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Hurricane Hassles

By Bill Nash

During Pan American World Airways DC-3 and DC-4 days out of Miami, tangling with hurricanes was not uncommon. Here are a few personal experiences with the big winds. On one trip, we had the unique experience to be beaten up by the same hurricane three times in areas hundreds of miles apart.

Flying into San Juan, Puerto Rico, from New York with a DC-4, we raced a hurricane to the airport. Another crew took our airplane to Miami while we overnighted. Approaching from the southeast, the storm arrived shortly thereafter and did an efficient job on San Juan.

Most of the employees of the Condado Beach Hotel where we were staying had left the hotel to look after their homes. The sea smashed the huge glass dining room windows and the wind ripped off roof tiles, smashing cars below. Rooms on the seaside had badly leaking windows from the driving rain. Our crew and other hotel guests helped move out the dining room furniture and plug holes in the guest room windows with towels. It was a wild night.

No planes came in the next day, but early on the following day our bird arrived and we took off for Miami. The Weather Department asked us to keep them advised if we saw the storm. There were no weather planes locating hurricanes in those days. We flew right on track for Miami, and so had the hurricane.

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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.

Hurricane Hassles

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As we approached its wall of gray cloud, there was no way to determine its lateral position, so we turned off the autopilot, slowed down to wallowing speed, and hand-wheeled the aircraft, moving up and down as much as forward for quite a while. Cold rain was so dense against the windshield that we checked the altimeter to see if we were under water. Engine cowl flaps had to be kept closed. Finally, without warning, we burst into the clear, but there was a wall of clouds straight ahead. In fact the clouds surrounded us. We realized that we were in the eye of the storm. The cylinder of clouds "stepped back" with altitude. Many years later, storm experts named this the "stadium effect".

We circled in the eye to rest awhile and found it was clear below us and that we were directly above Mayaguana Passage at the west end of Mayaguana Island of the Bahamas chain. We could give the Weather Bureau the exact latitude and longitude of the eye of the hurricane! When we did so, they were both amazed and pleased. Also, they advised us to get the hell out of there. We didn't argue. We beat our way through the other side of the storm and continued to Miami. However, we were to see this beast once again.

The storm was eventually forecast to make a direct hit on Miami, so I moved my mahogany speedboat up a waterway and secured it in the middle of a canal. Then I moved my family off Key Biscayne while I stayed to protect the house. It was good that I did. Two shutters blew loose and water was pouring in. I had just re-secured the shutters when our large and prolific Key Lime tree blew over on me. Key Lime trees are very protective of their fruit with many long sharp thorns. After forty soaking minutes, I was able to very carefully work my way from beneath the last branch, but with a lot of scratches to explain to my wife.

The next day, our Cairn terrier and I were able to check our neighbors' homes by paddling a canoe down the street, since not many neighbors had remained on the island. Actually, I was a little tired of that particular hurricane!

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Keep the good stories comin'!

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.

Bank balance as of January 31, 2025 was \$12,806.46. 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. It's time to renew for the new year. Be sure to clip and send in your check if you'd like to continue to receive the newsletter. Thank you!

Hurricane Hassles

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Earlier, scheduled for a DC-3 Caribbean island-hopping run, our first leg was Miami to Camaguay, Cuba. A hurricane had crossed Camaguay and was halfway to Miami over the sea. Since our crew was among the World's Most Experienced, we took off and followed our track, which center-punched the hurricane. When our right drift became excessive, we edged right and rode the outside of the storm, far off course, then turned back toward the track again. The sea was torn to shreds and foam was scooting across the waves. We bounced and bumped, but finally broke out of it all, approaching Camaguay from the West. We circled the field. It was a mess but the Cubans had cleverly buried the landing gear of the small aircraft, so that the planes sat on their bellies, safely anchored. After landing we found that, in spite of our many miles of deviation from track, we had beaten scheduled time by fourteen minutes.

One hurricane fooled all the airlines at Miami as well as the Weather Bureau. It had been heading north over the Gulf of Mexico, then took an unexpected 90 degree right turn and headed directly for Miami. All the airlines frantically called off-duty pilots to come right now and fly their aircraft out of Miami. We secured the house and I took my wife and children off the island of Key Biscayne to stay with friends on the mainland, then drove to the airport.

My co-pilot and I learned our DC-4 was hiding behind a hangar. By now, it was raining hard, so in order to keep our clothes dry, we parked them in the airplane and did the walk-around in our undershorts and bare feet. We each checked a wing for the fuel load, struggling to stay on the wing without being blown off. Back in the cockpit and still in our shorts, we started the engines. Number four was stubborn and required 45 minutes of off-on starting attempts before it began to run.

Finally we had them all turning and called the tower for taxi clearance. Great news! We were number 64 for take-off. The tower told us they were boarded up and could not see the traffic. The only clearance after take-off was "one plane turns left and the next plane turns right. After that you're on your own." All airport antennas had blown away. We taxied out, gripping the controls against the wind, and took our place in an incredibly long line of airplanes.

As planes took off, we crawled along for what seemed like forever, while the wind increased dramatically. Finally we were cleared into take-off position. We had shut the cowls and run the cylinder head temperatures up to hot. The wind was blowing straight at us, out of the east, which was good, but our airspeed without moving was up to 65 to 85 knots, which was not so good. The runway had a great deal of water on it, so we left the flaps up. Once cleared to go, we held the nose on the ground, splashed

Don't forget to check out our website at: www.clipperpioneers.com

If you enjoy reading the Clipper Pioneers newsletter, and would like to see it continue, please send in your renewal if you haven't already, for 2025. Form is on page 7.

Hurricane Hassles

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along, and jumped into the air. Before we got to the end of the runway, the cylinder head temperatures were all below minimum, even with the cowl flaps still closed.

Our "clearance" was to turn right after takeoff, which was a good thing as we were thrown into a right turn by extreme turbulence. We finally got the left wing down after having overshot our 180 degree turn and pointed the DC-4 in the general direction of Mexico. We tried to maintain 4000 feet but we only managed to pass it once in a while. In an hour we were in relatively clear air, so we put our clothes on and proceeded to Merida, Mexico, where an enterprising Vic Wright, who was in charge of our cargo operation, arranged for us to bring a full load of frozen shrimp back to Miami on our return flight.

One of the Jacksons

by © 2024 Ash Cutchin

As I was browsing the "In Memory Of" section of the Clipper Pioneer website, I noticed the following obit.

Romanas "Hugie" Ugianskis was born August 19, 1931 and passed away November 16, 2019. He served many roles in his life – husband, father, grandfather, son, brother, combat veteran, commercial pilot. He proudly served his adopted country for 30 years, retiring as an Air Force Lieutenant Colonel. He died peacefully and will be forever missed by his family and friends.

While I was serving as a Flight Engineer I flew with Hugie several times when he was a First Officer. Hugie's family had emigrated to the US from Hungary, I think, during the Hungarian Revolution. One flight was very memorable because of a certain passenger. I was the junior of the two FEOs on a 747SP flight from Dhahran, Saudia Arabia to JFK, and the other engineer chose to operate the first shift. So I did the exterior pre-flight and then returned to the cabin while the passengers were boarding. I recognized one particular passenger as the famous (some would say infamous) Rev. Jesse Jackson. We engaged in a brief conversation, and he told me he had been in Saudia Arabia seeking donations to his Rainbow Coalition. I asked him if he would like a tour of the cockpit and he said, "Sure" so he followed me up the circular stairway. I introduced him to the rest of the cockpit crew, and he took a quick look at all the instruments and lights, politely thanked us for the tour, and returned to the passenger cabin.

After I closed the cockpit door, Hughie made the following statement to us, "Man, he certainly looks a lot bigger in his Yankee uniform standing at home plate."

Hugie thought he had been talking to Reggie Jackson, the Yankee home run king at the time. We all had a big laugh about his confusion. The rest of our flight was uneventful. As far as I know none of us ever had another face-to-face experience with the Reverend.

A Captain Sam Miller Story

by © 2024 Ash Cutchin

I have seen several references to Captain Sam Miller in some of the newsletter stories. I once flew as a passenger from JFK to FRA in 1972 with him as the operating Captain. I believe he was also Vice President Flight Operations at the time.

My wife and I were en route to visit relatives in Wiesbaden, Germany. I checked her in as a Standby passenger and escorted her to the gate. Then I proceeded to Operations to ask for the jump seat. After introducing me to his First Officer, Captain Miller told me to check in at the gate, accompany my wife to her seat, and then come to the cockpit because he would allow me to ride in the jump seat. I was a 707 Flight Engineer at the time, and I believe it was my very first time aboard a 747 in fact.

I did as instructed after being told by the purser that my wife would be able to sit in First Class. Cool. Once I was seated behind Captain Miller, he turned around and introduced me to the Flight Engineer and then said, "Mr. Cutchin, I know your wife is seated in First Class, but you are on a cockpit pass for the jump seat."

"Yes sir. Thank you, sir."

He continued, "I am assigning you to observe the service in First Class between here and Frankfurt. If the service is unsatisfactory, you are to submit to me a written report when we arrive. If the service is satisfactory, then no report is required. Now go sit with your wife and enjoy the flight."

"Yes sir. Thank you, again."

He may have done the same thing with every jump seat rider for all I know, but that night I felt particularly fortunate to know Captain Sam Miller, a real gentleman's gentleman. The flight was great, the service was great, I did not have to submit a report, and we spent a wonderful week in Germany. I even got a chance to ride in the bridge of a Rhine cruise vessel while we docked at Rudesheim. First time I ever observed side thrusters on a boat.

Please Send Us Your Stories

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

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. Check it out at www.flyingboatmuseum.com Enjoy images from Pan Am here: <http://www.timetableimages.com/ttimages/ao1.htm>

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

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

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.

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

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

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/>

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 new passings reported for this month.

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

Tips to Avoid Fraud and Scams

Notice threatening behavior

Often scams are presented as urgent situations requiring immediate action. If you receive threats or hostility for asking questions that's a sign they are a scammer.

Be suspicious of fake caller IDs

Using computer software, scammers can make phone calls and emails that look like they're coming from legitimate companies, government organizations, or your local area code. Often it is best to ignore people that contact you uninitiated. At the very least avoid sharing private information. Looking up the organization's contact information and contacting them yourself is a safer option.

Also, scammers can pretend to be a social media connection for whom the victim does not know very well. A con artist could use a fake local number to text the victim. As the victim might only have the connection's social media or work phone they might think the "connection" is contacting them from a personal cell phone.

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!

Your Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Phone #: _____ Email: _____
Amount: \$ _____
(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. 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. 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