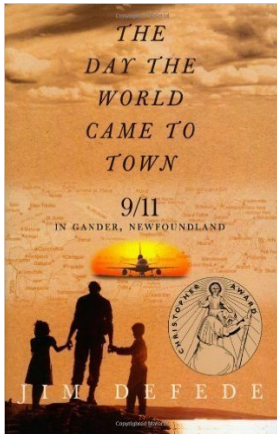


## ***Book Review – The Day the World Came to Town*** ***9/11 in Gander Newfoundland*** ***by Jim Defede***

*Review by Chris Hope, Master CFI*



All Americans can remember what they were doing on September 11, 2001. For us who fly airplanes, the day was more poignant than for more pilots. We pilots, especially those who were in the air that day, remember the most unusual instruction we received from Air Traffic Control – “Land. Now!” Aircraft entering the country had a similar call from the various off-shore controllers. “U.S. airspace is closed. What are your intentions?”

Some aircraft returned to their point of departure, and some diverted. This is the story of the thirty-eight aircraft and their 6,600 passengers who diverted to Gander, Newfoundland.

Newfoundland is the easternmost province of Canada, an island, roughly 1,000 miles northeast of Maine. The most noteworthy aspect of the town of Gander, is that served as a primary fuel stop for many years for all aircraft between the US and Europe. When props gave way to jets, its 10,000 residents returned to looking out for themselves.

6,000 people descended on this small town, and there are 6,000 unique stories about their experiences. But Jim Defede captures the essence of the community in his relating the stories of a dozen or so couples and individuals. Americans, Moldavians, Jews, residents from all over Europe and Africa. And the animals – dogs, monkeys, just to name a few. All were marooned on this small island.

The Newfies are wonderful people. They had the same amount of warning that all of us did – none. But they immediately rallied and were waiting when the first aircraft began landing an hour later. They started with putting the passengers to bed in their schools and churches and community halls. And then, almost immediately, began inviting these strangers into their homes.

We learn of the O’Rourke family, whose time in Gander was full of thoughts about their FDNY son. Was he alive? Clark and Roxanne Loper were returning from Russia with their newly adopted daughter. How would she fare? Rabbi Sudak and family find themselves far away from home in a community who has no Jewish residents. How will they fit in? And on the other side, Defede tells stories of the many Newfies who go so far beyond what might be expected as their little town doubles in size over night.

Out of all of horror and heartbreak that came out of that day, it is nice to be reminded that there are a lot of kind people in this world.

This book is definitely worth your time.

*Chris loves to read, write, and fly, but not necessarily in that order*

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