CONTRAILS

ISSUE 210 February 2020

Louisville

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

RNPA NOTAMS

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 yours here ONLY:

RNPAnews@gmail.com

If you use and depend on the **RNPA Directory** you must keep your mailing address(es) up to date. The ONLY place that can be done is to send it to:

The Keeper Of The Data Base:

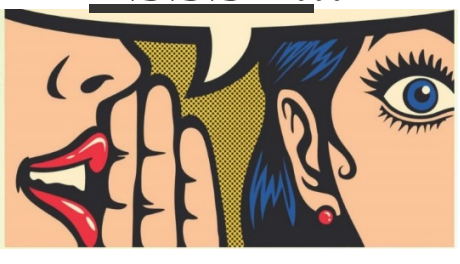
Howie Leland

howieleland@gmail.com

(239) 839-6198

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

PSSST...!

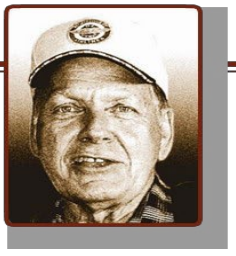


"Heard about the RNPA FORUM?"

Click the **"NEWS"** drop down menu, then click **"RNPA** Forum:

Posted comments will go out to over 840 RNPA members the same day.

President Reports



Gary Pisel

Greetings Fellow Members

RNPA is holding its own, not really growing but not decreasing in membership. However, we have found that many members no longer want to travel to the functions. Attendance had decreased dramatically. All functions are self sustaining, i.e. no RNPA funds are used, all expenses are covered by the attendees.

Currently there are no dues to belong to RNPA. We have monies in our treasury to cover what expenses we have.

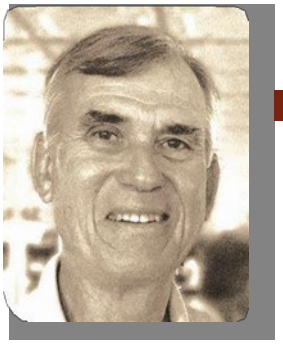
I would like to remind/ask each of you to consider attending the RNPA Reunion to be held in Louisville, May 7-9. K C Kolhbrand has a great venue planned. Our headquarters will be the Brown Hotel at $179.00/night. (this is the home of the famous Brown Sandwich) The fee for the Reunion is $230.00pp. This included a day at Churchill Downs for the race.

It is time for each and every member to review his estate plans. Update your contact list, make any changes you need to make and tell someone where the information is located. Look at the Survivors Checklist on line, better yet print a copy for your file.

Give your support to the NWA History Center. When in Minneapolis please find time to visit. They have an outstanding display of NWA.

Please remember those members that are having health problems. Send your best wishes and prayers their way.

Gary Pisel
President



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

The good news is, there will be no dues assessments for 2020 because our reserve funds remain adequate to meet our expenses. Our expenses are less since we've gone to "E-Contrails".

As always, we are looking to recruit new members. Applications are available at "RNPA.ORG" under the News heading. When completed, send the application along with a check payable to RNPA to:

RNPA Howie Leland 14541 Eagle Ridge Drive, Ft. Myers, FL 33912

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

If you have a change of address or phone number, please notify me at the above address, or call my phone, 239-768-3789 or cell phone 239-839-6198 or by email at: howieleland@gmail.com We want to stay in touch with everyone.

I hope to see you on May 7, 8 and 9 at the RNPA Reunion in Louisville, KY.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to RNPA.

Editor Jay Sakas

Suggestion are Welcome

Voices from the Sky

This edition continues with stories in the book "Voices from the Sky"

The legend of Speed Holman, his life and the tragic accident that ended it.

A couple of stories honoring the venerable DC 3.

An Article on Boeing and why it lost its way.

We have added stories from our members. Thanks to Dave Schneebeck and Art Daniels…Of course, a story by a Marine always elicits a laugh, or two…..

Our cover highlights the next RNPA reunion in Louisville, May, 7-9.

There were plans to create a paper edition of Contrails. Unfortunately, this editor had a birth of a new granddaughter get in the way. She takes up too much of my time. Volunteers to help in the project are always welcome.…….You may reach me at econtrailseditor@gmail.com or 360-731-0871.

Thanks for reading……J--

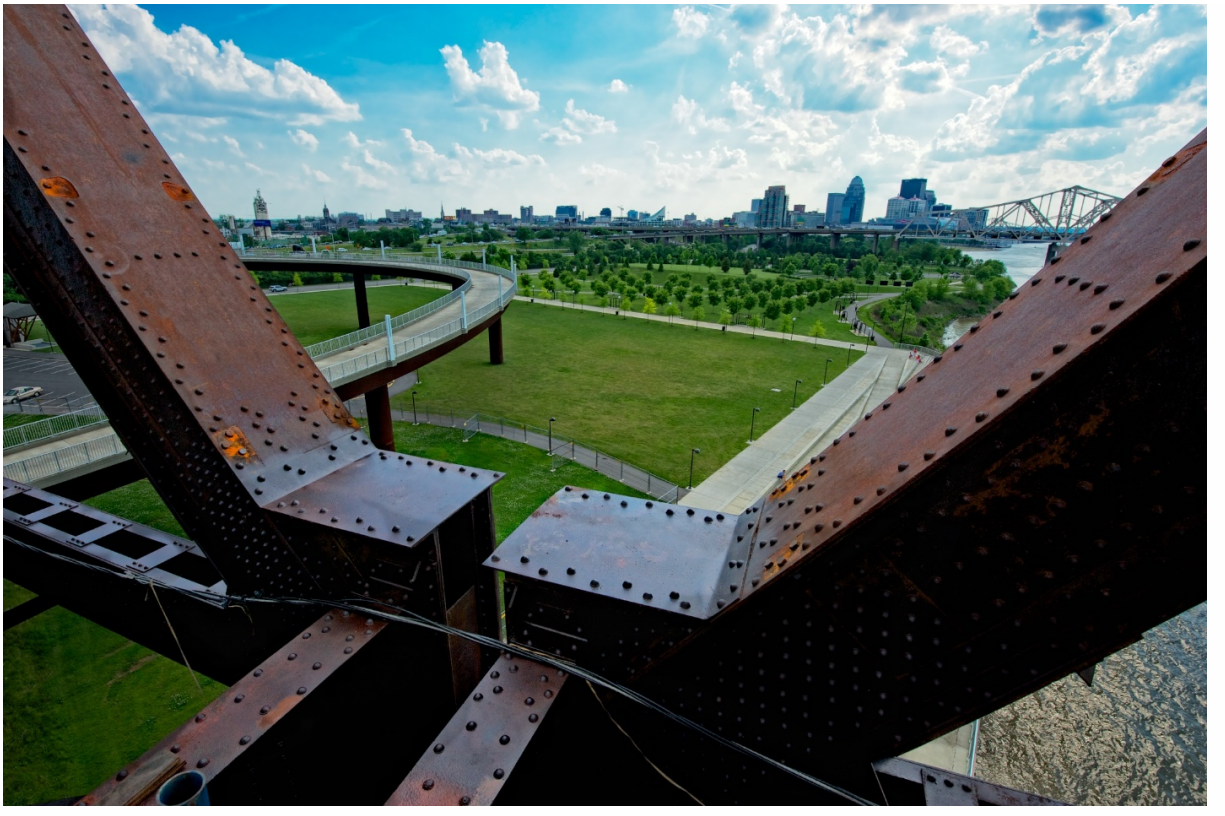
Named for King Louis XVI of France in appreciation for his assistance during the Revolutionary War, Louisville was founded by George Rogers Clark in 1778. While its initial growth was slow, the advent of the steamboat in the early 1800s sparked booming industrial development, and by 1830 Louisville had secured its place as the largest city in Kentucky.

During the Civil War, Louisville was an important Union base of operations and a major military supply center. In the postwar era, the city emerged even more prosperous than before, with merchant princes and manufacturers shaping the new economy. Owing to its strategic location at the Falls of the Ohio, Louisville was a major commercial center. River transportation was supplemented by the construction of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad,

which was chartered in 1850 and operated more than 1,800 miles of line in the state by 1920.

Joseph E. Seagram and Sons opened the world's largest distillery in Louisville following the repeal of prohibition. Thanks to companies such as Dupont, the city became the world's largest producer of synthetic rubber during World War II.

Louisville was also a city of firsts. In the reform-minded progressive era of the 1880's the city was the first in the nation to introduce the secret ballot, significantly reducing vote fraud. It was the first city in Kentucky to adopt zoning and planning measures to control and shape urban growth. Home to the first bridge designed exclusively for motor vehicles to cross the Ohio River, Louisville was also the birthplace of Mary Millicent Miller, the first woman in the United States to receive a steamboat master's license.



The city has been home to a number of men and women who changed the face of American history. President Zachary Taylor was reared in surrounding Jefferson County, and two U.S. Supreme Court Justices, including Louis D. Brandeis, the first Jewish Justice, were from the city proper. John James Audubon was a local shopkeeper in the early years of his career, drawing birds in his spare time. Second Lt. F. Scott Fitzgerald, stationed at Camp Zachary Taylor during World War I, was frequent presence at the bar in the famous Seelbach Hotel, immortalized in the novel The Great Gatsby. Muhammad Ali, perhaps the greatest heavyweight boxer of all time, was born in Louisville and won six Golden Glove tournaments in Kentucky."

KENTUCKY DERBY

MAY 2, 2020

KENTUCKY DERBY
CHURCHILL DOWNS
MAY 2 146 2020
EST. 1875
PRESENTED BY
WOODFORD RESERVE

HE BELONGED TO THE HEIGHTS AND THE HEIGHTS CLAIMED HIM

Charles W. "Speed" Holman

Was One of the Very Best

CHARLES W. "SPEED" HOLMAN was Northwest's first pilot. He was Northwest's first operations manager. Before his tragic death at an Omaha air show, May 1 7, 1931, he had established himself as one of the best airmen who ever lived. He brought great fame to infant Northwest Airways, establishing for it a persona that lasted many, many years. "If you want the mail to go through," the saying went, "give it to Northwest." He was widely known not only for his daring aerial exploits but for his pioneering work in commercial aviation as well.

Accomplishments? How about these in a mere eight years:

1923. Won stunt flying contest, National Pulitzer races, St. Louis.

1924. Second place, "On to Dayton" race, Minot, North Dakota to Dayton, Ohio.

1927. Won National Air Derby, New York to Spokane, 19 hours, 42 minutes.

1928. He powered his famed black Laird bi-plane to 1,433 loop-the-loops over the St. Paul airport, a world record.

1928. Won the Los Angeles to Cincinnati air derby.

1929. Became the first pilot ever to inside loop a Ford Tri-Motor. (It's been said that Holman also did an outside loop in a Tri-Motor but his close friend and fellow Northwest pilot Walter Bullock denies it. "Nobody ever did an outside loop in a Tri-Motor," Bullock said, "but if anybody could have Charlie would have done it").

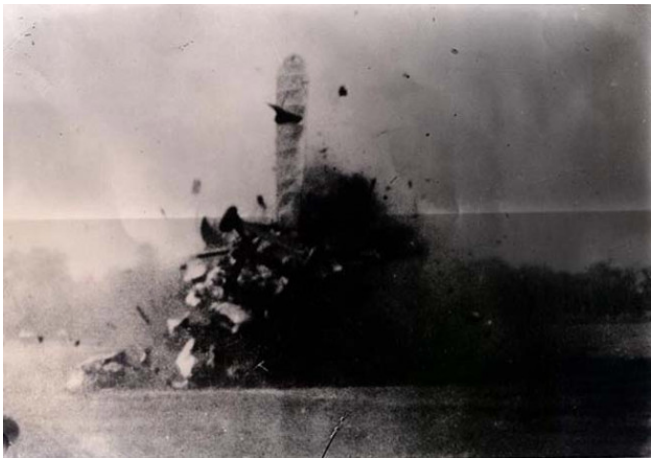
1929. Won first Gardner Trophy race, St. Louis to Indianapolis and return.

1929. Won the 800-cubic-inch (displacement) closed course race at the National Air Races, Cleveland.

1930. Now 32 years old, his last race was his greatest victory-the $10,000 Thompson Trophy event on the tenth day of aerial showmanship at the National Air Races, Chicago. He flew an untested bi-plane, the Laird "Solution," the only bi-plane ever to win.

Windy City plane designer and builder Matty Laird, one of the best of his era (who built and continually modified Holman's personal racing plane), had produced a stubby little number for the Thompson, hardly big enough for Holman's six-foot, five-and-half-inch frame. Laird's "Solution" was only 1 7 feet, eight inches long. Its upper wing spanned 21 feet, its lower one 18. It was powered by a 300 hp Pratt & Whitney Wasp Junior engine. Laird's problem was that it turned out he didn't have anybody to fly it. Holman, who was at the air extravaganza more or less to socialize with some of his old buddies, volunteered.

Holman's 1931 death at the Omaha air show is well-documented, particularly in Noel Allard's magnificent book about Holman's life, titled "Speed." (It also contains some awesome pictures). Flying upside down only a few feet above the grandstand Holman wavered and crashed. Several theories were advanced the most prominent being the metal clasp holding his safety belt to a side of the plane was corroded and couldn't stand the strain. (Laird had made a shoulder harness for Holman but he wasn't wearing it).



The man who snapped the dramatic photo of Holman's upside down plane skirting the grandstand seconds before his crash was a young Omaha World-Herald reporter named Edward R. Murrow.

A few years ago Charles W. Holman, "Speed's" nephew and namesake, presented the Northwest Airlines History Centre with an engraved plaque-given to his uncle after his 1930 Thompson Trophy victory by admiring co-workers at the airline's St. Paul base.
Listing some of his racing victories it reads "With admiration and appreciation of sincere friends this plaque is presented to Charles W. "Speed" Holman by the employees of Northwest Airways, Inc. An intrepid airman, fearless flyer, a genuine sportsman and a sterling character."

And there was a little story about that loop-the-loop record his nephew volunteered: "As I heard it the boys had been partying the night before," he relates. "Charlie had just returned from a run to Winnipeg to pick up some hooch. It was prohibition then, you know. "Somebody had a bright idea and it must have made more sense as the evening wore on. I think he only had a couple of hours of sleep and the next morning, he went out there and did 1,433 of them." Stop and mull this for a moment. Can you imagine anybody doing 1,433 consecutive loop-the-loops?

Walter Bullock, also a Northwest legend in his own time, probably knew Holman better than anybody. Walter received his Aero Club of America flying license in 1916 when he was 1 7 and was the youngest licensed pilot in the nation. He gave Holman his first airplane ride and some unofficial flying lessons when he, Walter, was hopping passengers off the ice of Lake Calhoun, Minneapolis, in the winter of 1917. They became inseparable friends. (After "Speed's" death Mrs. Holman came to stay with the Bullocks for a few days, she stayed for seven years).
In 1956 Northwest published a special issue of its house organ, the Northwest Airlines "News," commemorating the 25th anniversary of "Speed" Holman's death. Here's what Walter Bullock had to say about his old friend. (Walter calls him "Charlie" throughout. Holman thought "Speed" was okay as a "public" name, but his friends knew better than to use it because he wasn't particularly enamored with it): "Jimmy Doolittle, Eddie Rickenbacker, Roscoe Turner-none of 'em got more than polite applause at air shows where Charlie Holman performed. Charlie topped them all. He was the whole show. The crowds loved him and Charlie loved the crowds. He loved

fun and noise and excitement. Some said Charlie was a screwball but he wasn't. He was loyal and sincere. Some said Charlie was reckless but he wasn't.

He knew airplanes, their structures and what they could stand in the way of stress and strain way ahead of the rest of the crowd.
HE WAS THE GREATEST PILOT WHO EVER LIVED."

After his death the St. Paul airport, a product of Northwest founder Lewis H. Brittin's effort, was renamed Holman field. A Holman plaque on a seven-ton slab of granite rock, paid for by the St. Paul Aviation Club, is there. It reads: "1898-1931-Charles W. Holman - "Speed" - He belonged to the Heights and the Heights Claimed Him – Presented by the St. Paul Aviation Club - 1932."

In the early 1980s the St. Paul Jaycees, in their ignorance, proclaimed that Holman field should be renamed "St. Paul Downtown Airport," thus erasing "Speed" Holman's name from the consciousness of citizens forever. But to the few old-timers who are left, it's still, and always will be; ”Holman Field”

FINIS

100,000 Mourners Honored "Speed" Holman

"SPEED HOLMAN DIES IN CRASH"

read the eight-column headlines in the Twin Cities newspapers on Monday, May 18, 1931.

"The broken body of Charles W. 'Speed' Holman will rest as near

to his beloved sky as the hands of his friends can place it," said the St.

Paul Dispatch.

During one of his frequent late-night bull sessions with Northwest founder and leader Col. Lewis H. Brittin in Brittin's St. Paul lodgings, "Speed" had said "if anything ever happens" he wanted to be buried "on the highest point in Minnesota," in the Acacia Park cemetery across the verdant Minnesota River valley from historic Fort Snelling and Wold Chamberlain field, formerly Speedway field, now the Twin Cities International Airport.

Acacia is a special place known historically as Pilot Knob. Here in 1805 Chief Little Crow and his Sioux warriors agreed to permit the U. S. Government to establish Fort Snelling, in 1819, one of the first military outposts in the northwest. About 1820 leaders of the Sioux and Chippewa tribes met at Pilot Knob to smoke their peace pipes. While Pilot Knob may not be the highest point in Minnesota it oversees much surrounding territory. Holman was one of the best-known people in his part of the country and one of the best-known pilots in national aviation circles.

Scores of condolence messages poured in including those from Charles A. Lindbergh and World War I ace Eddie Rickenbacker. The family kept Lindbergh's message private. Rickenbacker said "I grieve with you and Charlie's family in our loss." "Speed" admired Rickenbacker and had a personal association with him. On Holman's desk at Northwest headquarters at the St. Paul airport was a photostatic print of the famous "Hat-in-the Ring" emblem with Rickenbacker's picture and his hand-written message "to my dear friend, Charles 'Speed' Holman, may all your landings be three pointed."

Minnesota governor Floyd B. Olson, among the most legendary politicians in the Gopher State's 15 0 -year history, said "he was not only one of the greatest aviators in America, he was one of the finest men I've ever met."

Old friend and fellow pilot Walter Bullock, who was described as "paralyzed" when he heard the news: "He was a perfect pilot, absolutely thorough in everything he did."

"Speed created a sensation in the 1929 National Air Races in Cleveland," the Minneapolis Tribune reported, "when he flew a 16-passenger Ford Tri-Motor plane upside-down."

The Dispatch opined "the shocking death of Charles W. 'Speed' Holman at the Omaha air races Sunday removes from American aviation one of its most brilliant figures and one of its finest personalities. . . Among those especially distinguished aviators for whom flying is a way of life more than a career, 'Speed' stood out with the select few."

Said the New York World-Telegram: (He will be) "buried where he

can long keep an invisible charge over the great airline system he loved and managed so well."

"He was as perfect a flyer as you could find," said Wold-Chamberlain field airport director Larry Hammond. "He always thought everything out. He was without a rival."

"To young boys he was a hero and his reputation among the youth of the Twin Cities was always furthered by his willingness to visit hospitals and gatherings of boys," the Tribune continued. "Next week he was to have paid a visit to the Dowling school for crippled children."

Holman's body came back to Minneapolis by train. From 5 p.m. until late the evening of May 20th more than 8,000 people filed through the dimly-lit Welander-Quist funeral chapel, 1825 Chicago avenue, to pay their respects. Ten thousand more viewed the grey casket at the Scottish Rite temple, Franklin and DuPont avenues, where a formal Masonic service was held the next day. About 1,5 0 0 viewed the actual service. Untold hundreds stood silently on the streets outside.

The funeral cortege was four miles long. Police estimated about 50 ,0 0 0 people attended the rites and lined the streets and boulevards to honor their fallen hero as the train of vehicles sadly made its slow way the several miles from the Scottish Rite temple to Acacia. Incredibly, another 50 ,0 0 0 people were at or around the gravesite area creating a mammoth jam of people and vehicles. Northwest veteran John "Red" Kennedy (see "Tales from the Northern Region")

remembers the day well. "I was nine years old and my dad wanted me to see the funeral," Red recalls. "We could only get as far as the Mendota bridge" which spans the Minnesota river.

Thirty military and civilian planes circled 3, 0 0 0 feet overhead as services were held. Rose petals and other floral tributes fluttered down. Active pallbearers included "Speed's" fellow Northwest Airways pilots - Chadwick Smith, his brother, R. L. Smith, Walter Bullock, Homer Cole, J. F. Malone and J. E. Ohrbeck. Their were 39 honorary pallbearers. Col. Brittin was at Mrs. Holman's side throughout.
One hundred thousand mourners meant that one out of every seven or eight people in the Twin Cities involved themselves in this unfolding drama. Combined population of the cities, then, was about 74 0 , 0 0 0 . It was one of the great funerals of the century - four years to the day after Lindbergh's epic trans-Atlantic flight.

It long had been Holman's custom to call his dark-haired wife Elvera, whom he married in 1924 and affectionately called Dee, after - not before - his out-of-town aerial performances. On the fateful May 17th Sunday, however, he called Dee before the Omaha show.
"He seemed to want to talk, he didn't want to hang up," Dee remembered. "When another Omaha call came late in the afternoon and they didn't want to talk to me I knew it had happened. I knew he was dead.
Dee never remarried. For many years she lived in a modest white frame house just south of 150th street and Old Lyndale road across the Minnesota river from Minneapolis in loosely populated Burnsville, then

a rolling, sylvan area of sunshine, trees, birds, flowers and farms. A small structure nearby housed her husband's trophies and innumerable other keepsakes from his incredible flying career.

On May 18 the Minneapolis Tribune published a poignant Page 1 picture of "Pups," Speed's beautiful young yellow spaniel, sadly looking into the camera lens "waiting in vain" for his master.

"Waiting in Vain"

Dee's last words to her husband were "be very, very careful."

SUPERPLANE

The Tough and Dependable Douglas DC-3. Northwest Flew Them Almost 20 Years

THE VENERABLE DOUGLAS DC-3 is perhaps the best-loved airplane in the history of commercial aviation. Tens of thousandsof people the world over experienced their first thrill of flight in a DC-3. They have served valiantly in both war and peace.

Northwest operated DC-3s for almost 20 years. Its first one arrived at Holman field, St. Paul in April, 1939, one of six received that year. The years 1946 and 194 7 saw the airline operating a fleet of 24.

Aircraft Mechanic Paul Fenske, on hand for the arrival of the first one, remembered them fondly: "We thought the world of our DC-3s. We flew them night and day and pounded the liver out of 'em. But when they were on the

ground we took care of them and treated them like the great airplanes they were."

Fenske's love for the plane was shared by flight crews. Seattle based Captain Russ Sorkness recalled: "She was and is a grand old girl, the first airplane that could be operated economically enough so the airlines could provide transportation at a cost Mr. John Q. could afford to pay. Also, with the C-4 7 version during World War II in Canada, Alaska and the Aleutian Islands we proved the impossible could be done."

At the dawn of the jet age, Board Chairman Croil Hunter recalled: ... Twenty years ago, our purchase of the DC-3s seemed as speculative an adventure as our present program to purchase jet transports. "The DC-3s were twice as large as the ships we bad been flying; they cost more than twice as much; they produced double the seat and ton miles; and we had to borrow most of' the money to pay for them. Result: We cut our need for mail subsidy by half. We gave our passengers comfort and speed they never believed possible. This produced even more passengers and revenues than we had planned, and we paid off our debts sooner than expected. The DC-3 was the first important step in the development of mass use of air travel."

The Douglas Aircraft News Bureau produced this salute to the DC- 3 as time was catching up with it. It was a tough old bird, indeed: Without doubt the best-known aircraft in the world is the Douglas DC-3.

Not that the ship is recognized by that name everywhere. Jn England the DC-3 has been called the Dakota, or Dak. During World War II American pilots referred to her as the Skytrain, The Sky-trooper the Doug, the Gooney Bird and numerous other homey nicknames.

The U. S. Military officially labeled her the C-47, C-53, and R4D. But regardless of the name, the performance has been the same. Uniformly honest and dependable, usually above and beyond the call of duty.

The first DC-3 flew in December, 1935, as an evolutionary product of the DC-1 and DC-2. It was twin-engine, had a gross weight of 24, 0 0 0 pounds and carried 21 passengers.

The airline industry converted to DC-3s as fast as Douglas could produce them. By 1938 the plane not only was the "standard" of major U. S. airlines, it also was operating in dozens of foreign countries. Customer and passenger popularity of the DC-3 was based on many factors. It was larger, faster and more luxurious than previous planes; it was more economical to operate and standardization of the DC-3 reduced maintenance cost and hiked safety records.

Stories of DC-3 durability are legend around the globe. One had five feet clipped from one wing in a mid-air collision but landed safety with a full load of passengers.

-During World War II a DC-3 had its light wing knocked off in a strafing operation. The plane was fitted with the wing of DC-2 which was 10 feet shorter and flew splendidly. The airmen christened her the DC-2 1/2."

-A DC-3 in the Burmese theater had the unique distinction of' being the only transport plane officially credited with downing an enemy fighter plane. A Zero ploughed into its tail, slicing off all but a foot and a half of the rudder. The Zero crashed but the DC-3 hobbled back to base and soon returned to service again. Perhaps no plane has been so abused as the DC-3, and yet bas survived so well.

Allowable gross take-off weight for civil operations in the U. S. is 25,200 pounds. During World War II the Air Transport Command regularly flew the ship at a normal gross of 29,000 and an overload of 31,000. DC-3s labored off Brazilian runways and across the Atlantic with 35,000 pounds in 1942.

The 21-passenger capacity originally envisioned for the ship has been stretched many times. During the evacuation of Burma a DC-3 carried 74 passengers.

Another fully documented tale of incredible DC-3 survival took place April 21, 1957, when the doughty ship lost 12 feet of its left wing to a mountain peak during a snowstorm but continued on in routine manner and made a safe landing at Phoenix, Arizona. There were 23 passengers aboard.

Perhaps the best reason the DC-3 is still flying is because it is questionable that anyone has designed a better airplane for the particular job.

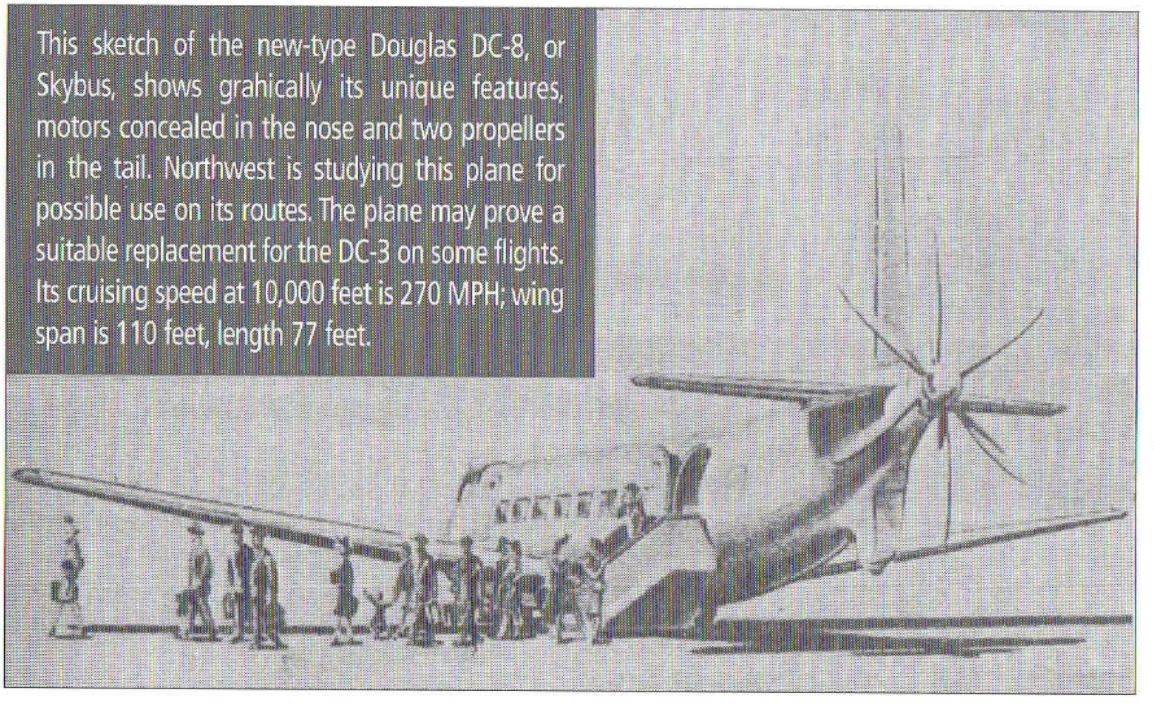
The Douglas Aircraft Company's version of a replacement of the old DC-3 in the early 1950s was the Super DC-3. This was a modified DC-3 which was faster and

had a new wing and tail. However, not many Supers were sold commercially, even though the U. S. Navy purchased a substantial number.

There are thousands of unofficial tributes to the DC-3, and scores of concrete citations, like that awarded by Secretary of the Air Force Harold E. Talbott, August 21, 1953, in Washington, D. C. Secretary Talbott said: "The soundness of his (Donald W.Douglas') technical skill is best illustrated by the DC-3 which he produced over 20 years ago and which unquestionably ranks as the best single airplane ever built."

Just how long the DC-3 will continue to f'ly is anybody's guess. If' the time ever comes when it disappears from the skies it will be missed by millions of' friends it has made the world around.

Northwest's original DC-3s cost $125,000 each. The airline's last DC-3 flight touched down at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport at 11 :28 p.m., September 27, 1958. Of the last five "3s" one was sold to Central Airlines and four to Ozark. They still had some miles left in them.



Replacement for the DC-3? It looked great on the drawing board. This photo and caption appeared on Page 1, Northwest's weekly "News Letter," November 23, 1945.

NORTHWEST'S "GLOBAL" DC-3S

In Early 1947 Two of Them Churned Their Way Across the World's Mightiest Ocean

NORTHWEST AIRLINES ONCE FLEW TWO DC-3s across the Pacific Ocean. DC-3s? Across the Pacific Ocean? That's right.

Read on.
The Civil Aeronautics Board awarded Northwest its northern "Great Circle" route to Asia in the summer of 1946, thus realizing NWA President and Board Chairman Crail Hunter's dream of a "Northwest Passage" to the Orient, sought by European explorers for centuries. Passenger service (with 32-passenger DC-4s) began in July, 1947.

The year between the award and the first passenger flight was a momentous one for Northwest Airlines-for the first time competing on the world stage and challenging the dominance of the then mighty and now defunct Pan American World Airways in the vast Pacific region.

Facilities had to be negotiated and made operational in Tokyo, Seoul, Shanghai, Manila and elsewhere. Sales organizations had to be set up and other personnel matters attended to. Schedules had to be worked out. And most importantly, Northwest officials had to establish relations with the movers and shakers of Southeast Asia, which they did in a very adept manner.

Operationally, there was another vital fact to consider-that of familiarizing Northwest personnel with the major airports of the region in a "hands on" mode. And that's where the DC-3s came in. Northwest designated two of its 23 DC-3s, which it had been flying since 1939, to case Southeast Asia's major airports.

Northwest's first Orient-bound DC-3, NC-33325, Ship 325, left Minneapolis-St. Paul April 6, 1947. Commanding were Captains Don King, recently named Orient Region vice president, and Ralph Nelson, the airline's Orient Region

director of flying. The four-man crew included Frank Haas, Orient Region supervisor of navigation and Stanley Carlson, flight radio operator.

A second DC-3 followed Ship 325 a short time later. Its crew consisted of Captains Chet Eklund and Charlie Ryan, Navigator Gerald Valeske and Radio Operator Virgil Schaffer. Both went via Seattle- Tacoma, Anchorage, Shemya Island in the Aleutians and Chitose, Japan. In both cases the planes were stripped down to the barest necessities. The 21 passenger seats were removed. Every non-essential item was jettisoned. Then, six 100-gallon gas drums were fastened to the main cabin floor to augment each plane's 800-gallon wing tank capacity. Large American flags were emblazoned on the fuselages. Crews carried their own food.

"The DC-3's normal range is about 1,000 miles but with 1,400 gallons of fuel, and by decreasing engine revolutions per minute and making other power and pressure adjustments, we should have a range of about 2,500 miles," King said. The longest flight segment was Shemya to Chitose, l,700 miles.

Both navigators "shot" the heavens through regular windows since the planes did not have navigator "blisters" atop their fuselages. Radio operators were provided with "special overseas equipment" with which they could maintain "worldwide radio range." The weather held and there were no incidents as each little plane, in turn, churned its way west over Alaska's forbidding terrain, across the vacant Bering Sea and above the frothy whitecaps of the world's mightiest ocean.

"These are the first DC-3s ever to fly the North Pacific Ocean, the longest overwater hop and one of the most spectacular feats ever performed by this type of airplane," bragged Northwest's employee publication, "Passages."
The publication assured readers, however, "These flights are in no sense a stunt. Rather, the DC-3 is the best plane for the purpose of surveying major airports in the Orient."

According to "Passages," stops were scheduled, in addition to regular NWA stations, at lwo Jima and Okinawa; at Misawa, Kanaya, Fukouka, Nagoya and Osaka, Japan; Taipei, Formosa; Pusan and Seoul, Korea; Nanking, Ching-tao, Amboy and other airports in China and various airports in the Republic of the Philippines. It was critical for Northwest's pilots to be familiar with them. The

Northwest Airlines History Centre, however, has no records that indicate how many of these stops actually were made. The two old DC-3s went on to serve Northwest's initial Orient efforts very well. Their seats were subsequently delivered to Tokyo on two DC-4s.

The Copilot

I am the copilot. I sit on the right.
It's up to me to be quick and bright;
I never talk back for I have regrets,
But I have to remember what the Captain forgets.

I make out the Flight Plan and study the weather,
Pull up the gear, stand by to feather;
Make out the mail forms and do the reporting,
And fly the old crate while the Captain is courting.

I take the readings, adjust the power,
Put on the heaters when we're in a shower;
Tell him where we are on the darkest night,
And do all the bookwork without any light.

I call for my Captain and buy him cokes;
I always laugh at his corny jokes,
And once in awhile when his landings are rusty
I always come through with, "By gosh it's gusty!"

All in all I'm a general stooge,
As I sit on the right of the man I call "Scrooge";
I guess you think that is past understanding,
But maybe some day he will give me a landing.

— Keith Murray

The Coming Boeing Bailout?

Matt Stoller Jul 3, 2019

Hi,

Welcome to Big, a newsletter about the politics of monopoly. If you like it, you can sign up here. Today I'll discuss how a merger in the 1990s ruined Boeing, and why the government will have to step in to save the company.

Let's start by admiring the company that was Boeing, so we can know what has been lost. As one journalist put it in 2000, "Boeing has always been less a business than an association of engineers devoted to building amazing flying machines."

For the bulk of the 20th century, Boeing made miracles. Its engineers designed the B-52 in a weekend, bet the company on the 707, and built the 747 despite deep observer skepticism. The 737 started coming off the assembly line in 1967, and it was such a good design it was still the company's top moneymaker thirty years later.

How did Boeing make miracles in civilian aircraft? In short, the civilian engineers were in charge. And it fell apart because the company, due to a merger, killed its engineering-first culture.

What Happened?

In 1993, Clinton's Deputy Secretary of Defense, Bill Perry, called defense contractor CEOs to a dinner, nicknamed "the last supper." He told them to merge with each other so as, in the classic excuse used by monopolists, to find efficiencies in their businesses. The rationale was that post-Cold War era military spending reductions demanded a leaner defense base. In reality, Perry had been a long-time mergers and acquisitions investment banker working with industry ally Norm Augustine, the eventual CEO of Lockheed Martin.

Perry was so aggressive about encouraging mergers that he put together an accounting scheme to have the Pentagon itself pay merger costs, which resulted in a bevy of consolidation among contractors and subcontractors. In 1997, Boeing, with both a commercial and military division, ended up buying McDonnell Douglas, a major aerospace company and competitor. With this purchase, the airline market radically consolidated.

Unlike Boeing, McDonnell Douglas was run by financiers rather than engineers. And though Boeing was the buyer, McDonnell Douglas executives somehow took power in what analysts started calling a "reverse takeover." The joke in Seattle was, "McDonnell Douglas bought Boeing with Boeing's money."

The merger sparked a war between the engineers and the bean-counters; as one analyst put it, "Some of the board of directors would rather have spent money on a walk-in humidor for shareholders than on a new plane." The white collar engineers responded to the aggressive cost-cutting and politically motivated design choices with the unthinkable, affiliating with the AFL-CIO and going on strike for the first time in the company's 56-year history. "We weren't fighting against Boeing," said the union leader. "We were fighting to save Boeing."

The key corporate protection that had protected Boeing engineering culture was a wall inside the company between the civilian division and military divisions. This wall was designed to prevent the military procurement process from corrupting civilian aviation. As aerospace engineers Pierre Sprey and Chuck Spinney noted, military procurement and engineering created a corrupt design process, with unnecessary complexity, poor safety standards, "wishful thinking projections" on performance, and so forth. Military contractors subcontract based on political concerns, not engineering ones. If contractors need to influence

a Senator from Montana, they will place production of a component in Montana, even if no one in the state can do the work.

Bad procurement is one reason (aside from more and more high-ranking military officials going into defense contracting work) why military products are often poor quality or deficient. For instance, the incredibly expensive joint strike fighter F-35 is a mess, and the Navy's most expensive aircraft carrier, costing $13 billion, was recently delivered without critical elevators to lift bombs into fighter jets. Much of this dynamic exists because of a lack of competition in contracting for major systems, a practice enhanced by the consolidation Perry pushed in the early 1990s. Monopolies don't have to produce good quality products, and often don't.

At any rate, when McDonnell Douglas took over Boeing, the military procurement guys took over aerospace production and design. The company began a radical outsourcing campaign, done for political purposes. In defense production, subcontractors were chosen to influence specific Senators and Congressmen; in civilian production, Boeing started moving production to different countries in return for airline purchases from the national airlines.

Engineers immediately recognized this offshoring as a disaster in the making. In 2001, a senior Boeing engineer named L. Hart Smith published a paper criticizing the business strategy behind offshoring production, noting that vital engineering tasks were being done in ways that seemed less costly but would end up destroying the company. He was quickly proved right.

The first disaster was Boeing's 787 Dreamliner, a test case in how to attempt to cut costs and end up driving up expenses. The company went over budget by something like $12-18 billion. As Sprey and Spinney put it, "You don't have to be wearing a deer-stalker hat to deduce that the rotten practices bred by DoD procurement have finally infected the executive suite of Boeing's commercial division." Aside from the offshoring of key capacity, the 787 had significant engineering problems, including electrical systems that caused battery fires on the planes.

In 2005, Boeing hired its first ever CEO without an aviation engineering background, bringing in James McNerney, who got his training in brand management at Proctor & Gamble, then McKinsey, and then spent two decades at General Electric learning from Jack Welch how to erode industrial capacity in

favor of shareholders. He brought these lessons to Boeing, and hurriedly launched a 737 version with new engines, the 737 Max, to compete with a more fuel-efficient Airbus model.

The key decision was, rather than fix the fundamental aerodynamic control problems caused by the new engine, to bandaid the existing 737 software, while pretending that flying the 737 Max was just like flying old ones. That way, airlines would be able to buy the plane and not have to retrain their pilots, as pilots must be re-certified any changed flight procedures but don't have to be recertified for new models with unchanged flying qualities. Unfortunately, the aerodynamics of the 737 body didn't fit with the Max's bulkier engine, which was obvious during the first wind tunnel tests.

The testing in 2012, with air flow approaching the speed of sound, allowed engineers to analyze how the airplane's aerodynamics would handle a range of extreme maneuvers. When the data came back, according to an engineer involved in the testing, it was clear there was an issue to address.

The old Boeing would have redesigned the plane's control surfaces to fix the faulty aerodynamics, but the McDonnell Douglas influenced Boeing new one tried to patch the problem with software. And it was bad software, some of written by outsourced engineers in India paid $9/dollar an hour. The Federal Aviation Administration, having outsourced much of its own regulatory capacity to Boeing, didn't know what was going on, and Boeing didn't tell airlines and pilots about the new and crucial safety procedures.

This disregard for engineering integrity and safety had come from the Wall Street driven financialization of the 1990s, through General Electric's McNerney, but also from military procurement culture. Current CEO Dennis Muilenburg, for instance, has presided over a series of problematic projects in the defense division, from the X-32, the losing entry in the F-35 joint strike fighter contract, to the long-troubled Airborne Laser system. Muilenburg has handled the 737 Max problem the way a defense official would, through public relations and political channels rather than the way a civilian engineer would, which would be through an aggressively honest review of engineering choices.

The net effect of the merger, and the follow-on managerial and financial choices, is that America significantly damaged its aerospace industry. Where there were two competitors - McDonnell Douglas and Boeing, now there is one. And that

domestic monopoly can no longer develop good civilian aerospace products. Hundreds of people are dead, and tens of billions of dollars wasted.

Boeing now has a rocky situation ahead of it. Buyers in the international market have little trust in the current leadership of the company, and it will face significant liability from victim families and from airlines who bought the jet, as well as mass cancelations of orders. There is a criminal investigation into the company, as there should be. This is likely to have significant and severe financial consequences.

The right policy path would be Congressional hearings to explore what happened to this once fine company, followed by a break-up of the company into a civilian and military division, or if possible, find a way to create multiple competitors out of this fiasco. Muilenburg should be fired, his compensation clawed back, and the Department of Justice should clean house and indict every relevant executive who empowered what looks like fraud at the core of the 737 Max fiasco. Congress should expand the FAA inspectors so they can once again do their job. With a new leadership team in place, Boeing could fix the 737 Max and begin planning great aircraft again.

In other words, we should put safety conscious civilian engineers back in charge of both building planes and regulating them. Otherwise, planes fall out of the sky.

Thanks for reading, and if you enjoy this newsletter, please share it on social media, forward it to your friends, or just sign up here.

cheers,

Matt Stoller

Once upon a time……Stories from the Old timers

You have to read this....Only upper Midwest pilots can get away with this event!....Art Daniels

Sixty years later, pilot's account of Minneapolis Lakers' plane crash in Iowa cornfield lives on…….Among the fans at Saturday's Timberwolves-Raptors game was 96-year-old Harold Gifford. Sixty years ago, he and two fellow pilots, flying a plane carrying the Minneapolis Lakers, narrowly averted a disaster battling a raging blizzard.

By Jerry Zgoda Star Tribune
Carroll Daily Times Herald

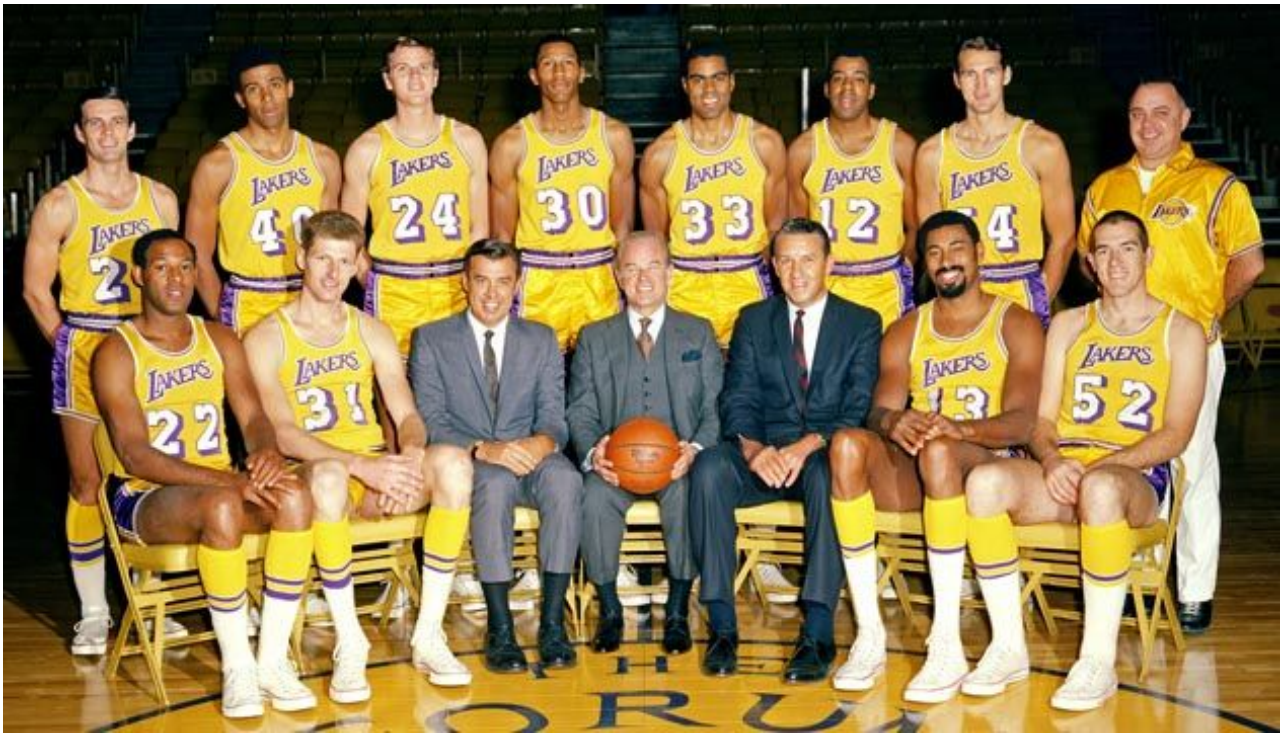
Editor's note: Harold Gifford landed the Lakers' plane in a cornfield near Carroll, Iowa, where Raptors coach Nick Nurse is from. The two of them spent time talking at the game on Saturday at Target Center. Gifford was the subject of this story by staff writer Jerry Zgoda, published in the Star Tribune on Jan. 18, 2010.

He awoke Sunday morning at his Woodbury home, collected his overnight bag and then, as all flyers habitually do, checked the weather forecast. Then Harold Gifford, 86, once again charted his course and set out for little Carroll, Iowa, 50 years since he last visited.

This time, it's his intended destination. This time, he expects to arrive Monday, welcomed in splendid sunshine. "This time, I'm going by car," he said.

Fifty years ago, Gifford copiloted an ancient chartered aircraft carrying home the Minneapolis Lakers basketball team in a storm from a game in St. Louis.

Until that night, that Lakers team considered itself anything but a winner.



Six seasons after legendary big man George Mikan led the franchise to the last of four NBA titles, these Lakers were on their way to a 25-50 regular season. They also were on their way out of town, bound with young star Elgin Baylor for a franchise move to lovely Los Angeles that very next summer.

That day began like so many others — with a loss, to the St. Louis Hawks — and ended with a night unlike any other for 22 people aboard. Blinded by an electrical failure and a raging blizzard, their chartered plane flew high, frozen and by the stars and the moon for nearly five hours before it made a forced, off-course, fabulous landing into an Iowa cornfield.

Cornfields were apparently very dangerous places back then. Eleven months earlier, musician Buddy Holly had died when his small plane crashed into a cornfield 100 miles to the northeast. The Lakers walked away from their plane unscratched on a night when their unexpected arrival was met by hatchet-carrying firemen and the town's mortician.

“Fifty years later,” said Hot Rod Hundley, who lived on that night to broadcast NBA games for more than 40 years, “and I could tell you now where everybody was seated on that plane.”

An Approaching Storm

Hundley was a 25-year-old guard from West Virginia on a Lakers team that was battling Cincinnati for last place the Sunday afternoon it faced two-time league MVP Bob Pettit and the mighty Hawks before some 7,000 boisterous fans at Kiel Auditorium.

They lost 135-119, their fourth consecutive defeat. Nine of the team’s 10 players — rookie forward Rudy LaRusso was back in Minnesota, too ill to travel — showered, dressed and squeezed themselves into three taxis for the ride to the airport as night fell.

Sleet fell as well as the storm approached.

Nineteen members of the Lakers’ traveling party — including wives, sons and a daughter of team personnel — gathered at an airport gate to hear interim coach Jim Pollard, a forward on the franchise’s championship teams, announce the flight would be delayed while the flight’s three pilots considered the forecasts and discussed whether the weather was fit for flying.

“Gate 13,” center Jim Krebs wrote in a 1969 Sports Illustrated account of that night. “When you lose as often as we did, you get over being superstitious.”

The team traveled in a 1930s DC-3 — a two-propeller plane with the speed and range that had revolutionized air travel nearly three decades earlier — purchased by cost-conscious owner Bob Short. Outdated for commercial air travel, it belched smoke from its exhaust and had recently had a generator repaired and approved.

Krebs, a 24-year-old former SMU star who'd had a premonition he would not live to see his 34th birthday, told teammates they shouldn't fly that night. Delayed more than two hours, the plane finally lifted off about 8:30, headed for home.

Players pulled out a card table made by Pollard's wife and prepared for a game of hearts as the plane climbed out of St. Louis. Soon, the cabin lights flickered, dimmed, then went dark.

"I don't even think we got the cards shuffled," guard Dick Garmaker said the other day from his Tulsa, Okla., home.

The lights died. The heat went out. So, too, did the plane's instruments: radio, fuel gauge, even a compass eventually, everything but a vacuum-driven artificial horizon indicator.

Then they ran out of hot coffee.

Flying on

Flying blind, the pilots considered it too dangerous to return to the busy St. Louis airport. Anticipating clearer weather to the north, they set aim for Minneapolis and climbed above the clouds, fixing the North Star in their windscreen as their navigational guide.

The storm intensified. The clouds billowed. The non-pressurized plane climbed to 17,000 feet — far beyond the normal 10,000-foot air lanes to avoid the bad weather and other planes.

The temperature inside the cabin plummeted well below freezing. The plane's floor and windows grew thick with frost. The only lights visible were the glow of cigarettes and a flashlight Gifford shined in the cockpit.

The passengers cloaked themselves with blankets, overcoats, newspapers in an unsuccessful attempt to stay warm. A few became ill because of turbulence and altitude, but all remained outwardly calm, if only because of the women and children aboard, as the plane rattled along.

"The hard part was being up there so long, knowing we were in serious trouble," said guard Bobby [Slick] Leonard, who still broadcasts Indiana Pacers games. "Hot Rod was huddled in a seat, scared to death. I remember him asking, 'Slick, you think we're going to die?' And I said, 'Hell, no. But if we do, we sure got a smell of the roses.' "

Through clouds puffed like cotton candy, the pilots saw a glow they assumed was Des Moines. At one point, Baylor collected his coat for a cushion, went to the plane's rear and lay down, telling teammates that if he was going to go, at least he would do so comfortably.

"There was a lot of praying and bargaining with God going on," Baylor remembers now.

Oh! Carroll

Concerned about accumulating ice and diminishing fuel, the pilots brought the plane down, descending from 17,000 feet to a only few hundred. Unable to see through a frosted windshield, the pilots donned goggles and stuck their faces out a small weather window, freezing their ears and cheeks.

After midnight, they located a highway and followed it, hoping to find a town and an airport. Turns out, that town was Carroll, a farming community of about 7,000 people 75 miles northwest of Des Moines.

They made a pass by the town's water tower, hoping to learn where they were. All they could see were the two "L's" — Gifford now quips he thought it was hell — and graffiti left by the 1959 senior class.

They circled searching for an airport and then followed the highway north out of town, nearly hitting a grove of trees when they flew straight and Hwy. 71 turned hard left.

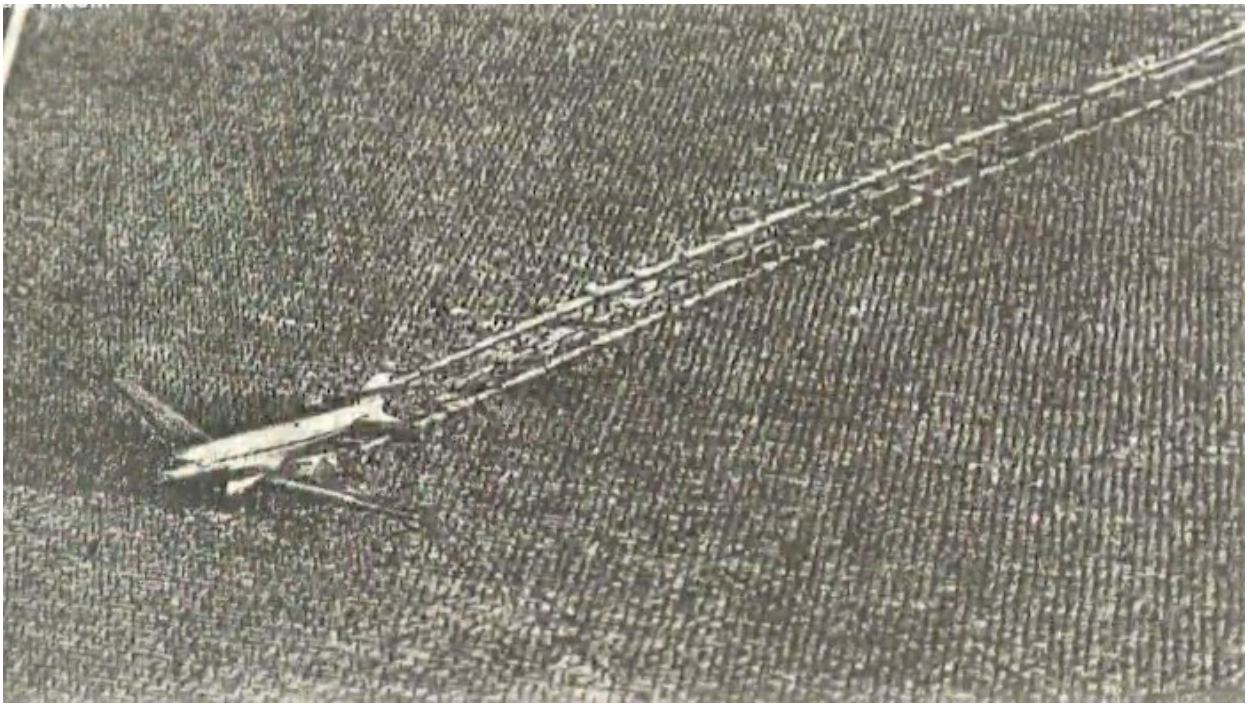
“I thought for sure we were going to hit the mountain,” said Garmaker, a Florida land developer who retired to Oklahoma two decades ago.

The pilots decided to follow the highway south back to Carroll, where the little town’s lights shone from residents awakened at 1 a.m. by the engines’ roar. A young shoe salesman threw a jacket over his pajamas, grabbed his galoshes and told his wife he wasn’t sure where he was headed in that blizzard, but he knew people were in trouble, somewhere.

After nixing the highway and a lake, the pilots chose a cornfield —unplowed during a wet autumn — because the standing stalks gave them visual reference and, having grown up on farms themselves, they knew it’d be free of rocks and ditches.

“If we hadn’t found that cornfield, we’d have found our destiny out there,” Gifford said.

The stalks and the accumulating snow provided cushion. The plane landed about 1:30 a.m. on Jan. 18, 1960, and plowed to an astonishingly quick stop. Baylor the next day called it the “smoothest” landing you could imagine, but Hundley now compares the dissipation of energy to dropping a basketball and letting it bounce until it stops.



Garmaker remembers Hundley breaking the deadly silence by shouting, “I live to love again!” when everyone realized they were still alive.

“You would have thought we won the world championship,” Hundley said.

Passengers joyously tumbled out into the snow, and players threw snowballs at each other and the pilots while they were led by Carroll residents a few hundred yards through the deep snow to waiting cars.

Pollard rode in the mortician’s vehicle. He said before his death in 1993 that he didn’t start shaking that night until he saw a stretcher in the back and realized he was in a hearse.

Whether fact or fiction, the undertaker purportedly said that night, “Thought I had some business tonight, boys.”

Passengers were shuttled to a nearby motor inn, where they warmed themselves with a roaring fire, coffee, whiskey and their good fortune. One by one, players telephoned home, informing worried wives about their presence in an Iowa cornfield.

One wife reportedly told her spouse to call back when he was sober. Krebs later quoted his wife, Jane, as saying this: Where have you been? What? Carol who?

"Everything was back to normal," wrote Krebs, who died at age 29 when he was struck by a falling tree while trying to remove it from a neighbor's yard. "God had answered our prayers. We had broken our losing streak."

Then ... and now

Players rode a bus home to Minneapolis the next day. They drove past the cornfield, the plane still there, gleaming in the sun, as they left town. A few days later, town residents watched as a bulldozer cleared a path and pilot Vern Ullman flew the plane away, stating he had put it there and would take it out.

Players contributed $50 each as a token of appreciation for the pilots. Soon thereafter at a home game, Short presented the pilots with a plaque wishing for eternal safe landings. The players rode that same plane on trips later that season.

"We know the officials are against us in the NBA, and the fans haven't been with us in attendance," Short said later the day the plane landed safely. "But now we know the Lord is trying to save us from dying."

The good people of Carroll this evening will remember that flight's 50th anniversary with a ceremony. A marker will be placed in the town's Veterans Memorial Park less than 100 yards from where the plane stopped.

Gifford climbed atop his family's Comfrey, Minn., barn when he was a boy to follow the flight of this newfangled thing called a plane. A military and corporate pilot for 50 years, he plans to charter a plane to fly over the site where he helped avoid this aviation truism: "If you run out of airspeed, altitude and ideas simultaneously, you've got a problem," he said.

Leonard, Baylor and Garmaker all said they would have liked to attend, if not for other commitments or health problems. You maybe could have convinced Hundley, too, if West Virginia wasn't retiring his college uniform number.

"I don't want to go back there," he said from his home in Phoenix. "I can understand the celebration. ... I went back to Iowa once for a golf tournament, but that was summer, though. The weather was perfect.

I know all about the winter weather in Iowa. No, thank you."

Jerry Zgoda covers Minnesota United FC and Major League Soccer for the Star Tribune.
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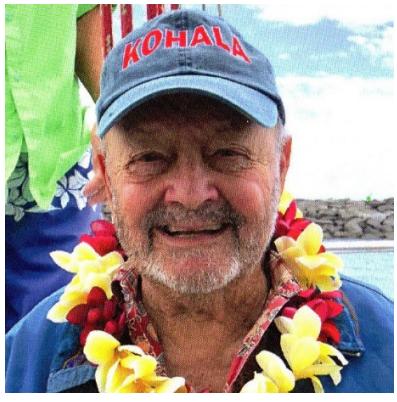
Pilot Humor

"Say ... what's a mountain goat doing way up here in a cloud bank?"

"I'll put this device into flight mode when you put this plane into flight mode."



SECOND LT.TINKER, USMC

LADDIES IN WAITING

After graduating from Edna High School in 1951, I tried to get my father to let me attend the E. R. Cross School of Diving in Los Angeles. My dad said no, that l needed to get a college degree first, and after that he didn't care what I did. So' I entered Victoria Jr. College, in Victoria, TX, and at the end of my second year I got a draft notice, which changed my life's track! I earned a high grade on the written test and the recruiter talked me into going to the Navy flight school in Pensacola, FL.

Flight school was a blast and very exciting. OMG! The very first person 1 got into a military aircraft with was Maj John Glenn! Unfortunately, we only had a one-sided conversation. I sat in the front seat, got air sick, and listened as John (he said I could call him John - ha ha!) flew us around and pointed out the different areas and airfields I
would be working with.

I think my flight school experience was fairly average, although in basic training one of my friends had to bail out of a plane that was in an "inverted" flat spin and died when his chute failed to open. Additionally, I almost killed myself in advanced training on my first jet formation takeoff.

One of the pre-takeoff procedures in the T-33 was to turn off the hydraulic power to the ailerons, then move the controls to make sure we still had at least minimal movement. My incident happened because I forgot to turn the hydraulic power back on after the check! Fortunately, during the takeoff, I was on the right side of the flight instructor's plane and the other cadet was on his left. I say fortunately because, due to a fueling error, I had more fuel (weight) in the right wing tip tank than the left, and as we lifted off the runway, my plane went into about a 45 degree right bank and turn, which I couldn't control because the ailerons had no hydraulic power. I remember the instructor looking straight down at me with his mouth open! If I had been on the left side, there could have been at least one, if not two, mid-air collisions as I flew through the other two planes, leaving three pilots dead. I would have made history!

Headline: Tinker Causes Worst Crash in Naval Aviation History

Didn't happen, thank God. Hell, *I* didn't even kill myself. *1* kicked in full left rudder and all the left aileron available. Pilots on the runway behind me said my right wing tip was only a foot off the ground. As the airspeed increased, aileron control also increased, so the plane gradually became wings-level. Now, I was able to get a free hand to turn the hydraulic power lever back on and rejoin my flight. It was the only "below average" score I got in flight school, and I was glad to be around to get it!

Carrier Landings

In the mid 1950s, when I went through flight school, it was still required that all Naval aviators, including those of us that had decided to accept a commission in the Marine Corps, got at least six landings on an aircraft carrier. (Did you know that Marines are actually part of the Navy?) With only about 150 hours in my log book, five other cadets and I walked on board the aircraft carrier USS Monterey to acquire our requisite landings. It wasn't going to be easy!

The way it worked was that six of us would go to sea on the ship then six other cadets would fly out and make their landings. Then my group would man those airplanes, make our six landings and fly back to Pensacola. It didn't work that smoothly though. After my group of six had our pre-flight briefing, we all went topside to watch the six cadets coming from shore make their landings. It was a pretty interesting show as the first plane trying to land was waved off by the LSO (Landing Signal Officer),

and the second plane spun in and crashed in the ocean. He evidently survived, but we were all pretty much in shock. Holy shit! Looked like we were going to be one airplane short.

FORMATION APPROACH TO SFO

We have been cleared for a visual approach to San Francisco's Runway 1 behind a TWA 707, which is about three miles ahead of us. The procedure only requires that we follow TWA to the airport and land behind him with safe separation. Both aircraft are to visually fly a path that keeps us over the Bay to the initial approach position for Runway 28, then make a left turn to position us for the ninety degree base leg to Runway 1.

The track we are flying will put us over the heavily populated townships on the peninsula, just to the west of the Bayshore Freeway, a seldom used approach to SFO Airport, only required when the winds blow strongly from the north. It is a gorgeous, clear, dark night in the Bay Area. We are slightly higher than TWA so their lights are blending into those on the ground; only the red flashing beacon is a visible identity of their aircraft. We see them cross over the outer marker for Runway 28 then start a left turn, which will position them for the right base leg to Runway l. We are flying a twin engine, high wing, slow moving, 40-passenger F-27, so Captain George flies us well past the

point where the TWA 707 made their left turn before we make ours. We start into the landing checklist with gear down, flaps approach setting, passengers seated, etc. We're both involved with required tasks other than just flying as we position ourselves for the final landing phase of the flight. Heads up now, my vision, both peripheral and focused, takes in our part of the Bay Area, and I see that something is missing. TWA! "Hey, George, where is that TWA we're supposed to be following?" He goes, "Shit!" adds power and starts to level off. (We had been rapidly descending.) About that instant, the TWA fly's directly beneath us! We are so directly on top of him I can see lights from the passenger windows on both sides of the 707. Being that they were only about 30 knots faster than us, it took more than just an instant for them to get gone! It was like being in a subway station and watching a bypass train go through. We even had time to hope that the tail didn't clip us as it passed under. It was that close!

We would have been almost totally at fault because our instructions were to "follow TWA" but I can't imagine that he didn't see our beacon in front of him. Of course, he wasn't expecting us, was he?

YOU *CAN* TEACH AN OLD DOG NEW TRICKS

When Northwest retired the Boeing 727, the staff at Retired Northwest Pilot's Association (RNPA) asked for 727 stories. I didn't think I had anything to offer because I only flew it for a year as a First Officer but have now decided that it might be interesting to write about the introduction of the aircraft to Pacific Airlines. Pacific got three 727-l00s in 1966. None of the initial Captains had ever flown pure jet equipment but, boy, did they learn fast!

Our most challenging route was a twelve-landing day that started in SFO and went to LAX with stops in Monterey (MRY) and Santa Barbara (SBA). We made two complete round trips a day. At the time, there was no speed restriction below 10,000 feet, so we would accelerate to 340 knots as soon as we got out of the airport restricted area. The only place we ever leveled off was between Monterey and Santa Barbara, where we got a five-minute cruise break. When we started down, we were already at VMO (maximum airspeed at which the aircraft is certified to operate) of 390 knots, and we kept that speed until we approached the airport or initial approach fix.

We had no altitude reminders (pilots made their own) and no proximity warning. The MRY Runway 28 had a one and a half degree down slope and was just over 4,500 feet long with a 200-foot drop at the end. But we soon learned that the 727 was much more aerodynamically precise than the

Fairchild F-27 we bad been flying. Circling approaches were a piece of cake (we could do that then,) plus, when you wanted to stop, you had great braking, even from the nose wheel. Reverse thrust was variable so you could pull in as much as you needed (the F-27 props just went to flat pitch, and even terror wouldn't increase their effect.)

We were always pretty light, even with a full passenger load, because we didn't have much fuel on board, so the landing speeds were sloooow. We flew the approach at 115 knots and touched down at 110. Turn off at center intersection, after just about 2,000 feet, without abusing the brakes. (Honest.) Finally, the tower folks told us we had to go to go to the next intersection before turning off. We did that until one day, we stuck the static wicks on the right wing tip through the rudder of a light twin that was parked near that turn-off.

SBA had a 5,000-foot runway , and further north, Arcata , which was reputed to be the foggiest airport in the U.S., had 5,900 feet with a 200-foot drop off on both ends. Plus, with weather, there was always a 10-knot tailwind on Arcata 's runway. My first landing with braking action nill ' was at Yakima , WA, with less than 7,000 feet of runway. (You could do that then also.)

The only incident that I can remember in the several years of this operation was caused by the fact that Boeing's checklist kept the anti-skid switch on after landing, and a stray signal released the brakes one morning, just as one of our planes was pulling up to the jetway in SFO (ask Jimmy Douglas and Pete Peterson.) Moving at about five knots, that little airplane destroyed the jetway, plus that part of the terminal and was back flying in about three months. The aircraft, not the jetway.

INTERESTING DAY AT THE OFFICE

The DC-10 that we are flying is a tight fit for the Honolulu- Sydney (HNL-SYD) route, meaning that when we lift off the HNL runway and head south, we are usually at maximum weight of 600,000 pounds: full passenger load of 290 and full fuel tanks, enough to get us to our destination, but no further. On this particular trip, we end up in a holding pattern at 0645 in the morning because Sydney won't allow approaches over the city until 0700 (don' t want to wake those Aussies up too early), and we are almost out of fuel.

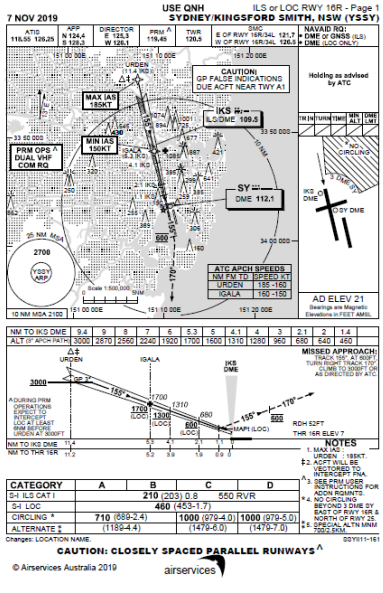
With only 17,0000 pounds in our tanks, having used over 215,000 pounds during the ten- hour trips south , our engines will quit in about forty minutes, and the closest alternate , either Cairns or Melbourne, is over an hour away.

I am chatting with the check Captain (yes, the last check ride of my career--that may sound ominous!) about our predicament, low fuel, no alternate airport, etc., and he acknowledged, then mentioned that he didn't think it was a big deal because the weather report indicated we should break out of the clouds at 1,500 feet, which was what I expected given the current weather report.

Finally, we're given a vector heading to intercept the localizer and then"cleared for the approach." We stay at 3,000 feet until the glide slope indicator starts to guide us down to the runway. Even though the prescribed procedure was to let the autopilot fly the approach, I decide to turn it off and "hand fly" the airplane. This is a mistake because the weather had a surprise for us. The normal procedure was to use the autopilot to fly the plane because it is much more precise then we humans, and being low on fuel, we *have* to land, but the weather report indicated that there was a high ceiling at the airport and I went with it.
We enter the cloud tops at about 2,500 feet and descend into darkness. The lower we go, the worse the weather is. At 1,500 feet, where we are

supposed to break out of the clouds, the rain is so loud we have a hard time communicating with each other. At this point I'm wondering if I can get the autopilot hooked back up. Through 1,000 feet, then 700, and things are not getting any better. At 500 feet and still in thick rain and clouds, I decide that we could not miss this approach. We don't have enough fuel to try again, and even if we did, there was nowhere else to go, so we're committed to continue down until the wheels touch the ground, whether I can see it or not! At 300 feet we break out of the clouds to a very windy and wet runway. We land with about an inch and a half of water on the ground, and with a slight tailwind, so we use all the runway on our landing roll, then taxied to the terminal, shutting down with just a little over 10,000 pounds of fuel. We left Hawaii with 230,000 pounds!

I flew the HNL-SYD trip about twenty-seven times and that is the only one that required that we fly an instrument approach.



Flyboy Olympics: What Military Pilots Do In the Bar Besides Drink

By Jon Goldenbaum, QB# 35223, RIV

In my twenty years as an Air Force fighter pilot, my best memories come from events that happened in the cockpit followed closely by the shenanigans in the bar. The bar is essential to military aviators; it is the place to unwind, review flights, laugh at mistakes, settle beefs, and teach young pilots how to get along in the world's most competitive culture. Recent political correctness has forced the most spirited bar activities to go underground but they will never die; Military pilots are a special breed and their aggressive personalities are on the other pole of PC. I had the good fortune to play in fighter bars all over Europe, the Pacific and in Viet Nam. Thus, I rubbed shoulders with the finest from our Air Force, Navy, and Marines as well as great personalities from the Royal Air Force, the German Luftwaffe, Canadian Forces as well as Italian and French pilots.

What follows are my recollections of the best of the games we played in the bar.

Songs: Military aviation bar songs have been around since WWI. The point is not the quality of the singing but the camaraderie gained by belting out songs guaranteed to shock the listener. Bar songs are always sarcastic, irreverent, and ridiculously ribald. They break out only after the artists are well lubricated, usually delivered at the top of the lungs by young singers with no talent at all for music. However, there have been some really great harmonic groups like the famous Alconbury Boys Chorus, USAF F-5E Aggressor pilots stationed in England in the '80s.

Many of these songs are very, very old, passed down in squadrons from generation to generation. For instance, many front-line jet fighter squadrons today still sing the World War 1 ditty "A poor aviator lay dying" with verses like: "Take the pistons out of my kidneys, the crankshaft out of my brain, the spark plugs out of my liver, and assemble the engine again."

You can bet that ex- fighter pilots in their senior years may have forgotten what they had for breakfast but will remember every word of "Mary Ann Burns," "Lupe" or "I Love My Wife." Viet Nam veteran fighter pilots can still sing "Dear Mom Your Son is Dead" ," You're Going Home In a Body Bag'" or anything written by F-4 jock Dick Jonas. Consistently, the best of all bar singers are Royal Air Force pilots who delight in singing Nazi marching songs whenever they share a NATO bar with modern German Luftwaffe pilots. Here are some sample lyrics that the RAF love to sing to the Luftwaffe: "The flag flies high on the masthead, we'll fight for the glory of the Reich. "So tonight we march against England, England, England's island shores, island shores, Seig Heil!"

Dice games: Dice cups with at least three sets of dice are mandatory in flyers bars. They are used to compete for drinks in a variety of games which, if not mastered by newbies, can cost them a lot of beer. "Horses," "4, 5, 6," and "Trips Out" are a few classics. Best of all are the huge games where 30 or 40 aviators will pass the dice cup, the loser buying an expensive round for all. This led to the most popular saying "You can't lose in a big game" to encourage players to join the game. Over the years, this saying was reused in many other circumstances, for instance often, the last thing pilots would say to each other before walking to their aircraft for a particularly perilous mass mission was "Hey, you can't lose in a big game".

Bat Hanging: This little game was specific to the bar at Laughlin AFB, the pilot training base in Texas where I learned to fly. The Officer's Club was designed in the 1960s with cheesy popcorn-covered recessed ceilings. These recessed areas had 30 foot long ledges in the ceiling, long enough to hold many "bats." The idea was to have your cohorts turn you upside down and lift you high enough to allow you to catch the toes of your flying boots on the recessed ledge. They would then let you go to see if you could hang. Really talented bat hangars could actually hang for minutes while holding a beer mug and drinking upside down, forcing the beer up their throats. Of course there were a few losses when the ledge gave way, or the participant's toes slipped, all adding to the merriment.

Crud: This game originated with the Canadian Air Force (Canadian Forces) at CFB Cold Lake, Alberta. For years, Cold Lake has been the home to Maple Flag, a NATO aerial exercise attended by North American and European forces; this international exposure spread the game among the flying squadrons of the Western World. Crud is played by two competing teams on a billiards table, squadron teams chosen for their skills at the game. No cue sticks are used, the object is for rotating shooters to throw the "shooter" cue ball to hit a striped "target ball," hopefully knocking it into a corner pocket. The shooter ball must never come to rest which leads to frantic running, blocking, checking, and other full body contact mayhem between

shooters and defenders. Hopefully after a spirited game, participants walk away with only bruises and minor contusions, nothing more serious. Being an ex-member of the 71st Tac Fighter (F-15) all-star Crud team, I still start limping whenever I see a pool table. In recent years, some organizations have banned the game since aircrew losses from Crud can rival those in actual combat.

Dead Bug: Usually played in the bar but can be effectively used in other venues. This is a simple game in which someone yells "Dead Bug" at the top of their voice. Upon hearing this, all in the bar will dive to the floor, roll on their backs, and wave their legs and arms in the air to mimic a dying insect. This must be done with dispatch because the last player to hit the floor has to buy a round for all. This is most effectively done when the bar is filled with drinkers in dress uniforms at a formal event, guaranteeing to ruin expensive dress uniforms and piss off wives and colonels. The game is less effective when the bar is filled with pilots in sweat- stained flight suits; nevertheless, still great fun if you don't break a leg diving to the floor.

Once I was in a long, boring meeting called by a pompous wing commander with mandatory attendance by all officers and their wives. The object of the meeting was to review family benefits for military families like medical care, insurance, etc., a most boring event for young fighter pilots. A collection of civilian "experts" were called in to brief us on these benefits, most who had little daily contact with the military and had no idea of the volatility of the crowd. After an hour of droning, one briefer asked for questions from the floor. A bored young and very spirited wife of a fighter pilot asked the following question, "I'm worried that our families could be exposed to a serious illness caused by a (screaming at the top of her voice) "DEAD BUG". All in the audience (including many wives) hit the floor.....we all paid dearly for months.

Carrier Landings: This sport derived from games played in the Cubi Point USN Officer's club bar in the Phillippines by Navy carrier pilots during the Viet Nam War. I am told that the game started simply enough using a chair with wheels, then became more sophisticated when they built a mock cockpit for the pilot to ride in. The intent was to deploy the tailhook at just the right moment, or the whole shebang wound up in the swimming pool.

In the Air Force, we had no such fancy equipment so we made do with three or four long bar tables placed end-to-end to make a carrier deck. The tables were then well watered down with beer to allow the participant a frictionless slide. To play, the "pilot" stood back about 20 feet from the table, took a running start, then belly flopped onto the slippery table with arms spread. The object was to slide down the entire length without slipping off the side or overshooting the end.

Night Carrier Landings: Same set up as above only all the lights in the room are turned off and the "pilot" allowed to hold a small flashlight in his teeth or strapped to his head for illumination. Carrier Landings and Night Carrier Landings were frowned upon by senior officer and Officer's Club managers due to the large amount of injuries to both pilots and bar furniture.

Piano Burning: Another fun activity courtesy of the Royal Air Force. The object here is to drag the Officer's Club (Mess) piano outside, douse it with lighter fluid or gasoline and set it alight. Once burning, raucous bar songs and heavy drinking proceed in the flickering fire light. Considered bad form to burn the piano in the club.

Piano Wrecking: A competitive game derived from Piano Burning. Here the object is to completely disassemble or wreck a piano using no tools, only bodies and bare hands. The resulting pieces must be small enough to pass through a one foot- by- one foot frame. This could be a pilfered picture

frame with the picture removed or sometimes special metal frames are fabricated just for the event. There are usually two competing teams, almost always a home and visiting fighter squadron. Obviously, the first team to get their piano completely through the frame wins. When squadrons visit each other for mutual flying exercises, a Piano Wrecking is often laid on and the host must provide both pianos. Procuring used pianos for the event is part of the game, pianos with metal frames are highly prized when given to your guests.

Canadian Rodeo: My personal favorite. This sport is modeled after classic rodeo bull or bronco riding. As we all have seen on TV, the intent is for the cowboy to stay on their bucking mount until a buzzer sounds after a prescribed number of seconds.

To start this game in the bar, a spirited fighter pilot announces to his companions that he intends to compete in a Canadian Rodeo, then points out his chosen mount. The mount is always an attractive young lady unaware of the events about to unfold. For best results, the young filly will be standing at the bar with a group of friends distracted by conversation and drink. The rider then creeps silently on his hands and knees to a position directly behind his intended without attracting her attention. The object is for him to clamp down on her derriere with his teeth and stay attached for five seconds. Instead of a buzzer, the rider's friends loudly count down the prescribed seconds. As you would imagine, once the rider strikes, the young lady shrieks loudly and wildly flails her fists or legs in an attempt to get free. Often she boxes the rider's ears or head with all her might, usually delivering painful blows which must be ignored by a skilled rider.

A clever bar cowboy chooses his target with care, those with loose fitting skirts or in jeans with large rear pockets are the best, both providing plenty of material to get a proper purchase with teeth, tight fitting slacks or pencil skirts provide the greatest challenge.

There are many, many other tales of the games and mayhem caused by this most unruly group. Take the time to have a drink with one and the stories will flow. Just for grins, yell DEAD BUG and see if an arthritic geezer can still hit the floor!

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