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Turning Finals – The Long Way Home

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by John A. Marshall

There was another, unspoken factor to the equation, one that lingered in the far recesses of the minds of the crew: The Boeing 314 was a flying boat, designed to takeoff and land on water, to fly to and from the port cities of the world. Now the Pacific Clipper would be asked to traverse nearly 3,000 miles of hostile desert and jungle, across Queensland and the Northern Territory to Port Darwin, over which the largest body of water was a river which would in all probability have little water in it anyway. Should they develop any sort of engine trouble, there would be nowhere to safely land the flying boat. She would become a hulk, a forgotten relic lost somewhere in the great Australian wilderness. It was a sobering thought.

The next morning the Boeing lifted gently from the waters of Gladstone Harbor and pointed her nose to the northwest. They leveled off at ten thousand feet and held their breath while the fuel tanks were reconfigured.

The engines adapted to their strange new diet with surprisingly little protest, coughing slightly at first, and then with a sigh of relief they settled into the long flight.

(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. 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.

Turning Finals – The Long Way Home

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They flew over some of the most inhospitable country any of them had ever seen, and some of the most beautiful. They traversed the south shore of the Gulf of Carpentaria, and over the stark green jungle of Arnhem Land in northern Australia. Great unbroken stretches of spindly desert and then endless green jungle passed beneath. It was a unique contrast to the unbroken blue of the oceans over which they normally flew. After eleven hours they reached Port Darwin, which was surrounded by thunderstorms, flashing angrily from horizon to horizon. It was a spectacular display of pyrotechnics. After the long flight the crew would have welcomed weather a little more benign.

They found Darwin a city on a war footing. Women and children were to be evacuated the following day, and the scene was something out of a wild west movie. Every other establishment was a saloon or a cafe; drunken bodies littered the sidewalks. Exhausted, the crew found lodging in what had until very recently been an Australian army brothel. They next morning they refueled and took off for Surabaya, in the Dutch East Indies.

The eight hour and forty minute flight was uneventful until the crew sighted the harbor at Surabaya. It was a magnificent sight; a goodly portion of the United States naval fleet was anchored there, headed by the battle cruiser Houston. Ford lined up the Boeing with the outer edge of the harbor and prepared to land. Suddenly, without warning, a Dutch fighter plane appeared off the Clipper's wing, and the airwaves were filled with anxious, hurried conversation between the fighter and its ground controller.

Ground: "What is she?"

Pilot: "I don't know, but she's a big one...might be German, or Japanese...wait a minute, I think I see part of an American flag on the fuselage."

Ground: "Doesn't mean a thing. Anyone can paint a flag on an airplane."

Pilot: "What do you want me to do? It looks like he's trying to land."

Ground: "Stay on her tail. If she makes one false move, shoot her out of the sky."

(continued on next page)

Bank balance as of February 27, 2026 was \$14,189.16. The opportunity to renew your membership with your donation is on a form on page 8 of this newsletter,

A SPECIAL THANK YOU to Adam Aron and the Pan Am Historical Foundation for their grant to the Clipper Pioneers in the amount of \$12,000. This gift, along with an anonymous donation we received for \$5,000 and the dues you are sending in will keep The Clipper Pioneers newsletter going for the rest of 2026.

If you have not sent in your dues for 2026, be sure to clip and send in your check if you'd like to continue to receive the newsletter. Thank you!

Turning Finals – The Long Way Home

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Through a quirk of the radio setup and the frequencies in use at the time, the Clipper crew was able to hear every word of the conversation between the fighter and his controller, but was unable to transmit itself. In a moment the lone fighter was joined by three others; together they stitched a woven pattern around the helpless flying boat. The casual patter between the pilots and the controller was unsettling, to say the least.

Ford made a gingerly letdown and landed in the choppy waters just outside the harbor. As the Pacific Clipper settled into the wallowing swells, they noticed a patrol boat setting out from shore to lead them in, and they sat with engines idling for their escort. Curiously, the boat would come just within hailing distance, and no closer. In the bow of the boat the flyers could see the tiny figure of a signalman, waving them on. They taxied slowly into the inner harbor, and not until they were safely docked did they learn that they had landed squarely in the midst of a mine field.

The crew spent the following day in Surabaya, conferring with the US naval commanders aboard the Houston. They had not received an update on the war situation since leaving Auckland. They learned that the Japanese were making serious inroads in Southeast Asia, and the sooner they were able to make their way west the better off they would be.

Once again fuel was a problem, with the limited stocks of aviation gas reserved for the military. Ford pleaded with the Dutch authorities, and even asked the American commanders to intervene, but to no avail. The Clipper's hi-bred engines would have to exist once again on a sub-standard diet of automobile gas.

On the advice of the military commanders in Java, Ford and the crew had selected Trincomalee, on the island of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) as their next stop. It offered a number of advantages, not the least of which was the fact that it was probably the finest deepwater port in South Asia, and home to most of the British fleet in the Far East. It would be a difficult flight of over twenty hours, with little margin for error. A mistake in navigation, an error of only a few degrees, and the Pacific Clipper could miss the Indian subcontinent altogether, and fly on into the vastness of the Indian Ocean until they ran out of fuel, lost forever.

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.

How to spot—and stop—imposter scams

How scammers are using the Iran conflict to try to steal your money and information

With global attention focused on the conflict in Iran, it's no surprise scammers have already added that situation to their story lines. Some recent reports to the FTC about imposter, romance, and fake charity scams include an Iran twist. The details change, but the scammer's goal is always to trick you into paying or sharing your personal information. Here are some examples of these scams — and how to protect yourself.

- Scammers contact you unexpectedly about a fraudulent charge. The call or text appears to come from your bank or a company you know. They say they've detected charges from Iran on your account (a lie). They transfer you to someone who says they work for a government agency like the FTC (that's another scammer) who convinces you to share your bank account information. But the truth is government agencies will never ask you to share financial information. Learn more at ftc.gov/imposters.
- Scammers pretending to be a friend or love interest in the military ask for money. Perhaps you've been chatting for a while with someone you met online. Now they tell you they're deployed to Iran. Suddenly you get an urgent request to send them money — maybe because they can't access their bank account or they have a medical emergency. But that's when you know you're likely dealing with a romance scam.
- Scammers create fake charities that sound and look official. They might claim to help people displaced or affected by the conflict in Iran and pressure you to donate in cash, gift cards, cryptocurrency, or wire transfers. Before you donate, go to ftc.gov/charity to learn how to research, what questions to ask, and how to spot a charity scam.

Act right away if you think you've sent money or given your information to a scammer, and report them at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.

(From <https://consumer.ftc.gov/consumer-alerts/2026/03/how-scammers-are-using-iran-conflict-try-steal-your-money-and-information>)

If you enjoy reading the Clipper Pioneers newsletter, and would like to continue receiving it in your mailbox, please send in your renewal if you haven't already, for 2026. The membership renewal form is on page 8.

Don't forget to check out our website at: 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!

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

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 and email him at philip@philipjett.com. His book is available in hardback, paperback, and eBook.

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); Margaret O'Shaughnessy-Director of the Foynes Flying Boat Museum; Edward Trippe; and Mary Lou Bigelow.

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/>

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>

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

Lawrence (Larry) Dean Black, born October 22, 1935, passed from this good long life on Monday, February 23, 2026. As the son of a Pennsylvania coal miner, he was inspired by two older brothers who were pilots during WWII. Merle Black flew 51 B-17 missions over Europe and was retired from United Airlines. Wayne Black was a glider instructor during the war and flew corporate aviation.

Larry was an accomplished classical pianist having led several church choirs during his lifetime after obtaining a B.S. in Music Education. Instead of teaching music, Larry entered US Navy flight training, spending 8.5 years flying passengers and cargo around the world with MATS and a tour in Intelligence in Washington, D.C. He joined Pan American World Airways in 1966 and transferred to United Airlines in 1985 continuing his transcontinental flying until retirement in 1995.

Larry married the love of his life, Katherine (Kay) Belle Montgomery and the amazing team they created kept them active throughout their 67 years of marriage. Kay became a flight instructor and taught her children to fly their privately-owned aircraft. After living in 18 homes in 10 different states, they settled in Seymour, TN. Their family was active in general aviation, owning several airplanes. Larry was an avid sailboat enthusiast as well. Upon retirement from UAL, he and his wife bought their first of many RV's and traveled to all contiguous US states, twice to Alaska and many Canadian provinces.

John F Hutchins III, 90, a 60-year resident of South Windsor, beloved husband of over 66 years to Jane Hutchins, passed away peacefully, at home, surrounded by his wife and two sons on Thursday, February 19, 2026. John was born on December 5, 1935, in Trenton, New Jersey. One of three children of the late John F Hutchins Jr, and Elsie Marion Hutchins.

John was raised in New Jersey and moved to Manchester, CT in 1962. John was a graduate of Purdue University, class of 1957 earning his B.A. in engineering. He then enlisted in the US Airforce proudly serving his country flying with the 656th Bomb Squadron. John was a commercial airline Captain for over 30 years with Pan American Airlines. A career he truly loved and his childhood dream.

In addition to his beloved Jane, he leaves his two sons, David F Hutchins of West Hartford and Michael J Hutchins of South Windsor. His four cherished grandchildren, Travis, Damon, Gianna, and Mathew. His sister Carolynn M Starr and brother-in-law Duane of Avon, and several nephews and their families. In addition to his parents, John was predeceased by his sister, Marion Cantwell.

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

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.

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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.

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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: _____

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City, State, Zip: _____

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Amount: \$ _____

(Make check payable to: Clipper Pioneers and mail to: P. O. Box 3457, Sequim WA 98382)