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## “Navigators of the First Global Air Force”

In our last issue, we started the story of Charlie. This issue continues the story.

From childhood, Charlie had heard stories of shipwrecks all along the Florida Keys. Spanish sea captains with millions of dollars in treasure had lost their ships in those waters as they made their way back toward Spain. He also knew the nineteenth century tales of how some Key West natives had ridden mules in the shallow waters along the reefs at night and had held lanterns high on poles to confuse pilots into navigating vessels onto the coral reefs. As a result, many Key West merchants sold a variety of exotic merchandise from such wrecked ships. Wrecking ships, recovering the cargo, and selling it resulted in a thriving business in old Key West.

These stories gave young Lunn a good sense of the value of accurate navigation. He became obsessed with the importance of being able to navigate by the stars as a means of maintaining an accurate course on the sea. He studied the stars and he studied navigation books until spherical trigonometry became common place as he worked to master his favorite subject. His diligence in learning the ways of the sea qualified him to be captain of his own ship at the age of 26.

In the early 1930s, an important part of the P & O Steamship Company's business was hauling trains from Key West to Havana. Cubans loaded the trains with sugar. P & O ships then transported the railroad cars laden with sugar back to Key West. From there they traveled on the railroad across the Florida Keys to US markets.

In Havana, Charles met two people who changed his life forever. The first was an attractive, green-eyed, blonde English girl who worked as a secretary in the P & O Office in Havana. After a year-long romance with the handsome young sea captain, she became Mrs Charles J. Lunn. The other person to change his life was Patrick Nolan, a captain for the Pan American Airways Company.

When Pan American pilots moored their flying boats in the Havana Harbor, they were generally near the P & O steam ships. It was a custom for the aircrews to go aboard the ships to visit and enjoy good, well prepared American food. It was on such visits that Captain Nolan became acquainted with Charlie Lunn and his expertise as a celestial navigator.

“Why don't you come up to Miami and make application for a job as a navigator with Pan American?” Nolan asked Lunn.

Lunn said he would have to think about that for awhile. He did think about it. In 1935 a disastrous hurricane swept across the Florida Keys destroying the rail line that had previously brought the trains to Key West.

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## “Navigators of the First Global Air Force”

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The P & O lines moved their operation from Key West to Fort Lauderdale. It was then that Charlie made up his mind to apply for a job as a navigator with the Pan American Airways Company in Miami.

At that time, Pan American was extending its aerial routes to distant cities of the world. Among the first people to navigate their big flying boats were Charlie J. Lunn and Fred Noonan. The latter name is indelibly written in the aviation history as the navigator who accompanied Amelia Earhart on her ill-fated effort to fly around the world. Although Charles J. Lunn is less well known, he had navigated the big Pan American clippers for five years before his fateful meeting with Gen Delos Emmons.

Classes began on Monday, 12 August 1940, with Charlie Lunn as the chief performer. He stood pleading with his fledgling cadets to understand the complicated procedures that he was explaining. There were no teachers' manuals. He was teaching what he had learned at sea and then modified so he could navigate flying machines. Great minds like Nathaniel Bowditch, John Hamilton Moore, Pytheas of Massalia, and many others had unlocked the secrets to using the stars for navigation. Lunn was the link between them and the thousands of young men who would be flying military missions around the world using celestial navigation.

With his fine six-foot physique, Charlie was a handsome figure in his Pan American Airways uniform. However in the classroom at the university, he often appeared in front of his class clad in a round-neck, short-sleeved, knit shirt that exposed the brawny, tattooed arms of a son of the sea.

“Don't write that down,” he would plead. “You've got to get it up here in your head. Your notes and papers won't do you any good when you're out over the ocean some night.” Navigating over the ocean at night seemed more like a dream than a reality to the cadets. None of us had even been “out over the ocean” in a plane at night. Nevertheless, Charlie doggedly transferred his grasp of celestial navigation to his struggling students. Little by little we became skilled at celestial navigation.

We received 50 hours of in-flight navigation training flying from the Pan American seaplane base at Dinner Key. The base was located on the coast five miles from the university. There Pan American converted five of its twin-engine Sikorsky and Consolidated flying boats into flying classrooms for day and night training missions. There were 10 large tables in each plane with maps of the Caribbean Sea area. Each table contained an altimeter, a compass, and an airspeed indicator. A large hatch open to the sky was used for taking celestial observations.

It was said that the ancient flying boats would take off at 115 miles per hour, cruise at 115 miles per hour, and land at 115 miles per hour. Cadet Harold McAuliff described the noise the clipper made in landing as being like the sound of a truck dumping a load of gravel on a tin roof. Antiquated as they were, the planes provided a real-life environment for practicing celestial navigation.

Before a cadet set foot in the big clipper training ships, he had to spend many hours atop the San Sebastian Hotel at night. There he got acquainted with the best friends he would ever have - the stars and planets. Cadets learned the names and the relative locations of the 50 brightest stars and the planets. Betelgeuse, Arcturus and Canopus became as familiar as the names of the streets back in their hometowns.

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### Don't Miss This Fantastic Pictorial History of Pan Am Available Online

For a trip through Pan Am's history with pictures and photos, go to our website -[www.clipperpioneers.com](http://www.clipperpioneers.com) - and click on the powerpoint presentation. It's just great!

You can now access the mailing and phone list of your fellow Clipper Pioneers. Go to the Clipper Pioneer website - [www.clipperpioneers.com](http://www.clipperpioneers.com) - and scroll down to the bottom of the home page. Click on “Members Only” - when the password box pops up, type in the user name & password printed in your newsletter. You will be able to access the current list of names, address, phone #s, and email addresses there.

## “Navigators of the First Global Air Force”

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In the classrooms, there were “dry runs” across the Atlantic Ocean from Miami to Lisbon and from Lisbon, Portugal, and from Lisbon to New York. These were routes which Charlie Lunn had flown many times. Charlie provided columns of figures representing the altitudes of given stars in degrees, minutes, and seconds. He also provided columns of figures representing the hour, minute, and seconds of each observation. These were to be added and averaged manually before using the almanac and tables to establish celestial fixes along the course. Neither averaging devices nor computers were in use at the time. Navigation was an exercise in mental gymnastics that seemed to have no ending.

Academic training quickly revealed that the plane’s airspeed indicator did not really measure how fast the plane was traveling. The compass did not tell the exact direction the plane was traveling, and the altimeter did not mark the actual altitude of the aircraft. As an aircraft moves through the air, navigators have to make corrections for such things as temperature, atmospheric pressure, magnetic variation, deviation, precession, and refraction. These were things that Charlie Lunn had learned for himself when he left marine navigation and took to the air.

Days and nights of work and study filled the cadets’ lives. As busy as they were the cadets found time for recreation at the beautiful Venetian Swimming Pool and the then uncrowded and uncluttered Miami beach. There were University of Miami football games at the Orange Bowl and dances under the stars at the Coral Gables Country Club. In addition there were many attractive coeds on the campus to keep company with the cadets in their various activities.

Then after 12 short weeks of Charlie Lunn’s intensified navigation training, there came the November graduation exercises held at the stately Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables. Forty-four cadets sat on the stage at the graduation exercises. We listened to speeches by Dr Ashe, Pan American Capt Carl Dewey, and Gen Davenport Johnson. The general, resplendent in his dress blue uniform, spoke for the US Army Air Corps. Several hundred invited guests attended the ceremonies, but few family members of the cadets were present. The country was still in the grips of the depression. Few people could afford the trip from remote parts of the country even for such an important affair.

Gen Davenport Johnson, in his wisdom, spoke of the future and of our mission. “Time is of the essence,” he said. “Our Air Force will be called upon to operate over much larger ranges than is the case in European operation today. If the United States should be become involved in the present world turmoil and be forced to defend the Western Hemisphere, we must be able to reach out from our coastal frontiers to discover, locate, and destroy the enemy before he can get in striking distance of vital objectives within the United States.”<sup>5</sup>

On that happy and peaceful night in Florida surrounded by the luxury and grandeur of the stately Biltmore Hotel and the music of the university band, General Johnson, even with a prophet’s mind, could not have understood the significance of the event. In the months ahead, Charlie Lunn’s 44 cadets would be navigating missions of inestimable significance. Passengers on their planes would include such luminaries as Sir Winston Churchill, Madame and Generalissimo Chiang-Kai-shek, Presidents Herbert Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, and Lyndon Johnson and Generals Douglas MacArthur, George C. Marshall, and Curtis E. LeMay.

Within one year, instead of defending our shores, many of us would be navigating across the world to “locate and destroy the enemy.” Classmates would fly combat missions on every battlefield in World War II: in the frigid Aleutian Islands, across the sand-blown deserts of North Africa, in distant Rangoon, Saipan, and Germany. They would navigate on the first aerial attack on Japan and later with the B-29s burn Japanese cities. They would “seek out and destroy” V-1 and V-2 launching pads and submarine pens on the continent of Europe and help soften up the beaches of Normandy for the D day invasion. They would be prisoners of the Japanese and the Germans, and internees of the Turks. They would help in the project to dig the tunnel for the great escape from Stalag Luft III in Germany. They would travel the brutal Bataan Death March and lose classmates in the horrible Japanese prison camps.

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## **“Navigators of the First Global Air Force”** ~ *continued from previous page*

At the commencement exercises of the celestial navigators of the Class of 40-A, General Johnson could have said, “These navigators will follow the stars on a path of tragedy and glory unique in the annals of American military history.”

(Footnotes)

Coxey’s Army refers to a group of about 500 unemployed persons who marched from Ohio to Washington, D.C., in the spring of 1894 to petition Congress for work on public works projects. The organizer of the march was Jacob S. Coxey.

By way of contrast, in the mid-1990s fledgling US Air Force navigators selected for the “bomber track: acquire approximately 150 hours of in-flight navigation training by the time they report to their first operational unit.

The Pan American-run school at Coral Gables was a short-run solution to the sudden and massive growth of demand for trained navigators in the Army Air Corps (AAC) (known after July 1941 as the Army Air Forces [AAF]). By late 1941, the AAF was meeting that demand with graduates from three navigation schools of its own located at Kelly Field, San Antonio, Texas; Mather Field, Sacramento, California; and Turner Field, Albany, Georgia. By the time the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the Pan American facility at Coral Gables was largely given over to training fledgling navigation for the Royal Air Force. The best scholarly account of aerial navigation down to World War II is Monte D. Wright, *Most Probable Position: A History of Aerial Navigation to 1941* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1972). There was a relatively brief existence of the Pan American facility as a training school for ACC navigators.

Army Air Forces. “Flying Training Command Historical Reviews,” 1 January 1939-30 June 1946, held by Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

Prior to World War II, the Army Air Corps had no school dedicated to training aerial navigators and Monte Wright in *Most Probable Position*, 175, describes pre-World War II navigation training in the AAC as “neither lengthy nor rigorous.” In fact, specialized officer aircrew members were unknown in the prewar ACC and navigators, as a distinct group of rated aviators, simply did not exist. All flying officers were pilots, some of whom might be called upon to perform navigator functions. Aerial navigation was considered just another flying skill that some pilots were expected to master. The most ambitious AAC training program for pilot-navigators was instituted in 1933 when the 2d Bomb Group at Langley Field, Virginia, and the 7th Bomb Group at Rockwell Field, California, offered standardized navigation courses to pilots drawn from units across the Air Corps. The program was cancelled the following year, a casualty of limited resources and the Air Corps’ costly involvement in government airmail operations. From 1934 until the establishment of the Pan American school at Coral Gables, navigation training reverted to individual units where it was conducted on a limited and more or less haphazard basis to meet local requirements.

Charles J. Lunn, interview with author, 1980; and Officer of the Chief of the Air Corps to Dr. B.F. Ashe, letter, subject: Pan American Navigation School, 24 July 1940. Pan American Airways, Inc., *New Horizons*, New York, December 1940, 11.

**Keep ‘em Comin’! We love getting your stories!**

## **A Bucket of Shrimp - Great, Great Story - and True!**

It happened every Friday evening, almost without fail, when the sun resembled a giant orange and was starting to dip into the blue ocean.

Old Ed came strolling along the beach to his favorite pier. Clutched in his bony hand was a bucket of shrimp. Ed walks out to the end of the pier, where it seems he almost has the world to himself. The glow of the sun is a golden bronze now.

Everybody's gone, except for a few joggers on the beach. Standing out on the end of the pier, Ed is alone with his thoughts...and his bucket of shrimp.

Before long, however, he is no longer alone. Up in the sky a thousand white dots come screeching and squawking, winging their way toward that lanky frame standing there on the end of the pier..

Before long, dozens of seagulls have enveloped him, their wings fluttering and flapping wildly. Ed stands there tossing shrimp to the hungry birds. As he does, if you listen closely, you can hear him say with a smile, 'Thank you. Thank you.'

In a few short minutes the bucket is empty. But Ed doesn't leave.

He stands there lost in thought, as though transported to another time and place. Invariably, one of the gulls lands on his sea-bleached, weather-beaten hat - an old military hat he's been wearing for years.

When he finally turns around and begins to walk back toward the beach, a few of the birds hop along the pier with him until he gets to the stairs, and then they, too, fly away. And old Ed quietly makes his way down to the end of the beach and on home.

If you were sitting there on the pier with your fishing line in the water, Ed might seem like 'a funny old duck,' as my dad used to say. Or, 'a guy that's a sandwich shy of a picnic,' as my kids might say. To onlookers, he's just another old codger, lost in his own weird world, feeding the seagulls with a bucket full of shrimp.

To the onlooker, rituals can look either very strange or very empty. They can seem altogether unimportant ....maybe even a lot of nonsense.

Old folks often do strange things, at least in the eyes of Boomers and Busters.

Most of them would probably write Old Ed off, down there in Florida .. That's too bad. They'd do well to know him better.

His full name: Eddie Rickenbacker. He was a famous hero back in World War II. On one of his flying missions across the Pacific, he and his seven-member crew went down. Miraculously, all of the men survived, crawled out of their plane, and climbed into a life raft.

Captain Rickenbacker and his crew floated for days on the rough waters of the Pacific. They fought the sun. They fought sharks. Most of all, they fought hunger. By the eighth day their rations ran out. No food. No water. They were hundreds of miles from land and no one knew where they were.

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## **A Bucket of Shrimp...** ~ *continued from previous page*

They needed a miracle. That afternoon they had a simple devotional service and prayed for a miracle. They tried to nap. Eddie leaned back and pulled his military cap over his nose. Time dragged. All he could hear was the slap of the waves against the raft.

Suddenly, Eddie felt something land on the top of his cap. It was a seagull!

Old Ed would later describe how he sat perfectly still, planning his next move. With a flash of his hand and a squawk from the gull, he managed to grab it and wring its neck. He tore the feathers off, and he and his starving crew made a meal - a very slight meal for eight men - of it. Then they used the intestines for bait. With it, they caught fish, which gave them food and more bait.....and the cycle continued. With that simple survival technique, they were able to endure the rigors of the sea until they were found and rescued (after 24 days at sea...).

Eddie Rickenbacker lived many years beyond that ordeal, but he never forgot the sacrifice of that first lifesaving seagull. And he never stopped saying, 'Thank you.' That's why almost every Friday night he would walk to the end of the pier with a bucket full of shrimp and a heart full of gratitude.

Reference: (Max Lucado, In The Eye of the Storm, pp.221, 225-226)

PS: Eddie was also an Ace in WW I and started Eastern Airlines.

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## **Hollywood Producer Gigi Garner Options “China Diaries”**

***James Garner’s Daughter, Producer Gigi Garner, Options “China Diaries” Written By Louis Stannard***

Apr 18, 2009 – While searching for a high-concept action/ romance script with “Asian content” producer Gigi Garner found exactly what she was looking for as soon as she read Louis Stannard’s “China Diaries.” Ms. Garner immediately optioned Stannard’s screenplay, which is adapted from his novel of the same title. The unique story is based on historical fiction and revolves around a man who discovers his mother’s journal 50 years later and how he finally learns of her noble efforts to save her family in China right before WWII.

Renowned aviation expert and pilot Captain Louis Stannard has accumulated over 23,000 hours in commercial and military aircraft and is a frequent speaker and lecturer around the country on this particular period in world history.

Ms. Garner is currently working on several other high profile projects as she is set to produce David Mamet’s new film “Come Back to Sorrento,” with William H. Macy, Felicity Huffman, and Rebecca Pidgeon attached, and Michael Worth set to direct.

Gigi Garner, who attended USC film school and studied films abroad as well, is the daughter of screen legend James Garner.

<http://www.prlog.org/10219952-hollywood-producer-gigi-garner-options-china-diaries.html>

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Read more stories and breaking news, along with more information about those who have passed on at our website: [www.clipperpioneers.com](http://www.clipperpioneers.com)

*...and God will lift you up on Eagle's Wings, bear you on the breath of dawn,  
make you to shine like the sun and hold you in the palm of His hand.*

## IN MEMORIAM

**William F. Pash**, retired Pan Am Captain, passed away on April 23, 2009 at Seton Hospital in Austin, Texas, as a result of kidney failure. Bill was 88 years old, and had flown with Pan Am for 33 years.

**Edgar Andrews Potter**, 86, died on Sunday, April 5, 2009 of Parkinson's Disease/Alzheimers. Edgar flew with various airlines from 1940 as a navigator, radio operator and retired in 1989 from Pan American World Airways as a cockpit flight engineer after 35 years of service.

**Charles C. Scroggin**, age 72, died in his sleep on April 18, 2009 in Miami, Florida. Charlie developed an early interest in aviation and became a licensed pilot. Following an apprenticeship flying small, propeller-driven charter aircraft, Charlie was hired by Pan American World Airways in 1966, where he began flying large, four-engine jets on Pan Am's worldwide routes. He was later selected as an instructor pilot and Check Pilot on both the Boeing 707 and the Boeing 747. When Pan Am sold its Pacific Routes to United Airlines, Charlie transferred to United and served as lead Captain and Check Pilot in United's transition to their newest Boeing aircraft, the 747-400. In that role he conducted the proving flights for United's ultra-long range flights from Los Angeles to Sydney, Australia.

**Emil J. Romanak**, passed away on Thursday, March 26, 2009. He flew B-24 bombers in the Pacific Theater during World War II, and completed thirty combat missions. He became a decorated pilot and after the war, began flying as a commercial airline pilot. Most of his flying was with Pan American Airlines, where he eventually became a captain flying 747 jets. Emil flew all over the world when Pan Am was in its heyday and it was an exciting time. He loved flying and touring and relating his experiences to family and friends. In 1981 Emil retired at age 60, the mandatory age for pilots.

**Herman Spellerberg**, Pan Am FEO, passed away on April 21, 2009. He passed peacefully without pain. Now he is at home with the Lord and his family members and friends who preceded him.

## AUXILIARY

**Dorothy Bowlin**, widow of Capt. Paul Bowlin, passed away in March.

For more information about each of these friends who will be missed, click on "In Memory Of..." at our website: [www.clipperpioneers.com](http://www.clipperpioneers.com)

Know of someone from Pan Am who has passed?  
Email the obit to Jerry Holmes at [jerry747@copper.net](mailto:jerry747@copper.net)

**ATTENTION AUXILLARY MEMBERS:**  
You must let me know if you wish to continue  
to receive this newsletter -  
**otherwise, YOU WILL BE DROPPED FROM THE MAILING LIST.**  
Jerry Holmes, 192 Foursome Drive, Sequim, WA 98382 -  
360- 681-0567 or email [jerry747@copper.net](mailto:jerry747@copper.net)

## **Tucson Convention was a great success!**

We have just returned from the Clipper Pioneers' Annual Convention, where a good time was had by all.

Kudos to Buck and his Tucson gang for some good planning and execution.

It was a bit warm in Tucson, but nice and chilly at night. The Phoenix Chapter of World Wings Ladies handled the check-in on the first day. Bill Stevens handled the Hospitality Room.

From now on, Stu Archer will be handling the conventions. He is planning on a cruise next year, probably in the spring, to Bermuda out of either New York or Baltimore.

We had several photographers at work at the convention, so watch the website for pictures coming soon!

It was great to see everyone, get a chance to catch up, and a great success, once again!

~Jerry

## **The Houston Area Pan Am Reunion**

**will be held at the  
Atascocita Country Club, Humble, TX,  
on August 1st, 2009  
10:00am till 4:00pm.**

**We will have a great meal and visits with old friends, for only \$15 per person...**

**Anyone wanting information or an invitation, contact:**

**Brendan "Tex" Love  
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Willis, TX 77378  
Home 936-856-7329  
Cell 936-718-8089  
belove@suddenlink.net**

Thanks to those who are sending us great stories! We will be running them in future issues of the Clipper Pioneer newsletter. Do you have a story to share with us? Send it to us! We'd love to print it in the newsletter! Do you have information that would be beneficial to us? Send it along! Let's share the good ideas! You can mail your articles, jokes, and other interesting information to: Jerry Holmes, 192 Four-some Drive, Sequim, WA - or email to [jerry747@copper.net](mailto:jerry747@copper.net).

***Having trouble viewing the membership list online?*** When you open the list, go to the top of your screen - you should see that it is set at a percentage. Click on that to make it larger.