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TURNING FINALS - THREE ENGINE ODYSSEY

By John A. Marshall

The sun rises behind us, the rosy glow of the dawn pushing us along as we climb northwest over Sumatra. Below the earth still slumbers in darkness, and cotton webs of fog trace the meandering rivers. Behind us in the cabin of the old 747 sit four hundred and ninety-five Indonesian Muslim pilgrims, bound for Mecca and the holy Haj.

Under charter to Garuda Indonesia Airlines, our 747 is part of a huge operation, which this year will transport nearly 125,000 of the faithful on their once in a lifetime pilgrimage. For many the journey will consume a life's savings, hoarded for this holiest of undertakings. Most of their number are middle-aged, or elderly, and some are relatively well-to-do; the trip is not cheap. Of the thousands that begin the pilgrimage from their homeland, nearly 400 will never see Indonesia again, succumbing to the merciless heat and dehydration that this arduous journey entails. A few will vanish without trace. In two weeks they will return, having satisfied their religion's most sacred requirement —the Haj pilgrimage to Mecca, the holiest of Islamic cities. Our airplane carries the surrealistic image of the Garuda painted on its tail, the mythical beast that is half-man, half-eagle; the chariot of the Hindu god Vishnu. There is irony in the fact that our aluminum chariot carrying Muslim pilgrims flaunts the likeness of an infidel god.

The operational environment is harsh and unforgiving. Middle Eastern summers are marked by oppressive heat; sand and dust storms are frequent occurrences, making already difficult travel even more so. Temperatures on the earth's surface routinely reach 125 degrees Fahrenheit. Airplanes don't perform particularly well in such temperatures, and people, particularly westerners used to a more temperate climate,

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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.

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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have a tough time of it as well. Available lift for takeoff is considerably reduced; fuel loads must be cut to protect the payload, and operations that would normally be conducted non-stop must now stop for fuel. Jakarta to Jeddah cannot be flown non-stop with 495 passengers aboard.

Abu Dhabi is now less than three hours away, across India and the storm-flecked Arabian Sea.

Puffy cumulus clouds begin to build, and as we near Madras on the Indian coast they grow more ominous and menacing. Lightning flashes continuously from a long line just off to the right of our course; it rises far above our altitude. Through the canyons of white clouds I can see the city below nestled into the hills on the coast. We are now slaloming through halls of clear air between towering ramparts of white and grey. To the north a solid line stretches from horizon to horizon. On the radar it reflects as an angry red -the worst color - and I am thankful it is not fifty miles further south.

Suddenly there is a bang, then another, and then a sickening lurch that shatters our calm routine. All eyes snap to the instrument panel and the gauges that monitor the health of our big Pratt & Whitney engines. They steady momentarily and for a period I thought it was a mirage, a blip in time that would not repeat. It was wishful thinking. The bang repeats, like a recalcitrant child clamoring for attention. Compressor stall, I instinctively think.

The number two engine is spinning down, its vital signs ebbing rapidly. Harry, the flight engineer, reaches up with a practiced motion and quickly tries to relight the dying engine, to no avail. Jerry, my number one, is flying the airplane and he struggles to keep the giant Boeing stable. As we take stock of the problem I realize that our first priority must be to negotiate a new altitude. A height that is comfortable and optimum for an airplane with four healthy engines is considerable higher than that attainable on only three. We must descend without delay. Madras Control is not a radar environment—we are Third World here—and making our desires known to the Indian controller presents an immediate problem. We must start down soon. We are clear of clouds and I know that no ever-revealing radar will betray us, so I nod at Jerry and tell him to begin the descent visually; we will keep a sharp eye out for other traffic.

Often just keeping an ear cocked to the radio transmissions will tell more about the traffic situation than any controller. It takes several minutes, but we are finally able to communicate our predicament and are re-cleared to a level that we can safely maintain on three engines. Safely ensconced at the new altitude, the downside soon becomes apparent: much of the weather now towers well above us. The number two engine is now recumbent; comatose and inert. Its only pulse is the force of the wind twirling the big fan. Harry goes through the litany of formal engine shutdown; virtually giving it the last rites, and we discuss trying a relight. I can see no reason not to, although in my gut I feel that it will be a futile exercise.

We read the checklist together, going through the relight procedure while Jerry is busy stabilizing the airplane on three engines at our new altitude. To our amazement the engine lights off, but our joy is short-lived; number two will not run above idle power. It protests loudly and violently at any movement of the thrust lever. At idle thrust however, everything is within normal operating limits, so we decide to let it run. Perhaps it will carry its own weight. Other matters press for my attention. What is to be our course of action? The Indonesian authorities have been emphatic in their statements that landing in India with an airplane load of Muslim pilgrims is a definite no-no, and should only be undertaken as a last resort. Political considerations must be factored into the delicate equation along with the operational imperatives. Can we nurse the crippled aircraft a thousand miles to the far side of the Arabian Sea?

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I explore the options. We are nearing Bombay with every passing mile, and if we can possibly get a re-clearance to a more northerly track we will pass only 280 miles south of Karachi on our transit across the water. Karachi has a superb airport, in a Muslim country. Harry and I get to work figuring three-engine fuel specifics and also work out a worst case scenario: What if we lose a second engine and are forced to proceed on two?

We switch to Bombay Control and I begin the delicate negotiations for our new routing. I do not specifically mention that we are flying on only three engines, but I have to assume that the Madras controller has already mentioned it. We wait several minutes, and finally I heave a sigh of relief as the clearance comes through: We are cleared as requested.

The flight deck settles down to some semblance of routine. The critical factor now is fuel. The airplane will consume nearly seventeen percent more fuel on three engines than on four. Harry and I work and rework the figures, and then I take control of the airplane and have Jerry do the same. The hours and years of experience pay off—we all come up with nearly the same figures. I plot the distance to fly on the chart for the umpteenth time, and it all comes out to the same conclusion. We should be able to make Abu Dhabi with an adequate margin. Not bounteous, but adequate. Just a few miles to the north of Abu Dhabi is Dubai, and Muscat is on the way. One thing that the Middle East has in great abundance is lots of long, unobstructed runways.

As we cross over the west coast of India just north of Goa we take our first accurate fuel reading and get a pleasant surprise. The limping number two engine, pulled reluctantly along by its mates, actually appears to be pulling its own weight, fuel-wise. Our three-engine consumption numbers are now considerably better than book predictions. I take a deep breath. Now all we have to worry about is the other three engines holding together.

The monsoon clouds recede behind us, and only a few towering anviled cumulus dot the western horizon. The sea below is an opaque azure blue, featureless, smooth. Nearly eight hundred miles of open water lay ahead of us before we will raise the unseen coast of Araby.

We settle into a routine, and the butterflies finally settle to an uneasy landing in my stomach. Back on autopilot, and monitored with a wary eye, our wounded machine soldiers on. I work the fuel figures once again, and each time they are better.

Karachi passes abeam, unseen, almost three hundred miles to starboard. We are now in communication with Karachi Radio on the high frequency long range radio net; an activity that is usually time-consuming and frustrating, and demanding of infinite patience. Today is no different. Atmospherics are particularly bad on this afternoon; static and interference fill my headset. Using the same frequency and usually at the same time, are not only Karachi, but Bombay, Delhi, Madras, and Kabul, and probably others that I don't know about. I spin the frequency control, searching for a clear channel. Voices rise out of the ether from across the sea; I hear Qantas, and Swissair as though calling through some long dark tunnel. I picture their crews, content and snug in their cockpits, bound for destinations that cannot help but be nicer than my own.

I am ultimately successful in making contact; Karachi replies faintly to my persistent calls. I pass our position and estimate for landfall, at which point we will be in range of the more reliable VHF controllers in Muscat.

We press on into the afternoon. The arc of the sun pushes the sharpening shadows across the cockpit. The slate blue expanse stretches below us, disappearing far ahead in the indefinite horizon. The sky is now nearly cloudless, a pale blue that reaches into the lemon yellow haze ahead, and the miles click off the inertial navigation readout with monotonous regularity. The winds against us have strengthened and our

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groundspeed, never earth-shattering on our three and a half engines, deteriorates further. We monitor the three remaining Prattis with a watchful eye, alert for the slightest hiccup. I run the fuel figures again with the new data. It will be close.

The blue of the western sky finally dulls, and merges gradually into a dusky brown as we near the Arabian peninsula. Crossing the coast of Muscat I can see straight down, but ahead the terrain disappears into a dusty haze. It is like flying into a bowl of cafe au lait. Off to the west great jagged peaks of an anonymous mountain range break the monotony of the landscape. The sun has descended far enough into the sandy pollution to be sharply defined, a red-orange ball hanging, descending slowly. It barely makes a shadow.

The safety valve airports pass beneath, unneeded; Muscat, Dubai, Sharjah. Abu Dhabi is finally within our grasp, and our fuel reserve is comfortable, not lavish, but comfortable. At long last we are close enough to pick up the automated weather and airport data and learn that the ground temperature at Abu Dhabi is a balmy 122 degrees. There is very little wind on the surface, but even that will feel like a blast furnace.

The controller in the tower wants to know the number of souls on board -a routine request when an aircraft arrives with less than its requisite number of engines doing useful work. I work out the figure and it comes to 517. It is the largest number of bodies I have ever carried aboard an airplane; all the more reason to be doubly careful here.

The landing is an anti-climax, the clone of thousands of engine-out exercises done over the years in the flight simulator. Safely down, we roll carefully to the end of the three-mile runway to ease the strain on the heat-sensitive brakes, and taxi slowly back to the terminal, the long day finally over. Tomorrow would present a new and different set of problems; tonight we would relax.

Voices of My Peers, Clipper Memories

By Eugene J. Dunning

Summary: In this book, Eugene Dunning asked hundreds of employees of the Pan Am family (flight crews, office workers, executives, maintenance, traffic and sales personnel, and many others) to give him that one story that will live in their memory forever. "Voices of My Peers, Clipper Memories" are those stories.

You can find information on how to order this book from this website -voicesofmypeers.com

New Book on Pan American World Airways

"With Pan American World Airways — Images of a Great Airline, author Jamie Baldwin has given us a treasure trove of Pan Am lore. Here is something for everyone — a concise history of the pioneering airline, a rich potpourri of Pan Am memorabilia, and, best of all, a nostalgic journey back to an age when the mighty Pan American ruled the skies."

Robert Gandt, Pan Am pilot 1965-1991, author of Skygods: The Fall of Pan Am and China Clipper
More information can be found at: <http://www.jpbtransconsulting.com/Pages/PanAmerican2.aspx>

Crash on the Hump

by Capt. C.J. Rosbert, a Flying Tiger, who enlisted in China National Aviation Corp./Pan Am when the U.S. Army took over General Chennault's fighter squadrons...

His co-pilot Charles "Ridge" Hammel was from Pan Am/Africa Ltd. Together they flew The Hump from Dinjan, India. These excerpts are from an article by Captain Rosbert in the Saturday Evening Post February 12, 1944.

With another few thousand feet...

On our last flight from India we took off into a pea-soup fog, and a few minutes out of our base the monsoon rain was flooding down the windshield in torrents. At 12,000 feet the rain turned to snow. We couldn't see our wing tips. That meant we were safe. As well as the Japanese like pot shots at our unarmed and always overloaded transports, no self-respecting combat pilot would fly in weather like that. With another few thousand feet, we'd be over the hump and the worst would be behind us.

But we couldn't get that next thousand feet. In less time than it takes to tell it, I could see a thin film of ice over the windshield, then over the wings, grow into a layer six inches thick. We started to drop, slowly. All the windows were frozen over solid from the inside. I pressed the palm of my bare hand up against the glass until I could feel the skin stick, then switched palms. Just before both hands turned numb, I managed to melt a little two-inch hole. I saw that we were passing through a cloud. Suddenly it opened and dead ahead loomed a jagged peak.

Grabbing the controls, I swung the ship violently into a bank. We missed the face of that cliff by inches. Then my heart stopped. A huge dark object swept by. A terrible scraping noise tore under the cabin; an explosive crash struck right behind me; the engines raced into a violent roar. Something stabbed my ankle, an intense pain shot through my left leg. Then, suddenly, we were not moving. Only the falling snow broke the silence.

I don't know how long I sat there before I heard Ridge's voice. It seemed to come from far away. "Get out of that thing before it catches fire!" I heard my own voice answer, "Come on back in. You'll freeze to death out there."

The captain's left ankle was broken, the copilot's badly sprained. Their Chinese radio operator was dead. Dragging himself, Ridge found their parachutes and six tins of emergency rations. This took the whole day. They fell asleep from exhaustion.

By daylight, the snow had stopped. Glistening, ice-encrusted peaks darted up all round us. I looked in the direction in the plane had been headed, and yelled to Ridge. Together, we stared at the ugly, jagged peak. Our steep bank away from the peak had miraculously paralleled the slope angle of the mountain, so that, when we hit, the plane simply slid along the face of the cliff. Another 50 feet, and we'd have crashed into the mountain; but for a rock that forced us to stop, we'd have catapulted into a second peak 50 feet ahead.

We were perched 16,000 feet high, up against one of the peaks of the Himalayas somewhere on the frontier of Tibet. The slim chance of our being sighted by searching planes was buried under the two feet of snow that had covered the plane in the night. That meant we'd have to manage our own escape. Five thousand feet below, possibly five miles away, was the edge of the timber line. In five days, we estimated, our ankles would improve enough move without blacking out.

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Keep the memories alive! Send in your stories to sue@clipperpioneers.com

Crash on the Hump

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The third day they tried, but their injured ankles would not support them. They barely got back to the shelter of the plane to sleep. Rosbert continues:

I was awakened by Ridge, who was prying up boards used to reinforce the floor. A sled! We literally flew for the first 100 yards, but when the slope flattened, the boards plowed deep in the soft snow. Finally Ridge got his going, but it hit a rock and sent him rolling 50 yards down the slope. I rolled after him. Lying on our backs, holding our injured feet in the air, we slid and rolled, 20, 50 yards at a time. Near the timber line we struck a slope almost 500 feet straight down. If getting out of the plane alive was a miracle, it would take another miracle to get to the bottom alive. Ridge had better control so he took the risk first. I watched him hurtle down in a cloud of snow and suddenly disappear. I heard him scream, breaking the silence. "It's okay, but it's rough. Come on down." I shoved with my good foot. Finally, I hit solid earth with crunching jolt. As I lay there, afraid my back was broken, I heard rushing water. Just before darkness we reached a stream. We found a cave so small the two of us could only half fit into it. We tried to make a fire by kindling some twigs with papers we had with us—our passports, photographs of my wife Marianne, my license cards, address book—every tangible bit of evidence we possessed to prove that we had a home, a family, a country.

The two pilots crawled, climbed, hobbled, climbed up a cliff on a vine. "Hunger produced first an intense empty feeling, which turned to a steady dull ache." They ate any growing things with stalks or stems, including fruit so "indescribably vile" it left their stomachs too numb to crave food. The 13th day they found a clearing, footprints, then a hut with two very old women and six children, and a boiling pot of food. Three days later, two children disappeared, and returned with three men "right out of the Stone Age." They led the pilots on a day-long trek to a larger hut and more people. They held court two weeks among people who had never seen a white man. Then a Tibetan trader passed by. They gave his son a note: "We are two American pilots. We crashed into a mountain", hoping he could get word to the outside. Four days later the son was back with a telegram from the commander of a British column four days' march away, saying he was sending rations and a medical officer.

Ridge and I were delirious at the good news. The boy explained to our hosts, who joined in the jubilation, breaking out an alcoholic corn drink, and dancing and shouting. . . .

The medical officer gave us a thorough going-over and patched up more than 20 cuts and bruises on each of us. Ridge's ankle had been badly sprained, but was now in pretty condition. Mine was fractured, but it had healed over, and this was no place to try to put it back in place. . . . It took 16 more days to get out of the mountains, but on a full stomach, resting in shelters swathed in blankets. Over tough places, our little helpers, who weighed 50 pounds less than either Ridge or I, carried us, resting in a sling swung from their foreheads . . . to a little British frontier station. A truck hurried us back to our India base to our friends. Ridge would be ready to fly again in a month. Pan American had a plane waiting, and in five days I was home, in the hands of a Seattle specialist who was to re-make my ankle. The doctor could not understand how, with one broken ankle and one badly sprained, we had lived through the hundreds of miles we walked. He called it a miracle.

The CNAC and Pan Am/Africa pilots spent 47 days and nights on their desperate journey from the crash site to the British outpost.

This story originally appeared in *The Clipper*, the newsletter of The Pan Am Historical Foundation.

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

Robert C. Davison passed away on July 2, 2013. He had been living in Clermont, FL and had been hospitalized for the previous 26 days.

Robert L. Johnson, 97 - December 13, 1915-June 22, 2013 - Longtime resident of Miami, born in Hamilton, Ohio. Began his flying career crop dusting in Ohio. Came to Miami in 1942 as a pilot with Pan American Airways to fly the "B-314 Flying Boats" out of Dinner Key. He retired as Captain after 35 illustrious years with Pan Am during the "Glory Years" of air travel. Blessed with wonderful health, during his retirement years he and Ruth spent much time at their summer home in Canada and traveling the world. He is survived by his loving and devoted wife of 46 years, Ruth, son David (Lori), grandson Logan and nephew Vincent (Virginia). A memorial service for family and friends will be held Thursday, June 27 at 3pm at Stanfill Funeral Home. The family will receive friends from 2-3pm. In lieu of flowers, the family requests a donation be made to your favorite charity.

William (Bill) C. Dillon Jan. 10th, 1924 - July 1st, 2013. Bill was born in Tacoma, WA (then Custer Station), to Vincent and Margaret Dillon, both deceased. Bill joined the United States Air Force at age 19 and was stationed in England throughout WWII. He hired into Pan American World Airways as a flight engineer and flew out of New York from 1953-54, then Hong Kong from 55-60, then Berlin, Germany from 60-63 (while living in Salzburg, Austria), and then out of Seattle for the remainder of his career.

Bil Stevens passed away on July 23, 2013. More next month.

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

Health Tip: Staying healthy through humor, laughter, and play

Laughter is strong medicine for both the body and the mind. It helps you stay balanced, energetic, joyful, and healthy at any age. A sense of humor helps you get through tough times, look outside yourself, laugh at the absurdities of life, and transcend difficulties.

Health Tip: Sleeping Better

Set a regular bedtime. Go to bed at the same time every night. Choose a time when you normally feel tired, so that you don't toss and turn. Try not to break this routine on weekends when it may be tempting to stay up late. If you want to change your bedtime, help your body adjust by making the change in small daily increments, such as 15 minutes earlier or later each day.

MORE ON THE CLIPPERS PIONEERS WEBSITE!

Check out the Clipper Pioneers online 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.

Latest News: Tech Support Scams

In a recent twist, scam artists are using the phone to try to break into your computer. They call, claiming to be computer techs associated with well-known companies like Microsoft. They say that they've detected viruses or other malware on your computer to trick you into giving them remote access or paying for software you don't need.

These scammers take advantage of your reasonable concerns about viruses and other threats. They know that computer users have heard time and again that it's important to install security software. But the purpose behind their elaborate scheme isn't to protect your computer; it's to make money.

How Tech Support Scams Work

Scammers have been peddling bogus security software for years. They set up fake websites, offer free "security" scans, and send alarming messages to try to convince you that your computer is infected. Then, they try to sell you software to fix the problem. At best, the software is worthless or available elsewhere for free. At worst, it could be malware — software designed to give criminals access to your computer and your personal information.

The latest version of the scam begins with a phone call. Scammers can get your name and other basic information from public directories. They might even guess what computer software you're using.

Once they have you on the phone, they often try to gain your trust by pretending to be associated with well-known companies or confusing you with a barrage of technical terms. They may ask you to go to your computer and perform a series of complex tasks. Sometimes, they target legitimate computer files and claim that they are viruses. Their tactics are designed to scare you into believing they can help fix your "problem."

Once they've gained your trust, they may:

- ~ask you to give them remote access to your computer and then make changes to your settings that could leave your computer vulnerable
- ~try to enroll you in a worthless computer maintenance or warranty program
- ~ask for credit card information so they can bill you for phony services — or services you could get elsewhere for free
- ~trick you into installing malware that could steal sensitive data, like user names and passwords
- ~direct you to websites and ask you to enter your credit card number and other personal information

Regardless of the tactics they use, they have one purpose: to make money.

If you get a call from someone who claims to be a tech support person, hang up. If they call back (as they did with me), tell them you are going to call the police, or continue to hang up. They tend to be persistent, and will try to convince you that they indeed work for "Microsoft". My mother received such a call, and got a phone number to call back — and they actually answered the phone — so they are good at what they are doing. Be aware that if it "sounds" suspicious, it's probably a scam. If you haven't already, put your phone number on the National Do Not Call Registry, and then report illegal sales calls.