(1)

From The AArchives. . .

NEW MEXICO SQUARED

By Russell Goutierez, Operations Analyst, System Operations Control

American Airlines has traditionally been a conservative company where employees tend to navigate a navy blue sea of conformity distilled from numerous hefty manuals that detail the who, what, where, when, and how of running an airline. Equally traditional, however, are the characters — the "square pegs" — who live on the edge either through choice or circumstance.

ost incidents involving nergency landings are, aradoxically, fairly raightforward affairs.

Forty-seven years ago, an adventurous captain and a feisty stewardess led a crew that won the Distinguished Service Award for Valor.

Most incidents involving emergency landings are, paradoxically, fairly straightforward affairs. An event occurs, usually a mechanical problem or medical crisis, the crew takes the necessary action based on their training and experience, the airplane lands, and the situation is resolved. Such was the case, for the most part at least, when American flight 183 shed its number four engine and caught fire twenty-five miles northeast of Columbus, New Mexicc, on December 3, 1948.

Captain Murwin D. Ator commanded the DC-6, assisted by first