

# DICK URE STORIES



*Captain Dick Ure in Dec 1966*

## CAPTAIN DUMB

One poignant story about how the pilots felt about Bill McChrystal occurred in the SLC crew room one morning when one 580 captain, a social misfit, slurred our chief pilot, then absent from the scene!

Dick Ure, another 580 captain, with a reputation of having a rather short fuse, took great umbrage with what he just heard. Ure, whose arms were huge, grabbed the blasphemous captain by the coat, shirt, and tie. With one hand he lifted this, none-to-small and a head taller, fellow up off the floor slamming him hard against the wall. Letting go, the fellow, shocked look and all, slid like a cartoon character to the floor. Captain Ure exclaimed, "Don't ever let me hear you bad-mouth our chief again!"

Unfortunately, in 1971 Captain Dick Ure succumbed to a massive heart attack. "Gone West" at age 42. He was a joy to fly with but not always safe to be with on a layover. If he had a couple of drinks he loved to fight. And he did.

This same nefarious captain, I will call "Captain Dumb," is a slow learner. Some years later I was in DEN about to ride up to the crew room in the elevator. Dave Kaplan was in the elevator dressed to the "9's" in a new suit, vest, and tie. Kaplan, a check-airman, occasionally pulled duty in the chief pilot's office.

The same aforementioned "Captain Dumb" steps into the elevator and "smart-assed" Dave saying, "your mother sure dresses you funny!" as he flips Dave's tie out of his vest. Simultaneously, Dave, with one foot, kicks the fellow's flight bag out of the elevator as the doors close.

Using the Dick Ure maneuver, Dave grabs “Captain Dumb” by the coat, shirt, and tie. Then kicking his feet out from under him Dave, ever the cleanliness type, proceeds to mop the elevator floor with “Captain Dumb’s” uniform. Except, “Captain Dumb” was still in the uniform!

We arrive at the third floor, the elevator door opens. I ask Dave and his new floor mop to quit thrashing around so I could exit the elevator without dirty shoes messing up my uniform pants. I then successfully exit and head down the hall turning to see Dave making his own exit exclaiming, “Idiot!” “Captan Dumb” then has to go back to retrieve his flight bag and, presumably, clean up some.

Dave then marched down the hallway into the chief pilots’ office to tell Captain Bill Norris of the morning’s event. Immediately, Norris reacts with a very concerned look. Dave was likely thinking, “this isn’t going to be good.”

Norris asked Dave who the other pilot involved was. Dave told him. Next, Norris grabs the phone and calls Captain Dick Orr, VP Flight Operations. Norris tells Orr what had just taken place naming the other pilot. Dave could hear Orr’s laugh in the background which, essentially, ended any subsequent investigation. It just isn’t helpful to acquire a negative reputation in the aviation world. I must add that, some three decades later, I am on a very friendly basis with this individual. I harbor no ill-will to anyone.”

*(Excerpted from Captain Billy Walker's online blog at <https://captainbillywalker.com/from-the-heart/part-two-the-arizona-adventures-of-the-walkers/>)*



*Captain Bob Rich in WWII*

## **BLIND LANDING**

Retired Captain Bob Rich says that society as a whole will be unable to relate to the conditions of that era, and is aware that stories told by us old airmail pilots will sound like embellished ludicrous allegations. However, he says, “They are true.”

I can vividly recall departing Grand Junction, Colorado on a night flight to Salt Lake City, in a very marginal weather situation. It was shortly before Christmas in the fifties. A front had developed northwest of Salt Lake City. The forecast didn’t show it as a serious threat to our route of flight. If we stayed on the ground every time they

forecast a weather disturbance, we would never accomplish much in the transportation of passengers and goods. Flying the high mountains with their varied weather patterns was a condition that Frontier pilots wrestled with daily.

First Officer Richard Ure, and I opined that weather conditions and the forecast offered a successful completion of this journey. The weather at the Salt Lake air terminal was adequate for dispatch. We therefore enplaned passengers and departed.

En route, unbeknownst to us (the information wasn't relayed) the front accelerated and we penetrated it in the vicinity of the Duchesne, Utah, H-marker beacon. Our relatively benign winds aloft suddenly increased to an extremely strong head wind (later determined to be in excess of 100 mph). Grand Junction, (our alternate) went below minimums. Vernal, Utah was down so we were committed to Salt Lake City.

We were enjoying head winds, prop and wing ice to a degree much more than we had anticipated, and our ground speed had deteriorated to less than 100 mph. Salt Lake weather in the interim had gone to zero ceiling and zero visibility with heavy snow. Hoping for improved weather in Salt Lake, we continued on. Fuel reserve was a very important consideration at this point in time and we were aware that we probably would have one shot and one shot only at Salt Lake City.

We departed the Spanish Fork H-marker en route to intercept the localizer of the instrument landing system at the fan marker. Ordinarily it required approximately 11 minutes to accomplish this transition. After approximately twenty minutes we intersected the localizer at the marker. It was obvious that we were involved in a situation that was extremely fretful. Because of this low altitude jet stream, we were very conscious of the fact that our aircraft was running very low on fuel on our approach to the Salt Lake Airport.

With the weather at the Ogden, Utah airport reporting zero/zero conditions, Rock Springs, Wyoming was our new paper 'alternate.' The remaining fuel would not sustain us to Rock Springs. We elected to continue the approach. The Salt Lake tower advised that the weather was zero/zero. I implored the tower operator to give us minimums on the weather so we could legally attempt an approach. He stated that in his opinion, bless his heart, the ceiling was 200 feet and visibility was one-half mile. This enabled us to shoot the approach without a lot of paper work.

Established on the glide path of the ILS (instrument landing system), I moved up and down gingerly to convince myself that the facility was operating properly. At 500 feet I requested that First Officer Ure monitor our approach as far as any possible visual reference was concerned. At minimums (200 feet above the surface), he stated, "Automobile headlights seemed to have passed beneath us."

Without ever seeing the runway we contacted the surface on about four inches of powdery snow, probably my best landing ever. Dick Ure yelled, "If you were a girl, I'd kiss you." Approximately twenty minutes later, in poor visibility caused by fog and heavy snow, we found the old east terminal.

*(EXCERPTED FROM "THE GOLDEN YEARS OF FLYING" By Old Frontier Airlines Captain Tex Searle with his kind permission and his publisher, Aviation Supplies & Academics (copyright 2009). His grand memoir is for sale at Amazon.com and ASA2fly.com.)*