



On April 8, 1957, ten salmon caught in the Shannon were flown to the United States. They weighed 100lb, and were flown from Shannon Airport on a Seaboard & Western Airlines cargo plane to New York. The salmon were packed in cardboard containers, with dry ice. They were shipped by Mr Sean Lynch, Thomas Street, Limerick to Mr T Kearns, Erin's Room, New York. Some of the salmon was presented to Mayor Wagner of New York at the Circus Saints' and Sinners' Dinner that year

Cargo airline takes off at Shannon

Seaboard & Western: World War II veterans get airlines off the ground

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IN 1949, Seaboard & Western Airlines opened a permanent station at Shannon only two years after the company completed its first flight from New York to Europe.

In 1946, a group of World War II veterans mostly of the Army's Air Transport Command founded The Seaboard & Western Airlines. The initial idea came from the Norden brothers, Arthur and Raymond. They were joined by Henry Reninger, Maintenance & Engineering; Carl Brell, Operations and Wallace Neth, Director of Traffic. Collectively they brought a wealth of knowledge of logistics, safety and maintenance from their wartime experiences.

Throughout the 1950s, the Leader reported some of the strange cargo that would pass through Shannon on board a Seaboard & Western flight. The report of November 7, 1953, included thousands of monkeys, which were being transported from Calcutta to New York for research into polio. Nine tons of gold bars coming from New York to Europe and two helicopters from New York to France.

In 1956, the company flew five times weekly each way from New York to Europe, stopping in Shannon. The inaugural flight on this service included two dogs in plywood kennels marked "Handle

with Love." In November 1956, Limerick chemists used the carrier to transport 720,000,000 units of penicillin to Hungary.

In 1958, a flying menagerie arrived at Shannon en route from Cleveland Zoo, Ohio, to Dublin Zoo. The live cargo consisted of six skunks, two racoons and three South American monkeys. The collection was transported from Shannon to Dublin in a specially equipped van. In August 1959, two crates marked "Handle with care and caution" arrived in Shannon Airport. Inside were two full-length pythons of the boa constrictor variety. These were a gift from Trinidad Zoo to Dublin Zoo. In return, Dublin Zoo sent two lion cubs to Trinidad.

The airline flew for all over the globe for thirty-three years without a single fatal air related accident. Although, sadly one of their co-pilots Merlyn Koecher, native of New York, was killed in a road traffic accident at O'Dwyer's Bridge in Limerick city in October 1958. He was the passenger in a car traveling from Corbally to the city when the car struck an electrical pole. The driver of the car survived the accident. He was also an American pilot with Seaboard & Western Airlines.

The company continues today in a different guise as in 1980, The Flying Tiger Line, absorbed the company. In 1988, it became part of the Federal Express Corporation.

