

BY DENISE ALLEN ZWICKER

# TRAVEL TALES

LOGGING 145 MILLION AIR MILES  
ANNUALLY, OUR FREQUENT  
FLIERS ARE PUTTING DIAMOND  
OFFSHORE ON THE MAP.

### DIAMOND OFFSHORE HAS BECOME A TRULY GLOBAL COMPANY

in recent years, with 30 of its 34 marketed rigs now working in non-U.S. waters. Thus, getting to work offshore has become a new challenge, involving passports, visas, work permits, shots, foreign taxes and frequent-flier miles—often for employees who may never have traveled beyond the U.S. Gulf Coast before.

“Our job may be offshore drilling, but it takes a lot of work to get people offshore,” said Renée Gannaway, travel manager. “We’re not like a factory, where people punch in every morning. In our business, we have to take our employees to work. At the same time, travel is personal, and people have very strong preferences. We do our best to satisfy them—along with company policy.”

For international assignments, our crews typically work a rotational schedule of 28 days aboard the rig followed by 28 days off. Keeping everyone happy is a real juggling act, with airline prices and policies changing daily—and an average of 100-plus Diamond Offshore travelers in the air every day. The numbers can be mind-boggling:

Of Diamond Offshore’s 5,300 employees, roughly 3,300 rotate regularly to rigs in non-U.S. waters, including Australia, Brazil, the U.K., Norway, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Philippines, Egypt, Montenegro, West Africa and the Bay of Campeche, Mexico.

The Travel Department tries to book flights three to four months in advance, delivering E-tickets to rig rotators before they leave the rig for their time off—in other words, at least 30 days before their next hitch.



RIFFAT ZAIDI



SANDRA SISSON



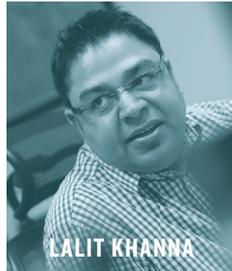
SANDIE JOHNSON



RENÉE GANNAWAY



GENEVA PERETTI



LALIT KHANNA

THE VALUE OF THE PERSONAL TOUCH IS EVIDENT IN THE TENURE AND POPULARITY OF OUR AGENTS. (AGENTS CHRIS BURKE AND WANDA HART ARE NOT PICTURED)

Travel agents must swing into action for weather-related and emergency evacuations as well as the rerouting required for special cases, such as the European volcanic-ash event in 2010.

Diamond Offshore’s air transactions for the year typically total 24,000 or more, handled by eight agents at our Houston headquarters.

Our employees travel more than 145 million miles a year, or an average of 400,000 miles per day—nearly the distance of a round trip to the moon and back.

“Diamond Offshore is unusual in keeping its travel office open 24 hours a day, seven days a week to serve its employees, and the department has grown in recent years—to eight agents,” said Gannaway. “Four agents rotate 12-hour shifts, seven days on/seven days off. The other four work staggered hours Monday through Friday. Most other contractors outsource their ‘after-hours’ calls to a customer center. But we figure it’s daytime somewhere we’re working, regardless of the hour here in Houston. We want to always be here for our people.” Along with getting Diamond Offshore’s rig rotators to work on the rigs, the department arranges the travel of rotating-shore-base and corporate travelers.

The value of the personal touch is evident in the tenure and popularity of our agents. Geneva Peretti, for example, is retiring this year after 13 years on the job. “Geneva and Chris Burke are the best of the best,” said Russell Peterson, one of Diamond Offshore’s “top 10 travelers” and a roving electrical supervisor for Australasia.

Some of these friendships are forged in adversity when flights change unexpectedly and bad weather threatens. Peterson would argue that some of them are forged in confusion, as well.

“I was on a hitch in Australia once when my mother got very sick, and I needed to fly home,” said Peterson. “We had to make lots of arrangements, and I was on the phone repeatedly with my wife and with agent Chris Burke, back and forth with each. I was tired and confused and,

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thinking I was talking to my wife, I ended a call with Chris by saying, ‘Thanks for everything, and I love you.’ Chris paused for just a moment before replying, ‘Well, I love you, too, but I think that message was meant for someone else.’”

All of these efforts are in service to a joint goal: to get every employee where he or she needs to be—on time, safely and as comfortably as possible.

## ON TIME

As if dealing with dozens of flight changes daily isn’t enough, our agents and the travelers themselves must wrestle with the logistics of international travel. Usually it goes smoothly, but sometimes...well, it doesn’t.

“Once, it took me six days to reach my assigned rig,” said Jim Breeden, storekeeper for the *Ocean Vanguard*. “I was living in the U.K. and traveling to Australia. Everything was going OK until I reached the Kimberley region of Australia, where I was supposed to board a helicopter to fly out to the rig. The engine on the helicopter burned up, and I ended up having to wait three days in Darwin, Australia, plus one night at the landing strip, which was in a remote area. It’s the longest crew change I’ve ever had.”

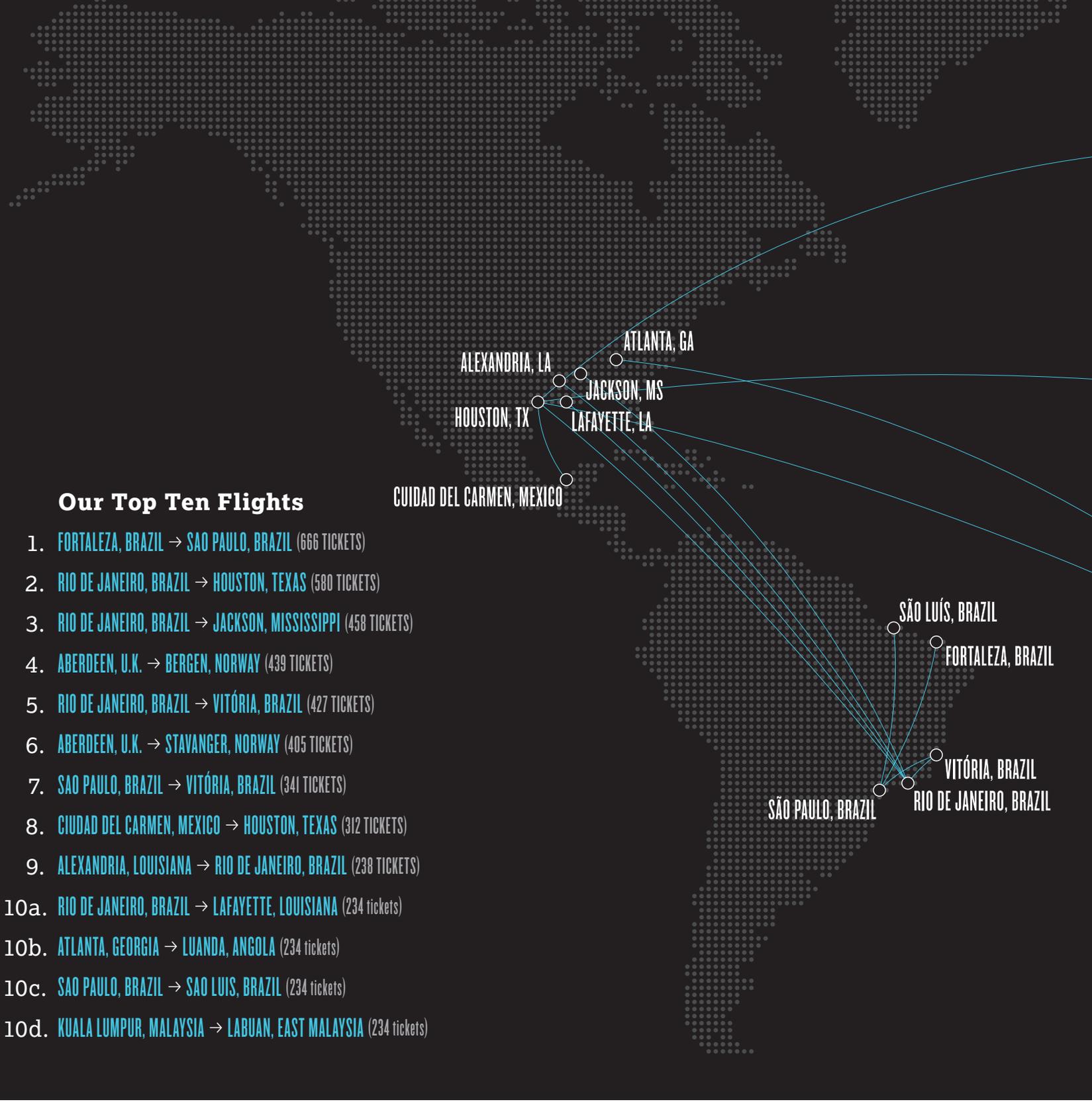
## SAFELY

Of course, Sept. 11, 2001, changed nearly everything about airline safety. Other factors, such as political unrest and natural disasters, affect not only air travel, but also ground transportation and interim lodging. Even in the safest areas, the logistics of regularly moving people from place to place requires coordination with immigration advisers, logistics teams and ground crews.

“When we go into an area that’s new to us, one of my jobs is to learn about the health risks in the area, such as indigenous infections and health care facilities,” said Jim Cantrell, international health, safety and environmental manager. “I also look into the cultural differences that are important for our people to understand. I work closely with Ron Relf, our chief of global security, to determine the safest ground transportation and to understand any dangers that might come up during the time we’ll be in the area.

“We can’t take anything for granted,” Cantrell stressed. “For example, if we’re hiring buses, we insist that they have seat belts and seat cushions. If we don’t check, we sometimes get unpleasant surprises, like the van in Equatorial Guinea that arrived with about six inches of mud throughout its interior.”





## Our Top Ten Flights

1. FORTALEZA, BRAZIL → SAO PAULO, BRAZIL (666 TICKETS)
2. RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL → HOUSTON, TEXAS (580 TICKETS)
3. RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL → JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI (458 TICKETS)
4. ABERDEEN, U.K. → BERGEN, NORWAY (439 TICKETS)
5. RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL → VITÓRIA, BRAZIL (427 TICKETS)
6. ABERDEEN, U.K. → STAVANGER, NORWAY (405 TICKETS)
7. SAO PAULO, BRAZIL → VITÓRIA, BRAZIL (341 TICKETS)
8. CIUDAD DEL CARMEN, MEXICO → HOUSTON, TEXAS (312 TICKETS)
9. ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA → RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL (238 TICKETS)
- 10a. RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL → LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA (234 tickets)
- 10b. ATLANTA, GEORGIA → LUANDA, ANGOLA (234 tickets)
- 10c. SAO PAULO, BRAZIL → SAO LUIS, BRAZIL (234 tickets)
- 10d. KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA → LABUAN, EAST MALAYSIA (234 tickets)

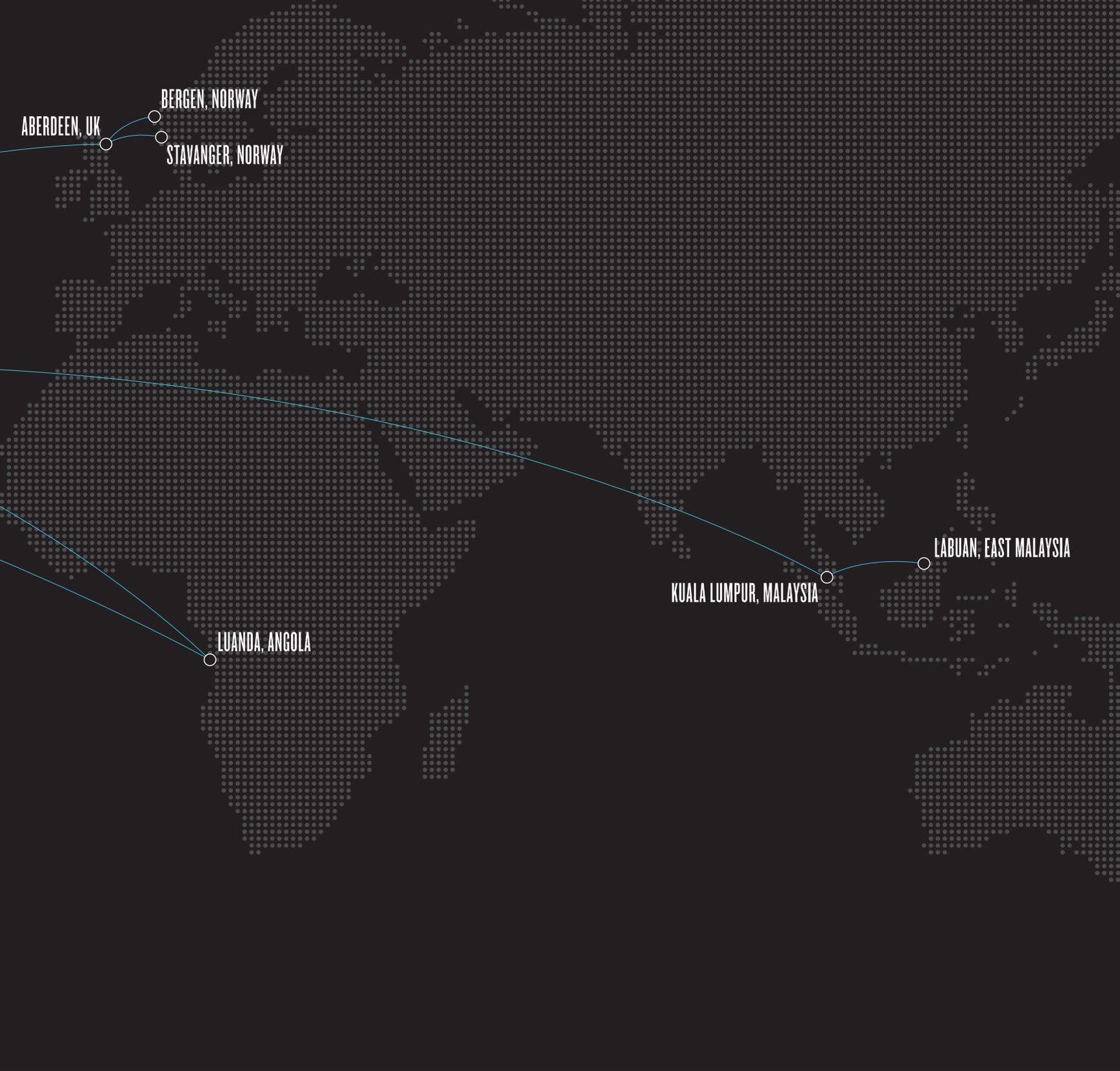
Relf, who has a military and investigations background in 120 countries, set up a contingency plan to move Diamond Offshore people and their families out of Egypt during the recent political unrest. Although everyone eventually was able to leave on commercial flights, Relf was ready with charter flights, safe houses and boats.

## COMFORTABLY

Diamond Offshore agents can't do much about the comfort of airplane seats or airports. But they can, and do, ensure

that traveling employees have plenty of time to make flight connections, for example. They book hotel rooms if employees must wait more than six hours for a flight. They do their best to accommodate every employee.

"The farthest I've ever traveled was when I was working 28/28 in the shorebase office of Balikpapan, Indonesia," said Seth Tidwell, regional administrator. "As I recall, that trip required 36 hours: first from Houston to Los Angeles, then nonstop on Singapore Airlines for 21 hours to Singapore. There, I had a long layover, then flew on to Balikpapan. The guys working on the rig had it even worse: They then



had about a four-hour stop in Balikpapan before taking a four-hour boat trip to the rig—and then some of our guys had to go right to work!

“Twelve time zones from Houston can be tough,” Tidwell sighed. “The best part is that Singapore Airlines had a great choice of movies, so I would see seven or eight movies on each round trip.

“One trip home, however, I flew from Balikpapan to Singapore to Los Angeles to Houston and, after a short layover, flew on to Mexico to meet my family for a vacation. After my long flights, though, I think I slept through most of that vacation.”

## ROMANCE

Although we don’t bill ourselves as matchmakers, at least two of Diamond Offshore’s frequent travelers have found the loves of their lives “at work.”

On July 9, 1996, Jim Breeden was traveling from Arkansas to a hitch in Nigeria when his overseas flight to London was delayed by a severe storm. After a wait in Dallas, he boarded a flight as a standby passenger. Just before the doors closed, the last standby passenger, a woman, entered the plane and approached the last available seat: the one next to Jim.

# TRAVEL BY THE NUMBERS

## 3,300

EMPLOYEES WHO ROTATE REGULARLY TO RIGS IN NON-U.S. WATERS



## 100+

DAILY AVERAGE EMPLOYEES IN THE AIR

## 3-4

MONTHS ADVANCE IN FLIGHT BOOKING

## 24/7

TRAVEL OFFICE HOURS

## 8

TRAVEL OFFICE AGENTS

### OUR TOP TEN TRAVELERS

FLEW ANYWHERE FROM 29 TO 37 TIMES IN 2012

1. Karl Paterson
2. Frode Viddal
3. Terje Hansen
4. John Montgomery
5. Douglas Davidson
6. Dag Henry Jonassen
7. James Pickles
8. Barratt Wilson
9. Mark Stephenson
10. Russell Eric Peterson

## 145 million

AVERAGE ANNUAL MILES

## 400,000

AVERAGE DAILY MILES

## 24,000

AVERAGE ANNUAL AIR TRANSACTIONS

“BOTH OF US HAD BEEN UPGRADED TO FIRST CLASS. HE HELPED ME STOW MY LUGGAGE AND TOOK MY HAND TO HELP ME INTO MY SEAT. THEN HE NEVER LET GO.”

“Both of us had been upgraded to first class. He helped me stow my luggage and took my hand to help me into my seat. Then he never let go,” recalled Lise Lotte Breeden, laughing as she recalled the story. “He said, ‘We’re going to be spending the night together, so I’d better introduce myself.’”

Sure enough, they “spent the night together” as they flew across the Atlantic Ocean, holding hands and talking nonstop. “Our respective parents had just had their golden anniversaries on the same date, and the similarities just went on from there,” Lise said. “It was as if we had known one another all our lives,” Jim added.

Their conversation did not go unnoticed by their fellow passengers: “When we got off the plane at London’s Gatwick Airport, the flight attendants and passengers said ‘Invite us to the wedding,’” Lise recalled.

It happened two years later in Lise’s home country of Denmark, with both of their families fully represented. “We chartered a bus for 40-plus people and, for three weeks, toured London, Normandy, and portions of France, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands before our wedding,” Jim said. “I’m so fortunate to be assigned to Norway today, since our two sons go to school in ‘next-door’ Denmark.”

Seth Tidwell likewise met his wife while living overseas for his job. “I have met many interesting people in my travels, and one dear to my heart stands out,” he said. “When I was transferred to Peru, it became very clear to me that I should have worked harder in high-school Spanish class—especially when I met a young Colombian señorita who I thought was pretty darn cute, intelligent, and made me laugh. The problem was that she didn’t speak English.

“I started working hard on my Spanish skills and, over many months, was able to slowly but steadily coax that young, cute, smart, funny Colombian into saying ‘I do’ (in Spanish, of course) at the altar,” Tidwell continued. “Carolina and I have been married 32 years now. We have two great kiddos, one of whom was born in Colombia. We have lived overseas about 15 years and now wryly call ourselves ‘the All-American familia.’”

## HAPPY ENDINGS

Happy endings like those are among the rewards of arranging travel for Diamond Offshore and reflect the tireless efforts of personnel working behind the scenes. “Patsy Nettles [manager of staffing services] and I joke that the stresses of this work are why we have to color our hair,” said Jane Munoz, Houston-based director of global employee services. “But the truth is that Diamond’s executives realize the effort it takes to mobilize our people, and they have always come through for us.” ■