



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Western-Pacific Intercom



Thunderbirds Welcome FAA

Cover

Story

The United States Air Force Thunderbirds recently welcomed FAA Western-Pacific Region visitors to their practice field at Indian Springs, Nevada, for their final practice demonstration prior to beginning their 1984 demonstration season. The Thunderbird pilots' practice sessions include very intensive, precision training as they constantly improve and refine their flying skills.

The purpose of the activity at Indian Springs was to allow FAA Flight Standards people to review the Thunderbirds' entire show sequence before public demonstrations.

The FAA visitors received a royal welcome and had an opportunity to personally meet with the Thunderbird pilots and received a briefing from Commander/Leader Lt. Col. Larry Stellmon.

As usual, the Thunderbirds' aerial demonstration was an outstanding, spectacular effort and enjoyed by all spectators.

Cover photo: FAAers posing with Commander/Leader Lt. Col. Larry Stellmon and the Thunderbird pilots are, from left: Charlie Zenith, Manager, Las Vegas FSDO and FAA Representative; Stu Meriwether, Air Traffic Representative, Nellis AFB; Casey Doss, an FAA friend; Jerry Gavette and John Mapel, Las Vegas FSDO; Gary Koch, Accident Prevention Coordinator, Flight Standards Division; Paul Muskat, Las Vegas FSDO; Deputy Director Dick Devereaux; Wanda Chappell, Las Vegas FSDO; Clyde DeHart, Manager, Flight Standards Division; Dean DeShazo, Manager, Las Vegas Airway Facilities Sector; Bill Burkhardt, Logistics Division; and Pete Hudes, Flight Standards Division. Cover photo by Barbara Abels.



Charlie Zenith, Manager, Las Vegas FSDO, pauses outside the NCO Club at Indian Springs where FAA visitors received a personal briefing from the Thunderbirds. The sign was a special warm touch and indicative of the reception FAA received at Indian Springs.

FAA INTERCOM is published weekly for Western-Pacific Region employees of the Department of Transportation/Federal Aviation Administration by the Public Affairs Office. Articles and black and white photographs should be sent to Barbara Abels, Editor, or Beth Caughey, Assistant Editor, AWP-5, 213/536-6431 or FTS 966-6431.

U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds Welcome FAA Visitors

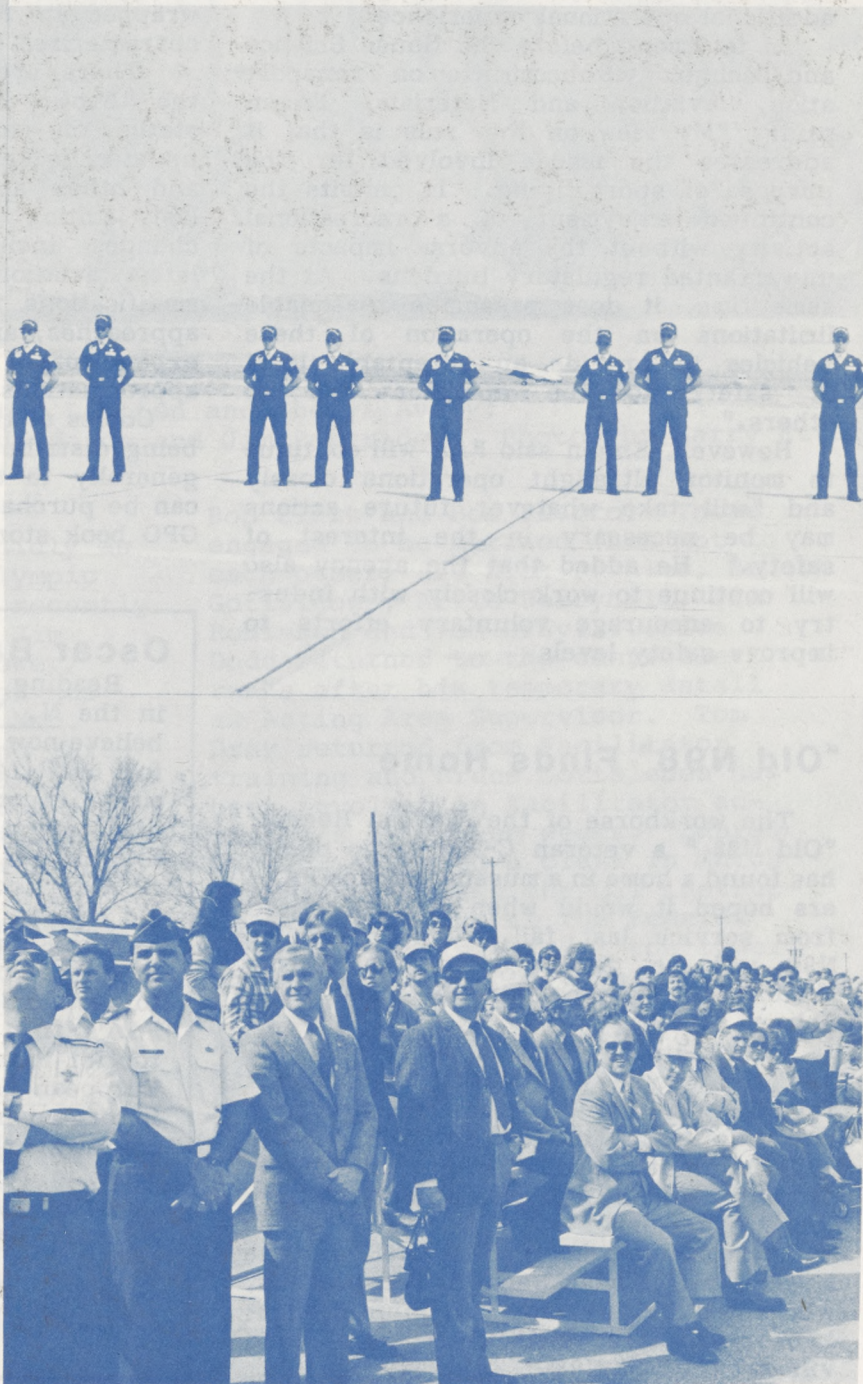


Above: The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds in tight formation.

Top right: The U.S. Thunderbirds Maintenance Crew line up for presentation to the crowd of spectators as each Thunderbird airplane lands with upmost precision.

Bottom right: The bleachers include not only FAA visitors, but also the citizens of the Indian Springs community who received a special Thunderbirds tribute for their support and patience. -

Photos by
Barbara Abels.



Ultralight Rule Working, Engen Tells Congress

Noting that he has flown an ultralight himself, FAA Administrator Engen has told Congress that the FAA's 1982 ultralight rule appears to be working well, but future changes may be necessary based on additional operational experience.

In testimony before the House Science and Technology Subcommittee on Transportation, Aviation and Materials, Engen said: "My view on this rule is that it addresses the issues involved for the purpose of sport flying. It permits the continued enjoyment of a recreational activity without the adverse impacts of unwarranted regulatory burdens. At the same time, it does prescribe reasonable limitations on the operation of these vehicles to provide an acceptable level of safety to the operator and to others."

However, Engen said FAA will continue to monitor ultralight operations closely and "will take whatever future actions may be necessary in the interest of safety." He added that the agency also will continue to work closely with industry to encourage voluntary efforts to improve safety levels.

"Old N98" Finds Home

The workhorse of the Alaskan Region, "Old N98," a veteran C-123 cargo plane, has found a home in a museum as many FAA-ers hoped it would when it was retired from service last fall. Appropriately, N98 will be displayed in the Alaska Historical Transportation Museum in Palmer, Alaska.

During its 26 years of service to FAA and the people of Alaska, the aircraft regularly delivered personnel, groceries and other cargo to FAA outposts, hauled fully equipped medical clinics to remote communities, and did yeoman service during emergencies.

Instrumental in placing N98 in the museum was Alaska Senator Ted Stevens, who noted, "Many sick and injured Alaskans were evacuated from towns and villages on 'Old N98'."

Nas Plan 3rd Edition Still the Brown Book

The old adage about not judging a book by its cover doesn't hold true when you're talking about the National Air-space System (NAS) Plan. The third edition of the Plan has just hit the streets wrapped in the same brown cover that characterized the first two editions.

There are no major surprises inside the "Brown Book" either, although the status of various programs has been updated to reflect major contract awards and other actions completed since the last edition in April 1983. Other changes include incorporation of the latest aviation growth forecasts, minor modifications to program scheduling and approaches, and adjustments which bring expenditures in line with the latest appropriations legislation.

Copies of the new volume currently are being distributed throughout the agency, generally to the branch level. It also can be purchased for \$12 from AES-10 or GPO book stores.

Oscar Bakke Dies

Reading Oscar Bakke's obituary in the N. Y. Times, it's hard to believe now that he worked for FAA for only 14 years. He held so many important positions during his agency career that it seems like he was here forever.

A former Director of the CAB's old Bureau of Safety, Bakke joined FAA in February 1960 as the Flight Standards chief. He then moved on to become Eastern Region Director, FAA's first Associate Administrator for Plans, and Director of the European Region. He was involved in organizing the agency's safety office at the time of his retirement in June 1974.

After leaving FAA, he worked for six years as Executive Director of the Newark Transportation Council. He died May 20 in Mountain Lake, N.J., at the age of 64.

LAX Tower Facts



Left: Jim Holtsclaw, Vinton Lampton and Sheryl Avery.

Right: Jim Holtsclaw, Carde Harde and Jim Partridge. Photos by Larry Etter.

Things are changing rapidly as we prepare for the 1984 Olympic Games. Los Angeles Tower recently welcomed its new manager, Jim Holtsclaw, from Ontario Tower/TRACON.....Bruce Gottsleben has been promoted to Lincoln, Neb. TRACAB. Vinnie Lampton and Carde Hardy have received Outstanding ratings and Quality Increase Awards. Sherry Becker got married and is now Sheryl Avery--the honeymoon was on the island of Hawaii. Bob Peterson has been promoted to Quality Assurance Training Specialist.....Recent signoffs include: Local Control--Lisa Krag; Ground Control--Dan Loerch, Tony Vella and Mary Haynes; awaiting C.I.C. certification only--Bob Steidley, Gil Garcia and Dayle Buschkotter; newest Full Performance Levels are Elizabeth Froehler and Laurel Macurda.....Welcome to: Dale Winter, Mike Roundtree and Tony Baranto. Proud fathers of baby controllers are Dave Munsinger, Mark Washam, Dan Loerch, Dan Kelly,

Bob Clark and Bob Fierro. Those engaged to be married (but not to each other) are Rick Pfahler, Bruce Gottsleben, Artie Berryhill, Jim Robinson and Tom Dray.....Dave Dodd returned to the controller ranks after his temporary detail as Acting Area Supervisor. Tom Dray returned from Facilitator training and Bruce Gottsleben has been involved in Facilitator activities for three weeks. Laurel Macurda attended a class in March to learn to teach the OJT instructor course. She is the Federal Women's Coordinator for the tower and will be trained as an EEO Counselor in the near future. Larry Etter recently attended a class on CBI. We hope to eventually do the watch schedule by computer.....The airport is still in the midst of its face lift: Runway 25L will be open by summer; Satellite 1 is open (PSA, AirCal, MuseAir, USAir and Southwest); the new parking structures are coming along nicely and the upper roadway has already been completed.

Where They Are Now

Unlike old soldiers who "just fade away," ex-FAA Administrators generally remain active and productive after leaving office. Out of eight former Administrators, only Elwood R. ("Pete") Quesada, who turned 80 in April, is listed as retired, and he still has a few irons in the fire. Quesada, who was the first Administrator from 1958-1961, now lives in a home he designed, built and landscaped in Hobe Sound, Fla.

As for the other seven former Administrators, an article in a recent issue of Aviation Convention News provides the following information on their activities:

Najeeb Halaby (1961-1965) practices international law and is president of a venture capital company that bears his name. Still an active pilot, he logs about 20 hours a month in his Piper Cheyenne.

William McKee (1965-1967) is president of Schriever & McKee, a military consulting firm in Washington, but says he's "getting ready to retire."

John Shaffer (1969-1973) is an independent consultant as well as a consultant and board member at Beech Aircraft. He's also involved in promoting liquid natural gas for use in both autos and airplanes.

Alexander Butterfield (1973-1975) is a partner in Armistead & Alexander, a firm specializing in management consulting, project management and executive search. The headquarters is in Woodland Hills, Calif.

John McLucas (1975-1977) is executive vice-president and chief strategic officer of the Communications Satellite Corp. in Washington, D.C.

Langhorne Bond (1977-1981) practices aviation law as a partner in the Washington law firm of Santarelli & Bond.

J. Lynn Helms (1981-1984) plans to establish a consulting firm in Washington, D.C., called Consultants International.

First Field CD-2 Delivered

The National Airspace System Plan marked another major milestone in late May with the first field delivery of the dual channel Common Digitizer (CD-2) to a long-range radar site in Indianapolis.

FAA has ordered 120 CD-2s for field use and plans to install them at all long range radar sites and selected terminal radar locations by October 1986. Another seven units will be used for training and maintenance support services at the FAA Academy and Technical Center. Initial deliveries were made to both facilities last year.

The CD-2 is an advanced version of the Common Digitizer now in use. Its function is to convert primary and secondary radar returns into digital language for processing by the air traffic control computers.

The major advantage of the new equipment is the dual channel feature which allows it to stay on the air if one channel fails or is shut down for routine maintenance. The present one-channel CDs are more vulnerable to complete shut-downs. The CD-2 also will be more accurate in its data collection.

The Indianapolis radar was chosen as the first field site because of its close proximity to the Indianapolis En Route Center, making the scheduled battery of tests on the new equipment easier to conduct. Tech Center personnel will be on hand at the center to direct the transition from the present CD installation to the new CD-2 as well as the integration of the CD-2 and the radar equipment.

The next field delivery will be in July to the London, Ohio, radar, followed by an August delivery to Alexandria, La.



Long Beach FSDO News

It was a sad day at the Long Beach Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) when it said goodbye to two of its supervisory personnel. Walt Daigle, Manager (right), accepted a position in the Western-Pacific Regional Office as Acting Manager, Flight Standards Branch. Bennie Harris, Operations Unit Supervisor, went to the San Jose General Aviation District Office. They are pictured with their gifts from the FSDO personnel. We wish them both well!



Fred Holmes Receives Award

Fred Holmes (above right), Reno NAV/COMM Electronic Technician, receives an outstanding rating with a Quality Increase Award from his supervisor, Drew Stallings, for his work this past year. One of Fred's outstanding accomplishments was the installation of ILS solid state sideband generators and clearance transmitters. This has resulted in a large improvement in the stability of the ILS. Congratulations, Fred!

Western ACO Wins 1984 National Certification Award

This year's winner of the Aviation Standards Aircraft Certification Award is the Western Aircraft Certification Office (ACO) located in the Federal Building, Hawthorne Calif. It was cited for its outstanding performance and contributions to aviation safety. The office, which is headed by Charles Blomer and staffed by 55 employees, is responsible for certification projects ranging from minor modifications to the original certification of aircraft.

The selection was made by a panel from the Office of Airworthiness, consisting of the director and three division managers. The panel paid particular attention to the exemplary manner in which the Western ACO performed as part of the Transport Airplane Certification Directorate, as well as its cooperative efforts with other certification directorates and agency organizations.

Runner-up for the national honor was the Wichita Manufacturing Inspection District Office.



International News

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT ELAINE CARTER, INT'L. AFFAIRS SPEC., AWP-4F FTS: 966-6333

SUMMER TRAVEL - The following is an article from a local newspaper on how to prepare for your summer travel. You might find it interesting and helpful.

— **PASSPORT.** "Typically, people look into their holiday options, decide on their destination and then apply for a passport," says John P. Caulfield, a press officer with the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs. "The process should be reversed. People should get their passports first, since with a passport in hand they can go virtually anywhere." And now is the off-season for passports, according to officials at the Passport Agency, who say that March through September is their busy time of year. So, applying now means faster processing of your application or replacement forms.

If you already have a passport, but the validation date is up and you need to replace it, call the Passport Agency for details. In Los Angeles the number is 209-7070. Next, get hold of the appropriate "Application for Passport by Mail," which is available on request by mail or in person at any passport office, most post offices and a host of travel agencies. Complete the form, attach your existing passport and two identical photographs (signed as instructed), and include the \$35 fee. Mail it all in and then congratulate yourself on beating the spring rush.

Applying for your first passport? You will need an application, available at passport offices, post offices and often travel agents; a certified copy of your birth certificate if you were born in the United States, a naturalization certificate or a consular report of birth if you were born abroad; proof of identity, such as a driver's license or banking card; two identical photographs (2 by 2 inches in size) and money to cover the cost of the passport — \$35 for adults and \$20 for youngsters, and the standard processing fee of \$7. You must also apply in person, but not necessarily at a passport agency. Many federal and state courts, and hundreds of post offices accept passport applications.

— **VISAS.** Most countries differ in their visa requirements and in the dispatch with which they process visa applications. Your travel agent or airline should know whether your vacation destination requires one. Travel agents generally have the forms. Foreign consulates and embassies always have them. Consulates can also list the documentation needed for visa applications. Allow several weeks, sometimes several months, for processing.

— **CUSTOMS.** Taking your Swiss-made pocketwatch to Switzerland certainly sounds like carrying coals to Newcastle. American customs officials, however, may not see the humor in that when you return to the United States. What they will see is a foreign-made article on which you should pay duty. One way to prevent frayed nerves and short tempers is to get a certificate of registration from the customs office nearest you before you leave home, particularly on such items as cameras and watches. The certificate will expedite free re-entry for your prized possessions.

— **NATIONALITY STATUS.** If meandering around, say, the Middle East means returning to your roots — you were born there, your parents are citizens or you married a citizen — check your status with consular officials from that region. However far removed, your former homeland may claim you as a citizen, with all the military obligations and other duties that implies.

— **VACCINATIONS.** Information on whether you'll need vaccinations to vacation in a certain country can be obtained from your physician, your local or state health department, foreign embassy or consulate. Or you can write to the Superintendent of Documents, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 for the brochure "Health Information for International Travel," which tells all.

— **INSURANCE.** Even the best-laid vacations may go awry, which is why you should make sure medical, travel accident and car insurance policies adequately cover you and your footloose family.

— **DRIVER'S LICENSE.** W. Allan Wilbur, public relations director of the American Automobile Association, said this about driver's licenses: "You need one when you drive. Whether it can be an American one is something else again. Austria, Italy and West Germany, for example, require that your license be in a language their authorities can read, and an International Driver's Permit is written in seven languages. Some countries, such as Spain and Greece, require the I.D.P."

International licenses can be obtained from the offices of the Southern California Automobile Club (AAA). According to Wilbur, the licenses cost \$5 and are good for one year from date of issue. You will need a valid American driver's license and two passport photographs. If you apply by mail, allow two weeks for delivery. The service is available to nonmembers at no extra charge.

— **MEDICATION.** Call your physician about medication you must or might take with you. Find out, for example, the brand names of comparable medications overseas. If you must take medication that contains a narcotic, have the doctor attest to this. Don't forget to list your eyeglass contact lens prescription — and take spare glasses along.

— **TRAVELER'S CHECKS.** Seasoned travelers know, and unseasoned travelers learn, not to carry large amounts of cash. It sounds like a commercial, but do convert most of your dollars into traveler's checks.

— **FOREIGN CURRENCY.** Have at least enough foreign currency to see you from the airport to your hotel, through your first pay telephone call and a meal.

— **VALUABLES.** Start with the obvious: Don't take valuable jewelry. Now move on to the subtle: Don't take items of sentimental value, such as family photographs. That means turning out your pockets and pocketbook contents and removing anything you don't want lost or stolen and that you will not need abroad.

— **LANDING PATTERNS.** National holidays are strange creatures, always falling on the least likely days. Since holidays usually mean closed banks and sometimes closed restaurants and more, check whether your arrival date coincides with a red-letter date. If it does, make sure you have enough foreign currency to see you through. If you plan to bring presents to live up the occasion, remember that some items are dutiable, and that the search techniques of some airport security teams may make gift wrapping downright silly.



**DON'T LET AN
ACCIDENT
SPOIL
YOUR VACATION**

Logistics Awards

Three Logistics Division employees were recently honored with a Logistics Honorary Award plaque. Presentation was made by Fred Gilmore, Director, Acquisition and Materiel Service, ALG-1.

Dottie Gragg, Manager, Acquisition Management Branch, received the plaque "for continued outstanding leadership in the accomplishment of FAA/Regional Minority Business Enterprise and F&E obligation goals."

Janice Beccue, Supply Technician, Materiel Support Section, Materiel Management Branch, received her plaque "for demonstrating an outstanding commitment to the mission of the Red Cross Blood Drive."

Ted Campbell, formerly Supervisor, Property Management and now Manager, Materiel Management Branch, received his plaque "for superior achievement and leadership during FY-83 which contributed to a successful Personal Property In-Use Management System and the expertise and leadership provided for the revision of the system for the new computer system as PPIMS II, assuring that all Logistics requirements are included."



From left--Ted Campbell, Janice Beccue, Dottie Gragg and Fred Gilmore.

Jacksonville History Compiled by Controller

The Jacksonville Center recently celebrated its 40th anniversary by publishing a history of the facility. The profusely illustrated 38-page, paper-bound volume was compiled and edited by controller Jan H. Johannes, the center's quality assurance specialist. Johannes became interested in history in 1973 when he volunteered to help the Nassau County, Fla., Bicentennial Committee. At that time his project was to do a six-month, 60 page picture history. Three-and-a-half years later Johannes came up with a 400 page book which was published locally and sold successfully.

Since that time, history has been his hobby. In 1977 when then Jacksonville Center Chief and now AAT Special Projects Manager Karl Trautman came up with the idea of

doing a facility history, Johannes naturally volunteered.

For over a year he worked on weekends and after his shift at the center almost every day. However, after interviewing scores of controllers, visiting the Smithsonian and the Library of Congress in Washington and collecting over 700 photos, he left the area and dropped the project.

Nevertheless, when he returned to Jacksonville in 1982, he picked up where he left off. By February 1984, the volume entitled "EARLY AVIATION AND JACKSONVILLE'S AIR ROUTE TRAFFIC CONTROL CENTER" was published.

FAAers who have served at the center or have special reasons for seeing the book should contact Ron Brown at Jax ARTCC.

Monterey Tower News

Controllers Lynne Ulicki and Jayne Overgard are again preparing to take part in the Air Race Classic, June 27-30. Both Lynne and Jayne are members of the Monterey Bay Chapter of The Ninety-Nines, the international organization of women pilots. They will fly from Pasco, Washington, to Gainesville Georgia. A fund-raising barbecue is being held June 22, at Air Trails, Inc. at Salinas Airport. Any profits raised during pre-race and race activities will be donated through the California International Airshow to local charities. Anyone wishing to support Jayne and Lynne in their efforts, or needing tickets, please call Monterey Tower, 408/375-1211. All of us at Monterey and Salinas Towers are behind Lynne and Jayne and wish them a successful flight.



Ed Perlis

Friends will be saddened to learn that FAA Retiree Ed Perlis passed away on June 4, in Long Beach, following a heart attack. Ed joined the agency in the '50s and served as Principal Operations Inspector in Seattle, Van Nuys and Long Beach Flight Standards District Offices. He was a World War II veteran flying 30 missions out of England and won the Distinguished Flying Cross after being shot down twice; once landing in France and once in Russian territory. In accordance with his wishes there was no funeral or memorial service. He was cremated and his ashes scattered at sea from the air. Ed is survived by his wife, Barbara, and two children.

Fromme and Potts Head Av Safety Office

With the Office of Aviation Safety now reporting directly to the Administrator and assuming additional safety responsibilities, Administrator Engen has announced that William Fromme will continue as the office director with Keith Potts serving as his deputy.

Fromme has been with FAA since 1973, with two years out to work for the Federal Railroad Administration. He became Director of the Aviation Safety Office in July 1982 after one year as Deputy Director. A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, he also has a master's in administrative management and a PH.D. in civil engineering. He learned to fly in the Navy and later was a pilot for Northwest Airlines.

Potts brings more than 25 years experience in the air traffic control business to his new post. His previous job was Manager of the Airspace Rules and Aeronautical Information Division in the Air Traffic Service. He also holds a commercial pilot's certificate with multi-engine and instrument ratings.

Civilair News

FLASH! FLASH! NEW items for sale at the Civilair desk. Tee shirts (in all sizes) with the FAA emblem on them. The official licensed pen and pencil of the Los Angeles 1984 Olympics. Pins and other novelties with the Olympic logo. Stop by the Civilair desk (Room 4W6) in the Regional Office and see these great buys!! Don't forget to bring your film to be developed, too!



LA84
Los Angeles

Oakland FSS News

For the first time in many years, Oakland Flight Service Station is almost fully staffed, but that won't last for long. First, congratulations to Jose Mandawe on his selection to Area Supervisor at Stockton FSS and for receiving a Special Achievement Award with an Outstanding Rating. Jimmy Turner recently left for Hayward Tower and Pete Hall, after seven years of dedicated teletype work moved on to Flight Data at the Oakland Center. Bryan Ashley was presented with an Outstanding Rating and is planning to change career fields by leaving for the Chicago ACDO this month. Anderson Davie recently received a Special Achievement Award and has been selected for a DOT Intra-Modal Mobility Assignment Program position with the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) Regional Office in San Francisco. Although there is nothing definite right now on anyone else, there are a lot of bids that have gone out and we could lose more. For those of you who are interested, get your bids for Oakland FSS ready..... Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Bob Kemp on the birth of their daughter Heather. Merv and Aurora Ingram and our new secretary Merl Berggren and her husband John from Bay TRACON are all going to be new parents.....We would like to welcome aboard Terry Lankford from Fresno FSS and Ed Wake from the Academy.....Marty Landers, Oakland FSS Manager, was recently awarded the EEO Manager's Award for 1983 by the National Black Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees.....A big "ATTA BOY" for Norm Largusa on his recent Quality Increase Award and also for the people receiving Career Service Emblems: Wayne Rodrigues and Bob Quintana - 30 years; Carl Bastin, Paul Pagel and Terry Lankford - 15 years.



Thirty Years For James Texeira



James "Tex" Texeira (above right) receives his 30-year career service pin from Ray Zazzetti, Air Traffic Manager, Honolulu Tower. A local grown aviator, Tex began his CAA/FAA career with a brief introduction to air traffic control at Honolulu Center. Three months later he joined the Honolulu Tower at the old John Rogers Terminal on the lagoon side of the airport. Tex is well known around the Honolulu Airport both for his intense enthusiasm for air traffic control and his zest for airplanes. He is the proud owner of an immaculately maintained Stinson L-5 that has been his hallmark around Honolulu for years. Tex retired in August 1981 and is serving as a rehired annuitant Evaluation and Proficiency Development Specialist at Honolulu Tower.

Alcoholics Anonymous Meetings at R.O.

Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are being held at the Regional Headquarters. Both old and new members are welcome. For information, please call Anne Clayton, Aviation Medical Div., Ext. 6300.

1027 Van Buren Avenue
Marina del Rey, CA 90291
May 29, 1984

Dan Rather
Managing Editor
CBS Evening News
Columbia Broadcasting System
51 W. 52nd Street
New York, NY 10019

Dear Mr. Rather:

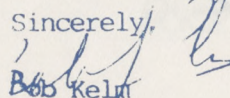
Last Friday, May 25th, I tuned in the 7 p.m. CBS News just in time to catch the item called "Aluminum Smog." What I saw was a pastiche of segments implying, among things, that the Federal Aviation Administration's air traffic control computers are breaking down from age and inattention. A casual viewer could even think that the computers themselves are vanishing, leaving the controllers to stare at blank radar scopes. Worse, your reporter quoted from a report of mine to support his contention. It was a new experience for me. For a moment I knew how the "big boys" feel when they get zapped by the media. This lowly public servant saw red.

The report he quoted described a conference of the people who handle the air traffic control computer software. We were discussing how we can continue to maintain and even improve that software, which doesn't deteriorate from age, while replacing the computer hardware, which does. We're trying to do all of this before the computers get to be 20-years old. Add that our particular Service is also taking on a bunch of software responsibilities that previously we thought would be handled by a sister service and you get the picture. Problems? You bet. Related to the controller strike? Hardly. Equipment collapsing? Nonsense. Ironically, that conference was doing what the media often criticize government for not doing .. anticipating and defining problems instead of reacting, and doing it openly and honestly. We came home genuinely enthused and the various reports and briefings from that conference were well-received and widely circulated.

We FAA automators are a proud lot who jealously reserve to ourselves the right to call each other names. We run what is probably the largest and the most complex collection of computers in the world; and we do it with unequalled reliability. If your reporter could point to one other nation, or even an industry, that maintains a comparable computer system more reliably than we do, that would be news to me. One reason the system is reliable: we do our worrying early. We grab at the issues before the breakdowns occur. There are lots of problems; many, such as competition with industry for skilled people, are not unique to the FAA.

Mr. Rather, what continues to trouble me even after I've cooled down is this: Editing the news to shock rather than to inform only reinforces those in government who advocate secrecy and reaction. It undermines the rest of us and helps neither government nor journalism. While I can appreciate the pressures of your deadlines and the need to rap us when we deserve it, we also deserve a bit more objectivity than was displayed last Friday night.

(Editor's Note: Bob Kelm is Assistant
Manager for Automation at Los Angeles
TRACON. We salute Bob for his candor.)

Sincerely,

Bob Kelm