

## MEMORIES OF THE B747



Last week I got my annual line check on the 747. When the check pilot told me this was the last line check that would ever be given on the 74 it brought back a flood of memories. I remember in 1969 and the biggest Boeing was in the news frequently. It seemed everyone was excited about this airplane, and anticipation was very high at the airlines that would be the first to fly it. At the time, I was flying F/O on the 707, and at that time it was a very good job. We flew great trips intra-Europe, and of course had the round the world service with one 13 day trip a month and layovers in Hong Kong. So my initial reaction was to stay put and enjoy the life style, but it wasn't long until I got caught up in the excitement and added my name to the list that was posted on the bulletin board at Hangar 12.

In February of 1970 I was assigned to ground school in Bldg. 95 at JFK. At that time I hadn't even seen a 747 yet except on the evening news and in reports in Aviation Week. As I recall it, there were nine of us in the class. Capt. Joe Carr was one and fellow F/O's Frank Montemurro, Dick Persons and maybe Dick Nicklas. The flight handbook was only about an inch and a half thick, as they were still printing and developing material. I remember the course as being good with very adequate training aids and the school was much more "user friendly" than 707 or Connie school had been (where it seemed they were more interested in teaching you how to build it rather than operate it). As hard as it may be to believe, the instruction in operating the INS seemed the most intensive and difficult to grasp. While we were in school the 747 got taken on it's proving run to Europe, where it drew large crowds, and as we were about to finish the course, Ed Frankum

flew the TWA inaugural and the first domestic 747 service, when he came from LAX to JFK on Feb. 25th.

I started simulator training on March 6th. Joe Carr was my flying partner, and John Robertson was the instructor. The sim was a delight to fly compared to the 707, and the large instruments and INS a huge improvement. I finished the simulator course on the 14th of March and went out to Kansas City to begin flight training. On March 19th I got my first close look at the 747 as my flying partner, Sam Croyle, and our instructor Bob Norris and I walked out to the flight line to board #103. Wow, was it ever impressive up close. (As a matter of fact, 28 years later I STILL find it impressive up close.) We did most of the training down at Salinas. My first landing was at night, and I will always remember approaching the runway for the first time, and Norris telling me to start easing off on the power for the landing. I thought he must be nuts, we're still way up in the air. Then his hand went over mine on the throttles and slowly eased them closed, a slight flare, and a nice touchdown, with me still thinking that it looked like we were at the middle marker. On March 23d Sam and I got our ratings from Vince Ring in #102.

Line training in that ere bore little resemblance to what goes on in today's operation. There was one, maybe two trips as an observer from the jump seat. At that time we only had the one international flight, 700 to LHR. On my observation ride I believe Bob Buck was the Capt. I do remember that Capt. MacKrille was also an observer, and as he sat in the forward jump seat I didn't see much anyway. By April 15th I had been set up for a line check. Capt. Shepard was checked on the way over to LHR by Billy Williams. On the morning of the 17th the airplane we were suppose to take home, #102, came in with an engine shut down due to oil leaks (a problem that was to plague the early 747 operations for quite some time). When the leak was repaired later that morning, we went out to the field the ferry the plane back to NY. Capt. Williams was flying from the left seat and I was F/O as we took off and soon thereafter lost all the oil again. At that time we had recently started service to ORY and that's where the spare engine was, so that's where we headed. Upon arriving there, Capt. Williams decided that Capt. Shepard and I were qualified and were to wait for the engine change and bring the airplane home. So I got checked out without ever flying the airplane on the line (something that I would not do for several months, by the way). Paris maintenance believed it would take them about 12 hours to do the engine change, no doubt because that is what they had been told by

Boeing. Four days later, on the 21st, Capt. Shepard and I, along with F/E's Bob West and Ed Kappert brought the bird back to Kennedy.

As aircraft continued to arrive during that first summer, we added service to Madrid and then to Rome. Everywhere we went we would draw crowds of curious and eager onlookers who wanted to see the airplane. Of course most of these were crew and staff from the foreign airlines, and we tried to give them the best tours we could. Finally, after almost six months of line service, I got to fly a leg, when Bob Buck let me fly 803 back from ORY on Aug 31st. To say I was grateful would be an understatement, as I was starting to look at my license to see what my rating said differently from what was on the Capt.'s. Those were definitely different times.

As many of you remember, at that time NY was divided into two domiciles, JFK which flew International and NYD which handled domestic. A pilot could switch operations on a quarterly basis and in the last quarter I went to NYD which was flying some very good trips. A typical flight might consist of a non-stop to the coast followed by two or three days of one shuttle a day between the west coast and ORD and then a non-stop back to NY.

We continued adding services and on Jan. 7th, 1971, Vern Lowell, Ed Kallina and I inaugurated FRA-LHR-IAD routing in #110. On Oct. 9th I had my first weather diversion in the 747 when Chuck Hoesel and I went in to Cologne for fuel on our flight to FRA. Shortly thereafter I was on 803, ORY-JFK with Bob Wittke. Arnold Palmer showed up and had a cockpit authority card issued by the FAA and spent the entire trip up in the cockpit with us. A delightful gentleman. As luck would have it we had to land in BGR for fuel on that trip. By the fall on '71 we had extended service through Rome down to ATH and TLV. In late Oct. on the way back from Rome on one of those trips we had to divert in to BGR. Joe Goetz was the Capt. and Frank Metro the F/E. As we extended the gear for landing the associated hydraulic system went away. We had a full load, which at that time was 356 pax. Guess I should explain that instead of being jammed full on seats like it now is, the 74 of that era was truly a luxury machine. The upper deck was called the Upper Deck Lounge, and had four tables, surrounded by seats. It could only be occupied during flight. B zone had more tables and a stand up bar against the rear bulkhead. Anyway, BGR was just a couple of Quonset huts at that time, very primitive. We had to have all of the pax clear customs, the company hired every bus it could find in that part to Maine, and all these people were taken out to a lobster dinner while

the company ferried a 727 with mechanics and a new hydraulic pump up to us. They made the repair, and after a seven hour delay we were on our way to New York.

By early in 1972 I was bored with the lack of flying and went back to the 707 to enjoy several months on the HKG run. At the beginning of '73 came back on the 74, and on 840 of Feb 24th, diverted in to Milan Malpensa because of snow in Rome, would you believe? Chuck Hoesel was the Capt. and Gordon Bishop the F/E and this was the first TWA 747 to go to MXP, and may have been the first ever 747. By the end of that year we had put the plane on the polar route between LAX and LHR.

After a short and involuntary displacement in late '74, I returned to the 747, now very junior due to the effects of deregulation, displacements and the closing of the Boston domicile. About the only interesting event I logged for the next couple of years was flying the first flight in to Malaga on Dec. 13th of '75, with Rutt Barr and Joe Crede, checked by Sam Mariani.

In 1976 the bottom fell out as we sold 12 of our 74's to the government of Iran. On March 19th of that year I flew IAF (Iranian Air Force) 6-288 from MCI to McConnell AFB with Capt. Ed Flynn. On June 12th, Capt. Sam Mariani and F/E Bob Pugh and I took the first 747 in to Barcelona. At about this time we raised the MGTOW of the 747 from 710,000 to 734,000, and I flew it at this weight for the first time on 761, LAX-LHR, July 22d with Capt. Hutch Thurston, F/E Bill Toms and IRO Bob Cherry. Later that summer, on August 30th to be exact, I was on Flt 880, JFK-ATH, with Capt. Dub Youngblood when we lost an engine shortly after takeoff. We returned to JFK and landed at 640,000#.

The SP's arrived in 1980. They were fun, and seemed like real hot rods compared to the larger 74's. They spent much of their early time flying out of BOS, which was great for me. On May 4th of that year Capt. Gordon Hargis, F/E Bob Cherry and I flew #202 on her first revenue flight from BOS-FCO. These planes were never used on the routes that they were designed for until 1983, when we started non-stop JFK-CAI service. I tried this route on Nov. 7th with John D'Albora, Bob Cobun and Hal Leiding. In '84 this route was extended to Kuwait. It was on the return CAI-JFK segment from one of these flights, that I had my longest leg. On Dec. 19th, with Bill Watson and F/E Coney Metcalfe it took us 12:47. Now I know this won't seem that long to you veterans of overseas Connie service, but it's a record for me, and I know it was a long day for

LAX Capt. Joe Kish, who had to ride the jumpseat all the way home because the flight was full.

The 747 sure could carry a load. I made note of a few of the really big one's that I had. They were all on LHR services by the way. Thanks Icahn. On an ORD-LHR flight in 1977 we had a payload on 121,739#. This was topped in 1982, when on a LHR-JFK flight we had 124,100# a load that was beaten on Nov. 23d, 1986, aboard the ill-fated #119, JFK-LHR we carried 133,554# of payload.

I've been very lucky in my 747 flying, with mostly routine operations. The only high speed, high energy abort came on Oct. 14, 1989. We were leaving LAX on the polar flight on #303. The Capt. was Butch Inglesby and the F/E was Tom Matheny, who had a student F/E in the engineers seat for the first time. Our T/O weight was 749,000 and we were at about 125kts on the roll when we had to abort. It sure uses up runway, tires, and brakes. We changed airplanes, tried again, and arrive in LHR at 1720 the next evening. The next year I got up to 78N, on a LAX-CDG polar flight with Howard Hall.

In January of '91 all hell broke loose when the invasion of Kuwait began. I was in the middle of a polar flight, which was disrupted by the almost complete vanishing act done by passengers. Services were slashed, most of the planes went to war as part of the CRAF operation. The largest sector of this was based in FCO, with service down to the desert. I spent Feb. of that year flying a freighter out to the Pacific. We went to Guam, Hickham and Clark AFB in the Phillipines.

I've been able to hang on and be one of the few remaining 747 Captains as the 747 enters its last month on TWA. It's a lot of memories on one of the world's greatest airliners. I'll be just a few hours short of 14,000 on it when it leaves. And you know, I still find it awesome. On my last trip to TLV, I was walking back from Jaffa and stopped twice just to look up and watch these magnificent machines coming in to Ben Gurion airport. And I said "Wow!". TWA Captain Lou Burns