DAC - MDC - Boeing Retirees
of California

Roundup

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Jim's Corner

Well I could go on about how the Covid virus is so disruptive, upsetting, when is this all going to end and on, and on and on…… but you have had enough of that, so let's move on to something else.

It certainly was a shame to miss our October Luncheon where we get to connect with many of our past colleagues and catch up with what's been going on with them as well as to hear a speaker that enlightens us on a subject that we were not previously that familiar with. I don't have all the history of the Retiree Association, but I believe it goes back into the 1980's or about 35 years or so. That would make 70 plus Luncheons without missing a beat. As far as I know October 2020 was the first time, we had a miss.

We are planning a Luncheon for March 2021. We are working with the Sycamore Centre and have secured the March 2nd date. They are currently not open and are dependent on state, county and city guidelines for large, inside gatherings. We continue to work closely with them. The February 2021 ROUNDUP will have all the information if it is a go/no go situation.

As I write this the presidential election is still 10 days away. In the meantime, my hope and prayer, whatever the outcome, is that this country beats the virus and finds a way to pull together. That we are able to put aside our left or right leanings and do what is best for all in our country. Pulling together is the only way we will succeed. In the meantime, stay safe, take the necessary precautions and do your part.

To you and your family, have a very happy holiday season and a Merry Christmas!

It doesn't seem like 2021 can come fast enough!!!

Jim Phillips, President, DAC/MDC/Boeing Retirees

One DAC-Built Fire Tanker Flies into the Sunset… While Another Enters its Firefighting Prime

The Erickson Aero Tanker 60, a DC-7 first built in 1958 for Eastern Air Lines, likely retired in October, while Erickson's converted MD-87s first operated by SAS are in demand as fire-fighting tankers.

On Oct 14 the venerable DC-7 aircraft known as Tanker 60 rumbled down the runway at Medford Air Tanker Base, Oregon, a hub for aircraft fighting wildfires along the West Coast, on what was planned as its final flight,. It was a 180-mile in-state trip to Madras, Oregon. After productive service until the 1970s as a passenger airliner flying along the U.S. East Coast and to Caribbean destinations followed by a 40-year stint as a fire-fighting tanker, it was to be retired at last.

Tanker 60 started its service life with Eastern Air Lines looking much like this.

Continuing a process that began during the late 1950s and '60s, when the first jet airliners entered commercial fleets replacing piston-driven planes, Tanker 60 was giving way to newer jet tanker aircraft. If this DC-7 could talk imagine what tales it

would tell! It was initially delivered to Eastern Air Lines when Dwight Eisenhower was president, Mickey Mantle was bashing home runs for the Yankees and Elvis Presley was dancing with his Blue Suede Shoes. Tanker 60 would reveal a lifetime of service covering roughly half of the entire history of powered flight that began with the Wright brothers in 1903.

Early DC-7s were purchased only by U.S. carriers. European carriers could not take advantage of the small range increase of the early DC-7, so Douglas released an extended-range variant, the DC-7C (Seven Seas) in 1956. Two 5-ft (1.5 m) wing root inserts added fuel capacity, reduced interference drag and made the cabin quieter by moving the engines farther outboard; all DC-7Cs had the nacelle fuel tanks previously seen on Pan American's and South African's DC-7Bs. The fuselage, which had been extended over the DC-6Bs with a 40-inch (100 cm) plug behind the wing for the DC-7 and DC-7B, was lengthened again with a 40-inch plug ahead of the wing to give the DC-7C a total length of 112 ft 3 in (34.21 m). Only 338 were built new during the DC-7's short production run from 1953 to 1958.

When new, DC-7s could fly non-stop east to west across the U.S. in 8 hours against the prevailing winds. The earliest 707 and DC-8 jets cut non-stop U.S. coast-to-coast flight time from 8 to 6 hours and the reign of the large propeller planes as first-line passenger liners was doomed. Retirements occurred much faster than most air industry experts had predicted, due to the increased productivity of the faster jetliners, as well as their smooth performance at higher altitudes and reduced maintenance costs. Still, many propeller planes of the DC-7's generation continued to perform as freighters, corporate aircraft and fire fighters. Some even became the aircraft of choice for smugglers.

Tanker 60 was reportedly the last airworthy DC-7 still in regular use.

A delightful Business Insider story with many pictures recounted the final flight, but unfortunately copyright limitations prevent us from bringing it to you in detail. But you can follow the thoughts of Captain Ron Carpinella and the others involved here https://www.msn.com/en-us/travel/news/as-jets-take-charge-of-fire-bombing-missions-the-62-year-old-piston-powered-tanker-60-takes-its-last-flight-over-oregon/ar-BB1atsF4?ocid=msedgdhp

The DC-7 flew over some grand scenery and Oregon landmarks in its final flight between Medford and Madras. All of us doubtless envy Capt. Carpinella and the reporter's view from aloft. It was a routine, easy flight compared to its fire tanker service, but perhaps fitting as a pre-retirement finale.

A Fire Aviation publication photo shows 5 MD-87 tankers in Madras, Oregon.

Meanwhile, looking to the future, beginning in 2013 Erickson Aero Tanker, owners of Tanker 60, moved forward with acquisition of former SAS MD-87s to augment its fleet. Erickson calls the MD-87 "the most versatile fire bomber available." In their fire tanker configuration, the MD-87s boast 900 miles loaded strike range and can get off the ground from a 5,000-foot runway, fully loaded. They are Interagency Tanker Board approved, cruise at 450 knots and have a 3,000-gallon capacity in all environments up to 40 degree C. Said pilot Mark Detrixhe in the AirInsight newsletter, "With enough hours in DC-9s and MD80s to say so, a 10 series right through the -87, this is an excellent design, airframe, handling. I loved it. So, don't worry about it. Maneuver at low altitude? Ha, you can roll the damn

thing as long as the wingtips are clear. Fatigue, it's a McDonnell Douglas airplane. How many DC3s are flying…Want to drive a Caddy? MD-80. Glad to see it in such use…"

In 2019 Erickson contracted with AerSale to modify its sixth MD-87 for tanker duty. "The Erickson Aero Tanker {MD-87} is a very versatile fire bomber and we are proud to continue our work to expand their fleet and add more aerial firefighting power to the skies," said Charlie McDonald, Senior Vice President MRO Services at AerSale. "This modified aircraft will rank among the best air tankers available for fighting wildfires across the country for years to come."

DC-7 article submitted by Rolf Sellge and modified to fit our newsletter by Elayne Bendel.

FAA chief Dickson likes what he found piloting a 737 MAX test flight

Sep. 30, 2020 at 7:28 pm. Updated Sep. 30, 2020 at 9:57 pm

_FAA chief Steve Dickson sitting inside the flight deck of a Boeing 737 MAX, conducts a pre-flight check ahead of take-off from Boeing Field in Seattle on Wednesday. (Mike Siegel / The Seattle Times)

By Dominic Gates, Seattle Times aerospace reporter

After piloting a Boeing 737 MAX on a test flight Wednesday, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) boss Steve Dickson — the authority who must give the final go-ahead for the plane to be ungrounded — declared himself satisfied with the updated jet's handling in the air.

"I liked what I saw on the flight this morning," Dickson said. "I felt very comfortable and very prepared based on the training."

Dickson, a former Delta Air Lines captain, was in Seattle on Monday and Tuesday to complete the training, including time in a flight simulator, now proposed for pilots before they can fly the MAX.
On Wednesday, he took off from Boeing Field just before 9 a.m. He flew east to Moses Lake, where he landed the jet, then returned to Seattle after almost two hours in flight.

The flight included practicing high angle-of-attack patterns, activating the flight control software — the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS) — that went wrong on the MAX crash flights in Indonesia and Ethiopia that killed 346 people.

During the 19-month grounding, Boeing redesigned MCAS to be much less aggressive and to ensure it won't overcome the commands of the pilots as it did in the crash flights.

"I got a chance to see how the new system performed and essentially it's a much more benign system than the original design," Dickson said in a post-flight news conference at Boeing's 737 delivery center at Boeing Field.

Though the pilots in the Ethiopian Airlines flight found that heavy forces on the horizontal tail prevented them from moving it manually, Dickson said he has no concerns on that score. Provided a pilot maintains control, he said, "you aren't going to have any problems" with moving the tail manually when needed.

Dickson said he had promised soon after taking the helm at the FAA in July 2019 that he wouldn't approve the MAX to fly again "until I was comfortable putting my family on it."

Yet on Wednesday some of the families of victims of the two crashes criticized Dickson's test flight as merely a "a public relations gift" to Boeing.

"It has no statistical validity but creates a sheen of product endorsement," said Michael Stumo, father of Samya Stumo, who died in the Ethiopian crash.

Dickson responded to that by saying he made the flight to see and feel for himself the outcome of all the redesign work on the airplane.

"This is not a publicity stunt. It's simply the fulfillment of a commitment," he said. "I ultimately will be charged with the decision on this aircraft. I believe it's important for me to lead from the front. "He added, that his flight was not an official part of the MAX's recertification process, which is not yet complete.

"We're in the home stretch, but it doesn't mean we'll take short cuts," he said.

Citing "our solemn responsibility," he said that he wants the public and the families of the victims to know that "when we get through this process, we will get it right."

Winning back the public's trust

Steps remaining before final clearance of the MAX include publication of an FAA report detailing the required pilot training, with a period for public comment.

And there will be a final review of the MAX's design documentation by the Technical Advisory Board (TAB) — consisting of experts from nine civil aviation authorities worldwide as well as NASA and the FAA.

Stumo and some of the other family members have publicly called for the FAA to release all the technical data for Boeing's redesign so that it could be assessed by independent experts.

But Dickson said that isn't possible as "much of the data being asked for is proprietary" to Boeing.
Instead, he cited the broad international makeup of the TAB review as a reason the public can trust the FAA to get the safety assessment of the MAX right this time around when it had failed on the original certification.

Dickson's response first noted that the concerns covered by these proposed design changes also cover previous 737 models, not just the MAX, and therefore "we have hundreds of millions of flight hours" by which to judge the safety of the 737.

"Statistically, it may be the safest airplane that's ever been built," he said.

Still, he said the FAA will continue to consider design enhancements for in-service models. And he added that he expects alignment between the FAA and EASA.

"There is very little daylight between the authorities on these issues," Dickson said.

Responding to the recent final investigation report from the U.S. House Transportation Committee, which offered a scathing critique of the FAA's original certification of the MAX, Dickson said he welcomes Congress's push for improved safety.

He said that while Boeing's wielding undue influence over the safety agency's decisions has been a concern, that's no longer the case since the MAX grounding.
Dickson said he's made it clear to his technical staff overseeing Boeing that "I've got their back."

Summarizing the role of his agency, Dickson said it is essential that airplane manufacturers be held "responsible for the safety of the products they are putting out there" and that the FAA must be in a position to "oversee their design and production effectively."

"The FAA has done more than any organization in the world to promote aviation safety" he said and added that its regulatory system "has led to an unprecedented level of safety in the U.S. over the past 20 years."

"Safety is a journey," he said. "We can always get better."

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FLASH_GREAT NEWS

Wednesday, Nov. 18, 2020 chief Dickson signed an order rescinding the grounding.

Welcome New Member.
Harry Cartwright, C1, Propulsion