

**PRESIDENT**

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

**VICE PRESIDENT**

CG "DINO" VLAHAKIS  
54 WESTVIEW LN  
LEBANON NH 03766-2016  
(603) 448-3729

**TREASURER / EDITOR**

GENE PATTERSON  
1202 EAST RIDGE VILLAGE DRIVE,  
CUTLER BAY, FL 33157  
(305) 235-7613

## **Pan Am's Pacific Clipper Journey in World War 2 ( written 1999): The 'Round The World Saga of the "Pacific Clipper"**

*by John A. Marshall*

*December 7, 1941 - January 6, 1942*

The first blush of dawn tinged the eastern sky and sent its rosy fingers creeping onto the flight deck of the huge triple-tailed flying boat as she cruised high above the South Pacific. Six days out of her home port of San Francisco, the Boeing 314 was part of Pan American Airways' growing new service that linked the far corners of the Pacific Ocean. With veteran captain Robert Ford in command, the Pacific Clipper, carrying 12 passengers and a crew of ten was just a few hours from landing in the harbor at Auckland, New Zealand.

The calm serenity of the flight deck early on this spring morning was suddenly shattered by the crackling of the radio. Radio Operator John Poindexter clamped the headset to his ears as he deciphered the coded message. His eyes widened as he quickly wrote the characters on the pad in front of him. Pearl Harbor had been attacked by Japanese war planes and had suffered heavy losses; the United States was at war. The stunned crew looked at each other as the implications of the message began to dawn. They realized that their route back to California was irrevocably cut, and there was no going back. Ford ordered radio silence, and then posted lookouts in the navigator's blister; two hours later, the Pacific Clipper touched down smoothly on the waters of Auckland harbor odyssey was just beginning.

*~ 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](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.

## The 'Round The World Saga of the "Pacific Clipper"

*~ continued from previous page*

The crew haunted the overwhelmed communications room at the US Embassy in Auckland every day for a week waiting for a message from Pan Am headquarters in New York. Finally they received word — they were to try and make it back to the United States the long way: around the world westbound. For Ford and his crew, it was a daunting assignment. Facing a journey of over 30,000 miles, over oceans and lands that none of them had ever seen, they would have to do all their own planning and servicing, scrounging whatever supplies and equipment they needed; all this in the face of an erupting World War in which political alliances and loyalties in many parts of the world were uncertain at best.

Their first assignment was to return to Noumea, back the way they had come over a week earlier. They were to pick up the Pan American station personnel there, and then deliver them to safety in Australia. Late on the evening of December 16th, the blacked out flying boat lifted off from Auckland harbor and headed northwest through the night toward Noumea. They maintained radio silence, landing in the harbor just as the sun was coming up. Ford went ashore and sought out the Pan Am Station Manager. "Round up all your people," he said. "I want them all at the dock in an hour. They can have one small bag apiece."

The crew set to work fuelling the airplane, and exactly two hours later, fully fuelled and carrying a barrel of engine oil, the Clipper took off and pointed her nose south for Australia.

It was late in the afternoon when the dark green smudge of the Queensland coast appeared in the windscreen, and Ford began a gentle descent for landing in the harbor at Gladstone. After offloading their bewildered passengers, the crew set about seeing to their primary responsibility, the Pacific Clipper. Captain Ford recounted, "I was wondering how we were going to pay for everything we were going to need on this trip. We had money enough for a trip to Auckland and back to San Francisco, but this was a different story. In Gladstone a young man who was a banker came up to me and out of the blue said, 'How are you fixed for money?' 'Well, we're broke!' I said. He said, 'I'll probably be shot for this,' but he went down to his bank on a Saturday morning, opened the vault and handed me five hundred American dollars. Since Rod Brown, our navigator, was the only one with a lock box and a key we put him in charge of the money. That \$500 financed the rest of the trip all the way to New York."

Ford planned to take off and head straight northwest, across the Queensland desert for Darwin, and then fly across the Timor Sea to the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), hoping that Java and Sumatra remained in friendly hands. The next day, as they droned into the tropical morning the coastal jungle gradually gave way to great arid stretches of grassland and sand dunes. Spinnifex and gum trees covered the landscape to the horizon. During the entire flight to Darwin the crew didn't see a river big enough to set down the big flying

*~ continued on next page*

**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)**

## The 'Round The World Saga of the "Pacific Clipper"

*~ continued from previous page*

boat should anything go wrong. Any emergency would force them to belly land the airplane onto the desert, and their flight would be over.

They approached the harbor at Darwin late in the afternoon. Massive thunderheads stretched across the horizon, and continuous flashes of lightning lit up the cockpit. The northernmost city in Australia, Darwin was closest to the conflict that was spreading southward like a brushfire. A rough frontier town in the most remote and primitive of the Australian territories, it was like something out of a wild west movie. After they had landed, the Pacific Clipper crew was offered a place to shower and change; much to their amusement their "locker room" turned out to be an Australian Army brothel.

Ford and his crew set about fueling the airplane. It was a lengthy, tiresome job. The fuel was stored in five gallon jerry cans, each one had to be hauled up over the wing and emptied into the tanks; it was past midnight before they were finished. They managed a few hours of fitful sleep before takeoff, but Ford was anxious to be under way. News of the progress of the Japanese forces was sketchy at best. They were fairly certain that most of the Dutch East Indies was still in friendly hands, but they could not dally.

Early the next morning they took off for Surabaya, fourteen hundred miles to the west across the Timor Sea. The sun rose as they droned on across the flat turquoise sea, soon they raised the eastern islands of the great archipelago of east Java. Rude thatch-roofed huts dotted the beaches; the islands were carpeted with the lush green jungle of the tropics.

Surabaya lay at the closed end of a large bay in the Bali Sea. The second largest city on the island of Java, it was guarded by a British garrison and a squadron of Bristol Beaufort fighters. As the Pacific Clipper approached the city, a single fighter rose to meet them; moments later it was joined by several more. The recognition signals that Ford had received in Australia proved to be in-accurate, and the big Boeing was a sight unfamiliar to the British pilots. The crew tensed as the fighters drew closer. Because of a quirk in the radio systems, they could hear the British pilots, but the pilots could not hear the Clipper. There was much discussion among them as to whether the flying boat should be shot down or allowed to land. At last the crew heard the British controller grant permission for them to land, and then add, "If they do anything suspicious, shoot them out of the sky!" With great relief, Ford began a very careful approach.

As they neared the harbor, Ford could see that it was filled with warships, so he set the Clipper down in the smooth water just outside the harbor entrance. "We turned around to head back," Ford said. "There was a launch that had come out to meet us, but instead of giving us a tow or a line, they stayed off about a mile and kept waving us on. Finally when we got further into the harbor they came closer. It turned out that we had landed right in the middle of a minefield, and they weren't about to come near us until they saw that we were through it!"

**TO BE CONTINUED IN NEXT ISSUE**

---

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

---

## No More Ruckus

*by Gordon Young*

The June issue of the Clipper Pioneer and the article on troublesome passengers reminded of a similar occurrence:

In the 80's I was on a 747 trip from JFK to FRA to Karachi, and to Bombay. After our Frankfurt take-off the purser came to the cockpit complaining of a disruptive passenger. She said the passenger had been a problem out of JFK and was still badmouthing Pan Am and disturbing the other passengers with his disruptive behavior. He was ignoring the flight services' attempt to calm the situation.

As it was not my flying leg, the Captain asked me to go back and see what was going on. As I approached this passenger, he was going through his act again. After listening politely, I then told him if he didn't stop now and obey the orders of the crew, that when we landed in Karachi, I would have the Pakistani police take him off the airplane! He stopped mid-sentence, and his eyes got big as saucers!

Him being an Indian national, he and I knew that if we left him in Karachi, he would be in big trouble! I love when it's a quiet flight!

## Health Tips

**Eat your stress away.** Prevent low blood sugar as it stresses you out. Eat regular and small healthy meals and keep fruit and veggies handy. Herbal teas will also soothe your frazzled nerves.

Eating unrefined carbohydrates, nuts and bananas boosts the formation of serotonin, another feel-good drug. Small amounts of protein containing the amino acid tryptamine can give you a boost when stress tires you out.

**Load up on vitamin C.** We need at least 90 mg of vitamin C per day and the best way to get this is by eating at least five servings of fresh fruit and vegetables every day. So hit the oranges and guavas!

**No folly in folic acid.** Folic acid should be taken regularly by all pregnant mums and people with a low immunity to disease. Folic acid can play a role in cancer prevention. It is found in green leafy vegetables, liver, fruit and bran.

**A for Away.** This vitamin, and beta carotene, help to boost immunity against disease. It also assists in the healing process of diseases such as measles and is recommended by the WHO. Good natural sources of vitamin A are kidneys, liver, dairy products, green and yellow vegetables, pawpaw, mangoes, chilli pepper, red sorrel and red palm oil.

**The secret of stretching.** When you stretch, ease your body into position until you feel the stretch and hold it for about 25 seconds. Breathe deeply to help your body move oxygen-rich blood to those sore muscles. Don't bounce or force yourself into an uncomfortable position.

*(from health24.com)*

**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 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 its 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				Cruising
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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](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

---

## 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).

*...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

**No newly reported obituaries for this month's newsletter.**

**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 Sue Forde at [sue@clipperpioneers.com](mailto:sue@clipperpioneers.com), or mail to: Sue Forde, P. O. Box 3457, Sequim, WA 98382**

## Why Do Some Pilots Have Such a Hard Time Understanding the word "Fuel"?

*By Captain Robert Lee Bragg - Edited by Dorothy A. Boyd-Bragg, Ph.D*

Pilots talk an awful lot about fuel - as well they should. Among the many things I've heard repeatedly over the years regarding fuel are: "fuel takes the place of intelligence;" "it's what keeps the machine in the air;" "only dummies don't know how much fuel they have on board and how long their machine can stay in the air;" you have to know when to keep it and when to get rid of it;" and "smart pilots will not allow air traffic control (ATC) or their company dispatchers to keep them in the air long enough to run them out of fuel knowing that their desks won't crash no matter what."

I know a great many examples of dumbness related to fuel. For instance, I once gave a transitioning co-pilot by the name of Wallace W. His initial check out on the b-747-400. My strongest memory is that he had no fuel knowledge - or awareness. We were flying a trip that went from San Francisco (SFO) to Tokyo (NRT) with a layover there, then on to Singapore (SIN), back to Tokyo and finally back to San Francisco, as I developed in an earlier story.

Before we departed San Francisco, I informed Wallace that I would only ask him one question when we reached Tokyo. I clearly stated that that question would be, "How long could we hold, if needed, once we got to Tokyo?" One would think that for his or her own sake any crewmember would want to know this, if for nothing else than self preservation.

The "holding information," such as time to hold, is computed and listed at the bottom of the flight plan - plus, one of the duties required of the pilots flying a plane is to keep a running total or "score" of the flight's status, i.e., how far ahead or behind the flight is in relation to what the flight plan predicts the fuel situation will be.

Upon reaching Narita and while making the approach and reaching approximately 500 feet we received a call from the tower. They had discovered rubber on the runway, possibly from a blown tire from a departing plane, and, accordingly, we were to make an immediate "go around" and proceed to the designated holding fix and enter the holding pattern, until further notice. For my training purpose, I couldn't have planned it better. On the go around, I asked our transitioning co-pilot, 'How long can we hold?' and he didn't have a clue—even though he had handled the flight plan at least hourly during our 9 hour flight.

**TO BE CONTINUED IN NEXT ISSUE**

## Donating in difficult times

These days, there are just so many reasons why people want to do something to help, to make a difference, to take action. In addition to volunteering or putting their feet to the pavement, lots of people are putting their hands in their wallets to try to make an impact. Once again, though, scammers will be there. As ever, they follow the headlines and pop up wherever there's money to be made. So, before you make a donation to support any cause, here are a few things to think about and do:

Do some research. There are many good organizations to support. Search online for recommendations — and, when you've found one that's well thought of, check it out. Type the group or fund's name into a search engine, plus the word "scam," "review," or "complaint."

Consider how you pay. Real charities won't ask you to pay by cash, money transfer, gift card, or Bitcoin. That's how scammers ask you to pay. So if someone tells you to donate that way, think about donating elsewhere.

Research crowdfunding, too. Many funds that give real help spring up right after a tragedy. But scammers put up crowdfunding pages, too, and it can be hard to tell the difference. You want your money to go to help, so do some online checking to find the real, official funds that support the people or causes you want to support.

If someone rushes you, slow down. Scammers want to get your money as soon as they can. They might start calling, pressuring you to give — or even saying you made a pledge. And, since you can't trust caller ID, you won't know who's really calling. So go back to the first bullet: do some research and then give. Just not in response to pressure.

Learn more about other ways to check out charities, and how to give safely, at [ftc.gov/charity](https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/charity).

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2020/06/donating-difficult-times>

*by Jennifer Leach, Associate Director, Division of Consumer and Business Education, FTC*

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](mailto:sue@clipperpioneers.com).

***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)***