

This memory by **Bill Norberg** was sent to the NetLetter in 2007 and appeared in NetLetter #971.

I would like to submit some experiences I had when Trans-Canada Air Lines changed its name and corporate image to Air Canada.

There had been ongoing discussions about changing the name of the airline to one that more closely represented the expansion of the original airline beyond Canada. The chosen name "Air Canada" was one that would not likely be the source of much dissent either within the airline or the country.

There were several airlines that used the same general name structure such as Air France etc.

The official date of the conversion to the new name was January 1, 1965 but there had already been a public presentation of the new name and aircraft livery on October 14, 1964.

Trans-Canada Air Lines had been selected to fly The Queen and the royal party from Ottawa to London, England following completion of the Canadian tour.

Trans-Canada Air Lines had never flown the Queen before, and this was a wonderful opportunity to give the airline some excellent public exposure. The President was ecstatic, and plans were developed to bring this about.

There was as usual, a great deal of communication required between the Government of Canada, the Queen and the airline to ensure all requirements were met, not the least of which were security concerns.

As the departure station was Ottawa which was a part of the Central Region, **Frank I. Young**, Regional Operations Manager, was given the responsibility to make the necessary arrangements on behalf of the airline. He in turn of course delegated specific responsibilities to the various departments involved.

Maintenance and Engineering were assigned responsibilities to make all necessary arrangements to select the aircraft to be used and modify the aircraft to provide the specific accommodations requested for the Queen.

The airline was operating both Conway and Pratt and Whitney powered DC-8 aircraft at the time. Not surprisingly, a Rolls Royce Conway powered aircraft was to be used by specific request not only must it be Rolls Royce powered, but the decals on the power plants also indicating the manufacturer should be placed on the aircraft side of the power plants so they could be seen from within the cabin.

Technical staff undertook a detailed monitoring of all the Conway power plants we had to determine which ones were likely to be the most reliable. Once this was determined, those power plants were relocated to the aircraft that had been selected for the flight, it was DC-8 number 809. Aircraft number 802 was selected as the backup aircraft.

I was assigned the responsibility to coordinate Maintenance Branch activities required to prepare the aircraft as well as those required to have the aircraft located in Ottawa the day before the Royal flight.

It was an interesting task as I had to coordinate several maintenance activities with other technical departments. I had the support of **Gerry Wolfe** and our final task was to prepare a report for the Maintenance Department that would be forwarded to all parties concerned including **F.I.Young** in Toronto.

He was very pleased at what we had provided. He immediately contacted the Director of Maintenance to request that I prepare a similar report for him to coordinate the company activities on his behalf. We took on the job and I was assigned the job of doing the necessary coordinating with other branches.

There were major changes made to the interior of the aircraft to accommodate the personal needs of the Queen and her staff. A special dining area was prepared to seat four people, a sleeping area for the Queen as well as dressing rooms etc. Special food service carts were modified to ensure a flawless service at mealtimes.

The cabin of the aircraft was fitted out with first class seating to accommodate the royal staff of which there were 27. The seating arrangement for these individuals was predetermined. The rear section of the cabin was allocated for the wardrobe trunks and special needs of the royal party. They were located on pallets for easy loading and had to be accessible during flight. The requirements for the flight were provided by the British staff and were very detailed. I remember one small item that was a bit amusing. It was stated that the Queen did not prefer champagne, but several cases should be boarded for the staff.

The President was quite anxious about the flight as he wanted it to go off well for obvious reasons. There was the overriding issue of security and special efforts were undertaken by the RCMP to ensure there was no opportunity for risks to the Queen and her royal party. After the aircraft had been modified it was given special tests to ensure all was in perfect condition. After the tests the aircraft was sealed, and no one was allowed in or near the aircraft.

The major exterior change to the selected aircraft was the application of the new, and yet unseen, livery that was a part of the name change from Trans-Canada Air Lines to Air Canada.

The design was still in a fluid state until just before the flight. I remember **Herb Seagrim** coming out to the base while the livery was being applied. We went down to the hangar to view it. He wanted a change the size of the maple leaf on the tail but otherwise approved it. The back up aircraft did not have the new livery.

As the flight was going to depart from the armed services hangar at Uplands Airport Ottawa we had to ensure all was in order. I arranged to have a DC-8 aircraft flown to Ottawa so we could ensure ourselves that there would be no surprises the day of the departure. We had the aircraft positioned exactly where it would be on departure day and the Military staff who would be providing the security and protocol services were there as well to ensure items like the "red carpet" were of the correct size etc.

It was quickly determined that the "red carpet" was not long enough. The Sargent-in-Charge reported that fact to the Officer-in-Charge who casually told him to get one that was long enough. He then came back to advise the officer that in event of a wind at time of departure, the carpet would often lift which could be a safety hazard to the Queen.

The officer asked the sergeant what he would recommend. The sergeant said that a service man standing on the side of the carpet every 5 feet would do. How many would he need? About 50.....arrange it! We carried out a few more tests and finalized our plan.

The pilot who had been selected to operate the flight was Captain **Art Anders**, a fine individual and an accomplished pilot of many years' experience. I knew Art quite well from our early Winnipeg days and felt very confident knowing he was in charge. I remember so well his comment the night before we ferried the aircraft to Ottawa to be ready for departure.

Everyone was on tenterhooks fearing something could happen to have a less than perfect operation. I admit I also had a few butterflies, but no more than I had every time we departed a key flight. Art said to me before the flight left for Ottawa.

"Don't worry Bill....once those wheels are off the ground we are not coming back" True to his word the departure went perfectly, and Art managed to have the flight arrive in London within 15 seconds of the plan. It doesn't get any better than that.

The departure went off on schedule and the Queen waved goodbye to Canada against the background of the new Air Canada livery. While we may exhibited a great deal of bravado about the flight we did have an ace in the hole. We had a second aircraft standing by behind the RCAF hangar ready to be moved to the departure ramp should it have been necessary. I did not have the privilege of being in Ottawa to observe the departure but was allowed to stay home that morning to watch it on TV. I felt good that it had gone well but that did not surprise me.

After this flight plans were developed to start the re-painting of the fleet to the new livery standards. It was a big job but we now had a fleet of aircraft in a striking new livery that drew attention to the change from the traditional Trans-Canada Air Lines candy stripe livery to a new bold maple leaf format.

It stood us well for many years as many of us know. This change to the name Air Canada was a good one as the airline has truly become a world airline and has developed a marvelous reputation for its quality of service and technical excellence of its operations. Truly a reputation that was well earned and a source of pride to all employees who served throughout these 70 memorable years.

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