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A Clipper Story from the "Good Old Boat" Days

by Jack H. Omohundro

I was hired after an interview with the much-revered Marius Lodesen when he was a member of a team of Pan Am captains that was making the rounds of various military bases in early 1945. The powers that be in Washington were asking Pan Am to do more and more, but Pan Am told them that there was a shortage of trained pilots available.

One of Pan Am's contacts in Washington noticed that, at this time, there were a number of pilots who had completed their combat tours and were being returned to the States for reassignment and suggested that Pan Am be allowed to interview some of these pilots and hire as many as they needed.

To shorten this epistle: I was interviewed and offered a job as a pilot and relieved from active duty with the Air Force to accept this job. At this time, I was a Captain, on flying duty and being paid about \$600.00 a month plus all kinds of benefits. I had completed, (by the Grace of the Good Lord) a tour of 25 combat missions over Europe as first pilot of a B-17 combat crew. During the interview, Captain Lodesen had asked me if I was hired, would I be able to be a co-pilot. I must have looked at him with an odd expression on my face - my childhood ambition since I was about seven years old was to be a pilot for Pan American Airways - for I answered him, "yes sir, and may I ask why?" He explained that if I was hired, I would start as a co-pilot and it was possible that I would be flying with captains who had less flying time than I did and certainly less 4-engined time. Little did I know that I would ride the right seat for 21 years.

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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.

A Clipper Story from the “Good Old Boat “Days

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I was notified that I was accepted and told to report to Pan Am's Atlantic Division at La Guardia Field, New York. I reported as directed and was told that I would be operating as a 4th and 3rd officer on B-314's operating out of North Beach as the sea plane operation out of La Guardia was known.

Again, the Good Lord was with me and I got to fly with some of the finest people that I shall ever know. These were the “Master Over-Ocean Captains of Pan Am. There were some who, as a veteran flight engineer told me early on, had a bit of trouble distinguishing between themselves and a god, but on the whole, they were great models for an eager young pilot to imitate. I made several trips to Foynes, Ireland, Lisbon, and various stations in Africa and South America during 1945 which was the last year that the 314's operated from New York.

The trip which is the subject of this epistle started out from New York sometime in September with scheduled stops in Bermuda, Horta (Azores), Lisbon, Bolama (just south of Dakar), and ending in Fish Lake, Liberia. As I remember, we were scheduled to be out about two weeks. We wound up being out about 20 days - so long that they just melded into one another.

We made our first section of the trip without incident. Our crew consisted of the Captain who shall be nameless, the F/O Lee Nelson, the Professional Navigator was Ray Eppley (?) first and second engineers, first and second radio officers whose names I cannot remember, and I think Greg Shortel was our Purser. Chuck Baerd (?) and I were third and fourth officers. I do not recall any passengers, but I suppose we had some, and there must have been some reason for Pan Am to be making this flight.

Our crew layover hotel was the Palacio in Estoril. We were issued our daily “expense money” in escudos which we eagerly and joyfully spent at the nearby casino. I think we were scheduled to be there for a couple of days before the next plane came from New York which we were to take on to Africa and back to Lisbon.

This is where the shortcomings of seaplane operations took over. Our plane got out of North Beach per schedule and into Bermuda, but the winds of a nearby hurricane suddenly became too much for operation, so they were kept in Bermuda for several days. They finally left Bermuda and got into Horta, but the “swells” were such that the take off for Lisbon was delayed for a couple of days.

They finally got into Lisbon and our crew took over and after transit, departed for Bolama. On the 314, one of the main duties of the 3rd and 4th officers was to snag the buoy after landing and secure the line to the nose post so that the plane could be winched into the docks. The landing area at Bolama was on a broad and fairly swift river,

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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

A Clipper Story from the “Good Old Boat “Days

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so we used “the big line”. The captain landed into the wind, but the current carried us pretty far downstream away from the docking area.

Chuck and I went down into the nose compartment to open the hatches and prepare to snag the buoy. It was Chuck’s turn to throw the grapple hook. Well, here things started to happen. Our captain swung us around and started to taxi back. As I said, we were pretty far downstream, so he decided to taxi back expeditiously - on the step. As we neared the buoy, I will until this day swear that all I heard was “THROW IT.” Chuck must have heard the same thing — they were shouted out the captain’s window - because he threw a strike with that four-pronged grapple, took a couple of half hitches on the bow post and inwardly congratulated himself, I am sure. That big line pulled that 314’s nose down and around and up popped the buoy from its anchor on the river bottom. It took about 2 or 3 hours of taxiing up and down the river with no air conditioning before they could repair the buoy so that we could dock.

That was Chuck’s starring role on the trip. After several more days of rather uneventful happenings, we arrived back at our own North Beach on a bright Sunday afternoon. In those days, the arrival of one of the Clippers was an event that was watched by hundreds from the rooftop of the arrival building.

Our landing out in Flushing Bay had been observed and we were now taxiing into the dock just behind the arrival building. It was my turn to “throw the hook.” The captain was bringing the Clipper in ever so nicely, no wind, nothing to worry about - but fate does strange things. As neared the buoy, I somehow overshot it and the grapple fell empty of the line and buoy. This necessitated turning that 314 around without reverse pitch, thrust or rudders, but he did it beautifully and approached the buoy again. So help me, I missed that damn buoy again!! We made another 360 and approached the buoy. This time, the captain could no longer contain his feelings, for he stuck the megaphone out his window and in a voice that I am sure was heard by God and the hundreds of people watching, “if you miss it again, follow it in.”

End of story and end of my life on the B-314. She was a great lady and I wish that I could have had more than a passing memory of her, but time and tide wait for no man. I had a wonderful life with Pan Am and 34 years full of wonderful memories. This trip was just one.

Captain, the German Police want you at the Airplane Immediately

by Gordon Young

During the waning days of Pan Am, I was flying A310 from JFK to the new Munich airport. The flight, descent and my usual smooth landing were normal. On arrival at the gate, the passengers started to deplane, and we three cockpit members gathered “our nests” and proceeded through the terminal to the hotel bus pick-up point.

A few minutes later, the passenger service agent breathlessly announced that the “cops” wanted my body at the airplane! Once there, I was told that before gate arrival, an American male passenger had died. Under German procedures, the police and a German doctor had to view the dead body in the presence of the A/C crew.

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Captain, the German Police want you at the Airplane Immediately

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Fast forward, things got sorted out. Later I realized that this was a colossal example of a breakdown in cabin cockpit communication. The flight service realized this guy was dead some time between landing and gate arrival. They put a blanket over him and said nothing to us about it!

End of the story...

On my next trip to MUC, I called the station manager's secretary and asked about my DOA pax. She said they had sorted the whole thing out and with the help from the U.S. Embassy, had shipped him back to the U.S. for burial. It seemed that he had a small carry-on bag filled with prescription medications and inhalers, Pennsylvania checking account, and business card identifying him as a member of a middle east committee against discrimination of autoimmune diseases.

Sequel... No, I did not spend the night in a German jail.

Propping a Jet Engine? Yes, It Can be Done

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

Funny what you think of in the middle of the night. I got to thinking that only those that flew small, prop planes, without starters, really know what "propping a plane" means. For the un-knowing and the young, the propping procedure takes place when someone has to get in front of a plane, take hold of the propeller, and swing it through. You also needed to have someone in the cockpit to switch on the ignition as the propeller swings. Then you are ready to fly. This procedure was required on such early planes as a J-3 Piper Cub and Aeronca's 7EC Champ. I really liked the J-3 and flew one before and after my Air Force years. They were the only prop planes I ever flew. Later versions of both the J-3 and the 7EC planes had electric starters making propping a part of history for me. An era was definitely over.

That being the case, I, therefore, have a claim to fame that's probably unique. I have propped a jet engine - and one that was attached to a B-747 flight about to depart from JFK for Europe at that. When we attempted to start #3 engine, always the first engine to be started, nothing happened. The engine wouldn't even turn over. We checked everything in the cockpit we could think of, such as the proper position of the pneumatic valves, and asked maintenance if they could see anything wrong. They couldn't find anything.

Then for some unknown reason, I asked maintenance to get a ladder and put it in front of # 3 engine. When it was in place, I asked them to climb up and manually turned the N-1(front) section of the engine completely through. This accomplished, they then moved out of the way.

We then began the pre-start check list from the beginning and, when we attempted to start #3 engine as the routine required, it started up immediately, as if nothing had ever happened. Maybe, my early training in propping a small plane carried over to my flying the B-747. That's the only thing I can come up with for giving me the idea to try propping a jet engine. Who knows? I surely don't.

PAN AM Reunion - MARCH 4-13, 2022

9 Night Southern Caribbean Cruise on Radiance of the Seas r/t Miami

Welcome back to the resumption of our annual Pan Am reunion cruises – and how we have missed them! Next March we embark on Royal Caribbean's beautiful luxury liner Radiance of the Seas to exciting and captivating islands in the Caribbean where the ultimate goal is to exceed your expectations by making this cruise not just a vacation but, an adventure at sea. GREAT PRICES, MAKE A DEPOSIT as soon as possible, IT WILL BE SOLD OUT QUICKLY.

These wonderful ports of call include:

Dominican Republic, St. Croix, St. Kitts, St. Maarten, San Juan and Labadee, Haiti.

- ◆ While onboard indulge in the spa, build a scrapbook of memories or simply relax poolside.
- ◆ Dine on gourmet food as well as 24-hour room service.
- ◆ Be entertained by world-class performers from across the globe that keep you busy morning to night.
- ◆ Socialize with Pan Am friends in our well known get together cocktail parties, customized amenities and select meeting areas.
- ◆ Enjoy Broadway musicals, spectacular shows, thrilling casino action, live comedy and music, bars, dancing and much more.

It's going to be a great cruise, come join us. Call in your Crown & Anchor number and dining selection. Family and friends are welcome.

Cabins: from

* Inside **\$649** / * Ocean view **\$759** / * Balcony **\$1009**

Rates are per person, cruise only, double occupancy, *Non-Refundable and based on availability at time of booking. Port charges/tax are additional at \$402.71 per person. Checks gladly accepted (address below) and all major credit cards.

Junior Suites and Suites pricing upon request and availability.

Deposit \$250 per person upon reserving; final is due 12/4/2021. Cabins are capacity controlled. Singles pay 200% of cruise fare and port charge.

Amenity fee of \$125. per person for onboard activities (parties, gifts, etc.) to be made out to Interline Travels and mailed separately to the address below (no credit cards for this); due with final balance or earlier at your convenience.

Insurance will be available according to your cruise price. More information with your invoice.

**To reserve call: Carmen 786-252-7838 , Email interlinetravels@yahoo.com
 Stu Archer (Pan Am pilot/cruise organizer) for information ~
 (305-238-0911) Email StuNjune@aol.com**

Pan Am Philadelphia Area Pilots (PAPAP)

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

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

Come Join the Santa Rosa Breakfast Group!

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

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

Jack Daniel passed away on Feb. 14, 2021. Hewas a pilot with Pan Am from 1964 to 1986 when United took over the 747 pacific route. He loved his job and missed flying after 9/11. He is survived by Maureen, his wife of 36 years, and was a great husband, father and grandfather. He had a full military service after serving for the Navy before getting hired with Pan Am.

PanAm Captain Frank M. Herrera had passed March 11, 2021. He was "81" (Birthday: 16 July 1939), & was predeceased by his wife Ariane's passing on 07 January 2021.

He was born in New York City in 1939, the middle child and only son of the late Frank A. and Marguerite D. (O'Brien) Herrera. Soon after he was born, his family moved to Rhode Island, where he resided for the majority of his life. He graduated from Providence Country Day in 1958 and Providence College, with a Bachelor of Arts. From there, he went on to serve his country as a Captain with the United States Air Force.

Following his military service—Frank became a pilot for Pan American World Airways, and once retired, he ran RI-based company: Quick Arms & Supply Company. He flew in the Air National Guard, was a member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary, the Quonset Davisville Navy Yacht Club, and was a proud and dedicated member of the Exeter Juvenile Hearing Board, Exeter, RI, where he served as Chairman.

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

A Little Humor...

British Airways flight asks for push back clearance from terminal.

Control Tower replies: 'And where is the world's most experienced airline going today without filing a flight plan?'

ATC: "Al Italia 345 continue taxi to 26L South via Tango - check for workers along taxiway."

Al Italia 345: " Roger, Taxi 26 Left a via Tango. Workers checked - all are working"

***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***

Walking Tips for Health and Safety

Walking, the activity in and of itself is actually one of the best forms of exercise for seniors. It is a low impact activity, which should prevent putting stress on bones and joints. Among other things, walking prevents weight gain, strengthens muscles, and decreases risks of many diseases related to being sedentary.

Walking also improves your balance and therefore decreases your likelihood of falling. The better you are at balancing yourself while walking, the fewer problems you should run into.

Some safety tips when out walking:

- Keep your cell phone on you: Especially when walking longer distances or outside, it is helpful to have your phone on you, should you fall or have any type of emergency.
- Wear the proper shoes: Having the proper footwear can help avoid a lot of accidents. They provide support that prevents pain from appearing in other areas and allow you to walk longer distances.
- Use a mobility device, if needed: When going on a walk, use a cane or walker if you usually do in the home. There is no point in adding strain to your body if you don't need to. Going for a walk with a mobility device is still exercise. At home, use canes or walkers rather than relying on walls or railings.
- Be alert to your surroundings and make eye contact with people.

(Excerpts from https://seniorsafetyadvice.com/safety-tips-for-seniors-living-alone/#Walking_Safety_Tips_For_Seniors)

RENEW TODAY!

In order to keep the newsletter and website going for the Clipper Pioneers, it's time for renewal donations. If you haven't already, please send your donation to: Clipper Pioneers, P. O. Box 3457, Sequim, WA 98382. Thank you!

Your Name: _____

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Thank you for your continuing support of the Clipper Pioneers!