



Last of the Flying Clipper "Ships"

By M.D. KLAAS

Mrs. Clare Booth Luce, international celebrity, following a transpacific flight aboard a B314 flying boat, wrote in 1941: "Fifty years from now people will look back upon a Clipper flight of today as the most romantic voyage of history." (1)

Only 26 years have passed, but many remember when Boeing's flying ships ruled the vast oceanic air lanes of the world. Glamorous, romantic, the B314's are now history. But one may wonder what became of the twelve ships built by Boeing for Pan American Airways from 1938-41. To give an historical account of the boats and their purpose for design, we will turn the clock back to the late 1930's.

By 1936, Pacific airmail and passenger service already had been inaugurated with M130 flying boats, *China Clippers*. The transatlantic routes were being surveyed by Pan Am and Imperial Airways (now BOAC) of Great Britain. Both the U. S. and England knew the importance of placing first by conquering with commercial flight the body of water that lay between them. Whoever linked the U. S. with Europe would gain world wide prestige and, also reap commodities of international trade.

Pan Am, America's contender in the race, realized that their present aircraft were incapable of competing with the favored luxurious service of

England's S23 *Canopus* (*Empire Class*) flying boats. A new U. S. commercial plane had to be designed and built. Not only would the new liner have to out-distance the S23's, but it would have to include unprecedented accommodations for passengers and crew. The race was on!

Financed by our government, Pan Am turned to Boeing, Douglas, Consolidated and Sikorsky Aircraft to design the new plane. The airline planned to expand their service with a flying boat. Land planes were considered impractical for over-ocean travel.

Boeing's bid was accepted, a contract signed. The proposed ship would transport up to 10,000 pounds of payload and would have a 2,400 statute-mile range (later increased to 5,200 miles) against a 30 mph headwind. She would cruise at 184 mph at 19,600 feet altitude.

Unequaled comfort for passengers and crew highlighted all design aspects. Not even the jetliners of today could meet the rigorous luxury standards set forth by the Clipper. Fashionable staterooms gave an air of opulence to the interior, which included a deluxe suite and dining salon. The Clipper could carry 89 persons, but for the chic comfort, accommodations were reduced to 68.



A navigator charts course on flight deck aboard YANKEE CLIPPER. (Author photo)

To power the giant, four engines controlled the 42-1/2 ton flying boat. Fortunately, Wright Aeronautical had completed tests on their new 14-cylinder, double-row engine. The estimated 1,500 hp requirements were solved. Also selected were 14-foot-nine-inch Hamilton hydromatic full-feathering props.

Final blueprints revealed a wing span of 152 feet, a spread unequalled by any commercial plane then in existence. The fuselage measured 109 feet, with a hull depth of just under 19 feet. Maximum fuel tankage called for 5,448 gallons with an oil tankage of 300 gallons.

The hull of the B314 was constructed so that the center wing spar would be supported on the upper portion of the fuselage. A novelty for flying boats, this asset was found to reduce wind drag and gave the ship a modern appearance.

The ship was so massive that a mechanical engineer could adjust and repair any of the engines while in flight. Catwalks led into the wings from the flight deck--an innovation which later, on many recorded occasions, saved the Clippers from ditching and possible disaster.

In May 1938, the first B314 was launched at Seattle's Duwamish Waterway, Puget Sound, adjacent to Boeing Field. The sleek boat was exhaustively tested on Lake Washington and Elliott Bay, and for several months was a familiar sight to Seattleites.

Extreme difficulties were encountered during the tests. In early June 1938, the ship nearly crashed while racing across the water. A gust of wind heaved the boat to starboard and drove its wing into the lake. For correctional purposes, two stabilizers were added to the empennage. In addition, the hydrostabilizers (seawings) had to be lowered from a dead rise to a lower angle, which provided far easier taxiing control.

All tests were directed by R. J. Minshall, then Boeing's vice-president of engineering. Chief designer was Wellwood E. Beall, supervisor and engineer of characteristics for the new plane. Altogether, about 450 miles of taxiing and 5,000 miles of in-flight operations were conducted.

Following Boeing's tests, the Civil Aeronautics Authority (CAA) conducted extensive tests on their own. The ship was granted its approved-type certificate for commercial service on January 26,

1939. Meanwhile, the fourth B314 was nearing completion at the factory.

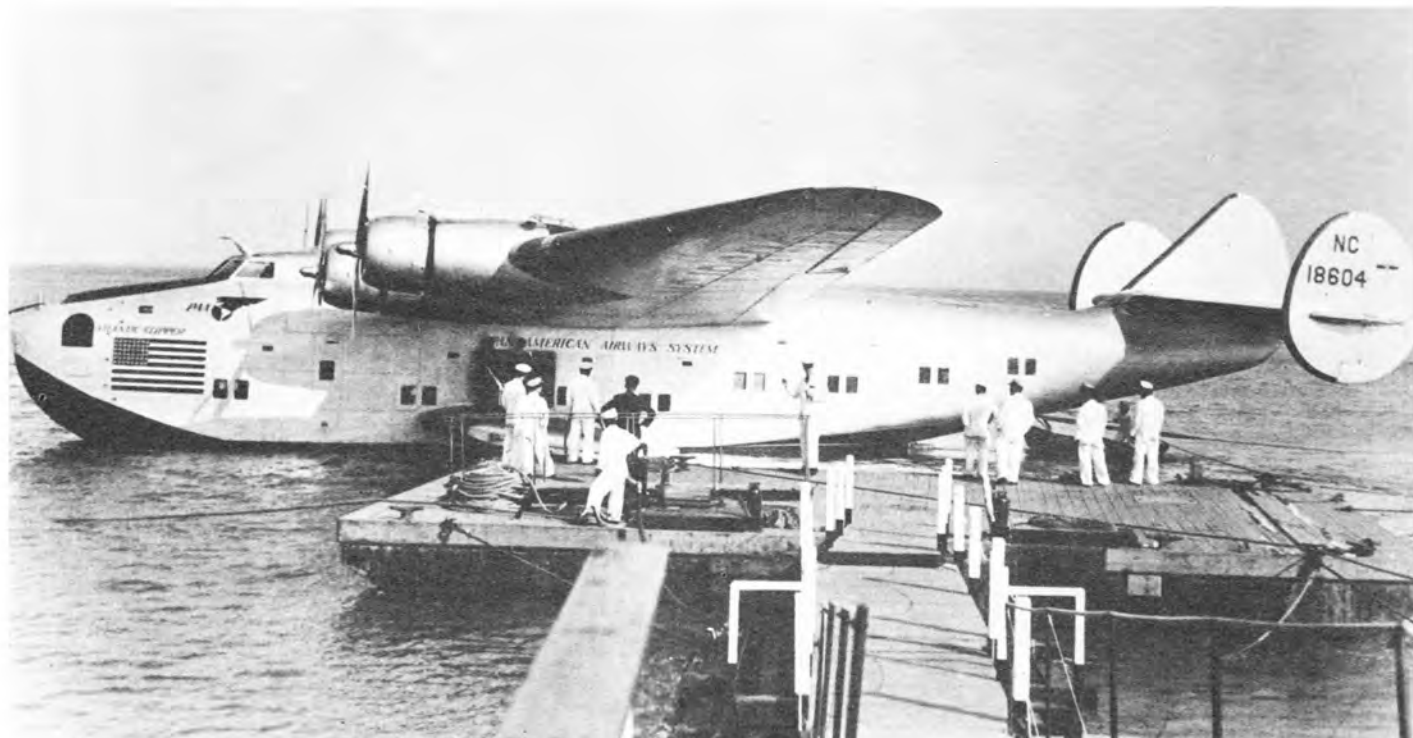
In March 1939, the first two B314's (NC 18601 and NC 18602) were delivered to Pan Am's Pacific Division at San Francisco, California. The third and fourth B314's built (NC 18603 and NC 18604) were flown to the Atlantic Division in New York.

On March 3, the -03 was christened by the First Lady, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. A bottle of water, collected from the seven seas, splashed against the bow of the *Yankee Clipper* at the Tidal Basin, Washington, D. C.

At the time the *Yankee* was christened, the unnamed -04 was shuttling passengers between New York and Bermuda. She was later christened the *Atlantic Clipper* on April 25 at Baltimore, Maryland. Additional ceremonies were held the same day at Treasure Island, San Francisco, for the -02. Her bow read, *California Clipper*.



A standard-passenger stateroom, as found aboard a Boeing Clipper, shown in day and night arrangement. Each standard compartment held 10 passengers by day, six by night. (Author photo)



Ground crew secures ATLANTIC to dock following trans-atlantic flight, Cabo Ruivo Airport, Lisbon, Portugal. Photo pre-World War II. (Author photo)



Passengers disembark AMERICAN at Cabo Ruivo Airport's Clipper Base, Lisbon, Portugal. Photo taken prior to the United States' entry into World War II. (Author photo)



Slicing through the gripping waters of Lake Washington is a twin-ruddered B314, during early stages of flight testing. (Photo—Dustin W. Carter)

The following day the -01 was christened *Honolulu Clipper* in the city whose name she bore.

On May 20, Captain A. E. LePorte, Pan Am commander, lifted the *Yankee Clipper* from the waters of Port Washington, Long Island. The ship arrived at Lisbon, Portugal, 26 hours and 54 minutes after departure. By May 22, the *Yankee* was in Marseilles, France, and the first airmail flight to Europe was history. She carried 200,000 (1,804 pounds) letters and some cargo. Return mail was picked up at Marseilles. The *Yankee* returned to Port Washington on May 27, completing the first scheduled round-trip airmail service over the Atlantic.

Prior to the inaugural airmail flight, a record inspection cruise to six European countries was conducted on March 26 by the *Yankee*. Captain Harold E. Gray, now Pan Am president, flew nine technical observers abroad for the final survey of foreign bases. Twenty-two days later, the Clipper landed at Baltimore, setting a world's record for the transportation of passengers across the Atlantic in a heavier-than-air craft.

In addition, the *Yankee's* return trip informally inaugurated Atlantic air express. (2) A small model of a Portuguese sailing ship had been cleared through U. S. Customs--a gift for President Franklin D. Roosevelt to add to his collection of ship models.

On June 17, the *Atlantic Clipper* made the first formal passenger crossing over the Atlantic. Aboard were 16 newspaper and radio reporters plus two Pan Am officials. Scheduled passenger service, however, did not begin until 11 days later.

On June 24, Captain Gray piloted the *Yankee* on the first commercial mail flight to Southampton, England. The direct route was between Shediac, New Brunswick, and Hythe, Southampton, crossing the

Atlantic between Botwood, Newfoundland, and Foynes, Eire, where Gray was able to refuel.

America was leading the race.

Passenger service was inaugurated over the Atlantic on June 28 by the *Dixie Clipper* (NC 18605), the fifth B314 to be built. Early survey flight commander, Captain R. O. D. Sullivan, lifted the *Dixie* into the air from Port Washington, New York, with 22 paying passengers aboard.

The last of the contracted B314's was christened the *American Clipper* (NC 18606) on July 6 at Terminal Island near San Pedro (Los Angeles), California. The ship made six demonstration flights over the city, carrying Hollywood stars and other prominent citizens. The *American* was later flown to New York for service over the Atlantic.

Because of the commercial demand for B314 service, an additional six ships were ordered through 1940-41. America had won the race and Pan Am centered on improving scheduled operation over both the Atlantic and Pacific.

On August 22, the *California* blazed a trail for the last survey flight to New Zealand in the South Pacific. Aboard were 25 passengers and crew--the former consisting of U. S. Army, Navy and Coast Guard officials. War seemed inevitable and the new air route to the "land-down-under" would be a vital military link to the Far East. A total of 15,000 miles and 101 hours and 52 minutes of flying time was logged when the *California* returned to San Francisco on September 6.

Famous overnight because of the historical flights, it became a social fad to travel by B314. Nobility and entertainment personalities hogged waiting lists for available space. Exaggerations soon plagued the B314's as gigantic "flying hotels"

equipped with individual staterooms and having promenade decks.

Once, a steward asked a woman passenger if he could take her coat. She refused, saying she would need it later for the promenade deck!

Countless Hollywood movies either had the word "clipper" written into their script or the B314's were filmed to provide an extra touch of intrigue to suspenseful plots. The Clippers had become news for the mass media and provided conventional entertainment for the general public.

On July 12, 1940, the *California* established regular fortnightly mail service from Los Angeles to Auckland, New Zealand. Passenger service was inaugurated a month later. All arrivals and departures were posted in newspapers alongside ship movements in major U. S. ports until World War II.

Before the completion of the first six B314's the *California* also inaugurated scheduled service from San Francisco to Singapore, Malaysia. Under command of Captain W. J. Barrows, the ship left May 2, 1941, and arrived in Singapore May 10, via the steppingstone islands in the Pacific. Standard fare was posted as \$825 or \$1,485 round-trip.

The B314's flying the Atlantic had only a brief summer of peace-time operation in 1939. Hitler's intolerable acts of engulfing Europe in a war upset all traffic calculations. Mail shipments multiplied ten times over expectations, to an average of 3,000 pounds per crossing. Weight scales rose until a load of 13,620 pounds (about half-a-million letters) was transported per trip.

The B314 route to Europe was shortened to Lisbon and Foynes, Eire, when France fell in 1940. England's dark days of 194-41 compelled the English government to purchase three B314's for their vital communication services. The sale price was set at three million.

England's intention was to use the planes for maintaining their vital route to West Africa after the Mediterranean was closed to non-military aircraft. If the Germans had occupied Lisbon, a direct flight could be made between England and Africa as determined by the B314's range.

However, the English were able to set up services with their own aircraft to West Africa, via Lisbon, and thus the B314's became available for other purposes.

Between April and June 1941, the three newly acquired B314's (NC 18607, -08 and -10) were flown to England and delivered to BOAC. They soon became famous in the news as the *Berwick* (G-AGCA), *Bangor* (G-AGCB) and *Bristol* (G-AGBZ).

Following two or three experimental flights down the coast of Africa, BOAC inaugurated a transatlantic service between Poole, England, and Baltimore, Maryland. During the summer months, one route was established with stops at Foynes, Eire, and Gander, Newfoundland, and operated four times a week in each direction. A second route between Lisbon and Baltimore was later established for the winter season via Africa, South America and the Caribbean. The latter service was conducted once a week in each direction.

As the war in Europe grew in magnitude, B314 flights over the Atlantic carried more persons of top priority. Tourist passage was limited--space given to war technicians, diplomatic couriers, military officials and foreign correspondents.

In August 1941, to further aid the British in their defense of Africa, the U. S. War Department purchased from Pan Am the *Capetown Clipper* (NC 18612), the last B314 model built. The flying boat became a war transport, carrying supplies across the South Atlantic.

Pan Am's B314s flying the north and mid-Atlantic routes were partly stripped of their luxurious accommodations and filled with mail and secret war cargo. While transatlantic passengers became more inconvenienced, the Pacific-based B314's maintained their sumptuous service--but not for long!

On December 7, 1941, the *Anzac* (NC18611), the 11th ship built, was one hour out of Honolulu on a flight to Singapore. A coded message was flashed to Captain H. Lanier Turner ordering him to change course. Turner landed at Hilo, about 200 miles southwest of Honolulu. Pearl Harbor was under attack!

Captain Turner and crew camouflaged their ship and returned, without passengers, to San Francisco on December 9. The Clipper's radio transmitter was silenced and she flew on an uncharted course.

Meanwhile, the *Pacific* had just completed a flight from San Francisco to Auckland. Captain Robert Ford was advised by the War Department to



Note the large U.S. flag on the nose of this 314 Clipper. Up to that time, Pan American Airways Clippers carried small flags. This increase in the size symbolizes the increase in world tensions, particularly in the Pacific area covered by these huge commercial aircraft. (Photo - Carter)



An international favorite, too. (Photo-Harry S. Gamm)

return to the United States, proceeding west around the world. The -09 pioneered a route that later became a literal life-line to our country's far eastern war activities. Captain Ford completed the long trek by traveling more than 34,500 miles, via Australia, India, Arabia, Central Africa, across the South Atlantic to South America, and north to New York.

When the *Pacific* landed in New York, on January 6, 1942, she had already been sold to the U.S. Navy. She was at the complete disposal of that military branch and flew mainly war materials until the advent of the DC4 *Skymaster* in November, 1942. In 1943, the *Pacific* was returned to the Pacific Division.

At the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the *Capetown* was flying a war mission from Miami, Florida, to Leopoldville in the Belgian Congo. Included with the war cargo were 4,369 pieces of mail. Besides being a war mission, the -12 inaugurated airmail service across the South Atlantic.

While the B314's scrambled into defensive action, the President ordered Henry Lewis Stimson, Secretary of War, to acquisition all available commercial aircraft for military service. By December 18, the *American*, *California*, *Anzac* and *Capetown Clippers* were turned over to the Army.

Designated C-98's, the four ships were to transport war materials between the U. S. and Malaysia, (3) via South America, Africa, and India. The *Yankee*, *Atlantic*, *Dirie*, *Honolulu* and *Pacific* were sold to the U. S. Navy. However, the former three Navy ships were allowed to continue passenger service between the U. S., Portugal and the British Isles. But the Navy stipulated that these planes would be diverted to war duty when deemed necessary.

In addition, the Navy ordered only one B314 to remain on the Pacific Division. The *Honolulu* was selected, since she was being overhauled at San Francisco when war was declared. The *California*, which was in Honolulu on December 18, was flown to the Atlantic Division of operation for service on the South American-North African route, via the Caribbean.

Before the acquisition of the B314's, one of the first priority shipments flown to India were P-40 aircraft parts for General Claire Chennault's *Flying Tigers*. The flight occurred a week after Pearl Harbor and the deliverance enabled 40 grounded P-40's to become airworthy. Two other B314's, filled to their brims with .50 caliber ammunition, left New York in December 1941. The rushed cargoes were destined for General Douglas MacArthur's forces in the deteriorating stand for the Philippines.

In the following months, both Navy and Army B314's rushed blood plasma and other medical supplies to the fighting fronts of Europe and the Far East. Return trips, via South America, carried vital U. S. war materials back to the States, such as crude rubber, beryllium and mica. Unchartered routes became routine, as the special flights increased.

In 1942, Captain Gray made a record flight from New York to Calcutta and return. The *Capetown* completed the 29,801-mile survey flight in 209 hours and set an aerial trail that later became the prime global supply line for the Air Transport Command (ATC).

Painted a dull wartime gray, the B314's flew the vast uncharted routes under a veil of secrecy. Refugees by the thousands crowded into port cities. Many tried to book passage on the ships flying to America. In Lisbon, the B314's meant freedom, and countless refugees prayed and hoped their names would be on the next confirmed passenger list.

The most concentrated one-piece shipment ever handled by a B314 was a 2,750-pound crankcase. It was flown to Bermuda to be installed in a warship that otherwise would have been out of commission.

The size of the B314's cargo hatchway made possible the shipment of a captured Nazi 88-mm anti-tank cannon. The barrel and breach were sent from Africa to the United States for analysis.

In March 1943, the *American* alone accomplished 20 transoceanic crossings and flew over 55,000 miles. Included were two round-trips from Brazil to the United States. More than 213,000 pounds were car-

ried across the Atlantic, which included military personnel. The *American* had a utilization factor of 12.58 hours a day during March.

Clipper crews--retaining their civilian status in the war--regularly reported for a trip with no idea of their destination. B314's flights entailed flights across deserts and mountains where a flying boat could not make an emergency landing. Frequently, B314's had to land and take off from debris covered harbors where masts of sunken ships jutted at askew angles towards the sky.

The majority of Pan Am's 700 special flights executed during the war were carried out by B314's. One significantly important trip was the shipment of tank parts and ammunition consigned to the North African campaign in 1942. It was delivered just before the Battle of El Alamein, the first major defeat of the *Desert Fox*, German Field Marshall Erwin Rommel.

Two special flights, No. 70 and 71, carried President Roosevelt and his staff to and from the Casablanca Conference in January 1943. The Clipper trips consisted of flying only the South Atlantic and recorded the first over-ocean air flight for an American President. While en route home, the President celebrated his 61st birthday in the *Dixie's* plush dining salon.

The first non-stop westward flight over the Atlantic between England and the United States was made by a B314 in 1942. Flight No. 22 carried Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall and Harry Hopkins, special assistant to the President, back to the United States after dire conferences were held in England.

In September and October 1943, 7,500 pounds of maps and charts were flown by B314's to General James H. Doolittle, commander of the Twelfth Air Force. The top priority cargo was delivered just before the intensified bombing of Europe and Africa by American aircraft.

Upon the B314's prompt arrivals, hinged decisions and events of world importance. Like clockwork, the ships sped vital cargo of men, mail and materials along 75,556 miles of aerial lifelines. By other means of transport over submarine-infested waters the cargo would have been many days or weeks longer in arriving.

During the years of contingency, there was every chance that some of the twelve boats would meet with disaster. Often the Clippers would perform heroic flights, such as the time when the *Anzac*, under the command of Captain William M. Masland, was ordered on a 36,728-mile trip around the world.

The C-98 *Anzac* was in New York and had just been overhauled at La Guardia's Marine Terminal Clipper Base. Captain Masland received orders to fly south to Natal on the coast of Brazil. He and his crew continued across the South Atlantic, North Africa, the Red Sea, Arabia, and landed at Bahrein in the Persian Gulf. At Bahrein, Masland awaited further orders.

The *Anzac* was to fly President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill and Premier Stalin to Australia for a meeting with Chiang Kai-shek following the Casablanca Conference. According to Captain Masland, the Japanese might have learned of the special flight, and therefore it was cancelled for security reasons. ④

However, Captain Masland, taking full responsibility, continued his preparation for the trip,

knowing the possibility of enemy confrontation. Carrying military "brass," the B314 flew unarmed and unescorted through Japanese-patrolled territory to Australia.

Another flight tinged with danger was the time Captain Marius Lodeesen, commanding the *Capetown*, approached enemy aircraft while surveying for possible base locations in the Indian Ocean. The Clipper was heading towards a nest of Zeros reported in the area. Orders from New York, under the most difficult conditions, were sent to Captain Lodeesen to change course. Without mishap, the *Capetown* landed at Diego Garcia (Chagos Archipelago Islands) in the Indian Ocean.

Although not one B314 was destroyed or damaged in combat, the flying ships were not without adversities. The *Yankee* was destroyed at Lisbon on February 22, 1943, after completing a transatlantic flight. Of the 39 passengers and crew aboard, 24 were killed. The CAB ruled the cause to be an inadvertent contact of the port wing with the water while making a low, left turn preparatory to landing.



B314 is shown at Treasure Island. (Photo - Carter)



Another view of the Flying Clipper at Treasure Island. (Photo - Gann)

When the *Yankee* sank in the Tagus River, she had logged 241 crossings of the Atlantic and had flown more than a million miles. Her record also showed the all-time mail load of 13,402 pounds carried on one flight to Europe in December 1940.

Boeing Clippers had no equal for speed, range and dependability, until the DC4 and Lockheed L49 were introduced on the aerial war routes. Though the B314's were a slower type aircraft, their size remained advantageous over land planes. The Clippers were the prize asset to the Naval Air Transport (NAT).

By November 1942, U. S. Army DC4's (C-54's) were taking much of the war loads away from the Boeings. The Miami-to-Natal route was chiefly controlled by Douglas DC3's (C-47's). By June, 1943, the four C-98's were operating only on the South Atlantic between Natal and the West Coast of Africa. They averaged 16,000 pounds per crossing.

Many U-boats were sighted by Clipper crews. Their findings were coded by radio to the Third Naval District Headquarters, New York. Between April, 1942 and December, 1943, B314 crews spotted from ten to twelve U-boats monthly. Many of the observed ships never again threatened Allied ship movements!

In late 1943 the Army's C-98's were turned over to the Navy. The production of DC4's had reached a new peak. Because of additional tonnage requirements in the Pacific, NAT returned three B314's to the Pacific Division.

The Atlantic Division's B314's were finally returned to civilian duty when the European war ended in May 1945. Pan Am continued to operate the four Atlantic-based ships while preparing for DC4 service. However, while Pan Am crews still flew the NAT owned B314's, the airline had no desire to repurchase the boats. Pan Am had sold the Clippers for \$900,000 each, under the 1941 acquisition contract and by 1945 the boats were considered obsolete. Numerous worldwide landing fields had been built as a result of the war and thus land planes, with their less bulky bodies, were foreseen as the future's answer to fast transoceanic travel.

According to Captain Masland, he piloted the last Pan Am B314 flight on the Atlantic, the *Capetown*, which left Lisbon on December 21, 1945. Three days later, via Africa and South America, the Clipper squatted down on Bowery Bay, adjacent to the *Marine Terminal*.

"From a public point of view," Captain Masland said, "we chose a poor time to arrive, 2:00 a.m. But all hands, especially the passengers, wanted to be home for Christmas, and we made it." (5)

By early 1946, the *Atlantic*, *Dixie*, *American* and *Capetown* were retired by NAT and flown to the Naval Air Station in San Diego, California. Anchored in the harbor, they were put up for sale by the War Assets Administration.

Before Pan Am's Pacific Division terminated B314 service in 1946, another accident befell the Boeing giants. In November 1945, the *Honolulu* was forced down at sea when two of her engines failed.

Undamaged by the mid-ocean landing, all 23 passengers and crew were rescued by the Navy's flattop, *USS Manila Bay*. But efforts to secure a tow line to save the plane failed. During the five-day ordeal, the Clipper rode the crest of a wave and was smashed against the side of a seaplane tender (*USS San Pablo*) dispatched to secure the drifting Clipper. The B314's starboard wing-tip

was shorn off and her bow was crushed.

Considered a floating derelict, the Navy ordered the plane sunk by gunfire. It took 1,300 rounds of 20 mm shells to sink the hardy craft. When she sank in a ball of fire and smoke, the Clipper had 18,000 hours of flying time accredited to her record--enough miles to girdle the globe 80 times.

Pan Am's last B314 flight terminated at San Francisco on April 8, 1946. Few noticed or cared as the *Pacific* alighted from Honolulu. A then new L49 *Constellation*, also from Honolulu, had landed four hours before the B314. All attention was centered on the new land plane. A few days later, the *Pacific*, *California* and *Anzac* were flown to San Diego to join their fellow castaways.

Shortly after the war, irregular departure airlines (non-skeds) came into existence. One such airline was Universal, with headquarters in New York. The line flew cargo and passengers at cut rates between New York, Miami and San Juan in the Caribbean.

When Universal acquired the boats from the War Assets, the planes had flown in excess of 8,300,000 miles on 3,650 ocean flights. They averaged 2,270 miles-per-flight and 18,000 hours in flying time each.

The NAT's war-weary *Pacific* had been severely damaged in a wind storm. Universal stripped the ship for her essential parts.

British Overseas Airways retired their three Boeings in January 1948. The ships had been taken off the transatlantic run in 1946 and placed on a thrice-weekly service between Baltimore and Bermuda. When they were withdrawn in 1948, the *Bangor*, *Bernwick* and *Bristol* had flown a total of 4,258,876 miles that included 596 Atlantic crossings. The ships carried 40,042 passengers and were the only British planes to fly under non-austerity conditions during the war. Despite 432 tons of war cargo, diplomatic and GPO mail carried, the British air travelers still enjoyed their tea and comfort during times of international hostility.

In January 1942, the *Bernwick* made news. She carried Churchill back to England, following his official visit to the United States and Canada. The Prime Minister later wrote of his experience and told how the flying boat was nearly shot down. As the unannounced B314 approached England, six English Hurricane fighters were ordered out to destroy the reported hostile bomber. But the liner landed unscathed at Plymouth. The Hurricanes, Churchill wrote, "... failed in their mission." (6)

Less than a year after purchasing the B314's, Universal went broke. Unable to maintain the ships, the six giants were returned to San Diego in the Spring of 1947. Once more they were put up for sale.

To recondition the boats, the onetime *Atlantic Clipper* was sacrificed for her needed parts. A second non-sked, American-International Airways of New York, bought the fleet of five B314's for \$500,000. A complete overhaul was given the B314's and they were once more reinstalled with luxurious fittings.

The first reconditioned B314 was the former *Capetown Clipper*. She was flown to Baltimore in July, hauled out of the water, and inspected for airworthiness by the CAB. Three months later the relicensed B314 landed on the Hudson River near Seventy-Ninth Street. On October 2, the ship, renamed the *Bermuda Sky-Queen*, took off for Poole,



Proudly displaying the Union Jack, the Boeing Clipper serviced BOAC until January, 1948. (Photo - Gann)

England. The effulgent *Queen* had been chartered to Air Liaison, Ltd., of London, to fly 62 English emigrants to New York for a British delegation at the United Nations. On the return trip, the *Queen* was forced down in the storm-tossed North Atlantic after bucking strong head winds and running short of fuel. All aboard the flying boat were rescued by the U. S. Coast Guard, after 24 tense hours.

Like the Honolulu incident, the *Queen's* bow was smashed when the rescue ship *Bibb* came too close. A wave rode the plane into the ship's side and the sturdy *Queen* had to be sunk. By order of her commander, Captain Charles Martin, the B314 was riddled with incendiary bullets. Ablaze, the liner slid beneath the sea.

From late 1947 to early 1948, the four remaining (former Pan Am Ships) B314's stood in dry-dock at San Diego. World Airways, one of America's leading supplemental air carriers, took control of the aging birds when the line was established in 1948. World operated the Boeings on the former Universal route for cargo and commercial charter.

The three British B314's were sold to the General Phoenix Corp., ⁽⁷⁾ a brokerage firm of Baltimore, on their expiration of BOAC's Certificate of Airworthiness. In turn, World Airways bought the British boats from GPC.

The last of the B314's spanned the eastern and Caribbean routes for the original World Airways until 1949. In the "red," World was compelled to sell out to its present management in 1950--a year after the costly B314 service was curtailed.

Because there were no bidders for the seven Clippers, the planes were beached. All but one was

ripped apart for scrap. In 1951, the last B314 was moored in Baltimore Harbor. She had just been purchased from a controversial figure, a "Master X," from a sheriff's sale.

"Master X" intended to fly the ship to Moscow to hold "peace talks" with Stalin. The B314 never left Baltimore. A sudden storm hit the harbor and the plane was sunk when a hole was knocked into her hull.

Andre Priester, Pan Am's former chief engineer and coordinator of operations, had dreamed of the day when flying boats would rule the skies in ocean-liner luxury. Enormous boats were on the drawing boards when the B314's were launched. Many, like the U. S. JRM *Marshall Mars*, the Howard Hughes "monster," and England's colossal SR 45 *Princess* flying boats, were later built. But these ships never saw commercial service, when land planes took over postwar operations.

When the B314's were scrapped, Priester's dream went with them. It was a sad end to the romance of "flying hotels," as well as for the salient contributors to the growth of commercial trans-oceanic transport. But the B314's will be remembered by many, such as Mrs. Luce, as the airliner that brought romantic air travel to its peak. Today, airlines compete for the dollar and can't afford specialized, luxurious service such as the flying boats offered.

As the 1940's came to an end, the major era for commercial flying ships--evanescence of a here today and gone tomorrow--had come to a close.

FOOTNOTES:

- (1) Luce, Clare Booth. "Destiny Crosses the Deadline," *Life*, 1941. (Exact date of publication is not at hand. An original published article kept in author's file.)
- (2) *California Clipper* inaugurated official transpacific air express August 31, 1941. *Dixie Clipper* inaugurated official transatlantic air express September 28, 1941
- (3) Direct service was discontinued after fall of Malaysia to Japanese forces in early 1942. However, periodic secret flights to that area prevailed as recorded in cases following the fall of Malaysia.
- (4) Masland, William M. "Personal letter to author," September 26, 1964.
- (5) *Ibid.*
- (6) Churchill, Winston. "Flying Home," *Life*. (Exact year and date of publication is not at hand. An original published article kept in author's file.)
- (7) No longer in business, according to CAB.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Because of the extensive references used to compile the historical account of the twelve B314 flying boat Clipper Ships, the author has refrained from listing them.

The majority of references used were taken from official B314 documents, some of which are originals and now in the author's personal collection. The statistical data used has been taken from these documents and have been checked for accuracy.

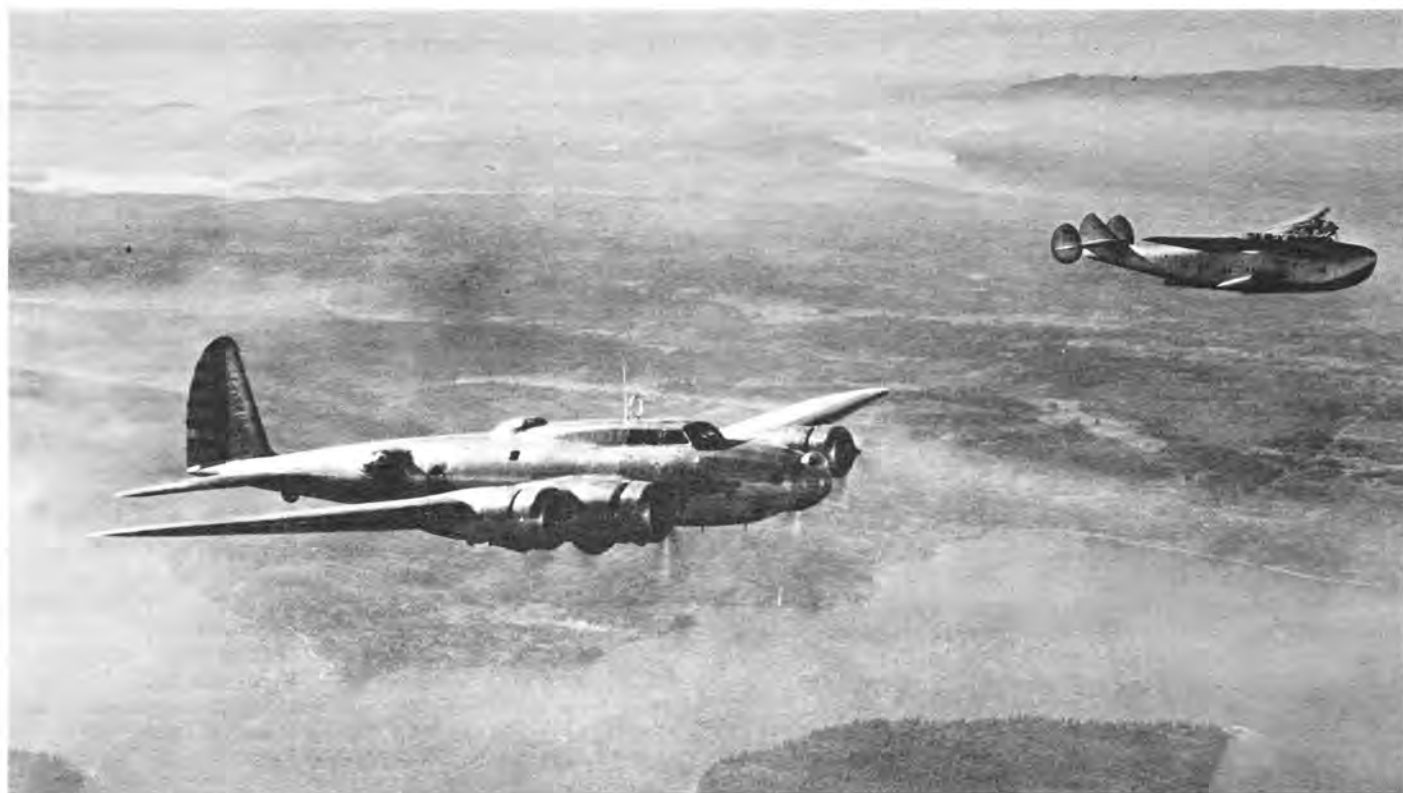
The author has gathered and collected B314 material since 1951. A rough historical draft (75 copies) was completed by author in 1964. One copy is registered with the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

In addition, the author was awarded a certificate for contributing "valuable historical material to Pan American World Airways 'Clipper Hall'" in New York. The certificate was presented by the airline's curator, Althea Lister. A copy of the original draft is also in the personal collection of Harold E. Gray, President of Pan American and a former commander of B314's. Additional documents are registered with various libraries throughout the United States.

Official organizations that have contributed major references in the past 16 years are as follows:

1. Boeing Aircraft Co.
2. British Overseas Airways (BOAC)
3. Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB)
4. Federal Aviation Association (FAA)
5. Pan American World Airways (Pan Am)
6. United States Air Force
7. United States Army
8. United States Coast Guard
9. United States Navy

Numerous aviation books and periodicals have also been used to compile this report. But the latter have been used only as a guide. No direct quotes, other than those indicated in copy, have been made. Additional references include clippings the author has collected; many were published at the time B314's were in operation.



The 314 Clipper in unusual pose with an early B-17. Each type aircraft significantly represents a major era in aviation, the flying boat and the forward-looking military bombardment aircraft. (Photo - Carter)