



Scud Runner

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"To err is human, to forgive is divine; neither of which is FAA policy."

unknown

Pilot's Lounge - Early ATC

By Sandy Gordley



At left is Archie W. League, usually regarded as the first air traffic controller. The 1929 photo shows him dressed for cold weather at St. Louis, where the airport operator employed him to prevent collisions between aircraft. His

communication tools were simple: a red flag for "hold" and a checkered one for "go." League joined the Federal service in 1927. He eventually became FAA's Air Traffic Service Director and retired as an Assistant Administrator in 1973.

The Air Commerce Act of 1926 authorized the Department of Commerce to "establish air traffic rules for the navigation, protection, and identification of aircraft, including rules as to safe altitudes of flight and rules for the prevention of collisions between vessels and aircraft." The first rules were brief and basic. For example, pilots were told not to begin their takeoff until "there is no risk of collision with landing aircraft and until preceding aircraft are clear of the field."

As more aircraft were fitted for radio communication, radio-equipped airport traffic control towers began to replace flagmen. In 1920, the first radio-equipped control tower in the United States began operating at the Cleveland Municipal Airport. By 1932, almost all airline aircraft were being equipped for radio-telephone communication, and about 20 radio control towers were operating by 1935.

Controller Bill Darby is shown with the latest equipment in this 1936 view of New-



ark tower.

The early en route controllers tracked the position of planes using maps and blackboards and little boat-shaped weights that came to be called "shrimp boats." They had no direct radio link with aircraft but used telephones to say in touch with airline dispatchers, airway radio operators, and airport traffic controllers. These individuals fed information to the en route controllers and also relayed their instructions to pilots.

In August 1941, Congress appropriated funds for the Civil Aeronautics Administration (CAA) to construct and operate ATC towers, and soon the CAA began taking over operations at the first of these towers, with their number growing to 115 by 1944. In the postwar era, ATC at most airports was eventually to become a permanent federal responsibility. In response to war-time needs, the CAA also greatly expanded its en route air traffic control system. Women, too, for the first time were trained as controllers during the war, and, at their peak, represented well over 40% of the controller workforce.

Squawk - Super Salto Sailplane

By Sandy Gordley

Bob Carlton began flying in 1979 at the age of 19. He has since logged over 2000 hours in a wide variety of aircraft and holds a commercial pilot certificate. Bob has flown hang gliders, airplanes, helicopters and sailplanes from hundreds of sites in the U. S., Canada, Mexico and Australia. He has flown air shows professionally since 1993. He is from Albuquerque, N. M. and is a member of SSA and ICAS.



Bob is one of the most versatile airshow performers in North America. He began flying airshows in his Salto sailplane and over the years has continued to add innovative performances such as barnstorming biplane aerobatics, helicopter sailplane tow, night aerobatics with strobes and pyro and the world's only twin jet sailplane.

When he is not performing at air shows, Bob is a rocket scientist for a major national laboratory.

Touch and Go - What Determines an Aircraft's Lifespan?

By Sandy Gordley

An aircraft's lifespan is measured not in years but in pressurization cycles. Each time an aircraft is pressurized during flight, its fuselage and wings are stressed. Both are made of large, plate-like parts connected with fasteners and rivets, and over time, cracks develop around the fastener holes due to metal fatigue. Aircraft used on longer flights experience fewer pressurization cycles, and can last more than 20 years. There are some 747s that are 25 to 30 years old.

An aircraft's lifespan is measured by the manufacturer and is usually based on take-off and landing cycles. The fuselage is most susceptible to fatigue, but the wings are too, especially on short hauls where an aircraft goes through pressurization cycles every day. The manufacturers design the aircraft to be "trouble-free" for a certain period of



time. There are maintenance actions to preclude any catastrophic failures, but that's not to say that the aircraft might not experience metal fatigue before those times. When a certain point is reached in an aircraft's lifespan, it needs to be inspected and parts replaced if necessary.

The limiting TECHNICAL factor may be metal stress and fatigue, but the possible FINANCIAL limits are endless: engine fuel consumption vs upgrades vs scrappage, the structure of the original purchase (actual ownership vs lease), who owned the airframe and for how long, which airline had it last and for what purpose, etc. Most of the aircraft now in long-term storage in the desert will never fly again, though most of them could be made to be airworthy – just not economically.

Compass

By Sandy Gordley

We are experiencing some problems with our pilot-controlled runway lighting and the problem is intermittent so please bear with us.



They work most of the time, but please reconsider flying at night until we resolve this problem.