

**EXCERPTED FROM "THE GOLDEN YEARS OF FLYING"**  
**By Old Frontier Airlines Captain Tex Searle with his kind permission**  
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**His grand memoir is for sale at Amazon.com and ASA2fly.com.**

Captain Seymour "Ike" Isaacs had located a pair of eyeglasses with special one-half-inch thick lenses at a novelty store. When he put them on, he looked like the mad scientist who was in the terminal stage of blindness. When the urge hit him, he would put them on and walk dose behind the copilot through the waiting area of the terminal at the end of a trip. The passengers, waiting for their departure, would casually look in the captain's direction when they noticed others nervously staring at him. They quickly straightened up in their seats, not believing what they were seeing, as this poor blind captain closely followed his copilot through the terminal.

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A flushed stewardess rushed into the cockpit and informed Captain Seymour Isaacs that there was a passenger in the blue room smoking marijuana. "I've demanded he stop smoking and unlock the blue room door, but he just ignores me," she said. She told the captain he better damn well do something about it. Captain Isaacs reached up and turned the No Smoking sign on.

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Captain Isaacs enlisted in the Army Air Corps September 1942. He had attended Civil Service Aircraft Mechanical School and the School of Aeronautics. While waiting a call to active duty he was employed as an aircraft mechanic at the Rome Air Depot in Rome, New York. He was called to active duty for pilot training in February 1943. He was commissioned a second lieutenant, and after completing B-17 training he was assigned a crew and a B-17 which he transported over the water to England from the U.S. Often they returned to base after sustaining hits from fighters or shrapnel damage from German 88 anti-aircraft fire. Captain Isaacs shares the following experiences.

On one mission, the flak from anti-aircraft cannon bounced the planes around the sky like yo yos. The tail gunner lost his composure and had to be restrained. On another mission, we took a hit in the bomb bay area that disabled my top turret gunner and ruptured our oxygen supply. Void of the primary oxygen supply, and with the B-17 badly damaged and unable to hold altitude, we had to leave the formation and drop to a lower altitude where the crew could breath without supplemental oxygen. We had to

return to the base alone, detached from the main bomb group. We felt fortunate to arrive safely as Me109s and FW-190s were always on the prowl for wounded stragglers.

After flying thirty three missions, I was rotated back stateside where I was trained to fly the B-24 Liberator, and the cargo version of the B-24 designated the C-87.

The C-87 was also know as the Liberator Express. They were both manufactured by Consolidated Vultee. The C-82 Packet and the C-119 Flying Boxcar I flew were both manufactured by the Fairchild Company. The C- 119 was an improved version of the Packet, and had the large Wright turbo compound engines. The crews liked to call it the high handled wheelbarrow which it resembled. I was sent to South Carolina for my check out on the C-54 (Civilian DC-4).

I served in the Military Air Transport with duty in Canada and the Arctic. Relieved of active duty in 1950, I began flying for Frontier Airlines. I was recalled to active duty in 1952 and served in New Foundland. After being relieved from active duty again in 1955, I returned to Frontier. During my employment with Frontier, I also served in the Air Force Reserve and then transferred to the Utah Air Guard. I retired from the Guard in 1967 and from Frontier in January 1984.

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In the early 1950s I was chief pilot over a squadron of C-54 aircraft built by the Douglas Aircraft Company and C-119 aircraft built by the Fairchild Company. We were operating out of Stephenville, Newfoundland for the Northeast Air Command. Our flying assignments called for us to fly over the North Atlantic, Canada, Greenland, and the North Pole delivering cargo and personnel for the D.E.W (Distant Early Warning) line project. Much of the cargo was delivered by airdrops from the C-119 Fairchild. They had large clam doors that opened up at the rear of the aircraft for easy unloading of cargo from the air.

There were two drawbacks to using the C-119 with its 3500-hp Wright Cyclone turbo compound engines. We had a series of engine failures, and at max gross the Fairchild would not hold altitude on a single engine. A call for help brought personnel from the Air Force, the Wright Cyclone Engine Company, and the Fairchild Aircraft Company.

Near the end of our review, I invited the chief pilot of Fairchild to join me for a ride around the patch. The chief was sharp and knowledgeable, he demonstrated the C-119's landing and take-off performance capabilities

**with great expertise. After the last takeoff with the Fairchild chief pilot at the controls, I waited until he called for the gear up. I raised the gear and then cut the fuel off to number one engine. At this point the gentleman became very upset with my action and vented his feelings on me while he struggled with this engine-out performance that had so endeared itself on my crews.**

**After letting him sweat and listening to his blustering, I returned the engine back on line and eased the power up. We returned to the base and landed. I reminded him he was flying an empty airplane with only minimum fuel aboard for the engines. How would he have handled forty drums of fuel oil? That was the problem my crews had been struggling with. We returned to the coffee shop and the man from Fairchild and I discussed the problem at hand, and also of a personal note. As he prepared for his departure, the man from the Fairchild Company left me with this remark: "There is nothing wrong with this airplane that the Douglas Aircraft company couldn't fix."**

**Captain Isaacs logs show his flight time for the military to be 330 hours. His civilian flight time was 27,350 hours for a total time of 34,700 hours in the air. He is still a member of the Confederate Air Force with the rank of Colonel. Captain Isaacs loved to fly. He is a perfect specimen of health, but had to turn in his key to the cockpit as per the FAA mandatory retirement age sixty. In his retirement years he spends the summers at his home in Summit Park, located in the Wasatch Mountains east of Salt Lake City, and the winters at his home in Arizona.**