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## Raids Against Germany in WWII

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I think most crew members would probably agree that the pyrotechnic show, in the skies over England, in the morning when the Eighth was assembling, was a rare sight to behold.

The order of progression for assembling the Eighth Air Force was to first assemble the Flight elements, the Squadrons, the Groups, the Combat wings, the Divisions and, finally, the Air Force.

As soon as the four Squadron elements were formed, the high, low and second elements would take up their positions on the lead element, to form a Squadron. When the three Squadrons had completed assembly, it was necessary to get into Group formation.

This was accomplished by having the three Squadrons arrive over a pre-selected fix at a precise time and heading. The high and low Squadrons were separated from the lead Squadron by 1000 feet and, after getting into group formation, they would maintain their positions by following the lead Squadron.

Then it was necessary to get into the Combat Wing formation. We were in the 13th Combat Wing, which consisted of three Bomb Groups: the 95th, the 100th and the 390th. Whichever Group was leading the Wing that day, would arrive over a pre-selected point, at a precise time and heading. Thirty seconds later, the second Group would pass that fix, followed by the third Group, thirty seconds later. We were then in Combat Wing formation. The navigators in the lead airplanes had a tremendous responsibility, to ensure that the rendezvous times were strictly adhered to.

There were three Divisions in the Eighth, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd. The 1st and 3rd Divisions consisted of B-17s only, and the 2nd Division was B-24s. The B-24s were faster than the B-17s, but the B-17s could fly higher, therefore, the two were not compatible in formation. As a result the 1st and 3rd Divisions would fly together and the 2nd Division would fly separately.

Now that the Groups were flying in Combat Wing formation, it was necessary to assemble the Divisions. This was usually accomplished at the "coast out"—a city on the coast, selected as the departure point "fix." The Group leader in each Combat Wing knew his assigned position in the Division, and the precise time that he should arrive at the coast out departure point, to assume that position in the Division formation.

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The lead Group in the Division, which had been selected to lead the Eighth on the mission, would be first over the departure fix. Thirty seconds after the last Group in the first Wing passed that point, the second Wing would fall in trail, and so on, until all Combat Wings were flying in trail and the Division would be formed.

One minute later, the lead Group in the other Division would fly over that point, and the Combat Wings in that Division would follow the same procedure to get into formation. When all of its Combat Wings were in trail, the Eighth Air Force B-17 strike force was formed and on its way to the target. At the same time the 2nd Division B-24s were assembling in a similar manner and also departing to their target.

Meanwhile, as the bombers were assembling for their mission, pilots from the Fighter Groups were being briefed on their day's mission.

Normally, 600 to 800 P-38's, P-47's, and P-51's would accompany the bombers to provide protection against enemy fighter attacks. Fighter cover was not needed by the bombers until they were penetrating enemy territory, therefore to help conserve fuel, fighter takeoffs were planned to give them enough time to quickly assemble after takeoff, and climb on course up the bomber stream to the groups they would be covering. The combined strength of the fighters and bombers brought the total number of aircraft participating in a mission to approximately two thousand.

A major problem that presented itself, on each mission, was that the bomber stream was getting too stretched out. It was not uncommon for the headlines in stateside newspapers—in trying to show the strength of our Air Force—to state that the first Group of bombers was bombing Berlin, while the last Group was still over the English Channel.

It made great headlines but was a very undesirable situation. It meant that the Groups were out of position, and not keeping the proper separation. Furthermore, it was almost impossible for them to catch up and get back into the desired formation. This made the entire bomber stream more vulnerable to fighter attacks.

Finally, our planners figured out what we were doing wrong. When the first Group departed the coast out fix, it started its climb to what would be the bombing altitude. Then, as each succeeding Group departed that fix, it, too, would start climbing. The problem with this procedure was that, as soon as the first Group started its climb, its true airspeed would start to increase, and it would encounter different wind velocities. Now it would start to pull away from the Group in back of it, and the "stretch-out" of the bomber stream would begin.

By the time the last Group had reached the coast out, to start its climb, the first Group would be leveled off, with a true airspeed approaching 250 miles per hour, and the bomber stream would be really stretching out.

The solution to this problem that had been frustrating the Bomber crews for so long was pretty simple. We would no longer start climbing at the coast out, but instead, at a designated time, all Groups would start

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You can now access the mailing and phone list of your fellow Clipper Pioneers. Go to the Clipper Pioneer website - [www.clipperpioneers.com](http://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 user name and password from your printed newsletter. You will be able to access the current list of names, address, phone #s, and email addresses there.

# Raids Against Germany in WWII

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climbing, irrespective of position. This meant that we all would have similar true airspeeds and would be influenced by the same winds aloft.

That took care of the problem. It was still possible for a Group to be out of position, because of poor timing, but the entire bomber stream wouldn't get all stretched out.

When you consider the way our Air Traffic Control system operates today, and all the facilities at their disposal to guide each individual airplane through the sky to ensure its safety, it's almost unbelievable that we were able to do what we did.

To think of launching hundreds of airplanes, in a small airspace, many times in total darkness, loaded with bombs, with complete radio silence, and no control from the ground, and do it successfully day after day, with young air crews, with minimum experience, is absolutely mind boggling.

The accomplishments of the Eighth Air Force have been and will be reviewed by historians from World War II on. There never will be another air armada to compare to it. I feel confident that they will never cease to be amazed by our ability to assemble hundreds of heavy Bombers, under the conditions we were confronting, into the devastating strike force we now fondly refer to as, "The Mighty Eighth."

## Heard Around...

'Your seat cushions can be used for flotation; and, in the event of an emergency water landing, please paddle to shore and take them with our compliments.'

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'As you exit the plane, make sure to gather all of your belongings. Anything left behind will be distributed evenly among the flight attendants. Please do not leave children or spouses.....except for that gentleman over there.'

\*\*\*\*\*

Heard on Southwest Airlines just after a very hard landing in Salt Lake City . The flight attendant came on the intercom and said, 'That was quite a bump, and I know what y'all are thinking. I'm here to tell you it wasn't the airline's fault, it wasn't the pilot's fault, it wasn't the flight attendant's fault, it was the asphalt.'

**The reunion cruise is taking place this month. Watch for the stories and photos at the website: [www.clipperpioneers.com](http://www.clipperpioneers.com)**

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 Foursome Drive, Sequim, WA - or email to [jerry747@copper.net](mailto:jerry747@copper.net).

**Be sure to check out "The Maiden of Maiden Flights" slideshow on our website ([www.clipperpioneers.com](http://www.clipperpioneers.com)) in the right-hand column - the old photos are amazing - from a bygone era!!**

## “Navigators of the First Global Air Force”

From *On Celestial Wings* by Col Ed Whitcomb  
November 1995

The University of Miami band blared its music through the majestic Biltmore Hotel as 44 khaki-clad cadets marched onto the stage of the big ballroom. It was a historic occasion because we were first graduating class of professional aerial navigators for the United States' military services. We were to become known as the Class of 40-A. On stage with the 44 of us were representatives of the University of Miami at Coral Gables, Florida, the United States Army Air Corps, and Pan American Airways – the organizations that had put together America's first navigation training program. It was among the first programs of World War II in which business, military, and university personnel combined efforts in the interest of national defense.

The date was 12 November 1940. World War II had been raging in Europe for more than a year, and Adolph Hitler had sent his troops into Poland, Norway, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. Fighting, death, and destruction were far away from US shores. America was enjoying peace with a president named Franklin Delano Roosevelt who had vowed that he would never send an American boy to die on foreign soil. Congress had passed laws enacting the draft, but the men on the platform in Coral Gables were not concerned about that. There were all volunteers who anticipated one thing: to fly!

We came in early August 1940 to what became the fountainhead of navigational knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Few people traveled by commercial airlines in those days. We came by bus, boat, train, and automobile from the crowded streets of New York City, the lonely rangelands of Montana, and the peaceful small towns of the Midwest. Many of my classmates were first and second generation Americans of Serbian, Jewish, Italian, Polish, and English extraction. It was an all-American group including, among others, the family names of Markovich, Berkowitz, Boselli, Vifquain, and Meenagh.

The class members were young men in their early twenties, bright-eyed and eager to succeed in navigation school so they could fly. We had only a vague idea of the complexities of celestial navigation. None of us had ever known an aerial navigator nor could have had any idea of the perils the future held for us. We could not have envisioned that we would be flying courses where no man had ever flown, dropping bombs on civilian cities around the world and seeing our classmates shot out of the sky.

My roommate, Theodore J. Boselli, a former champion bantamweight boxer from Clemson University, would later navigate the first presidential plane. Walter E. Seamon, son of the mayor of West Jefferson, Ohio, would also be assigned to the president's plane. George Markovich, a brilliant graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, would guide a plane called the *Bataan* for the great Gen Douglas MacArthur in his flights around the Southwest Pacific. Russell M. Vifquain, the blonde-headed son of an Iowa college professor, had led Iowa State University to be runner-up in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) gold competition. In the years ahead he would be with Gen Curtis LeMay dropping tons of incendiary bombs into the crowded heart of Tokyo, Japan. Jay Horowitz, a happy Jewish boy from Sweetwater, Tennessee, would suffer more agony as a prisoner at the hands of the Japanese than anyone could have imagined. These and many others were my classmates as we entered into the academic phase of celestial navigation.

But it was 1940, and we were in the city of Coral Gables. The US was at peace and our thoughts were not of war. Our home during the 12-week course of training was the stately San Sebastian Hotel at the corner of Le Jeune and University streets. In our first military formations we wore T-shirts, civilian clothes,

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## **“Navigators of the First Global Air Force”**

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and a variety of uniforms from previous military organizations. We were a second “Coxey’s Army” ready to be molded into military men and more importantly, celestial navigators.

Capt Norris B. Harbold, a 1928 product of the United States Military Academy at West Point, was in charge of the detachment. He had a history of efforts to promote celestial navigation training in the Air Corps. We conducted close-order drill formations on the streets near the hotel where there was scant vehicular traffic. Coral Gables on the outskirts of Miami was a sleepy and almost desolate city after the big land development boom and later depression of the 1930s. There were dozens of city blocks where streets, sidewalks, curbs, and fire hydrants supported vacant lots overgrown with weeds.

The cadets marched in ragged military formations across the street to the “Cardboard College” – a group of buildings intended to serve the University of Miami until a new campus was established. The university’s grandiose plans for new buildings had stopped dead with the advent of the big depression. But the temporary facilities were adequate for our 240 hours of ground training in navigation and meteorology.

The development of the navigation training program had come about in a very unusual way. Gen Delos Emmons, chief of General Headquarters of the US Army Air Corps, had been aboard a giant Pan American clipper on a fact-finding mission to Europe in 1939. All night the big silver clipper lumbered along on its flight from New York to the island of Horta in the Azores. While other passengers dozed, General Emmons observed the plane’s navigator industriously plotting his course by celestial navigation. The general stood on the flight deck in awe of the proficiency of the work. Then as the stars faded away in the light of a new day, the navigator pointed to a dark mound on the distant horizon dead ahead of the aircraft.

“That is the island of Horta,” announced Charles J. Lunn, the navigator.

“Amazing!” exclaimed the general.

“It would be more amazing if it were not there,” replied Lunn matter of factly.<sup>2</sup>

General Emmons had more than a passing interest in this feat of expertise in celestial navigation. Axis victories in Europe suggested alarming possibilities for US involvement in the European war. The Air Corps urgently needed a lot of well-trained and highly skilled navigators. General Emmons knew that there was no program in the Air Corps to do the job although the Air Corps had tried on several occasions to establish celestial navigation schools. At that time, most military flights were conducted within the continental limits of the United States. Therefore, there was little stimulus for flying officers to do more than make a hobby of celestial navigation. A few officers including Norris B. Harbold, Eugene L. Eubank, Albert F. Hegenberger, Glenn C. Jamison, Lawrence J. Carr and Curtis Le May had taken particular interest in celestial navigation; but by the spring of 1940, the Army Air Corps had only 80 experienced celestial navigators. It would need thousands to man the new bombers on order for the Air Corps.<sup>3</sup>

“How many men could you teach to do this?” Emmons asked Lunn.

“Just as many as could hear my voice,” was Lunn’s succinct reply.

The conversation planted an idea in the general’s mind. With whatever else he may have learned on his fact-finding mission to Europe, he came back to Washington, D.C., with an idea for training navigators.

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Upon his return, he contacted Juan Tripp, president of Pan American Airways and Dr. B.F. Ashe, president of the University of the Miami. Their meetings culminated in an agreement whereby Pan American would provide navigational training with Charles J. Lunn as the chief navigation instructor. The University of Miami would provide food, housing, and classrooms for instruction at the rate of \$12.50 per cadet per week. The cadets were in place, and the program was under way even before the agreement was signed.<sup>4</sup>

Charlie Lunn seemed the most unlikely person to be teaching a university class. His academic credentials were woefully deficient. He had no college degrees whatsoever. He had never attended a college or university. The fact was Charles J. Lunn, chief navigator instructor at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida, in 1940, had failed his sophomore year at Key West High School. He was a high school dropout.

Charlie and his sister had stood at the head of their classes in grammar school and in high school until Charlie's interests turned to girls and basketball. At 16 years of age, he was a good enough athlete to draw \$10 a game playing for the Key West Athletic Club team. However, as a result of his extracurricular activities, his academic standing declined to the point that he decided to leave school.

Nineteen years later, he found himself standing before a class of college-trained and educated students from all parts of the United States. Many of them had college degrees in engineering, education, and a variety of other fields. It was Charlie's job to train them in the complicated art of celestial navigation.

When Charlie left high school, his father made it clear to him that he was to get himself reinstated in high school or get a job to support himself. Since he had grown weary of dull classroom life, Charlie set out to find a job.

In 1921 there were few employment opportunities in Key West, Florida for a 16 year old school drop out. Sponging (gathering sponges from the sea) and fishing were about the only jobs available on the island and such jobs were not attractive to young Lunn. The 7<sup>th</sup> US Navy Base, where many naval vessels stopped for fuel and water, was one of the chief employers in Key West. Charlie was unable to find a job there because 18 was the minimum age for employment with the government.

Like other boys his age, he was fascinated by the ships which came into the Key West Harbor. He had talked to sailors about their voyages to far away ports and learned that it would be possible to get a job as an oiler on an oceangoing ship.

So at the age of 16, Charlie took his first job oiling the engine on a freighter ship of the P & O Steamship Company plying between Key West, Tampa and Havana. It did not take the lad very long to grow tired of his work in the steaming hot and smelly bowels of the ship. If there was any romance and adventure in that life, it completely escaped him. After a couple of trips he applied for a job working on the top deck where he would have more opportunity to learn about sailing.

As a deck hand, Charlie was industrious and inquisitive. He asked questions and he studied books until, at the age of 18, he became third mate on his ship.

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**Pan American Airways Crew Layover Hotels - <http://www.paacrewlayover.com/> - is a website that has photos from many hotels from the present and the past. Be sure to check it out!**

*...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

**Burleigh B. Wood, Sr.** passed away on April 10, 2010. Burleigh was born on October 27, 1934, in Seminole, Oklahoma. In July of 1964 he hired on with Pan American World Airways as a Pilot Engineer and attained Captain on the B-707 then Captain on the B-747. In 1986, Pan American sold its international routes to United Airlines and Burleigh was one of the Captains on the B-747. Later, he transferred to United where he finished out his career as an airline pilot.

## Pan Am 2010 Reunion List

	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Names</b>	<b>Resident of</b>
2	Alber	John/ Patricia	New Jersey
2	Archer	Stuart / June	Florida
2	Atkinson	William / Barbara	New York
2	Baumlin	Edward/ Patricia	
2	Benefield	Harvey / Janet	Florida
1	Booth	Robert	Florida
2	Cassidy	Jerry / Cindy	Florida
2	Clippard	Buck / Carol	Arizona
1	Crittenden	Sue	Australia
2	Dean	Bruce / Gail	New York
2	Holmes	Jerry/ Louise	Washington
2	Holmes	William /Tina	
1	Howson	Robert	California
2	Huber, Glays	Blomquist,Vicky	Florida/California
2	Jordan, William	Cooper, Sue	California
2	Knief	Herman / Jacqueline	North Carolina
2	Lambooy, Albertine	Von Heiserman,Marion	Connecticut
2	Ledoux	Don / Lucille	California
2	Leinbach	Samuel/Patricia	Virginia
2	Mayhew, Richard	Caporale, Elvira	Connecticut
2	McAlind	Gerard/ Patricia	New Jersey
2	Meffert	Michael / Sallie	Virginia
2	Nauta, Blanche	Jenks, Mildred	California
2	Reynolds, Robert	Kelley, Dorothy	New York
3	Robinette	Richard / Ingrid	Austria
2	Robinson,Leonard	Lawrence,E./Scott, V.	Washington
2	Smith	Bill / Shirley	Connecticut
2	Smith, Madeline	Spitzer, Jean	Connecticut
2	Spencer	Chuck / Joanne	Connecticut
2	Stevens	Bill / Vivienne	Connecticut
2	Vitale	Richard / Suzanne	New Hampshire
2	White	James/ Laila	Florida
2	Yoder	Richard/ Mary Anne	Florida

64 Total Passengers

## **FBI Tips - How to Avoid Fraud**

### **Reverse Mortgage Scams**

The FBI and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Inspector General (HUD-OIG) urge consumers, especially senior citizens, to be vigilant when seeking reverse mortgage products. Reverse mortgages, also known as Home Equity Conversion Mortgages (HECM), have increased more than 1,300 percent between 1999 and 2008, creating significant opportunities for fraud perpetrators.

Reverse mortgage scams are engineered by unscrupulous professionals in a multitude of real estate, financial services, and related entities to steal the equity from the property of unsuspecting senior citizens aged 62 or older or to use these seniors to unwittingly aid the fraudsters in stealing equity from a flipped property.

In many of the reported scams, victim seniors are offered free homes, investment opportunities, and foreclosure or refinance assistance; they are also used as straw buyers in property flipping scams.

Seniors are frequently targeted for this fraud through local churches, investment seminars, and television, radio, billboard, and mailer advertisements.

A legitimate HECM loan product is insured by the Federal Housing Authority (FHA). It enables eligible homeowners to access the equity in their homes by providing funds without incurring a monthly payment. Eligible borrowers must be 62 years or older who occupy their property as their primary residence and who own their property or have a small mortgage balance. See the [FBI/HUD Intelligence Bulletin](#) for specific details on HECMs as well as other foreclosure rescue and investment schemes.

Seniors should consider the following:

- § Do not respond to unsolicited advertisements.
- § Be suspicious of anyone claiming that you can own a home with no down payment.
- § Do not sign anything that you do not fully understand.
- § Do not accept payment from individuals for a home you did not purchase.
- § Seek out your own reverse mortgage counselor.

*If you are a victim of this type of fraud and want to file a complaint, please submit information through our [electronic tip line](#) or through [your local FBI office](#). You may also file a complaint with HUD-OIG at [www.hud.gov/complaints/fraud\\_waste.cfm](http://www.hud.gov/complaints/fraud_waste.cfm) or by calling HUD's Hotline at 1-800-347-3735. [www.fbi.gov/majcases/fraud/seniorsfam.htm](http://www.fbi.gov/majcases/fraud/seniorsfam.htm)*

**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.

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

**For a really neat look at Pan Am in action, go to: [www.panamva.com/](http://www.panamva.com/) on the internet.**