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FLYING CENTRAL AMERICA - Volcanos - Part 4

by Bill Nash

Mexico City was always a nice layover. We stayed in a popular hotel and dined in a beautiful dining room, often a few tables away from Mexican and U.S. movie stars. There was good entertainment and great Mariachi bands. One member of each Mariachi band was the accountant. He would keep a record of each request and eventually present a bill to each "requester" at a certain quantity of pesos per song.

We were cautioned to not enter parts of the city, such as Tepito - "thieves" Market, which is an infamous zone, where thieves sell on Saturday and Sunday what they had stolen during the previous week. They would lay their loot out in the street on cardboard or blankets. Though there are iron bars on the windows of many homes, thieves easily lifted those off with automobile hydraulic jacks. People hustle over to Tepito to buy back their stolen possessions at reasonable prices. I once watched a young man sitting on his bicycle haggling over the price of a bike claxon horn while a boy was busy stealing a red reflector from his rear fender.

Today, Tepito is also heavy in drug trafficking. The Mexican government still allows the area to survive, perhaps for the same reasons red light districts are tolerated; they know where they are.

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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.

FLYING CENTRAL AMERICA - Volcanos - Part 4

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It is suggested that one does not go there without a trustworthy knowledgeable local person. Taxis will not wait there. Many will not go there. Even if they stop for a traffic light, they could lose their hub-caps or tail-lights.

Even though rules for pilots required eight hours from bottle to throttle, it pays to imbibe little in Mexico City. At 7,342 feet of altitude, one bottle of powerful three X's Orizaba beer can send one early to bed.

To leave the subject of Central America for a moment - one night in Miami, as a copilot with Vic Wright on a C-46 trip, I was doing the walk-around and noticed that the tail wheel tire looked partly flat. I checked the tire pressure and it was correct at 70 pounds. That meant to me that the airplane was overloaded. I informed Capt. Wright, and he frowned and said, "We've got to make this cargo operation go. Let's go!" So we went, destination Caracas, Venezuela, with a cargo of cigarettes.

Our take-off was a real ground-hugger. Our climb was long. We had a stop at Jamaica. After our take-off there the tower called and asked, "are both engines working, Captain? You seem quite low!"

We landed at Maiquetia airport on Venezuela's coast and went to the hotel. We were awakened at 7 AM by some Venezuelan official to inform Vic Wright that Pan Am was being fined \$ 5,000 for having 5,000 pounds of unmanifested cargo on board. The loading supervisor in Miami had severely miscalculated. Had we lost an engine en-route, we would surely have been in the drink.

1976: Pan Am's Boeing Clipper Liberty Bell, set a world flight record

1-3 May 1976: Pan American World Airways' Boeing 747SP-21 Clipper Liberty Bell, N533PA, departed New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport, on a record-setting around the world flight. Under the command of Captain Walter H. Mullikan, the airline's chief pilot, the flight crew included co-pilots Albert A. Frink, Lyman G. Watt, and flight engineers Frank Cassaniti and Edwards Shields. The airliner carried

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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 May 30, 2025 was \$10,640.63. 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. 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!

1976: Pan Am's Boeing Clipper Liberty Bell, set a world flight record

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98 passengers. The flight set a new speed record for a flight around the world, eastbound, and three speed records for commercial airline routes.

Clipper Liberty Bell flew eastward from New York JFK to Indira Ghandi International Airport (DEL), New Delhi, India, a distance of 8,081 miles (13,005.1 kilometers), at an average speed of 869.63 kilometers per hour (540.363 miles per hour). After servicing the 747, it continued on its journey. The next destination was Tokyo International Airport (HND), Tokyo, Japan. This stage covered 7,539 miles (12,132.8 kilometers). The airliner's average speed was 421.20 kilometers per hour (261.722 miles per hour). Striking Pan Am workers at Tokyo delayed preparing the airliner for the next leg of the journey. After refueling, the Pan American flight continued on to its starting point, John F. Kennedy International Airport, New York, New York. This final leg was 7,517 miles (12,097.4 kilometers). The average speed was 912.50 kilometers per hour (567.001 miles per hour).

The total duration of the flight was 46 hours, 1 second. The actual flight time was 39 hours, 25 minutes, 53 seconds. Total distance flown was 23,137 miles (37,235.4 kilometers). The average speed for the entire flight was 809.24 kilometers per hour (502.838 miles per hour).

Clipper Liberty Bell had been christened in a ceremony at Indianapolis on 30 April 1976 by Betty Ford, First Lady of the United States of America.

In 1977, Captain Mullikin flew the same 747SP on another circumnavigation, 29–31 October 1977, but this time it crossed both the North and South Poles. Renamed Clipper New Horizons, 21025 set 7 world records on that flight, with a total flight time of 54 hours, 7 minutes, 12 seconds. This trip was called "Flight 50."

(Excerpted from story posted at <https://www.thisdayinaviation.com/1-3-may-1976/>)

Save the Date ~ Pan Am Lunch/Lecture December 6 2025

It's time again to mark your calendars for our annual lunch/lecture reunion at Michaels at Shoreline in Mt View, CA

Our speaker is not yet confirmed and we are hopeful that our invitation to the President of World Wings International will be accepted. After a long storied history of camaraderie and philanthropy, World Wings International will be merged with the Pan Am Museum Foundation at the end of 2024, and we look forward to hearing about the history and future of World Wings International.

Look for future updates and registration in October.

Stay well and stay safe,

Alfred Gilbert

Shanghai Control ATCC Communications Failure

by Gene Woerner

The recent power outages of ATC facilities at the Newark and other Area Air Traffic Control Centres has brought back memories of a similar situation I faced during a Flight from Beijing to Shanghai in early 1982.

I had recently checked out as Captain on the B 747 and was on a three day pattern from Tokyo's Narita Airport to Beijing with an overnight layover there. The following day the pattern called for our return to Narita with a transit stop at Shanghai.

Pan Am had recently received approval to fly to these Chinese Cities from Tokyo. Everything was still new to the Company, and of course the Crew, although we had been well briefed on what to expect once crossing into the PRC, we were primed for the unforeseen.

Everything was relatively routine and worked out well from Tokyo to Beijing and initially from Beijing to Shanghai the following day a short flight of about 2+ hours.

We had contacted Shanghai Control and were cleared to enter their airspace to a Navigation fix, the name and designator I can't remember - also cleared to descend to 7000 meters. China was using altitude levels in meters so we were given a conversion chart on leaving Dispatch in NRT which converted feet to meters, I believe it was FL 200.

As we approached the fix, we made a transmission to inform Shanghai control of our position and altitude. The First Officer made several calls; however, we received no reply. Since I was the Pilot flying, he looked at the charts for alternate frequencies without being able to make contact with anyone.

We entered a standard holding pattern and then proceeded in accordance with our flight plan and proceeded to a VOR fix which was the beginning of the approach.

We were actually able to get weather information on the Atis and as we approached the initial approach fix. We were finally, after many tries, able to contact the tower. During all this time we had not heard another aircraft.

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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. Funds are dropping, and we may not have enough to continue without your help! Form is on page 8.

Shanghai Control ATCC Communications Failure

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The tower immediately cleared for the ILS approach which we completed without any radar or traffic information, and landed 10 minutes later. Again, during the whole approach we heard no other aircraft transmissions.

After clearing the Runway we all breathed a sigh of relief that we were able to complete the flight and did not have to have to return to Beijing.

The flight to Narita from Shanghai was uneventful and we arrived there on schedule.

Writer seeks Pan Am pilots to interview

My name is Jason Ross. I am a writer who is attempting to speak with former Pan Am pilots who went on to fly with United, following the purchase of the Pacific routes in 1986. I'm looking to interview several pilots for the writing of a potential book focusing on United's purchase of the Pacific.

A little about myself. I grew up fascinated with aviation and especially aviation history. Influenced by family members who worked for Pan Am and served in the Air Force, I started my career as an Air Force officer. Over time I became passionate about organizations' cultures and how they have led to success or failure, and everything in between. Ultimately, this led to my interest in the acquisition of Pan Am's Pacific routes and individuals' experiences with the acquisition.

If you are interested in sharing your experience, I can be reached at jason.r.ross@gmail.com. Thank you again for your help.

Best regards,
Jason Ross

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. If you're doing vigorous-intensity aerobic activity, aim for at least 75 minutes a week. Exercise any number of minutes at a time—even climbing up a few flights of stairs counts.

Benefits include helping your heart, lungs, and blood vessels become stronger and more fit; Increases your endurance. May lower your risk for heart disease, stroke, diabetes, some cancers, and anxiety *(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.

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

Donald Eugene Cooper (1932–2025) Gone But Not Forgotten~ Captain Donald Eugene Cooper, 93, of Port Ludlow, Washington, passed away peacefully on April 6, 2025. Born on March 3, 1932, in Everett, Washington, Donald was the son of Alfred and Bernadine Cooper.

He honorably served in the U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, and the National Guard. In May 1961, Donald completed officer training and flight training with the Air Force and served during the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Cold War. He retired from military service at the rank of Major after a distinguished career of dedication to his country. Following his military service, Donald pursued a long career in commercial aviation. He joined Pan American Airlines and worked as a navigator, flight engineer, and first officer, eventually retiring as a Captain. He truly loved his career in aviation and cherished the opportunity to travel the world through flying.

Donald will be remembered for his unwavering dedication to his family and country, and his passion for aviation. He is survived by his beloved wife, Betty; his son, Eric Cooper, and daughter-in-law, Kelle Kitchel-Cooper; his granddaughter, Callaway Cooper; and his niece and nephew, Francine Cooper Long and Alfred Cooper and their families. He was preceded in death by his parents, Alfred, and Bernadine Cooper. A memorial service to honor Donald's life will be held in the summer of 2025.

Carl Stevenson passed away in April 2025, with his family at his side. He last flew with Pan Am in Berlin and retired on the West Coast.. More information to follow.

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.

Protect Yourself Online

Protect Yourself from Attempts To Steal Your Information

It's important to know when someone is trying to trick you into giving them your personal information. Scammers send phishing emails or text messages to trick you into clicking on a link or opening an

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Places to Visit

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>

Protect Yourself Online

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attachment that downloads malware. Don't click on a link in an unexpected email or text. Instead, contact the company using a phone number or website you know is real.

Know What To Do if Something Goes Wrong

If you discover an issue, it's important to act quickly. Find out what to do if someone hacked your email or social media account or if you think you may have installed malware. If you think someone is using your personal information, go to IdentityTheft.gov to report it and get a personalized recovery plan.

Stranded in the Sky: Untold Story

Philip Jett is the author of STRANDED IN THE SKY: The Untold Story of Pan Am Luxury Airlines Trapped on the Day of Infamy, which combined the stories of the Anzac, Hong Kong, Pacific, and Philippine Clippers, with a great deal of original research. The book debuted before a large group of Pan Am clipper families on Treasure Island in San Francisco in May of 2023. He may be available to speak to Pan Am groups or associations without charge. If interested, you may visit his website at www.philipjett.com and email him at philip@philipjett.com. His book is available in hardback, paperback, and eBook.

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

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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