

PCN Services – High Life *Newsletter, News, Events, Deaths, Illness Notices & PCN Ads & Calendar.* Note: Notices from major sections are distributed by separate email address to allow our subscribers the ability to customize and filter notices not desired.

Large web community for one of world's largest airlines

High Life



For all Delta people who have truly touched the *High Life!*

Above aerial I shot over waters off British Columbia.

Dear PCN (of over 2600 subscribing members),

Group Section.....

Mark's Remarks:

DP3 Ballot received: As all other honor roll members I have received the ballot for the election of our DP3 trustees. We still have a number of issues worth fighting for and current representatives are doing a good job. Please get involved and please vote.

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Red letter day: 4 striper again. Well, the training cycle that I have been involved with, started Jan 29th and ended May 2nd and I still await scheduling and completion of OE. My Capt PC has been passed and I have earned the right to be called Captain again. Will start flying on 767's soon. Training wasn't the most enjoyable but I do look forward to actually flying the missions.

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[PCN Ads](#) – *up and running!*

For all of you who have an item, service or offer to promote Ad packages as follows:

FREE listings - \$0 for 45 days.

Jobs offered, jobs wanted, Pets, items Wanted. Runs 45 days, includes images.

Basic Listing - \$5 for 60 days with multiple images.

Silver - \$10 for 120 days with multiple images.

Gold - \$25 for one year with multiple images.

Platinum - \$50 for 3 years with multiple images.

Every one submitting an Ad gets a private login and complete control over their ads. URL's and images are allowed and you will see it is a very nice format for entering online ads.

Check it out; just register and submit and get your item, thing wanted, service or house, posted. Its just that easy!

[PCN Ads](#)

Note: PCN Ads was developed to give our group and outlet to advertise in front of our exclusive and numerous members along with searchable on the www, and by so doing keeps our newsletter free from any profit or commercial link.

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Tools for our members:

PCN Main Website: <http://pcn.homestead.com/home01.html>

PCN Google Group archives: <http://groups.google.com/group/PilotCommunicationNet>

PCN Ads – <http://pilotcommunication.net/Ads/>

PCN Tool Bar (for IE browser) - <http://pcntools.ourtoolbar.com/>

PCN Calendar - <http://pcn.homestead.com/Calendar.html>

PCN specific emails: misc@pilotcommunication.net

pcn.calendar@gmail.com

signup@pilotcommunication.net

illness@pilotcommunication.net

death@pilotcommunication.net

ads@pilotcommunication.net

mark@pilotcommunication.net

Here is hoping all PCN'ers are safe! Catastrophe in the South.

News Section.....

Here is hoping all PCN'ers are safe! Tornadic catastrophe in the South.

SLIDE SHOW

April 28, 2011, 5:05 p.m. EDT

Slide show: Devastation in storms' wake

Two weeks of deadly storms mark South out for destruction

<http://www.marketwatch.com/story/slide-show-devastation-in-storms-wake-2011-04-28?siteid=yhoof>

Delta News (Recent stories of interest): [Yahoo](#), [AJC](#)

Delta Air Lines pays CEO \$8 million for 2010

Delta Air Lines CEO collected \$8 million last year as full-year profit drove incentive payout
Joshua Freed, AP Airlines Writer, On Friday April 29, 2011, 5:59 pm EDT

A profitable year for Delta Air Lines turned into a profitable year for CEO Richard Anderson, too.

Anderson collected compensation worth about \$8 million last year, according to an Associated Press analysis of a filing made Friday afternoon.

The pay for Richard Anderson was down 4 percent from the previous year. His \$600,000 salary didn't change. But for 2010 he received incentive pay of almost \$1.3 million. He didn't get that incentive pay in 2009 because Delta didn't turn a profit that year. But he did get relocation benefits and other perks valued at \$1.2 million, so the two payments roughly offset each other.

Delta said Anderson's base salary has not changed since he joined Delta as CEO on Sept. 1, 2007. He gets incentive pay in cash for years like 2010, when Delta turns a profit and has a payout under its profit-sharing plan. He gets incentive pay in restricted shares if the profit-sharing plan doesn't pay out.

Anderson, 56, received stock awards valued at \$6 million last year, down from \$6.6 million a year earlier.

Read more: <http://finance.yahoo.com/news/Delta-Air-Lines-pays-CEO-8-apf-2363736950.html?x=0&.v=4>

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Delta Air Reports Smaller Loss Than Estimated on Higher Fares

By Mary Jane Credeur - Apr 26, 2011 10:06 AM ET

[Delta Air Lines Inc. \(DAL\)](#), the world's second-largest carrier, posted a smaller first-quarter loss than analysts estimated as higher fares helped blunt rising fuel costs.

The net loss was \$318 million, or 38 cents a share, including a gain related to fuel hedges. That compares with the 50-cent average loss estimate of 13 analysts surveyed by Bloomberg. Revenue rose 13 percent to \$7.75 billion, the Atlanta-based company said today in a statement.

Delta and other U.S. carriers raised ticket prices six times last quarter to mitigate a 41 percent jump in jet-fuel prices from a year earlier. Delta is retiring some of its oldest and least-efficient planes and cutting capacity after the peak summer travel season to further lower costs.

Read more: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-04-26/delta-air-reports-smaller-loss-than-estimated-on-higher-fares.html?cmpid=yahoo>

Other Airline News (Recent stories of interest): [Yahoo](#), [AJC](#)

Southwest, AirTran merger approved by DOJ

Dayton Business Journal - by DBJ Staff

Date: Wednesday, April 27, 2011, 8:52pm EDT

Southwest Airlines Co. said the U.S. Department of Justice has given its approval of the planned merger with **AirTran Holdings**.

The merger with AirTran (NYSE: AAI) will bring Southwest (NYSE: LUV) to the **Dayton International Airport**, long a goal of Dayton-area officials.

"AirTran stockholders approved the acquisition of AirTran by Southwest Airlines on March 23, 2011, which, when combined with DOJ approval and other regulatory clearances, constitutes one of the final steps toward closing the transaction," Southwest [said in a press release Wednesday](#).

The airline [previously said it plans to close the merger](#) on May 2.

"Next steps also include beginning work on securing a Single Operating Certificate (SOC) from the Federal Aviation Administration, which is currently projected for completion in the first quarter of 2012," according to Southwest.

Southwest also said the merger will benefit consumers through the expansion of low-fare competition in airline markets across the United States, the creation of broader network offerings with a wider range of consumer choices, improved quality and service, and the overall creation of a platform for new growth.

AirTran is the second-busiest carrier flying out of Dayton. Atlanta-based **Delta Air Lines** (NYSE: DAL) is the busiest. Other top carriers at the airport include **US Airways Group**; **AMR Corp.**'s American Airlines unit; and **United Continental Holdings Inc.**, the parent company of United and Continental.

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US Airways posts \$114M loss in 1Q

[US Airways Group Inc.](#) cites high fuel costs for a first-quarter net loss of \$114 million, or 71 cents per diluted share. In the same period last year, the airline lost \$45 million, or 28 cents per diluted share.

Excluding one-time items, US Airways lost \$110 million, or 68 cents per diluted share, in the latest quarter. Analysts had, on average, expected the carrier to lose 72 cents per share.

Revenue rose 11.7 percent to \$3 billion.

Read more: [US Airways posts \\$114M loss in 1Q | The Business Journal](#)

Finance Section ((Claims, PBGC, HCTC, Insurance, Planning, Tax, Estate) - section containing items with financial consequence to our group):

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Remaining financial items for retirees to watch:

After Aug 2007 these are retirement items remaining with financial consequence.

1. ~~PBGC 2nd look re-calc at qualified annuity benefits~~ - completed 8/24/07
2. ~~PBGC make up lump payment for underpayments since termination:~~ most reported received 1/31/08
3. ~~Final claim distribution by DAL through BSI~~ – distributed at or around Mar 23, 2011.
4. ~~Class Action suit against DAL concerning 5-yr look-back worth in excess of \$100 million~~ - *withdrawn*
5. Final Benefit Determination Letters (BDL's) PBGC re-calc "determination" of qualified annuity (likely after claim stock sale) – *in process until end of year (only 45 days to appeal)* Appeal extensions generally granted in Nov 2010 now extended by our law firm for all to: revised to ~~Feb 18, 2011~~ ~~Now Mar 18, 2011~~, ~~April 29, 2011~~, **July 29, 2011**
6. Pension reinstatement/contribution request by DP3 representing the retired pilots. *very long shot....pending*
7. ~~Roth IRA creation as per Worker, Retiree, and Employer Recovery Act of 2008~~ – deadline ~~June 22nd, 2009~~

8. Expiration of HCTC 80% premium subsidy will expire on December 31, 2010. ~~Action has continued 80% for Jan & Feb.~~ Action expired and subsidy effective Mar 2011 is now back to 65%.

9. Financial condition of the D&S Plan--a plan that pays benefits to eligible survivors of deceased pilots as well as to disabled pilots. A form 5500 for the D&S Plan is filed annually.

10. Formation of a VEBA Health Insurance plan by DP3.

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Insurance (issues about health, life or disability that are of interest):

From: [Bobby R. Foster](#)

Date: 4/25/2011 1:49:42 PM

To: misc@pilotcommunication.net

Subject: Retiree Optional Life Insurance Reduction

To All Retirees:

I just found out that when you turn 65, your Delta optional life insurance amount is reduced to 25% of what you had before age 65. For example, if you had \$500,000 it is now only \$125,000. Spouse optional life insurance does not reduce due to age, or any other benefits offered to retirees and spouses. This is applicable to pilots who retired between 2000 and 2010. Other retirement ages have different reductions. This information is located on the dl.delta.net website, but you have to drill down ten layers to find it in Adobe Acrobat format. (Go to dl.net.delta.com>select retirees>logon>Employee Info(under DELTANET) then(Self-service) on the drop down>Agree>Benefits Direct(on the left)>under Other Resources select Documents & Forms>Summary Plan Descriptions(Under Documents &Forms Directory) select(Health, Disability & Insurance)>Pilot Life Insurance & Survivor Benefit Handbook(this is Adobe). Go to page 25 of the document and read the info for your retirement date.. Got that.

I had no idea that this benefit coverage reduced with age.

Bob Foster

bfoster4@mac.com

Pension:

Re-print of latest update with honor roll appeal.

DP3 Chairman's Update

April 29, 2011

During our April meeting, your DP3 trustees continued to coordinate with our legal team to complete our preparations for the consolidated appeal of our pension benefits currently paid by the PBGC. In addition to discussing the pending PBGC appeal, the trustees also decided to change the password for access to the Member's-Only portion of the DP3 website, in order to ensure that access to appeal information was only available to current Honor Roll members. We also voted to extend the deadline for candidate nominations for the 2011 trustee election, and discussed a possible extension of the deadline to become an Honor Roll member for those who plan to participate in the PBGC appeal.

Membership Support

While it is gratifying to see so many retired pilots financially supporting our efforts, I am troubled that so few eligible members are willing to step forward to share the DP3 workload; and that several hundred retirees, who have a huge financial stake in our ultimate success, have failed to become Honor Roll members and join the appeal.

In spite of the fact that the trustees agreed to extend the nominating deadline, sent a message to all members advising them of the new cutoff date, and sought additional volunteers, we have only three candidates running for three positions in this year's trustee election. We are fortunate that we have two incumbent trustees seeking re-election and one highly qualified outside candidate running for the first time, but I wish we could offer you more choices in this year's election, which will begin on May 1 and run through May 31, reflecting changes adopted by the board following last year's election. (The change reduced the voting period from six weeks.)

Benefits of Honor Roll Membership

Getting back to the membership issue, there are approximately 3000 retirees who have up to \$1500 per month at stake in our PBGC appeals and potential federal court case, and well over half of those retirees are currently fully paid Honor Roll members of DP3. While it is possible that everyone could share in any successes we have during the PBGC appeals process, if we are forced to pursue a remedy through the federal courts, any court decision would most likely only apply to those who are named participants in the case-HR members.

To date the total cost of DP3 membership is \$1500. While that is certainly not an insignificant sum of money, a successful appeal could increase the benefits of thousands of DP3 members by that amount **every month**, plus successful appellants would receive a retro check for each month since the plan was terminated on September 2, 2006. While we cannot guarantee success, your odds of benefiting from our efforts are certainly better if you are an Honor Roll member of DP3, than if you choose to remain on the sidelines and let others fight your battles for you!

Deadlines for Joining the Appeal

While it is in everyone's interest to have as many Honor Roll members as possible, we need to ensure that our legal team has sufficient time to prepare all of the appeal documents. Subsequent to our April meeting where the DP3 trustees decided to defer establishing a hard deadline for retirees to become Honor Roll members and participate in the appeal, our attorneys have advised us to implement the following policy:

- Those of you who previously joined the appeal but have allowed your Honor Roll membership to lapse (by non-payment of 2011 dues) must become current on your dues by **June 20, 2011**, or we will begin the process to remove you from the DP3 appeal. (Note that this does not affect your right to an individual appeal or using your own counsel, provided you previously extended your appeal deadline in accordance with DP3's instructions.)
- Those of you who are 2011 Honor Roll members (\$1500 level) may join the appeal at any time providing we have sufficient time to process your appeals paperwork - but the sooner you join us, the less expense we will incur for last minute changes.
- Those of you who have not been on the Honor Roll since 2009, or who have never joined DP3 in the first place, may still become an Honor Roll member and file an appeal as long as you allow us sufficient time to process the required paperwork.
- If you have a QDRO and have not received your BDL, you cannot join the appeal under any circumstance until your BDL is issued. (This is a PBGC requirement-you are not allowed to appeal until you have received your Final Benefit Determination Letter.) If that occurs before the appeal filing deadline of July 29, 2011, we will add you to the appeal when it's filed as long as we have your required paperwork. If that occurs after the appeal is filed, you may join the appeal in progress without prejudice.

To avoid any last minute problems with your appeal paperwork, please check the membership status box at the top left of this email, and ensure your documents have been received and logged by DP3. We also ask that you log on to the members only web page and check the status of your appeal to make sure any listed missing documents or pages are sent to us as soon as possible.

Thank you for your continued support.

Will Buergey
Chairman, DP3

Postscript: while I have not re-printed the meeting minutes there is one motion that affects some of our widow survivors that was passed at the meeting and I wanted to share:

Brant motion that DP3 include a new written policy under the web page "About DP3:Policies:Membership" to include the following new bullet point (Nichols second.) Motion passed 9-0. Widows and survivors who are no longer receiving a PBGC benefit under the Single Life annuity option but may have back benefits will not be required to pay further dues and assessments to remain in the appeal. Widows and survivors who are still receiving a PBGC benefit under the Joint and Survivor annuity option and may have back and future benefits shall continue to pay further dues and assessments to remain in the appeal. The divorced spouse of a retired member or the member shall pay further dues and assessments to remain in the appeal. DP3 cannot be a party to the QDRO split and only needs one full set of dues and assessments.

As the PBGC appeals progresses the sensitivity of the information does as well. While the PCN has re-published many of DP3 general postings, we will refrain from re-publishing "private emails" in view of the nature of the process. So when there is a general update we will re-publish and when there is a private email we will help announce its existence.

To PCN subscribers these links are “hot” and will take you directly to the DP3 resource page or checklist for filing an appeal concerning your PBGC benefits.

Click for [PBGC Appeals Resource Page](#)

Or

[Appeal Checklist](#)

DP3 (login required)

Click to appeal your PBGC benefit

Call PBGC in DC- 1-800-400-7242

Link of explanation for BSW ([Benefit Statement Worksheet](#))

(Note: Must know your DP3 assigned passwords which cannot be shared in our newsletter!)

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Commercial Section.....

Investment (Legitimate firms that have helped our group are encouraged to contact PCN to add articles here):

Travel & Non-Revving (share a quick reco):

From: Yorkieat@aol.com

Date: 4/26/2011 12:24:13 PM

To: Yorkieatl@aol.com

Subject: Fwd: I missed this when I was in Japan

DLNet/ DNN

eZED program changes, fees are dropping

March 28, 2011

Delta has added three new airlines to its electronic Zonal Employee Discount program, bringing to 12 the number of eZED participants for Delta employees and retirees. And because of the increased participation, the service fees are dropping.

Lufthansa, Emirates and Finnair are the newest eZED participants. The myIDTravel service fees will drop from \$3.15 to \$2.73 per coupon for eZED tickets purchased on or after April 1.

“With eZED, employees and retirees can purchase and refund eZED tickets from any computer with Internet access, 24/7,” said Steve Jensen, manager- Interline and Industry Affairs. “There’s no need to go to the Delta ticket counter.”

As the industry transitions to electronic ticketing for interline employee travel, not all airlines will be able to comply with the technical requirements to enable eZED ticketing, Steve said.

The ZED agreement with British Airways will be suspended on May 11, when the carrier stops accepting paper tickets. Because BA is not a participant in myIDTravel, there is no process to allow Delta to maintain an eZED relationship.

The deadline for all carriers to transition to electronic ticketing is March 2012.

“Delta is doing everything we can to preserve as many interline reduced-rate agreements as possible,” Steve said. Delta will continue to add new eZED participants as they become eligible, he said.

Check the [Other Airline Travel page](#) for more information, including a fact sheet, tutorial, list of eZED participants and frequently asked questions

Life Section...

Misc Posts:

Great for us "cheap" pilots:

USE OF BOTTLE TOPS TO SEAL A BAG.....

WHAT A GREAT IDEA. NO MORE TWIST TIES OR RUBBER BANDS. This method is WATER PROOF AND AIR TIGHT. GREAT! The guy who first thought of the idea should be given an award for originality!!!

Seal Plastic Bags with Old Bottle Caps

Cut up a disposable water bottle and keep the neck and top, as in photo.



Insert the plastic bag through the neck and screw the top to seal.



The bag is made to be air-tight, such that water will not leak, the secret lies with the top and screw cap!

This is a great idea to share.

Good for us and the environment too.

Zip-top bags are great, but sometimes you buy something in bulk and you're stuck with an unsealable bag. Home-centric blog Re-Nest shows us an easy way to give these bags an airtight seal with an old water bottle.

All you need to do is cut off the top of the bottle and take off the cap. Push the bag through the bottle neck, fold it over the edges, and twist the cap back on. Now, your bag has an air and water tight seal, and you didn't have to waste the bag.

Human Interest:

Good Read (Good book recommendation & [Community Author's](#) blurbs):

Event Announcements (Click here for [Calendar](#)): to post pcn.calendar@gmail.com

This is the PCN Calendar designed for you to publish your 2011 event dates. Please send them in to Kim.

Click here for our PCN [Calendar](#).

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From: DWskierven@aol.com
Date: 4/28/2011 10:15:29 PM
Subject: First Tuesday of the Month ORD Pilot's Breakfast

It certainly doesn't feel like it weather wise, but **this coming Tuesday** is the First Tuesday of the Month and the month is May!! So where is all the warm spring weather? Anyway, time to solve all the world problems at the ORD Delta Pilot's monthly breakfast at 09:30 at Mama Rini's 177 W. Virginia Ave, Crystal Lake or about 1 mile north of the Lake In the Hill's airport. Everyone and anyone is invited.
See you there, David W. Skjerven

I am looking for....." (Share a post of who you are seeking, if one sought answers....wallah):

From: F4HUBBS@aol.com
Date: 4/21/2011 4:32:02 PM
To: mark@pilotcommunication.net
Subject: Dave Rothbart

Mark,

I was referred to you by Julian of Delta Golden Wings on the outside chance you might be able to help. Here is my request.

I'm trying to locate a **Dave Rothbart**, who by now should be a retired Delta pilot and is a classmate of mine from Air Force Pilot Training Class 67D. Our last contact was in 1992 when he was based in NY. He would be about 68 or 69 years old now. I know there may be privacy considerations, but if he is a member of your organization would it be possible to forward this email or otherwise contact him and let him know his classmates are trying to get in touch?

Jim Hubbard
760-243-5841
F4HUBBS@aol.com

Follow up.....it works!

From: F4HUBBS@aol.com
Date: 04/25/11 11:46:50
To: marksztanyo@gmail.com
Subject: Re: Dave Rothbart

Mark,

Dave just checked in with me. Thanks for your help.

Jim

Good Deal/Bad Deal (Share a quick good deal or bad deal you have found – no commercials here!)

If you have something you represent that has a commercial interest, place it in the new service of [PCN Ads](#). Designed especially for our group but available to the industry. Registration is free and so are some ads. The rest start as low as \$5. Enter you promo in [PCN Ads](#).

Bad Deal:

From: [Bob Pike](#)
Date: 4/25/2011 9:18:56 AM
To: misc@pilotcommunication.net
Subject: G. O. Parking

Mark-

You may want to post this letter from our buddy Rob Kight concerning parking at the G.O.

[https://connect.delta.com/f5-w-687474703a2f2f646c6e65742e64656c74612e636f6d\\$\\$/tibadmin/DocumentDownload?sec_level=&linkFrom=ShortList&more=/portal/com/Pages/Full%2BList?gen_long=yes&temp_type=ORG0000002117;&s_type=date&s_order=desc&tdLL=Yes&sec=no&docname=corp_comm/DNN/Executive_Memos/pr/article_0080063.pdf&object_id=09012ac180b11df0](https://connect.delta.com/f5-w-687474703a2f2f646c6e65742e64656c74612e636f6d$$/tibadmin/DocumentDownload?sec_level=&linkFrom=ShortList&more=/portal/com/Pages/Full%2BList?gen_long=yes&temp_type=ORG0000002117;&s_type=date&s_order=desc&tdLL=Yes&sec=no&docname=corp_comm/DNN/Executive_Memos/pr/article_0080063.pdf&object_id=09012ac180b11df0)

It appears that this ends the free parking options for ALL non-revs

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Bob Pike

Hangar Flying (Share a bit of ole hangar flying with the net. Need a sim buddy? Use PCN for request) :

From: [kim frey](mailto:kimfrey)
Date: 4/30/2011 9:34:24 AM
To: kimfrey23@msn.com
Subject: FW: Twilight Landing at LAX

This is great. If you look closely I think you can see the Santa Monica pier...brought back great memories of hundreds of layovers at the old Huntley House Hotel in Santa Monica.....

Cockpit view of a twilight landing at Los Angeles airport compressed into about 4 minutes.

Be sure to view this in full screen to see how awesome it really is!

<http://www.wxpnews.com/110208-Twilight>

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From: DWSkierven@aol.com
Date: 4/28/2011 10:54:34 PM

From: garyfkitch@aol.com <garyfkitch@aol.com>
Date: Sunday, April 24, 2011, 10:55 AM

Amazing WWII Aircraft Facts

No matter how one looks at it, these are incredible statistics. **Aside from the figures on aircraft, consider this statement from the article: On average 6600 American service men died per MONTH, during WWII (about 220 a day). Most Americans who were not adults during WWII have no understanding of the magnitude of it. This listing of some of the aircraft facts gives a bit of insight to it. 276,000 aircraft manufactured in the US .**

43,000 planes lost overseas, including 23,000 in combat.

14,000 lost in the continental U.S.

The US civilian population maintained a dedicated effort for four years, many working long hours seven days per week and often also volunteering for other work. WWII was the largest human effort in history.

Statistics from Flight Journal magazine.

THE COST of DOING BUSINESS

---- **The staggering cost of war.**

THE PRICE OF VICTORY (cost of an aircraft in WWII dollars)

B-17	\$204,370.	P-40	\$44,892.
B-24	\$215,516.	P-47	\$85,578.
B-25	\$142,194.	P-51	\$51,572.
B-26	\$192,426.	C-47	\$88,574.
B-29	\$605,360.	PT-17	\$15,052.
P-38	\$97,147.	AT-6	\$22,952.

PLANES A DAY WORLDWIDE

From Germany 's invasion of Poland Sept. 1, 1939 and ending with Japan 's surrender Sept. 2, 1945 --- 2,433 days. **From 1942 onward, America averaged 170 planes lost a day.**

How many is a 1,000 planes? B-17 production (12,731) wingtip to wingtip would extend 250 miles. 1,000 B-17s carried 2.5 million gallons of high octane fuel and required 10,000 airmen to fly and fight them.

THE NUMBERS GAME

9.7 billion gallons of gasoline consumed, 1942-1945.

107.8 million hours flown, 1943-1945.

459.7 billion rounds of aircraft ammo fired overseas, 1942-1945.

7.9 million bombs dropped overseas, 1943-1945.

2.3 million combat sorties, 1941-1945 (one sortie = one takeoff).

299,230 aircraft accepted, 1940-1945.

808,471 aircraft engines accepted, 1940-1945.

799,972 propellers accepted, 1940-1945.

WWII MOST-PRODUCED COMBAT AIRCRAFT

Ilyushin IL-2 Sturmovik

36,183

Sources: Rene Francillon, Japanese Aircraft of the Pacific war; Cajus Bekker, The Luftwaffe Diaries; Ray Wagner, American Combat Planes; Wikipedia.

According to the AAF Statistical Digest, in less than four years (December 1941- August 1945), the US Army Air Forces lost 14,903 pilots, aircrew and assorted personnel plus 13,873 airplanes --- ***inside the continental United States.*** They were the result of 52,651 aircraft accidents (6,039 involving fatalities) in 45 months.

Think about those numbers. They average 1,170 aircraft accidents per month---- nearly 40 a day. (Less than one accident in four resulted in totaled aircraft, however.)

It gets worse.....

Almost 1,000 Army planes disappeared en route from the US to foreign climes. But an eye-watering 43,581 aircraft were lost overseas including 22,948 on combat missions (18,418 against the Western Axis) and 20,633 attributed to **non-combat causes** overseas.

In a single 376 plane raid in August 1943, 60 B-17s were shot down. That was a 16 percent loss rate and meant 600 empty bunks in England . In 1942-43 it was statistically impossible for bomber crews to complete a 25-mission tour in Europe .

Pacific theatre losses were far less (4,530 in combat) owing to smaller forces committed. The worst B-29 mission, against Tokyo on May 25, 1945, cost 26 Superfortresses, 5.6 percent of the 464 dispatched from the Marianas .

On average, 6,600 American servicemen died per month during WWII, about 220 a day. By the end of the war, over 40,000 airmen were killed in combat theatres and another 18,000 wounded. Some 12,000 missing men were declared dead, including a number "liberated" by the Soviets but never returned. More than 41,000 were captured, half of the 5,400 held by the Japanese died in captivity, compared with one-tenth in German hands. Total combat casualties were pegged at

121,867.

US manpower made up the deficit. The AAF's peak strength was reached in 1944 with 2,372,000 personnel, nearly twice the previous year's figure.

The losses were huge---but so were production totals. From 1941 through 1945, American industry delivered more than 276,000 military aircraft. That number was enough not only for US Army, Navy and Marine Corps, but for allies as diverse as Britain , Australia , China and Russia . In fact, from 1943 onward, America produced more planes than Britain and Russia combined. And more than Germany and Japan together 1941-45.

However, our enemies took massive losses. Through much of 1944, the Luftwaffe sustained uncontrolled hemorrhaging, reaching 25 percent of aircrews and 40 planes a month. And in late 1944 into 1945, nearly half the pilots in Japanese squadrons had flown fewer than 200 hours. The disparity of two years before had been completely reversed.

Experience Level:

Uncle Sam sent many of his sons to war with absolute minimums of training. Some fighter pilots entered combat in 1942 with less than one hour in their assigned aircraft.

The 357th Fighter Group (often known as The Yoxford Boys) went to England in late 1943 having trained on P-39s. The group never saw a Mustang until shortly before its first combat mission.

A high-time P-51 pilot had 30 hours in type. Many had fewer than five hours. Some had one hour.

With arrival of new aircraft, many combat units transitioned in combat. The attitude was, "**They all have a stick and a throttle. Go fly `em.**" When the famed 4th Fighter Group converted from P-47s to P-51s in February 1944, there was no time to stand down for an orderly transition. The Group commander, Col. Donald Blakeslee, said, "**You can learn to fly `51s on the way to the target.**"

A future P-47 ace said, "**I was sent to England to die.**" He was not alone. Some fighter pilots tucked their wheels in the well on their first combat mission with one previous flight in the aircraft. Meanwhile, many bomber crews were still learning their trade: of Jimmy Doolittle's 15 pilots on the April 1942 Tokyo raid, only five had won their wings before 1941. All but one of the 16 copilots were less than a year out of flight school.

In WWII flying safety took a back seat to combat. The AAF's worst accident rate was recorded by the A-36 Invader version of the P-51: a staggering 274 accidents per 100,000 flying hours. Next worst were the P-39 at 245, the P-40 at 188, and the P-38 at 139. All were Allison powered.

Bomber wrecks were fewer but more expensive. The B-17 and B-24 averaged 30 and 35 accidents per 100,000 flight hours, respectively-- a horrific figure considering that from 1980 to 2000 the Air Force's major mishap rate was less than 2.

The B-29 was even worse at 40; the world's most sophisticated, most capable and most expensive bomber was too urgently needed to stand down for mere safety reasons. The AAF set a reasonably high standard for B-29 pilots, but the desired figures were seldom attained.

The original cadre of the 58th Bomb Wing was to have 400 hours of multi-engine time, but there were not enough experienced pilots to meet the criterion. Only ten percent had overseas experience. Conversely, when a \$2.1 billion B-2 crashed in 2008, the Air Force initiated a two-month "safety pause" rather than declare a "stand down", let alone grounding.

The B-29 was no better for maintenance. Though the R3350 was known as a complicated,

troublesome power-plant, no more than half the mechanics had previous experience with the Duplex Cyclone. But they made it work.

Navigators:

Perhaps the greatest unsung success story of AAF training was Navigators. The Army graduated some 50,000 during the War. And many had never flown out of sight of land before leaving "Uncle Sugar" for a war zone. Yet the huge majority found their way across oceans and continents without getting lost or running out of fuel --- a stirring tribute to the AAF's educational establishments.

Cadet To Colonel:

It was possible for a flying cadet at the time of Pearl Harbor to finish the war with eagles on his shoulders. That was the record of John D. Landers, a 21-year-old Texan, who was commissioned a second lieutenant on December 12, 1941. He joined his combat squadron with 209 hours total flight time, including 2½ in P-40s. He finished the war as a full colonel, commanding an 8th Air Force Group --- at age 24.

As the training pipeline filled up, however those low figures became exceptions.

By early 1944, the average AAF fighter pilot entering combat had logged at least 450 hours, usually including 250 hours in training. At the same time, many captains and first lieutenants claimed over 600 hours.

FACT:

At its height in mid-1944, the Army Air Forces had 2.6 million people and nearly 80,000 aircraft of all types.

Today the US Air Force employs 327,000 active personnel (plus 170,000 civilians) with 5,500+ manned and perhaps 200 unmanned aircraft.

The 2009 figures represent about 12 percent of the manpower and 7 percent of the airplanes of the WWII peak.

IN SUMMATION:

Whether there will ever be another war like that experienced in 1940-45 is doubtful, as fighters and bombers have given way to helicopters and remotely-controlled drones over Afghanistan and Iraq . But within living memory, men left the earth *in 1,000-plane formations* and fought major battles five miles high, leaving a legacy that remains timeless.

Editor: I apologize for not being able to include all the neat images sent with this email, but I thought the text interesting enough to share with the PCN.

Political (food for thought):

Humor/Sobering or Fun (Share some "vulgarity free" humor with the net):



Mark

Mark Sztanyo (Stän'yō), PCN Dir & HL Editor
[Pilot Communication Net](#) from Aug 2009
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Life on earth will soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last!

Serving the Delta community, and pilots (active and retired) and their families, *including original Delta*, and former C&S, Northeast, Pan-Am, Western, NWA, Republic, North-Central, Southern Airways, Hughes- Airwest, and all the Delta Connection carriers.

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