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October 2017 - Clipper Pioneers Newsletter

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## A Few Tales from the Tenerife Crash that Never Got Reported

(CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS ISSUE)

*by Captain Robert Lee Bragg*

### The Gaggle Finally Arrives

The next morning, Tuesday, representatives from Pan Am, FAA, NTSB, Boeing, Pratt & Whitney, as well as representatives from KLM, all showed up in my room and started asking questions. After a while, I stated that I had written ten pages of notes regarding the night of the accident and would be glad to read it to them. All agreed that this was a good idea.

After I was finished, one of KLM's attorneys stated, "It looks like our man took off without a take off clearance." I couldn't believe what I heard. I was sure he heard about his statement later – basically he had admitted that the accident was caused by KLM.

After this group departed, a U.S. Air Force colonel appeared and, after introducing himself, told us that he had just arrived from Frankfurt (Rhein/Main Airport) with a C-141 and a C-130 and that they would be evacuating all crew members and passengers within the next few days. The C-130 flew from Las Palmas to Tenerife, landed on the taxi way, boarded all stretcher cases, flew back to Las Palmas, transferred the stretchers to the C-141, which in turn evacuated all stretcher cases back to the states. It took quite a while to get the job done but no one complained.

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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).**

**Click on the "Members Only" button on the righthand side. The password will be: captain.**

**Dues are \$20 per year. Once you've paid through 2018, no more dues are required. Make them payable to Clipper Pioneers, and mail to Jerry Holmes at 192 Foursome Dr., Sequim, WA 98382.**

## A Few Tales from the Tenerife Crash that Never Got Reported

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### The Handling of the Deceased

Ultimately, there were 583 bodies from the accident. The airport authorities selected the largest plane hangar at the Tenerife airport and designated it as a morgue. They also informed both airlines, Pan Am and KLM, that if the bodies weren't removed from the island within three days that a mass grave would be dug and all bodies would be buried together.

Both airlines decided to remove their passengers' and crew members' bodies back to their departure points – Amsterdam for KLM and the U.S. for Pan Am. Most of Pan Am's passengers were from California or the east coast. The first problem was that of locating enough caskets. Pan Am secured their required number from the U.K. and flew them to Tenerife. KLM secured theirs from the Netherlands. To my knowledge, this was the first accident where bodies were brought back to their country of origin.

Later Peter Jennings, then ABC's Chief European correspondent based in London, told me that seeing all of the bodies in the Tenerife hangar was one of the worse scenes he'd ever seen, and he had been a war correspondent in Vietnam. He admitted that after seeing the Tenerife scenes he'd sadly learned that things can always get worse, worse than Vietnam.

### Hotel Mencey, Santa Cruz, Tenerife

After being at the hospital for three days, I was definitely ready to get out and head home. Just prior to my departing the hospital, one of the male flight attendants who had been assigned to assist the crew members in the hospital came by my room and asked what clothing I needed. My response was simple, "Everything." I had lost my suitcase in the crash. I gave him underwear sizes, shirt sizes, pants sizes, etc. Later, the Iberia captain and Rich Self helped me physically get from the hospital to the hotel in trousers borrowed from Rich Self, a very tall guy. I had to roll up the cuffs.

When we arrived at the hotel and as I walked through the lobby, I happened to see Pan Am's Amsterdam manager, who had been brought down to translate KLM's news releases as they were all in Dutch. I walked over and asked him if he knew anything about Pan Am's plans to evacuate the crew. His response back was, "I had nothing to worry about as many would never leave the island." To say that this statement really got to me would be a gross understatement. I grumbled even more as I hobbled back to my room, which was at the rear of the hotel - remember I had a very heavy cast on my leg.

When I finally got into my room, here is what our flight attendant had graciously provided me with: a very small brown sweater; an even smaller pair of boxer shorts; a pair of beach sandals; a tooth brush, and no tooth paste - nothing else. To say the obvious, I couldn't wear any of the clothes, and I was even more annoyed than I had been before. I knew there were plenty of shops near the hotel.

I managed to hobble back to the lobby and proceeded to tell Pan Am's Amsterdam manager what I had found in my room and that it was my intention to call a press conference and tell everyone how poorly Pan Am crew members were being treated. Very shortly after my statement, he took off and within five minutes our vice president for operations, Walt Mullikin, came back and started telling me how glad everyone was that we had survived the crash. My immediate thought was, "Why in hell didn't someone call us back instead of our waiting in the hospital for two full days, not knowing what was happening." I was then ushered into the

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## A Few Tales from the Tenerife Crash that Never Got Reported

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dining room where you would have thought a big party was going on. Wine, beer, and lots and lots of food were everywhere.

I didn't think it appropriate for airline officials to be in a party atmosphere at the main hotel where the accident investigation was just getting underway. I said what I thought. I think it was at this time it was decided to get me off the island just as soon as possible. I was told that if I wished I could leave the next morning – along with Peter Jennings.

To make that possible, Rich Self let me keep the pair of his pants I'd borrowed earlier and additionally provided a shirt and a belt; and, Walt Milligan lent me his blue blazer for the flight back. Pan Am itself had still provided next to nothing. Yet, I finally thought that most of the problems were behind me. I was wrong.

### The Trip from Tenerife Back to the U.S.

Peter Jennings, eight of the Pan Am passengers, and I departed early the next morning on a small commuter plane for Las Palmas, to connect with a non-stop flight to London. We were met at Las Palmas by a Pan Am ticket agent at the gate who told us he had our tickets and that he would be back to show us to the departure gate. He didn't show up until the Iberia flight had departed for London without us. He basically forgot us. Peter Jennings then took over and arranged for a flight to Madrid connecting with another London Flight.

When we arrived at the domestic terminal in Madrid, no one met us, and Peter Jennings once again arranged things. Among other things, he got us taxis to the international departure terminal and, in the end, arranged for tickets for all of us. We had no funds. I've often wondered if he ever got reimbursed.

This was even more frustrating as Pan Am had a ticket counter and operations at the Madrid Airport. Ultimately, we finally made it to London and connected with Pan Am's "Round the World" flight back to New York.

Everything that Pan Am had arranged for the crew didn't work. On a look back basis, I should have worn what Pan Am had provided me with instead of the borrowed clothes that I did wear back. Then I would have really been able to draw attention to Pan Am's appalling lack of concern for the crew members and surviving passengers. I really missed my chance to highlight Pan Am's general lack of concern.

### Legal Issues

Once we arrived at London, I did my first interview on the accident at Heathrow Airport. Peter Jennings had arranged in advance for a camera crew to meet us. In the interview, I brought out the fact that *The London Times* in their earlier article had incorrectly related incorrect details about the Tenerife runway. After the interview, we boarded the Pan Am flight to New York and things seemed to return to normal. I was mistaken.

Within two weeks, the legal hassles started and never stopped. Both Victor Grubbs, the Pan Am captain, and I started receiving notices of each and every law suit filed in connection with the Tenerife crash. For a very long time, I kept about two filing cabinets full of legal paper work. I was well aware that when you have mega accidents, everyone gets sued: Pan Am, KLM, Boeing, Pratt & Whitney, the captains, and the first officers – to name just a few.

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## A Few Tales from the Tenerife Crash that Never Got Reported

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While I was still filling my filing cabinets, a good bit after the Tenerife crash, I had occasion to have lunch in California with one of our Tenerife passengers. She owned a travel agency and had been responsible for booking eighty passengers on the flight which ended up in Tenerife. She told me that she had received word from the insurance claims administrator and was told that he would visit her the next day and was prepared to make her one offer and that there would be no negotiations or flexibility with the offer. He was told that there was no need for him to visit because she and others would see him in court.

As for the insurance situation, it was incredibly lucky that Pan Am, KLM, and the Spanish Airport Authority which was then controlled by the Spanish military were all insured by Lloyds of London. Talk about one stop shopping and staying out of the courts.

Lloyd's pointed "a finger" at no one – no blame was placed, they just settled quickly. They paid for the replacement of the airplanes – estimated value of the planes was complicated to calculate, as then and now, as the rate of change and technological obsolescence in aviation circles is fast - \$25,000 for all who died as provided for by the Geneva Convention – although the underwriters did have to take the initiative and caution some that it was not necessary to engage a high-paid lawyer in order to secure this compensation. In truth, these complicated transactions are still not fully comprehended. Shall we say that Lloyd's was not overly communicative?

Ironically, the very thing that Pan Am had wanted to avoid, a mass burial, was to become a sad reality in California. Most of the passengers on the Pan Am Clipper had been from California, heading for a cruise, and many were buried there together because the Spanish police, for unknown reasons, had removed all jewelry from the victims and thus hampered positive identification in too many cases. I've often wondered what actually happened to the jewelry and watches. I had heard that it might have been turned over to the U.S. State Department, but I have no reason to believe that it's true. I had and have a personal interest, since I lost cufflinks made from Russian rubles when I lost my suitcase in the crash. I still don't know what happened to them.

The crash has certainly not been forgotten and hopefully there will never be a more deadly aviation catastrophe. In 2007, the Dutch, working with the Spanish government authorities on Tenerife who gave them the land free of charge, erected a distinctive memorial to all who had died in 1977. Although not directly stated, the message of the memorial structure was "Gone but not forgotten."

To end as I began, you may know the accident but you probably don't know the inside story of what followed. I could say more, but I'll refrain from doing so. The bottom line is that just as one thing led to another to cause the accident, one thing also led to another to produce a disastrous aftermath as well.

**Please update your email address and phone number if it's been changed!**

**Email or write to Jerry Holmes - 192 Foursome Drive, Sequim, WA 98382  
or email to: [jerryholmes747@gmail.com](mailto:jerryholmes747@gmail.com)**

## Pan Am Cruise Reunion set for 2018 - Royal Caribbean's Navigator

Dear Pan Amer's:

We are very excited about our next (and much asked for) Pan Am Reunion Transatlantic Cruise from Miami to Southampton, England. The crossing will be a 15 day trip to Portugal, Spain and France. The cruise begins with six relaxing days at sea where you can melt away stress, relax poolside reach out to old friends and much more. Enjoy gourmet style dining in their top notch dining rooms or be pampered totally in the specialty pay bistros. Remember to leave a little room for savoring favorites in the different ports of call stops.

Your price includes: registration fee towards amenities, Vegas style shows, use of pool, tours of kitchen and such. Food is virtuously non-stop and even room service can be ordered up to midnight free. Games, movies, etc.. Look forward to great times at get together's and cocktail parties. We are on the beginning stages with Royal Caribbean to plan special tours at the different ports at prices only available to the Pan Am guests.

Rates: are per person, double occupancy, cruise only and based on availability at time of booking. Port charges are \$230.; government taxes are additional and fluctuate daily. **Singles** pay 200% of cruise, port charges and deposit plus one time tax. Once our allotment is gone, prevailing rates will take effect. We check prices to make sure you get the best, taking everything into consideration. Call to reserve now; a deposit of \$450 per person will lock in the current price which may increase in the future. As usual, all major credit cards are accepted but checks are preferred in an attempt to keep down credit card fees and pass the savings toward our onboard amenities, parties and the like. Insurance is available and highly suggested; call for your quote. Contact Stu Archer, former Pan Am pilot and cruise consultant, at 305-238-0911. Email [stunjune@aol.com](mailto:stunjune@aol.com). More info to come. Call ChoiceAir **800-533-7803** for Royal Caribbean's best air quote.

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|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Inside from \$799 /</b> | <b>Outside from \$1099 /</b> | <b>Balcony from \$1859.</b> |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

| <u>Date</u>       | <u>Port of Call</u>                | <u>Arrive</u> | <u>Depart</u> |          |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|----------|
| Sun 22 Apr2018    | Miami, Florida                     | -             | 5:00 PM       | Boarding |
| Sun 23-28 Apr2018 | Cruising                           | - -           |               | Cruising |
| Sun 29 Apr2018    | Ponta Delgada, Azores              | 7:00 AM       | 3:00 PM       | Docked   |
| Mon 30 Apr2018    | Cruising                           | - -           |               | Cruising |
| Tue 01May2018     | Lisbon, Portugal                   | 10:00 AM      | 6:00 PM       | Docked   |
| Wed 02May2018     | Vigo, Spain                        | 11:00 AM      | 6:00 PM       | Docked   |
| Thu 03May2018     | La Coruna, Spain                   | 7:00 AM       | 6:00 PM       | Docked   |
| Fri 04May2018     | Cruising                           | - -           |               | Cruising |
| Sat 05May2018     | Paris /Normandy (Le Havre), France | 7:00 AM       | 9:00 PM       | Docked   |
| Sun 06May2018     | Southampton, England               | 5:30 AM       |               | -        |

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| <p><b>CALL CARMEN JAQUET – INTERLINE TRAVELS, INC. 786-252-7838</b><br/> <b>Direct Line – 1-888-592-7245</b><br/> <b>456 MERLIN CT., TALLAHASSEE, FL 32301</b></p> |
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| <p><b>Information about Ireland Reunion on next page</b></p> |
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## Pan Am Reunion scheduled for Foynes, May 2018

Margaret O'Shaughnessy is planning a Pan Am Reunion in Foynes & Limerick with chosen dates to suit the Pan Am Cruise which will arrive in Southampton on May 6th so that you can fly or cruise to Ireland. PLEASE just let Margaret know if you plan to attend. At this time we do not need deposits, etc., just names. Spread the word, and I look forward to hearing from you all. Contact Margaret O'Shaughnessy at [margaret@flyingboatmuseum.com](mailto:margaret@flyingboatmuseum.com). Margaret O'Shaughnessy is the Director of the Foynes Flying Boat & Maritime Museum, Foynes, Co Limerick, Ireland. Mobile: +353 87 2490830. Or contact Stu Archer at [stunjune@aol.com](mailto:stunjune@aol.com).

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## Pan Am Philadelphia Area Pilots (PAPAP)

We meet the second Tuesday of every quarter at the Continental Inn in Yardley, PA at 1200 for a bit of BS before going to our private conference room upstairs for lunch.

Been going on since 1992 and it's a great way to stay together. Contact: Chris Blaydon [215 757 6229](tel:2157576229) or [cblayd@aol.com](mailto:cblayd@aol.com)

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## Come Join the Santa Rosa Breakfast Group!

The Santa Rosa Breakfast group meets about every six weeks. They have 17 pilots, FA's and FEO's that get together to discuss the old days. Anyone in the Sonoma, Napa, and Marin county areas north of San Francisco who would like to join them should email Dave Criley at [davecriley@comcast.net](mailto:davecriley@comcast.net), and send your email contact. They started out with 5 and have grown to 17. *~from Dave Criley*

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## Share Your Memories

Please send your stories to Jerry or Sue by email to: [sue@clipperpioneers.com](mailto:sue@clipperpioneers.com).

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## Layovers for Pan Am

Check out Pan American layovers at [www.paacrewlayover.com](http://www.paacrewlayover.com), where some 81 cities and over 161 hotels are shown in photos.

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**Pan Am Historical Society has a Facebook page. You can view it here:**  
**<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Pan-Am-Historical-Foundation/226994925218>**

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## Flying Boat Reunion clip now available for viewing

A 15-minute special that aired April 27, 2016 on Ireland's popular RTE TV show "Nationwide" is now available for viewing. China Clipper First Officer Robert Hicks (94); Merry Barton, daughter of Folger Athearn (Pan Am's station manager in Noumea, New Caledonia in 1941); Director of the Foynes Flying Boat Museum Margaret O'Shaughnessy; Ed Trippe and Mary Lou Bigelow were interviewed during the Foynes Flying Boat reunion. <http://www.rte.ie/player/us/show/nationwide-21/10566026/>

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| <p><b>REMINDER: CLIPPER PIONEERS NEWSLETTER'S<br/>LAST PRINT EDITION WILL BE DEC. 2018</b></p> |
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*...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

**Owen D. "Darrel" Yoder** died peacefully May 3, 2017 in Bluffton, OH. He had lived in Bluffton for 17 years. Darrel was hired by Pan Am in March of 1951.

**John J. Donoghue**, age 94, passed away on May 15, 2013. He was a resident of Key Biscayne, FL since 1955. J.J., as he was known, was born in Dansville, N.Y. on July 2, 1918, and graduated from Cornell in 1940. He passed up medical school to join the Army Air Corps, the precursor to the U.S. Air Force. In 1941, Juan Tripp was looking for volunteers to join his airline, Pan American World Airways. J. J. began his Pan Am career on the flying boats out of Dinner Key that year.

**Guy Conti** passed away recently. Details are unknown.

**Robert W. Lokker** passed away December 9, 2015 in Eastern Niagara Hospital, Lockport. Born in Jersey City, NJ on May 5, 1926 he was the son of Warren and Lillian (Christians) Lokker. Robert served in the US Marine Corp from 1943 to 1946 during WW II serving as an air gunner and dive bomber in the South Pacific. He served 1 ½ years during the Korean War. Once Korea ended Robert became a pilot for Pan Am where he worked for 25 years flying everything they had including a 747, he retired in 1978.

**Morton M. Block**, 91, of Palo Alto passed away peacefully on Monday, Aug. 22, 2011, at Stanford Hospital. He was born in Omaha, Neb., in 1920 to Louis and Bess Bloch. At age 3, he moved to California and was raised in Bakersfield and San Francisco. He graduated from USC, then enlisted in the Navy during WWII. His Navy career included time spent in the Asia Pacific theatre. Following the war he joined Pan American Airways, where he was a Dispatcher and Flight controller for Pan Am until his retirement in the 1980.

**Ira (Joe) Moore**, age 95, died peacefully at home at La Vida Real in El Cajon, CA on November 2, 2016. Joe was born in Waco, Texas on September 11, 1921. Joe was hired by Pan American World Airways (Pan Am), and was based in Brownsville, TX, New Orleans, Bogota, Columbia, Miami, New York, Rome, Italy, and San Francisco.

**William (Bill) Ralph Jordan** passed away peacefully July 21, 2017 at his home in Novato, California. His devoted friend and companion Susannah Cooper was by his side. He was 93. Bill was born on June 10, 1924 in Whittier, California. Bill grew up in Redwood Valley, California and graduated from Ukiah High School in 1942. Bill joined the Navy and received flight training in Pensacola, Florida to become a pilot. Pan American Airlines was hiring and Bill quickly applied to pursue his love of flying and traveling. He was hired as a navigator. He became First Officer, then Captain on the Boeing 747 and Check pilot on the 747.

**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)**

**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.

**Don't forget to check out our website at: [www.clipperpioneers.com](http://www.clipperpioneers.com)**

## The Equifax Data Breach: What to Do

September 8, 2017

*by Seena Gressin, Attorney, Division of Consumer & Business Education, FTC*

If you have a [credit report](#), there's a good chance that you're one of the 143 million American consumers whose sensitive personal information was exposed in a data breach at Equifax, one of the nation's three major credit reporting agencies.

Here are the facts, according to Equifax. The breach lasted from mid-May through July. The hackers accessed people's names, Social Security numbers, birth dates, addresses and, in some instances, driver's license numbers. They also stole credit card numbers for about 209,000 people and dispute documents with personal identifying information for about 182,000 people. And they grabbed personal information of people in the UK and Canada too.

There are steps to take to help protect your information from being misused. Visit Equifax's website, [www.equifaxsecurity2017.com](http://www.equifaxsecurity2017.com).

- Find out if your information was exposed. Click on the "Potential Impact" tab and enter your last name and the last six digits of your Social Security number. Your Social Security number is sensitive information, so make sure you're on a [secure computer](#) and an [encrypted network connection](#) any time you enter it. The site will tell you if you've been affected by this breach.
- Whether or not your information was exposed, U.S. consumers can get a year of free credit monitoring and other services. The site will give you a date when you can come back to enroll. Write down the date and come back to the site and click "Enroll" on that date. You have until November 21, 2017 to enroll.
- You also can access [frequently asked questions](#) at the site.

Here are some other steps to take to help protect yourself after a data breach:

- **Check your credit reports** from Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion — for free — by visiting [annualcreditreport.com](http://annualcreditreport.com). Accounts or activity that you don't recognize could indicate identity theft. Visit [IdentityTheft.gov](http://IdentityTheft.gov) to find out what to do.
- **Consider placing a credit freeze on your files.** A credit freeze makes it harder for someone to open a new account in your name. Keep in mind that a credit freeze won't prevent a thief from making charges to your existing accounts.
- **Monitor your existing credit card and bank accounts closely** for charges you don't recognize.
- If you decide against a credit freeze, **consider placing a fraud alert on your files.** A fraud alert warns creditors that you may be an identity theft victim and that they should verify that anyone seeking credit in your name really is you.
- **File your taxes early** — as soon as you have the tax information you need, before a scammer can. Tax identity theft happens when someone uses your Social Security number to get a tax refund or a job. Respond right away to letters from the IRS.

Visit [Identitytheft.gov/databreach](http://Identitytheft.gov/databreach) to learn more about protecting yourself after a data breach.

*(from <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2017/09/equifax-data-breach-what-do>)*