Tracked The First Boeing 717 Ever Built For 24 rs: Here's How Many Flights It Squeezed In



By Jacob Johnson — Nov 7, 2026, 5:00 PM EST

a very important piece of aviation history is still flying between islands and g to serve passengers after nearly 30 years in operation. Using the Simple Flying t Tracker, we monitored registration N488HA through a 24-hour operating vatching how the world's oldest surviving **Boeing 717** churned through ten ectors in a single day.

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; this specific airframe in real time lays bare the relentless operational demands e interisland scheduling. As regional carriers squeeze maximum productivity g twin-jets, following line airframe MSN 55001 offers a rare window into how gineering handles ten rapid cycles of takeoff, climb, and descent in a single day.

Start Point Of The 717

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ʏ of MSN 55001 begins long before its current life in Hawaii, originating in 1998 ’s flight testbed registered as N717XB, as per AirFleets. The airframe served as ational platform for certifying the MD-95 derivative before commercial ramped up in Long Beach. Following that, the MD-95 program was then l as the 717. This pedigree makes the aircraft not just a standard regional but the literal genesis of the entire 717 production line: technically only the ʏer produced, but the first to enter regular service.

its initial stint as a manufacturer test vehicle, the aircraft crossed the Pacific ımercial routes in the Southern Hemisphere. Airport-Data and Simple Flying ıalysis documents its tenure operating for Australian carriers Impulse Airlines **aslink** under registrations VH-VQA and VH-NXF. During this era, the twinjet ; mettle on short-haul Australian domestic sectors, establishing the high-cycle

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/, the airframe found its permanent home in the Hawaiian island chain, where it istened with its current registration N488HA and the traditional Hawaiian bird .iohi. Operating under **Hawaiian Airlines**' colors, it has spent over two decades ; the short, high-density sectors connecting Honolulu to neighboring island Jltimately, surviving decades of corrosive maritime air and relentless ation cycles attests to the robust structural margins engineered into the original lerived airframe.

re Did The Aircraft Fly To?



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to Simple Flying's tracker replay data, monitoring registration N488HA through tober 9, revealed a punishing schedule that highlights the twinjet's unmatched l efficiency. The day's operations commenced bright and early at Daniel K. ernational Airport in Honolulu (HNL), where the aircraft departed at 07:07 local Standard Time (HST) on flight AS1013 across the brief 21-minute hop to Lihue owing a rapid ground turnaround, the airframe immediately operated the return 024 at 08:13 HST, setting the fast-paced tempo for a tough 24-hour operating

/ approached, internal flight logs and tracking replay records show N488HA ng its relentless cadence across multiple islands without missing a beat. The cled back to Lihue as AS1053 before returning to Honolulu, and quickly pivoted rd **Kahului Airport** (OGG) on flight AS1096 at 12:43 HST. Each sector averaged 21 utes airborne, showing how the high-thrust Rolls-Royce BR715 engines rapidly e the airframe on short-stage climbs where traditional narrowbodies burn el during extended altitude transitions. Ground crews at each island destination lly completed tight gate turnarounds, capitalizing on the aircraft's built-in o keep passenger boarding moving at peak efficiency.

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ng rotation pushed the aircraft further across the island chain before g its demanding operating day late into the night. After completing another hrough Lihue, N488HA operated flight AS1120 from Lihue down to Kailua-Kona n a 45-minute airborne duration, followed by the return sector AS1157 to The final assignment of the day came as flight AS1132, departing Honolulu at and touching down in Hilo (ITO) at 21:53 HST after a 35-minute hop. Across all rs, the airframe accumulated roughly 4 hours and 42 minutes of total airborne e enduring ten full pressurization cycles, a testament to the robust durability d into line airframe MSN 55001.

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ching Perfectly To Hawaiian's Needs?

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to Simple Flying aircraft analysis, the 717 was structurally over-engineered for l durability, tracing its lineage directly back to the ultra-rugged **McDonnell C-9**and **McDonnell Douglas MD-80** families. The now more common modern e narrowbodies are designed for long-range fuel efficiency, whereas the 717 heavy-gauge aluminum fuselage and exceptionally robust landing gear specifically to absorb the relentless shock of short-field landings and rapid d cycles. This explains why legacy airframes like MSN 55001 can endure f high-frequency island hopping without any premature fatigue.

ft's powerplant performance is also custom-tailored for brief regional hops. As nanufacturer summaries, the twin rear-mounted Rolls-Royce BR715 turbofans

717 to rapidly punch through low-level turbulence and reach efficient cruise before initiating an immediate descent toward neighboring island runways.

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this relentless operating tempo pushes mechanical systems to their absolute
porting from AirInsight has shown that Hawaiian's 717s frequently operate up to
a day, meaning that meticulous inspections of pressure bulkheads, wing spars,
ng gear attachments are needed. This punishing, high-cycle reality highlights
ircraft remains irreplaceable for island networks, especially because the routes
ntegrate into carrier codeshare operations.

vaiian Airlines Active 717 Aircraft Open in Tracker

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Merger With Alaska

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landmark merger between Alaska Air Group and Hawaiian Airlines, operational of inter-island flying underwent a profound realignment. Hawaiian's historic 7s now operates under consolidated commercial frameworks, evidenced by ıbers transitioning to **Alaska Airlines**' familiar AS prefix, such as the early ıS1013 from Honolulu to Lihue. Despite the updated ticketing and codeshare ɔns, the day-to-day cabin experience and local ground operations are still ɔted in Hawaiian's established island culture.

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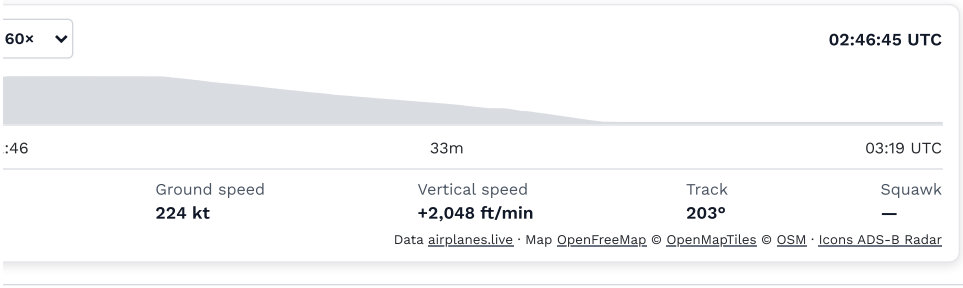

d network allows passengers connecting from mainland North American on Alaska operated aircraft to seamlessly transition onto interisland 717 under a single booking itinerary. Maintaining high-frequency regional ity is vital to sustaining economic mobility across the islands, so residents and ike can travel between Honolulu, Lihue, Kahului, Kailua-Kona, and Hilo with riction.

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hese merged operations within the flight tracker feature highlights the sheer
y of coordinating high-density regional traffic under a single parent holding
With air traffic control vectors and ground turnaround teams managing up to
/cles per airframe, the integration of AS flight numbers is a visible marker of
tional regional carriers are adapting to post-merger realities.

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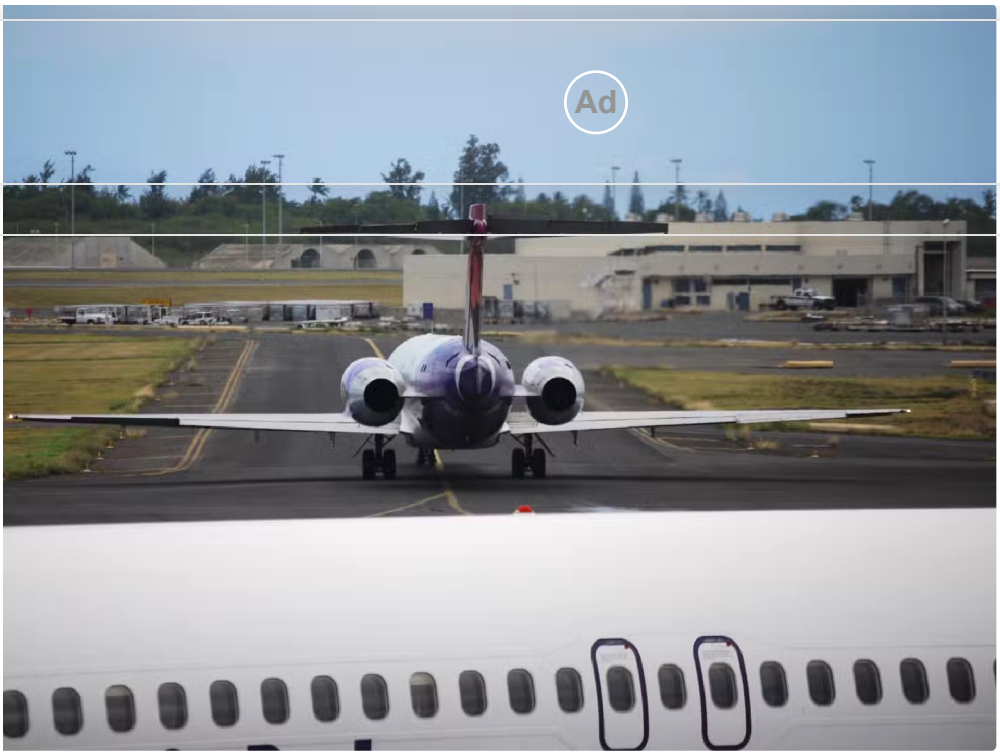

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ıeir unmatched reliability on high-frequency interisland sectors, the global 717 pidly approaching an inevitable retirement finale. According to Simple Flying ıajor operators are preparing to sunset the type as airframe maintenance ıw more complex and fuel-efficiency standards shift toward next-generation dies. **Delta Air Lines**, which operates the world's largest 717 fleet, has steadily roundwork to replace its aging twin-jets with fuel-efficient **Airbus A220** aircraft y domestic hubs.

e, in the Pacific, Hawaiian Airlines is mapping out its own generational fleet . As per Business Traveller, the airline's interisland 717 operations are slated to l out starting in 2028, with the carrier planning to transition those high-density l sectors to **Boeing 737-800**s. Flight tracking logs for historic airframes like eflect this changing landscape; operational data show active tracked schedules ›ff after mid-October, signaling that these veteran aircraft face increasingly tight ıce windows and scheduled deep-check rotations.

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ual departure of the 717 will mark the definitive end of the DC-9 bloodline, era of commercial aviation defined by rugged, rear-mounted engine airframes ithstand punishing, multi-cycle daily rosters. Tracking aircraft like MSN 55001, provides a living archive of how robust engineering and dedicated maintenance ep aviation history airborne day after day.

ue Legend Of Hawaii



registration N488HA through ten demanding sectors in a single twenty-four- low showed exactly why the 717 is so legendary among pilots, mechanics, and nthusiasts alike. From its humble origins as Boeing flight testbed MSN 55001 to es of faithful service connecting Honolulu, Lihue, Kahului, Kailua-Kona, and Hilo, ft embodies a masterclass in structural durability designed to conquer the ysics of short-stage, high-cycle operations.

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threshold is fast approaching, when Hawaiian Airlines begins transitioning its
tions to Boeing 737-800s and Delta advances its A220 rollout, so monitoring
aining flight of the world's oldest active 717 offers a poignant glimpse into an
ommercial landscape. You can continue following live fleet telemetry via
ying's tracking channels as these iconic twin-jets gracefully approach their final
of service.

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ounding like the MD80 with American Airlines, yes this aircraft has served the area well, yes it wil be nice when ng 737's come along &: then you can retire the older plane - have a celebration on its last flight when ever this ace !!

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Ink a few years back sold all their remaining B717 to Delta, replacing with A220 mostly. As others seem to be well.

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