



Reflections

The Quarterly Journal of the Northwest Airlines History Center



September 2023

Volume 21, number 3

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Building plans update for our new museum

Hypersonic passenger transport research?

Sustainable Aviation Fuels take a big step forward

Meet our newest director, Tim Haskin

Pacific Air Lines flying tales from Capt. Jack Ferrer, Jr.

Our mission:

To inspire interest in commercial aviation and our community's unique role in it.

We will preserve and present the history of Northwest Airlines and its associated carriers and partners, and show how they contributed to and still influence the development of science and technology, and the economic and social growth of Minnesota and the Upper Midwest.



Boeing photo of early 747 deliveries being prepared for National and Northwest Orient. National used their pair of 747s on the Miami-London Heathrow route, but replaced them in the mid-1970s with DC-10-30s which were easier to fill and more complementary to the rest of their network. NWA would pick up those same 747s!

The Siren Song of the East, Part 3

1972 merger plan with the much-pursued Sun King by Scott Norris

George Baker had pushed his luck time and time again to establish National in the mid-1930s, keep it operating through the war, and carve out a competitive position post-war. Starting as essentially a Local Service carrier by literally puddle-jumping across central Florida and the Panhandle with Ryan Monoplanes and Stinson Tri-Motors, National was able to acquire Lockheed 10A Electras and then model 18 Lodestars during wartime, fighting constantly against Eastern's administrative challenges. To Eddie Rickenbacker's consternation, Baker successfully petitioned the CAB for a route from Florida to New York City it began in 1945, threading a multi-stop route on lower-traffic sectors its Lodestars could handle - and then acquiring DC-4s and DC-6s in short order to offer nonstop service. By 1946, National was also flying nonstop NYC to Havana, Cuba.

Baker, like Icarus, kept pushing higher and would likewise get burned - a 1945-46 investment in Caribbean Atlantic Airlines and lease of National's Lodestars was seen by the CAB as a backdoor takeover and "cheat" to start a Miami - San Juan service. And through the 1950s, Baker's lobbying efforts to acquire a license and operate a new TV station in Miami revealed an influence scandal at the Federal Communications Commission, forcing several new stations to change ownership, including his. This likely influenced CAB regulators to deny National's route requests from Florida to St. Louis, Chicago, and Minneapolis (going to TWA and Northwest instead.) **HERE COMES THE SUN 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:

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

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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, and the October 14 show

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. Or, call for the free hotel shuttle from either terminal.

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 uppermost level (do not use spaces not reserved for the hotel) and cross into the hotel's second floor. You may need to buzz the door for entrance, as a safety protocol.

The museum is located on the third floor, above the pool area, 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 Chairman Bruce Kitt



I enjoy aviation related research. I'm also married, and being considerate of my wife's interests (definitely not as aviation focused as mine) is a balancing act we've managed to work to mutual satisfaction.

We enjoy traveling, and yes, we still put up with all the hassles my airline career provides us to fly non-rev (aka, stand-by). Our latest trip was to see the Redwood National Forest in SE Oregon: MSP-SEA-MFR and back. Outbound was a piece of cake, we even saw first class... as we walked to the next-to-last row in coach for our seats. Arrived at Medford, OR (MFR), grabbed a rental car and saw the redwoods. Truly magnificent structures.

We then spent a day relaxing in MFR, each in our own way. Mine was to explore the interesting role MFR played in the early histories of West Coast Airlines (WCA) and Southwest Airways (SWA), two post-war Essential Air

Service carriers. I did this by visiting the Southern Oregon Historical Society in MFR and exploring the "Transportation: Aviation" folders in their archive. MFR was the interchange station for these two regional airlines: the northern terminus for SWA, the southern terminus for WCA. MFR was also an early station for Pacific Air Transport, which had become United Airlines by this time. MFR thus offered exceptional routes to many key business cities in the Pacific Northwest and major California cities. (We also enjoyed local wineries and great food.)

My point is that local historical societies have surprising gems residing in their archives. While not all historical societies may have robust aviation holdings, people move and you never know what discoveries lay waiting - might even be something non-aviation that grabs your interest. Go check them out, be pleasantly surprised. Support them. CAVU.

(P.S.: Our MFR-SEA-MSP trip saw us sleeping overnight in the terminal at SEA. Ah, the joys of non-revving.)

New on the website:

Between a fruitful trek to this summer's airline memorabilia shows, and a most generous (and ongoing) contribution of digital files from former Mesaba / Compass FA Jason Zessin, our **Safety Cards** page now features over 100 examples, going all the way back to the 1960s.



Check your basements and storage boxes!

Do you have materials to contribute to our museum? Please contact our collections manager 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 reference items; and union communications. Items from Hughes Airwest & its predecessors, Southern, and the Airlink partners are especially appreciated - few items found their way to Minnesota to survive corporate purges & transfers.

Buy wise to support the NWAHC!

Visit our online store, with world-exclusive designs on a wide variety of items - from shirts to mugs, travel gear to puzzles, and more, at shop.northwestairlineshistory.org. Or scan this QR code to jump to our store directly.

We also offer surplus materials and new apparel and pins for sale on **eBay** under the handle "cyberglitz" - the assortment changes every week!





Illustration from Boeing

NASA resumes Mach 4 transport research

Following up from the December 2018 issue of REFLECTIONS (“Supersonic Speculation”), NASA recently investigated the business case for supersonic passenger air travel aboard aircraft that could theoretically travel between Mach 2 and Mach 4 (1,500-3,000 mph). By comparison, today’s larger airliners cruise at roughly 600 mph, or Mach 0.8.

The studies concluded potential passenger markets exist in about 50 established transoceanic routes. NASA’s Advanced Air Vehicles Program (AAVP) is now moving into the next phase of the high-speed travel research, issuing two 12-month contracts for developing concept designs and technology roadmaps to outline risks and challenges, and identify needed technologies to make Mach 2-plus travel a reality.

Boeing is leading the first team, with partners Exosonic, GE Aerospace, Georgia Tech, Rolls-Royce North American Technologies, and others. Northrop Grumman leads the second team, with partners Blue Ridge Research, Boom Supersonic, and Rolls-Royce.

Each team will develop elements including airframe, power, propulsion, thermal management, and composite materials that can hold up under high speeds, as well as non-proprietary designs for concept vehicles.

New Museum fundraising and design news

It was a busy summer for the NWAHC Board as several key steps were taken on the path to realizing the vision of a building a significant commercial aviation museum in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area.

Our fundraising efforts have a 2023-24 goal of \$750,000 to cover architectural design, program development, and staffing for two key positions, to get us to the point of attaining approval from the Metropolitan Airports Commission and local governments. We have adopted a nonprofit fundraising software and communications package called Bloomerang.



University of Minnesota test field in St. Paul

Minnesota makes big move to develop Sustainable Aviation Fuels

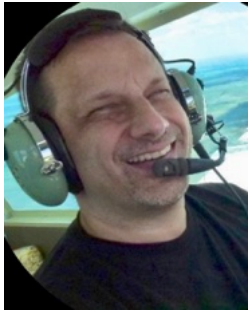
Reducing carbon emissions through cleaner fuel, while keeping cost affordable by efficient production and ensuring consistent supply from domestic sources, has been the trifecta goal for the aviation industry. On August 28, a joint announcement from Delta Airlines, Ecolab, Xcel Energy, the University of Minnesota, Bank of America, Metropolitan Airports Commission, and Minnesota state government launched a joint strategy for research and production for Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), coordinated through the GREATER MSP Partnership.

Tax credits, production and investment incentives, and University research are being combined to bring commercial-scale SAF volumes to MSP Airport by 2025, while also protecting water supply and improving regional agriculture practices. SAF can reduce lifecycle carbon emissions by aviation by more than 80%.

Delta uses about 250 million gallons of jet fuel annually at MSP, and plans for 50% of this to be regionally-sourced SAF by 2035.

This software will help us in reaching out to potential donors and keeping the community well-informed on our progress and ways to contribute.

We are talking with three Twin Cities-based architectural bureaus on Requests for Proposal: HGA, RSP, and Pope Design Group. Each of these firms is well-experienced in museum and public space design, bring knowledge of how to work with local governments and garner community support, and can help us estimate construction costs as well as long-term operating expenses. We are working through “wish lists” and resources to help these firms deliver thoughtful proposals, and plan on issuing RFPs this fall for review in early 2024.



Meet our newest Board member, Tim Haskin

Editor's note: We originally spoke with Tim Haskin in the December 2020 edition of REFLECTIONS about his startup business, Airline Time Machine (airlinetimemachine.com). Tim formally joined our Board this spring.

REF: At Northwest, you started in Reservations, then moved through Sales, was a station manager at LaCrosse, WI, and came back to MSP for ground ops sales. And then worked with other travel and transportation companies, as well as the agency software market. But what gave you the aviation bug in the first place, and why come to NWA?

TH: I grew up near a Strategic Air Command base in Upstate New York. We had B-52s and KC-135s flying over; my father had been in the Air Force. On top of that, three miles away was the Utica airport, home of Mohawk Airlines - and so was exposed to all sorts of low level flying. School field trips went to airports to see aviation careers, so it was very much ingrained. I collected timetables and used them to figure out how each plane worked its way through the network.

I was the kid who would hit all the counters at the airport grabbing one of everything, and now I wish I'd grabbed two! Even in college, going to visit friends in New York, I'd visit the City Ticket Offices and go home with a suitcase full of brochures.

In the early 1980s, I had gone through business school and got my degree, had managed some retail at Sears Roebuck. But I knew I was interested in international aviation. My father at that time was working for General Electric, doing a lot of travel to East Asia and flew Northwest and Pan Am quite a bit. Even then I could see that Pan Am and TWA were in trouble, but "Northwest Orient" was well regarded and had an exotic name - so that's where I applied to!

REF: I remember taping sheets of notebook paper up on my bedroom wall with flight segments and times to piece each aircraft's routing together. Airplane nerds weren't understood well, though, back then.

TH: If a young person says they have an interest in aviation, the question they always get hit with is, "Pilot or Flight Attendant?" Which are two very important positions, but two out of thousands at a big airline. Back-office, backstage kinds of careers like who schedules the crews and maintenance, who

looks at weather, how do they figure out how big the fleet needs to be - what I had some access to growing up in a smaller town with all these regional carriers, whose families worked these kinds of jobs, could really show you how an airline ran. Seeing the kids come through our museum on a recent ACE Camp field trip brings all that back from childhood.

REF: We have talked about that if you get kids interested in an industry or career by 5th grade, it makes so much difference ten, twenty years down the line at hiring and keeping talent. We can play a big role in that inspiration and education, especially now that MSP is no longer an airline HQ city.

TH: For me, getting to know the Museum, was really validation that all the behind-the-scenes collecting I had done for years was finally OK; there were others like me. Your collecting is not an illness! Seeing enthusiastic teens at shows this year is a big deal because they'll be working the ramps and counters soon.

I have wonderful memories from early in my career having colleagues in Sales who had been at Pacific and West Coast and Bonanza and Southern, even Wisconsin Central. Folks at the end of their careers - and here I was at 24 just sitting there and lapping up their stories as we were working. That brings us back to how can we as a museum capture these stories while we still can, so that kids today and tomorrow can get the real information from people who did the work and lived these incredible experiences.

Our museum is this nexus of information and knowledge and people and uniforms and timetables - showing how we got to where we are. A legacy of innovation and leadership that Minnesota and the Upper Midwest can be proud of. And we are in a great position to help tell the stories of where do we go from here, especially if we are able to link up with other Minnesota institutions like the Mayo Clinic, for instance - working with Northwest in the 1930s to figure out high-altitude flying, and air ambulance work, all the way to aviation telemedicine and Boeing 777s landing at Rochester today.

Whether you come through corporate flying, air ambulance, running freight for Bemidji Aviation, or even drone work, its all commercial aviation. Solid careers on their own, but also airlines rely on these "farm teams" because you get that experience in dispatch or cost accounting or yes, pilot hours.

Putting exhibits and programming together that show kids and teens all these different aspects of aviation and letting them touch real airliners and equipment, play with flight sims and 3-D printers is such an important thing to do for our community. I'm glad to be here at this point in time to help make it happen.

Entities opposing Baker's television ownership included Eastern Airlines - claiming that ownership would represent a constant advertisement for National - and Storer Broadcasting, which you may recall from our December 2022 issue, was the company that acquired Northeast Airlines in the 1960s and would unwittingly become an airline opponent of National.

With this turbulence in the background, National's managers continued opportunistically upgrading the fleet - bringing on Convairs, DC-7s, Constellations, and finally the L-188 Electra; adding more frequencies up and down the East Coast and into Cuba; and extending its Gulf Coast operation past New Orleans out to Houston - again causing no end of competitive grief for Eastern. And National got out in front of Eastern by being the first US domestic carrier to fly jets, leasing a Boeing 707 from Pan Am in December 1958 on the New York - Miami route.

However, the television scandal just kept ballooning into the 1960s, with hearings in the US House of Representatives and ultimately a failed appeal to the US Supreme Court. Baker's attention was drawn away from his airline as his pursuit of a TV empire grew more and more bitter. He resigned as president in November 1961. Lewis Maytag (of the appliance manufacturer and former owner of Frontier Airlines) purchased majority control in April 1962 and became the new chairman. Baker sued Maytag in May 1963, but died in Vienna in November that year.

Trapped by their own success

While the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) had sanctioned Baker in the 1950s by denying Midwest route authorities, as he started taking his hands off the airline in 1961, the agency gave National a favor in awarding transcontinental authority between Florida and California. (Perhaps the agency recognized the loss of Cuba revenue resulting from the Communist takeover that year.)

With a combination of multi-stop Electra flights and DC-8 nonstops, a robust network was quickly established by mid-decade that featured scissor hubs at Houston and New Orleans. Traffic was quick to build as aerospace, energy, and entertainment traffic was booming across the sunbelt, and National had the best routings connecting the fastest-growing parts of the country.

Maytag invested in new Boeing 727s and Douglas Super 61s through the 1960s, and much like at Northwest, tended to pay up front so aircraft were owned assets. Revenues and profits continued to build, although Maytag's labor relations were abrasive. Outside of an oddball SFO - Atlanta authority, the CAB would not grant any further boons for the rest of the 1960s. While population and business activity grew, this was fine - but National management was uneasy.

The company was basically two smaller airlines that intersected at Miami. Its East Coast operation was busy but Eastern always offered more capacity, and Northeast was hungry for market share. It was basically an origin-and-destination business and heavily dependent on vacation traffic.

Its transcontinental operation was strong and its home markets growing, but had no significant local feed on either end of the operation - again highly dependent on point-to-point demand although with a better balance of business-to-vacation traffic.

California passengers were not going to connect via Miami to New York or Boston, no matter how attractive "triangle fares" were. And while Douglas DC-10s on order would further improve seat-mile costs, without another traffic source the company was one hurricane or bad winter away from crisis, no matter how rosy the profits were.

And these two systems were not effective at balancing seasonal demand to keep the company's fleet fully utilized. West Coast traffic was consistent through the year, while East Coast demand of course was much higher in winter than summer.

London calling

In June 1970 National was able to launch service from Miami to London Heathrow. This route was an immediate hit as it was able to use Gulf Coast markets such as Tampa, New Orleans, and Houston for feed. The company quickly filed for additional transatlantic authorities, although these efforts would not bear fruit until the back half of the 1970s.

Meanwhile, the company was still stymied at growth into Central America or the Caribbean, which could have bolstered business and cargo traffic over Miami and leveraged both the East Coast and West Coast networks for feed.

Labor strikes during 1971 pushed the company into a rare revenue loss, just as payments for DC-10s and 747s (and a new terminal at New York JFK) were coming due.

"It was the plan all along"

Maytag would say that his business plan from 1962 onward was to structure the company to be an attractive merger partner, despite being a vocal opponent of mergers at the time. He had read the industry well; by the early 1970s Western was trying to merge with American; Allegheny and Mohawk were combining; and Northeast had tried and failed to join Northwest but now had a deal with Delta. Even Eastern was saying they might need to acquire Braniff, Continental, TWA, or Pan Am. Maytag had even informally discussed merging with NWA in 1968.

Maytag and his chairman, Dudley Swim, had structured National to offer two sets of strong traffic flows, modern equipment, a set of attractive terminals at key airports, and a well-run maintenance facility. And when times were good, a cash-generating machine. Now they just needed a buyer.

Northwest's perspective

Donald Nyrop and the NWA Board had just been denied a merger with Northeast in March 1971 (see *the December 2022 REFLECTIONS*), as the CAB refused to let NEA's Miami - Los Angeles route pass over to NWA in the deal.

In retrospect, the Northeast combination would have created more problems than opportunities - but the NWA board still had merging on its mind, and Swim was in immediate contact. Discussions moved quickly and a deal was announced on September 23, 1971.

There were a number of valid arguments in favor:

- Fleet commonality with the 727s and 747s, always something NWA was interested in.
- While the DC-10s had different engines and ranges, that meant the -40s could be used on overseas runs and the -10s could concentrate on domestic.
- NW 707s and NA DC-8s were on their way out, anyway.
- Even better economies of scale for aircraft maintenance.
- "Triangle" routings could direct widebodies on specific times / days to maximize revenue, versus simple out-and-backs.
- Houston, Atlanta, and New Orleans would feed to Asian routes via California; Florida would feed via New York
- Station consolidation at New York, Miami, Tampa, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.
- Both companies owned most of their respective fleets, so refinancing payments for assets would not be a problem.
- Some limited ability to seasonalize fleet usage - NWA had a stronger summer season, while NAL peaked in the winter.



- And of course eliminating duplicate staff in marketing, sales, legal, and procurement departments.

These savings and sales enhancements would have contributed millions - perhaps tens of millions of dollars - of profit annually to the combined company. Good but not incredible results.

Instead of paying cash, for each share of National stock, Northwest would offer 0.85 of a newly minted share of NWA. With about 8.5 million shares of National outstanding, at Northwest's stock price then, the deal would be worth about \$225 million. If this had been a cash offer, those cost savings and traffic boosters would have needed a decade to pay off. Nyrop would be the chairman, Maytag the vice chair, and most of the Board members would carry on around a larger table.

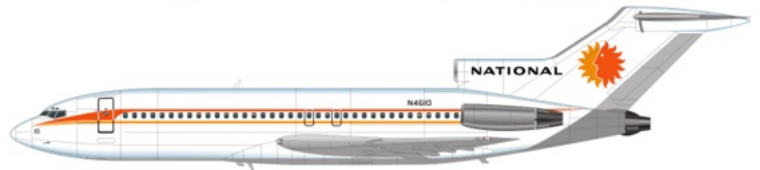
Where would that table be? It was never announced, but it was understood headquarters would have left Minnesota - probably to Miami or New York. And would the carrier's name would be changed? - "Northwest" did not fit the new network.



DC-10-10 N68N photo by Clipperarctic, no date or airport provided, CC 4.0 license.

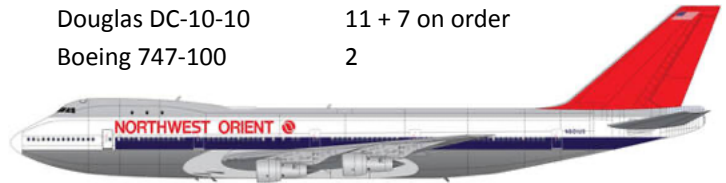
Feature Article

Despite these unanswered strategic questions, and the moderate cost savings and revenue enhancements a combination would bring, the deal earned quick Board approvals at each carrier. The vote went to shareholders in December 1971, and the motion was approved at both companies.



National's 1972 fleet

Boeing 727-100	13
Boeing 727-200	25
Douglas DC-8-20/30	5
Douglas DC-8-61	2
Douglas DC-10-10	11 + 7 on order
Boeing 747-100	2



Northwest's 1972 fleet

Boeing 727-100	32
Boeing 727-200	24
Boeing 720B	13
Boeing 707-320	33
Douglas DC-10-40	14 on order
Boeing 747-100	15



Hang on a minute

While NWA and NAL both argued that the combined company would achieve higher marketing awareness, that Missoula-to-Mobile routings were somehow possible, and that all the wide body frames coming on-line would be filled despite industry acknowledgment of over-capacity - and that this would lead to even higher profits - critical voices began to speak out in 1972.

National's poor labor relations (and objectification of its flight attendants) were further agitated by remarks from Nyrop and Maytag during CAB hearings, implying NWA's contracts would be imposed on the NAL staff. Seeing Northwest's recent labor history and strikes apparently did not inspire confidence, so all seven National unions came out opposed to the merger in January 1972 and were vocal both at government meetings and in the press.

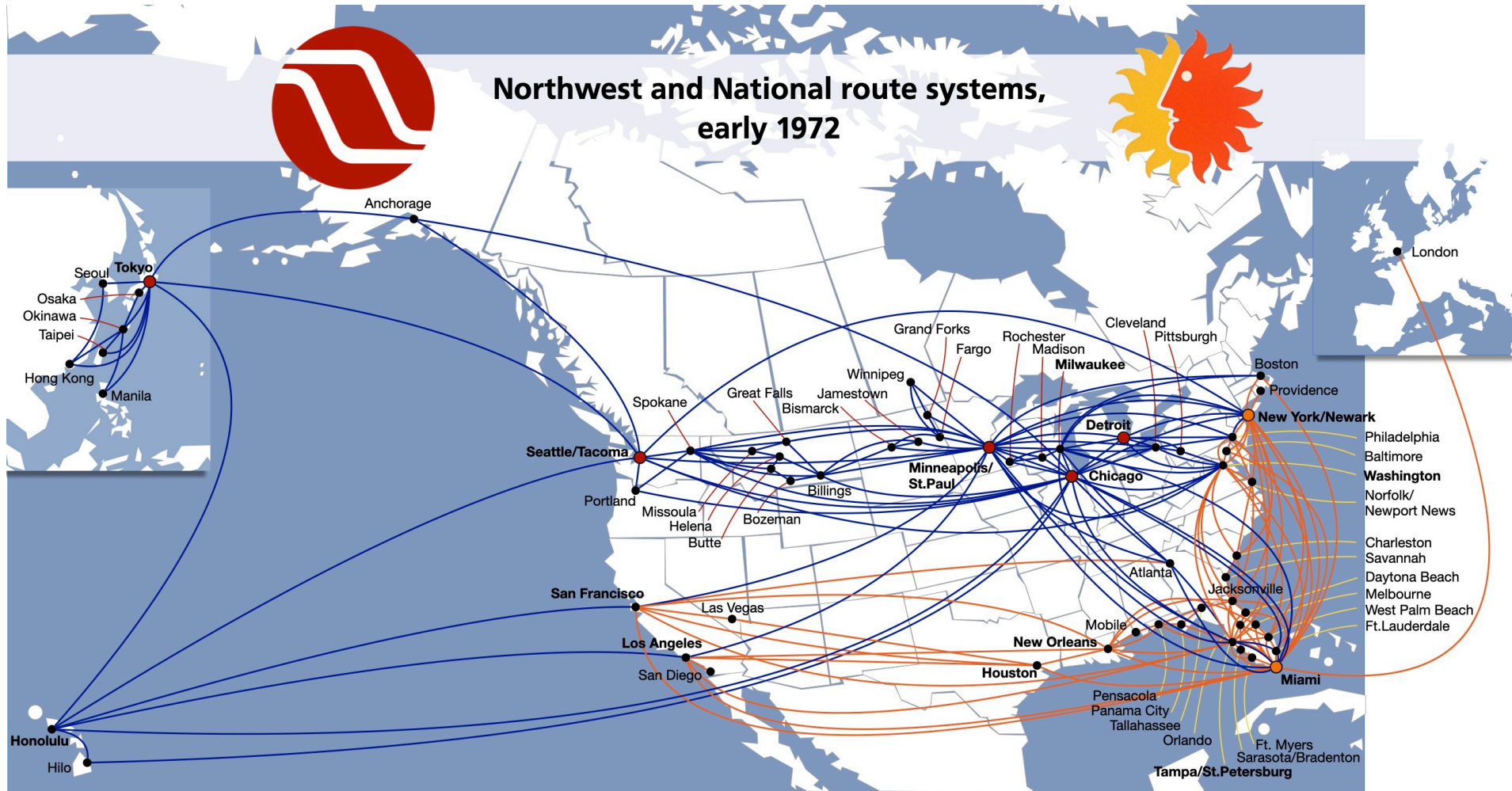
While Northwest's unions were silent about the deal, the US Justice Department and Bureau of Operating Rights had issues. On May 22, 1972, the Civil Aeronautics Board denied the merger request as "not being consistent with the public interest." Associate Chief Examiner Robert Park noted, "the benefits from the merger would be outweighed by the probable detrimental consequences," including a loss of competition and innovation that smaller trunk carriers contributed. "The merger is not needed for financial reasons by either partner, nor is it required to remedy any known route deficiencies. Rather, its avowed purpose is to render two of the industry's most profitable air carriers, which are individually strong, even stronger."

While NWA and NAL continued to lobby for approval into summer 1972, even obtaining the advocacy of the Department of Transportation, the full CAB board remained skeptical and even got NWA's counsel to concede "neither airline would go down the drain" if the merger was not approved. CAB also believed the British government might not approve a transfer of London rights to NWA. The Twin Cities business community also started becoming apprehensive to the deal at Nyrop's failure to assure leaders that Minneapolis would remain headquarters.

NORTHWEST	1971 results	NATIONAL
15.6 billion	ASMs (Available Seat Miles)	10.6 billion
5.6 billion	RPMs (Revenue Passenger Miles)	4.2 billion
35.6%	Avg. Load Factor	39.9%
6.1 million	Passenger Count	5.5 million
\$425 million	Operating Revenue	\$277 million
\$332 million	Passenger Revenue	\$256 million
\$40 million	Cargo Revenue	\$21 million
\$11.8 million	Pre-tax Net Income	-\$3.9 million
\$125 million	Assets	\$122 million
\$252 million	Long-term Debt	\$167 million

National's 1972 profit recovery, the death of chairman Swim, and burbling labor unrest (which would come to a head in 1975) all combined to reduce the NAL board's intensity of winning the government's approval. The CAB had not yet issued its final decision by the time a November 28, 1972 deadline between the two companies, and National let the deal lapse.

East Coast competition only got more difficult as Delta acquired Northeast. A merged NWA may have been too distracted by Florida battles to jump on Atlantic and Pacific opportunities soon to come.



Analysis: Combined System Map

The merged carrier would have been a stronger carrier into Florida, offering East Coast, Midwest, and West Coast destinations, and robust schedules into both Miami and Tampa. Without routes into the Caribbean or Latin America, however, Miami would not become a viable connecting hub. Even its valuable London route would not capture any additional NWA passengers as no one from Milwaukee or Chicago would bother with such an obtuse routing.

Furthermore, the combined carrier would still come up short into Florida against Eastern and Delta, both on East Coast frequencies and for breadth of feed being funneled through Atlanta.

NWA's Asia network would see more on-line connections over New York City as that routing was more direct between Tokyo and Miami. If NW had its Northern Europe routes from the late 1970s at this time, JFK would have been a powerful hub.

A "four corners" hub arrangement (MIA, JFK, SEA, LAX in this case) only works with substantial regional and transcontinental feed, coupled with extensive overseas flights. National offered nothing to boost Seattle, and neither carrier could offer more than one overseas route from the other cities. So there were no competitive network synergies that could result from this merger - not without dozens of new route authorities, or another merger with someone like Braniff, who could supply the missing puzzle pieces.

Cabin & Cockpit Anecdotes

By Chief Pilot Jack Ferrer, Jr. - via Pacific Airlines Portfolio



Jack was born August 28, 1928 and first flew in 1946. He was hired by Southwest in 1948, served with the US Air Force 1950-1954, and resumed work with Southwest, becoming a Captain in 1959 and serving through the mergers through Republic, ending his career in 1988 as a 757 Captain. He was even contracted by Hughes Airwest to fly assignments in Ghana and Liberia! After a long & well-earned retirement, Jack passed in September 2013.

In '48 I was a purser onboard a Southwest Airways DC-3 flight from SFO to LAX. Our flight was full of San Francisco Examiner employees and they all were pretty well looped. One of the passengers went to the back of the plane and thought the airstairs was the door to the bathroom so he pulled on the handle and the door opened. The guy nearly fell out of the plane. If it wasn't for his buddies standing close by he probably would have fallen out and ended up somewhere around Santa Cruz. Well, Captain Stevenson called me forward and explained that we had to land and if the airstairs was down when we landed we probably would lose it altogether. He said the solution would be if I were to pull up on the one remaining chain and hold the door up off the runway then we could fix it after landing. While landing I was in the back pulling as hard as I could – it was enough to clear the asphalt. It was quite a balance act holding up the weight of that door with the wind and runway rushing by. After we landed and came to a stop we quickly closed the door and took off continuing to our destination of LAX.

Right around 1958 I was flying out of LAX as the 1st Officer onboard a Martin 202. Jack Cromer was the Captain. Jack said he had to leave for a short time and told me to sit in the left seat while he was gone. I figured he was going to the bathroom or wanted to chat with one of the passengers. Jack had a reputation of extended conversations with passengers. After a little while the Station Agent standing next to the plane looked up at the cockpit and signaled me to start the right engine. I glanced back in the passenger cabin and didn't see Jack so I started the right engine. The stewardess rang the bell twice to tell me the airstairs was up and locked in place. Then the agent told me to start the left engine. I started the left engine. I then called the control tower and asked for clearance to taxi. When I received clearance I taxied out and was near the main runway when I received a call from the Southwest Ops Agent. He said "Stop, Captain Cromer is still in the terminal".

I was the First Officer flying out of CEC to MFR, flying a Martin



Martin 202 at SFO in 1957, showing the transitional livery before the name change to Pacific. Photographer unknown, via Pacific Airlines Portfolio.

202, George Klika the Captain. We had a lot of icing on the windows and wings so George told me to turn on the wing heaters. (*Ed. note: these heaters used the same fuel as the aircraft's engines.*) I turned on all 4 heaters and at the same time we were hit by lightning on the left wing. The Captain yelled "Holy shit, you blew the wing off!" There was a lot of adrenalin running for a few seconds until we realized it was a lightning strike and the wing was still there.

Photographer unknown, via Pacific Airlines Portfolio.



In the mid 60's I was flying an F-27 from Reno to San Francisco. It was 2 am. The cabin was full of casino people who were pretty well drunk. The stewardess came to the cockpit and told me that everyone was uncontrollable and it was a problem with people running back and forth and throwing things all over the place. My response was "OK, I'll put everyone to sleep." I raised the cabin pressurization to 12,000 feet and turned up the cabin heaters. After about 30 minutes I called back to the stewardess and asked "How are things going?" Her response was "Everyone's sleeping!"

In 1961 I was flying a Martin 404 from San Jose to Van Nuys with a stop at Vandenberg. I picked up a load of civilians at the Lockheed hanger in San Jose and then was off to Vandenberg. On approach to Vandenberg I called for clearance to land. I was told there were two military flights ahead of me and would have to wait my turn. One of the planes called in and said "I have two code 6's onboard (two Colonels)." The other plane called "I have one code 6 and a code 7 (one Colonel and a Brigadier General)." My response to everyone was "Who's watching the store?" Obviously the guy in the tower didn't have a sense of humor as he responded, "Do you know your rights to land were cancelled this afternoon?"

I asked him "What's the problem?" I was told our proof of insurance was expired. Hoping for the best, I held pattern and after the other two aircraft landed, the tower called and said we had permission to land. Maybe he did have a sense of humor after all.

In the 50's there were three Captains who would not let me fly the planes when I was a First Officer because I was not military-trained. I was flying with one of them one day on a flight from SFO to LAX in a Martin 404. It was a beautiful sunny afternoon and I was looking out the window when I noticed the plane was weaving up and down and sideways. I looked over to the Captain and saw he was sound asleep. He wouldn't let me fly or cruise even on a clear day. I thought "I'll fix you!" I tested the Fire Warning System which has 6 large red warning lights and a bell that could wake the dead. That woke him up – straight up! He said "What happened?" I told him one of the warning lights flashed so I tested the system. He was wide awake the rest of the flight.

This other Captain actually went to the Chief Pilot and told him they could not check me out because I was not trained in the military. One day the two of us were in a Martin 202 climbing through 9,000 feet and the airspeed and rate of climb were decreasing. I pointed out to "Captain Marvel" that the rolling check power setting had a wide white line near our altitude; we had passed that mark so I told him it was time to shift the Super Chargers to "high blower" in order to regain the lost engine power. The correct procedure when shifting to high blower was to reduce one throttle at a time, shift to high blower, and do the same procedure to the other engine. He looked at me – at that time both throttles were wide open – he reached up and put both blower switches to high at the same time. The plane shot up like we had jet assistance. He looked up at me and said "How about that!"



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