

# EV ADEN STORIES



## OL' FRONTIER AIRLINES MUSINGS By BILLY WALKER, FRONTIER PILOT

When FAL first acquired the 737's I had a flight with Ev Aden. I had never flown with him prior to this. Ev flew the first leg as was customary. He hand flew to FL 330 and then he reached up moved the A/P paddles up. I hit the disconnect switch on my yoke. I didn't say a word. I saw him glance in my direction as he re-engaged the A/P. Again, I hit the disconnect switch! Ev exclaimed, "Just WHAT do you think you are doing?" I said, "I understand that when you were the chief pilot you had all the autopilots removed from the DC-3s and Convairs! Well, I've been flying those airplanes a few years now with as many as 17 legs a day. So, I'm just payin' you back!" Ev laughed out loud and we got along very well. I then told him that I knew where he learned trade. He said, "How so?" I said, "At my father's CPT school in Cheyenne." Ev said, "I'll be! Your dad must be Pic Walker!" "Yup," says I.

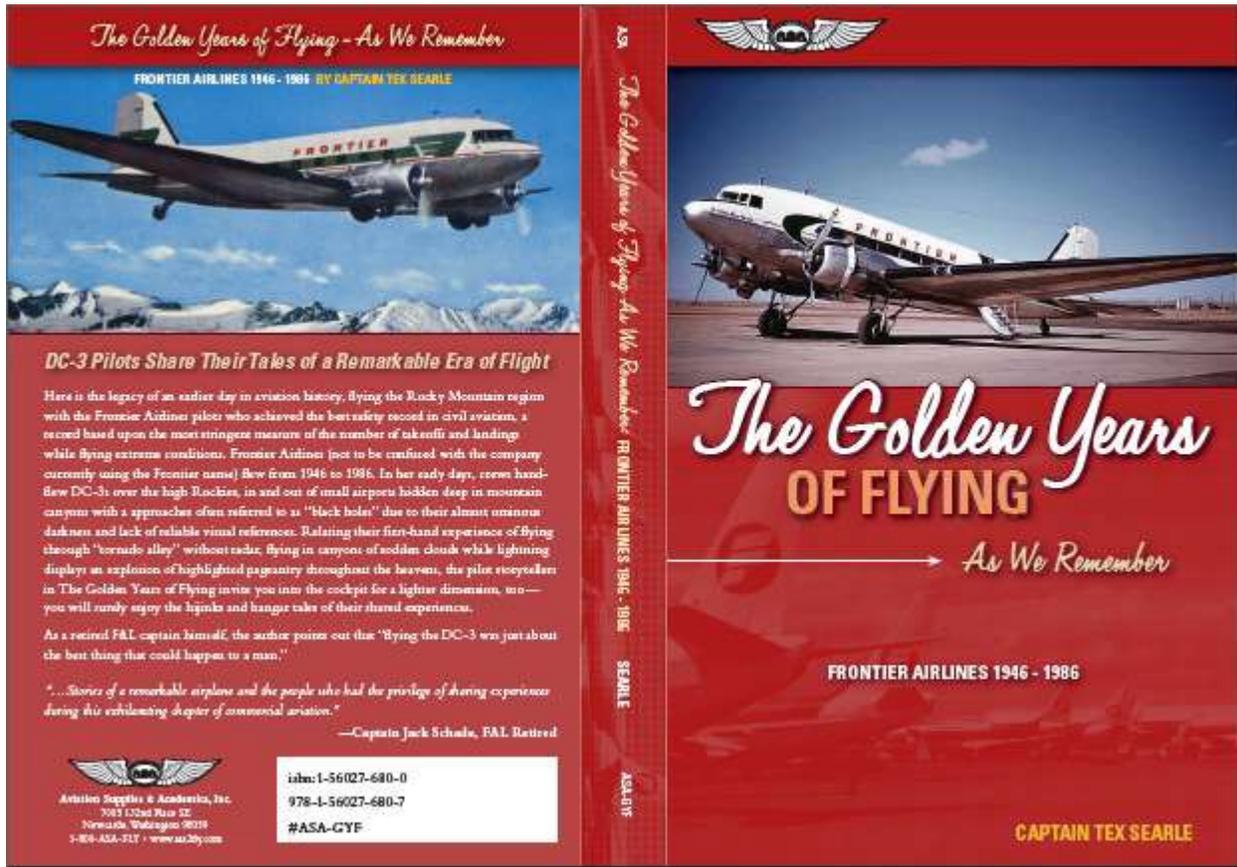
My father, and a non-flying brother, owned Plains Airways, Inc. with bases in CYS, LAR and FMM (Ft. Morgan, CO, the pre-glider training base). Ev Aden, Fred Hart Jack Kettler, and Warren Heckman learned to fly at Plains Airways. Fred & Warren at the Laramie base. Warren's instructor, Bert Orchard, was the same fellow who had taught my mother to fly. My Mom was the first female to learn to fly in Wyoming. This was back in the '30s.

My father came up with an advertising plan. He placed two large billboards along the east-west highway running through Cheyenne. That highway is now I-80. He had my Mom's photo on the billboard. It said, "If SHE can learn to fly – YOU can learn to fly" along with Plains Airways address & phone #. One billboard on the east side of town, one on the west side. Imagine what some lawyer would do with that t'day!

Two of the three DC-3C's that came from Arizona Airways had been my Dad's. He sold them to Johnny Bulla a pilot and pro-golfer. Johnny was one of the owners of Arizona Airways. I dated his daughter when I was a senior in high school. She went to North High while I was at Scottsdale High. I recall picking her up for the first date. Mr. Bulla asked if I played golf. I said, "No, but I helped my father build a golf course in Wyoming." He said, "Close enough!" We never made the connection about the airplanes. Both my dad and Johnny Bulla had Gone West before I pieced it all together. Captain Ralph S. Johnson, former UAL Chief Test Pilot, was my Dad's best friend. He and Johnny Bulla delivered the two DC-3C's to PHX. It was Ralph who helped me piece together the fact that two FAL 3's had belonged to my Dad before Arizona Airways and, later, FAL.

Ev was from Chugwater just north of CYS. After I flew some with Ev I asked my Dad, "Why didn't you ever teach Ev to pull the throttles back!" Several of the old hands joked that everything Ev flew had the throttles bent forward! Hell of a pilot and he taught me a lot about Low Freq. approaches. In that he was THE master!

## THE GOLDEN YEARS OF FLYING By TEX SEARLE, FRONTIER PILOT



## THE DIRECTOR OF FLIGHT OPERATIONS

Everett Aden (Ev)

Whether he was training or overseeing check flights, Chief Pilot Ev Aden of Monarch/Frontier demanded strict discipline from those involved. In the end it paid dividends to both the company and the pilots in having the best safety record ever in the airline industry. Frontier pilots knew they had been well trained to master the art of carrying MPX (mail, passengers, and express) throughout the Rocky Mountain empire.

Captain Aden was a precise disciplinarian and a perfectionist. He expected his pilots to know the capabilities of their aircraft to its limits. His crews had to know the names and memorize the heights of all the major peaks and passes that they flew over and through. He questioned the pilots on their knowledge of every canyon and the location of every landing strip. He made sure they were well versed in the various weather patterns they could expect over the mountains.

In their early careers many crews had Captain Aden as an instructor or check pilot. Over and over he would hone them in the proper use of the manual loop for navigating when all else had failed. How well crews remember Aden giving a bearing he wanted intercepted which led to Denver radio station KOA, frequency 850 KHz. It was proper procedure for both pilots to listen to the three-letter Morse code identifier to positively make sure they had the correct H-marker tuned in. But the Denver station was a commercial broadcast station and it rarely identified itself other than on the hour or half-hour. If a positive identification was not made on the station to the satisfaction of Captain Aden, crews might find themselves attempting to shoot an approach into North Platte, Nebraska from a wrong frequency that was mysteriously tuned in.

Using the broadcast station kept the training flights outside the perimeters of the traffic flow into the Denver airport.

(In later years it was not uncommon for training flights to travel several hundred miles to a less active airport to accomplish the required flight training.)

The pilots being checked could expect to receive a clearance to intercept a track to the Denver radio fix and also were requested to give a timed estimate of arrival. The pilot first located his present position in relation to the station, then determined the heading to fly to intercept the inbound bearing at ninety degrees. By operating the manual loop antenna, he determined the time-distance to the station by noting the time it took for the aural-null needle to show a ten-degree change in direction in relation to the station.

All this had to be accomplished while holding the aircraft on a steady heading and if the estimate to the station was less than two and one-half minutes, it would be necessary to make a two hundred seventy degree turn away from the station before tracking inbound. During this procedure with Captain Aden checking, certain flight instruments would mysteriously begin to fail until the flight instruments were down to needle, ball, and airspeed.

Or an engine would unexpectedly fail. This caused the DC-3 to immediately yaw into the bad engine. A pilots reaction would be to immediately apply the proper rudder application to remain established on a straight path. Constant awareness was stressed in training to use proper procedures to identify the failed engine. We still remember the prompting: "Right engine! Left engine! Which is it? The rudder peddle you push identifies your good engine. I give you books and you eat the covers."

To properly identify which engine had failed may sound like a simple procedure, but throw in a few hurdles as mentioned and a negligent pilot may find himself behind the power curve and trying to quick-start his brain. Captain Aden insisted that all Frontier crews be able to react to any unforeseen problem as though they were in cruise control and that his pilots be drilled to the extent they would be at ease navigating by whatever radio or instruments were available.

History testifies that over the years a few last farewells were hastily expressed because of unplanned descents—some because the good engine was mistakenly shut down. A recent newspaper article related the distressful situation inflicted upon one crew, hauling contract mail, departing from Boise, Idaho at night. Shortly after takeoff an engine became engulfed in flames. The ensuing investigation revealed the crew of the cargo airline had mistakenly shut down the remaining good engine, preventing them from making an emergency landing at the airport. There were no survivors. Frontier crews had none of that.

When the air work was completed, Captain Aden might give a clearance that called for the crews to shoot a circling approach to runway 12 at the old Stapleton airfield. After cranking the coffee makers to 378-KC, they would positively identify the DEN radio fix by listening to its Morse code signal, da dit dit - dit - da dit. Using the manual-loop to navigate by and with the weather reported at minimums (sometimes lower), they could expect to lose an engine at anytime. While approaching the radio fix the gear would be lowered, and after the crew had made a visual inspection out the side window to verify that the gear was down, the final check was called for.

When Captain Aden called landing checklist completed, it was a cue for those who had experienced this before to recheck the green light that indicated the gear was down and locked. Knowing the gear warning horn could be mysteriously silenced, when they rechecked, more often than not they would discover a red warning light had replaced the green light. When Captain Aden was queried on this he sometimes answered innocently, "What do I know? I'm just a dumb copilot." The gear latch handle would be quietly latched down again and the landing gear handle returned to neutral. If anyone failed to catch the red glow of the gear- unlocked warning light, they were afraid to venture a guess as to what might happen to them on the debriefing, It was best not to forget.

Inbound over the radio fix and approaching minimums, the hood would sometimes be removed indicating they were clear of the clouds. If it wasn't removed, they pulled up, cleaned the airplane up, and did it all over again. As this was to be a circling approach to runway 12, the pilot's response had to be immediate. After station passage he banked the DC-3 right to a heading of 210 degrees, and then instantly turned left 90 degrees to the runway heading of 120 degrees. While doing all this, it was necessary to get the gear back down and locked as Captain Aden had failed an engine after the final check had been completed.

To keep the DC-3 in the air while flying on a single engine, it was necessary to reduce the drag by raising the gear and leaving it retracted until you were certain you had the runway made. Tensed for a go-around if the call should come that a cow had wandered onto the runway, crews were always happy to hear the welcome squeal of the runway. Pilots claimed they could always plan on a ten-pound weight loss during a proficiency check. But to quote the adage,

“perspiration forestalls expiration,” it all paid off when making a tight approach in the lonely confines of the Rocky Mountains.

Captain Aden was born in Rising City, Nebraska about fifty miles west of Omaha. Later the family moved to Wheatland, Wyoming to live on a ranch. The owner took young Ev up in a Piper Cub for his first ride, and it was then that Ev knew where his future lay. When old enough Ev quit his job and entered the Wheatland Civilian Pilot Training Program set up by the government to train pilots for the growing Army and Navy aviation programs. Ev continued his education at the University of Wyoming, and later, at Cheyenne, he got his commercial license and instructors rating.

Captain Aden comments: "With war clouds hovering near I joined the U.S. Navy as a flight officer. After my indoctrination I served as a primary flight instructor in Stearman biplanes. After a year of instructing I transferred to a flying boat squadron at Patuxent River, MD. I flew the big twin engine PBM Mariner's and the four engine PB2Y Coronado's to Bermuda, Puerto Rico, Trinidad and down the southern coast of South America to Natal, Brazil. This is where I got my non-directional navigation experience which proved most beneficial during the early Monarch/Frontier days. When the squadron closed, I was transferred to Olathe, Kansas, to fly the Navy R4Ds (DC-3). While there I took the CAA written and flight check for the ATP and DC-3 rating."

"One unusual experience that I witnessed, and I'll never forget. I had departed Amarillo, Texas, on a beautiful clear night flying a Navy R4D to Phoenix, Arizona. As we passed over Tucumcari, New Mexico, the sky lit up so bright that we didn't need to use cockpit lights. I saw a white cloud rise well above our altitude of 10,000 feet and form a mushroom shape. I estimated we were about 150 to 200 miles from the cloud. I called every CAA ground station from our position to Winslow and received reports of shaking like an earthquake, and a loud bang but no one had a clue as to the cause. The next day, the paper said there was an unknown explosion at Alamogordo, New Mexico, and no one was hurt."

"Upon returning home, I told my wife I didn't know what we had experienced but it certainly was not unknown and it was big. Two days later, Hiroshima was bombed and I knew then that I had seen the first test explosion of the atomic bomb."

Captain Aden joined Monarch in December of 1946, and accepted the chief pilot position four months later. When Monarch/Challenger/Arizona Airways merged in 1950, Captain Aden became the Director of Flight operations. He served thirteen and one-half years in a supervisory capacity. With the rumor of jets on Frontier nearing fruition, Ev elected to return to line flying so he could fly the B-727.

Throughout Frontier's system, Captain Aden became known as Captain Cheerio for his friendly greetings and sign-offs. Under his direction Frontier crews became known as the best airline mountain and H-marker pilots in the world. Other governments called upon his expertise to work with them on their flight programs. He was called to Iceland to establish the physical locations of H- markers for Flugfelag Island Airlines and the pilot training program. He was called to work with the Saskatchewan Government Airways in the proper usage of the H-marker and to work with them in setting up their training programs. Captain Aden received his Canadian Air Transport Rating and is still a rated Canadian Air Transport pilot.

Captain Chick Stevens, editor of Frontier Magazine, wrote that instrument checks Aden gave captains every six months were so tough that the pilots would think they were supermen when Aden told them they had done a good job. Many Frontier pilots received their Air Transport Rating through his program.

With all his contributions to safety, Captain Aden still found time to fly the lighted cross over Denver each Christmas eve for thirteen years. The large, lighted cross was mounted on the belly of a DC-3. Captain Aden is listed in the Denver Post's Gallery Of Fame for having flown the lighted cross for thirteen consecutive years.

In 1981, Captain Aden piloted flight 74 from Guadalajara into Denver, and parked the Boeing for the last time as per the FAA requirement that airline pilots retire at age 60. For this last Frontier flight that Captain Cheerio would command, his first officer was Emily Howell Warner, the first female pilot of any regularly scheduled U.S. airline.



Ev and Emily after their flight

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***His grand memoir is for sale at Amazon.com and ASA2fly.com.***

## EVERETT LADEN COLORADO AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY HONOREE IN 1983

Everett Aden started on a long history of airline flying with a solo flight on July 15, 1941 in Wheatland, Wyoming. He had moved there from Rising City, Nebraska, where he was born May 5, 1921.

Ev accumulated a number of ratings and much experience, including private pilot, mechanic, parachute rigger, commercial pilot, CFI, ART, and Aircraft Dispatcher, and had Icelandic and Canadian pilot licenses, as well as being an examiner for the FAA. He flew helicopters, many of the largest airliners, and the private planes he owned.

Ev entered the United States Navy in 1942 and served as a flight instructor for about three years. During this time, he flew the N3N3, Stearman, N2S, Curtiss SNV, SNJ, Howard NH-1, DC-3, PBM and Coronado PB2Y.

After the war, Ev joined Frontier Airlines and rose to become their chief pilot, and he also flew for Monarch and Western Airlines. While working with Frontier, he was assigned to work with Iceland on a safety-training program for Flugfelag Island Airways, specializing on radio beacons and navigation.

During his airline flying, Ev was rated on DC-3, CV-340, CVAK 340 (Convair 580), Boeing 727 and 737. While in the airlines, he created formal training programs for these organizations as major contributions to safe flying. Much of this time was in Colorado where he was a major factor in the safe operation of Colorado-based airlines. During his 34 1/2 years of flying with Monarch and Frontier, Ev took not one day of sick leave.

Over the years thousands of Denverites saw the annual flying of the cross on Christmas Eve. Frontier Airlines, the Denver Post and Ray Wilson, sponsored these flights from 1946-1959. Ev was the pilot. Ev and his wife, Carrie, lived at Van Aire, where they flew their Cessna 180, and where he taught his three sons to fly. Others in his family flew and worked in the aviation business.

While flying an airliner on July 16, 1945 at 5:30 AM, he witnessed the explosion of the world's first atom bomb.

Ev Aden's 30,000+ hours of accident-free flying time is an inspiration to Colorado and the nation.

Mr. Aden passed away January 10, 2008.

[-http://www.coloradoaviationhistoricalsociety.org/bio\\_popup.asp?id=14](http://www.coloradoaviationhistoricalsociety.org/bio_popup.asp?id=14)

