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FLYING CENTRAL AMERICA - Volcanos - Part 2

By Bill Nash

Medellin, Colombia, though it is not in Central America, was the southernmost destination on our Central American missions. The route from Panama to Medellin crossed Turbo, Colombia, the area of the world's heaviest rainfall, then to the headwaters of the San Jorge river and south through rugged canyons below the ridges to Medellin. Through these canyons, with an overcast below the ridges, we did our zigzag navigation until we came to Antioquia, (we called it Annie Oakley), a small red-roofed town on a river that ran left and right in a canyon across our course. Just beyond "Annie Oakley" a canyon wall arose in front of us to a plateau. We would spiral up to the overcast. Most of the time we could see across the plateau. If we saw a huge dead tree, we knew we were looking all the way across and could squeeze between the overcast and the plateau. After passing the dead tree we could drop down into the valley to Medellin. If the clouds covered the plateau we made a 30 degree climbing spiral into the overcast, then headed for our Medellin beacon or favorite broadcast station and made a descending race track descent to the airport.

We often overnighted in very clean Guatemala City. The air there was the most invigorating I have ever breathed. One just had to take fast walks and deep inhalations while inspecting the square block market and shops which exhibited colorful hand-woven textiles, wood carvings, leather work, silver and gold jewelry and, if one was lucky, some original Mayan clay figurines. Indians had secret sources they had uncovered while harvesting chicle from wild sapota trees.

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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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Guatemala has at times experienced government changes by revolution rather than election. One of our crews' transports was mistaken for revolutionaries en route to the hotel from the airport and was shot up. The captain was hit, but recovered.

On certain religious holidays to remember the dead, huge heavy religious statues are carried in a parade by volunteers who pay to do so, the amount according to the distance they carry. They join many others by placing their shoulders long poles supporting the platforms. There is no music. All is hushed - no sound, except the shuffling of feet. The statues sway ghost-like, and the faces of both spectators and carriers are serious. It is an experience one cannot soon forget.

Many times, the Guatemala valley would be covered by clouds. We had our unique pilot-created approaches to keep us on schedule. None of these techniques ever caused a problem. Of course we couldn't use them if we had a check pilot or the F.A.A. aboard.

Once I off-loaded some cargo before taking off in a C-46 at Guatemala, destination Miami. Chief pilot cargo Vic Wright called me in and wanted an explanation. He was a very go-go guy. Guatemala was a dished high altitude airport. With my trusty computer, I showed him that if I lost an engine at speed between velocity one and velocity two, the runway climbed faster than the airplane with that cargo aboard. The end of the runway dropped off in a cliff. Vic growled and mumbled and went off stating - "we've got to make this cargo operation go!"

Guatemala and bordering Mexico were blessed with Mayan and Aztec temple ruins. As pilots, we could please our passengers and benefit our company by circling the pyramids of Chichen Itza, Uxmal, Tikal, Tulum, and others. Indian names given to towns and natural resources in those areas were rhythmic and slipped of the tongue with ease: Chichicostenango, Quetzaltenango, Tulencingo, Quintana Roo, Chilpancingo, and Thuantepec.

In approaching Tegucigalpa, Honduras, from the south, we could find the proper valley when we saw
(continued on next page)

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 March 31, 2025 was \$11,918.14. 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!

FLYING CENTRAL AMERICA - Volcanos - Part 2

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2 small peaks on its southern ridge. The airport there was short, with the terminal directly at one end of the single runway and a 1500 foot deep crevasse at the other end. Under certain cloud conditions we had an approach from San Salvador that startled first officers who had not yet experienced it. We would climb up rising ground on the downwind leg, then, while climbing, call for gear down and add power. Then, following the climbing terrain left we'd add more power and drop a little flap continuing to climb to the final approach, then suddenly see the runway, add flap and land short - since the runway was humped. If we landed too far down the runway we'd be going hell-bent downhill for the terminal. Strangely, the cloud ceiling climbed with us on this approach. It was an odd characteristic of the area. The new co-pilots thought so too.

At that time, the landing field at San Jose, Costa Rica, was a square of patchy grass. When it rained it became a muddy skating rink. One day, I started a take-off roll and went sliding sideways. Taxiing back, we tried again and went sailing off to the left again. I explained to the passengers that we were testing the traction prior to takeoff. The wind was only five knots so we went to the other end, found better traction and gave it to the first officer to take off. He did a fine job and we turned on course to David, Panama. David was my favorite place to land. It was a king-size square of beautiful grass, and, if possible, I worked it out so that it was my turn to land there. One could paint the wheels on that grass and never know when the plane was on the ground.

Our next stop south was Panama City. Usually I tried to leave David early and fly fast to the Bay of Panama. That gave us time to circle the beautiful Archipelago de Las Perlas - the Pearl Islands. I often wondered if I could ever become wealthy enough to buy one of those islands with its shining white beaches and green jungle. The television series "Survivor" beat me to it.

In Panama we stayed in a large wooden hotel that had been rushed to completion for Teddy Roosevelt's inauguration. High ceilings and tall windows gave each large bedroom good air circulation. - No air conditioning, of course. My first time there, I awakened in the morning to find a 3-foot dragon staring at me from a tree branch next to the unscreened window. It was my first close view of an iguana. Little did I realize that I would be eating fried iguana tail served on Pan Am's northbound clippers. It was delicious. The passengers acclaimed it to be the best fried chicken they'd ever had - but wondered why the bones were so white. On Panama's Central Avenue were kiosks selling delicious iguana sandwiches.

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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 8.

FLYING CENTRAL AMERICA - Volcanos - Part 2

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This old time tropical classic hotel had a huge expansive cool porch where many colorful planters punches were served to appreciative guests. I very much enjoyed the general ambience, as well as the planters punches.

One night in Panama, a very embarrassed assistant chief pilot, training, landed on the wrong side of the canal at the wrong airport. In another interesting incident one of our pilots experienced an engine failure while taking off in Panama flying a C-46. He dropped down out of sight of the tower controller, so the tower reported the plane crashed. Meanwhile, the pilot was busily zigzagging, dodging the highest terrain, unable to climb on one engine with the new 48,000 pound max load. After fifteen minutes he finally struggled around a hill, and there was the canal. He called the amazed tower controller and said, "I'm flying down the canal. Get everyone out of my way so that I can land " - and he made it.

One of our copilots, to get a date, would go to the American Army nurses' quarters in the evening and stand outside and yell "Mary!" Of the several Marys who opened their doors, he would usually get his date.

Panama's main shopping street, Central Ave, was lined with East Indian and Chinese shops where one could buy at freeport prices, cameras, watches, jewelry, carved Chinese furniture, and get a fill of haggling. The sellers loved to haggle. If you bought at first price they were actually disappointed. It was their social life.

On a four-day layover at Panama, I asked my crew if they would like to ride through the canal in a ship. They were delighted with the idea. I visited the main canal office and learned that a cargo vessel was coming through the next day. They very kindly contacted its captain and he said to come ahead. There were four of us - the first officer, myself, a male purser, and a pretty strawberry blond stewardess. We climbed aboard an early train to Colon to cross the isthmus and were transported to the ship with the pilot boat. Captain Hardy Schultz, who welcomed us personally, was very enamored of our stewardess and invited us to dine with him in his quarters, where he regaled us with wartime stories of his trips to Murmansk. Then he spent almost the whole seven hours of the trip with us, explaining interesting points as we traveled through the canal. We anchored in Panama Bay and had a fun dinner with the friendly captain. Then we thanked him profusely and wished him clear sailing as we boarded a launch and returned to our big wooden hotel.

To Be Continued in the Next Issue

Tips for Safety on the Internet: Keep Your Computer Software Up to Date

Criminals look for weak points to exploit before software companies can fix them. So, update the software programs on your computer, tablet, and mobile phone as soon as possible when a newer version comes out. Software updates often contain critical patches and protections against security threats. Turn on automatic updates to automatically update your security software, internet browser, operating system, and mobile apps. *(from the Federal Trade Commission)*

A Pan Am Story

By Fred Parkin

In March of 1970, with the arrival of the 747, I was, as the British politely say, “made redundant.” I was furloughed along with many others.

In February of 1986 I got a telegram from Pan Am offering me my job back. No longer a late 20s single guy, going around the world monthly with six international stewardesses, I was a married guy with two kids and a house in San Francisco. But I was also between companies. Seems “guaranteed recall rights” ended up in the pilots contract all those years.

Few pilots know who their airline president is, let alone have the ability to pick up the phone and give him a call, but I knew Marty Shugrue, since he was furloughed the same spring of 1970, when he stayed with Pan Am in the marketing department.

“Marty, I got this crazy telegram offering me my job back.”

“Fred, I got the same telegram and I’m the President!” “I heard you joined with some Cornell classmates and built a 100 unit restaurant chain, Victoria Station.” “Nice going”.

“I know you’re not going back into the cockpit but how about trading my seniority number for a lifetime pass for me and my family?”

Had I had better listening skills when he replied, “Your lifetime or Pan Am’s”, I might have hesitated.

“Mine, of course” “I’m going to eventually buy or start another restaurant chain but save the expense of retraining me. In six months, I’ll be gone.”

“Sorry but because of ERISA our lawyers say I can’t allow the trade.”

In December of 1967, 12 former military pilots, many former Vietnam guys, started training on the 707 with Pan Am at SFO and went down and opened the base in LAX. All got furloughed in March of 1970. In 1986 all got the telegram. Take a guess how many started retraining with me in MIA that February?

Nine!! One guy gave up his law practice, one his real estate business and several had been back in the military and retired. And all were probably in the midst of a mid-life crisis of some sort like I was.

In the fall of 1986 a retired Pan Am Captain I’d known for years, Warren Simmons, called me and asked if I’d be his partner and build his one Chevys Mexican Restaurant into a chain. I did and we sold it to the Taco bell division of PepsiCo in 1993.

HEALTH TIPS: Aerobic Exercises

Go for a brisk walk or bike ride. (Remember the helmet.) Do housework or gardening. Take a yoga, tai chi, water or chair aerobics, or other activities class for older adults. You may find free or discounted classes at a local community or senior center. Aim for at least 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity. *(from NIH.gov)*

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

Jerome "Jerry" Patrick Fox, age 86, of Detroit Lakes died on July 31, 2024, of complications from heart surgery.

Jerry was born in Fargo, ND on August 17, 1937, to John and Margaret (McNulty) Fox, but the family moved to Detroit Lakes when Jerry was just an infant. He went on to excel in high school sports for the Detroit Lakes Lakers. Jerry received a scholarship for both football and hockey at the University of North Dakota. While there, Jerry studied business and graduated from UND with a B.S. Degree in Business Administration in 1959 which was also the year Jerry and the Fighting Sioux Hockey Team won the National Championship.

Following graduation, Jerry entered the U.S. Navy, fulfilling his lifelong ambition of becoming a pilot. Jerry flew transport aircraft including many trips to Vietnam during his 5 years of service. After leaving the Navy, Jerry then flew for Pan American Airways, first flying the 707 and upon his promotion to Captain, he flew the 747. Jerry spent 27 wonderful years with Pan Am, seeing the world and doing what he loved. Although Jerry was not ready to retire, he did so in 1997 after flying for three years at Atlas Air.

Jerry especially enjoyed hunting and fishing, and for many years he spent his vacations as a guide at an elk hunting camp in the mountains of Montana. He was an avid sports fan making sure he always followed his beloved "Fighting Sioux" football and hockey teams. He also played semi-pro hockey for the Fresno Falcons in California when he wasn't honoring his flying commitments.

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.

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>

Nowhere to Land – The IGS Berlin

By John Frisbie

I got lazy and stopped keeping a flight log so this is out of a 94 year old's memory - assistance gladly requested for more details!

We were still operating out of Tempelhof so that should help with the year.

We had the last flights of the night. THF was already below take off minimums - we weren't coming back. Hannover was minimums and going down fast. We weren't coming back. Tegel with its 8,000 foot runway and excellent ILS was the only option. It was 0/0 when we arrived!

Over the years we had known that this day would come and had discussed what we called "The British Option" because they were doing it legally already. The copilot (I) would land on instruments, needing the Captain's okay that he identified enough runway lights to confirm the runway alignment. (With backup from the flight engineer).

The glide slope lands you at 500 feet per minute (firm but safe). With brakes and full reverse, we were there. Now what? Here's the beauty of the B-727 : Aft air stair! With his flashlight in hand, the Flight engineer could signal the captain through the side window which way to the runway edge so he could turn around and find the taxiway. There we were met by a follow me truck. It's in my mind that we had a fleet of 8 crews and planes. And all landed the same way (again - corrections, please).

It seemed like all the taxis in Berlin were at Tegel. Our crew got back to Tempelhof finally and took the remainder of the night to get home. I don't recall much was said about it later - funny.

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: _____

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