



# REFLECTIONS

The Newsletter of the NWA History Centre  
Dedicated to preserving the history of a great airline and its people.  
**NORTHWEST AIRLINES 1926-2010**



## HONORING THE DOOLITTLE "DO-MUCH" RAIDERS

by Robert DuBert

This April 18, Americans will commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first US Army Air Corps bombing raid against the Japanese mainland during World War II. Conceived and led by Lt. Col. James H. Doolittle, the attack, which became known as "The Doolittle Raid," had a much more profound effect on the conduct of the war than was apparent in the raid's immediate aftermath. Some Northwest Airlines employees had a supporting role in the preparation for the raid, and two Northwest people have played pivotal roles in recognizing the heroism and sacrifices of the 80 raider aircrew and insuring that they will be always remembered. Those efforts are the subject of this report.



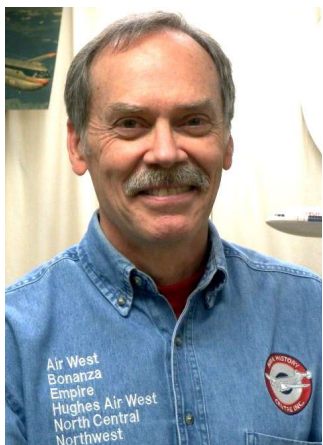
Former NWA employee Brian "Bear" Anderson, with the Congressional Gold Medal he presented to the surviving members of the Doolittle Raid on April 18, 2015. Photo: Matt Sager, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association.

**BACKGROUND** The details of the Doolittle Raid are beyond the scope of this report and are well-documented elsewhere (see suggested references on p. 5). Readers will recall that the weeks and months after the Dec. 7, 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor saw an almost uninterrupted series of Allied defeats in the Pacific theatre of war which impacted American morale and which called into question the Roosevelt administration's conduct of the war by some in Congress. The bombing raid, conducted by sixteen B-25 medium bombers launched from the aircraft carrier USS Hornet, was a daring gamble, an offensive operation after months of desperate defense. While the actual bombing damage was less than first reported, the strategic consequences were far-reaching, as shocked and humiliated Japanese military leaders responded with a rushed attempt to extend their defensive perimeter, leading to the Battle of Midway, a disaster for the Japanese and the turning point in the Pacific war. While wartime Japanese newspapers mocked the raid as "do-little", Mitsuo Fuchida and Masatake Okumiya, former officers in the Imperial Japanese Navy, wrote this in 1955: "In point of physical damage inflicted, it was true enough that the raid did not accomplish a great deal. But the same could not be said of its impact on the minds of Japan's naval leaders and its consequent influence on the war at sea. From this standpoint, neither 'do-nothing' nor 'do-little' were accurate descriptions. On the contrary, it must be regarded as a 'do-much' raid.

To prepare for the raid, it was necessary to modify the B-25s to extend their operational range. Mid-Continent Airlines was awarded a contract for these modifications, and since time was critical, at least one and probably more Northwest Airlines mechanics assisted with the work, possibly on a "temporary loan" arrangement with Mid-Continent (See sidebar on p. 4).

After the raid, Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall recommended Doolittle for the Medal of Honor, and Lt. Col. Doolittle was summoned to Washington to receive the decoration from Pres. Roosevelt. At first, Doolittle resisted, claiming that all eighty of the crewmen should receive the honor. However, Marshall, aware of the immediate political, public-relations and propaganda benefits that would accrue, ordered Doolittle to accept the award. The other 79 crewmembers were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and various other decorations from the Chinese government. Over three more years of brutal warfare would follow, and while the crew of the Doolittle Raid were never forgotten, they became one component of the pantheon of millions of American and Allied soldiers, sailors, airmen and civilians, whose heroism, sacrifices, injuries and deaths would lead to the defeat of the Axis powers.

**THE BEAR** Brian Anderson is a brawny man who stands 6 feet 4 inches tall and he has a beard. But that isn't why his friends call him "Bear". He received that nickname in his twenties *Cont. on p. 4*



Bruce Kitt

Photo: Joe Callaci.

## From the Executive Director

When the NWA History Centre museum suspended public visiting hours last September, it was with the expectation that the museum would reopen in its new location inside the Crowne Plaza Aire Hotel, East Bloomington (CPAH), in January.

It's now March, formal negotiations have just begun and our reopening date is a contingent of these talks. Happily, remodeling continues at the CPAH (see photos on page 3 and on our facebook page) and our museum space is still scheduled as the next phase in the remodel. The

Board will push to conclude these talks quickly so that there is a concrete date we can mark on our calendars.

The move into the CPAH will present the NWAHC Board with a new operating experience. Up to now the museum's operation—museum and archive—has been in one location; when the museum reopens the public will visit the museum at the CPAH, but the archive will be in another location. A final determination has not been made, but the archive will either remain in its present location at 2 Appletree Square or move to a shared space at Flying Cloud Airport in Eden Prairie, Minn. as part of the expanding AirSpaceMinnesota collaboration.

The NWA History Centre will celebrate its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this coming October and the board recognizes that fundamental changes are necessary to grow the NWAHC beyond its core airline base so that it appeals to more people. Acknowledging that this requires skills beyond our respective levels of experience, the Board is considering hiring trained museum and/or business personnel. As a first step, the Board is in discussion with an experienced grant writer to obtain funding for two positions—a paid Director to oversee the NWAHC's strategic growth, and a paid Administrative Director to coordinate operations and volunteers at the NWAHC's two locations (the hotel and the archives).

There are many moving parts all of a sudden to this relocation process and all are important to the future of the NWA History Centre. We will continue to keep you posted on our progress, and, as always, thank you for your continuing support. CAVU. ➔

The NWA History Centre is temporarily closed to visitors, pending our relocation. Please monitor our website and facebook page for our reopening announcement.



Like us on Facebook.



## THE NWA HISTORY CENTRE

Founder **Henry V. "Pete" Patzke**  
1925-2012

8011 34<sup>th</sup> Ave S, Suite C26  
Bloomington MN 55425-1637  
952-698-4478

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Executive Director **Bruce Kitt**  
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Editor **Robert DuBert**  
[robert.dubert@gmail.com](mailto:robert.dubert@gmail.com) 734-678-7600

Reporters **Anne Kerr, Bruce Kitt, Carol Hall, Don Swanson.**

### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

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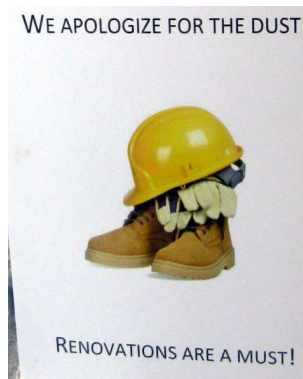
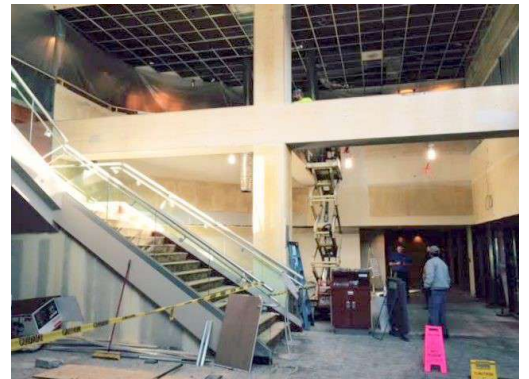
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# HOTEL REMODELING SCRAPBOOK

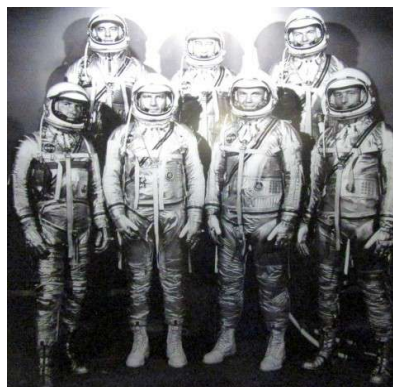
As any homeowner can attest, no renovation project ever goes completely smoothly. There is mess, there are complications and things always take longer than expected. But the work *is* progressing at the Crowne Plaza Aire, and we at the NWAHC anxiously and patiently await the day when we can begin moving into our new space in the hotel later this year. These photos show the ongoing work and some of the finished areas (see p.8 for more on our preparation). *Photos: Bruce Kitt and Robert DuBert.*



*The Business/Computer room for hotel guests, with aviation artwork and prints installed.*



*Hallways on each floor are decorated with large photos of commercial, military and civil aviation, and space technology. Bruce Kitt, left, admires a photo. Below is a conference room (not yet redecorated) which will be available for us to use for meetings and special events.*





Cont. from p.1

when some of his “friends” signed him up for a match with Victor the Wrestling Bear at a Michigan Sports-mans' Expo, to raise money for charity. The match ended in a draw, and the name stuck.

Born in Oxford, Michigan, Brian grew up in suburban Detroit. While in grade school, he wrote book reports on the war memoirs *God is My Co-Pilot* by Col. Robert L. Scott and *Thirty Seconds over Tokyo*, a first-hand account of the Doolittle Raid by Col. Ted R. Lawson (Both were published in paperback in the 1950s and marketed to school pupils through the Scholastic Book Service). Thus was born a passion for aviation and history, especially the history of World War II, which has only grown stronger with time.

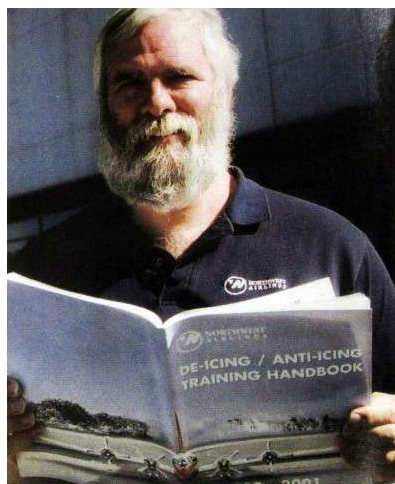
As a teenager, Brian got a part-time job with a fixed-base operator at the Pontiac airport, where he learned de-icing at the age of 15, little realizing at the time how important this would be to his subsequent career. He went on to serve in the US Army as a helicopter crew chief, and attended Western Michigan University. Brian joined Northwest Airlines in 1977, working as an Equipment Service Employee (ESE) at DTW. In 1981, he transferred to DCA, where he met Cyndee Pollock, who worked in the Northwest Airlines reservations office and served as the Vice-General Chair of BRAC, the Brotherhood of

Railway, Airline, Steamship Clerks, Express and Station Employees. They were wed in 1981 and transferred to BOS the following year, where Cyndee worked as a Customer Service Agent and Supervisor before her retirement from Northwest. Bear, meanwhile, developed a specialty in de-icing and served as a certified instructor in de-icing at NWA, eventually heading the de-icing training program for the airline.

In 1980, he joined the Confederate (now Commemorative) Air Force as a Life Member, working on the crews of the B-24 *Diamond Lill* and B-29 *Fifi*, but what he has enjoyed most from his time at this organization are the “35 years of research and meeting people,” especially the veterans. He especially remembers meeting Lt. Gen. James Doolittle and his wife in 1986 at an airshow in Las Vegas and the opportunity to talk with Doolittle at length about his military career. Brian joined the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders Association, and his devotion to this organization and its mission led to his being appointed to the position of Sergeant at Arms, where his duties include assisting with special events, making arrangements for guests and VIPs and guarding against



Photo from a college football game. The man in the photo is not Brian Anderson.



Brian with a Northwest De-Icing/Anti-Icing Training Handbook. Photo: World Traveler magazine, December 2000.

## Modifying the B-25 bombers for the Doolittle Raid

In January 1942, Lt. Col. Doolittle requested that a total of 24 B-25 bombers be sent to the Mid-Continent Airlines maintenance facility at Wold-Chamberlain Field in Minneapolis for “alteration as required.” To increase the range of the planes for the mission, additional fuel tanks were required and supplied by the U.S. Rubber Company: a 225 gallon rubber bladder to be located on the top of the bomb bay, a 160 gallon bladder in the crawl space above the bomb bay, and a 60 gallon leakproof tank in place of the lower gun turret. This installation had never been done before, and the airline mechanics had to improvise.

Historian Robert J. Serling reported this exchange: “Where the hell are the blueprints?”, a maintenance foreman asked his supervisor. ‘There aren’t any,’ he was told. ‘We’ll have to figure out something that will work ourselves.’” In addition, bomb extension shackles, produced by McQuay-Norris, an auto parts supplier, had to be installed to allow room inside the bomb bay for the tank bladder.



B-25s at the Mid-Continent hangar. Photo: NWAHC archives.

NWA company historian Kenneth Ruble, attempting to clarify the possible role of the NWA Mod Center in those installations, was told flatly by former Mod Center superintendent Ralph Geror that all the Doolittle B-25s were prepared by Mid-Continent at their hangars. Yet we know of at least one Northwest mechanic who worked on the project: **Philip Blotz**. His grandson, Tim Blotz, a television anchorman at KMSP in Minneapolis, remembers his grandfather telling him about working on the B-25s and on aircraft at the NWA wartime test facility in Vandalia, Ohio. While there is no official record of which Northwest employees might have assisted with the project, it is probable that Mid-Continent, being a small airline and given the scope and urgency of the project, received the “temporary help” of some NWA mechanics. Tim Blotz, after extensive research and with the assistance of NWAHC volunteer Wayne Snyder, prepared this report for his blog “Stand By.”

<https://timothyblotz.com/2012/04/13/the-doolittle-raid-on-tokyo-one-familys-untold-story/>



Philip Blotz enlisted in the US Navy in 1944, as an aircraft mechanic. Photo courtesy Tim Blotz.

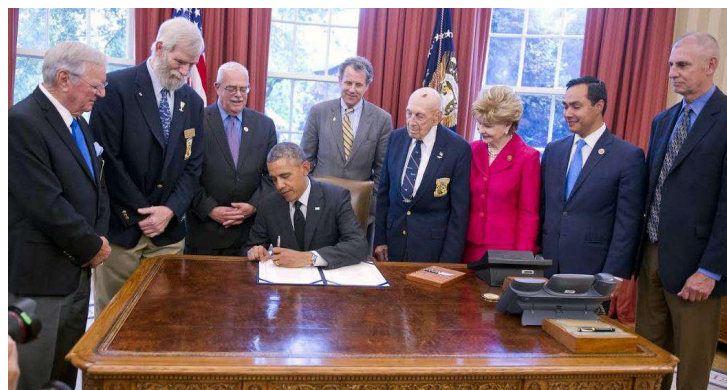
the unauthorized use of the Raider Crest—he calls it “a great gopher job.”

**MEDALS** Readers will be familiar with the Medal of Honor (which Doolittle received) and the Presidential Medal of Freedom, most recently awarded to former Vice President Joseph Biden. The Medal of Honor is America's highest military honor, awarded to U.S. military personnel for personal acts of valor above and beyond the call of duty. It is usually presented by the President, in the name of Congress. The Presidential Medal of Freedom was established by President Kennedy in 1963 and is our country's highest civilian award. It is presented



by the President in recognition of "an especially meritorious contribution to the security or national interests of the United States, world peace, cultural or other significant public or private endeavors", and may also be awarded to military personnel and non-U.S. citizens. There is a third medal, perhaps less familiar, the Congressional Gold Medal, first established by the Second Continental Congress in 1776, which is awarded to individuals and groups "who have performed an achievement that has an impact on American history and culture that is likely to be recognized as a major achievement in the recipient's field long after the achievement." Civilians, military personnel and non-U.S. citizens are eligible to receive this award, and notable recipients include George Washington, John Paul Jones, Charles Lindbergh, Bob Hope, Walt Disney, George and Ira Gershwin, and Raoul Wallenberg. Unlike the two other medals, the Gold Medal is custom-designed for each recipient by the U.S. Mint, and is "not portable"—it's to be displayed, not worn. Brian, noting that such World War II units as the Tuskegee Airmen, the Native American and Navajo Code Talkers, the Womens' Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) and the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team (the "Go for Broke" unit comprised mostly of Japanese Nisei) had been recent recipients of the medal, concluded that the Doolittle Raiders "should get it also. I took it upon myself to start the process. This will help cement their legacy."

**THE PROCESS** The award of a Gold Medal requires an Act of Congress, the approval of two-thirds of the membership of the House and the Senate, and the subsequent approval of the House Committee on Financial Services and the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs. Thus began a four-year process for Brian and his wife Cyndee. Individually and together, they contacted and visited major aviation museums, getting letters of support. They made personal visits to the offices of *every* member of the House and Senate, in some cases more than once, to make the case for awarding the medal to the Raiders and to line up support for the eventual legislative resolutions. After protracted negotiations, Rep. Pete Olson, R-Texas, a former Navy P-3C Orion pilot, and Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, agreed to sponsor the bills, which were introduced in 2013 as House Resolution 1209 and Senate Resolution 381. On May 23, 2014, with the signatures of 79 Senators and 310 Representatives, the resolutions were passed "to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the World War II members of the 'Doolittle Tokyo Raiders', for outstanding heroism, valor, skill and service to the United States in conducting the bombings of Tokyo," and that same day the bill was signed into Public Law 113-106 by President Obama, in a special ceremony in the White House



Pres. Obama signs into law the awarding of the Gold Medal to the Doolittle Raiders, witnessed by Brian Anderson, Sen. Sherrod Brown and Doolittle Raider Lt. Col. Richard Cole, 2nd, 4th and 5th from the left. Photo courtesy Brian Anderson.

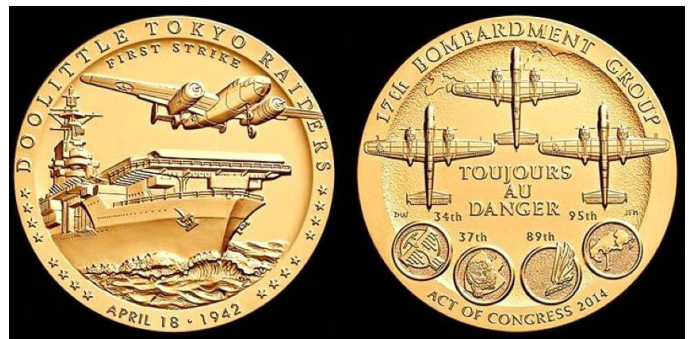
Oval Office. After Brian thanked the President, he responded, "No, Brian, I want to thank you. This would not have happened without the hard work you and Cyndee did." For Brian and Cyndee, it was the culmination of thousands of hours of work, a devoted labor of love and respect, and a genuine "mission accomplished." But one step remained.

**AWARDING THE MEDAL** At the time of the signing, only four Raiders remained alive—Staff Sgt. David Thatcher, Lt. Col. Edward Saylor, Lt. Col. Robert Hite and Lt. Col. Richard Cole. Cole attended the Oval Office ceremony but the others were too frail to travel. Saylor died on Jan. 29, 2015 and Hite two months later, before the Gold Medal casting was complete. Time was of the essence! Finally, in April the Gold Medal was ready and was flown to Dayton International Airport. On April 18, 2015, the 73<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the Doolittle Raid, the Gold Medal was loaded onboard the B-25 *Panchito* (based at the Delaware Aviation Museum), which then performed a ceremonial flight over the Wright Patterson Air Force Base, near Dayton, home of the USAF museum. On landing, the bomber received a traditional water cannon salute. Brian deplaned and presented the Gold Medal to Lt. Col. Cole and Sgt. Thatcher, who accepted it on behalf of their 78 deceased comrades. Later, in a ceremony at the museum, Cole and Thatcher presented the medal to the National Museum of the United States Air Force, where it is now displayed with other Raider artifacts in the museum's B-25 diorama.



Right: Brian Anderson presents the Gold Medal to Doolittle Raiders Lt. Col. Richard Cole, center, and Staff Sgt. David Thatcher. Photo: USAF.

Below: The Gold Medal, which includes the motto of the Doolittle Raiders: *Toujours Au Danger—Always Towards Danger*.



**EPILOGUE** Brian "Bear" Anderson has received his own share of awards, and his display shelves at home include these from NWA: the 1996 Excellence Award, the 1997 President's Award, the 2003 Caring Award (both he and Cyndee received *cont. on p.6*



Cont. from p.5

this), Team Excellence Awards for 2007 and 2008, and awards presented to the BOS station which Delta management intended to discard. Cyndee retired from Northwest in 2006 and Brian retired from Delta in 2009 after his job was eliminated when Delta outsourced the de-icing program (both had 33 year careers at NWA). He then served for seven years as a Field Operations Manager for Kilfrost, the British company which first introduced fluid aircraft de-icing at Imperial Airways in the 1930s. They live in Salem, New Hampshire; Brian is president

of the New Hampshire chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution and Cyndee works as a geneologist for the Daughters of the American Revolution. They're avid travelers and are proud to have visited over 230 national parks. Brian's work for the Doolittle Raiders continues, and his current project goal is the construction and installation of a monument honoring the raiders and all WWII B-25 units in Arlington National Cemetery. He envisions a four-sided pyramid topped with a bronze B-25 model. If you're interested in assisting with this project, please contact him at [icebear1@comcast.net](mailto:icebear1@comcast.net).

Staff Sgt. David Thatcher died on June 22, 2016, leaving Lt. Col. Richard Cole, 101, as the sole surviving crew member of the Doolittle Raid. →

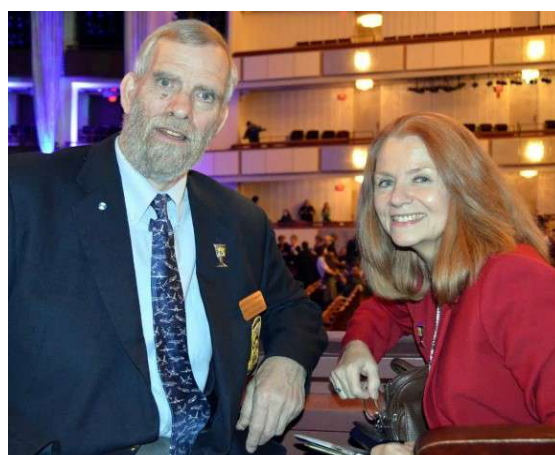


Photo: Stars and Stripes.



Left: Brian and Cyndee Anderson, center, with Staff Sgt. David Thatcher, seated left, and Lt. Col. Richard Cole, seated right, at the USAF Museum following the presentation of the Doolittle Raiders Gold Medal to the museum. Photo: USAF Museum.

Right: Brian and Cyndee Anderson at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, where they attended a gala benefit concert for the USO in 2014. Photo courtesy Brian Anderson.

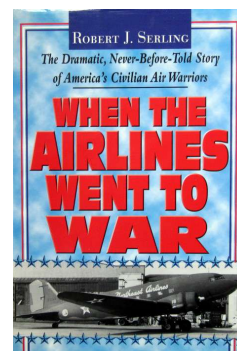
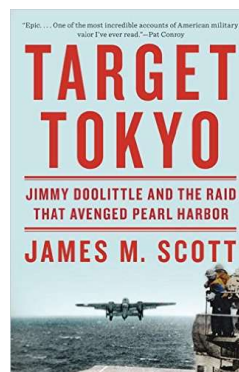
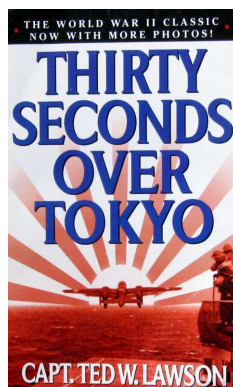


### Recommended Reading

Lawson, Capt. Ted W. Thirty Seconds over Tokyo, 2002. Pocket Star Books, New York. This is the latest edition of the book which Brian Anderson first read as a child, and contains extra photos.

Scott, James M. Target Tokyo, 2015. W.W. Norton, New York. This recent book is a comprehensive account of the raid, the aftermath and the consequences.

Serling, Robert J. When the Airlines Went to War, 1997. Kensington Books, New York. An excellent overview of the airline industry during World War II. Out of print but available used online.



**On YouTube—** The Raiders Gold Medal Ceremony in Congress: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10Elv0wAoVU>

The Raiders Gold Medal Ceremony at the Museum of the United States Air Force: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJAmQ0W6usk>

The Ceremonial Flight onboard the B-25 *Panchito*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTIHvTFRSBk>

## Q&A with Historian and Writer JOHANNES ALLERT

Johannes Allert is a Twin Cities-based historian whose works cover aviation, the military and the history of the upper midwest. A graduate of Norwich University in Vermont, where he received a Master of Arts Degree in Military History, Allert holds a Legacy Fellowship at the Minnesota Historical Society and is on the adjunct faculties of Minnesota State University Moorhead and Rogers State University in Oklahoma. He's a regular presenter at the annual Northern Great Plains History Conference at St. Cloud State (Minn.) University. And he's one of us, a Life member of the NWAHC! Recently I interviewed Johannes, by email, to find out more about his life and work.



Johannes Allert, right, with his father Charles and the dog. Photo courtesy Johannes Allert.

**Q: Johannes, please tell us about your early life and education.** *A: With the exception of brief stays in Washington D.C. and Madison, Wisc., I've grown up and lived in the Twin Cities. While placing a high premium on education, our parents never shoved us in any specific direction. That was left up to us. So, after finishing high school, I followed my older siblings to Mankato State University where I majored in Sociology and minored in History. My interests in history and aviation came from my father who, like many of his generation, served in WW II. After college, I briefly worked for a summer as a 'ramp rat' at Flying Tigers Air Cargo. My full-time employment includes five years in Human Service, twenty in the travel industry and eight in the medical device industry. In 2009, I decided to return to university and complete a Master's in History from Norwich University. Although I didn't fully realize it at the time, the major benefit of the program was writing, writing and more writing. As an undergraduate, my composition skills were sorely lacking, but I actually grew to enjoy it. I still consider it a challenging but rewarding experience. As for military service, the closest I've come to it was through marriage: my wife Lori was active Army (a Lt. Colonel) and currently serves as a Reservist. My primary affiliations include: the Society of Military History, the Military Writers Association, the U.S. Army Historical Foundation, the Air Force Association, and the Minnesota Historical Society.*

**Q: What drew you to those fields of study?** *A: Sometimes, life involves discovering what you're not good at. I'm absolutely terrible in math and science. Instead, I'm drawn to literature. And to history, which is actually stranger than fiction.*

**Q: Did you consider a full-time teaching career?** *A: I've taught Cold War History and World Power Politics at MSU Moorhead. At Rogers State University I teach on-line survey courses in American History. I also tutor for Anoka/Ramsey Community College's TRIO program (St. Francis High School's College Prep). Essentially, I've taken the scenic route but consider my past work experiences as valuable context. Admittedly, there are times I feel envious toward those who have made academia their life-long career, until I discover that many express frustration or experience burnout. For undecided students who feel pressured to lock into a specific field of study, I tell them life provides many growth opportunities and paths of exploration. Embrace the long-game. A person's life consists of many chapters.*

**Q: How did you get started in serious historical writing?** *A: After presenting my master's thesis on Lt. Gen. Frank Andrews, I was encouraged to publish it [ed.: Andrews was an early advocate for an independent Army Air Force. Joint Base Andrews, home of Air Force One, is named after him]. The USAF Air and Space Power Journal kindly accepted my submission. They provided valuable, constructive feedback that culminated in a published, peer-reviewed, feature article. I still consider it beginner's luck!*

**Q: How do you choose subjects to write about?** *A: My initial subjects (Lt. Gen. Frank Andrews and NWA's Modification Center) essentially paid tribute to my parents and their generation. More recently, however, my current historic subjects have found me. I realize that comes across as eccentric but it's the truth.*

**Q: What are you working on now? Any books in the works?** *A: With assistance from the Minnesota Historical Society, I've been working on a larger project entitled "Discovering Minnesota's Lost Generation - Reflections and Remembrances of the Great War". It involves digging into their "War Records" archives. I'm also toying with the idea of writing something about one particular Minnesotan, Maj. Gen. George Leach [ed.: Leach was also a former mayor of Minneapolis]. His leadership and vision influenced the National Guard in general and the Air National Guard in particular. Another project in the works involves expanding upon my graduate thesis about Lt. Gen. Frank Andrews and his legacy as a talented operational leader. People have read enough about Marshall, Eisenhower, and Patton. It is time that the two and three-star generals receive their due. ➔*

### SUGGESTED READING FROM THE WORKS OF JOHANNES ALLERT, available online:

**"Remembering NWA's First Accident** (REFLECTIONS, Spring 2012)

[http://nwahistory.org/assets/12\\_winter\\_newsletter.pdf](http://nwahistory.org/assets/12_winter_newsletter.pdf)

**"Frank Andrews and the Role of Airpower in Hemispheric Defense"** (AIR & SPACE POWER JOURNAL)

<http://www.au.af.mil/au/afri/aspi/digital/pdf/articles/2013-May-Jun/F-allert.pdf>

**"Northwest Airlines' Modification Center in World War II"** (Minnesota HISTORY)

<http://collections.mnhs.org/MNHHistoryMagazine/articles/63/v63i08p324-333.pdf>

**"A Case of Mistaken Identity - Col. Edgar Gorrell"** (a three-part article. The link will take you to all three parts)

<https://balloonstodrones.wordpress.com/2016/10/07/a-case-of-mistaken-identity-colonel-edgar-stanley-gorrell-part-1-early-life/>



# PLANNING THE DISPLAYS FOR OUR FUTURE NEW SPACE AT THE CROWNE PLAZA AIRE

A report by Bruce Kitt

On Jan. 6, 2017, twenty three volunteers from the NWAHC met with two representatives from the Minnesota Historical Society—**David Grabitske**, State History Services Manager, and **Todd Mahon**, a Field Services Specialist from the Heritage Preservation Department, to help us collect our thoughts and plan for our future. This was a mutually beneficial meeting as David and Todd used us as their “beta test” for doing quick, time-sensitive, on-site help to museums such as the NWAHC. An unexpected benefit for us was their surprise announcement that they had dedicated their entire day to our meeting—far longer than the morning hours most of us expected.

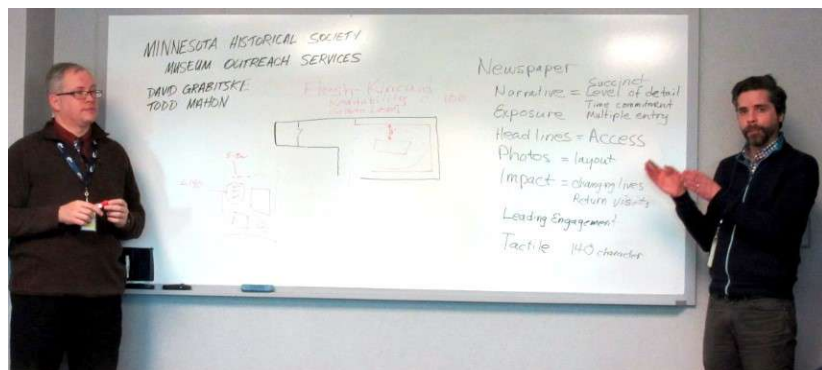


The morning session was focused on a general layout for the new museum. Their recommendation, which generated much agreement, was to think of the museum display as having “A” and “B” areas. “A” would be the display running along the outer walls. The focus of these displays would be from an employee’s perspective. David & Todd suggested an MSP timeline, from 1925 to present. We’d decide how to populate the dates, but their suggestion was to have small, specific mini-displays. We learned that there are four levels in a *hierarchy of information* that museums utilize:

1. *Orientation: a short overview of what the visitor is going to learn about,*
2. *Segmentation: breaking the overall story into topics for easy reading and understanding,*
3. *Explanation: more in-depth information.*
4. *Identification: the use of objects to illustrate the above.*

Right: David Grabitske and Todd Mahon. Photos: Robert DuBert

The “B” area could focus on the public’s air travel experiences. The concept of one or several walk-around display units was considered and discussed.



The afternoon session began after a lunch break and lasted until 430p. The topic was what stories and subjects to tell. Six of us were in attendance for this session. We had two whiteboards full of ideas and from them we selected several to pursue as our initial new displays. This is where you, our volunteers, can step in and help us put together something new for our visitors to see. Please look at the topics listed below—we need a preliminary draft of what would become the storyline for each topic, and we ask that you consider writing a draft outline for one (or more!). David & Todd have committed to staying with us as we create these new displays and we need to be equally committed on our side.

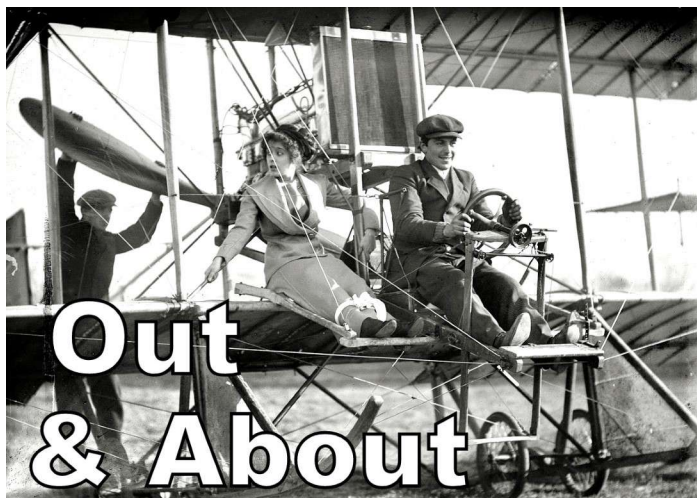
We have identified eight segments to tell the story of commercial aviation in Minnesota, focused at MSP:

1. *Air Mail & the origins of commercial US aviation.*
2. *Early airlines.*
3. *World War II and its impact on commercial aviation*
4. *Post-war and the growth of international routes and the emergence of local service carriers (i.e. North Central, Southern, Air West, etc., the Northwest Airlines family tree).*
5. *1960-1970s - the introduction of jets*
6. *Deregulation and its effects*
7. *September 11, 2001 and its effects*
8. *Industry consolidation.*

The more people who take on a piece of this task, the better and easier it will be for us to come up with great displays. I echo David & Todd's reminder that this is only a preliminary step for us and we'll have plenty of help from each other (research, fact-checking, etc.) and from David and Todd in guiding us through the process leading up to our grand reopening. I sincerely hope there's something in this that whets your creative appetite. Please let me (Bruce Kitt) know what you're interested in and how you would be willing to help. Call the NWAHC at 952-698-4478 or email me at [bruce.kitt@nwahistory.org](mailto:bruce.kitt@nwahistory.org). Thanks!

Many thanks to the NWAHC volunteers who attended this meeting: Gail Diercks; Flora Dreyer; Robert DuBert; Kay Ferrell; Woody Fountain; Art Gorgen; Carol Hall; Doug Hall; Dianne Hermann; Chuck Huntley; Bruce Kitt; Bonnie Lane; Bill Marchessault; Dave McCarthy; Karen Melchior; Keith Oberg; Mike Peasley; Linda Peck; Vince Rodriguez; Sue Rostkoski; Kevin Sliwinski; Don Swanson; John Yuen.





## A Visit to the

# FLIGHT PATH MUSEUM & LEARNING CENTER

6661 W. Imperial Highway, Los Angeles CA 90045

424-646-7284 [flightpathmuseum.com](http://flightpathmuseum.com)

Open Tuesday-Saturday 10a-3p, closed on major holidays

Admission: FREE. Free parking

Closest airport: LAX. Ground transportation: Uber, Lyft, taxi.

The **Flight Path Museum & Learning Center** was founded in 1995 as a nonprofit, community-based organization to honor aviation pioneers, recognize the economic importance of aviation and aerospace to Southern California, and encourage youth to pursue education and careers in aviation-related fields. In November 2002 the Los Angeles Board of Airport Commissioners officially authorized Flight Path to operate an educational facility and museum in the LAX Imperial Terminal. During the next year, Flight Path refurbished the terminal with major support from Los Angeles World Airports, the agency which operates LAX. The museum celebrates the history of LAX and includes exhibits about the five airlines (*United, American, TWA, Western and Pan Am*) which moved their operations from Burbank's Lockheed Air Terminal to Los Angeles Municipal Airport (now LAX) in 1946, thereby establishing it as the premier airport for the region. Onsite is the **William A. Schoneberger Research Library**, available by reservation. One gallery is devoted to the history of *The Flying Tiger Line*, where large picture windows offer visitors an unobstructed view of two runways of LAX. (Note: of special interest are the design and layout of the museum displays, which follow the guidelines suggested for the NWAHC by David Grabitske and Todd Mahon. See p.8). The museum is operated by a professional staff, augmented by a corps of welcoming and helpful volunteers. NWAHC Executive Director Bruce Kitt and your editor recently visited Flight Path, on separate visits, to view the displays and learn more about the operation.



Left: The Flight Path Learning Center & Museum is located on the perimeter of LAX.



Right: NWAHC Executive Director Bruce Kitt with Marie Happ, Flight Path's Director of Volunteers. Bruce spent an entire day at the museum.



Left: One of a series of timeline display placards located on the perimeter walls of the museum, which describe the history of LAX for visitors.

Right: The William A Schoneberger Research Library is available to visitors free of charge. Reservations suggested.



Left: A free-standing display case of Pan Am memorabilia.



Right: Delta Terminals 5 and 6 and the LAX Theme Restaurant, as seen from the Flying Tiger Line gallery.

Photo: Robert DuBert and Bruce Kitt.







Bonanza Airlines mechanics work on a Rolls Royce Dart turboprop engine of a Fokker F-27 at Bonanza's Las Vegas maintenance base. Photo: NWAHC Archives

## NEWS and ANNOUNCEMENTS

Got an event related to Northwest/Republic you'd like to promote in these pages? Send details to Robert DuBert, editor, at [robert.dubert@gmail.com](mailto:robert.dubert@gmail.com) Photos and images always a big plus! Deadlines: Feb. 20, May 20, Aug. 20 and Nov. 20.

A play by **Jessica Huang**, about the life of former Northwest employee **Harry Chin**, who worked at the NWA Bomber Modification Center during World War II. "Follow the true story of Harry Chin, one of the many Chinese nationals who landed in the U.S. through a loophole in the Chinese Exclusion Act. Haunted by the ghosts of his past and provoked by the curiosity of his daughter, Harry is forced to confront his buried secrets. Through leaps of time and space, we experience Harry's longing for the life he left in China, and the complications of love in a new land." A review by **Anne Kerr** will appear in the June issue of REFLECTIONS.



### The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin

March 18-April 9, 2017  
30 E. 10th St., St. Paul MN  
651.292.4323  
[historytheatre.com](http://historytheatre.com)



## HELP A HISTORIC DOUGLAS DC-3 FLY AGAIN!

The **Aviation Heritage Center** of Wisconsin, in Sheboygan Falls, invites your financial donations and volunteer assistance for their plan to restore a former North Central DC-3, which will become the pride of the museum's aircraft collection and anchor a planned North Central exhibit gallery and commemorative library. You don't have to be a Wisconsin resident to participate in this project (Ed: use your non-rev travel privileges. You earned 'em). For information, contact: **Jon Helminiak**, Founder and Director, North Central Airlines Commemorative Exhibit, Aviation Heritage Center of Wisconsin, N6191 Resource Dr., Sheboygan Falls WI 53085. Email: [jon@ahcw.org](mailto:jon@ahcw.org) Phone: 262-893-5500 (text or call).





**Submissions Requested:** Are you possibly interested in writing something related to the history of Northwest and/or Republic Airlines (NC, RW, SO etc.), for possible inclusion in a future issue of REFLECTIONS? Especially of interest are any topics **not** covered in past issues and little-known historical items which have never appeared in print elsewhere. The length can be anything from a half-page (two or three paragraphs) up to a feature-length four pages. Corroborating photos and/or images are a must, and all submissions are subject to fact-checking and editing for length and content. Historical accuracy is key—no hearsay, gossip, tall tales or idle speculations, please (however interesting they might be ☺). If you're interested, please contact me at [robert.dubert@gmail.com](mailto:robert.dubert@gmail.com) or 734-678-7600 (leave a message) to discuss your idea.

## CATASTROPHE AVERTED—THE UNDERWEAR BOMBER



On Christmas Day, 2009, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, a passenger onboard Northwest flight 253 from AMS to DTW, attempted to destroy the aircraft by detonating a bomb hidden in his underwear, a plot which failed when the bomb failed to detonate fully and Abdulmutallab was subdued by other passengers and crew members minutes before the flight arrived in Detroit. This incident is the subject of a documentary produced by Darlow Smithson Productions in 2010 for the BBC. The program aired on the Discovery Channel, but is now available to stream on YouTube, and includes an in-depth look at airport security worldwide, a dramatization of Abdulmutallab's journey which began in Ghana, and the results of testing which revealed that the aircraft most likely could have landed safely even if the bomb had gone off as planned. Former NWA Director of Security Douglas Laird appears several times during the program. Highly recommended. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3VtQ\\_DRv4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3VtQ_DRv4)

How Safe Are Our Skies? Detroit Flight 253



drone strike in Yemen. Recently, on Feb. 22, the *New York Times* revealed the full extent of al-Awlaki's involvement in the NW 253 bomb plot: [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/22/us/politics/anwar-awlaki-underwear-bomber-abdulmutallab.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/22/us/politics/anwar-awlaki-underwear-bomber-abdulmutallab.html?_r=0)

**RUBBLE** The former Northwest Airlines Training Company (NATCO) building has been completely demolished, as the new training center and headquarters for the Minnesota Vikings football team takes shape on the former headquarters campus of Northwest Airlines. Pilot Brent Koth has documented the demolition in a series of photos which he posted on the NWA Employee facebook page on Jan. 19: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/NATCO/161195180572223>

Bruce Kitt, who recently visited the demolition site, reports that the former NATCO is now "a pile of rubble." And Koth reports that the Eagan police department told him that the "Northwest Parkway" street signs have all been stolen.

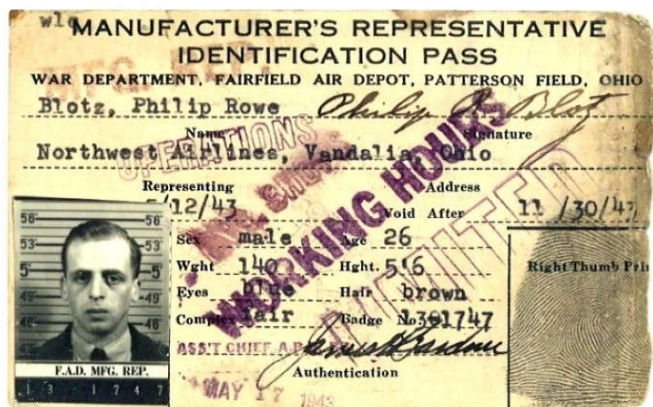
Photos: Brent Koth



Last month, your editor took advantage of light flight loads and balmy weather in northern Virginia to pay a visit to the grave of NWA founding director Lt. Col. Paul Henderson, who is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Henderson, who served as Asst. Postmaster General before leaving government service to work at Northwest Airways and National Air Transport, was responsible for the installation of navigation beacons across part of the transcontinental airmail route and for organizing the system of Contract Air Mail (CAM), designed to outsource the carriage of some airmail to the "private sector" of airlines just getting started in the U.S., providing the revenue necessary for them to survive and succeed. More than just an airline founding director, Henderson can rightly be considered a Founding Father of the American airline industry. For more on the founding of Northwest Airways, see the Sept. 2016 issue of

REFLECTIONS: [http://nwahistory.org/assets/16\\_sep\\_newsletter.pdf](http://nwahistory.org/assets/16_sep_newsletter.pdf) And, a reminder that the last 10 years of our newsletter is available on the NWAHC website: <http://nwahistory.org>





Upper left: a Doolittle Raider B-25 at the Mid-Continent hangar. NWAHC Archives.  
Lower left: NWA mechanic Philip Blotz's ID card. Photo courtesy Tim Blotz.

Above: a B-25 in action, from a LIFE magazine advertisement for the Fisher Body Division of General Motors.

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**Admission: \$5 Children under 15 Free**

The 2017 **DETROIT Aviation and Airline Collectibles Show**

**Sat. May 20**  
9AM to 4PM

At Historic Willow Run Airport  
Presented and Hosted by the Yankee Air Museum

Don't miss the Rides!

For More Information visit  
[www.YankeeAirMuseum.org/Events](http://www.YankeeAirMuseum.org/Events)  
or call the Yankee Air Museum 734-483-4030

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