



# Reflections

The Quarterly Journal of the Northwest Airlines History Center



June 2020

Volume 18, number 2

## In this issue:

Finding the unexpected resting places of the Northwest fleet

Bigger on the inside? Time travel to MSP in 2003

Diecast dreams build a business

50 years since the 747's introduction

## 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.

# GROUND STOP



*Not a desert boneyard - just diecast models of recent vintage. Whether for helping hobbyists recreate memories of times past, or invent spaces that never existed, the model-aircraft scene has blossomed in recent years with new suppliers and ambitions to grow like the model-railroad industry.*

## Keeping history alive at home, while an industry is sidelined

--by Scott Norris

By now, many readers will be into their third month of social-distancing restrictions as the key tool at this time to fight the global COVID-19 pandemic. Hundreds of thousands of travel industry workers have been furloughed, a growing list of airlines have declared bankruptcy, airport terminals and hotels are empty, and without a vaccine, no one can predict when or how travelers will return to the skies.

Yet the airline business retains its ability to fascinate. For some, the memories of coworkers and shared frustrations and triumphs continue to burn brightly. For others, the promise of discovery and freedom to explore the world can be seen in every contrail. We all have our own reasons for wanting to stay close to the machines and places and people of air transportation.

But with museums closed and aircraft grounded, scanners quiet and FlightRadar24 empty, unable to gather around a table at a restaurant or even at others' homes, how do we pursue our passion and continue to find community? Let's check in with several enthusiasts to see how they're not just coping, but creating new art and new business to stay engaged.

Shelter-in-place: to page 8

# Flight Plan

## From Director Bruce Kitt



COVID restrictions applicable to museums in our state were lifted on June 1st. The Northwest Airlines History Center (NWAHC) is now planning for the museum's opening, bearing in mind CDC, state, and hotel recommendations and guidelines. Our target is Wednesday, July 15, 2020 – 125 days since our last visitors – and we are looking forward to greeting you! That this pandemic onslaught has been rough on all of us, worldwide, is a sad understatement. I am thankful that our volunteers have come through safely and I hope that none of you has had family members or friends come down with the virus.

Until then, the challenge becomes remaining visible so when society returns to "normal" (as we used to experience it), the public remembers we are still here. I, and the Board of Directors, and our Reflections' editor, have been talking about what we can do to keep the NWAHC in the public's eye during our hiatus. I have been gathering information on what other museums that are already open are doing and what those museums now closed are sharing about their re-opening plans and strategies. All this strategizing changes as the CDC and various states' health departments learn more about the virus. Our museum will also have to adhere to guidelines the Crowne Plaza Aire Hotel puts in place for their safety protocols. It's a moving target that means our re-opening response evolves with new information.

One change that will become normal for the NWAHC is the decision to introduce the NWAHC to the digital world. Not an easy flip of a switch as this represents a new skill we will have to teach ourselves. We will begin filming parts of the museum to run on YouTube, Facebook, and our website. We'll become more polished as we do more of this, but you'll be able to watch us – gaffes and all – as we hone our presentations. We'll make an announcement when we're ready to launch.

On a positive note, the NWAHC received its first AmazonSmile donation check this month. THANK YOU to everyone who purchased and designated the NWAHC as their charitable recipient. It requires many people making many purchases in order to meet Amazon's threshold for disbursement. Please remember the NWAHC when you use AmazonSmile for your online .

While it may seem difficult to end with my customary "CAVU", remember, it's always sunny and clear at 30,000 feet. Stay healthy, stay safe.



### Shopping on Amazon helps the NWAHC!

0.5% of every sale is contributed when you shop via this link:  
[smile.amazon.com/ch/41-2020975](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/41-2020975)

## 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.

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

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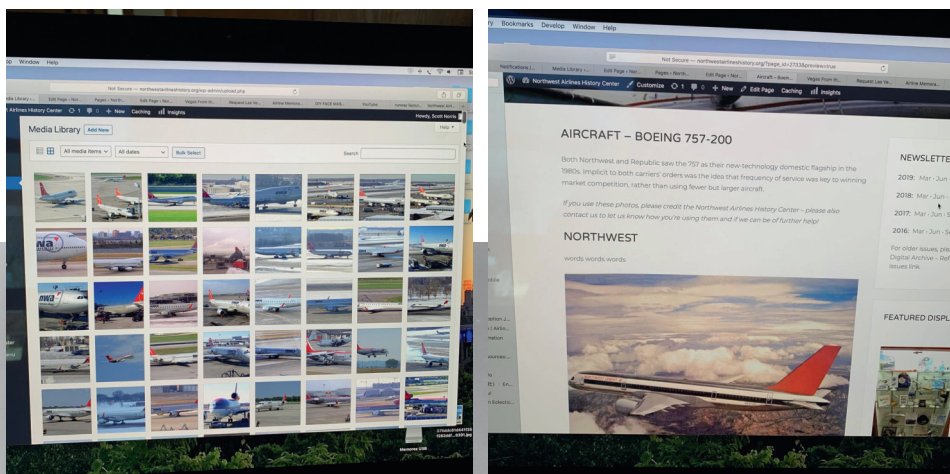
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# Preflight Briefing



## From the Editor

Having spent a lot more time at home this past quarter, I was able to dig into a backburner project in earnest: scanning our extensive aircraft photo collection. At last count, I have uploaded over 800 images to our website's database, and that figure will likely be over 1,000 by the 4th of July. The Aircraft galleries project aims to have entries for every type flown by not just the "mainline" members of the Northwest Family, but also the Airlink and Express operations, and even types proposed but never ordered (like the 2707 and the 7J7) - 75 different aircraft series as I look over the draft page. It will represent the largest expansion of the NWAHC's website ever, and it underscores our commitment to make more of our archives and resources available, even if we can't see you in person at the museum. I'm sure you'll be as delighted to scroll through the images as I've been in uncovering them! Watch our website and Facebook for the launch announcement later this summer. Fair skies, and good health to you.



Above: "behind the scenes" of our website - loading the Media Library and working on the 757-200 gallery page.



April 1965 photo of N461US - first of the 727-51 fleet - at Minneapolis-St. Paul, by Logan Coombs, via the James Borden Photography Collection in the NWAHC Archives.

### Have items you'd be interested in donating to the NWAHC?

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

## VISITING THE MUSEUM

### Current schedule:

Wednesday - Saturday 11 am - 5 pm

Closed Sunday-Tuesday, and major holidays.

**CORONAVIRUS PAUSE: Watch our Facebook account for updates - at press time, the museum location is closed.**

### Admission and parking are FREE

(Special events may incur a charge.)

### Directions:

#### FROM MSP INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT:

Use the Metro Blue Line light rail from either Terminal 1 or Terminal 2. Take the southbound train (towards the Mall of America) and exit at the American Boulevard station, which is the stop immediately beyond Terminal 2. The Crowne Plaza Aire Hotel is immediately east, across the street from the station. Trains run every 10 minutes and fares are \$2.50 peak / \$2.00 off-peak. A ticket is good for 2.5 hours of unlimited travel, so depending on the length of your visit to the museum, a separate return ticket may not be necessary.

#### FROM THE TWIN CITIES METRO AREA:

Head toward MSP International Airport. From I-494, exit at 34th Ave. S. Go south on 34th for one block to American Blvd. Turn left (east) onto American Blvd. Crowne Plaza Aire Hotel is on your right. Free parking is available on the top two floors of the hotel's ramp.

The museum is on the third floor, across from the Fitness Center.

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

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

\$35 level - receives the REFLECTIONS print edition via U.S. Postal Service. (Be sure to give us your email address if you'd also like the early online access.)

## Compass Readings

### NWAHC gets credits in the May-June 2020 edition of Airways Magazine

Keynote speaker at the 2018 MSP Airline Show, and retired Southern - Republic - Northwest - Delta FA, David Stringer has taken on the byline of historic features editor at Airways Magazine, where he's published numerous reviews of Local Service and trunkline carriers. "Northwest Airlines in the Postwar Era" kicked off in the May-June 2020 issue, and will be concluded in the July-August edition. David employs his extensive timetable and advertising collection to nostalgic effect, and called on the NWAHC for aircraft photos which hadn't been widely published. His timing lined up perfectly with the start of our Archive photo-scanning project, and we were happy to supply over a dozen unique shots for the series.

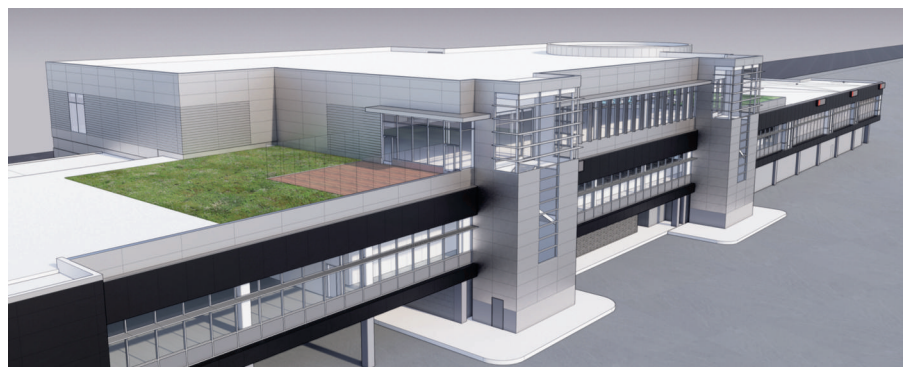


### NWA's former Gold Concourse at MSP gets a double-deck makeover

NWA's self-financed expansion of Minneapolis' Gold Concourse in the mid-1980s was a unique project for the time, but the public-private partnership model would become quite common across the US, as it ensured carriers could get facilities tailored to their specific needs at faster speed.

Control of the concourse eventually reverted to MSP after Northwest's bankruptcy, but the airport authority had become a nimble developer over the years, improving baggage flows, adding a Customs and Immigration station to the renamed G Concourse, connecting it by skybridge to the A, B, and C concourses, and dramatically expanding dining and retail options.

MSP had announced a multi-year, 70,000 square foot upgrade project for the upper G gates in 2019, but the COVID crisis presented an opportunity to both accelerate the plan and save money through shutting down all operations on G for the summer of 2020. The space between gates G15 and G17 will be filled-in, and seating will be expanded for G17 - G22. A second story will be added to house a new Delta SkyClub, as well as access for a future tram station that would run along G concourse to the terminal. Construction should finish in 2022.



Images by the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) and the Alliance architectural firm.



# Gallery - 50th Anniversary of Boeing 747 operations at Northwest

Northwest ordered ten frames of the basic 747-100 in 1966, and all were delivered from May 1970 through mid-1971. A top-up order for five -100B longer-range variants was also delivered in 1971. The first aircraft to enter service flew a very light schedule to help train flight crews. While the timetable called for a June 15, 1970 start date, in fact the first flights didn't begin until June 22.

The one-ship operation was a leisurely mid-day departure from MSP to JFK, 90-minute turnaround, and evening arrival back in Minnesota.

At July 1, 1970 the pace for that first aircraft picked up, and three more joined the fleet. Seattle, Hawaii, California, Chicago, and Tokyo were all added in mid-summer with aircraft routing through every station but returning to MSP for regular inspections and updates.

Strike action across the back half of 1970 interrupted the rollout of service, but by June 1971 the fleet had reached Manila, Hong Kong, Taipei, Miami, Los Angeles, and Anchorage.

Because of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, the ideas being considered at the NWAHC to commemorate the 50th anniversary have been frustrated, but we will be posting special content online this summer from our archives.

Perhaps in 2021 we can all get together for a 51st birthday! In the meantime, we'd love to hear your stories about flying the Queen of the Skies, especially in the early days. Please drop us a note at [info@northwestairlineshistory.org](mailto:info@northwestairlineshistory.org) - we'd love to help share your experiences.



Fall 1970 photo at Minneapolis-St. Paul, by Noel Allard. Noel has generously donated a selection of his exciting 747 shots!



New gates at MSP were built to handle the 747: contrast the Gold Concourse of 1970-71 construction against the renderings of its appearance-to-be in 2022 on the opposite page...

## Introducing new 747 schedules

Flight Number Class of Service	9 F/Y		17 F/Y	203 F/Y	7 F/Y	221 F/Y
	747	747	747	747	747	747
Aircraft						
Days Operated	Tu, Th, Sa,* Eff. Aug. 1	Daily Eff. Sept. 1	Sa. Eff. July 1	Ex, Sa, Su. Eff. July 1	Daily Eff. July 1	Daily Eff. June 8
New York (Kennedy) . . . . . EDT Lv			8 25	9 00	10 00	5 30
Chicago (O'Hare) . . . . . PDT Lv				↓	11 17	↓
Chicago (O'Hare) . . . . . Ar			11 00	10 43	12 20	7 18
Minneapolis/St. Paul . . . . . Ar						
Minneapolis/St. Paul . . . . . CDT Lv	8 15	8 15				
San Francisco/Oakland . . . . . PDT Lv	9 50	9 50				
San Francisco/Oakland . . . . . Lv	11 00	11 00				
Seattle/Tacoma . . . . . Ar					2 15	
Seattle/Tacoma . . . . . PDT Lv						3 45
Honolulu . . . . . HST Ar	12 55	12 55	2 39			
Honolulu . . . . . HST Lv	2 30	2 30				
International Date Line						5 35
Tokyo . . . . . Ar	5 10	5 10				

\*Su, Mo, We, Fr, Frequencies Operate with 707 Aircraft

Flight Number Class of Service	232 F/Y	230 F/Y	10 F/Y		16 F/Y	4 F/Y
	747	747	747	747	747	747
Aircraft						
Days Operated	Daily Eff. June 8	Ex, Sa, Su. Eff. July 1	Su, We, Fr,* Eff. Aug. 1	Daily Eff. Sept. 1	Sa. Eff. July 1	Daily Eff. July 1
Tokyo . . . . . Lv			9 00	9 00		8 20
International Date Line						
Honolulu . . . . . HST Ar			9 00	9 00		
Honolulu . . . . . HST Lv					6 00	
Seattle/Tacoma . . . . . Ar			10 45	10 45		12 50
Seattle/Tacoma . . . . . Lv						2 40
San Francisco/Oakland . . . . . Ar			6 20	6 20		
San Francisco/Oakland . . . . . PDT Lv			7 20	7 20		
Minneapolis/St. Paul . . . . . CDT Ar			12 35	12 35		
Minneapolis/St. Paul . . . . . Lv	12 30	6 15			6 45	8 10
Chicago (O'Hare) . . . . . Ar						
Chicago (O'Hare) . . . . . CDT Lv					8 00	9 10
New York (Kennedy) . . . . . EDT Ar	3 59	9 38			10 51	11 58

\*Mo, Tu, Th, Sa, Frequencies Operate with 707 Aircraft

## Gallery - 747 introduction anniversary



*Stewardesses find food service easier, quicker with new galley arrangements on the 747.*



*Wider aisles on the 747.*

*The first class lounge in the upper deck of the 747 boasts real comfort, elegance.*



*Overhead compartments above 747 seats permit carry-on of luggage and other bulky items.*

*Two abreast doorways provide easier, faster boarding and deplaning.*

*Cabin service and seating features on the new 747, from NWA's 1969 annual report.*

Late-1960s concept artwork from Boeing's art department.



Festivities and roll-out for the delivery of N601US at Renton.



N601US getting painted by the sunset in an air-to-air photography session after delivery.



## Feature Article

# Now boarding for the year 2003

Faithful reproduction of MSP Airport in 1/400 scale

The Twin Cities' planespotter community on Facebook was abuzz last summer from postings by locally-based pilot Cyrus Cambata and air traffic controller Ben Graden on a massive model they were constructing in Ben's basement. The snapshots shared then were only the tip of the iceberg, however, as the team was wrapping up their efforts for a 100-person open house to debut their 2-1/2 year project. REFLECTIONS checked in with them during the lockdown to learn more and share pictures of the 'complete' assembly; excerpts of the interview are printed here but the full conversation is posted on our website.

### REFLECTIONS: How did this idea come about? Why the 2000s-era setting?

**Ben:** The very first decision we made was that we knew we wanted to recreate the 2003-2004 timeline when NWA was the primary carrier still serving MSP. We wanted that timeframe specifically because it was the time we were just getting out of high school and into college and a time we have our fondest memories of doing airport photography, spotting, and just spending time hanging out at MSP together. Also, NWA was a big part of our life growing up as kids and into our teens, so we wanted to keep that timeframe alive as to how we remember MSP. The sounds of the DC-9s, 727s, DC-10s, roaring around wearing that hot bowling shoe livery resurrected a lot of memories for us.

### REF: What kind of effort goes into designing and building a fully realized airport? How much custom work went into the project?

**Ben:** Man, how do I explain 2.5 years of yes, "scratch work" without writing a small book? The only things we used that was pre-made and purchased were all the jet bridges, the ground service equipment (GSE), and obviously all the model airplanes. Everything else was constructed by me and Cyrus and a master modeler named Dave Southam, who actually lives outside London.

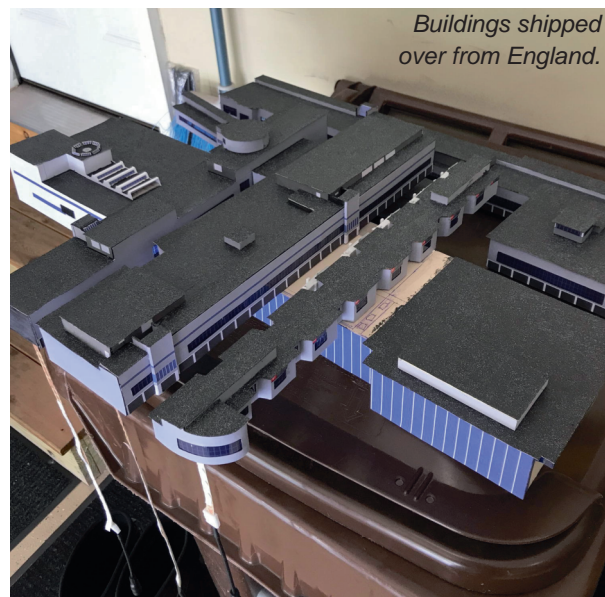
All the runway and taxiway lights are fiber optic. These lights took a lot of time to install as each one had to be pre drilled with a tiny drill bit, shoved through the hole, glued in place, and cut to length. Each 4' x4' section of the model contains two fiber optic light motors, one for the taxiway blue, and one for the runway white. This way, since the model is made to be disassembled, in theory we shouldn't have to break any lights.

**Cyrus:** I can say without a doubt Dave made our model the way it is today. His craftsmanship on our buildings is phenomenal and to think a lot of our buildings were done just based on measurements and Dave looking at pictures of the buildings. It wasn't until later on in the project that we started sending templates for Dave to follow, which helped tremendously in creating the more complicated buildings. One other thing to consider is the time difference between the UK and us meant we had a small window of opportunity to discuss business and finalize ideas. It was a major undertaking to say the least.

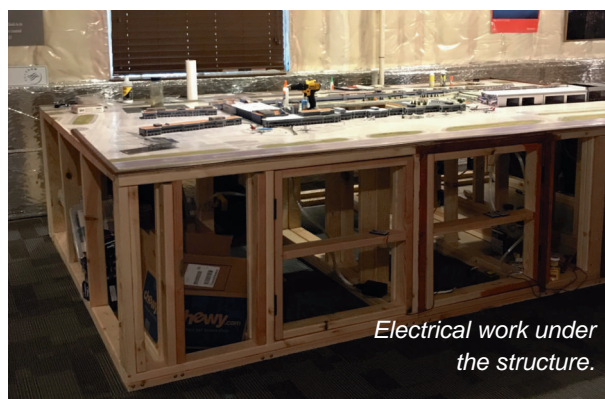
As for our ground equipment, most of our ground service equipment (GSE) is a combination of custom made GSE equipment from Shapeways as well as Gemini Jets 1/400 GSE equipment. We then hand painted each and every piece to correlate with the associated airlines they would be representing at the gates on the model. As to how many we have, it must be over 500 pieces in total, and that's a rough guess. That is in addition to our 117 Gemini Jet bridges, many of which were hand painted as well.

### REF: Are you "done" with the model? What would you like to do with it?

**Cyrus:** I think for Ben and I the model will always be 95% complete. Just the other day we joked about adding 17/35 and terminal 2 while we were sitting here during the covid crisis. As Ben mentioned, we know there is always small details to add and it just depends on how much more we want to do with it over the years. The fact that the model does break apart, means we can keep it safe for the long term and always come back to it years down the road. Both Ben and I recently had children, so I think it's safe to say our time will be consumed with our families for the foreseeable future.



*Buildings shipped over from England.*



*Electrical work under the structure.*





*For a REFLECTIONS Extra with more photos and a full interview with Cyrus and Ben, check the Blog section of the NWAHC website.*

# Right now, the Only Way to Fly

Model enthusiasts like Ben Graden and Cyrus Cambata may have taken their hobby to an extreme, but thousands of collectors enjoy picking up a plastic or metal model of a special aircraft or carrier to keep on a shelf. Not many brick-and-mortar retailers stock these, however, so avgeeks usually buy at conventions or from online merchants. In downtown St. Paul, however, above the Farmers' Market in Lowertown, United 767/757 Pilot Donald Gardner has set up a real-world storefront (in addition to a website) devoted to diecast - DGPilot.com. We interviewed Don via email and Instagram chat, with highlights here - for the full conversation see the blog post on the NWAHC website.

## REFLECTIONS: A Pilot's life is usually busy - what led you to open a shop?

**Don:** I like to say with a grin, that opening a model store is my Dad's fault. I honestly never dreamed that I would own a model store. I had not collected any model airplanes since I was a teenager. In 2015, I returned home to Kansas City where I grew up and while visiting my Dad's house he mentioned he had started a hobby of collecting model airplanes. I must have spent hours going through his collection of diecast model aircraft and was amazed at the attention to detail involved in each and every model. Over the next few weeks, my Dad sent me pictures of model airplanes almost daily, and sent me a Boeing 757 model. We had a couple of phone conversations and decided to test our luck in selling models on Ebay. In 2016, we launched web store, but both of us took a leisurely approach to running the business over the next couple of years. In June 2018, I decided to give it a shot after I visited a friend's model shop in Europe. I felt that the Twin Cities was lacking a hobby shop for aviation enthusiasts to visit and the idea of our retail showroom was born. We held our grand opening in July 2018.

## REF: As you've been selling, what themes or features do you see your customers particularly interested in?

**Don:** When there is a model release featuring a retro, or special airline livery they usually sell pretty well. There's been a fascination with Icelandair and its special liveries including the Hekla Aurora and Vatnajökull, The models are also becoming more interactive in terms of features as well. In 2018, GeminiJets released a Boeing 747 Freighter to replicate the Boeing Dreamlifter. That was a very popular model as the tail of the model actually has the ability to open.

Lately, I've become a fan of classic airliners. I really like the 1:200 scale Inflight200 Northwest Cargo Boeing 747-200 models as well as the recently released 1:200 scale Northwest Convair 580! You also can't forget the Inflight200 DC-10 in the Bowling Shoe livery.

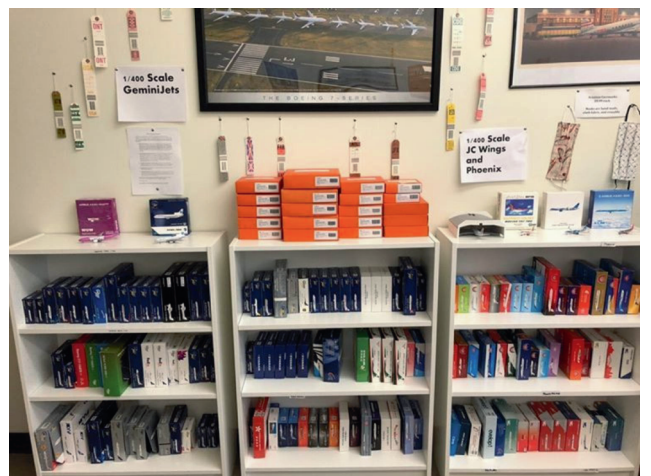
We try to stock a variety of different models, and try to stock the popular domestic airlines as well as international carriers. I also like to stock models of air carriers that fly into Minneapolis. We also like to rotate the carriers we stock from month to month so we can showcase the variety of available models on the market to our customers. If we don't have a particular item in stock we can always try to order it for you.

## REF: Is there much professional / social interaction among the resellers?

**Don:** In the last couple of years we've started selling at several model shows, and I've had the opportunity to meet a few other retailers. I really enjoy the shows and think they are place for enthusiasts and those who have a real love of aviation to come together to celebrate this passion. I keep in touch with several of them as its nice to talk every once in awhile to discuss the trends of the model industry.

## REF: How would you like to see the diecast model business evolve?

**Don:** I think the next evolution for the diecast model business will be towards accessories. I'd like to see more airport terminals, and buildings one would see at or near an airport, such as hotels, rental car facilities and transportation centers. 3-D printing certainly has the potential to take this accessory side of the business to a whole new level.



Don is offering a 10% discount for REFLECTIONS readers at DGPilot.com: use code NW10 at checkout.

# Chasing Ghosts

Bringing the diecast model theme to its conclusion for this issue, we became aware of Gary Tinnes' intense enthusiasm for Northwest and his model reviews on YouTube through his frequent postings on Twitter (@nwa\_airlines). Gary has started a new video series called "Final Destinations" where he locates the ultimate resting places of each member of an airline's fleet type when retired. His first three episodes are now posted and they trace the final locations of Northwest's 727-100 and 727-200 fleets. An excerpt of our interview is printed below - and like our other stories this quarter, we have an expanded dialogue in the Blog section of northwestairlineshistory.org.

## REFLECTIONS: Your "day job" is a station manager, but you're quite busy as well on social media with a number of projects.

**Gary:** Yes, I got started making videos back in 2013 with general aviation topics and random fun flying pieces, and still put those out. I got into doing video reviews of diecast model aircraft - unboxing, looking at the build quality and how faithfully it reproduces the actual ship. There are enough different manufacturers and approaches to putting models out that there is a lot to talk about and demonstrate. A recent video I put up went through the various 200-scale Northwest Boeing 757-200 products available off eBay, and whether they were worth the money (because they are selling for much more than their original cost.) The various projects are on a YouTube channel called ON the AIR PLANES. I also run three different Twitter accounts: one called Art of the Skies, another on diecast models, and my NWA tribute account.

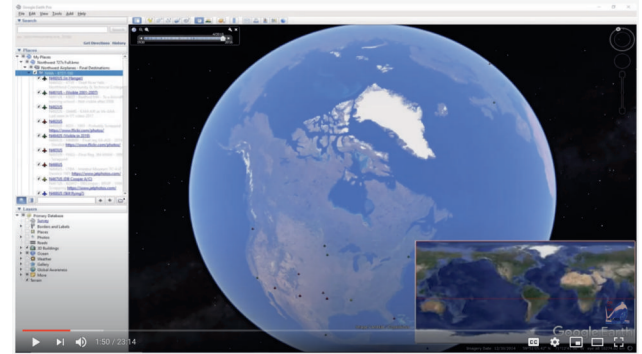
## REF: Where did the inspiration for your new video series come from?

**Gary:** Putting the review pieces together taught me a lot about editing and how to be creative in showing and shooting models. I found some ways to introduce noise in the image and the effect was like watching a home movie from the 1970s someone would've taken at the runway fence. And that got me to want to do something historic about the Northwest fleet.

Meanwhile, the COVID crisis led me to have a lot more time on my hands than usual. So I started looking through fleet lists and national registries to see where NWA's 727s ended up. Can you believe N820EA (after NW and Champion) was chopped into an Air Force 1 mock up back in 2008? And there are still some derelict 727s in the "Thermometer" livery in Smyrna. This is probably my favorite instance out of them all. I actually contacted a photographer who snapped pictures, while travelling on the last flight of N202US, from pre-departure to approach and after landing in Maxton. That was the last day the Northwest 727s were really operating for NW. So these videos are how I can express my appreciation for these aircraft and show what I've learned.



Final Destinations - Northwest 727-100 - EP1 - Part 1



Final Destinations - Northwest 727-100 - EP1 - Part 1



Final Destinations - Northwest 727-100 - EP1 - Part 1

# More for researchers to dig into on our website

Under the "Digital Archive" tab of the NWAHC website, a new addition offers readers, writers, and analysts access to scanned copies of over four dozen fleet lists for Northwest spanning the 1990s and 2000s.

While most online databases show aircraft registration numbers and fleet types, these booklets go into greater depth to note serial numbers, engine types, and unique configurations. Some issues include airframe build dates, and the final issues also contain data for the Airlink carrier fleets as well.

Another benefit of having so many issues through time in one place is the ability to watch aircraft come into the fleet and eventually exit. Summary tables also show NWA's breakdown of aircraft types, including open orders.

A small trove of NWA fleet lists from the 1960s has also been uncovered in the Capt. James Borden Collection and those will be scanned and added to the online listings this summer.

If you have copies of company fleet lists from other eras (we know Republic and North Central also routinely issued them, too), please contact us!





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# ***GIVE WINGS TO YOUR HEART***

**Volunteering with the NWAHC can take many forms!**

***Do you have talents in any of these areas - and time to share?***

- Photography
- Document scanning
- Exhibit & display building
- Social media
- E-commerce
- Event planning & outreach
- Grant applications
- "People skills" and the gift of conversation?

As our collection and membership grows, so do our opportunities to help communicate the Northwest Family history - from greeting visitors at our Bloomington, MN museum, to digitizing our archives, building community links, and strengthening our base of funding.

***Now boarding!***

- Click on the "Join Us" tab at [www.northwestairlineshistory.org](http://www.northwestairlineshistory.org)
- Email: [info@northwestairlineshistory.org](mailto:info@northwestairlineshistory.org)
- Phone: 952-698-4478

