



# Reflections

*Dedicated to preserving the history of a great airline.*

## What is an SAS DC-9-40 named Gunnar Viking doing on the cover of *Reflections*?

Good question. The answer comes from NWAHC volunteer Bob DuBert. It seems he was at the History Centre for his monthly stint and picked up the May 2011 issue of "RNPA CONTRAILS." He read an

article on page 41 by retired NWA Capt. Steve Bowen, in which he gave a warm salute to the passing of a great airline. Steve chronicled his experience riding one of the five last NWA DC-9-40's to its grave at Sanford Airport, Orlando, Fla., in January 2011. (Ed. note: Turn to page 5 for Capt. Bowen's article, reprinted with permission.)

Bob DuBert, being the aviation history buff that he is, decided to look up the history of the aircraft Steve Bowen rode on its final voyage, Ship 9755. He shares it here with you:

### The DC-9-40 Series

Douglas developed the DC-9-40 series in response to requests from the Scandinavian Airline System and Swissair for an aircraft with a larger capacity than the Series 30. A fuselage stretch of 76 inches allowed the Series 40 to accommodate two more rows of passenger seats. Total production of the Series 40 was 71, with 49 deliveries to SAS and 22 to TOA Domestic Airlines of Japan.

### The DC-9 in the Northwest Fleet

The DC-9 aircraft type was unique in the Northwest fleet in that all of these aircraft were originally delivered to other airlines, including several corporate components of Republic Airlines. Other original owners of Northwest DC-9's included Alitalia, Swissair, SAS, Austrian, Allegheny, Atlantis, Yugoslavian Air Transport (JAT), Eastern, Hawaiian, Delta (!), Texas International, Purdue, Korean and Northeast. Many of the aircraft flying for European airlines were given names: for example the Alitalia 9's were named after islands in the Aegean, Ionian and Adriatic Seas. The Swissair 9's were named after cities in Switzerland. The SAS aircraft were named after Vikings.

### NWA Ship 9755, Registration N755NW

Ship 9755, officially a DC-9-41, construction number 47179, was the 335th DC-9 built out of a total production run of 976, civilian and military. It was delivered to SAS on June 25, 1968, registered in Norway as LN-RLC, and given the name "Gunnar Viking." It was acquired by NWA in February 1991, who was the second and final owner. Note that the aircraft was already 23 years old when NWA acquired it, and would give almost 20 more years of dependable service!

NWA ultimately acquired a total of 12 of the SAS Series 41's, re-registered them as N750NW-N763NW, with corresponding ship numbers 9750-9763 (n.b. there was no 9757 or 9761). The original Viking names of these aircraft were, in order, *Arnljot, Heming, Erling, Adils, Toste, Gunnar, Hjalmar, Helge, Stein, Agne, Sune and Torleif*.

*Continued on page 2*



Photo: Nils Rosengaard, July 26, 1968

Gunnar Viking, one month after delivery, at Copenhagen Airport.

## **President's Message**

by Bruce Kitt

One hallmark of a small museum is the number of hats that are worn by one person. All of us at the NWA History Centre wear at least one hat, that of the host, the greeter, and the docent - the indispensable volunteer.

I wear that hat. I also wear the hat of the Collection Manager; my effort trying to marshall hundreds (now thousands) of individual pieces into something that resembles a jigsaw puzzle about a great legacy airline. Not all of the pieces are in the museum. But, as with Swiss cheese, the collection, even with it's holes, is something you can look at and have a sense of the whole.



I enjoy wearing the hat of the President of the NWA History Centre. With that hat comes great pride in working to nurture the vision of a few farsighted people in 2002 to a bigger and better future. This hat also pushes me to the realization that one person cannot do everything, but many people can. Volunteering to help at the History Centre is one piece. Supporting the work of the museum through your generous contributions is another piece.

In cooperation with Wings Financial Credit Union, your contribution to the NWA History Centre can now be on an automatic, sustaining basis. You set the amount you want to contribute each month, fill out the form and give it to the tellers at your neighborhood Wings branch.

I do it. It was an easy commitment to make, an easy form to complete and an easy hat to wear. Your one-time request becomes part of the museum's ability to create a monthly budget that helps the museum set realistic goals. Support the shared commitment to see the NWA History Centre grow and prosper by joining those who have already made the commitment to support the museum through this easy step. CAVU

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## ***Gunnar Viking*** *Continued from page 1*

### **Bob DuBert's recollection of working the "Dash 40"**

This was my least favorite 9 to work. Pilots told me that it was a "dog" because it was heavier than the Dash 30, but with the same power. In hot weather, it always seemed to be weight-restricted. Sometimes, Dispatch would substitute a 40 for a full Dash 50 flight, causing seat assignment nightmares for the agents and the flight attendants. Minimum FA crew on the Dash 40 was 3 FAs, which meant we made less "short crew" pay on this aircraft versus the Dash 30. Compared to some other NW aircraft types, however, it was delightful. ➔

### **References include the following:**

"Fleet Information Register," 4th Quarter 1997, Northwest Aircraft Inc.; "Jet Airliner Production List Volume 2," J. R. Roach and A. B. Eastwood, The Airline Hobby Shop, Middlesex, U.K. 1995; "McDonnell Douglas DC-9," Terry Waddington, World Transport Press, Miami 1998.

*Ed. Note: It feels very appropriate that all those SAS Dash 40's named after Vikings were acquired by NWA, with its home office in MSP. I'm sure Arnljot, Heming, Erling, Adils, Toste, Gunnar, Hjalmar, Helge, Stein, Agne, Sune and Torleif felt right at home. To see a photo of Ship 9755 in NWA livery on her last flight, see page 6. Thank you, Steve Bowen and Bob DuBert for your great contributions.*

*Already History . . .*

## Earthquake, Tsunami, Nuclear 'Accident' Can't Melt Down This Intrepid FA

*Back From Japan* by Lauren Darling

Wednesday, March 16, 2011 - Just got home an hour ago. THANK GOD!!! Should have been home last Sunday morning. What a trip. Left MSP for Tokyo last Friday, March 11, and four hours before landing, two captains (we have four pilots on the 747) came down from the upper deck and gathered all the flight attendants in the galley to tell us we had a "situation." An earthquake. The first reactor exploded with fire and we had to circle way around the cloud to land at our alternate airport, Osaka. We didn't have much fuel left. Good thing we only had 30 passengers. We spent the night in Osaka due to a mechanical problem. The next evening we had ONE passenger back to Tokyo. Two of our flight attendants called in "scared" and went home from Osaka. We had a two-day layover and there were aftershocks every hour. A big one came at 10:03 a.m. and knocked me out of bed at the Radisson TYO. I saw my uniform swaying in the closet and the pictures on the walls went sideways. That was the second "big one." It measured 6.0 with warnings for a second tsunami. Can we spell S-T-R-E-S-S !!!!! We were rescheduled at least five times and finally ended up going to Honolulu for two days. Only about 20 passengers on that segment. Maui, Kauai, and the Big Island also had major damage from the tsunami. Deadheaded this morning from Honolulu to LAX to MSP. I sped down the freeway to get home. Kissed the cat and kissed the ground. I think I'll skip my dance class tonight and have a glass of wine or two and process what has happened. Watching Japan news channels breaks my heart. Beyond devastating. I haven't cried yet. I just may do that tonight. Love you all, Lauren.



Author Lauren Darling, kneeling left, Bob Reardon, center standing, and other Flight 619 crew members.

*"I saw my uniform swaying in the closet and the pictures on the walls went sideways."*



*Back From Japan Again* by Lauren Darling

Sunday, March 20, 2011 - Went back to Tokyo and the trip went as scheduled. Three days. We did have another big aftershock, measuring 6.1, on Saturday at 6:58 p.m. I now have all my essentials by the door for a quick "out of here." All flights were halted so runways could be checked for cracks. Airport re-opened after 20 minutes. This time our crew brought in care packages from Trader Joe's, which included soy milk, toilet paper, rice and bottled water. We added soup noodles. Flight home was like daycare. Many children, families, even a newborn. We ran out of bassinets. All were getting out of Dodge!!

On my way home from the airport, still in uniform, I stopped at Petco and asked if they would donate to the animals in Japanese shelters with their owners. Although he couldn't commit because he wasn't the manager, he did give me ten packages of doggie treats. I thanked him, gave him my card and asked him to call me if something further could be done. I will hit PetSmart later. I'll take these treats to Tokyo with me next Friday. The Japanese love their pets. See photos at <http://photo.sankei.jp.msn.com/kodawari/data/Earthquake/201103/17/pet/>

*Ed. note: These letters originally appeared in Karen Schmit's "BITS AND PIECES," NWA/Delta Flight Attendant on-line newsletter, April 30, 2011. Lauren Darling, is planning to retire later this year after 42 years in the air.*

☆ **Bill Marchessault - Gold Star Volunteer!** ☆



In vintage F/A uniforms, Bill and Fay Kulenkamp chat with NWA CEO Emeritus Donald W. Nyrop, at Mal Freeburg Day, Richfield, Minn., June 12, 2010.

*Seen here in two of his many roles for the NWA History Centre, Bill has been an active volunteer with the museum since its founding in 2002.*



Bill in the NWA History Centre gift shop. He has produced a variety of items with vintage logos that are available for purchase.

Although born in Los Angeles County, Calif., Bill moved to Minnesota with his family in 1950 when he was two years old, and has called MSP his home base ever since. In 1957 the family built a Vern Donnay three bedroom rambler on Town Terrace, in “prestigious West Bloomington.” There he grew up. “I was the eldest of seven children, not necessarily the most responsible,” he says. Five brothers and sisters remain in the Twin Cities today.

After obtaining a two-year degree in marketing at Normandale College, Bill went to work for Donaldson’s Department Store. While there he ran into a friend from high school who had started working for NWA as a flight attendant in 1972. She suggested Bill check out job possibilities there. In addition to Northwest, Bill also applied at Western and North Central. Bill had two interviews with Western but wasn’t hired. Ironically, about a year later Western found itself in a class action suit for discrimination against males as flight attendants.

In the meantime, on January 29, 1973, NWA hired Bill. Six months later North Central called for an interview, but he stayed with Northwest, now Delta, where he remains - 38 years later. These days Bill flies “Lead” most of the time and prefers domestic flights. “There is a certain amount of challenge dealing with the flying public every day, and helping people gives me satisfaction. I like the people I work with. Most of them are more seasoned and happier in their jobs. We are able to relax and enjoy being with one another,” he added.

Bill started his airline merchandising career in 1978. He saw a gal in Honolulu wearing a T-shirt with a silhouette of the 1926 NWA logo. She bought it from Jack Kemp, Seattle flight attendant. Jack’s wife did the screen printing and Jack sold the shirts when he was on the road. “I ordered one and wore it, Bill said. “People started asking me about it. Jack told me if I sold four dozen shirts he’d give me a price break. That sounded like a lot of shirts to sell, but I agreed.

“Bryan Moon, NWA V.P. Marketing, was instrumental in helping me get started,” Bill says. “I would take merchandise to reservations offices and cargo offices, set up a display and have a store for them. Bill Wren, at that time V.P., Public Relations, asked me to sell merchandise at Northwest Airlines Family Day. They opened a hangar and invited employees, family and friends to come to the hangar, walk through several airplanes and buy merchandise. Eleven thousand people came through in about four hours. We had eight people working and sold lots of stuff.

*“I felt this was an opportunity for me to leave a mark - to make a lasting contribution.”*

“When the NWA History Centre called me in 2002 to ask if I would set up a gift shop in the museum, I immediately felt it would be a good fit. I had lots of experience selling down line, and I felt that the NWAHC would make money from the things I produced. I felt this was an opportunity for me to leave a mark - to make a lasting contribution.” Bill agreed to set up the gift shop.

Unfortunately there isn’t room here for more of Bill’s interesting stories, not the least of which involves a Baltimore Colts NWA charter in 1974. But stay tuned - we’ll write about it in a future issue of *Reflections*. Here’s a tantalizing quote from that story: “No you won’t!” said Carol Rosenbloom, owner of the Colts, when NWA said it would send another airplane after a 727-200 crashed, while being ferried into Buffalo N.Y. to pick up the team.

Bill Marchessault is leaving his mark and making his contribution to the NWAHC, where he serves on the board of directors and works as a good-will ambassador for the museum wherever his travels take him. And, lest we forget, works his magic in the museum gift shop - a wonderful source of gifts for airline buffs. ➔

**The Dying of the Light** by Capt. Steve Bowen

Reprinted with permission from May 2011 "RNPA CONTRAILS"



It's always a sad thing when something you've known and loved for a lifetime comes to an end. The comfort of a familiar environment is replaced by something new and unfamiliar. It feels strange. We don't like it much. But gradually it becomes the familiar and we eventually get used to it. We learn to like it ... or at least tolerate it.

For me, such has been the transition from Northwest to Delta. Actually, for me it's been an even more difficult transition for active Northwest people to active Delta. And the more years one has had as a Northwest pilot/employee, the harder the transition would be, I would imagine.

Perhaps it's not such a big deal for those of us who came through previous transitions such as from Southern or North Central or Hughes Airwest to Republic to Northwest, etc. But, in my case, I grew up with Northwest Airlines. I hung out at Wold Chamberlain Field as a kid watching the Northwest Stratocruisers, DC-7's and Martin 202's take off and land. I was hired right out of college (still a kid!) by Northwest and spent almost 39 years as a Northwest pilot. So seeing Northwest gradually disappear into Delta is not something I can easily accept. I'll always be a Northwest pilot to the core!

Thankfully, the transition has been gradual, so I've been able to adjust to the new Delta way of doing things little by little. There were still red-tails plying the skies and sitting on the hangar ramp as some sort of reassurance that Northwest is still around. But then Donald Nyrop passed away and the light that was Northwest Airlines dimmed a bit. Whether you liked him or not, Mr. Nyrop was the foundation upon which Northwest was built. Under his leadership, Northwest Airlines survived and grew into a great international airline when the likes of Pan Am and TWA fell by the wayside.

But I had an experience recently that finally brought home the reality that there really is no more Northwest Airlines. I was one of the last three passengers on the last flight of a red-tailed aircraft still sporting the familiar Northwest livery.

Here's what happened. On January 2, 2011, I got a call from my good friend, Dan Gradwohl (MSP DC-9 Capt.) inviting me to ride along on a ferry flight he had picked up the next day from MSP to SFB (Sanford Airport in Orlando, Fla.). It was a one-way trip as the aircraft (a DC9-40) was to be retired from the Delta fleet. Later I learned that it was one of five DC-9's being flown from MSP and DTW to SFB that day to be permanently retired - never to fly again. All five aircraft were still painted in Northwest colors and were, in fact, the last aircraft in the entire fleet still sporting the NWA red tail.

So it was to be Dan, his co-pilot, Jeff, Dan's wife Sara, their good friend Phil (a United dispatcher and aviation history buff) and me. The other four ferry flights carried no passengers, only the two pilots on each. Sara, Phil and I were the only passengers on that day-January 3, 2011-the last day that a Northwest plane was to take flight!

The atmosphere at MSP Gate F1 was generally pretty upbeat ... chatting with the agent, taking pictures, etc. And on board, as well, it was something of a party.

*Continued on page 6***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**

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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](mailto:editor@nwahistory.org) or call Anne @ 612-865-5377.*

**The Dying of the Light.** *Continued from page 5*

A full snack and breakfast service was provided in the galley, Sara became our lovely “stewardess,” and many more pictures were taken. The mood was definitely celebratory, and it was an event to be celebrated. We were retiring an aircraft that had served faithfully and well since it came into service with North Central Airlines in 1969, then was later rebranded as Republic Airlines, then ultimately Northwest Airlines in 1986. We do celebrate retirements, but alas, this retirement was actually to become a death, as we later found out.



Mission complete. Passengers and crew: Phil, Sara, Dan, Jeff and myself.

Once on the ground and parked at the ramp, the mood took on a more somber tone when we learned that these five aircraft, along with at least 17 others already at Sanford, were to be stripped of all usable parts, then shredded as scrap metal, never to fly again. The evidence was all around us. It was a veritable Northwest graveyard! I remember thinking that it was a good thing that the landing had been a greaser. At least the last landing of this venerable aircraft had been perfect. One’s last flight should always be a good one in every respect. And it wasn’t just the last flight of ship 9755, this had really been the last flight of Northwest Airlines.

I did a lot of thinking that day as we were all whisked off to MCO to catch our flights home ... and later on the flight from MCO to MSP. The other crews didn’t seem to be so touched by the events of the day. It was just another day, another dollar to them it seemed. But for me, it kind of felt like an old friend had died and I was in mourning. Northwest Airlines is in my blood. It’s been a part of me my entire life. And as I contemplated that life-long relationship on the flight home that day, I kept thinking of my favorite poem by Welsh poet Dylan Thomas, which ends with those unforgettable lines:

***“...Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.”***



**Coffee & Conversation  
at the  
NWA History Centre**

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**Meet NWA Orient Route Pioneers**

**Joyce Rudquist Norvold, “Chris” Norvold, Shirley Huskins,  
Lois Abbott, John Peterson and others**

**Saturday, August 6, 1-3 p.m. at the NWA History Centre**

*Light refreshments*

**\$5.00 per person donation for admission\***

**R.S.V.P. to Mary Fryer at 651-699-8833 or E-mail [mcfrayer@q.com](mailto:mcfrayer@q.com)**

For advance reservations, please send your check to: Mary Fryer, NWA History Centre, 8101 34th Avenue South, Bloomington, MN 55425

*\*Income received from memberships, donations, events and the sale of merchandise supports the goals of the NWAHC.*



The Tokyo Staff House was the temporary home of some of our Orient pioneers.

**Raffle for a  
NWA DC-4  
model airplane**





Holman Field, St. Paul, MN

## Hangar Talk . . . *Stories from or about Reflections Readers*

**“That looks nice enough to use for a sport coat,” Steve Rothmeier, NWA Chairman and CEO once remarked to Boeing Commercial Airplane Co. President Dean Thornton.**



The fabric's original purpose

Rothmeier didn't realize the implications of his statement, made while admiring the fabric on the seats in his company's new 747-400's. Some time later, in January 1989, as Rothmeier was relaxing on the speaker's stage after addressing the 747-400 rollout audience in Everett, Wash., Thornton called him back to the podium. He held up a sport coat, a nice grey herringbone with a red pinstripe, and related Rothmeier's comments. The Northwest chairman had a new sport coat that fit rather well, and was guaranteed to hold up to food spills and repeated vacuuming. And he could almost disappear into the upholstery if he wore it when traveling on his new fleet of 747-400's.

Northwest was the launch customer for Boeing's new 418 passenger capacity, 747-400. See the sport coat at the NWA History Centre.

Thank you, Bob DuBert for photos of the Rothmeier jacket.



Steve Rothmeier's jacket



One of NWA's ten new 747-400's, 1989



Personally inscribed

***Where did this earlier NWA employee work?***



*His nickname was "Snakes."*

**Photos from the archives**

E-mail your answer to [Editor@nwahistory.org](mailto:Editor@nwahistory.org) or mail to Reflections Editor, NWA History Centre, 8101 34th Ave. S., Bloomington, MN 55425. Good luck!

***March 2011 Mystery Airport is Valley City, N.D.***



Hello? Anybody there? Didn't receive even one answer. Maybe because this photo was dated 1928?

NWA History Centre



8101 34th Avenue South  
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*NWA History Centre Reflections*

*June 2011*

***Reminder . . .***

## ***Remembering Donald Nyrop***



Donald Nyrop and Croil Hunter

**June 11, 2011, 1-3 p.m. at the NWA History Centre**

*R.S.V.P. to Mary Fryer at 651-699-8833 or E-mail [mcfryer@q.com](mailto:mcfryer@q.com)*



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