



Reflections

Dedicated to preserving the history of a great airline.

Norvolds Relive Good Times From Early Days in the Orient

by Anne Kerr

Joyce Rudquist Norvold's scrapbooks brought it all back. Pages filled with 2-1/2 x 3-1/2" black and white snapshots, each held in place by black photo-corners. NWA history came to life as we turned the pages while Joyce and her husband Chris told me their stories. It is 66 years since Joyce first donned her NWA Stewardess uniform in 1945 and 63 years since Chris became a NWA purser in 1948. They met in Tokyo at the staff house in 1951 and married in 1952. That was the end of Joyce's airline career. Chris, however, continued in his job until 1967 when he got his A&P, became a mechanic, and continued working for NWA until retirement in 1984.

We met at their home in Woodville, Wisc., an hour-plus drive east of MSP and Chris's birthplace. Joyce and her sister Jerry (one of NWA's first stewardesses) hailed from Rosy, Minn., near Blackduck. The town of Rosy disappeared long ago, but Joyce remembers living on Dixon Lake - even meeting **Charles W. 'Speed' Holman** there. She was seven years old when Speed flew up to their father Al Rudquist's island resort to do some fishing. Speed flew over the resort to alert Al to pick him up. He landed on Murphy's field, about a mile away. The day went well until time for Speed to go back to MSP. On his takeoff roll, one of his wheels hit something in the ground and his plane nosed over, breaking the propeller. Turns out there was a submerged well near the end of the field. He called MSP for a new prop and spent the night with Joyce's family. The next day the replacement prop arrived and Joyce watched Holman's successful departure. The broken propeller was retrieved by Al Rudquist and stored in his woodshed for decades until it passed to Joyce's brother, who, before he died in 2010, asked Joyce to donate it to the to the NWA History Centre.

I was happy to deliver it to the museum for the Rudquist family.

According to Joyce, this photo with these G.I.'s in Pusan, Korea (left) was taken at their request. "They were excited to have their picture taken with an American girl. Operations were a bit primitive in Pusan at this time," she says. "The ticket office was the hood of a jeep."

Home base in those days was the former summer home of Japan's Prince Tanagawa, which NWA purchased for use as the Tokyo staff house. Situated on a large campus, with several other buildings including a commissary stocked with food flown in by Northwest, the staff house was on Avenue A in Shibuya-Ku. There was a glass-enclosed solarium at the entrance, where buses would deposit and pick up crews.

"**John Arnold** was 'major domo' of the staff house," Joyce says. "His wife was private secretary to Mrs. MacArthur, wife of Gen. Douglas MacArthur, Allied Commander of the Japanese occupation." The Arnolds had an apartment upstairs.



*Joyce and Chris (Howie) Norvold
with Speed Holman's propeller*



Joyce in Pusan, Korea with G.I.'s

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Norvolds ... Continued from Page 2

Shopping in the Ginza was an important activity on layovers in Tokyo. Crews borrowed resident pilots' cars or rode the bus, returning to the staff house with their purchases and restaurant reports. "Pilots and wives stationed there would share names of Japanese restaurants where it was safe to eat," Joyce said.

Flights from MSP to Tokyo in those days were 33 hours long, with stops in Edmonton, Anchorage, and Shemya, in the Aleutian Islands. Crews needed to lay over for rest along the way, and Chris recalled the stark reality of Shemya. "The original buildings, quonset huts, were blown down by winds from the Bering Sea and were replaced with stronger structures. The sign over the door to the men's sleeping quarters said 'Home for Wayward Girls.' Food service was in the Northwest lounge. The 'food shack,' as we called it, also had ping pong tables, a pool table and a bar. Naturally," Chris says.

He recalls accommodations in Edmonton and Anchorage were far more hospitable. "We usually stayed at the Westward Hotel in Anchorage. When there were too many crews in town the overflow went to the Anchorage Hotel. The local hangout for NWA crews was The Hangar, a bar in downtown Anchorage. Alaskan **Harry Hefte** is pictured here with **Bob Whitacre**, NWA purser. We were valued customers at the bar and made friends with the locals."



Harry Hefte and Bob Whitacre, Anchorage

Joyce tells of one layover when she and Bob Whitacre went fishing in Shep Creek with a hand-made tool. "It was a rope with a three-pronged iron hook at the end of it. Crude. We stood on the shore and threw it underhand into the creek." Joyce claims to have caught a fish, and Bob took it home to his mother.

In April, 1947, **Dave Rall**, **Don Jones** and Joyce stayed with their airplane in Anchorage during Easter week, waiting for an engine change. Joyce got a call early in the morning from Dave. "It's Easter Sunday and I think we should go to church. So get your duds on and I'll pick you up in the car I won in a poker game last night." "True story," Joyce confirmed. "NWA was good to us that week. When our overnight layover stretched on and on, they wired money to keep us afloat."

Both of these pilots were later involved in accidents. Captain Don Jones was flying NWA Flight 307, a Martin 2-0-2 that crashed in Minneapolis in a 1950 snowstorm, killing all aboard and two on the ground. Dave Rall successfully ditched NWA Flight 1, a DC-7C, in the South China Sea in a storm at night in July, 1960, losing one passenger to a heart attack.

In NWA stewardess training, Joyce was a product of **Zell McConnell's** classes in deportment. "She taught that posture, carriage, and keeping oneself looking one's best are all vital. Zell demonstrated the wrong way to sit and walk and then taught us the proper way. Joyce, at 90 years, demonstrated these for me flawlessly. "Zell had a sense of humor which made the whole process an unforgettable hoot." A former Paris model, she operated the modeling school that bore her name in downtown Minneapolis.

Joyce received her wings in November, 1945. Classes then were held at the airport. Other instructors included **Jerry Rudquist** (Joyce's sister), **Rosie Stein**, **Wenzell Franzich**, **Al Baird** and **Al Hartman**.

Joyce and Chris Norvold's stories won't quit. We'll add just a couple, and then you'll have to wait for another issue of **Reflections** for more.

A turtle race in a DC-4? You bet. Joyce and her co-worker, **Dorothy Morris**, found their way into a St. Paul newspaper with this one. It seems the girls bought turtles, named Murgitroid and George, when they attended a rodeo at Madison Square Garden in NYC. Upon showing them off in the airplane on their way home, a passenger suggested a race up the aisle. The turtles covered the distance in half an hour. George won.

Chris tells about the time he served a drink to **Donald Nyrop**. Nyrop ordered a scotch and soda. When Chris brought the drink to him, Nyrop started to reach in his pocket. "No, Mr. Nyrop, it's free. The pilots are buying," Chris said. "In that case, I'll take two," Nyrop replied. ➔



Joyce receives her wings from sister Jerry and Rosie Stein.

Ed. note: Chris's real name is Howard (Howie) Norvold. Somehow, when NWA hired him, people started calling him Chris. He was too shy to correct them. So for the entire 36 years of his NWA career, he answered to Chris. He still does.

☆ Kevin Sliwinski - Gold Star Volunteer! ☆

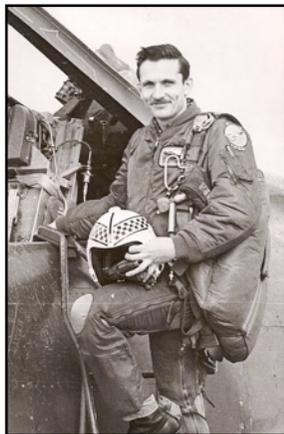
Back in the 1980s and 1990s, when Kevin Sliwinski was training newly hired Northwest Airlines pilots, he developed a class on NWA history. "I thought it was important that pilots had the feeling of who the company was, who **Don Nyrop** was. I gradually picked up some memorabilia and produced a slide show that I used for training aids," he says. "When I left the airline in October, 2001, I left it all in my desk. The NWA History Centre wasn't formed until 2003, and I had no place to put it. I had to leave, and these things were the property of Northwest Airlines," Kevin says, still wishing he could have saved them.

Kevin's career with Northwest began when he was hired by **Ray Alexander** in 1986 as Lead 727 Ground Training Instructor and New Hire trainer. "We were on the third floor of the Flight Service building (F) on 34th Ave. sharing space with flight attendant training." Subsequently, Kevin was in the first group of personnel transferred to NATCO (Northwest Airlines Training Corporation). "It was initially going to be in North Dakota, a joint effort between NWA, the state of North Dakota and the University of North Dakota. Things changed, and it was built on property NWA already owned in Eagan. It was a state of the art training facility. Ray Alexander, was the primary designer of the building. He had fabulous ideas. Buildings A and F are now closed, but the NATCO building lives on."

In the early 1990s Kevin was Manager of Air Crew Training in Miami, Eagan and Toulouse, France. "My instructors went to Miami and France, until simulators were installed at Eagan. In the mid-1990s NWA decided to phase out NATCO and bring instructors back to NWA. "I went back as Manager of Air Crew Training, A320, working for **Noel Duncan**, Fleet Captain. **Jeff Carlson**, who later became V.P. of Flight Operations, was Flight Training Manager. We trained NWA pilots on the Airbus."

Kevin's next stint was Manager of Pilot Standards under **Chuck Hanebuth**, a line pilot and Director of Pilot Standards. "All of the Line Check Pilots worked for Chuck. I did data collection and analysis for Flight Operations. After a few years I became a manager in I.T. for pilot applications. Working for me were all programmers and program analysts for pilots, with the exception of the IBM main frame. After Sept. 11, 2001 we were grounded. NWA and all other airlines were losing money. Most of the programming I was working on was suspended. I was laid off, then retired at the end of October, 2001."

It was his *second* retirement; the first was from the United States Air Force in 1980.



F-100 Training - Canon A.F.B.

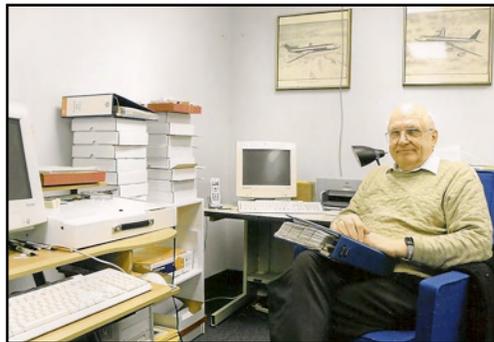
A Chicago native, Kevin joined the Air Force in 1960 in an aviation cadet program, and was a navigator on a KC-97 (the military version of the B-377 Stratocruiser) for two years. "It was an interesting time," Kevin says. "We had the Cuban missile crisis and the Dew Line went down. I spent time at Goose Bay, Labrador, at minus 30 degrees in snow storms. The B-52 and B-57 were faster than our planes. If they had to launch from the States, we'd have a head start on them. Thankfully they never did. We just had to sit there in the cold and pretend that we were in a war." Kevin next went to the Pacific and did two TDY tours (temporary duty) in KC-135's from air bases in Okinawa and Thailand, for missions supporting the war in Viet Nam.

Next came pilot training in 1967 at Craig A.F.B., Selma, Ala., in T-37's and T-38's. Then to Canon A.F.B. in New Mexico to qualify on the F-100 Super Sabre.

Kevin was based at Tuy Hoa Air Base in South Viet Nam for a year, where he flew 155 missions and held a staff position, Chief of Plans. "We ran into anti-aircraft fire in Laos on just about every mission. We were bombing the Ho Chi Minh trail."

He was twice awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and an Air Medal with seven clusters. His citations state, "The professional competence, aerial skill, and devotion to duty displayed by Captain Sliwinski reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force."

On May 14, 1970, Kevin's F-100 lost its hydraulic power on a bombing run in Laos. He had hydraulic fumes in the cockpit, no brakes or nose wheel steering. He returned to Tuy Hoa after dropping his bombs on the target and



Kevin Sliwinski at work at the NWA History Centre

Continued on page 5

Kevin Sliwinski ... Continued from page 4

executed an aircraft carrier (barrier engagement) landing at the base. He was given this photo a couple of days later, which shows the tail hook engaging the barrier.



After flying the F-100 in Europe, Kevin returned to Vance A.F.B., an air training facility in Oklahoma where he was a flight instructor and Chief of Flight Operations. On good weather days he was responsible for 80 T-37 and 120 T-38 flights per day. Kevin acknowledges, "Being a flight instructor was sometimes more dangerous than flying missions, but at least nobody was shooting at us."

Later, Kevin went back to S.A.C. (Strategic Air Command) headquarters in Nebraska. At Offutt A.F.B. Kevin scheduled RC-135's and the President's E-4's, which were 747-100's and 200's. In times of emergency the E-4 carries the President and his entire battle staff.

After retiring in 1980, Kevin returned to college and got his Master's degree. "By this time I had three girls and two boys, some in college, so I had to get back to work," he said. After graduating he worked for a hydraulic-pneumatic distributor, managing the entire company except the sales department. But he longed to work for an airline. He applied for airline jobs and had an offer from Flight Safety International as an instructor. "I turned it down, taking a chance that an airline would call me. Northwest called the very next day."

Kevin has stayed retired since leaving Northwest, but says he has never been busier. He was Commander of the Minnesota Wing, Civil Air Patrol, from 1997 to 2000, and now serves as its Director of Finance and Government Relations Officer.

In 2003 Kevin was active with the Centennial of Flight, moving around a Wright Flyer replica built by Flight Expo, which is currently on display in Hangar 5, Fleming Field, where the Minnesota Aviation History and Education Center (MAHEC) is housed. Kevin is also Vice President of the North Central Region Aerospace Education Association. For Kevin, it seems, one thing leads to another, and it finally led to the Northwest Airlines History Centre in 2003.

"I thought the Centre was a great idea," Kevin says. "I was a docent for awhile and then was asked to do computer entry of accessions, replacing **Pete Patzke**, who was in the hospital. I currently maintain the Centre's computer hardware and network, working with Past Perfect, a fabulous museum software program. We maintain all of our contacts and send out e-newsletters. Ironically, I am also working on another project, organizing thousands of slides turned over to the museum after the Delta merger. We have accessed 524 slides and I have what's known as job security." *Ed. Note: See boxes of slides in photo on page 4.*

Kevin rounds out his activities by singing in two choirs at his church in Bloomington. He and his wife Bobbi (Roberta) will celebrate 49 years of marriage in June.

Next time you see Kevin at the museum, he'd enjoy telling you more about his days at Northwest and adventures in the Air Force. ➔

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Put your talent to work for the NWA History Centre!

Hosts/Hostesses needed during museum hours.

Call Wayne Snyder 952-698-4478

Story and photograph submissions for the newsletter.

Call Anne Kerr 612-865-5377

Help with many H.C. projects

Call Bruce Kitt 952-698-4478

Publisher

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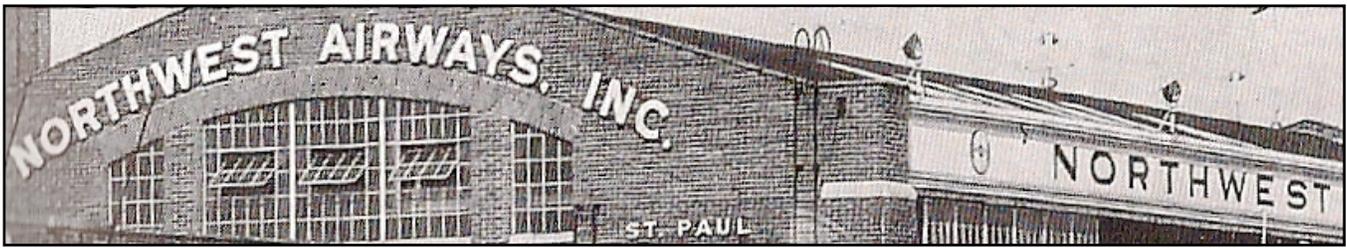
Monday through Friday

11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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Members: *We'd like to hear from you! Have ideas of stories you'd like to see in your newsletter? Photos to share? Send to editor@nwahistory.org or call Anne @ 612-865-5377.*



Holman Field, St. Paul, MN

Hangar Talk . . . Stories from *Reflections* Readers

Bob Lackie, a retired NWA mechanic, engineer and co-pilot, contributed his remembrances of the winter of 1962-1963.

I took a temporary transfer to Miami for the winter season as a ramp mechanic on the afternoon shift. This particular day was very rainy, so much so there was mild flooding in low areas. When I got to the employee's parking lot I took off my shoes and socks, put on flip-flops, rolled up my pant legs and headed for our operations office. My route was across a large paved area near the end of a runway, and one of our Boeing 720s was sitting there apparently waiting for T/O clearance. It was darker than usual for mid-afternoon, and the rain was still pouring down heavily. I watched as the plane disappeared into the dark gray rain before the wheels even left the ground.

After punching in, I talked with other afternoon-shifters in operations. We heard the VHF monitor radio calling our flight. The weather was so bad there were several in-bound flights holding at various fixes in the area waiting for the rain to let up. Those crews were also trying to contact the NWA aircraft with no reply. Soon the operations phone rang. It was ATC calling to say they had lost contact with our flight and asking where it should be at this time. **Bill Blick**, the dispatcher, checked the flight plan and told the controller the flight should be up around Tallahassee by then. It wasn't looking good, so after a short time Bill consulted the Missing Flight instructions and started calling the numbers in the order they were listed. The first one, as I remember, was the Dade County Sheriff's Office, followed by several NWA numbers in MSP.

The next day was calm and clear, and the wreckage was found late in the afternoon in the Everglades, about 35 miles west of the airport near Forty-mile Bend. After everything was cleaned up at the crash site, the parts were helicoptered to Opa-Locka Airport. A wooden frame was built in a hangar, and they reconstructed the fuselage parts on it. I lived near the Opa-Locka Airport and went over to that hangar to look at the reconstruction. The cockpit was fairly intact and gave me an eerie feeling as I looked at the controls the way they were positioned when the plane went down. The elevator trim position indicator was against the nose-down stop.

While I was there a helicopter landed near the hangar with more fuselage parts. After the load was cut loose from the chopper a guy started banging on the large pieces with a club. He said water moccasin snakes liked to crawl into the debris to get warm in the sun-warmed metal and this was his way of suggesting that they leave.

For several days after the accident, we shipped as many caskets as possible on scheduled flights back north. Since there had been no fire, most of the baggage was in good condition. The insurance company took charge of the recovered baggage, and it was all destroyed by burning at the city incinerator. A guy who helped in that operation told how he threw out cameras and other valuables, under the watchful eye of the insurance company representative.

Northwest's top-gun of operations, **Paul Soderlind**, analyzed all the known facts concerning the crash and came to the conclusion that the flight entered into a tremendous up-draft on climb-out, and the crew ran the trim all the way nose down in an effort to stop the rapid climb. When the updraft stopped, the plane instantly nosed over. The speed of descent increased so rapidly that the airspeed built up to where the trim control could not overcome the aerodynamic force on the controls and they stayed that way all the way down. Capt. Soderlind's report went out to all operators of Boeing 720-B aircraft, and new training instructions were issued.

Another event that occurred that winter in Miami was a fueling incident on the ramp after a 720 had arrived. After the passengers deplaned, I went to the cockpit to check the log book. While standing in the cockpit doorway I heard and felt a "BANG" and rushed out to see fuel all over the ramp from a ruptured tank in the left outboard wing panel. Rivets were popped loose and the bottom skin was sagging. Fuel rained from the rivet holes. While the emergency responders were being notified, I went to the departure gate, found the agent checking in passengers, and told him this flight was going nowhere today. Of course I was just a ramp rat with no authority to make big decisions like that, so he brushed me off and continued with passenger check-in.

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Hangar Talk . . . continued from page 6

After the tumult, the aircraft was towed to a hangar where the repair could be made. A search went out to locate the closest available left wing. One was finally located in Europe, sent to MIA, and a special Boeing team came down to do the repair.

As you might expect, the FAA wanted to know the cause. Ice in the tank was suspected, so for a week or more we stood by to remove certain inspection covers on each in-bound flight as soon as the chocks were in. We worked fast to get the covers unscrewed because at the Miami temperature the ice, if any, would quickly melt. The plan was to see if ice could have blocked the tank vents, allowing pressure to build up while refueling was in progress. I am not aware that any positive cause for over-pressure was ever discovered. ➔

Ed. note: The 720B that crashed in the Everglades on 2-12-1963 was NWA Flight 705. Lost crew: Captain Roy Almqvist, First Officer Bob Feller, Second Officer Allen Friesen, and Stewardesses Connie Blank, Wendy Engebretson, Myrna Ewert, Virginia Younkin and Mary Sandell. Thirty-seven passengers were lost.

Quiz - Match the Slogan with the Airline

Below are advertising slogans for the 14 airlines that comprised the Northwest Airlines family. Can you match each slogan to its airline? Each airline is represented by at least one slogan. Go for it!

- | | | | |
|--|-------|---|-------|
| 1. We Fly to the Nicest Places | _____ | 18. Joining More of America than Any Other Airline | _____ |
| 2. Go By the Short Scenic Passage | _____ | 19. The Airline Serving California's Redwood Empire | _____ |
| 3. Route of the Aristocrats | _____ | 20. Some People Just Know How to Fly | _____ |
| 4. YES | _____ | 21. Nobody's Second Class on _____ | _____ |
| 5. Flying the Route of the Gold Strikes | _____ | 22. Travel By Air - Enjoy Idaho's Scenic Wonderland | _____ |
| 6. Route of the Northliners (two airlines) | _____ | 23. Nobody Serves Our Republic Like _____ | _____ |
| 7. We're Building Your Kind of Airline | _____ | | |
| 8. Now You're Flying Smart | _____ | | |
| 9. First Co-ordinated Air-Rail Service in the U.S. | _____ | | |
| 10. The Pacific Air Line | _____ | | |
| 11. Serving the Evergreen Empire | _____ | | |
| 12. Give Wings to Your Heart | _____ | | |
| 13. We Make You Feel Like Flying | _____ | | |
| 14. You're On To Something Special | _____ | | |
| 15. Top Banana in the West | _____ | | |
| 16. The One Airline That Had to Happen | _____ | | |
| 17. Route of the Timesavers | _____ | | |

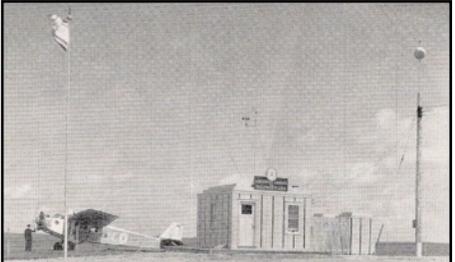
The Airlines:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. Air West | k. Southwest Airways |
| b. Bonanza Airlines | l. West Coast Airlines |
| c. Empire Airlines | m. Wisconsin Central Airlines |
| d. Hughes AirWest | n. Zimmerly Airlines |
| e. North Central Airlines | |
| f. Northwest Airways | |
| g. Northwest Airlines | |
| h. Pacific Airlines | |
| i. Republic Airlines | |
| j. Southern Airways | |

*Ed. note: Thanks to **Bob DuBert**, retired NWA F/A for this brain teaser. Check your answers below.*

- 1.h, 2.g, 3.j, 4.d, 5.b, 6.m,e, 7.i, 8.g, 9.f, 10.k, 11.l, 12.g, 13.i, 14.j, 15.d, 16.a, 17.c, 18.i, 19.k, 20.g, 21.j, 22.n, 23.i

**From the Archives . . .
Can you place this airport?**



Mystery Airport, March 2011
Hint: The year is 1928

E-mail your answer to Editor@nwahistory.org or mail to Reflections Editor, NWA History Centre, 8101 34th Ave. S., Bloomington, MN 55425. Good Luck!

December 2010 Mystery Airport is Portland Oregon.



Nobody correctly guessed the home of this art deco NWA terminal. This photo was taken in August, 1944 when the terminal reopened.

NWA History Centre



8101 34th Avenue South
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“Gold Star Volunteer” Kevin Sliwinski posed under his F-100 in Viet Nam, 1970.

NWA History Centre Reflections

March 2011

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Remembering Donald Nyrop***

Saturday, June 11

1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

at the NWA History Centre

Light refreshments



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