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Tales from the Tenerife Crash that Never Got Reported

by Captain Robert Lee Bragg edited by Dorothy A. Boyd-Bragg, Ph.D. - (Continued from last issue.)

Part 4: Legal Issues

Once we arrived at London, I did my first interview on the accident at Heathrow Airport. Peter Jennings had arranged in advance for a camera crew to meet us. In the interview, I brought out the fact that *The London Times* in their earlier article had incorrectly related incorrect details about the Tenerife runway. After the interview, we boarded the Pan Am flight to New York and things seemed to return to normal. I was mistaken.

Within two weeks, the legal hassles started and never stopped. Both Victor Grubbs, the Pan Am captain, and I started receiving notices of each and every lawsuit filed in connection with the Tenerife crash. For a very long time, I kept about two filing cabinets full of legal paperwork. I was well aware that when you have mega accidents, everyone gets sued: Pan Am, KLM, Boeing, Pratt & Whitney, the captains, and the first officers – to name just a few.

As background to such litigious actions and to provide an interesting side-note to our chief pilot's "mood," after the Tenerife accident and just after I had checked out as a 747 captain, Pan Am's chief pilot gave me a check ride to Nassau. In the process, he found time to criticize my first officer about not wearing his seat belt tight enough. When the first officer responded that he didn't think the manual stated how tight the belt had to be worn, the chief pilot responded that the first officer just "wasn't complying with the spirit of the FAA regulation." I said nothing.

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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. To request a current membership list, email sue@clipperpioneers.com with your request. Click on the "Members Only" button on the righthand side to access the current and previous newsletters.

Tales from the Tenerife Crash that Never Got Reported

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Just a bit later, I received a phone call from one of the Pan Am attorneys informing me that our chief pilot, Capt. Bill Erkes, had called him and asked for him to investigate and see if he couldn't come up with a way "legally" to terminate us: Vic Grubbs, George Warren, and me.

I immediately called Walt Milligan, our vice president of operations, and informed him what I'd been told. He stated he didn't believe me, and I simply told him to call the attorney, which he did. Subsequent actions speak volumes. About one week later, our chief pilot was dismissed from his job.

While I was still filling my filing cabinets, a good bit after the Tenerife crash, I had occasion to have lunch in California with one of our Tenerife passengers. She owned a travel agency and had been responsible for booking eighty passengers on the flight which ended up in Tenerife. She told me that she had received word from the insurance claims administrator and was told that he would visit her the next day and was prepared to make her one offer and that there would be no negotiations or flexibility with the offer. He was told that there was no need for him to visit because she and others would see him in court.

As for the insurance situation, it was incredibly lucky that Pan Am, KLM, and the Spanish Airport Authority which was then controlled by the Spanish military were all insured by Lloyds of London. Talk about one stop shopping and staying out of the courts.

Lloyd's pointed "a finger" at no one – no blame was placed, they just settled quickly. They paid for the replacement of the airplanes – estimated value of the planes was complicated to calculate, as then and now, as the rate of change and technological obsolescence in aviation circles is fast - \$25,000 for all who died as provided for by the Geneva Convention – although the underwriters did have to take the initiative and caution some that it was not necessary to engage a high-paid lawyer in order to secure this compensation. In truth, these complicated transactions are still not fully comprehended. Shall we say that Lloyd's was not overly communicative?

Ironically, the very thing that Pan Am had wanted to avoid, a mass burial, was to become a sad reality in California. Most of the passengers on the Pan Am Clipper had been from California, heading for a cruise, and many were buried there together because the Spanish police, for unknown reasons, had removed all jewelry from the victims and thus hampered positive identification in too many cases. I've often wondered what actually happened to the jewelry and watches. I had heard that it might have been turned over to the U.S. State Department, but I have no reason to believe that it's true. I had and have a personal interest since

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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.

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

Tales from the Tenerife Crash that Never Got Reported

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I lost cufflinks made from Russian rubles when I lost my suitcase in the crash. I still don't know what happened to them

The crash has certainly not been forgotten and hopefully, there will never be a more deadly aviation catastrophe. In 2007, the Dutch, working with the Spanish government authorities on Tenerife who gave them the land free of charge, erected a distinctive memorial to all who had died in 1977. Although not directly stated, the message of the memorial structure was "Gone but not forgotten."

To end as I began, you may know the accident but you probably don't know the inside story of what followed. I could say more, but I'll refrain from doing so. The bottom line is that just as one thing led to another to cause the accident, one thing also led to another to produce a disastrous aftermath as well.

Anyone have a story on this?

Has anyone written the story about the Korean Air 707 that the Soviets shot at and forced to land on a frozen lake? The US state Dept asked PanAm (IGS) Berlin to fly into Murmansk to rescue passengers and crew. Our chief pilot, Frank Richie accomplished the task, a most amazing adventure? My info is second hand but I am sure there are some of us left who are better informed, maybe John Marshall . - *John Frisbie*

Novel about Pan Am: The Guest from Johannesburg

Dear Clipper Pioneers ,

I just visited your great web site, and felt the Clipper Pioneers might be interested in my recently published novel that features Pan Am in its earliest days, called "The Guest From Johannesburg". My dad was with Pan Am in NY, passing away in 1944. As a result, my brother and I grew up as part of the Pan American family and you all still represent the best in worldwide aviation.

My novel includes the formative days when construction crews transformed a shipload of material into thriving resorts on the atolls of Midway and Wake Island. It goes on to track Pan Am's growth and industry leadership, including the amazing work for America in WWII, Korea and Vietnam.

The main character is Pan Am's director for the Pacific, Duff Malone, who got to know Capt. Ed Musick and most of the legendary leaders of those early years. If you are interested, I could send you a copy. If you like what you read, you might mention it to your colleagues at Clipper Pioneers.

I hope you like the idea, and I appreciate your sharing with anyone in your group who enjoys a romantic adventure that uses Pan Am as one of the main characters.

Best Regards,

Don McPhail

The novel is available on Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble and other local bookstores.

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

50 Years+ since my first B-747 flight at Roswell.

from Ted Osinski

Thumbing through my log book memories of analog days when we hand flew aircraft. "Seat of the pants flying" was the norm.

Introduction of digital era of programmed flight automation and operation, re. B-737 MAX, Air France 447 Airbus 330 RIO/CDG, Asiana 414 B-777 SEL/SFO and others has all but negated situational awareness, training, and seat of the pants proficiency, resulting in unnecessary tragedies.

Simulators were not available when we first flew the B-747 at Roswell. All training and check rides flown in the actual aircraft.

An interesting observation was noticed. Most pilots had difficulty tracking the tail of the ADF needle on non precision approaches. With the introduction of Inertial Navigation I spent considerable time into operation of the system.

ATP check ride 02/12/70 B-747 N738PA. with Johnny Walker Chief Pilot Training and Larry Tapper FAA Designee went well including tracking tail of the needle on ADF non precision approach splitting the center line of runway.

Needless to say, upon completion of approach Johnny Walker took controls and said, "no one has split runway center line to date what's going on". Reply with a smile, "Will show how I track the needle when I receive ATP thumbs up".

With their blessing, I fessed up. Studying Inertial, I noticed function "Track and Ground speed". Being former navigator, applied magnetic variation to inbound magnetic heading for ADF approach which gave True Track on INS, selecting and tracked during approach resulted in splitting runway.

Needless to say, all others that followed were not allowed to use INS track. Shortly afterword, FAA eliminated required demonstration of non precision approaches to published minimums allowing line operations only to circling minimums in our ops specks.

Last command flight 04/13/94 B-747-400 SEL/ORD 174UA, all automated. Only requirement pilot must manually take off. Auto Pilot engaged,,select programmed SEL/ORD flight plan, Insert. Auto Land ORD. Must disengage and manually taxi to gate.

Future, single pilot operation. to be followed by drone operation.!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Fortunate to be product of excellent training by a great airline. "Gone But Never Forgotten".

Enjoying retirement in Florida 'till final flight west.

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

ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS

JUNE 7, 2021 – JUNE 17, 2021 Round trip Copenhagen

Dear Pan Amer's:

To our family of travelers, travel is not about merely grazing the surface of a destination; it's about learning, building human connections, and exploring what life has to offer. For all of us ex us ex Pan Am—travel is life. We will emerge from this crisis more empathetic, engaged, and eager to travel more than ever before and will be much more appreciative of the world and all its beauty. Therefore, after much thought and consideration on our next cruise, we have chosen to explore the Baltic and it's beauty.

We'll be sailing on Royal Caribbean's Adventure of the Seas June 7, 2021 for an 10 day venture giving plenty of leeway for safe travel. Our cruise includes all meals, Vegas style shows/ entertainment ,accommodations of your choice and a wide variety of activities onboard. Join our Captain Stu Archer in special Pan Am cocktail parties plus some other tricks up his sleeve, ports of call to dream about and much, much more. This is an open invitation for your family and friends to join the fun and have a great time.

ITINERARY:

Mon 07 Jun 2021	Copenhagen, Denmark	05:00 PM		Boarding
Tue 08 Jun 2021				CruisingCruising
Wed 09 Jun 2021	Riga, Latvia1	0:00 AM0	6:00 PM	Docked
Thu 10 Jun 2021	Tallinn, Estonia	11:00 AM	07:00 PM	Docked
Fri 11Jun 2021	St. Petersburg, Russia	07:00 AM		Docked
Sat 12 Jun 2021	St. Petersburg, Russia	06:00 PM		Docked
Sun 13 Jun 2021	Helsinki, Finland	07:00 AM	05:00 PM	Docked
Mon 14 Jun 2021	Stockholm, Sweden	08:00 AM	05:00 PM	Docked
Tue 15 Jun 2021	Cruising			Cruising
Wed 16 Jun 2021	Copenhagen, Denmark	11:00 AM		Docked
Thu 17Jun 2021	Copenhagen, Denmark			Departure

Cabins from: \$999 Inside *\$1199 Ocean view *\$1959 Balcony *\$2450 Jr. Suites

Rate factor 5/15/2020—cruise only, per person, double occupancy (singles pay 200%) and based on ongoing daily pricing at time of booking with Royal Caribbean. Port charges and government taxes additional (\$456.24PP). Book early and lock in your price. Insurance is available according to category of cabin chosen. Look and book thru Royal Caribbean's AIR2SEA program and get the best airfare deals. Third/fourth passenger rates available upon request. Deposit is \$450 per person and all major credit cards are accepted ; however, and as always we prefer and appreciate to receive deposits and or full payments by check. Additional is a fee for Pan Am amenities at \$125 per person for onboard parties, discount at specialty restaurants and gifts; this is a private fund for Pan Am activities and only checks are accepted. Checks payable to and mail to INTERLINE TRAVELS, 456 MERLIN CT., TALLAHASSEE, FL 32301.

Throughout the months we will be sending out updates on all the different ports of call to help you plan your itinerary and make the most of your travel photo album. ~Carmen (786-252-7838).

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

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/>

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.

Check Out the Lockerbie Website

A 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 Hudspeth

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.

*...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

Durward B. Bradshaw Jr., 80 of Denton, TX passed away August 15, 2020. Durward was born July 5, 1940, in Waldron, AR. Durward graduated from Sunray High School in 1958. He played football at West Texas State for 2 years before leaving and pursuing a career in aviation. He was married to Alice Ann Bradshaw, his high school sweetheart, for 48 years before her passing in 2016. He remarried later in life to Margaret Ann and they spent the last 2 years of his life together. Durward began his aviation career as a crop duster in West Texas and then transitioned to a bush pilot in Wyoming. His first commercial pilot position was in the early 1960's with West Coast Airlines. He worked for Pan American Airlines from 1966 until 1986. During this time, Durward went back to college to complete a degree in Aeronautical Engineering from Embry Riddle University. In 1986, Durward transferred to United Airlines where he ended his career as a Boeing 777 captain. He had a distinguished career as a pilot, fleet captain, flight trainer, as well as numerous management roles. He retired in 2000 after 36 years of dedicated service.

Robert Booth, aged 88, of Pensacola, FL, formerly of Navarre, FL and Guilford, CT, died after a brief illness on 30 July, 2020 in Pensacola, FL. He was a retired Pan Am captain, a former pilot in the United States Air Force as well as a pilot with American Airlines, Northeast Airlines and Eastern Airlines. Bob, the eldest of four children, was born on May 26, 1932 in New York City to the late Robert Booth and Margaret Hogan. A graduate of Fordham Preparatory School in The Bronx, NY, he attended Villanova University before joining the Air Force in 1952. Bob earned his silver wings in 1954 and was assigned as a flight instructor at Reese Air Force Base, Lubbock, TX. Leaving active duty in 1957, he began his airline career living in New York, NY, Berlin, Germany, and Guilford, CT. During Bob's career he flew the T-6, T-28, T-33, F-84, and TB-25 in the Air Force, the C-119 in the Air Force Reserves, and during his airline career he flew the Convair 240, DC-3, DC-6, Vickers Viscount, Lockheed Constellation, B-727, B-707, and the B-747. The highlight of his airline career was flying as a B-747 Captain for eleven years, until he retired in 1991.

Robert Calhoun McGrory (January 10, 1935 – July 16, 2020), age 85, died after a sudden illness at Jefferson University Neuroscience Center. He was born in Philadelphia to Mary Edith (Calhoun) and George Frances McGrory and raised in Mt Airy. He will be interred at Washington Crossing National Cemetery after a private family service. Family and friends will be invited to celebrate his life when circumstances permit. He flew with Pan Am for 25 years, rising through the ranks to become a 747 Captain.

Nathan Winter passed away on Nov. 22, 2019 in Dallas, TX of cancer. He served as a Marine, then later became a 747 pilot with Pan Am. He was 87 when he passed.

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. Know of someone from Pan Am who has passed? Email the obit to Sue Forde at sue@clipperpioneers.com, or mail to: Sue Forde, P. O. Box 3457, Sequim, WA 98382

Avoid Coronavirus Scams

Learn how to tell the difference between a real contact tracer and a scammer. Legitimate tracers need health information, not money or personal financial information.

Don't respond to texts, emails or calls about checks from the government. Here's what you need to know.

Ignore offers for vaccinations and home test kits. Scammers are selling products to treat or prevent COVID-19 without proof that they work.

Be wary of ads for test kits. Most test kits being advertised have not been approved by the FDA, and aren't necessarily accurate.

Hang up on robocalls. Scammers are using illegal robocalls to pitch everything from low-priced health insurance to work-at-home schemes.

Watch for emails claiming to be from the CDC or WHO. Use sites like coronavirus.gov and usa.gov/coronavirus to get the latest information. And don't click on links from sources you don't know.

Do your homework when it comes to donations. Never donate in cash, by gift card, or by wiring money.

Health Tips

Get what you give! Always giving and never taking? This is the short road to [compassion fatigue](#). Give to yourself and receive from others, otherwise you'll get to a point where you have nothing left to give. And hey, if you can't receive from others, how can you expect them to receive from you?

Sunscreen can be a smokescreen. Sunscreen is unlikely to stop you from being sunburned, or to reduce your risk of developing skin cancer. That's because most people don't apply it properly, and stay in the sun too long. The solution? Slather on sunscreen daily and reapply it often, especially if you've been in the water. How much? At least enough to fill a shot glass.

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 in the upcoming months. Please share yours with us, as well! Please send them to Sue by email to: sue@clipperpioneers.com.

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

Email or write to:

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