

Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport August 2020 Travelers Aid Activity Report

Desk Totals	<u>Term A</u>	<u>Info B</u>	<u>Baggage South</u>
Customer Assists 7,338	1,877	3,695	1,766
Volunteer Hours 656	212	232	212

Special Feature



Volunteer **Alan Davis** witnessed what he described as “an extraordinary scene” from the Info B Desk on August 12th.

Around 4:00pm a Delta flight arrived from Los Angeles and shortly thereafter a hearse with an official seal drove up and parked next to the plane. About fifteen people walked out onto the tarmac and waited for a coffin to be passed down from the cargo hold. Alan and his desk partner, **Ken Lane**, had noticed this same group of people when they passed by the desk earlier in the day.

A military honor guard marched out to escort the casket as it was loaded into the hearse. The family returned inside the airport and again walked past the desk as they headed toward Terminal C. The ceremony took about 30 minutes and many airport passengers and guests stood at attention to watch and to pay their respects.

One gentleman standing nearby came over to talk with Alan and Ken. He had been on the flight and said the pilot announced that their plane was carrying the remains of a young soldier who had been missing in action during the Korean War. His remains were either just discovered or just released by North Korea and were being flown home to Arlington Cemetery for burial. The family members present on the tarmac were descendants of this “fallen hero” since his death had occurred almost 70 years ago.

Alan and Ken felt very privileged to have witnessed such a poignant historical event.

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Assistance Stories

Goutam Kundu came to the Terminal A desk looking for his mother. He said she should have landed on an Air Canada flight about 45 minutes earlier but he was unable to find her. His mother was scheduled to have wheelchair service. Volunteer **Mary Chait** and **Staff** made a page while Mr. Kundu went to the gate to see if she was waiting for him there. Upon hearing the page, an Air Canada employee came to the desk and said Mrs. Kundu had been taken over to United Airlines by the attendant. Mary and Staff tried to reach out to the airline but while doing so, Mr. Kundu received a call from United to tell him his mother was with them.

On August 12th **Staff** received a call from a social worker at Suburban Hospital requesting assistance through security for a 38 year old man who, upon discharge, was flying to Boston. The man was supposed to arrive by Uber at 3:00pm at door 6. Staff got a text from the social worker at 3:20pm that changed his arrival at the curb to 4:00pm. The man did not have a cell phone so somehow he arrived and bypassed Staff and proceeded to the gate on his own. The man called his sister in Boston from the gate area to let her know he was there and ready to board his flight. The sister called Staff who was able to find the man and confirm with his sister and the hospital social worker that all was well.

Ken Lowrie received a telephone call at Bag South from a woman who lives in Minnesota. She was preparing for an upcoming trip and was concerned that her MN driver's license will expire at the end of the month and prior to her travel. Due to Covid-19 closures, the state extended the expiration date until October 31st. The woman wondered how she would get through the security checkpoint with what could seem like an invalid license. Ken gave her the 1-866 number for the TSA Contact Center found in our online manual. He also recommended she bring her passport along with her just in case.

Program Updates

The Bag South information desk (Terminal B opposite bag claim 5) was opened on August 3rd. This location is our third information desk to reopen following the Covid-19 quarantine. Just like the Terminal A and Info B desks, it is staffed by volunteers Monday-Friday, 10:00am - 6:00pm.

The **MWAA IT** team has created many new and exciting functions for the touchscreen info desk kiosks and was rolled out on the 31st. New features include the ability to use voice command to access flight information as well as to submit assistance stories. Passengers can receive airport wayfinding maps and personalized Metro maps by scanning a QR code.