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The Iran Adventure

by Harvey Benefield

I call this the Iran Adventure. Perhaps some background is in order. During the winter of 1978-79 the Shah of Iran abdicated. The new ruler and spiritual leader, Ayatollah Khomeini had yet to arrive and the entire country was in a state of turmoil. Some of the masses of Iranian people had broken into the armory and stolen all the weapons. Many, if not all of the people were armed. For the most part law and order had broken down. In addition to this, air traffic control at the airport and airspace was almost nonexistent.

In order to keep air traffic flowing, particularly our own, Pan Am operations representatives had been sent from our New York headquarters to Tehran to set up some sort of interim or VFR air traffic system to get the aircraft in and out of the area safely. However when they arrived the situation was so bad that they were unable to do as much as they desired. They were trapped in one of the hotels, as were other American citizens and foreign nationals. They were desperate to leave while they could. I guess this is where and how I got involved.

During January 1979 I was on vacation. I was out of the loop as regards what was going on in the world of aviation. My daughter Laura and I had gone to Colorado to ski during January. When we returned Pan Am Crew Scheduling office in NY called and assigned me a charter trip. I was to operate a B707 ferry flight from NY to Bermuda. We were to layover there, then operate a Bermuda – Brussels charter. After a layover at Brussels, I/we were to deadhead to Frankfurt and operate Frankfurt – New York, or await further assignment.. The first part of the trip was uneventful.

In Brussels, after supper and upon returning to my room, I received a phone call from Pan Am Flight Operations office in NY. It seems that some of our flight operations people were in Tehran and they couldn't leave because a revolution had started. They asked us, me and the First Officer Paul Franz and the Flight

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No Password Needed for Members Only Section of the Website

Please note - we have changed the access to the online newsletters so that you will no longer need a password to access them. GO TO OUR WEBSITE AT: www.clipperpioneers.com. There is also new information about accessing the members' mailing list. See page 5 for details.

Click on the "Members Only" button on the righthand side to access the current and previous newsletters.

The Iran Adventure

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Engineer Al Bekebrede to ferry a plane to Bahrain and wait there for further instructions regarding an evacuation flight from Tehran. The proposed flight was to operate ferry flight TE453 from Brussels to Bahrain. After that we were to wait for further instructions regarding departure times, etc. and then to operate flight E453 from Bahrain to Tehran for the evacuation, then to Istanbul if a fuel stop was necessary then on to Frankfurt. Bahrain is a small island country in the Persian Gulf, 22 miles east of Saudi Arabia. A crew of five flight attendants joined us in Bahrain. They were pursers Betty Carter and Bob Reinke and flight attendants Laddy Chorwat, Tavi Renzoni and Joyce Horton.

After arriving in Bahrain we were told to wait for further orders, as expected. We were told that they, NY Flight Operations, couldn't contact the people in Tehran directly. The time wasn't right and poor communications. During that time the local TV station was showing pictures of the revolution that was taking place there. During the next three days or so I contacted NY Operations on more than one occasion. Not much to do except to wait another day. I then tried and used the local telephone and called the "crew hotel" in Tehran and talked to one of the people there. They told us of their troubles in the hotel and the continuing revolution in the city. They said they were anxiously awaiting us. We didn't know what to expect in Tehran.

The next few days in Bahrain weren't too hard to take. Bahrain is an island nation in the Persian Gulf, just 22 miles from the Saudi Arabian coast. The place was full of the old and the new. There were some sumptuous new hotels and buildings and a lot of the old and ancient places, bazaars and such. Our only problem was waiting around for the time to be "just right". As I said before, we received daily briefings from NY about what was going on in Iran, and then we turned on the local TV and got another story. They, NY operations were unable to get through to the stranded people in Tehran by any means, and yet we were able to pick up the hotel phone and call them in their rooms. Strange.

After about four days we were given the word to go. Early in the morning I went to the Operations office at the airport and was given whatever weather briefing was available. The weather was forecast to be good, however that was little more than a guess. The only weather charts were satellite photos showing no cloud cover. We fueled for our destination, Tehran, and as much extra fuel we could carry. We had enough fuel to make a few approaches at Tehran then proceed to Istanbul, our first alternate. We were properly dispatched and were given a route that would take us to the Iranian airspace, then on into Tehran. In my possession I had a letter in teletype form from the Prime Minister of Iran. I can't remember the name now but it was recognizable then. This was to be used in the event we had trouble with the Iranian authorities.

After takeoff we had an uneventful trip until we arrived at the point of entry into the Iranian airspace at a point over the Persian Gulf. Local VHF communication with Iran was not effective. We then entered into a holding pattern at 29,000 feet and tried to contact the air traffic controllers using HF. I think that was when

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The last print issue of this newsletter was scheduled for Dec. 2018. However, because of quite a few requests to keep the newsletter going as a print edition, it has been decided to continue with it for at least another year (or until the funds run dry).

We'd like to have more stories to share! If you have a story you'd like to send, please send it in sooner rather than later! Email to: sue@clipperpioneers.com.

The Iran Adventure

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we made contact. We were denied entree to their airspace. I read to them the letter from the Prime Minister and after a lengthy delay, about a half hour, or so, was asked to read the letter. This was done, reading every word and phrase. After what seemed like hours, but was probably only minutes, we were told that our entry was approved, however VFR or Visual Flight Rules was all that was available. We proceeded to the destination VFR and were out of range of any communication until nearing Tehran. Fortunately we were visual all the way. We made position reports "in the blind" frequently. The only two frequencies that were available to us were the AA beacon, which was the outer marker at Merhabad airport and 131.4 which was the local PanOp (Pan Am's operations) frequency. We maintained VFR and descended to the local airport operating altitude. After we called PanOp and told them of our arrival and that we were unable to contact the tower, they relayed most of the information we needed. We were told that the airport was closed and they would try to open it as soon as they were able, because the runway was deliberately littered with trucks and buses. We stayed in the low level holding pattern, southeast of the airport, while the local people tried to remove the vehicles. This was no little problem because the people that parked the vehicles didn't leave the keys. After a long period of time, or so we thought, the runway was finally cleared. The Pan Am Operations manager told us that the runway looked clear and that he had driven his car the full length and it was clear.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE

My Wackiest Flying Story

by Dick Edwards

This story takes place sometime between 1943 and 1945, on the north coast of Brazil at one of our refueling stops called San Luis. It was our third day out of Rio, and the last stop before reaching Belem for our 3rd overnight since leaving Rio. The airplane was a regular PAA DC-3. In the years shown, it was required that "security curtains" be put in the cabin windows when approaching an airport and while moving about the airport - the idea being to prevent spies from seeing what secrets we had at the airport. Did they work — yes, because anyone trying to peak out around the curtain was reported immediately to the Purser by any passenger seeing them doing so!! People got involved where misbehaving was concerned!!

The DC-3 was a 21 passenger "tail dragger" airplane and the crew consisted of four: Captain; 1st Officer; Flight Radio Officer; and Purser (Steward). For the most part, all of us were young and enjoyed a good practical joke or a good funny prank.

It was not at all uncommon to have passengers traveling for their very first time on an airplane; plus, there were those who could just not do well with the English language. Most of our Purses spoke three languages and sometimes more. The two important ones for us in our travels —other than English— was Spanish and Portuguese. The Purser on this flight had been born in Cuba and was fluent in all three languages.

Now the story is going to get a little goofy —the "young guy's" side of the purser was going to kick in just for the fun of breaking the routine! A new passenger had boarded at San Luis that had never flown on an airplane; hah! the purser's kid side started to peak, and he just had to pull a funny to amuse them all. The procedure, as most know, is to taxi out to the end of the takeoff runway, stop, then "run up" each of the two engines to its take off power and once there, make sure all of the gauges are "in the green" and then bring both engines back to a comfortable power. When the Captain is sure all is in the "Go", a radio call goes to

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

My Wackiest Flying Story

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the tower for clearance to take off. Sometimes it took a few minutes to get that clearance, and so you just sat with engines purring away.

It was shortly after the engines were brought down to waiting power that one of the passengers — the San Luis boarding one, I guess — wanted to show he was a man of travel. He asked the Purser how high they were — now it is really going to get wacky — speaking loud enough for all the passengers to hear him, the Purser said, I don't know how high we are, just a minute, I will take a look. With that, he moved to the cabin entrance door, opened it, then let out a yaaaaa and jumped out to the ground! I kid you not — this is a true story— then the purser plopped his rump up on the cabin floor, pulled himself back into the cabin and calmly closed the door!!! Most passengers were in hysterics, and some in open mouth confusion; finally breaking into hilarity when they caught on to the Purser's prank.

Wow! We up front didn't know why, but it was very evident that the "Open Cabin Door" red light came on for a short while before going back green. As a precaution, I was asked to check the cabin and did so — everything looked normal to me, and the Purser was sitting way in the back with a big innocent smile on his face.

Once on the ground in Belem, it didn't take long for us to learn what had happened. The passengers were telling the story over and over and having a really big laugh! In fact, the passengers were telling the story over and over again all the way back to Miami. Three overnights and three trip legs away!

For those who have trouble with this story, you must understand that in the time period shown, we were not allowed to fly at night. It meant that we flew from early morning to before night, each day and then we, along with the passengers, would "lay over" for the night. This arrangement also meant that the passengers turned to the Purser for everything and did so, at all times. The trip from Miami to Rio took 4 days with three overnights. The return trip from Rio skirted the east and north coast of Brazil, so the trip had six legs and there were five overnights. The passengers and Pursers had a lot of time together. Is it any wonder that some of the Pursers liked to find ways to entertain their passengers? And this one entertained them all the way to Miami!

That's my wackiest flying story folks. It is one I will never ever forget!

New Lockerbie website

A new website has been created for Lockerbie. It can be viewed at www.lockerbie103.com. It might be a worthwhile site to check out, especially for those who plan on visiting Lockerbie. Be sure to enter the web address in the browser (not Google Search, etc.) with the www. Otherwise, they will get hundreds of Lockerbies and 103s and may not find the web site after 15 pages. ~Claude Hedspeth

You are a part of this wonderful Pan Am "family". Are there memories you've written down that you'd like to share with us in this newsletter? We've gotten some great response, and there will continue to be interesting stories coming up in 2018. Please share yours with us, as well! Please send them to Jerry or Sue by email to: sue@clipperpioneers.com.

***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 27, 2019

TAMPA TO BARCELONA

Dear Pan Amers:

Once again we prepare for our next and much welcomed Pan Am reunion cruise.

We are honoring the many requests to repeat a Transatlantic cruise with lots of wonderful and interesting ports of call. Our 14 day cruise, departs Tampa to Barcelona starting off with seven relaxing days at sea. Melt away land-based stress with a spa massage, build a scrapbook of memories or simply relax poolside. Plenty of time to reach out to old friends, enjoy movies and lots 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 a lifetime of memories to cherish. Family and friends are most welcomed.

Rates: per person, double occupancy, cruise only, based on availability and subject to change. Singles pay 200%. Port charges and government taxes additional \$330.39 per person plus a registration fee (to help with amenities, cocktail parties and such) at \$125. per person. Call to reserve now; a deposit of \$450 per person will lock in the current price. All major credit cards are accepted but checks are preferred. Insurance is highly suggested and cost is based on category type cabin. More information with your invoice.

ITINERARY:

Sat	27 Apr 2019	Tampa, Florida	5:00 PM	Boarding	
Sun	28 Apr 2019	Key West, Florida	11:00 AM	6:00 PM	Docked
Mon	29 Apr 2019	thru 05 May 2019	Cruising	-	Cruising
Mon	06 May 2019	La Palma, Canary Islands	1:00 PM	9:00 PM	Docked
Tue	07 May 2019	Tenerife, Canary Islands	7:00 AM	5:00 PM	Docked
Wed	08 May 2019	Cruising	-	-	Cruising
Thu	09 May 2019	Malaga, Spain	12:00 PM	9:30 PM	Docked
Fri	10 May 2019	Cruising	-	-	Cruising
Sat	11 May 2019	Barcelona, Spain	6:00 AM	-	Debark

\$789 (Inside) _ \$929 (Outside) \$1698 (Balcony) \$2539 (Jr. Suite)

To reserve call INTERLINE TRAVELS 1-888-592-7245 (TOLL FREE) or Carmen's direct mobile phone 786-252-7838. For questions on cruise call Stu Archer (Pan Am pilot and cruise director) at 305-238-0911. Carmen 786-252-7838 INTERLINETRAVELS@YAHOO.COM

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

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, and send your email contact. They started out with 5 and have grown to 17. ~from Dave Criley

Pan Am -- Personal Tributes to A Global Aviation Pioneer

As many of you know, the Pan Am Historical Foundation recently published the highly acclaimed *Pan Am – Personal Tributes to a Global Aviation Pioneer*, a book that caught the attention of Pan Amers and aviation enthusiasts around the world. The initial sales have been excellent and now into the sixth month since publication, the orders continue to come in.

This book may very well be one of the best – if not the best – book ever published about Pan Am. Rebecca Maksel, in the respected aviation journal *Air & Space*, published by the Smithsonian, wrote this about the book: “*Pan Am—Personal Tributes to a Global Aviation Pioneer* is just that: An insider’s look at the airline from those who worked there. In addition to a history of Pan Am, the book also includes the esoteric: an interview with artist Milton Hebal, who sculpted the 15-foot bronze signs of the zodiac that graced the façade of the Pan Am building at JFK; a reminiscence from an employee who worked at Pan Am’s Counter Vanderbilt, the largest ticket counter in the world; and a mournful remembrance from a flight attendant who flew aboard the White House press charter the day President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. Readers will learn about flights behind the Iron Curtain and Pan Am rescues of American citizens stranded by wars, revolutions, and earthquakes. The airline even had a waiting list for passengers interested in future trips to the moon.”

This book belongs in every Pan Amer’s library, and we are fortunate to have inventory available from the original print order to offer a special price of \$35 per single copy to friends and family of Pan Am. For those wishing to purchase five or more copies, the savings will be even better at \$30 per copy. Shipping will be free for orders within the United States. For international orders, please add \$50 per copy for shipping due to USPS international postage rates. Visit <https://www.panam.org/shop/669-panam90-book> to order.

Layovers for Pan Am

Check out Pan American layovers at www.paacrewlayover.com, where some 81 cities and over 161 hotels are shown in photos.

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

*...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

Paul A. Johns, of Iola, WI, age 104, died Wednesday, March 28, 2018 with family and friends by his side. He was born in Yeoman, Indiana on October 11, 1913 to the late Roy and Ethel (Hildebrand) Johns. Paul married his high school sweetheart, Elvie Kallio, in 1934. They were married for 55 years. Paul's passion was always flying. He began his 66 years as a pilot in 1929 when he soloed in a glider at age 15. In 1939, Pan American Airways hired him to establish an instrument training program for pilots ferrying aircraft to Europe via South America, once this was a success he fulfilled his dream to become a line pilot, flying DC-3s to the Caribbean and South America. In 1944, he transferred to Pan American's Pacific fleet, flying the PB2Y3 flying boat and the fabled Boeing 314 Clipper "Flying Boat" from San Francisco to Honolulu. As a Senior Pilot and Master Navigator, Paul completed 220 flights on the longest overwater route flown by any airline at that time.

Robert Barnard "Bob" McEachran, age 79, of Sarasota, Florida passed away peacefully from complications of Parkinson's on Saturday May 26, 2018. Bob was born March 17, 1939 in Minneapolis, MN to the late Dr. Gordon and Elsie McEachran. Bob graduated from West High in 1957 and attended the University of Minnesota. He joined the United States Marine Corp in 1961 and served in Vietnam from 1964-1965 as a helicopter pilot with HMM365, receiving 15 air medals. Bob joined Pan Am in 1967 and retired from Delta Airlines as a Captain. Bob enjoyed traveling, boating, fishing, antique cars, hot rods and ranching on his property in Montana. He will be remembered for his sense of humor, ready smile and his ability to fix anything. Bob is survived by his beloved wife of 56 years, Kathleen Flynn McEachran; loving children, Molly Burns (William) and Michele Zeitz (Doug Heuer); brother, Dr. James McEachran DDS and cherished grandson, Gordon Thomas Zeitz. He is preceded in death by his son, Thomas McEachran.

Bill Taylor passed away on May 26, 2018. There will be a memorial service on Thursday, July 19th in Ponte Vedra. One of Bill's favorite quotes seems appropriate: "Someday you will read or hear that Billy Graham is dead. Don't you believe a word of it. I shall be more alive than I am now. I will just have changed my address. I will have gone into the presence of God." More information to follow.

Retired Captain Donn Foreman passed away on May 21, 2018. There will be a service at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Medina WA, 8398 NE 12th St, 98039, on June 22nd, 2018 at 11:00 a.m.,

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

Thanks to the guys who have sent us stories!

You are a part of this wonderful "family". Are there memories you've written down that you'd like to share with us in this newsletter - short or long? Have you come across an interesting article that you'd like to share with us? Would you share pieces from a book you've written? Please send them along, so others can enjoy! We'd love to hear from you! Please send them to Jerry or Sue by email to: sue@clipperpioneers.com.

Pan Am was the airline that practically invented aviation. It pioneered air navigation and communications, and its list of "firsts" in the industry is awe-inspiring. Known as the "Queen of the Skies," it was the benchmark by which all other airlines were judged. ~Helen Davey.

On “Brain Bags” and such

from Dave Wendt

I was reminded, after reading Capt. Bragg’s article in the June Clipper Pioneers Newsletter, “Breaking at Least a Few of the Rules,” about an incident that happened to me back in 1968 in MIA. I was a relatively new 727 FEO on standby and got a call to provide sim support at the Training Center off 36th St. I grabbed my brain bag and headed off. About an hour into the sim, the instructor got a telephone call from outside and shut down the simulator. I was told to head over to the terminal to operate a flight to JFK – in my colorful short sleeve shirt and wash pants. I did a quick look around outside the 727 and on into the cockpit – (I think the first class pax probably thought I was a very late show for work – and even forgot to wear my uniform!)

Arriving at the hotel in NYC, with only my brain bag in hand, I got my room key and headed off for the elevator. I had always tipped “as required” – and was very surprised, about 15 minutes later, when there was a loud knock on the door and there stood a porter with his hand out for his tip! I was so flabbergasted I got out a quarter and gave it to him. If I hadn’t, I probably would have gotten a wake-up call at o’dark-thirty in the morning!!

Lessons learned: Pack at least a tooth brush in that brain bag and whatever else there is spare room for – because, as they say, “you just never know!”

Secondly – if you happen to be hijacked to Cuba (on 13 April 1969) - don’t reach down with your sprightly FEO efficiency into that bag to supply the pilots with their numbers – because you will quickly have the business end of a .38 cal pointed right at you! Being a pilot who used to carry one in VietNam, you realize that there is a live round on either side of the firing chamber! It didn’t make any difference which way the barrel rotated! “No habla Espanyol” and then slowly pointing down to the big blue binder inside worked much better!

With iPads and no FEOs these days, things are undoubtedly a bit different, so you could probably just disregard all the preceding advice!

Port Jefferson Lunch

The luncheon went well. Photos have been posted on the clipperpioneers.com website. Check ‘em out!

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/>
