



ISSUE NO. 205

MARCH 2018



Farewell to the Queen of the Skies  
Memories Remain

RETIREMENT NORTHWEST AIRLINES PILOTS' ASSOCIATION

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## Notices to Airmen

From here on out  
the most critical  
thing is *NOT* to

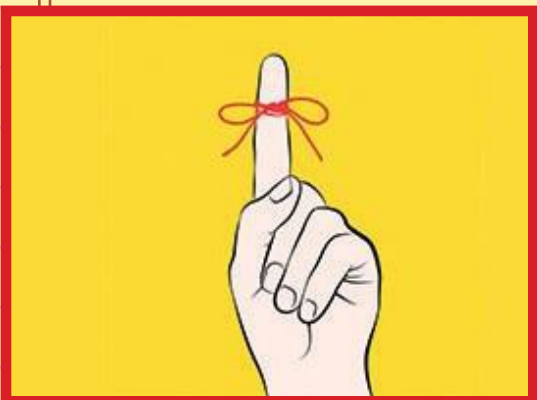
**FLY THE AIRPLANE.**

Instead, you *MUST*

**KEEP YOUR EMAIL UP TO DATE.**

The only way we will have to  
communicate directly with you  
as a group is through emails.  
Change them here, and ONLY  
here:

**[RNPAnews@bhi.com](mailto:RNPAnews@bhi.com)**



### ADDRESS & PHONE CHANGES

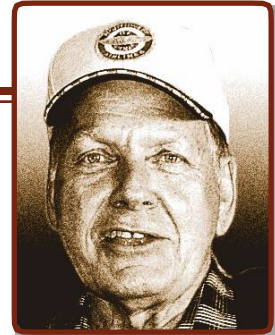
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**Howie can't change your email address changes**

**&**

**RNPA News can't fix your address and phone changes**

**The both need to be kept up to date.**



## President Reports

*Gary Pisel*

GREETINGS FROM A NEW MEDIA

For years RNPA was treated to one of the BEST magazines in the industry. Now we are trading CONTRAILS in print to CONTRAILS on the web. Jay has established a website that will provide all of you with all the information you want at the tap of a key. As we learn the site and explore its venues you will be pleased with the content.

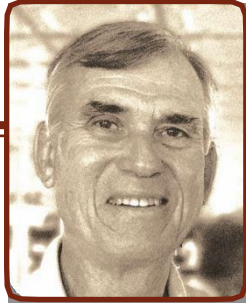
Plans are underway for our RNPA REUNION to be held in New Orleans on May 7-8-9, 2019. Ron Vandervort is working hard to present a great venue. Information will be forthcoming shortly concerning costs and hotels.

This summer we again hold our summer cruise on the St Croix. This will be held June 21. Watch for the sign-up application and cost.

Don't forget the SURVIVOR's CHECK LIST is on the web site.

This has been extremely helpful for those in need. If you have any information to be posted on the site, please contact me.

As we approach this new method of information please be patient.



## Trea\$urer'\$ Report: *Howie LELAND*

Since receiving a few checks for 2018 dues this year, I want to update you on the dues situation. The checks received have been returned. No dues notices were sent out for 2018. The board voted to extend membership through 2018 if you were a member in good standing in 2017. This is a result of initiating the use of "Electronic Contrails".

As we continue to seek new members, the details and application can be found at "RNPA.ORG". Send the completed application along with a check to RNPA to: Howie Leland  
14541 Eagle Ridge Dr. Ft. Myers, FL 33912

New member dues are \$25 for regular members or \$20 for affiliate members.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to RNPA.

Howie Leland 14541 Eagle Ridge Dr. Ft. Myers, FL 33912



## The Design Thoughts behind e-Contrails

When Gary Ferguson decided that he was burning out with the published edition and need to resign, many of us thought he might reconsider. Some of us, Dick Dodge and myself volunteered to help. Gary, in all his wisdom, thought an e-Contrails on the web would work better.

All of us started to look for the web program that would suit our needs. Gary found a couple, Dick thought of one that might work, as so did I. Unfortunately, Gary took ill and had to pass on the quest.

The current RNPA web site operates through "Front Page". It is an old Microsoft program that is obsolete. The couple of web programs we tried were Muse, Wix, Wordpress, and Google. We settled on Wordpress. Over a month was spent, trying it out. Finally, we hired a web master to help out. Then we had to look elsewhere, as Wordpress like most of the programs are theme driven, once you settle on a theme, you are stuck with its rules.

The web master, who happens to be my neighbor, found a program that suits our needs; Joomla. It is a free-standing program, which allows us the flexibility we were looking for. Joomla allows our members to interface with the web site. This will reduce the size of e-Contrails for quicker loading and yet all sections in Contrails will be accessible by the members via a menu system.

Letters to the editor will become The Mail Bag, which may be in blog format. A way for our members to communicate with each other. In the memoriam section, it will contain all the Obits and list of those that flew West. Bill Day will be able to update them on a daily basis. The Events calendar can also be updated on a regular basis. Contrails will do all the rest. Wonderful articles, pictures of people attending the events and much more.

We will attempt four issues a year. The learning curve on editing could be long. We are no Gary, but we will learn to be as talented, as he is.

This is your e-Contrails. Suggestions are always welcome.

# The Last Flight

The ramp is wet from the midnight rain. I sit here awaiting my fate. Soon I will fly away to my final resting spot. Somewhere in the American desert and far from my place of birth. I am a Boeing 747-400, the Queen of the Sky. We were many that flew all over the world. Mainstays of the golden age of aviation.

Now I am the last, the last of the Queens.



The ground crew is fueling me. It won't be long before I will lift my wings and fly to the boneyard.

I should not be deserving of that end. You would think I would be a museum piece, proudly showing the lineage of the Boeing 747. That privilege goes to ship 6301, sitting in all its glory at the Delta Air Museum. Unfortunately, I was the last to be delivered to the launch customer, Northwest Airlines. It too suffered its demise by Delta's acquisition. We both now are relics.



My ancestry is royal. I came from a long line of historic Boeing airplanes. From the B80, B247, B314, B307, aircraft who brought in the modern age of air travel. Then came the B707, the granddaddy of the Boeing jet fleet, ushering in the modern jet age.

Finally came the matriarch, the 747. The idea for the 747 was born from a military competition. To build super military freighters capable of long range and extraordinary lift capabilities. Though Boeing did not win the competition, from it evolved the 747. On February 9, 1969 the first 747-100 took flight. The first delivery went to Pan AM.

From the matriarch grew the offspring. The 747-200 flew into the air in 1970. That spawned cousins, 747-SP, 747-200F and finally my big sister, the 747-300. She was the newest of the new and first flew in 1980.



The Queen of the Sky, 747-400 was launched in February 1989. Northwest Airlines was the launch customer with delivery of 10 aircraft. I was the last to arrive as N676NW in April of 2002. While N674US got to do the farewell tour. I leave as I came,

unnoticed.

The pilots are boarding and the APU is running. A crack of daylight is breaking over the hanger. It will be a good day to fly.

The tug is hooked up and I am tugged from the ramp onto the taxiway. As we turn onto the taxiway, Hundreds of mechanics, ground crew, pilots, flight attendants and so many others, lining the sides of the taxiway. At the end of the line, two fire trucks are shooting the arch salute. As I taxi under the arch, if there was a way to show a tear, I would.



We clear the arch and start the engines. As we taxi onto the runway, we get additional farewells over the radio.

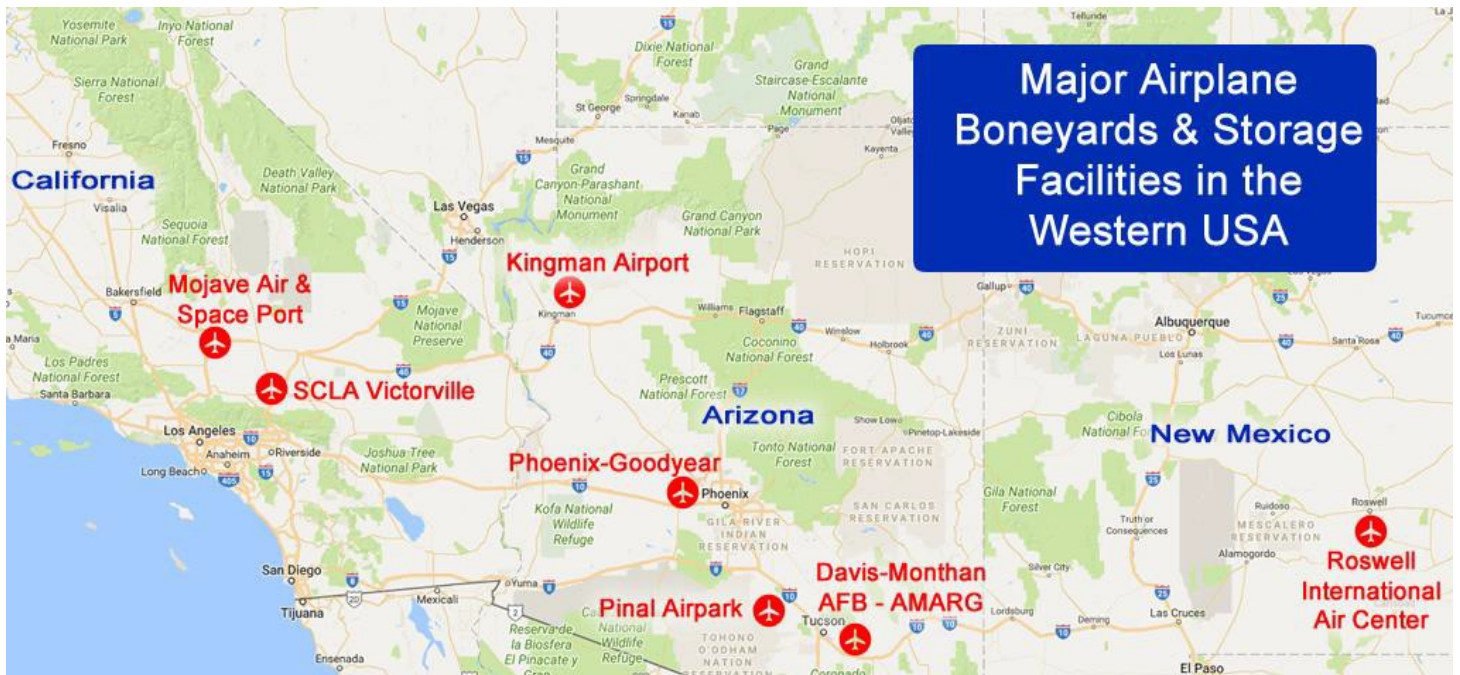
We pause for a moment, and as we advance the power, the cheers are heard above the roar. Soaring into the sky, I leave behind many, many memories.

As I fly West, though I wear the colors of Delta, forever I will be, the red-tailed Queen of the Skies with a Northwest heart.





# BONE-YARD.....Where old airliners come to die.....



We received this note and photos from member Dr. Joseph Handelman about Pinal Airpark (aka the infamous Marana Airport). Access has loosened up a bit. According to Joe, if you can arrange a photo tour bringing hiking shoes, lots of water, broad brimmed hat, sunblock (applied one hour in advance), sunglasses, be in pretty good cardiovascular shape, and have healthy hips and knees. Great experience

Boeing 747-800, N770BA, en 37564-1437, at Pinal Air Park. (Photo by Dr. Joseph Handelman)



Built for the military, and former home to a CIA operation, Pinal Airpark is finally ready for its close-up. For motorists on the way to Tucson from Phoenix, little interrupts the desert's color scheme. Then, a flicker of white, red and blue draw eyes to the west, where a cluster of tail fins pokes over the horizon. As tires chew asphalt with a hypnotic thrum, the sleek metallic bodies connected to those fins emerge. Passenger jets, too many to count at

75 mph, sit wing to wing. The 747s are easy to pick out, thanks to their immense size and bulbous noses. The other jets are noted only for their sheer number, as dozens comprise a tableau one would expect at an active airport, not in a solitary patch of land bounded by desert on one side and cotton fields on the other.

The next exit offers a partial explanation: Pinal Airpark Road. Adventurous travelers who just a few years ago followed the two-lane road past the sand and gravel pit would have encountered an armed guard at the airpark's gate. The alarmed barks of guard dogs emphasized the point - visitors were not welcome.

Today, however, the small guard shack is empty. Concrete pads are all that remain of the kennels, where guard dogs awaited orders.

Stand outside Pinal Airpark's chain-link fence for a good view of its 100-plus airliners in varying states of decay or disassembly. From here it appears little more than a boneyard, a tattered tableau of jetliner history.





But something is out of place, like a gleaming white 747s. It begs a closer look. Jim Petty agrees, and he has the keys to this once mysterious airline kingdom. Petty opens the door to Pinal Airpark's headquarters – a double-wide trailer that didn't exist a year ago - and offers an enthusiastic handshake. The few who know where to find him are fortunate to find him within, as he splits his

time among the county's two airfields and his Florence office.

Petty is happy to offer tours of the public airfield, inviting visitors inside his county-supplied SUV for a lap around the facility (and halting at a curiously\_ placed stop sign) until you realize it's at the end of the runway, and aircraft have the right of way).

Petty, the airport economic development director, is liaison between Pinal County and the airpark's tenants, the largest of which, Marana Aerospace Solutions, is minding most of the jets parked here.



That's somewhat true, for some aircraft. A jet with a faded TWA logo on its fuselage invokes images of fliers in suits and ties, with complimentary champagne served shortly after takeoff. Other planes sit with engines removed, and most have a red "X" taped to their noses, marked for salvage. necessary, and flown to where they're needed. Petty says Marana Aerospace Solutions remains publicity shy, and Jim

Martin, the company's CEO, declined to comment on business operations.

But Petty is happy to talk with anyone who catches him on duty at the airfield. He has even flagged down slow-moving travelers along the access road, inviting them in for a better look.

Given Pinal Airpark's longstanding off-limits attitude, Petty does whatever he can to open it to the public. That's not just his personal ideals talking. The FAA lists Pinal Airpark as a general-aviation airport, which means the public must have access.



For decades the airfield was not in compliance, because of leery tenants who wanted nothing to do with visitors. But at one time in its 72-year history, it was one of the most secure, and secretive, airfields in the world. The CIA would have it no other way.

Although some aircraft have been there three decades or more, others have arrived almost directly from the factory, Petty says.

Some of those 747s, for example, odds are, here because a deal fell through, or the buyer (often an aircraft leasing company) had no immediate use for them. Marana keeps the jets in ready-to-go shape, Petty says, even rolling them a foot or two several times a day to keep tires in shape. When those 747s are called into service, Petty says, they'll be tugged into Marana's hangar, cleaned and painted if needed.

## History

Not long after the U.S. entered WWII, bulldozers began scraping a lonely patch of desert between Tucson and Picacho Peak. It was the perfect site, given the need for land and isolation.

In 1943 the first soldiers arrived to train as pilots at Marana Army Air Field, but five years later there was no need for the military base. Pinal County has overseen operations ever since. Although the airpark was to be open to the public, several tenants had other ideas. The CIA operated flights in and out of the airfield throughout the Vietnam War, Petty says. The grounds were secured by patrols and motion sensors (the latter are still scattered around the field, atop 4-foot-high rusty stakes). Those entering required a security clearance.

In 1975, Pinal County leased the airfield to Evergreen Maintenance, which for nearly 40 years stored, repaired or salvaged commercial aircraft, Petty says.

With guards stationed at the entrance, Pinal Airpark remained visitor-unfriendly even as more aircraft arrived, adding to the curiosity factor. The attitude shifted shortly after Evergreen was sold to a venture-capital group in 2011, remaining the company Marana Aerospace Solutions. The guard post was abandoned, though a small, casually dressed security force

still patrols. Petty hopes to transform the airpark into a welcoming place where gates are open to those who ask for a tour.

# The Forgotten



# Requiem de Pace

## The Art of Modifications: Ship 6743-6744-6745-6746



By Bill Emmer

The article about the Kalitta freighter going to the bone yard in the August issue of *Contrails* made me Google that aircraft (yes, Virginia, Google is now a verb), and sure enough, not only did I fly it but many of you did as well. It was once N646NW; you may have known it as 6746. Before that it was N152UA, the last B747-200 delivered to United in 1987. It was also our last Freighter and our newest Freighter as well.

In January, 2001 David Fry, Program Manager for 747 Freighter Commissioning sent me a letter thanking me for my assistance in preparing these new aircraft for service. These photos of 6743 and 6744 were included. I played minor roles in the conversions of 6745 and 6746, the two United passenger aircraft which we also converted to freighters (I re-wrote the B747-200 AOM and attempted to include differences for all of the aircraft in our fleet, one of which was that Kalitta aircraft mentioned above).

Ship 6743 was commissioned in two phases. The first phase accepted the aircraft and made it air worthy—it needed a C check as I recall, and had some outstanding AD's (it had been owned or leased by Korean Air and then leased to Southern Air—I understood that it had been previously sold or leased to KAL by NWA after our management weenies didn't get the concessions they wanted from ALPA in a contract or side letter—I believe that to be true but can't recall the source of the information. In any event, we were growing our freighter fleet for the first time in years and this aircraft was the first of what would be 4 new freighters to join the fleet in many years). The aircraft was in XMN or Xiamen (pronounced shaw men; if you walked south from Taipei for half the length of the island of Taiwan, and then swam across the Formosa Straight you would swim ashore in mainland China fairly near that city). Jimmy Tarr (Tarr Baby) and I, accompanied by Eric Ranum (Grant's 6'2" little brother)

flew there via Hong Kong to do the first acceptance flight. We layed over in HKG and flew to XMN on Dragon Air the next day. I'm still worried that the Park Lane will send me a bill for the cost of repairing the "runway" after Eric's carrier landings, of course in my room...but I digress.

The point of commissioning the aircraft in two phases was to get it airworthy/operational in time for a Thanksgiving launch so it would be available for service over the holidays. After the holidays it would be returned to Asia and have the flight deck standardized with the rest of the fleet. There are many Freight Dogs reading this who will recall all of the round-dial engine gauges (28?) as well as the hydraulic pressure gauges by the F/Os foot rest, etc. on that aircraft for the first several months of its life as a Northwest Freighter.

The airport at XMN was being developed as a hub for aviation-related manufacturers and contractors on a decommissioned Chinese AFB with a single 8,000 foot runway. Outside the gate were brand new high-rise, fully furnished condominiums that housed the employees of Taeco (a consortium owned by the Chinese government and several Asian airlines that accomplished depot-level aircraft maintenance under contract for the world's commercial airlines. It's sister company Haeco did the same work at the new airport in HKG). All of the A&Ps were college grads, and the \$2/day pay, along with free rent for one of those new condos was an excellent compensation package at the time.

An interesting aside was the requirement for the three of us to go to airport operations and have ID cards issued. The gent, who spoke no English, took our NWA I.D.s and also took photos of each of us; a half hour later he returned our NWA I.D.s and issued us the new cards. We were sort of identical triplets, with "Last Name, First Name" for our last name and first name (related to George Foreman apparently). Each day as we reported to the Taeco hangar a guard scrutinized our I.D.s and after confirming our photo against our face and studying our names, he returned the cards to us and waived us through the gate.

The day we arrived they were stripping the paint off of the fuselage; having sprayed the aircraft with solvent, it was then pressure washed and all of the effluent fell on

the floor of the hangar, was washed into the drains and of course dumped into the river. It seems our current EPA Secretary got his training at Taeco...

The project ran behind schedule from the start due to logistics: Parts identified for replacement were ordered from NWA nightly (which, due to the 12 hour time zone difference was during the normal work day in MSP), and put on the next flight out of MSP to HKG via NRT. However, they'd sit in Hong Kong for a couple of days in customs, and then be again air freighted or trucked to Xiamen, where they'd sit for another couple of days in customs. It was averaging a week or more to get replacement parts, and to my knowledge that never improved.

We arrived when we did so we'd have a day to get adjusted, another to get our I.D.s and any other needs



Department Number

C-8020

Northwest Airlines, Inc.  
5101 Northwest Drive  
St. Paul MN 55111-3034  
www.nwa.com

January 29, 2001

Bill Emmer,

The commissioning of 6743 and 6744 marked the first time that Northwest Airlines has purchased freighter aircraft since June of 1987. With the addition of these two production freighters Northwest Airlines, Inc. operates a fleet of ten 747-200 freighter aircraft to service the increased demand for heavy lift cargo operations. Both aircraft were delivered on-time and under the planned budget.

I want to thank you for all of your work to make the introduction of these aircraft into revenue service for Northwest Airline possible. Please accept this "before and after" picture as a small token of my appreciation for a job well done. It was truly a pleasure to have worked with you on this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David J. Fry'.

David J. Fry  
Program Manager 747 Freighter Commissioning  
Northwest Airlines



attended to, and figure out how to do the acceptance flight. A week later we were still waiting to fly. To apologize for the delay the VP of Marketing made arrangements for Edward, a recent college grad, to take us to “Seagull Island” and show us around. He paid our way into the Seaquarium, and gave us the nickel tour of the beautiful and very European hamlet developed by missionaries about 150 years earlier. After buying us lunch this well-spoken young man took us to the tourist area. I asked him if there was someplace nearby to purchase tea. He recalled that there was but couldn’t quite remember exactly where those shops were located. He excused himself and addressed a middle aged Chinese woman nearby. I watched her smile, say nothing, and then Edward returned, a bit annoyed. She was from a village about 25 miles away and spoke a different dialect that he did not understand. As she was schooled during the Cultural Revolution years when Mao was still in control, she did not speak Mandarin, the single language common to all Chinese today. Recall that to the British a “Mandarin” is slang, meaning a bureaucrat—Mandarin of course being the spoken dialect of Chinese government employees for hundreds of years.

Eventually we got our hands on 6743. We spent the first day doing ground tests of all of the systems per the Boeing Flight Test Manual. The following day we got airborne and proceeded to the 30nm X 35 nm area granted to us by the regional Air Force Command to perform all of our flight tests. That was barely enough to complete those tests that could be performed at low altitude and low speed, including shutting each engine down, one at a time, and re-lighting it (We did this in symmetrical pairs, so it wasn’t as bad as it sounds--retard both to idle, let them cool for 5 minutes, shut one down, re-light it, shut the other one down, re-light it, wait 5 minutes then spool them both and do the other two. With enough fuel on board for about 10 hours of flying time and a Takeoff Gross Weight of about 500,000 pounds, the aircraft easily maintains 250 Knots at 10,000 feet on two engines).

Our problems arose when we had to perform checks and tests at high mach numbers. As we would encroach upon the border of our box the radar controllers would come unhinged. They were obviously using ancient radars and indicated aircraft position lagged actual position by 30 seconds or more. At a ground speed of 500 knots it was nearly impossible to accomplish all of these tasks without giving these guys a stroke. We spent more than eight hours the first day trying to complete all of these tasks and were unsuccessful. We had to go out a second day.

We eventually got through all of the tasks that we could—we flew the aircraft to LAX with some stickers on it, which did not sit well with MSP MC, but it was the

best we could do. Interestingly, with a little help from Steve Smith, our illustrious Fleet Captain, I was able to bring about 1500 pounds of granite all of the way home to Orlando, having paid no freight or duty on any of the materials. Eric brought home a couple of granite-topped tables to MSP. John Yuen, NWA Manager of Non Destructive Inspection was originally from China and made sure we had pallets that were compatible with a DC-10; off-loaded from our freighter to the Death Cruiser that arrived daily in LAX from GUM, that aircraft flew LAX-MSP-MCO, so each of our pallets was only minimally handled. Had I known in advance how easy it would be I would have brought back 15,000 pounds!

For the second phase of commissioning, Grant Ranum replaced Tarr Baby—you can imagine how much fun that was being out voted at every turn of events (those two brothers closed ranks on everything, and they love “soup noodle” shops—the spicier the better!). Because of the logistics problems, customs issues and the difficulty with ATC in XMN, this phase was accomplished at Haeco —located just north of the approach end of Runway 7R at HKG International Airport (Chek Lap Kok).

The aircraft was standardized to the rest of the fleet. A contractor had manufactured units that contained the tape gauges for all of the engine instruments, and after some initial issues they proved to be acceptable. The hydraulic gauges were re-located to the S/O panel, the Anti Skid/Body Gear Steering switch arrangement was replicated per NWA standard, etc. Further, the excellent Flight Director that was standard Boeing issue was tossed in favor of that nearly useless Yellow Bird, the brain child of a heroic Chief Pilot who wanted the forward instrument panel of the Whale to be as similar as possible to the Three Holer. Since that arrangement wasn’t offered by Boeing, NWA had years earlier contracted with a third party to design and install an electronic unit that would take inputs for the dual element system and drive the single element Yellow Bird system. The unfortunate result was that a Flight Director certificated to hand fly a 1200 RVR CAT II approach was discarded in favor of a system that was only marginally capable of flying an 1800 RVR CAT I approach. With less than favorable wind conditions, it wouldn’t capture a course or glide slope without a lot of help from the pilots. Anyone who ever flew the Generic Whale for NWA knew what a dog it was when flying instruments. Another downgrade was the crew oxygen mask—the excellent full-face inflatable smoke/oxygen masks in use today on all modern aircraft were discarded for the sake of standardization. Instead, those old, uncomfortable blue masks with plastic straps that required the use of cheesy smoke goggles from Home Depot were installed. While



# In Recognition of Your Contribution Commissioning Aircraft 6743 and 6744



**N9401**  
Acquired - May 21, 1999



**ZS-SBJ**  
Acquired - October 29, 1999

**Dave Fry**  
Program Manager, 747 Commissioning



**N643NW**  
Commissioned - March 30, 2000



**N644NW**  
Commissioned - August 16, 2000

**Kevin Hill**  
Director, Fleet Management

until the following day. Had the flight been scheduled two or more days later we could have done something constructive with our time off, but it was not to be. Every morning we'd go to Deli France and get a made to order breakfast for a quite reasonable price, return to the Park Lane Hotel and find the flight had been canceled. We did get an opportunity to do some serious sight seeing, but after a week we wanted to jump on that aluminum over-cast and get the job done. The problem had been a recalcitrant AC Generator. Even replacing the heavy duty supply cable connecting the engine driven generator to its respective bus didn't solve the problem. Eventually we convinced Maintenance and MC to defer it and let us complete the flight test.

Once again we spent a day completing the ground portion of the Boeing Flight Test Manual (this is virtually the same procedure as

I've long been a fan of standardization, I always felt these two items were better left un-standardized.

The Ranum boys and I got to star in our own version of Ground Hog Day for over a week. Each day the acceptance flight was scheduled for the following day, and at about 0900L on the following day the flight was canceled

an FCF or Functional Check Flight that many of you did in the Air Force). The next day we got airborne and entered an area south east of the airport between 50 and 100 DME and between two VOR radials 30 degrees apart. We were in contact with Hong Kong approach the entire time and they were precise, professional, accom-

modating, and spoke English perfectly--of course with an Aussie accent. It was a breeze compared to Xiamen.

We completed touch-and-go and full stop landings at Macau. They too were exceedingly accommodating. Because of this the three remaining freighter mods (6744, 6745 and 6746) were done by Haeco and to my knowledge their acceptance flights were performed in HKG and Macau.

Having recently returned from HKG, I flew 6744 from Mirana (KAVQ), north of Tucson, to Amarillo (KAMA) to have it painted. We had serious issues with the INS's. The aircraft had been parked for quite awhile at AVQ and one of the units would fail after about an hour of use. The #3 unit would not accept any way-point information. Their data bases were woefully out of date, and we had only limited information as to how they operated. These were Delco Carousel systems that were to be replaced with Littons at Haeco, so we didn't want to spend any money on them if we could avoid it. I had used these INS's at Air Florida, so I was familiar with them, and they had been the original inertial nav systems used on the DC-10s and B-747s prior to NWA replacing them with the Littons, so NWA still had some training documentation available. Eventually I discovered that the third INS was installed for Standby Platform use only, not navigation. Further, we repeatedly re-started the difficult unit in flight, and found that it would operate for an increasing period of time with each cycle.

About a month later I was tasked to take this newly-painted Freighter to HKG. We decided to fly the aircraft Part 91 from AMA to HKG. Marketing, however, wanted us to fly non-stop. I preferred not to do that for a number of reasons. The biggest drawback was that it would have been an exceedingly long duty day. Additionally, Jet A at AMA was more than double what it cost at SEA or ANC. With the troublesome INS I wanted to fly over land as long as possible, to give it a chance to get well or fail altogether (in which case we would have had it replaced in SEA). As a crew we wanted an ANC lay-over so we could eat fish tacos at Humpey's. And lastly, arguably most importantly, there were three of us flying this machine (myself, Chris Glaser and Greg Stas), so we really needed three legs (Chris brought his wife Karen, although she didn't get a leg).

On the other hand, the aircraft was not yet RVSM capable or certified, so flying through ANC airspace would require a waiver; as it happened, with a little help from the FAA's Joe Masini (our APM), that was easily obtained over the telephone from ANC Center.

Just as we were about to leave the small operations office at Mirana I got a phone call on my cell phone from someone in marketing asking how difficult it would be

to delay the flight for another day. The company had been negotiating an alliance for freight comparable to what it had done with KLM, but had not gotten Alitalia to agree to the fine print. As a result, it had directed the paint shop to remove its logo from the paint scheme, leaving only ours and KLM's. There'd been a change of heart and someone in marketing had decided to put that logo back on 6744. He told me it could be done in a few hours. I asked him if he'd checked with the paint contractor. He had not. I explained that a UAL B747-400 had just been towed into the single paint hangar, it would be there for at least three weeks, and that the Chinese were pretty good at painting aircraft. I hung up my cell phone and turned it off.

The flight was mostly un-eventful—that recalcitrant Delco Carousel INS worked fine on the leg into ANC (as well as during the final leg to HKG). The halibut tacos at Humpey's were delicious! Chris did not impress his wife Karen with his landing in HKG! She also did not understand why we whine so much about the exhaustion of flying to and from Asia (she easily slept 8 hours on a leather sofa the width of the upperdeck).

6745 and 6746 were United aircraft manufactured in 1987 (N151UA and N152UA—their only two B747-200B aircraft), the same year we began taking delivery of our B747-400s. They were very low time, low cycle aircraft and were a dream to fly. It broke my heart to see their avionics sacrificed for the NWA standard—just shy of needle, ball and airspeed. They were also equipped with JT9D-7R engines. The newest aircraft in our fleet had -7Q engines. 6601 delivered in 1970 and now in the Smithsonian, depending on the day you flew it, had 4 -7J engines, or possibly 2 or 3 -7Js with the remaining engine(s) being -7F, or occasionally -7A. Count your lucky stars you weren't getting a check ride as a S/O on that little darling...throw in a wet runway or clutter and imagine the ensuing nightmare (the S/O was the computer painstakingly calculating performance).

Considering that today's pilots aren't expected to use an E6B, plot a course or fly an NDB or RMI approach, it's no wonder that the pilots still flying these aircraft today are often long in the tooth, just like the aircraft.

Now you know the rest of the story! ✈

For those of you interested in some of the technical data relating to these B747-200F aircraft, the following URLs will provide some interesting information as well as a photo of several of these NWA aircraft at the freight ramp in Narita:

<http://ialcargo.com/specs/b747.pdf> [http://www.aircraft-commerce.com/sample\\_articles/sample\\_articles/owners\\_guide.pdf](http://www.aircraft-commerce.com/sample_articles/sample_articles/owners_guide.pdf)