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Flights and Plights in South America

by Bill Nash

On a dark night, Capt. Jim Evans and a First Officer were ferrying a DC-3 from the island of Cozumel to Merida, Mexico. Shortly after takeoff at about 500 feet, the pilots noticed that they were descending.

Jim increased the power and eased the wheel back to an increased climb position – and the descent increased. Soon the aircraft stopped. “Well, what the hell,” said the copilot. Jim said, “I second that.” They aimed their flashlights at the side windows, and they saw – water! “How the hell did we do that!?” Jim exclaimed. They seemed to be floating well, so they put on life jackets, climbed out on a wing and up on the fuselage, and spent the rest of the night trying to figure out how they would explain this one to the chief pilot.

The blue light of dawn revealed the reason they had performed a skillful smooth water landing with a land plane: Number one engine Nacelle had snapped its upper engine mounts and allowed the engine to point forty-five degrees downward. Every time the captain had increased the power, the still running number One had pulled the plane down, until they eased into the water.

Soon a Cozumel fishing boat spotted the plane and crew and came to their rescue, towing their plane to shallow water. Airport ground crew then towed the DC 3 up on the beach and back to the airport. Mechanics from Miami brought two replacement engines and the plane was ferried to Miami for overhaul. This plane was back in service within four months.

Another unplanned landing was made on the Mexican Yucatan peninsula a few years later. Captain Don McLennan took off from Merida, Mexico, for New Orleans with a gross load of bananas. About 700 feet one

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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.

Flights and Plights in South America

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propeller flew off, went chop – chop under the belly of the Curtis Commando C 46 and knocked off the other propeller.

The engines raced and roared as Don chopped both throttles, shoved the nose down, and bellied into one of the many small sisal fields, separated by stone walls in the area – without hitting a stone wall. That airplane also was restored to fly again. Captain Vic Wright, our Cargo chief pilot, liked to brag that his flight crew had sold all of the bananas to the natives by the time the rescue crew had arrived. Captain McLennan immediately put in a request for transfer to New York.

San Jose was surrounded by mountains and two semi-active volcanoes. To get out of the valley without doing a hardness test on the side of a mountain, we would perform a climbing holding pattern before proceeding on course to Panama or Nicaragua.

One of our planes, leaving the valley at altitude, but still flying by instruments, finally popped out of the clouds at Puerto Limon on the Caribbean coast. The pilots still could see nothing in front of them but gray. However, bright sunshine shone in the cockpit side windows.

Then it occurred to the crew that the source of that pungent odor they had experienced inside the clouds was the furnace-like breath of a volcano. Tiny hot particles had frosted their windshield. At Panama they performed a tricky landing, able to see only through the side windows.

Guatemala has at times experienced government changes by revolution rather than election. One of our crew transports was mistaken for revolutionaries en route to the hotel from the airport and was shot up. The captain was hit, but recovered.

In about 1954 or 1955, on a layover in Managua, Nicaragua, I wandered alone to a rustic restaurant on lake Managua. As I was about to order, I heard a voice coming from a jovial group at a large table in the center of the room: “Captain, Captain, PamnAmerican!” I looked up and one of the men at the big table was hailing me. “Come and join us, Captain!” Welcome to Nicaragua!” I was not in uniform but he had recognized me. I thought that was strange. I realized it was courteous to accept the invitation so I joined the men at their table.

In a few moments I learned that I was in the company of Anastasio Somoza Garcia, the president of Nicaragua, and the presidents of two other nations: Jose Antonio Remon of Panama and Rafael Trujillo Molina of the Dominican Republic. They politely used English with me, and I tried my ruptured Spanish with them. They were kind enough to applaud my efforts. Looking around the restaurant, I could see tables with rough-looking men scattered about. Then I know how I was known. When the president goes out, any strangers are identified by his “Secret Service.”

Since I did not have to fly for two days, I accepted their generous offer of drinks and soon could hardly see what

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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

Flights and Plights in South America

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I was eating. These fellows all collected guns. Since I also was a gun collector, we had something mutual to talk about. I made a big point of staying away from politics and so did they. They asked sound intelligent questions about flying.

President Somoza insisted that I visit him the next day to see his gun collection. He sent an armored limousine for me and, fortified with aspirin, I climbed in feeling quite grand and a little hung-over. We had an enjoyable lunch, then an enjoyable afternoon admiring and discussing guns. Most were beautifully engraved presentation models. I drooled over a pair of pearl-handled gold and silver "Peacemaker" Colt revolvers. I wonder where they are now.

Six months later, President Remon of Panama was dead – assassinated. Six years later, President Trujillo of Dominican Republic was dead – assassinated. President Somoza was ousted.

Famous People flying Pan Am

By Carl Stevenson

My 15-year old grandson asked me who was the most famous person I met while flying for Pan Am. Without hesitation I answered, "Charles Lindberg."

Then I had to search my old brain to remember others. Here they are:

While deadheading from New York to London, my seatmate was the Beatle, George Harrison.

We had great conversations on the flight and I got to hear his story about becoming a Beatle. Fascinating person.

Having breakfast at the Siam Intercontinental in Bangkok before my flight to San Francisco as co-pilot on our Pan Am 747, Spirow Agnew asked if he could join me. (I was in my uniform.) He was the former Vice President under Richard Nixon. We enjoyed a delightful conversation with our breakfast. What an interesting gentleman.

After my pre-flight of our 707 prior to taking off for London from Los Angeles, I encountered a beautiful young lady carrying a rather tall and large package up the aircraft stairs. I offered to help her, and when we got to the top of the stairs, I told her that I would ask the Captain if she could stow it in the cockpit, and she was thrilled when he agreed. She was Sharon Tate, and the package was a gift she was taking to her boyfriend, Roman Polanski in London.

During one of my layovers in Tokyo, I received a phone call in my hotel room from the Pan Am P.R. office asking if I would show Jack Jones around Tokyo that evening. Jack was an up and coming singer and was in Tokyo for some TV commercials. I took him to the Ginza and we enjoyed several beverages in one of the night clubs. While having our drinks, a lovely lady came to our table and started chatting with Jack. He introduced me to Julie London.

On our short flight from Geneva to Paris, the stewardess came to the cockpit and told us we had the Secretary of the Navy, John Lehman, on board. I invited him to join us in the cockpit for our landing in Paris. He graciously accepted. As we approached Paris for our landing at Orly, we requested an extended downwind to give Secretary Lehman a nice view of Paris.

Tahiti – The 707 era of the late 1960s

Those who were based in Lotus land during this era and flew the South Pacific trips, probably remember a seven day pattern LAX-Tahiti-AKL with a four day lay-over in PPT. This trip had a shuttle to AKL on the 5th day and then back to Tahiti for two more days.

The flight to PPT was eight hours or more and from the time you left the runway at LAX until touchdown in PPT it was over water. The flight left LAX on Saturday evening arriving PPT early Sunday morning. The innovation of INS and global positioning systems (GPS) did not exist on Pan American aircraft at the time. In order to find Tahiti, navigation depended on celestial and loran fixes, therefore the flight was at night. The crew hotel was the Tahara IHC located on a high cliff overlooking the Pacific some 7 miles from downtown PPT.

The hotel was quite unique, the lobby and check-in were located on the top floor of the hotel and one would have to take an elevator down over the cliff to your assigned room. It was beautiful but expensive and boring as hell if you stayed there, unless you were on a honeymoon. Many crew members would opt to go to Morea for three days and stay at the Bali High Hotel.

Three young men from the SFO bay area owned this hotel and later became hotel entrepreneurs owning many hotels. The Bali High's amenities were a little primitive but adequate for the typical Pan Am crew member who enjoyed life. I remember meals were served family style at 1800. After dinner we would sit around the bar and be entertained by the natives, who were also the hotel staff.

During the day, if one wanted to swim we would load on to a raft called the "Leakie Teakie" and motor out into the lagoon. The shore in front of the hotel was composed of sharp coral, which would rip you to shreds.

Sometimes a crew member returning from Auckland would bring back a half of a lamb and it would be barbecued on the beach for everyone to share. Those who stayed on Tahiti could catch a taxi to Papeete and sight-see or walk along the waterfront.

Some would go to Quinn's bar for their entertainment. As I remember Quinn's, the bar was square shaped and located in the center of large ballroom. Also, both the men's and women's WC's were located at the back of this big ballroom. There were two doors, one marked "men" and the other "women". If you went through either door, you entered a common room which had no wall or partition to separate the rooms. It was just one big room shared by all. It would catch many by surprise and even embarrassed a few. Quinn's burned down many, many years ago and is just a memory now but at the time it was a legend of the South Pacific.

Bank balance as of December 2020 is \$7,886.40. If you'd like to contribute to keep the Clipper Pioneers going, please send your check payable to: Clipper Pioneers, P. O. Box 3457, Sequim WA 98382.

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

Another First?

By Captain Robert Lee Bragg edited by Dorothy A. Boyd-Bragg. Ph.D.

During the 1970's, I flew from New York to Lisbon as a first officer on the B-747 (100) numerous times. I especially enjoyed the trip when I flew with Capt. Burn Colley. Thinking back, I can't recall anyone ever saying anything in the least negative about him. He had nothing but friends.

On one of my early trips to Lisbon with him, the crew, as was the norm, stayed at Estoril, just outside of Lisbon. It was at that time often described as the "Portuguese Riviera," even though it didn't have rocky beaches. It had sandy beaches, great hotels, restaurants and daily life there revolved around tourism. What better place for a Pan Am crew to stay!

Capt. Colley and the rest of the crew on this occasion walked to a small, nearby restaurant owned by a former Pan Am purser. I should have known better, but I had wine and some food that didn't quite taste the way I thought it should. I've never eaten anything that doesn't taste "quite right" since. During the night, I got sick - very, very sick. I was so sick I knew I couldn't fly back the next day in the right seat. I told Capt. Colley that I would have to call in sick. He had another idea.

After we took off and leveled off, the engineer, a pilot, sat in my seat and I literally stretched out on the floor under the coat rack in the cockpit, where I stayed for at least half the trip. I slept half- way back to New York - about four hours. Later I would shake my head and think, I've heard about people being "under the weather" but never "under the coat rack." Perhaps, it's another first to add to my list.

Commentary on Pilots and Firearms

from Bill Nash

At one time, since we flew U.S. mail, the company armed us. Part of the contents of the ship's briefcase was a 38 cal. revolver.

Then came the pantywaists who thought it was horrible to have a gun on the airplane - PAA then forbade the pilots to be armed. I was always armed, rules or no stupid rules. In my briefcase was always a 357 Smith and Wesson Magnum revolver, a box of armor-piercing shells, and a box of hollowpoints.

The gun was loaded alternately with this ammo.

In the 1973 Rome attack by terrorists, if the pilots had been armed I think the captain might have had the opportunity to pick off the terrorists from his cockpit window as they approached, preventing them from boarding. His wife was one of the passengers on board who died.

ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS

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

WILL NOT BE HELD DUE TO UNCERTAINTIES OF TRAVEL DUE TO COVID-19.

STAY TUNED - We'll let you know when / if it's rescheduled.

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

David FLocker passed in November 2020. No other information is available.

David Duane Fagerland died peacefully at home, at the age of 82, on November 14, 2020, surrounded with love from his family. David was a beloved husband, father and grandfather. On the day of his passing, he exclaimed he was a "lucky man". We take comfort in knowing that he was ready to part with this world and join his son and parents. He was born in Elewa, Wisconsin on December 28, 1937, and was the only child of May and Ernie Fagerland. He grew up in Waukesha, Wisconsin, then graduated from The University of Wisconsin in 1961 with dual degrees in Business Statistics and Naval Science. In 1966, David had the good fortune of turning his love of flying into a career. He was hired by Pan Am and flew worldwide for them. He was initially based in San Francisco and eventually landed in Seattle, where he wanted to raise his family.

James Phillip Carter Sr went home to be with the Lord on Wednesday, December 16, 2020. He was born in Carter 9 camp outside of Shilar, Oklahoma on January 27, 1928. He graduated from Fairfax high school in Oklahoma in 1945 and then started college at Oklahoma A & M (now called Oklahoma State). He interrupted his college career and joined the Army National Guard and served as a member of the 45th Infantry in Korea during the war. After having received an honorable discharge from the Army, Jim resumed his collegiate work at Oklahoma A & M. He graduated in 1953 with a degree in Animal Husbandry. Simultaneously, he earned a private pilot's license, which led to a brief stint as an Agricultural Pilot. He was hired by Pan American Airlines as a Navigator/Co- pilot based in San Francisco. Twenty-seven years later, after logging 8500 international flight hours, he retired as a Senior First Officer.

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

Tips to Avoid Scams

There are thousands of new scams every year, and sometimes, it's challenging to keep up with all of them. Here is a tip to help avoid them:

Never send money via gift card or wire transfer to someone you have never met face-to-face. Seriously, just don't ever do it. If they ask you to use wire transfer, a prepaid debit card, or a gift card, those cannot be traced and are as good as cash. Chances are, you won't see your money again. If someone is trying to convince you to pay this way, stop, get off the phone or the computer, and file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

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***

Pam Am Book - Pan American World Airways - Images of a Great Airline 2nd Edition

by James Patrick Baldwin

This is a pictorial history of the airline that highlights its aviation "Firsts" and notable achievements. Included are vintage photographs of airliners, images of timetable covers, schedules and route maps, annual report covers and baggage strap tags, all documenting its storied history from first flight to last. The 2nd Edition features additional images as well as narratives about significant aircraft in Pan American's fleet and its important routes.

The firsts and significant events are presented in chronological order and are divided into six sections representing key eras of the life of Pan American: (1) Beginnings (1927-1939); (2) The War Years (1940-1945); (3) The Piston Era (1946-1957); (4) The Jet Age (1958-1969); (5) Top of the World - Boeing 747 (1970-1979); and (6) End of an American Icon (1980-1991). The firsts and significant events are listed at the beginning of each section followed by images of that era of aircraft, timetable covers and maps, baggage strap tags and annual reports. Narratives about the key aircraft of each era and the history of the airline's important routes follow.

The book is a good reference source for key events in the life of an important airline that paved the way to what the industry is today, and which was a true aviation pioneer.

Paperback: 277 pages Full color 8.5 in x 11 in (22 cm x 28 cm) Publisher: Kindle Direct Publishing – JPB Publications Language: English ISBN-13: 979-8643333241 ASIN: B0882N66M4 Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 0.7 x 11 inches Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds eBay Link: <https://www.ebay.com/itm/184281953583>

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