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## **Evacuation of American Hostages from Iran**

*By Edward L. Shields*

In 1978 and 1979, Iran was holding American hostages. When they were to be released, Pan Am was asked to provide two 747's for evacuation flights. It required supervisory flight crews and volunteer Flight Service personnel. We had volunteer Flight Service personnel from USA, Londa, Holland, Denmark and France.

I was called at my office and was told that they wanted a 747 cargo airplane to pick up Government materials. I had a small emergency overnight bag with me and they were holding an airplane for us.

We flew to Istanbul, Turkey, but were denied entry into Iran. The company had Lucille pack a suitcase for me and had it delivered to Istanbul. The only problem was that she had packed Doug and Mark's underwear and I had to do a little shopping in Istanbul.

We waited for over a week, and our cargo flight was cancelled. We were then waiting for evacuation flights.

We finally had approval from Iran to enter their airspace and we departed at first light for Mirabad Airport.

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**Important Notice: Unless we receive sufficient funds to continue with publishing this newsletter, it will be closing down in a few months. If you enjoy receiving it, please send in your dues as soon as possible, and if you are able to add additional funds as a donation to continue the newsletter, please consider doing so. More detail at the bottom of the next page. Thank you!**

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## Evacuation of American Hostages from Iran

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All the Iran navigation aids were turned off, but with our inertial computers to guide us, we entered Iran.

When we were in the area, I called Pan Operations and they advised that they were having a delay getting the passengers to the airport. Also, they said that both sides of the runway had heavy equipment but there was enough clearance for us to land.

Capt. Brown made a perfect landing, and we were told to stop on the runway for a security check. I went down to lower 41 and opened the hatch to the nose gear. Four or five Iranians climbed up the nose gear and inspected the airplane. They also checked our passports and license, but said not to worry. They cleared us to start engines and follow their vehicle to the ramp.

Since this was an evacuation flight, the FAA had given us approval, if needed, to load passengers in the aisle between the seats and even in the johns. When the hostages started to arrive, they were very happy to board the airplane with the USA flag on the tail.

A boy with an AK gun came into the cockpit, opened my briefcase, and took a pack of my cigarettes. I told him to put them back. Capt. Brown asked whether I wanted to die for a smoke. I said that the boy couldn't do that as Iran prohibited it. He did put them back and went to the upper lounge. Later, I went back and offered him a cigarette and he took one and handed me his gun while he smoked.

While waiting, we rotated one crew outside to be sure nothing happened. Once during my turn outside, I felt something in my back. I turned and another kid had his gun in my back. I put up my hands and slowly turned and I said, "don't do that". He laughed and took the gun away.

I kept the auxiliary power unit running to keep the airplane cool, and our Flight Service team was outstanding serving soda and snacks to the Americans now on board. They were getting a little concerned over our departure delay, but kept working. Then the guards would call a passenger's name and make them get back off the airplane and open their luggage. The Iranians would take cameras,

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**Bank balance as of December 31, 2025 was \$5,392.11.** The opportunity to renew your membership with your donation is on a form on page 8 of this newsletter,

There are approximately enough funds for three (3) more issues unless we receive enough to keep going, so if we don't receive funding over the next 30 days, we will be printing every other month until the funds run out. The monthly expenses include newsletter layout (\$400); printing (\$300); mailing (\$300); website hosting and updates \$108.95; and monthly bookkeeping (\$200). There is an annual charge for renewal of the nonprofit corporation, and the expense for filing the yearly income tax return. See annual Profit & Loss Report on page 4.

**Please consider sending your dues as soon as possible, and any extra you might wish to donate to keep it going!** Be sure to clip and send in your check if you'd like to continue to receive the newsletter. Thank you!

## Evacuation of American Hostages from Iran

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pictures and anything else they wanted. They kept that routine up all day and we were starting to think that we would be stranded in Iran. They finally said they were finished, and I made an inspection of the wheel wells and the airplane. As I was checking that all the doors were closed, I noticed a little girl looking out on the ramp. They had offloaded her dog in his crate. I went down and got the dog and took him to the cockpit.

When we were cleared to start, it was getting close to dusk. We taxied out and on our takeoff roll, you could hear the cheers from our passengers even in the cockpit above the roar of the engines. Once we were in cruise, I asked the purser to bring the little girl into the cockpit. When she came in, she started crying when she saw that we had her dog, and she started hugging and kissing me.

Our first evacuation flight was to Rome. After we landed and had secured the airplane, we walked into the arrival area to find that none of our passengers had left the area and were waiting to thank us over and over again. I have a letter from the father of that little girl thanking me for saving her dog, and I have many thank you notes from the passengers. Italy did not want to have any problems with Iran, so all the other evacuation flights would return to Frankfurt, Germany. We had three more evacuation flights from Iran to Frankfurt, but on these flights we only had a few hours on the ground in Iran. Each time, the passengers cheered wildly when we made our takeoff and when we finally left Iran airspace.

My last evacuation flight was on a 747 cargo plane to get the State Department's equipment and records. Our airplane was loaded and we were just about to depart. The airplane was sitting on a wide

*(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](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.

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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](mailto:sue@clipperpioneers.com).

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## Evacuation of American Hostages from Iran

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open ramp with no other equipment near it. I saw a fork lift come across the ramp and it ran into our plane. The fork lift put a hole in the fuselage just below the cargo door. Before leaving Frankfurt, I had asked for a roll of high speed tape, and as it turned out, it was needed. I asked the Iranians for a drill to stop-drill the cracks around the hole. They said that there were no drills at the airport, but that they could get one in the morning. We did not want to overnight in Iran, and I told Captain Brown that I could use my Boy Scout knife to make a hole at each crack and use the high speed tape. He agreed that we should try the repair, and that we would fly to Frankfurt un-pressurized.

We departed just before sunset, and at ten thousand, we all had to go on oxygen. We were not comfortable wearing the oxygen masks for so long, and I asked Capt. Brown if I could start to pressurize. He agreed, and I finally got our cabin pressure below ten thousand, and we could take off our masks. We flew on to Frankfurt and when we arrived, I went back to see if the tape had held. It was still there. Frankfurt installed a metal patch over the tape, and another crew returned the plane to JFK.

Pan Am was great during the evacuation flights and kept advising our families that all was going well.

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## Clipper Pioneers Profit and Loss Report for 2025

Item	Annual Expense	Monthly Average	Annual Income	Mo.Avg Income
USPS	\$1,682.10	\$120.12	\$8,300.00	\$691.67
Mailing Service	\$1,138.44	\$113.86		
Printing	\$3,105.02	\$258.75		
Website Updates/ Maintenance/Hosting	\$1,307.40	\$108.95		
Newsletter Production and Layout	\$4,800.00	\$400.00		
Bookkeeping Service	\$2,400.00	\$200.00		
IRS Application Fee / Accounting (annual) - CPA Services	\$1,350.00	\$112.50		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$15,782.96</b>	<b>\$1,314.18</b>		
<b>Income</b>	<b>\$8,300.00</b>			
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$15,782.96</b>			
<b>Shortfall for 2025</b>	<b>\$(7,482.96)</b>			

**Please note that in order to continue printing the newsletter each month will require a monthly inflow of approximately \$1,350.00 per month.**

**Don't forget to check out our website at: [www.clipperpioneers.com](http://www.clipperpioneers.com)**

## **PAN AM MUSEUM CRUISE APRIL 25 - MAY 2, 2027**

Welcome Aboard the Magnificent AmaMagna - An Unforgettable Voyage with Purpose

Set sail on a once-in-a-lifetime journey along the legendary Danube River, where timeless history, vibrant culture, and stunning landscapes come together — all from the luxurious comfort of the AmaMagna.

This isn't just a cruise. It's a celebration of heritage, a gathering of kindred spirits, and a meaningful way to support the Pan Am World Museum! Join fellow Pan Am enthusiasts and adventurers as you explore the heart of Southeast Europe in unparalleled style and sophistication. April 25 - May 2, 2027

PRESENTING GEMS OF SOUTHEAST EUROPE on AmaWaterways AmaMagna

If you are thinking of joining us, don't delay! Take full advantage of our discounts, extended solely for our group. We've had a wonderful response so far, it's sure to be another fabulous trip!

Only \$400 deposit - balance is not due until 90 days before cruise. (\$200 is non-refundable).

For more information, visit <https://thepanammuseum.org/travel/cruise2027>

Start planning for the 3rd Biennial Pan Am World Museum Fundraiser Cruise!

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## **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](mailto:jason.r.ross@gmail.com). Thank you again for your help.

Best regards, Jason Ross

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## **Stranded in the Sky: Untold Story**

Philip Jett is the author of STRANDED IN THE SKY: The Untold Story of Pan Am Luxury Airliners 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](http://www.philipjett.com) and email him at [philip@philipjett.com](mailto:philip@philipjett.com). His book is available in hardback, paperback, and eBook.

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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.

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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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## 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](http://www.flyingboatmuseum.com) Enjoy images from Pan Am here: <http://www.timetableimages.com/ttimages/ao1.htm>

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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 new obituaries for 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.*

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## National Park Service approves the creation of a Pan Am Historic District

MIAMI, FLORIDA - January 2, 2026 -- The National Park Service has approved the creation of a Pan Am Historic District at Miami International Airport for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, recognizing historic buildings that once served as the mother base of Pan American World Airways. The announcement was made by the Pan Am Museum Foundation.

The buildings are as follows (oldest to newest). (1) Pan Am Hangar 5, (1929). The 97-year-old hangar is the only surviving structure from Pan Am's original historic 1928 NW 36th Street Airport and the oldest building at today's MIA. (2) Pan Am double hangar and offices (1943). Upon completion, the huge new double hangar was immediately put in service as a maintenance and overhaul base for Pan Am's significant WWII Army Air Transport Command operations. (3) (Top) Pan Am Latin American Division Headquarters and Stewardess College (1964).

Paying architectural tribute to the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, India (which earned it the popular nickname "The Taj Mahal"), the building reflects Pan Am's global reach in the Jet Age. Today, it is being respectfully and meticulously renovated and repurposed as a private VIP terminal, slated to open later this year. (Bottom) Pan Am's 7 acres-under-one-roof jet maintenance and overhaul facility (1964). At the time of its completion, it was the most technologically advanced jet overhaul facility in the world, serving Pan Am's entire fleet. (4) The Pan Am International Flight Academy (1980), a premier flight training academy serving Pan Am and other airlines. Still a leading international flight academy, its stunning two-story atrium lobby contains numerous historic Pan Am photos and artifacts. (5) National Register diagram showing the location and layout of the newly designated Pan Am Historic District at MIA. For a link to the page where photos are available, go to [www.clipperpioneers.com](http://www.clipperpioneers.com).

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## 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](mailto:sue@clipperpioneers.com)

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## Pan Am 100th Anniversary Legendary Voyage - Oct. 2027

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR! RETRACE THE CLIPPER ROUTE BY SEA

Journey along Pan Am®'s historic Clipper route, visiting 19 ports and 13 countries over 28 days.

### INTRODUCING PAN AM'S NEWEST PORT

Spend a day at RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay™, named the #1 private island 20 years in a row.

### HISTORIC PORTS OF CALL

From Santo Domingo and Santa Marta to Belize City, explore storied gateways reimaged.

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Signature touches and exclusive onboard experiences evoke the Golden Age of Travel.

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Exceptional 2:1 guest-to-crew ratio & voted "Best Service" by Cruise Critic for three years in a row.

### DESTINATION DINING™

From familiar flavors to timeless classics, we're committed to fresh culinary experiences.

19 Ports - 13 Countries - 2 Heritage Brands - 1 Legendary Voyage - 28-Day Legendary Voyage - Pan Am 100th Anniversary - Zuiderdam - Roundtrip Miami - Oct. 30, 2027

Contact Your Travel Advisor to Book Today - @tourwithorit Orit Rindner - Tel: 850-270-7745 BOOK EARLY & SAVE - Holland American + Pan Am Reserve your place today and receive up to 60% off our most popular amenities plus added benefits and upgrades.

## 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)