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TURNING FINALS: FLYING THE '6

by John A. Marshall

Flying in Berlin in the early days was an exercise in weather management that often never seemed to come out exactly right, particularly when the summer days flowed into the crispness of autumn and then the dank grey of early winter.

In the early days of my airline career, I cut my teeth at the flight engineer's station of one of the venerable airliners of the time, the Douglas DC-6B. My class of newly hired, neophyte would-be airline pilots were assigned to the company's Internal German Service, stationed in Berlin. We were handed over to the care and ministrations of the Assistant Chief Flight Engineer. He was a baleful, somber figure, who also served as the local FAA examiner. A great hulk of a man, he walked with an ambling, rolling gait, as though he were treading the deck of a ship in a heavy sea. Out of his hearing we called him the Cinnamon Bear, with awe and trepidation at first, and then in later years as we all mellowed, with great respect and affection.

It was my fate to be assigned to the nightly freighter as my perpetual training flight. This was the only flight (other than an occasional afternoon cargo run to Hamburg and back) that was operated by our aging DC-6A freighter, affectionately known as Nineteen Charlie. She was a battle-scarred veteran of milk runs into the Caribbean and Central America, squatting on sun-baked strips carved from bug-infested jungles. She had hopped from island to island carrying coconuts and bananas, and now she carried the mail into and out of Berlin. The mail, both civilian mail from the city and military mail from all three of the Allied occupying armies, was considered too valuable to be consigned to surface transport over the East German autobahns and railways, so it all went by air. Every night except Sunday, the blue and yellow trucks of the German Bundespost would begin to gather at the cargo depot at the far end of the big hangar. Soon they were

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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.

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

Dues are \$20 a year or \$80 for the 4 remaining years. Make them payable to Clipper Pioneers, and mail to Jerry Holmes at 192 Foursome Dr., Sequim, WA 98382.

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joined by the green military vehicles, and by 10:30 the hundreds of sacks of mail and other assorted cargo were loaded aboard Nineteen Charlie. She left for Frankfurt at 11 PM, and you could set your watch by her.

The flight crew sauntered down leisurely from Operations around ten-thirty. Everything on the airport was quiet now, the last flights having arrived from the West by ten, and the big birds were silent, attended by an army of mechanics readying them for the following day's operations. The flight engineer was always the first to arrive and in my case, new at the game and anxious to absorb all the quirks and tricks of the trade, "early" meant at the airplane an hour and a half before departure, with the hulking figure of my instructor never far from my side.

Precisely at 11 PM the four big Pratt & Whitneys were cranked into sputtering life, and we slowly taxied out to the end of the runway. With the exhausts glowing an angry orange-red and the propellers straining to a pulsing song, we roared the length of runway 27 Left, lifted off and careening over the railway station, we were off into the night. Upon arrival at Frankfurt, the mail flight became part of a carefully orchestrated scenario that turned the Frankfurt Airport into a central mail depot for all of West Germany. Flights from all over the Republic were arriving within minutes of each other, bound for the same rendezvous. Sacks of mail were unloaded, sorted, exchanged, and reloaded, and two hours later the same airplanes dispersed, bound for the cities from whence they came. It was one of the original hub and spoke operations.

During the two-hour layover, the pilots took pillows and blankets into the Operations office and were able to snatch forty winks while the loading was completed, but I did not join them. The DC-6 was a sleek-looking creature from a distance, but up close she was mottled with dozens of orifices — some large, others the size of soda straws. We would be asked the function of each on our final check, and the check engineers made sure we were well drilled. The entire layover was spent walking around the airplane, flashlight in hand, instructor at my side, poking and peering into the nether regions of the airplane. I saw valves and pipes and cables in my sleep for weeks afterward.

Then it was back aboard for the flight back through the south corridor to Berlin. It was nearly 3 AM, and the sparkling lights of the East German towns were about half the size they had been earlier. The country slept. Finally, the glow of Berlin appeared on the horizon ahead, and soon we could see the blackness of Tempelhof, like a hole in the middle of the city. The tires squeaked onto the runway at 3:30, give or take a few minutes, and the day's flying was finally done

At long last, I finished my nocturnal apprenticeship and was given the nod to appear before the Cinnamon Bear and show off my new-found knowledge. Frightening tales of the Bear's oral examinations had been circulating for many days, and I climbed the stairs to our aerie of a classroom with butterflies in my stomach. I had no idea what to expect. I was there for nearly two hours while he poked and probed into the recesses of my brain and extracted everything that I knew about the DC-6. At the end, he gave me a sly grin and said, "Well, it looks as though you know what you're talking about — now we'll see if you can handle the airplane."

I was euphoric! I knew I could handle the airplane - I was just worried about that damned oral. The flight check was a piece of cake. I came back to earth in body only, the rest of me still walking on the air that I had just left. At last I was a full-fledged flight engineer!

We finished our training and began flying the line coincident with the waning days of autumn and the

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**REMINDER: CLIPPER PIONEERS NEWSLETTER'S LAST PRINT
EDITION WILL BE DEC. 2018**

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gradual onset of the northern European winter. Fog, low ceilings, and ticklish approaches became the norm as the days grew shorter and grayer. It was a rare day that at least one of the airports in the system did not have weather at or close to minimums. The captains took great pride in always getting the aircraft to its dispatched destination, regardless of the weather. There were a few that carried the practice to extremes and bored the airplane into the undercast and through the white cottony fog toward the runway, breaking out just seconds before the wheels touched. They were superb airmen, and the airplane they flew was a wonderful, reliable, rocking chair of a craft, with a predictability that resulted in few surprises. Most of them had been flying the '6 for so long that they wore the old airplane like a comfortable pair of shoes.

As the bleak winter twilight approached, the late afternoon flights always faced the possibility of a diversion. Atmospheric conditions were often just right for the formation of the pea-soup fog that was so prevalent in northern Europe. Brown coal was the fuel of choice in the cities, and as winter approached, the pall of thick acrid smoke hung like a blanket over the city. You could smell it in the descent; as soon as the airplane dropped below 3,000 feet, the pungent odor assailed the nostrils and made the eyes sting. When the moisture content was right, and the winds wafted from the east, fog would form, thick and impenetrable, and the Berlin airports would close down for the night. Eastbound airplanes already in the corridor continued into the Control Zone to attempt a look-see approach, a maneuver that was permitted even though the weather was reported below minimums. A "Look-See" was just what the name implied: A quirk in the regulations that permitted the flight to make an approach to minimums and 'take a look'. If you could see enough to land, you did; if not, a missed approach was mandatory. Sometimes you made it, groping through the murk, seeing the approach lights gleaming at the very last possible instant, then the runway flashed by beneath and the edge lights whipped by, barely noticed in your anxiety to actually see the concrete; then the wheels suddenly touch, you knew they would, but it is always a startling, grateful surprise, and by God, you're home.

On other occasions, you would begin an approach and know the odds are against you; the previous airplane has probably already missed and the reports aren't very good; in fact, the visibility is getting worse, but you are going to try anyway. The state-of-the-art of weather forecasting and reporting is still pretty much a guessing game, particularly where Berlin fog is concerned. Your airplane descends into the gloom, the tops of the undercast slinging past the windscreen. Nowhere is the sensation of pure speed more evident than when flying just above the tops of a flat undercast. Now suddenly we are enfolded by the thick grey cocoon. Lower and lower we go; there is absolutely no sign of life beneath. We are immersed in a bottle of gray milk; the only indication that we are fast closing on the earth is the steady unwinding of the altimeter. The tension in the cockpit rises imperceptibly as we enter the final stages of the approach. The air is silky smooth, benign, deceptively innocent as it blankets our world, our sanctuary. The outer marker passed, punctuated by the flashing blue light on the panel and the swing of the ADF needle. The landing gear drops with a satisfying thump and the three greens are almost an afterthought; when have they ever failed not to appear? Checklist complete, mixtures full rich, props full forward, gear down, flaps full down. Now we wait.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE.

**Keep the memories alive! Send in your stories to sue@clipperpioneers.com.
If you know of upcoming events, can pass on good stories by others that
you think our members would enjoy, or any other information,
please pass that along to us too!**

GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT NORMANDY AND OMAHA BEACH!

What a great opportunity to visit all of Normandy and Omaha Beach. The Pan Am Reunion Cruise departing Boston 24 April next year has some great port calls, including 16 hours in Le Havre and 10 hour in Cherbourg, France. That gives you plenty of time to visit the Battle of Normandy Museum in Bayeux, the Airborne Museum in Sainte-Mere-Eglise, Caen's, Deauville and the beautiful village of Honfleur, plus much more.

We will be on Royal Caribbean's ship, "Serenade of the Seas", with additional stops at Cork, Ireland, Portland, Dorset on the south coast of England, Bruges, Belgium, Amsterdam, Netherlands (at the peak of the tulip festival), Gothenburg, Denmark and our final stop, Copenhagen, Denmark where you can visit as long as you like.

Flights returning to the U.S. in mid May should be a good time to travel; the tourist season has not begun.

Also sometime starting July, Royal Caribbean will make arrangements and publish return flights home. We still have cabins at great prices, a deposit will lock in the current price, starting at \$1279.00. Call Interline Travels at [1-888-592-7245](tel:1-888-592-7245) or Carmen's Cell [786-252-7838](tel:786-252-7838) or e-mail interlinetravels@yahoo.com. You can always call me at [305-238-0911](tel:305-238-0911) or e-mail stunjune@aol.com. This Cruise is for all the Pan Am folks and their friends, so help me spread the word , forward it to your friend. Thanks, Stu

2015 SERENADE OF THE SEAS ITINERARY

24-Apr	Boston, Massachusetts	5:00 PM
25-Apr thru 30 April	Cruising	
1-May	Cork, Ireland	9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
2-May	Portland (Dorset), UK 1	1:00 AM - 9:00 PM
3-May	Le Havre (Paris), France	7:00 AM - 11:00 PM
4-May	Cherbourg, France	7:00 AM - 5:00 PM
5-May	Zeebrugge (Brussels), Belgium	9:00 AM 7:00 PM
6-May	Amsterdam, Holland	10:00 AM 9:00 PM
7-May	Cruising	
8-May	Gothenburg, Sweden	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
9-May	Copenhagen, Denmark	6:00 AM

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MORE ON THE CLIPPERS PIONEERS WEBSITE!

We've updated our website! Check out the Clipper Pioneers online www.clipperpioneers.com - for 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. There is also a great list of "resources" available. •

***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***

PAN AM REUNION CRUISE ~ APRIL 24 - MAY 9, 2015

ROYAL CARIBBEAN'S SERENADE OF THE SEAS

Dear Pan Amers:

Once again we prepare for our next much welcomed Pan Am reunion cruise. We are honoring the many requests for a Transatlantic cruise with lots of wonderful and interesting ports of call. Our 15 day cruise, departing Boston to Copenhagen, starts off with six relaxing days at sea. Plenty of time to reach out to old friends, take a spa treatment, movies to watch and much, much more. Expect a great time.

Embarking on an oceangoing adventure like this will be no doubt one of the most exciting moments of any traveler's life. The old saying that it's as much about the journey as the destination has never been truer. Adventures await you at each port, shopping, exploring famous attractions or sipping a cool drink in a romantic café. So, welcome aboard, I know this cruise will provide you with a lifetime of memories to cherish. Family and friends are most welcomed.

Rates: Prices are per person, double occupancy, cruise only and based on availability at time of booking. Once our allotment is gone prevailing rates will take effect. Singles pay 200% of cruise fare and port charge. Port charges (\$240) and taxes (\$280.94) additional. Call in your reservation 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, onboard parties and the like. **DON'T DELAY !**

Insurance is available and highly suggested and is priced by category chosen. Inquire on your price. More information will come with your invoice.

Inside from \$1279 / Outside from \$1749 / Balcony from \$1979.

PRICE UPDATE: Those guests booked with deposits before May 30 may be eligible for a further discount depending on category booked, your Crown & Anchor status and of course assuming the price will be less than our group rates.

Call Interline Travels at 1-888-592-7245 or
Carmen Jaquet's cell 786-252-7838 (Pan Am Cruise Coordinator).
Email interlinetravels@yahoo.com.

My line may be tied with many calls for this cruise;
please be patient and leave your message and I will get to you ASAP. Thank you.
Address - 456 MERLIN CT. , TALLAHASSEE, FL 32301

Feel free to contact Stu Archer former Pan Am pilot and cruise consultant at 305-238-0911.
Email stunjune@aol.com.

Don't forget to check out our website at: www.clipperpioneers.com

NOVEMBER 1957 – SEARCH FOR THE 944

by Cliff Pierce

Written Jan. 6, 2004

You could cut the gloom with a knife. In 4 a.m. darkness at the old SFO Pan Am base, the B-377 Stratocruiser and DC7-C, parked nose to tail on the ramp outside the dispatch office were surrounded by trucks and service vehicles. Both planes were being fueled for maximum endurance. The mission ahead might involve being in the air for the next 20 hours.

Inside where the crews were getting briefed, there was none of the usual banter, conversation or light jokes. On this Saturday morning, there was nothing to laugh about. One of our planes was missing.

My phone had rung at about 10:30 Friday night. It was my boss, our chief pilot, Sam Peters; he told me that our Stratocruiser N90944 that had left SFO for Honolulu at 11:30 Friday morning had not been heard from since 5 p.m. It was presumed down.

Sam said that we would send two planes out on a search, leaving around 5:00 in the morning. They needed extra eyes - - - would I come?

I was assigned to the DC7-C crew in command of Captain Jim Roberts. Sam Peters would command the Stratocruiser. When we reached the search area, we would drop down to two or three hundred feet above the water and fly pre-determined patterns covering hundreds of square miles of ocean.

What did we hope to find? Realistically, we didn't expect to find the plane afloat. Even if it had made a controlled water landing and had not broken up, there was little chance it would float that long. We were really hoping to find people in life rafts, but this too was not being very realistic. If the crew had been able to make a safe landing, they would have had time to report their problem as Captain Dick Ogg had done a year earlier when he successfully ditched Stratocruiser N90943 in roughly the same area with no loss of life. But we had hope.

The plane we would be looking for, "Romance of the Skies", had been in command of Captain Gordon Brown, 40 years old with a wife and five children living in Palo Alto. There were pilots Bill Wygant, Bill Fortenberry, Flight Engineer Al Pinataro, Purser Gene Crosthwaite, Flight Attendants Marie McGrath and Yvonne Alexander and Flt Service Supervisor Jack King. There were 36 passengers including one family of six. Among the passengers were PanAm copilot Bob Alexander with his wife and two children heading for a vacation in Hawaii.

We were in the air by 5:30 and would take four and a half hours to get to the search area. Captain Brown's last report had put him 1106 miles east of Honolulu. We would rendezvous with the coast guard weather ship, "Pontchartrain" stationed halfway between SFO and HNL and commence our search from there. We had a crew of 4 pilots, 2 flight engineers and 4 observers.

None of us had had breakfast. Knowing we would have to eat during the next 20 hours, I had gotten checked out on the galley and food supplies. My bacon, eggs, toast and coffee for all hands made the atmosphere a little lighter. With our stomachs more comfortable, we were ready for the serious business of scanning the waves.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE.

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.

*...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

Captain Joe Haselby, PAA/DL pilot, passed away at age 79. He was born/raised in the Ann Arbor, Michigan area. He attended the University of Michigan and was a Navy fighter pilot (USS Coral Sea , CVA-43). He joined Pan American 01-31-1966. He flew the Berlin routes during much of his time with Pan Am, circa 1976 until the merger with Delta in 1991, and he had been living in Berlin these past years.

Chester Dale 'Chet' Bailey, age 80, passed away on July 22, 2014. USAF veteran retired PAA/DL pilot Captain was born Nov. 25, 1933. Captain Bailey joined Pan American 01-04-1965 and retired with Delta Air Lines at the mandatory age 60 in 1993, based 031/NYC. Captain Bailey had most recently resided at 266 Pine Needle Lane, Bigfork MT.

Sherman Carr – It is with great sadness that our fabulous host for many a World Wings party has died. He had been battling Prostate cancer for 20 years. More to follow.

For more information about each of these friends who will be missed, click on "In Memory Of..." at our website: www.clipperpioneers.com. Know of someone from Pan Am who has passed? Email the obit to Jerry Holmes at jerryholmes747@gmail.com

Pan Am Flt Eng - Pilot / World Wings Picnic - Thursday, Sept. 18, 2014

The Villages Golf and Country Club, San Jose, California - 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. - \$25.00 per person

Lunch at 12:30 PM includes: Choice of Salad (Caesar or Pear), Fresh Carved BBQ Tri Tip, Green Vegetable, Baked Beans, Rolls, Dessert (Costco Cookies), Beer, Wine, Soft Drinks, Water.

Two Bocce Ball Courts Available for Entertainment. There will be a prize for "Best Fitting Pan Am Uniform" (Yours truly sole judge) . **PLEASE respond by Thursday September 11 , 2014! (or sooner)**

Send check payable to: Dan Affourtit (acting for PAA Picnic Chairman Emeritus Pete Ryden) 7851 Prestwick Circle, San Jose, CA 95135-2143, and marked for "Pan Am Picnic". Include E-Mail if changed recently

DIRECTIONS: To get to "The Villages" from Hwy. 101 North or South exit at Yerba Buena Rd., proceed East to the 4th or 5th stoplight (San Felipe Rd.), turn right and proceed to the 1st stoplight (Villages Parkway), turn left to The Villages and follow the signs for "Visitors" (Left side of entrance).

At the Gate tell the guard you are attending the Pan Am Picnic. He will check your name on the "Invite list" and direct you to the Picnic Grounds (Gazebo Park), which is straight ahead and just past the 2nd STOP sign on the right side.

Upon arrival please check in and get a name tag. Thank you. Dan A.

Do you have an upcoming event that would be of interest to the other members? Please forward the information to sue@clipperpioneers.com.

Russian hackers might have your info — now what?

by Amy Hebert, Consumer Education Specialist, FTC

You may have heard about it in the news: reports that Russian hackers have stolen more than a billion unique username and password combinations, and more than 500 million email addresses, grabbed from thousands of websites. What should you do about it? We asked our resident expert, Maneesha Mithal, director of our Division of Privacy and Identity Protection.

Q. How do you know if your information was part of this hack?

A. You really don't, so don't take any chances. Change the passwords you use for sensitive sites like your bank and email account — really any site that has important financial or health information. Make sure each password is different so someone who knows one of your passwords won't suddenly have access to all your important accounts. We have some tips for creating strong passwords — strong, as in hard to guess.

Some online services also offer “two-factor authentication.” To get into your account, you need a password plus something else, like a code sent to your smartphone, to prove it's you. We recommend that people use this service when it's available.

If you think your email account might already have been affected by a hack, here's what you can do.

Q. Is creating new passwords enough?

A. Once you have strong passwords, you need to keep them safe. Think twice when you're asked to enter usernames and passwords, and never provide them in response to an email. For example, if you get an email or text that seems to be from your bank, visit the bank website directly rather than clicking on any links — which could contain malware — or calling any numbers in the message. Scammers impersonate well-known businesses or the government to trick you into handing over your information.

Q. Is there anything else you can do?

A. It's unlikely this will be the last time you're affected by a hack or data breach. One way to increase the chance you'll catch someone trying to misuse your information is to review your credit card and bank account statements regularly. If you see charges that you don't recognize, contact your bank or credit card provider right away and speak to the fraud department.

You also can check your credit reports for free every few months at AnnualCreditReport.com or call 1-877-322-8228. Your credit report includes information about your credit card accounts and other bills you pay, so it's a good way to find out if someone has opened credit in your name. You're entitled to a free report every 12 months from each of the three credit bureaus — Equifax, Experian and TransUnion. If it turns out you are a victim of identity theft, you can find the steps you should take to deal with it at ftc.gov/idtheft.

Last but not least, send this post to your family and friends to make sure they know what to do, too.

Q. How can someone make sure this doesn't happen to them again?

A. Unfortunately, you can't. But by taking these steps, you can lessen the odds scammers will get a hold of your information, and also minimize the consequences if they do.

For more information about identity theft, and steps to take if you suspect you may be a victim, go to:
<http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/feature-0014-identity-theft>