

December 2021 Volume 19, number 4

#### In this issue:

The October MSP Airliner Show was a smashing success!

A slick arrival on a DC-10 into Seoul

Logo controversy: Should the Regal Imperial Eagle be counted as an official emblem?

## Our mission:

To preserve and display the memory of Northwest Airlines' colorful history.

To tell the stories of carriers merged and allied with NWA, and the stations and regions they served.

To show how the legacy of NWA carries on into the future.



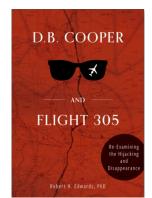
Northwest retirees, avgeeks, and "unsolved mysteries" fans all watched Tom Hiddleston as Loki Laufeyson as Cooper, and Erika Coleman as Florence Schaffner, enact the notorious events. All rights held by Marvel / Disney.

# D.B. Cooper: Now the truth is told

...about how the NWAHC advised Marvel Studios with that great scene in the Disney+ TV series "LOKI" —by Scott Norris

Around the stacks in our museum's archives, there's a saying: "D.B. Cooper is the gift that keeps on giving." Not in the monetary sense, mind you, nor in donations or contributions. No, it's in the emails and Facebook comments and Twitter threads that wind up on our doorstep with the latest 'imaginative' hot takes or stale conspiracies on who "Cooper" really was and how he may have survived to the present day. On the one hand, it does keep the Northwest brand in the public's consciousness. But on the other hand, focusing on just one hijacking and one man glosses over 73 years of hard work and achievement.

The evergreen folktale status of Flight 305 does, however, give your Museum the opportunity on occasion to contribute positively to the incident's retelling. Such has been the case over the past year with Dr. Robert Edwards, a British economist, researcher, private pilot, and writer currently in Romania, on his just-published book, "D.B. Cooper and Flight 305," where we gave advice on Boeing 727 aircraft components and how they are identified and tracked, in order to dispel erroneous conclusions made by other theorists. **SECRETS REVEALED to page 6** 



# **Preflight Checklist**

# The Northwest Airlines History Center, Inc.

We are an independent, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation registered in the State of Minnesota. Volunteer-staffed and volunteer-managed. We have no organizational or financial tie to Delta Air Lines.

Founder: Henry V. "Pete" Patzke (1925-2012)

#### Directors:

- Executive Director and Collections Manager: Bruce Kitt
- Museum Director: open position
- Directors: Bruce Kitt, Fay Kulenkamp, Bill Marchessault, Vince Rodriguez, Jeff Schwalen, Mike Vetter, Scott Norris
- Director Emeritus: Jerry Nielsen

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Editor: Scott Norris northwestairlines@comcast.net

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## Visiting the Museum

The NWAHC Museum is located inside the Crowne Plaza AIRE Hotel in Bloomington, MN, just south of MSP International Airport.

Current schedule: Thursday - Saturday, 11 am - 5 pm Closed for major holidays.

Admission and parking are FREE. (Special events may incur a charge.)

#### **Directions:**

**From the airport:** Use METRO Blue Line light rail from either Terminal 1 or Terminal 2 southbound and exit at the American Boulevard station. The Crowne Plaza AIRE is immediately east, across the street from the station. Trains run every 10 minutes and fares are \$2.50 peak / \$2 off-peak. Tickets are good for 2.5 hours of unlimited travel, so depending on the length of your visit, a separate return ticket may not be necessary.

**From the Mall of America:** Take the METRO Blue Line light rail outbound; American Boulevard is the third stop.

In the Twin Cities Metro area: Head toward MSP International Airport. From Interstate 494, exit on 34th Ave. S. and go south one block to American Blvd. Turn left (east) on American and then immediately right into (and under) the hotel. The parking ramp is on the left - follow the signs for free hotel parking on the ground level (do not use spaces not reserved for the hotel.)

The museum is located on the third floor, above the pool area on the second floor, and across from the Fitness Center.

## **Annual Membership**

Membership is the main source of funding for the NWAHC; please join!

\$30 level - receives REFLECTIONS digital edition early access via email

\$35 level - receives REFLECTIONS print edition by U.S. Postal Service (U.S. mailing addresses only)

# **Boarding Announcements**



# **From Director Bruce Kitt**

Thankfully, 2021 is ending better than 2020 did. On behalf of we volunteers at the Northwest Airlines History Center (NWAHC), thank you for your loyal and steadfast support. Your renewals, your financial donations and gifts of artifacts, and your word of mouth or subscriptions-as-gifts to family and friends, enabled the NWAHC to weather hurdles that permanently closed many smaller museums during the past year.

Not that it's been turbulence-free for the museum. Our main goal for 2021 was to migrate our business platform to Shopify, and we may still meet that goal, albeit six months behind schedule. Once installed, Shopify will enable us to enter the e-



## From Editor Scott Norris

While the NWAHC board continues work on crafting a development map for the future of the museum, I've continued building new features on our website - and appropriately enough, have just launched a new "wing" to our Digital Archives dedicated to route maps.

Even before I understood how to read a timetable, the maps within them, behind ticket counters, and in advertising, sparked my imagination and curiosity. The artistry of route maps has inspired countless thousands as well - and I hope this new gallery is seen as much for its beauty as it will be for research and use in math and social studies teaching.

## Shop online to support the NWAHC!

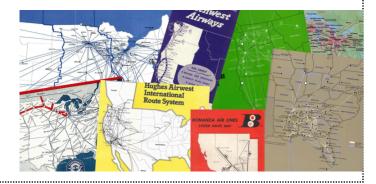
- Treasure hunt! We offer surplus materials and new apparel and pins for sale on **eBay** under the handle "cyberglitz" the assortment changes every week!
- Buying on amazon.com? We all learned how convenient is can be this year. Sign up for Amazon Smile and 1/2% of every purchase is contributed to our museum. Use the link at smile.amazon.com/ch/41-2020975 to specify the NWAHC!

commerce stratosphere. This will give the NWAHC the ability to advertise - and attract - a global membership. A larger membership base is the key step the board identified as a critical shortfall in creating the stable financial engine needed to power future success. We are closing in on completing this important step.

Our business relationship with Access Philanthropy (AP) is becoming more involved as we've moved beyond the preliminary introduction stage. We have some difficult conversations ahead, but are optimistic that working through them will leave the future of the museum and the board better positioned to grow and prosper. You will also be involved in this process. We want to hear from you as we work towards creating the organizational structure necessary to insure a future for the NWAHC we all want to see. Please visit https://tinyurl.com/28ctnd2p to participate in a brief survey (just one page).

Thank you for the support you've given the NWAHC. Like an airline, it's the effort of many who keep it flying. CAVU. 

From the 1920s to the 2000s, we've included all the Northwest Family carriers and Airlinks - from Empire and Southwest to Precision and Pacific Island Air, drawing from annual reports, timetables, inflight magazines and more. Just like our very popular Timetable galleries, the Route Maps pages will be regularly added to as we uncover more treasures. Go to http://northwestairlineshistory.org/route-maps/ and explore!



## Interested in donating materials?

Please contact our collections manager, Bruce Kitt, at bruce.kitt@northwestairlineshistory.org with details of your items, photos if possible, and how we can reach you.

We are especially interested in items that help us tell stories or demonstrate concepts and procedures; records and correspondence; video, audio, and photos; training materials; and union communications. Items from Hughes Airwest & its predecessors, and Southern are especially appreciated.

# **Compass Readings**



After the 2020 event was cancelled due to COVID, the Upper Midwest aviation community turned out in force for our return to the Best Western Plus on October 9th. 13 vendors rented 32 tables, an all-time best. And that beefier supply of memorabilia, antiques, and current collectibles was matched by record attendance - at least 50 people higher than the previous best. And as a fundraiser for the NWAHC, the net proceeds were also a best-ever figure. Vendors were extremely happy with their sales as well - no mean feat as the Twin Cities' event slots between shows in Atlanta the week prior and Chicago the week after.

A pre-show clip shot by and aired on KMSP-TV 9 in the Twin Cities the day before and morning of the event definitely helped draw a diverse crowd including many families with young children! And the MSP planespotting community also got out the word early and often through Facebook groups - weather was great that day for watching aircraft at the nearby Cargo Road Viewing Area.

With such solid results, we have committed to the same location for next year - so please make a date to join us on Saturday, October 8, 2022 at the Best Western Plus in Bloomington, Minnesota.







UPPER LEFT: friends old and new found the show a wonderful get-together opportunity.

ABOVE: die-cut paper totem pole using the NWA Imperial Eagle motif on its base resembles the actual pole presented to Mayor LaGuardia when Northwest inaugurated services to NYC in 1945.

LEFT: the MSP Airport Foundation came with an informative booth showing the many projects they undertake to keep the airport a welcoming and supportive place both for workers and travelers.

We're already planning next year's show and hoping to add more exciting elements - watch for our announcements!





## **Civil Air Patrol history encounter**

On October 19 we were pleased to welcome about 80 cadets, commanders, and family members from the Minnesota Wing Civil Air Patrol for an evening tour of the museum, history presentations and discussions about aviation careers by our own Bruce Kitt and Delta/NWA Capt. Jim Zurales, and even a little shopping. All told, our guests were with us for about 3 hours. It was a great opportunity to grow community awareness of the museum, and we look forward to hosting the CAP again.



## **NWAHC Strategic Planning Update**

Your Board will be meeting with Access Philanthropy on Dec. 2nd to define the NWAHC's long-run vision and critical steps for the next several years, including the possibility of hiring one or more marketing and management positions, the funding needed, and fundraising required to be a vibrant hub of our broader aviation community. We invite all Members and history enthusiasts to participate in our first feedback survey at https://tinyurl.com/28ctnd2p this month.





#### **E-commerce update**

Can you hear our heads pounding against the table? The global staffing and supply-chain crisis manifested at our new e-commerce service provider, Shopify, this fall in multiple forms.

- First, we experienced delays in getting the NWAHC coded correctly as a tax-exempt 501 (c)(3) nonprofit. That's important for ensuring our customer transactions are handled properly, and also so that we don't get charged sales tax on purchases of equipment.
- Then, the cash-register equipment we need to transition over from our old Clover commerce system, such as barcode scanners and receipt printers, has been backordered for several months.

These delays only started to resolve at Thanksgiving; with them out of the way we can proceed to testing credit card payments, refunds, and how customer information is handled.

#### **REFLECTIONS, December 2021**

#### northwestairlineshistory.org

# **Feature Article**

The Museum's biggest brush with fame around Cooper started under modest beginnings almost two years ago. Bruce Kitt tells the tale:

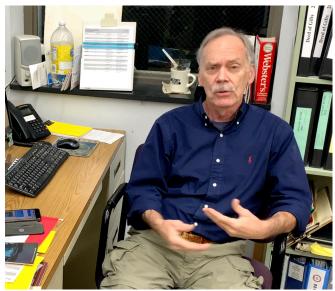
"In January 2020, I received a text message asking for information about the Cooper hijacking of November '71. And they were beginning to ask for specifics about cabin furnishings. So they (the production assistant) wanted to know what the seating was, what the cabin layout was like where Cooper was sitting and what would have transpired. I answered a couple basic questions, got them going on it, and as they started their own production work, the questions began to become more specific. One of them was, they wanted to know what would have been in the seat pocket in 1971. So doing some digging around, the very obvious first thing was Passages, Northwest's inflight magazine. She was elated to hear that: "oh, gee, do you have one?" "Yes, we do." "Can you send me a scan of the cover?" Which I did - and that grew. She came back and said, "can we get a scan of the back cover?" Which I said, "oh, yes, and you're really going to going to love it - spoiler alert - because it has a Disney tiein."

"So then she came back, "well, can you scan the contents?" "Well, I don't think the actor playing Cooper going to be reading it; why don't I just give you the number of pages - you have the front and back cover; you can just make a dummy up that's similar, without going to all this trouble."

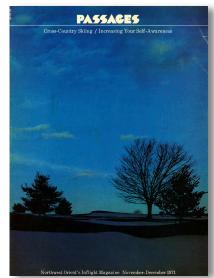
"All of this keeps going on and on; they want to know what the flight attendant uniforms were like, what were they wearing; so I made sure they had the correct set of wings for the stewardesses. In cabin service, what would they have been doing - did they even have cabin service? I was initially wrong, because the flight was just 30 minutes - Portland to Seattle; so that's really not long enough to get a full cabin service out, and you're not getting a full meal, just a light snack and a drink. Well, subsequently I found out through some of the retirees that help us that no, they actually started serving as soon as you sat down. So he would have had his whiskeys and whatnot; there would have been time for that."

"All of this leads up, as I'm asking her, what can you tell me about it, because we like to know. What is it going to be used for, what to keep an eye out for, and she says, 'well, I can't tell you.' Okay, we're kind of used to that - some things that are still in production and you don't want word leaking out. I said, would we get a copy? would we get credit for anything? and the answers were 'no, no, if i told you I could lose my job.' Kind of a dead end, and nothing any more. So whatever we provided to them was sufficient for their purposes and - that was it."

"After seeing [the trailer for LOKI], I went back through the correspondence with this person, and her name wasn't a giveaway, but her email was .MCU - the Marvel Cinematic Universe. So we did end up helping Disney in the production of this. Not knowing what was going on at the time - but seeing how it turned out - was a pretty interesting use of the archives."



Bruce Kitt at the NWAHC Archive



We did end up scanning the full issue of the November 1971 Passages and it is posted on our blog - use the short link https://bit.ly/DBCooperMags



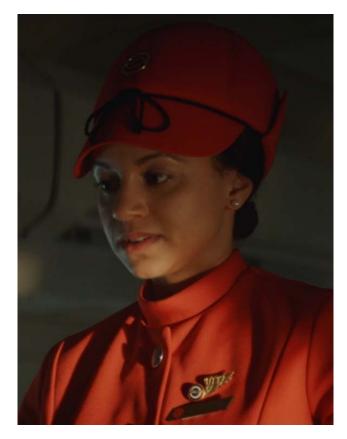
Back cover of Passages - some kind of Mickey Mouse operation!



You can smell the kerosene, conifers, and coffee in this evocative Disney/Marvel rendering above of Sea-Tac that features a pair of Northwest 727-100s in the correct livery as they hadn't been painted in the silver-top style yet. Even the red 'feathers' under the cockpit windows are correct. The company titles aren't shown, because it's a fictional story, and because technically Delta still owned the Northwest trademark at the time of the episode's production. Yes, it's November 1971 and Flight 305 landed at SEA at 5:43 pm, so it should be dark, as the news photo to the right of the actual aircraft during the hijacking from the Seattle Post-Intelligencer demonstrates.



Above and below photos Marvel/Disney.



Yes, they got the flight attendant wings and name badge right, but the roles of Florence Shaffner and Tina Mucklow were amalgamated in this episode of LOKI. Shaffner did initially engage with Cooper and was handed the hijacking note. But Mucklow ended up being the crew member intermediary before Flight 305 landed in Seattle, and she remained as the only cabin crew when they departed again.

Mucklow's story, along with that of friend of the NWAHC Bill Rataczak, the co-pilot on Flight 305, is being scripted as a movie thriller by the production company McFarland Entertainment, with director Dawn Bierschwal, under the title, "Nod If You Understand."

We "met" Bierschwal and McFarland, and reconnected with Mucklow, on Twitter during the 50th anniversary livestream, and extended our invitation to help their production in any way we can.





There was sadly no practical cabin set constructed - everything outside of the actors was computer-generated. The seat upholstery and headrest covers, cabin ceiling, placement of window emergency exits, and cabin-divider paneling all contribute to the realism of the scene - and its Mid-Century aesthetic parallels that of other buildings and offices in the show's Time Variance Authority. The "set" earns extra points for correctly not having any other staff or passengers present (which also made the job easier for Marvel's graphics designers!) The bins are not period, however - they were an open-shelf configuration with PSU units that hung below the rack line.

As Loki / Cooper makes his way toward the tailcone exit, with parachutes strapped on, the cabin is painted with low almost-sunset sunlight streaming through the cabin windows - which alludes to the romanticized shading and folktale status this incident has taken on. Never mind that Cooper had ordered the shades to be lowered; that gets in the way of storytelling! When he jumps, the sunlight is coming from more of an overhead position, similar to the view of aircraft at Sea-Tac on the previous page (points are awarded for showing the staircase in down position, using the model of a short-body 727-100, and remembering NWA had a red tail.) So which was it - almost sunset or mid-day? We already answered the question on the preceding page - the flight took off from Seattle at 7:33 pm, and Cooper is believed to have jumped around 8:11 pm. In November, this was all well after sunset so none of this sequence would have experienced daylight. The weather in the presumed jump site and altitude was also far from photogenic - cloudy with high winds and freezing rain.

For a few moments, however, Northwest metal and cabin crew flew again, and you won't hear us nitpick about that!

(Images with Tom Hiddleston of course per Disney/Marvel. Cabin shot part of FBI case file documentation.)



northwestairlineshistory.org

**REFLECTIONS, December 2021** 

# Logos don't speak for themselves (Part 4)

#### **By Bruce Kitt**

To update the conclusion from my previous article, the 1948 compass logo's use now appears as the calm before a technological storm. I stated that its use spanned 13 years – it didn't. Commercial aviation was at the end of one era, piston-power, and the beginning of the jet age, which blew open the ability – and capacity – of airlines to fly everyone everywhere. It was during this period that a program to differentiate Northwest from its competitors through passenger food service, morphed into a symbol that is considered by some to be an actual logo. It's a debated contention, best told chronologically and in two broad subjects, to answer.

#### **GAME OF WORDS**

Front page news in the April-May 1957 issue of Northwest Orient Airlines News (NWON): "Deluxe 'Imperial Service' Started on Some Flights", flights utilizing the new Douglas DC-7C, which recently entered the fleet that spring. On page 2, President Nyrop provided further details how Imperial Service would be rolled out for Northwest's Stratocruisers and DC-6s. The cover of the April 28, 1957 timetable inaugurated DC-7C service, and introduced "Imperial Service", with a coronet above the letter "M" in Imperial (Illus.15). Thereafter, every timetable's "General Information" page explained the coronet and the mouth-watering enhancements that level of service provided.

The first quarter of 1958 began the demotion of the 1948 logo. The first example was the cover of the 1957 Annual Report (**Illus.**16). While its contents pertained to what happened the preceding year, illustrated by a drawing of the DC-7C, what catches the reader's eye is the large, half-page presence of an eagle that also incorporated the 1948 compass logo. This eagle next appeared on the cover of the February 1, 1958 timetable (the coronet's use continued internally). The eagle replaced the 1948 logo as NWON's masthead logo beginning with the April-May 1958 edition, and then the coronet, both on the front cover and internally, on the April 27, 1958 timetable's General Information page.

This timetable is a prime example of the ambiguity that's associated with the eagle's purpose, as the coronet was still used on the flight schedule pages to denote a certain level of cabin service. Additionally, there are several places within this April 27<sup>th</sup> timetable were the eagle is used with the words Imperial Service (**Illus**.17)

There were no explanations from Northwest's General Office regarding the eagle until page 8 of the June-July, 1958 NWON. Not unexpectedly, an employee had written to NWON asking about this dual usage. Malcolm MacKay, Executive VP, answered this question under the heading "Imperial Eagle to be Official NWA Insignia" and saying, in reference to the 1948 logo, that the public "...has little or no knowledge of its basic significance." He went on to say, "The Imperial Eagle will be used more and more on certain company material as the symbol of our Imperial Service, **but will not be used on the exterior of our aircraft**." (bold text added). There were no further issues of NWON in 1958, thus no further comments regarding the Imperial Eagle.

#### DAILY DC-7C MIPERIAL SERVICE MON-STOP COAST TO COAST AND COAST TO COAST SEATILE-TACOMA – NEW YORK DORTLAND – CHICAGO – NEW YORK DORTLAND – DORTLAND –

#### **ILLUSTRATION 15:**

The "Seven Seas" were introduced with Imperial Service ... radar-equipped, of course!

(Image courtesy Bill Rosenbloom.)



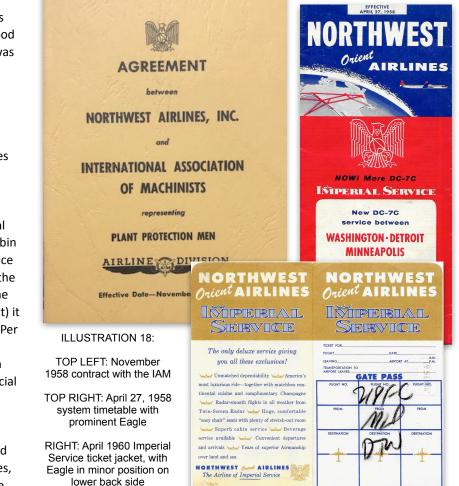
ILLUSTRATION 16: An impression of the under-construction main hangar complex at Minneapolis-St. Paul joins an illustration of the brand-new Douglas DC-7C and the Imperial Eagle in the 1957 Annual Report. The DC-7C would never show its model number on the tailfin.



ILLUSTRATION 17: The Eagle joins the 'coronet' service mark inside timetables from spring 1958.

The first quarter of 1959 began with additional food news: NWON's Jan-Feb issue announced Northwest's new Regal Imperial Service, offering NWA's "finest food and service". In the timetables, this level of service was shown in respective flight information and on the general information page as a new listing, Regal Imperial. The Imperial Eagle was also present, representing Imperial Service. NWON for May-June, 1959 announced the creation of another level of service, Coronation Coach, indicated in the timetables by a small Cinderella-style coach.

As listed above, between 1957-1959, Northwest introduced Imperial Service, the Imperial Eagle, Regal Imperial service, and Coronation Coach service as cabin food enhancements. Additional names for food service were rolled down the aisle in subsequent years, yet the Imperial Eagle symbol outlasted them all; in 1985 (the last timetable perused in the research for this subject) it was the ubiquitous symbol for in-flight food service. Per Mr. MacKay, it did replace the 1948 logo in other instances (Illus.18), but its most extensive use was in timetables. That the Imperial Eagle became "the official NWA insignia" is not supported by a company-wide rebranding campaign as seen in previous logo transitions. However, contrary to Mr. MacKay's statement that the Imperial Eagle would "not be used on the exterior of our aircraft", it was. Game of Planes, the second part of the Imperial Eagle, will discuss the Imperial Eagle in flight.





Siberian Cutoff, Northwest crews knew how to handle cold conditions, as Bill's story on the next page illustrates:

# **Tales from the Line**

# Handling culture and weather as smooth as ice

#### By Capt. Bill Atkins (courtesy of the Atkins family)

It is December 23rd, 1973, a cold winter day in Northeast Asia. My cockpit crew consists of Ken Men and George Lund, and we are scheduled to make the milk run from Tokyo's Haneda Airport to Seoul, Korea on Flight 21 westbound and Flight 22 back to Japan. The aircraft is a recently-delivered Douglas DC-10, Northwest #152. Our trip is scheduled out at 09:00, but we are a half hour late because the wings had to be deiced.

We make our first position report over Nagoya, the Japanese control center. They come back to advise us that our destination of Seoul-Kimpo (retranslated as Gimpo from the 2000s onward) is now closed to all traffic due to an inch of ice on all runways.

This condition is not a surprise because we were advised on an earlier weather briefing that it was a "strong possibility." We just say thank you [doetastamashi] and proceed on our original flight plan to the next checkpoint of Matsue. Apparently Nagoya Control had expected us to request clearance to an alternate airport or turn back to our point of departure.

Next, we make a position report over Matsue, Japan. Once again we are given the same closed-airport report. We acknowledge and then, much to their consternation, proceed on to Pohang on the southern Korea coast. Once again, when we make our position report at Pohang, the Korean controllers give us the same bad-news airport situation. Nevertheless, we continue on toward Taegu (Daegu in modern translation.)

At Taegu we request clearance to the Kimpo Approach Control frequency. This is unusual because such requests are not usually made this far out. However, they oblige, in spite of the fact this strange flight should be heading for a remote alternate airport - and not requesting Approach Control before arriving at the normal checkpoint, Ansong (now Anseong).

We make contact with the Approach Control frequency and make a specific request: "Please, telephone the Korean Civil Aeronautics Board in downtown Seoul and tell them: We are requesting clearance to make an approach, not to make a landing. Landing will be made only at the pilot's own discretion." There was a long silence before we hear, "Roger."

We are now in the holding pattern over Seoul at 25,000 feet for about 20 minutes before they come back on the radio: "Northwest 21, the Korean Civil Aeronautics Board clears NWA21 to make an APPROACH, not to make a landing. Landing only at the pilot's discretion - repeated a second time - landing ONLY at the pilot's discretion."

Perhaps I am just lucky they are having a Board meeting when they receive my inquiry? The KCAB has never before received such a request; one that relieved them of any responsibility for an airplane making a landing. They have saved face by not having to be accountable for the success of a landing when the Captain himself assumes all the responsibility.

Our approach is normal. The weather is good. Visibility is about 6 miles and the wind is 20 knots, a slight crosswind, on the icy runway - as predicted: glare ice.

The DC-10 is normally a stiff-legged gear on touchdown, but this landing is smooth as glass because that is what we are dealing with: glassy ice.

Douglas' DC-10 jet with variable thrust reversing is ideal for this type of landing condition. Positive thrust, zero thrust, or reverse thrust on the center engine can be used: whatever you prefer. The brakes are never touched, not even when parking at our gate.

Cabin crew does not even realize we are on the ground until the Ground Gate personnel roll the DC-10's cabin door up into the ceiling to disembark passengers.

Meanwhile, Kimpo's terminal is crowded shoulder to shoulder with stranded passengers because no other aircraft has been in or out for many hours. Northwest 21 is the one and only flight to land that morning.

Apparently no pilot had yet thought to request a clearance directly from the KCAB instead of the Approach Controller. I believe, as most Pilots do, that every landing has to be at the pilot's discretion and is his sole responsibility.

NWA's Korea Station Manager exclaimed I was the greatest Pilot in the world! Twenty-some years later he still recalls the moment when we meet. But, any NWA Pilot could have done the same. The secret is knowing <u>how</u> to ask for clearance and <u>from whom</u>.



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# Props to our volunteers!

Our team makes the connections to history - join us!

The sky's the limit for folks interested in volunteering their time and expertise with the NWAHC - such as:

- Greeting and guiding our museum guests
- Designing and building museum exhibits
- Growing our e-commerce functionality
- Grant application and fundraising
- Community outreach & event planning
- Scanning and indexing historic documents and photos

Many of our ongoing projects are flexible to fit your schedule. And airline experience isn't necessary - just a love of history, adventure, and storytelling!

- Click the "Join Us" tab at northwestairlineshistory.org
- Email us: info@northwestairlineshistory.org
- Or give us a call: (952) 698-4478