

**PRESIDENT**

STU ARCHER
7340 SW 132 ST
MIAMI, FL 33156-6804
(305) 238-0911

VICE-PRESIDENT

HARVEY BENEFIELD
1261 ALGARDI AVE
CORAL GABLES, FL 33146-1107
(305) 665-6384

TREASURER / EDITOR

JERRY HOLMES
192 FOURSOME DRIVE
SEQUIM, WA 98382
(360) 681-0567

August 2018 - Clipper Pioneers Newsletter

Vol 53-8 - Page 1

The Iran Adventure

by Harvey Benefield

continued from previous issue

After holding for what seemed like an eternity, but was probably no more than 30 minutes or so, we were cleared to land. During the holding period, Al, the flight engineer said that he was picking up the sound of "acquisition" radar. I was told that that meant that someone had his or her weapons locked onto us. For the uneducated about military terminology, a weapons radar system was trying to get a target for their weapons, and that target was us.

We landed. We were instructed by PanOp to continue to the end of the runway and taxi to a certain area and wait. We did. Since we were told that we were to pick up personnel for the evacuation, this seemed only reasonable to wait for the evacuees to be brought to us. The two outboard engines were shut down and we waited as instructed.

School type buses approached and we thought they would be the evacuees. We were wrong. When the busses stopped, armed military people unloaded and, upon the direction of a senior military person, someone we later called "the general" directed the troupes to surround the airplane. Within a short time, armed militia surrounded the airplane, all with their weapons aimed at the cockpit. If you think this was frightening, you are right. I asked the other cockpit members to show their hands on the cockpit glareshield to show that we were unarmed. The general, I think, gave us the signal to cut the other engines. That was done.

Before long the military people pushed a boarding ladder to the forward entrance door and a group of them rapidly boarded the airplane. They were heavily armed. They searched the airplane. When they were satisfied that the Marines were not on board, we were allowed (ordered) to leave the plane. We stayed as

~ continued on next page

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

~ continued from previous page

a group under the wing of the plane and were questioned by a senior military officer, one of the two that spoke English. The other spoke only Farsi (sp)

There were many questions about why we were here and what did we want. After much discussion among themselves, they decided that we were to get in one of the busses and go into the city to a police station or other military office. When we asked why, no one seemed to have an answer. That was the last thing we wanted to do. Note: It is to be noted that during a revolution, there appeared to be no leaders. I told the commanding officer that we were a civilian aircraft and we, the crew, were not going off the airport. We were to go to the terminal and pick up passengers. There was a lot of back and forth arguing about our situation. After some hesitation he seemed to agree with us and we were told that we could start only 2 engines to taxi to the terminal and no more. One of the armed militia stayed in the cockpit during the trip to the terminal.

The busses with the militia led and followed us to the terminal. We were told later that one of the busses was a little close to the engines and we must have almost put him on his side, which frightened the crap out of the troops on board the buses.

Upon arrival at the terminal militia once again surrounded the airplane. A set of air stairs was then pulled up to the airplane. The Pan Am passenger service personnel at the terminal were in the process of getting the passenger's necessary paperwork completed and getting them on the airplane. There was a mix of people. Most were Pan Am personnel, including the flight operations personnel (Chief Pilot types) that we were to pick up, plus a number of others. We had Intercontinental Hotel people (at that time, IHC was a subsidiary of Pan Am Corporation) and a number of other people, including many from the various press corps.

I wanted to check in with the Pan Am Operations people and was told by some armed person at the top of the stairs that I couldn't get off the airplane. As I said before, during a revolution, every one and no one was in charge. I put on my uniform coat and hat and told the guard that I was the Captain and I was authorized to do whatever I wanted. He seemed to agree. It all turned out to be a worthless exercise. The passenger service personnel were trying to do their best to handle the chaos.

As I mentioned before, radio communications were almost non-existent. We had originally planned to be at the terminal for about an hour but by this time a few hours had expired. I felt that I should tell the company in New York what was happening. In the cockpit a number of radios and radio equipment are available. One that we used was the earpiece and a lip mike. Most observers can't tell whether we are talking among ourselves or speaking on one of the communication radios. We dialed "Berna" radio, a commercial unit in Europe on the HF band and had them open a line to Pan Am Operations in New York. We spoke to them in a normal voice as if we were speaking to each other and brought them up to date, all the while having some

~ continued on next page

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

~ continued from previous page

weapon toting person s in the cockpit, looking at us. Sometime during this time, the officer in charge of the militia disappeared and was not a factor, just more of an inconvenience.

Loading the passengers was becoming a problem, as no one seemed to be able to make up his or her mind. First, no Iranians. Then, an American husband with an Iranian wife was OK. After that, an American wife with an Iranian husband was not OK. During all this, a couple of young people of whatever nationality were able to slip on the airplane and sit on the floor in the back, behind seats. I don't know if they were ever found out or not. Didn't care, either. All evacuees were searched and all camera film was confiscated. Much was harassment.

As the passengers were arriving in the airplane we recalculated the fuel necessary for the next flight leg and decided to try to fly nonstop to Frankfurt, bypassing Istanbul. Time on the ground at Tehran was in excess of 4 hours. Seemed much longer, maybe an eternity. I was more concerned about departing during daylight hours because of lighting problems on the airport and runway lighting. There was none. We finally received "startup" clearance, (from one of our own operational people, on the ground) but that was rapidly cancelled because some very official people wanted to check the passengers again. The airstairs were rolled out to the airplane and the entry door was re-opened. After another search the doors were closed again and we once again received start-up clearance. Engines were started and we taxied rapidly so as to avoid the chance that someone might change their minds again about us departing. We were almost past sunset. We took off with no Air Traffic Control clearance. We departed VFR and contacted Istanbul on the HF band and received clearance while airborne. After takeoff, the passenger started to applaud. When we passed the Iranian border, an announcement was made to that effect, the Seat Belt sign was extinguished and the celebration really started. The bar was opened. Alcohol helped.

We had plenty of fuel so we cancelled the scheduled Istanbul stop and touched down in Frankfurt 6 hours later. Had a few interviews at the terminal by some news media, then on to the hotel for rest. It had been a long day.

Upon arrival at the hotel, the press and the IHC people had arranged a banquet to which we were invited. In addition, chilled, complimentary champagne had been delivered to each room.

At the banquet, many stories were told by the evacuees about the past few days of their adventuresome times. Many stories were funny now that were not so funny then. As I said before, alcohol helps. A few speeches later we found out just how happy they were to get out of that place.

After that, the trip home was uneventful. I deadheaded back to New York, then on to Miami. I had been gone from my home for a few days short of two weeks.

Lucky if you Don't: Dead if you Do

by Bill Kline

The clearance out of Nassau was to maintain 2000 feet until advised, heading for Miami. After sitting on the runway for almost 10 minutes waiting for takeoff clearance, we asked Nassau Tower if there was a problem. Tower stated they were awaiting clearance from MIA due inbound traffic. After another 10 minutes, we were given clearance for takeoff, but maintain 2000 feet and request higher from MIA Center. With a full power

~ continued on next page

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

Lucky if you Don't: Dead if you Do

~ continued from previous page

takeoff on the 727 and a light load, we were through 2000 feet before we could get the power reduced. Levelled off at 2100 feet and starting to ease down to 2000 feet, we switched over to Miami, when we both saw a twin otter nose on.

After a yanking and banking maneuver to get clear, we informed Miami we had just experienced a near miss. Miami stated that the traffic was level at 2000 feet eastbound. Why were we at 2000 feet? Nassau should have cleared us to 10,000 feet. Just lucky we were not holding 2000 but coming down from 2100. Wrote up a report for the Chief Pilot's Office in MIA and got the following reply. "There is never any reason to be off altitude. Pan Am policy is that pilots will work to fly with precision and adhere to clearances."

While I agreed that we should always fly assigned altitude, the Chief Pilot's Office failed to grasp the irony of this particular situation. Nassau gave us the wrong clearance and being off altitude was a true stroke of luck that saved our lives.

(from Clipper Pioneers newsletter Dec. 2004)

First RTW Flight - A Downline Disruption!

By Eugene Leach

In 1997, Eugene Leach wrote to tell of the part he played in Pan Am's first RTW flight. Not the much-publicized flight of the Lockheed Constellation Clipper America, this globe-circling flight was completely unplanned until a few days after Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor. In the air over the South Pacific, the only safe option open to the Clipper Pacific was to continue westbound around the world to New York. Pan American Airways System, as it was known in those days, hired me on April Fool's Day, 1940. Little did I know what was in store in the following five and one-half years. This story highlights one 24-hour period during those years.

"On December 7, 1941, I was assigned to the crew of the B-314, NC18602, captain Robert Ford commanding. I had completed some modifications on radio equipment at Canton Island and at Noumea, New Caledonia and was proceeding to Auckland, New Zealand to do the same there. It was common practice to assign radio operators to the crew for training as future Flight Radio Officers (FEO).

"About an hour out from Noumea, I was on watch and was advised of the attack at Pearl Harbor. We proceeded to Auckland and stayed there awaiting orders. On December 15, 1941 we departed Auckland for Noumea to evacuate all Pan American personnel, their wives and children. They were given less than two hours to wind up their affairs and board the Pacific Clipper, taking only what they could carry. We off-loaded them at Gladstone, Australia.

"Our two Flight Steward crew members, Barney Sawicki and Verne C. Edwards, performed magnificently, procuring ample food for the crew at each overnight stop for the following day's flight. Having arrived at Soerabaia, Java in the Dutch East Indies on December 18, 1941, we were put up at the Oranje Hotel. On December 22, upon assembling the crew, Barney Sawicki was nowhere to be found and no one had the slightest idea of his whereabouts. Unable to locate Barney, Captain Ford decided we must proceed.

"Upon arrival at the airport, everyone took their time, hoping against hope that Barney would show. Someone, presumably one of the Flight Engineers, had occasion to open the starboard side bulkhead, exposing the more than sufficient crawl-space to the two starboard engines.

"There, in peace and solitude and sleeping off what must have been a world-class hangover, lay Barney Sawicki. Barney enjoyed life but first he did his job and did it well."

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

Leslie Jefferson Williams made his final ascent to Heaven on Monday, June 11, 2018. Born in Ft. Meyers, FL in 1924 and raised in Orlando, Les was a Florida-Boy through and through. He began his lifelong love of flying in the Army Air Corp in 1938. He was a B-17 Co-Pilot and was honorably discharged at the end of WWII.

On the GI Bill, Les enrolled at Florida State University where he met and fell in love with his first wife, Joan D. Pickerill. After graduating FSU with a degree in Zoology, Les worked as a crop duster pilot in Georgia, before he and his young wife, now with two daughters, moved to San Marcos, Texas to be an Air Force flight instructor and administrator.

Les dreamed of flying for National Airlines and in 1962 he got his wish. Now with three little daughters, Les and Joan moved back to Florida and Les joined National Airlines, flying 727's and later flew as Captain for Pan American Airlines.

Captain Merlin Leon Tryon, 79, of Brookfield, beloved husband of Renate Tryon, died at Danbury Hospital on Wednesday, July 4, 2018. He was born in Thatcher, AZ, son of the late Merlin Oscar and Josephine (Haley) Tryon. Merlin was a Veteran of the Vietnam War, serving stateside with the United States Marine Corps. He worked for many years as a pilot for Pan Am.

Gus Littlefield passed away May 31, 2018. No additional information available.

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.

**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**

26th Annual Family Reunion und Oktoberfest

Sunday, Oct 7th, 2018

Where: Two Steps Downtown Grille
Ives St., Danbury, CT

When: Sunday October 7th, 2018 - from 1400 'til 1700

What: Luncheon Buffet
Beer and Wine: NO CHARGE
Pay Bar: AVAILABLE
Cost: \$26.00 per person, all inclusive

Tell all your Pan Am Friends. Casual Dress. Copy this notice and pass it on!

Make checks payable to: Alan Vale (Write "Reunion" in the memo)
Mail to: Alan Vale, 40 Britannia Dr., Danbury CT 06811-2612
(203) 778-2993
av747@att.net

Print your name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Phone: _____ # in your party: _____
Print their names: _____

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

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/>
