

Story by Joe Kets of the
1954 Wash, D.C. Barbershop
Convention. Bud Leeko, Director

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Once upon a time, many years ago, The Cascade Chorus ^{had} won the Evergreen district competition, and ~~we~~ ^{went} ~~intend~~ to go to Washington D.C. the nations capital for the National Convention. Some of the members drove or went by train, about 20 members and a few wives went on a chartered plane, ^{SO THIS IS THE STORY OF THAT TRIP}

We were ~~at~~ gatered at Mahlow Sweet airport around 4 o'clock the afternoon when the plane was supposed to pick us up. We waited till 8:30 or before it arrived. The pilot explained, that on the way west an important instrument had gone haywire. He flew into Seattle airport to have the ~~the~~ thing repaired, it took more time than he expected. He realized we were waiting and wondering. So he ~~had~~ had to fly from Seattle down to Coast to come pick us up, and had to fly along the coast back to Seattle. ^{"HE CALLED IT FLYING BY THE SEAT OF HIS PANTS"} We waited several more hours at Seattle airport before they finished installing the repaired instrument.

As we finally got underway in the right direction East. We were too tired and sleepy to do any singing. Very early next morning we arrived at Great Falls Montana, ~~where we had~~ to stop for Fuel, only the airfield at Great Falls was socked in solid with fog - it looked like a big mountain of snow.

I should have mentioned this before. Our plane was a DC 3. Large enough for 25 passengers, all the baggage was carried in the passenger compartment. we had uniforms.

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hanging all over, ~~bags~~ ^{suit cases} under the seats and under our feet. One toilet in the tail end of the plane - no flight attendants and our only of that ^{good} stuff, all you got for, how money was or ride on the plane. Our pilot was a short guy - wore a Cow boy hat and boots, during the war he flew in Burma and other far east countries, ~~He~~ ^{WE SOON REALIZED HE} was a Good Pilot. Nothing seemed to disturb him. The air fare was supposed to include food, which it did if you could find a restaurant, ~~which~~ We did at ~~least~~ least ones in Chicago a long walk from the plane and back. The pilot gave us tickets, which the restaurant accepted. The place to eat was across the highway from the airport.

I sorta got ahead of my story. left you up in the air over Great Falls, Montana with the fog solid on the ground so we headed south, getting low on fuel.

We came to a small airport, don't know the name just a place, way out in the country. ~~Just~~ A restaurant building that looked like a big old bus, with a trailer next to it. The owner, a lady, lived in the trailer she was still in bed, and had a hard time getting organized to take care of ~~all~~ our gang, probably the biggest crowd she had ever seen in her place. We sorta pitched in to help out, somebody cooked bacon, somebody else fried eggs, and somebody made toast. We all had Bacon + Eggs toast and coffee. The owner was so upset and nervous she couldn't get going. Mrs Olson one of our bunch... finally

set her down ~~last~~ do the book keeping and keep track of the charges - ~~Since~~ we all enjoyed a good breakfast.

The pilot had gotten hold of some body to bring us fuel for the plane. The tank truck drove up and proceeded to fill the fuel tanks ~~of the~~ plane. The pilot, co pilot ~~and~~ another pilot who was (dead heading) back to Chicago with us, were finishing their breakfast ~~when~~ the gas truck guy came in to have his ticket signed.

It was obvious that ~~the~~ pilot was sorta up set. Everyone at there table brought out paper and pencil and ^{were} doing some important figuring.

The result was another set back for the trip. The plane was too heavy, ^{FOR THE SHORT RUNWAY?} they had to get rid of weight.

Only trouble was the tank truck that brought the gas had no way to pump it out. The truck driver took off and quite a while later came with another tank truck and proceeded to pump gas out of the plane. Finally ready to go again.

The pilot went as far back on the field as he could go, locked the brakes, reved up the engines and started with a jump -

Even at that it did n't look he would clear the trees ~~at~~ the field next to the little air field (but he did with room to spare). We headed south East, must have! Next stop for gas at a medium size airport in East Kansas. A large plane

was waiting for clearance to go west. Our pilot told us to stay in our seats while he gassed up. He said they might ground us too. Shortly thereafter we were on our way to Chicago.

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It was raining and windy when we left Kansas.

Tail wind forced - so we made up some time, did not help any - we flew in a pattern around the ^{Chicago} airport for what seemed forever. Way out over Lake Michigan then around again close to south Chicago. ^{we finally landed} The pilot gave us meal slips so we walked to ~~the~~ Restaurant and ^{had supper} ~~the~~

It was typical summer storm weather. Sunshine - rain, dark clouds of in the distance lightning

Looking ^{NORTH} East it seemed like several storms in that direction. The pilot said we'll just have to dodge around the storms

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enough to start fueling. Several people pitched in to help the poor gal because she really was confused and discombobulated, we all had bacon & eggs. The pilot had called a gas company and after a while a gas tank truck drove up and proceeded to fill the planes tanks. After that he came to the Restaurant went to where the pilot and crew were sitting and gave him the ticket for the gas. I was watching those proceedings and noticed the pilot was sorta upset. Well the crew got busy figuring and came up with the solution that we had to ~~much gas~~ ^{weight} for the short runway of the airport. The tank truck driver had no way to pump the gas back out of ~~the plane~~ ~~the~~ so we waited till he drove back to town and brought out another tank truck to do the job. all this took a lot of time, We finally took off again just barely got up high enough to clear the trees at the end of the runway. Our next stop was for gas again at a small airport in Kansas. A large West bound plane was there on the ground waiting for clearance to fly out. Our pilot instructed us to stay in our seats because he said "I'll just get ~~gas~~ and get the hell out of here before they ground us too. Our next stop was Chicago. we flew in a pattern around O'Hara airport for a long time before they cleared us for landing. We walked to a place to eat Super than back to the plane. The weather was typical summer storms, dark clouds and some lightning toward the North & East. We were all standing

