

Rex,

Rather than call your Dad, with so many likely calling, I prefer to remember my last visit with him. Not all that long ago, but yet so. We all know that Jack Gibson is one of those rare characters that will make his leaving all too difficult. He is simply one of those we'd expect to turn the lights out for the rest of us.

I want you to know that he is more than just a long time colleague; a long time friend. Much more because he saved my life one cold miserable snowy day when we both were flying our Frontier flights towards Denver.

Jack heard me call my times departing Sidney, Nebraska on the last of several legs with our Denver destination the final leg. Had it not been for your Dad it literally could have been my final leg anywhere!

Normally, when weather changes abruptly our dispatchers will catch it and stop us or alter our route. This didn't happen. The dispatcher missed it, but Jack didn't. He was ahead of me and able to make it into Denver as the weather went to WOXOF! That's indefinite zero sky obscured by fog. One of Denver's famous "up-slopes" had arrived and the entire front-range was going sour and fast.

When Jack heard me on the company radio (129.3) he recognized my voice, knew where I was and that there would be no way for me to get into Denver. I remember his words "Billy, don't even think about Denver!"

Already, the front range was quickly socked in. I headed for Cheyenne. Cheyenne was zero/zero by the time we arrived. ...we headed for Laramie just 50 miles away. Laramie was still holding at minimums. But, as soon as we reached Laramie it went to zero/zero as well.

We had just enough fuel left to make Casper. We were accumulating a lot of ice although the de and anti-ice systems were working fine. We pressed on.

Down the ILS we went as the CPR weather dropped below minimums. We were carrying extra power to compensate for the heaviness the ice caused and the 50 knots of wind, albeit the wind was right down the runway.

We could barely make out the runway as we crossed the threshold. It was a firm touch down and NOISY! The ice was shed with a loud exclamation creating wide-eyes and even whiter knuckles with many of our passengers. We came to a stop on the runway.

...and we couldn't move! The wind was so strong we had to wait for the station folks to help walk the aircraft to the ramp. ...the next three days were spent at the Ramada Inn. Thanks to Captain Jack Gibson we were inside, warm, fed & watered.

I love your Ol' Man for lots of reasons, but this is one Jack Gibson story I'll remember the rest of my days. Please hug him for Cheryl and me.

-Billy Walker
(3/22/14)