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Administration**

Western-Pacific Intercom



**FAA Keeps "Big Eye"
On Blimp Operations**

Cover Story

Photos and Story
by Russell Park

"Look up in the sky, it's a bird, it's a plane, no = it's the Goodyear Blimp."

How many times have you heard that saying or seen the blimp hovering over a major sports event or traveling silently through the skies over the past many years?

The story of the Goodyear airship is long and colorful and includes, as you can well imagine, direct involvement by the FAA. The airship Columbia, based in the Los Angeles area, falls under the responsibility of the Flight Standards Division's District Office in Long Beach. The inspector assigned is 24-year FAA veteran Neal Savoy, the last ten years assigned to the blimp. Savoy is a Principal Aviation Safety Inspector. To get the real flavor for the airship operations and the FAA involvement, INTERCOM met Neal and the Goodyear people one day recently to "look things over." We met at the Airship Operations Center in Carson near the intersection of the San Diego (#405) and the Harbor Freeway.

Assigned to the team is Goodyear Public Relations representative Bob Urhausen. Bob coordinates all flight and travel arrangements for the Columbia team.

Leading the FAA on our tour was Nick Nickolary, Chief Pilot for Columbia. Nick and his team of pilots are all FAA certificated. During our tour the pilots and crew listened closely as Nick and Neal talked "FAA talk" regarding regulations and upcoming training sessions.

After a tour of the rigging shop, electronics shop, backup van and the support facilities, we walked to the runway area where the Columbia is tethered to a pole placed in the ground near the center. Their ground crew chief, John Crafton, and his assistant, Joe Nick, were preparing Columbia for our flight. A dozen or so crew members stood around the airship holding down the lines attached to the front and top.

The crew directed us aboard the car, slung below the bag, watching the weight disbursement and placing sandbags in compartments below the car to equalize the weight where necessary. The twin Continental engines == six cylinder (pusher type), alongside the car were running "O.K." They would take us to our cruising speed of 35 mph. The blimp has a maximum speed of 50 mph. Columbia's length is 192 feet, 59 feet high and 50 feet wide. The volume is 202,700 cubic feet. We were to take off and fly at the normal altitude between 1,000 and 3,000 feet. The maximum altitude is 10,000 feet. The maximum gross weight is 12,320 lbs. and the airship can carry six passengers plus the pilot for a range of 500 miles. We would only fly a few miles today in the Southwestern Los Angeles area.

Nick explained the overhead control panel which contains controls for communications, fuel and the electrical systems. Rudder pedals regulate the airship's right and left direction, and the elevator wheel alongside the pilot's seat controls the up and down direction. As we glided through the airways, Nick would operate the throttles for the speed of the engines and set the pitch control for the angle which the propeller blades "bite" the air. Further controls allowed Nick to control the fuel mixture and heat controls and the envelope pressure controls. The latter controls regulate helium and ballonet air pressure to trim and shape the airship envelope.

After a very safe review of all operations, we had the feeling we were in very experienced, fully qualified "good hands." Nick revved up the engines, signaled to the ground crew and we were literally bounced into the sky. The ground crew pulls down on the car and the airship goes down and then up into the sky. As the engines work at full power, the nose of the airship comes up sharply and we climb for a few seconds cruising altitude. From there on, as Nick throttles back the engines, we find we have the best view in the city for looking down to the harbor of Los Angeles to the south, the tall buildings of

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Down on the Ground

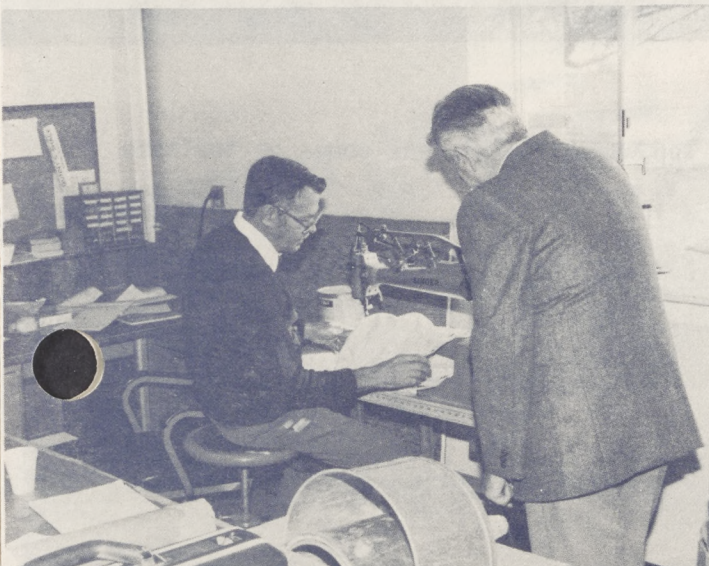
Cover photo: Neal Savoy, right, Principal Aviation Safety Inspector, Long Beach Flight Standards Division Office reviews details with Nick Nickolary, Chief Pilot for airship Columbia.

Top, right -- Columbia support crew prepares equipment for transportation.

Middle, right -- Neal Savoy, FAA checks helium bottles "six pack" with Nick Nickolary, Chief Pilot.

Below, right -- Airship Operations Support van.

Bottom -- Neal Savoy, FAA, looks over work with Glen Bowers, Chief Rigger.



Cover Story, Continued

the downtown area to the north. To the west and north are the planes landing and taking off from Los Angeles International Airport. As we pass north of the Torrance area, a small yellow biplane comes up to take a look at the "blimp."

The Columbia is one of four airships operated by the Goodyear fleet. The airship Europa, tours the Continent annually during the spring and summer, following schedules similar to her American sister ships Enterprise, America and Columbia. All four airships of the fleet are equipped with incandescent night signs to flash after-dark messages from the sky. The "Super Skytacular" signs on each of the blimps are 105 feet long and 24.5 feet high. Each includes 3,780 lamps or a total of 7,560 per ship (one on each side).

As we glide above the scenes of Southern California, and all too soon, returned to the airship Operations center for a landing we are handled most skillfully by the crew of the airship Columbia. As we depart the operations area we can see why Goodyear is so proud of its safety record. In more than 60 years of commercial operations carrying passengers, more than 1,000,000 women, men and children have flown in their airships without an injury.

Western-Pacific Intercom

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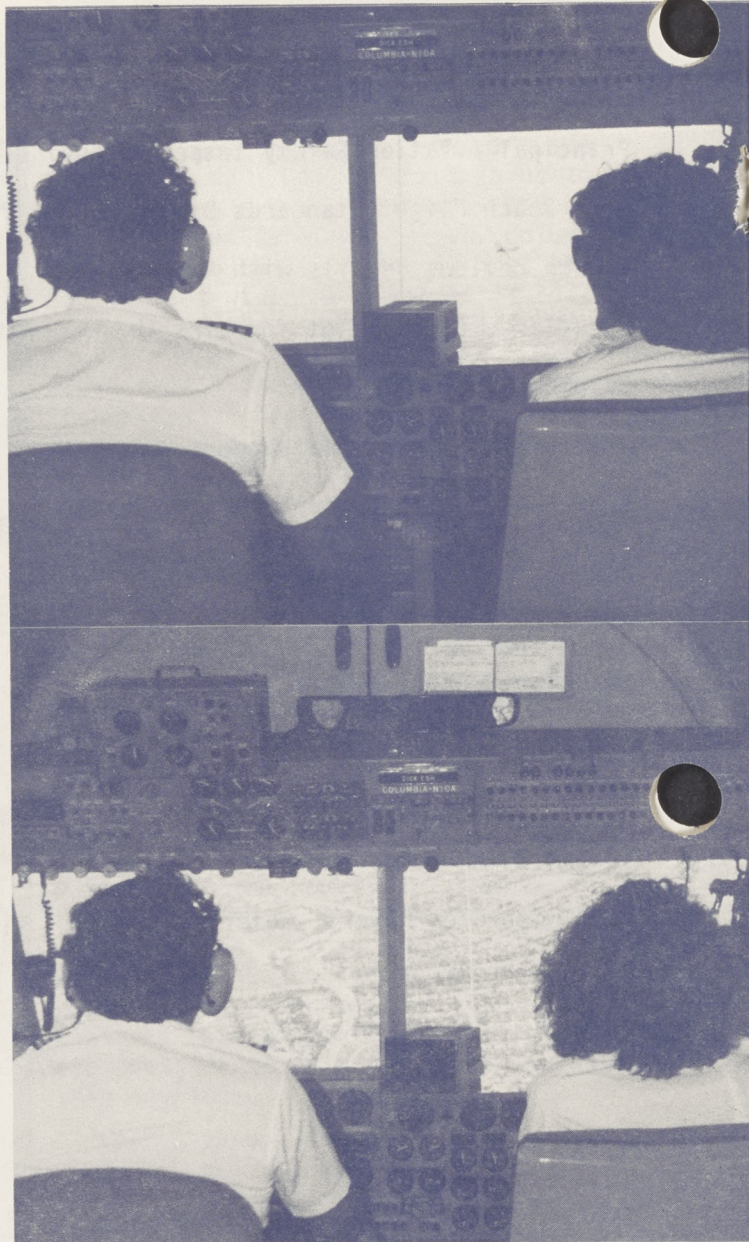
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
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Top, right -- Biplane comes up to "take a look" at blimp.

Bottom, right -- View of the city along San Diego Freeway.

More 

More Cover Story

Top, right -- Pilot gets signal from ground crew.

Left -- From the mountains to the sea.



Middle, right -- Ground crew prepares blimp for FAA's Neal Savoy.

Below -- A good luck at the outer skin and the "skytacular" lighting system.



San Diego AFS Newsline

Three Electronics Technicians from San Diego Airway Facilities Sector were invited to the Regional Director's staff meeting to receive their 40-year career service emblems. Joseph Covington and Howard Elder from the Ontario Radar/Comm/Data Airway Facilities Sector Field Office (AFSFO) and Jean Reulet from the Palm Springs AFSFO received the pins from Acting Director Alex Hammond.

Also receiving a career emblem is Robert Romio of Mt. Laguna AFSFO. Robert has accumulated 30 years of federal service.

San Diego Airway Facilities Sector wants to recognize three retirees for their contribution and dedicated service to FAA. Each will be missed, but each one is wished much happiness as they enter a new era in life.

Ed Owens started with FAA in 1962 at the old Los Angeles Center. He transferred to Palmdale in 1963 and from there came to Miramar and the San Diego Sector in 1966. He was fully certified on all COMM/RADAR equipment and served as the Systems Program Specialist. Ed has a total of 30 years service, counting his military time. He is looking forward to a vacation that lasts longer than two weeks.

Howard Elder started with FAA in 1971. He served as an Electronics Technician, Technician-in-Depth and Systems Program Specialist. He said he spent a lot of time in school. When asked what he planned to do in retirement, Howard replied, "Enjoy it, learn how to cook and work on the 'honey do list'." He has given 40 years and two months to federal service, counting his military time.

Jean Reulet started with FAA in 1979. He came to Palm Springs when it was 120 degrees and wondered if he had made a mistake. Jean has been in the same office under one supervisor since coming into the agency. He plans to travel first in the U.S. and then in Europe, visiting France and Germany. He retires with 40 years of service, including time in the military and with Point Mugu.



Fergus T. Thompsen

We are saddened to report Fergus T. "Tommy" Thompsen passed away December 29, 1986, in St. George, Utah. Tommy had been a member of the FAA family since the early 1940's. Except for military service during World War II, he remained with the FAA until his retirement in 1973.

Tommy entered FAA service at the Regional Office in Los Angeles. Upon returning from duty in the U.S. Army, he worked at the old FAA Hangar in Santa Monica. He was in Procurement and Contracting in the Western Regional Office until 1964. During that period FAA expanded enormously with the construction of the Los Angeles, Seattle, Oakland, Salt Lake City and Denver centers, plus the radar systems, and Tommy was part of the contracting team that constructed these facilities.

In 1964, he moved to the Salt Lake City Area Office and worked with the Contract and Procurement Section. He was the Section Chief until the closure of the Area Office. In 1968, Tommy returned to Los Angeles and finished his FAA career as Chief of the Real Estate Section in 1973. All who worked for and with him knew him as a totally dedicated and conscientious contracting officer.

Tommy is survived by his wife, Helen, of St. George; a daughter, Cynthia Johnson of Lafayette, Colorado; and three grandchildren. A son, Bill Thompsen, preceded him in death several years ago.

Condolences may be sent to Mrs. Thompsen at 3087 S. Spruce Cr., St. George, Utah 84770.

Long Beach FSDO Hosts Mystery Aviator Award



The Second Annual Mystery Aviator Award and Banquet was recently hosted by Long Beach Flight Standards District Office at a club in Long Beach, Calif. Acting as Master of Ceremonies was Accident Prevention Specialist Paul Stebelton, who had been honored as the First Mystery Aviator in 1985. The Mystery Aviator Award was initiated in 1985 to recognize a prominent Southern California aviator, and is entitled "mystery" to keep it a secret from the recipient.

This year's honoree is Eddie Martin, founder of the Orange County John Wayne Airport. More than 350 folks attended the event to honor this great aviation pioneer. Martin -- who has been a pilot for American Airlines, Western Airlines and MacMillan Oil Company -- flew during World War II as a Lockheed test pilot.

As is traditional, Martin received dozens of awards and plaques, including an alabaster eagle and a personally autographed photo of President Reagan. It was an evening to long be remembered, especially for one of Southern California's great aviators -- Eddie Martin.

Photo: Regional Accident Prevention Specialist Jack Norris (left) presents a Certificate of Appreciation to Eddie Martin on behalf of Regional Director Mac McClure. Emcee Paul Stebelton (right) represents Long Beach FSDO.

FAA Toastmasters Club #3449 Elects New Officers



A new slate of officers has taken over the gavel at FAA Toastmasters Club #3449. They are -- President, Cliff Rustad; Educational Vice President, Al Knieriem; Administrative Vice President Bill Carter; Treasurer, Mike Spitt; Secretary, Susan Bishop; Sergeant-at-Arms Kristina Comitas and O.C. Baugh; and Bulletin Editor, Elly Brekke. All officers are employed in the Regional Airway Facilities Division, except Mike, from Logistics and Elly from Public Affairs.

The officers will serve a six-month term from January to June. The Club in-

vites all FAA employees to visit their meetings held on the first and third Tuesdays of the month. Contact an officer for more information.

Photo: Newly elected Toastmasters officers include (from left) Susan Bishop, Bill Carter, Cliff Rustad, O.C. Baugh, Al Knieriem and Mike Spitt. Unavailable for photo were Elly Brekke and Kristina Comitas. (Photo by Elly Brekke.)

"Operation Raincheck" Successful in Reno

Reno Tower/TRACON resumed the "Operation Raincheck" program in October '86 and is pleased to announce the classes are booked solid through the end of April '87.

Considering the upcoming ARSA in the Reno area and the original course plan of "Operation Raincheck" the response

from pilots in Northern Nevada and California has been overwhelming. Positive feedback from the over 50 pilot graduates, thus far, has been very gratifying to those involved.

Conducting the classes at the Reno Tower are Air Traffic Control Specialists Jim Mawhar, Laura Turnbow and Dante Edwards.

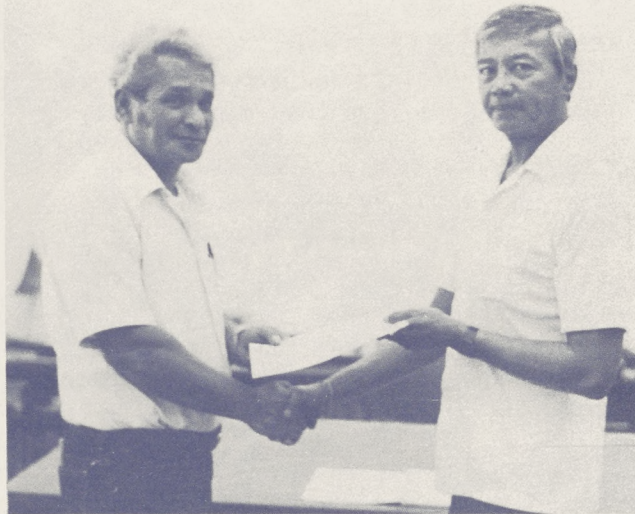
Guam AFSFO Present Awards

The folks at Guam Airway Facilities Sector Field Office recently presented awards to two employees.

Electronics Technician Tony Manibusan earned a Special Achievement Award (SAA) In addition, Tony received a Letter of Appreciation for his participation in responding to the typhoon in Saipan on December 4 through 6.

Maintenance Mechanic Bob Perez also earned a Letter of Appreciation for his role in responding to the Saipan typhoon.

Congratulations, Tony and Bob!



Photos: Top -- Tony Manibusan (left) receives an SAA from Radar Unit Supervisor Juan Taisague.

Below -- Bob Perez (left) accepts a Letter of Appreciation from Environmental Systems Unit Supervisor Yasuko Aoki.



New Limits Put On Travel Advances

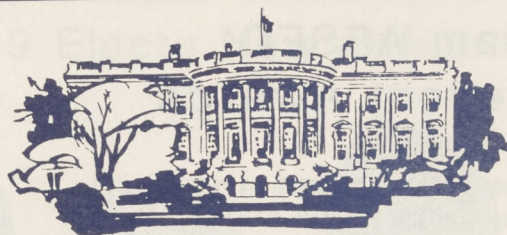
Due to new limits on travel advances, FAA management is encouraging all eligible employees to apply for a Diners Club charge card. Eligible employees in this case refers to anyone who anticipates traveling once a year, including making a permanent change of station.

The new limits are reflected in revisions to the DOT Travel Manual. Under the changes, advances for non-card holders now will be restricted to 70 percent of anticipated travel expenses, instead of the previous 80 percent. Also travel advances for both card and non-card holders will be \$25 a day with a minimum allowable advance of \$50 unless a lesser amount is justified in writing. In other words, generally, one won't be able to get an advance for a one-day trip without special authorization.

One excepted category to the new limits may be air traffic students at the FAA Academy. DOT/FAA is concerned that the changes will work a hardship on these individuals and has asked the General Services Administration to allow them to receive 100 percent travel advances. Pending a decision from GSA, they will continue to collect travel advances at the 80 percent rate.

Buffalo Picked for AFSS

The long legal battle to decide the location of the automated flight service station in Western New York has been decided in favor of Buffalo. The Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit recently denied the request of Chemung County (Elmira) for reconsideration of the issue. FAA expects to award a contract to the Niagra Frontier Transportation Authority in the near future for the Buffalo facility.



Darc Passes Test

When the IBM 9020 computer system at the Denver enroute center went down for 12 days in mid-January, the back-up Direct Access Radar Channel (DARC) was able to take over and handle the traffic without missing a beat.

Center manager Frank Johns said, "The DARC certainly earned its keep for us. It passed the ultimate test and proved to be a very reliable and stable system."

"During the down period everyone worked together and the controllers together functioned superbly," Johns added. "Their positive attitude was apparent throughout."

The center's 9020 was down from Jan. 8 until Jan. 20 for needed troubleshooting and maintenance. Although technicians had the primary system back in operation in a few days, the facility management elected to stay with the DARC system until all work was completed in order to avoid switching back and forth between systems. Also the DARC was performing well and traffic moved safely and efficiently.

Although the IBM 9020 is now back up and working at Denver, its days at the center are numbered. The new Host computer system is scheduled to be delivered there on March 6.



The Blizzard Of '87

When the Great Blizzard of '87 hit Washington, D.C., on Thursday, Jan. 22, Vanessa Dixon of the Office of Human Resource Planning and Evaluation was going the wrong way. Somewhat late for work because she had taken her children to the doctor, she wondered why her inbound Metro trains were almost empty and the outbound trains were "packed like sardines."

Another rider told her the Government was closing early but, by this time, she was only two stops from her destination and decided to keep going. She arrived at her office just as Alan VanDeventer and other co-workers were on their way out. It was not their last meeting of the day.

Three hours later when Vanessa was leaving the building, she met VanDeventer on his way back in. He had run into a mega traffic jam at the Pentagon and decided his office might be a better place to wait out the backlog. He would not be alone.

Budget's Joan Bauerlein decided to leave her car in the garage and ride Metro when she departed at 3:30 p.m. She got as far as the Pentagon station and found that was the end of the line for her particular train. After spending two and a half hours waiting in vain for a train going in her direction, she hopped an inbound train and returned to FAA headquarters. There she checked with the 10th Floor Communications Center and was told the 14th Street bridge now was clear. So she got in her car and was home in 20 minutes.

Some FAAers found Good Samaritans on the road who helped them over rough spots like Public Affairs' Bob Buckhorn. He was just barely moving up a narrow, one-lane exit ramp with little hope that he would make the grade when suddenly his car experienced a mysterious surge of power that carried him over the top. At that point, he glanced quickly in his rear view mirror and saw two burly helpers still leaning into the back of his auto. They waived good bye and then turned to help the next car in line.

DOT Acts To Cut Delays

The Department of Transportation has initiated an investigation to determine how airline scheduling practices contribute to flight delays.

In announcing the action on Jan. 28, Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Hanford Dole said, "We plan to determine whether airlines routinely misrepresent their schedules to consumers." She noted that there is increasing evidence that the carriers are scheduling more operations in peak hours than the airports can handle even in good weather. The investigation will begin with Atlanta's Hartsfield Airport.

The Secretary also said DOT is proposing to grant antitrust immunity to the airlines to permit joint discussions "aimed at adjusting schedules to reduce delays." She noted that a similar meeting in Sept. 1984 was very successful in achieving this goal.

In addition, Dole noted that FAA will continue to make "technical and procedural improvements to help reduce delays." She cited the Expanded East Coast, which will be largely implemented this month, and the development of a similar plan for the West Coast.



MTS Has New Phone No.

The Management Training School MTS in Lawton, Okla., has a new telephone number. For FAAers around the country, the FTS number is 8-749-2735.

Black History Month Observances Set

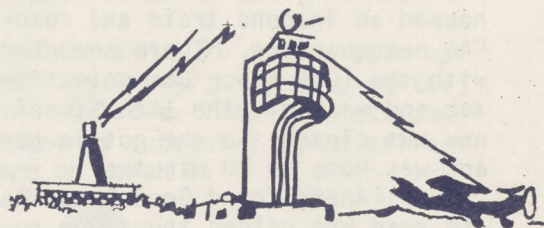
Black Colleges and Universities, known to educators as "Historically Black Colleges and Universities," are the focal point for the Department of Transportation's Black History Month celebration that began on Feb. 1.

Transportation Secretary Dole said, "We have chosen to highlight these outstanding institutions, not only because of our own DOT program to assist black colleges and universities but because of their important role in the American education system."

In Washington, D.C., FAA is teaming up with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in a joint program honoring Black achievements that is scheduled for 2 p.m., Feb. 11, in the FOB=10A auditorium. Dr. George Thomas of the Civil Right Office will act as Master of Ceremonies with Acting Deputy Administrator Robert Whittington and Deputy Associate Administrator for Airports Quentin Taylor among the other FAA participants.

NHTSA's speaker will be Civil Rights Director Hanley J. Norment. The guest speaker is Dr. Therman Evans, currently corporate medical director of an insurance conglomerate and former President of the DC Board of Education.

Monterey Tower News



Congratulations to Buck Dodson on his selection as Air Traffic Manager of Chico Tower. Aloha and Good Luck to Ken Powell, Air Traffic Controller Specialist, in his new job at Honolulu Tower, and to Tony Patrizio, at Van Nuys Tower.

Welcome aboard to Dave Brooks from Palo Alto Tower, Gary Hartsough from Livermore Tower, and to Tim Miller from Sacramento Tower.