

AL KENDELL STORIES



Captain Al Kendell in about 1961

*EXCERPTED FROM "THE GOLDEN YEARS OF FLYING"
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His grand memoir is for sale at Amazon.com and ASA2fly.com.*

That Lying Passenger

Captain Al Kendell tells of a time they were climbing out of Hastings, Nebraska in a DC-3. In the distance you could see the large Navy arsenal where munitions were stored in uniform rows of underground facilities covered with mounds of earth.

The stewardess entered the cockpit and asked, "What are those large mounds we can see?" Feeling in a jesting mood, I advised her they were Indian burial mounds.

She blurted out, "That lying passenger in the cabin told me they were arsenals."

Memoirs of the Ceiling

Cruising at 13,000 feet, Captain Kendell could do nothing but shake his head when the stewardess told him of her latest episode in the cabin of the DC-3.

I was walking up the aisle and I felt a tug on my skirt. I turned and this small, elderly lady motioned me to lean down so she could whisper to me. She asked where the bathroom was. I told her to follow me and I would lead the way.

At the rear of the aircraft, I held the door open until she had entered inside the blue room. I walked to the forward section of the cabin and when I turned around I was stunned to see she was back in her seat again. She wasn't in that blue room thirty seconds, and there she sat, motioning me to come to her.

She whispered, "I need a newspaper." A gentleman in the next seat offered his paper and said he was through with it.

Once again she returned to the blue room. I surmised that she liked to read while sitting on the john. After a lengthy period of time, I began to worry about her, but she finally reappeared and returned to her seat.

This series of events was eating on my mind, I couldn't figure it out. I noticed she'd forgotten her newspaper so I stepped back to the blue room to retrieve it. You're not going to believe this, but all over the overhead of our blue room she had stuck that paper. She wet it with water and plastered it on good.

I'd never run into a situation like this before. I had to know what was going on. I paused by her seat and asked why the newspaper was stuck on the blue room overhead? She whispered, "When I started to use the bathroom, I looked up and saw this little window in the ceiling. Well, I didn't want anybody up there peeking down at me and watching, so I fixed it."

Short Notice

Another story that remains in Captain Al Kendell's memory files: He was at the controls of a CV580 when the stew entered the cockpit and asked him if he had a key to the blue room as the door would not open. "There is a lady back there on short notice about to charge the blue room door," she said.

I told her the blue room door could only be locked by a person inside and requested that she take her seat until after we skirted a thunderstorm we were fast approaching. The turbulence was already starting to build. The stew blurted, "There's no one inside that blue room, and the door will not open. I'll have to try other means," and rushed from the cockpit.

A short time later the stew again entered the cockpit. This time she was wiping her arms and hands with paper towels as she informed me that this would be her last trip. As soon as we block in, she said, I'm handing in my resignation. When I stepped out of the cockpit this lady demanded, "I've got to pee, and I've got to do it now." So I hurried her into the commissary and pulled the curtains. I emptied all the ice from the ice bucket and told her to have at it.

The turbulence was so bad she asked me to steady it while she tried to sit on it. Well, there we were, both sliding around on the floor, me trying to keep the bucket under her and her missing the bucket and peeing on my floor and on me too. What time do we get on the ground?"

Ball Lightning

Captain Al Kendell tells about the time he and Captain Al Mooney were flying in obscured conditions and a brilliant, bluish ball of lightning appeared at the wing tip. "It grew until it was the size of a basketball. From the wing tip it rolled towards us and entered the cabin. It continued across the aisle and exited out the other side, then danced to the end of the wing tip where it disappeared. At the completion of the trip, we all filed off the aircraft with trepidation," Kendell reported.

There are other stories that tell of ball lightning actually rolling down the aisle between startled passengers who sit frozen in their seats. Looking the other way, some strive to ignore it hoping it will vanish. With high performance aircraft now able to fly above the weather, we don't see so much of this unusual phenomenon.