



1926 pride of clover field, Santa Monica, was the Douglas M-2 mailplane which was built for Western Air Express (now Western Airlines) for use on its first contract air mail route, C.A.M. 4, between Los Angeles and Salt Lake City with a fueling stop at Las Vegas. A pilot with his seat pack parachute still on and two Douglas workers admire the aircraft.

Western Airline celebrates 50th

LOS ANGELES - Western Airlines, the only survivor of a handful of airlines that pioneered commercial aviation, celebrates its fiftieth birthday on April 17th this year with the re-creation of its original flight from Los Angeles to Salt Lake City, via Las Vegas.

At 7:39 a.m. a restored Douglas M-2 bi-plane will depart Los Angeles International Airport to travel the historic 653-mile route, just as it did a half-century. The fifty year old aircraft is scheduled to land in Las Vegas about noon and, after a refueling and ceremonial stop, continue on to Salt Lake City, with arrival shortly before dusk.

Piloting the single engine plane will be Ted Homan, a veteran flyer who retired as a Western jet pilot in 1974. Homan, who lives in Santa Paula, California, was the project lead in restoring the aircraft to flying condition.

Homan was thirteen years old when Western made its original flight through his childhood home of Las Vegas. He was at the field when the first Western (Western Air Express flight landed there for refueling).

Like so many veteran pilots, he decided on the spot that he was going to be a pilot. However, he did not know his boyhood dream would include flying the same type of aircraft fifty years later over that original route.

When Western's first flight took place there was considerable bravado attached to facing the elements in the open-cockpit planes. Standard equipment for passengers was a flying suit, goggles, gloves, parachute and lots of courage.

In 1928, the Guggenheim Foundation chose Western to set up a "model airway" between Los Angeles and San Francisco (then served through the airport at Oakland). The purpose was to incorporate the latest in technical perfection and passenger safety and comfort.

With money from the foundation, Western purchased three Fokker F-10 Tri-motor aircraft. This permitted passengers to sit in comfortable wicker chairs inside the cabin and be served meals by a steward (the first flight attendants in U.S. domestic service).

Commercial aviation was new, and improvement in the "state of the art" was up to the airlines themselves. Western was a leader. It was the first with many technological developments adopted later as standard by other airlines and the government.

In 1929, under the guidance of Herbert Hoover, Jr., son of President Hoover, Western developed the first air-to-ground radio, in cooperation with Boeing. A year later, Western introduced the Fokker F-32 aircraft to commercial airline operation. It was a four-engined plane capable of carrying 32 passengers - by far the largest airliner in the world at that time.

In 1932, Irving Krick, a young Western cargo clerk, developed the air mass analysis system of weather forecasting which proved remarkably accurate. Soon Western was known as "The Airline With Perpetual Tailwinds."

One of the most important contributions Western made to commercial aviation was the use of the directional radio compass for air navigation. This compass became the prime navigational instru-



Celebrities like Will Rogers, right, here with one of Western Air Express' first pilots, Al DeGarmo, delighted in flying in the Twenties. Al now lives in Florence, Oregon. Rogers so wanted to be Western's first passenger that he went to the Post Office and bought enough stamps to ship himself over the line's first air mail route from Los Angeles to Salt Lake City. However, regular mail took the space first.

ment for nearly thirty years and is still used today.

There were other firsts: Western was first to successfully attempt inflight television; first airline to complete ten years of operation without a single passenger fatality; and was first to introduce half-fares for children.

But the airlines had its ups and downs. In 1934, the Post Office Department cancelled all airmail contracts. Many airlines went out of business.

However, things got better. The routes of National Parks Airway were added to Western's in 1937. The DC-3 aircraft came on the scene and passengers replaced mail and freight as the prime source of revenue. To reflect this change, Western changed its name from "Express" to Air Lines in 1941.

World War II stripped the company down to three DC-3s and a couple of Lockheed Lodestars. But Western was given two important war missions: to train pilots for the military, and to take men and material to Alaska in the famous "Sourdough Operation."

In 1944, a merger with Inland Air Lines expanded Western in the Rockies and into South Dakota.

The early fifties saw the introduction of the Douglas DC-6B. Western eventually bought 31 of them. The company's routes stretched along the entire West Coast and in 1957 were extended to Mexico City. Western went as far East as Minneapolis-St. Paul.

In 1960, Western entered the Jet Age

with the leasing of two Boeing 707's.

Western secured routes to Alaska by merging with Pacific Northern Airlines in 1967, thus extending the carrier north of Seattle-Tacoma to nine cities in the 49th state.

On January 4, 1969, Western won routes to Hawaii, and today is the Number two airline to Hawaii linking the Islands with direct service to major cities throughout the West, Alaska and into the Midwest.

From that first 600-mile route to Salt Lake City, flown with open-cockpit bi-planes, Western now serves more than forty major cities - from Anchorage in the North to Acapulco in the South and Honolulu in the West to the Twin Cities in the East. All of its planes are jets with the largest jet being the wide-bodied Douglas DC-10.

Western has written a proud heritage in aviation history across the skies of America.

Death row

(Continued from p. 1 col. 6) sign a statement indicating that a gun had been passed around the bus.

Peebles believes the other prosecution witness was similarly coerced.

Peebles said he is investigating the possibility that the fatal shot on October 7, 1974, was fired by someone among or behind the crowds of white demonstrators - possibly at the bus.

"There is some information," he said, "that it (the shot) came from outside the bus."

During the trial, bus driver Ernest Cojoe, an Army combat veteran, testified he was certain the shot couldn't have come from a .45 automatic inside the bus. Other students on the bus had also testified that the shot sounded more like a "firecracker" than a gunshot.

Peebles said he will appeal if his April 21st motion for a new trial is unsuccessful. If that appeal is rejected "there is a very definite chance that Tyler will go to the electric chair," he said.

Lolis Elie, Tyler's family attorney, though not directly involved in the case, says "In my seventeen years as a civil rights lawyer this is the most outrageous thing I've seen in my life. There are lots of funny things about this case."

Wright still 4 - C head

Majorie Wright, assistant professor of community service and public affairs at the University of Oregon, has been reappointed to a two-year term as state chairperson of the Community Coordinated Child Care Council by Governor Bob Straub.

The Council is a legislatively-created advisory board to the State Children's Services Division. Commonly known as the 4-C's Council, it proposes and reviews policy relating to day care programs throughout the state.

Ms. Wright has served as chairperson of the Council since 1974. She has been a faculty member at the University of Oregon since 1970.

Before coming to the University, she taught at the University of Oklahoma and was a social worker in Chicago.

She earned her Ph.D. degree from DePaul University in Chicago, MSW degree from the University of Illinois, and holds a certificate in social work from Tulane (Louisiana University).

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