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## **Flying the Boeing 314 Flying Boat**

**CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS ISSUE**

*by William B. Nash*

The crews for the president's flight were not specially chosen. Any Pan Am crews could have handled the flights, but Cone and Vinal and crews were available.

In another of Pan Am's many contributions toward shortening World War II, Captains George Duff and Marius Lodeesen and crew were called upon to fly a very vital mission to Leopoldville, Belgian Congo.

In the desperate effort to construct an atom bomb before the enemy did the United States had already learned to obtain U-235 from U-238. Also, our scientists knew how to detonate such a bomb. The one problem left was where to get enough uranium to build it. The Belgian Congo was the only known source of pitchblende in which uranium is found. America again called upon Pan Am for its long range aircraft and experience. Duff and Lodeesen landed the B-314 in the Congo River at Leopoldville, and the plane was fully loaded with unmarked boxes. These boxes would end the war in the Pacific. The crew was not told of the content or use - just to get them to the USA safely and fast. They did (Brock, 1978).

In the first two years of WWII, Pan Am safely transported British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, King George of Greece, Admiral Nimitz of the U.S. Navy, General Marshall of the U.S. Army, and numerous high level diplomats and senior officials.

Some prominent passengers could come up with some amusing comments. Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, upon arrival in New York on one of our 314's was walking on the dock to the terminal after disembarkation and she stopped to watch great clusters of condoms exiting a sewer into Bowery Bay. She commented, "So this is America!"

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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](http://www.clipperpioneers.com). To request a current membership list, email [sue@clipperpioneers.com](mailto:sue@clipperpioneers.com) with your request. Click on the "Members Only" button on the righthand side to access the current and previous newsletters.

## Flying the Boeing 314 Flying Boat

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At one departure from our marine terminal at New York's La Guardia airport, as the plane was taxiing out for take-off, one of the stewards felt a tug on his sleeve from a passenger. It was Martha Raye, American comedy actress. She said, "Let me know when we're over Brooklyn. I want to go to the can."

While I was assigned to the Boeing 314, one tragic crash of a Boeing 314 occurred. For three weeks I had been scheduled to fly Third Officer on the '03, the Boeing 314 Yankee Clipper, on an "O" trip; New York-Bermuda-Horta in the Azores-Lisbon, then to Africa, South America, and north to New York. Two days before departure, operations sent me out on an earlier "O" trip to take the place of a sick crew member. Our trip to Lisbon was uneventful. Our plane was taken on by another crew. On February 22, 1943, our crew was in Lisbon, having breakfast, all ready to depart for the harbor to meet the Clipper '03 for our leg to Africa, when our captain, Max Weber, was called to the phone. He came back, his face turned white. The Yankee Clipper had crashed into the Tagus River, with many deaths and injuries. There were survivors.

For the next three weeks we remained in Lisbon. Our captain was Max Weber. We worked on the remains of the '03 and visited surviving crew members and passengers in the hospital. Captain Audrey Durst, Chief Pilot, came over and took charge. Max Weber took Durst's flight out. Our crew had the sad task of identifying our dead crew member friends in the morgue and observe them being fingerprinted by the maritime police. We signed police papers as witnesses. None of us ate the rest of the day. Some of the bodies had not been easy to identify.

Our job on the wreckage, which had been lifted from the bottom of the Tagus River, was to disassemble and pack in barrels all the vital instruments and parts that might give a hint as to the cause of the crash. Our job at the hospital was to cheer up the injured passengers and crew. We took flowers and presents and talked with them. A number of passengers were USO entertainers. One of them was Jane Froman. I thought she was quite a girl. So did John Burn, the injured Fourth Officer on the crashed '03. He married her.

The captain of the '03, R.O.D. Sullivan, survived, but First Officer Rush died. There were 39 people aboard, twenty four were fatalities. Third Officer, Andy Freeland, who took my place, was also killed. Andy was a close friend for six years before we joined Pan Am. Identifying Andy at the morgue was one of the times in my life that this grown man wept. The cause of the crash was concluded to be "R.O.D. Sullivan", and after a hearing he was summarily fired.

For what it's worth, I have always felt Captain Sullivan was railroaded, and this feeling is based on more than the confidence I had in him when I flew with him. It's based on a probable cause other than "pilot error".

Captain Sullivan was making a pass over the Tagus River landing area prior to landing. Wind, current, surface obstacles, etc., had to be checked. Since landing was not yet imminent, the seat belts had not yet been called for. A crew member was standing between the captain and the copilot holding onto the curtain bars. Fourth Officer John Burn was standing on the top of the spiral stairwell looking at the cockpit. John reported that they had plenty of altitude (400 or 500 ft.) and 140 knots indicated airspeed. Suddenly the

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**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! We appreciate you and the interesting stories you send in for all to enjoy! Email to: [sue@clipperpioneers.com](mailto:sue@clipperpioneers.com).**

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

## Flying the Boeing 314 Flying Boat

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plane performed a left diving turn into the water. Captain Sullivan said that the control wheel turned forward and left in his hands and he could not hold it. I believe him.

After talking to Captain Sullivan and John Burn I felt that someone had turned on the hydraulic valve of the autopilot - inadvertently - without the indices being set. It wasn't Sullivan. He was hand-wheeling. It wasn't Rush. He was too smart. It had to be the crew member standing between them.

The autopilot indices had to match the indices positions of the ailerons, elevator, and rudder indices before turning on the hydraulic power. When the autopilot was not in use, its indices would float out of position. If the hydraulic power was turned on without lining them up with the flight control positions with three set knobs, the airplane would follow the unset indices into a climb, dive, or roll, or even a snap roll. Personally, I constantly reset the indices even when hand-wheeling with the autopilot off.

The aisle-side arm rests of the pilots' seats curved upward from behind. Following this curve upward on the captain's side was a nice flat metal strip - a great place to rest one's foot when standing between captain and copilot. Halfway up this strip, sticking right out of the top of it on the captain's side, was a fore-and-aft-moving ball-handled lever, the autopilot on-off hydraulic valve. More than once, while flying the B-314, I had found a crew member's foot accidentally moving that valve, so had formed a habit of keeping an eye on any feet that got near it. In the copilot's seat I couldn't reach the indices settings.

I fully explained my theory to my superiors. I was thanked, but that was the last I ever heard of "autopilot" in connection with that crash. I do not know if it was ever brought up at the hearing.

Even as a very junior pilot in my first year with the company, I had heard stories about R.O.D. Sullivan; that he was disliked by some pretty powerful people in the company, because he had a mind of his own and did his job the most efficient way, even if it was "different". For instance, he was sent to California to ferry a Boeing 314 to New York. They'd given him a route to fly that he thought was ridiculous. It would take him 'way south, then east, then north, staying over water most of the way. The next thing the New York Operations knew, reports were coming in across the United States of a monster airplane flying at 1000 feet over terrain directly from San Francisco to New York. Sullivan said, "I've got an empty airplane, with four engines and plenty of fuel. Why not?" Perhaps he irked other boat pilots because he could outfly them. He'd land across a river and pull right up to the pier, rather than land down river and taxi for thirty minutes. He knew he could do it, so to him, it was not unsafe. Once, when I was a Fourth Officer, he told me to get the bow hatch open fast after landing, because he'd have the plane stopped at the float line by the time I had it open. He did. All I had to do was drop the grapnel straight down to snag the floating bowline. Also we heard that he survived his "unusual procedures" because he kept a "little black book" recording the shortcomings of certain "Master Ocean Pilots". R.O.D. Sullivan had flown the Pacific Ocean 55 times. Two weeks prior to this incident his 100<sup>th</sup> crossing of the Atlantic Ocean was celebrated.

True or not, I've often wondered if, when the opportunity presented itself to dump R.O.D., his enemies took it. I liked him. I know he was an excellent boat pilot, and I know being blamed for the accident broke his heart. He worked a while flying for Firestone in Africa - and then he died.

**TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE**

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

## A Tale of Two Captains

*By Robert Kloepper*

I was older than most when I was hired by PanAm. Because of the direction where PanAm was heading financially and the fact that I didn't desire to commute because of family reasons, I spent my 35 year career as a NAV, a RCO, an MCO, and finally a FEO.

I probably flew with more Captains in my flying career than anybody, except for professional flight engineers. I can honestly say that I got along with all of them. I even got along with some that most pilots thought were problems. However, there were two that were not like the rest.

I was a 707 MCO and was flying mostly charter lines. I was with this Captain that I didn't know on a Warsaw trip. The Marine embassy guards were kind enough to allow PanAm pilots on layover to hang out in their club. The three of us crew members were taking advantage of this and were having a nice quiet evening with a few ( not many) beers.

Suddenly the Captain went off the wall. It was as if someone threw a switch. He began to make nasty and belligerent remarks to the young Marines in the room. At first they were laughing at him but then some of them stopped laughing. I was angry, but the FEO was livid. He wanted to go and leave him there. I asked him to wait while I found a senior enlisted man and asked to come over and kick the three of us out of the club. He complied. Now we walked back to the hotel while the Captain made awful remarks to people on the street. Thank goodness they didn't know what he was saying. At the hotel we dumped him in the bar and called it a night. The next afternoon at pickup time we met in the lobby and the ferry flight to FRA was uneventful. Nobody mentioned the night before. I never saw him again.

This story happened after PAC day but everyone involved was a PanAm guy. When those of us went to UAL, PanAm gave us SA tickets to be used world wide on PanAm. My wife, youngest son, and I went on a trip from JFK to Paris and then on to Israel. It went well until on the way home. The flight from Paris to JFK was full except for two seats in First Class.

I told my wife and son to go on without me. I gave her all of my cash and told her to get a PA cop to help her get a safe cab to Jersey where we lived. I was there in the terminal all alone. The agent looked at me closely and said he recognized me from flights that I had made to Paris as a crew member.

He took my ID card and went on board to ask the Captain if I could ride the jump seat. He returned a moment later with a puzzled look on his face. He said the Captain said "NO.....f\*\*k him, he's one those rats who went to UAL."

I boarded the escalator to the main terminal. Just then I heard the agent's voice...."Hey, Kloepper, I found you a seat". He gave me a seat in F/C with my wife and son. He delayed the departure while I jumped on the return escalator.

Later during flight my wife asked me if I was going to speak to the Captain when he came out of the cockpit. I told her "no, because he might put me off in KEF". Then I said to my wife that she could give me the cash back. She said "What cash?"

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## **Detained in Damascus**

*By Lawrence Bleitz*

In May of 1970, I was FEO on Pan Am 2, around the world with a layover in Beirut. Captain Crittenden, myself and three other crew members hired a taxi to Damascus, Syria.

After shopping and sight-seeing, we drove back to the Lebanese border station.

However, to our great chagrin, the guards refused to allow us to re-enter Lebanon!

Since we were flight crew, we did not have visas. Visas were not required of flight crews, but the guards could not grasp that fact.

We asked to see the major in charge, but he was as dense as his guards. We explained to him that we were the flight crew of the Pan American round-the-world flight, and if we weren't allowed to go back to Beirut, 150 passengers would be stranded, and an international incident would be created. We even showed him our room keys from the Phoenician Hotel, proving that we were already staying in Beirut and had only gone to Damascus for a couple of hours of sight-seeing.

Also, our taxi had Lebanese plates.

The pompous ass was unmoved and would not budge.

While the rest of the crew argued with him, I made my way down to the far corner of the counter and struck up a conversation with a young lieutenant. He said to wait until the major was off duty.

That happy event transpired in less than an hour, and I gathered my cohorts and relieved them of all their spare shekels, which I placed in the paw of the crooked lieutenant, who then escorted us to the gate and waved us through. It could have had a much worse ending.

Two hundred fifty passengers never knew how close they came to spending an extra day or two in Beirut. I still haven't figured out how we could have explained it to the chief pilot.

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## **Getting to 80...**

I have good news for you. The first 80 years of life are the hardest. The second 80 are a succession of birthdays and parties. Once you reach 80, everyone wants to carry your baggage and help you up the steps. If you forget your name, anyone else's name, telephone numbers, promises to be in three places at once or how many grandchildren you have, you need only to explain that you are 80.

At 70, people get mad at you for everything. If you act foolishly, everybody looks for softening of the brain. Being 70 is no fun at all. At that age, people expect you to retire to Florida and complain about your arthritis and ask people to stop mumbling because you can't understand them.

But, if you survive to 80, everyone is still surprised you are still alive! The treat you with respect for having lived so long. Actually, they seem to be surprised that you can still walk and talk sensibly. Everyone should try to make it to 90. It's the best time of life. If you ask me, life begins at 80. ~ANONYMOUS



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## Pan Am Philadelphia Area Pilots (PAPAP)

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

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

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## Come Join the Santa Rosa Breakfast Group!

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

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## Flying Boat Reunion clip now available for viewing

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

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## Layovers for Pan Am

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

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## Check Out the Lockerbie Website

A website has been created for Lockerbie. It can be viewed at [www.lockerbie103.com](http://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 Hudspeth

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## Pan Am -- Personal Tributes to A Global Aviation Pioneer

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. Visit <https://www.panam.org/shop/669-panam90-book> to order.

### Thank You for the Stories You're Sending In! Keep 'em coming!!

We've been getting some good stories about memories of your times with Pan Am, and we want you to know we appreciate it! Keep them coming, and you will see them in the upcoming issues! 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? Send them to [sue@clipperpioneers.com](mailto:sue@clipperpioneers.com) or [jerryholmes747@gmail.com](mailto:jerryholmes747@gmail.com)

*...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

**Wm Harvey Benefield**, "slipped the surly bonds of earth" with his family by his side on November 18, 2019. Harvey was born in New Orleans, LA on August 20, 1933 to the late Hartford Odell and Anna Stanley Benefield. The family later moved to Miami during his elementary school years. He graduated from Miami Senior High (51) and received his BS Civil Engineer degree from University of Miami. It was there that he met and later married the beautiful Janet Chadwick. After college, he joined the Navy, becoming a Naval Aviator. After almost 8 years, enjoying Naval life he moved on to Pan American World Airways until retirement as a B747 Captain. Harvey was proud of the fact that he qualified in a series of aircraft from the DC3 to the B747. Until his passing, Harvey served as Vice President of the Clipper Pioneers.

**Duyane Alan 'Dewey' Hoffman** – February 24, 1920 – October 30, 2019 (Died @ age 99 years – 4 months shy of 100 years) Apopka, FL Dewey joined Pan American Airways in 1942 making military trips during WW II transporting military supplies & helping train Navy pilots. In the 36 years flying mostly as Captain he flew many various airplanes from the B-314 flying boats to retiring in 1978 as a 747 Captain. During these years he was based in N.Y. Miami & Rio flying the Caribbean & East Coast of South America. When stationed in Brownsville he flew south through Mexico & Central America where he was introduced to orchids in 1949. Transferring back to N.Y., he flew many trips along the West coast of Africa to Johannesburg, throughout Europe & as Far East as Bangkok, Thailand. His family & friends enjoyed the many accounts & adventures of all of the places he traveled.

**Don Drennan** was peacefully taken to Heaven on October 3rd, 2019 by the grace of God he was surrounded by his 3 loving children (John, Carol, and Julie), many of his grandchildren, as well as his wife Joan. Don served in the United States Navy as a carrier pilot and later flew as a commercial pilot. He was a dedicated member of Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church and was deeply involved with Boy Scout Troop 212. In addition, he was on the Camp Timberwolf Board for 25 years and served as the President of the Board for 14 years. He was instrumental in leading the efforts to make vast improvements at the camp in order to make it the "Home of Troop 212". He also volunteered with inner city youth organizations in Oakland to develop camping programs for disadvantaged youths. He was an avid sailor and friend to all who knew him.

**For more information and full obituaries about each of these friends who will be missed, click on "In Memory Of..." at our website: [www.clipperpioneers.com](http://www.clipperpioneers.com). Know of someone from Pan Am who has passed? Email the obit to Jerry Holmes at [jerryholmes747@gmail.com](mailto:jerryholmes747@gmail.com) or [sue@clipperpioneers.com](mailto:sue@clipperpioneers.com), or mail to: Sue Forde, P. O. Box 3457, Sequim, WA 98382**

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

***Email or write to:***

***Clipper Pioneers, c/o Sue Forde, P. O. Box 3457, Sequim WA 98382  
or email to: [sue@clipperpioneers.com](mailto:sue@clipperpioneers.com) or [jerryholmes747@gmail.com](mailto:jerryholmes747@gmail.com)***

## Make Plans for our Next Cruise in 2020!

Dear Pan Amer's: I trust all of you got home safe and sound from our fabulous TransAtlantic cruise. It was wonderful meeting up with old friends and making new ones. I'm very happy to announce our next adventure is a great 11 day cruise to the Caribbean. This is for all the Pan Folks and friends. Come join the fun, It is a great cruise and one of the very few for the entire year that will visit Panama and the best price of all. It's a great itinerary. If interested, get a deposit to Carmen, the only cabins available are those listed below.

### Serenade of the Seas Mar. 2, 2020

Inside \$1050 / Outside \$1250 / Balcony \$1950

RATES - are "from", Non-Refundable, per person, cruise only, double occupancy and based on availability at time of booking. Port / government taxes are additional (\$398. per person); surcharge for amenities (gifts, cocktail parties, etc.) is \$125. per person.. Deposit is \$450.00 per person. Major credit cards accepted but checks are preferred. Make out to Interline Travels, 456 Merlin Ct., Tallahassee, FL 32301.

To reserve call Carmen direct 786-252-7838; [INTERLINETRAVELS@YAHOO.COM](mailto:INTERLINETRAVELS@YAHOO.COM). For questions and further information call Stu Archer (for Pan Am pilot and cruise coordinator) at 305-238-0911.

#### VISITING PORTS OF CALL

PUERTO LIMON

COLÓN, PANAMA

COLÓN, PANAMA

ORANJESTAD, ARUBA

PUERTO LIMON – Come to Puerto Limon ready to meet a raw and beautiful side unlike any other in Costa Rica.

COLÓN, PANAMA – Home to the Panama Canal's Atlantic Ocean entryway, Colón is the second-largest city in Panama.

COLÓN, PANAMA – Cartagena de Indias boasts romantic colonial architecture and a Caribbean coast glittering in shades of bright white and aquamarine.

ORANJESTAD, ARUBA – Welcome to Aruba— or as the locals say, Bon bini. Here Dutch traditions mix with island charm.

WILLEMSTAD, CURACAO – Curaçao is a treasure trove of cultural attractions, rich history, and natural scenery — from desert landscapes and rugged cliffs to 38 spectacular, and mostly secluded, beaches.

**Check out the website - [www.clipperpioneers.com](http://www.clipperpioneers.com) - for more detailed information about the ports of call - where you can go and what you can see!**

**Don't miss out - come and join us on this fun cruise with your fellow PanAmer's!**

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**Thanks to those of you who have sent us stories! Keep 'em coming!**

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