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First-hand account on the Doolittle Raid - Part IV

(This is a continuation of the story run in the February 2010 issue of The Clipper Pioneers newsletter).

When we were close enough, I pulled up to 1300 feet and opened the bomb doors. There were furious black bursts of anti-aircraft fire all around us, but I flew straight on through them, spotting our target, the torpedo works and the dry-docks.

I saw a big ship in the dry-dock just as we flew over it. Those flak bursts were really getting close and bouncing us around, when I heard Bourgeois shouting, "Bombs Away!" I couldn't see it, but Williams had a bird's eye view from the back and he shouted jubilantly, "We got an aircraft carrier! The whole dock is burning!" I started turning to the south and strained my neck to look back and at that moment saw a large crane blow up and start falling over!... Take that!

There was loud yelling and clapping each other on the back. We were all just ecstatic, and still alive! But there wasn't much time to celebrate. We had to get out of here and fast!

When we were some thirty miles out to sea, we took one last look back at our target, and could still see huge billows of black smoke. Up until now, we had been flying for Uncle Sam, but now we were flying for ourselves. We flew south over open ocean, parallel to the Japanese coast all afternoon. We saw a large submarine apparently at rest, and then in another fifteen miles, we spotted three large enemy cruisers headed for Japan. There were no more bombs, so we just let them be and kept on going.

By late afternoon, Campbell calculated that it was time to turn and make for China. Across the East China Sea, the weather out ahead of us looked bad and overcast. Up until now we had not had time to think much about our gasoline supply, but the math did not look good. We just didn't have enough fuel to make it!

Each man took turns cranking the little hand radio to see if we could pick up the promised radio beacon. There was no signal. This is not good. The weather turned bad and it was getting dark, so we climbed up.

I was now flying on instruments, through a dark misty rain. Just when it really looked hopeless of reaching land, we suddenly picked up a strong tailwind. It was an answer to a prayer. Maybe just maybe, we can make it! In total darkness at 2100 hours, we figured that we must be crossing the coastline, so I began a slow, slow climb to be sure of not hitting any high ground or anything. I conserved as much fuel as I could, getting real low on gas now. The guys were still cranking on the radio, but after five hours of hand cranking with aching hands and backs, there was utter silence. No radio beacon! Then the red light started blinking, indicating twenty minutes of fuel left.

We started getting ready to bail out. I turned the controls over to Knobby and crawled to the back of the plane, past the now collapsed rubber gas tank. I dumped everything out of my bag and repacked just what

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First-hand account on the Doolittle Raid

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I really needed, my .45 pistol, ammunition, flashlight, compass, medical kit, fishing tackle, chocolate bars, peanut butter and crackers. I told Williams to come forward with me so we could all be together for this. There was no other choice. I had to get us as far west as possible, and then we had to jump.

At 2230 we were up to sixty-five hundred feet. We were over land, but still above the Japanese Army in China. We couldn't see the stars, so Campbell couldn't get a good fix on our position. We were flying on fumes now, and I didn't want to run out of gas before we were ready to go. Each man filled his canteen, put on his Mae West life jacket and parachute, and filled his bag with rations, those "C" rations from the Presidio. I put her on auto-pilot and we all gathered in the navigator's compartment around the hatch in the floor. We checked each other's parachute harness. Everyone was scared, without a doubt. None of us had ever done this before! I said, "Williams first, Bourgeois second, Campbell third, Knobloch fourth, and I'll follow you guys! Go fast, two seconds apart! Then count three seconds off and pull your rip-cord!"

We kicked open the hatch and gathered around the hole looking down into the blackness. It did not look very inviting! Then I looked up at Williams and gave the order, "JUMP!!!" Within seconds they were all gone. I turned and reached back for the auto-pilot, but could not reach it, so I pulled the throttles back, then turned and jumped. Counting quickly, thousand one, thousand two, thousand three, I pulled my rip-cord and jerked back up with a terrific shock. At first I thought that I was hung on the plane, but after a few agonizing seconds that seemed like hours, realized that I was free and drifting down.

Being in the total dark, I was disoriented at first, but figured my feet must be pointed toward the ground. I looked down through the black mist to see what was coming up. I was in a thick mist or fog, and the silence was so eerie after nearly thirteen hours inside that noisy plane. I could only hear the whoosh, whoosh sound of the wind blowing through my shroud lines, and then I heard a loud crash and explosion. my plane!

Looking for my flashlight, I groped through my bag with my right hand, finally pulled it out and shined it down toward the ground, which I still could not see. Finally I picked up a glimmer of water and thought I was landing in a lake. We're too far inland for this to be ocean. I hope! I relaxed my legs a little, thinking I was about to splash into water and would have to swim out, and then bang. I jolted suddenly and crashed over onto my side. Lying there in just a few inches of water, I raised my head and put my hands down into thick mud. It was rice paddy!

There was a burning pain, as if someone had stuck a knife in my stomach. I must have torn a muscle or broke something. I laid there dazed for a few minutes, and after a while struggled up to my feet. I dug a hole and buried my parachute in the mud. Then started trying to walk, holding my stomach, but every direction I moved the water got deeper. Then, I saw some lights off in the distance. I fished around for my flashlight and signaled one time. Sensing something wrong, I got out my compass and to my horror saw that those lights were off to my west. That must be a Jap patrol! How dumb could I be!

Knobby had to be back to my east, so I sat still and quiet and did not move. It was a cold dark lonely night. At 0100 hours I saw a single light off to the east. I flashed my light in that direction, one time. It had to be Knobby! I waited a while, and then called out softly, "Knobby?" And a voice replied "Mac, is that you?" Thank goodness, what a relief!

Separated by a wide stream, we sat on opposite banks of the water communicating in low voices. After daybreak, Knobby found a small rowboat and came across to get me. We started walking east toward the rest of the crew and away from that Japanese patrol. Knobby had cut his hip when he went through the hatch, but it wasn't too awful bad. We walked together toward a small village and several Chinese came

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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 - and scroll down to the bottom of the home page. Click on "Members Only" - when the password box pops up, type in username & password in your print edition of this newsletter.. You will be able to access the current list of names, address, phone #s, and email addresses there.

First-hand account on the Doolittle Raid

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out to meet us; they seemed friendly enough. I said, "Luchu hoo megwa fugi! Luchu hoo megwa fugi!" meaning, "I am an American! I am an American!"

Later that morning we found the others. Williams had wrenched his knee when he landed in a tree, but he was limping along just fine. There were hugs all around. I have never been so happy to see four guys in all my life!

Well, the five of us eventually made it out of China with the help of the local Chinese people and the Catholic missions along the way. They were all very good to us, and later they were made to pay terribly for it, so we found out afterwards. For a couple of weeks we traveled across country. Strafed a couple of times by enemy planes, we kept on moving, by foot, by pony, by car, by train, and by airplane. But we finally made it to India.

I did not make it home for the baby's birth. I stayed on there flying a DC-3 "Gooney Bird" in the China-Burma-India Theatre for the next several months. I flew supplies over the Himalaya Mountains, or as we called it, over "The Hump" into China. When B-25s finally arrived in India, I flew combat missions over Burma, and then later in the war, flew a B-29 out of the Marianna Islands to bomb Japan again and again.

After the war, I remained in the Air Force until 1962, when I retired from the service as a Lt. Colonel, and then came back to Texas, my beautiful Texas. First moving to Abilene and then we settled in Lubbock, where Aggie taught school at MacKenzie Junior High.

I worked at the S & R Auto Supply, once again in an atmosphere of machinery, oil and grease. I lived a good life and raised two wonderful sons that I am very proud of. I feel blessed in many ways. We have a great country, better than most folks know. It is worth fighting for. Some people call me a hero, but I have never thought of myself that way, no. But I did serve in the company of heroes.

What we did, will never leave me. It will always be there in my fondest memories. I will always think of the fine and brave men that I was privileged to serve with. Remember us, for we were soldiers once and young. With the loss of all 16 aircraft, Doolittle believed that the raid had been a failure, and that he would be court-martialed upon returning to the states. Quite to the contrary, the raid proved to be a tremendous boost to American morale, which had plunged following the Pearl Harbor attack. It also caused serious doubts in the minds of Japanese war planners. They in turn recalled many seasoned fighter plane units back to defend the home islands, which resulted in Japan's weakened air capabilities at the upcoming Battle of Midway and other South Pacific campaigns.

Edgar "Mac" Mc Elroy, Lt. Col., U.S.A.F. (Ret.) passed away at his residence in Lubbock, Texas early on the morning of Friday, April 4, 2003. Remember.

Dues are still due from 210 people! This is the only notice you will receive. If the number after your name on the envelope is 2009, YOU OWE DUES.

Please send your check to me, or we'll have to remove your name from the Roster. Dues are \$20 per year - or \$80 for 5 years. (Please consider paying for five years - it will save both of us time and will save you money - you get a year free!)

In case you haven't noticed, the newsletter comes out every month now.

Take a look at the upcoming cruises - you'll be missing a good one if you don't go! ~Jerry

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

Dear Pan Amers,

Last summer, Cynthia sent me the story of her Pan Am interview. I ask her permission to forward it on to the Pan Am group. It is interesting and shows you how precious a position with Pan Am was. Thank you Cynthia, for sharing.

Coop

My Story with PAA (Yorkshire 1960)

by Cynthia B Huntington

I came off 'night duty' at 7.15 am, (12 hours in charge of 40 patients), at Bradford Royal Infirmary in Yorkshire, to meet my Pan American Airline appointment in Sheffield at 8 am! I was driven there by my 'then' boyfriend, Nigel, in his two seater MG. That is where I changed from my nurse's severe uniform, consisting of white bonnet with bow under chin, black stockings and laced shoes, starched navy dress, into natural colored stockings and black pumps, a beautiful jersey wool dress and jacket, (my sister's), a single pearl necklace, ear-rings, black leather shoulder bag and NO MAKE UP!

It was a difficult feat, changing in the cramped area of the front seat with Nigel driving like a mad man through the morning's rush hour. I arrived more than half an hour late, into a town that neither of us had visited before.

With no make up in my bag (where was it, had I left it in bathroom?) I had to rely on smacking my cheeks with my small hairbrush and used spit on my fingers to groom my brows. All this was done hurriedly as I rushed to room 18 in Sheffield's town hall. I knocked on the room's door, and when it opened I saw it was full of glamorous young women, who wore full make up, who were thoroughly groomed and be-jeweled. All eyes were on me as the Pan Am uniformed hostess let me in, smilingly and welcomed me with..."We know who you are...we are waiting for you, come right in." And I was ushered into the first interview room, after I'd complete a form. "I was shocked, why wasn't I seated with all those glamour girls in the waiting room?" I apologized for my 'unmade-up' face saying "we are not allowed to wear any kind of make up in the hospital and I didn't put it in my workbag last night, I've come directly from night duty. But I know how to use it." I was asked if I'd be willing to have my chignon cut short, as that was required by all stewardesses, short hair, as the airports are windy places, and tidiness was all important. And of course I was willing

There were 5 interviews, in five different rooms. Four men and one woman interviewed me. The woman asked me to lift my skirt above my knees and walk the length of the room to show that I had the required LEGS! (I just hoped my stocking seams were straight!) I enjoyed the different interviewers, and I felt that I was accepted to train, and would be told later that same day.

My language skills were tested during the last interview, and we discussed when the final results would be known, and when I would be informed. I had accepted another position which would start in 2 weeks, in Copenhagen, and needed to give notice. I was told that, under the circumstances, I would be informed later that day by telephone at my parents home and confirmed by letter immediately after. The fact that I had a cooking diploma from school in Copenhagen, and had au-paired in Lyon, France, and was a registered nurse with training in midwifery helped me get quick acceptance.

At approximately 11 am after the interviews, I returned, flushed and excited to Nigel's car in the town's parking lot. He was fast asleep. We drove to my parents' house where we all had late lunch together. By 5 pm I received a call to say I had passed the interviews and now had to set up an appointment with the medical examiner near Heathrow airport. I received a letter of confirmation a few days later giving me instructions of where to find the medical examining doctor.

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My Story with PAA (Yorkshire 1960)

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I knew I could not get the day off from the hospital for the medical exam and I didn't even try. I needed to leave on the earliest train. It took four hours from Bradford, Yorkshire to London by train and it cost more than a week's salary. I feigned sickness the day before, while working, I was setting up for the next day's absence. In those days you went to work however ill you were, and 'they' at the nurses' administration office would decide if you could work or go into the nurse's sickbay. I was on the train to London, knowing that my younger sister would call the hospital's Matron and pretend to be ME, saying, "I'm sorry I've got terrible intestinal upset, and I'm calling to say...ooo, ...have to run..." The Matron called back half an hour later, mother took the call, and said "Cynthia is unavailable and is in the bathroom now, and the family doctor will be here shortly. I'll let her know how concerned you are, and thank you for calling." I was embarrassed and felt a little guilty that my sister and mother had lied on my behalf, while I was on the tracks to London.

Those were the strict days, the days of unattractive nurses' uniforms, and absolute dedication.

So, I passed the medical exam and I flew first class to NY and started training in "Jamaica - Idlewild" two months later...Yippee!

In 1978, I went for a second interview, this time for the China Tours. I was living in NJ with my husband, two children, and a Chow Chow. The interview took place in the Metropolitan building in Manhattan. I applied to be a Team Leader on the China Tours. I was later told that 31 of us 'gals', all former PAA stewardesses, were chosen out of 680 applicants, all from surrounding states of NY. We had a week's training and stayed at the Roosevelt Hotel, at our own expense.

I went on five tours, each for three weeks, over a 3 year period. At that time my children were 16 and 7, and I advertised in the local newspapers for a live-in housekeeper to work only when I was away. My husband didn't like it, but I went anyway. From the four housekeepers who applied I chose the plainest who could cook well. She was an Italian-American and looked after my family well.

It was the best thing I did, not just for myself, but for my children. I later adopted a Korean baby girl, who is now 29.

Airline Announcements?

United Flight Attendant announced, "People, people we're not picking out furniture here, find a seat and get in it!"

On landing, the stewardess said, "Please be sure to take all of your belongings. If you're going to leave anything, please make sure it's something we'd like to have."

An airline pilot wrote that on this particular flight he had hammered his ship into the runway really hard. The airline had a policy which required the first officer to stand at the door while the passengers exited, smile, and give them a 'Thanks for flying our airline.' He said that, in light of his bad landing, he had a hard time looking the passengers in the eye, thinking that someone would have a smart comment. Finally everyone had gotten off except for a little old lady walking with a cane.

She said, 'Sir, do you mind if I ask you a question?'

'Why, no, Ma'am,' said the pilot. 'What is it?'

The little old lady said, 'Did we land, or were we shot down?'

Pan Am Reunion Cruise



ms. VEENDAM
Cruise to Bermuda r/t New York
May 9, – May 16, 2010

Dear Pan Amers:

We are pleased to announce our 2010 Pan Am reunion. Interline Travels, Inc. and Holland America would like to invite you aboard the beautiful luxury liner MS Veendam. Many of you have already sampled its awards and accolades on the Aug.30, 1998 sailing of the Clipper Pioneers cruise reunion to Canada and New England. What a great opportunity to join up with your old buddies and take a stroll down memory lane. Both Interline Travels and Holland America are honored to be serving the Pan Am family once again. With five star luxury dining to white glove service - you've got some pampering coming your way.

Bermuda is an enchanting island with British flair. The proper attire is Bermuda shorts, cricket is the national Sport and high tea goes without saying. From Historic St. George, a charming UNESCO World Heritage Site to Hamilton, with pastel-colored storefronts, there is something for everyone. Onboard you will enjoy endless activities, Vega style shows, gourmet dining, private complimentary cocktail parties with slide show presentations and much more. This invitation is open to all family & friends of Pan Am. Unfortunately, many will be left out for lack of knowledge; so, if you know any ex employees we urge you to inform them of this invitation so they attend this cruise and/or may be kept current of all Pan Am functions in the future.

Cabin Prices (from)

Inside \$499 .M	Outside \$729 . EE	Balcony \$1659 . B
(\$529.L - \$549.K - \$569.J - \$589. I)	(\$749.E - \$769.DA - \$789.D)	(\$1759.A) \$2559 S Suite

Rates are per person, plus the port charges/taxes of \$359.05 each. These cabins are the starting prices for our group and do not reflect the lowest categories. Once our allotment is gone we will have to resort to the higher categories for a few dollars more. Hurry and lock in you rates; book early before the general public takes the cabins we want for you. More information (cancellations, insurance, etc.) with your invoice. Deposit is \$250 per person; checks preferred but major credit cards are accepted. Advise us if you've sailed on HAL before.

Miami **(305) 598-0363** or **1-888-592-7245** Toll Free

INTERLINE TRAVELS,

9401 SW 79th Ave.,

MIAMI , FL 33156

Email:PanAmRetirees@yahoo.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 Four-some Drive, Sequim, WA - or email to jerry747@copper.net.

*...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

Melvin J. Fuller took his final flight January 28, 2010. He led an exemplary life -- working hard and playing hard, along side of his loving wife, Pearl, of 67 years.. A pilot for Pan Am for 36 years, he never missed a flight. He was an enthusiastic Rotarian, a happy hiker and a great tennis player. A man that all who had the privilege to know admired. He will be sorely missed by his many friends and all of his family. He'd requested no services, donations to Hospice would be nice.

Capt. R.W. Savory passed away in January 2010, in Santa Rosa, CA. He had reached the venerable age of 100, last October.

Edmund Buchser, Jr., retired Lt. Colonel, United States Marine Corps, and retired Pan Am captain, of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, passed away, January 10, 2010.

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

NOTES ABOUT UPCOMING CRUISE....

In just 3 months, the 2010 Pan Am Reunion will be departing New York on Holland America's ms. VEENDAM visiting two beautiful ports in Bermuda, Hamilton & St. George's with many of our Pan Am friends.

If you have not already signed up or booked your cabin, there is still time and there are cabins available. With all the wintery weather, ice, freezing rain and snow, it will be a pleasant change to get away and spend some time with your Pan Am friends in some pleasant weather.

Some have asked how best to handle their arrival in New York. The hotels around the airports both LGA and JFK are more reasonable in price than the downtown hotels, it just depends.

Some want to do things in Manhattan or visit Times Square, Canal Street or other sights. LGA is the closes airport to the city and there are several choices to travel to the docks. Kew Gardens Cab that many of us used to travel to the airport during our flying days, still operates. Their phone is 516-794-2443 and they told me it costs about \$36.50 from LGA to the docks and you can get 3-4 people in the cab depending on baggage. You might even ask for an airline discount, Pan Am, Delta or United.

There is other transportation service available and listed in the baggage area. I know as we get a little older, some are more concerned about their health and the possibility of having to cancel prior or during the cruise. So you do not lose your money, I have been purchasing insurance from Carmen to cover the costs of the cruise. It's not that expensive, so contact Carmen at Interline Travel Inc. at 305-598-0363 or 1-888-592-7245 to book your cruise and ask about insurance.

It gives me peace of mind to have the insurance to know I will not lose my money if I have to cancel. This is going to be a fun cruise and I hope we are able to get this information to all the Pan Am folks. So pass this on and book your cruise if not signed up. Any question contact either Carmen or myself. Hope to see you. ~Stu Archer

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

How to Catch Health Insurance Frauds

Medical Equipment Fraud: Equipment manufacturers offer "free" products to individuals. Insurers are then charged for products that were not needed and/or may not have been delivered.

"Rolling Lab" Schemes: Unnecessary and sometimes fake tests are given to individuals at health clubs, retirement homes, or shopping malls and billed to insurance companies or Medicare.

Services Not Performed: Customers or providers bill insurers for services never rendered by changing bills or submitting fake ones.

Medicare Fraud:

Medicare fraud can take the form of any of the health insurance frauds described above. Senior citizens are frequent targets of Medicare schemes, especially by medical equipment manufacturers who offer seniors free medical products in exchange for their Medicare numbers.

Because a physician has to sign a form certifying that equipment or testing is needed before Medicare pays for it, con-artists fake signatures or bribe corrupt doctors to sign the forms. Once a signature is in place, the manufacturers bill Medicare for merchandise or service that was not needed or was not ordered.

Some Tips to Avoiding Health Insurance Frauds

- Never sign blank insurance claim forms.
- Never give blanket authorization to a medical provider to bill for services rendered.
- Ask your medical providers what they will charge and what you will be expected to pay out-of-pocket.
- Carefully review your insurer's explanation of the benefits statement. Call your insurer and provider if you have questions.
- Do not do business with door-to-door or telephone salespeople who tell you that services of medical equipment are free.
- Give your insurance/Medicare identification only to those who have provided you with medical services.
- Keep accurate records of all health care appointments.
- Know if your physician ordered equipment for you.

(from the FBI website - www.fbi.gov/majcases/fraud/seniorsfam.htm)

A website of interest:

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!

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.