



# Touching Ground

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AT THE DES MOINES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

## Airline Manager A Part of CRAF Military Mission

While most Americans watched Operation Iraqi Freedom unfold on their TVs, American Airlines (AA) manager, Mike O'Donnell, watched it through the window of a wide-bodied, American B-777 a third of the way around the world from the DSM



Volunteers ranged from flight crews and flight attendants to ramp teams and mechanics on the four B-777's and the two B-767's used for missions. O'Donnell is pictured on the far left.

International Airport. O'Donnell was a volunteer for two two-week periods in April and May 2003 helping AA transport troops to Kuwait. AA is one of eleven commercial carriers participating in America's Civilian Reserve Air Force Program (CRAF).

The U.S. Department of Defense mobilizes the services of the commercial airlines since they are government contractors. AA's European base was Frankfurt, Germany.

They could utilize return-trips without troops on board with freight generating several million dollars in revenues. The 7 1/2 hour flight from Frankfurt to Kuwait was longer due to not being able to fly directly over Switzerland and Austria, making them straddle the Alps on the way down through France, Italy, then the northeast corner of Africa and Saudi Arabia.

Logging 180-hours from April 14-28, they transported 2,000 troops to Kuwait in nine missions. From May 19- June 2, they flew in medics, engineers and military police as they brought out Marine combat troops, a

changing of the guard in the war effort. As the loadmaster for the crew, O'Donnell was responsible for getting the soldiers gear and ammunition loaded/unloaded efficiently, and also calculating weight factors to keep the aircraft balanced and safe. The troops were more relaxed on the commercial airliners taking advantage of meals, movies and an open-cockpit policy.

O'Donnell said the work was hard in the 112- 115 degree heat and humbly admits he's fortunate to hand duties off to a great staff here in DSM in order to take advantage of the opportunity to serve. "It's a whole new perspective to witness that emotion firsthand and be a part of it. Returning home with the troops stateside in Texas, it was 3 A.M. in the morning and they had a band and full-military guard to welcome us home. It just gave me goosebumps!"➔

## Airport Landscaping Efforts Recognized

At the June 3 Airport Board meeting, Aviation Director, Bill Flannery, received an award from Tom Dunbar of Dunbar/Jones PLC in recognition of design and construction of the landscaping that passengers enjoy as they visit the airport. The 2003 Award of Merit was given to the Des Moines landscaping firm on behalf of the American Society of Landscape Architects and was only one of five recognized out of 23 entries statewide. The main designer, Doug



Adamson, used indigenous materials of stone and plants found on the site of the airport to bring all of the locations on the grounds into one continuous theme for aesthetics as well as practicality. The award is the culmination of three years from the design planning to the constructional metamorphosis of beauty that welcomes visitors here at the Des Moines International Airport.➔

### Airport Web Byte...

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### The National Air Tour...

**30-plus vintage aircraft  
Fuel stop on September 11, 2003  
DSM International Airport  
Details to come!**

# THE DES MOINES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND NEW YORK CITY – GET THERE!

The Des Moines International Airport has something many people may not realize – nonstop jet service to New York!

In June of 2002 Continental Airlines began service from Des Moines to the Newark Liberty International Airport. Although Newark is in New Jersey, it is closer and more convenient to Manhattan than either LaGuardia or Kennedy Airports. In addition to being the most convenient of the New York area airports, Newark International is the only one that provides direct, fast, and inexpensive rail service to Manhattan, thanks to AirTrain service.

With the AirTrain, Des Moines air travelers can quickly and inexpensively connect from the Newark Airport to New York's mass transit rail network. Imagine, flying nonstop from Des Moines, picking up your baggage, and boarding a comfortable train for a brief *16-minute* train ride to Penn Central Station in the heart of Manhattan! No other airport

in the New York City area offers this hassle-free rail service to Manhattan.

There are 3 easy steps that you can make to take advantage of this service.

- Reserve a flight from Des Moines to New York on Continental Airlines.
- Upon your arrival, collect your bags and take the free AirTrain monorail from your airline terminal to the Newark Liberty International Airport Rail Link Station.
- At the Rail Link Station, observe the schedule display board and buy a ticket for the next train to New York Penn Station. The cost is 11.55 USD (NJ TRANSIT) and up to 27.00 USD (Amtrak), each way. Credit cards are accepted.

Once you have reached Penn Station, which is located at 8th Avenue and 31st Street, you can obtain a taxi or rent a car, transfer to Amtrak or Long Island Rail Road trains to other cities, or see a Continental agent for flight reservations and ticketing

assistance at the Penn Station Continental Ticket Office (8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. M-F).

So, what are you waiting for? Summer is a great time to visit the "Big Apple". With Continental's nonstop jet service from Des Moines and AirTrain service to Manhattan, getting there as easy as 1,2,3.➔

## Bring A Child to Work Day



*Joey Andre, son of airport employees, Gina and Steve Andre. 16 kids signed up for the 2003 tour on April 24.*



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