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Vol 48-3 Page 1

## TURNING FINALS - THE LONG WAY HOME - Part 2

*By John A. Marshall*

The Pacific Clipper lifted off from the placid waters of Surabaya Harbor on the north coast of the island of Java, in the Dutch East Indies; early in the morning of December 22, 1941. The blossoming world war was barely two weeks old, and the big Pan American Boeing 314 flying boat, had been caught on the wrong side of the Pacific. Her crew, headed by veteran captain Bob Ford, had been charged with the incredible task of flying their airplane back to the United States the long way around, westbound, utilizing any route that was open to them, into the teeth of a global conflict the magnitude of which none of them could even begin to comprehend. Southern Asia, Arabia, Africa, and the South Atlantic, vast areas which they would have to traverse in order to accomplish their mission, were totally foreign to the crew of the Pacific Clipper. They would all be venturing into virgin territory.

As she settled into the long climb to altitude and pointed her nose to the northwest and the Indian subcontinent, Ford contemplated the task before them. They would cross the long stretch of land that was Sumatra, the largest island in the West Indies archipelago. It was dangerously close to the Malay peninsula, where Japanese troops were known to have landed. If fighter squadrons had accompanied them, who knew how far afield would they range?

The Boeing cruised uneventfully throughout the afternoon and into the darkening night. Below, the sinister island lurked, black, silent, and unknown. The dawn found them over the vastness of the Indian Ocean,

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**Please note - we have changed the access to the online newsletters so that you will need a password to access them. We're hoping this will help past members who haven't paid their dues to do so, in order to read the newsletter. This password will also give you access to the membership & phone list. GO TO OUR WEBSITE AT: [www.clipperpioneers.com](http://www.clipperpioneers.com).**

**The username will remain the same: panam. The new password will be: captain.**

**Dues are \$20 a year or \$80 for 5 years. Make them payable to Clipper Pioneers, and mail to Jerry Holmes at 192 Foursome Dr., Sequim, WA 98382.**

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hopefully aimed straight at Ceylon. Navigator Rod Brown, whom Ford would later acclaim as “one of the finest aviators and navigators I ever flew with,” had used every tool in his arsenal to keep the Clipper on course, praying that they wouldn’t be so far from his plots that they would miss the island. They had been in the air nearly eighteen hours; if Brown’s calculations were correct they would reach Ceylon with barely two hour’s fuel reserve.

As they neared the tip of the massive Indian subcontinent a low layer of scud stretched across the horizon ahead of them. Ford took the big Boeing down on the deck to stay underneath, and they droned along into the grey of the morning, all eyes searching for a landfall. Suddenly the slate-blue surface of the placid sea was broken by a strange shape; ahead they could see a low dark cigar-shaped object floating on the surface. At 150 miles per hour they closed on the apparition in short order, and it was soon apparent that this was nothing ordinary. It was a submarine, basking gently on the surface, and as they came closer they could see the crew taking the early morning sun on the long flat deck, startled by the sudden appearance of a huge four-engine flying boat bearing down on them. Even more startling to the Pan Am crew was the sight of the rising sun flying from the fantail of the sub—they had just startled a Japanese submarine! In the seconds that were left before they roared overhead they saw the enemy sailors hurry forward toward the bow gun, and swing it to bear on the onrushing Clipper. Ford rolled the ship into a steep bank and then pulled up into the bottom of the cloud deck a few hundred feet above. For several anxious seconds they held their breaths, waiting for a cannon shot that never came.

Two hours later Ford landed the Clipper in the waters of Trincomalee harbor, this time un-mined, and the crew and aircraft took a well-earned rest. Two days later they were off again, this time their flight would parallel the west coast of India to their next port of call, the Indian city of Karachi. It was Christmas Day, 1941. They climbed into the warm blue morning, and had just leveled off, settling in for the nine hour flight. Suddenly the morning was shattered with a loud bang; the Pacific Clipper answered with a gut-wrenching yaw as the number three engine wracked itself in a spasm of failure. Black oil spewed from the cowl; Ford reached quickly for the feathering button, and brought the shuddering Wright to a stop. The engineers quickly assessed the situation; it was soon obvious that they would have to return to Trincomalee.

After they landed and tied up to the pier they had left only a few hours before, the engineers, Parish and Roth, began tearing into the sick engine. It was repairable, except for the fact that they lacked some very sophisticated tools that they could only expect to find in a well-equipped machine shop. The crew scratched their heads, pondering just how to effect a fix, when suddenly they realized the answer to their problem was right in front of them—surrounding them, in fact. Half of the British naval might was anchored in the harbor. It wasn’t long before the two flight engineers were aboard one of the British battle cruisers, availing themselves of the Royal Navy’s hospitality and the ship’s machine shop.

It took two days to repair the Boeing’s number three engine, and then Ford’s crew tried again, this time successfully. The nine hour flight to Karachi was uneventful. The tired crew retired gratefully to the Carleton Hotel, and Ford soaked in a hot bath to unwind. There was a long way to go.

The next leg was to the tiny emirate of Bahrain, an island just off the coast of Saudi Arabia, a flight of just over 8 hours, the shortest leg of the journey. The British Army garrison there greeted them cordially, and provided

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everything the crew asked for, including tankful of precious aviation gas. After crossing Saudi Arabia and the Red Sea, they would be tackling the vastness of the African continent. But the first problem was the Arabian peninsula. In 1941 the vast oil riches of the mid-east were largely untapped; it was a primitive, xenophobic part of the world, unaccustomed to westerners and western ways. Ford was informed by the British that overflight of the Saudi kingdom was prohibited; only a week earlier two RAF pilots who had made a forced landing there were captured by nomadic Bedouins, buried in the sand up to their necks, heads covered with honey, and left to the ants and the scorpions.

This was an unwelcome piece of news; circumnavigating Saudi Arabia would add hundreds of miles and at least a full day to the trip. The next morning the Southern Cross took off into an overcast sky, headed roundabout for Africa. In a few moments they burst into bright sunlight; below them stretched a carpet of cottony stratus, reaching as far as the eye could see. Ford made a quick decision, and turned the airplane directly west, straight over the heart of Arabia. He would rely on the steadfastness of the big Wrights; he knew there was no Saudi Air Force that could intercept them.

The undercast was unending, stretching to the horizon. Morning stretched into afternoon, and breaks began to appear beneath; they flew over a large city. In the central square below was a huge temple, with literally millions of people surrounding it, gazing upward at the unworldly sight and sound of the big flying boat. They had overflown Mecca during the Haj, and Ford said later that it was though someone had kicked over a huge ant hill. In a few miles they crossed the eastern shore of the Red Sea, and headed for the coast of Africa and the next landing at Khartoum. They landed on the waters of the Blue Nile, that great river of legend and romantic renown, except that it was a fetid, disease-ridden, sluggish brown stream, steamy and dank. Ford negotiated the fuel and supplies with the British: they were anxious to be off.

The next leg would really test the mettle of Navigator Brown. The plan was to fly southwestward across half the length of the African continent to Leopoldville, in the Belgian Congo. The route was a blank slate; seventeen hundred miles of unknown territory; radio aids were virtually non-existent.

The maps that were available to the crew were old and outdated; Brown still was relying on maps torn from schoolboy atlases in New Zealand. The Pacific Clipper took off from the Blue Nile at Khartoum early in the morning, before the sun could heat the atmosphere to unbearable heights. The crew turned the nose of the Boeing toward the south-southwest, and settled in for the long pull across the Dark Continent. At first the landscape was bleak and brown; sand dunes and desert stretched to the horizon.

The occasional mud-thatched village passed beneath, brown figures staring unbelieving into the bright sunlight as the Boeing roared overhead. Africa was a daunting sight. Where would they go if they missed Leopoldville and the Congo River? Gradually the brown grudgingly gave way to pale green of the great African savannah, and then the green deepened as they flew over the broad interior jungle. There was little

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### **MORE ON THE CLIPPERS PIONEERS WEBSITE!**

Check out the Clipper Pioneers online [www.clipperpioneers.com](http://www.clipperpioneers.com) - for up-to-date announcements, videos about Pan Am, and other interesting articles and photos! The "In Memory Of..." page features more information about those who have passed on than what we can print here, and the current list of members is also available for paid members.

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wind, and the visibility was good. Huge thunderheads dotted the horizon, but they were isolated and circumnavigable. It was, fortunately, a benign time of year, weatherwise, for central Africa. At long last they saw the shimmering ribbon of the mighty Congo in the late afternoon sun. They landed in the river and taxied to the dock, where the worst heat and humidity they had yet experienced greeted them. They were also happily surprised to see a Pan American representative, dispatched to oversee the opening of new, war-driven routes across Africa, but also bearing bottles of ice-cold beer.

The next morning the crew boarded the aircraft for the longest and most difficult leg of their odyssey. They had been underway from San Francisco for nearly a month, had virtually lived aboard their charge, the big Boeing that soldiered on, but they were rapidly growing tired of the confines of the aircraft, of the endless hours droning toward unknown horizons. They had already flown thousands of miles across South Asia and Arabia, breasted the African continent, and now would test the South Atlantic.

(to be continued in the next issue)

### Request for Training Manuals

My name is Alexander Blaine and I am an instructor at Usairways. I am contacting you to ask you for assistance. I would like to be able to reach out to the retired Pan Am pilot community and ask if there anyone would be willing to give/sell me any of their old manuals. I am especially interested in old training manuals and the like.

I would greatly appreciate any help you can give me in this regards. As a side note, I was hired by a charter airline in 1985 and I did most of my training on the B707 simulator in Miami.

Thank you in advance,  
Alexander M. Blaine - ambflyer@hotmail.com  
B757/767 Instructor, Usairways

### Wildly Mistaken Predictions

"If I had thought about it, I wouldn't have done the experiment. The literature was full of examples that said you can't do this." —*Spencer Silver on the work that led to the unique adhesives for 3-M "Post-It" Notepads.*

"Drill for oil? You mean drill into the ground to try and find oil? You're crazy." *Drillers who Edwin L. Drake tried to enlist to his project to drill for oil in 1859.*

"Stocks have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau." *Irving Fisher, Professor of Economics, Yale University, 1929.*

"Airplanes are interesting toys but of no military value." *Marechal Ferdinand Foch, Professor of Strategy, Ecole Superieure de Guerre, France.*

"Everything that can be invented has been invented" *Charles H Duell, Commissioner, US Office of Patents, 1899.*

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## Avoiding scams—and getting help if you're scammed

*From Market Watch*

Identity theft and scams that target older Americans are much more common than those against younger Americans. According to a survey by the Investor Protection Trust, one out of every 5 citizens over the age of 65 has been the victim of a financial scam, and according to the Better Business Bureau 10% of the U.S. population fall victim to consumer scams annually. This article is intended to assist those who have been scammed as well as to provide information and resources to help you avoid being scammed in the future.

First the obvious: If you have been scammed or are a victim of credit-card fraud, notify all credit card companies and tell them to issue you a new card. Place a credit-card freeze on your account with the three main credit agencies. You must also remember to place a credit freeze on the account of deceased persons. If you fail to freeze their credit a thief can steal their identity and apply for credit in that person's name. The companies and their contact numbers are Equifax, 800-525-6285; Experian, 888-397-3742 and Trans Union, 800-680-7289.

You should also contact your local law enforcement agency. Complaints can be filed as well by calling 877-IDTHEFT or logging on to the Federal Trade Commission website at <http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/feature-0014-identity-theft>.

## Financial & securities scams and identity fraud

### How you can protect yourself

Of course investors must do their homework before investing. Purchasing a security solely because an analyst or broker has recommended it can be a mistake, and even more so if the company is one you've never heard of. Take time to investigate—particularly if you are not dealing with your regular broker or investment adviser.

We have listed what you should do if you think you have been scammed and what you should watch for so you are less likely to get scammed. For more complete information on fraud & scams go to: <http://www.retiredbrains.com/Home/Financial+Resources/Identity+Theft+and+Scams/default.aspx>.

On a state-by-state basis, call the North American Securities Administrators Association, 202-737-0900; or click this link to check out your broker or investment adviser: <http://www.nasaa.org/2709/how-to-check-out-your-broker-or-investment-adviser/>

Additional resources :

Financial Industry Regulatory Authority for the military: <http://www.saveandinvest.org/MilitaryCenter/>;

Securities and Exchange Commission: <http://www.sec.gov/>.

***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.



## PAN AM PILOTS Branson, Missouri Reunion May 13-17, 2013

This is what has been set up for our next Pan Am Reunion in Branson, Missouri, May 13-17, 2013. We will stay at the **Westgate Branson Woods Hotel, 1-877-502-7058** for reservations, **mention GROUP CODE 24-914**, great rates starting at \$65, Hot Breakfast, Hospitality room and more. You can fly into Branson on SouthWest and AirTran, Springfield on both American and Delta. The Reunion Activity Package costs \$256 per person and includes most everything, shows and transportation to each, Welcome Deli Buffet, plus A FINAL EVENING DINNER & Entertainment There are several optional shows and a great Ladies Tour and Lunch available I recommend. **You can visit the web-site ( [www.reunionpro.com](http://www.reunionpro.com) ) click on reunions and scroll down and you'll see the Pan Am Reunion.** Lots of information available, hotel, Registration form and more. Share this with all your friends, any questions feel free to contact me. Hope to see you in Branson.

~Stu Archer

### **Monday:**

Check in at WESTGATE BRANS WOODS

12:00 Noon - Hospitality Room Open

5:30 p.m. - WELCOME DELI BUFFET In Hospitality Room at Resort

### **Tuesday:**

Hot Breakfast

10:00 a.m. - THE CLAY COOPER SHOW - "Entertainer of the Year!"

4:00 p.m.- THE SHOWBOAT BRANSON BELLE Dinner,  
Show and Cruise on Beautiful Table Rock Lake

### **Wednesday:**

Hot Breakfast

4:45 p.m. - Dolly Parton's DIXIE STAMPEDE DINNER AND SHOW  
"the most fun place to eat in Branson!!"

8:00 p.m. - OPTIONAL SHOW: OH WHAT A NIGHT!!  
Tribute to Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons!! 10 a.m.  
*\$40.00 per person including tax and transportation*

### **Thursday:**

Hot Breakfast

10:00 a.m. - BUSINESS MEETING

9:00 a.m. - LADIES TOUR AND LUNCH  
*\$30.00 per person including tax and transportation*

2:00 p.m. OPTIONAL SHOW: #1 HITS OF THE 60'S SHOW  
*\$35.00 per person including tax and transportation*

7:00 p.m. - FINAL EVENING DINNER & Entertainment

**Friday:** Hot Breakfast ~ Depart

### **ACTIVITY PACKAGE \$256.00 per person**

#### **INCLUDES:**

**Hospitality Room  
Welcome Packets  
with Name Badges  
Clay Cooper Show  
Showboat  
Branson Belle  
Dinner, Show &  
Cruise  
Dixie Stampede  
Dinner & Show  
Final Evening Dinner  
Transportation to  
Group Activities  
All Tax and Most  
Gratuities  
Reunion Website**

**Fill out and return the  
form on the back page of  
this newsletter to get an  
early reservation. Thanks  
for choosing Branson!!!!!!**

*...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

**Robert Perry Zentner** was born Dec. 22, 1917, in Bandon-by-the-Sea, Oregon, and passed away peacefully on Jan. 31, 2013, at 95 years of age. An early passion for both ham radio and flying led to him becoming a pilot and then a captain with Pan American World Airlines.

**Clifford Carroll Pierce** Dec. 15, 1922 - Oct. 30, 2012. Long time San Mateo County resident Clifford "Cliff" Carroll Pierce passed away peacefully at his home on Tuesday, October 30th. He joined the U.S. Navy and became a fighter pilot flying Corsairs off the Intrepid for the duration of World War II. After the war ended, Cliff was hired by Pan American Airways as a pilot.

**James Scott Chadwick**, 91, passed away quietly in his Mill Valley, California home on February 8, 2013. He was hired as a Flight Engineer at Treasure Island in March, 1943, retired on December 31, 1982.

**Mary Gunn Botthof** passed away on October 1, 2011 in Reno, NV.

**Robert Paul (Bob) Crow**, 88, passed away on Dec. 17, 2011 in Landrum, SC. He joined Pan Am in 1948 as a traffic supervisor and was stationed in Bangkok and Philadelphia as a Traffic Manager, then in Chicago as a Director of Controls and Director of Airport Services until his retirement in 1982.

**Victor Nitlow**, a longtime Island Park resident and a pilot for Pan American World Airways, died in his home in Naples, Fla., on Dec. 12. He was 91.

**Ray J. Egan**, 94, of Sarasota, passed away on January 22, 2013. He was born in Holyoke, MA and served during World War II as a U.S. Air Force pilot. Ray retired from Pan American World Airways after 35 years of service piloting around the globe.

**Warren "Robby" Robinson**, 91, passed away on Thursday, Jan. 26, 2012, in Manchester. Robby was a pilot and captain with Pan American World Airways for 37 years, retiring in 1980. He flew several generations of planes to cities around the globe, ending with the Boeing 747.

**Ralph Waldo Emerson Cox Jr.**, DDS - aviation pioneer in Cape May passes away peacefully at age 97 on February 25, 2012. Born December 30, 1914 in Pittsburgh, PA. Ralph's dream was to fly aircraft, so he volunteered for the US Army Aviation pilot program. He joined the US Navy and flew anti sub patrols along the US Eastern Seaboard and the coast of Spain. After Ralph's discharge in 1941, he supported the war effort joining American Overseas Airlines and Pan American which flew Sikorsky S44 flying boats.

**A J Dupre** passed away 21 Dec 2012 at the age of 94. He fell and broke his hip and the died of pneumonia

**William A. (Bill) Deplitch Col USMC Ret.**, passed away Dec. 26, 2012 at the age of 89. He was with Pan American World Airways long before it became Pan Am, a short time as pilot, then as dispatcher in the Far East, from there at various stations to finally at New York where he became Director of Operations Control. He was 37 yrs with PanAm altogether having started in '46.

**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 [jerryholmes747@gmail.com](mailto:jerryholmes747@gmail.com)**

**PAN AM REUNION**  
**Branson, Missouri**  
**May 13-17, 2013**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

GUEST/SPOUSE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

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**HOST HOTEL: WESTGATE BRANSON WOODS**

Call 1-877-502-7058 for room reservations and mention **GROUP CODE 24-914**. Rooms not reserved prior to April 13, 2013 will be dropped from the group block and be accepted only on a space-available basis. You may select from several different room types when making reservations. (Traditional Queen, \$65.00/1 Bedroom Studio, \$72.00/1 Bedroom Standard, \$89.00). Hot breakfast for two people per room is included in the rate as well as hospitality room.

**PLEASE REGISTER ME FOR THE FOLLOWING:**

Reunion Activity Package \_\_\_\_\_ # of attendees x \$256.00 pp = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Wednesday, Oh What a Night! \_\_\_\_\_ # of attendees x \$40.00 pp = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Thursday, Ladies Tour/Lunch \_\_\_\_\_ # of attendees x \$30.00 pp = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Thursday, Hits of the 60's Show \_\_\_\_\_ # of attendees x \$35.00 pp = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL DUE.....\$** \_\_\_\_\_

A 50% deposit is requested by March 13 with final payment due April 13. Refunds on cancellations after May 6 will be on a case by case basis. Cancellations must be made by phone and authorized by a representative of "Gatherings Plus."

Mobility Restrictions? \_\_\_\_\_

Dietary Restrictions? \_\_\_\_\_

**MAIL REGISTRATION FORM AND CHECK PAYABLE TO:**

**GATHERINGS PLUS****P. O. BOX 1023, BRANSON WEST, MO. 65737****417-338-4048...[pamb@bransonmilitaryreunions.com](mailto:pamb@bransonmilitaryreunions.com) ~ Reunion****Website: [www.reunionpro.com](http://www.reunionpro.com)**