

# CONTRAILS



ISSUE NO. 195

AUGUST 2015



*Design and photograph by Robert DuBert*

# RNPA CONTRAILS



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*Each Member!*

The RNPA newsletter Contrails is published quarterly in February, May, August and November by the Retired Northwest Airlines Pilots' Association, a non-profit organization whose purpose is to maintain the friendships and associations of the members, to promote their general welfare, and assist those active pilots who are approaching retirement with the problems relating thereto. Membership is \$45 annually for Regular Members (NWA pilots, active or retired) and \$35 for Affiliate Members.

### ADDRESS & PHONE CHANGES

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SEATTLE . . . 11 HRS. 40 MIN.

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**NORTHWEST**

*Miss Eva Gabor featured in*

*It's Here!*

ES  
R

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...and a few surprises

# August Notes

**doozy** | 'doozē | (also **doozie**)  
noun (pl. **doozies**) informal, chiefly N. Amer.  
something outstanding or unique of its kind:  
*it's gonna be a doozy of a reunion.*



**ABQ 2016**

Seattle Summer Picnic registration deadline  
is approaching - August 13th. Page 47

Sign up for the Minneapolis Christmas Party  
on page 52. **NEW TIME!** Dec. 10th.

Seattle's having their Christmas Party on  
Dec. 10th, too! Page 22

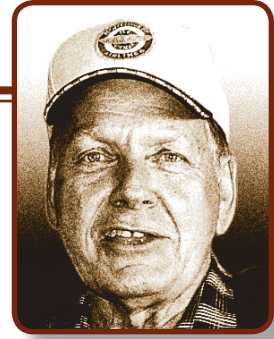


Send email changes to [rnpanews@bhi.com](mailto:rnpanews@bhi.com)

**HINT:** Hang onto the 2014 Membership Directory!



## President's Report: Gary PISEL



Greetings fellow members,

Summer has arrived in Phoenix, temperatures are well over 100 daily. So we have left the area, spending the summer in Long Beach at a great RV park. It is on the water & bike path and walking distance to Shoreline Village, the Catalina Express terminal and the Aquarium of the Pacific. Life is good!

Our RNPA Board meeting in June was very productive. A decision was made to continue the annual Reunions even though the attendance is diminishing. We have tried to keep the costs as low as possible, however with smaller groups we will have to pay more for the services we need. Several future sites are being considered. If you have any suggestions please relay them to a member of the Board. If you want to head up and plan a Reunion let us know.

Long Beach Reunion is rapidly approaching. Plans are finalized for the day tour trip to the island of Catalina and town of Avalon. The Avalon Scenic tour will be part of the day giving you the overall picture of Catalina. Optional venues are yours at a discounted price. The Zip Line is one of the best in the USA.

We will be auctioning the SOLID GOLD wings in support of the Paul Soderlind Scholarship fund. Absentee bids are accepted via email. Give the opening amount and final amount you want to pay. Email me: [gpiel@aol.com](mailto:gpiel@aol.com)

Thanks for all your support!



## Treasurer's Report: Dino OLIVA

Our editor has just asked for my words of wisdom for the August newsletter, so here goes.

In June, we held our semi-annual RNPA board meeting in MSP. Along with our normal business, the topic of the future of RNPA was discussed. RNPA has two board meetings per year, in June and at the annual reunion in the fall.

Activities other than reunions, such as the SEA and MSP summer and winter affairs, are not funded by RNPA, but are paid for by the individuals attending the function. RNPA's major expense is the four newsletters published annually. After a study by our editor, it was determined that to get the most bang for our dollar we must publish four newsletters per year, and that 64 pages was the least expensive to publish.

To pay for all our RNPA expenses with the current dues of \$45 for pilots and \$35 for affiliate members we must have just over 1300 members. As we have a finite number of potential members, at some time in the near future we will fall below the required 1300 members. At that time, we will either have to start raising our dues, cut out the newsletter, or terminate RNPA.

It is incumbent, then, in order to remain viable for as long as possible, that each of you encourage your non member friends to sign up.

That is your challenge—get at it—recruit.



# ALL OF YOU ARE POTENTIAL REPORTERS. DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO CONTRIBUTE?

### ON THE COVER

The NWA History Centre managed to move everything to their new digs without damaging a single artifact, thanks to a lot of volunteer help. Their June newsletter, *Reflections*, documents that move in detail and may be accessed here:

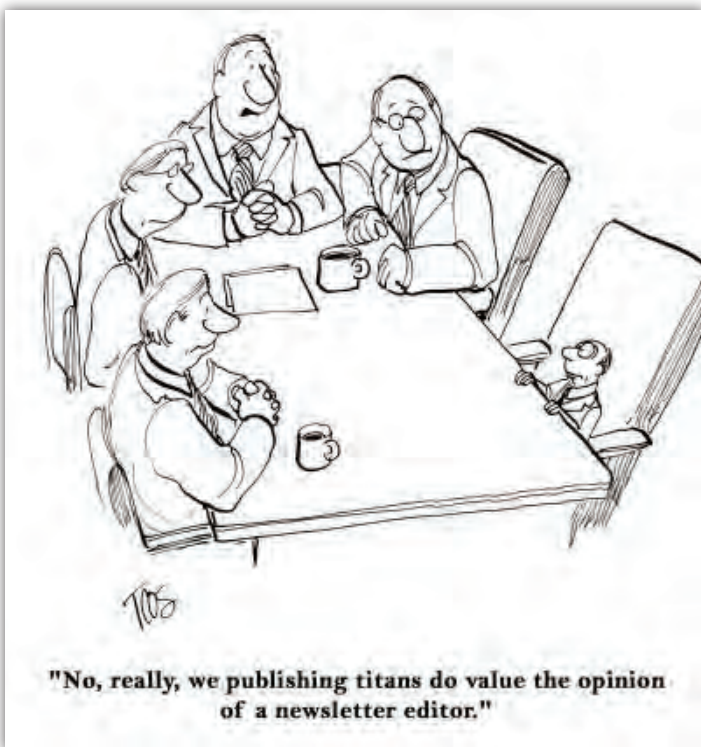
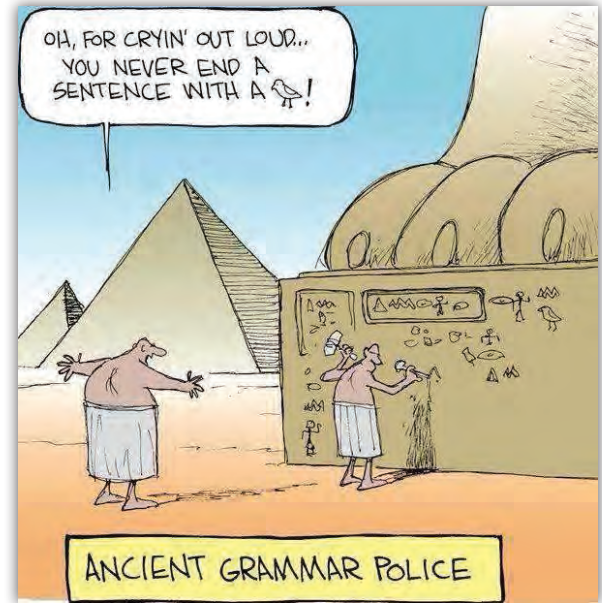
<http://tinyurl.com/oxv34zh>

They can always use your support.

### FEATURE ARTICLE

Jay Sakas contributes a nice piece of fiction for us on page 35 called *The Last Pilot*. He says he has more. I am looking forward to more.

Over the last few years we have enjoyed publishing some fine fiction. If you are one who likes to create by writing I encourage you to send me some of your efforts for all to enjoy. (Little chance of rejection here.)



### SURPRISES NOT LISTED IN "CONTENTS"

- A companion piece to Erika Armstrong's *A Chick in the Cockpit* from the pages of the Atlantic magazine that I think you will enjoy.
- Some non-fiction follow-up to Sakas' *The Last Pilot*, concerning the future of piloting.
- On page 53 you will find the story of Northwest Airways' 1929 crash in St. Paul where the first pilot on the "In Memoriam" list was killed.
- And finally, Vic Britt asked me not long ago if I was aware that pension income was immune to bankruptcy. I wasn't. So he sent me the article from *The New York Times* that you will find on page 56. It's not a typical subject for Contrails but I think you'll find it interesting.

Whatchabeenupto?

# We've Got Mail



SUSAN  
COAKLEY

**MT**  
**TX**

To Editor of Contrails,

Thanks for the work you and the staff do to keep the friends of our career updated.

Both Chuck and I are doing fine. We now live in both the beautiful state of Montana (Red Lodge) in summer and the great state of Texas in the winter months.

After retirement, Chuck's next challenge was to build our beautiful home in Montana where the first thing in was a tennis court. To many of you, this is not a surprise. We both enjoy it tremendously.

After much abuse to the knees, Chuck had a double knee replacement as his tennis demanded it. Skiing is on the bottom of the list but he is playing great tennis, especially in Texas where he won a state competition in doubles. The boys in Texas envy his ability in tennis at his age of 76.

I enjoy competitive golf and play every day in Texas as much as possible, and as much as possible in Montana during the summer. We enjoy the hiking, tennis and golf and are blessed with the health so far to keep it going.

We do reminisce often about our airline career and the friends we developed during that time and appreciate your updates on everyone. It's always fun to occasionally cross paths with those we new prior to retirement.

Thanks for all you do.

Susan (Mattes) & Chuck  
Coakley

BILL  
ALONSO

**FL**

I want to thank all of you that are involved in putting together Contrails. It's a great magazine.

It is fun to read articles such as "You Bet Your Job" by John Doherty; since we all have experienced those sim rides.

I have an idea for an article;

I took an early out in 2013 and after 33 years of taking checkrides I was looking forward to my "let's have fun" last ride. I never got that. Instead it was a formal checkride with no time left at the end of the period.

I'm wondering if we can get some of the members to write in and tell their story about that last sim ride.

Thanks,  
Bill Alonso

CHUCK  
HAGEN

**MN**

Hi Gary:

Thank you for your nice introduction of Erika in the May issue of Contrails. For you to do that was Special.

In that May issue, was also an excellent write up on Bill Barnard. In addition to what was written, Bill was also Council 54 Safety Committee Chairman for years. As Council and then MEC chairman in those years, I often went to Bill for comments and advise regarding pilot affairs. He was so steady and full of common sense.

During the 1972 pilot strike, the Company started calling senior captains asking them to fly. In addition to the letter he wrote to company officials regarding strike breaking, it was reported that his response to the telephone call was simply, "I haven't sold my soul yet."

It's been 43 years since that effort. I still tend to tear up thinking about how Bill and other very senior pilots closed ranks when things were "touch and go" for us. We needed them so bad. Carstensen, Henderson, Cox, Kimm, McKeown, to name just a very few.

What a great job Bill Day is doing. It must take him forever, digging up all that info and making each "passing" story so complete.

The best and then some,

Chuck Hagen

JIM  
PALMER

**WA**

Hi RNPA;

The May Contrails published the 1940 Seniority List. I got to fly with quite a few of those pilots over my copilot years, but the name that got my memory is J. R. Galt.

In St Paul in 1936 Jack Galt was dating my 23 year old sister. I was 14 years old and very interested in Jack because he was a Minn. National Guard Pilot and he found out I was interested in flying. He asked me if I would like to go for an airplane ride and I did indeed.

He took me out to Wold Chamberlin Airport and rented a Rearwin Sportster on skis from Deponti Aviation in the winter of 1936 and we

NEW PORT RICHEY —

A New Port Richey resident is being recognized as the Angel Flight Southeast’s Pilot of the Year.

Warren Cheatham was picked out of 600 Angel Flight pilots. His volunteer work has helped save the lives of many.

Angel Flight Southeast is a non-profit volunteer pilot organization that provides free air transportation to distant medical facilities.

Four years ago, an oxygen tank was Rosemary Cahoon’s lifeline. “I had maybe 10 percent of my lungs left, which was not much,” said Cahoon. “All you think about is breathing because it just takes so much energy to breathe.”

Cahoon badly needed a lung transplant, but the lungs she needed were at a hospital hours away. “I was called down there for a transplant and I couldn’t make it because I didn’t have transportation,” she said. But that all changed when she met Cheatham.

“He is a very special angel,” said Cahoon.

Cheatham is a retired commercial pilot and an Air Force veteran who helped fuel fighter planes during the Vietnam War. For him, his love of being high in the sky never stopped.

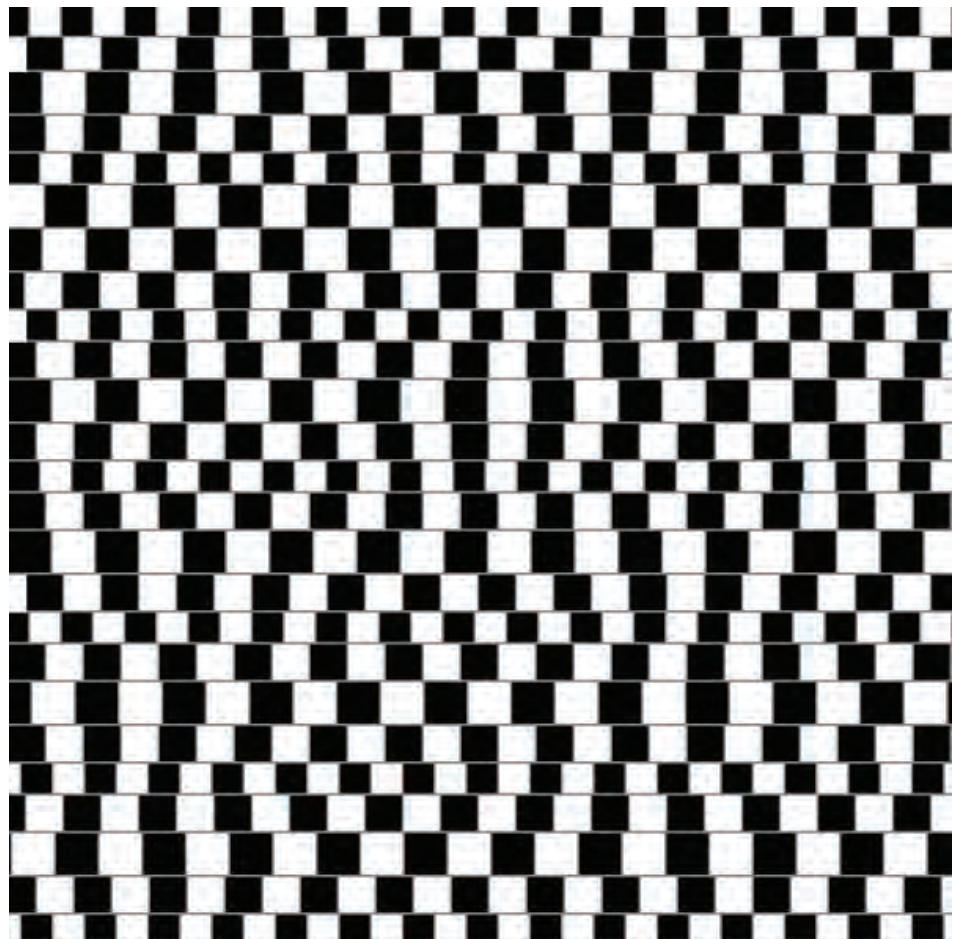
“I still would be going up flying—I just wouldn’t be accomplishing anything for anybody,” said Cheatham. Flying with a purpose and volunteering more than just his plane and time is what earned him his new title.

“I didn’t do anything special to win,” said Cheatham. But Cahoon sees differently.

“I wouldn’t be here without him today,” she said.

The organization is always looking for new volunteers.

*(Submitted by Dan Stack)*



PALMER CONT.  
took off in the snow. He let me handle the stick a little. I was thrilled and was sad when he stopped dating my Sister.

When I was hired by NWA in 1950 I knew he was a NWA pilot and was hoping to see him at the airport offices so I could re-introduce myself. I was layed off afler a few weeks and never ran across Jack.

During my layoff Jack Galt and Ray Render were killed on a test flight of a Martin 202. That was truly a sad day for me and NWA.

Jim Palmer

They all are  
Use a straight  
edge to verify.

← Answer

How many horizontal gray lines in this image are straight?

April 1958. Having just completed a “grueling” week of company orientation which included systems, etc. of the DC3 and DC4 we were on our way to Seattle. Typically, the company wanted us there the next day but agreed to three days since we were driving a 1955 Studebaker and its top speed was well under the 100mph required if we drove 17 hours without rest stops or gas.

We were to get three bounces in Seattle supervised by Capt. Fred Zimmerly (a great guy by the way) and any further education would be handled by the line captains. Then report the next day to our base at Spokane.

The road trip was uneventful but educational. For instance, in Glendive, Mont. you can’t get a “manhattan” cocktail but they could fix you up with a “ditch” whatever that was.

Also I learned as we drove by the Butte airport there was high terrain pretty darn close by.

Fast forward now to early May. On my first orientation flight, in a DC3, we have arrived somehow in the vicinity of Butte, Montana. Don’t recall the altitude as we arrived over town but do know it is well above sea level and it’s snowing. Since I’m being orientated [sic] the captain explains how this approach is done.

He says, “We spiral over the city lights to about 400 feet AGL. There we see the highway heading SE out of town. We follow the highway and descend to 200 feet until we see the gas station, whereupon we take up a heading of (about 140 as best I can remember) 140 degrees and in a few seconds we will see the runway”

Also it is explained to me that the company agent will be outdoors on a long mike cord to tell us of weather conditions and traffic if he/she can see any. He/she also can

control the runway lights.

So here we go. We spiral, we follow highway, we see gas station, we take up heading, we no see runway. Captain is yelling at co-pilot to tell agent to turn up damn lights. Co-pilot is yelling at agent to turn up lights. Agent is yelling at anyone who will listen, damn lights are up full. I’m worried about where damn hills are. At about 100 feet by magic the runway is dead ahead. We land no sweat.

Now what really worries me is the captain and helper seem to treat the whole thing as a “no big deal, normal” operation. I’m thinking maybe one doesn’t plan on living to a ripe old age at this job but it beats going to work for a living.

Thanks to all you folks who make Contrails such a fun read, and the association hum along.

Charlie (or Chuck)  
Sivertson

The passing of another Dave Peterson.

It was with sadness I noted the passing of my NWA namesake, Dave Peterson. But I did have to smile at the acknowledgement that he was “THE Dave Peterson”, or as our t-shirts described, the REAL Dave Peterson while I selected the title of the OTHER Dave Petersen. He provided a lot of cover as well as great stories and will be missed.

When I left NWA 10 years ago I believe I noted they had hired the NEXT. I never had the chance to leave a sympathy card in his mailbox.

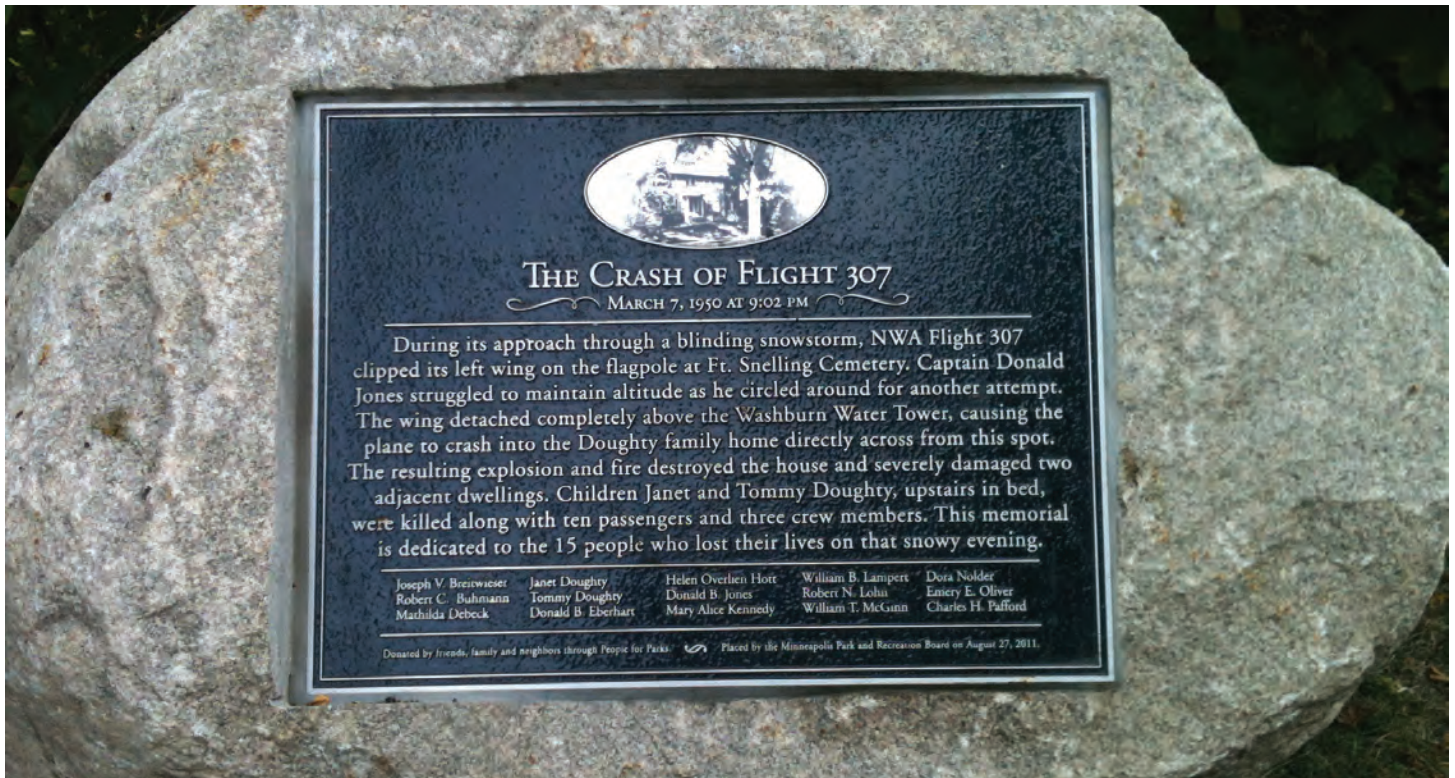
Best to you all,  
B. D. (The Other Dave)  
Petersen

*The “REAL” Dave Peterson was not a member of RNPA. – Ed.*

I was visiting my granddaughter last night when I asked if I could borrow a newspaper.  
“This is the 21st century,” she said. We don’t waste money on newspapers. Here, use my iPad.”  
I can tell you this. That spider never knew what hit him.  
*Thx to Walt Mills*

INTERNATIONAL THINKING AT ITS BEST!  
Question: What is the truest definition of Globalization?  
Answer: Princess Diana’s death.  
Question: How come?  
Answer: An English princess with an Egyptian boyfriend crashes in a French tunnel, driving a German car with a Dutch engine, driven by a Belgian who was drunk on Scottish whisky, (check the bottle before you change the spelling) followed closely by Italian Papparazzi, on Japanese motorcycles; treated by an American doctor, using Brazilian medicines.  
This is sent to you by an American, using Bill Gate’s technology. And you’re probably reading this on your computer, that uses Taiwanese chips, and a Korean monitor, assembled by Bangladeshi workers in a Singapore plant, transported by Indian lorry-drivers hijacked by Indonesians, unloaded by Sicilian longshoremen, and trucked to you by Mexican illegals....  
That, my friend, is Globalization!





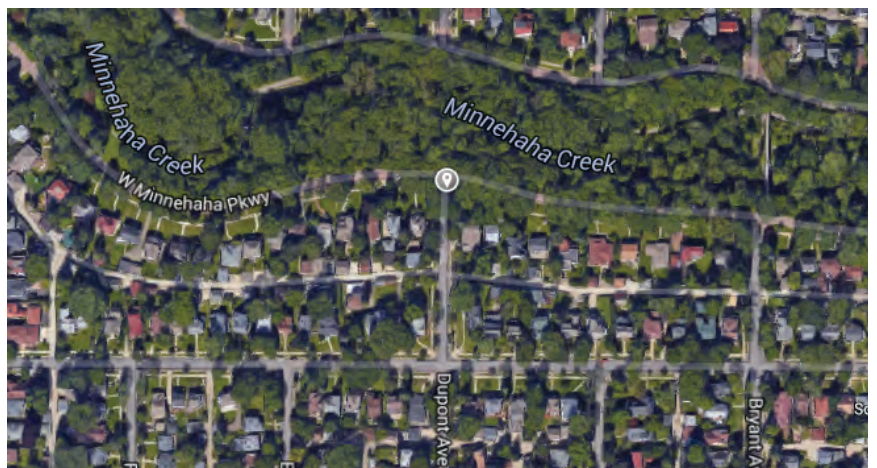
DICK WING



On March 7, 1950, a Martin 202 arriving MSP in a driving snow storm, clipped a flag pole in Fort Snelling. The impact cracked the main spar. As the airplane went around for another try, the left wing departed the airplane and landed near the Washburn Water Tower. The airplane then crashed into a house at Minnehaha Creek and Dupont Ave. S. Thirteen people and crew members on board were killed and two children in the upstairs of the house also died.

Flight 307 was flown by Captain Don Jones and Copilot William McGinn. Northwest's 22 Martins became very unpopular with NWA pilots who refused to fly them. This accident was not the first wing separation. The 202 was found to have a major defect in the wing structure. NWA got rid of all the 202s.

Now 63 years later, a Minneapolis Council Member and the Minneapolis Park Board worked together to remember the people killed in this terrible crash. A Memorial Plaque was placed at the scene of the crash at Dupont Ave. and Minnehaha Parkway.



Hi Gary,

Last April we got a tour at Luke AFB with the Ebners' son, Lt. Col Michael Ebner, who is in charge of the F-35 training.

Great tour with a small group that was planned at the last minute. Ebners have been in town for a couple months and start their trek back to Minnesota later.

Barbara



Sue and Tom Ebner with their son.



Lt. Col. Ebner wearing his \$500,000 helmet. That cost includes the supporting computer equipment.



Lt. Col. Michael Ebner is the Commander, 61st Fighter Squadron, Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. The 61st Fighter Squadron is the first F-35A fighter squadron at Luke AFB, training world-class pilots in the Air Force's newest fifth-generation fighter.



## NWA AT CENTENNIAL LAKES PARK

**Sunday August 23, 2015 between 10AM and 5PM**

A group of Northwest Alumni have received approval from the City of Edina to install sculptures in Centennial Lakes Park which recognize the contributions of the men and women of Northwest Airlines and Mr. Nyrop to the growth of commercial aviation. Nick Legeros, a renowned and award winning local sculptor, has been commissioned to create the sculptures [www.nikosculpture.com](http://www.nikosculpture.com). The sculptures depict a 5 year old boy and a 10 year old girl whimsically playing with model airplanes, already installed in the park, and a family boarding an aircraft in the 1960s when flying was a dress up adventure.

To celebrate the project, we are inviting former employees, their families, and friends to join us for NWA day at Centennial Lakes Park. The Park has walking trails, 18 hole grass miniature golf, lawn bowling, and entertainment at the amphitheater. We are also renting the pavilion so friends and families can gather. Mall of America is offering a shopping bag with coupons and family attraction tickets worth \$100 for each family in attendance.

Please come anytime and stay as long as you wish. Centennial Lakes Park Pavilion is located at 7499 France Ave South, Edina, Mn 55435.

A Facebook page has been created where you can follow the installation of the sculptures, learn more about the plans for NWA Day at the Park, and pass information to others who may be interested. The Facebook page is "NWA at Centennial Lakes Park". The page will also include information on discount hotel rates in Bloomington for any out of town guests who need lodging the weekend of August 21-23.

We have partnered with the Edina Community Foundation to raise the funds necessary for the cost of the sculptures and assist with new plantings in the sculpture area. We have already received support from over 100 former employees and friends. If you would like to help us with this project, please send your tax deductible donation to the Donald Nyrop Centennial Fund, Edina Community Foundation, 5280 Grandview Square, Edina, MN 55436 or donate online at [edinacommunityfoundation.org](http://edinacommunityfoundation.org).

Thanks for your support.  
John Horn

BOB  
IMMEL

**FL**

August 01, 2012

That issue that I just browsed thru should be printed and sold.

Bob Immel

*Note the date of Bob's email, please. I found it while cleaning out my mailboxes.*

*Thanks, Bob. I'm happy you think so—or at least did think so three years ago.*

*To print 108 pages in full color would be so expensive that we'd never be able to sell enough to cover the cost. It can still be read for free online, though. It's intended as a recruiting tool—to show those not familiar with RNPA what we're up to. You may share it with anyone you please and I hope you will.*

*Once you have typed the URL into your browser you will also find many back copies of Contrails by scrolling down.*

– Editor

**URL** ↓

[issuu.com/contrails/docs/best\\_of\\_contrails\\_lo\\_res](http://issuu.com/contrails/docs/best_of_contrails_lo_res)





# A STABILIZED approach



Contributing Columnist **James Baldwin**



*Like Father ————— Like Son*

## ICONOCLASTIC WARRIORS

The idea of joining the military, for whatever reason, be it required or as a volunteer, is an obviously momentous decision. It's a career move or chosen path for some, an escape from the penury of their civilian life for others and the completion of the service requirement for those who enjoyed any military assistance with their education. Except in times of outright large scale war, it's a free choice our free country allows.

Since so few of our citizens are involved in military life on a per capita basis, it is generally out of view in the daily pursuit for the rest of us. There are significant exceptions of course: I may see sailors and airmen when I'm enjoying a sunny day jogging around Coronado, but a military presence, by understandable design, is unseen near my home on the north shore of Lake Tahoe. Here in Washington D.C. as I write this, the appearance, grandeur, significance and respect of the U.S. military organization is far more visible as I'm sure it is in other military oriented locations throughout America. Even though my dad fought in WWII, and his father before him in WWI, I did not come from a military oriented family. We did not live in those locations where a military pres-

ence was foremost and innocently, it was considered fair game when I was in college to use the student deferment offered as a way to avoid the war then raging in Vietnam. By the time I managed to graduate, the conflict was ending; the draft was over.

Despite my civilian background, it didn't take any effort at all to appreciate the nearly opposite orientation of the son of a military officer whose truly significant family lineage and military service dated back to the American Revolution. Both sides of his family's forebears included soldiers who fought in the war to create our country. One grandfather was a former physician, fought as an infantryman in the Mexican-American War, and became an Episcopal minister in the District of Columbia. He stood on the gallows at the hanging of the conspirators of the Lincoln assassination. Another family member is noted to have been a leading Peace Democrat in the American Civil War as well as serving as Speaker in the Ohio Senate and later becoming a U.S. Congressman. There are most certainly other families who have significant and recorded history of their ancestor's participation in past conflict, but this story reflects

the past warrior history to the more recent, and as we will see, it gets better.

Robert Olds was the patriarch warrior of that family and his story is for the most part either sadly forgotten, or worse yet, totally unknown to those living in the nation he fought hard to protect. With a life spanning only the first half of the last century, after graduating from high school he joined the Aviation Section of The Signal Enlisted Reserve Corps, trained to become a pilot, fought in WWI and WWII, managed a career in the Army Air Corp rising to the rank of Major General, married four times and produced four sons. Flamboyant in approach, fearless and outspoken in speech, energetic with initiative and diplomatic with an occasional comment others found too direct, were marks of this born leader.

Robin Olds was his eldest son. With an Army officer father who was a pilot, a disciplinarian and an unquestionable leader, it was almost unavoidable for a son to be raised without the strong influence of a military style of life and values. Adding to that influence, he enjoyed with avid interest listening to the stories and tales from friends and fellow aviators his father had come to know during The Great War. Many evenings were spent at their home with Eddie Rickenbacker, Tooeey Spaatz, Fiorella LaGuardia, Hap Arnold, Roscoe Turner and others who openly supported air supremacy in battle and knew America was behind in that respect. His father was an ardent critic of the “battleship admiral” military mentality of the time and it was a debate that occurred at the highest levels and marked by resistance to change the way wars had been fought in the past. How wrong the soldiers from the past would be proven to be by this group of renegades.

Captain Robert Olds was convinced General Billy Mitchell was prescient in his vision of how the military needed to change and testified at his court martial trial despite threatening implications to his own career. As an assigned aide to General Mitchell in the Office of the Chief of Air Service he was obviously impacted by his views and Olds was an openly opinionated supporter of air power at a time when it was not a popular concept.

Although Billy Mitchell died in 1936, WWII finally



proved his views and theories were correct. He is still the only American who has had a military airplane, the North American B-25 Mitchell, named after him. As an interesting note of allegiance to and belief in Mitchell, Robert Olds dressed his son and soon to be fellow warrior, Robin, in an Air Services uniform for public interview and photography before the trial. Robin Olds was three years old.

Olds' personality as an outlier or iconoclast was passed on to his son who would find, later in his own life just as his father did, that his sometimes blunt delivery would indeed sometimes blunt his own progress with the military hierarchy. Olds was a warrior, not a politician. His need to speak to the issue based on fact and specifics led to an occasional comment others

considered imprudent. There was no “spin zone” with Olds and some took umbrage with his direct approach. Apparently, so did at least a couple of his four wives.

Even though Robin's mother Eloise died when he was just four, Robert, in true pilot fashion, found wife number two just two years later. The rigors of military life and difficult assignments helped to unravel that relationship after just a couple of years as Olds was given additional responsibility and an increased leadership position. He was then assigned to Langley Field to attend the Air Corp Tactical School. His performance during that period led him to being asked to become an instructor, which he did for an extended period.

Of course not having been there during that time I'm just guessing, but the Langley Field bar scene was probably, for its own day and age, not too much different than the one in the movie “Top Gun” where Maverick and Goose croon “You've Lost That Loving Feeling” to Kelly McGillis. We all know how that turned out and in my mind I imagined Robert Olds having similar skills as he landed wife number three. He must have made good use of his time with her as he was able to father two more sons. Unfortunately that marriage ended in divorce as well.

When the training school was relocated to Alabama, Olds remained as the Operations Officer for what was known as the 2nd Bomb Group. Using 12 of the very first Boeing B-17 bombers produced, Olds was assigned

the task of formulating the basic rules and procedures to enable bombing of any target, anywhere in the world, in any weather. Proving the effectiveness of the bomber was accomplished with record breaking trans-continental flights and several goodwill flights to South America and gained Olds considerable notoriety as well as the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Meanwhile, over at Roosevelt's Bureau of Air Commerce, a gentleman named Eugene Luther Vidal, Sr. was doing his best as the assigned director. He was one of the first Army Air Corp pilots, the quarterback and captain of the U.S. Military Academy football team, an all-American basketball player and a decathlon competitor in the 1920 and 1924 Olympics. A true superstar, this dude was obviously quite a stud and Amelia Earhart was listed as his main love interest. Later in life long after Earhart went missing in the Pacific, Vidal's son asked his father if he had had a "fling" with her. "More than that," the elder replied. When asked why he had never married her, the senior Vidal replied decades later with emotion still in his voice: "I have never really wanted to marry another boy, and she was like a boy."

Vidal Sr. participated in the founding of three airlines with Charles Lindbergh and Amelia Earhart at Transcontinental Air Transport, which eventually became Trans World Airlines. They were also involved in startups which eventually became Eastern Airlines and Northeast Airlines.

Vidal's wife was Nina Gore, the high society good looking occasional actress who married repeatedly for connection to society's notables and for plain old financial support. Together they had a son named Eugene Louis Vidal who, after his baptism at age thirteen, chose the name Gore Vidal, whom we all know as one of the great and prolific American writers of the twentieth century. That is a story all by itself. That union lasted thirteen years before they divorced and Nina married into the well known Auchincloss family. Husband Hugh D. Auchincloss had formerly married a Russian noblewoman and the union lasted seven years producing one son.



Jacqueline Bovier being given away to John Kennedy by Hugh Auchincloss on Sept. 12, 1953.

Nina and Hugh remained together for six years before an affair with Robert Olds led to their breakup. Only of interest as an unrelated side note, Hugh went on to wed for the third time and it was to Janet Lee Bovier, already the mother of Jacqueline Lee Bovier, future first lady. It was the same Hugh D. Auchincloss who gave the bride away after her father was barred from attending the ceremony after consuming too much alcohol.

During this same period, General Henry Arnold commanded Olds to organize the Air Corp Ferrying Command in order to deliver mass numbers of airplanes to the Royal Air Force as well as points across the Atlantic. Over 7,000 airplanes were delivered in the Lend Lease program as the Sec-

ond World War heated up. A later promotion to Major General saw Olds finally commanding the Second Air Force. As a hallmark of his career, an ability to cut to the important part of any issue and make a decision enabled Army superiors to quickly identify Olds as the soldier who could get the job done. Although the subjects and issues were markedly different, the son would be in the future as outspoken, opinionated and accomplished as the father he admired. Outright skill, single minded determination, physical size and presence and a disregard for unwarranted tradition made both of them into the leader each turned out to be. Curtis LeMay remarked that of all the great leaders he had come into contact with, "If I had to single out anyone, I would say that Robert Olds made the biggest impact."

Just ten months into his union with Nina, Robert Olds suffered a heart attack, recovered and later died in 1943 from pericardial disease. He was 47 years old. His two sons, Robin and Steven, who were both attending the United States Military Academy, were flown by B-17 to Tucson to be with him before he passed. His ashes were dispersed over the mountains nearby but his legacy was intact and his methods ready to be carried forward by his warrior son, Robin. That too is another story and one which we shall cover next time. ✪

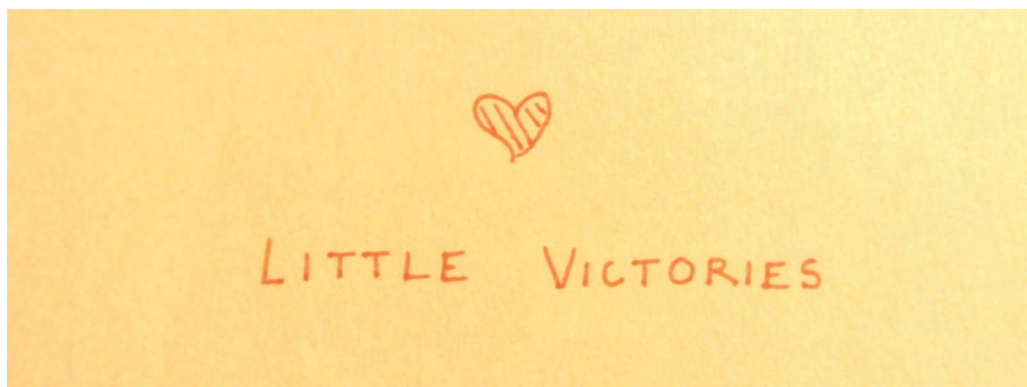
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it



## CONTRIBUTING COLUMNIST JOHN DOHERTY



“And now your and my flying days are done. And perhaps those of us who survived the blessed profession of airline pilot can say with satisfaction that we broke even. And that’s the big victory.”

I think the best that pilots—along with “The Gambler” of Kenny Rogers fame—can hope for at the end of their careers is to “break even.” To retire with pension intact, for there to never have been a flight with more takeoffs than landings, to not have broken anything or hurt anyone, to have all the letters in the files removed, and to have the chief pilot not sure of your name as he says good-bye.

Not to say that we didn’t have our successes along the way—we did. We had what I’m calling “Little Victories.” Those few moments in a career that we can look back on with particular satisfaction.

I got my foot in the door at Northwest with a little victory. I’d dropped out of the University of Oregon after a majorly unsuccessful year and half to join the Marines to defend the US against the mythical domino theory. From the Marines I applied to Northwest where I knew the college education standard was 2 years—a standard I didn’t meet. Sitting across the desk from Randal Briese who was going over my application line by line. He paused at the education level line. I was bright enough to

have been meticulously honest on my application, and there it was; “College, 1½ years.” Briese asked me pointedly, “How much college do you have?” I replied, “A year and a half.”

Briese pursed his lips, crossed out my entry and wrote in “2 years,” and I was in. A little victory that made all the difference to my future.

Well almost in. I was still in the Marines with two months of active duty remaining. In the normal course of things I was assigned to be the Group Duty Officer. I showed up a little before 8:00 for the change-over in the colonel’s office to discover that unlike every other Duty Officer I’d stood previously, this colonel liked to change over at 7:45 and I’d missed the time. The colonel was pissed. (Rules for success in life: don’t ever do anything that pisses off a Marine Corps bird colonel.)

Turned out my punishment was to stand the duty again a few days later—all good except it was the date I had set for my interview with the chief pilot at Northwest. And did I say that I was based in South Carolina, so getting to Minneapolis came

with some logistical issues. I was given the news about my assignment while I was in the squadron operations office. Seeing my career possibilities crumbling and being more or less broke after my post-Vietnam celebrations and needing a job, I flew into a rage.

I kicked a wastebasket clattering across the room, discarded papers flying. I shouted, "I can't wait to get out of this green m[redacted]!" I finished up with the threat of telling Mendel Rivers that the Marine Corps was interfering with a Vietnam Vet's efforts to obtain civilian employment. (Mendel Rivers was the Representative from my S.C. district and Chairman of the Armed Services Committee in the House—and had a reputation of strong support for service men and women.) Stunned silence followed my outburst.

Miraculously I disappeared from the group duty roster a couple of days later—a little victory. I kept my appointment with an assistant chief pilot who it turned out was a former Marine Corps pilot himself, and the interview was a slam-dunk. Another little victory.

I spent the first few years at Northwest flying side-saddle on the 707. One of my practices was to tune in WWV during preflight and to set the second hands on both the captain's and co-pilot's clocks sweeping in synchrony at exactly the correct time. On one occasion I was flying with a captain who had taken note of this practice of mine. One day in cruise I noticed him messing with the HF and looking at the clocks. After some time he

turned to me and said in his inimitable style, "You set the goddam clocks wrong."

What could I say? Sometime later I noticed the captain fiddling with his clock and the HF again. Covertly observing, I noticed him surreptitiously reset his clock to where I'd had it in the first place. Giving him a couple of minutes to conclude that he'd gotten away with his deception I intoned, "The goddam clocks were set right in the first place, weren't they." He turned to me displaying his signature glare and replied, "Yes the goddam clocks were set right in the first place." A little victory.

Wrenching on the DC-10, turning off the runway at ANC, coming out of reverse and #2 EGT starts for the sky—too rapid for "crew coordination." Instinctively I reach up and shut the engine down. The captain (God bless him) immediately sees what's going on, calls for the copilot to open the start valve to cool the engine as it winds down. By happenstance there is an ATC guy in the jump seat and the captain turns to him and says, "Well, John just saved a \$2 million engine." The Controller, impressed asks, "Will he get any special recognition for that?" The captain replies, "His recognition is that he would have gotten fired if he'd missed it." A little victory.

With the passage of a few side-saddle years I took on my first co-pilot checkout on the 727. In those days we did some of the training in the aircraft, and on this particular occasion I was getting my checkride in the plane at Rochester. The maneuver I was to perform was the lateral and vertical





offset to a landing. (In retrospect why we would have been required to perform this crazy maneuver in the aircraft is beyond me.)

Anyway, the captain told me to put my head down and positioned the aircraft for the maneuver. He says, "OK, you got it, take it in and land." With one look and without thinking I blurted out, "We'll never make it!" The instructor took another look, replied, "You're right, I have the aircraft." And that was the end of that maneuver. A little victory.

Fast forward to flying captain on the 757. Taxiing into Gate 7 (I think it was) on the Gold in MSP. Tight fit, with 57s on either side. Marshaller giving me the come-ahead. Seemed tight; stop the aircraft, open my side window and stick my head out far enough to see my wingtip. The other wingtip was close enough that I didn't want to take it any further. Meanwhile the marshaller is giving me energetic body language that I should bring it on in. I decline. Marshaller flings his wands on the ground and goes stomping off.

Wait five minutes and a tug hooks up with, "Release your brakes." Me; "Brakes released." First thing the tug driver does is back us up and start for the gate all over. At the gate I ask the tug driver to stop into the cockpit if he would. He does and I ask, "I noticed you backed us up before pulling into the gate, how come?" He replies, "Because if we had kept going we would have clipped wingtips." A little victory.

Still on the 757—have a Fed I don't know along line-checking me; there is an MEL on the aircraft related to APU oil quantity (as I recall). I ask maintenance to visually check the oil quantity as I interpret required by the MEL (APU is not inop itself and is running). Maintenance says it's not needed. I ask them to do it anyway. They refuse. I tell them when they check it and it's OK I'll take the airplane to wherever it was we were headed. They come and check it, sign off the log, slam the door and leave. Fed is silent through the entire little drama. We push back late.

Next day flying through the same base and I am met at the gate by a chief pilot and a maintenance supervisor. They proceed to tear me a new—well lets just say their excoriations were fundamental. Needlessly inconvenienced our passengers, unprofessional, disrespectful to maintenance, airline needs team players, we're trying to make a profit here, you don't understand the MEL, etc.

I have the Fed's contact info, call him and discuss the situation I'm in with my airline. He tells me

at this point, "If you hadn't insisted on having the APU oil checked it would have been an unsatisfactory check ride." I ask him for a letter to that extent which he provides and which I provide in turn to the chief pilot's office. I don't hear back. A little victory.

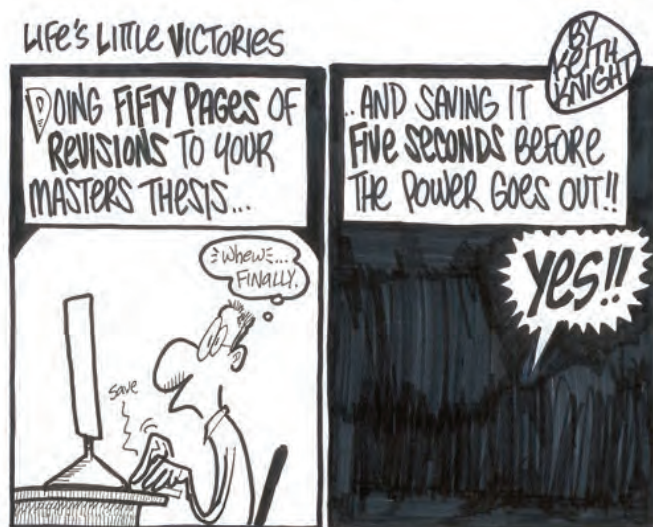
Taxiing out for takeoff at MEM, lots of summer storms including pretty much off the end of our assigned runway (there weren't any good runways). I turn around at the run-up pad and take a look at the departure weather on the radar—opt to delay takeoff until the cell at the end of the runway clears—it was fast moving and didn't seem like it would be much of a delay.

A couple of DC-9s taxi by and blast off into the weather. Tower asks me (and this is an exact quote) "What's it going to take to get you out of here?" Sarcasm dripping from his voice. I mumble something about give me a few minutes.

I take the few minutes, the cell clears, and off we go. Sometime during climbout the flight attendant comes to the cockpit with a note—as it turns out from a deadheading FedEx pilot in the back. The note says, "Thanks for delaying the takeoff for the weather and putting safety first." A little victory—and thanks FedEx.

So looking back, the little victories were few and far between. And that's OK, right? All those thousands of flights, got from A to B, didn't hurt anyone, didn't break anything and (mostly) didn't have to go see the chief pilot.

And now your and my flying days are done. And perhaps those of us who survived the blessed profession of airline pilot can say with satisfaction that we broke even. And that's the big victory. ✈





# *A Chick in the Cockpit*



Contributing Columnist **Erika Armstrong**

## Mistresses, Wives and the Mile High Club



The flustered aircraft salesman walks past the front desk of the FBO pulling at his tie, a permanent blush to his cheeks; for some reason, he can't look me in the eye. Next in through the sliding doors is the flight crew looking similarly discombobulated with confusion. The only clue they give me is an eye roll when I ask if everything is okay. All I can think of the situation is that the demonstration flight did not go well. The last two people through the doors gave me the answer to their bewilderment. The gentleman who had been taking several demonstration flights over the last few weeks had taken his wife for a ride a few days earlier. Today, it was the mistress' turn, and while the salesman and flight crew were professional in front of their clients, the ability to handle this type of social situation is a requirement for pilots—and it's not something they teach you in ground school. (In case you're wondering, during the divorce, both the husband and ex-wife got matching jets).

Stepping into the cockpit of a corporate jet is similar to stepping into a confessional. Pilots enter a realm of intimacy with their passengers, and knowing how to deal with the drama of clients can be just as difficult as landing an ILS to minimums in Aspen during a blinding blizzard with a tornado mixed in. If a pilot doesn't deal with these personal situations appropriately, he could lose his job. You can be the best aviator in the world, but if you can't deal with the personal aspect of corporate charter clients, then you better start thinking about flying the red-eye cargo routes.

My most awkward moment came after months of flying a family and a nanny to a high elevation destination. On this particular day, it was just the husband and the nanny, and on this day, she was taking care of the husband. My inclination was to rage against the injustice and corrupt morals, but that is not part of my job description as a pilot. I am not allowed human emotions; I am just a pilot getting

paid to fly the airplane. I had to remind myself that it wasn't up to me to set personal rules and make moral judgments of my clients. My job is to get the people who are paying to their destination safely. But it's not easy when the very next week, I was flying the wife, children and nanny. It hurt my heart. But life works itself out without my interference.

Clients forget that pilots are human. When they ask us to close the door or curtain so that they might join a particular club, it's awkward for the other pilot and me. Pilots don't like having to use emotions. Feeling awkward is an emotion that someone else puts us in. So, we deal with it by using humor. But that's between us pilots. How do you deal with your misbehaving clients? Think like a priest or psychologist. What happens in the cabin, stays in the cabin, and so do your thoughts about it. Don't say a word to your clients, but do what you can to guide the situation behind the scenes. Above all, just be the ultimate professional, look them in the eye and ask if they enjoyed their flight. Okay, that is passive aggressive, but you get the idea.

I had a pilot friend lose his corporate pilot contract with a client after he thought it was okay to ask his passenger if the two women onboard were available for dating. Since they were his daughters, they were not, and he was asked to never fly them again. It was a cushy flying job, and he always regretted his moment of being human. He forgot he was a pilot and needed to act like one. Pilot means in control, and that means controlling yourself in the situation.

Corporate and Part 135 charter pilots will be placed in an awkward situation at some point in their careers. Maybe it's a fight between family members, or a drunk client who shouldn't be driving a rental car. For the most part, your role is to ignore it, but there will be times when you have to step in to keep you and your passengers safe. It's your job.

If your boss wants to smoke pot inflight because it's his airplane, how does a pilot respond? Responsibly. I'm from Colorado where it's legal, but it's not at most destinations. It still violates federal law and, despite the laws, breathing it in, especially at altitude, might impair your ability to be a pilot. If a polite request to put it out draws you a nudge and a wink, it's where you have to draw the line. If you have to, raise the cabin pressure to 9,999 feet and put on your oxygen mask. If the smell of your passengers tips off a security search, you and your passengers will be in for a long day. It's not worth risking your life or your license so be proactive. As a crew, stand up for each other and give a united front to keep you and your flight safe. It can happen once, but don't allow it to

happen again. If this is a charter, it's much easier to lay down the rules. If this is a private aircraft with a fulltime flight crew, the situation is more difficult. Tell your boss what will happen when he gets caught. The smell doesn't go away and line guys know what that smell is. Tell your boss about ramp checks and DEA investigations, and if that doesn't work, stand up and say "no." If you get fired for this, I have a hundred attorneys that would love to take your case.

It's easier if your passenger is a charter client, but it still demands alternative thinking. I had a very intoxicated passenger who wanted to rent a car once we got to the destination FBO. He had made his way up to the cockpit several times during the flight and it became very apparent he shouldn't be driving. In this instance, it was easy to control the situation behind the scenes without being the bad guy. I called ahead on Unicom and told the customer service rep the situation. I told her that this gentleman should not be allowed to drive under any circumstances. I had her call a limo service and to have a car waiting. It was a gamble for me, but I was willing to take the financial hit (explain it to my boss) if it didn't work out. The customer service rep was prepared to firmly tell this gentlemen "no." She did a great job while being kind about the situation, and since we had a limo waiting, it was still convenient for him. She told him he could have the limo drive him back tomorrow if he still wanted the rental car. He ended up enjoying being driven around in a limo, and the expense ended up being comparable to the rental car since he was only needing transportation to two places. He ended up using limo service at most of his destinations after this incident.

The world outside aviation doesn't realize all the nuances of being a corporate or charter pilot. The job requirements of a pilot these days goes beyond just flying a machine. Not only is it learning complex machinery in complex airspace, it is about pleasing clients to please employers. It often puts pilots in interpersonal situations beyond the call of duty. Just remember it takes a village to please a client. Use the resources and people around you. If a client is doing something unusual, a phone call to the chief pilot or flight dispatcher might save your job. Just letting someone else know that you need help controlling a customer situation helps you gain even more control, and cover your hindsight. Somewhere out there, right now, a charter pilot crew is fighting a mechanical problem and bad weather, but they can handle that. It's the passengers in the back of the airplane who are giving them an ulcer... ✈

# A Brief History of the Mile High Club

Air travel hasn't quite lost all its romance.



Chris Philpot

BY MARK GERCHICK

Only true aviation geeks are likely to celebrate, or even notice, the milestone being celebrated this year in the history of aviation: the debut, a century ago, of the autopilot. In June 1914, at a historic aeronautical-safety competition in Paris, a 21-year-old American daredevil pilot-inventor named Lawrence Burst Sperry stunned the aviation world by using the instrument to keep a biplane flying straight and level along the Seine. According to his biographer, William Wyatt Davenport, Sperry stood on a wing as the plane, in effect, flew itself—a feat that won him the event's \$10,000 prize.

By eliminating the need for taxing “hand flying” on long journeys, and thereby reducing pilot fatigue, Sperry's autopilot ultimately made flying much safer. But it had another, less obvious benefit. It freed up pilots to do other things with their hands—and bodies. The brilliant young Sperry himself soon grasped the possibilities. Legend has it that in late November 1916, while piloting a Curtiss Flying Boat C-2 some 500 feet above the coast of Long Island, he used his instrument to administer a novel kind of flying lesson to one Cynthia Polk (whose husband was driving an ambulance in war-torn France). During their airborne antics, however, the two unwittingly managed to bump and disengage the autopilot, sending their plane into Great South Bay, where they

were rescued, both stark naked, by duck hunters. A gallant Sperry explained that the force of the crash had stripped both fliers of all their clothing, but that didn't stop a skeptical New York tabloid from running the famous headline “Aerial Petting Ends in Wetting.” For his caper, Sperry is generally considered the founder of the Mile High Club, a cohort that loosely includes all those who have ever “done it” in flight (though precisely what constitutes “it” remains a lurking definitional issue).

“Flying,” the 1930s stunt pilot Pancho Barnes is often quoted as saying, “makes me feel like a sex maniac in a warehouse with a stack of \$20 bills.” Today's overcrowded, underfed, overstressed airline passengers, consigned to travel in “just a bloody bus with wings” as Ryanair CEO Michael O'Leary puts it, are unlikely to share that enthusiasm. It's all the more remarkable, then, that airborne sex remains on the bucket list of plenty of passengers, at least male ones. A “Sex Census” published in 2011 by the condom maker Trojan found that 33 percent of American men aspire to have sex on an airplane. (The top locale for women: a beach.) Similarly, nearly a third of the Brits who responded to a 2010 TripAdvisor poll said they wanted to try in-flight sex.

A lot of U.S. fliers may have already acted out that fantasy. In a global survey of more than 300,000 adults

## **“Flying,” said the 1930s stunt pilot Pancho Barnes, “makes me feel like a sex maniac in a whorehouse with a stack of \$20 bills.”**

conducted in 2005 by the condom maker Durex, 2 percent of respondents worldwide (and 4 percent of American respondents) claimed to have had sex on an airplane. A 2010 survey commissioned by Sensis Condoms (when did condom makers become avid pollsters?) found a similar incidence of in-flight sex (3 percent) among its respondents. Assuming that about 100 million Americans have traveled by air, and discounting for lying braggarts, if even only 1 percent of them have indulged, then that’s a million or so Mile Highers.

Less-than-scientific anecdotes abound too. When Virgin Atlantic installed diaper-changing tables aboard its new Airbus A340-600 long-haul jets, in 2002, it wasn’t just mothers and children who found them useful. Within weeks, according to the airline, the tables were destroyed by “those determined to join the Mile High Club.” That said, the airline’s founder, the billionaire bad boy Sir Richard Branson, has waxed nostalgic about a tryst he had at age 19 in a Laker Airways lavatory (“It was every man’s dream”). Almost 20 years ago, Singapore Airlines, for its part, reported that a third of its cases of “unruly behavior” involved in-flight sex.

For the airlines, the “sexy skies” are all about marketing the fantasy. Actual in-flight sex is the last thing they want to deal with, especially since 9/11, when the preferred cabin ambience has become no-fun, no-drama—a shift more self-protective than puritanical. Is it just love, or is that couple huddled together in their seats trying to ignite explosive-filled sneakers? Even a visit to the bathroom can trigger a full-bore fighter-jet scramble, as it did on the 10th anniversary of 9/11, when a pair of F-16s shadowed a Frontier flight until it landed in Detroit after two passengers made for the lavatory at the same time. Cabin crews working chock-full flights now also have no time, much less the inclination, to play chaperone.

Almost perversely, as the reality of today’s air travel for the ordinary coach passenger moves from bearable to downright nasty, reviving the lost “romance” of flying makes marketing sense. Branson, the master marketer, beckons passengers to “get lucky” when they fly Virgin America jets outfitted with seat-back touch screens that let you send “an in-flight cocktail to that friendly stranger in seat 4A.” After all, if you’re busy punching your video screen to chat up some “friendly stranger,” you’re not griping about an airline’s \$7.50 snack pack. And when Singapore Airlines proudly unveiled for global media its super-jumbo double-deck-

er Airbus A380 jet, the hype was all about the glories of its 12 ultra-costly first-class “suites.” Combine two of the private pods (about \$10,000 each for the round trip from New York to Frankfurt), and you can share a legit double bed, shown in publicity photos strewn with rose petals, alongside a gold tray holding an open bottle of Dom Pérignon and two half-full champagne flutes. What are you supposed to think? Then there’s Air New Zealand’s “Skycouch” (three adjacent coach seats that can be transformed into a flat, bed-like surface), popularly known as “cuddle class.” It comes with the coy admonition to “just keep your clothes on thanks!”

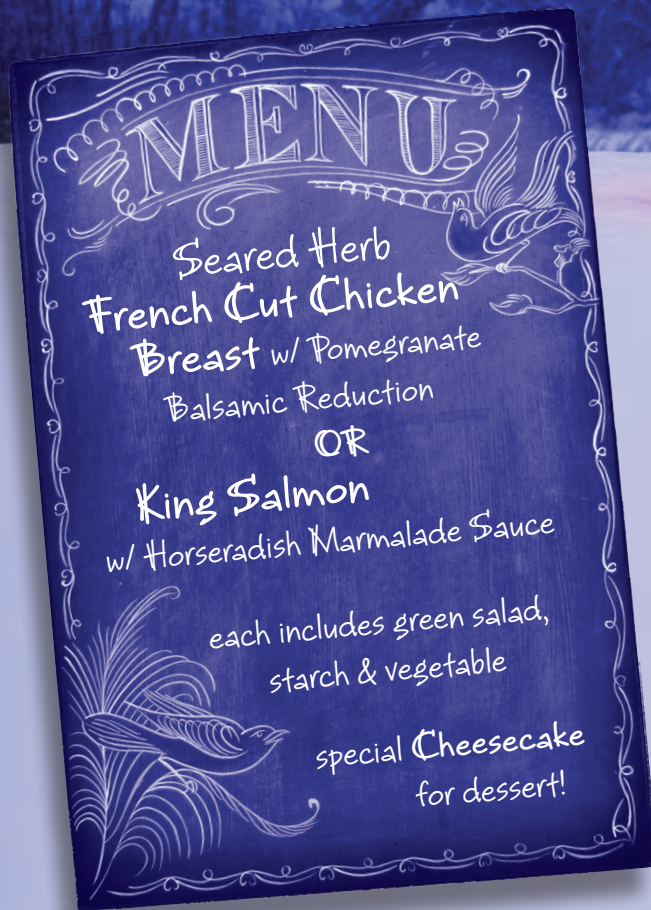
Could we return to the good old days when travelers were “mad men” and flight attendants were “sexy stewes,” when the “sex sells seats” mantra drove some carriers to adorn “trolley dollies” in hot pants and go-go boots and to offer “executive” (men-only) flights between Chicago and New York? Not likely, at least in the United States, where women constitute more than 40 percent of frequent fliers and half of international air travelers, and make most travel-buying decisions. How many of these women are really looking to “get lucky” on their next flight? Being hit on by an unseen stranger while buckled into a seat at 35,000 feet, online commenters have complained, is at best “a little creepy” and at worst like being trapped in a “mile high stalker club.”

For those moved by the marketing, or otherwise compelled to act out the mile-high fantasy (Freud posited that the fantasy of flight itself has “infantile erotic roots”), there’s a better solution than flying commercial: your own plane. Think Playboy’s Big Bunny, a 1970s-era DC-9 jet outfitted as a “party pit,” complete with a fur-covered oval bed, a shower, and a discotheque, all presided over by flight attendants (“Jet Bunnies”) in black-leather mini-jumpsuits: “Imagine Studio 54 with wings,” enthused a Playboy feature. That particular icon supposedly now resides, dismantled, in a small city in Mexico, but some air-charter services offer hour-long jaunts for adventurous couples wanting to live out the dream, or at least spice up their relationships. These outfits come and go, with names like Erotic Airways and Flamingo Air, but typically they equip their small Pipers or Cessnas with a mattress (in lieu of the customary four or six seats), overfly scenic spots like Cincinnati or western Georgia, and throw in a bottle of not-quite-vintage bubbly, all for about \$500.

The sheets—no joke—are yours to take home as souvenirs. ✪

# SEATTLE 2015 CHRISTMAS PARTY

DEC. 10TH  
10:30 - 3:00



***Emerald Downs Racetrack***  
2300 Emerald Downs Drive  
Auburn, Washington

***\$35 per person***



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed: \$35 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Checks payable to **"Sunshine Club"**

**Registration DEADLINE: December 3rd**

Chicken

Salmon

Mail to:

**Kathee Nelick**

**6101 Nahane West N E**

**Tacoma WA 98422**

253.927.9136

knelick60@comcast.net

# 2015 Edition of the Minneapolis Summer Cruise



Photography: The Editor

A little rain didn't stop very many.

Cruising aboard Avalon on the St. Croix River the second Thursday of June every year has become the most well attended of all the RNPA affiliated get-togethers, rain or shine. So a little rain is not going to prevent our getting to see our friends and co-workers each summer.

But because of a schedule conflict it's the THIRD Thursday next year.

This event has been happening for at least fifteen years, maybe longer. For the last few years the attendance has been hovering just under 250 guests. It's always open to anyone with ties to Northwest Airlines and their friends. Come join us next year.

## Next year it's June 16th

These two interior shots make it look like everyone just sits at their tables for three hours. Nothing could be further from the fact. This brief time while everyone waits while the tables are cleared was the only time the photographer had a chance to get these shots. Most of the time while standing, mingling and visiting friends it can be difficult navigating the aisles.







Pete Johnson & Claudia Waters, HOST Phil Hallin



Lynn Hensrud



Bob & Sue Horning



Joan Zeisneiss, Cheryl Dolan, JoAnn LeMire





Jack Cutler



Kirk Mogren



Wayne Segulia



Don Lundvall



Claire Davis



Beth Burt



Gail Dierks



Virgil Sagness



Bill Waterbury



Carol Hall



Paul Hallin



Wally Pizzczek



Joe Sutila



Joel Tastad



Paul Nungesser



Al Teasley



Linda Saveland



First Lastname



Robert Wolf



Dick Glover



Don Aulick



Lee Bradshaw



Pete Campbell



Paul Jackman



Mike Roeloff, Sandy & Gary Roeloff



Dave Kollitz, Chuck Hinz, Ed Johnson



Tim & Kathy Mannion, RaNae Wolle



The Lelands: (l-r) Marilyn, Holly, J.D., Howie



Elizabeth Moulder, Gary & Shirleen Hutchens



Sue Bartho, Mary Jane Dittberner, Sandra Ryan



Claudia Waters & Pete Johnson



Dino & Karen Oliva



Don & Jane Chadwick



Doug & Libby Baker



Dorothy & Lowell Schroeder



Deneen & Tony Polgar



Cindy & Jim Dandrea



Judy & Tom Schellinger



Dawn & Jim Thill



Bonnie & John Nashopoulos



Joanne & John Osborn



Lois & Dick Haglund



Ann & Ralph Kisor



Sue Kostka, Hal Hockett



Vikki & Jim Hancock



Meme & Carl Simmons



Suzanne & David Zanick



Diane & John Andres



Sammy & Bill Fellingner



Gerogeia & Bob Johnson



Roger & Rosie Grotbo



Char Stewart, Susan Eckley



Sharon & Ken Kreutzmann



Bernard Phillips, Linda Saveland



Marilyn & Tim Olson



Charles Moore & Connie Thompson



Linda & Tim Walker



Bobbi & George Lachinski



Sue & Dick Duxbury



Marilyn & Howie Leland



Don & Vicky Bulger



Nancy & Jim Bestul



Mary Ann & Dick Robbins



Lowell & Kathleen Williams



Wendy & Larry Ganse



Helen & Gene Frank



Judy Huff, Shari Burns



Pete Brown, Steve Lillyblad



Milt & Mary Eitrem



Elaine Mielke, Jack Cornforth



Dave Griffiths, Steve Lapensky



Joan & Gary Thompson



Angie & Dave Lundin



Nancy & K. P. Haram



Susan & Terry Marsh



Marty Ginzl, Jenee Hannon



Chuck & Karen Erickson



Beverly & Duane Chirhart



Jeanne & Don Wiedner



Mindy & Pete Schenck



Keith Maxwell & Kathy Zeilie



Dick & Marina Jones



Joan & Gene Sommerfield



Dianne Heglund, Sharon Gayle



Dottie Bassett, Donna Miller





Lynn & Terry confer



Judy & Bob Royer



Barb & John Vivian



Kay & Neil Elliott



Kathleen Palmen, Bev Ryan



Mary Linda & Tom White



Joan & Gary Downes



Robert Wolf, Edith Schrope



Barb & Dick Erlandson



Wendy & Pete Vinsant



Stephanie & Dick Wing



Steve & Eris Hunter



Penny & Bob White



Rod & Dee Hald



Kathy & Neil Cebell



Eldon & Coleen Boose



Jane & Dave Sanderson



Paul Hallin, Uncle Phil Hallin



Sara & Nick Modders



Julie & Les McNamee



George & Connie Morrison, Polly Viertel



Jack Rattigan, Ellen & Ned Stephens

# THE LAST PILOT

By Jay Sakas



Looking out the right window, she could see the shadow of the airplane dancing across the waves. Looking to the left, only blue skies. Pushing herself up, looking around the old man in the pilot's seat, she could see the little grass strip that they had taken off from over an hour ago. It was her seventh birthday and as promised by the old man up front, her PAPAU, once she was able to reach the rudder pedals, she would have her first flight lesson. With a little help from a pillow and some big shoes she had achieved that goal.

What fun it was to be able to guide the airplane around by moving the stick or pushing on the rudder pedals. They rolled, climbed and spun the little blue airplane. She wished she could be up here forever. But it was all coming to a quick end as the airplane slowly settled down on the green turf. Gently the wheels kissed the runway and her first flight was over.

Now though, the seat she was sitting on was starting to vibrate and the intensity was increasing every second.

It wasn't a Citabria that she was flying. It was the year 2079 and she was in an HST 100, a commercial airliner, cruising at 120,000 feet doing Mach 4.5. The seat she was wrapped in was designed to sense the pilot's physical presence and alertness and wake them up if needed. Since she helped design it, it was embarrassing that she should be the one caught napping. Well, maybe just daydreaming.

Except she wasn't *flying* the HST. It was a drone.

The booming voice of the controller, a drone controller, came over her earpiece.

"Captain Grace, you do this to us every time we are

in 'coast.' You'd think this being your last flight you would stay awake for the whole bloody flight."

"Huh," she said sarcastically, "give me something to do and I'll stay awake."

She was on New World Flight 2 from China, Beijing International, to the Atlantic Regional, located where the old JFK airport had been. Three hundred and fifty souls on board traveling in excess of Mach 4.5. A flight of three hours that would have taken 15 hours in the olden days.

She had not really fallen asleep, just daydreaming of a time 60 years ago when her destiny was formed by that first flight. She dreamed of becoming an astronaut and that dream had made her excel in school, be selected to the Air Force academy and achieving her goal of earning a doctorate in aerospace engineering. Eventually she became a test pilot and joined the HST project with New World Aviation. Her grandfather lived long enough to see her get her wings. At graduation he had kissed her on the forehead. Always a sign that she had made him proud.

A lot had changed in the last 150 years. Aviation during the early 20th century began with one pilot, then two, three and four. Today we were back down to one pilot, if he or she can be called a pilot—more like an observer (baby sitter).

The world of the drones started back in 2012 during the Iraqi war. Today very few aircraft remain that require fossil fuel and need pilots. General aviation is limited and highly restricted to certain areas for flight in the US. She still had the old Citabria, rebuilt a couple of times and still flown at her ranch in Oregon. The only unrestricted airspace in which to do loops and spins and so many other maneuvers her grandfather had taught her so long ago.

Over the last 60-some years there came a decline in aviation. The high cost of fossil fuels, global warming and the resurgence of the railroads drove airlines to consolidate and to date there was only a few left. The railroads with their vacuum tubes and maglev technology, with speeds over 500 knots, had become the number one method for intercity transportation.



New York to Los Angeles in 6 hours and passenger loads of over 1000 people. Along with driverless electric cars on the highways and ultrahigh speed wireless everywhere, the world became smaller. The only survivor was the HST. People still needed to go fast—to far off places.

Today was her last flight. For over a year, she had been part of a cadre of “pilots” whose sole job was to make the passengers feel more secure—that someone was in charge up front. Little did they know that during this past year and going forward, the only persons in charge were and would be, “The Droids”—a name she gave to the drone controllers. For over a year, the four dozen HSTs flying, no pilot had touched the controls, responded to any emergencies, let alone brought the airplane in for a landing.

The Droids controlled all the HSTs from ATC centers located throughout the world using the numerous satellites. They were the elite of today’s aviation. No uniforms, no titles, and as far as she was concerned, no respect for the few remaining pilots, such as herself. She had tried to convince the “powers that be” to allow the pilot in the aircraft to have command in case of an emergency. The result was the joystick next to her left hand. It was only activated as deemed necessary by the Droids. The only landings she had ever made in a HST was in the simulator. Nothing like an actual landing was allowed. Though the thought had crossed her mind to attempt a landing.

The HST was the latest in about everything. Innovations in metallurgy, composites and electronics. The hybrid engines operated as jets in the lower atmosphere to scram jets in space. No one aircraft manufacturer could afford to build the aircraft. It was a consortium of manufactures, nations and one airline, New World.

“Artic control, we are 10 min from reentry, any chance I can have a private time, she asked the “Droid.” They were required to turn the cameras off and give her a chance to use the small area once called a “biffy.” Once the engines were started till the shutdown, she was locked in the flight deck, aka the “cockpit.”

“Go ahead. Cameras off,” answered the Droid. “You have 5 minutes.”

Many years ago, after her grandmother had passed away, she was going through the attic at the ranch, and had come across a neatly wrapped package. It must have held a great significance to her grandmother. Taped to the package was a picture of her grandmother in a flight attendant’s uniform and a very young pilot in uniform, her grandfather. Written on the back of the photo was the inscription, “*Our first flight together as a married couple.*” Unwrapping it, she found her grandmother’s and grandfather’s uniforms. His captain’s hat, with a Northwest Airlines emblem, resting on top of the 4 striped jacket, and his company wings still attached to the jacket.

She found the wings unique. In doing research, she found that the original wings were designed by former Northwest Airways Vice President and General Manager, Colonel Lewis Brittin. A gold insignia with wings emanating from a globe and the words US AIR MAIL over the globe. The US Post Office was so impressed that they got permission from Britten to use them and gave those wings to pilots of all the airlines that were flying airmail. After the contracts ended, only Northwest Airways retained the wings as their pilot insignia.

She and her grandfather, whom she called Papau, always had a special connection. He was her mentor, confidante and best friend. It was then that she thought of wearing the uniform on her last flight, as a way of honoring his memory and that of all Northwest pilots.

She had the jacket tailored to size. As for the pants, no tailoring would make them fit. Boy, did those old guys have big guts.

She put the uniform on behind the screen and slipped her flight suit over it. Sliding back into her seat, “Artic Control... New World 2 ready for reentry,” she said into her mic.

“All systems are go on our end Jady Grace, was the smart ass reply from Artic Control.

“That’s Captain Grace to you,” she replied sharply. “All system are go from this end... Droid... oops, sorry... Artic Control.”

“Touché... contact North America control on Sat 135.45,” said the controller, whose real name was Jesse.

“By the way, Captain Grace, we are sorry to see you go. Never a dull moment with you in the air. We will miss you.”

“Fly safe. Good luck,” was uttered by a bevy of voices in the background.

“Thanks ladies and gentlemen, it has been a privilege to know you and work with you. If you ever want to fly a real airplane and I mean a real airplane... come out to the ranch. The door is always open.”

Though she made fun of them on occasion, she did respect their responsibility.

With a slight quiver in her voice she keyed the mike, “North America Control, New World 2 on frequency, flight level 1200.”

“New World 2, North America Control, we have control and all systems show go for reentry. Confirm all systems go on your end.”

“All systems go for New World 2,” she replied,

The HST had slowed to Mach 4 while coasting at FL 1200. Thrusters in the nose would soon fire to start the descent. The deck angle would pitch up 25 degrees and the airplane would start to decelerate. The high deck angle would allow the G forces and skin temperature to stay within the tolerable range. This scenario would continue until reaching FL 550 at which time the deck angle reduces to zero, speed brakes come out and the speed is reduced to MACH 1.5. The scrams would shut down and the aircraft would coast until the turbo jets ignite at FL350 and a conventional approach would begin. The descent would be over the Atlantic Ocean for sonic boom consideration. Once the speed dropped below Mach 1, a beautiful contrail would track the flight to New York.

As the flight passed into the troposphere, all Jadyne could do was watch the big screens in front her. There were no windows on the aircraft, just screens with computer generated images of what the scenery would look like if there had been windows. She could watch the profile of the approach on the HUD superimposed on the screen. This was truly an automatic approach. Computers control everything. Even the Droids had no input into the approach unless tolerances were exceeded.

The joy stick next to her left hand was disconnected. Maybe she could convince the Droids to activate it and she could shoot the approach and landing. Not going to happen. Too much ego for a Droid to let a pilot make the landing.

The instruments in front of her confirmed that the aircraft was on profile. The approach course was intercepted. The flaps started out on schedule, with the gear shortly thereafter. On speed at 180 knots, the airplane slowly settled onto the runway with a thud. No such thing as a greaser. Finesse was not an attribute of auto lands. The spoilers and reversers came out on schedule

and the aircraft made the high speed turn and taxied to the hold line and shut down.

The ground vehicles were there to tow the airplane to the gate and the personnel in protective gear were securing the aircraft to prevent spillage of the toxic fuel. After a flight, this aircraft leaked like a sieve on the ground, just like the old SR-71.

Arriving at the gate, she heard the cockpit door unlock and the green light above the door lit up. Jadyne got out of the chair, removed her flight suit and placed her grandfather’s hat on her head. Looking in the mirror on the door, she straightened her tie. That was the hardest item to find to complete the uniform. No one wore ties anymore.

She walked through the small galley over to the main cabin door. She stopped and looked at the 350 people pushing and shoving trying to be the first off the flight. Over the years that had not changed.

As the first few passengers came up to her, she said her mantra, “Thanks for flying New World Airlines, enjoy your stay in the US.” Most of the passengers did not look up at her or brushed by without an acknowledgement. In a moment a smile crossed her face and the mantra continued.

“Thanks for flying Northwest Airlines, it was a pleasure serving you”.

Of course she was in essence telling the truth. New World was a conglomeration of previous airlines and Northwest was in that mix.

**F**inally, all the passengers were gone, as well as the flight attendants. She closed her eyes and let out a big sigh. When she opened them, she saw a young girl leading a bent old man toward the door. As they came up to her she heard the girl ask the old man.

“Papau, who is that woman and why is she wearing those funny clothes?”

The old man looked up and stopped. “That is a pilot, JJ, the Captain of the flight,” he answered.

“Do we still have pilots,” asked the young girl.

“We used too, they are long gone,” said the old man as he straightened himself up and smartly saluted Jadyne. As she returned the salute she felt something caress her forehead.

With a wink and a smile, the old man and the girl disappeared down the jetway.

Standing there, looking at the empty aircraft she felt sadness mixed with happiness. An era born with a single pilot had come to an end with the last pilot. With a smile on her face and warm memories, she left the airplane.

An era of aviation had flown west. ✈

From *Aviation Week*, January 12, 2015

NASA is advancing an airliner flight deck of the future that features one seat in the cockpit for a captain and one on the ground, occupied by an operator filling the role of either “super dispatcher” or first officer. The research, while rife with political and public ramifications that could far outweigh the technical challenges, is far less science fiction than it was three years ago.

AND THIS FROM SLATE:

# Flying Solo

Having one pilot in the cockpit might be scarier than having none.

By Steve Casner

If you strolled through a 1950s airport, you would have seen a flight crew of four stride by in step, sporting aviator sunglasses and dressed to the nines. They’d be headed into the office. Up top, where the sky’s blue, the coffee’s hot, and the view can’t be beat. The cockpit they knew had more gauges and switches than the top floor of Frankenstein’s castle, and each crew member was master of his own part of it. They had wild layovers in faraway places that most people only dreamed of ever going. At work and at play, they were a team.

Airline pilots today will tell you that much of the romance has been deleted from that scene—not to mention half the flight crew. The first to get pink-slipped was the navigator, who used to climb up to the sextant port on top of the airplane to consult the stars and figure out the airplane’s position, give or take 5 miles. Next to go was the flight engineer, affectionately known as “the plumber,” the one who looked after the airplane’s systems during flight. When GPS, sensors, and fast processors arrived, these two crew members were told that the functions they once performed could now be handled at lower cost and with greater precision by automation.

What remain today are two pilots and an auto-flight system that is now used during much of the flight. And, yes, flying is cheaper and safer than ever.

Now that we’ve gone from four pilots to two, and with more automation on the way, you don’t need to be a mind reader to know what the industry is thinking

next. The aircraft manufacturer Embraer has already revealed plans for a single-pilot regional jet, and Cessna has produced several small single-pilot jets. (I’m rated to fly this one.) And as my colleagues at NASA are busy studying the feasibility of large single-pilot airliners, a Delta Air Lines pilot made it look easy a few weeks ago when the other pilot was accidentally locked out of the cockpit. But should we be a little nervous about the idea of having just one pilot up there in the front office? The research says maybe so.

Studies show that pilots make plenty of errors. That’s why we have two pilots in the airline cockpit—to construct a sort of human safety net. While one pilot operates the aircraft’s controls, the other pilot keeps watch for occasional errors and tries to point them out before they cause any harm. NASA engineer Everett Palmer likes to sum up the idea with a quip: “To err is human, to be error-tolerant is divine.” Keeping the error-maker and getting rid of the error-catcher may not prove to be very error-tolerant.

Besides, automation doesn’t eliminate human error—it just relocates it. The engineers and programmers who design automation are humans, too. They write complex software that contains bugs and nuances. Pilots often speak of automation surprises in which the computers do something unexpected, occasionally resulting in accidents. Having only one pilot in the cockpit might compromise our ability to make sense of these technological noodle-scratchers when they pop up.

As automation assumes more and more control of flights, pilots must remain ready to intervene when something goes wrong. But when they're not busy saving the day, what do pilots do while monitoring the automation? Studies show that pilots spend impressive amounts of this time talking to each other, mind-wandering, and drifting out of the loop. If you've ever wondered how well pilots perform when asked to suddenly take over after long periods of automated control, the available research does not inspire confidence. "When a problem arises after a long period of nothingness, the response of people is well-documented," says design thinker Don Norman. "It goes something like this: 'Huh? What's happening? Oh shit.'"

After initial training in a simulator, a new airline pilot gets an on-the-job education during her initial operating experience, and then over the next few years as a first officer while "flying the line" with more experienced captains. Before we drop down to only one pilot, we will need a substitute for the apprenticeship learning that is so central to airline pilot training today.

Although rare, pilot incapacitation is another problem that would be amplified in a one-pilot cockpit. Aside from having an airplane that would need to fly itself or be controlled from the ground, recognizing incapacitation is not easy. Sometimes pilots are just quiet; sometimes there is something more serious going on.

It's difficult to imagine a lonesome pilot in a highly automated cockpit, enduring long hours of boredom, watching her skills and ability to pay attention slip away, yet somehow remaining ready to intervene on a moment's notice. Google has already given up on the idea of asking drivers to assume this role in a semi-automated car, because it understands that people simply aren't any good at it. In Google's vision, the safer bet is to keep working and build a "zero-pilot" car: one that steers clear of the problems that will surely pop up as we gradually substitute computers for humans behind the wheel. But high in the sky and with so many souls on board, there are a great many unsolved challenges that stand in the way of a safe autonomous airliner.

One way to mitigate the problems that arise from a single pilot watching over automation might be to design a cockpit in which pilot and automation cooperatively fly the airplane. In his book *The Design of Future Things*, Norman presents us with the example of a horse and rider. Norman points out that the rider doesn't program and monitor the horse, nor does the horse wander around at will. "They do it together," says Norman. In a collaborative system, Norman says, the human is "continually involved in giving high-level guidance, thereby always staying active, always being in the loop." To date, no airplane manufacturers seem interested in redesign-

ing airplanes to work more like horses, although a few of my colleagues at NASA have taken a crack at it.

NASA is also considering alternatives to letting one pilot go it alone. "Two heads are better than one," insists Walter Johnson, who leads a NASA project that explores the idea of having pilots' helpers on the ground who remain in constant communication with as many as 12 aircraft at a time. But even this idea presents problems when we look at it more closely. Johnson was quick to point out, "The safety of the flight cannot depend on the availability of the ground pilot. The air-ground communication link could go down." No pilot wants to hear: "Your air disaster is important to us. Please continue to hold ..."

And having a helper on the other end of a communications link may not be the same thing as having a crew mate sitting beside you. Cognitive anthropologist Ed Hutchins has shown that pilots communicate with each other using facial expressions, posture, head pose, eye gaze, and even respiratory rate. "When we work together in a shared space," Hutchins told me, "a lot need not be said." Hutchins added: "A link to a ground pilot might become a nuisance to a pilot dealing with a real problem." Johnson's team at NASA is looking at ways of using technology to recapture some of the nonverbal cues between the two pilots who would be physically separated. "We're making good progress," says Johnson.

Automation in the cockpit is forcing us to address the hard questions about how to use technology as it increases in capability. Do humans, by their very nature, need to work in teams? Can humans and computers work effectively as a team? Will we always need humans in the loop, or will all four of those original pilots eventually be out of a job? And if there are any jobs left, will they be any fun? Or will they be lonely affairs in which people sit like potted plants in front of complex computing systems, watching out for blinking lights? Aviation is pounding its fist on the desk and demanding answers.

Johnson acknowledges that: "When you work on technology like this, fear is everywhere." But dear frequent-flying reader: Relax. When the first two-crew airliners rolled out, there were three-pilot airplanes flying around for 30 more years. So fliers had a choice. And so will you. How do you like your cockpit? With no pilots, one, or two? You'll probably have plenty of time to think it over. ✈

*This article is part of Future Tense, a collaboration among Arizona State University, New America, and Slate. Future Tense explores the ways emerging technologies affect society, policy, and culture. To read more, visit the Future Tense blog and the Future Tense home page. You can also follow us on Twitter.*

# 2015 Winners!

## PAUL SODERLIND MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Four recipients have been chosen out of over 200 applicants and each will receive a \$5,000 scholarship. Each recipient has provided a short bio and a picture. Those of us who support the Soderlind Fund should be very proud of being able to help provide for the education of these most deserving young people.

The requirements and application for the scholarship are listed on the Wings Financial Credit Union website. Remember, all applicants must be related to a former NW employee (active at Delta or retired, as long as they were former NW employees). The student must be attending or accepted to enter an accredited college or trade school technical training program to be eligible to apply. Any course of study is acceptable and does not need to be aviation related.

Once again, thanks to each of you who contribute to the scholarship fund, either through personal contributions or by buying chances on the RNPA raffle items. It is mostly through those donations that we are able to keep the scholarship fund going. However, in 2014 the Soderlind Fund received a large donation from The Guardian Fund (originally funded by NWA pilots to protect our pension fund during the NWA bankruptcy). Thanks are also due to Wings Financial Credit Union for their help and support in bringing this program to fruition. If you have any questions regarding the program, feel free to give me a call at 952-953-4378.

Sincerely,  
Tom Schellinger  
Secretary/Treasurer, PSMSF



My name is Kanyon Edvall and I am a graduate of Perham High School in Perham, Minnesota. This fall I will be attending the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to pursue a degree in computer engineering with a focus in software.

I am honored to be a recipient of the Paul Soderlind Memorial Scholarship - not only because this scholarship will have a significant financial impact, but also because it symbolizes the innovation

of Paul Soderlind. I too have a passion for learning. I graduated with highest honors, earned the presidential award, and had a cumulative GPA of 3.99. I am a member of the National Honor Society, and a student Rotarian.

While at Perham High School, I ran a volunteer tech help desk for students and staff, and volunteered as an Hour of Code instructor. I initiated adding a computer science course to our school's curriculum, and jumpstarted our inactive robotics program. I went on to become a team captain and mentor team members in programming and electrical design.

As a member of Perham's cross country team I was a varsity runner on back to back state and national championship teams. I also competed in robotics, speech, and science research. In my spare time I enjoy building / modifying electronics. My most recent projects include building a 3D printer, a home theater PC, and a custom computer.

Thank you once again for your generous support, it means so much, as I follow my passion and pursue a degree in computer engineering.

*Kanyon's father is a NWA/Delta pilot.*



My name is Kyle Schwartz, and I am senior at Edina High School and will be attending Vanderbilt University as an Ingram Scholar this fall. I am an Edina Scholar Athlete as well as the founder and leader of my high school's Habitat for Humanity team. I plan to continue being active in community service in college and beyond. I have a passion for helping people and plan to study neuroscience on a pre-med track. My summer plans include volunteering at a medical clinic in Nicaragua and participating in Habitat for Humanity builds in Minneapolis. Additionally, as a member of the autism community, I understand both the challenges and unique benefits of having autism. While at Vanderbilt, I hope to participate in autism research.

*Kyle's mother is a NWA/Delta Sr. Business Analyst, Information Technology.*



My name is Alexis McHale. I would like to express my most sincere thanks for this opportunity. I will begin studies at St. Thomas University this fall and am overjoyed to get started. I am also one of four incoming freshman that will be competing on the UST Dance Team. Upon conclusion of my academic career, I hope to find rewarding work related to my field of study and work for some time to help me gain more real world experience. I ultimately dream to one day start a small dance studio business of my own and help others develop a love for the sport I have participated in for as long as I can remember. I believe St. Thomas has an ideal mix in their business and competitive dance programs, as well as a focus on Catholic intellectual tradition for me to turn these dreams into plans. This financial support will allow me to pursue them with absolute certainty.

*Alexis' grandfather was a NWA Mechanic and Crew Chief*

My name is Kristen Mertens and I am a sophomore at Gustavus Adolphus College. I am extremely appreciative to be one of this year's recipients of the Paul Soderlind Memorial Scholarship and plan to use it toward both tuition and some of the additional fees to study abroad. I will be spending the Spring Semester of next year in Freiberg, Germany for an Environmental Studies and Sustainability program. I am an Environmental Studies and Financial Economics double major and hope to establish a career working to get corporations more invested in sustainable alternatives and environmental awareness. I feel it is very important to make our industries and businesses of this world more sustainable and hope that my work can make a difference.

*Kristen's grandfather was a NWA Mechanic and Director of Repair Planning*





# Iconic Seaplane to star in Hollywood Movie

*from*  
**GENERAL  
AVIATION  
NEWS**

By Meg Godlewski  
May 3, 2015

“What is that?”

My student and I were on downwind to Runway 16 at Pierce County/Thun Field (KPLU) in Puyallup, Wash., when he uttered this phrase. “It looks like something out of World War II!” he exclaimed as we saw the high-wing boat-hulled aircraft make its final approach.

And he is right. The “that” in question is a 1945 PB, an amphibious Patrol Bomber (the PB) built by Consolidated Aircraft. During their military service, many of the PBs were used for patrol and to rescue sailors and aviators from the ocean. Many were kept in the military until the 1980s, then released to become water bombers for fire fighting.

This particular PB belongs to Bud Rude of Spanaway, Wash., and it’s set to star in a movie with Nicolas Cage about the rescue of sailors from the USS Indianapolis during World War II.

The USS Indianapolis was the ship that delivered the atomic bomb to the island of Tinian. It was on the way home between Guam and Leyte Gulf when it was torpedoed in the dead of night by a Japanese submarine and sunk. Approximately 900 of the 1,196 men aboard went into the sea. Very few life rafts were launched, but most of the survivors had lifejackets.

Because the delivery of the bomb had been a top secret mission, the location of the ship was not readily available—even to the Navy—so rescue was delayed. The men became easy prey for sharks.

The survivors were spotted by accident by Lt. Wilbur C. Gwinn, who was flying a PV-1 Ventura bomber on routine patrol and reported seeing many men in the water. A PB under the command of Lieutenant Adrian Marks was dispatched to lend assistance and report.

When Marks’ crew dropped life rafts and supplies to the men in the water, they saw the sharks attacking the men. Marks decided to violate the standing order not to put down at sea. [Because of the existing high sea state -Ed.] He landed the large seaplane and began bringing survivors aboard. Those who couldn’t fit into the hull he had strapped to the wings with parachute chord. Marks’ PB remained on the surface of the water until a ship, the USS Cecil Doyle, came to pick them up. A total of 56 men were saved. Marks was very nearly court-martialed for violating the standing order.

The sinking of the Indianapolis and the rescue were lost in the pages of history until 1975, when Steven Spielberg’s blockbuster movie “Jaws” came out. The shark hunter in the movie, a man named Quint, was a survivor of the USS Indianapolis. In the movie, he explains his hatred of sharks stems from that experience.

That experience will soon be captured in a major motion picture, “USS Indianapolis: Men of Courage,” which will begin shooting soon in South Carolina. Cage has been cast as Capt. Charles Butler McVay, captain of the Indianapolis. The movie, directed by Mario Van



Kevin (L) and John Schell. Most readers are aware that John is a retired NWA captain and a member of RNPA.

Peebles, is set for release on Memorial Day 2016.

The PBY that will star in the film is being readied for its trip across the country by father-son team John and Kevin Schell. The airplane is undergoing annual inspection.

John Schell notes that this particular PBY came out later in the war, at the end of the production run. I imagine it kicked around the country for awhile before they turned it into a water bomber and that was 20 some years ago," he said. "The airplane is still certified as a water bomber."

Schell, who has been involved in aviation since the early 1950s, holds several pilot certificates including type ratings. "I also have an A&E certificate. When I went to school, you got an A&E certificate, now they call them A&P (Airframe and Powerplant) certificates." He also has an IA, so he can sign off the work.

He's worked with his son on several large aircraft annuals and restoration projects over the years, but this is the first PBY they have worked on—and it appears to be the first one that many people have seen in person, judging by the amount of attention it has been getting since arriving at the airport, which is located about 20 miles south of Seattle.

"We should be charging admission of 25 cents! We'd be millionaires by now," says the elder Schell.

While the size is the most attention-grabbing aspect of the project, Schell says that doesn't intimidate him or his son. "I had a DC-3 that I resurrected some years ago," he recalled. "That project was similar to this one. They are just airplanes, although they may seem gigantic. You just have more of it than you do the smaller ones!"

Kevin Schell noted that most of the restoration to battle-ready status, such as the addition of gun turrets, will likely be done by Hollywood. "I am sure they are

going to use Computer Graphic Imagery or CGI for that," he said.

For the project, the Schells have the help of a small group of students from the Airframe and Powerplant program at Clover Park Technical College, which is located directly across the runway from the Schell hangar.

"We did not go looking for help," John Schell notes. "Some of the kids came over here and asked if they could volunteer to work on it and I said no, I am going to pay you. They are under contract to me."

Five students are working on the project, doing everything from stripping paint and degreasing the airframe to finishing floorboards.

"I plan to make my living doing aircraft restoration, so this is an incredible opportunity for me," explains Josh Kaiser, a second-year student in the A&P program. "We work on it outside of class time."



Look closely. David Major is under there.

"I'm very excited to be working in this," said David Major as he masked off the instrument panel for painting. "It's very satisfying to know I worked on something this old. I'm looking forward to seeing it in the movie."

The Schells are happy to have the young helpers working with them, because not only does it get the job done quicker, but it's also a way to reach the next generation. "Most of these kids' parents weren't even born when World War II was going on and these kids don't even know what these airplanes were," John Schell explains.

The plan is to have the airplane's annual finished by May. "We are working six days a week," Kevin Schell said. "We will be burning the midnight oil." It is airworthy now," the elder Schell notes. "We're now working on the cosmetic aspect of it." When the airplane is finished, it will leave Washington state to be repainted in the colors of Marks' PBY, then it heads to South Carolina for filming. ✪



Six or seven years ago, Betty and Wayne Spohn realized there were quite a few retired NWA people in the Palm Springs area—some year-round residents and others, “snowbirds” like themselves, and also those who enjoy the wonderful sunshine and warm winter weather for a few weeks or a month.

It seemed a good opportunity to organize an evening each year for dinner and lots of visiting and laughs. Wayne has made the arrangements the past six years and hopes more will join us next winter.

The get-together is around the middle of March after daylight saving time begins. Let us know if you’re in the area by emailing [spohnbw@comcast.net](mailto:spohnbw@comcast.net)





Greg & Nina Berry



Judy & Chane Howard



Francine & Larry Patrick



Deneen & Tony Polgar



LouAnn & Tom Lieberman, Diane Backovich



Lynn & Royal Cherry



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# “CAPTAIN SMITH”



## By Darrel Smith

For three years, I had served as the Chief Pilot for the approximately 400 men and women pilots at the Honolulu pilot base. This relatively small group somehow seemed to form a special bond. We had personal contact on a regular basis and in many cases addressed each other by our first names. It seems that I knew, at least by sight, just about every pilot, mechanic, aircraft cleaner, gate agent and flight attendant that called Honolulu their duty station.

The Chief Pilot's office was naturally the focal point of problems or unusual events that the pilots incurred as they "flew the line." They were the ones who had to make the hard decisions at night, thousands of miles from land concerning weather conditions, fuel, disruptive passengers and numerous other possible happenings.

Many, many times these tired souls would tap on my door, after flying all night and parking their huge machines, and ask to speak with me a moment. They had been up all night with the responsibility of a very expensive aircraft and, more importantly, hundreds of trusting passengers on their shoulders. They sometimes needed a little encouragement and support.

How could I, sitting in my office, understand what they were feeling without actually "flying the line" just like them? In order to maintain my proficiency I made every effort to fly at least one flight each month.

I would look at my "Chief Pilots" required duties and find a trip that would fit into my available days off. The assigned pilot was contacted and asked if he or she would allow me to fly that trip. That pilot would receive full pay but be allowed to stay at home.

Most pilots were very happy to take a short paid vacation. A few loved to fly and did not want to give up their trip—I always respected their wishes. I enjoyed this flying and felt much more knowledgeable when pilots approached me with questions about their experiences out "on the line."

In Honolulu, there were only about three giant steps from the door of the Chief Pilot's office to the door of the flight planning room. On the days of my line trips I arrived early at my office to deal with "current events." There always seemed to be something going on!

Some days it was difficult to pull myself from my office to attend to the flight planning process. Sometimes I felt that my best effort could not be given to this endeavor—thank goodness for good copilots. They



seemed to understand and shouldered the load.

This little story is about one of those proficiency flights, scheduled from Honolulu to Tokyo and return. The westbound flight was totally uneventful in that I don't remember any details.

Our arrival in Tokyo was on time and we were directed to park on the ramp where we descended large portable stairs to the tarmac. Sometimes we had to wait momentarily before boarding large busses that transported passengers and crew to the terminal.

At the bottom of these stairs, I would sometimes look over my shoulder and behold the magnificent machine that had transported my crew and more than 300 other souls safely across a huge ocean. I always marveled at the fact that this guy from a small farm in the hills of West Tennessee had just been "the Captain" in charge of this flight.

During the next twenty-four hours we attempted to get the proper nourishment and some rest since our body clocks were totally confused. We needed sleep but our bodies insisted that we should be awake.

The next afternoon, upon arriving at the airport for our return flight to Honolulu, after clearing security, the cabin crew proceeded to the aircraft and immediately commenced the demanding chores required to make ready for a full load of passengers. Their work was complicated and at times strenuous, there was always stress involved.

The pilots leisurely proceeded to the flight planning area where we would go through our normal preflight ritual. We completed our duties while exchanging pleasantries with the station personnel and then were transported to the aircraft.

Upon boarding, it was customary for the Captain to approach the lead flight attendant and brief her (or him) as to what could be expected during the night flight (mostly concerning time, weather and expected turbulence). This night I approached the "lead" and pulled her aside in order to pass on any pertinent information.

I knew this lady! We had worked together on several of these crossings and I was aware that she was much more experienced than me. I was also aware of how hard the cabin crew worked during the seven or more hours of these flights.

I addressed her jokingly with a somewhat "wise ass" attitude. I asked, "OK, how are we going to handle this?" With a slight frown she sort of cocked her head to one side and asked, "What do you mean?"

I replied, "Well, my name is Darrel but I would prefer that you address me as Captain Smith. As commander of this trans-Pacific flight I want you to understand that our job of flying this big aircraft is very

stressful, therefore we will be requesting some special attention. These overnight flights can be long and very trying for us.

"Would you please have one of your flight attendants drop into the cockpit about every fifteen minutes with our favorite beverages to insure that we are awake and all our needs have been met. I like my coffee with one and a half sugars and just a splash of cream. By the way, would you please serve my steak, medium rare, about one hour after take off?"

This experienced lead flight attendant quietly listened to my little speech. Her head remained cocked to one side with her eyes locked on mine.

She paused for only a moment before speaking. I love her for her quick wit and feisty reply. "First of all Captain Smith, F&# YOU. (She also generously displayed the appropriate hand signal.) Every seat on this aircraft will be filled with a paying passenger's ass and the entire group will be expecting continuous drink service and two full meals during the night. If and when we have time we may or may not offer you guys some coffee. Your meals, should we even remember, will only be served after every flight attendant has had an opportunity to take a meal break!" My weak reply was "Well, OK, I just wanted to make sure we understood each other."

We both had a good laugh! I then proceeded to give her the proper briefing which she had originally expected.

The flight went without a hitch and the cockpit crew had wonderful service, as usual. The proper beverages flowed and the meals were on time and properly prepared. It always amazed me that the terribly overworked cabin crew could do their stressful jobs, day after day, so efficiently and with a smile.

They were definitely the mainstay of our Airline. They always stepped forward and did what was required and more. I respect and honor them!

Ladies and Gentlemen, "Thank You," you held the Airline together!



# MY FIGHTING DAYS ARE ABOUT OVER

*unnamed*  
The author is a retired Northwest Airlines Captain and Navy Commander.

## WARNING:

*Reason 1) Adult language. If you're easily offended by what is euphemistically referred to as "Adult Language," you may wish to skip this. (Seems like a lot of non-adults are claiming this kind of language as their own, though.)*

*Reason 2) Political correctness. But it really is the author's whole point. There are a great many of the author's peers that will be heard to say, or at least think to themselves, "Oooohh yeah! I remember a lot of those places and some others, too. Whew!" – Editor*

I will be 77 years old in 20 days [early 2013 -Ed.]. My fighting days are just about over. Anyone who takes a drink of alcohol anymore is castigated, inspected and hammered on the altar of political correctness. Officers' clubs are things of the past. Men have become emasculated. The Carrie Nations of yesterday have the floor now and I, along with thousands of my peers, have become dinosaur.

What I do now is to remember:

I remember...

- Jimmy's kitchen in Kowloon where you got a big bowl of pickled garlic buds before you were even asked what you wished to drink. They were so good but rendered you unfit for social contact.
- The gyoza served in the tiny Tonkatsu restaurant in Narita, Japan. They also rendered you unfit for social contact.
- The Aero Club on the airport at Kai Tak in Hong Kong where you could interact with pilots from all over the globe.
- The bar at the hotel in Gatwick, England. When you greeted the ugly bartender who had only a few teeth with, "Hey, Bartender, How's it going?" he would always respond with, "Bloody f#?\*ing Top-Ho."
- The bars in the Manila Hotel in Manila, PI and the \_\_\_\_\_ hotel where the bar was in the lower level and you could always get a beer no matter how late it was. The Manila Hotel was where McArthur had his headquarters and the \_\_\_\_\_ hotel was owned by Imelda Marcos. Both hotels had the most beautiful girls that could be found in the whole Island complex.



- The stiff and most proper bars in England where you could meet and talk with members of the IRA or the Ulster Light Constabulary; your choice any night.
- The little restaurant in Narita, Japan where I could drink Sapporo beer and practice with a renowned karate expert named Mas Oyama, who was the top expert in the art of Kyokushinkai. Those sessions usually ended with a lot of sake and pop-skull heads the next morning.
- Getting the COMFAIRMED duty crew in Sigonella, Sicily drunk on New Year's Eve in 1965 along with another pilot. [Neither] of us could motivate when we were finished celebrating. God help us if the flare had ever gone up.
- The little restaurant in Kowloon that advertised, "Bloody cheap Chinese food at fair dinkum prices." Obviously targeted at the Australian pilots.
- Nancy Poon in Kowloon who ran a jewelry store and who loved dirty jokes; the dirtier the better. She would buy you as many beers as you could hold as long as you could tell her new dirty jokes.
- Flying in horseshit weather for hours at 200 feet at night over the water looking for submarines that we hardly ever found. When we did find one it was like either an orgasm or a bowel movement after a week of constipation.
- I remember jumping a Russian Whiskey submarine on the surface in the Med. It was like sticking your finger in a light socket. We flew over the disabled sub for three days and dumped newspapers and Playboy magazines on them (which were really appreciated) before the sub rendezvoused with a Soviet sub tender in the Gulf of Sirte.
- I remember crashing a P2V in Argentina, Newfoundland in the tail end of a hurricane in zero-zero



weather. The plane was strike damaged and no one was killed but a priest, who was standing at the end of the runway to administer last rites was soaked by the driving rain and didn't really appreciate the enlisted man who ran by him escaping the plane who said, "Get the f^%# out of my way, Father".

- Snake alley in Taipei where you could buy just about anything you wished but where snake blood was the main thing most Chinese wanted to buy and drink.
- The long tail river boats in Bangkok that would take you up river to a number of shrines and a zoo where a local would wrestle a number of poisonous snakes in an open amphitheatre and where you could pass underneath an elephant for luck.



- The Chinese guy who told my copilot as he pointed at me, "You follee him. He old China hand". Old China hand! Damn! I thought that only old China Marines who were there during the opium wars merited that title. I was honored.
- My first carrier landings when some idiot took a wave off to the right of the island and almost clobbered me as I lifted off in a deck launch in a T-28. I survived after wrapping up my plane in a left turn and getting an approach turn stall whereupon I leveled the wings and dived for the water. I survived and so did the plane but Prifly almost had a coronary. No one would tell me the name of the SOB that had caused that.

- The Banzai Cliff on Saipan, Marianna Islands where a thousand or so Japanese committed suicide (or seppuku) rather than surrender to the Marines who were struggling to come ashore. The Northwest Airlines head mechanic there had been with the American Volunteer Group (AKA, the Flying Tigers) and had a wonderful scrapbook with pictures of the whole operation. I used to get Smitty drunk as often as I could. He was a true hero.



I especially remember...

- Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; the patrols in skivvies rather than flight suits due to the heat, the Rum Goodies at 10 cents a glass (You could get blotted on a dollar), the push and shove with the Marines who were there to protect the P2s and the base, the relaxed work day and the freedom you had to do what you did with your plane if the situation dictated. I remember piss poor box lunches with raw chicken, sour milk and candy bars with weevils in them but the flying was wonderful nonetheless.

I remember...

- Flying in the little punch-up in the Dominican Republic where I flew beach cover in order to find gun runners. It was legal flat-hatting and more fun than I can ever tell you, flying the beach at 50 to 100 feet and interdicting wherever I wished.
- Being a Commander in the Navy and being a Captain with a major airline flying the 747 aircraft.

I can remember that what I had to say mattered to the people around me. That has long gone away. I am now relegated to being an old man, muttering junk that no one wishes to hear. I don't fit in any more. I do not despair at this situation. I recognize that each generation has to make its own way. ➔

*(Submitted by Vic Britt)*

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# FIRST PILOT TO DIE WHILE EMPLOYED BY AND AS AN OPERATING CREW MEMBER OF NORTHWEST AIRWAYS

Edwin H. "Eddie" Middagh  
Born 1892, died June 24, 1929

## THE NORTHWEST AIRWAYS CRASH OF 1929

**By Johannes R. Allert**

St. Paul was a bustling city in the 1920s. Located along the banks of the Mississippi River, as the center for state government, it was also a beehive of activity for commerce and transportation. Looking from the heights of the Mounds Park neighborhood, it provided a panoramic view and a perfect backdrop to the residents who lived up there. In the 1920s, the Mounds Park neighborhood consisted of white, middle-class workers who lived in fairly large houses. Most were first or second generation Americans of German, Irish or Scandinavian descent.

Directly below the heights and across the river from Mounds Park lay the St Paul Airport (later named Holman Field) where fledgling Northwest Airways was in the middle of its third year of service, offering flights to and from the Twin Cities to Chicago using the Ford Tri-motor to transport its customers. Up until that time,

they had flown over one million miles without fatalities.

Air travel was still considered a novel idea in the summer of 1929. Just 2 years before, Charles Lindbergh had made his solo trip across the Atlantic from New York to Paris, which helped opened the door for air travel. The creation of larger and better engines led to larger aircraft. The Ford Tri-motor became one of the first workhorses in civil aviation. Among other new inventions came the development of radio in 1920 which vastly improved communications in the air and on the ground. Beacons also sprang up across the countryside to assist in navigation. All helped in the growth of air transportation. But despite these improvements, accidents could and still did happen.

Late on the afternoon of June 24, 1929 a Northwest Airways Ford Tri-motor NC7416 ship #30 was preparing to take off. Piloted by Edwin Middagh (who had 4,000 hours of flying time under his belt), the aircraft con-



**This Ford Tri-motor crashed at the corner of River (now Wilshire) Street and Mounds Boulevard on June 24, 1929 shortly after takeoff from Holman Field.**

tained six passengers and 18-year-old steward, Robert Johnston. The weather that day was clear and warm with light winds. The plane taxied down the runway, then lifted off on its final leg to Minneapolis.

Just as the aircraft cleared the field and gained altitude, something went terribly wrong. The right engine sputtered then suddenly came to a stop, followed in quick succession by the center and then the left engine. In a desperate attempt to save his passengers and crew, Edwin Middagh swung his Tri-motor back towards the St. Paul Airport to land his aircraft. Unfortunately, his Tri-motor had neither the power nor the lift to make it back to the field. The aircraft came down hard, clipping two houses on River Street. Upon impact, the aircraft broke into three pieces and came to rest on the corner of River Street and Mounds Boulevard.

The first one out of the aircraft was the steward, Robert Johnston, who managed to kick open one of the windows and crawl out. After assisting the passengers, he went to help the pilot, but it was too late. Edwin Middagh was knocked unconscious upon impact and as the steward went to extract him from the wreckage, the cockpit caught fire, and the pilot burned to death. All passengers on board suffered injuries and were taken to local hospitals for treatment. Four local residents were injured by burns they received while trying to assist with the rescue efforts when the aircraft caught fire. Another resident was slightly injured when the plane crashed, its wing taking out the front porch where the person was sitting.

My father, Charles H. Allert (9 years old at the time), was outside playing with his younger brother Wm. Don-

ald Allert and their friends by their home on 652 Mclean when they saw the aircraft go down and heard the crash. My father stated that they were the first on the scene. News quickly spread throughout the neighborhood and the surrounding community of the accident, and it was not long before the whole area was clogged with traffic and bystanders.

Once the fire was put out, some onlookers stormed the wreckage looking for souvenirs, pulling out anything that wasn't nailed down. Local neighborhood kids sold pieces of the wreckage to the crowds of people coming to see the crash. Complaints were officially lodged by the residents of the neighborhood because of all the damage done to their property by outsiders who, in their zeal to get to the crash site, tore down fences as well as trampled over their shrubbery and flower gardens.

Police and Fire Fighters as well as a recovery team from Northwest Airlines found it virtually impossible to rope off the area let alone get to the site and eventually requested assistance from the 109th Aero Squadron based near Ft. Snelling, to help with crowd control. Even with the additional manpower, the area stilled remained clogged with people and traffic well into the evening.

By the following day, a joint investigation by F. H. Longeway, aircraft inspector for the U.S. Department of Commerce and Charles "Speed" Holman, Operations Manager of Northwest Airways confirmed that the air crash was due to engine failure and their report was quickly sent to Washington D.C.

Exactly 80 years have passed since that tragic day in June. Shortly before my father's death in February, I showed him the photographs taken the day of the crash.

Opposite :

The lot where the Tri-motor crashed is now occupied by a stucco and brick home that was built in 1939.

**The crash attracted large numbers of people who hampered recovery efforts and caused even more damage to the neighborhood as they gawked and collected souvenirs.**



Even at that late stage he perked up and was interested in the photos that I had located, courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society online web site. He had told me of the story a couple of times as I was growing up, and had even taken me to the location once long ago.

In the photo, there are clusters of youth around the perimeter of the crash site. I can't help but wonder if my dad, his younger brother, and their friends are among the crowd. After his passing I wanted to go back to his old neighborhood and attempt to locate the site and see what the area was like now. Before I could do that, I had to lay the groundwork and do some research. My life-long friend, Ken Hornby, came along for the ride and to assist in whatever way he could. Our first stop was to the Minnesota History Center where they not only provided courteous assistance, but valuable information as well. I found most of accounts in the St. Paul Pioneer Press to be well written and they helped shed light on the event, as well as the reaction and problems encountered by the emergency response teams of that era.

After making copies of the Pioneer Press, we headed off to Mounds Park. In 2009 the homes in the neighborhood look older, and the population diverse. As we drove around, we saw a number of homes undergoing renovation. Dad's old home at 652 Mclean looked familiar, but the color has changed and the greenhouse where his mother would start her plants and flowers for the growing season had been replaced by a wooden deck.

Our biggest problem we encountered was that we could not find the elusive River Street. Ken Hornby spotted an older gentleman sitting on his front porch enjoying the spring day and suggested we pull over

and ask him for directions. It turned out to be a good suggestion because the gentleman turned out to be Mr. Steve Trimble, the area's unofficial historian and history columnist of the neighborhood newspaper. Mr. Trimble informed us that, for whatever reason, River Street had now been changed to Wilshire Street, and that it was a mere 2 blocks away.

Upon arriving at the site of the former accident, neighbors living there pointed to the exact location of the accident as well to where the original black & white photos were taken which was from the second floor of the home across the street.

The lot where the Tri-motor crashed is now occupied by a stucco and brick home that was built in 1939. All in all a good visit, and it was nice to know that through the years the new people in the neighborhood were aware of some of the history of long ago. My advice to anyone is that if you are interested in something, put on your "History Detective Hat" and do some sleuthing!

References: Photos courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul Pioneer Press - Vol. 76 Issue 176 & 177, Mr. Steve Trimble, Mr. Charles H. Allert-R.I.P.

This story was sent out on RNPA NEWS several years ago, but I thought it time to publish it here. It came to us from one Carol Ann Faulkner, whose title is Delta's PCN (Pilot Communication Net) Death Notice Communicator. Carol has been of immeasurable help to RNPA and our obituary editors. – Ed.



Giving older people a chance to hit the reset button and start their economic lives anew.

By CONSTANCE GUSTKE

After work started to dry up and creditors began calling, George Maxey, 66, a retired nursery owner and plant consultant in Orlando, Fla., wanted his financial peace and quiet back. With his income dwindling, though, Mr. Maxey saw that the debt hole he was digging was only getting deeper, with no end in sight. So he declared Chapter 7 bankruptcy, which liquidates some assets to repay creditors.

Bankruptcy was a chance to hit the financial reset button, he said. “I wanted to leave money, not debt, to my grandchildren,” he said, “and begin rebuilding my life.”

Getting over the stigma of bankruptcy was the hardest part, Mr. Maxey added.

For some older Americans, bankruptcy can bring much-needed relief from debt brought on by medical expenses or helping needy children, and experts say it can be a valuable tool to protect retirement assets, after negotiating with creditors. But with reliable statistics on current bankruptcies hard to come by, anecdotal evidence suggests that shame at being in financial turmoil frequently prevents retirees from getting help early.

“People usually postpone bankruptcy for several years before filing,” said Deborah Thorne, an associate professor of sociology at Ohio University, who has studied older Americans and bankruptcy. “When finances head south, they should file right away.”

By spending retirement assets, Ms. Thorne said, retirees risk a downward financial spiral from which they are less likely to recover than younger people. A better strategy is to defend assets at all costs, she said.

Why? Retirement income and savings are usually untouchable during bankruptcies under federal law. Pensions, 401(k)’s and qualified profit-sharing plans are exempt from creditors, as are individual retirement accounts worth up to \$1.245 million. Social Security payments are also exempt.

Retirees can usually avoid losing their homes by using a homestead exemption, intended to protect the equity of a principal residence in a bankruptcy. (Equity is the value of a property minus the amount owed on it.) Homestead exemption amounts vary by state, but some states, including Florida and Texas, do not limit the equity that is exempt. “This is a way to keep your estate intact,” said Eric Klein, a bankruptcy lawyer in Boca Raton, Fla.

Some debts like student loans and federal tax bills

less than three years old usually cannot be discharged in a bankruptcy, said Walter Benenati, a bankruptcy lawyer in Orlando, Fla. The same goes for alimony and child support. So bankruptcy may not wipe the slate clean.

A means test helps determine which type of bankruptcy fits best. Chapter 7 usually works best for people without a lot of income or assets, specialists said, because they are usually used to satisfy creditors. High-income filers usually opt for Chapter 13, which is a repayment plan. “It lasts for a minimum of five years, and it’s a budget that’s created to pay back creditors,” said John Pottow, a professor at the University of Michigan Law School and a bankruptcy specialist.

But before going into a bankruptcy, try negotiating with creditors, said Johanna Sweaney Salt, a certified public accountant with Gray, Salt and Associates in Claremont, Calif. One place to start is credit card companies, by asking for reduced interest on outstanding balances. Even medical debt can be negotiated, she added. “In many cases, hospitals have even cut balances in half,” she said.

“A lot of people who jump into bankruptcy never know what settlement they could have had,” said Paul Kuzmickas, a bankruptcy lawyer with Luftman, Heck & Associates in Cleveland. “So it’s always better to negotiate first.” Retirees have leverage here because creditors know they cannot touch retirement money, he added.

Simply refusing to pay is another strategy. Retirement assets are off the table, and the retiree may have little else. Yes, creditors can take the retiree to court, and even get a judgment, but the money may be uncollectable. This is called being judgment-proof, Mr. Kuzmickas said.

Either way, credit scores do take a beating. A bankruptcy can stay on a credit report for as long as 10 years. But negative credit scores from mounting debt can be equally corrosive, specialists said.

After Mr. Maxey declared bankruptcy, his credit score dipped 200 points. “Now it’s slowly coming back,” he said. He is also working on rebuilding his credit by leasing a car.

People who declare bankruptcy must also take credit and debtor counseling classes that help them rebuild their finances.

“I’m so conservative now,” he said, “and careful with everything I do.” ✦ *(Suggested by Vic Britt)*





### “BOB” YOUNGGREN 1921 ~ 2015

**Captain Robert Younggren**, age 93, a retired Northwest Airlines captain, “Flew West” on March 16, 2015. Born April 04, 1921 to Oscar and Josie Younggren of Hallock, Minnesota. The Younggren family operated an auto dealership at least as far back as 1917, therefore Bob grew up amidst motorized vehicles; cars, tractors, and airplanes. His first grade report card includes the comment, Robert would be a better student if he took his head out of the clouds, and put it back in the classroom. This lad was destined to be a pilot.

When Bob was 16 his father bought him a used 38 hp Piper J-2 Cub for the princely sum of \$800. As a young lad Bob would skip school to hang out at the Hallock Airport where he was taught to fly by his father in an OX-5 powered Curtiss-Robin. By the time Bob Younggren entered the University of North Dakota aviation program he was an experienced pilot.

World War II loomed ever present for his generation and after a year of studies Bob entered the Army Air Corps—receiving a direct commission. He served Air Training Command as an instructor pilot before shipping out to Europe. Some of his European duty involved flying transports, serving as personal pilot for Generals Pete Quesada, Jimmy Doolittle and Carl Spaatz. The family treasures personally inscribed photographs of these notable military leaders. Army flight records document that Bob flew 16 different Air Corps airplanes ranging from trainers to the C-47, P-47, P-51, A-36 and the B-17. Having participated in 6 battles and campaigns, Bob returned to Hallock a decorated veteran.

Shortly after returning from European service, Bob met the lovely Curly (Olga) Kiryluk, a nurse and a “city

girl” from Chicago, temporarily working at the Hallock Hospital while visiting her parents. On April 17, 1946 Bob and Curly were married. Soon thereafter Bob started ‘Younggren Flying Service,’ a one-size-fits-all operation that included crop dusting, charter trips, instruction, and even low level fox hunting. Crop dusting was big business in Minnesota farming country and Bob’s father was none too thrilled when Bob left his thriving business and hired on with NWA. This was a classic situation: small town boy went to war and saw much of the world and is no longer content to settle down in a small town.

Bob Younggren was hired by NWA on July 22, 1949. To quote a contemporary airline CEO, “Robert was a one of a kind man, a gentle man, and a gentleman, through and through. I don’t think I’ve ever met anyone who lived, breathed, and loved aviation more than Captain Robert.” During his 32 year career at NWA, the same Robert flew the Douglas 3, 4, 6, 7, 10 as well as the Boeing 377, 707 (720/320), 727, and 747/200. Ending his career at age 60 as a 747 captain, Bob would say, “I didn’t work a day in my life. It was all an adventure.” In post-retirement, Bob rejoined NWA as a consultant hiring pilots.

Bob had an extensive list of hobbies and interests: Cars, restoring and flying old airplanes, boating, and building a “double A-frame” cabin on a lake in northern Minnesota. He prepared for retirement by buying/building a hangar at Anoka County Airport [alongside Bill Halvorson] and restoring and flying Piper Cubs – his favorites. In retirement he acquired a mechanics license and welding certification. Curly called Hangar 6 his “bachelor pad,” where “the boys hang out with their toys.” Tragically, Bob endured a 90% vision loss late in life, requiring him to function as a blind person.

Bob remained in the Twin Cities until the death of his beloved Curly in 1999. He moved to Washington State to be near his daughters Bobbie (Keith) Gillin and Trish Younggren. They gave Bob four grandchildren and a great-grandson. He is survived by his brother Donald and numerous nieces and nephews.

It is worthy of note that Bob’s two daughters and a son-in-law were connected with aviation: Bobbie as a 20 year UAL flight attendant (now psychotherapist) and Trish as a flight attendant and inflight manager with the original Frontier Airlines (now a nurse). Son-in-law Keith, an architect specialized in airport design, is the Architecture Manager at SEA-TAC Airport. Bob was proud of them all until the very end.

On Robert’s grave stone will be the words, “KEEP AIRSPEED,” the phrase he regularly used as a blessing to departing family and grandchildren.

(– Bill Day)



**HANS WALDENSTROM  
1940 ~ 2015**

**Captain Hans Waldenstrom**, age 74, “Flew West” on April 23, 2015. Hans was born December 01, 1940 in Jakobstad, Finland, a mostly Swedish speaking community. He left behind a life well lived following a relatively short battle with brain cancer.

The Waldenstrom family came to the USA when he was 16 years old and his English vocabulary was limited to “yes”, “no”, and “okay.” Being a quick study and showing some talent in the field of photography, he hired on with a helicopter aerial photography company. It was then he was bitten by the desire to learn to fly.

Hans never graduated from high school, but was admitted to Bethel University (nee College) in St. Paul and graduated with a major in Political Science. During and following college he underwent flight training at Northland Aviation at the Anoka County Airport where he continued building his flight experience. Hans instructed at Northland until being hired by Northwest Airlines.

Hans met Mary, a student nurse in Chicago and they were married in 1965. Three years later, on August, 05, 1968, Hans was hired by Northwest. During his 32 year career at NWA Hans flew the Lockheed Electra, Boeing 727, and the Boeing 757— retiring at age 60.

There were five priorities in Hans’ life and his career enabled him to enjoy all five at the same time. His strong Faith in God was number one followed by love of family, and then a host of friends. Flying and fishing were right there, too. However, he intermingled these loves so well it is hard to prioritize them.

Throughout the years he preferred bidding trips that

brought him to his favorite fishing holes. For years he flew “the hills” and kept a pick-up camper in Missoula allowing him to do a little fly fishing on layovers. Of course, when his seniority allowed, the big salmon in Alaska were a draw and he could be found fishing there. It is doubtful he ever missed a salmon season in Alaska.

Sensitivity and caring for others was a characteristic of Hans everyday living and also evidenced in his work. He was professionalism personified. Retired Captain Bill Emmer wrote in a testimonial about Hans, “..... set an example for all of us, and I spent my career trying to emulate his cockpit style.....You taught us how to lead from the front, support our crew, and find peaceful solutions to difficult problems.....an excellent mentor.” A flight attendant added, “He was caring, enthusiastic, supportive, and always complimentary.”

Keeping food on the table during months and years of “unemployment” with NWA, this industrious man designed and built several fine homes on Lake Minnetonka. Hans was also a locksmith during those years and became a dealer/distributor of locks imported from.... guess where, Sweden!

After Mary passed away in 2000 Hans remained in their Ft. Myers home until the onset of his illness. During the later years he retained his affection for Volvos and restored a 1973 P1800. He stayed active with RNPA, attending the 2014 convention in Sacramento. As his cancer intensified his daughter Susan Waldenstrom of Stillwater, MN became his primary caregiver. Daughter Karla Strand of California, a medically retired captain of Horizon Airlines, and her husband Timm, gave Hans and Mary four grandones: Cole, Gilliam, Lucy and Isabel. Hans was also survived by siblings Carl Waldenstrom; sister Karin Mikkola; plus a host of relatives in the US and Finland. (- Roger Moberg)





## DICK HADDON 1934 ~ 2015

**Captain Richard D. Haddon**, age 81, quietly “Flew West” on February 22, 2015. Dick Haddon was born on January 6, 1934 to George and Edna Haddon and grew up in Whittier, California, an idea climate for a young man attracted to the rugged outdoors. Taught by his father, Dick acquired skills in camping, hunting and fishing that served him for a lifetime.

At age 19 Dick enlisted in the Air Force and was shortly thereafter accepted into the Aviation Cadet program. His primary flight training was at Bartow Air Base, FL in the T-6 Texan and T-28 Trojan followed by advanced training in the TB-25 multiengine trainer at Goodfellow AFB, TX. Dick was commissioned in the USAF Reserve in February of 1955. Upon completion of flight training 2/Lt. Richard Haddon was assigned to the Air Weather Service at Wiesbaden AFB, Germany as a C-47 pilot.

Dick separated from active duty in 1957 and returned to Whittier, CA to complete an Associates Degree from Fullerton College. While studying at Fullerton College, he flew the C-46 with the Air Force Reserve, then in July of 1958 Dick transitioned to the C-119 at Gowen Field, ID. During this period he also did some non-scheduled airline flying.

NWA employment began on April 04, 1959. His initial NWA line assignment was to the Spokane base as copilot on the DC-4. It was while flying out of Spokane he met his future wife Marge, a NWA flight attendant.



Before taking the leap into marriage, Dick wanted Marge to appreciate his passion for hunting. Her first hunting experience was a deer hunt on a Billings layover. Dick and Marge were married nearly 55 years.

In the airline industry these years were renowned for frequent and sometimes long layoffs. In 1962 Dick felt the blade of the NWA manning cuts and was laid off. In May the same year he was discharged from the Air Force Reserve and commissioned as a LTJG in the U.S. Coast Guard. After receiving an ironic USAF Air Rescue checkout in the SA-16, Dick served a year at Coast Guard Air Station St. Petersburg, Florida.

By the time Dick was recalled by NWA the Spokane crew base had closed and his only base option was MSP. Dick grew weary of snow plowing driveways and sidewalks and in 1965 moved the family to Seattle in search of milder winters. He added his fourth stripe in April of 1968 when he checked out as captain on the 727. During his 25 year career at NWA Dick flew the DC-4, DC-6, Electra, B-707, B-727, DC-10 and B-747/200.

Some of Dick's favorite flying was as copilot for Woody Herman. Woody the preeminent mentor, in turn checked Dick out on float planes. Dick's other diverse aviation qualifications included a helicopter rating and a Cessna Citation corporate jet type rating. This well rounded aviation career ended in 1984 when he lost his medical qualification due to coronary artery disability. Dick remained an active RNPA and QB member, attending many functions of both organizations.

In later life Dick continued to pursue his lifetime passion for hunting and fishing with his son Brad as well as his many valued friends. Dick's love of hunting only competed with his love of country and family. Notwithstanding his true patriotism, it was his love of family where he shined brightest. He is survived by his wife Marge, son Brad, daughter Lori and husband Joe, and grandsons Ethan and Luke. This past February 22, 2015 Dick quietly succumbed to a brain tumor at home in Port Orchard with his family by his side. He will be greatly missed by many.

(– Bill Day)



## GLENN EGGERT 1938 ~ 2015

**Captain Glenn Elliott Eggert**, age 76, “Flew West” on April 7, 2015 after a long bout with melanoma cancer. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife Joan who passed away in 2006.

Glenn was born and raised at Medford, Wisconsin, a small town 160 miles east of the MSP airport. Glenn’s father ran a retail business servicing cars and trucks, selling gasoline, International Harvester trucks and agricultural lime. In high school Glenn was a good student, who was also active in basketball, track, and band. After Medford High he spent two years at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where he was active in the UW marching band before enlisting in the U.S. Navy as a Naval Aviation Cadet in 1959.

Like many of his NWA pilot colleagues, Glenn began his military flight training at NAS Pensacola, Florida. After earning his wings of gold, Glenn was assigned to airborne early warning squadron VAW-33 at NAS Quonset Point, RI. This squadron deployed as detachments to various carriers. Glenn cruised mostly aboard the USS Lake Champlain (CVS-39), an anti-submarine warfare (ASW) Essex class straight deck carrier and the aircraft carrier USS Independence. He flew the EA-1W, an ASW/ECM derivative of the Douglas AD Skyraider (A1E). It is noteworthy that ASW was a critical naval component for the quarantine of Cuba during the October 1962 Cuban Crisis and Glenn was in the middle of the fray.

Glenn separated from the active duty Navy in early fall of 1964 and was hired by NWA on October 19, 1964. A couple years after starting with NWA, Glenn revisited VAW-33 and shared the word about airline life with his former squadron mates. His testimony must have been pretty convincing because four others followed in his footsteps, including Wes Vermillion who was destined to become a long term friend.

Joan Perks, a NWA flight attendant, also saw merit in the man who she married in March of 1971. Glenn and Joan had concurrent careers at NWA.

Glenn’s initial captain checkout was on the L-188 in 1968. During his 35 years at NWA Glenn became rated in the Lockheed L-188, Boeing 707 (720/320), Boeing 727, Douglas DC-10

and both the Boeing 747/200 and 747/400. During a NWA labor dispute; Glenn and Joan flew for Ambassador Airlines, a charter operator at Indianapolis Airport, flying a former EAL water wagon Boeing 720. With Glenn’s encouragement, Dale Nadon also hired on as a pilot for Ambassador.

Glenn served NWA Flight Training as an instructor on many aircraft. He was well known for his flying skills, knowledge of his aircraft and as a patient mentor. On May 1, 1996, Glenn flew the inaugural Detroit–Beijing and Beijing-Detroit return flight on May 3, 1996. Because of the lengthy 13-hour flight, two crews of two pilots each (all captains) were assigned to the aircraft. Sarge Martin, Managing Director of Flying and Chief Pilot for Northwest; Gene Frampton, Managing Director of Flight Training, Procedures and Standards; Tim Olson, Director and 747 Fleet Captain; and Glenn Eggert, Senior Line Check Captain, flew both inaugurals. Glenn spent his last 10 years as an instructor on the 400 and finally put away his NWA flight bag on February 14, 1999.

Widowed in 2006, Glenn is survived by his son Sean Ian Eggert (Mariana), grandsons Bode and Jack, sister Marilyn C. Eggert and brother Douglas A. Eggert, as well as many nieces and nephews. He filled the grandfather role well and spent enjoyable hours with his grandsons at Arizona hockey rinks. Most of all Glenn treasured his time with Sean and family. Glenn’s long-term friend Dale Nadon writes: “Glenn and I met in 1964 on joining with NWA. We have been lifelong friends helping one another through good times and bad times. I will truly miss him... until we meet in that big crew lounge in the sky...”

(– Dale Nadon and Bill Day)



## “RICH” JACOBSON 1948 ~ 2015

**Captain Richard Neil Jacobson**, age 67, passed away on April 09, 2015 at the Mayo Clinic in Scottsdale, AZ, surrounded by his children. Diagnosed in 2005 with an Agent Orange related lymphoma, Rich succumbed ten years later to an associated staph pneumonia.

Rich was born during a winter blizzard in Rugby, North Dakota on January 29, 1948. He was a “bonus baby” after three older sibs and destined to be a farm kid living on a wheat farm near Wolford, North Dakota. As a typical teenager, he loved fast cars and pop music, especially the Beatles and Simon and Garfunkel. While not exactly an athlete, Rich did play basketball in high school—his school was so small it needed every boy on the team. After high school Rich attended North Dakota State University and was never seen playing basketball again.

1970 was a big year for Rich. He graduated from North Dakota State and having completed Air Force ROTC, was commissioned in the Air Force. Rich went from the wild winters of the north prairies to pilot training in the desert of Arizona at Williams AFB (the country club of training bases). Fast airplanes soon supplanted his love for fast cars. After earning his silver wings Rich transitioned to the C-130 and joined a C-130 Wing at CCK in Taiwan. This unit supplied much of the C-130 combat airlift into Vietnam. Rich flew extensive combat missions in Southeast Asia and left the Air Force a decorated Vietnam veteran.

Completing his Air Force obligations, Rich began his airline pilot career flying for Braniff Airways. With the sudden sad demise of Braniff in 1982, Rich opted to come on board at Northwest. Rich would be of that new generation of NWA pilots who flew out of multiple bases, in his case: MSP, HNL, and DTW.

Rich served as captain on the B-727, A-320, DC-10, Boeing 747-200 and the Boeing 747-400. Those who flew with Rich knew him as a rock solid pilot. He was fun as well, often injecting his North Dakota humor into his job. On Christmas Eve Rich would offer First Class passengers his own cinnamon-sugar lefse bites and announce to the children on board that their radar was showing something that looked suspiciously like sleigh and reindeer. Richard ended his lengthy and varied airline career in 2001 as a 747/400 captain.

The Jacobson family lived in many places: Grand Forks, North Dakota; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Nisswa, Minnesota; Honolulu, Hawaii; and Wickenburg and Peoria, Arizona.

Rich was blessed to maintain a close relationship with his three children; Andrea Jacobson, Jennifer Rath, and Skipp Jacobson, and four grandchildren. Rich was divorced from the mother of his children whom he married as a college student. Love for his children and grandkids lit up his last difficult years.

Rich was very proud to have been a pilot. He flew to MSP to see his daughter Jennifer about two weeks before he passed away. In old NWA style, Rich dressed in fine attire to fly non-rev, surmising that the gate agents appreciated he wasn't in his pajamas like the rest of the travelers.

A wide variety of cars remained Rich's lifelong interest. When his daughter Andrea notified USAA of his passing, the agent said she had the chills reading Rich's account. He had, during his 44 years as a USAA member, insured 72 vehicles, the most she had ever seen in her long career at USAA.

Rich was an excellent photographer. He also loved cooking and getting people together for good food, good music—always the generous host. Our colleague Rich was a people person, always respectful and kind toward others. He will be missed.

(– Bill Day)



**JIM REDESKE**  
1939 ~ 2015

**Jim Redeske**, age 75, retired Vice-President, Personnel, Northwest Airlines, died February 16, 2015 after a long bout with Pancreatic Cancer. Jim was a long standing member and supporter of RNPA. He was born in Wisconsin and moved to Minnesota at a young age. Jim grew up pheasant hunting on the land where Southdale Mall now stands. He graduated from the University of Minnesota Business School and served 5½ years in the Marine Corps.

Jim was an employee of Northwest for 24 years, rising to the Vice-Presidential level and working in In-Flight Services, Human Resources, and Labor Relations. He was a very trustworthy representative of the company. Jim had a role in one of the most notorious events in Northwest Airlines History. On Thanksgiving Eve, 1971, he was preparing to go home when he was called to Flight Operations. There he learned that a Northwest jet



had been hijacked on a flight from Seattle to Portland. The Hijacker was demanding \$200,000 in used \$20 bills and three parachutes. Jim immediately tele-typed the manifest of passengers to authorities in Washington, D.C., who quickly identified passenger Dan Cooper as the likely hijacker. A reporter erroneously identified him as D.B. Cooper and the name stuck. You know the rest of the story.

After retirement Jim volunteered in many capacities for the benefit of all Northwest employees and retirees. During the Bankruptcy at Northwest, he served on the 1114 Committee that represented retiree's benefits. Subsequent to that he served as a member of the VEBA Board that oversaw the benefits that retirees and their families received who were under age 65. He also served as Chairman of the NW Retiree Benefit Trust that provided benefits for Medicare Eligible retirees of Northwest Airlines.

Jim loved sports, was an avid fisherman, loved the outdoors, and had a special interest in hockey both as a coach and a fan. He also devoted many hours as a volunteer restoring the 261 Steam Engine Train in Minneapolis. He especially liked getting the restored passenger cars ready for trips and stayed with the cars as they traveled to make sure all went smoothly.

Jim is survived by his wife and companion for over 50 years, Bettyann. They met in high school at Minnehaha Academy. He also is survived by three children: Steve, Marcia, and Sara: plus four grandchildren. Retired NWA pilot Gary Redeske is his brother. *(- Dennis Olden)*





# Membership Application and Change of Address Form

NAME
SPOUSE'S NAME

**CHANGE:** This is a change of address or status only

PERMANENT MAILING ADDRESS		
STREET		
CITY		
STATE	ZIP+4	PHONE
EMAIL * Leave this blank if you do not wish to receive RNPA email news. (See note)		

**MEMBERSHIP TYPE**

**REGULAR (NR) \$45**  
Pilots: Retired NWA, post-merger retired Delta, or Active Delta

**AFFILIATE (AF) \$35**  
Spouse or widow of RNPA member, pre-merger Delta retired pilots, other NWA or Delta employees, a friend, or a pilot from another airline

SECOND OR SEASONAL ADDRESS (for RNPA annual directory only)		
STREET		
CITY		
STATE	ZIP+4	PHONE

**PAYMENT**

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:  
"RNPA"  
AND MAIL TO:  
Retired NWA Pilots' Assn.  
Dino Oliva  
3701 Bayou Louise Lane  
Sarasota FL 34242-1105

DATE OF BIRTH (Optional for affiliate member)
---

DATE OF FIRST EMPLOYMENT WITH <input type="checkbox"/> NWA <input type="checkbox"/> DELTA AS:	
AN EMPLOYEE	A PILOT

DATE OF RETIREMENT FROM <input type="checkbox"/> NWA <input type="checkbox"/> DELTA AS:	
AN EMPLOYEE	A PILOT

IF CURRENTLY EMPLOYED BY DELTA INDICATE:	
BASE	POSITION

IF RETIRED, WAS IT "NORMAL" (Age 60/65 for pilots)?	YES ___	NO ___
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IF NOT, INDICATE TYPE OF RETIREMENT: MEDICAL ___	EARLY ___	RESIGNED ___
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APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF HOURS LOGGED
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AIRLINE AIRCRAFT TYPES FLOWN AS PILOT
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**NOTES**

**U. S. POSTAL SERVICE:** We are unable to change mailing addresses seasonally. Instead, Contrails and all other mail is sent First Class to your permanent mailing address, which provides for forwarding, unlike our previous mailing system. If desired, please arrange forwarding through the U. S. Postal Service.

**\*EMAIL NOTE:** To protect email addresses they have been removed from the RNPA website (www.rnpa.org). To request a member's email address or to **change your own** please contact Phil Hallin at:  
**RNPAnews@bhi.com**

<b>REMARKS:</b> Affiliates please include information as to profession, employer, department, positions held, and other relevant info:
--

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Curtiss in  
*June Bug*, 1909

*from*  Smithsonian  
National Air and Space Museum

As a manufacturer and racer of motorcycles, it was only natural for Curtiss to wonder how fast he could move on a motorcycle with his V-8. He instructed his workers to construct a frame that could support the weight of the engine. The Curtiss V-8 was air-cooled, producing approximately 30 to 40 horsepower at 1,800 rpm. The motorcycle used direct drive because a conventional chain-and-belt transmission could not withstand the power of the massive engine. Curtiss took the motorcycle to the Florida Speed Carnival at Ormond Beach in January 1907. He recorded a record-setting speed of 218 kph (136 mph) during his run. He was dubbed "the fastest man on Earth."

Before achieving fame in aeronautics, Glenn Curtiss started his career with motorcycles. The early aviation community began to seek out Curtiss because of his growing reputation for designing powerful, lightweight motorcycle engines. In 1906 he designed his first V-8 engine in response to several requests from early aeronautical experimenters.

