

**PRESIDENT**

STUARCHER
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

Interesting History: Preparing for Daily Raids Against Germany in WWII

*forwarded by Jack Smith -
Author Unknown*

Comments: Here is something that is a great read, even if you aren't a military buff. Get a cup of coffee or a soda and set down and take the time to read and visualize the drama of those long ago times. If you have ever flown you will find imagination creating an almost ballet in slow motion vision of the action. Quiet remarkable.....Red

Guys, this is a neat little "read". This was forwarded to me and I do not know the author. I am saving this because the folks that lived these stories won't be around forever. - "VD"

Of all the stories that have been written, and movies that have been shown, about the 8th Air Force, very little attention has been given to what was involved in assembling 1200 B-17's and B-24's each day, to get them in formation to carry out a strike against Germany.

Certainly showing bombers under attack by fighters, or encountering heavy flak, was a reality, and are interesting to watch. Also, stories about some of the rougher missions make interesting reading. But what was going on over England, each morning, could get just as scary to the crews as the time spent over some of the targets. The planning, and coordination, that had to be accomplished during the night, by the operations planners of each Group, so that the crews could be briefed, was unbelievable.

If the planners had failed to do their jobs properly, there would have been a free-for-all among Bomb Groups, in the skies over England.

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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.

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The rendezvous points, altitude, and times had to be precise, and known by all of the crews, before the Eighth Air Force could get in formation. The success of the planners, in accomplishing their mission, enabled the Eighth Air Force to become the most powerful air armada ever assembled. In my view, how this was accomplished is one of the major untold stories of the war.

I was a pilot in the 95th Bomb Group, in late 1944 and early 1945, and what follows is a typical mission, as I remember it, from a crew member's perspective.

Early in the evening, our Squadron Operations would post the names of the crews that were scheduled to fly the following day. There were two ways we could be notified if the Group had been alerted to fly. One was by means of lights on the front of the orderly room, and the other with raising of colored flags. If a green light was on, the Group was alerted, if a red light was on we would fly, and if a white light was on, the Group would stand down.

The light was monitored frequently throughout the evening to learn our status and, normally, we would know before going to bed if we would be flying the next day.

On the morning of a mission, the CQ (charge of quarters) would awaken the crews about four or five o'clock, depending on takeoff time. The questions we always asked were, "What is the fuel load?" and, "What is the bomb load?" If his answer was, "full Tokyo tanks," we knew we would be going deep into Germany. Shortly after being awakened, "6-by" trucks would start shuttling us to the mess hall.

We always had all the fresh eggs we could eat, when flying a mission. After breakfast, the trucks carried us to the briefing room. All of the crew members attended the main briefing, and then the Navigators, Bombardiers and Radio operators went to a specialized briefing.

At the main briefing, in addition to the target information—anti-aircraft guns, fighter escort and route in—we received a sheet showing our location in the formation, the call signs for the day and all the information we would need to assemble our Group and get into the bomber stream.

After briefing, we got into our flight gear, drew our parachutes and loaded onto the trucks for a ride to our plane. We were now guided by the time on our daily briefing sheet. We started engines at a given time and watched for the airplane we would be flying in formation with to taxi past, then we would taxi behind him. We

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Pan Am Historical Society has a Facebook page. You can view it here:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Pan-Am-Historical-Foundation/226994925218>

Bank balance as of March 31, 2023 was \$16,952.73. The opportunity to renew your membership with your donation is on a form on page 7 of this newsletter, which will go toward continuing forward. Thank you to the those who have mailed in your donations in 2023 already! Be sure to clip and send in your check if you'd like to continue to receive the newsletter. Thank you!

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were following strict radio silence.

We were now parked, nose to tail around the perimeter, on both sides of the active runway, and extremely vulnerable to a fighter strafing attack. At the designated takeoff time, a green flare would be fired and takeoff would begin. Every thirty seconds an airplane started takeoff roll. We were lined up on the perimeter so that the 12 airplanes of the high squadron would take off first, followed by the lead and then the low squadron.

Each Group had a pattern for the airplanes to fly during climb to assembly altitude. Some would fly a triangle, some a rectangle and our Group flew a circle, using a "Buncher" (a low frequency radio station) which was located on our station.

The patterns for each Group fit together like a jig saw puzzle. Unfortunately, strong winds aloft would destroy the integrity of the patterns, and there would be considerable over running of each other's patterns.

Many of our takeoffs were made before daylight, during the winter of '44 and '45, when I was there, so it was not uncommon to climb through several thousand feet of cloud overcast. Also it was not uncommon to experience one or two near misses while climbing through the clouds, although you would never see the other airplane. You knew you had just had a near miss, when suddenly the airplane would shake violently as it hit the prop wash of another plane. It was a wonderful feeling to break out on top, so you could watch for other planes, to keep from running into each other.

To add to the congestion we were creating, the Royal Air Force Lancasters, Halifaxes, and Wimpys would be returning from their night missions, and flying through our formations. Needless to say, pilots had to keep their heads on a swivel and their eyes out of the cockpit.

After take off, the squadron lead would fire a flare every 30 seconds, so that we could keep him located and enable us to get into formation quicker. The color of our Group flare was red-green. The first thing you would see, when breaking out of the clouds, was a sky filled with pyrotechnics, so you had to search the sky for the Group flare, which would identify the lead airplane of your Squadron. Once you had it located, you could adjust your pattern to climb more quickly into formation with him. As each airplane pulled into formation, they would also fire a flare, with the lead plane, making it much easier for the following aircraft to keep him in sight.

I think most crew members would probably agree that the pyrotechnic show, in the skies over England, in the morning when the Eighth was assembling, was a rare sight to behold.

The order of progression for assembling the Eighth Air Force was to first assemble the Flight elements, the Squadrons, the Groups, the Combat wings, the Divisions and, finally, the Air Force.

As soon as the four Squadron elements were formed, the high, low and second elements would take up their positions on the lead element, to form a Squadron. When the three Squadrons had

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completed assembly, it was necessary to get into Group formation.

To think of launching hundreds of airplanes, in a small airspace, many times in total darkness, loaded with bombs, with complete radio silence, and no control from the ground, and do it successfully day after day, with young air crews, with minimum experience, is absolutely mind boggling.

The accomplishments of the Eighth Air Force have been and will be reviewed by historians from World War II on. There never will be another air armada to compare to it. I feel confident that they will never cease to be amazed by our ability to assemble hundreds of heavy Bombers, under the conditions we were confronting, into the devastating strike force we now fondly refer to as, "The Mighty Eighth."

Problems/Solutions - a Little Humor Included...

P: Left inside main tire almost needs replacement.

S: Almost replaced left inside main tire.

*

P: Test flight OK, except auto-land very rough.

S: Auto-land not installed on this aircraft.

*

P: Something loose in cockpit

S: Something tightened in cockpit

*

P: Dead bugs on windshield.

S: Live bugs on back-order.

*

P: Auto pilot in altitude-hold mode produces a 200 feet per minute descent...

S: Cannot reproduce problem on ground. P: Evidence of leak on right main landing gear.

S: Evidence removed...

*

P: DME volume unbelievably loud..

S: DME volume set to more believable level.

*

P: Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick.

S: That's what friction locks are for.

*

P: IFF inoperative in OFF mode.

S: IFF always inoperative in OFF mode.

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

**PAN AM MUSEUM FOUNDATION
COME CRUISE WITH US!
Join us on a fabulous luxury Silversea Cruise!
Mark Your Calendars: August 2 - 9, 2023
CRUISE ITALY & CROATIA IN STYLE**

Come sail with us in Pan Am style and support the Pan Am Museum! Enjoy exclusive amenities and guest benefits by booking your suite through this fundraiser.

We've secured the very best pricing and a liberal cancellation policy for our exclusive PAMF group (all pricing excludes airfare and transfers). In addition, our special pricing will be guaranteed until Dec. 31, 2022.

Open to friends and family! Space is limited! Many suites offer a 3rd guest with a pullout couch.

Venice to Venice: August 2 - 9, 2023

VOYAGE ITINERARY

Silver Spirit – 7 Days

Leaves Port: August 2, 2023

Voyage SL 230802007

Day 1: Venice (Departs at 7pm)

Day 2: Trieste, Italy

Day 3: Zadar, Croatia

Day 4: Hvar, Croatia

Day 5: Dubrovnik, Croatia

Day 6: Split, Croatia

Day 7: Kvarner Bay, Croatia

Day 8: Venice (Arrive at 8am)

For More Information

**The Pan Am Museum Foundation
board@thepanammuseum.org
www.thePanAmMuseum.org**

What's Included prices starting at \$4,400 per person

Shore Excursions (1 per port/per day)

All beverages included at all times including premium liquor and wine selection of 150+ bottles

Personal butler service in every suite category

24-hour room service

1:1 Crew to guest ratio

Fully customized mini bar

\$350 Ship Board Credit per suite

All crew gratuities

Exclusive PAMF Welcome Cocktail Reception and other exclusive onboard events

8 Fine dining options offering culinary excellence

Onboard activities and live entertainment

High speed WiFi

Pillow menu

Visit their website for more information: <https://www.thepanammuseum.org/cruise-benefit/>

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

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/>

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.

Flying Somewhere? Useful Tip for Air Traffic

FlightAware is a free flight tracker that will change what you think about live flight tracking and aviation data. It can be seen at: www.flightaware.com/

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

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

Dale Russell Fernandes, 90, of Carlisle, passed away Tuesday, September 6, 2022, at Chapel Pointe. He was born on January 9, 1932, in East Orange, NJ and was the son of the late Joseph C. Fernandes and Ethel May (Hawkins) Fernandes. "Dale graduated from Nutley High School in Nutley, NJ in 1950 and Bucknell University in 1954 with a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering. It was at Bucknell University that he met Joy, and they were married in 1955. He retired as a Commander from the U.S. Naval Reserve in 1975 after serving 2 years in submarines, then 18 years as a Naval Aviator, flying various anti-submarine aircraft. Dale spent 20 years flying around the world as a pilot for Pan American World Airways and 7 years as a pilot with United Airlines. Dale flew DC-8, B-727, B-707, L-1011 and B-747 aircraft. Dale retired to Walpole, NH, where he spent 6 years building an airplane which he flew around the country for 6 years! Dale enjoyed painting watercolors, singing in barbershop quartets and playing handbells. Dale moved to Florida in 2007 and then near Gettysburg, PA.

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**

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

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

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: _____

Address: _____

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(Make check payable to: Clipper Pioneers and mail to: P. O. Box 3457, Sequim WA 98382)

Thank you for your continuing support of the Clipper Pioneers!

Tips for Healthy Living

Learn to do stretching exercises when you wake up. It boosts circulation and digestion, and eases back pain.

Don't skip breakfast. Studies show that eating a proper breakfast is one of the most positive things you can do if you are trying to lose weight. Breakfast skippers tend to gain weight. A balanced breakfast includes fresh fruit or fruit juice, a high-fibre breakfast cereal, low-fat milk or yoghurt, wholewheat toast, and a boiled egg.

Neurobics for your mind. Get your brain fizzing with energy. American researchers coined the term 'neurobics' for tasks which activate the brain's own biochemical pathways and to bring new pathways online that can help to strengthen or preserve brain circuits. Examples: Brush your teeth with your 'other' hand, take a new route to work or choose your clothes based on sense of touch rather than sight. People with mental agility tend to have lower rates of Alzheimer's disease and age-related mental decline.

Getting adequate sleep is one of the most important things you can do to improve your health quickly. Not getting enough quality rest can have a noticeable impact on focus, mood, and overall well-being. Research shows that adults should aim for around seven to nine hours of uninterrupted sleep per night to restore both the body and the mind. Developing an evening routine that sets you up for success is essential to achieving this goal. Dim lighting a few hours before bed, avoiding screen time, and engaging in physical activity during the day are just a few recommendations that can help you get into a regular sleep pattern, so you can lead healthier and more productive lives.

Drink More Water. Drinking 8-10 glasses of water per day can really make a difference in how you feel overall, even if that means carrying around a water bottle or keeping one with you at all times! Not only will it help boost your energy levels and make you feel less sluggish during the day but it may also help prevent further health issues such as headaches or constipation. Making drinking more water part of your lifestyle can be the first step to improving your health quickly — try setting an alarm every two hours as a reminder, if that helps you out!

Exercise Regularly. Just by ensuring that you get at least 30 minutes of exercise five days a week, you can improve your physical and mental well-being. Exercise not only improves your cardiovascular system, but it can also help reduce stress, improve your mood, increase mental clarity, and even combat disease. So don't forget to incorporate regular exercise into your routine. Even if it means going for a short walk each day or setting aside half an hour to go for a jog — it all adds up and will help in improving your overall health!

Do You Know About Events that are Upcoming?

There are many events and get-togethers that may be of interest to our readers. If you know about one, or have a group that gets together on a regular basis - or even once in awhile - please let us know so we can share with our readers! :)