

Oranges Anyone?

Another nice fun adventure was the runs to Florida for the weekend. Cold in Ohio, 20s, 30s, 40s, or colder and we'd get to go to FL, 70s, in January, sunny and warm.

Remember, we'd go to Robbins or Dobbins in GA, stay the night Fri night, then up and out to Patrick AFB, FL. Sometimes, after dinner we'd get a wake by the beach, however, we warned, there are fire red ants that bite your feet. Had to get there while it was light enough to see them. Other nights if dark, a drink and a walk on the quiet beach, close to the water, feet, in and out of the water, on the shore line. The sound of rushing waves, the dark blue color with these white caps coming right toward you. Sky dark, but lights off in the distance, or stars glimmering above. Perfect 60-70 degrees. I felt like we were in paradise! For me, it was. Anything better as we woke up and headed for the airplanes early in the morning. Perhaps a flight lunch, sometimes not. However, the night before we left, we put our citrus order in. It was the time of Hugh Navel Oranges, Grapefruits so large you needed two hands to hold them. And Juicy.... WOW! They were wonderful.



The best tasting oranges I had ever had. Then and now. Again, this was before worldwide shipment. Perhaps I and we helped dream world wide shipment up so we could have them more often. This was a winter treat! Again in Ohio, 20-30s at home, oranges and grapefruits were little shriveled up things with skin so thick and tuff, they were hardly edible, probably frozen, shipped before completely ripe, hardly a drop of juice in them.

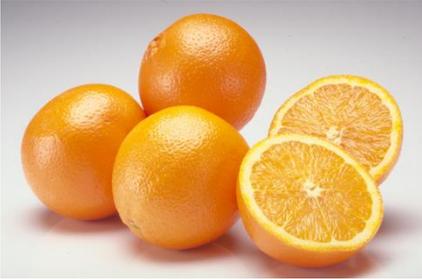


Oh, BUT IN FLORIDA, WOW!!! Fresh squeezed orange juice in the morning. Sometimes looking out at the water with a view. Well, I tell you, I don't think there is or was anything better. Other than Lobsters.



The Citrus was in. A little shack at the edge of the flight line, bags and bags of fruit for our purchase. We'd have to ask how many we could take, to see if the plane could carry the entire load. The pilots might have to fly banked all the way home. Anyway, we got plenty, put the bags of fruit, in their own seat, with a seatbelt, tight enough to hold, but not too tight, to squeeze, and...had to keep them secure and safe. Treated them nicely like any other patient. Distributed the load, however, I suppose the back end of the plane was still a bit hefty to get off the ground.

Home was a celebration. Back at work I had taken orders before the flight. Luckily, when I did, we did make it there and back to accomplish that mission for others. Other times we were rerouted for other emergencies. However, several times we made the citrus fruit run.



The office was a smelling good, with fresh, juicy oranges; we'd open and eat for lunch. What a treat, in the winter cold and snow. What a refreshed attitude I had, having been, in the 70 degree sunny weather for the weekend. People, who hadn't ordered, wondered why I was smiling and where did all the fruit come from.

"What did you do for the weekend," people would share their happenings with others. I'd smile and say, "I was in Florida for the weekend." "Want some fruit?" Huh, they'd say. How'd you get there and back in a weekend? I'd say, "I flew." Thus, more would people would be added to the list of Citrus Fruit Heaven, for the next trip.

Chris Butterworth

C-123s, C-130s, C-9s, C-141s, and C-5s