

We had just come through Redington Pass northeast of Tucson heading for the Tucson Airport. We were cleared to fly over the field and make a left downwind for runway 30 following an American Airlines DC6 which was on a straight-in final. It was a beautiful day with unlimited visibility and light variable winds - temps about 95F.

At that point in time, Tucson Airport was unique, in that it had a motel right on the field adjacent to the tower. One could fly their airplane to TUS and have a tie-down right outside your hotel door! This was the first and only airport in the good ole US of A to have this type of offering - and, it was quite popular, too.

I was flying one of our DC3s and just now joined the circuit for a left downwind for runway 30. My crew consisted of F/O Rocky Crane and Stew Dorothy Foster. Just leaving Safford, we had a half load - maybe 10 passengers if memory serves me correctly. I called for, "Gear Down - final check", as I glanced down to space myself from the landing 'Six'.

Watching the American flight landing and turning base, I noticed a large puff of grey-white smoke plume from the right side of the airplane. I then heard, "Frontier - go around!"

The American flight experienced a blown tire or tires on the right (starboard) side and came to a stop - veering slightly to the right still on the runway. I called for 'gear up, climb power, cowls trail' as I milked up the flaps and headed northwest and slightly to the right of centerline so as to observe what was going on down below. I noticed some emergency equipment speeding toward the airplane and also heard, "Frontier - pilot choice - you may make right-hand base from present position and land runway 21 - pilots' choice."

I nodded to Rocky as 'affirmative' and again called for gear down - final check. Bending the airplane around and lining up for runway 21 and calling for landing flaps, Dorothy came up to the cockpit asking what was happening? Explaining the situation and that everything was 'okay', she went back to her post in the cabin. (Remember - no PA system.)

Okay now we were, 'gear down - handle neutral - latch locked - 2 green lights - pressure's up - I got a wheel.' "I called for, "three quarter flaps.. and that's all I'll use" and was approaching the threshold of runway 21 and was, "cleared to land runway 21."

Just over the end of the runway, glancing at my instruments, etc., I thought I saw an object crossing the runway ahead! Just as I yelled, "I'm going around...gear up...climb power - trail the cowls". Rocky could be heard yelling, "Holy Shmoke Ace! There was a kid on a tricycle crossing the runway ahead of us!" I yelled back, "Yeh...and without a clearance!" Then we heard the tower say, "Wow! I caught that exactly the same time as you did, Frontier." This time Dorothy opened the cabin door - excitedly yelling, "Did you see that?"

We answered simultaneously, "See what?" I could make out heads twisting a look up front at us as the door was left wide open! I assured Dorothy and told her to go back - calm the passengers down and tell them we've got plenty of fuel and, "...we'll try to get this thing on the ground some time soon - maybe today even!"

By now, the American 'six' was towed clear of runway 30 and we were, "...cleared to land on runway 30...pilots' discretion." We landed without further distractions - taxied to our gate and shut down the left engine while deplaning passengers - then enplaning some passengers and were on our way again. While taxiing out, the tower then called and told us that company requests we return to the ramp. Returning to ramp, we picked up several of American's passengers. We now had a full load - 24 passengers - and were on our way for nice 'bumpy' ride to PHX.

*-Excerpted from Ace Avakian article, FARPA newsletter, Feb 2007*