

Call to Flight



THE FARGO FORUM
HECTOR GIVES AIRPORT TO CITY
COMMISSION TO LAY PLANS FOR IMPROVEMENTS ON WEDNESDAY

NORTHWEST AIRLINES
United Airlines
Fargo
Braniff Airlines

*The Story of
Fargo's Hector
International
Airport*

*The Story of
Fargo's Hector
International
Airport*

Call to Flight

*The Story of
Fargo's Hector International Airport*

By
Nancy Edmonds Hanson
and
Joyce Eisenbraun

Air Show '86
June 14-22, 1986

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, thanks to the Alex Stern Family Foundation for its grant supporting a portion of the cost of this review of the story of flight in Fargo. From the very first step in producing it – the collection and identification of photographs from the past 60 years – it has been abundantly clear to those of us who've worked on it that the history of this important element of Fargo's civic past is fading all too rapidly. We appreciate the foundation's firm endorsement of the need to begin to preserve it.

Thanks, too, to the Fargo Municipal Airport Authority who've guided this book as well as the airport it chronicles, and to executive director Joe Parmer and airport manager Jim Kapitan.

Wally Specht, who has invested his life in various facets of Fargo aviation, provided not only the original inspiration but numerous photographs for the early chapters, as well as much of the aeronautical memorabilia shown on the cover. Another lifetimer who helped is Bill Snyder – an enthusiastic kid with a great imagination who's managed to stay that way all his life.

We appreciate others who volunteered information and leads – Yvonne Barney, Gordon Person, Lois Kundert, Gordon Straith, Bill Braseth, Sgt. Everett Brust and many more. John Bye of the Institute for Regional Studies, Todd Strand of the State Historical Society and Andrea Halgrimson of The Forum delved for documentation that supports the personal remembrance on which most of the project is built. We also drew on a 1965 thesis by then-NDSU student Don Lindberg and a research paper by Frank Vyzralek, who knows everything there is to know about North Dakota.

Last but not least, thanks to Vince Lindstrom of the Fargo-Moorhead Convention and Visitors Bureau for making life here seem such a grand adventure.

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Airmail service lay behind early efforts to secure airline service to and from Fargo. It was a proud day when these four men surveyed letters carried on the first Fargo-to-St. Paul flight on July 14, 1927 — from left, Col. Lewis Brittin, founder of Northwest Airways; Fargo pilot and Aeronautics Club president Murray Baldwin; George Sudheimer, representative of St. Paul mayor Larry Hodgson, and St. Paul postmaster C.J. Moos.

A great adventure that grew into a great asset — that's what aviation has always meant in Fargo-Moorhead's story.

The human longing to soar, as old as the story of Icarus, holds a special attraction on the prairie. Here men and women have always been addicted to watching the sky . . . waiting for rain when the land was parched, dreading hail when it was imminently fruitful, or — in a blunt landscape punctuated only by stars and sunsets — simply looking for relief.

News of Wilbur and Orville Wright's 1903 triumph at Kitty Hawk set the stage. Early fliers raised the curtain in 1911 as they first electrified breathless Fargo-Moorhead crowds. But it remained to the returning flying aces of World War I to train the spotlight on aviation's vast promise.

Their mission was simple but profound. They set out to convince a city with its feet on the ground that its future could truly lie above the clouds.

Hopping from county fairs to small-town exhibitions, daring young barnstormers became the romantic figures of their day. For a dollar or two, these larger-than-life heroes invited any earthbound dreamer to climb on board and briefly share with them the lofty perspective once reserved for birds or angels.

Novelty evolved into industry as Fargo leaders sketched out their plans for what aviation could mean to a community so distant and yet so ambitious in its dreams. Pioneer air fields — literally that — were proudly replaced by civic-supported Hector Airport. Slowly at first, then at a quickened pace, Hector evolved into a link in air service from border to border and beyond.

Endowed with the right combination of winter weather, strategic location and adept ground support, Fargo's airport was to play a part in America's strategy in World War II and in the nation's postwar defense. Too, major improvements inspired by military needs were to be added to the groundwork for Hector Airport's still-expanding network of aviation services for civilians. Those services have helped local businesses survive and grow, and have become an essential element of the city's appeal to residents and visitors alike.

A civic asset, yes. But still and always, an adventure. The first men and women who fell in love with flying above the prairie managed to capture and hold Fargo's imagination, just as aviation's sense of drama and daring controlled their own.

Today a younger world has forgotten the sense of wonder with which pioneer pilots took to the air, accepting as everyday an experience that made their great-grandparents catch their breath in sheer amazement. Few of those fliers' names — once the stuff of starstruck daydreams — are still familiar here on their home ground. Their airplanes seem puny and frail and ancient.

But their biggest achievement continues on, as current now as tomorrow's news: Local aviation has in fact mirrored Fargo-Moorhead's progress, and flight has linked us to an adventure that still stretches to the stars.



1



Pioneer Fargo pilot Verne Roberts personified the jaunty spirit of early aviators, World War I fliers ready to try their wings at making civilian history as airborne daredevils.

1 — Roberts poses with his grandmother, Mrs. Charles A. (Matilda) Roberts. The 1919 photo includes the Curtiss "Jenny" in which the young pilot barnstormed throughout the Northwest. Mrs. Roberts was Fargo's first white woman settler and mother of the first white child born here — Verne's father L.A. Roberts.

2 — The young pilot christened his Velie Monocoupe the "Go-Fargo-Go," and in it won national attention during the 1927 National Air Derby.

3 — Roberts and other local fliers took passengers on aerial tours of Fargo-Moorhead for two or three dollars per ride. Here he reassures passenger Lillian Hovland.



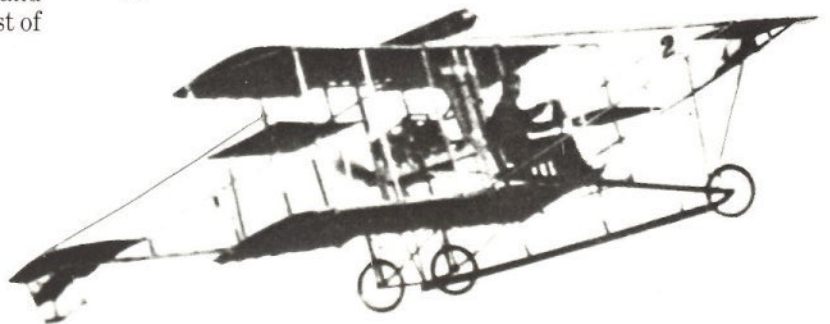
Barnstorming pilots took their nickname from the theatre, where for decades actors had criss-crossed the country playing one-night stands before rural crowds. They took their cue from those actors, too. During the late 'teens and the '20s, no county fair was quite complete without its flying exhibition, and no audience was more enthralled than one craning its necks to watch airborne dare-devils test the limits of their aircraft and their imaginations.

It was an occupation ideal for post-war veterans addicted to adventure. Fliers raced and looped-the-loop. They walked out on the wings of their aircraft. They jumped from one plane to another in the sky, or dipped low to pick up a waving scarf from the ground.

Fargo's first air exhibition was staged in 1919. The Army Flying Circus arrived by train, unloaded its planes, towed them to the Holes farm (near 12th Avenue North and Fourth Street) and performed.

Later that year L.W. Hope of Ada, Minn., and Lt. James Carling of St. Paul logged another local "first" when they flew nonstop from the Twin Cities to Fargo-Moorhead. Or nearly. Their accomplishment was slightly foreshortened when they ran out of gas and landed unexpectedly a mile southeast of Moorhead.

"Lucky Bob" St. Henry recorded what may be North Dakota's first successful flight in Fargo on June 9, 1911. As a huge crowd watched below, he guided his brand-new Curtiss pusher biplane, the "Sweetheart," through two perfect flights, landing to thunderous applause.



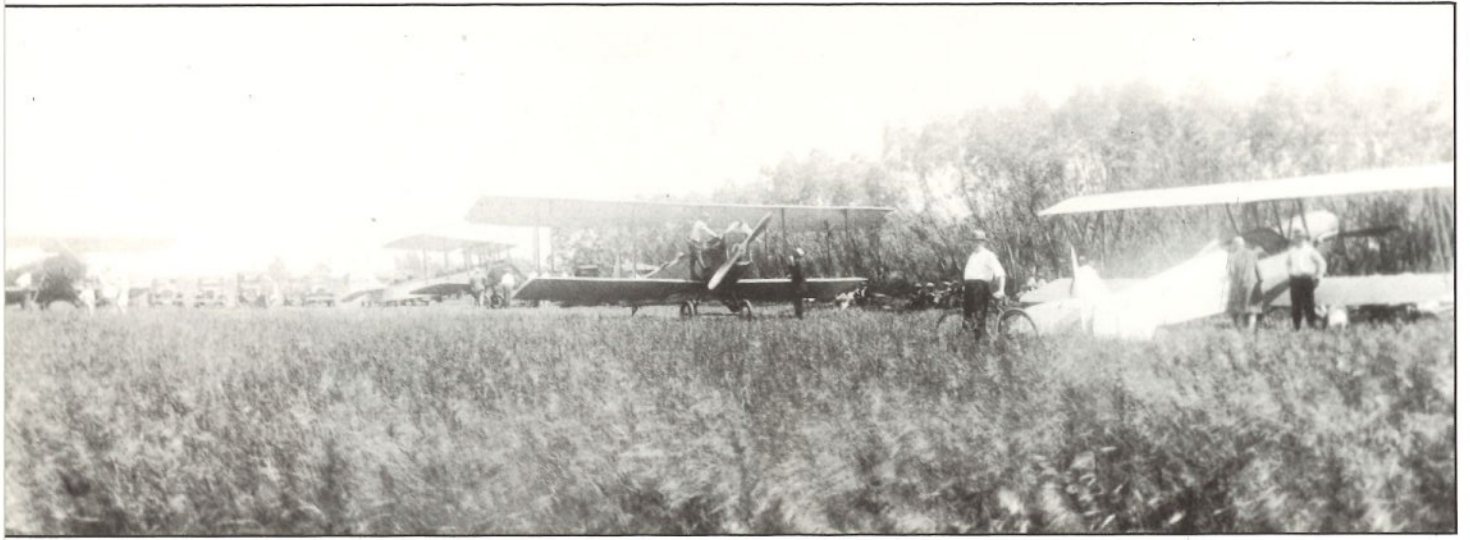


Known as "Tree Tops" to her fellow aviators, Moorhead's Florence Klingensmith earned national fame in the early 1930s for her daring stunt flying.

In 1928, at age 22, she became North Dakota's first licensed woman pilot. By the next spring she'd convinced six Fargo businessmen to finance her purchase of the airplane she christened "Miss Fargo," telling them, "I'll risk my neck if you'll risk your money."

She kept her word, setting the world's loop-the-loop record for women pilots in 1930 at Hector Airport. A year later she nearly tripled the number, spending almost five hours tracing 1,078 loops above the heads of 25,000 spectators in Minneapolis.





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1 — *These four biplanes readying for take-off in a grassy pasture include a Canadian Army plane on the far left and Cuba Chaney's aircraft at center.*

2 — *Murray Baldwin and a fellow aviation booster survey stubble on the primitive landing strip. While Martin Hector's land north of the city would eventually become Fargo's airport, the earliest and most widely documented pioneer activity took place on Verne Roberts' property — long ago swallowed up by residential development.*

3 — *The portrait of Baldwin dates from his later years as Dakota Clinic administrator and mayor of Fargo.*

4 — *Local fliers Elmo Vettel and Roald Braseth show off Braseth's OX-5-powered Travelaire in 1929.*

The zest with which Fargo's early aviators took to flight was matched only by the zeal of earthbound boosters deeply convinced that development of an airport was becoming a critical step in civic progress.

The habit of calling pioneer airports "fields" was no flight of fancy. Early fliers generally touched ground in farmers' hayfields — preferably dry ones, and long enough to accommodate the lengthy landings of airplanes equipped with no brakes except the force of gravity.

Fargo's most popular landing strips throughout the early 1920s included not only the Hector property in the southeast corner of the present airport, but also Holes field near the old fairgrounds on Fourth Street and 12th Avenue North, Porrit field on the west side, Roberts field at about Seventh Avenue and 18th Street South, and El Zagal Park. The only improvements most could ever claim were the occasions on which a dry spell firmed up the gumbo underfoot, or the proprietor was moved to mow his hay.

More formal facilities were clearly needed if Fargo was to take the budding aviation industry seriously. In May of 1927 the Fargo Commercial Club (forerunner of the Chamber of Commerce) spawned the Fargo Aeronautics Club with avid flying enthusiast Murray Baldwin as president and Fargo postmaster Hugh Corrigan as vice president.

Baldwin, joined by Roberts and other local pilots, took the offensive in campaigning for a real airport. They supported local entries in national air races and air derbies, both to polish the city's progressive image and to inspire wider local interest.

The ploy worked well, as the populace closely followed local heroes' sometimes-extravagant exploits and cheered them as they established a long series of regional "firsts." The airport boosters' greatest coup, however, was promoting a fly-in visit by Minnesota's favorite son and the nation's hero of the hour, Charles Lindbergh.

Spectators and "We" at Fargo Celebration on Lindbergh Day



Upper left—Part of the crowd standing in Thirteenth at N, opposite the landing field, watching Lindbergh's escort planes descend for the landing.
 Upper right—Murray Baldwin, (left) Lindbergh and Mayor Dahl, (right) with Congressman Burtness in the rear of Mr. Baldwin at the left.
 Center left—Lindbergh's plane, "The Spirit of St. Louis," in the wire enclosure at the landing field.
 Center right—A small section of the crowd applauding Lindbergh after his speech in El Zagal park.

Lower left—National guardsmen at the entrance to the landing field and part of the crowd lining the fence enclosing the field.
 Lower right—Lindbergh speaking in El Zagal park. In the right background may be seen Mayor Bottolfson, (left) of Moorhead and Congressman Burtness (right) while beyond the platform is another section of the throng that listened to the speakers. In front of Lindbergh are microphones by means of which his voice was amplified so that it was carried to the outskirts of the crowd, and also broadcast over Station WDAY.

Lindbergh, Hard At Work Developing Flying, Tells Of Big Industry's Growth

would be greeted in Paris by such a crowd. "I never thought that things would be as they were," he said. He declared he had no difficulty in keeping awake and did not get very tired. In answer to one question, he said the trip across did not "seem so long."

Denies Stories
 He also said he could not understand where reporters got some of the stories they have printed about him. The one about the "first cigarette, for instance. "I smoked a

FLYING AID IS PLEDGED LINDBERGH

(Continued From Page One)
 signs of activity about the ship became apparent, other persons arrived and soon the road was lined with automobiles awaiting the aviator.
 His departure from the hotel could not be kept a secret and shortly after his arrival the crowd increased and a large representation from the city watched his setawav.

mercial aviation center, if she selects it."
 The banquet guests, who represented many points in North Dakota and Minnesota and Winnipeg in Canada, accorded Col. Lindbergh a great ovation as he came into the banquet room. The crowd rose to its feet and stood until the famous aviator crossed the big hall and seated himself. As usual he looked slightly abashed at the attention he attracted.
 The famous Lindbergh smile, which accentuates his boyishness, was a prominent feature of the banquet.



Tens of thousands — some estimate 100,000 — were on hand to greet Col. Charles A. Lindbergh when his "Spirit of St. Louis" landed at Hector Field on Aug. 26, 1927, and to hear his address that morning in El Zagal Park.

Just three months earlier, on May 20 and 21, the young flier from Little Falls, Minn., captured the nation's imagination with the world's first solo non-stop flight from New York to Paris. The sight of the same Ryan monoplane touching ground on North Dakota soil was a thrill that many remember to this day.

Like the city's own early aviators, Lindbergh had learned to fly during Army service in World War I before launching his civilian career as a barn-stormer and exhibition pilot. Widely mocked in the American press before his voyage, he became a hero on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean when he succeeded against the odds — spanning 3,610 miles in 33 hours to win a coveted \$25,000 prize.

His visit to Fargo that summer was part of an 82-city tour promoting the development of local airports. Here as in communities from coast to coast, the boyish "Flying Colonel" made the romance and adventure of aviation utterly irresistible to throngs of well-wishers.

That intoxicating surge of enthusiasm sent airport proposals soaring. Two weeks later the Board of City Commissioners appropriated the first funds for true improvements at Hector Field.



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While Hector Airport's history is usually dated from the day in 1931 when pioneer banker Martin Hector presented the city with a deed to 160 acres of land, it was conceived much earlier.

On Sept. 9, 1927, Hector — the founder of Fargo National Bank and a Fargoan since 1872, when he arrived with the Northern Pacific Railroad — agreed to lease a quarter-section of land to the city for five years at \$1 per year.

The land lay outside the city limits. Even if civic finances had permitted its purchase, state law forbade buying it outright unless it could double for some lawful use, such as a garbage dump. Nor was it clear that the city could legally fund improvements on the leased land. Nevertheless, led by commissioner George Hoenck (widely considered “the father of Hector Airport”), the city did appropriate \$1,000 per year for fencing, grading and upkeep.

Shortly before the lease was to expire, Hoenck persuaded Hector to consider turning ownership of the airfield over to Fargo. City fathers finally succeeded in convincing the North Dakota Legislature to change the law on March 11, 1931. Less than a month later, on April 9, the Fargo Forum trumpeted the news that Hector had secured the city's place in the history of aviation with his outright gift of the land.

In later years Hector and his daughter-in-law, Mrs. Fred M. (Margaret) Hector, donated several additional parcels totalling nearly 50 acres that were incorporated into the present airport property, along with acreage purchased from a number of adjacent landowners.

What to call Fargo's new airport was never subject to debate. Its name was stipulated in the deed which Hoenck brought to Hector to sign in 1931: The field would be known in perpetuity as Hector Airport.

1 — Martin Hector's gift of 160 acres of land — deeded to the city of Fargo on March 30, 1931 — prompted an immediate start to construction of the airport's first runway of layers of gravel, cinders and oil. Lying southeast-to-northwest, it was 1,200 feet long and 125 feet wide, and was ready before Hector Airport's formal dedication on May 27. The southwest-to-northeast runway came in September, with kerosene flares used to light the field at night. In the lower right corner of this 1932 photo are Northwest Airways' hangar and the original waiting room just off Highway 81.

2 — Martin Hector.

3 — Among those who welcomed the permanent airport were long-time aviation boosters Fuller, Canfield and Koester, photographed here in 1923 in front of a Petrel biplane.

1 — Fargo businessman W.H. Fallen financed construction of the airport's first hangar in May of 1931 to accommodate Northwest Airways, which had begun service to Chicago on Feb. 2. Its cost was estimated at \$15,000. Pilot Charles Klessig is shown in front of the building with his first airplane, a Velie 65 hp. Monocoupe.

2 — The original one-story administration building served the airport during its first four years until construction began in 1935 on a more elaborate structure.

Visible to the rear is one of the Civil Aeronautics Administration's network of flashing beacons which predated radio signals as a guide to pilots. Stationed at 30-mile intervals, the rotating white beacons were flanked by red and green lights blinking out the location in Morse code.

3 — The Fargo Exchange Club sponsored the appearance of Lt. Walter Hinton, the first man to fly the Atlantic, as headliner of the Hector Airport dedication program on May 27, 1931. Hinton is eighth from the left.

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Farmers—For Minnesota, Fargo and vicinity: Fair with some clouds; tonight and Tuesday; not much change in temperature.

THE FARGO FORUM

Evening Edition



ESTABLISHED 1878

PRICE FIVE CENTS

FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA, MONDAY EVENING, APRIL 6, 1914

Twelve Pages

Vol. 52, No. 118

HECTOR GIVES AIRPORT TO CITY

Girl's Convicted Slayer Gets Retrial

EVIDENCE WAS INSUFFICIENT, JUDGE HOLDS IN INDIANA KILLING

Kirkland, Held Guilty Of Murdering Newcomb, Was Acquitted

FOUR OTHERS NOW AWAITING TRIAL

Judge Declares Verdict Should Have Been On Another Count

Indianapolis, Ind., April 6.—(AP)—A court here today declared a verdict of guilty in the murder of a young woman, which was returned by a jury last week, to be a nullity. The court held that the evidence was insufficient to sustain the verdict. The case involves the murder of a young woman named Newcomb, who was killed in Indiana. The defendant, Kirkland, was acquitted on the charge of murder, but the court held that the verdict should have been on another count. Four other persons are now awaiting trial in connection with the case.

MARDI GRAS OF STATE INTEREST

Louisianians From Many N. D. Points Will Attend Show Here

Minneapolis, Minn., April 6.—(AP)—A group of Louisiana friends from many North Dakota points are expected to attend a Mardi Gras celebration in Minneapolis this evening. The group includes many of the state's leading citizens and is expected to bring with them a large quantity of Louisiana specialties. The celebration will be held at the Hennepin Hotel and will include a variety of entertainment and a display of Louisiana products.

Trans-Missouri Railways May Get Rate Increases

St. Louis, Mo., April 6.—(AP)—The Trans-Missouri railway system is expected to receive a rate increase of 10 percent on its freight rates. The increase is expected to take effect on April 15. The railway system includes the Missouri Pacific, the Illinois Central, and the Rock Island.

Ohio Prison Arsonist Gives Not Guilty Plea

Columbus, O., April 6.—(AP)—A man charged with the arson of a prison in Ohio today gave a not guilty plea. The man is accused of setting fire to the prison building in an attempt to escape. The case is being heard in a court here.

U. S. Marines On Guard In Stricken Capital

United States Marines have taken charge of the stricken city of Maracaibo, Venezuela. A view of a street in the city is shown in the background.



PETER JOHNSON IS DEAD AT 71

Case County Farmer For 44 Years Dies Unexpectedly

Case County, N. D., April 6.—(AP)—Peter Johnson, a well-known farmer and community leader, died unexpectedly at the age of 71. He had been a resident of Case County for 44 years. Mr. Johnson was a member of the local church and was highly respected in the community.

START SEEDING IN CASS FIELDS

Planting To Be General By Midweek Throughout Southern N. D.

Sioux Falls, S. D., April 6.—(AP)—The planting season in Cass County, N. D., is well advanced. Farmers are busy seeding their fields, and it is expected that the work will be completed by midweek. The weather is favorable for planting, and the farmers are optimistic about the prospects for the season.

CITY POLITICAL RACE NEARS END

Sioux Falls, S. D., April 6.—(AP)—The political race in Sioux Falls is nearing its end. The candidates are making their final appeals to the voters, and the election is expected to take place soon.

Crack N. P. Train Hits Locomotive Near Missouri

St. Louis, Mo., April 6.—(AP)—A crack in the nose of a Northern Pacific train today caused the locomotive to be derailed near Missouri. The train was carrying a large load of freight, and the accident caused significant damage to the locomotive and the freight.

Think Martyred Jesuit's Bones Unearthed In N. Y.

New York, N. Y., April 6.—(AP)—The bones of a martyred Jesuit priest, believed to be those of Father James Neenan, were unearthed in New York. The discovery was made during an archaeological excavation in the city.

'General' Coxey Hurt In Automobile Mishap

St. Paul, Minn., April 6.—(AP)—General Coxey was injured in an automobile accident today. The accident occurred on a highway near St. Paul, and the general was taken to a hospital for treatment.

CONVICTION OF ALBERT B. FALL ON CONSPIRACY CHARGE UPHELD

Sentence Of Year In Jail, \$100,000 Fine Is Held Legal

BLACKSMITH GUILTY ALSO AFFIRMED

District Of Columbia Court Delivers Decision Today

Washington, April 6.—(AP)—A court here today affirmed the conviction of Albert B. Fall on a charge of conspiracy. The court also affirmed the conviction of a blacksmith who was found to be an accessory to the crime. The court held that the sentence of one year in jail and a fine of \$100,000 was legal.

Garney Dies In Mine After 5 Weeks Illness

St. Paul, Minn., April 6.—(AP)—A man who had been ill for five weeks died in a mine today. The man was working in the mine and had been suffering from a severe illness.

POLICE HUNTING MISSING DOCTOR

St. Paul, Minn., April 6.—(AP)—Police are searching for a doctor who has disappeared. The doctor is believed to be in the city, but his whereabouts are unknown.

ENDERLIN MAN DIES IN FARGO

Fargo, N. D., April 6.—(AP)—A man named Enderlin died in Fargo today. The man was a resident of Fargo and had been ill for some time.

Summer Hospitality Burns At Seaside Park Resort

St. Paul, Minn., April 6.—(AP)—A fire at a resort today destroyed a large building. The fire was caused by a gas leak, and the building was used for summer hospitality.

They All Like It—

St. Paul, Minn., April 6.—(AP)—A new show is being put on in St. Paul. The show is very popular and is being enjoyed by everyone.

Bank Of England Head Confers With Mellon

London, England, April 6.—(AP)—The head of the Bank of England today conferred with the head of the Federal Reserve Bank in the United States. The two heads discussed the current state of the world economy and the relationship between the two banks.

Ministralle Musical Show To Entertain Fargo K. C.

Fargo, N. D., April 6.—(AP)—A musical show is being put on in Fargo. The show is being put on by the K. C. and is expected to be a great success.

Host of Hazards Beset Sub-Sea Arctic Journey

Compass Failure, And Involving Fuel Supply Greatest Dangers To Proposed Submarine Expedition By Wilkins' Expedition

By ADMIRAL HUGH RODMAN

Washington, April 6.—(AP)—All the world has thrilled to the daring and romantic plans of Capt. Sir George Robert Wilkins to make a submarine passage across the world's ice pack. But it should be just as willing to consider the hazards, particularly when the results are unlikely to add one iota to the world's knowledge, and little to the scientific information that is already known.

Donor Of Airport



St. Paul, Minn., April 6.—(AP)—A man who has donated a large sum of money to the city for the construction of an airport. The man is a well-known philanthropist and is expected to be honored for his contribution.

START REVOLT IN VENEZUELA

Caracas, Venezuela, April 6.—(AP)—A revolution has broken out in Venezuela. The revolutionaries are demanding the resignation of the government and the establishment of a new government.

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TYPEWRITERS Royal Dictators—Rebuilt Machines of All Makes **OFFICE SPECIALTIES CO.** Combined With COMMERCIAL STATIONERS, Inc. Opposite Black's—115 Broadway



1

FARGO TO HAVE MOST MODERN AIRWAYS RADIO STATION IN U.S.

Range Beacon to Give
Plane Guide Service
Continuously

STEEL TOWERS TO
SUPPORT ANTENNAE

Communication Radios,
Automatic Printer To
Be Installed

ONE VISITING SHIP PER DAY AVERAGE FOR HECTOR FIELD

Major Development Of
Port Packed Into Last
Seven Months

200 PILOTS LAND
DURING YEAR 1930

Titus Richards, Manager,
Keeps "Log" Of
Activities

FOG DISRUPTS INAUGURAL DAY PLANS FOR NEW FARGO AIR LINE

Three Planes Forced To
Ground By Thick
Flying Haze

PASSENGER SHIP
NOW AT WADENA

Itinerary Will Be Resumed
When Mist Mantle
Lifts



2

1, 2 and 3 — Pilot Bernt Balchon and noted explorer Lincoln Ellsworth prepared for a 1934 trans-Antarctic flight of discovery on Fargo's snowy airfield. Their goal was to be first to fly more than 2,000 across Antarctica to determine whether it was a continent. The mission failed when the "Polar Star" went down and was trapped in the ice.

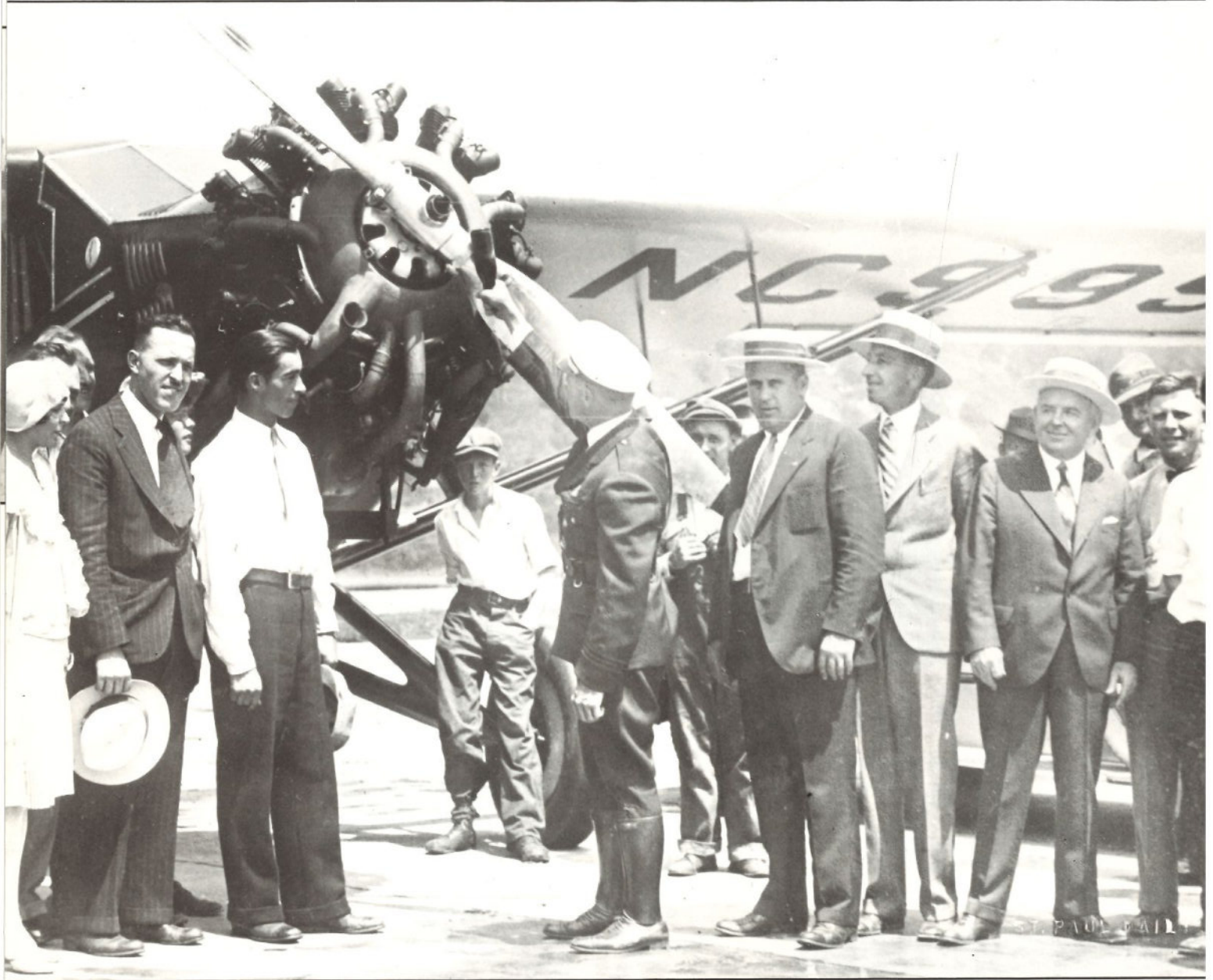
4 — Fargo flier W.R. Braseth is pictured beside the first sign to announce the designation of "Hector Field, Fargo's Municipal Airport." That the property be used only as an airfield, and that it perpetually bear the Hector name were conditions of the deed presented to the city.

5 — U.S. Army Air Corps airplanes frequently used Hector Airport as a test site for winter maneuvers and equipment. This Fokker Tri-motor accomplished its landing on skis.



CITY WITHIN 17
HOURS OF N.Y.





1

1 — Canadian-American Airlines began serving Hector Airport on Oct. 16, 1928, with Fargo as the mid-point of regular airmail flights between Winnipeg and St. Paul. Much Canadian postal service between Manitoba and Ontario was routed through the Twin Cities to avoid flying over the rough, remote country separating Toronto and Winnipeg.

The city was an official port of entry until 1930, when the franchise went to Grand Forks. Canadian-American withdrew at that time. The change was also a factor in Northwest Airways' ending three months of trial service in late 1928 in favor of the flying field at Pembina nearer of the international border.

2



2 — The Hamilton Metalplane became the first Northwest Airways aircraft to fly into Hector Airport after the Minneapolis-based airline resumed regular service to Fargo on Feb. 2, 1931. Airmail, passenger and express service was offered from the Twin Cities to Pembina, with connections for Winnipeg via Fargo and Grand Forks. Service was extended to Bismarck-Mandan by way of Valley City and Jamestown the next year.

The seven-passenger Hamiltons flew schedules based on cruising speeds of from 105 to 120 miles per hour. They boasted two important innovations: heated cabins and restrooms.

3 — The U.S. Army temporarily flew airmail routes after President Franklin Roosevelt canceled all civilian contracts during a three-month investigation in the winter of 1934. The loss of business forced the reorganization of many hard-hit commercial carriers, including the evolution of Northwest Airways into Northwest Airlines. The Army's brief but disastrous experience, marred by numerous crashes and several fatalities, led to serious efforts to upgrade and modernize the Air Corps' aircraft, navigational aids and support facilities.



3

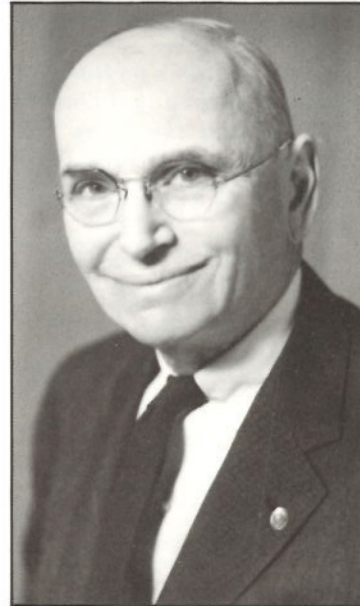
The stories of Fargo aviation and Northwest Airlines, the nation's second-oldest commercial carrier, have been intertwined almost since their beginnings. The names of two Fargoans figure large in that legacy — Bill Stern and Croil Hunter.

Stern, president of Dakota National Bank and one of the city's most prominent citizens until his death in 1964, was among the earliest local advocates of aviation's potential. From 1926, when Col. Lewis Brittin founded Northwest Airways in St. Paul, Stern and colleagues Dr. Frank Darrow and W.P. Chesnut strongly lobbied not only for regular airmail service to Fargo, but also for development of adequate airport facilities here to make that service possible. They are said to have been responsible for selecting the Hector property as its most suitable location.

Meanwhile Croil Hunter — whose boyhood home was near Stern's in Fargo — was helping to build the airline. Tapped to succeed Brittin as general manager, he was elected the company's first operating president in 1937. He retired in 1953.

Hunter guided Northwest through sometimes-rocky years of rapid change and growth as its first routes across the upper midwest stretched westward to Seattle and then across the Pacific Ocean.

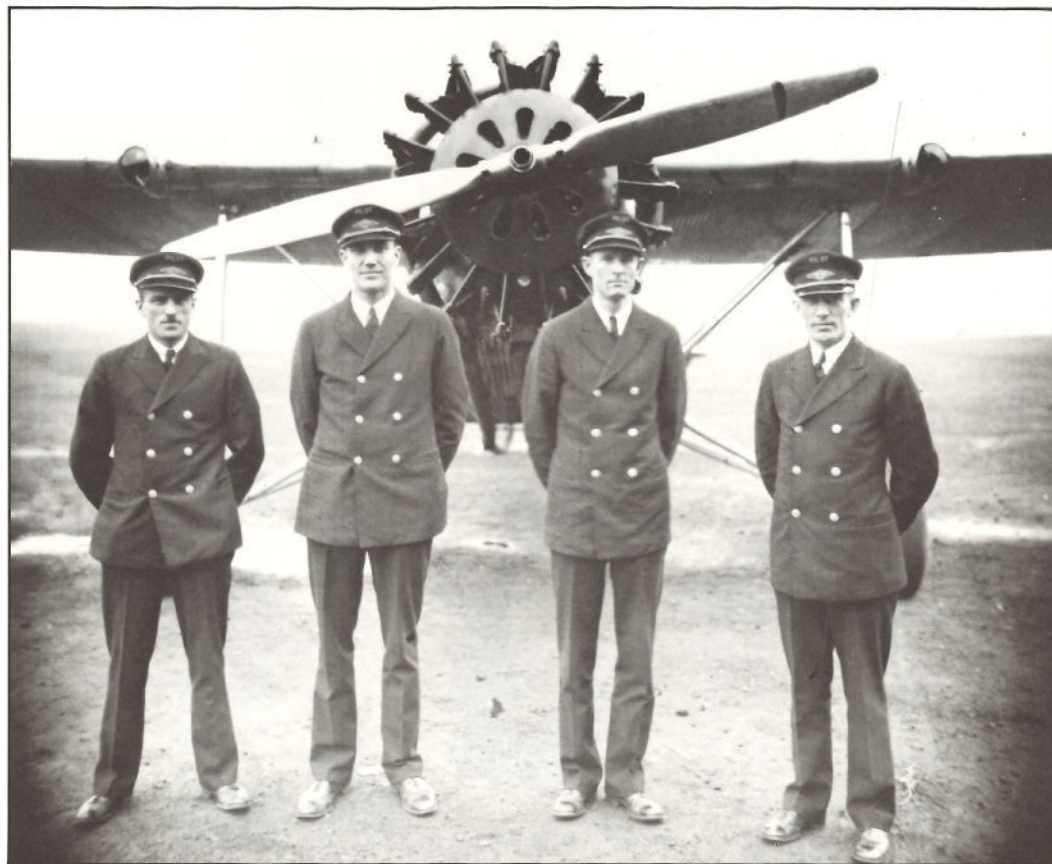
Stern, elected a corporate director in 1936, served as Hunter's special assistant. The World War I veteran maintained a special interest in aviation's role in the national defense and strongly supported Northwest's far-reaching World War II efforts. He also directed operation of Northwestern Aeronautical Corporation, a Northwest Airlines subsidiary which built some 2,400 transport gliders for the Army.



William Stern



Croil Hunter



2



1 — Four early Northwest Airways captains — first commercial fliers in the nation to be outfitted in now-familiar pilots' uniforms — stand at ease in front of one of the airline's fleet of Hamiltons in 1928. Pilots wore six-button coats; non-flying personnel had only four.

2 — Famous Minnesota flier Charles "Speed" Holman oversees passenger loading for a St. Paul flight in 1929. Holman, Northwest's first pilot and namesake of the Twin Cities' Holman Field, served as its operations manager until his death in an air race accident.

1



2

Form ACA 885 (Rev. 5-15-32)

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
CIVIL AERONAUTICS ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON

This is to identify
WILLIAM
ALEXANDER STRATH
(First name) (Middle name) (Last name)

who has been certificated as an airman by the Civil Aeronautics Administration and whose signature appears hereon.

Signature: *William Alexander Strath*

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 15-38415

Signature: *Allen J. [unclear]*
Civil Aeronautics Representative

Signature: *[unclear]*
Fingerprinting Officer

Place of birth: Ontario, Canada
Date of birth: Nov. 9, 1891
Color eyes: Hazel hair: Gray
Weight: 145 lbs. Ht.: 5 ft. 7 1/2 in.

FINGERPRINTS—RIGHT HAND

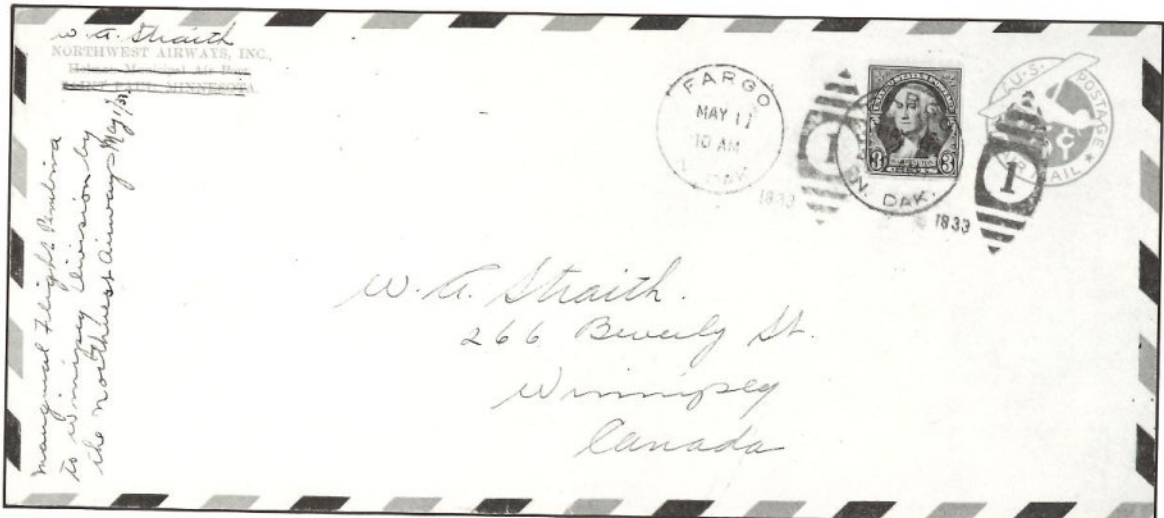
RIGHT THUMB

This certificate shall be of 60 days duration and, unless the holder thereof is otherwise notified by the Administrator within such period, it shall continue in effect thereafter until otherwise specified by the Board unless suspended or revoked.

MONTH OF *July 1932*

DATE	Type Plane	License No.	Type Engine
<i>7/29</i>	<i>HAMILTON</i>	<i>VC7791</i>	<i>HORNET</i>
<i>31</i>	"	"	"
<i>1</i>	"	"	"
<i>2</i>	"	"	"
<i>3</i>	"	"	"
<i>4</i>	"	"	"
<i>5</i>	"	"	"
<i>6</i>	"	"	"
<i>7</i>	"	"	"
<i>8</i>	"	"	"
<i>9</i>	"	"	"
<i>10</i>	"	"	"
<i>12</i>	"	"	<i>2834E</i>
<i>14</i>	"	"	<i>277E</i>
<i>15</i>	"	"	<i>275E</i>
<i>16</i>	"	"	<i>277</i>
<i>17</i>	"	"	<i>28E</i>
<i>18</i>	"	"	"
<i>19</i>	"	"	"
<i>20</i>	"	"	"
<i>21</i>	"	"	"

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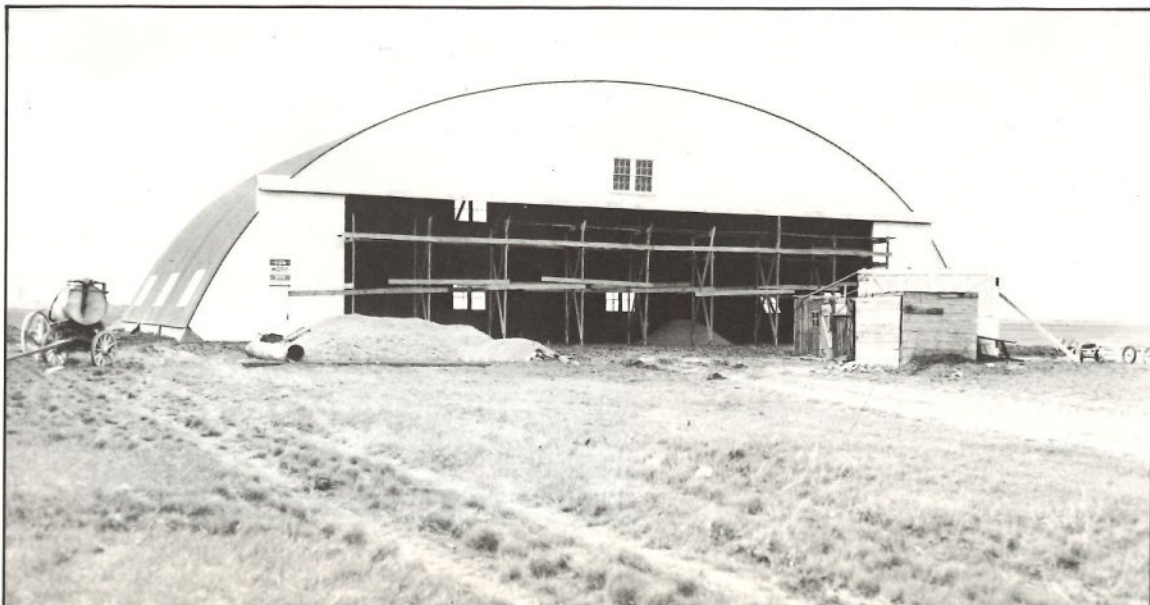


1 — Hector Airport's second administration building, located near Highway 81 — now 19th Avenue North — was completed in 1937 with the assistance of the Workers Progress Administration.

In 1934 Northwest added the Lockheed 10-A Electra, here shown loading passengers that first summer, to its fleet. The ten-passenger plane cruised at just under 200 mph, nearly twice the speed of the Hamilton. The round-trip airfare from Fargo to Minneapolis was \$11.

2 — The W.P.A. participated in other airport improvements as well, including construction of this city-owned hangar, additional runways and a drainage system. After occupying several sites over the years, the hangar is now part of the Valley Aviation complex.

2



1



1 — During World War II and the postwar boom, Fargo's Hector Airport truly took its place as part of a larger picture. The small civic airport was to become a vital link in aviation in the upper midwest ... used by the military as well as civilian fliers.

2 — Among the U.S. Army contingent at Hector Field in 1944 were S/Sgt. Robert Overturt and Shorty Reynolds.



2

Explosive growth — in buildings, equipment, technology and traffic — marked the development years at Hector Airport. In preparation for war, military, civilian and commercial interests coordinated efforts to ensure a strong national defense.

Both commercial and private aviation experienced significant changes during the years of World War II. The focus of attention had shifted to the needs of the military, and all other flying played a supporting role to the Army's needs.

Flying schools turned their attention to qualifying for military contracts which would allow them to train pilots for war. Other private pilots volunteered for Civil Air Patrol: their efforts as spotters and messengers saved the Air Force hundreds of hours.

The military's capital investment at Hector in equipment and buildings convinced local aviation supporters of the long-term value of quality aviation facilities. City support would be needed; so they pushed, prodded and passed (with the help of city voters) a substantial city bond issue.

That advance planning extended Fargo's aviation boom for several years after war's end. The thousands of planes which had passed through Fargo during the war had kept flying fever at a high pitch. Military innovations and new technologies, marvels at first, were quickly adapted to civilian use.

Commercial routes expanded into new territory from New York to the Orient, maintaining Fargo's rank as an important stop along the way. In private flying, the ambitious predicted the sky was the limit, and an eager public signed up to learn to fly.

The lure of flight and memories of the essential role it played during World War II inspired an unprecedented response to the newly-formed North Dakota Air National Guard. The dedication of these men was soon tested by emergencies at home and the rigors of war in Korea.

In the search for ever-faster planes, propeller-driven machines were set aside in favor of new jet aircraft. Technology had taken another leap forward, and carried Fargo and the rest of the nation with it into the sky.

In just over a decade, the desire to go further and faster had pushed flying into a bold new era. From barnstorming to soaring at jet speeds, grassy pastures to concrete runways, beacons of light to the magic of radar-aided instrument landings . . . the dreams of pioneer aviators were beginning to come true.

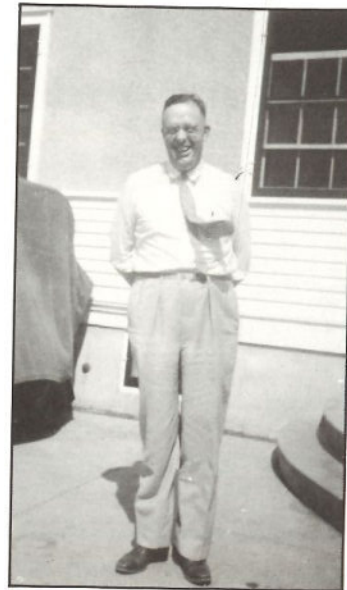
1 — F.L. (Bill) Bayley, a former plainclothes officer with the Fargo Police Department, succeeded Charles Klessig as airport manager in 1942. Other early managers included Florence Klingensmith, Arthur Burnevik, Clarence de Causemeaker, Elmer Pagel, Titus Richards and Ole Anderson.

2 — By the mid-1940s the U.S. Army and Northwest Airlines, along with several private businesses, had made significant improvements to the airport. But the city was handed the problem of finishing a list of vitally needed facilities headed by this new hangar. A citywide bond issue was proposed in 1943. With the support of a carefully-orchestrated campaign — door-to-door canvassing abetted by enthusiastic editorials and stories in *The Fargo Forum* — the 1.3 mill proposal passed three-to-one.

3 — Hector Airport's second administration building was completed in 1937 with Workers Progress Administration funds and manpower. The control tower in this later photo was added at the Army's request in the early '40s. The federal government re-established a customs office there in 1938 — convenient for Northwest, which could eliminate the Pembina stop on flights to Winnipeg.

4 — Among the many FBOs — fixed base operators — familiar at Hector Airport over the years was E.A. "Pappy" Skroch, who flew charters, trained fliers and sold planes.

1



2





Materials were hard to come by in wartime, so the city elected to commandeer the former Winter Sports Arena. It was dismantled and moved to the airport by T.F. Powers Construction; it has been relocated several times since then, and is now part of the Valley Aviation complex.

1 — Two soldiers stationed here posed with local airport worker Lois Rasmusen in 1944.

2 — Among a number of area women involved in the war effort was former WASP pilot Viola Thompson, who flew a Ventura bomber towing a target sleeve at the end of a thousand-foot cable. Fighter pilots used the target for practice, firing colored "bullets" to test their aim. Thompson went on to become a commercial pilot and serve as CAA station operator here.

3 — Hector Airport's first control tower was completed in 1944, with Fred Hjortsberg directing Civil Aeronautics Administration activities there.

4 — Northwest Airlines' all-out support of the war effort was reflected even in messages painted on the sides of its aircraft.

5 — Ralph W. Shultz headed Weather Bureau operations during much of the war. Until 1936, when the agency moved to the airport from its original quarters in the Moorhead Post Office, Roy McClurg was director.

6 — Among many visiting wartime aircraft was the B-24 bomber whose curvaceous mascot this man is admiring.

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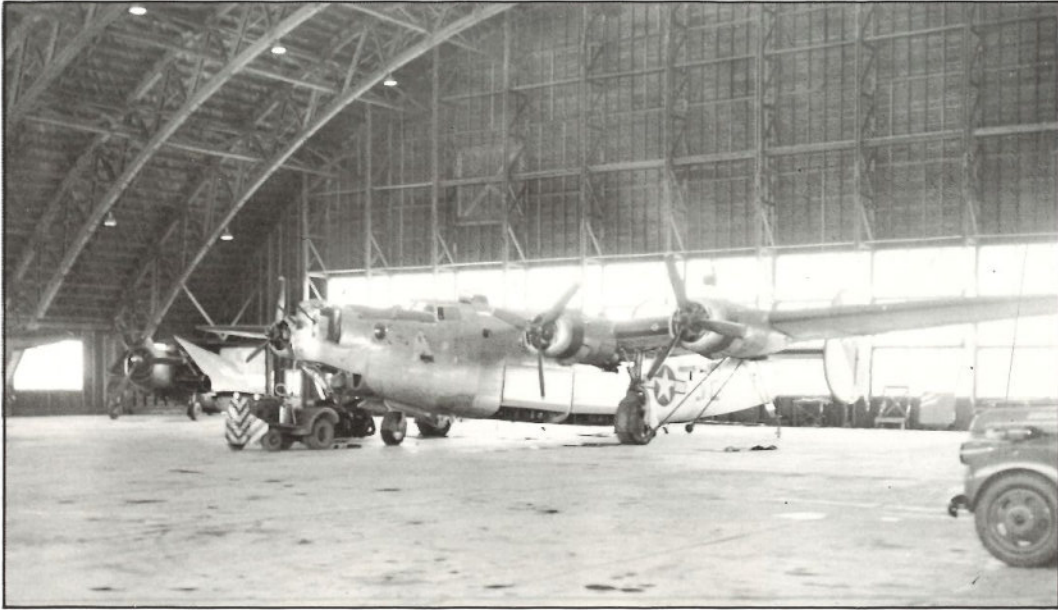
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6



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2



1 — Unlike other ships with longer, more spectacular careers, this B-24 crashed at Hector near war's end. No longer needed overseas and expensive to repair, it languished for years until dismantled for use by NDSU aeronautics students.

2 — Northwest Airlines played an aggressive role in local airport development with the construction of its new hangar in 1941 and, in 1942, the arrival at the field of its winterizing equipment. More than 80 personnel were employed to winterize not only Northwest's ships, but military aircraft (especially C-47 and C-46 cargo ships) headed for cold-weather service in Alaska.

3 — One of the best-kept local wartime secrets was the ferrying of Russia-bound airplanes through Hector Airport on their way to Canada and on to Asia through the Soviets' back door.

The ferry service began in 1942, though the story was not released to the public until 1944. Hundreds of P-39 Aircobras (like the one in this surreptitious photo) headed north, along with some big-bellied freighters.



**Surplus Plane
Sales Here
Net \$143,452**

1



**Fargo Is On Main Air Route
For Planes Going To Russia**

After World War II civilian aviation was spurred not only by the return of Army Air Corps pilots and the booming economy but by the ready availability of aircraft. Hundreds of bright yellow single-engine PT-26 Fairchild trainers were sold by the Army at Hector Airport. Veterans received priority as well as a 20 percent discount.

Uncle Sam netted \$143,452.54 on the sale of 138 of the 249 planes locally available — a rousing success, since the authorities had expected to sell only 75.

2



1 — Hundreds of decommissioned training planes were parked with precision at Hector Airport awaiting sale.

2 — After training countless pilots during the war, Harry Faleide concentrated on training civilians interested in flying. Dakota Skyways began with 50 to 60 in attendance, many of them prominent Fargo business and professional people. Along with helping returning military pilots to earn certification as commercial navigational pilots and civilian fliers, he continued to train members of the Civil Air Patrol.



3 — Pilot Kay McEnroe was the first woman instructor with Faleide's Fargo Flying Service.

4 — Harold Berger also trained pilots through Faleide's operation.

3



4



2



1 — Private enterprise flourished at Hector Airport after the war. In 1945, when Capt. Vernon Scott took over Dakota Skyways, he rented the hangar built by Northwest Airlines from the city (which had bought it for \$40,000), where he and his staff trained pilots and sold aircraft.

2, 3 and 4 — Trucks, tanks, tools, tractors, tugs, trailers and countless other pieces of Army equipment remained at Hector Airport at war's end. Due to efforts by U.S. Sen. Milton Young and airport manager F.L. Bayley, the Army was persuaded to leave the materials here for civic use. The city also was given the right to use 19 Army buildings including the fire station, barracks and shop.

As the Army pulled out the CAA proposed closing its control tower as well. Again with congressional intervention, the air controllers were not only retained in Fargo, but the tower continued to be staffed 24 hours a day.



3



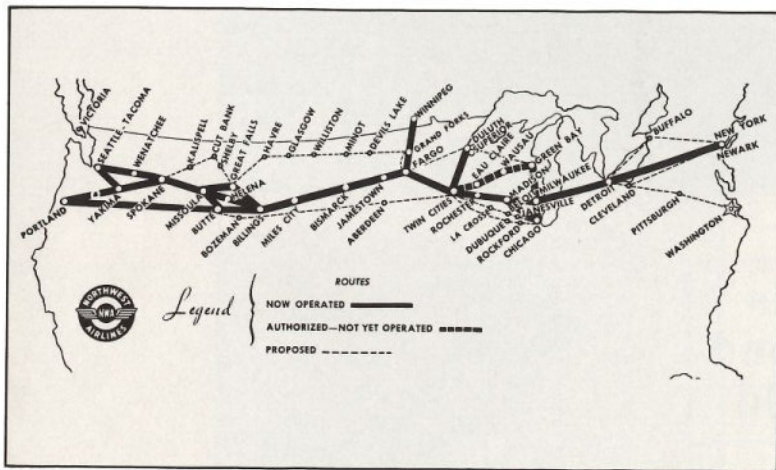
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1 — Northwest Airlines director Bill Stern, along with Sen. Warren Magnuson of Washington, met in 1951 with Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-Shek in Formosa. The two Americans had lunch with General Douglas MacArthur in Tokyo on the day he was relieved of his command.

2 — Northwest's rapid postwar growth began with the June 1, 1945, extension of service to New York City. The Minneapolis-based carrier had been serving Seattle since 1938.

3 — The airline's inaugural flight from Seattle to the Hawaiian Islands came in 1948 after prolonged negotiations. Bill Stern is on left and Croil Hunter is fourth from left.



2



3

At war's end Northwest Airlines rapidly extended in new directions, with Fargo continuing as an important link in its northern routes.

The airline's outstanding record of service was cited when its bid for service to New York was finally granted in 1945 after seven years of petitioning. That extension, reaching from Seattle and Portland to New York and Newark, made it the nation's fourth transcontinental carrier.

In 1946 President Harry Truman approved a Civil Aeronautics Board certificate that fulfilled Croil Hunter and Bill Stern's longtime dream of trans-Pacific service. It granted Northwest Routes to Edmonton, Anchorage, Tokyo, Seoul, Manchuria, eastern China, Shanghai and Manila. Flights to Washington, D.C., and to Hawaii were approved in the next two years.

Stern, both a shrewd businessman and an excellent unofficial ambassador for the airline, helped cement relations in the Orient. He represented the airline on numerous goodwill missions when service was inaugurated and later, in the early 1950s, when the airline was once again recruited for military service. Northwest played a central role in the Korean Airlift, ferrying 40,000 military passengers and 12 million pounds of high priority military cargo in 1,380 trips. It also operated UN-99, a United Nations DC-3 which carried UN observers to Allied positions in South Korea during the fighting.

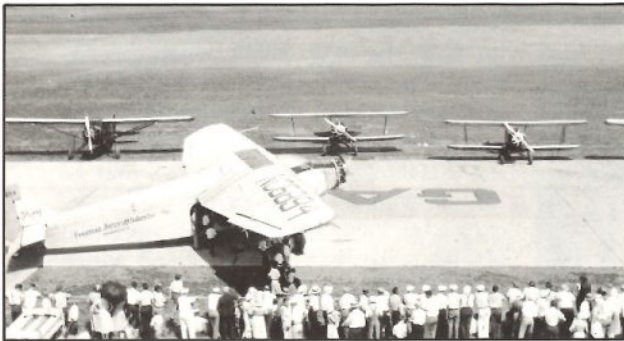


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Sky Ranch Is Fargo's Second Landing Field

3



4

1 — Northwest Airlines flew the Boeing B-377 Stratocruiser into Fargo in the early 1950s.

2 — Sky Ranch Airport was established south and west of Fargo by R.E. Cole, Jr. Billed as a "combination light plane haven and pilots country club," it offered two well-lit sod runways.

4 — Bill Odom, who set a world record for round-the-world flights in his A-26 Bombshell, landed at Fargo during his speedy journey. He complimented manager Bill Bayley on another record, this one set by Hector — the fastest service of his entire flight.

3, 5, 6 — Air shows sponsored by the Junior Chamber of Commerce and other civic crowds drew large crowds to the airport in the 1940s, though not quite so large as the record numbers of aviation's first exciting days.

5



The aviation fever of earlier years had turned into a practical enthusiasm by the late 1940s. It launched new businesses, a surge in commercial traffic that surpassed expectations, improved connections establishing Fargo securely along the northern route, and even a second (though short-lived) smaller airport for private planes.

Traffic skyrocketed to an all-time record of 89,569 landings and takeoffs in 1947. More than 105 aircraft were now based at Hector, keeping 178 employees and pilots busy.

The CAA's new instrument landing system pleased fliers most of all. The "radio pilot" went into operation on all Northwest planes in 1948.

Fargo developed a five-year plan to accommodate Hector Airport's growing needs, with a larger and more modern administration building at the top of the list. The 1943 bond issue provided some funds, but now the possibility of federal participation on a 50/50 basis made development even more likely.

Although the barnstorming days were long past, air shows were well attended as airplanes performed choreographed aerial ballets and pilots astounded spectators with their daring stunts.

6



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1 — *The North Dakota Air National Guard contingent — Jan. 16, 1947, in the Avalon Ballroom.*

2 — *The first summer camp in 1948 was a challenge, beginning with construction of temporary quarters by the men. The wooden-floored tents worked well until the rains came and swamped the entire area with mud.*

3 — *By February of 1947 the first air technicians and caretakers had begun full-time employment at the base, servicing and maintaining aircraft.*

3



4 — Major Donald C. Jones commanded the 178th Fighter Squadron at the time of the blizzard of 1949, when Guardsmen used their planes to rescue stranded North Dakotans and drop hundreds of tons of food and feed to people and livestock. He was killed in a crash of his F-51 en route from Minot to Fargo during the airlift.

5 — Their first challenge in responding to that call for emergency help was to dig out their own planes from drifts at Hector Field.



4

The North Dakota Air National Guard was officially organized on Jan. 16, 1947, under the leadership of Lt. Col. Richard Neece. The Air Force had been skeptical about locating an Air Guard unit in so sparsely populated a state as North Dakota, but the immediate response to initial recruitment efforts calmed their fears: Fargo instantly became the fourth-largest of the 55 units in the nation.

The first unit in the state, the 178th Fighter Squadron, originally met in the old Avalon Ballroom before moving to Hector Airport. Later that year the city leased its large hangar to the Guard in addition to an annual fee of \$11,200 for use of the airport proper.

The Guard settled into Hector Airport during its first winter but deemed the facilities seriously inadequate. Neece estimated it would have taken 48 hours to get planes into the air in an emergency. Sen. Milton Young obtained federal financing for the improvements the Air Guard considered most pressing, construction of the concrete apron outside its hangar.

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4



1 — The North Dakota Air National Guard was ordered to federal service in Korea on April 1, 1951. These four, replete with overwater gear — Stenehjelm, Stewart, Green and Sjulstad — were headed for gunnery training.

2 — The 178th was deployed to Georgia and then on to California. Many of the men were transferred to other units within the Air Force and saw action in Korea.

3 — Following the Korean conflict, the North Dakota Air Guard had to start again, since many of its original members elected to remain on active Air Force duty. Simultaneously the unit converted from the faithful propeller-driven F-51 to jet aircraft.

4 — Lt. Larry Rosenberg and Lt. Alexander MacDonald climb into an F-94, the first of the Air Guard's fighter-interceptors, during a "scramble."

5 — The North Dakota unit captured another first with the successful firing of air-to-air rockets from fighter-interceptors. The 178th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron converted in 1958 from the F-94C to the F-89D, followed a year later by the F-89J.

5



Lt. George Gorman of the Air Guard received instant notoriety in 1948 when he reported engaging in a dogfight with a "flying disk" while piloting a P-51 fighter over the Red River Valley.

Three others also corroborated his report with their own sightings of the mysterious lighted craft, including Hector air traffic controllers Lloyd Jensen and J.E. Johnson and Dr. A.E. Cannon.

In addition to a story in the Saturday Evening Post and an investigation by a team of Air Force officers from Dayton, Ohio, Gorman's report generated reactions from UFO aficionados nationwide, many offering their own often-bizarre explanations of the never-to-be-solved puzzle.

**Army Proves
Every Report
Of Flying Disk**

**Claims 'Flying Disks' Work
Of 'Paranormal Telekinesis'**



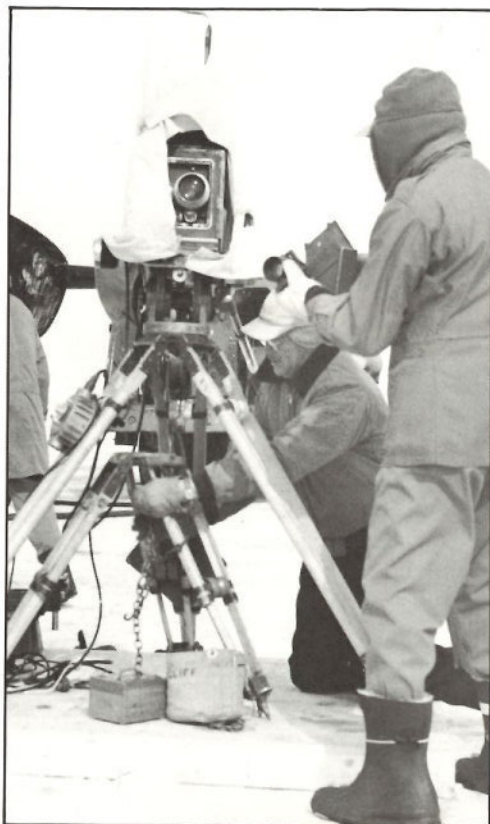
A typically frigid March in Fargo provided the perfect setting for filming of the movie "Jet Pilot," a 1950 release starring John Wayne and Janet Leigh.

Hector Airport doubled for Alaska in filmed scenes. While the stars never made an appearance here, their doubles took part in simulated air maneuvers staged over Fargo and ground action at the airfield, including the capture of an invading Russian bomber by U.S. Air Force fighters.

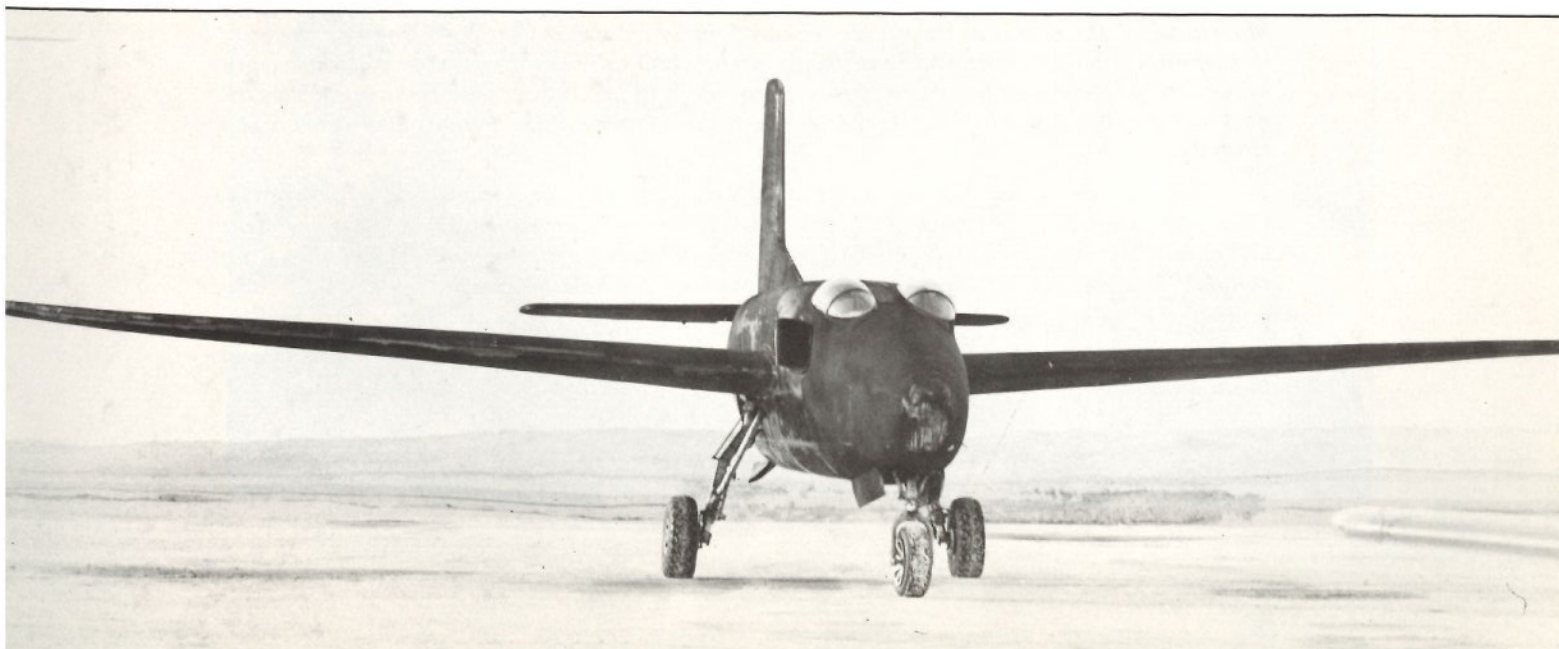
In predictable Fargo fashion, the entire North Dakota contingent — Air National Guardsmen as well as airport service and ground crews — was enjoying mild days when the thermometer topped a full eight degrees, while the Hollywood crew shivered and shook.

1 — Directing the groundwork for the movie-makers was Philip G. Cochran, well-known flying ace who commanded the First Air commandos who flew British Chindits into Burma during World War II.

2 — The invading XB-43 bomber was painted black, making it easily distinguishable from the "good guys."



2



EXTRA THE FARGO FORUM EXTRA
AND DAILY TRIBUNE
 VOL. 34, NO. 104 FARGO, N. D., THURSDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 30, 1941 Sixteen Pages PRICE FIVE CENTS

14 KILLED IN FIERY CRASH OF NORTHWEST AIRLINER HERE

Crash Grinds Plane Into Bits Of Debris—

FLAMES LEAP HIGH INTO AIR
 Pilot Hurlled Free As Plane Smashes Into Field Near Moorhead

Ambulance Operator Tells Of Getting Call To Crash Scene

PUSH ACROSS CREEK



2



3



1, 2 and 3 — The 1941 crash of a Northwest Airlines airplane in a field north of Moorhead — the worst in Fargo-Moorhead aviation history — stands alone as the only local commercial airliner accident involving fatalities. Fourteen men and women were killed, including a number of prominent members of the business community. Investigation by the CAA ultimately determined that icing on the wings had caused the tragedy.

4 — Near misses were not unusual for student pilots in the pre-war days before the Civil Aeronautics Administration took over air traffic control at Hector Airport, but direct hits like this one were nevertheless rare. These two planes, a Waco and a Cub, collided 100 feet above the ground while approaching for landing.

5 — Col. R.M. "Marsh" Johnson, third squadron commander of the North Dakota Air National Guard, bailed out in 1950 when one of the wheels of his P-51 Mustang refused to go down during a landing. The plane crashed in a ditch at the airport's edge.

Despite rapidly multiplying traffic, adverse winter weather and large numbers of student pilots taking to the air, Hector Airport experienced relatively few accidents involving fatalities even before its installation of sophisticated radar and the advent of round-the-clock air traffic control. Only one commercial airliner disaster has marred 55 years of local aviation history. Misfortunes involving general and military aviation have also been rare.

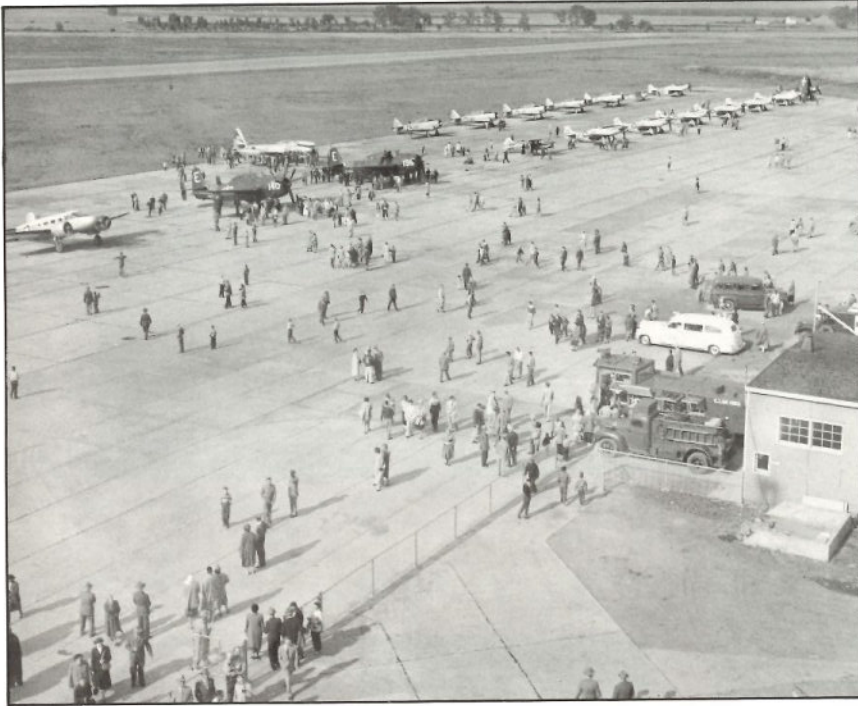
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5



1 — Many aircraft were on hand for the east-side terminal dedication — jets, a Corsair fighter, bombers, helicopters and two F-84 Thunderjet fighters.

2 — Roger Lewis, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, received the

key to the city as keynote speaker at the ceremony.

3 — W.F. Kurke and Associates of Fargo designed the east-side terminal. General contractor was J.E. Krieg and Sons.

4



By the early 1950s Fargo's Hector Airport had developed into a busy and increasingly well-equipped stop on major air routes.

Besides Northwest Airlines, which had provided continuous service since 1931, Hector was attracting interest from other carriers. North Central Airways, a regional carrier that was to evolve into Republic Airlines, provided daily service from Minneapolis with stops at St. Cloud and Alexandria beginning in 1952. (That route was discontinued in 1954. North Central returned in 1957, initially offering the area's first north-south service to Omaha with stops across South Dakota.) Frontier Airlines was making inquiries, and Braniff expressed interest in adding Fargo to its routes.

Aided by federal allocations as well as local funds, the east-side terminal progressed quickly. Work was completed in time for the dedication ceremony of Sept. 13, 1953.



3

4 — After being replaced, the old terminal on Highway 81 was dismantled. Its control tower became a concession and ticket booth at the "Kiddie Carnival" on North University Drive and 19th Avenue, while the building was moved south of NDSU and recommissioned as an apartment house.

5 — Among the thousands present for the dedication were these dignitaries: (Front row, from left) Dr. F.S. Hultz, president of NDAC and Civil Air Patrol wing commander; V.A. Kropff of Braniff Airways; A.W. Goldammer, Lakota, N.D.; North Dakota Governor Norman Brunsdale; Fargo mayor Murray Baldwin; J.M. Kurke, deputy commander of North Dakota CAP; Ed Vie of the CAA district office in St. Paul; C. Angus Fraser; and George Hoenck of Fargo, known as "the father of Hector Airport" for his work as a city commissioner during the airport's infancy.



Hector International Airport in 1986 shares a name and a tradition with the simple municipal airfield donated by Martin Hector nearly 60 years ago . . . but the past two decades of planning and investment have dramatically altered the face it shows the traveling public.

In the mid-1960s escalating air traffic and advances in aircraft design prompted the Fargo City Commission to call for a master plan for airport development. That plan — updated in several stages since its release in 1968 — laid out a strategy for continued improvement and expansion of services, both to fliers and to air passengers.

Most dramatic of all is the new west-side passenger terminal. When local and state officials cut the ribbon at its opening on Jan. 16, 1986, nearly 20 years of steady progress seemed complete: Hector International Airport was ready for the year 2000.

The modern steel-and-glass terminal is most visible to the public, but it's only one element of a more profound expansion program that has included land acquisition, a new taxiway and ramp for commercial aircraft, access roads, utilities and landscaping. Total cost of the terminal and related improvements has exceeded \$16.3 million, funded through a combination of federal allocations, surplus airport revenues and a \$2.5 million bond issue.

The Airport Authority has accomplished much of what it set out to do, but several possibilities remain in the discussion stage. With its new location, the terminal site has room to accommodate the air freight facility proposed in the master plan when demand grows to a level that requires it. Too, proposals continue to be debated for construction of an airport hotel.

Martin Hector's gift of 160 acres of land has grown to nearly 2,700, most of the area from 19th Avenue North to County Road 20 and from University Drive to old Highway 81. The first 1,200-foot landing strip commissioned in 1931 has become a part of Runway 17/35, whose 9,150-foot length and weight-bearing capacity can accommodate the largest aircraft flying today.

What remains precisely the same, now as it was 55 years ago, is the pride that Fargoans have declared for their city's aeronautical progress.

When Hector Airport was dedicated on May 27, 1931, those in attendance declared that Fargo had created an airport second to none among cities of its size.

In 1986 their reactions were just the same.



1

Viewed from the air, Hector International Airport presents an altogether different profile in 1986. The Federal Aviation Administration's control tower preceded the terminal on the new site on the west side of the main runway by six years.

Relocation of airport facilities was in part dictated by the need to expand the entire spectrum of services. The old east-side site, used in various configurations since 1927, had been virtually backed into a corner.

2



1 — The new Hector terminal is four times the size of its predecessor, which was built in 1953 and remodeled in 1964 and 1970. The 76,000-square-foot facility was designed by Foss Associates.

2 — The terminal faces south, overlooking ample parking lots and landscaped areas extending to 19th Avenue North.

3 — Escalators, an elevator and a stairway connect the lofty main-floor lobby with the upper-level departure lounge, restaurant, gift shop and offices.



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1 — Passengers as well as meeters and greeters relax in the airy Barnstormer restaurant overlooking the lobby.

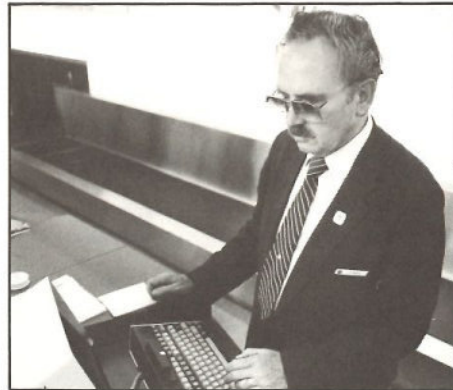
2 — Gift shop manager Linda Foyen offers departing passengers a chance to take home a reminder of North Dakota.

3 — The terminal's departure lounge has seating for 260, almost ten times as many as the boarding area in the previous terminal. The present four boarding gates, each equipped with an enclosed jetway, can be expanded to six as traffic warrants warrants.

4 — Four car rental firms lease space at the airport — Hertz, Avis, Budget and National.

5 — Northwest Airlines ticket agent Lyle Davis has represented the carrier at Hector Airport for 39 years.

5



4



1 — Four airlines serve Fargo today, though several others have come and gone. Braniff International flew into Hector Airport in the middle 1950s, and several commuter lines including Real West and Northern Airways offered flights within North Dakota during the first years after airline deregulation allowed the major carriers to drop low-traffic intrastate routes.

2 — Frontier Airlines began serving Fargo in 1975. Its routes connect through its Denver hub. Dan Hogberg is local station manager.

3 — Northwest Airlines has served Fargo since 1931. Manager is Ron Balvitsch, a veteran of 39 years with the airline.

4 — Republic Airlines station manager Gib Bromenschenkel has headed its Fargo operation since 1957. The carrier was established as Wisconsin Central Airways in the late 1940s and adopted the still-familiar name of North Central in the mid-1950s.

5 — United Airlines entered the Fargo market in 1984 with Denver-based routes. Dick Weak is station manager.

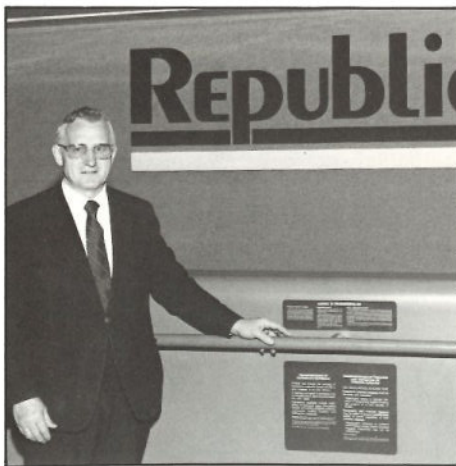
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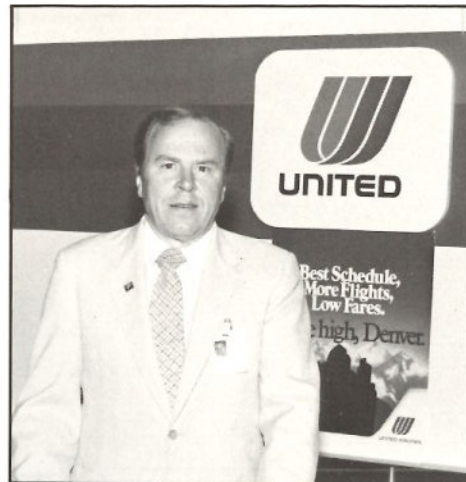
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1 — While arriving and departing passengers circulate through the terminal's public areas, a separate corps of workers readies flights behind the scenes, like this United Airlines baggage-loader.

4



2 and 3 — Capt. Bill Park of United Airlines prepares for a flight with a routine sight check of his equipment and a review of current weather reports.

4 — Hot or freezing North Dakota winds no longer faze passengers boarding or leaving flights ("enplaning" and "deplaning") at Hector Airport, thanks to enclosed jetways now provided by all four air carriers.

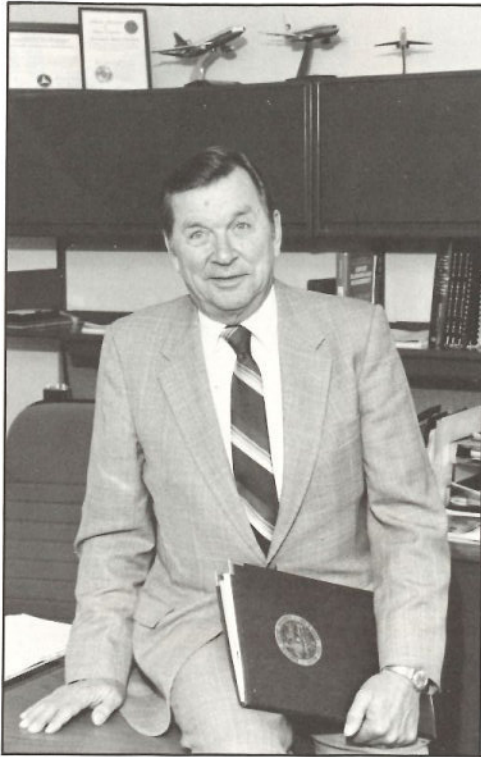
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1 — Seventeen flights arrive and depart daily. Hector Airport served 369,854 arriving or departing passengers in 1985. With the passenger count up 20 percent in the first five months of 1986, this year is likely to exceed the record set in 1979 before deregulation somewhat reduced the number of flights.

2 — The Fargo Municipal Airport Authority, established in 1969 to oversee airport activities and implementation of the master plan, has since invested some \$25 million in improvements including the new terminal. Members, left to right, include Richard Hentges; Paul Gallagher; secretary-receptionist Joan Stading; chairman Tom Williams; executive director Joe Parmer; Sid Cichy, and Jeannette Stanton.

3 — Joe Parmer's association with Hector Airport goes back to Jan. 1, 1947, when he became F.L. Bayley's assistant. He succeeded Bayley as manager in 1952. When the Airport Authority was established in 1969, he became its first executive director.

4 — Jim Kapitan (here with secretary Joan Stading) assumed his job as airport manager in 1970. He has also been a member of the North Dakota Air National Guard for 22 years, holding the rank of major and serving as its disaster preparedness officer.

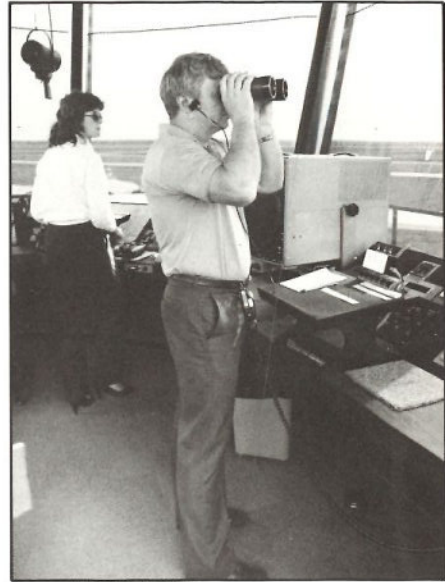


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The Federal Aviation Administration has managed air traffic control at Hector Airport for more than 40 years. Today traffic has grown from reports of one landing per day in Hector Airport's earliest months to, in 1985, a total of 92,898 landings and takeoffs. Commercial air carriers accounted for 8,778 of that total and air taxis (freight and charters) for 6,789. Locally based aviation represented 40 percent of traffic — 33,971 for general aviation and 3,875 for military aircraft headquartered here.

1 — Tower chief Dan Driscoll (standing) confers with controllers Tom Thompson and Tim Carroll.

2 — Ron Westby uses binoculars to spot an incoming airplane while Louise Borchardt handles ground control.

3 — Dan Tinderholt monitors a radar screen tracking arriving and departing aircraft.



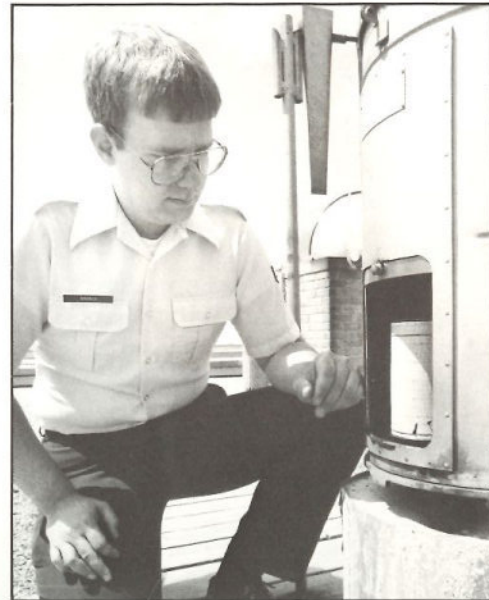
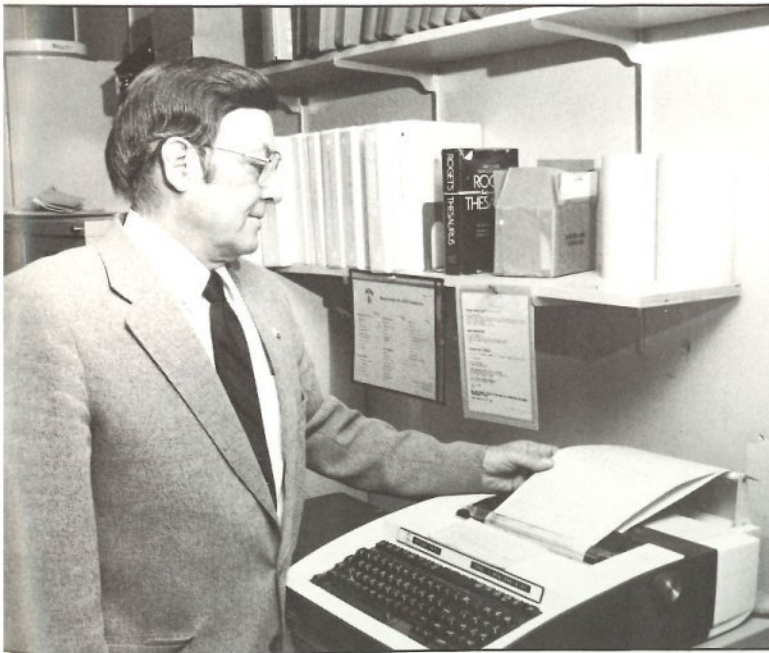
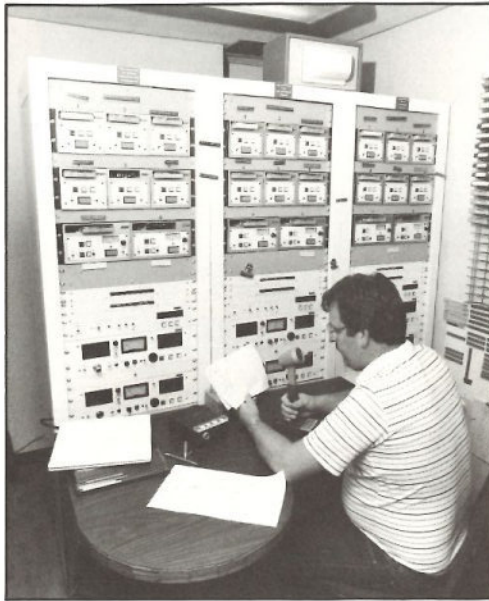
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The U.S. Weather Service — formally, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration — remains in offices in Hector Airport's old terminal. Providing accurate, immediate weather reports to military and civilian pilots is part of the agency's central role. But it performs vital public services as well, including severe weather watches and warnings and general weather forecasts, relayed to the news media and by NOAA's own weather radio station.

4 — Mike Bender broadcasts current weather conditions and forecasts for the Fargo-Moorhead region and the Detroit Lakes area on NOAA weather radio. Special radio receivers allow the public to tune into these reports, which are updated hourly or more frequently during severe weather.

5 — Meteorologist-in-charge Herbert Monson watches incoming national reports on the NOAA weather wire.

6 — Sgt. Dan Markee checks the rain gauge on the roof.



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Peacetime defense has become the North Dakota Air National Guard's mission, with Fargo-based personnel playing an integral role along the nation's northern border. Practice may become humdrum at times, but it makes the teamwork perfect.

In test after test, North Dakota's Air Guard has taken top honors in national and regional competitions. The commitment to excellence in all areas — from maintenance and communications to motor pool and engineering — has created a unit well-prepared for civil or defense emergencies.

1 — Sgt. Ellen Rising, Sgt. Patricia McMerty, SMSgt. James Schreiner and A1C. Jacqueline Sander practice loading an AIR 2A inert training weapon aboard an ANF-101.

2 — Mission success frequently depends on behind-the-scenes personnel like SSgt. Leroy Noreen in communications.

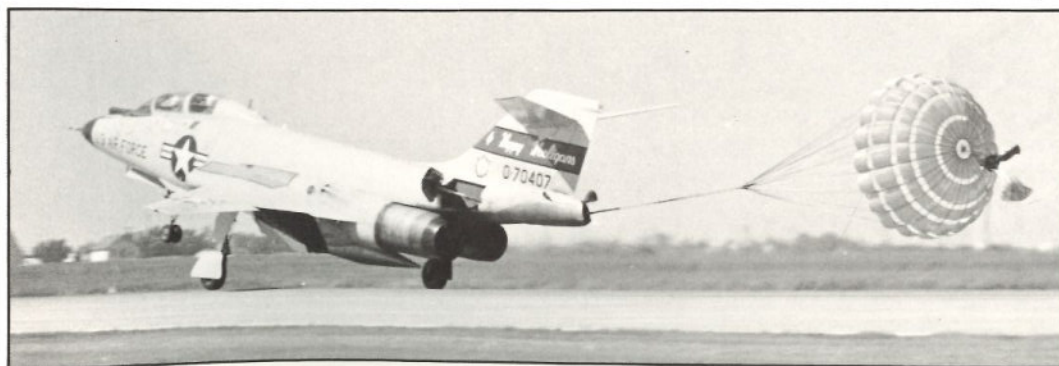
3 — The Happy Hooligans often take the awards in national competitions. One of the most coveted, the William Tell, has been won twice. Here Major Robert Carlson and First Lieutenant Steve Brosowski were greeted returning home after the unit's success in the 1972 contest.

4 — Another safe landing demonstrates the precision mastered while continually remaining on alert.

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Individual airplanes and independent pilots were the start of Fargo aviation, and they remain an important part of today's airport activity.

Grouped under the heading of "general aviation" are the aircraft services, flying schools, charter companies and sales firms which the non-flying public seldom sees, but which contribute to the bustle of everyday airport activity.

FBOs — "fixed-base operators" — have come and gone throughout Hector Airport's history. Among many familiar names of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s were Pappy Skroch, Harry Faleide, A.J. "Prince" Kundert and Duane Strand ... succeeded today by firms including Valley Aviation, Aviation Resources, Executive Aviation and Dakota Aero-Tech.

1 — With the removal of commercial passenger traffic to the new terminal, general aviation dominates Hector Airport's east side along with activities of the Air Guard.

2 — Pilot Gene Jenson spruces up a plane in front of the Skroch-Kundert Aviation hangar in 1958.

3 — Prince Kundert and his son Chuck, shown in 1958 with a Cessna 182, were among Hector's most active FBOs.

4 — A tug operated by Norman Stroh moves a plane outside Valley Aviation.

5 — Dennis Krabbenhoft fuels the aircraft.



1

1 — Simulated search-and-rescue operations develop skills for real emergencies. Here Senior CAP member Keith Taylor points out crash details to three cadets.

2 and 4 — The CAP squadron operates three planes used to develop members' skills in search-and-rescue areas of pilot training, communications and emergency medical training. Here Lt. Col. Larry Rueble confers with USAF advisor Col. Richard Scharf prior to take-off, then taxis toward the runway.

3 — Pilot Neil Jacobson of Executive Air Taxi, Bismarck, is stationed at Hector Airport with St. Luke's Hospitals' leased LifeFlight helicopter. As Fargo-Moorhead develops its growing role as a regional medical center, the air ambulance service provides fast, direct transportation in emergencies.



2

3



While much of general aviation is inspired by business or recreation, other organizations stand by for times of emergency.

Civil Air Patrol, the civilian arm of the Air Force, was organized during World War II to aid the military as spotters of enemy aircraft and in local defense work. The Red River Valley Squadron came into being much later, in 1965, when the North Dakota Wing Corporate Branch Office originated at Hector Field. Since then the CAP has been involved in rescues during blizzards, when an aircraft has been lost or has crashed, and at other times when air and ground teams can assist the community.

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1 — Flight instructor Dave Jallen of Executive Aviation goes over a sectional map with Bill Nicoloff. The firm also rents aircraft.

2 — Steve Edner, Dwite Green and Karen Fercho of Aviation Resources provide charter services from their base in the old Hector terminal.

3 — Dakota Aero-Tech is approved by the FAA to check, service and repair aircraft and hot air balloons, like this one being tested by Emory Babolian. The firm also provides turn-around service for commercial airlines' aircraft and ground vehicles.

4 and 5 — Dakota Aero-Tech offers one of only three one-year training courses for A&P mechanics (airframe and power plant) in the nation. Today its graduates and former faculty members are on the staffs of virtually every major commercial carrier and aeronautics firm in the nation. It was founded in 1964 by Prince Kundert and purchased ten years later by Gordon Person, Yvonne Barney and Duane Peterson.



5

Retired film-maker Bill Snyder caught "flying fever," along with the rest of America, in 1927 when Charles Lindbergh landed in Paris after his solo trans-Atlantic flight. In the years that followed Bill and his friends became avid fans of Fargo's early aviators, ready passengers for the first commercial flights from the city, and eventually pilots of their own light aircraft.

In the spirit of this nostalgic review at Fargo flying, Bill shares fond highlights of his lifelong romance with the science and the magic of aviation.

A Lifelong Romance with Flight One Man's Story

By Bill Snyder

I was only ten years old when the great aviation age infected my blood. The year was 1927, and the occasion was the news that Charles Lindbergh had flown non-stop from New York to Paris in his monoplane "The Spirit of St. Louis."

Nothing in that time captured the imagination like the Lone Eagle's solo trans-Atlantic flight. My father and I bought all the newspapers to savor every little detail and watched the newsreel footage of that dramatic take-off — not only once, but a second time. Lindy's flight was the opening gun that announced to the entire world that aviation was going to be a part of every person's future.

In those days I attended Jefferson School in Fargo. When the wind was from the southwest, the local airmen at Roberts Field nearby would buzz the school as they approached to land. Such a noisy announcement sent us rushing to the aerodrome to watch the fliers hop passengers or just tinker with their flying machines.

Our heroes were Murray Baldwin, Verne Roberts and Cuba Chaney, all pioneer local aviators. None of us had the three dollars or so needed to buy a ride in Verne Roberts' plane so all we could do was wish and watch. But it was great fun for youngsters of that day — we were the airport kids.

The Lindbergh flight ignited the aviation explosion in every possible way. Newspapers were loaded not only with stories about aviation, but with advertising that referred to flying. Black's, a local department store,

featured this copy two weeks after the great flight: "The 'Spirit of St. Louis' conquered the seemingly impossible — the Spirit of Black's has successfully conquered high prices!" It touted a special price for rides with Verne Roberts as well: two passengers for five bucks.

Lindbergh's visit to Fargo was a high point of my young life. My mother and I, along with some of my schoolmates, rode the streetcar to the Agricultural College, then walked to the flying field north of the campus to wait many hours for "We" — the famous Ryan monoplane and its heroic pilot.

It was an event of gigantic proportions. Almost on schedule, Lindy appeared from the east over Moorhead, circled the field a number of times, made a low pass to inspect the landing surface, and finally dropped to a perfect three-point landing. Watching that moment was one of the great thrills of my life. For an earthbound lad it was fuel for the imagination. I'm sure every kid watching the proceedings that day pictured himself flying Lindy's plane. I know I did.

Like the kids of my day, I flew many hours in my imagination. We read pulp magazines like "War Aces," "War Birds" and "Flying Aces." We collected pictures and clippings about the Red Baron, the Lafayette Escadrille and Eddie Rickenbacker. We rode our bikes to Hector Field to watch Florence Klingensmith set the world record for lady fliers, and counted out loud as she looped each loop.

My first airplane ride came when

Clyde W. Ice, a South Dakota barnstormer, flew into Fargo in his Ford Tri-motor. He sold rides for a penny a pound, one dollar minimum. With the blessing of my parents and their gift of a dollar, I bought a ticket — my second great aviation thrill.

As Ice was doing land-office business, the ride amounted to only one big circle of the city, but it was indelibly stamped on my mind. I'll never forget the feel of the wicker seats, the noise as the three engines roared to life, and the excitement as I watched the shadow of the wheels lift from the grass landing strip.



Ten-year-old Bill Snyder day-dreamed of flying his own plane.

In my high school days one of my good friends was a lad named Gordon Straith. His father Bill was a pilot for Northwest Airways, one of two stationed here in Fargo along with one six-passenger Hamilton. Bill and Carl Leuthi, the second man, alternated on the daily up-and-back trips to Bismarck.

Those were the primitive days of flying. There were no radio navigational aids, no de-icing capabilities, no copilots and no air traffic control system. It was seat-of-the-pants flying at best. But Straith and Leuthi kept the line running, winter and summer.

Occasionally the weather forced them down. Leuthi once made an emergency landing in a farmer's field, then made friends with the farmer. The next

winter the farmer spelled out Leuthi's name in that field with the aid of his manure spreader. It was the talk of the aviation community at the time.

Clarence Bates was the Fargo radio operator in those early days of Northwest Airways. We shared a common hobby, amateur radio, and became good friends. He later became a pilot for Northwest and, in 1940, was the lone survivor of the only fatal airline accident in Fargo-Moorhead history.

Although I'd long harbored the desire to fly an airplane, I didn't get the chance to learn until I was in my forties.

It was back in the 1950s when I climbed into a small plane with a young instructor named Lew Axford and started my flying career in earnest. Lew had previously flown for a small North Dakota airline, but had left to spend his time teaching students from North Dakota State University and middle-aged guys like me to bore holes in the sky.

All I learned on that first day was to taxi the tail-dragger airplane and perform a few elementary maneuvers in the sky, but I was hooked on flying in that first hour! That same day I began to study the ground school manuals in preparation for the required FAA written test. It was fun!

Ask any pilot what his greatest flying thrill has been, and he'll probably tell you it was the first time he flew solo. You never forget a minute of it — it's that deeply embedded in your memory. Mine came one June morning after Lew and I had been shooting practice landings — "touch and go's," they're called, because you just touch down and then take off again without stopping.

"Pull off in the grass," Lew said as we were taxiing back to the hangar. I pulled the two-seat trainer off the tar runway and stopped in the grass. "It isn't safe to ride with you," he said as he unhooked his lap belt and started to climb out of the aircraft. "So take it around three times by yourself. Don't forget to call the tower on the radio and shut the window."

I taxied back to the end of the runway, called the tower, shut the window and took off. The Cessna, with Lew's weight missing, literally jumped into the air; light airplanes behave differently when loads are reduced, as I discovered. My first landing was a grease-job — smooth as silk. I poured on the throttle and climbed into the smooth morning air again.

This time the thought hit me: I was like Lucky Lindy. . .

My second landing was a bit different. The little plane glided farther than when it was loaded with both Lew and me. On my second attempt I overshoot the runway. Although I had only done it once in dual instruction, I pulled on 20 degrees of wing flaps to change the rate of descent. It worked. I greased the plane onward for a second time. My confidence was increasing.

The third try was a repeat of the second. I used the flaps again, and I put the little bird right on the painted numbers at the end of the runway. I had soloed!

Lew had been standing alongside the runway watching. When I taxied back and picked him up for the ride back to the ramp he asked, "Who told you to use flaps?"

I thought a minute. "Nobody told me not to use them."

Lew grunted something I did not hear. I wasn't listening. I was still on cloud nine. After all, I had just completed the greatest thrill of my life at the time. (Yes, Evelette my wife, even a greater thrill than getting married!)

Before I finished my license course I bought a used Cessna airplane which had belonged to F-M contractor Dick Kvamme, a typical small-business flier who used his flying machine to travel between jobs.

After I finished my instruction and got my license, that Cessna took me all around the tri-state area. It stretched my range. Where once I had to drive to cover my territory, I could now fly to Williston or Rapid City or Wolf Point or Mankato, do my thing, and be home that night.

Later I traded that bird for a more sophisticated plane, one that I could fly on instruments. With that model I spread my wings to cover the entire United States and Canada — Los Angeles, Seattle, Atlanta, Washington, Ottawa, Saskatoon, Niagara Falls, Laredo, Kansas City. Every one of those trips was an airborne adventure.

And in between trips were hours of "hangar flying," those gossip sessions where pilots swap tales based on that old saying: "Flying is nothing but hours and hours of sheer boredom, punctuated by moments of sheer terror!"

Part of the fun of flying is the sense of accomplishment from learning new skills. Instrument flying gives you confidence and discipline. With Hector Field's all-weather runways and instrument landing system, it's a very fine airport on which to learn "blind flying," as it was called many years ago.

Instrument instructor Lee Barnum and I spent many hours practicing approaches to Fargo when the ceiling was low and rain pelted the windshield. Later this training made it easy to shoot instrument approaches into Oakland, San Jose, Van Nuys, Memphis, Colorado Springs and many smaller cities.

When I look back over my years of flying I see lots of changes in Hector Field. The general aviation area has been continually squeezed by parking lots, rental-car parking and other constraints that made it hard to get on and off the field with baggage. With the new passenger terminal now in service, the general aviation area will be more utilitarian. After all, general aviation is a vital part of any airport development . . . and city development, too, for many decisions on business location are made by executives who want first-class facilities for corporate aircraft as well as good commercial flight connections.

The real pleasure of my flying days was the view of the world from my up-front pilot's seat. I've seen America pass in review: the checkered plains of the agricultural midwest; the smoke and pollution of the industrial east; the



1 — Film-maker Snyder and colleague Norm Selberg prepare for a ride in Bill's first Cessna in 1961.

2 — Bill's parents gave him a trip to Minneapolis via Northwest for graduation in 1935. The round-trip fare was \$11.

2

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scenic wonders of the Grand Canyon and Yellowstone Park, and the twinkling lights of civilization at night.

I loved every minute of it.

Many times, when I was homeward bound at sundown, I would watch the shadows lengthen, then disappear as the lights of the cities and farms would blink on, one by one. I would look down on lines of car headlights which defined the highways and feel sorry for all those earthbound drivers below.

And then, as I watched the lights of Fargo-Moorhead grow from a tiny speck at 100 miles to the thousands of individual lights that define a bustling city, I always thought of Alfred Lord Tennyson's prophetic poem "Locksley Hall." Written long before the Wright brothers invented the airplane, it's been a favorite of mine since the Lindbergh days.

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,

Saw a Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be,

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,

Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales.



Mark Taylor, an "airport kid" of a new generation, fixes his sight skyward.

By
Nancy Edmonds Hanson
and
Joyce Eisenbraun

