

A Place to Rest on the Ocean

I leaned back in relaxation as the Lockheed L-1649 Starliner I was flying was in final approach to Plattsburgh International Airport in Plattsburgh, New York, parking at the terminal instead of a maintenance/storage spot. In a few moments, I was departing for Amsterdam Schiphol airport. Although I normally just perform casual lone joyrides on this, today, someone hired me to transport his friends to the Netherlands. I then planned on heading north to the Faroe Islands, where I could relax to stuff there. I pulled out my phone to contact John, my customer, to alert him.

“At the airport yet?” I said. “Nope, but I’m closest. The rest of them will arrive later” said John. “Ok. Go to the Terminal, that’s where I am parked, and board via the jetway. Forget the mobile stairways, the terminal’s almost empty today” I said. “Got it” he replied.

After turning off the Wright R-3350 988 TC18-EA-2 Duplex-Cyclone engines, I turned some dials on the flight engineer’s panel, including the ones that cut fuel to the engines. I then proceeded to walk the jetway into the passenger waiting spot to wait for John, and the 11 others he was travelling with, to arrive; capable of seating up to 99 passengers, the Starliner was incredibly under capacity once loaded, but hey, it’s less weight, which means less runway needed to take off. Seven minutes later, John arrived, and once I saw him, I intimated him to come over.

“I am so glad I found out about you. No more need to go down to the City to connect internationally! I can fly wherever I want, whenever I want, as long as you’re available!” that cougar said. “Yeah. To be honest, despite living in NYC, I’d avoid using those airports there - they’re always so crowded, and LaGuardia’s a third-world country with its disconnected terminals, and a whole lot more. I’d rather use Stewart International down in Newburgh if you insisted on NYC”. Ten minutes later, the rest of them arrived.

After everyone boarded the plane, we took off soon. 8 hours or so later, we neared Amsterdam Schiphol, with me flying the aircraft the whole time; I rarely truly tire, and didn’t the whole duration. We parked at a terminal, and everyone deplaned via the jetway. I turned everything off, and entered the terminal via the jetway, making my way to the cafes. I bought a (how cliché) sandwich - make that 2 sandwiches - and

rapaciously ate all of them. I then proceeded to nap for three hours. Twenty minutes after the waking up, I departed to the Faroe Islands.

Landing at Tórshavn Vágar Airport in the Faroe Islands, I've gotten used to the looks at my aircraft from ground personnel, and passengers, as my aircraft was the only Starliner, let alone the only aircraft of the Constellation family, and the only Lockheed aircraft, as well as the only large long range piston-propeller aircraft, if not the only piston propeller aircraft, as I almost always see only Airbus A320s there, apart from the helicopters that acted as inter-island transport most of the time, to even appear at this airport off-consistently, let alone at all. They too observe me, the quiet, friendly-faced, stately Red Wolf who always flew it, when I deplane. Once I parked at a maintenance spot in front of a hangar, I turned everything off, and cut fuel to the Wright R-3350 988 TC18-EA-2 Duplex-Cyclone engines. I deplaned, walked over to my Lincoln Town Car, and sped off to town.

Later that afternoon found me in Fugloy, boating north into the Northern Atlantic to spend some quality time alone. Close to shore, I ran into an old friend who was also out at sea. He waved hello at me, and I stopped to converse with him.

“Hello” he said

“Hello, Peter” I replied to that portly Caracal

“Your name’s Da, wasn’t it? Da something Lu-ish?”

“Lu DaQiao, or in western order, Da Qiao Lu. My American friends bestowed upon me the name Kelson”

“Right. Got it. Long time no see”

“Of course. Next week is my retirement. I’m travelling around, and maybe will continue after this”

“Cool. Where you headed after here?”

“Probably further north to Greenland, or maybe eastwards to The Shetlands”

“I see. Fishing?”

“Yeah. Maybe catch something” I mused

“Cod’s congregating around them waters this time of year”

“Just so, as I remember”

“Well, see you around”

“Thanks, man”

I continued further out to sea. Once I was at the usual fishing spot I usually haunted when I was here, I pulled out my fishing rod, and casted into the water.

I remember my first time setting foot on these islands. I was almost broke. I’ll spare you the details because in a sea of “rags-to-riches” stories, it’s borderline cliché. I’ll tell you the gist: I lost everything when I was young, and throughout the years, memories of my old days before the loss, was what kept me going. At 19, I founded a general store to generate income, with profits so slow I couldn’t pay myself, and worked overtime to keep everything in balance. I told myself the whole time, it’s worth it – as Cicero once said in *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*, *Itaque earum rerum hic tenetur a sapiente delectus, ut aut reiciendis voluptatibus maiores alias consequatur aut perferendis doloribus asperiores repellat* (translation: “the wise man therefore always holds in these matters to this principle of selection: he rejects pleasures to secure other greater pleasures, or else he endures pains to avoid worse pains”).

Slowly, the small general store I founded grew. After earning enough money, I bought a few buildings I rented out, and continued to focus on my general store. After earning a considerable amount of money, I turned to saving aircraft from scrapping as a hobby. First, it was my favourite aircraft, the Lockheed L-1011 Tristar, then it was the Douglas DC-7C, then it was the Convair 990A Coronado. After that, I saved this Starliner, and then a Douglas DC-6 after this.

Now that I was approaching 24, the company I founded was ready for retirement, to be sold to an eager one who will take good care of my store in my stead. It was the second year of my company, around 2 years ago, that I first set foot here. It has grown on me like a home, so I consider this place a home, better than old NYC. Unsurprisingly, it was different then. I was still dreaming of the day I’d strike figurative financial gold, reaching success like Elie Tahari did. Now, the dream was achieved, and I now had everything I could ever want.

Time always seems so relative sometimes. I remember that first time coming here to these islands like yesterday. Likewise, my days of hardship I too remember like it’s yesterday. But the sea, the most glorious northern Atlantic Ocean, always looked the

same. It seemed so timeless. And nature always is proven to calm the nerves of the wracked, overworked city folk like me, so I felt home here, having a place to rest on the ocean.

I felt a strong tug, and wrestled whatever was on the line's end. In I reeled a large Atlantic Cod. I proudly looked at my catch, and set it in a tankard filled with water. I then reeled in a second one 20 minutes later, though not as large as the first. Three hours later, and 18 catches, consisting of 11 Atlantic Cod, 2 Haddock, and 2 Pollock, and 3 Atlantic Mackerel, I finished up fishing. I decided I'll have one of the Cod for tonight's dinner, and a Mackerel for tomorrow's, and headed back to shore.

Everything in life has changed - for the better, I say - the last few years. In all this change, I was glad I had at least had one place that never did, one place that is timeless yesterday, today, and tomorrow. A place that is static in condition so I can call it home. A forever home out there on the ocean.