

Video games fly high aboard Canadian airplanes

Canadian Pacific Airlines Ltd. (CP Air) of Vancouver will offer computer-generated electronic games on its aircraft beginning in January 1985. It is one of the first airlines to offer this type of in-flight entertainment.

CP Air's "arcade in the sky" will allow passengers to play mystery games, Star Wars-type games, sports games and quizzes, at their seats.

Dual purpose trays

Special seat trays that will also double as dining trays, are being installed by Air Video, a Toronto-based company whose vice-president and general manager, Michael Thorek, developed the concept.

The seat tray becomes a playing board, with a built-in computer, on which is located a liquid crystal display video-type screen. The game is operated by thumb pressure from a "joy board" set on the right-hand

side of the tray. A head set provides the sound that goes with the action. Four rows of buttons on the left side are also operated by thumb pressure, and feature stop-and-start moves as well as "fire", for the war game series.

Some 7 000 trays are currently being manufactured and are being placed aboard CP Air's 36 aircraft. The first games are being put on two of the airline's *Boeing 737s* on domestic flights. The other aircraft will be converted to house the games as they come in for their main maintenance checks.

Positive test results

Testing by CP Air last year of the system brought a positive response with about 30 per cent of passengers ordering the games.

The concept is novel. A games dispenser, weighing about 450 grams, contains all the games, which are stored

on 9-centimetre floppy discs. The dispensers are provided to flight attendants who wear them on a belt at their waists.

When a passenger requests a game, the attendant enters the game number on the dispenser's keyboard, and then points the dispenser at the passenger's tray, presses a button and the game is transmitted from the floppy disc by infrared light beams to the tray. The transaction, including the provision of a receipt, takes less than a minute.

The dispenser can also provide full inventory control of bar, headset and duty-free sales, as well as game sales, by storing transaction information.

The games are programmed with different degrees of difficulty and new ones will be introduced continually to maintain variety in the selections. They can be rented for a specified time or for the length of the flight, and will automatically stop ten to 15 minutes before landing. The revenue will be shared jointly by the CP Air and Air Video.

Arctic tragedy solution sought by scientists

Three scientists from the University of Alberta are attempting to discover why all the seamen and scientists who were with the ill-fated Franklin expedition of 1845-1848 left their ships and eventually died.

Physical anthropologist Owen Beattie, pathologist Roger Amy and Eric Damkjar, an Arctic archeologist, spent three weeks last summer on Beechey Island in the central Arctic searching for clues of the fate of the expedition.



Body of John Torrington exhumed in the Arctic was almost perfectly preserved by the permafrost.

The body of John Torrington, a 20-year-old petty officer who died in the spring of 1846 and whose grave was discovered in 1850, was exhumed and tissue samples were taken to conduct tests searching for the cause of death. The body, which was almost perfectly preserved in the permafrost, was thawed in a bath of water.

Pneumonia a likely cause of death

As a result of the tests conducted to date, "the most likely direct cause of death of petty officer Torrington, on the basis of the scant tissue evidence available, was pneumonia", said Dr. Amy.

Dr. Beattie said the eventual findings of the pathologists on the early deaths, added to information gleaned from skeletal remains found in other locations, will offer clues as to why all the seamen and scientists eventually died.

The expedition, under Sir John Franklin, left Britain in 1845 to sail the Northwest Passage and collect scientific data. During the winter they were locked in the ice near Beechey Island, but the jams cleared in late summer and the two ships, *Erebus* and *Terror*, pressed on towards the south of King William Island, where they became trapped by the ice in the winter of 1846-47.

Sir John Franklin died in June 1847. In April 1848, the 105 survivors of the original 129-man complement abandoned their ships and moved south.

A note that was left behind said they



Hand of John Torrington.

left the ships hauling lifeboats and they were making for the mouth of the Back River on the mainland.

"They left the ship...either to await rescue perhaps at the mouth of the Back River or perhaps even to row upriver into mainland Canada to a Hudson's Bay post," said Dr. Beattie.

It was not until 1879 that a United States expedition under Lt. Frederick Schwatka, searching for clues, confirmed the tragic end to the endeavour. Lt. Schwatka found the skeletons of the last of the crew on a desolate stretch of the mainland which he named Starvation Cove.

The tragic march of the men has been well documented, as far back as the 1850s, where they walked and where they died. The ships have yet to be discovered as well as the reason why the men left the ships.