

WELCOME TO OUR NEW DEPARTMENT COVERING VINTAGE AIRLINERS. NOW THAT THEY ARE ALMOST EXTINCT, WE HAVE SEEN A RISING INTEREST IN THESE MAGNIFICENT AIRCRAFT SO, ACCORDINGLY, WE WILL BE PRESENTING NOTEWORTHY PHOTOGRAPHS AND MEMORABILIA FROM A TIME NOT THAT LONG AGO WHEN TRAVELING BY AIR WAS STILL AN EXCITING ADVENTURE



With all four turning, *Stratocruiser Seattle-Tacoma* begins to taxi to the active. The plane originally operated with the name *Stratocruiser Minneapolis-St. Paul*.

With its "double-bubble" fuselage and lower deck lounge, Northwest's passengers were initially very pleased with the new airliner as can be seen in this photo of passengers arriving at Honolulu.



In the airline industry, there was a great deal of fanfare when the Boeing 377 Stratocruiser made its first appearance. It was a big, bold aircraft and offered unprecedented luxury for passengers on long distance flights. However, the airliner had immense problems with engines/propellers and a number of crashes made passengers wary of the type. The plane never turned a profit and airlines rather quickly disposed of their 377s. Northwest Airlines ordered ten 377s and put them onto their long-distance routes. The color photos depict Northwest's B.377 N74602 *Stratocruiser Seattle-Tacoma* after the right landing gear folded while on the ramp.



Looking a bit like a beached whale, N74602 presented a distressing sight but damage was relatively minimal and the aircraft was repaired and put back into service.



When Northwest phased its B.377 fleet out of service, the aircraft were purchased by broker Lee Mansdorf and N74602 was then sold to Aero Spacelines for possible use in Jack Conroy's Pregnant Guppy project. With 30,860-hrs on the clock and all airline markings painted over, N74602 was photographed in the mid-1960s at Mojave Airport when the Stratocruisers were just about the only aircraft at the sprawling field.



An Air Force crash crew took care of any fuel leaks after N74602's gear collapse. Number four propeller and R-4360 suffered damage. The aircraft made its first flight on 28 March 1949 and was delivered to Northwest on 22 June 1949.