



CLIPPER PIONEERS, INC.

FORMER PAN AM COCKPIT CREW

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

October 2023 - Clipper Pioneers Newsletter

Vol 58-10 Page 1

Flying up to Ilopango

*by Peter L. Carroll,
PAA 05165*

When Pan Am hired me in 1966, I was based as a pilot/flight engineer in Miami, crewing on the 727. Most all the captains on that equipment had waited for many years to attain that left seat, and made it more than just pleasant to fly with them. Some were particularly memorable; they seemed to be bottomless sources of knowledge. There were two who had been buddies since the Brownsville days, and when it came to Central America, they were incredible. One could sketch a map of Central America, showing the airports and airways (with their magnetic compass headings), then add all the significant mountains, all the VFR valley routes, and all this done accurately from memory. The other was equally well-versed on the area.

Sometimes "local knowledge" was what saved the day.

On one of the old 501/502 flights which made all the stops between Panama and Guatemala, I was the engineer for the first captain I spoke of. We were making the VOR approach to runway 15 at Ilopango airport in Salvador. The weather was marginal for that approach (only IFR approach to the airport) with low clouds and fog. We were the only aircraft in the vicinity of the airport.

When we reached our minimum descent altitude and the time ran out on our approach without a glimpse of the runway, we started our missed approach. The Captain applied power, retracted the gear, and as we passed the far end of the runway, there it was, totally clear of the fog and surrounded by the low clouds.

Back came the throttles, as he set enough thrust to maintain the altitude, but we weren't climbing! "What's going on", I thought; was it time for me to speak up? Then, to increase my apprehension, he made a left

~ 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. 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.

Flying up to Ilopango

~ continued from previous page

turn, heading toward... what? He descended in that clear area to below the clouds and in front of us was a four-mile diameter lake. He called for flaps to tighten our turning radius in the cliff-surrounded lake and reversed direction toward the airport. We climbed back up above the lake edge to get above the airport elevation. From that point it was a visual "contact approach" to runway 33, where we landed, and I exhaled.

The tower people were their usual, accommodating selves.

Okay!, So, things were a little "looser" in Miami, but, retrospectively, darn! It was fun!

An Unusual Takeoff

by Don Harris

I was first officer on the cargo flight 161/22 March 1968 which left JFK for PHL, DTW, and ORD and changed to flight 160 returning to DTW, PHL and JFK. We were flying 300C number 459.

But we didn't make it back to JFK that day. Things went well until we arrived back at DTW where the weather was miserable. It had been snowing lightly pretty well all day, the sky was obscured, visibility 1 mile with a temperature of about 27 degrees reported. We got in fine, loaded up, and taxied out for PHL about 7 PM. It was dark. Aside from the reduced visibility and low ceiling the only unusual thing was that there was a lot of slush on the runway. But, we were really light, PHL being only about one and a half hours away, so we weren't concerned about the slush. We taxied into position, set the parking brake and spun up the engines. They came up unevenly causing yaw, which took a bit of time to be corrected. By that time, we were rolling, so power was added and off we went.

But, it was not a normal takeoff, especially for so light an aircraft. I remember thinking as we got to 80 knots that "boy, this slush really slows you down". Well before V1, any thought of an abort was gone. It seemed like the faster we went, the worse the acceleration became. One of the other guys said "it's lucky we are light". We finally got to VR, rotated, and as we lifted off we heard a click and the bright red light on the console which had filled the cockpit with red light (remember - it was dark out) went out. We knew instantly what that meant. You all do, too - we had taken off with the parking brake set. I think the reason we didn't notice it was because the spin up had been so exciting.

I don't know why the brake released during liftoff- perhaps the Captain, who was flying, was one of those who stepped on the brakes upon retraction to stop the rotation of the wheels or perhaps it had to do with the gear retraction system which would prevent us from landing with the parking brake set. Either way, the brake release was a good thing for this crew, that night. Things could have been worse.

~ continued on next page

Bank balance as of August 31, 2023 was \$21,034.87. The opportunity to renew your membership with your donation is on a form on page 8 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!

An Unusual Takeoff

~ continued from previous page

The weather at PHL was fine, so the Captain decided we would set down very gently and see if we got a nice rolling sensation. If we did, we would stop. If we did not, we would go around and continue on to JFK where the runways were really long, the crash crews were really good, we had our big maintenance base, and our cars were parked.

We got that nice rolling sensation and stopped at PHL. We taxied in, and parked. The Captain told us to say nothing to anyone until he contacted the union. Then the maintenance chief came storming up and said words to the effect that "we've got 8 tire changes - what's going on?" None of us said a word, we just started getting our gear together since we knew we were in for a layover. It must have driven the chief crazy.

The Captain called the union, the union called the chief pilot who said to forget it. But someone else must have intervened and another Captain met us the next day for the trip to JFK. JFK sent a truck to PHL with 8 wheels and a crew to do the wheel change on the aircraft. I never heard anything more about the flight after that. I don't remember who the Captain and Engineer were, but if they read this they may have something more to say. It surely was not our finest hour. Well, live and learn.

Historical Foundation features Pan Am Stewardess in War and Peace

Our friends at the Smithsonian wanted us to help spread the word about an upcoming presentation: **The Pan Am Stewardess in War and Peace** and I wanted to share it with you:

<https://airandspace.si.edu/whats-on/events/pan-am-stewardess-war-and-peace>

And did you see our new Digital Library? Check out: <https://exhibits.panam.digital/great-expectations/index.html>

Thanks as always!

Doug, Pan Am Historical Foundation

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! :)

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.

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

Pan Am Mergers That Did Not Happen

by Captain Gary G Gulbransen

In 1985 United bought the Pan Am Pacific routes. Under ALPA guidelines, Bob Gould and I were designated as the two Merger Representatives. Six months later and many meetings in Chicago and New York our Merger Committee had a merger by date-of-hire seniority list.

Fast forward to early 1989, Dan Affourtit VP Flight Operations called me to say American Airlines was going to buy Pan Am. Wow! I had to sign a Securities and Exchange Commission non-disclosure agreement about the deal.

Dan tasked me to project how the two pilot groups could be merged. Dan and I were the only Pan Am employees, the rest were "suits" from the Pan Am building. There were no pilots working on the American side. Having worked on the United deal, I had a data base of Pan Am pilots and a good friend provided an American pilot data set. It didn't look too bad except for the big hiring bulge at Pan Am in 1966/1967. That same bulge caused Delta to impose a ratio on most Pan Am pilots in the European Route sale. I attended one secret meeting in an airport hotel in Dallas and then went on a working trip thinking "We are saved". Back from my trip, I called Dan Affourtit and he said Pan Am CEO Tom Plaskett and American Airlines CEO Robert Crandall had lunch and the deal was dead.

Later in 1989, Dan again called and wanted a report for Chairman Plaskett on a merger between Northwest Airlines and Pan Am. Merge all unions, not just the pilots. I asked "Who will be the surviving carrier?" Dan said "Pan Am, we're buying them". Due to the required secrecy, I remember having my wife call the Flight Attendant Teamster Union for some information and no other than William Genoese, the head of the Teamsters airline division, answered the phone.

My report said in part "...that there is different union representation (except for the pilots) for all labor groupsand due to the size of NWA no PanAm union would prevail in representational elections...Pan Am would have to deal with new people at new unions..." I FedEx'd my report to New York and the plan quickly died for financial reasons other than my report.

Ah what could have been...but did not happen.

Pan Am SFO Lunch & Lecture Reunion

***Save the Date* Saturday December 2, 2023**

I am pleased to announce our speaker for our annual lunch and lecture. Ken Fortenberry, is the author of the Pan Am history based investigation into the disappearance of Pan Am flight 7 on routine flight from SFO to Honolulu on November 8, 1957. Among the 36 passengers and 8 crew members lost that day was Ken's father, William H. Fortenberry, acting as pilot-navigator. Ken will share with us his 30+ year campaign to solve the mystery of the disappearance, and ultimately to organize the memorial of PAA flight 7, recently dedicated at the Millbrae City Hall.

Don't miss this opportunity to learn an important part of Pan Am history and how the event improved aviation safety and the advent of the FAA.

Copies of Ken's book will be available for purchase and signature by the author.

Registration will open in October. Please reply now if you plan to attend. Seating will be limited to the room at Michaels at Shoreline in Mt View, CA.

Al Gilbert

Mark Your Calendar - Dec. 7, 2023 - New York City

Great Lunch with Joanne Spencer

Hello Pan Amers, I am happy to confirm we are planning our Pan Am NYC luncheon on Thursday Dec. 7, 2023 at Noon to 3:00PM

We only do this once a year, so I hope you make every effort to attend and bring a friend.

Here are details:

Villa Mosconi Restaurant, 69 Macdougall St. (bet Bleecker and W. Houston Sts, Greenwich Village, N. Y. 10012 - Tel: 212 674-0390

Menu will consist of: appetizers, salad, pastas, bread and butter, chicken, fish, meat. Coffee and dessert. White and red wine, beer and soft drinks, tax and tip.

Cost: \$70.00 CASH ONLY, REPEAT CASH ONLY pay at door.

So let me hear from you. Until then, stay well and happy.

Regards, JoAnne and Ann

PAN AM FOLKS AROUND THE WORLD

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

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

Rex D. Smith, age 92, passed away on August 2, 2023 in Cameron Park, CA. He was born on May 21, 1931 in Tulsa, OK. He worked as a flight instructor and airplane salesman for Beechcraft. He started his airline career with Mohawk Airlines and joined Pan Am in April 1966. Rex was very talented and played the ukulele and the guitar, gave tennis lessons, played a good game of golf and studied history. He had a great sense of humor and loved to tell stories. He was preceded in death by his second wife, Deirdre Browne-Smith. He is survived by his three lovely daughters, Lezlie Daugherty, Lori Barnett and Louann McKinnon. Rex was flying as a Captain when Pan Am went out of business in 1991. He was a unique individual and will be greatly missed.

Capt. Donald Eugene Griffin—**Donald Eugene Griffin**, 81, passed away on November 20th, 2022 in Orlando, FL. He was the loving husband of Raelene Seiler Griffin. They shared 52 years of marriage together. Born in Hominy, Oklahoma on July 10, 1941, he was the son of Ruby Lay Griffin and George Griffin. He attended Hominy Highschool and Oklahoma State University. He was a veteran of the Vietnam War and served in the Airforce as an F-4 fighter pilot. His commercial aviation career span through National, Pam Am, and Delta airlines. Don will be remembered for his love of golf, having home cooked meals, and spending time with friends and family. He will be remembered for his humbleness and easy-going personality. He always thought of others before himself and would give anything to make sure his family was happy. He is survived by his children, Kelly Griffin Koller and Jeffery Griffin and his spouse, Callie Griffin; grandchildren, Seiler Griffin, Koen Koller, Casey Griffin and Kamron Koller, and his siblings, Georgia Griffin Hester and Joe Griffin.

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 Documentary Series about Pan American Airways on PBS

When Pan Am's M-130 flying boat "China Clipper" took off for the first scheduled flight to Manila on November 22, 1935, it riveted the attention of people around the world. At that moment Pan Am vaulted to a commanding position and the world changed forever as a result. That's the story brought to life in "Across the Pacific." Newly unearthed archival motion pictures, photographs, and original sound recordings as well as stunning graphics, help bring this history back to life.

The film by Moreno/Lyons Productions tells the epic story of how Pan American Airways became the first to bridge the mighty Pacific - the first airline to cross any ocean. Focusing in particular on the contributions of Pan Am's visionary leader Juan Trippe, aircraft designer Igor Sikorsky, and radio engineer Hugo Leuteritz, the three-part program is currently broadcast on PBS. "Across the Pacific" premiered on VPM PBS in Richmond Virginia May/June 2020. You can watch each episode on the home page of the Clipper Pioneers website (www.clipperpioneers.com)

Tips for Healthy Living

Stay hydrated. As simple as this tip might seem, it's one of the most crucial. Every cell, organ, and tissue in your body is counting on water to help them work properly. In addition to drinking water, herbal tea and vegetable or fruit juices can supply a substantial amount of hydration. A simple start towards a healthy living for seniors!

Read the nutrition facts labels. Sometimes, food packaging can be deceiving. Make sure you take the extra time to look at the nutrition facts label at the grocery store when purchasing food. Pay attention to the serving size and how many servings you are actually eating. Also, if someone is sent to the grocery store on behalf of the senior, make sure they know of any dietary restrictions/recommendations that are specific to that person.

Keep it colorful. Have you ever been told that it's best to have more color on your plate? Think green, orange, red, and purple when it comes to veggies and fruit.

(from <https://www.thehelperbees.com/families/healthy-hive/healthy-living-for-seniors/>)

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

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: _____ **0** _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone #: _____ **Email:** _____

Amount Donated: \$ _____

(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!