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Old Naval Aviators

You guys ever think back to how it all began? That first ride over the bridge to NAS Pensacola...

In the old days, Marine Guards stood watch on the gate... crisp uniforms, polished white helmet liners with yellow and red stripes on the side and the large golden Globe and Anchor on the front... even to the un-initiated, you knew you were entering a new and exciting phase of your young life.

After you received your temporary pass, you drive through the Main Gate and are confronted with the gleaming Blue Angel F-9 or F-11... depending on the year... and your heart started beating just a little faster... and your mind immediately thought of the possibilities of your future... maybe, just maybe... someday....

If you took the left fork in the road and drove up the hill, past the golf course, toward the BOQ... and continued past it... as you crested the top... off to your right was Captains Row... antebellum homes overlooking the parade field, football stadium, the beautiful Base Chapel and eventually out to the bay.

On the left was Chevalier Field... home of O&R or NARF as it was later called... and parked on the field, depending on the year... would be gleaming, newly painted aircraft right out of re-work. They could have been; F6F's, F-9's, SNB's, TV-2's, T-28's or later, even A-4's... tucked way back to the left, were about a dozen or so, cos-Moline coated old veterans... A Corsair, Bearcat, Tigercat, Panther, Banshee and others... planes that would later provide the nucleus for our future museum that was only just a dream at the time.

As you approached the Base Headquarters building... if you went left again, you drove by a brick wall that pre-dated the Civil War... continuing around, it eventually turned back to the right and approached the docks. If you were lucky, you might have had your first glimpse of a real aircraft carrier (the first of many). It could have been called Saipan or Antietam... or Lexington... all veterans of the last "Good War". And again your mind reflected... maybe, just maybe... some day...

Just past the carrier, the road took another right turn and brought you along the sea wall and the old hangars on your left. You didn't know it at the time, but this was the real birthplace of Naval Aviation...

~ continued on page 2

Old Naval Aviators

~ continued from previous page

where once old Curtiss Triads and other long forgotten sea planes and float planes were launched and trained the first of those to go before us; sharing the bay with old square-riggers still in service.

As you continued west, on your right was the old Training Command Headquarters. and a large number of brick buildings which you would soon learn were barracks and training buildings... the altitude chamber and the Navy Exchange.

Just past the hangars on the left was the indoor swimming pool where you were first introduced to the Dilbert Dunker and other torture devices only known to Naval Aviators... past that was the Survival School and their small animal collection, inside the building was a cutaway of the old PBY.

Past that was the water tower and obstacle course... if you took the road to your right, here you'd find NAMI Headquarters... the National Cemetery and the Base Hospital, where you'd sweat out your indoc physical... take eye and hearing tests and experience your first (and hopefully last) EEG... needles in the head and strobe lights... who could ever forget it. Somewhere in here was also the "Flight Equipment Shop"... where you'd receive your first flight gear; your first leather jacket and be introduced to your first real "smells" unique to Naval Aviation... I can close my eyes and still remember the smell of my first flight jacket, flight suit, oxygen mask and helmet... bet you can too.

If you had continued on the main road, you'd go past the incredible Officers Club at Mustin Beach... and then on your right you come upon an awesome sight; the old Ft. Barrancas... even more history than you expected in this short journey. Driving up the hill, you see the light house... and eventually on your right, you see Sherman Field.

This is where the action was... even back then the Blue Angels had a hangar there... but there were also the planes you soon hoped to fly. Depending on the generation, they were Panthers, Cougars, Banshee's... T-28's, T-2's, F-9's or TA-4's... whether you stayed there or went to Meridian or Texas... this was most likely the place you came back to for your first look at a carrier deck from a cockpit. Can you imagine the civilian pilots of today with 200 hours under their belt, a few cross countries, maybe some hood time. At 200 hours the Navy pilot had a half dozen traps in their log book.

If you were like me... you probably parked near the tower and Base Ops and watched the traffic pattern where all manner of aircraft were landing and taking off... everything from T-34's to F-8's and Phantoms... or they could have been SNJ's, T-28's, Panthers and Bearcats... if it had been just a few years earlier. And here once again, your mind would wander and you'd think... maybe, just maybe... someday...

Thinking back, our first experiences were so unique from our other services. Every Naval Aviator from designated 0001, went through NAS Pensacola! The Air Force, where newbies encountered cookie cutter bases, that ranged from no-where Texas, to Oklahoma, to Mississippi or a beautiful, but miserably hot Arizona. Even started out with civilian instructors. Ugh! They all felt and looked the same, save the local climate, topography, training, tradition... but ours was sooo different... Awesome, beautiful, historical and almost overwhelming... and we all shared the same experience. Damn we were lucky! ~Shadow

You can now access the mailing and phone list of your fellow Clipper Pioneers. Go to the Clipper Pioneer website - www.clipperpioneers.com - and scroll down to the bottom of the home page. Click on "Members Only" - when the password box pops up, type in "CPMember". The password is "flyboat". You will be able to access the current list of names, address, phone #s, and email addresses there.

Letters from Dutch...

Dear Dwight,

No, I hadn't read what you sent regarding float planes and some other things. I have read other material by Valerie Lester – she writes darn well.

Both Folsoms hit the nail right on the head regarding the airmanship of recent generations of pilots. They are heads down programming computers and nobody's looking out the windows.

Maybe the enclosed will trigger a few thoughts for you. One of us is going to glide in there first. Should it be me, I'll hang around the field and wait for you with a back slap and a hug before we go our separate ways. If it's after dark, I'll be at the edge of the field swinging a kerosene lantern for you as you glide in.

I am now 84 years old; I've been retired for 24 years. It took me two years to accept the fact that it was all over. Retirement has been awfully good to me. It took awhile for me to realize this. I am living alone here at Cutchogue. I haven't been west of Port Jefferson in ten years.

There are some nice memories regarding one Dwight Shrum. Take care.

Kind regards, Dutch
(Holland L. Redfield)

“The Final Touchdown”

by Holland L. “Dutch” Redfield

During a lifetime in aviation, I have experienced only one forced landing. It was not difficult. The dead-stick glide began at 3,000 feet. There were several suitable fields from which to choose. Things worked out nicely. Yet, I know that I have one more forced landing lurking and waiting for me out there. I believe at this stage of my life that I am prepared for it. Perhaps there will be warning, maybe not.

Will there be time for me to plan a good approach to this final touchdown? Will it be a hasty, no power, no options, straight ahead steep descent to a walloping hard touchdown? Or, will it be a soft afternoon peaceful glide?

Whatever, for this final glide I ask only for an open cockpit, so I can, however briefly, savor for the last time the feels of flight, as biplane wings forward of me exquisitely frame and record the slowly changing, tilting scenes as I maneuver and silently bank and glide onto what I have long known will be my very final approach.

Please, no helmet, so old ears can best sense vital changes in speed, relayed through the lovely sounds of whistling interplane struts and wires, and so cheeks and bared head can best read changing airflows swirling behind the cockpit's tiny windshield.

Below, in a forest of trees lies a grassy field long ago set aside for biplane flyers of old. It looks small, tiny. With lightly crossed aileron and rudder, I'll slip her a few inches over the fence. I'll level her off, then

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“The Final Touchdown”

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hold her off, with wheels skimming the grass tips. The lift of wings, the sounds of flight, rapidly diminish. With stick full back, lift fades, a slight tremor, then she and I are bumping and rolling across the beautifully sodded field. The wooden propeller remains still.

We roll to a stop. I have no belt to loosen. I raise goggles and slowly climb out. Suddenly there is applause, then bear hugs, and slaps on the back. “Hey, you old goat, you really slicked that one on!” I am with old friends.

And then standing near, I spot beloved Helen. I yell to her. I run to her.

Report about the Houston Area Pan Am Reunion

by Tex Love

The Houston Area Pan Am Reunion convened Saturday, August 1st, 2009, at a new location. It was held at The Kingwood Country Club in Kingwood, TX. "Tex" Love emceed the event. There were approximately 78 attending, enjoying a great meal and the beautiful surroundings of the Country Club atmosphere. Old friends visited, and new friends were made.

A talk was given by Mr. John Graves, who is with The 1940 Air Terminal Museum, Hobby Airport, Houston. He collected some Pan Am memorabilia to be viewed at the museum. Mr. A. J. High also gave a recount of him being the first pilot of a commercial airline to land at The Houston Intercontinental Airport (IAH), before it became "Bush Intercontinental Airport", with a Continental and a Pan Am airplane in a holding pattern hoping to be number one, but settling for number 2 and 3.

Bill (Moose) Stovall and his family did a great job of decorating the "Magnolia Room" at the club. "Tex" Love will send out a photo album to The Clipper Pioneers when it is completed and captioned...

The Way to Go

by Bill Nash

Juan Trippe, in the process of pioneering and developing the world's first international airline, used flying boats because airports did not exist in most nations. Because of his Spanish first name and intelligent approach he acquired many landing rights in Latin America.

Soon Pan Am was operating around the east coast of South America to Rio and Buenos Aires. I flew one of the early “boats” Pan Am used around the coast - the Consolidated Commodore, which took off at 75 mph, cruised at 75 mph, and landed at 75 mph. Eventually Pan Am's Douglas DC3 land planes replaced the flying boats when Pan Am and nations built airports where needed.

Mr. Trippe wanted a faster route from Belem, at the Amazon river's mouth to Rio de Janeiro. A direct route Belem to Rio was over jungle and wild country and required a fuel stop halfway - when there was no fuel stop and no anything. During the 1930's, Mr. Trippe hired Fritz Blotner, a jungle adventurer of many talents to find such a place and build a refueling airport there.

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The Way to Go

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Fritz's trek through jungle and badlands is a story in itself. He found a plateau; flat on top near the Rio Grande, a river which led by water to the Atlantic Ocean.

Pan Am built a wagon-wheel shaped airport on the high plateau and a burro trail up the cliff from the river. Boats and barges brought drums of fuel up the river and burros carried them up to the airport.

Flying DC3's on this route, there was little to navigate by. The squeaky omni directional broadcasting signal was good for about 100 miles and no good at all when electrical thunderstorms were present.

Therefore, we learned to navigate using topographical charts, flying very low to read the rising cliffs and drop-offs.

As we began to near the airport, we would call Mr. Hempel, the German man in charge, by calling, "Hey Hempel" (the airport, however, had a name - Barreiras - pronounced Ba-Hair-Ahs). We sometimes had Hempel hold down his mike button when we were close. The communication frequency gave us a better bearing than the nav frequency.

The runways were yellow gravel. After heavy rain they were very soft, so we kept rolling after landing til we taxied up on the small concrete fueling ramp. We would depart the same way, making a rolling take-off.

Mr. Hempel was a fun guy. He gave us a good meal and showed us the results of some of his local hunting and animal captures. He kept a clear "hot sauce" on the dining table which he and experienced crew members encouraged first-time pilots to try. They still couldn't taste their food when we got to Rio.

Good Health Habits at 60 and Beyond

Do you feel as good now as you did at 40 years of age? At 50?

If the answer is no, read on. You might be able to feel as good as you used to (or even better) by picking up a few new good health habits. It may seem like more trouble than it's worth to start doing something new. However, even small changes can improve your health. One small change you can make is to add some activity to your daily life. Another is to eat more fiber or to make sure you get plenty of fruits and vegetables in your diet.

What if I've never been very active? Will starting now really make a difference?

Yes! Physical activity is good for people at any age. Among older adults, falls are a common cause of injury and disability. Physical activity makes your bones and muscles stronger. When your muscles are strong, you're less likely to fall. If you do fall, strong bones are less likely to break.

Regular physical activity is good for your brain too. Recent studies have shown that people who do simple exercises (for example, walking briskly) on a regular basis are better able to make decisions than people who aren't physically active.

I haven't been physically active in a long time. I'm afraid I'll get hurt when I start.

From diabetes to heart disease, many chronic (ongoing) health problems are improved by even moderate amounts of physical activity. For people who have these conditions, a lack of exercise is a bigger

~ continued on page 8

Know the Signs: Frauds and Scams Rampant, especially Against the Elderly

Many legitimate companies and charities solicit consumers by phone. Unfortunately, con artists use the phone, too. They rob people every day, with phones as their weapons.

Fraudulent telemarketers understand human nature. We all want to believe that it's our lucky day, that we can get a great deal, or that we can solve our problems.

Older people are disproportionately targeted by fraudulent telemarketers. That's because they're home to get the calls, they have money saved that can be robbed, and they're too polite to hang up.

It's important to know who you're dealing with. If a company or charity is unfamiliar, check it out with your state or local consumer agency and the Better Business Bureau. Fraudulent operators open and close quickly, so the fact that no one has made a complaint yet doesn't guarantee the company or charity is legitimate. Ask for advice about the type of pitch you received and the danger signs of fraud.

Some telemarketing pitches are blatantly fraudulent, and you should know the signs. It's illegal for telemarketers to ask for a fee upfront if they promise or claim it's likely they'll get you a credit card or loan, or to "repair" your credit. It's also illegal for any company to ask you to pay or buy something to win a prize, or to claim that paying will increase your chances of winning. And it's illegal to buy and sell tickets to foreign lotteries by phone or mail.

Other danger signs of fraud may be harder to recognize. They include: pressure to act immediately; refusal to send you written information; use of scare tactics; demands to send payment by wire or courier; demands for payment of taxes or customs fees to claim a prize; requests for your financial account numbers even though you're not paying for something with them; promises to recover money you've lost in other scams, for a fee; claims that you can make lots of money working from home; and refusal to stop calling when you say you're not interested.

Beware of identity thieves. Crooks pretending to be from companies you do business with may call or send an email, asking to verify personal information they should already have. Contact the company directly to confirm before providing information.

How you pay matters. If you pay for a transaction with cash, checks, or money orders, your money is gone before you realize there is a problem. Paying by credit card is safest because you can dispute the charges if you don't get what you were promised. You don't have the same dispute rights when you pay with debit cards or give your bank account number. Bank debits have become fraudulent telemarketers' preferred form of payment.

Where telemarketers are located matters, too. Some fraudulent telemarketers are deliberately located in other countries because it's more difficult for U.S. law enforcement agencies to pursue them. It may be hard to tell where they are; they may have mail forwarded from the U.S. and use telephone numbers that look like domestic long-distance. Be very cautious when dealing with unknown companies from other countries.

Be prepared when you answer the phone. Think about the advice you'd give someone else about how to detect fraud, then follow that advice yourself. Use Caller ID or an answering machine to screen calls. Don't hesitate to hang up on suspicious calls.

Know your "do-not-call" rights. Put your number on the national "do-not-call" registry to stop most telemarketing calls. Call 888-382-1222, TTY 866-290-4326 or go to www.donotcall.gov. You can also tell companies not to call you again on a case-by-case basis. Report violations of your "do-not-call" rights through the "do-not-call" number or Web site. Report telemarketing fraud to the NFIC at 800-876-7060, www.fraud.org.

(from <http://www.fraud.org/tips/telemarketing/general.htm>)

*...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

Captain Rennie Hargraves passed away August 6th. Rennie was 91 years old. No funeral arrangement as of this writing. He is survived by his wife Barbara.

Harold Odom - MIA based, passed away recently with cancer. No further details.

Marjory Munn 88, passed on July 25, 2009. She was one of four WASP (Women Auxiliary Service Pilots) hired by Pan American as stewardess because they were denied the right to be hired as pilots in the late 1940s.

Jack Eagan Jr passed away Sunday, July 12. Jack was 91 and my neighbor for 43 years. It is my understanding Jack was in the Clipper cockpit before and during WW2 for Pan American.

Paul Reinders was killed in a light plane accident in Alaska approx. a month ago.

Phil Hoffman passed away last weekend. He had a lung transplant recently - no further details. Submitted by Les McDevitt.

Captain Arthur P. Valla passed away Friday June 19th, after a protracted battle with cancer. Over the past month he was able to have quality time with his children and at the end, Anne, Steve and Art Jr.

Art was a great fellow to work with and he will be missed.

Don Roth passed away at age 79 on August 8th in Rancho Santa Fe, CA. He was hired by Pan Am in 1956, and lived in Torch Lake, Michigan.

Capt. Rolf von Lorenz attended the Univ. of Minnesota, flew in the Navy for six years, then came to Pan Am in Nov '65 where he flew the B-727, 707, 747 and A-300 Air Bus. During his career he was based in SFO, Berlin, and Miami. After Pan Am, Rolf flew 2 years with Korean Airlines. Rolf, age 73, and his wife Nadya for 36 yrs, a former PA Flt. Attendant (Nadya Nikolajew) retired in Sonoma, CA. Rolf knew he was passing away and died in her arms at 4:20 AM on Jan 22, 2009 of heart failure as a complication of Lyme disease (caused by tick bites that were undiagnosed for several years).

AUXILIARY

Regina Perman passed away May 2, 2009. Widow Capt. Ken Perman. Regina was chosen to be one of only twelve Pan Am stewardesses out of 3,000 applicants in Germany after WWII. She was also co-president of the Pan Am Wives Clipper Club.

For more information 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 Jerry Holmes at jerry747@copper.net

**Check out the wonderful photos of the Pan Am Reunion at our website:
www.clipperpioneers.com!**

Upcoming Pan Am Wives Clipper Club Events

August 6

Luncheon at Elaine's house 12 noon.

December 12

Christmas luncheon at Channing house.

Good Health Habits at 60 and Beyond

~ continued from page 5

risk than an exercise-related injury.

Talk with your doctor about your plans before you get started. Your muscles will very likely be sore when you first increase your physical activity, but don't consider that a reason to stop. Mild soreness will go away in a few days as you become more used to the physical activity.

What's the best way to get physically active now?

For most people, walking is one of the easiest activities to do. Experts recommend at least 30 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week, but you don't have to do all 30 minutes at once. Try walking for 15 minutes twice each day or for 10 minutes 3 times each day.

People who have started being physically active later in life say that exercising with a partner is the best motivation to stick with it. Some suggest starting or joining a walking group with friends or neighbors. Others suggest getting a dog that needs to be walked.

If walking isn't your idea of a good time, try gardening or dancing. Go fishing or swimming. The activity can be both enjoyable and good for you.

What about strength training?

When your muscles are strong, activities like getting out of a chair or holding a door open are much easier. If you decide to lift weights, start with a 1-pound or 5-pound weight. If you don't have weights, you can use a can of soup, a book or a full water bottle. Keep your weights in the same room as your television and do a few exercises while you watch.

Another way to build muscle is to use a resistance band (also called an exercise band). Resistance bands are flexible and come in different lengths. They are commonly used to strengthen upper arm and leg muscles.

(from familydoctor.org)

Having trouble viewing the membership list online? When you open the list, go to the top of your screen - you should see that it is set at a percentage. Click on that to make it larger.

For a really neat look at Pan Am in action, go to: www.panamva.com/ on the internet.

Thanks to those who are sending us great stories! We will be running them in future issues of the Clipper Pioneer newsletter. Do you have a story to share with us? Send it to us! We'd love to print it in the newsletter! Do you have information that would be beneficial to us? Send it along! Let's share the good ideas! You can mail your articles, jokes, and other interesting information to: Jerry Holmes, 192 Four-some Drive, Sequim, WA - or email to jerry747@copper.net.