



from **AMERICAN AIRLINES**

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"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen; welcome aboard the American Airlines Southerner. This is your stewardess Miss Knox. Our flight plan to San Francisco tonight is six hours and thirty-one minutes. Miss Campbell and I are about to serve dinner and when we are finished if there is anything we can do to make your flight more pleasant, please let us know." In this fashion, Miss Donna Knox greets her passengers over the loud speaker as her gleaming silver Flagship is airborne at Dallas, Texas.

Donna, charming brownette of 23, with quiet grey eyes, is a typical American Airlines stewardess, and after two months of flying is much more thrilled at her new profession than she is at being the daughter of the mayor of San Diego, California.

As she makes her way up the aisle of the Flagship, she personally greets each of her passengers, calling those who have flown with her before by name.

Her work actually started an hour before the passengers boarded the Flagship, when she arrived at the operations office at Love Field. Here she went over the flight plan with the captain, read the most recent policy bulletins affecting her work, and studied the special stewardess information reports advising her that one passenger is traveling with a three-month old baby, that the special meal aboard is for a diabetic passenger, and that the Public Relations Department would want her to pose for a picture with the movie star who would be aboard on arrival in San Francisco.

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Then she and Bettye Campbell, the second stewardess on this flight, boarded the Flagship and carefully checked the blankets, pillows, food service and other cabin equipment, and their stewardess kits which contain items ranging from disposable dummies to first aid supplies and playing cards.

As the passengers came aboard, Donna and Bettye inspected their boarding passes, to be sure they were on the right plane, and, when they were seated, secured their names and destinations.

The dinner over and the trays returned to their racks in the galley, Donna and Bettye move about the ship distributing magazines or stationery, answering the questions the passengers ask about the workings of the airplane, its engines, the weather, why it flies, etc. After a while, Donna relieves the mother in seat 10 of her baby and later fills out a Sky Cradle Certificate stating that the young man had been a passenger on this flight, and has it signed by the entire crew.

Throughout the rest of the trip the two girls circulate among the passengers, conducting themselves very much in the manner of two hostesses entertaining fifty guests in their drawing room. Upon arrival in San Francisco, they bid each passenger goodbye at the door of the Flagship, and, after turning in the reports they have unobtrusively made out during the flight, board the crew car and are taken to their hotel. Usually they turn in early and rise early the next morning for a few hours of sightseeing before their return flight, which follows much the same pattern as the westbound trip. Back in Dallas, the girls have three days off between trips.

Donna shares an apartment with two other stewardesses and spends her time off riding, fishing, boating and dancing.

A graduate of San Diego State College, she had previously attended the University of Southern California and San Diego High School. Her ambition to be a stewardess dates back to her high school days, and she applied for the position immediately after receiving her A.B. degree in liberal arts. During the year between the time of her application and the time she was notified of her selection for training at American's stewardess training school (which she says was the longest year of her life), she worked in the offices of her father's dairy.

She admits she approached the stewardess training school in Chicago with some trepidation. She had been told it was in American's hangar at the airport and had visions of a classroom surrounded by oil drums and quarters resembling the back room of a machine shop. Instead, she found the Stewardess Training Center occupied the east wing on the third floor of the largest commercial hangar in the country.

Although a year elapsed between her first interview and the start of her training, she had nothing to worry about as her education, background, personality, and physical qualifications fitted these exacting standards:

Age: 21 to 28 years

Marital Status: Single

Height: 5'2" to 5'7"

Weight: In proportion to height

Vision: Not requiring use of glasses

Once established in the school, Donna soon learned that any similarity between the machine shop and the Stewardess Training Center was purely coincidental and that the school was so appointed that unless she wanted to, she would never realize she was not living and studying at a fashionable girls' academy.

Overwhelmed by the six 6-bed dormitories, each decorated in a different pastel shade, with drapes, bed spreads and linen to match, she was more impressed by the two classrooms, one for DC-6 training and one for Convair training.

In the DC-6 classroom, she found a full scale mock-up of the Flagships on which she would serve. One actually simulates the motion of a plane in flight so she could learn the proper way to walk during turbulent flight conditions. It enabled her to become familiar with the galley and to learn a myriad of details about the cabin of the aircraft.

The Convair classroom features walls lined with charts of that type airplane, maps of the airline system of the United States and blackboards at which she was to spend many an hour in the ensuing month.

The Flagship lounge, where the girls gather for bridge, Canasta, or just loafing, and where they are allowed to entertain guests until 11:00 PM, was described by Donna as "simply a dream." Equipped with a 20-inch television set, a record player and radio, the spacious room has pale blue walls, deep blue carpeting, flowered drapes, cherry sofas, and chartreuse chairs.

Here Donna found her fellow students to be young ladies who had just graduated from college; girls with two years of college and two years of business experience; registered nurses; and a high school graduate who had worked four years as a receptionist in an advertising agency. All were attractive, had pleasant dispositions, clear complexions, and even teeth and, as the month wore on, she learned that all had sales ability, stable temperaments, good judgement, and good characters. "They're just a swell bunch of kids," according to Donna.

On the first day of school, she was fitted for the trim blue uniform she was not allowed to don until one month later. On the second day, she entered into a rigorous course of studies which were to qualify her to wear this uniform and the silver wings designating her a member of that select group of young women - the American Airlines Stewardess Corps.

There were lectures on meteorology, the theory of flight, the technical details of aircraft, the routes of all airlines, governmental agencies interested in aviation, ticketing and reservations, passenger service, food service, flight dispatching and related subjects. There were trips downstairs to the hangar floor where American's rigid maintenance procedures were explained and observed as the mechanics worked. There were trips to the cockpit of the DC-6 and Convair Flagships, where senior captains explained the workings of the instruments used in flight, and there was practice in the emergency procedures used in evacuating disabled aircraft and in first aid.

Midway in this course came "H-Day" - and tears. H-Day climaxes the section of the training period devoted to personality and personal grooming. It is conducted by experts who assist the girls to make the most of their inherent charms. "H-Day" is that dread time when most students are shorn of their lovely long hair and given a short hair cut to conform to the standards of the company which require hair no lower than the collar line. But Donna's tears were short lived as she got used to the new coiffure. "I had to admit it did something for me," she said later.

During the last week of school, the students made observation trips on regular flights to Dallas, New York or Los Angeles, watching the manner in which regular stewardesses "worked" their flights and performing some of the duties under the guidance of the stewardess.

Back at school Donna took a final examination. Then came the day for which she had waited so long and for which she had worked so hard. Following a luncheon at the Shoreland Hotel, overlooking Lake Michigan, she was called to the dais and American's Superintendent of Passenger and Cargo Service pinned silver wings to her uniform and presented her with a diploma certifying she was now a member of the American Airlines' Stewardess Corps.

Since her graduation she has had many important passengers. Movie stars, statesmen and business tycoons are part of her life. She likes flying and feels there are a number of places she still wants to visit before finding the right person with whom to spend the rest of her life. If she is a typical American Airlines' stewardess, she will be married in about two years.