

Airports, Airlines, Military and Nonsked Personalities

At the end of World War 2 the US airport and airways system was probably the best that existed anywhere in the world. When World War 2 ended America's civil airlines (legacy carriers as they are known today) operated a mixed fleet of pre WW2 manufactured DC-3's, C-47's and C-54/DC-4's and /DC-4's. Air Transport Command (ATC) early during WW2 was organized by the military acquired most of America's airline equipment, personnel and management, leaving just enough to provide daily flights in most key national markets. C.R. Smith of American was made a Brigadier General to organize the ATC program and effort. People such as Art Kelly and Tom Wolfe of Western Air Lines rose in stature as ATC's management began developing a world wide airline support system. Civilian airline pilots assigned to ATC soon found themselves flying military aircraft converted to cargo-passenger liners such as the 4 engine B-17's (C-108)* and B-24's (C-82) as well as Boeing 307 Strato Liners, Boeing 314 Flying Boats and factory new C-54's. Major airports through out the US were upgraded, paved, lighted and fitted equipped for all weather instrument operations. Hundreds of new airbase facilities were built all across the country, many of which were to subsequently become the local municipal airports.

Kingman, Arizona was a sleepy desert town when WW2 started. It transformed as did many desert airports, into a large military pilot training base. It in fact to this day retains its 1940's original tower and operations building complete with hand cranked air raid warning siren. Sadly after the end of hostilities Kingman's broad desert vistas became the grave yard for over 20,000 military veteran combat aircraft. Thousands of B-17's, B-24's, P-40's, P-38's, A-20's, B-26's ((Martin), P-61's, The Kingman airport continues in its role as a place to store surplus aircraft, civilian in the 21st century, where they are also broken up and smelted into aluminum ingots.

Fortunately the Kingman aircraft death camp brought major benefits to the airline industry in the form of thousands of new and nearly new aircraft engines, components and parts. This mass of low cost materials kept many airliners operating well beyond their anticipated life expectancies. It allowed the Douglas DC-3 and Curtiss C-46's to continue at airlines in North and South America for almost 50 years. At 70 years the Douglas DC-3 is still a major provider of flight services in many remote corners of the world with as many as 1000 still operating. Their enemy is not age. It's fuel – gasoline.

After hostilities ended the nonskeds entered the scene, slowly at first, but soon became a noticeable and competitive force to the legacy airlines. In 1938 the legacy airlines wrote legislation which Congress dutifully passed as the Civil Aeronautics Act of 1938. The airlines divided up the nation into a series of monopoly mail and passenger routes subsidized by the federal government. However a few small specialized operators not engaged in scheduled or mail services objected and provisions were made to allow their services under an exemption as being nonscheduled. The then Civil Aeronautics Administration (CAA) also established a separate Civil Air Regulation (CAR) governing the operations specifically of these non-scheduled airline operators, CAR Part 42 and a separate CAA economic regulation, Part 298. Initially a nonsked need only acquire an

aircraft and register it with the CAA and proceed to commence operations, which were permitted worldwide. No application for a public convenience certification was needed, merely registering the name of the organization with the CAA. Close to 1,300 names were registered with CAA as nonscheduled operators by early 1946. Many never opened their doors as operators and quickly faded into oblivion.

The new nonsked, mostly returned military veterans, short on dollars and naïve assumed this Part 42 status authorized them to fly " ANYWHERE ANY TIME". Initially the major (legacy) airlines paid them scant attention since most were engaged in moving freight and flying to off route destinations with a hodgepodge of aircraft.

Some types included were Lockheed Lodestars, converted Douglas B-18 bombers (a major modified DC-3 airframe), Douglas B-23 bombers, C-82 (B-24 converted Bombers), PB4Y Flying Boats, Martin Mariner flying Boats, Catalina PBY Flying Boats, Boeing 314 Flying Boats, Waco Troop Carrier Gliders and the more commercially adaptable and modified DC-4/C-54's, C-47/DC-3., C-46/CW-20's, Boeing 307 Strato Liners and Lockheed C-69/049 Constellations. Most of the converted bombers and flying boats soon disappeared as economics overcame enthusiasm.

The nonskeds quickly found out moving passengers was considerably more lucrative and efficient than hauling freight or live stock. Virtually overnight a new industry was born. Offering Spartan low fare unembellished services anywhere any time with converted military aircraft still fitted out with military troop seats these airlines moved into major legacy airline passenger markets, but not without stiff resistance from legacy airlines served airports. Initially people looking for a cheap flight out of New York would have to go to Teterboro (Hasbrouk Heights), N.J. There they would have to wander through parked aircraft and around stacks of cargo to find someone running passenger services. If they found a flight to Chicago for instance, they would have to share their seat with a load of cargo down the other side of the aircraft. In some instances they shared the flight with a coffin or coffins carrying the remains of a dead veteran or loved ones. The aircraft interior was bare metal skin. Seats were metal with canvas backing and seat belt. Arriving at Chicago, the nonsked was not allowed to embarrass the airport terminal building with its appearance and was diverted to the old 1930's WPA built terminal at 63rd Street or to an open field area on 63rd street where the cargo was to be unloaded. If they needed to catch a regularly scheduled flight a half mile walk would get them to Chicago Midway's main terminal.

In Los Angeles there were two airports, both competing for business. Grand Central Air Terminal in Glendale and Lockheed Air Terminal in Burbank, about 5 miles apart. In the Bay area, Oakland's airport authority had been dealing with such carriers as the war ended and military contract airlines operated by aircraft manufacturers and airlines converted to civil operators such as TransOcean and California Eastern Air Lines. At Ontario, California, a former Consolidate Vultee Corporation operated contractor was reorganized into Pacific Overseas Airlines with a fleet of 10 Douglas C-54's. nonsked airlines were not welcome at the San Francisco Airport where they would be competing with legacy airlines nor at New York's Port Authority's La Guardia or Newark Airports

where the legacy airlines were politically well entrenched. Many other cities allowed the nonskeds to operate into their facilities but made sure their aircraft were parked away from main terminal buildings at inconvenient and hard to get to locations. Airlines owned what few public address systems existed and nonsked were not allowed to use them not even for emergency announcements. The era of of vocal megaphones to announce flights remained intact for a few more years.

Legacy airlines had fuel contracts and suppliers. Nonskeds were required to pay cash in advance for fuel, landing fees and other airport service charges. Airport service people, many shooting for jobs with legacy airline, were often hostile to nonsked crews nd passengers. Numerous storied planted by legacy airline PR departments decried the under financed cheap fare airlines. The legacy PR people would allege major safety violations and CAA inspectors would check crews and aircraft with excessive zeal and frequency looking for any item, no matter how minute, to write up a violation and try to ground (red tag) the aircraft.

Teterboro, Burbank, Chicago Midway and Oakland soon shifted their attitude and began catering to the nonskeds. At Chicago, Monarch Air Service operated by "Scotty" Pierce O'Carroll, had been on the airport since it was opened. O'Carroll was well connected in local Chicago politics and his business interests in catering to the nonskeds was enormous. Chiacgo opened their old South Terminal to the nonsked and shortly thereafter to the foreign international carriers. The old WPA built structure became Chicago's International Terminal. At Midway the nonsked began using regular passenger loading gates for their flights. Scotty O'Carrolls gas trucks serviced and turned their flights around in less than 20 minutes on average. At Oakland, Burbank, Kansas City and Dallas recognition that the nonskeds meant substantial airport revenues began to sink in and facilities and services began to surface and be made available to the nonskeds.

The People – Denny McLinn, Wally Lamb, Buzz Scott, Terry Grant, Clint Moen, Godon Eggers, etc.