



TEAM TALK

The Evergreen Aero Modelers

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From The President's Workbench...Roger Weeks

The weather has turned hot, hot, hot. I don't know about you, but I sure am not used to this heat. But, it feels better than the cold we had this winter. And, we can go flying.

Saturday was not quite so hot, but a beautiful day. Several of us, including Bill Lawrence and Dave Bibbee, did some buddy box flying with members of the museum. This was in support of the Membership Group, and was a total success. We were there from about 8:30 until 1:30, and had a blast. People from all over the Northwest, and even one couple from Maine were with us and shared in the fun. For those of you who weren't with us, you missed out on a great time.

I am at the museum on Tuesday and Wednesday morning, and I see some of you club members out flying from time to time. We have an incredible site and it is so good to see it being used. One thing for sure on

T.E.A.M. MEETING!

Thursday, June 8

7:00 PM

At

**EVERGREEN
AVIATION
MUSEUM**

flying RC: keep your plane in fairly close: If your plane goes down in the gully to the north of the field, it is going to be something else again to find, and then reclaim. Blackberries are more than abundant down there.



Enough for now: I am going back to work on a model in my shop. Air conditioned also, how nice. **Happy Landings. Roger**

A Farewell To Laureano...

As I signed in for my usual Saturday volunteer day, Saturday, May 6, I was in for a shock. It was announced that Laureano Mier had resigned his position as Director of the Education Department of Evergreen Aviation Museum, Tuesday, May 2.

I wasn't surprised because there were signs this might happen. Laureano left for personal reasons...REAL personal reasons. There were problems to be dealt with at home and he needed to be there. GliderBill offered a clue in his email to many of us. It is sad that Laureano has left Evergreen Avia-

tion Museum...and TEAM, but he made the right decision...FAMILY COMES FIRST.

From that perspective alone, it is easy to say that he has earned the highest admiration and deepest respect from those of us who were lucky enough to work with him.

Laureano's accomplishments during his short tenure at EAM (approximately 14 months) are nothing short of spectacular. He got



What's this?

1. A Potrazebie?
2. A worn-out model engine?
3. A gyrocopter rotor hub?



What's this?

1. A Feeblefetzter?
2. A weird lawn mower?
3. Landing gear for a strange flying thingie?

The answer is on Page 3. Check it out, if you're interested.

Laureano cont'd...

EAM on the map with the Boy Scouts, Civil Air Patrol, Embry-Riddle, local schools and organizations other than those just stated. He initiated programs to generate interest in aviation with people young and old around this entire region. He made friends with everybody that resulted in their wanting to come back and do more with this institution. If there was any single person responsible for measuring up to the goals and mission statement of Evergreen Aviation Museum and the Michael King Aviation Education Institute, it would be Laureano without question.

Now don't get me wrong, there are many people working here that have contributed a great deal to Evergreen. It's just that Laureano did his job right out of the starting gate. He did it with a seemingly endless supply of energy, passion, zeal, commitment and loyalty. Dave Bibbee once told me that

"there are probably not more than a hundred people on the planet that can do what Laureano does!" I feel the same way. I hope all of you who know him share the same feeling.

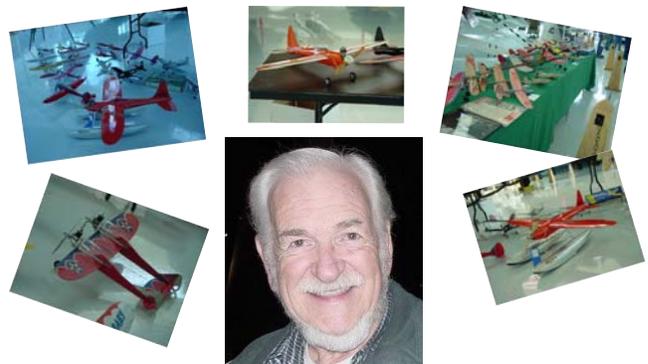
Laureano, you will be sorely missed, but I'm certain you have the support of the entire volunteer organization in your decision...AND we look forward to seeing you when you can visit us. God bless you and your family and a heartfelt THANK YOU for everything!.

The American Junior Classic...

"Frank Macy has finally had his day in the Sun!" Laureano said this as the AJ Classic Saturday was winding down. He was so happy for Frank and the success of the day.

An amazing display of American Junior models, the likes of which I've not seen. Hand launch gliders, rubber launched gliders, rubber-powered flyers, CO₂ motor powered, twin-engine Cox .049 powered...simply really cool stuff. Then there's the great display of Jim Walker memorabilia that'll knock your socks off. Kudos, Frank!

Any of you guys have anything to offer on this subject? This was my volunteer day and I had little time to spend near the exhibit.



Please consider yourself invited to do a write-up on this event.

Glider Bill sez...

About the membership flight demos Saturday (May 13): Roger Weeks, Cecil Mead, Dave Bibbee, all flew demos and "Buddy Box" flights until about 2:30. We had good attendance throughout the morning and then a large group of Scouts came over and watched. Cecil flew 5 demo flights with his P-51 and thrilled everyone.

We had a couple of "premature" landings with two of the Aircore 40 planes and there is some repair work to be done. Bill Wheeler flew several times with "Popeye" as his Pilot putting on a good show! I was supposed to announce the flights and stunts, etc. but became much involved in refueling the Aircore 40s for Roger and helping with the Buddy-box pilots. It was the best turnout for these demo events yet!

We still have one Aircore plane down ("Laureano's

Legacy", ...all in fun, Laureano...Ed: Dick Johnson) in the "Ditch" and when Mitch Mason gets back from his vacation, he will bring out his gas-powered hedge trimmer and hopefully we will be able to cut a swath through the berry bushes. Eric Reimer and a friend went into the ditch after our last meeting, but couldn't find anything but thorns!

Field maintenance: We need a couple of pressure washers to clean up the fencing. I have one and will get out there soon, but we could have two. If someone has one and is available to come out, have them get in touch with me at **503-435-0230**. We may need some bleach or mold remover also, so what I am saying is that we need a work party soon. I'm available any Wed., Thurs., or Fri. and even Sat. We need bark dust but I don't know if the museum furnishes that and/or does it. I'll try to find out from Terry Naig.

TEAM Meeting Minutes...May 11, 2006

TEAM Meeting Minutes for May 11, 2006

Call to order by Roger Weeks at 7:00 pm.

Reading of minutes of previous meeting by Roger Weeks.
Minutes were accepted.

Treasurer's report: \$897.82 by Dave Bibbee.

Old Business:

- HK-1 model: discussed
 - Speed controls
 - Fuselage
 - Tail Section – a plea for help on this... volunteers???
 - Wing
- Electric Meet: Darrel, Bill and Roger are CDs... more later.
- The A. J. Classic Event was a success. Many positive comments.
 - Gil Coughlin was a hit with all his models and light flyers
 - Jim Walker's family felt honored by the event and enjoyed it
 - Several comments about Jim Walker
 - He flew 4 U-Control planes at one time...one in reverse (the opposite direction of the other three)

New Business:

- Article in Hood River News (sorry, I didn't get anything on this)
- May 27, Saturday in Eugene
 - Swap Meet & Sale
 - At the Oregon Air & Space Museum
90377 Boeing Dr.
Eugene, OR
 - Regional Control line Event at the Eugene Airport
- Lower Columbia RC Society
 - Want to fly at TEAM's field
 - Roger, "Let 'EM Come! Glad to have 'em."
 - June 20 (Tuesday) Air Fair at Astoria Airport with warbird demo flights.
- Float-Fly June 15 – 18, Sutherlin, OR. Plat I Reservoir. David Olson CD, 196 Old Settlement Rd., Roseburg, OR 97470. Phone 541-580-0011 or dolson3265@msn.com.

- Saturday, May 13, Evergreen Membership Day. Demo flight showtimes are 10, 11 & 12.
- Every 3rd Saturday is TEAM Club Fly day...except for this coming Saturday (May 13) which will be the club fly day. Got THAT?

Show & Tell

- Glider Bill brought in the HK-1 wing floats to show progress. Good workmanship.
- Frank Macy had several items for Show & Tell along with a very informative presentation about Jim Walker and his contributions. A few of the items he showed and told about were:
 - AJ Classic made its fortune from the little gliders
 - Martin B-10 sold for 7 cents
 - Americobra (1942) sold for 10 cents (Frank looked for one of these models for 35 years)
 - Fighter 74 – Jim Walker flew of these at a time and kept them going for about 3 minutes ending up in a massive sweat and out of breath. The Fighter 74 sold for 10 cents in 1947
 - The AJ Interceptor introduced in 1939 and originally sold for 35 cents...later for 50 cents.
 - The AJ 404 Interceptor was introduced in 1947 and originally sold for 50 cents...later for 59 cents.
 - AJ Classic made a profit all through WWII.

Meeting was closed.

Minutes were taken by Dick Johnson (me) who is sometimes a little slow on the uptake. Jerry Eichten had a family commitment meeting night. I'll bet Jerry had more fun than I did.
smile



What's this?

1. It's not meat the farjohns should ripsnite the cusca-pads.
2. Axial flow turbo-encabulator.
3. A really, REALLY ugly flying thingie...gyrocopter.

A Tale of Woe and a Plea...

At our last meeting, those of you who attended might have heard me say the following, but I need to say it all members, so please stay with me.

You all may know that I am retired, but have gone back to work for Tektronix as a technical writer...the profession by which I have earned my living for many...many...many years (did I mention "many years?"). Because I'm over the age of employability (yep, we all know that there is an unwritten rule that anyone over 50 is no longer employable, but that employers get around this by calling us contractors, then they pay us a great deal more, but for a shorter period of time), some of my past clients continue to hire me partly because of my skills and partly because I make them smile and laugh sometimes... and partly because I'm so darn cute. *smile*

I've been on my last contract with Tek for nine months (the longest contiguous period of hours, weeks and months I've ever worked for Tek). Just before our last meeting, it was announced to me that my work would end on the 26 of May, the final day of Tek's fiscal year. This made sense and I was at peace with it. In fact, I found myself looking forward to it because I would have time to do newsletters on time, build some models to fly and go flying...at DeAlton Field, of course. Well, two days after I learned this, another announcement came down. I've been extended another nine months.

This is a good thing for my wife and myself. We will be able to build up our coiffures back to a respectable point where we can take a trip or two and use our fifth wheel trailer a lot more. I have to continue the work...no other choice. There is a rub, though...

The rub is that for the next nine months, I'm going to remain in the same time crunch I've been in for the past nine months.

The American Junior Classic...cont'd

Another great move by Frank was inviting Gil Coughlin to exhibit at the event. It is my understanding that Gil was the first person to win the Jim Walker award of a trip around the world demonstrating the American Junior line of products. Gil is a brilliant modeler. I'm certain his credentials go way beyond what I'm able to remember. Gil wowed EAM visitors with his exhibit of special flying lightweight models and engines. One engine was a three-cylinder radial diesel engine. It is my guess that each cylinder displaced something like .049 ci...times three would make it a .15 ci engine. Gil says it is one of three like it in the world. Also he had a tiny CO₂ motor on a tiny model.

Flying lightweights captured many people and kept Gil quite busy winding the rubber powered flyers and launching them. Amazing! Gil traveled to EAM from his home in Tacoma.

This means that, without help, TEAM TALK will be sporadic and frequently late. Thus, I must ask for help.

Help can come in any number of forms:

- Someone else doing the newsletter
- More content contributions from you, the membership
- Someone else doing the newsletter
- More content contributions from you, the membership
- Ad infinitum...

Now what I'm really hoping for is that someone will call, knock on my door (though that would be really weird), email me, snail me or somehow message me begging to take over the newsletter...excuse me while I have a belly laugh here. OK, chortling has passed.

Having said that, the reality may be more accurate that I will have to continue publishing the newsletter, but I will need more input from all of you in the form of articles and information to be included in the newsletter.

At present, I have only been lucky enough to get a few inputs from Jerry, Roger, Glider Bill (I just love that handle) and a couple others with articles. The one I've included today came from another source and was so interesting that I thought you'd all like to read it...because it is true.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not complaining. It's just that there is soooooo much on my plate and if I don't get help, I'll have to give it up...just to have a little time for myself.

So please consider offering to take over the newsletter, or to at least help me with gathering content so that I can produce this rag on a timely basis. Please!

Dick Johnson

Thanks a bunch, Gil!



Some Aviation Chuckles...

Aviation

Note: For those that don't know, "The Sled" is the SR-71 Blackbird spy plane from the 1960's and still the fastest airplane. In his book, "Sled Driver", SR-71 Blackbird pilot Brian Shul writes:

"I'll always remember a certain radio exchange that occurred one day as Walt (my back-seater) and I were screaming across Southern California 13 miles high. We were monitoring various radio transmissions from other aircraft as we entered Los Angeles airspace. Though they didn't really control us, they did monitor our movement across their scope. I heard a Cessna ask for a readout of its ground speed."90 knots" Center replied. Moments later, a Twin Beech required the same. "120 knots," Center answered. We weren't the only ones proud of our ground speed that day as almost instantly an

F-18 smugly transmitted, "Ah, Center, Dusty 52 requests ground speed readout." There was a slight pause, then the response, "525 knots on the ground, Dusty." Another silent pause. As I was thinking to myself how ripe a situation this was, I heard a familiar click of a radio transmission coming from my back-seater. It was at that precise moment I realized Walt and I had become a real crew, for we were both thinking in unison. "Center, Aspen 20, you got a ground speed readout for us?" There was a longer than normal pause.... "Aspen, I show 1,742 knots" (That's about 2004.658 mph for those who don't know) No further inquiries were heard on that frequency.

In another famous SR-71 story, Los Angeles Center reported receiving a request for clearance to FL 600 (60,000ft). The incredulous controller, with some disdain in his voice, asked, "How do you plan to get up to 60,000 feet? The pilot (obviously a sled driver), responded, "We don't plan to go up to it; we plan to go down to it." He was cleared.

The pilot was sitting in his seat and pulled out a .38 revolver. He placed it on top of the instrument panel, and then asked the navigator, "Do you know what I use this for?" The navigator replied timidly, "No, what's it for?" The pilot responded, "I use this on navigators who get me lost!" The navigator proceeded to pull out a .45 and place it on his chart table.

The pilot asked, "What's that for?" "To be honest sir," the navigator replied, "I'll know we're lost before you will"

When Hillary Clinton visited Iraq last month the Army Blackhawk helicopter used to transport the Senator was given the call sign "broomstick one". And they say the Army has no sense of humor!

Tower: "Delta 351, you have traffic at 10 o'clock, 6 miles!" Delta 351:"Give us another hint! We have digital watches!"

One day the pilot of a Cherokee 180 was told by the tower to hold short of the runway while a MD80 landed. The MD80 landed, rolled out, turned around, and taxied back past the Cherokee. Some quick-witted comedian in the MD80 crew got on the radio and said, "What a cute little plane. Did you make it all by yourself?" Our hero the Cherokee pilot, not about to let the insult go by, came back with: "I made it out of MD80 parts. Another landing like that and I'll have enough parts for another one."

1941 CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF GLOBE BY PAN AM'S "PACIFIC CLIPPER"

Subject:
1941 CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF GLOBE BY PAN
AM'S "PACIFIC CLIPPER"



This article is sure to arouse empathy from aviators who have piloted or navigated aircraft over long stretches of open ocean...or imagined the challenges of doing so.

The Round The World Saga of the "Pacific Clipper"
John A. Marshall

- Engines: Four (4) 1,600 hp (1,192 kW) Wright R-2600 Twin Cyclone (1,192 kW), 14 cylinder, air-cooled, radial engines.
- Wing Span: 152 ft. (46.33 m.)
- Length: 106 ft (32.31 m.)
- Max T.O. Weight: 84,000 lb. (38,102 kg.)
- Max level speed: 199 mph (320 km/h)
- Cruising speed: 184 mph (296 km/h)
- Range: 5,200 miles (8369 km)
- First flight: June 7, 1938
- Ceiling: 19,600 feet
- Accommodation: 10 crew, 74 passengers

December 7, 1941 The first blush of dawn tinged the eastern sky and sent its rosy fingers creeping onto the flight deck of the huge triple-tailed flying boat as she cruised high above the South Pacific. Six days out of her home port of San Francisco, the Boeing 314 was part of Pan American Airways' growing new service that linked the far corners of the Pacific Ocean. With veteran Captain Robert Ford in command, the Pacific Clipper, carrying 12 passengers and a crew of ten was just a few hours from landing in the harbor at Auckland, New Zealand.

The calm serenity of the flight deck early on this spring morning was suddenly shattered by the crackling of the radio. Radio Operator John Poindexter clamped the headset to his ears as he deciphered the coded message. His eyes widened as he quickly wrote the characters on the pad in front of him. Pearl Harbor had been attacked by Japanese war planes and had suffered heavy losses; the United States was at war. The stunned crew looked at each other as the implications of the message began to dawn. They realized that their route back to California was irrevocably cut, and there was no going back. Ford ordered radio silence, and then posted lookouts in the navigator's blister; two hours

later, the Pacific Clipper touched down smoothly on the waters of Auckland harbor. Their odyssey was just beginning.

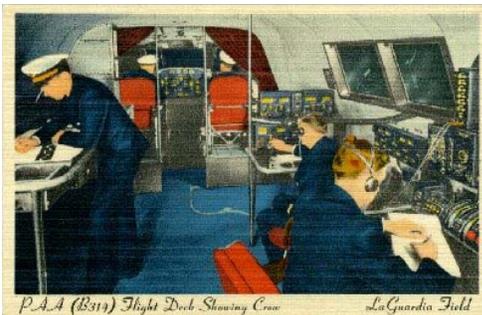
The crew haunted the overwhelmed communications room at the US Embassy in Auckland every day for a week waiting for a message from Pan Am headquarters in New York. Finally they received word—they were to try and make it back to the United States the long way: around the world westbound. For Ford and his crew, it was a daunting assignment. Facing a journey of over 30,000 miles, over oceans and lands that none of them had ever seen, they would have to do all their own planning and servicing, scrounging whatever supplies and equipment they needed; all this in the face of an erupting World War in which political alliances and loyalties in many parts of the world were uncertain at best. Their first assignment was to return to Noumea, back the way they had come over a week earlier. They were to pick up the Pan American station personnel there, and then deliver them to safety in Australia. Late on the evening of December 16th, the blacked out flying boat lifted off from Auckland harbor and headed northwest through the night toward Noumea. They maintained radio silence, landing in the harbor just as the sun was coming up. Ford went ashore and sought out the Pan Am Station Manager. "Round up all your people," he said. "I want them all at the dock in an hour. They can have one small bag apiece."

The crew set to work fueling the airplane, and exactly two hours later, fully fueled and carrying a barrel of engine oil, the Clipper took off and pointed her nose south for Australia.

It was late in the afternoon when the dark green smudge of the Queensland coast appeared in the windscreen, and Ford began a gentle descent for landing in the harbor at Gladstone. After offloading their bewildered passengers, the crew set about seeing to their primary responsibility, the Pacific Clipper. Captain Ford recounted, "I was wondering how we were going to pay for everything we were going to need on this trip. We had money enough for a trip to Auckland and back to San Francisco, but this was a different story. In Gladstone a young man who was a banker came up to me and out of the blue said, 'How are you fixed for money?' 'Well, we're broke' I said. He said, 'I'll probably be shot for this,' but he went down to his bank on a Saturday morning, opened the vault and handed me five hundred American dollars. Since Rod Brown, our navigator, was the only one with a lock box and a key we put him in charge of the money. That \$500 financed the rest of the trip all the way to New York."

Pacific Clipper cont'd

Ford planned to take off and head straight northwest, across the Queensland desert for Darwin, and then fly across the Timor Sea to the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), hoping that Java and Sumatra remained in friendly hands. The next day, as they droned into the tropical morning, the coastal jungle gradually gave way to great arid stretches of grassland and sand dunes. Spinnifex and gum trees covered the landscape to the horizon. During the entire flight to Darwin the crew didn't see a river big enough to set down the big flying boat should anything go wrong. Any emergency would force them to belly land the airplane onto the desert, and their flight would be over.



P.A.A. (B-11) Flight Deck Showing Crew *La Guardia Field*

They approached the harbor at Darwin late in the afternoon. Massive thunderheads stretched across the horizon, and continuous flashes of lightning lit up the cockpit. The northernmost city in Australia, Darwin was closest to the conflict that was spreading southward like a brushfire. A rough frontier town in the most remote and primitive of the Australian territories, it was like something out of a wild west movie. After they had landed, the Pacific Clipper crew was offered a place to shower and change; much to their amusement their "locker room" turned out to be an Australian Army brothel.

Ford and his crew set about fueling the airplane. It was a lengthy, tiresome job. The fuel was stored in five gallon jerry cans, each one had to be hauled up over the wing and emptied into the tanks; it was past midnight before they were finished. They managed a few hours of fitful sleep before takeoff, but Ford was anxious to be under way. News of the progress of the Japanese forces was sketchy at best. They were fairly certain that most of the Dutch East Indies was still in friendly hands, but they could not dally.

Early the next morning they took off for Surabaya, four-hundred miles to the West across the Timor Sea. The sun rose as they droned on across the flat turquoise sea, soon they raised the eastern islands of the great archipelago of east Java. Crude thatch-roofed huts dotted the beaches; the islands were carpeted with the lush green

jungle of the tropics.

Surabaya lay at the closed end of a large bay in the Bali Sea. The second largest city on the island of Java, it was guarded by a British garrison and a squadron of Bristol Beaufort fighters. As the Pacific Clipper approached the city, a single fighter rose to meet them; moments later it was joined by several more. The recognition signals that Ford had received in Australia proved to be inaccurate, and the big Boeing was a sight unfamiliar to the British pilots. The crew tensed as the fighters drew closer. Because of a quirk in the radio systems, they could hear the British pilots, but the pilots could not hear the Clipper. There was much discussion among them as to whether the flying boat should be shot down or allowed to land. At last the crew heard the British controller grant permission for them to land, and then add, "If they do anything suspicious, shoot them out of the sky!" With great relief, Ford began a very careful approach.

As they neared the harbor, Ford could see that it was filled with warships, so he set the Clipper down in the smooth water just outside the harbor entrance. "We turned around to head back," Ford said. "There was a launch that had come out to meet us, but instead of giving us a tow or a line, they stayed off about a mile and kept waving us on. Finally when we got further into the harbor they came closer. It turned out that we had landed right in the middle of a minefield, and they weren't about to come near us until they saw that we were through it!"

When they disembarked the crew of the Pacific Clipper received an unpleasant surprise; they were told that they would be unable to refuel with 100 octane aviation gas. What little there was severely rationed, and was reserved for the military. There was automobile gas in abundance however, and Ford was welcome to what ever he needed. He had no choice. The next leg of their journey would be many hours over the Indian Ocean, and there was no hope of refueling elsewhere. The flight engineers, Swede Roth and Jocko Parish, formulated a plan that they hoped would work. They transferred all their remaining aviation fuel to the two fuselage tanks, and filled the remaining tanks to the limit with the lower octane automobile gas.

"We took off from Surabaya on the 100 octane, climbed a couple of thousand feet, and pulled back the power to cool off the engines," said Ford. "Then we switched to the automobile gas and held our breaths. The engines almost jumped out of their mounts, but they ran. We figured it was either that or leave the airplane to the Japs."

They flew northwesterly across the Sunda Straits, paralleling the coast of Sumatra. Chasing the setting sun, they started across the vast expanse of ocean. They had no

Pacific Clipper cont'd

aviation charts or maps for this part of the world; the only navigational information available to the crew was the latitude and longitude of their destination at Trincomalee, on the island of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). Using this data, and drawing from memory, Rod Brown was creating his own Mercator maps of South Asia. Ford was not only worried about finding the harbor, he was very concerned about missing Ceylon altogether. He envisioned the Clipper droning on over India, lost and low on fuel, unable to find a body of water on which to land.

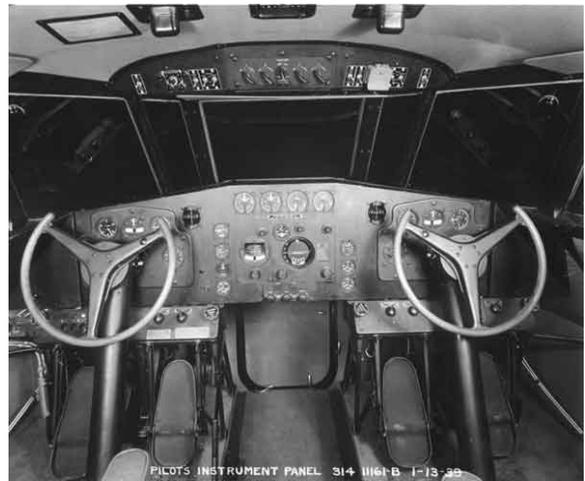
As they neared the island they could see a cloud bank ahead. Ford said, "There was some low scud, so we descended. We wanted the maximum available visibility to permit picking up landfall at the earliest moment -- we didn't want to miss the island. All of a sudden there it was, right in front of us, a Jap submarine! We could see the crew running for the deck gun. Let me tell you we were pretty busy getting back into the scud again!"

Ford jammed the throttles of the Clipper forward to climb power, the engines complaining bitterly. Their 150 mph speed soon had them well out of range of the sub's guns, and the crew heaved a sigh of relief. It would be difficult to determine who was the more surprised; the Japanese submarine commander or the crew of the Clipper, startled out of their reverie after the long flight.

It was another hour until they reached the island, and the Boeing finally touched water in the harbor at Trincomalee. The British Forces stationed there were anxious to hear what Ford and his crew had to report from the war zone to the East, and the crew was duly summoned to a military meeting. Presiding was a pompous Royal Navy Commodore who informed Ford in no uncertain terms that he doubted Ford would know a submarine if it ran over him. Ford felt the hackles rise on the back of his neck. He realized that he could not afford to make an enemy of the British military, the fate of the Pacific Clipper rested too heavily in their hands. He swallowed hard and said nothing.

It was Christmas Eve when they began the takeoff from Ceylon and turned the ship again to the Northwest. The heavily loaded Boeing struggled for altitude, laboring through the leaden humid air. Suddenly there was a frightening bang as the number three engine let go. It shuddered in its mount, and as they peered through the windscreen the crew could see gushes of black oil pouring back over the wing. Ford quickly shut the engine down, and wheeled the Clipper over into a 180 degree turn, heading back to Trincomalee. Less than an hour after takeoff the Pacific Clipper was back on the waters of Trincomalee harbor. The repairs to the engine took the rest of Christmas Eve and all of Christmas Day. One of

the engine's eighteen cylinders had failed, wrenching itself loose from its mount, and while the repair was not particularly complex, it was tedious and time-consuming. Finally early in the morning of December 26th, they took off from Ceylon for the second time. All day they droned across the lush carpet of the Indian sub continent, and then cut across the northeastern corner of the Arabian Sea to their landing in Karachi, touching down in mid-afternoon.



The following day, bathed and refreshed, they took off and flew westward across the Gulf of Oman toward Arabia. After just a bit over eight routine hours of flying, they landed in Bahrain, where there was a British garrison.

Another frustration presented itself the following morning as they were planning the next leg of their journey. They had planned to fly straight west across the Arabian peninsula and the Red Sea into Africa, a flight that would not have been much longer than the leg they had just completed from Karachi.

"When we were preparing to leave Bahrain, we were warned by the British authorities not to fly across Arabia," said Ford. "The Saudis had apparently already caught some British fliers who had been forced down there. The natives had dug a hole, buried them in it up to their necks, and just left them."

They took off into the gray morning and climbed through a solid overcast. They broke out of the clouds into the dazzling sunshine, and the carpet of clouds below stretched westward to the horizon. "We flew north for about twenty minutes," Ford said, "then we turned west and headed straight across Saudi Arabia. We flew for several hours before there was a break in the clouds below us, and damned if we weren't smack over the Mosque at Mecca I could see the people pouring out of it,

Pacific Clipper cont'd

it was just like kicking an anthill. They were probably firing at us, but at least they didn't have any anti-aircraft."

The Pacific Clipper crossed the Red Sea and the coast of Africa in the early afternoon with the Saharan sun streaming in the cockpit windows. The land below was a dingy yellowish brown, with nothing but rolling sand dunes and stark rocky outcroppings. The only sign of human habitation was an occasional hut; every so often they flew over small clusters of men tending livestock who stopped and shielded their eyes from the sun, staring up at the strange bird that made such a noise. The crew's prayers for the continued good health of the four Wright Cyclones became more and more fervent. Should they have to make an emergency landing here they would be in dire straits indeed.

Later in the afternoon they raised the Nile River, and Ford turned the ship to follow it to the confluence of the White and Blue Niles, just below Khartoum. They landed in the river, and after they were moored the crew went ashore to be greeted by the now familiar hospitality of the Royal Air Force. Ford's plan was to continue southwest to Leopoldville in the Belgian Congo and begin their South Atlantic crossing there. He had no desire to set out across the Sahara; a forced landing in that vast trackless wasteland would not only render the aircraft forever immobile, but the crew would surely perish in the harshness of the desert.

Early the next morning they took off from the Nile for Leopoldville. This was to be a particularly long overland flight, and they wanted to leave plenty of daylight for the arrival. They would land on the Congo River at Leopoldville, and from there would strike out across the South Atlantic for South America.

The endless brown of the Sudan gave way to rolling green hills, and then rocky crests that stretched across their path. They flew over native villages, and great gatherings of wildlife. Herds of wildebeest, hundreds of thousands strong, stampeded in panic as the Clipper roared overhead. The grassland soon turned to jungle, and they crossed several small rivers, which they tried to match to their maps. Suddenly ahead they saw a large river, much bigger and wider than others they had crossed, and off to their right was a good-sized town. The river had to be the mighty Congo, and the town was Bumba, the largest settlement on the river at that point. From their maps they saw that they could turn and follow the river downstream to Leopoldville. They had five hundred miles to fly.

Late in the afternoon they raised the Congolese capital of Leopoldville. Ford set the Boeing down gently onto the



river, and immediately realized the strength of the current. He powered the ship into the mooring, and the crew finally stepped ashore. It was like stepping into a sauna. The heat was the most oppressive they had yet encountered; it descended on them like a cloak, sapping what energy they had left.

A pleasant surprise awaited them however, when two familiar faces greeted them at the dock. A Pan American Airport Manager and a Radio Officer had been dispatched to meet them, and Ford was handed a cold beer. "That was one of the high points of the whole trip," he said.

After a night ashore they went to the airplane the next morning prepared for the long over-water leg that would take them back to the western hemisphere. The terrible heat and humidity had not abated a bit when the hatches were finally secured and they swung the Clipper into the river channel for the takeoff. The airplane was loaded to the gunnels with fuel, plus the drum of oil that had come aboard at Noumea. It was, to put it mildly, just a bit overloaded. They headed downstream into the wind, going with the six-knot current. Just beyond the limits of the town the river changed from a placid downstream current into a cataract of rushing rapids; pillars of rocks broke the water into a tumbling maelstrom. Ford held the engines at takeoff power, and the crew held their breath while the airplane gathered speed on the glassy river. The heat and humidity, and their tremendous gross weight were all factors working against them as they struggled to get the machine off the water before the cataracts. Ford rocked the hull with the elevators, trying to get the Boeing up on the step. Just before they would enter the rapids and face certain destruction, the hull lifted free. The Pacific Clipper was flying, but just barely. Their troubles were far from over, however. Just beyond the cataracts they entered the steep gorges; it was as though they were flying into a canyon. With her wings bowed, the Clipper staggered, clawing for every inch of altitude.

Pacific Clipper cont'd

The engines had been at take-off power for nearly five minutes and their temperatures were rapidly climbing above the red line; how much more abuse could they take? With agonizing slowness the big Boeing began to climb, foot by perilous foot. At last they were clear of the walls of the gorge, and Ford felt he could pull the throttles back to climb power. He turned the airplane toward the West and the Atlantic. The crew, silent, listened intently to the beat of the engines. They roared on without a miss, and as the airplane finally settled down at their cruising altitude Ford decided they could safely head for Brazil, over three thousand miles to the West.

The crew felt revived with new energy, and in spite of their fatigue, they were excitedly optimistic. Against all odds they had crossed southern Asia and breasted the African continent. Their airplane was performing better than they had any right to expect, and after their next long ocean leg they would be back in the hemisphere from which they had begun their journey nearly a month before. The interior of the airplane that had been home to them for so many days was beginning to wear rather thin. They were sick of the endless hours spent droning westward, tired of the apprehension of the unknown and frustrated by the lack of any real meaningful news about what was happening in a world besieged by war. They just wanted to get home.

After being airborne over twenty hours, they landed in the harbor at Natal just before noon. While they were waiting for the necessary immigration formalities to be completed, the Brazilian authorities insisted that the crew disembark while the interior of the airplane was sprayed for yellow fever. Two men in rubber suits and masks boarded and fumigated the airplane.

Late that same afternoon they took off for Trinidad, following the Brazilian coast as it curved around to the Northwest. It wasn't until after they had departed that the crew made an unpleasant discovery. Most of their personal papers and money were missing, along with a military chart that had been entrusted to Navigator Rod Brown by the US military attaché in Leopoldville, obviously stolen by the Brazilian "fumigators."

The sun set as they crossed the mouth of the Amazon, nearly a hundred miles wide where it joins the sea. Across the Guineas in the dark they droned, and finally at 3 AM the following morning they landed at Trinidad. There was a Pan Am station at Port of Spain, and they happily delivered themselves and their weary charge into friendly hands.

The final leg to New York was almost anti-climactic. Just before six on the bitter morning of January 6th, the

control officer in the Marine Terminal at La Guardia was startled to hear his radio crackle into life with the message, "Pacific Clipper, inbound from Auckland, New Zealand, Captain Ford reporting. Overhead in five minutes."

In a final bit of irony, after over thirty-thousand miles and two hundred hours of flying on their epic journey, the Pacific Clipper had to circle for nearly an hour, because no landings were permitted in the harbor until official sunrise. They finally touched down just before seven, the spray from their landing freezing as it hit the hull. No matter—the Pacific Clipper had made it home.

The significance of the flight is best illustrated by the records that were set by Ford and his crew. It was the first round-the-world flight by a commercial airliner, as well as the longest continuous flight by a commercial plane, and was the first circumnavigation following a route near the Equator (they crossed the Equator four times). They touched all but two of the world's seven continents, flew 31,500 miles in 209 hours and made 18 stops under the flags of 12 different nations. They also made the longest non-stop flight in Pan American's history, a 3,583 mile crossing of the South Atlantic from Africa to Brazil.

As the war progressed, it became clear that neither the Army nor the Navy was equipped or experienced enough to undertake the tremendous amount of long distance air transport work required. Pan American Airways was one of the few airlines in the country with the personnel and expertise to supplement the military air forces. Captain Bob Ford and most of his crew spent the war flying contract missions for the US Armed Forces. After the war Ford continued flying for Pan American, which was actively expanding its routes across the Pacific and around the world. He left the airline in 1952 to pursue other



aviation interests.

Some Aviation Chuckles cont'd...

There's a story about the military pilot calling for a priority landing because his single-engine jet fighter was running "a bit peaked." Air Traffic Control told the fighter jock that he was number two behind a B-52 that had one engine shut down. "Ah," the pilot remarked, "the dreaded seven-engine approach."

 A student became lost during a solo cross-country flight. While attempting to locate the aircraft on radar, ATC asked, "What was your last known position?"
 Student: "When I was number one for takeoff."

 Taxiing down the tarmac, the 757 abruptly stopped, turned around and returned to the gate. After an hour-long wait, it finally took off. A concerned passenger asked the flight attendant, "What was the problem?"
 "The pilot was bothered by a noise he heard in the engine," explained the flight attendant, "and it took us a while to find a new pilot."

 "Flight 2341, for noise abatement turn right 45 degrees." "But Center, we are at 35,000 feet. How much noise can we make up here?"

Coming Events...

Thursday, June 8—T.E.A.M. Meeting at 7:00pm at EAM.

June 16-18—23rd Annual Plat I Float Fly, Roseburg...for info contact dolson3265@msn.com.

Tuesday, June 20—Airfare at Astoria Airport...Warbird Demos.

Saturday, July 22—All Electric Fly-In at DeAlton Flying Field (Evergreen Aviation Museum)... contact Roger Weeks for info

August 12, 13—T.E.A.M. Country Classic 2006 control line contest at DeAlton Field...contact Jerry Eichten for info.

Every 3rd Saturday—Club Fly at DeAlton Field.