

Field Editors

TWA offices around the world contributed to the "Starliner" and it would appear that each one had a "field editor" who was sometimes identified by name. To illustrate the Gander contribution, here are several dates and names found:

Date	Name
1948-04-01	Jim Foran
1949-05-26	Gerry Wakeham
1952-10-09	James Brownell*
1954-06-24	Dick Smith
1956-11-29	EJ Austin

* An interesting note concerning Mr Brownell around 1953:

The SKYLINER field editor contest has been held since Jan. 1, 1949. Only regularly accredited field editors are eligible.

Honorable mention winners, in the order of selection, are:

News Division: James Brownell, **Gander**; Jenny Sallee, Wichita; Bob Wolters, Kansas City; Dolores Schaefer, Pittsburgh; Stan Phillips, Cairo; Al Hadad, Winslow, (now at Phoenix,) Bob Frank, Kansas City.

Overview of TWA in Gander

The first commercial flight via Gander of TWA (which at the time meant "Transcontinental and Western Airlines") flew from La Guardia Field, New York to Orly, Paris, on 5-6 February 1946. This was a Constellation L-049, serial number 2035, NC86511, called the "Star of Paris".



As can be seen below, Gander was the first international TWA field office:

INTERNATIONAL	
City	Inauguration of Service
ALGIERS.....	July 7, 1946.
ATHENS.....	March 31, 1946.
BASRA.....	March 2, 1948.
BOMBAY.....	Jan. 5, 1947.
BOSTON.....	Feb. 7, 1946.
CAIRO.....	April 2, 1946.
CHICAGO.....	May 4, 1946.
DETROIT.....	June 18, 1947.
DHAHRAN.....	July 2, 1946.
FRANKFURT.....	Sept. 30, 1950.
GANDER	Feb. 5, 1946.
GENEVA.....	March 31, 1946.
LISBON.....	May 1, 1946.

Doubt is sometimes expressed about which TWA Constellation made the first scheduled flight from New York to Paris. This is maybe because on 03 February, another L-049, with a very similar name "Paris Sky Chief", NC86505, s/n 2026, flew from a similar route from Washington to Paris as a trial run. It was captained by the same pilot, Hal Blackburn,

It is noteworthy that the "Star of Paris" left TWA service on 01 September 1961, roughly the same period TWA was closing operations in Gander. The following newsletter extract from 07 March 1962 gives the story:

G. P. Wakeham Named to DTM Post at Montreal

NEW YORK—Appointment of Gerald P. Wakeham as district transportation manager at Montreal has been announced by E. Paul Burke, Atlantic region general transportation manager.

Wakeham's responsibilities include ground service operations for TWA's "polar" route flights from the West Coast to London, Frankfurt, Paris, Milan and Rome.

Wakeham has been stationed at Gander, Newfoundland, since 1946. With his transfer, reassignment of Gander station personnel has been completed.

Movement of personnel

The above paragraphs describe the coming and going of TWA from Gander as an organisation. But it can be seen also from the point of view of the individuals who came and went. It is of interest to note that TWA staff came to Gander from all over the world. Gander was a

key operation where mistakes could be costly. Only the best came to the Rock! Annex A gives a list of the names gleaned from TWA documents.

For a list of all the known people who lived in the TWA residences (bldgs 13 and 14) on the "American side" in Gander, you can go the the following web page.

<http://bobsganderhistory.com/gene6a.pdf>

Service pins

Like many companies, TWA gave out pins for years of loyal service. A number of Gander employees received such pins during their time in Gander. There may be quite likely more that were not noted, but at Annex B can be found a list of certain employees who were recipients of a 5-, 10-, or 15-year pin.

Babies, weddings and similar items

When one thinks of aviation companies in Old Gander, the images that come to mind are often those of the terminal in hangar 22 and airplanes on the ramp. But these companies were operated by people in flesh and bone. While TWA information is sparse, here are some bits of information gleaned mainly from the newsletter.

Even when giving birth, women in those days had no first names, being known by the name of the husband. For example, Jane Doe would be known officially as Mrs John Doe!

Date	Mr and Mrs	Child's name	Remarks
51-11-06?	Bert Wheeler	Paul Desmond	7lb 3oz
52-10-14?	JA Kotesich	John	7lb 10oz
54-04-01	CR Willis	William Eric	10lb
55-10-06	Eugene Austin	Eugene Jr	7lb 11oz

(As an aside, the newsletter dated 54-05-06 shows Eugene Austin as hospitalised at the Banting Memorial Hospital.)

There were other stories involving TWA and babies. Two are told here, one happy and the other much less so.

The newsletter of 1949-01-20 tells the story of a race between TWA and the stork. TWA lost! Mrs Suzy Jones (her first name given because she was flying alone) was transferred on arrival to the Banting Memorial Hospital. The father, HH Jones, had been waiting in New York, so TWA flew him free to Gander. He was rushed through customs and 45 minutes after getting on the ground, he was at his wife's side.

The next problem was citizenship. Mr Jones was happy to learn that his son would automatically become an American citizen at age 21.

The other story was much sadder, as described in the newsletter of 02 March 1950. After a non-scheduled stop in Boston, a TWA airliner took off before dawn carrying a three-year-old baby, Mary Rose, to her home in Grand Falls. Her father, Leo Rose, had brought the girl to famed Leahy Clinic, where two operations showed she had a brain tumour and little time to live. Leo Rose contacted Bob Sidley, the editor of the Boston "Traveller", who put the ball in motion. TWA provided tickets for two seats and got approval from the American Civil Aviation Administration for a non-scheduled stop in Boston.

When word was received that the TWA plane was en route from New York to Boston, a limousine was dispatched to the hospital and little Mary was rushed to the airport in her father's arms, for the 4 1/2 hour trip to Gander. Arrangements had been made to immediately transport father and child to Grand Falls, 40 miles away, by rail car.

It is not certain that "modern" airline companies would do that today. And none of the other passengers complained about the detours and longer flight. How times have changed!

But there were wedding bells in Gander as well. Below are two of the stories found.

The first story comes from the newsletter for 18 December 1952 and mentions a flight control clerk, Maurice Doyle, and a Sidney Parson who may have been a local lass.

GANDER — When Maurice Doyle, flight control clerk, married Sidney Parsons on Nov. 6 they decided to take a gander at the United States on their honeymoon. It was Sidney's first trip and Maurice's first one west of New York.

They toured Los Angeles, Phoenix and shopped in New York. "All in all, a wonderful trip!" they reported on returning home.

The second story was given much more coverage as reported on 10 June 1948. The simplest way to do it is to show the clipping!

Newlyweds from Gander Visit Stations in U. S. on Honeymoon

When Gerald Wakeham of the RAF Ferry command asked a U. S. Army secretary to dance at a Newfoundland servicemen's canteen, the two didn't dream that in three years they would spend their honeymoon visiting TWA stations at New York, Kansas City, Wichita, the Grand Canyon and points west, but that's exactly what they're doing!

After their June 3 wedding at the bride's home in Grand Falls, Newfoundland, the TWAs left Gander on a Connie for New York City, first stop on their honeymoon. It is Gerald's third trip and Eileen's second to the United States.

Next stop was Kansas City where hot sunshine tempted them to Penn Valley park for sun-bathing. It was also in MKC that the bridegroom was "initiated." Finding women's clothes cheaper and styles more advanced than in Newfoundland, Eileen purchased a slack suit and luscious pink bathing suit!

In Wichita they planned to visit with a couple of TWAs who had made recent trips to Gander and then head for the Grand Canyon and possibly the west coast.

Both Gerald and Eileen went to work for TWA in 1946; the former is a senior Traffic representative, his wife a stenographer. Mr. Wakeham was the second native of Newfoundland to be employed by TWA.



HONEYMOONING a long way from home, 2,300 miles to be exact, are Gerald and Eileen Wakeham, TWAs from Gander. After a hard winter in the north country, hot weather and plenty of sun in Kansas City induced the pair to Penn Valley park where this picture was taken.

Gander - a sportsman's paradise

When TWA thought of sports in Gander, it was rarely about "town" sports. The Americans played a lot of baseball on a big field in front of the RC church on the "American side". But that was not the hot topic.

John Murphy of TWA was perhaps Gander's greatest hockey player. On 10 March 1956 the Boston Bruins came to Gander to play an exhibition game against the Gander Flyers. At the end of the first period, the score was 20-1 for the Bruins and it was John Murphy who got the Gander goal. But the sports focus was on other things.

Some TWA employees were into 5-pin bowling. In spring of 1954, TWA had two mens teams and a mixed team. The TWA mixed team came first in the nine-week playoff - but the best the men could do was fifth and sixteenth position. But John Murphy, as good with a bowling ball as a hockey stick, finished the season with a respectable 2034,6 average, with Gerry Wakeham slightly behind at 188.6. But bowling was not the main sports conversation with TWA.

What was the talk of the town for TWA personnel - as it was for most "outsiders" - was the hunting and fishing. One article from the early 50s was positively lyric and said notably:

Stretches of undulating tundra, cut by countless streams, dotted with lakes and ponds, and interspersed with copses and groves, comprise central Newfoundland, in the heart of which lies Gander Airport, the TWA stop. Caribou herds roam this section, and here are found the Gander and Exploit rivers, famed for salmon running as large as 40 pounds.

It also mentioned the wildlife close to Gander, later mentioning that this is within the reach of people with incomes in the 5000\$ range.

Two hundred of the finest fishing streams in the world teeming with salmon and trout, 4,000 miles of coast crowded with tuna and swordfish, herds of moose and caribou which 500 to 1,000 kills yearly would leave adequately protected—



PROOF of Gander's fishing claims is this photo of **GEORGE FRIEDRISCH**, station manager, left, and Chicago's station manager, **HERB DEDLAKE**, with a "part" of their catch near the Newfoundland airport.

One fishing story is from July of 1949 when Richard M Gaul, transportation agent, took a group from Wichita to Indian Bay Pond,

26 miles from Gander. As Gaul stood casting on the bank, one 7-pound fish made leap for the nearby falls, missed and fell at the startled angler's feet. Gaul pushed him into his creel, just as another made the same mistake!

TWA personnel were known to go the extra mile. When a couple of American hunters came to Gander in April 1948 without really have made proper arrangements, TWA took them under their wing. George Fowlow and Dick Gaul had hunting permits, so they took the visitors out with them. The Gander fellows got a moose each, while both visitors got a caribou one of which apparently was a 42-pointer (which would be quite rare for a caribou!)

But the palm for a fishing trip goes to John Murphy in the summer of 1950. A flight from New York to Shannon two hours east of Gander had to turn around because of mechanical problems. The passengers were really not pleased to find that countryside below was not Ireland. But the day was saved by John Murphy who, on his day off, jumped in to entertain the passengers.

His first step was to take them down to Gander Lake, where he explained the Ferry Command marine base he knew so well. He then brought to the choicest place around.

The party had fished Dead Man's pond and had refreshments at the Log Cabin. One of the women passengers, Mrs. Jay Glinn, was probably the best-dressed fly-caster in the world. Dressed in mink scarf and orchids (for her trans-Atlantic trip), she hauled two trout from the clear, cold waters.

The on-board hostess now had a problem. She no longer had to apologise for the long delay. Instead she now had to beg the passengers to climb the steps to the airplane - most were ready to leave the enchanted isle.

Was this a practice run for a certain September 2001?

Social life

The staff and families of TWA employees were well integrated into normal life. At the end of this article is a reference to a party on Gander Lake on 11 September - 1951! But there were other small items of information that show what their life was like.

And in those days of well-differentiated male and female roles, there had to be a beauty queen somewhere along the way. The following extract is from 14 April 1946:

* * *

THIS AND THAT DEPT: High-
light of a dance held by Gander TWA
employees recently was a beauty con-
test in which TWA Station Receptionist
Terry Griffin was voted Queen of
Gander. Congratulations, Terry.

This TWA newsletter liked to talk about well-known personalities related to the airline and Gander had one - or rather the son of a well-known personality.

**Gander Mechanic Has Slight
Interest in Politics; His Father
Is Newfoundland Prime Minister**

GANDER—Newfoundland is now
a province of the Dominion of
Canada and the man who is re-
garded as most responsible for this
confederation between the two
countries is Newfoundland's pres-
ent prime minister, Hon. Joseph
R. Smallwood.

This fact alone may not prove interesting to many TWAers; however it introduces one of the prime minister's sons, Ramsey M. Smallwood, a TWA mechanic since Sept. 27, 1947, in the maintenance department at Gander.

Ramsey was born in St. John's, capital of Newfoundland. Before joining TWA he was with the Royal Air Force transport command.

Among his hobbies, he rates fishing and swimming as his top favorites, and what red-blooded Newfoundlander doesn't with the cool waters of the Atlantic rolling by his door. Fellow-workers claim he takes after his famous father though, for he's pretty good at politics.

Some of these Gander folk were real jokesters. This was shown very well in the newsletter's international contest for the best photo, won by Jim Brownell, with the photo below. (27 August 1953). It had an interesting caption: "Wooden you know!"



Actually, it was a store window dummy used to sell nylons that had been placed in the cockpit of a small private plane. The rules didn't say that the photo had to show real people!

TWA personal were impressed by the RCMP (or maybe not, as they described them as the North West Mounted Police).

If you don't believe that the Northwest Mounted Police always get their man, take it from international captains Walt Gunn and Bill Piper—they do. Walt and Bill—on a fishing trip—were chatting in the terminal lobby at Gander when Bill noticed that his transistor radio was missing. The theft was reported to the Mounties at 6 PM along with a fragmentary description of some persons who had been loitering nearby. Less than three hours later one of the mounties returned with the radio. He reported it had been recovered from a suspect about to board a train at the railroad station who had matched the description given by Piper.

TWA accident reports

TWA was involved in a least three accidents, but only two involved airplanes. The first one reported in this article was mentioned in the newsletter of 03 July 1950 - and involved the railway!

1. Two fellows from TWA Kansas City were in Gander on a fishing trip. Guided by Bill Mendina from the Gander office, they were on their way to a fishing spot on a motorised hand car going at about 50 mph when they collided with a section car going in the other direction. Mr Mendina, said the report, "will be laid up for about six weeks with cracked ribs, dislocated shoulder, torn knee ligaments and other minor injuries".

The two visitors suffered bruises and sprains. More than anything their pride was hurt when TWA warned them to stick to planes for transportation in the future.

2. The first Gander related TWA crash happened on 02 March 1949 when a DC-4 passenger plane NC34537 was trying to land. On board of this "Transcontinental & Western Airline" were nine crew members and 24 passengers, with no fatalities.

The Flight Safety Organization accident report was written up as follows :

TWA Flight 924 departed LaGuardia Field at 20:22, March 1, 1949, for Bombay, India, with the first scheduled stop at Gander. At 02:06 the next day the plane passed into the Gander control area and reported over Round Pond, 95 miles southwest of Gander Airport.

At 02:30 the aircraft was cleared to the Gander tower to make a GCA (Ground Control Approach) straight-in approach, using runway 09, and was advised that the surface wind was variable from the northeast to east-north-east at 15-20 miles per hour. The 02:30 weather was transmitted to the flight by GCA and acknowledged as 400 feet overcast, visibility two miles, light freezing drizzle, light snow and fog, altimeter 29.64. The aircraft was identified thirteen miles west of the field, and was further advised to start its final approach. Considerable rime ice accumulated during the descent through the overcast obscuring the co-pilots windshield and largely obscuring the windshield on the captains side.

Flight 924 established visual contact at approximately 400 feet above the ground while two miles from the airport. The landing gear was then lowered and the flaps set to fifteen degrees preparatory to landing. Approximately 1,615 feet from the approach end of runway 09 the aircraft struck a power line and then contacted the ground. Full power was applied, the aircraft again became fully airborne and continued to the runway where a landing was made.

PROBABLE CAUSE: "The Board determines that the probable cause of this accident was the attempt to continue an approach for a landing using both GCA and visual reference to the ground under conditions of restricted cockpit visibility which resulted in the aircraft striking the ground."

No image of this plane was found but it would have been similar to the aircraft in the following photo:



(I do not know who sent me this photo but it is possible it came from an archive that may have been called the "Stoltzius file" or something similar)

3. As far as the third accident is concerned, no documentary information has yet been found but will be added if and when it becomes available. However, the three photos below taken by the late Tom Pelley, an employee of Air France at the time, tell the story.

The only information meager presently available on the time and location comes from the date on the photos themselves, which appears to be 1952. Any additional information would be sincerely appreciated.



Training of Gander's TWA staff

It would appear from the company newsletter that a great deal of emphasis was put on training throughout the TWA system. Specialists or managers, especially from La Guardia and the main base in Kansas City, Missouri, often come to Gander to ensure that local personnel were aware of the latest equipment and methods.

Statistics do not specify, however, how many of these services visits left a few days open for salmon fishing on the Gander River and other activities of a similar nature!

The following photos show certain occasions when the personnel from Gander participated in this training in other parts of the world. This training was varied, covering subjects as large as airport operations, engine maintenance and equipment for food service. Given the constant training and postings all over the world, one could wonder if TWA, from its earlier wartime experience, did not use the military model for its aviation management. (Use zoom as necessary.)

Food services were looked at on 15 September 1950 in Kansas City:

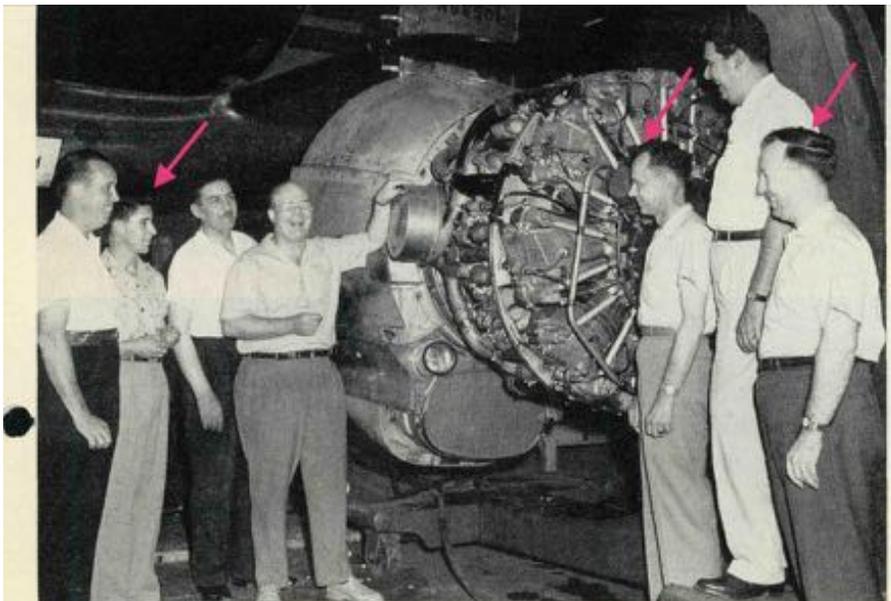


As can be seen from the overcoats, this training visit to Paris was On 24 March 1955



ORLY FIELD OPERATIONS at Paris are studied by this group of stateside management TWAers on a familiarization tour overseas. Left to right are A. B. Brown, Kansas City; H. J. Dunkel, New York; R. S. Mead, Kansas City; John Aimetti, J. H. Hunter, New York; R. K. Horton, T. W. Fay, Kansas City; C. E. Ford, I. H. Easterwood, Chicago; E. T. Phillips, Kansas City; Bill Mendina, Gander; W. H. Spannuth, Kansas City; J. D. Kappen, Los Angeles; Nick Kolen, Louis Van Wye, W. M. Gilbirds, Kansas City; George Mitkevitch, Paris; R. L. Warner, San Francisco.

Kansas City 15 September 1955



OVERSEAS MAINTENANCE instructors from TWA and other airlines and maintenance services visit the Kansas City Overhaul base to "check out" on the Super-G Constellation. Shown are Charles Sharp, Kansas City instructor; S. D. Blandford, Allied maintenance, Gander; Desmond Mooney, Shannon maintenance foreman; Stan Moore, international maintenance training supervisor, Paris; William Mendina, Gander, general maintenance foreman for TWA; H. H. Marsch, VARIG Airlines maintenance instructor, Rio de Janeiro; O. A. Bulris, Allied, Gander. The engine is a Wright 3350-DA-3, powerplant on the Super-G.

SEPTEMBER 15, 1955

Familiarization was carried in Geneva in April 1956. It is easy to spot the "feller from Gander" - he is the only one with a hat.



TWA general operations via Gander

TWA existed in Gander for three reasons. Firstly, its job was to make sure the passengers on their flights were in as far as possible treated like royalty, be kings and queens, their own travelling employees or eventually economy class passengers when air travel became open to a larger public.

In the regard it had for most of time in Gander a fully operational commissary to provide food services. The complete story on catering and hotel services to TWA (and the other airlines can be seen here:

<http://bobsganderhistory.com/Caterers2.pdf>

The second job was to provide aircraft maintenance services. During its very first years, TWA, like all the other airlines, had its own

maintenance crews. The TWA crews came basically from Kansas City from TWA's well practiced main facility. However, having separate maintenance crews for each airline when they generally used the same type of aircraft was wasteful, so in 1948, Allied Aviation who already did combined maintenance in La Guardia in New York, came to do the same in Gander. Airline company maintenance employees were transferred to this new unit as required.

The third job of TWA was to ensure that their airplanes were properly refuelled. The refuelling was done by three different oil companies, based essentially on the lowest bidder. As shown in the photo on page 16, the oil company in the earlier period was Intava, a lesser-known predecessor to Esso Imperial. Intava was born on 07 March 1939 from the union of Vacuum Oil Co and the Anglo-American Oil Co. Intava was the contraction of "International Aviation Associates", with its main sales organisation in London, England. At the end of the war, Intava, under new ownership, had moved its headquarters to New York, with the intention of moving gradually back into the Old Continent. It was now 50/50 in the hands of Socony-Vacuum Oil and Standard Oil. In the 1900's, Standard Oil of New Jersey had started marketing its products under the brand name 'Esso' and the brand name for aviation products became "Esso Aviation" in 1947. The name Esso, by the way, comes from the initials "SO" of Standard Oil.

In 1951 Royal-Dutch Shell won the refuelling contract for TWA. However in 1956, Esso was the lowest bidder and regained the contract. As far as is known, Esso kept this contract until the end of TWA operations in Gander.

Interesting notes about TWA operations

The following is a registered letter sent from Gander on 09 September 1952, showing the TWA logo. Forty cents was probably a fair amount of money roughly 70 years ago!



It was mentioned earlier that Gander was a choice hunting and fishing destination for Americans. In June of 1947 the following were the round-trip excursion fares between Gander and selected cities:

Between GANDER and	Fare
Boston	\$135.90
Chicago	223.20
New York	154.30
Philadelphia	164.00
Washington	176.40

These fares were not to be used to calculate the price of a ticket that would be used to go elsewhere, for example to London or Paris, only to Gander.

Nine years later, in June 1956, the policy was changed, so that TWA employees could profit from a half-price excursion flight to Shannon. The normal full price Gander to Shannon was then \$255.50, so for company personnel, it would have been \$127.90. Assuming that the 1947 price Gander-New York went up perhaps 50%, a trip New York-Shannon would have been in the order of \$300+. Still a lot of money for those days.

While the local TWA office took care of the aircraft and passengers, certain arrangements had been made to facilitate local administration. In particular, TWA was organised by regions and Gander came under the "Eastern Region". It was this level in the organisation which handled all property and lease negotiations. More importantly, that office also took care of landing fees, which was a constant problem in Gander, being often out of sync with other comparable airports.

A problem that TWA, like the other airlines, had to worry about in late 1948 was something very much out of their control, namely a rail strike that threatened to cause a fuel shortage. No fuel had been delivered by rail from the seaport of Lewisporte since 12 October and by 10 November the normal reserve of two million gallons was down to 500,000.

Plans were made in 1948 to divert planes through Stephenville, Sydney or Moncton. Luckily normal operations were able to resume when the strike ended on 12 November.

From the earliest days, the TWA team in Gander was considered first rate. For example, just before Christmas it got news of its performance in the company-wide "on-time" contest. The following headline and table from 23 December 1948 tells all:

GANDER WINS IN CLOSE ON-TIME RACE

ON-TIME CONTEST PRIZE LIST	
Group A	
Gander	\$400
Cairo	\$200
Group B	
Bombay	\$300
Geneva	\$150
Group C	
Philadelphia	\$200
Algiers	\$100

It was also the on-time winner in Class B the following year. In September 1954, Gander was in the top level with respect to cargo:

PERFECT CARGO MARKS

NEW YORK — The following stations posted perfect marks during August for international cargo handling: Bombay, Boston, Chicago, Colombo, Detroit, Dhahran, Frankfurt, Gander, Philadelphia, Santa Maria and Tunis.

In May 1955, it was again in the winner's circle:

PERFECT CARGO MARKS

NEW YORK—The following stations handling international cargo came up with perfect records for no errors during March: Chicago, Colombo, Detroit, Dhahran, Frankfurt, Gander, Middle East, Philadelphia, Santa Maria and Tunis.

Gander was not always given good marks by some TWA people, at least not in March 1954 - though that may have been more of a Gander than a TWA problem!

COMMUTERS across the Atlantic are now fond of saying the most dangerous thing about such a trip is the hot water at Gander. Reports Bob Bruemmer, agency and interline field rep, "I like it because it's true."

TWA and the International Association of Machinists covering maintenance, cargo, stores, guard, commissary and dining service employees. Gander provided a union representative during that period, namely Norbert Vickers. In the previous July, a new working agreement had been signed with flight and assistant flight dispatchers.

It may or may not have been a result of previous agreements of this nature that TWA employees in Gander had excellent conditions. For example, on 01 December, an "education allowance" was established for Gander. It could not be ascertained why such an allowance would have been required because, as far as is known, airline employee dependants were integrated into the schools of Gander under exactly the conditions as all other students. On the other hand, it has been suggested that the use of allowances at specific locations might be a manner of acting locally, while avoiding company-wide precedents that might arise if these matters had to be taken up with the union.

To finish of this section on operations, while no statistics were found giving the total number of TWA flights flown while it operated in Gander, there is information on what was probably the peak period. In July of 1954. TWA gander handled 303 flights, considered as possibly the busiest TWA international station on the system.

Photos of operations.

A number of pages have been found here and there showing TWA personnel going about their jobs, These are not of modern quality and have been clipped out of collage layouts. They are however too good to leave out.

They can be seen in the following pages.



TWA ticket counter, old terminal. hangar 22
Gerry Wakeham, Doris Johnston, Richard Stamp
21 November 1946



Hostess Mary Clark, Navigator Ali Bey,
ticket agent George Pearce,
Allied ticket counter, late 1950



TWA commissary: Agnes O'Keefe, cook
Cyril Lawlor, commissary helper
Preparation meals flight Beirut - New York
December 1950



December 1950



Commissary chief Louis Kasinski
checking meal bays on a Constellation
Late 1950



A small chapel for international passengers
was built at the airport.

The altar was provided by a local parish priest.
The vestments and other facilities were loaned from the
Shrine Church of the Sea in New York. The pews were
made by Leonard Saunders of Gander maintenance.

By December 1950 it was used 15 times for mass and
countless visitors had come to view this quaint chapel.

In the photo, Gerry Wakeham, chief transportation agent-

Mr Wakeham was not only a stalwart of TWA in Gander. He had other interests outside of aviation and a long career in aviation.

The following information comes from his Son, Bob, now a reporter at the St John's Evening Telegram:

"He notably freelanced for The Telegram, taking photographs and writing the odd article. But when he wrote a piece about an Air France plane skidding off the runway at Gander, the story was picked up by one of the wire services and was spotted by Air France bosses in the States who found out that a TWA employee had written the article. They weren't too pleased that an employee of one of their competitors was the author. Bad publicity and all. So they complained to TWA types who informed Dad he had to stop his freelancing immediately. Either that or get another job. Steve Herder, the publisher of the Telegram at the time, and a friend of Dad's (aside from their newspaper connection, they both were involved in the senior hockey league), told Dad to quit his TWA job and take a full time job with The Telegram. Dad, of course, wasn't about to give up his airline livelihood. But he also wanted to continue to freelance, so he and Herder came up with a innovative plan: Dad would still write for the paper, but use a pseudonym. And what they came up with was "Chris Inoway". I don't know the derivation of "Chris", but "Inaway" came about because Dad would often respond to questions with that phrase. "Did you like the movie, Gerry?" "Ya, in a way." So there are bylines somewhere in the Telegram archives of stories out of Gander that say: "By Telegram Reporter, Chris Inoway."

Gerry Wakeham certainly led an interesting life in Gander. Aside from TWA and his Telegram work, he was a co-founder of the Avion Players (and performed in numerous stage plays), played the drums on occasion with Ed Goff and the Solidaires, and was president of the Gander Hockey Association. After Gander, he was TWA station manager in Montreal, a supervisor at Dulles Airport in Virginia, an analyst with TWA in New York City, manager for TWA at McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey, manager of Air Cargo at Philadelphia International Airport, and, finally, a supervisor in custom service at Philadelphia.

Conclusion

The story of TWA in Gander is not a novel with an introduction that sets the scene, a plot where good folk and bad folk do battle, where characters have their forces and flaws and the flow of the action leads to an unexpected denouement.

Yet, in a sense it is all of that. TWA arrived after the war, as did the other airlines, with high hopes of increased trans-Atlantic travel. As did the other main companies, it fought the battles for longer runways, lower landing costs and better services (See the Pan American articles on this website for more on that.) During the 1950s it was TWA busiest station in the world, but by the start of the 1960s, it had disappeared from Gander.

TWA had its characters too, but all in all, it was a wonderful partnership with Gander's other citizens. Hopefully this article will keep alive the memories of both the story and the characters that made it real.

Annexes:

- ° Annex A - movements of personnel
- ° Annex B - Gander personnel service pins
- ° Annex C - Well-known photos of TWA aircraft in Gander

Other related website articles:

- TWA and the Atlantic ferry effort
<http://bobsganderhistory.com/TWAFerry.pdf>
- TWA Gander Lake party
<http://bobsganderhistory.com/TWApicnic.pdf>
- Taking care of old Gander's transients
<http://bobsganderhistory.com/Caterers2.pdf>
- The history of Pan Am in Gander
<http://bobsganderhistory.com/PanAmGander>
- For a list of all the known people who lived in the TWA residences (bldgs 13 and 14) on the "American side" in Gander
<http://bobsganderhistory.com/gene6a.pdf>

Annex A - movement of personnel

Date	Name	From	To	Date/Remarks
47-08-21	DW "Dink" Hill	Gander	Cairo	station manager in both places
48-10	George Friedrich		Gander	rehired by TWA as managed in Gander
50-01-19	George Friedrich	Gander	Paris	operations Mgr Orly
50-03-03	Jack Kotesich	Bombay	Gander	District operations mgr
50-03-23	Verne E Crouch	Kansas City	Gander	dispatcher
50-12-07	John J Fitzgerald	Pittsburg	Gander	food unit supervisor
50-12-07	Vharles E Hess	Gander	Paris	dispatcher
51-11-29	Paul Husak	NY LGA	Gander	dispatcher
53-09-03	Calvin R Willis	Lisbon	Gander	dispatcher
54-09-09	Richard T Smith	NY IDL	Gander	Asst dispatcher
54-10-07	Calvin R Willis	Gander	Kansas City	
55-03-31	Eugene T Kelly	NY IDL	Gander	dispatcher
55-08-04	Jack Kotesich	Gander	Baltimore	see note1
56-06-28	Howard J Swift	Gander	NY LGA	dispatcher
56-07-05	Donald J Eubanks	NY IDL	Gander	Asst dispatcher
56-12-06	HD Amundson	Kansas City	Gander	dispatcher
56-12-27	Narbourne Vickers	Gander	Kansas City	dispatcher
57-09-12	John M Britain	Athens	Gander	dispatcher
57-10-10	JE Brownell	?	Gander	Flight dispatch coordinator
59-05.14	Eugene F Eubanks	Gander	NY IDL	dispatcher
61-01.26	John E Murphy	Gander	NY	regional manager of passengers and cargo

Replacing Jack Kostecoch on 1955-08-04 was John E Murphy, the assistant "District operations manager", native of St,John's who joined TWA in 1946. John was well known in Gander frm having spent the was as assistant to the Commanding Officers of Ferry Command and perhaps moreso for being a superb hockey player.

Gerald Wakeham, also a Newfoundlander, and equally with TWA since 1946, became assistant DOM. When John Murphy left in 1961, Mr Wakeham replaced him and closed up the TWA services in Gander.

TWA employee loyal service pins Gander, Newfoundland

Years of service	Name	Date
5 year	N Miller	55-04-28
5 year	R Ford	56-07-26
10 year	Charles Pulliam	47-06-19
10 year	Bill Mendina	50.03.02
10 year	TK Cederland	50-06-01
10 year	HJ Swift	56-92-23
10 year	ET Kelly	56-92-23
15 year	NF Vickers	56-09-27
15 year	JE Brownell	57-01-31

Annex C: TWA aircraft in Gander





This last photo represents well both the departure of TWA from Gander and the decline of Gander as an international airport.

This TWA Constellation is shown at the new terminal opened in 1959. By then, Connies could fly direct NY-London non-stop. This one was most likely a flight with technical or other problem requiring a non-scheduled stop.