



www.flyingtigerline.org

Flying Tiger Line Pilots Association

*Pilots and employees of the Flying Tiger Line, dedicated to preserving the memory
of a great airline and those who served in China and in World War II*

Special Pre-Reunion Edition
April 2017

Hello Everyone,

Our **43rd Annual FTLPA Reunion** in Portland is only a month away now. We have an anticipated attendance of 280 members and guests. If you haven't signed up yet, we would sure like to see you join us for another fun-filled weekend to honor the experiences and friendships we share together. A list of Who Is Coming can be viewed from the Next Reunion page of our website

Please remember that the deadline for Peter to receive your Registration Forms is May 1st. If you need special consideration due to unresolved scheduling conflicts then please contact me – we can work something out.

It's important that all members add these new FTLPA email addresses to your Address Book or Contacts. Group distributions of news and announcements will only be coming from these in the future.

email@flyingtigerline.org
president@flyingtigerline.org

I hope to see you soon,

John Dickson
(208) 699-5909
president@flyingtigerline.org

Portland Reunion Update

All information about our upcoming reunion can be found on our website or in previous newsletters. Here is some last minute information for those planning on attending this year.

Deadline

All Registration Forms must be received by May 1st, 2017. If you have circumstances that won't allow you to decide by that day (bidding, medical, etc.) then simply call us and let us know your intentions. Unfortunately, once we make the final payment on this day, all adjustments to the attendance figure will have to be considered on an individual basis.

Need a Room?

Please contact John at president@flyingtigerline.org. He has a handful of members unable to attend who still hold group rate reservations and are willing to work with you on switching it over to your name.

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Important Reunion Links

[Portland Reunion Information](#)
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[Registration Form](#)

Cancelling a Room?

Again, please contact John at president@flyingtigerline.org. He may be able to assist getting a fellow member who was late in obtaining the group rate into your cheaper reservation.

Airport Transportation

Unfortunately the hotel has discontinued the use of an airport shuttle. If you are flying into PDX for the reunion then you will have to arrange your own ground transportation (taxi, Uber, etc.). The Red Lion is not very far from the airport and will still provide transportation to areas within a 4 mile radius, including the train station.

Check In Procedures

It's extremely important that all attendees visit the check-in desk and receive their envelopes immediately upon arriving at the Hospitality Suite. If you wish to sit with someone then coordinate it well beforehand and have one person as that designated to put the yellow labels at the table you choose. There are always those handful of attendees who we have to try to chase down on Saturday to get them to check in and choose a seat. This year you'll get to set in the pet section. Please check in before you start yakking!

Golf on Thursday

We need three (3) more players to make 4 groups. Only the following thirteen (13) players have signed up – Robert Carona, Tom & Lynn Cartmill, Bob Cecchi, Winston Churchill, Doug Happ, Gloria McComas, Paul Rebscher, Bill Reid, John & Anek Smith, and Larry & Mary Weeks. Larry Weeks is once again coordinating play this year and can be reached at weeks.larry@gmail.com for pairing information and further details.

Evergreen Museum Visit on Friday

So far there will be approximately 180 of us visiting the museum. Transportation will be aboard 55-passenger luxury buses, each with a lav aboard. A ticket will be included in your check-in envelope and must be presented to board the bus – do not lose it. Below is the approximate scheduling:

2:30pm	Buses depart the front of the Red Lion Hotel
3:45pm	Arrive at the Space Museum building for (1) hour visit with general public
5:00pm	Short walk to the Air Museum building.
6:00pm	No Host bar and buffet will be open
6:30pm	Entry into the cockpit of the Spruce Goose will begin (4 at a time)
9:00pm	Buses begin departing the museum for the Red Lion Hotel

Business Meeting Saturday Morning

Among other important business, details and input for future reunions will be discussed. There have also been nomination(s) for Honorary Memberships into FTLPA which must be voted on. There will be two short presentations following the meeting

- Guy & Charles will present their new book, *Tiger 747*
- Lydia Rossi will show a 15 minute video titled *A Brief History of The American Volunteer Group Flying Tigers*. You won't want to miss it

Banquet & Dance Saturday Night

The cocktail reception begins at 6PM, with Eliot Shulman taking portrait shots from 5:30 to 6:45. All members must be at their tables by 7PM for the banquet meals to be served. Please do not forget your dinner meal selection found in your check-in envelope.

The Hangar Store

Please remember that only cash or check will be accepted at the store this year. Previous attempts at trying to provide for credit card use have failed and we're going to have to go back to basics this year. We need volunteers. Please contact Joyce Danielsen at Joyce_Danielsen@yahoo.com.

Pets

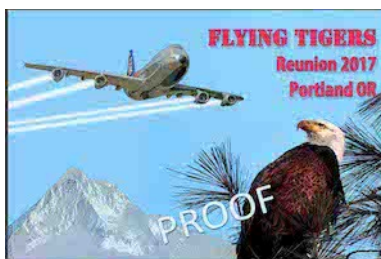
Everyone is reminded that the Red Lion is an extremely pet friendly hotel and members are encouraged to bring their *best friends* to the Hospitality Suite. This will definitely be a first for our reunions. A one time fee of \$25 (normally \$25 per day) will be charged to your room if you bring your pet with you.

Tennis

Only a very small group has raised their hands in the interest of a tennis tournament. Still, racquets will be made available by the hotel (or bring your own), and a sign up form will be provided in the hospitality suite. Hopefully the weather will be great and we can get some action going.

The Hangar

The Hangar has become the sole effort of our Flight Attendant Representative, Joyce Daniels. With the assistance of former FTL F/A, Andee Wright some new merchandise ideas have been created (umbrellas, luggage tags, etc.) along with those items traditionally offered. Once again, Susan Skinner has created a wonderful poster to commemorate our event this year. These will be offered for \$25 each. Previous years posters will also be available for \$20 each. Proceeds from the sale of posters will go towards the Skinner's favorite charity, the Effie Yeaw Nature Center near their home in Sacramento.



Please Note

Only cash or check will be accepted at The Hangar this year.



Cabin Crew Corner



Joyce Daniels

Flight Attendant Representative

After the business meeting on Saturday morning we will have a short flight attendant meeting to discuss the 2018 reunion. The theme for the reunion will be, "Memories; Flight Attendants Flown West". See me at the reunion for the time and place.

We already have 6 volunteers signed up to help but can always use more input for such an important event. I am also working on more flight attendant related items for The Hangar so come with ideas! Since the reunion will be in Palm Springs next year, we expect a large contingent of F/A's attending it.

Squawk Ident!

Congratulations to Barney Szymaniak, Rudi Kohlbacher, and Scott Mergele who were the first three with the correct identity of last quarter's photo of newly upgraded 727 Captain Tom Pierchala from 1984. All three winners will receive a \$10 gift certificate for use in The Hangar during the Portland Reunion.



Captain, Tom Pierchala, 1984



Who's That Tiger? – Photo Contest

The first three members to contact John Dickson and identify this FTL pilot at left will receive a \$10 gift certificate for merchandise offered at *The Hangar*. The winner will be announced in the next edition and another photo will be added for the next newsletter's contest.

Email John at president@flyingtigerline.org or call him at (208) 699-5909 with your guess.

Got a good pic of yourself from way back when? Send it to John and he'll consider using it in the next edition.

Future Reunions



Renaissance Hotel – Palm Springs

2018

Flight Attendant Recognition Banquet

Renaissance Palm Springs Hotel

888 E Tahquitz Canyon Way

Palm Springs, CA 92262

May 2nd to May 6th, 2018

Friday night at the Palm Springs Air Museum



P40 at the Palm Springs Air Museum

FTLPA donated \$2500 to the PSAM last year.

To view letter of gratitude

[Click Here](#)



Flying Tiger Line room
in the Flight Path Museum

2019

45-Year

Anniversary Reunion

Renaissance Long Beach Hotel

111 East Ocean Boulevard

Long Beach, CA 90802

May 1st to May 5th, 2019

Visits to Flight Path Museum at LAX
and California Science Center in L.A.



OV-105 Endeavour
at the California Science Center

Erik Shilling & The Tiger Mouth

Our special guest of honor in Portland will be Mrs. Ilse Shilling, wife of famed AVG pilot, Erik Shilling. The following contains excerpts edited for this newsletter from Warbirds Forum. The full article can be found at <http://www.warbirdforum.com/erikrip.htm>

Eriksen E. Shilling was an original member of the American Volunteer Group, the legendary Flying Tigers, and flew the unit's very first combat mission of the war. When President Franklin D. Roosevelt gave permission for Claire Chennault to recruit American military pilots to serve in China in April 1941, 1st Lieutenant Erik Shilling of the U.S. Army Air Corps was one of the first to sign up. Eventually, 109 pilots and 150 mechanics assembled in San Francisco on July 7, 1941, Prescott and our company founders among them. Continuig to Hawaii, they learned Japan had taken control of French Indochina. Fearing Japanese interception, they sailed to Singapore, then on to Rangoon, Burma by early August aboard the Dutch liner "Jagersfontein."

During training at Toungoo, north of Rangoon, Shilling created what would become the renowned insignia of the American Volunteer Group, the fierce tiger mouth painted on the noses of their P-40s. As he later recalled, "It's always been said that the tiger mouth came about after we saw a picture of a P-40 being flown by 112 Squadron in North Africa. That's not true. I was looking through a British magazine one day and saw a photo of a Messerschmitt-110 with a shark face on it. They were the 'Haifisch Gruppe.' I thought it looked perfect for our squadron insignia." Shilling chalked a sharkmouth on his P-40 to see how it might look; when he asked Chennault for permission to use it as a squadron marking, Chennault saw it as the group marking. Shilling ended up chalking the sharkmouth on all of the P-40s before they were painted. "That's why there were no two of them with the same shape of mouth," he remembered.



*Erik Shilling in the cockpit of a restored P-40C
at Planes of Fame, Chino CA (photo by Tom Cleaver)*

The first six months of America's participation in the Second World War offered little news but disaster piled atop disaster. In all the gloom, one bright spot appeared in the skies over Rangoon, Burma at Christmas, 194 – a small band of outnumbered volunteer fighter pilots were fighting against terrific odds in the defense of The Burma Road, the lifeline to China. The pilots were American, and they were winning!

In later years, many would believe the unit fought in China against the Japanese for years before the attack on Pearl Harbor. In fact, the first operational mission of the A.V.G. was not flown until December 10, 1941, after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The flight, a photo reconnaissance mission from Rangoon to Bangkok, was flown by Shilling. Prior to the outbreak of war, Shilling - who had been involved in the development of aerial reconnaissance with the U.S. Army Air Corps prior to joining the A.V.G. - modified his P-40 with a 20-inch Fairchild camera in the baggage compartment behind the cockpit. Shilling flew the mission accompanied by the Group Intelligence Officer, Allen Christman, and future ace Ed Rector. Leaving Rangoon, they refueled at Mingaladon, then went on to Tavoy on the border and topped off so as to have fuel to make the round trip to Bangkok and back to Rangoon. Twenty minutes after they left Tavoy, the Japanese struck the base. Evading the Japanese, the three Americans flew on to Bangkok, where Shilling climbed up to 26,000 feet and proceeded to photograph the docks and surrounding airfields. He rejoined his escort and returned to Bangkok without further incident. The photos revealed over 90 Japanese aircraft.

Shilling's adventures were far from over. Shortly thereafter, while flight testing a Curtiss-Wright CW-21, he suffered engine failure and crashed in the mountains southwest of Kunming, China. He was the first European the people in that region had ever seen; they took him at first for a Japanese. Shilling's luck held when a Chinese patrol happened along before his captors could demonstrate what they had in mind for the Japanese enemy, and he returned to the AVG in one piece.

During the next 25 years, Erik Shilling would be intimately involved with America's wars in Asia. After first flying with the AVG, he joined Civil Air Transport and went on to perform one hundred crossings of "The Hump" - the supply route from the Chinese capitol in Chungking over the Himalayas to India. He participated in the Chinese Civil War after World War II, until the Communist victory in 1949.

In 1949, Civil Air Transport became involved with the then-new Central Intelligence Agency. The airline's pilots knew China intimately; for the C.I.A., the communist victory on the mainland did not mean the end. Between 1951 and the end of the Korean War in 1953, Shilling flew several resupply missions into Communist China, including one daylight mission in a C-54, flown from Clark AFB in the Philippines into the mountains west of Chungking - 500 miles inside the country - then out across eastern China to Kadena air base on Okinawa.

In March, 1954 Shilling became involved in the attempt to supply French forces at Dienbienphu by air. Shilling and his comrades flew unescorted daylight missions to drop supplies in flights that involved diving the heavily-loaded airplane into the valley, leveling off at low altitude to make the drop, then climbing back out, all the while under fire from the surrounding hills.

In 1958, the struggle that became the American war in Southeast Asia began. Shilling flew in the unknown war in Laos until 1967, which made him the last member of the Flying Tigers to fly combat missions. He left Laos in 1967 and joined his old comrades in Flying Tigers Airline, from which he finally retired in 1979.

During the past thirty years, Erik Shilling was well-known in Southern California aviation circles, where his yellow Starduster-Too with its AVG insignia of the Flying Tiger drew attention wherever he flew. Many younger pilots benefitted from his years of experience when he became a flight instructor specializing in aerobatics. Shilling travelled the country in later years, speaking of his experiences, and wrote an autobiography, "Destiny: A Flying Tiger Remembers."

Mr. Shilling took his Final Flight away in 2002 and is survived by his wife, Ilse Shilling, who will be our Guest of Honor during the Portland Reunion. If you would like to know more about Shilling's story there are some interesting videos at the links below.

Part 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tgiLSkcvN4>

Part 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rtl1nWCLtMg>

New Books

TWO NEW BOOKS FROM THE TEAM THAT BROUGHT YOU DC-8 & THE FLYING TIGER LINE

Tiger 747 tells the story of the Boeing 747 in service with the Flying Tiger Line, Seaboard World, and Federal Express, with an individual history of the thirty-four jumbos operated, and two in-depth historical essays, charting the evolution of Flying Tigers and Seaboard and the story of the Boeing 747. It also includes technical information and descriptions, pilot and crew memories, and a special history of Flying Tigers' flight attendants.
A worthwhile sequel to the DC-8 & FTL book.



The Story Of The MD-11's 288 pages include a series of epic historical essays covering the design, development, test flying, and airline service up to and beyond the end of MD-11 production; detailed individual airframe histories of every one of the 200 MD-11s built; fascinating technical drawings and descriptions. The story of a pilots' favorite up to the present day.

still available: **DC-8 & The Flying Tiger Line**, a pioneering airline and a historically significant aircraft that together changed the world of air commerce forever



Aviation historian, Guy Van Herbruggen and journalist, Charles Kennedy, have collaborated once again to author two new books relevant to most within our group. We were introduced to them at the New Orleans Reunion shortly after their book, **DC-8 & The Flying Tiger Line**, was released to the public. Since then Charles and Guy were our guests in Napa where they were presented with a plaque honoring our airline's founder, Robert Prescott. The brass plaque will be attached to our former DC8 simulator, now partially restored and on display at the museum in Saint-Ghislain, Belgium through their coordinated efforts.

Tiger 747 will highlight the history of the Boeing 747 with specific reference to all of the the aircraft used by the Flying Tiger Line, Seaboard World Airways, Metro Airways, and ultimately Federal Express. The pages will include the individual aircraft histories of 34 airframes, flight deck and simulator descriptions, passenger operations, charter missions, and sections devoted to memories from those that were lucky enough to fly this magnificent aircraft.

Already complete, their second book, *The Story of the MD-11*, will surely be of interest to all who made it through the merger and eventually checked out on the *MadDog*. Guy & Charles will be attending the reunion where both of these new books will be available for purchase.

Say Again?

"A fierce and monkish art; a castigation of the flesh. You must cut out your imagination and not fly an airplane but regulate a half-dozen instruments. At first, the conflicts between animal sense and engineering brain are irresistibly strong."

— Wolfgang Langewiesche, *describing flying on instruments*, A Flier's world, 1943.

Flown West



*To fly west, my
friend, is a flight we
all must take for a
final check*

Author unknown

The following former Flying Tigers have also made their final flight since our last 2016 reunion in Napa. More information might be found in the **Flown West** section of our website or in the FTLPA **Discussion Forum**.

*# **Art Jacobs** – November 3, 2012
Ernie Rice – September 8, 2013
Hal Ewing – April 25, 2016
Greg Beckman– May 9, 2016
Gail Vikse – June 2, 2016
Thomas Mitchel – June 30, 2016
Bob Kelley– July 1, 2016
Scott Cutler – August 1, 2016
Merle Kleen – August 18, 2016
Don McComas – October 19, 2016

Karl Krout – October 20, 2016
Brad Bowers – November 4, 2016
Jim Carey – November 20, 2016
*# **Suzie Clikeman** – Unknown Date
Ralph Grella – February 10, 2017
*# **Fred Thorp** – March 18, 2017
*# **Dick Sundermann** – April 3, 2017
* **Tom "Moose" Nelson** – April 22, 2017

*Added since last newsletter
Former SWA F/A

Vintage FTL Advertisement #11

JACK FRYE, President of General Aniline and Film Corp.



Formerly it took 12 days to ship film from the eastern film producers to Hollywood.



Our trial shipment via the Tigers beat our old schedule by more than a full working week!



Cross-country speed, low rates, and preferred handling have kept us sold solid on the Tigers.

KEY
MAIN ROUTE ———
CONNECTING ROUTE - - - -

Write for free illustrated folder describing Flying Tigers' unique Advance Manifest System.

FLYING TIGERS... ANOTHER BUSINESS BUILT ON "CAN DO"

Flying Tiger Line

OFFICES IN PRINCIPAL CITIES • GENERAL OFFICES: LOCKHEED AIR TERMINAL, BURBANK 8, CALIFORNIA • CABLE: FLYTIGER

110

Time Magazine, May 18, 1953

News & Announcements

Heroes Are Honored

Todd Kocisko, the son of George and Jo Nell Kocisko, was featured on NBC's "4 Our Heroses" segment in March. The LA County Sheriff's Air Rescue 5 team, piloted by Todd, saved an 11-year-old boy in treacherous conditions after he slid 200 feet down Mt. Baldy. Todd and his identical twin, Mark, are both Deputy Sheriff pilots for Los Angeles County.

http://www.nbclausangeles.com/news/local/4-our-heroses-mt-baldy_Los-Angeles-415926393.html

New Facebook Pages

A Facebook Group has been started specifically for former FTL F/A's. It is managed and private where the galley crews can still get together and have a few "bin-sitting" talks. Visit and sign up at

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/230828110273276>

In addition, another group has been established for all Flying Tiger Line employees at

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/49561093755/>

Got News?

Let us know and we'll include it in the next edition

Video Library

Click on the various links below for some interesting videos from websites that pertain to our history at the Flying Tiger Line. Two new links have been added that are well worth looking at.

The Flying Tiger Line

[Flying Tigers "Can Do" Spirit](#) (35:08)
[Tribute to the Flying Tiger Line](#) (4:05)
[The True Story of the Flying Tigers](#) (43:17)
[The Flying Tigers Cargo Company](#) (9:56)
[Tribute to Bob Prescott](#) (PDF)
[Elephant Arrival in Burbank](#) (12:56)
[Flying Tigers 747 Blown Tires ANC](#) (18:35)

(New) [The Flying Tiger Line \(1945-1989\)](#)

The P40 Warhawk

[How to Fly the P40 Warhawk](#) (28:18)
[WW2: Curtiss P-40 Warhawk](#) (46:00)
[P40, Warbirds of WWII](#) (45:17)
[P-40 Warhawk Vs. Japanese Zero](#) (4:52)
[P-40 Cockpit Tour](#) (6:01)
[Pearl Harbor P40 Boys](#) (5:58)
[Amazing WWII Color Pictures](#)

American Volunteer Group

[Wings Over China –The Story of the Flying Tigers](#) (47:44)
[Flying Tigers: "The Story of the Fourteenth Air Force"](#) (39:50)
[The Flying Tigers](#) (7:11)
[The Flying Tigers – Famous Dogfights](#) (43:59)
[Dick Rossi Interview, 1999](#) (41:18)
[Flying Tigers Bite Back](#) (4:33)

[History, Books, and Art](#)
[Discussion Forum](#)

Miscellaneous

[Boeing 707 Barrel Roll](#) (4:31)
[Douglas DC-8 - The Birth of a Jet](#) (13:16)
[Lockheed Constellation Story](#) (10:39)
[Classic Airliners - "Freight Dogs" - 1973](#) (10:14)
(New) [Airlines of the 1980's](#) (SWA & FTL at about 4 minutes)

JOE CRECCA VIDEOS

[New Orleans Presentation](#) (1:17:09)
[Fox13 News Never Give Up](#) (7:24)
[Vietnam War Commemoration Oral History Project](#) (3:47)

Contact Us

Mailing Address: 14248 56th Ave. So.
Seattle, WA 98168

Website: www.flyingtigerline.org
Email: email@flyingtigerline.org

FTLPA Officers:

John Dickson
President
[Email](#)
(208) 699-5909

Larry Weeks
Vice-President
[Email](#)

Peter Okicich
Secretary-Treasurer/Webmaster
[Email](#)

Joyce Danielsens
Flight Attendant Representative
[Email](#)

George Gewehr
Historian
[Email](#)

Sandra White
Meeting Planner
[Email](#)

2017 REUNION-PORTLAND, OR

May 17th to May 21st, 2017

I am planning on attending YES ____ NO ____ Only 2017 Dues Enclosed ____

Name _____ Partner _____

Other guests attending,

list names here: _____

Enclosed, \$20 for 2017 Dues\$ _____

Enclosed, \$20 per person for Registration.....\$ _____

Enclosed, \$60.00 per person for golf at HERON LAKES GOLF COURSE..\$ _____

Enclosed, \$90.00 per person for EVERGREEN AIR & SPACE MUSEUM...\$ _____

This includes charter bus ride and buffet dinner.

The cut-off for this event is 201 people. Sign up now!

Enclosed, \$60.00 per person for Banquet Dinner & Dance

Choose your entrée Ribeye Steak....\$ _____

Mesquite Honey Glazed Salmon.\$ _____

Chicken Parmesan...\$ _____

Vegetarian Puff Pastry.....\$ _____

Enclosed, \$6.00 each for custom name badges \$ _____

Names as you want them to appear _____

Total Enclosed.. \$ _____

Mail to: FTLPA, 14248 56TH Ave. S., Seattle, WA 98168

Deadline for Receipt is May 1st, 2017