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## First PAN AM Internal German Service flight to Moscow Russia

*by Gene Woerner*

It was 1973, I am a First Officer on the B -727 based in Berlin flying in the Internal German Service.

The Cold War in Europe was thawing somewhat and Pan Am was asked by the US State Department to explore starting Flights from Frankfurt to Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport.

Captain Howard Ashcroft who was the Chief Pilot in the IGS at the time was asked to make these flights a reality.

I was not privy to what went on behind the scenes in Berlin ,Washington and New York, however Captain Ashcroft was to be the Captain of this inaugural flight and, to this day I don't know why, he asked me to be his First Officer. I can't remember who the Flight Engineer was.

After a pretty comprehensive briefing in the Chief Pilot's office in Berlin a few days prior to the flight, which included several US State Department Officials, the flight was scheduled for November 6.

On the 5th we deadheaded to Frankfurt and were scheduled to depart FRA mid morning the following day.

After arriving in Frankfurt the next day and after we checked in at the Intercontinental Hotel, we had

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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](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.

## First PAN AM Internal German Service flight to Moscow Russia

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another meeting with State Department personnel, Pan Am officials from New York and the London based Flight Attendants.

After the meeting we were all invited by the US State Department to have dinner in the Intercontinental dining room on the top floor of the Hotel which has expansive views of Frankfurt and the Main River.

The next morning in Dispatch we met a number of Russian Officials including a Pilot who had been authorized to ride in the cockpit in case there were any issues once we crossed into the Soviet Union airspace and during our approach and landing at Sheremetyevo airport.

On boarding the aircraft most of the passengers were already seated, they were mostly US officials and press correspondence with prior clearances to make the flight to Moscow.

The flight itself was mostly uneventful, the transition to Moscow control and consequently the approach and landing went seamless we were surprised how good the Controllers English language skills were, only some had heavy Russian accents.

Upon arrival we were greeted immigration and customs, the Russian Press as well as some representatives from US News outlets.

We boarded a small minibus and were taken downtown to a Hotel very close to Red Square. The Hotel was nice, if somewhat spartan with security personnel evident everywhere.

The most memorable part of the trip occurred the following day November 7. As it turned out that was the day the yearly Anniversary Parade to celebrate the October Revolution and the formation of the Soviet Union would take place.

We were directed to the parade route just in time to see all the Russian Military hardware and troops parading thru Red Square,

I had seen these parades on TV in the past but actually being there in real time was very impressive. After the parade we headed for the Government owned Gump department store where we bought some Russian souvenirs.

The next day we departed Moscow for Frankfurt and after arriving there we all breathed a big sigh of relieve that the whole trip had gone so smooth and without a hitch.

**Bank balance as of September 30, 2024** was \$15,366.35. The opportunity to renew your membership with your donation is on a form on page 4 of this newsletter, which will go toward continuing forward. Thank you to the those who have mailed in your donations in 2024 already! Be sure to clip and send in your check if you'd like to continue to receive the newsletter. Thank you!

## **First PAN AM Internal German Service flight to Moscow Russia**

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I have not been back to Moscow since, no great desire to, certainly not under the present political climate in 2024.

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### **C.F. Blair Jr. ~ The life and times**

*Curated and edited by Terrance E. Highfield,  
St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands*

C.F. Blair Jr., an American Aviation pioneer, was instrumental in developing navigation techniques for long-distance flights. His pioneering role in this field, coupled with his service in World War II in the U.S. Navy and later in the U.S. Air Force, and promoted to the rank of Brigadier General, is a testament to his innovative spirit.

After the war, he worked with the Air Transport Command and was a test pilot for Grumman Aircraft. For the Naval Transport Service, he flew Sikorsky VS-44 across the Atlantic to Foynes, Ireland.

While a reserve military officer, he continued his civilian career as a pilot for American Overseas Airlines and, eventually, Pan American.

March 1968: Married Maureen O'Hara.

July 1969: Retired from Pan Am after 45,000 hours and 10,000,000 miles.

1956: Authored *Thunder Above. Red Ball in the Sky* is an account of his aviation Career (available on Amazon).

Captain Blair was hired as Pan Am's chief pilot in 1950. Pan Am purchased a single-seat P-51 Mustang and encouraged him to attempt a new long-distance flight record. Pan Am was not disappointed.

In January 1951, Captain Blair piloted a modified North American single-seat P-51 Mustang 3,478 miles from New York Idlewild airport to the London airport in a record-breaking 7 hours and 48 minutes. On arrival, his daring feat was described as, "A tall, dark, married, and 41, brought no luggage, but had a shaving kit and a toothbrush in a small leather bag'.

On May 29, the same year, he piloted the single-seat P-51 nonstop across the North Pole from Bardufoss, Norway, to Fairbanks, Alaska, relying on his self-taught celestial navigation using a surplus \$12.00 astronomical compass and several wristwatches.

Captain Blair was awarded the prestigious Harmon Trophy and the Gold Medal from the Norwegian Aero Club that same year. These awards are significant in the aviation community, with the Harmon

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**Visit [www.clipperpioneers.com](http://www.clipperpioneers.com)**

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## **C.F. Blair Jr. The life and times**

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Trophy being awarded for outstanding achievements in the field of aviation and the Gold Medal from the Norwegian Aero Club symbolizing international recognition for his contributions to aviation.

The U.S. Air Force recognized Captain Blair's expertise and invited him to act as a consultant with the rank of Colonel. He split his duties between the Air Force and Pan Am, a testament to his dedication to his country and the aviation industry.

Colonel Blair was promoted to brigadier general in 1959. Two weeks after his promotion, he led a nonstop flight of two F-100 Super Sabre jets from England to Alaska over the North Pole. Subsequently, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for this achievement.

Captain Blair's entrepreneurial spirit was evident when he founded Antilles Airboats in 1963. With a \$10,000 down payment on a single Gruman Goose, his business plan was to provide convenient downtown-to-downtown air service between St. Thomas and St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, and San Juan, Puerto Rico, providing convenient Inter-island travel for residents and tourists.

He retired from Pan American in 1969 and managed Antilles Airboat, which became the world's largest passenger and cargo seaplane airline.

In 1974, a conventional runway was commissioned, and he purchased two retired Sandringham flying boats from Ansette Airlines, which operated scheduled seaplane flights between Sydney, AUS, and Lord Howe Island, New South Wales—these four-engine seaplanes were ferried to St. Croix, U.S.V.I., piloted by Captian Ron Gillis and Bryan Monkton. The forty-two-seat Sandringham seaplanes were marketed as Charter flights for the Eastern Caribbean, i.e., Martinique, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, Dominica, Antigua, Tortola, Peter Island, and Santo Domingo.

In July 1976, Sandringham VP-LVE lifted off from Christiansted Harbour, St. Croix destination Foynes Ireland, via Boston Harbor and the Foynes Yacht Club for charter flights from the Foynes Yacht Club.

*Please dedicate this humble edited piece, if it ever sees daylight, to Ash Cutchin, who was keen to mention Ms. O'Hara on the only trip he ever flew with Captain Blair.*

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## **About a Publishers Clearinghouse Scam...**

*From Ash Cutchin*

After a couple of friends were scammed,.... I typed the following question into my browser..... "How does publishers clearing house notify a winner?"

Here is the answer: Notice especially the last part..... ASH

Publishers Clearing House winners are notified to fill out an online prize claim form to claim their

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## About a Publishers Clearinghouse Scam...

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winnings<sup>1</sup>. The prize winner selection process is random and unbiased, and supervised by the PCH Board of Judges and independent auditors. Winners of smaller prize amounts (generally below \$10,000) may be notified via an overnight express carrier or email, while major prize amounts are not awarded via email.

- Publishers Clearing House will NEVER notify winners of major prizes ahead of time. NEVER.
- You'll know you're being scammed if you receive a phone call, text or other alert from someone claiming to be PCH with a Big Check with your name on it.
- Chances are they're going to ask YOU to send THEM money in order to claim the prize.

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## Interesting Places to “Visit” on the Internet

**Foynes Flying Boat Museum, in Foynes, Ireland** – features a full scale replica of the Boeing B314 “Yankee Clipper”. This replica was created for the museum from detailed plans by a team specialising in movie sets, and the reviews they have received of the aircraft are fantastic. Check it out at [www.flyingboatmuseum.com](http://www.flyingboatmuseum.com)

Enjoy images from Pan Am here: <http://www.timetableimages.com/ttimages/ao1.htm>

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## Pan Am Stories: You Can't Make This Up

*from Al Gilbert, Pan Am SFO Retirees Association.*

I am excited to announce the publication of my book Pan Am Stories: You Can't Make This Up - a collection of amusing and historical vignettes from my personal work experiences and stories told to me by colleagues. Now available on Amazon at [Pan Am Stories](#) in paperback and Kindle editions, all sales proceeds will benefit the Pan Am Museum in Garden City, NY. Thank you for your purchase support and your reviews.

*Al Gilbert, Pan Am SFO Retirees Association*

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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).

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**Thank You for the Stories You're Sending In! Keep 'em coming!!**

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## **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 or cblayd@aol.com

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## **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

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## **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.

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## **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

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## **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.

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## **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

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## **Enjoy Listening to the Pan Am Podcasts**

Now in the third season, The Pan Am Podcast brings the history of Pan American World Airways to life through engaging storytelling and insightful interviews with Pan Am employees, passengers, authors, and aviation enthusiasts. <https://podcast.thepanammuseum.org/>

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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>

*...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

There are no obituaries to report in this issue.

*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: Clipper Pioneers, attn: Sue Forde, c/o P. O. Box 3457, Sequim, WA 98382.*

### Health Tip - Trade Limits for Rewards

"My patients often ask me what limits they should place around screen time to protect their eyes," says Jennifer Lyerly, a Raleigh, North Carolina-based optometrist who specializes in contact lenses and myopia management. "The more successful approach is to start thinking less about limits and more about what activities are good for your eyes, body and mental health. Getting outside, being active—those are things that serve your entire wellness and also help reduce daily eye issues like dryness and eye fatigue. Instead of focusing on a negative association like setting limits, reward yourself with an outdoor walk or exercise break where you have no screen in sight every single day."

*from Forbes Magazine 10 Pieces Of Expert Advice On Aging Well In 2024 Written By Alena Hall  
<https://www.forbes.com/health/healthy-aging/expert-advice-for-aging-well/>*

### Save the Date: December 7 Annual Lunch & Lecture Reunion

A reminder to \*save the date\* for Saturday December 7th for our annual lunch & lecture reunion at Michaels at Shoreline in Mt. View, CA. Our featured speaker is author Philip Jett who will speak about December 7th 1941, the subject of his book Stranded in the Sky: The Untold Story of Pan Am Luxury Airliners Trapped on the Day of Infamy.

**RENEW TODAY!**

In order to keep the newsletter and website going for the Clipper Pioneers, it's time for renewal dues of \$50 00 (or more if you wish to donate extra to help keep us going!). If you haven't already, please send it to: Clipper Pioneers, P. O. Box 3457, Sequim, WA 98382. Thank you!

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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!*

## PAN AM REUNION CRUISE - APRIL 28 - MAY 12, 2025

### MIAMI TO SOUTHAMPTON ROYAL CARIBBEAN'S INDEPENDENCE OF THE SEAS

Dear Pan Amers:

Once again we prepare for our next much welcomed Pan Am reunion cruise. We honor the many requests for a Transatlantic cruise with lots of wonderful and interesting ports of call. Our 14 day cruise departs Miami visiting Kings Wharf (Bermuda), Ponta Delgada (Azores), 2 fabulous days Lisbon (Portugal), Vigo (Spain) then ending in Southampton (England). Take time to melt away land-based stress with a spa massage, build a scrapbook of memories or simply relax poolside. Four days for the crossing is a blessing considering the usual 6 - 8 days. Plenty of time to reach out to old friends, enjoy movies and much, much more. Expect a great time.

Embarking on an oceangoing adventure like this will be no doubt one of the most exciting moments of any traveler's life. The old saying that it's as much about the journey as the destination has never been truer. Adventures await you at each port, shopping, sightseeing famous attractions or sipping a cool drink in a romantic café. So, welcome aboard, I know this cruise will provide you with a lifetime of memories to cherish. Family and friends are most welcomed.

Call in your reservation now; As usual, all major credit cards are accepted but checks are preferred in an attempt to keep down credit card fees and pass the savings toward our onboard amenities, parties and the like. DON'T DELAY ! Call Carmen at 786-252-7838 for prices

Insurance is available and highly suggested and is priced by your category chosen. Inquire on your price. More information will come with your invoice. Flights available through Air / Sea 844-278-9745

Call Interline Travels at Carmen's cell 786-252-7838. If line is busy please be patient and leave your message, I will get to you ASAP Email address [interlinetravels@yahoo.com](mailto:interlinetravels@yahoo.com). Address - 456 MERLIN CT. , TALLAHASSEE, FL 32301 Feel free to contact Stu Archer former Pan Am pilot and cruise consultant at 305-238-0911. Email [stunjune@aol.com](mailto:stunjune@aol.com). Carmen Jaquet - cell 786-252-7838 or 305-598-0363 Pan Am Cruise Coordinator

Date	Ports	Arrive	Depart	
Mon 28 Apr	Miami, Florida	-		Boarding
Tue 29 Apr	Cruising			
Wed 30 Apr	Cruising	-		
Thu 01 May	King's Wharf, Bermuda	8:00 AM	5:00 PM	
Fri 02 May	Cruising	-	-	Cruising
Sat 03 May	Cruising	-	-	Cruising
Sun 04 May	Cruising	-	-	Cruising
Mon 05 May	Cruising	-	-	Cruising
Tue 06 May	Ponta Delgada, Azores	9:00 AM	6:00 PM	
Wed 07 May	Cruising	-	-	Cruising
Thu 08 May	Lisbon, Portugal	11:59 AM	-	Docked
Fri 09 May	Lisbon, Portugal	-	5:00 PM	Docked
Sat 10 May	Vigo, Spain	9:00 AM	5:00 PM	Docked
Sun 11 May	Cruising		-	Cruising
Mon 12 May	Southampton, England	5:30 AM	-	Departure