

 NORTHWEST AIRLINES

WORLD Traveler

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 50
YEARS

BRIDGING
the PACIFIC

SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE EDITION

CELEBRATING

50 YEARS of Service to Asia

Fifty years ago this July, Northwest Airlines started regular service between the United States and Asia. That it is so easily accessible to American business and leisure travelers today is due to Northwest's commitment to excellence. This year Northwest celebrates five decades of bridging the Pacific and the many milestones that made that vision a reality and promise a rewarding future.



BY JANE AMMESON

July 15, 1947

At 1:15 a.m. Northwest Airlines makes the world a smaller place when it begins regularly scheduled flights to and from Asia.



First DC-4s Cross the Pacific

After World War II, a fleet of 41 aircraft can fly at a speed of 225 mph.

"In those days, we used DC-4s and could carry 32 passengers from Tokyo to Shanghai to Manila," says Stanley Fukai, ticketing agent for the first flight. "Then going back to the States, we took seats off and made it 24 because of gross-weight restrictions and the additional fuel load that was required."



Mail Takes Flight to China

"We had only one paying, ticketed customer to Shanghai—a lady," recalls Warren Avenson, copilot of the inaugural flight from Tokyo to Shanghai. "She was an American and her hobby was taking first flights. When we got to Shanghai, Northwest didn't yet have departure steps. But the Chinese authorities said everybody had to get off the airplane—it was the procedure. So we dug out a folding ladder kept on board and hung it on the door frame. But this very nice American woman took one look and said, 'No, a lady doesn't go down a ladder. I'm not getting off.' But the Chinese said, 'Yes, you are.' And she said, 'No, I'm not.' Eventually, the Chinese found a set of steps."



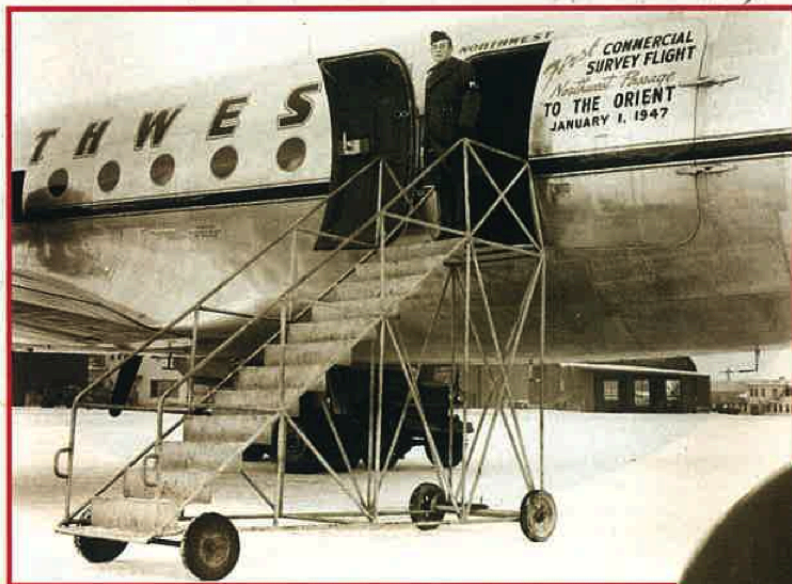
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First Commercial Survey Flight

"The first real flight to Japan was January 1, 1947. It was not a scheduled flight, and it didn't haul passengers," says Jerome Koerner, the flight's radio operator. "We were a shake-down crew surveying the routes before inaugural passenger flights began. We took over the station manager, mechanics, other personnel and so forth. We must have made about 12 of those flights. I made three myself. When July 15, 1947, finally arrived, we were ready for anything."



3 FLIGHTS WEEKLY TO THE ORIENT

Flying time-	TOKYO	SEOUL	SHANGHAI	MANILA
NEW YORK	39 hours	46 hours	45 hours	51 hours
CHICAGO	35 hours	42 hours	41 hours	47 hours
MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL	33 hours	40 hours	39 hours	45 hours
SEATTLE-TACOMA	27 hours	34 hours	33 hours	39 hours



Original 1947 Flight Schedule

"We made three flights a week—Monday, Wednesday and Saturday," says Jerome Koerner, a radio operator at the time. "We were certified to carry only 24 people, because there were many times when we had to haul fuel tanks instead of passengers. Now, flights are taking 17,000 to 18,000 people a week."

"Our plane back then grossed out at a maximum take-off weight of about 72,000 pounds. The 747 grosses out at 873,000 pounds, more than 800,000 pounds heavier than we were. Looking back, I consider that I was flying in the days of the dinosaurs."

First Airline with Regular Flights to Japan

On July 15, 1947, Northwest becomes the first airline to operate regularly scheduled flights between the U.S. and Japan.

"We had to make three legs on that flight," says first flight radio operator Jerome Koerner. "It took us about 14 hours just to fly to Anchorage from Minneapolis. We got off at that point and a relief crew would take the plane on to Shemya, and another crew would take it from Shemya down to Tokyo. Normally we figured it would be 33 hours flight time over from Minneapolis and 29 hours back. You can see why we needed relief crews at Anchorage, Shemya and Tokyo. Now, the crews go nonstop and it takes just 14 hours from New York to Tokyo—a trip that used to take 39 hours."

First Flight Crew

Crewing the first leg of the trip July 15, 1947, are (below, left to right) radio operator Jerome Koerner, flight mechanic Donald Rector, navigator George T. Bickel, purser Virgil Carlson, first officer Larry Horner, stewardess Evelyn Currie and captain Ed LaParle.



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First Color Ad Hits Magazine Stands

By the early 1950s, more people are flying to Asia. In 1952, Northwest's first color magazine ad promises not only exotic destinations, but also interesting traveling companions.

But when Northwest first opened its Asia routes in 1947, things were different. "The passengers were almost exclusively American," says Bill Glaza, Northwest manager of public relations and government sales in Japan, 1953-87. "A Japanese person needed a visa and had to purchase the ticket in dollars, so it was very hard for Asians to travel. A few Manila citizens were immigrating to the U.S., but mostly it was U.S. businessmen, government officials and the military."

Sleep on a Cloud...

...So promises the copy in a December 22, 1953, advertisement romancing travel on a Boeing Stratocruiser. "Stratocruiser berths provide more room than standard railroad berths," the ad continues. "A wind-proof curtain separating the berth section from the main passenger loading door is drawn at night to protect sleeping passengers from chills during ground stops."



Great Circle Route Originates in the Twin Cities

Northwest began flying the great circle route to Anchorage, Shemya, Tokyo, Seoul, Shanghai and Manila from the Twin Cities in 1947. By using the north-Pacific route instead of the mid-Pacific one, New York became 2,000 miles closer to Japan. Fifty years later, Northwest continues to serve Asia via the north Pacific.

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Fujiyama Room Puts Glamour Into Flying

On October 30, 1955, Northwest introduces the Fujiyama Room on the lower level of its Stratocruisers and features Asian decor and gourmet delicacies. "The food served on those early trips was really pretty lousy," recalls co-pilot Warren Avenson. "Frozen Maxson meals were sent over in a refrigerated ship, picked up at the dock and put in the freezer at Northwest Airlines' staff house. Later, the meals were thawed and heated on the plane. One captain, who appreciated fine dining, wouldn't let flight attendants serve these 'frozen-food entrées' between Tokyo and Korea. He brought his own food to share with the passengers."

Now... Northwest flies you non-stop to New York in world's largest airliner... the Stratocruiser

Now the spacious double-deck, nine in its cabins and Fujiyama Room! Luxury that's yours only on NWA Stratocruiser!

There's special service only on Northwest!

NORTHWEST AIRLINES



Cheaper by the Two Dozen

In 1957, Northwest adds 24 DC-7Cs—touted as America's fastest, finest long-range airplanes.

Stratocruiser Cuts Flight Time

In 1955, the 300-mph Boeing 377 Stratocruiser trims nearly eight hours off the previous flight time to Tokyo. The plane provides 69 first-class seats on the upper level and 14 spaces in the lower-deck cocktail lounge. "I remember the general office congratulating us for the superb load factor. We had 25 passengers on the flight when it left Tokyo—the first time we had reached that number," recalls Bill Glaza, Northwest manager of public relations, Japan, 1953-87.

Into Thin Air

In 1957, Northwest is the only airline using pressurized aircraft on all its flights. "We normally flew at 8,000 feet so passengers could breathe easily without pressurization," says Jerome Koerner. "But when we went over the Rockies and had to climb to 18 or 19,000 feet, the air was so thin, we couldn't breathe without pressurization. So it was a real plus."

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Sounds of Silence

In 1960, Northwest pioneers an industry leadership in noise abatement that continues to this day. "Management recognized the problem as soon as jets began arriving, and Northwest began a series of research experiments aimed at minimizing the inevitable rise in decibels. The result was an exact procedural system to be followed during all landings and take-offs," says Jerry Fredrickson, Northwest director of flying.



Fastest Air Service to Tokyo Is Launched

Northwest passengers receive a colorful welcome in 1960 on an inaugural flight to Tokyo's Haneda Airport. Although the Boeing 720-B mostly flies domestic U.S. routes, it can make the trans-Pacific route via Anchorage. On July 8, 1960, Northwest offers the fastest U.S. jet service from New York to Tokyo—beating its closest competitor by six hours, 31 minutes.



A Big Jets Fan

With the arrival of Boeing intercontinental 707-320s in 1963 and the sale of the original DC8s, Northwest becomes the first operator in the U.S. with all fan jets. In 1971, Northwest adds five long-range B747s capable of flying 6,740 miles nonstop.



1963

Northwest's new corporate logo is inspired by the tail design of the Northwest jets in the early 1960s. Northwest passenger miles top, for the first time, the two-billion mark. Northwest orders its first 11 tri-jets, the Boeing 727-100s. On October 28, 1963, Northwest Airlines begins non-stop flights between Tokyo and Seattle.



1969

Designer K.M. Lee, a Hawaiian of Chinese parentage, creates the new Northwest corporate symbol. The logo is a contemporary derivative of Northwest's well-established and traditional red-tail hallmark.

Making a Major Point

Flight attendants dramatize the size of jet-engine nacelle.



Paradise Found

720B over Waikiki in 1961. San Francisco-Honolulu-Orient flights begin in 1969.

More Milestones

1961: Northwest is given permanent authority over its Pacific routes, those in service since 1947, including Korea, Okinawa, Taiwan, Philippines and Hong Kong. 1962: With the advent of the intercontinental jets, Shemya Island no longer is needed for trans-Pacific refueling. 1965: Northwest's net income rises to \$45.7 million. 1967: Northwest's fleet reaches a total of 81. Northwest offers first service to Osaka.

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Paying Tribute to the DC-10

In 1971, Northwest orders 14 customized 236-passenger DC-10s, with a range 1,205 miles more than the standard model. On June 2, 1973, Tokyo personnel celebrate the first Northwest DC-10 service to Asia.

Also Noteworthy

1972: Northwest is the first airline to provide Japanese interpreters for its customers.

1975: Northwest makes a nonstop demonstration flight on a DC10-40 from Los Angeles to Hong Kong (7,677 miles) in 14 hours, 44 minutes.

Flights of Fancy

Along with the new DC-10 service in the early 1970s, Northwest flight attendants get an updated look.



Traveling Billboards

Northwest uses Hong Kong's double-decker trams in 1970 to promote 747 trans-Pacific flights.



Dining in Style

First-class passengers anticipate feasting on a gourmet buffet on this 747-100 in 1971.



Spotlighting Asia's Rich Heritage

At the Expo '74 in Spokane, Northwest showcases its service to Asia with an authentic Chinese junk from Hong Kong. In 1979, Northwest inaugurates flights between Seattle and Seoul and between Honolulu and Osaka.



Travel Is Key To Understanding

Northwest runs advertising in Japanese, Chinese, Korean and English. This ad in Japanese promotes key U.S. cities served by Northwest.

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Straight to the Top

In 1984, NWA becomes the No. 1 trans-Pacific carrier. "When Asia was a very faraway place for most North Americans, we made a commitment to operate there and to open a series of north-Pacific routes that brought Asia and the U.S. much closer together. I think that commitment is one of the main reasons for our success," says NWA Executive Vice President, Michael E. Levine.

Going in Grand Style

A Northwest Boeing 747 flies over the Grand Hotel in Taipei in 1980.

Flying Nonstop

1981: Northwest initiates nonstops between Los Angeles and Tokyo and Tokyo and Guam (a favorite Japanese destination) and between Taipei and Manila.

1983: Northwest raises its passenger load factor to 60 percent and earns a net profit of \$50 million. **1984:** After a 35-year hiatus, Northwest returns to Shanghai.

It's a Big Order

Northwest places its largest single aircraft order in 1985—10 more 757s, 10 new-generation Boeing 747-400s and three long-range 747-200s.

Just Northwest

In 1986, Northwest acquires Republic Airlines and drops the *Orient* from its name.

Fresh Outlook

Flight attendants sport another new look in the late 1980s.

1989: Northwest is the first airline to operate a 747-400 to Asia with a stop in Tokyo.

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Detroit to Beijing in 1996

Co-chairman Gary Wilson inaugurates nonstop Northwest service from Detroit to Beijing, cutting eight hours for travelers leaving from the eastern half of North America.

More Nonstops to China

In late 1996, Northwest is providing seven flights each week to China, including three non-stop flights between Detroit and Beijing—the only regularly scheduled nonstop service from the U.S. to China's capital operated by a U.S. carrier.



1997

Golden Anniversary

This year Northwest celebrates 50 years of flights to Asia. "If you look back at what's happened between 1947 and 1997, the first lesson you learn is you can't project exactly what will happen," says Michael E. Levine, executive vice president, NWA. "The second lesson is there's the prospect of remarkable change and remarkable growth. We hope to be as actively involved in Asia in the next 50 years as we were in the last 50."



Really Knowing How To Fly

1994: Northwest offers World Business Class and increases Osaka flights from 18 to 42. 1997: NWA begins nonstop service from Minneapolis-St. Paul to Osaka.