

PACK IT:
GOING GREEN, P. 22

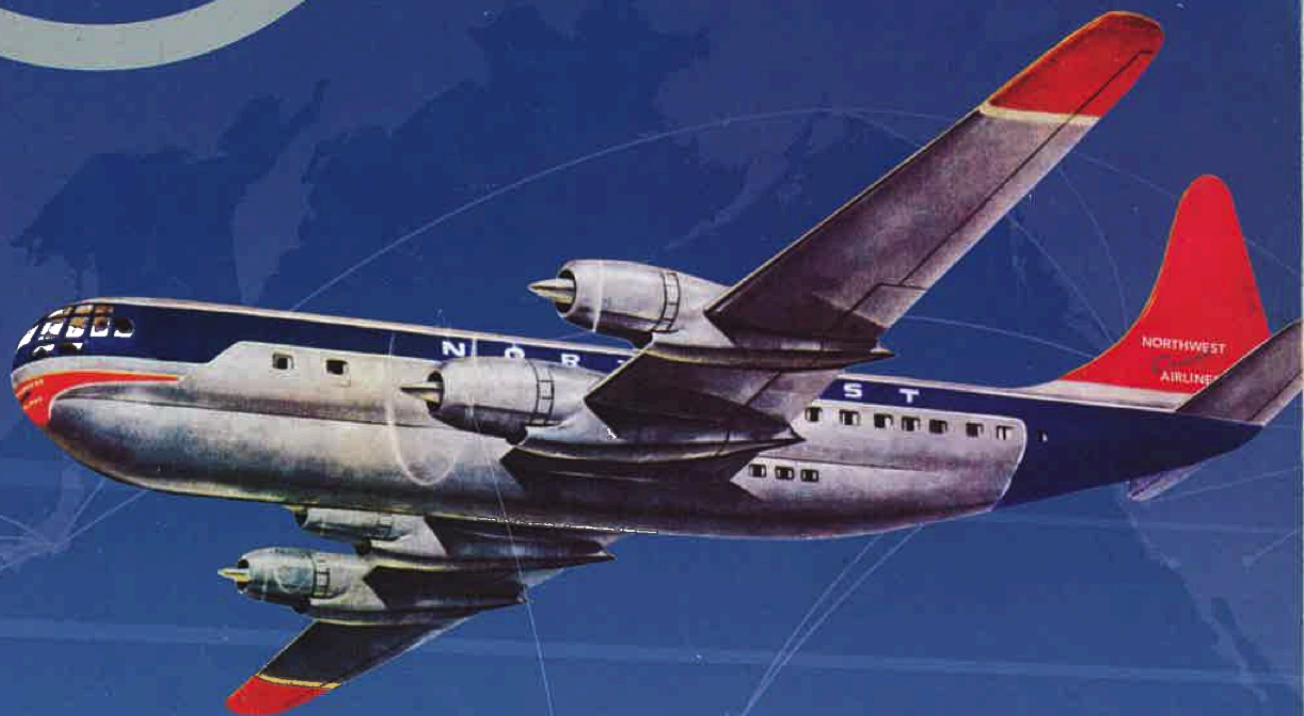
TO DINE FOR:
COASTAL CLASSICS, P. 74

JULY 2007



nwa

WorldTraveler



Pacific Flight

NORTHWEST AIRLINES CELEBRATES
60 YEARS OF SERVICE TO ASIA

THREE DAYS:
Boston

nwa.com check-in

Dubai

The Ultimate Desert
Escape Promises Thrills
and Luxury

60
YEARS
Bridging
the Pacific

60 YEARS BRIDGING THE PACIFIC



Northwest Airlines celebrates its
60th anniversary of service to Asia.

by CHRISTINE CARSON

Passengers from Minneapolis/St. Paul exit their double-decker aircraft in Tokyo, freshly shaved and made up, alert and ready to face the day after spending the night tucked in snug sleeping berths. They've spent more than 33 hours crossing the Pacific, stopping in Canada and Alaska to reach Tokyo.

This scene describes not a present-day test flight on a luxury airline, but a 1940s milestone and a piece of Northwest Airlines' storied history of service to Asia. The double-decker plane was the then-revolutionary Boeing Stratocruiser. With an earlier historic trip on a DC4, NWA became the first of today's airlines to link North America to Asia over the Pacific.

The world of commercial aviation has changed dramatically since NWA began trans-Pacific service on July 15, 1947. Sixty years ago, air travel—especially overseas—was a luxury for only the wealthy and most elite. Journeys between Northwest's North

American base and the capitals of Asia took more than 30 hours in propeller-driven planes and involved multiple stops. Today NWA's trans-Pacific routes provide vital transportation for travelers of all walks of life and carry overnight cargo shipments in a fraction of the original time.

The importance of these routes will only grow as trade and travel between Asia and America continue to accelerate. Meeting travelers' growing demands will present some of NWA's most exciting opportunities for growth in the coming decades, says Laura Liu, vice president-international marketing and sales.

"With our hub at Narita Airport in Tokyo and our stations in many other major Asian cities, Northwest is well-positioned to grow along with emerging Asian markets," Liu says. "The Asian market presents unique challenges of geography and access, but we have the people and experience to meet those challenges."

60
YEARS
Bridging
the Pacific

Right: NWA's first flight crew to Asia poses before the inaugural flight on July 15, 1947.



Below: NWA pioneered the concept of cocktail service on domestic flights in 1949, and then designed each Stratocruiser's lower-deck lounge with a touch of Asia.

THE VISION

Northwest's move into the Asian market 60 years ago was a natural follow-up to the airline's service during World War II. Prior to the war, the company's routes covered the U.S. Midwest and Northwest, and parts of Canada. Due to the airline's extensive experience flying in cold-

weather climates, the military chose NWA to operate a supply route to U.S. forces stationed on Alaska's mainland and the Aleutian Islands.

When the war ended, NWA quickly moved to open commercial routes to Alaska based on the former military routes. In September 1946, the airline began service on what it called the "Outside Coastal Route," following the Pacific Coast north and west from Seattle to Anchorage. NWA later added an "Inside Overland Passage," carrying passengers from the Twin Cities to Anchorage over Canada.

By summer 1947, NWA was ready to make air travel to Asia by way of the fabled Northwest Passage a reality. On July 15, the airline launched its "Great Circle Route" from Minneapolis/St. Paul to Tokyo. Passengers stopped along the way in Edmonton and Alberta, Canada, and in Anchorage and Shemya Island, Alaska, in the Aleutian chain. From Tokyo they could continue on to Seoul, Shanghai or Manila.

During the next few years, NWA added more departure points, offering flights to Asia from several more U.S. cities. The airline dropped some destinations—Shanghai in 1949 and Seoul in 1950—due to wars in China and Korea.

Retired NWA captain Joe Kimm started flying the Seattle-Tokyo route in 1953. "Flying has changed a lot," Kimm says. "When I started on the route, we'd fly with three pilots, two engineers, two radio operators and two navigators. I think there were eight in the cabin crew.

"There were bunks for the flight crew to sleep in, and we'd rotate to fly for eight hours and then sleep for four," he says. As equipment on the aircraft improved over the years, fewer flight officers were needed.



CROSSING *the* PACIFIC

1947

July 15: Northwest Airlines service to Asia begins from Minneapolis/St. Paul via Edmonton, Alberta, and Anchorage and Shemya, Alaska. Destinations: Tokyo, Seoul, Shanghai and Manila. NWA is the first of today's airlines to link North America to Asia over the Pacific.
Sept. 25: First service to Okinawa.

1949

May 15: Civil war in China forces suspension of Shanghai service.
Aug. 1: NWA acquires its first Boeing B-377 Stratocruiser. The large and luxurious double-decker aircraft features passenger lounges for relaxation on long trans-Pacific flights.

1950

July 25: Fighting in Korea forces suspension of commercial service to Seoul. The U.S. government selects NWA as the contractor for the Korean airlift. NWA service expands to Taipei, Taiwan, then known as Formosa.



1948 logo

1956

Jan. 1: NWA leases Shemya Island in the Aleutian chain from the U.S. government, for use as a fuel stop on the North Pacific route, thus becoming the first airline to operate its own airport.

1957

NWA introduces first class "Imperial Service."

1959

June 1: NWA inaugurates New York-Anchorage-Tokyo service.

1966

NWA wins approval to serve Hong Kong.



IN OCTOBER 1986, NWA ACQUIRED Republic Airlines, GAINING OPERATIONAL HUBS IN Detroit AND Memphis.

THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

NWA added jets to its fleet in the 1960s, allowing the airline to carry more passengers at much higher speeds than was possible with piston-engine propeller aircraft. Buoyed by aircraft advancements, NWA continued to expand in Pacific markets: It added service to Hong Kong in 1966 and Osaka, Japan, in 1967. The airline closed the decade with the addition of a long-sought route from California to Honolulu and Tokyo.

By the mid-1970s, NWA passengers traveling from the United States to the airline's Tokyo hub could continue on to six other cities in Asia. The introduction of the Boeing 747 jumbo jet—with a range of up to 6,740 miles—enabled

the airline to keep up with growing demand for trans-Pacific flights.

In addition to its growing passenger service, NWA was an early pioneer in flying freight across the Pacific. The airline introduced jets devoted solely to flying cargo in 1961. In 1975 NWA moved to the Boeing 747F, which carried up to 210,000 pounds of cargo. With this capacity, NWA quickly developed the largest cargo operation among all U.S. passenger/freight combination carriers.

THE CHALLENGES

The 1980s marked a time of rapid growth in the Pacific market. Improved relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China increased demand for renewed



Above: NWA celebrates its 50th anniversary of service to Asia with a colorful 747-400, dubbed the "WorldPlane." An advertisement from a 1950 edition of the Saturday Evening Post promoting the Stratocruiser. Right: NWA logo in 1987.



1967

NWA service expands to Osaka, Japan.

1970

NWA offers the first Boeing 747 trans-Pacific service from

Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Honolulu.

1978

Narita airport opens in Japan, now the hub of NWA's Asia Pacific network.

1981

NWA begins service to Guam. NWA adds Houston and Los Angeles to its international 747 freighter service network.

1983

San Francisco becomes the sixth U.S. gateway to Asia with nonstop service to Tokyo.



1984

May 2: After a 35-year hiatus, NWA resumes service to China with a Seattle-Tokyo-Shanghai route.

1986

Oct. 1: NWA acquires Republic Airlines and gains operational hubs in Detroit, Minneapolis/St. Paul and Memphis.

1987

Detroit to Tokyo service begins. **April 6:** NWA launches service from Tokyo to Bangkok.

1989

NWA begins passenger service to Singapore and expands to Saipan. NWA launches the Boeing 747-400. **June:** NWA starts twice-weekly, nonstop



IN 2008, NORTHWEST WILL BE THE first North American airline TO PLACE THE NEW BOEING 787 Dreamliner into commercial service.

air links between the nations. On May 2, 1984, after a 35-year hiatus, NWA resumed service to China with a Seattle-Tokyo-Shanghai route.

In October 1986, NWA acquired Republic Airlines, gaining operational hubs in Detroit and Memphis. Northwest's WorldGateway at Detroit has since become a main departure point east of the Rocky Mountains for trans-Pacific flights.

Then, at the dawn of the new millennium, NWA and other U.S. carriers encountered major challenges. The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks caused financial hardship for U.S. carriers. Pushed by soaring fuel costs, NWA sought reorganization in September 2005. During this period, the airline eliminated some trans-Pacific routes and decreased the frequency of others.

THE FUTURE

A reorganized NWA emerged from bankruptcy protection in late May 2007. In many ways, the timing could not be better. The economies of many Asian countries

are strong, and demand for business and personal travel—as well as shipping—is higher than ever. In 2008, Northwest will be the first North American airline to place the new Boeing 787 Dreamliner into commercial service.

Boeing expects the Dreamliner to offer seating for 210–250 passengers, while using 20 percent less fuel than jets of comparable size. The new jet will have a range of 7,650–8,200 miles.

“When the 787 arrives, we expect to be able to add more Asian destinations,” Liu says. “With the 787’s range, the number of Asian cities that can be reached in nonstop flights from our hubs in Detroit and Minneapolis/St. Paul will increase.”

It’s hard to overestimate the value of expanded routes to Asia for the U.S. cities they serve, Liu says. “Economic studies show that these routes are worth hundreds of millions of dollars to the communities,” she says.

Asia offers great opportunity, but Liu says she does not underestimate the challenges. China is not an open-skies



Above: A view of the Northwest Airlines WorldClubs lounge at Detroit.

service from Minneapolis/St. Paul to Tokyo.

1991

NWA is the first U.S. airline to fly over the former Soviet Union since World War II.

April 19:

NWA announces charter service to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, making it the first U.S. airline to fly into the country since the Vietnam War.

1992

NWA begins service to Beijing and expands service to Nagoya, Japan. NWA implements a new Pacific schedule by retiming all flights through Tokyo Narita.

1993

NWA dramatically expands intercontinental service from Detroit, including multiple daily flights

to Tokyo and three-times weekly service to Osaka.

1994

NWA expands service from Detroit to Osaka.

1996

May 1: NWA launches first U.S.-China nonstop service from Detroit to Beijing.

1997

NWA celebrates 50 years of trans-Pacific service with a colorful 747-400, dubbed the “WorldPlane.”



1998

June: NWA starts daily nonstop service between Detroit and Osaka.

June 2: NWA launches nonstop service between Detroit and Nagoya.

2000

April 6: NWA begins twice-weekly, round-trip Detroit-Shanghai service with B747-400 aircraft.



Left: NWA once offered trans-Pacific passengers these “cards that talk” to help with language barriers. Right: Northwest’s WorldGateway at Detroit is a major gateway to Asia. Below: NWA’s current logo, created in 2003.



country, which means airlines have to negotiate for rights to fly to every city. The same is true of Vietnam.

Geography presents another challenge in service to Asia, Liu adds. Offering daily flights between the United States and Asia requires NWA to have two planes to fly the route, for maintenance purposes—a large capital investment, she says.

For this reason, NWA’s long-established Tokyo hub is a huge asset. The airline performs much of its aircraft maintenance for Asia routes in Asia. “We really benefit from having set up shop there so long ago,”

Liu says. “We’re very much an Asian airline from that perspective.”

The airline faces another big obstacle to successful operations in Asia with the continued high cost of jet fuel. With flights to Asia covering 6,000 miles, compared to 4,000 miles to Europe, jet fuel costs play a role in determining NWA’s routes.

It’s clear that Liu relishes the challenges that trans-Pacific routes present. “We were there first,” she says. “And we’re still excited to be a part of a developing Asia.” ▼

Christine Carson is a Seattle-based freelance writer.

▶ NORTHWEST HISTORY: ASIA AND BEYOND

History buffs and aviation fans can learn more about all aspects of Northwest Airlines’ history at the **NWA History Centre** in Bloomington, Minn., just minutes from the Minneapolis-St. Paul (MSP) International Airport. The nonprofit museum was formed in 2002 by NWA employees, retirees and airline friends and is operated by knowledgeable volunteers. The galleries feature vintage and current model aircraft, uniforms, photos and memorabilia. The museum also maintains historical records, publications and a gift shop.

Located at 8101 34th Ave. S., the museum is open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday–Friday. Admission is free. Call 952-698-4478, or visit nwahistory.org.



2002

February: NWA opens its new WorldGateway terminal at Detroit.

April: NWA begins new service to Busan, South Korea.

2003

Aug. 6: NWA unveils its first Airbus A330 wide-body aircraft.

2004

June 10: NWA debuts daily nonstop flight

between Portland, Ore., and Tokyo.

October: NWA begins new service from Tokyo to Guangzhou, China.

2005

Feb. 24: NWA and Korean Air announce a code-sharing agreement that allows both airlines to carry international cargo on each other’s freighter flights between Asia and the U.S.

2007

March 19: NWA announces Airbus A330 wide-body aircraft will be used between Tokyo and Honolulu, Saipan and Guam, and between Honolulu and Osaka starting this summer.

April 23: NWA opens

a new WorldClub lounge for Northwest and SkyTeam customers at Narita International Airport, as part of its ongoing efforts to enhance passengers’ travel experience.

June 8: NWA

announces it will resume daily nonstop service between Osaka, Japan, and Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, on Dec. 21. The new service will complement NWA’s six daily roundtrip flights from Japan to Micronesia.

