pounds on takeoff – what's an old Georgia country boy doing here?

It took some getting used to. I suspect that, initially, the monster was flying me more than I was flying it.

Boeing's big one comes in three basic models: the 100, which grosses out at 710,000 pounds; the 200 at 775,000; and the shortened SP at 699,000. More can be carried with uprated engines; a late version of the -200 was certificated to taxi at 823,000 pounds and roll at 820,000, the 3,000 being burned on the way to the runway. (That's 500 gallons, a shot glass full in 747 calculations.)

You don't get into this airplane-you go aboard, like entering a ship. Pilots are in the cockpit an hour or so before departure, not that running the checklist takes longer than in other jets, but international schedules require more detailed preparation than domestic hops. Everything – fueling, restocking, repairs, cleaning – moves at a slower pace simply because of the size of the machine. For example: the -200's fuel tanks hold better than 52,000 gallons, a weight greater than that of three fully loaded 737s. You can't pump that volume in five minutes.

The first order of business up front is to program the three inertial navigation systems. Two are minimum equipment the third a "hot spare." All three are used: INS controls resemble pushbutton phones. You must "tell" the gadget where it is by typing in the latitude and longitude of the departure gate. Once it has accepted this data and aligned itself, an automatic count down exercise taking 10 to 15 minutes, it will direct you to any place on the globe via the great-circle route. As many as nine way points are typed in to conform with whatever route the trip is cleared to fly. En route, a wealth of information is provided – wind, ground speed, position, time to go; and so on – as well as a continuous readout of equipment reliability. the INS takes its own pulse, reports internal problems and tells you what action to take.

This Nav marvel is deceptively easy to set up and use, yet it harbors pitfalls for the careless. If you neglect to switch to "Nav" once alignment is completed and the aircraft is moved even six inches, all three sets must be reprogrammed. The resulting delay is difficult to explain to the passengers, not to mention the boss. And, needless to add, punch in the wrong coordinates and it will blithely lead you off course to an incorrect waypoint, a most serious blunder. The drill is to check, recheck and check again before and during flight. Assume nothing, ever.

While we set things up, review departure plates and route charts and check fuel once again, the cockpit is a busy place. Maintenance personnel return the log and discuss repairs; fuelers compare our gauges with underwing readings; the senior cabin attendant wants the time en route and flight conditions; a deadheading crew wants to stow bags with ours. They may. The ramp manager has a question about radioactive cargo. The phone rings off the hook-an oven in number-three galley trips its breaker, a tap drips in one of the blue rooms, sound and picture don't jive on the rear cabin projector, the coach galleys are still short 60 meals, a passenger wants to ride in the cockpit. (He may not.)

Operations and the dispatcher are on the horn with information or queries. It's one minor crisis after another and, of course, the captain is expected to come up with a solution every time. The image remains untarnished if he appears to have all the answers, so the ticket is, when in doubt, fake it. "Yes, dear, it will be smooth when we level off and you can start lunch then."

It seems impossible that order will ever emerge from the seeming confusion, yet all things come together in the end: At schedule minus five the last cargo-door light goes out and only door two-left remains open to receive last-minute passengers. Then its light goes out, the jet loader rolls away, and we are off the blocks on the dot and slowly pushed back from the terminal. "You are clear to start all four," says the man on the nose wheel phone. The JT9s spin up slowly, light off, stabilize and we report this to him. He wishes us a good trip, unplugs and walks off to the left. He's a big bruiser but way down there, giving the thumbs up, he looks small.

The 747 moves with minimum encouragement, for it generates considerable thrust at idle power. Steering, controlled by tillers, one for each pilot, is not difficult even through tight turns if you keep your mind on it. Speed must be carefully watched as the ship accelerates steadily. Due to cockpit height, you'd never guess the rate looking straight ahead so you check the INS frequently, maintaining straightaway speed at 20 to 25 knots and slowing to nine or less for right-angle turns. If you ride the binders, the engineer will grumble; he's watching the brake temperature gauges. It is all too easy to overheat them.

The view from the third floor is tremendous. You look right over all other types, including those mini-jumbos, the DC-10 and L-1011.

The moment of truth. You look down the 12,000-foot strip, try to forget you're strapped to the dead weight of 30 loaded DC-3s and take a final glance at flaps, fuel, trim, engine gauges – the killer items. Cleared to go. Landing lights on. Ease thrust levers up an inch, wait a few seconds, then work right on up to takeoff power. The roll initially is ponderous; acceleration

seems hopelessly slow. After 3,000 feet it is more lively and by 6,000 the big job is galloping along in great style, its enormous JT9s emitting their characteristic angry, growling buzz and the whole whopping, un-believable affair beginning to feel like an airplane that wants to fly. You are moving right along now – 120 knots, 130, 140 with not too much runway left. 150. VI. Rotate.

Smoothly pull the nose up to 10 degrees and no more or the tail will drag. At 10 degrees nose up, the tail clears the ground by only two to three feet. Lift off. The end of the runway sweeps past. Positive rate of climb. Gear up. The vertical speed needle is above zero but not by much. At 800 feet comes the first flap retraction and climb power. The flaps-up maneuvering speed when heavy is 275 or more, and ATC is aware that you must bust the below 10,000 speed limit.

At 10,000, let speed build to 320, turn off landing lights and seat-belt sign and request an estimated time of arrival. "We'll be on the blocks – let's see-12 hours and 20 minutes from now," says the engineer. This is not shades of that 727 milk run through Memphis, Little Rock and Fort Smith.

On overseas runs, you get little opportunity actually to fly the 747. Most of the time you sit there and watch it fly itself. You make perhaps five landings a month. (The copilot wants his half of the legs.) "Simulator check next month and I need the practice," works now and then but don't overdo it. You need good will in the right seat, too. Operating the 747 safely demands full-time cooperation from three heads. Never before in my experience has a congenial cockpit atmosphere been more important.

A 747 is a delight to hand-fly; you can maneuver all over with one hand, even through steep turns. The ailerons at first seem too sensitive, a result of the cockpit being several feet above the roll axis. Abrupt banking imparts an uncomfortable swing to everyone upstairs. Upper-deck riders remain seated during transition with a new pilot on the wheel. You learn to brace elbows on armrests and think your way into turns.

With a failed outboard engine, about half the rudder trim will keep it straight on climb-out; with two on a side gone, the other two at high thrust, all the trim and some leg are needed. In flight there is little visual indication of the 'aircraft's size unless you look back at number-one engine, which appears as an odd craft flying sloppy formation back there. The cockpit has Boeing stamped all over it, the arrangement of controls and instruments similar to those on the 707 and 727.

The engine-fire handles have been moved to the overhead and their former location under the glareshield used for nav radio selectors, INS and autopilot switches. You can tune in VORs and select headings and radials while keeping an eye out for traffic, a real step in the right direction.

The immense size and weight at hand are apparent when you take the wheel. Response to power adjustments is understandably sluggish at high gross weights. As in other heavy types, you must stay ahead of the airplane. An ILS flown half a dot high and five knots fast may draw no comment from a check pilot but that much low and five slow guarantees sharp comment. If the big ship is allowed to sag on final, only a massive application of thrust will reestablish the proper profile. Like most flying problems, this one is easier to avoid than correct.

The 747 bounces and bucks in rough air, though at a slow rate, and those passengers riding in the tail get the worst ride. What may be termed light chop up front will usually cause the attendants in back to ask for the seat-belt light. The "little" SP is legal for cruise at Flight Level 450. You'd think it would scramble on up there, but at max gross weight it runs out of wing before it runs out of power and must fly lower until a considerable amount of fuel is burned. Climb in all models is made at 320 knots until Mach .82 is reached, then at .82 to level off. Cruising speed is .84 to .86.

Yes, I know the question of every pilot who's watched a 747 land: how do you judge height from the lofty cockpit? Again, this takes some getting used to. To

the standard callouts, the pilot not flying adds certain altitudes. Our book requires, "500 feet, 400, 300, 200, 100, 50, 30, 20 and 10," in training and makes their use optional on the line. These are read from the radio altimeters.

The best arrivals come after good approaches. If you get your act together at the marker – localizer, glideslope and speed – sink rate will settle on 600 to 700 fpm and if you maintain that configuration to 100 feet you may make the fares imagine you to be a real pro-but don't bet on it. The 747 can be bounced 20 feet back into flight or crunched with an impact that registers on the nearest Richter scale.

Each pilot has his own pet way to terminate flight smoothly. My instructor suggested this: at 50 feet, chop the power to idle and at 30 feet, raise the nose two or three degrees – a mechanical procedure, but it serves until the forward view during flare begins to look either right or wrong, at which time you can eyeball it. The first two landings in simulator or ship are hard to believe, but you soon adjust to the novel sensations and sights. "This airplane sits six inches lower every time I fly it," said one friend.

Amusingly, the inflections of the copilot calling out altitudes is a hint of how things are going. If the recitation becomes rapid and pitch rises, it's prudent to look around and do something differently.

If you are right on the money, the call-outs are in a casual monotone and ground contact is announced when the body gear tilts forward, triggering the speed brake. The handle motors back and, by George, you're on.

The management encourages skippers to make at least one tour of the cabin to answer questions, reassure the nervous, wave the flag, so to speak. A good time is after dinner, while the liqueurs are being served, before the movie. I do not relish this duty, and will never become accustomed to the sea of faces on the main cabin deck – half the population of the town where I grew up. The sight is sobering.

I'm much more content in my cubicle up top, in the company of two experts whose language I understand, surrounded by the familiar dimly lit gauges of my work. The needles point to the right places, the dials tell all the right stories, the ominous lights that warn and alert remain unlit as we speed through the dark toward a target far beyond the invisible horizon. Someone should write a book ... tell it like it is, I think, refastening my seat belt.

A guy walks into a bar with a monkey.

The monkey grabbed some olives off the bar and ate them.
Then he grabbed some sliced limes and ate them.
He then jumped onto the pool table and grabbed the cue ball.
To everyone's amazement, he stuck it in his mouth and somehow managed to swallow it whole.
The bartender looked at the guy and said,

"Did you see what your Monkey just did?"

"No, what?" replied the man.

"He just ate the cue ball off my pool table...whole!"

"Yeah, that doesn't surprise me," replied the guy.

"He eats everything in sight. Sorry and don't worry, I'll pay for the cue ball."

The guy finished his drink, paid his bill, paid for all the stuff the Monkey ate and left.

Two weeks later the guy came back, and had his monkey with him. He ordered a drink and the monkey started running around the bar.

The Monkey found a maraschino cherry on the bar. He grabbed it, stuck it up his butt, pulled it out, and then ate it.
Then the monkey found a peanut, and again stuck it up his butt, pulled it out, and ate it. The bartender asked,

"Did you see what your monkey just did?"

"No, what?" replied the man.

"Well, he stuck a maraschino cherry and a peanut up his butt, pulled them out, and ate them!"

"Yeah, that doesn't surprise me," replied the guy.

"He will eat anything, but ever since he had to pass that cue ball, he measures everything first."

English Spoken - Around the World

In a Bangkok temple:

IT IS FORBIDDEN TO ENTER A WOMAN, EVEN A FOREIGNER, IF DRESSED AS A MAN.

Cocktail lounge , Norway :

LADIES ARE REQUESTED NOT TO HAVE CHILDREN IN THE BAR.

Doctors office, Rome :

SPECIALIST IN WOMEN AND OTHER DISEASES.

Dry cleaners, Bangkok :

DROP YOUR TROUSERS HERE FOR THE BEST RESULTS.

In a Nairobi restaurant:

CUSTOMERS WHO FIND OUR WAITRESSES RUDE OUGHT TO SEE THE MANAGER.

On the main road to Mombassa, leaving Nairobi :

TAKE NOTICE: WHEN THIS SIGN IS UNDER WATER, THIS ROAD IS IMPASSABLE.

On a poster at Kencom:

ARE YOU AN ADULT THAT CANNOT READ? IF SO WE CAN HELP.

In a City restaurant:

OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK AND WEEKENDS.

In a cemetery:

PERSONS ARE PROHIBITED FROM PICKING FLOWERS FROM ANY BUT THEIR OWN GRAVES .

Tokyo hotel's rules and regulations:

GUESTS ARE REQUESTED NOT TO SMOKE OR DO OTHER DISGUSTING BEHAVIOURS IN BED.

On the menu of a Swiss restaurant:

OUR WINES LEAVE YOU NOTHING TO HOPE FOR.

In a Tokyo bar:

SPECIAL COCKTAILS FOR THE LADIES WITH NUTS.

In a Hotel , Yugoslavia

THE FLATTENING OF UNDERWEAR WITH PLEASURE IS THE JOB OF THE CHAMBERMAID.

Hotel , Japan :

YOU ARE INVITED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE CHAMBERMAID.

In the lobby of a Moscow hotel across from a Russian Orthodox monastery:

YOU ARE WELCOME TO VISIT THE CEMETERY WHERE FAMOUS RUSSIAN AND SOVIET COMPOSERS, ARTISTS AND WRITERS ARE BURIED DAILY EXCEPT THURSDAY.

A sign posted in Germany 's Black Forest :

IT IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN ON OUR BLACK FOREST CAMPING SITE THAT PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT SEX, FOR INSTANCE, MEN AND WOMEN, LIVE TOGETHER IN ONE TENT UNLESS THEY ARE MARRIED WITH EACH OTHER FOR THIS PURPOSE..

In a Hotel, Zurich :

BECAUSE OF THE IMPROPRIETY OF ENTERTAINING GUESTS OF THE OPPOSITE SEX IN THE BEDROOM, IT IS SUGGESTED THAT THE LOBBY BE USED FOR THIS PURPOSE.

Advertisement for donkey rides, Thailand :

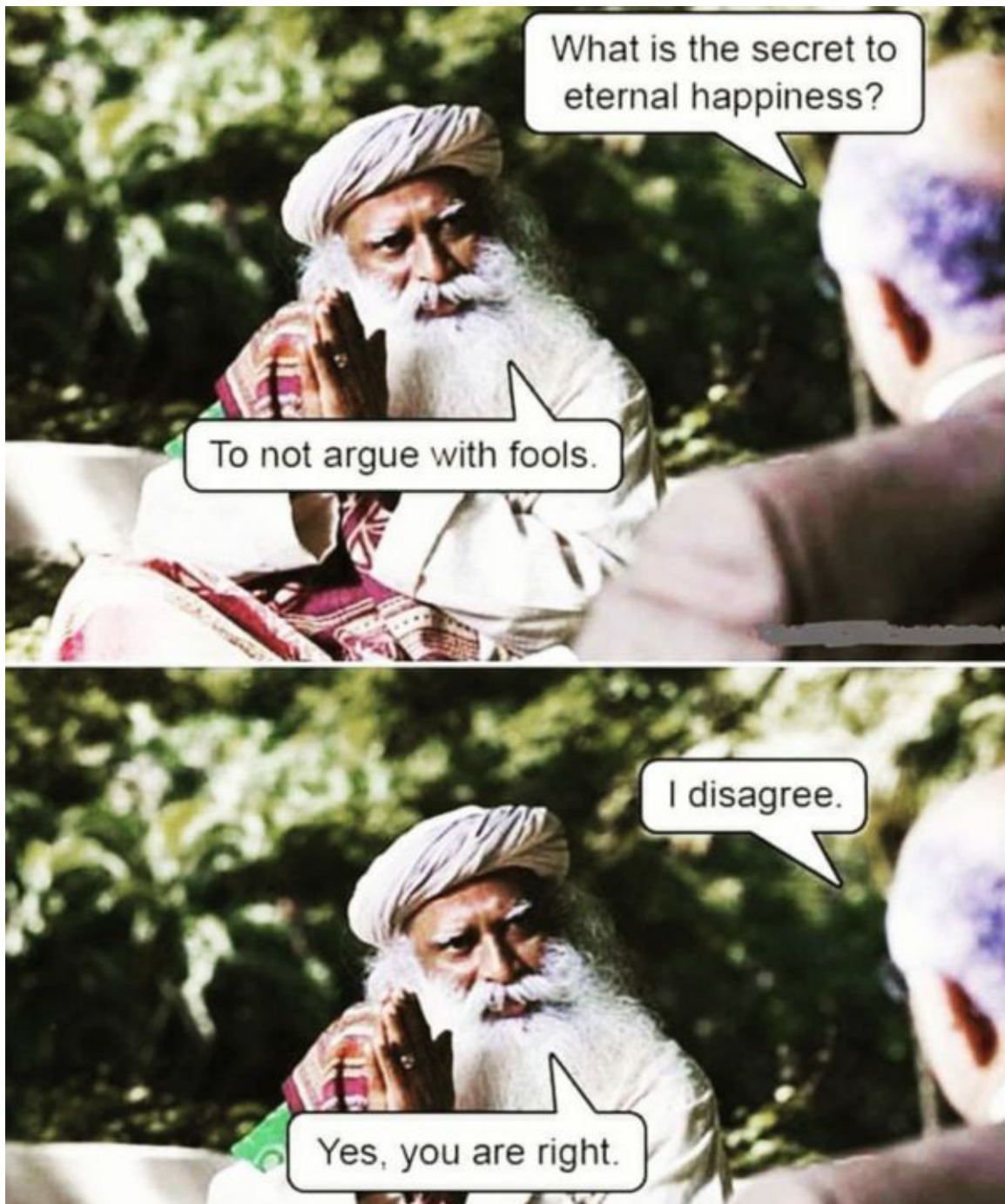
WOULD YOU LIKE TO RIDE ON YOUR OWN ASS?

Airline ticket office, Copenhagen :

WE TAKE YOUR BAGS AND SEND THEM IN ALL DIRECTIONS.

A laundry in Rome :

LADIES, LEAVE YOUR CLOTHES HERE AND SPEND THE AFTERNOON HAVING A GOOD TIME.



The Crew Room

What have you been up to? - Bruce Sprague

I retired in November 2006 (shortly thereafter they changed the retirement age to 65...bummer), and did all the usual things getting everything around the house fixed up, traveled to many places, and took it easy. After living in Kingwood, Texas for over three decades, early in 2010 we decided to build a nice home in Clear Lake, Texas, and got another boat. While there, I conducted tours at the NASA Space Center. Three years later, we decided we should have stayed in Kingwood, near family and friends. So...sold the boat, and we built another home back in Kingwood! Starting early in 2015 I took on the Treasurer and Webmaster jobs for the Golden Eagles, which keeps me busy to this day. Also that year, I got back into the aviation game, and started teaching (to mostly military pilots) the 737 Type Rating, and continue running the 737 simulator on occasion to this day. Hurricane Harvey floods wiped us out in August 2017. We had no flood insurance (we were not in a flood zone), and then spent half a year rebuilding. So far our health is ok, and with nine grandkids, they keep us busy, along with helping family and friends with the Mac computer. I look forward to seeing many of the CAL guys at our Kingwood, Texas LAC breakfast every Tuesday! Right now our big project is replacing a ton of landscape plants that did not survive the great Texas ice storm a month ago. Hopefully this Fall the pandemic will be under control, and we will do some more travel...mostly to see family and friends.

What have you been up to? - Di Johnson

Hi Y'all. After retiring as CAL Director of Regulatory Affairs in December 2008, it didn't take long to have the company come back and hire me (which amounted to three more years) as a regulatory compliance consultant. I worked the joining of CMI-CAL FAA Operating certificates and then the regulatory aspects the CAL-UAL merger. Enough paperwork at that point. Suzie and I rebuilt our family cottage on Keuka Lake, NY and now we split our time there 50-50 with life in Kingwood, TX. As I was getting too complacent, Bill Vaughn put me on to CPaT who hired me for a couple years writing pilot training courseware. That was actually fun in my warped 'manuals' experienced way. Now I enjoy hanging out with the Golden Eagles in the Kingwood LAC during Tuesday breakfasts at La Madeleine.

What have you been up to? - Mike Holmberg

Hiking in the local area. We made a few trips to Hawaii to get my daughter set in school. Bought an airplane to teach other daughter to fly

What have you been up to? - Nancy Novaes

Traveling until I became a repeat visitor to all 7 continents (8 if you count New Zealand). Then we just decided to enjoy New York/New Jersey and stay home starting in mid-2018. I spent several years as President of the International Society of Women Airline Pilots; now I focus on family and friends . . . and maybe a smattering of political activism.

This city girl has discovered gardening and kayaking. While I seem to spend a lot of time fighting the deer and squirrels over my deck-crops, I usually win and grow some sweet tomatoes. This year, the squirrels won, however.

Miss the Big Birds and the fine friends I worked with, however, even today.

Stay safe, friends!

.... N2

What have you been up to? - Ludo Adons

Teaching kids from 12 years old through 76 years old how to fly gliders (sailplanes) at the Philadelphia Glider Council in Hilltown, PA. Towing gliders with the L-19 Bird dog or the Piper Pawnee.

Flying an open cockpit G2T1 Great Lakes Biplane.

What have you been up to? - Ed Warnock

This summer marks sixty years of my flying Transport Category airplanes beginning in 1960 with five years in the USAF C-118 (Douglas DC-6B) & C-130-E's, then eighteen great years at Bob Six's, "Kick Ass" Proud Bird with the Golden Tail, Continental Airlines (B-707, 720-B & 727's). It took 6 more airlines and 14 years to finish 34 years under FAR Part 121 flying; the best of the best of them all was my 8 ½ years at MGM Grand Air (727-100, DC-8-62 & 757) which included Scheduled upscale 1st Class service to NY and World-Wide Charter (NBA, NHL, Rock & Roll Bands, Hollywood Celebs, Heads of State, Royal Families).

In 1999 my career as a Corporate Pilot began at Clay Lacy Aviation managing and flying an all First Class 1968 B-727-100 Domestic & International for 5 years (FAR Part 125) – a season with the Utah Jazz; a Spring and Fall North American Tour with U-2; Europe and the Pacific with Discovery Networks; WWE to Korea & Australia and Las Vegas High Rollers. This background of experience was the stepping stone for me to start, manage and fly a one airplane Corporate Flight Department with a Bermuda Registered 1967 Boeing "Super 27" (B-727-100 w/MD-80 engines, Winglets & Flap droop and 20,000 lbs. aux fuel). All our flying is for the personal, pleasure travel of the owner, no business, most all flying is International (mostly Europe) and we've flown around the World 12 times. I've been to 2 of the top 6 "Most Dangerous Airports in the World" – St. Maarten, TNCM, and Paro, Bhutan, VQPR. (Paro Airport is the only International airport of Bhutan. The airport is located 3.7 miles from Paro, Bhutan in a deep valley on the bank of the river Paro Chhu at an elevation of 7,333 feet; the single runway is 6,512 feet long and 98 feet wide. With surrounding peaks as high as 18,000 feet it is considered one of the world's most challenging airports. Other interesting airports have been Lanai, HI, PHNY, with 5,000 feet of runway and Tagbilaran – Bohol, PI airport with 5,800 ft. X 98 ft. wide ending at the start of a city street.

In the spring of 2019 I stepped back from the full time management job and for the past year and a half I fly part time as a contract pilot. To date I am the oldest pilot, at 83 years, with a FIRST CLASS medical, current and flying as Captain on the oldest, 53 years, airworthy B-727-100 (May 1967, Reg. VP-BAP, S/N 19260), check us out on the web.

Ed Warnock with VP-BAP at Paro, Bhutan October 16, 2011



A recollection - Kent Muhlberger

"Do you know how to get to Tampa?", the captain asked.

"Yes sir", I replied.

"Does that look like enough gas to get us to Tampa?" was the follow up question.

"Yes sir"

"Well, why don't you call Flight Service and file us a flight plan"

Um...when was the last time I did that, I thought, but said "Ok". I proceeded to dig out the frequency of IAH FSS. I jotted down the route, tail number, call sign and everything else I could remember. FSS helped with whatever I left out. And soon I was calling for our clearance.

So how did we get to this point? Well the company had initiated a major computer update on Saturday. Everyone was warned about potential problems but we were assured that all would be well by Sunday. You can guess what happened. It was chaos. Even by Monday paperwork was hard to come by if you could get it at all.

Passengers were boarded, we got our numbers and we were ready to push except for that detail of a release and flight plan, weather and notams.

Details, details. We pushed and flew to uneventfully Tampa. Fortunately, the system was back the next day when we proceeded with the pairing. Never heard a word about it.

Celebrating Irish-American Heritage Month

March 12, 2021 By Dennis K. Johnson

Irish-American Heritage Month was first proclaimed in 1991 by President George H.W. Bush—whose Irish ancestors hailed from County Wexford and who served as a U.S. Navy pilot in World War II—to honor the contributions of Irish-Americans and to give people an excuse to drink pints o’ Guinness. American cities with large ethnic Irish populations, such as Boston, Chicago, and New York City, take St. Patrick’s Day seriously and hold large celebrations. The excuse to throw a party has spread around the world, to countries such as Brazil, Russia, and Japan, and it’s even celebrated aboard the International Space Station. It’s often forgotten that the holiday is meant to commemorate the fifth-century British Christian missionary who voyaged into Ireland, drove out the snakes (not off a plane), and became the first bishop of Ireland. Today, he is venerated as a patron saint of Ireland.

Pilots might prefer to celebrate the particular contributions of an Irish-American pilot, Douglas “Wrong Way” Corrigan (1907–1995), who took off from New York in 1938 with a flight plan for California but “accidentally” landed in Ireland.

Corrigan was born in Galveston, Texas, in 1907 and earned his pilot certificate in 1926. He worked as a mechanic for the Ryan Aeronautical Co. in San Diego and assisted in building Charles Lindbergh’s *Spirit of St. Louis*. Inspired by Lindbergh’s flight, Corrigan started to plan his own transatlantic flight to Ireland. He worked numerous jobs in aviation and in 1933 bought a 1929 Curtiss OX–5 Robin airplane and began to modify it for a lengthy, nonstop flight. Corrigan boosted the horsepower of the engine and installed additional fuel tanks. In 1935, Corrigan sought permission from the Bureau of Air Commerce to fly from New York to Ireland, which was a requirement at that time. The application was rejected because his airplane was considered unsafe for a transatlantic flight. Corrigan continued to improve and modify his aircraft, but was repeatedly refused the transatlantic permit.

In July 1938, Corrigan flew his Robin from California to New York City, where he filed a flight plan for a return to the West Coast. On July 17 he took off for “California,” but after a 28-hour flight landed at Baldonnel Aerodrome, outside Dublin. He claimed that his “wrong way” flight was caused by “navigational error” and that he’d misread his compass.

On his return to New York City, by ship, he was honored for his audacious flight with a ticker-tape parade and a two-week suspension of his pilot certificate. Corrigan quickly wrote his autobiography, *That’s My Story*, which was published in time for Christmas sales in 1938. He also endorsed numerous “wrong way” products, including a wristwatch that ran backward. The next year, he starred as himself in a Hollywood film, *The Flying Irishman*. To the end of his life, he never admitted flying to Ireland intentionally.

Some other Irish-American pilots to honor—with better navigational skills than Corrigan—include astronaut Michael Collins, who flew Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin to the moon on Apollo 11, and Jim Irwin, who didn’t get lost walking on the moon during Apollo 15.

On chilly evenings this March, pilots should celebrate Corrigan’s daring flight with a warming Irish coffee while watching *The Flying Irishman*. Corrigan’s book, *That’s My Story*, is out of print, but used copies are available on book-selling websites.

You can visit Corrigan’s airplane at the Planes of Fame Air Museum at Chino Airport in California, about 35 miles east of Los Angeles. Currently, it’s in serious need of restoration and displayed without its wings. From there, navigate to Corrigan’s final landing site at Fairhaven Memorial Park in Santa Ana, about 27 miles southeast. His grave is in block M, grave 31.





Added since the August 2020 Edition

- **Denotes Golden Eagles Member**

Richard Mahoney	July 14, 2020
CM "Red Stubben"	July 29, 2020
Wes Coss	Aug 10, 2020
Jim Bryant*	Aug 15, 2020
Bill Baddorf*	Sep 01, 2020
Jim Buick*	Sep 05 2020
Lawrence Irving	Sep 2020
Mike Bowers	Oct 8, 2020
Loren Furlong	Dec 6 2020.
Bill Gilbert	Dec 9 2020
Tom Carr	Dec 28, 2020
Joseph "Scotty" Henderson	Dec 31, 2020
Larry Camden *	Jan 21, 2021
Pete Hernandez*	Mar 15, 2021

High Flight

by 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 un-trespassed sanctity of space,
put out my hand and touched the face of
God."

Golden Contrails

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www.thegoldeneagles.org

