

'Twas the Night Before Christmas (Aviation Style)

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I know we have a few pilots, "wanna be" pilots and many passengers who read this Blog. This "takeoff" on the poem 'Twas the night before Christmas has been making the rounds of aviation websites and other publications for over 20 years. No one seems to know where it came from. Enjoy ...

'Twas the night before Christmas, and out on the ramp,
Not an airplane was stirring, not even a Champ.
The aircraft were fastened to tie downs with care,
In hopes that -- come morning -- they all would be there.

The fuel trucks were nestled, all snug in their spots,
With gusts from two-forty at 39 knots.
I slumped at the fuel desk, now finally caught up,
And settled down comfortably, resting my butt.

When the radio lit up with noise and with chatter,
I turned up the scanner to see what was the matter.
A voice clearly heard over static and snow,
Called for clearance to land at the airport below.

He barked his transmission so lively and quick,
I'd have sworn that the call sign he used was "St. Nick."
I ran to the panel to turn up the lights,
The better to welcome this magical flight.

He called his position, no room for denial,
"St. Nicholas One, turnin' left onto final."
And what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a Rutan-built sleigh, with eight Rotax Reindeer!

With vectors to final, down the glideslope he came,
As he passed all fixes, he called them by name:
"Now Ringo! Now Tolga! Now Trini and Bacun!
On Comet! On Cupid!" What pills was he takin'?

While controllers were sittin', and scratchin' their heads,
They phoned to my office, and I heard it with dread,
The message they left was both urgent and dour:
"When Santa pulls in, have him please call the tower."

He landed like silk, with the sled runners sparking,
Then I heard, "Left at Charlie," and, "Taxi to parking."
He slowed to a taxi, turned off of three-oh,
And stopped on the ramp with a "Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho!"

He stepped out of the sleigh, but before he could talk,
I ran out to meet him with my best set of chocks.
His red helmet and goggles were covered with frost,
And his beard was all blackened from reindeer exhaust.

His breath smelled like peppermint, gone slightly stale,
And he puffed on a pipe, but he didn't inhale.
His cheeks were all rosy and jiggled like jelly,
His boots were as black as a cropduster's belly.

He was chubby and plump, in his suit of bright red,
And he asked me to "fill it, with hundred low-lead."
He came dashing in from the snow-covered pump,
I knew he was anxious for drainin' the sump.

I spoke not a word, but went straight to my work,
And I filled up the sleigh, but I spilled like a jerk.
He came out of the restroom, and sighed in relief,
Then he picked up a phone for a Flight Service brief.

And I thought as he silently scribed in his log,
These reindeer could land in an eighth-mile fog.
He completed his pre-flight, from the front to the rear,
Then he put on his headset, and I heard him yell, "Clear!"

And laying a finger on his push-to-talk,
He called up the tower for clearance and squawk.
"Take taxiway Charlie, the southbound direction,
Turn right three-two-zero at pilot's discretion"

He sped down the runway, the best of the best,
"Your traffic's a Grumman, inbound from the west."
Then I heard him proclaim, as he climbed through the night,
"Merry Christmas to all! I have traffic in sight!"