

DCA Poem Tells Moral

Although none of us likes to advertise mistakes, passing on experiences to others sometimes alerts others to the fact that routine matters can be important. Recently at Washington a flight was dispatched with a gear pin still in one of the landing gear struts.

While we agree this is a serious matter, DCA agent Austin Morrison reflected "poetically" on the mishap. Perhaps his parody on "The Night Before Christmas" is the best way to bring the incident, and the moral, to the attention of all PIEDMONITOR readers. —Ed.

It was twenty minutes after departure,
And all through the house
Not a creature was stirring,
Not even a mouse.

While Charlie shined his boots,
Tom read a paper,
Gene drank his coffee;
I inhaled the vapor.

Then on the radio there arose
such a clatter,
We sprang from Operations to
see what was the matter.
Away to the gate we flew like a
flash,
Threw open the gate, ran over
the trash.

And what to our wondering eyes
should appear,
But a landing gear pin in the
right landing gear.
In was 389 returning to gate
To remove the pin—twenty min-
utes too late.

The smoke and the soot settled
all around
And gave a look of disaster to
agent on the ground.
There was the little old captain
smiling so fierce we felt sick,
We knew in that moment it
must be Captain Stick.

Now, I tell you the captain was
very nice.
Say something about him? No
dice.
We removed the pin; he was on
his way.
This will never happen again,
not tomorrow, not today.

There's a moral to this story,
Think of it every night:
Because there's no pin in the
left,
Doesn't mean there's none in the
right.

Social Security Tax Goes Up

Social Security tax was increased one-half of one per cent — from two and one-half to three — effective January 1. The increase means that an employee who earns \$4,800 or more a year will pay \$144 instead of the \$120 paid in 1959.

The company, which matches employee deductions, paid out \$90,752.44 in 1958 taxes as its share alone. The new rate will

Congrats

15 YEARS SERVICE
L. J. Lambert, Chief Storekeeper, INT, January 14

10 YEARS SERVICE
Palmer Alexander, IBM Supervisor, INT., January 16
James C. Butner, Jr., Mech., INT-FB, January 19
Ernest L. Hurt, Sr. Mech., INT, January 5
Ernest R. Sanders, Chief Agent, RIC, January 2
Marvin E. Stokely, F/O, ORF, January 16

5 YEARS SERVICE
James L. Brown, Jr., Stockroom Clk., INT-FB, January 10
Billy Jack Heflin, Agent, LEX, January 17

BIRTHS
Baby Girl to Ken May (LYH) and wife, November 12
Baby Boy to Ronnie Abshire (CRW) and wife Jane, November 16

MARRIAGES
Betty Poore (LYH) to Syney Ives, December 19
Brownie Wagner (ILM) to Linda Meyer, December 12

PROMOTIONS
Jim Dallas, HTS Agent to SHD Chief Agent
Will Jett, RDU Asst. Manager to DAN Manager
Paul M. Lindsay, F/O to Reserve Captain
Bob Lipscomb, ILM Manager to SHD Manager
Sy Pierce, DAN Manager to ILM Manager
Bob Turbiville, EWN Chief Agent to RDU Asst. Manager
Larry Wall, EWN Agent to Chief Agent

increase the company's share by an estimated \$20,000.

Along with the increased tax are increased benefits. The maximum benefit an individual could receive ten years ago on the one per cent tax was \$46.50. Now, with the three per cent tax, the benefit may go as high as \$119.

Third In A Series Of Five

Control Problems Cited

ATA—There are two ways of navigating an airplane from one point to another — (1) visually or (2) by instruments — with a separate set of rules set up for each method. Visual Flight Rules (VFR) prescribe the minimum acceptable weather conditions in which a pilot can fly on the principle of "see and be seen."

When weather conditions fall below the VFR minimum, the pilot must fly under Instrument Flight Rules (IFR). But, his plane must be equipped with the necessary instruments, and he must be certificated for instrument flight by virtue of specialized training and experience.

Under IFR the pilot files a flight plan with the air traffic controller. After checking the flight plans of others, the controller issues a clearance authorizing routes and altitudes to be flown. This ensures that the plane's path will not conflict with that of other IFR aircraft on the same route. Throughout the flight, the Air Traffic Control (ATC) system monitors the plane's progress and continually passes new instructions to maintain separation from other planes.

Airway 'Road Signs'

The basic element of the ATC system is the airway. It is clearly defined on aeronautical charts. It has directional "road signs" and distance markers in the form of radio navigation aids on the ground.

At the moment there are two separate airways systems, one served by the old low-frequency radio ranges and the other by the newer very-high-frequency VOR and VORTAC stations. Eventually the old ranges will be completely replaced.

Shortcomings of ATC

The ATC system was originally designed to handle only bad weather operations. As more and more aircraft took to the sky, more pilots decided to take advantage of the protection the system provides by filing IFR flight plans even in clear weather. During this period, however, there was no great improvement or expansion of facilities or personnel within the system, with the result that today the system is badly overloaded.

The control operation is almost entirely manual. The pertinent facts of each flight—position, heading, speed, altitude, etc.—must be continually relayed from controller to aircraft and back by voice. The controller



FLIGHT PLAN is drafted by F/O Pete Dickens (right) for approval by Captain Milt Browning. The flight plan takes into consideration many factors pertaining to navigation and safety in the airspace.

depends largely on hand-written strips of paper and manual postings on his board, although he may have a great many airplanes in his sector at one time.

High Demand On Airspace

Despite the fact that the system has not changed much over the years, the demand upon it has grown to staggering proportions. In 1958, for instance, control towers handled some 18 million itinerant aircraft take-offs and landings. Position reports from en route aircraft to control centers totaled some 35,316,000. There were about 1,100,000 instrument approaches.

For all its shortcomings, the system has established a remarkable safety record. Air traffic controllers are doing an excellent job of maintaining separation between IFR flights. But what can they do about VFR flight about which they have no information?

Everyone's Property

Remember, under today's rules, the air is everyone's property. The citizen who is properly qualified may use it pretty much

as he pleases in clear weather, subject only to some basic rules of the road. He need file no flight plan or make position reports. He hopes he will see and be seen. Yet, he is sharing the airspace with many aircraft on IFR flight plans.

The deficiencies of the ATC system extend across the board—need for greater automation, better communications, more and better navigation facilities, radar, personnel and airports of greater capacity. There is no simple solution.

There must be a coordinated "package deal" in which improvements are made gradually all over the system. Such a program is underway. It consists of, first, steps that can be taken to ensure a greater order of control; second, provision of adequate facilities for a more efficient system within a few years; and third, a research and development program for the creation of an ultimate system aimed at perfect traffic control.

(Next issue: Interim Answers to the ATC problem)



OPERATION COOPERATION, in its second month, is getting enthusiastic acceptance. Ken Ross, R. E. Turbiville and Bob Reed look over the first of the monthly cartoon calendars which will depict right and wrong station procedures. (—Photo One) Betty Hunter, INT, demonstrates the "voice with a smile" which is the magic ingredient

in phone contacts and sales. (—Photo Two) Julian Morton, INT Agent, uses up-to-the-minute information, knowledge of airline procedures and pleasant manners with a passenger at the counter. (—Photo Three) Agent Norris Smith snaps a salute to the captain after a careful check on the ramp. (—Photo Four)