



Flight Radio Navigator

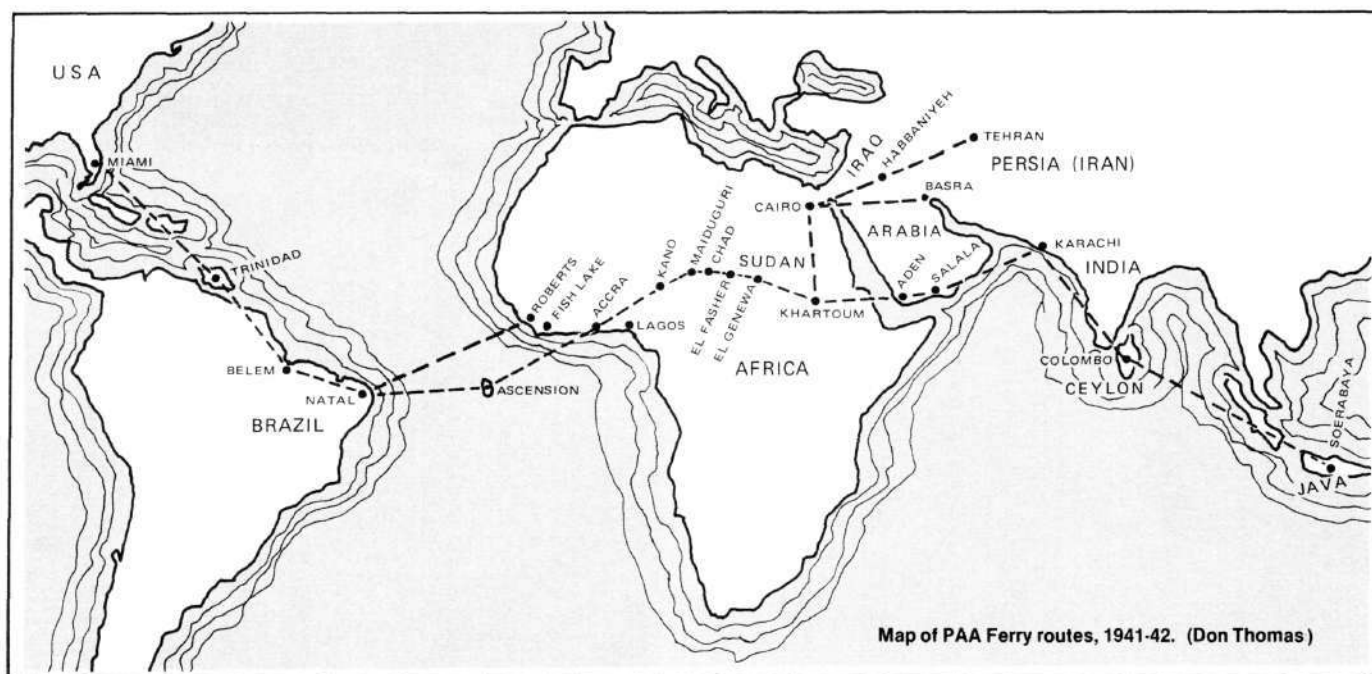
ADVENTURES WITH PAN AMERICAN AIR FERRIES—1942

by W. Donald Thomas, Lt., USNR (Ret.)

Flight crew members who participated in Pan American Air Ferries activities during 1941 and 1942 will never forget the experience. Here was high adventure, high pay, and high flying, and a chance to help the war effort with what they could do best—flying planes, navigating, or radio operating.

In 1941 things looked dark for the Allies. Although the U.S. had not yet entered the war, we were helping the Allies with Lend-Lease aircraft, and delivery was a problem. Atlantic Airways, Ltd., was formed by PAA to ferry airplanes for the British from Miami to the West Coast of Africa, via Brazil and the South Atlantic. Under the Lend-Lease agreement, the British had snapped up all the old aircraft they could get their hands on. Atlantic Airways started in June 1941 with a skeleton staff of 10 captains and two copilots, two radio operators, an operations manager and assistant, an engineer and a master mechanic, most from Pan American Airways.

PAA,¹ with its worldwide experience, had been picked out to deliver these aircraft to Africa. It was a cost-plus agreement. Our State Department was in charge of arrangements, and by coincidence Secretary of State Stettinius happened to be a brother-in-law of Juan Trippe, PAA's president. However, it had all been arranged beforehand. Trippe had visited with Prime Minister Churchill in England and had discussed with him the opening of a supply and ferry route across Africa to Cairo in support of British operations in North Africa. President Roosevelt then directed the establishment of this aerial highway. The U.S. Army Air Corps' Ferry Command supervised the route and the flow of materiel to the fighting fronts. Biggest task was the building or improving of the primitive airports across Africa, mostly in Nigeria and the Sudan, along the route to Cairo and Teheran. The Airport Development Program (ADP) under the State Department, had been improving the airports at



Belem and Natal in Brazil, along with PAA. Now they and the AAF had a bigger job to do in Africa.

A fleet of DC-2s and DC-3s was ferried to Accra to be operated by another subsidiary, PAA Africa. PAAA was delegated the task of transporting urgent cargo and spare parts all over Africa and the Middle East, and carrying ferry crews back across Africa to board the large PAA Boeing *Clippers*, and later the TWA B-24 *Liberators* for the trip back to Brazil and/or Miami. PAA Africa was set up by Franklin Gledhill, a vice-president of PAA, who personally surveyed thousands of miles across the continent. George Kraigher, chief pilot and operations manager at the PAA base at Brownsville, Texas, was nominated as operations manager in Africa and was credited with doing a superb job.

Atlantic Airways' original pilots were an experienced mixture of commercial, military reserve, bush pilots, stunt pilots, and others who had been flying in many countries as well as the U.S. Never in aviation history had there been a bunch of characters like that. Slim Menafee, Jim Allison, Lyon, and Andy Burke were all from Lockheed. Lou Gravis and Maurice Marrs were also from Lockheed, where they had been serving with KLM as instructor/pilots when KLM bought Lockheed aircraft. Ralph and Art Inman had been operating a flying circus, taking passengers up for joy rides. Jim Bledsoe,² Pete Branson, and Mullins were from Eastern Airlines. Bill Cleveland and Al DeGarmo were Naval Reserve.³ Jim Smart had been a test pilot for Ford Motor Co.⁴ Joe Mackey had been engaged in North Atlantic ferry operations.⁵ No information on Gene Fricks, but K.W. Neese was a bush pilot from Alaska. Hal Sweet was from CNAC in China, Max Stell from KNILM in the Dutch East Indies, and Joe Silverthorne had been down adventuring in Honduras. Flake Clausewitz was a crop duster. Radio operators were Manuel "Pete" Fernandez, on loan from Eastern Airlines, and John Wilmott.

The company couldn't find any navigators. PAA was the only transoceanic carrier in the U.S. They used navigators, but had none to spare, so navigators were borrowed from the RAF and RCAF, and one from the U.S. Army Air Corps.

The first flight of aircraft ferried by Atlantic Airways in June 1941 was composed mostly of Lockheed 10s and *Lodestars*. According to some crews they were described as "scrap aluminum," which had been purchased from several airlines and private corporations. The interiors were stripped and extra fuel tanks installed to extend their

range. As I remember, all these extra fuel tanks used by PAAF seemed to be covered with a heavy black tar paper. A great deal of the plumbing on these early crude tanks was nothing but common garden hose connections, with standard household plumbing valves being used. Even the temporary auxiliary oil tanks installed in the cabin, because the permanent oil tanks had an insufficient capacity for the long flight, had a Rube Goldberg arrangement with a garden hose equipped with shutoffs. It was pressurized with a tire pump, but it worked okay. For the Atlantic crossing many of the early flights were loaded with five-gallon tins of gasoline. In the middle of the Atlantic, when part of the fuel supply had burned down, a hatchet, which was provided, was used to chop two holes in the tin so it could be emptied into the cabin tank. The empty cans were disposed of through the emergency exit door, or by opening a window and letting them be sucked out into space, hoping they wouldn't hit the tail section. Some flight crews decided later that it was quite a stupid thing to do.

⁶Upon approaching Bathurst on the first flight, most of the planes were lost except they knew that if they sighted land it would be Africa. One of the pilots got concerned and broadcast "blind" for them to turn on the radio beacon. He repeated the request several times but could get no response from the RAF because they were observing radio silence; something he should have been doing himself. Finally the pilot got sore and said, "If you don't turn on that G-D beacon I'm going to set this SOB down in the ocean." This brought results and the beacon was turned on, luckily for some planes which found they were way off course. Radio operators were often found more useful than navigators.

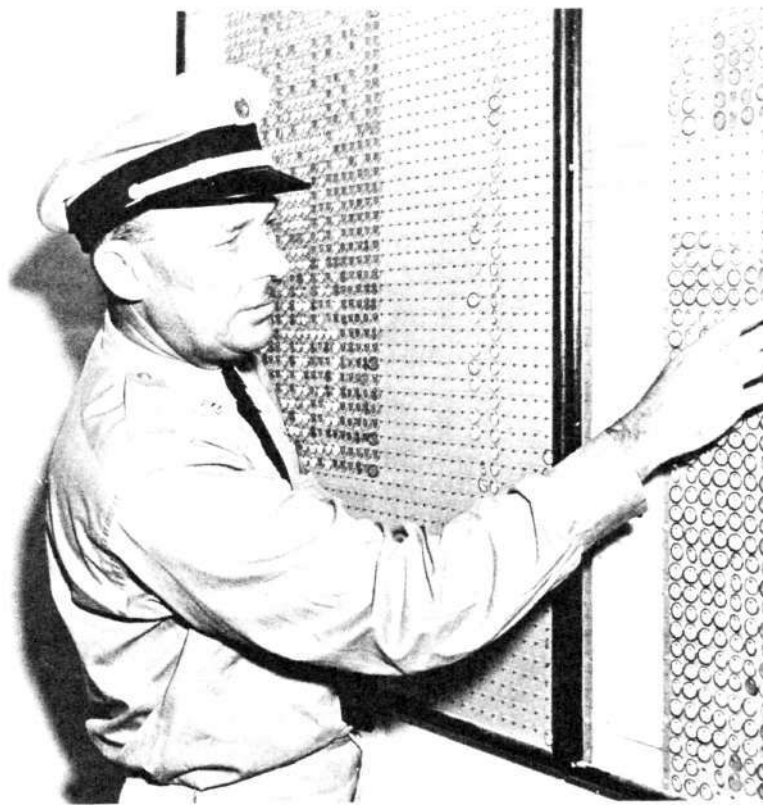
There was no emergency equipment on these first planes, only parachutes, and no search-and-rescue setup over the routes which they flew. Radio operator Fernandez remembers that on one trip across the South Atlantic, pilot Joe Mackey asked why he was communicating with the New York traffic control center instead of Natal or Bathurst. He was told that those stations closed down as soon as they took off, and that if they went down at least New York and the Coast Guard would know when and where. No life raft and no life vests were aboard.

Colonel Jules Prevost, USAF (Ret.), describes the second flight, in July 1941, as a mix of seven *Lodestars* and DC-2s. On that flight he flew as copilot with Captain Marrs, with Fernandez as radio operator and a New Zealand Air Force officer named Brass as navigator. The plane was the second DC-2 manufactured by Douglas and bore little resemblance to the later DC-2s and DC-3s. Prevost describes it as a hydraulic nightmare, requiring much hand pump operation for

Wilbur S. Alexander, chief navigation instructor (at extreme left) conducting class in the use of octants at the Pan American Ferries Flight Training School. (Pan American Airways Photo)



Frank Hankins, assistant operations manager, Pan American Air Ferries, is here shown after inspecting the captains; copilots; and navigators' charts where all pertinent information about the various individuals are recorded.
(Pan American Airways Photo)



Stanley C. Huffman, supervisor, flight training, checking the qualifications of various instructors in his office at Homestead, Fla., Oct. 19, 1942.
(Pan American Airways Photo)

flaps, landing gear, etc. The trip nearly became a nightmare when pilot Marrs had a gallbladder attack or something similar, and had to be laid out on the floor. They all had a funny feeling, not knowing how they were going to get down. On arrival at Belem, they picked up Marrs, put him in the pilot's seat so he could land the plane, and an ambulance was waiting, ordered by radio.

By the end of June 1941, 10 airplanes had been ferried to Lagos, Nigeria, and seven more a month later in July to Accra on the Gold Coast,⁷ mostly with the same crews as on the June flights. This removed the aircraft on hand when Atlantic Airways was formed. In August 1941, Pan American Air Ferries, which had been incorporated in July, absorbed the operation, and reorganization plans were put into effect in anticipation of the large number of airplanes which had to be ferried to the war fronts.

School facilities were leased by PAAF and expansion of the training programs was undertaken. Personnel for the school were hired, which relieved the operations department from radio and navigation training for flight personnel. The operations department was expanded into several separate sections to handle employment of flight personnel, record keeping, safety regulations and equipment, route information and briefing, cruising data, and crew qualifications and personnel policies. This left the executive department to deal with the problems of a growing organization. Pilot training was a most important phase; many copilots who needed training in twin-engine equipment were hired. Training equipment was scarce. Cessnas were used for basic twin-engine flight instruction, and some were later released for instrument flight training.

In April 1942, the operations department moved from Municipal Field in Miami to the 36th St. Airport,⁸ and the first big ferry movement was started, with 70 B-25-C twin-engine Lend-Lease bombers to be ferried to the Middle East for the Russians. A route manual was prepared. This PAAF route manual was later much in demand by both the Army and Navy. Approximate mileage flown in ferry operations was 3,750,000, with 7,500 miles an average ferry trip. It was almost 15,000 miles one-way to Surabaya, Java, destination of the

PBY-5A amphibians which the Dutch Navy had bought. PAAF made a promise to move 120 airplanes in October 1942, including about 45 A-20s, the plane the Russians wanted especially. Actually, 121 airplanes were ferried that month. In all, well over 500 aircraft were ferried by PAAF before the Army Air Force took over ferrying of all aircraft on November 1, 1942.

PAAF benefited greatly from the experience and facilities of Pan American Airways in the technical, purchasing, and other administrative services. John A. Steele was operations manager, Frank H. Hankins, Jr., was assistant operations manager in charge of the offices at the airport. Manuel "Pete" Fernandez, Sr., was in charge of the flight radio operators.⁹ Captain Carl M. Dewey was director of flight training, with Capt. Stanley C. Huffman supervisor of flight training. Bob Crawford was in charge of headaches and morale problems. Coordination of the various divisions of the training section was under his guidance.¹⁰

The navigation section of PAA at the University of Miami had trained hundreds of U.S. and RAF pilots in navigation since it had opened late in 1940. Director Charles Lunn now organized the training of navigators for PAAF. One would be needed on each aircraft. High school graduates could hope to be trained as air navigators, or "avigators" as they were sometimes called, in about 15 weeks. At least 50 hours of plotting courses during flight were required for graduation. Jules Prevost, a young but top-notch engine mechanic, was largely responsible for keeping the aircraft in flying condition in both Miami and Brazil. He was assigned the task of maintaining the flow of aircraft through the stations south of Miami to Africa.¹¹

So much for history. What follows are some day-to-day experiences while ferrying these twin-engine bombers across the South Atlantic and across Africa.

Three of us radio operators at Tropical Radio Telegraph Company's station in Miami resigned in the same week to fly for PAAF.¹² Perhaps we were caught up in the patriotism of the times or were worried about being drafted, but mainly I think we were looking forward to \$800 per month and expenses, quite an increase

from the \$120 per month or so from our shore station jobs. Besides, the Coast Guard was slated to take over our radio station, and we were to be inducted into the Coast Guard Reserve. Flying sounded more exciting. The ferry pilots were paid \$1,000 per month; copilots, navigators and radio navigators \$800 per month. We three needed minimal training for the job as we were already expert radio telegraphers. Familiarization with the equipment was all that was needed. After passing physical exams we awaited our first assignment.¹³

A typical trip went as follows—taken from the author's radio log and PAA Africa and PAA Clipper ticket stubs for the return trip in May 1942. The plane was a B-25-C bomber, No. 112546, to be ferried from Miami to the Russians at Basrah, Iraq. Our captain was Hal Sweet, who had been flying for China National Aviation Corp. in China.¹⁴ Copilot was Capt. Beyeler.¹⁵ Navigator was Sheffield, and the author was radio navigator.

Departed	Time	Date	Arrived	Time	Date	Fit. Time
Miami, Florida	0500GCT	1 May	Trinidad	1300GCT	1 May	8h 00m
Trinidad	0012GCT	2 May	Belem	1700GCT	2 May	6h 48m
Belem, Brazil	1032GCT	9 May	Natal	1517GCT	9 May	4h 45m
Natal, Brazil	2200GCT	9 May	Roberts	0914GCT	10 May	11h 14m
Roberts, Liberia	1225GCT	10 May	Accra	1610GCT	10 May	3h 45m
Accra, Gold Coast	0930GCT	13 May	Kano	1308GCT	13 May	3h 48m
Kano, Nigeria	1538GCT	13 May	Khartoum	2330GCT	13 May	7h 52m
Khartoum, Sudan	1045GCT	14 May	Cairo	1516GCT	14 May	4h 31m
Cairo, Egypt	0403GCT	15 May	Habbaniyeh	0812GCT	15 May	4h 09m
Habbaniyeh, Iraq	0915GCT	15 May	Shaibah	1040GCT	15 May	1h 25m

Return trip as passengers on PAA-Africa DC-3s and PAA B-314 Clipper

Departed	Date	Arrived	Date
Basrah (Shaibah) Iraq	15 May	Cairo	15 May
Cairo, Egypt	16 May	Lagos	16 May
Lagos, Nigeria	19 May	Fishermans Lake	19 May
Fishermans Lake, Liberia	20 May	Natal	21 May
Natal, Brazil	21 May	Belem	21 May
Belem, Brazil	22 May	Trinidad	22 May
Trinidad	22 May	San Juan	22 May
San Juan, Puerto Rico	22 May	Miami	22 May

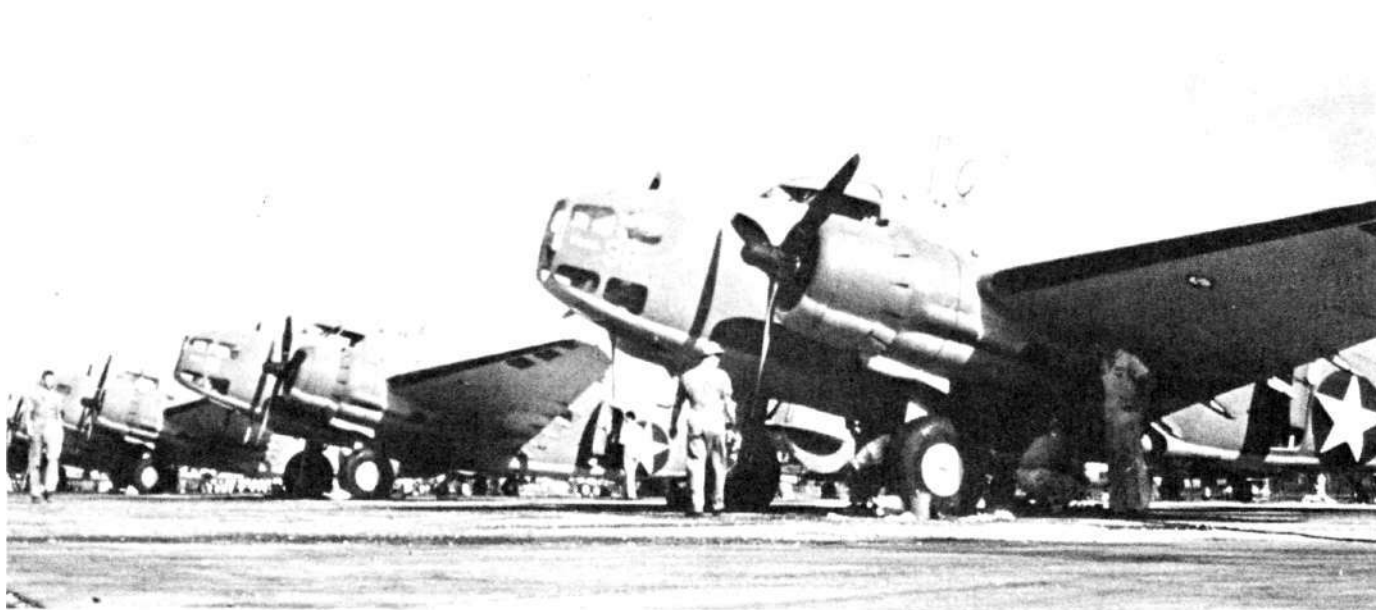


Manuel Fernandez, Sr., superintendent of communications, Pan American Air Ferries.
(Pan American Airways Photo)

The B-25C was a nice airplane. However, the radio operator was back near the tail, with a little window to see out of. He could see up to the cockpit over the big extra gas tanks. Our main complaint was the throat mikes, which we soon discarded and either brought our own microphones or rigged up a pulley system to the cockpit to pass notes back and forth.

Takeoff on a ferrying trip from Miami meant checking the aircraft and equipment in pitch-black darkness at the airport, with four or five similar planes warming up, then the suspenseful takeoff with the plane heavily loaded with extra gas, and the final climb over the ocean as we headed for Trinidad. We arrived between 9:00 and 11:00

Group of Hudson bombers lined up on apron outside PAAF hangar being prepared for flight to Africa.
(Pan American Airways Photo)



a.m. at the airport in Trinidad and spent the night there. During most of 1942 the U.S. Army furnished housing and mess facilities for local PAA ferry personnel and transient crews at Waller Field, near Piarco. This was an improvement over the Queens Park Hotel in Port of Spain, an older hotel which was detested by the earlier flight crews of 1941.¹⁶

Next morning we headed for the cold outdoor showers and an early takeoff for Belem, at the mouth of the Amazon. At all these airports it was a busy time for the flight radio operator. Our title was radio navigator; PAAF hoped to train us in celestial navigation, but we never had time for lessons. At each stop we had to retune the radio equipment on all planes in the flight; frequencies for the next airport had to be set up. Each plane carried a navigator, but due to the scarcity of trained radiomen, most flights carried only one radio operator for every five planes.

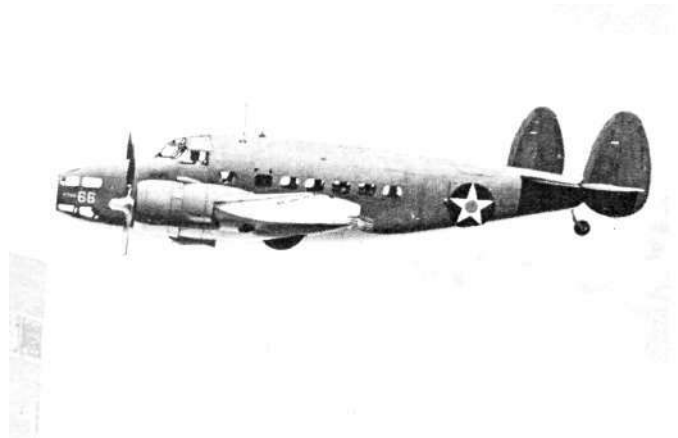
Belem was interesting; a sleepy town I had twice visited on merchant ships years before. It hadn't changed much. The Grand Hotel was our home, mosquito nets and all. The band on the inside balcony played every night, and always the same tunes at the same time. Three or four days was our usual stay while the aircraft were being serviced for the longer flights ahead. Beautiful serving trays made with butterfly wings, carved rosewood vases, inlaid wood boxes, and other souvenirs of Brazil were bought by the crews and stowed away in our luggage.

An interesting story appeared in the *Miami Herald* in 1942: On a recent trip from Rio to Washington, Fernando Lobo, minister-counsel of the Brazilian Embassy, stopped at this Grand Hotel at Belem and asked the proprietor how he liked the American fliers constantly passing through. "Fine," he said. "Fine. But once I did the wrong thing. A captain came to the hotel, a big American, and wrote his name in the book. I didn't pay attention. I just gave him a room on the top floor and forgot about him. Pretty soon came a colonel and he signed the book. When he saw the name of the captain he said, 'Look who you have here; this is the son of the President, Capt. Elliot Roosevelt.' So I ran upstairs right away and apologized to Captain Roosevelt for giving him such a poor room. But he was already stretched out on the bed, and he said, 'It's all right. It's fine.' So I left him. But that night, what do you suppose? That very night the German radio announced from Berlin that Capt. Elliot Roosevelt was staying at my hotel! What spies we have!"

Of course we were constantly advised that this was a secret opera-

A bomber which Pan American Air Ferries is flying to Africa, the Middle East and beyond, is shown being gassed prior to departure.

(Pan American Airways Photo)



Lockheed Hudson bomber in flight, PAA Ferries. (Pan American Airways)

tion and to be careful of what we said, but there were many German and Italian nationals and sympathizers in Brazil. Instructions to crews were detailed, and warnings such as, "Do not fly west of Cairo"; "Before partaking of food or water at any post be personally assured by the American [U.S.] representative that it is safe"; "All pilots must keep a sharp lookout for submarines between Roberts and Accra and if sighted notify Accra by radio by sending signal 'SSS' and pinpoint location"; "Pilot should be cautioned against flying anywhere near Ft. Lamy as the Free French seem to shoot at any plane near there just for practice"; "Clear no ship for Kano unless the forecasted visibility at that station is greater than four miles"; etc., etc.

On January 9, 1942, a Lockheed 10 left Miami piloted by Capt. Lott with Julian Prevost as copilot. Mr. Hankins had directed a survey of the island of Fernando de Noronha off the Brazilian coast, as a possible emergency landing field. The island was garrisoned by the Brazilian Army and was being used as a penal colony. Prevost said their landing caused consternation among the garrison but he was able to communicate with the senior officers in French and explain the purpose of their mission. Air France had set up a crude landing field a few years before and had provided a radio beacon. The French radio operator and his wife still lived there, and were willing to reactivate the system. Although I remember that Fernando de Noronha was mentioned in our briefings as an emergency landing field, I doubt that it ever had to be used by PAA ferries.

From the beginning of PAA ferries until August 8, 1942, ferry affairs in Brazil were handled by Panair do Brasil. Then a PAAF representative came down, and on October 1, a mechanic arrived from Miami. Work was going on at the Grand Hotel, refurbishing rooms on the second and third floors, plus more showers and toilet facilities. The hotel was turned over to the U.S. Army Air Force on November 1.¹⁷

Our next hop was over the jungles to Natal, at the tip of Brazil and the closest point to Africa. For hours and hours we flew through fleecy cumulus clouds, over the thick green jungles, with rivers and streams spread out below, winding off in every direction. At Natal we stayed at a PAAF boarding house, usually for several days, waiting for favorable winds for the overnight flight across the South Atlantic.

In the fall of 1941 the ferry planes first used the old Air France field at Natal. In December a new adjacent field was opened. It was built as part of the airport development program of PAA. Panair do Brasil set up weather, radio, and gas facilities. In February 1942, a house was located in town for 30 men. A very capable English woman, Emily Knabe, was hired to run it, and kitchen and household staff engaged. Work on enlarging it was completed in July, with room for 72 transient and 11 permanent personnel. At times over 100 people had to be accommodated. Originally the estimate had been for 15 or 20 boarders per day. Crews and passengers from the big *Clipper* ships stopped over, including some famous correspond-

ents, Claire Booth Luce, and the American ambassador to Russia. Water towers were built, and a poultry yard set up. Six taxis were leased until cars and a bus could be sent from Miami. An operations man was sent on April 1, and by November 1, 1942, there were 12 men on the staff. This was a big improvement over the beginning of the operation, when few facilities were available, few tools for repairs, and aircraft had to be gassed from steel drums by means of hand pumps. Batteries had to be carried into the city for recharging.

Another disadvantage was that all work had to be performed in the open in swirling sand under a broiling sun in the dry season and under a steady downpour of rain during the wet season. Some crews slept on their aircraft, some found quarters in a space formerly used by Air France crews; others made the long trip into town in broken-down taxis over very bad roads to find equally poor accommodation at the local hotel. Men lived on canned food as the local food was prepared under poor sanitary conditions. Meteorology forecasts were lacking. LATI¹⁸ pilots furnished weather. LATI had a schedule from Natal to the Canary Islands until late in 1941 and was the last Axis airline to fly the Atlantic before its gas supply was cut off and it ceased operations. By 1942, PAA had a Boeing 314 *Clipper* operating in the region, so more reliable weather information was available.

Planes at Natal usually arrived in the afternoon and were scheduled to depart the night of the following day. However, delays often occurred when large numbers of planes arrived and could not be gassed and checked in time for departure. After the average 30-hour layover, the crews were driven out to the field. After a visual inspection of the aircraft they took off about the same time in order to arrive in Africa about one hour after sunrise.

On March 14, 1942, a B-25C piloted by veteran Alaskan bush pilot Ken Neese flew into a hilltop one very dark night leaving Natal. The hazards of a night takeoff at Natal were well known, and required that a captain be well trained in instrument flight. Night takeoffs were necessary due to weather and landing conditions in Liberia. However, there were no lights around Natal at night to give a visual horizon, and pilots had to go on instruments immediately after passing the last runway light. After that accident, Prevost, who had had dinner only a few hours before with Neese, had the unpleasant task of picking up the remains of the entire crew and burying them in a Natal cemetery. He then arranged to position a half-dozen Coleman lanterns with three large reflective mirrors

around each one in a line extending outward from the runway as a visual reference, which for a time satisfied the need for orientation. A native was hired to service the lanterns and to light them on command.

It was not until late in July 1942 that the airport on Ascension Island in the middle of the Atlantic was opened, and all flights were refueled there. This gave a much greater margin of safety for aircraft arriving over the African coast in bad weather, low on fuel.

The route across Africa had been well developed by 1942, and base and refueling depots could service PAA ferry flights at the following airports along the way: Takoradi and Accra, Gold Coast; Roberts Field and Fishermans Lake, Liberia; Maiduguri, Kano, and Kaduna, Nigeria; El Fasher, El Geneina, and Khartoum, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan; Cairo, Egypt; Habbaniyah and Basrah in Iraq; and Teheran in Persia. See map of routes. Small airports across Africa, which the British had been using for single-engined planes, were enlarged to handle the heavy multi-engined bombers. Lots of foundation and longer runways were required. Large concrete platforms were made so that engines could be warmed up without desert sand being sucked into them. Keeping enough gasoline on hand was a problem. At one desert airdrome 1000 camels, in addition to trucks, could hardly keep up with the required fuel supply. Each camel could carry 35 gallons of the precious gasoline at a time.

Aside from crossing the ocean at night in a twin-engined flying gas tank, and a couple of times skimming the tops of the trees at the end of the runway taking off in a heavy B-25 bomber, the flights did not seem hazardous. Sometimes I was even bored or sleepy. One night, flying to Khartoum in the Sudan, I kept watching a small light in the desert out of the little window by the radio operator's position in the tail of a B-25. For the longest time we seemed to be making no progress—the light never changed position. I finally realized I was staring at a fixed wing light on our own airplane.

I did fall asleep once and was rudely awakened by what proved to be an emergency. We were ferrying a Hudson to the RAF in Cairo in early July 1942. We had left Brazil and were partway over the Atlantic at midnight. The generator had quit charging, so we cut off lights and radio to conserve batteries. I had nothing to do, so went back

Group of Lockheed Hudson bombers and Martin B-26s on field at Miami, 1942. (Pan American Airways Photo)



and lay down on the deck for a nap. The copilot was also asleep, but at the navigator's desk. The pilot, flying the plane, finished a tank of gas, switched to a new tank, then came back to where I was to use the toilet. He left the navigator, who was practicing piloting in the copilot's seat, to fly the plane. Suddenly both engines quit; that's when I woke up. The pilot and I both raced up to the cockpit while the navigator was struggling with the controls and the plane was swooping and diving. The stars were going round and round outside the windows and I was wildly wondering how or when to inflate the life rafts, if any. "Do you want lights?" I asked the pilot. "No, no." "Shall I tell the DC-3 flying near us?" "No, no," he said again, while fiddling with the knobs and switches on the control panel. Finally the engines came to life and we leveled off at 1000 feet and started climbing back to 9000. Ferry crews were not eager to fly with this pilot after that. Switching from an empty gas tank to another empty one in flight is dangerous, and we were lucky to be alive.

At Cairo we usually stayed at the famous Shephard's Hotel. Cairo was a completely blacked-out city at night during the war, although only the airport was in danger of being bombed.¹⁹ When ferrying B-25s from Cairo to Basrah or Teheran for the Russians we usually stopped at Habbaniyah in the Iraqi desert, or Lydda in Palestine to refuel on the way.

Basrah was a typical Arab city, dry and sandy, with narrow streets teeming with donkeys and peddlers. Burnoused Arabs were sitting at the many sidewalk cafes drinking coffee, the strongest drink allowed them by the Koran. At Teheran we stayed at the Shah's palace. The palace was being used as a hotel for Allied officers, and the Shah was living down the street. Layers of thick carpets covered the floors, and the gardens were magnificent.²⁰ The bazaars were fascinating. Silverware, brassware, and Persian rugs galore, jewel boxes and furniture inlaid with ivory and mother of pearl, and the exquisite miniature paintings of Persia on bracelets, pins, and other jewelry were everywhere. A ferry pilot hitching rides back across Africa by PAA-Africa with a parachute and a 9 by 12 rug on his back was not an uncommon sight in 1942.

Teheran, the terminus for most of our B-25s, B-26s, and A-20s, gave us a good look at our Allies, the Russians. We were giving them these Lend-Lease bombers, but if we had fired one of the .50-cal. machine guns in testing they would complain. Temporary radio-direction finders were installed on the A-20s for navigation. These RDFs were supposed to be brought back to the U.S. after delivery of the aircraft, but the hard-bargaining Russians wouldn't let them be removed. Sometimes a truckload of us entering the airport would be barred by a Soviet soldier with his long-bayoneted rifle. If we bulled on through anyhow he would level the rifle to shoot but he never actually fired. If you tried to give a Soviet soldier chocolate or a cigarette he would refuse, embarrassed, and probably scared. Stalin was running his country by terror. They needed us as Allies but didn't want us as friends.

After a few days at Teheran, with walks up the dry hills toward the snow-covered mountains, and taking movies of the camel caravans in the streets, we were ready for return to Miami for another trip. Returning the crews to Miami was the job of PAA-Africa, who flew us back across the continent in bucket-seat DC-3s, with our baggage piled in the aisle. PAAA had bulldozed and supplied new airports across the deserts to take care of the increasing wartime traffic, especially from the ferry service, but also for other activities like the P-40 fighter assembly plant in Eritrea, where Douglas, Sperry-Rand, Lockheed, Curtiss-Wright, and other aircraft manufacturers operated in the bombed-out Italian Caproni aircraft area at Gura, near Asmara.

Trips on PAA-Africa were boring, with box lunches and no stew-ardesses. The evening meal at a different "Hotel DeGink" each night was an adventure. One airport in particular in Nigeria had a chef who put out such gourmet meals that pilots somehow always managed to arrive in time for the evening meal and an overnight stopover.

Liberia was our destination on the return trip across Africa. Here, at Fishermans Lake, the big Boeing *Clippers* picked us up and flew

us back to Miami. Later in the year the B-24 *Liberator* planes operated by TWA on contract with the Air Force took off from Roberts Field in Liberia and returned us to Miami via Natal, Belem, and Trinidad, or dropped us off in Brazil, where we finished the trip in DC-3s of Eastern Air Lines or Pan American. These B-24s, first converted to passenger use by Consairways in 1942 for returning ferry crews from Australia, were able to carry much larger payloads than the Boeing *Clippers* of PAA, as they were able to take off from land runways rather than overcome the drag of the water. They were also considerably faster than the *Clippers*. The Army called this cargo version the C-86.

Liberia was like the popular conception of Africa—hot, steaming jungles, rubber plantations, native woman wearing only beads above the waist, and dugout canoes. Not at all like the arid semi-desert of much of Central, North, and East Africa. Lagos, in Nigeria, was more tropical than Accra, on the Gold Coast. At Lagos we stayed at an RAF camp in the jungle. Accommodations and food were as good as could be expected in such a location, but the ferry crews were all competing to be first on the list to go home. Most of the American crews complained about the native servants waking them up at daybreak with a cup of hot tea as British custom required. I asked to be last on the list to go home, so stayed there three days exploring the jungle and collecting butterflies and land shells for museums in the U.S.

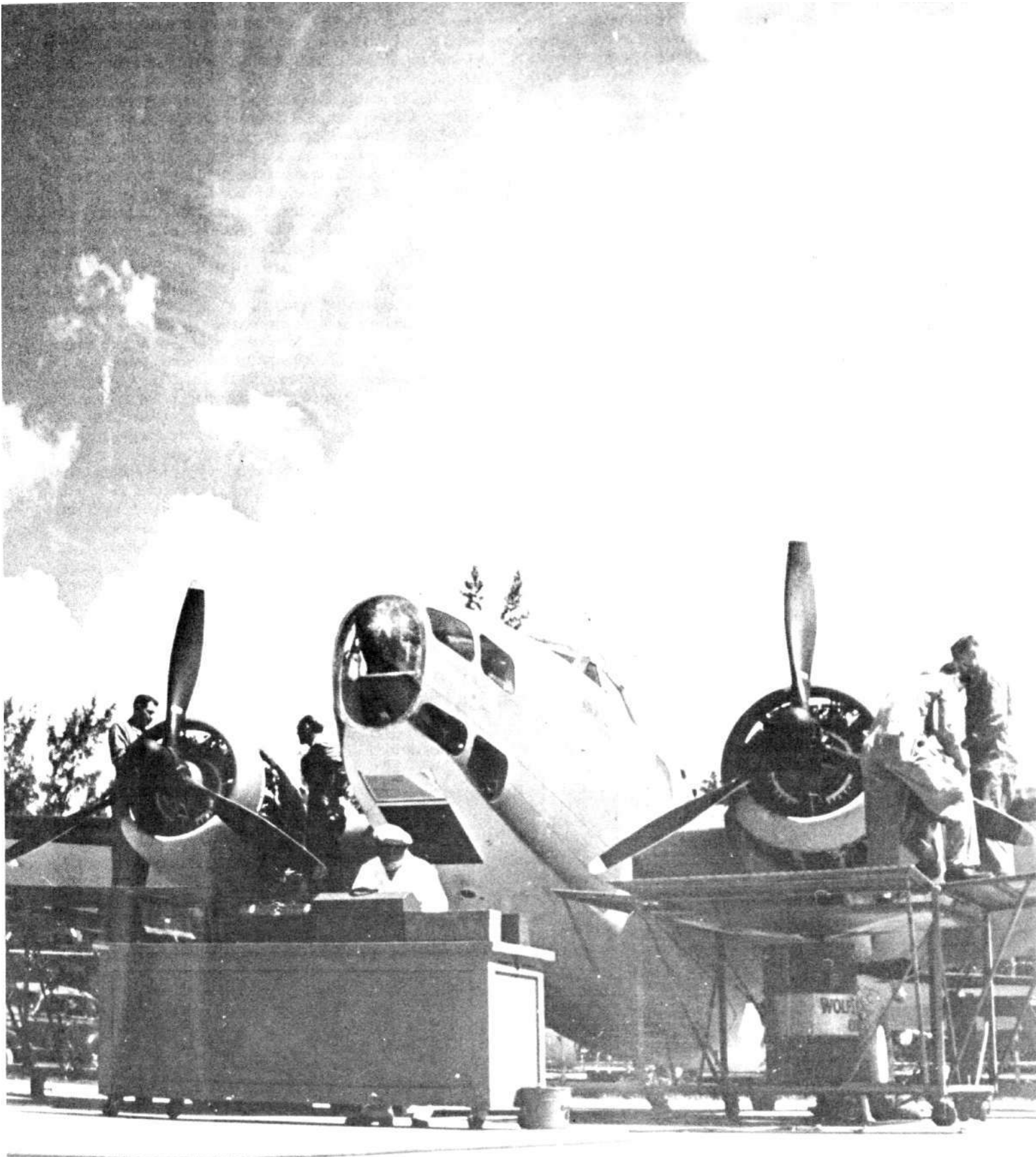
Arrival at the seaplane base of PAA at Miami's Dinner Key on a *Clipper* ship was a big event. Waiting for us were dozens of wives and girlfriends. They seemed quite excited about seeing us again, but were held back by strong wire fencing in the terminal building.²¹

The radio navigator at the end of a trip had many suggestions to turn in to the office, on his form for "details of trouble with equipment or communications during trip." Samples from the author's logs: "Belem not listening ferry freqs as per memos"; "Beat note on freq meter inaudible unless body used as ant. Suggest longer wire to ant on meter. Oprs shud all be told to stand up and put hand on ANT of freq meter *and foot on key* when tuning"; "All ships shud keep together so as to have benefit of opr. This is not done except at Miami"; "Lots of pilots, copilots and navigators lack any instruction. All shud be checked out on simple radio operation, DF & recvrs, etc. All shud be emphatically instructed to clear tower before takeoff (& landing if poss.)."

After most of the B-25s were delivered we began to get the B-26s, what the Army called the "Marauder." These were not popular with ferry crews. They were heavy planes with short wings and seemed to have an unusually high rate of accidents landing and taking off. Later, more wing was added, but also more weight, so the plane was still not popular. In April 1942, one had crashed into the side of a mountain in a thunderstorm in Nigeria with loss of the plane and four men. In September another lost both engines in Nigeria due to contaminated fuel and landed on a riverbank with all four crew members injured. The radio navigator, H.M. Vanderver, had to remain in hospital in Africa for two months. Following is his story of the crash, as related to the author, verbatim. It could not be improved on:

"As to the B-26 crash with Inman (Ralph? Raleigh? Both?—his brother Art called him Ralph), I'll be as brief as I can and that will be windy. About the 15th of Sept., 1942, we took off from 36th Street Airport. We were all afraid of the B-26 and called it the flying prostitute. This was the original model with such short wingspan that we said it had no visible means of support. It flew mainly by a specially designed prop with four blades and electrically controlled pitch; it would stall at anything less than 140 miles airspeed. We spent the first night in Trinidad where we had a 4000-ft. runway to get this thing back in the air, used every inch and scrapped the bushes at the end, but made it.

'No more problems. We crossed the Atlantic via Ascension where about 600 men were living in tents and almost literally starving to death. German subs had sunk their water tanker and the ship with all their food and supplies. We had two large boxes of food aboard and gave them one. The other we kept, thank God.



Maintenance crew of Pan American Air Ferries beginning to make a pre-departure check on engine before this bomber is flown to Africa, the Middle East and beyond by Pan American Air Ferries personnel.
(Pan American Airways Photo)

"If you draw a line from Accra to Kano, where it crosses the Niger River is the exact spot where we crashed. As we crossed some mountains we ran into a rainstorm like I'd never seen before. This was a wall of almost solid water which was pushing us down at several hundred feet a minute with full power on. We knew we'd hit the mountain if that kept up very long, but we suddenly broke out into sunshine and the world looked beautiful.

"We had crossed the mountain and were flying at 11,000 feet when the left engine suddenly wound up to probably 5000 rpm. That prop had flattened out as flat as a cow turd and the control had gone totally haywire. There was nothing to do but pull the power, otherwise the engine would have exploded. We lost 3000 feet in about five minutes. That piece of junk would not fly on one engine. We knew we were going to have to come down somewhere soon and were looking at the Niger River which was crookeder than any snake and only about 30 feet wide. At about 8000 feet the other engine wound up and Inman pulled the power on it. He opened the bomb bay doors and told Christie, the navigator, and me to jump. We both tried but couldn't get behind the bomb racks with back chutes on. Neither of the pilots had chutes on. The only place we could have gotten out was through the floor hatch in the cockpit and there wasn't time to drop the wheels (which had to be done because they folded right under the hatch) and get them back up again. To have landed wheels down would have been suicide for the pilots.

"So we sat down, buckled our seat belts, and prayed. Inman said he lost control the last 50 feet and we pancaked in right at the top of a high bank of the river. From there we took out through the jungle which had a lot of 100-ft. mahogany trees. Fortunately we didn't hit anything solid head-on as we were going a hundred or more mph when we entered the jungle. The wings sheared, but not completely off. They were full of fuel and we drug them. When we finally stopped I realized that I was lying in the left corner of the fuselage against the bulkhead behind the pilot with my chair on top of me and Christie was on top of me with his chair still attached to him by his seatbelt. I could see fire coming through the floor in the back of the ship. I yelled to Christie to get off me, which he did pronto and dived through the door into the cockpit taking the chair with him. When he saw that the chair was holding him from getting out he loosened his belt and went on out through the top hatch in the cockpit and left his chair hung by the armrests in the door which was

my only escape. I couldn't get the chair out and was trapped. In the meantime my pants legs were on fire and my hair was burning. The pilot and copilot had gotten out immediately through the sliding top hatch in the cockpit.

"The copilot managed to get back to the hatch to where he could reach in and mash the arms of the chair together enough so I could pull the chair out of the doorway and enter the cockpit. He then grabbed one of my chute straps and pulled me through the hatch, when I fell headfirst and got my mouth full of dirt. They all then put the fire out on me and dragged me away from the plane.

"The other three were on their feet but cut and bruised. I was in foul shape; blisters hanging off my burned legs. One had about a quart of plasma in it and I was having a hell of a time breathing because my bloodstream had been so drained of fluid my heart couldn't pump the thick blood. I didn't know this at the time, of course. They could see natives moving around in the bush who made attempts to approach us but when a tank would explode or flares, etc., would go off it frightened them and they would drop back.

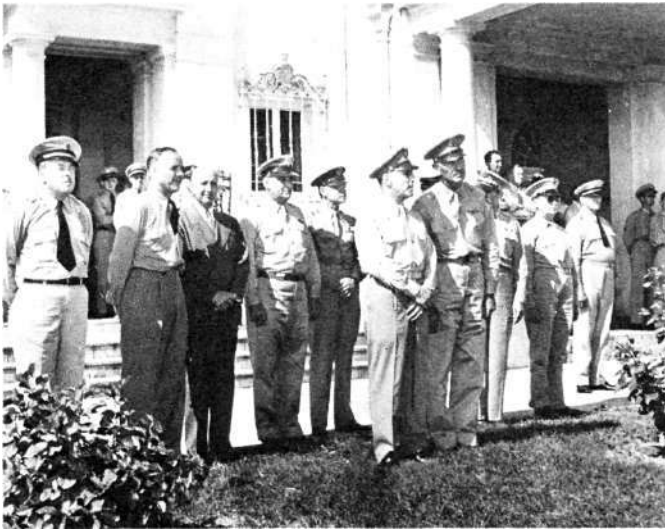
"Finally, after 30 or 40 minutes the fire died down enough for them to approach and they came on all fours, about 20 of them making a noise that sounded more like turkeys gobbling than anything I can think of. I was hurting too much to pay much attention to them. They were large, tall, and very handsome men dressed in breechcloths. I still am not sure of their tribe. I was told later by the British that they were Housas, but if they were, they were far from their tribal area. They got a woven grass mat they used to sleep on, about 4' x 6' and used it for a stretcher to carry me to one of their huts about one-quarter of a mile from the crash. The huts were round, about 10 ft. in diameter, mud walls, thatched roof, dirt floors, with opposite openings for doors and not a stick of furnishings of any kind. They sat me down on the ground with my back to the wall and my legs stretched out on the mat. We could communicate only with sign language. I needed water but the rest of the crew wouldn't let me drink any because it was muddy and they wanted to boil it first. Christie went back to the crash site and found a can of pineapple juice and some sardines. I had no saliva to help clear my

Consolidated PBY-5A Catalina amphibian that crashed on takeoff at Gura, Eritrea, on Oct. 31, 1942. Capt. Max Stell overloaded the aircraft for the 9000-foot altitude, time of day, temperature, etc. Thirteen people were on board for a test hop.
(U.S. Air Force Photo)

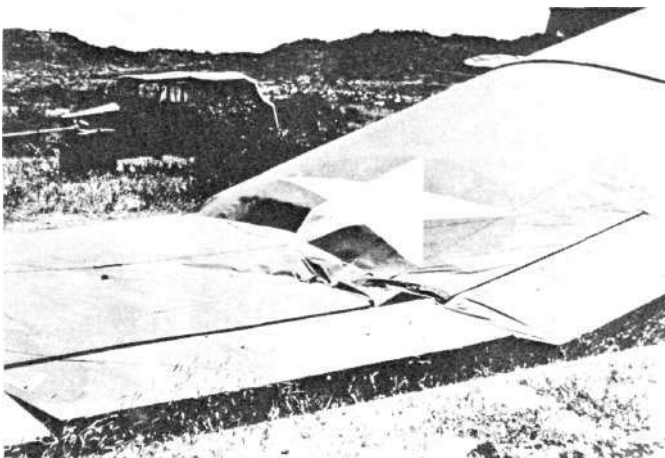




Graduating class, June 12, 1942, PAAF Mechanical Training Section. John A. Steele, operations manager, PAAF, is shown presenting one of the graduates with his diploma and congratulating him upon the successful completion of his work. (Pan American Airways Photo)



Major General Harold L. George, commanding general, Air Transport Command, and Brigadier General Ralph N. Wooton are here shown reviewing the air transport pilots in training with the PAAF, August 29, 1942. Those in the reviewing group from left to right are: Carl M. Dewey, director of Flight Training Section; John A. Steele, operations manager; W.O. Snyder, Eastern Division manager, PAA; Colonel Paul E. Burrows, commander, Air Transport Command, Morrison Field; Colonel W.C. Mahoney, Air Transport Command; Major General George; Brigadier General Wooton; Colonel Gilbert D. Hatfield, commanding officer, U.S. Marine Corps, Miami; and Robert Crawford, assistant to director of PAAF Flight Training Section. (Pan American Airways Photo)



The damaged wing of the Consolidated PB5A at Gura, Eritrea, Oct. 31, 1942. (U.S. Air Force Photo)

mouth of dirt so I drank the juice, dirt and all. It must have gone straight into my bloodstream because in less than five minutes I was beginning to breathe normally. That juice saved my life. We had no lighter or matches and the natives tried for about five hours to build a fire but never did make it.

"We knew we were about 100 miles from Kaduna, the nearest town and doctor and that I'd never live to get there. What we didn't know was that the British Army was practicing jungle warfare about 20 miles away. The natives knew it, though, and unbeknownst to us they had dispatched a runner to their camp. The poor devil must have run all the way through some mighty rough territory.

"We had crashed about 2:00 P.M. From time to time the natives offered us various kinds of food which we politely refused. An old woman with breasts that hung to her waist came in our hut and did some kind of ritual over me. She got on her knees and bowed across my legs until her hands and forehead touched the ground on the other side. She must have bowed over at least 20 times and all the while gobbling a mantra over and over that sounded much like a turkey gobbling. It would have been funny to see those long, stringy breasts swinging back and forth, but at the time I just hoped the gods that be took note of what she was saying.

"About midnight we began to hear some kind of motor in the far distance. We couldn't imagine what it was. As the hours went by we could tell it was getting closer. Finally we could hear it crashing through the jungle and decided it had to be a tank. But how could a tank be in that location? It stopped perhaps a half mile away and in about 15 minutes two British Army doctors, two other officers, a sergeant and about 10 enlisted men walked in. Those were the most beautiful people I'd ever seen. They had used a Bren gun carrier on tracks to get to us. One gave me a cup of water, one popped me with a shot of morphine, and another handed me a quart of Scotch and said, "Drink it." I drank all I could without a chaser. They wouldn't give me any more water for a while. They loaded me on a stretcher after loosely bandaging my legs and hands so as not to break any of the blisters. It took all day for the party to walk the 15 miles to intersect a road they had beat out from Kaduna to their camp. I knew nothing about this because I went to sleep right after we started and woke up only once for a few minutes while they had set me down to rest. It was dark when we got to the road and the ambulance had been cruising (bumping) up and down the road for hours because they didn't know where we were coming out. I then had to ride that rough road for 90 miles to reach Kaduna and the hospital.

"I stayed in the hospital (another mud wall thatched roof ward with 20 beds) for exactly 60 days before I was able to leave on crutches. The doctors, the Sisters (nurses) and everyone treated me as if I were a member of the royal family. They put me on a narrow-gauge train with a sleeping car and a freight car headed for Kano about 6:00 P.M. Although it was less than a hundred miles, it took us 15 hours because the train would stop at every clearing and trade with the natives—sometimes for two hours.

"Anyway, I finally got to Kano and caught one of our DC-3s to Lagos where I caught the PAA *Clipper* nonstop to Trinidad, a 3500-mile flight, thence to Miami on another PAA plane. I had been gone nearly three months.

"Incidentally, when Christie returned to the hut after an inspection of the crash site, he said that we had sat down on an alligator (probably a crocodile) and had squashed guts for yards around. That has to be the unluckiest aquatic reptile since we all crawled out of the slime four or five billion years ago.

"Before we crashed, our destination was Tel Aviv. I had bummed, borrowed and stolen six rolls of 8mm movie film. We were going to get lost for a week or two and tour Palestine. I had started making pictures in Miami of the plane, crew, and scenes. Those might have been of some interest to you, but the whole damn business got burned up. You asked how long I stayed on the payroll. Well, I was laid up for nine months after I got back. I think I drew my last check in August '43. Then I taught at Embury-Riddle until the first of 1944 when I went back to flying freight for Eastern until the Japs turned belly-up. I wish I could help you think of someone who would have



Douglas C-47 transport of PAA-Africa at Accra, Gold Coast, Africa in 1942.
(Tom Elder Photo)

some pictures, but I can't even remember the copilot's name who pulled me out of the fire and saved my life. Ain't that a hell of a note!"²²

Some crews called these B-26s "The Separator" because they separated the men from the boys. The term had previously been used to refer to the Martin A-30, Army type 187, a tail-dragger, short-coupled aircraft, which was very difficult to maintain in a stable flying condition when heavily loaded, and had a bad ground-handling trait particularly on landing. Fernandez describes when he went to Baltimore with Captain Silverthorne to pick up the first one. They skidded on the newly laid runway and would have gone into a lake if a pile of dirt hadn't stopped them. Pilot Ralph Inman said they had a gliding angle like a dead duck.

The Vega *Venturas*, B-34s, were being delivered all summer in 1942 to Accra for the South African Air Force. After takeoff from Miami in a *Ventura*, I noticed gasoline bubbling out of the tanks under my feet at the radio position behind the pilot as we gained altitude and the atmospheric pressure decreased. This scared me, but the pilots didn't seem to be worried.

Some of the *Venturas* developed trouble along the route, so that if five of them started off in a flight we might end up in Africa with only two or three from the original flight, but others, repaired, would join us along the way. In the PAAF company magazine, *PAN AFFAIRS*, which we all enjoyed, one article in an August issue ran as follows: "It's heard said that Capt. Silverthorne is playing chess with his airplanes, using the continent of South America as his chessboard. He makes a move with one ship, dashes back for the next play, gets that in position, moves up to the first for another jump, back to another, etc.—alternately moving them all in the forward march to victory."

Many flight crews took movies on these trips. My most exciting movies were made in Brazil the day that country declared war on the Axis. German submarines had just sunk some Brazilian troopships. Driving into town from the airport our taxi was surrounded by a mob of thousands, led by a drummer beating away a la Spirit of '76. When they found we were Americans they cheered and urged us to accompany them. They were on the way out to burn down a German farm. On arrival in the town we found bonfires in the streets* everywhere. The atmosphere was more on the carnival than the ugly side,



Aircraft dispatcher at Accra, Gold Coast, Africa. (Pan American Airways)

but the German, Italian and Japanese businesses had been sacked and the office contents thrown into the streets and burned. Mobs were roaming the streets, but police on horseback made no move to stop them. My movies were one of only two films which got out of Brazil, as all regular newsreels of these disturbances were confiscated by the Brazilian authorities.

Mention of the above reminded me of Pete Fernandez' description of his first flight with Atlantic Airways to Belem. When he ventured outside the Grand Hotel he ran into a big demonstration. He found that the crowd was objecting to some of the ferry crewmen wearing shorts, as usually worn in Africa, thereby fouling the vision of the Brazilian ladies with semi-nude exposure of Yakee legs. He said the Brazilians were really teed off.

On my last trip in a *Ventura* we refueled at Ascension. Our stops there had never been long enough for a chance to see the island. We



A view of Ascension Island from the top of Green Mountain.

(Tom Elder Photo)



"Wideawake" airstrip on Ascension Island, South Atlantic Ocean before it was lengthened. (Tom Elder Photo)

usually saw only the collection of tents which the Army had set down at the airstrip to service the traffic to and from Africa. This time I found a DC-3 which was headed for Accra the next day after an over-night stay. My pilot agreed that he could get to Accra without me, and the DC-3 pilot agreed to take me there the next day. So I hauled off my parachute and bag, stowed them in an Army tent, and took off to view the island. Actually, Ascension was just a big ash heap, the top of a number of extinct volcanoes, pushed up out of the ocean. Although the British had said an airstrip was not feasible, the U.S. had made one. It had a hump in the middle, but was satisfactory. The main difficulty at this airport, known as "Wideawake Tower," was the fact that it ran through a rookery of wideawake or sooty terns. These birds were a danger to the aircraft when they came in at dusk to roost on the runways, or took off in the morning for the fishing grounds, for these were the busiest times for the runways. The birds, who had been nesting there for centuries, could not be driven off by explosives or other forms of violence, and remained a problem. I walked through their rookery on the way to the ocean. Thousands of nests covered the bare rocks. It was hard to avoid

stepping on eggs or young birds. The terns were so fearless that they could be caught with bare hands, like birds in the Galapagos. It's quite a trick to hold a flapping bird at arm's-length in one hand while taking movies of it with the other arm stretched out. On the shore I gathered some very rare shells for the museum at Harvard.²³ My free time at airports or rest camps was usually devoted to collecting butterflies, shells, and reptiles for my museum friends in the U.S.²⁴

I wasn't the only one who was bringing them back alive. Although my livestock was usually large lizards, chameleons and African toads for my herpetologist friends, others brought back monkeys. Capt. Goodsell brought in marmosets from Brazil. Captain Clausewitz brought back an ocelot, but was not allowed to bring back an anteater.

Clausewitz and two crew members perished later after an engine on his *Ventura* failed at sea.²⁵ Tom Elder of PAA-Africa, on the radio at Roberts Field, advised Clausewitz, who was about five minutes away, that at his present altitude he could land safely at Roberts Field, with a shallow river as an emergency landing spot if needed. Clausewitz, however, with his other engine heating up, spotted a cleared field near Cape Palmas, Liberia, and opted to land there, unfortunately crashing into some palm trees.

The pilot of one aircraft returning ferry crews from Brazil was Captain Buck. He adamantly refused to board a passenger who wanted to take along a boa constrictor. Someone was overheard commenting to the disappointed man, "Well, I guess you know now this pilot ain't no *Frank* Buck."

The summer of 1942 was a busy time ferrying *Hudson* A-28A bombers to the RAF. One hundred of them were delivered to Cairo and most were used to carry gasoline to Montgomery's troops. This had a big part in Monty's victory at El Alamein which forced the German retreat to Tunisia and was the beginning of the end for the German-Italian campaign in North Africa. Up to that time the threat to Cairo was real.²⁶

In Egypt, I took movies from the air along the Nile at Thebes, Luxor, and around the pyramids and Sphinx. On landing at Cairo



North American B-25C bomber 41-12537 delivered to Russians at Teheran, Iran, in June 1942 by PAA Ferries.
(Don Thomas Photos)



North American B-25C bomber 41-12546 at airport in Nigeria. This aircraft was delivered to the Russians at Basrah, Iraq, by PAA Ferries in May 1942.

we were warned by the RAF to stay far away from the pyramids. They said they had almost shot us down; they had their ack-ack trained on us. A similar pair of British-marked *Hudson* bombers had joined the traffic circle at the airport with proper identification, let down their wheels as if to land, dropped bombs on the runway, and flew off before the British realized they were being fooled by captured aircraft manned by German pilots from Rommel's Western Desert forces. *Hudsons* had a reputation of catching fire easily in any crash situation. One was burning on the runway at Cairo when we were landing on one trip. One of ours burned up when it turned off the runway in Liberia to avoid another aircraft which was landing.

The worst disaster involving a *Hudson* occurred one night when we took off from Natal, a flight of four aircraft, on July 5, 1942. This accident apparently was pilot error. The takeoff was probably too steep; the aircraft stalled, spun in, and Captain Ayers and crew were killed. I remember after takeoff contacting two other aircraft in our flight but could not get the others. After many such tries, the Natal tower called and unhappily told us of the crash.

On October 1, 1942, a meeting was held in Miami which all PAAF personnel were required to attend. A bombshell was dropped. General George, head of the Army Air Corps Transport Command, outlined plans to take over ferrying of all aircraft as of November 1, 1942. PAA Ferries was to be dissolved. Pilots, copilots and navigators were offered commissions in the Army Air Corps, with ranks according to their experience. A few senior captains, like Maurice Marrs and Lou Gravis were offered commissions as major.²⁷ Radio navigators were the forgotten men. General George said that as radio operators were enlisted men in the Army, no commissions would be given, except for supervisory personnel, like our superintendent, Pete Fernandez.

My last ferry trip was an interesting one. We were supposed to take a PBY *Catalina* amphibian to Ceylon for the Dutch Navy. This was a nice comfortable aircraft with plexiglass observation windows aft. Across Central Africa we would often fly low. The pilot would use the intercom and tell me of game ahead, then I would take movies of stampeding herds of roan antelope, ostriches, giraffes, and other wild game. The plane was slow, 90 to 100 knots, but still too fast for movies. Most of my shots came out poorly, although there was a good one of us coming down on Lake Chad to try out the pontoons.

The mountains of Eritrea were our undoing. We landed at Gura for three days of overhaul, and when ready took off for a short test flight. The pilot invited several guests, the mechanics who had worked on the plane hopped aboard for a ride. I invited a friend,

and we ended up with 13 aboard. We took off but noticed we weren't gaining altitude. The air was thin at this high-altitude airport, the runway sloped up, the plane had less lift in the heat of the day and just couldn't get up. The pilot had been used to flying PBYs for KNILM, off the water in the heavy atmosphere of the Dutch East Indies. When a power line loomed up ahead we tried to turn back, started hitting bushes and haystacks, and ended up in a crash about a mile off the end of the runway. It tore up the hull and broke a wing, but we had turned off the switches so it didn't catch fire. We all scrambled out safely and watched gasoline dripping out of a ruptured wing tank. The only casualty was our navigator, who had decided not to go along for the test hop. It seems he saw us crash in a cloud of dust and started running to the rescue. At that high altitude he soon passed out and was picked up by a passing Jeep.²⁸

For three months we stayed in Gura, waiting for repairs to the plane. It was like old home week, however, or the crossroads of Africa. Friends I had known years ago were now working for Douglas, Lockheed, Sperry-Rand, PAAF, PAAA, Curtiss-Wright, or the Army, and all showed up sooner or later. The billeting officer at the barracks had been purser on a U.S. Line ship when I had been on her a few years before. The man assigned to the next bunk to mine was Ed Chorlian, an old pal. I had stayed at his home in Alexandria years before when he worked at Western Electric and had set up Cairo's first radio broadcast station. At that time I was running to Alex as radio officer on the American Export line ships. Later, during the war we used to hear Ed as Cairo's CBS correspondent on the radio. But now American citizens had been ordered out by the U.S. Embassy, as Cairo was in grave danger from Rommel's army. So here Ed was in Gura, setting up a broadcast studio and sound system for this Douglas Aircraft facility. And then, in the latrine one day who should I meet but my Boston landlady's son, an Eastern Airlines pilot, Captain (later Colonel) Ollie Salmela. "What are you doing here?" I asked. "Flying for the Army. And what are you doing here?" "Flying for the Army," was my reply too. Radiomen and pilots were scarce in East Africa, so the Army asked us to fly for them while we were waiting for our plane to be repaired. Every week we would be off to Cairo or the desert airports, or to India with a plane-load of freight. We were flying for the Army, although we were not in the Army.

In Karachi we stayed at a Rajah's palace, which had been loaned to the British as a transient hotel for officers. On the Karachi trips we stopped to refuel at places like Aden, Mukalla, Salallah, and other small sheikdoms on the southern Arabian coast. We were warned not to get a forced landing in the desert as we might not survive if we fell



B-25C 41-12546 crew at Belem, Brazil, in May 1942. Left to right: copilot Beyeler, navigator Sheffield and Capt. Hal Sweet. (Don Thomas Photo)

into the hands of the bedouins. We had been taught to say in Arabic, "Take me to the English and you will be well rewarded." I already knew some Arabic from my merchant marine trips years before to Egypt—the words *impshe* and *yallah*. As both words meant roughly, "Get the hell out of here," my instructors didn't think that these were the right words to use if we were forced down in the desert.

After flying for the Army for three months or so, word came in December that the main wingspar for our plane had still not arrived. PAA Ferries had paid off most crews and we were about the last on the payroll. The Army by now had taken over ferrying of all aircraft, so we decided to return home for Christmas. It was just as well. Nine of the PBY-5As had been delivered to the Dutch, but they never got this one. We learned later that ours was all fixed up and put out on the flight line, then completely demolished when a P-40 fighter on a test flight flew into it. We finally arrived back in Miami just before Christmas, and I was one of the last to be paid off by PAA Ferries before it was disbanded.

Back home in Miami, now that the Army Air Force had taken over the ferrying job, PAAF pilots, copilots and navigators had mostly accepted commissions in the Air Force Transport Command. PAAF radio navigators had been offered jobs in many airlines, several of whom were contracting with the military to fly the Atlantic or Pacific, or over the hump to China from India with cargo planes. My friends all started flying the Pacific for United Air Lines, Consolidated, and other transocean routes of Eastern, American, TWA, American Export, and other contract carriers. By contracting out many of the cargo routes to private airlines the military was able to concentrate more of their strained resources on the ferrying, bombing, fighting, and training phases of the air war. I wanted to fly the Pacific like my friends, but preferred to fly with the Navy, so was commissioned in early 1943.

The small group of American mechanics and Brazilian personnel at Natal who serviced and launched approximately 14 different types of aircraft for PAAF, and assisted the Army Air Corps and Canadian flights, did an outstanding job and deserve a well-done.

Following is a list of the crashes during the ferry operations. The fatal accident ratio was less than one percent, which PAAF felt was a measure of the success of the operation. Also is given a complete list of the ferry flights, dates, aircraft number, captain, and final destination. This data, and some of the previous information, is from an operations report of PAA Ferries which is included in six volumes of data on the organization. These volumes were donated to the University of Miami Library by Frank Hankins, who was assistant

operations manager of PAAF. Most of the volumes are manuals for instruction in the engineering and navigation schools operated by PAAF. Few photographs of the actual ferried aircraft or the airports and other facilities along the routes are available anywhere, probably due to the necessary secrecy of the operation.

NOTES

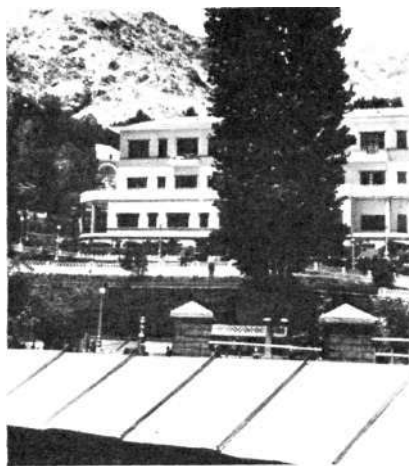
1. Pan American Airways was not known at that time as "Pan Am."
2. Jim Bledsoe after the war served as chief engineer for CNAC in China.
3. DeGamo was one of the original airmail pilots; flew DH-4s with a parachute strapped behind, and was one of the first Western Airlines pilots.
4. Jim Smart was later commander of a very large C-54 operation on the Hump route in India at Tezgaon.
5. Mackey, who previously had had a hand in organizing the North Atlantic ferry service for the RAF and was twice reported killed in ferry crashes, after the war started a very successful airline out of south Florida to the Bahamas, Mackey Airlines.
6. Just before the very first flight Ralph Inman was asked if he was scared. He replied, "Hell no, I'm trembling from enthusiastic excitement." Upon seeing Africa for the first time he said, "I always wanted to come to Africa. If I had paid my good money to see this, I would have been one sick son of a bitch."
7. The Gold Coast is now called Ghana.
8. Official dedication ceremonies were delayed until June 1, 1942.
9. Fernandez later became a colonel in charge of communications in the AAF Air Transport Command, later serving as aide to General "Rosy" O'Donnell in the Korean war, while "Pete" Fernandez, Jr., became a famous ace in that conflict.
10. Crawford will be best remembered as the author of the words and music for the "Army Air Corps," adopted as the Air Corps' song.
11. Commissioned in the Air Force, after WWII Prevost became maintenance supervisor for CNAC in China, went back on active duty during the Berlin airlift, and retired as a colonel.
12. The other two were lost in crashes the following year while flying for the Air Transport Command; the widow of one married the author's brother-in-law.
13. Wartime demand was for 150,000 radio telegraphers, but only 2500 were available, and all presently employed.
14. Sweet was famed as the pilot who flew out the DC-2.5 from a Japanese-controlled part of China under Japanese gunfire, after a downed DC-3 which had lost a wing could only be repaired with what was on hand, a DC-2 wing. Capt. Sweet, of Pasadena, California, also was famed as the CNAC pilot who flew General Waved and General Brett to Rangoon in Burma, landing there during a raid by 60 Japanese planes. The party miraculously escaped harm.
15. Beyeler, who flew three more ferry trips with PAAF as captain, was later lost on a flight from Ascension to Accra for the Air Corps Ferry Command when engine trouble was encountered and he had to ditch his plane in the ocean.
16. Piarco Guest House was finally completed about October 1, 1942, and is still being used as an overnight stop for Pan Am passengers and crews.
17. This was the date the U.S. Air Force took over ferrying of all aircraft from PAAF. The Grand Hotel was later acquired by Pan American Airways as the first of its Inter-continental Hotel system of over 50 hotels built or bought all over the world.
18. Linee Aeree Transcontinental Italiane.
19. The Axis respected Cairo, the Holy City of the Moslems, while the Allies were bypassing Rome, the Christian Holy City.
20. Several years later, when the author arrived at Teheran on a Skyways International C-46 and stayed at the best hotel in town the difference was notable. The hotel's toilet consisted of a hole in the floor with a raised concrete footprint on either side.
21. PAA's seaplane base terminal building is now Miami's City Hall.
22. The copilot was R.G. Howard.
23. *Nerita ascensionitis*, a large bleeding-tooth shell last collected by Captain Cook on his round-the-world exploration voyage 200 years ago, and lodged at the British Museum. Harvard's MCZ was delighted.
24. "Butterflies of Liberia," published by the Carnegie Museum at Pittsburgh, lists many butterflies caught by the author in Africa, including some new species.
25. Clausewitz perished later when his *Ventura* engine failed at sea. He and two crew members were killed and the plane destroyed trying to land on one engine at Cape Palmas, Nigeria. An airport manager later told me that he could have made the airport easily if he had kept altitude.
26. On previous trips the author had been negotiating in the bazaar in Cairo for a certain jewel box, inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl; he had been back twice and couldn't get the price low enough. This trip, however, Rommel was knocking at the doors of Cairo, and the box was bought at half price. Automobiles and other goods could be bought at giveaway prices. Then came El Alamein, and later the U.S. invasion of North Africa, and Cairo was safe once again.
27. Major Marrs died a few years ago. He was a General in charge of the Missouri Air National Guard. Gravis and Marrs were in charge of operations after being integrated into the 20th Ferrying Group of the AAF at Nashville, Tenn. Lieutenant (later Colonel) Jules Prevost served as assistant group maintenance officer there under Joe Mackey. He later was in charge of a flight of 24 C-46 Curtiss *Commandos* which was ferried to India.
28. The navigator was Charlie Price. After the war he still made occasional navigation trips for Aeronaves de Mexico to Spain, on leave from his job as a major in the Miami police department.

FERRY FLIGHTS

FLT.	DATE	SHIP NO.	CAPTAIN	DEST'N
1	6/22/41	NC25640	R. Inman	Lagos
	6/22/41	NC18993	Gravis	Lagos
	6/22/41	NC34900	Bledsoe	Lagos
	6/22/41	NC3138	Branson	Lagos
	6/22/41	NC1611	Marrs	Lagos
	6/22/41	NC33616	Menefee	Lagos
	6/22/41	NC25604	A. Inman	Lagos
	6/22/41	NC25630	Allison	Lagos
2	6/22/41	NC25631	Lyon	Lagos
	6/22/41	NC25632	Burke	Lagos
	7/25/41	NC14297	Menefee	Accra
	7/25/41	NC14277	R. Inman	Accra
	7/25/41	NC14278	Marrs	Accra
	7/25/41	NC25630	Cleveland	Accra
	7/25/41	NC33617	Burke	Accra
	7/25/41	NC25631	A. Inman	Accra
3	7/25/41	NC25633	Gravis	Accra
	9/25/41	US 8	Gravis	Accra
	9/25/41	US 9	Marrs	Accra
	9/25/41	US 10	Menefee	Accra
	9/25/41	NC14966	Bledsoe	Accra
	9/25/41	NC33642	Cleveland	Accra
	9/25/41	NC25623	R. Inman	Accra
4	10/24/41	N33653	A. Inman	Accra
	10/24/41	N33655	Neese	Accra
	10/24/41	N33675	DeGarmo	Accra
	10/24/41	N33675	DeGarmo	Accra
5	11/3/41	N13712	Cleveland	Accra
6	11/11/41	N18117	Mullins	Accra
7	11/15/41	NC21750	Mackey	Accra
8	12/7/41	N14280	Fricks	Accra
9	12/27/41	N-71-PBY	Cleveland	Soerabaja
10	12/31/41	N-72-PBY	Fricks	Calcutta
11	1/6/42	N-73-PBY	Cordova	Soerabaja
12	1/4/42	N-50-PBY	Brown	Soerabaja
13	1/9/42	Op. Bite	Lott	Brazil
14	1/15/42	N16094	DeGarmo	Accra
	1/15/42	N17313	Neese	Accra
15	1/17/42	41-29628	Bledsoe	Natal
	1/17/42	41	A. Inman	Accra
	1/17/42	41 29633	Mackey	Accra
16	1/30/42	41 29635	Clausewitz	Accra
	1/30/42	41 20078	Stanley	Accra
	1/30/42	41 20079	R. Inman	Accra
	1/30/42	41 20080	Fischer	Accra
17	2/15/42	41 20059	DeGarmo	Accra
	2/15/42	41 20081	Wedge	Accra
	2/15/42	41 20058	A. Inman	Accra
	2/16/42	41 20085	R.E. Jones	Calcutta
19	2/17/42	41 20083	Bledsoe	Calcutta
	2/17/42	41 20082	Bennett	Accra
	2/17/42	41 20084	Cleveland	Accra
20	2/22/42	42 6505	Stanley	Accra
	2/22/42	41 16082	Clausewitz	Accra
	2/26/42	42 20099	McCurley	Cairo
21	2/26/42	41 14297	Silverthorne	Accra
	2/26/42	20057		



Home from Africa, Don Thomas, PAAF radio navigator in 1942. Baby is now second secretary, American Embassy, Bangkok, 1983. (Don Thomas Photo)



The Shah's palace at Teheran, Iran. Used as officers' quarters for ferry crews. They made the Shah move down the street. (Don Thomas)

22	3/5/42	41-7725	Leyshon	Accra
	3/5/42	41-7730	Davis	Accra
	3/5/42	41-20101	Wedge	Accra
	3/5/42	41-7726	Corben	Accra
	3/5/42	41-7722	Kendall	Accra
23	3/6/42	41-12459	Fricks	Basra
	3/6/42	41-12461	Mackey	Basra
24	3/7/42	41-12469	R. Inman	Basra
25	3/8/42	41-14298	H.J. Brown	Accra
	3/8/42	41-7723	Tremayne	Accra
	3/8/42	41-7728	Bennett	Accra
26	3/11/42	41-12463	DeGarmo	Basra
	3/11/42	41-12467	Neese	Natal
27	3/17/42	41-29629	McCurley	Accra
	3/17/42	41-20113	Lansing	Accra
	3/17/42	41-20105	Bledsoe	Accra
	3/17/42	41-7727	Cummings	Accra
	3/17/42	41-20109	Rodick	Accra
	3/17/42	41-20103	Chandler	Accra
	3/17/42	41-7738	McKenney	Accra
	3/17/42	41-7729	Silverthorne	Accra
	3/17/42	41-20111	Ezell	Accra
	3/17/42	41-29627	Clausewitz	Ret. Miami
28	3/20/42	41-20115	Mills	Accra
	3/20/42	41-20117	Emerson	Accra
29	3/21/42	41-29626	Stanley	Ret. Miami
30	4/3/42	41-12591	Mullins	Basra
	4/3/42	41-12518	Cordova	Crashed
31	4/4/42	41-29626	Cummings	Accra
	4/4/42	41-29636	Gephart	Accra
	4/4/42	41-29632	Bledsoe	Accra
	4/4/42	41-29630	Bach	Accra
32	4/4/42	41-12519	Brown	Basra
33	4/8/42	41-12479	Gravis	Basra
	4/8/42	41-12525	Fischer	Basra
34	4/9/42	41-12477	Ezell	Basra
35	4/11/42	41-29641	Bennett	Accra
	4/11/42	41-29645	Bateman	Accra
	4/11/42	41-29631	T.I. Davis	Accra
	4/11/42	41-29643	McGinley	Incomplete
	4/11/42	41-29640	J.E. Haynes	Incomplete
36	4/13/42	41-12473	Cleveland	Basra
	4/13/42	41-12517	Rodick	Basra
	4/13/42	41-12475	Tremayne	Basra
37	4/19/42	41-29644	Smart	Accra
	4/19/42	41-29642	Stanley	Accra
38	4/20/42	41-12521	A. Inman	Basra
	4/20/42	41-12553	Mackey	Basra
39	4/21/42	41-12351	Corben	Basra
40	4/23/42	41-12471	R. Inman	Basra
	4/23/42	41-12548	DeGarmo	Basra
41	4/24/42	41-12593	Cramer	Basra
	4/24/42	41-12547	Marrs	Basra
	4/24/42	41-12549	Fricks	Basra
42	4/25/42	41-12555	Chandler	Basra
	4/25/42	41-12550	Kendall	Basra
43	4/26/42	41-12563	Greer	Basra
	4/28/42	41-12556	Mills	Basra
	4/26/42	41-12594	Bach	Basra

44	5/1/42	41-12586	Bledsoe	Basra
	5/1/42	41-12546	Sweet	Basra
	5/1/42	41-12557	Wedge	Basra
45	5/1/42	41-12554	Hays	Basra
46	5/6/42	41-29627	Clausewitz	Cairo
	5/6/42	41-29643	B.T. Jones	Cairo
	5/6/42	42-6457	Emerson	Accra
47	5/6/42	41-7760	R.L. Haynes	Accra
48	5/7/42	41-20134	Lansing	Calcutta
	5/7/42	41-20132	H.J. Brown	Calcutta
49	5/10/42	41-12706	Ezell	Basra
	5/10/42	41-12707	F.L. Brown	Basra
	5/10/42	41-12569	Fischer	Basra
	5/10/42	41-12383	Mullins	Basra
50	5/14/42	41-29647	Lott	Cairo
	5/14/42	42-6455	Cummings	Accra
51	5/15/42	41-12526	Davis	Tehran
	5/15/42	41-12564	Smart	Tehran
	5/15/42	41-12711	Wynn	Natal
	5/15/42	41-12522	Gravis	Ret. Miami
52	5/17/42	42-6475	Silverthorne	Calcutta
53	5/19/42	42-6479	McGinley	Cairo
	5/19/42	41-12520	Tremayne	Tehran
	5/19/42	41-12530	Mackey	Tehran
	5/19/42	42-6481	Stanley	Cairo
	5/19/42	41-12708	Rodick	Tehran
54	5/23/42	42-6477	Leyshon	Karachi
55	5/24/42	41-12588	Gravis	Basra
56	5/26/42	41-29639	Flanagan	Cairo
	5/26/42	41-29637	Deuel	Cairo
57	5/29/42	41-12744	Fricks	Tehran
	5/29/42	41-12753	Wedge	Basra
	5/29/42	41-12752	Bledsoe	Tehran
58	5/29/42	41-12552	DeGarmo	Tehran
	5/29/42	41-12742	Cramer	Tehran
59	5/30/42	41-12584	Hays	Tehran
	5/30/42	41-12743	R. Inman	Tehran
	5/30/42	41-12749	Mills	Tehran
60	6/1/42	41-12528	Ezell	Tehran
	6/1/42	41-12710	Chandler	Tehran
	6/1/42	41-12534	Marrs	Tehran
	6/1/42	41-12537	F.L. Brown	Tehran
	6/1/42	41-12747	Mullins	Tehran
	6/1/42	41-12745	Kendall	Tehran
	6/1/42	41-12715	Sweet	Tehran
61	6/5/42	41-12562	Bach	Tehran
	6/5/42	41-12751	Cleveland	Tehran
	6/5/42	41-12746	A. Inman	Tehran
62	6/11/42	41-12712	Fischer	Tehran
	6/11/42	41-12713	Emerson	Tehran
	6/11/42	41-12750	Wynn	Tehran
	6/11/42	41-12714	Erdman	Tehran
	6/11/42	41-12559	Sporrer	Tehran
63	6/11/42	41-29646	Wantz	Cairo
64	6/17/42	AE 778	B.T. Jones	Accra
65	6/17/42	41-29640	E.E. Davis	Cairo
66	6/18/42	AE 727	Clausewitz	Accra
	6/18/42	AE 786	McCurley	Khartoum
	6/18/42	AE 791	Bennett	Khartoum
67	6/19/42	41-12522	Tremayne	Tehran
	6/19/42	41-12457	Mackey	Tehran
	6/19/42	41-12709	Rodick	Tehran
	6/19/42	41-12748	Smart	Tehran
68	6/21/42	AE 735	Farrow	Accra
	6/21/42	AE 766	Cummings	Marshall
69	6/22/42	AE 808	Gephart	Accra
70	6/23/42	AE 770	Clarke	Accra
71	6/25/42	41-12705	Leonard	Tehran
72	6/26/42	41-38584	Brannan	Cairo
73	6/28/42	41-12587	Mills	Tehran
74	6/29/42	42-6588	Hawkins	Cairo
	6/29/42	42-46945	Bateman	Khartoum
	6/29/42	42-6678	Derryberry	Khartoum
	6/29/42	42-6672	Webber	Cairo
	6/29/42	42-6657	Clevenger	Cairo
	6/29/42	42-6670	J.E. Haynes	Cairo
	6/29/42	42-46937	Lansing	Cairo
	6/29/42	42-6674	H.J. Brown	Khartoum
75	6/29/42	42-6500	McDonald	Chunking
	6/29/42	42-6502	O'Neal	Cairo
76	6/30/42	42-6680	Stanley	Cairo
	6/30/42	42-46941	McKenney	Cairo
	6/30/42	42-6652	H. Johnson	Cairo

	6/30/42	42-6590	McGinley	Cairo
77	7/1/42	42-6647	Amerkanian	crash
78	7/2/42	42-6598	Gravis	Khartoum
	7/2/42	42-6656	Moomaw	Cairo
	7/2/42	42-6643	Flanagan	Cairo
	7/2/42	42-46939	Lott	Cairo
	7/2/42	42-6585	Bledsoe	Cairo
79	7/3/42	AE765	Silverthorne	Accra
	7/3/42	42-6679	Leyshon	Cairo
	7/3/42	42-6654	Mullins	Cairo
	7/3/42	42-6650	Fricks	Cairo
80	7/4/42	42-6584	Cramer	Cairo
	7/4/42	42-46938	F.L. Brown	Cairo
	7/4/42	42-46942	McCurley	Cairo
	7/4/42	42-6660	Stell	Cairo
81	7/4/42	41-29634	McCoy	Cairo
82	7/5/42	42-46944	B.T. Jones	Cairo
	7/5/42	42-6673	Marrs	Cairo
	7/5/42	42-6664	Fowlie	Cairo
	7/5/42	42-6589	Ayers	crash
83	7/8/42	42-6586	Sweet	Cairo
	7/8/42	42-6653	Farrow	Cairo
	7/8/42	42-46946	Fischer	Cairo
	7/8/42	42-46943	Spillman	Cairo
	7/8/42	42-6677	Wedge	Cairo
	7/8/42	42-6240	R. Inman	Cairo
	7/8/42	42-6644	A. Inman	Cairo
	7/8/42	42-6663	Cleveland	Cairo
84	7/11/42	42-6669	A.T. Davis	Asmara
	7/11/42	42-6597	Beyeler	Cairo
85	7/12/42	AE 783	Silverthorne	Trinidad
	7/12/42	AE 777	Clarke	Accra
	7/12/42	AE772	Clausewitz	Accra
	7/12/42	42-46948	Chandler	Cairo
86	7/15/42	42-6501	Kendall	Chunking
87	7/16/42	42-6596	Amerkanian	Cairo
88	7/16/42	41-29638	Wentz	Cairo
89	7/17/42	42-6646	Levert	Asmara
90	7/18/42	42-47373	T.I. Davis	Accra
	7/18/42	42-47377	Goodsell	Accra
	7/18/42	42-47376	Tremayne	Accra
91	7/20/42	AE 832	Stanley	Accra
92	7/21/42	AE836	Erdmann	Accra
	7/21/42	AE 718	Stuart	Accra
	7/21/42	AE 820	DeGarmo	Accra
	7/21/42	AE838	Rodieck	Accra
	7/21/42	AE814	Gephart	Accra
93	7/22/42	AE823	Bennett	Accra
	7/22/42	AE 827	Ezell	Accra
94	7/23/42	AE 752	Bach	Accra
	7/23/42	AE 710	Hays	Accra
95	7/24/42	41-12953	Emerson	Tehran
	7/24/42	AE809	Wynn	Accra
	7/24/42	42-6635	Derryberry	Asmara
	7/24/42	AE 807	Hawkins	Accra
	7/24/42	AE 769	Webber	Accra
96	7/25/42	42-46963	Reed	Asmara
	7/25/42	42-47017	Chewning	Asmara
	7/25/42	AE 741	Mackey	Accra
97	7/26/42	42-46967	EC. Davis	Asmara
	7/26/42	AE804	H.J. Brown	Accra
98	7/27/42	AE800	J.E. Haynes	Accra
	7/27/42	AE 757	Bateman	Accra
	7/27/42	AE801	McGinley	Accra
	7/27/42	AE 704	Lansing	Accra
99	7/28/42	42-46953	Stell	Asmara
100	7/28/42	41-7357	Gravis	Cairo
	7/28/42	41-7370	Fricks	Cairo
	7/28/42	41-38581	O'Neal	Accra
	7/28/42	41-38583	Leyshon	Accra
	7/28/42	41-18402	Flanagan	Accra
101	7/30/42	AE 766	Moomaw	Accra
	7/30/42	AE 826	Clausewitz	Accra
	7/30/42	AE 700	B.T. Jones	Accra
102	7/30/42	41-7356	Mills	Cairo
	7/30/42	41-18401	Brannan	Accra
103	7/31/42	AE789	McKenney	Accra
	7/31/42	42-47012	Spillman	Asmara
104	8/1/42	AE802	Lott	Accra
	8/1/42	AE816	Farrow	Accra
	8/1/42	42-47015	McCoy	Cairo
105	8/1/42	41-38582	Goodsell	Accra
106	8/2/42	42-47013	Fowlie	Cairo

107	8/3/42	41-7413	Mullins	Cairo
	8/3/42	41-7372	F.L. Brown	Cairo
108	8/5/42	AE 754	Stanley	Accra
109	8/6/42	42-47011	Beyeler	Cairo
110	8/7/42	AE844	Silverthorne	Accra
	8/7/42	AE924	J.W. Clarke	Accra
	8/7/42	AE 830	Hays	Accra
	8/7/42	AE835	Smart	Accra
	8/7/42	AE 817	Tremayne	Accra
111	8/7/42	42-7392	Marrs	Cairo
112	8/8/42	AE 896	Hawkins	Accra
	8/8/42	42-47042	Deuel	Cairo
	8/8/42	AE 815	Ezell	Accra
	8/8/42	AE 897	Chandler	Accra
	8/8/42	AE775	Cramer	Accra
	8/8/42	AE812	Howarth	Accra
	8/8/42	AE 828	Wedge	Accra
113	8/9/42	AE843	Wynn	Accra
	8/9/42	AE 900	Gephart	Accra
	8/9/42	42-47032	Fischer	Asmara
	8/9/42	42-47044	H.J. Brown	Asmara
	8/9/42	AE 739	Webber	Accra
	8/9/42	AE 885	Erdman	Accra
	8/9/42	42-47025	Bach	Cairo
114	8/10/42	AE 709	Bateman	Accra
	8/10/42	42-47037	R. Inman	Natal
	8/10/42	42-47049	DeGarmo	Asmara
115	8/11/42	41-7305	T.I. Davis	Cairo
116	8/12/42	42-6681	Wantz	Natal
	8/12/42	AE 914	Mackey	Accra
117	8/12/42	41-18400	Brannan, L.	Accra
118	9/13/42	41-18403	Flannagan	Accra
119	8/14/42	42-47041	A.T. Davis	Cairo
120	8/14/42	41-7831	Brannan, J.	Accra
	8/14/42	41-38579	O'Neal	Accra
121	8/15/42	42-47034	Levert	Natal
	8/15/42	42-6645	Clevenger	Cairo
	8/15/42	42-47030	Amerkanian	Cairo
	8/15/42	AE 951	McCurley	Accra
122	8/16/42	AE712	Moomaw	Accra
123	8/17/42	42-47033	Farrow	Asmara
	8/17/42	AE 786	B.T. Jones	Accra
124	8/17/42	41-7424	A. Inman	Cairo
125	8/18/42	42-47048	Leyshon	Cairo
126	8/19/42	41-7390	F.L. Brown	Cairo
127	8/20/42	41-7411	Bledsoe	Natal
	8/20/42	41-7739	Goodsell	Accra
	8/20/42	41-7754	Anthony	Accra
128	8/21/42	AE903	Rodieck	Accra
129	8/22/42	42-6609	Southard	Cairo
	8/22/42	AE 837	J.E. Haynes	Accra
	8/22/42	41-7434	Gravis	Cairo
	8/22/42	41-7393	Fricks	Cairo
130	8/24/42	AE841	Lott	Accra
131	8/25/42	AE 906	Clausewitz	crash
132	8/25/42	41-7378	Ezell	Cairo
	8/25/42	41-7361	Cramer	Cairo
	8/25/42	42-15890	Gephart	Karachi
133	8/28/42	42-6655	E.E. Davis	Cairo
	8/28/42	AE 915	Derryberry	Accra
134	8/30/42	41-7382	Smart	Cairo
135	9/1/42	41-7388	Hays	Palestine
	9/1/42	41-7369	Tremayne	Cairo
136	9/2/42	AE898	Erdmann	Accra
137	9/4/42	41-7405	Gravis	Khartoum
138	9/5/42	AE 904	Mackey	Accra
139	9/6/42	41-7363	Mills	Palestine
	9/6/42	AE 810	McCurley	Natal
140	9/7/42	41-3033	J.W. Clarke	Abadan
141	9/8/42	41-7360	Webber	Belem
	9/8/42	41-3036	Chandler	Lawyer
	9/8/42	41-7351	Wedge	Accra
	9/8/42	41-2942	Stell	Abadan
142	9/9/42	41-7377	Spillman	Khartoum
	9/9/42	41-3029	Silverthorne	Basra
143	9/10/42	41-7419	Bledsoe	Accra
	9/10/42	41-3027	Brannan, L.	Lawyer
	9/10/42	41-3070	Moomaw	Abadan
144	9/11/42	AE891	Bristow	Accra
	9/11/42	41-7433	Bach	Palestine
145	9/12/42	AE888	Hawkins	Accra

146	9/13/42	41-7375	Fisher	Khartoum
	9/13/42	AE909	B.T. Jones	Accra
147	9/14/42	41-3024	Chewning	Accra
	9/14/42	41-3056	H.J. Brown	Abadan
	9/14/42	41-7401	R. Inman	crash
148	9/15/42	AE901	DaVania	Accra
	9/15/42	42-6651	Brannan, J.	Cairo
	9/15/42	41-3019	J.H. Hall	Abadan
	9/15/42	41-3018	Beyeler	Basra
149	9/16/42	41-3015	Howarth	Basra
150	9/17/42	41-3020	Peteler	Basra
	9/17/42	41-3026	Blevans	Basra
151	9/18/42	41-3121	Stanley	Accra
152	9/19/42	41-3025	Hix	Accra
153	9/20/42	41-3042	Lynott	Basra
	9/20/42	41-3057	Hamp	Basra
154	9/21/42	41-3035	Deuel	Natal
155	9/24/42	41-2703	Derryberry	Abadan
	9/24/42	41-3039	Clevenger	Basra
	9/24/42	41-3049	Wantz	Abadan
	9/24/42	41-3062	Levert	Basra
156	9/25/42	41-3122	Goodsell	Basra
	9/25/42	41-3032	Kendall	Basra
	9/25/42	41-7366	Cramer	Khartoum
157	9/27/42	41-2813	McCoy	Basra
	9/27/42	41-3030	Bateman	crash
158	9/27/42	42-15889	Sweet	Calcutta
159	9/28/42	44-3061	A.T. Davis	Abadan
160	9/29/42	41-3108	Silverthorne	Basra
	9/29/42	41-7414	DeGarmo	Khartoum
161	10/2/42	41-2912	McGinley	Accra
	10/2/42	41-2742	Lott	Basra
	10/2/42	41-3071	B.T. Jones	Basra
162	10/3/42	41-2939	McCurley	Basra
163	10/4/42	41-2944	Rodieck	Basra
	10/4/42	41-3053	Sporrer	Natal
	10/4/42	41-2909	Faulkner	Cairo
	10/4/42	41-3041	Jensen	Basra
164	10/5/42	41-2738	Frugoli	Cairo
	10/5/42	41-18556	Tremayne	Accra
165	10/6/42	41-2946	Rundie	Basra
	10/6/42	41-2933	Granere	Abadan
166	10/7/42	41-2739	Amerkanian	Abadan
	10/7/42	41-2722	Spillman	Abadan
167	10/8/42	41-3077	Couer	Abadan
	10/8/42	41-2945	Elliot	Basra
	10/8/42	41-2822	Farrow	crash
168	10/9/42	42-47122	DaVania	Freetown
	10/9/42	41-3105	Hawkins	Basra
	10/9/42	41-2734	Leyshon	Accra
	10/9/42	41-3118	Walmsley	Abadan
	10/9/42	41-3109	M.C. Hall	Abadan
	10/9/42	41-3076	Carte	Cairo
	10/9/42	41-2841	Marrs	Abadan
	10/9/42	41-38584	Mitchell	Accra
169	10/10/42	41-2743	Miller, J.	Abadan
	10/10/42	41-3050	Veatch	Basra
	10/10/42	41-3115	Miller, B.	Basra
	10/10/42	41-3120	Poe	Basra
	10/10/42	42-47139	Bledsoe	Freetown
	10/10/42	42-47134	Fisher	Freetown
	10/10/42	42-47131	Gravis	Freetown
	10/10/42	42-47145	Smart	Freetown
	10/10/42	42-47147	Mills	Freetown
170	10/11/42	41-2725	Springer	Abadan
171	10/11/42	Y-82-PBY	McKenney	Colombo
172	10/12/42	41-3082	Caton	Basra
	10/12/42	41-3106	Crawford	Abadan
	10/12/42	41-3037	Kivett	Abadan
	10/12/42	41-2701	Penn	Abadan
173	10/13/42	42-47159	B.T. Jones	Freetown
	10/13/42	42-47161	Wedge	Freetown
	10/13/42	41-3123	Cauthen	Basra
	10/13/42	41-2836	Orozco	Basra
	10/13/42	41-3043	Moomaw	Abadan
174	10/13/42	Y-80-PBY	F.L. Brown	Colombo
175	10/14/42	42-47154	Ezell	Freetown
	10/14/42	42-47136	Mullins	Freetown
	10/14/42	41-2839	Dandison	Basra
176	10/14/42	Y-81-PBY	Stell	crash
	10/14/42	Y-84-PBY	Bach	Colombo
177	10/15/42	42-47133	Webber	Freetown
	10/15/42	41-2747	Creswell	Abadan

178	10/16/42	42-47124	Roach	Freetown	183	10/21/42	41-3228	McGinley	Basra	189	10/27/42	41-3226	Wantz	Basra
	10/16/42	42-47132	Anthony	Freetown		10/21/42	41-2959	Blevans	Basra		10/27/42	41-3277	Smith	Basra
	10/16/42	42-47157	Hix	Freetown		10/21/42	41-3209	Clarke	Basra					
	10/16/42	41-3040	West	Basra		10/21/42	41-2715	Bateman	Basra	190	10/28/42	41-3219	Mills	Basra
	10/16/42	41-2728	Haynes	Abadan		10/21/42	41-2938	Gephart	Basra		10/28/42	41-3234	Wilkinson	Basra
	10/16/42	41-2820	Brannan, L.	Basra		10/21/42	42-47142	Cramer	Freetown		10/28/42	41-2958	Qarver	Basra
179	10/17/42	42-47135	Swanson	Freetown	184	10/22/42	42-47126	Carley	Freetown		10/28/42	41-3200	Tilden	Basra
	10/17/42	42-47130	Allyn	Freetown		10/22/42	41-3257	Hamp	Basra		10/28/42	41-3220	Hix	Basra
	10/17/42	41-2798	Brannan, J.	Abadan		10/22/42	42-47015	Chandler	Freetown	191	10/29/42	42-47155	Davis, T.	Freetown
	10/17/42	41-2943	Stuart	Basra		10/22/42	41-3276	Hays	Basra		10/29/42	41-3218	Miller	Basra
	10/17/42	41-2783	Brown, H.J.	Basra							10/29/42	41-2837	B.T. Jones	Basra
180	10/18/42	42-47129	Silverthorne	Freetown	185	10/23/42	41-3214	Pitman	Basra		10/29/42	41-3235	Swanson	Basra
	10/18/42	42-47141	Smallwood	Freetown		10/23/42	41-3204	Covan	Basra		10/29/42	41-3229	Walmsley	Basra
	10/18/42	42-47152	Crawford	Freetown		10/23/42	41-3223	Mitchell	Basra	192	10/30/42	41-3207	Davis, A.	Basra
	10/18/42	42-47143	Mackey	Freetown							10/30/42	41-3023	Allyn	Basra
	10/18/42	42-47127	Brockway	Freetown	186	10/23/42	41-3231	Beyeler	Basra		10/30/42	41-3232	Granere	Basra
	10/18/42	41-2823	Hall	Habbaniyeh	187	10/24/42	41-3230	Matheson	Accra		10/30/42	41-2950	Couer	Basra
	10/18/42	Y-83-PBY	Fricks	Colombo		10/24/42	41-3197	Bell	Basra		10/30/42	41-3124	Derryberry	Basra
181	10/19/42	42-47123	O'Neal	Freetown		10/24/42	41-3224	Fisher	Basra	193	10/31/42	41-2910	Levert	Basra
	10/19/42	41-3028	Tamposi	Basra	188	10/25/42	42-47140	Davis, E.	Freetown		10/31/42	41-2724	Crawford	Basra
	10/19/42	41-3213	Peteler	Basra		10/25/42	41-3114	Boettner	Basra		10/31/42	41-3054	Smart	Basra
	10/19/42	41-3101	Southard	Basra		10/25/42	41-3021	Howarth	Basra		10/31/42	41-2940	Webber	Basra
182	10/20/42	41-23253	Goodsell	Natal		10/25/42	41-3276	DaVania	Basra	194	10/31/42	Y-85-PBY	Marrs	Colombo

FERRY FLIGHT CRASHES

LOCATION/DATE	NO. AND TYPE	PROBABLE CAUSE	PERSONNEL	INJURIES
Natal, Brazil 1/21/42	U.S. 2145 Lodestar C-60	Brakes not unlocked prior to landing.	J. Tremayne J.L. Bledsoe	None—slight damage right wing.
Natal, Brazil 3/14/42	41-12467 B-25C	Crashed 3 minutes after takeoff.	K.W. Neese L.A. DeRosia H.S. Jones J.F. Anderson	All killed, and plane destroyed.
Oshogbo, Nigeria 4/12/42	41-12518 B-26C	Crashed into mountain in thunderstorm.	F. Cordova R. Murray Lt. D.R. Whipple M.Sgt. H.R. Kent	All killed, and plane destroyed.
Marshall, Liberia 6/25/42	AE 766 Ventura B-34	Landed on beach, out of fuel.	W.S. Cummings E. DeLam R.W. Dale	Only minor. Plane badly damaged.
Marshall, Liberia 7/7/42	No. 6647 Hudson A-28A	Turned off runway to avoid ldg plane.	J. Amerkanian J.H. Stuart J.B. Brickell L.L. Dawkins	Slight burns. Plane burned.
Kano, Nigeria 7/8/42	42-6643 (M.S. 6818) Hudson A-28A	Hurricane passed underneath & clipped landing gear.	O.F. Flanagan R.W. Davania J.B. Tompkins	None—plane slightly damaged.
Natal, Brazil 7/8/42	NC 42-6589 Hudson A-28A	Took off steeply, stalled & spun in.	M.R. Ayers W.A. McCurdy W.J. Morrissey	All killed. Plane burned.
Cape Palmas, Liberia 8/29/42	No. 906 (4349) Ventura B-34	Engine failed 2 hrs at sea. Tried 1 eng. landing to save plane.	E.F. Clausewitz E.C. Kail N.L. Corley, Jr.	All killed. Plane burned.
Between Vario & Kaduna, Nigeria 9/19/42	41-7401 B-26	Both engines out at 11,000 ft. Landed on riverbank. Contaminated fuel in tank.	R.R. Inman R.G. Howard E.R. Christie H.M. Vanderver	Cuts & bruises for all. Serious leg burns on Vanderver
Ft. Liberty, Haiti 9/27/42	No. 13030 A-20	All oil consumed in engine—on fire in air.	F.S. Bateman A.S. Baldwin	Plane burned. Crew parachuted.
100 miles SE Elobeid 9/26/42	A-20 41-2894	Out of fuel. Landed open field. Hit rock.	D.H. Southard R.M. Sage	No injuries. Nose & props smashed.
Nasiriya, Iraq 10/6/42	41-3035 A-20	Dust storm. Hit unmarked ditch in field.	R.P. Deuel F.L. Graham	Back strain & leg bruises. Landing gear & nose damage.
Unknown, out of Accra. 10/13/42	41-2822 A-20B		D.M. Farrow J.H. Barenthaler	
Gura, Eritrea 10/14/42	Y-81 PBY-5A	Crashed on test hop. Overloaded.	M.W. Stell E. Shaffer J. Johansen W.D. Thomas	No injuries. Wing broken, hull badly damaged.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Don Thomas has spent a lifetime in radio communications, with 13 years as radio officer on tankers, freighters, fishing trawlers, and cruise liners, including many transatlantic liners. He was chief radio officer on the SS *Washington*, largest U.S. liner at that time. He worked at shore stations for RCA and Tropical Radio in the U.S. and Central America. During World War II he was radio navigator with PAA Ferries, ferrying bombers to Africa and the Middle East, later being commissioned in the

Naval Reserve as air navigation instructor at Pensacola NAS. After the war he served in the U.S. Foreign Service in Spain, Indonesia, Panama, Taiwan, Brazil, and Washington, with temporary duty in Nicaragua, Honduras and the Dominican Republic, and in Vietnam and Thailand during the Vietnam War.

Since retirement he raises tropical birds, collects butterflies in the tropics, and is the world authority on pioneer airline baggage labels and timetables.