



Australian Vintage Aeroplane News

Newsletter of Queensland Vintage Aeroplane Group / Australian Flying Museum Inc.



Above: The Grumman Avenger fires up at the Ingham Wings and Wheels Airshow 2011. (Photo: Dirk Mohrmann).

Message from the Editors:

- Have you something to share with our other members?
- Would you like to contribute to **your** newsletter?
- Do you have something to sell? Place an ad in our Classifieds!
- Just send your articles and pics to: info@qvag.com.au

Membership Matters

- If you know someone who would like to join, there is now an **on-line membership form** on our web-site.
- If you refer a new Full Member to the Group, we will give you a **stainless steel insulated mug** in return!

**The last Mystery Aircraft
was an Ornithopter Model
No. 1 and the winner was
Tim Heyman.**

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Above: Cessna 195's VH-BVD and VH-KES over Kilcoy. (Photo - Mal Shipton).

**Check out
our website:**

www.qvag.com.au

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

Greetings and best wishes for 2012. I am looking forward to the flying calendar for events for this year.

Kilcoy Kapers Sunday 26 February 2012. **Wondai** - hosted by Barambah Aero Club for lunch. April 15 (Easter is Sun 8). **Best of British Fly-In** Event 9 & 10 June 2012 combined with the MG Car Club where the vehicles will race a steam loco incorporating a trip to Goondiwindi. **Fly-in lunch** hosted by Gympie Flying Club 19 August. **Kingaroy Peanut Festival Ball** 27/28 October 2012 (Wings of Yester-year).

Unfortunately I will not be able to attend Kilcoy Kapers as I will be in WA for that week.

These are a few of the events to whet the appetite of any vintage aeroplane operator and part of approach to engender interest in our group with exposure to different localities! For those enthusiasts who do not have an aircraft, no problem, we will endeavour to organise a flight for those people.

Part of the maintenance programme on the QVAG clubhouse at Watts Bridge was carried out at the working bee late last year and was a success. We had all the committee participating with a few other member stalwarts to assist and all the tasks were completed by mid-afternoon Sunday the second day.

The aim was to carry out repairs – decommission all the refrigerators - pest proof the building - spray weeds – garden tidy – upgrade security locks – switch off electrical supply at our power box to save electricity costs.

QVAG has no Watts Bridge activities planned for 2012 due to the airfield management com-

mittee and its constraints on our activities.

We have a new Museum Bus organised for our memorabilia marketing which should be in operation early this year. This is a great support asset for our group.

Our last General Meeting held at Caboolture Airfield at 10:00 hours on Sunday 15th January 2012 was well attended by the committee and members and achieved a positive outcome of some of the current issues.

Mal Shipton (Vice-President) introduced Dion Pastars to the meeting. He had some positive suggestions regarding joint aircraft ownership which has been taken on board and will be promoted by QVAG.

I would like to suggest a further aspect of aircraft ownership – let us promote the group acquisition of rebuild projects, which was the main activity of this group at its inception many years ago.

I commend to the membership to organise a small group and get that joint-owner project going whether it be a serviceable aircraft or restoration project.

There is currently a membership restoration project progressing at Redcliffe Aerodrome on DH-104 Dove VH-DHI. Call in at the hangar and witness what can be done when a group applies enthusiasm and hard work.

We need to seriously look at attracting more, younger members to our group. Our exposure at the different localities this year may attract some of the younger members of the community.

Don't forget we need membership feedback to guide our committee and carry out the needs of

the Group. We do need member input in the form of Letters to the Editor in this newsletter.

All items and submissions for the AVAN newsletter are to be submitted to committee prior to access by the newsletter editor – please no material direct to the editor as he then has to pass it back to committee for approval.

Also those of you that have not renewed your membership please assist the secretary and the Group by renewing your membership promptly – we cannot run this organisation without the finances!!

On a more serious note I wish to highlight a recent event in a Case & Judgment in the District Court (NSW)! It concerns a Claim and Judgment against Roy Fox (DH.89 Dragon Rapide -VH-UTV)! This will take some time to read and I think that it is important for you folk to take the time to do just that and be aware of the hazards of aircraft operations and litigation !

This to me is yet another ridiculous claim awarded by a judge yet the ramifications are dire - Roy is over half a million dollars poorer in this particular instance!! The info provided in the link below gives all the details - **h t t p : / / www.caselaw.nsw.gov.au/action/PJUDG?jgmtid=156621**

In closing I would like to remind the membership that we need to focus all our efforts on the aviation activities and camaraderie and not become focused on politics within or outside the group. The aim of our organisation is to enjoy and foster Vintage Aviation.

**Safe Flying and Restoring,
PJ (Pat Harrington)**

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT

I trust everyone had a great Christmas break and is back to the 2012 grindstone refreshed.

The new year brings both hope and challenge for QVAG. Our first event is at Kilcoy on Feb. 26.

Lunch will be catered and we will have an aircraft available as well as photographers to capture that special image of your baby.

The countryside looks at its absolute best with green rolling

FOR SALE



New flying suit, size LARGE \$75.
Contact Mal Shipton via e-mail gipsybiplane@gmail.com.

hills and even the Floods Enquiry agreeing that Lake Somerset is full.

The Kilcoy strip is also a picture after the recent heavy rain.

There are still a few balls in the air regarding the Wings of Yesterday event at the end of October at Kingaroy, as to the format it may take, however it will be a very enjoyable weekend.

Plenty of motels in town and great hospitality right on the field at the Soaring Club.

Dion Pastars is taking expressions of interest in a Fractional Ownership of a biplane.

There is already commitment from a number of folk for the venture, so consider the option of enjoying 90% the benefits of a vintage aircraft for just 10% the outlay.

This could be a great way to get more members as well as a greater vintage aircraft population in SE Queensland. With our dollar well above parity, there

are a lot of really tempting toys in the US that could be landed here for an attractive price also.

A timely reminder that our sister organization, the AAAA has its National Fly In at Cowra on the weekend of 24/25 March. What better reason to lodge a pre ballot vote?

A challenge we face is lacklustre support from the wider membership. We are bound by the special magic that our old airplanes have yet our events are not specially well attended and there seems little interest in the running of QVAG.

Please remember without your support the organization is in real danger of just fading away. I don't mean to labour the point but have said it a number of times.

To end on a bright note, what could be better than Dion Pastars' C195 over the lovely landscape around Kilcoy?

**Blue skies and tailwinds,
Mal Shipton VP**



Above: Dion Pastars' Cessna 195 over Kilcoy. (Photo - Mal Shipton).

PAN-AM CLIPPER OPERATIONS - 7 DECEMBER 1941

On the morning of December 7, 1941, every Pan American Airways (PAA) Captain, and in the case of the long distance flying boats, "Master of Ocean Flying Boats", carried a locked black company leather flight case next to him in the cockpit of the aircraft.

In this case he would carry his flight-plan as determined by the PAA dispatch and meteorology departments, check-lists, manuals and other essential documents. He also carried a sealed envelope that had large, back letters stenciled on it - "PLAN A - TOP SECRET - FOR CAPTAIN'S EYES ONLY".

Pan American management had worked with the Army and Navy to formulate a contingency plan in the possible eventuality of an outbreak of hostilities between the United States and Japan.

PAA's large flying boat fleet provided essential air transportation in the Pacific via United States Foreign Air Mail Routes No. 14 and No. 19, from San Francisco and San Pedro, California, to PAA Pearl Harbor, Honolulu, T. H. (Territory of Hawaii, U.S.), thence PAA station (a.) Midway Island (U.S.); Wake Island (U.S.); Agana, Guam (U.S.); Manila, P.I. (Commonwealth of the Philippines, U.S.), Hong Kong (U.K.) and Singapore (U.K.); and (b.) Canton Island (U.K.); Suva, Fiji (U.K.); Noumea, New Caledonia (France) and Auckland, N.Z.

Pan American facilities and aircraft were strategically deployed and a major target for Japanese attack and seizure.

Indeed, the Japanese authorities had long objected to the projection of American commercial

and military interest in the western Pacific.

The 1935 inauguration of trans-Pacific commercial air transport service by PAA was viewed negatively by authorities in Tokyo who sought control over Asia and the Pacific and the establishment of the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere".

Tokyo would claim following their surprise attacks of December 7 that this concept was meant to liberate Asians from colonial rule.

In point of fact, Japan was merely using this as a pretext for imposing themselves as master of all Asian and Pacific peoples.

The PAA contingency plans were flexible and changed weekly. There was no way to know precisely when or where



Above: Flight deck of a Pan-Am Clipper.

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potential hostilities would break out. Nor was it possible to know exactly where every aircraft would be when potential hostilities occurred.

However, the emphasis by December 1941 within the company was not "if" there would be a Japanese attack but "when" and "where". Each PAA Pacific Division Captain received his sealed envelope from Dispatch at the PAA Treasure Island, San Francisco base upon embarkation for westbound trips. An Atlantic or Latin American Division Captain at Dinner Key, Miami, Pan American Field, Miami and Marine Air Terminal, New York, likewise checked out similar envelopes from dispatch at their bases before trips to Latin America, Europe and Africa.

He had to sign off the sealed envelope on a confidential log. It was his responsibility to ensure the security of the document for his flight assignment, returning it unopened to Dispatch if nothing had happened to require the revelation of its contents.

When the Japanese attacked, PAA lost its Pacific routes west and south beyond Hawaii and its personnel at Guam, Manila and Singapore were captured and interned. At that time four Clippers were aloft or at stations under attack. Pan American personnel remained at Hong Kong, Midway, Wake Island and Canton Island. Guam was attacked early on December 8, 1941. All 32 PAA employees were interned and sent to Japan.

Captain John Hamilton in the Martin M-130 "Philippine Clipper" had just departed Wake Island for Guam when he received the coded message. The flight was running late, otherwise it would have been caught at Guam. Captain Hamilton returned to Wake and conferred



Above: Honolulu Clipper

with Cdr. Cunningham (USN) and Major Deveraux (USMC) of the Wake garrison. The Japanese attacked while the ship was moored in the Wake lagoon at the PAA pier on Peale Island.

Somehow the aircraft survived the attack. All PAA personnel except one were evacuated aboard the M-130. Captain Hamilton sent coded messages to Midway because he had no way of knowing if the island was still in American hands.

It was. The aircraft was ordered to Hilo as conditions at Pearl Harbour were uncertain.

Passing Maui and the Alenuihana Channel, PAA radio advised Hamilton that he could land Middle Lock Channel, Pearl, so Hamilton swung the aircraft left and around for approach to HNL. The crew and passengers had a stunning view of Pearl Harbor and Hickham Field.

"It was the worst thing I have ever seen" said Hamilton. All aboard were appalled at the carnage as fires were still burning and there was much smoke in the air. The airplane was in-

spected and it had numerous bullet holes from Wake. It was flown back to SFO the next day.

When the Japanese attacked Manila, P.I., all PAA employees and their families gathered at the Manila Hotel. They were soon captured by Japanese forces and interned at Santo Tomas University.

At Singapore, the station manager, traffic agent and chief engineer escaped.

The traffic manager had just been transferred from Manila, where his wife was still located and she was taken prisoner.

Hong Kong was attacked December 8 and fell to the Japanese December 18. Sikorsky S-42B "Hong Kong Clipper" which flew a "shuttle" service from MNL to HKG was caught at her HKG moorings by the initial Japanese attack and was destroyed.

PAA and CNAC (today CAAC, aka Air China) aircrew and ground personnel were largely evacuated from Hong Kong by CNAC aircraft to Chungking. In 1941, CNAC was a wholly-

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owned subsidiary of PAA.

The Boeing 314 NC-18611 "Anzac Clipper" commanded by Captain Lanier Turner left SFO December 6 for HNL delayed one hour by a maintenance problem. The flight was the FAM-14 trip to Singapore (SIN) via HNL, MDY, AWK, GUM and MNL.

At 0830 December 7, one hour from HNL, the crew were advised of the Japanese attack at HNL. Captain Turner opened his "secret envelope" and immediately diverted to HTO (Hilo).

The delay at SFO saved NC-18611 from being on final landing approach into HNL exactly when the Japanese struck. NC-18611 returned to SFO from HTO the next day.

The morning of December 7, 1941, the Pan American Airways Boeing 314 NC-18602 "Pacific Clipper" under the Command of Captain Robert Ford was en-route Honolulu to Auckland, New Zealand via FAM-19 from Noumea, New Caledonia. Two

hours out of Auckland, the radio operator tuned to an Auckland AM radio station to hear news of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The flight crew was stunned. For all they knew, Hawaii was being invaded and their route home had been cut off. Almost immediately they received a coded message via PAA Radio Operations, Honolulu and transmitted by PAA Treasure Island, San Francisco, California, PAA Dinner Key, Miami, Florida and PAA Marine Air Terminal, New York, New York:

"PEARL HARBOR ATTACKED BY JAPANESE BOMBERS. IMPLEMENT PLAN A."

Upon receipt of the coded message, Captain Ford had his radio operator transmit a request for the message to be repeated, which it was.

He then opened his envelope.

Pan American Airways Pacific Division Office of the Division Manager TOP SECRET - TOP SECRET - TOP SECRET

To: Captain, PAA Flight 73 and return Flight 74 SFO-LAX-HNL-CIS-SUV-NOU-AKL.

From: Division Manager, Pacific Division.

Subject: Special Instructions to Avoid Military Activity

1. Background:

Pan American Airways in cooperation with the Chief of Staff, United States Army, Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet Operations, the Secretary of War and the Secretary of State, has agreed to place its fleet of flying boats at the disposal of the military for whatever logistical or tactical purpose they may deem necessary at such time as hostilities break out between United States forces and the military forces of the Imperial Japanese government.

In the event that you are required to open and read these instructions, you may assume that hostilities have already occurred and that the aircraft under your command represents a strategic military resource which must be protected and secured from falling into enemy hands.

Your operational scenario will be determined by the status of your flight at the time it becomes necessary to implement these instructions. Since it is not possible to foresee the exact time or place that hostilities will occur, the following alternatives have been developed for your flight route. Select the paragraph that most closely represents your en-route status at such time as you are prepared to execute these instructions.

1.1 Action: If aircraft is moored at any en-route station, cancel scheduled departure flight plan and consult



Above: California Clipper

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with PAA Operations for further instructions.

All ground station managers have been provided with special instructions for securing aircraft and expediting diversionary operations.

1. En-route LAX-HNL: Prior to ETP: reverse course and divert to SFO. If past ETP, contact KVM to determine status of destination terminal. If possible, continue and land at HNL. If HNL is not open for arrival, divert to HTO (Hilo) and await further instructions.

2. En-route HNL-CIS: Contact KVM or KCCG for instructions. Aircraft will either return to HNL or proceed to CIS and await further instructions.

3. En-route CIS-SUV: Contact KCCG for instructions. Aircraft will either return to CIS or proceed to SUV and await further instructions.

4. En-route SUV-NOU: Contact Suva radio or FJPM at Noumea. Aircraft will either return to SUV or proceed to NOU and await further instructions.

5. En-route NOU-AKL: Contact FJPM or Auckland radio. Aircraft will either return to NOU or proceed to AKL and await further instructions.

For the return portion of this flight, follow the above instructions in reverse order. In all cases, once diversion has been executed, shut down all radios and maintain strict radio silence. Authentication flight patterns for non-radio approach and landing at each diversionary destination are listed in the appendix to this order.

All line station managers have

been provided with duplicate copies of these patterns and will expect you to proceed in accordance therewith. Strict adherence to authentication flight patterns is essential. Any deviation could result in airborne challenges by military aircraft.

Important: once these instructions have been executed, all operational information regarding disposition and progress of your flight shall be considered Top Secret. Crew members shall be instructed to speak to no one repeat no one other than authorized and properly identified company or military personnel.

With regard to actions taken or planned for the flight, any breach of these security measures shall be considered a breach of wartime security and any personnel creating such a breach of security shall be prosecuted under the wartime regulations concerned with national security matters. (E N D)

Under the circumstances and given what they knew, the crew of NC-18602 continued to Auckland. Subsequent messages to and from PAA Operations confirmed that they could not return via HNL. So they would then fly an epic return trip to the United States westbound via Noumea, Darwin (Australia), Surabaya, Trincomalee (Ceylon), Karachi, Bahrain, Khartoum, Leopoldville, Natal and Port-of-Spain. At 05:54 EST January 6, 1942, Captain Ford radioed the following message to an astonished control tower operator at La Guardia Marine Air Terminal, Queens, New York: "La Guardia Tower, Pan American Clipper NC18602 inbound from Auckland, New Zealand, Captain Robert Ford reporting. Due to arrive Pan American Marine Ter-

minal La Guardia in seven minutes, over". The tower replied: "Clipper 18602 this is La Guardia. The seaplane channel is closed until daylight. You will have to hold for an hour so we can clear you for landing. Advise intentions, please; and say again, confirm your departure point, we show no overseas inbounds at this time."

Captain Ford replied: "La Guardia, roger, no problem, we can do that. I say again, inbound from Auckland, New Zealand by way of the long way around for about the past month; it will sure be good to get home again". The crew stepped off the aircraft wearing tropical uniforms and were welcomed by the bitter cold of a January New York morning. So that is the story of Pan American and Hawaii, December 7, 1941 in this, the year of the 70th anniversary of the events. *(Obviously this was written in 2011 - Ed.)*

Author unknown.

EDITORIAL

We've got some great reading and plenty of interesting pix this issue. The Pan-Am Clipper tales, whilst not club-related and quite lengthy, do provide an insight into the trials and tribulations of war-time pilots - enjoy!

Contributions are always welcome and I look forward to receiving many more in the coming year. How about project updates, tech and supplier tips, useful web-site links, aviation humour, best and worst trips, member profiles etc.?

The newsletter is just one way for members to interact and keep the spirit alive - make use of it, please!

*Regards,
Christian Smith*

AROUND THE WORLD SAGA OF PAN-AM "PACIFIC CLIPPER"

Engines: Four 1600 hp (1,192 kW) Wright R-2600 Twin Cyclone (1,192 kw), 14 cylinder, air-cooled, radial engines.

Wing Span: 152 ft. (46.33 m.)

Length: 106 ft (32.31 m.)

Max Take-off Weight: 84,000 lb. (38,102 kg.)

Max level speed: 199 mph (320 km/hour)

Cruising speed: 184 mph (296 km/hour)

Range: 5,200 miles (8369 km)

First flight: June 7, 1938

Ceiling: 19,600 feet

Accommodation: 10 crew, 74 passengers

December 7, 1941 - The first blush of dawn tinged the eastern sky and sent its rosy fingers creeping onto the flight deck of the huge triple-tailed flying boat as she cruised high above the South Pacific. Six days out of her home port of San Francisco, the Boeing 314 was part of Pan American Airways' growing new service that linked the far corners of the Pacific Ocean.

With veteran captain Robert Ford in command, the Pacific Clipper, carrying 12 passengers and a crew of ten was just a few hours from landing in the harbour at Auckland, New Zealand.

The calm serenity of the flight deck early on this spring morning was suddenly shattered by the crackling of the radio. Radio Operator John Poindexter clamped the headset to his ears as he deciphered the coded message. His eyes widened as he quickly wrote the characters on the pad in front of him. Pearl Harbour had been attacked by Japanese war planes and had suffered heavy losses; the United States was at war.

The stunned crew looked at each other as the implications of the message began to dawn. They realized that their route back to California was irrevoca-

bly cut, and there was no going back. Ford ordered radio silence, and then posted lookouts in the navigator's blister; two hours later, the Pacific Clipper touched down smoothly on the waters of Auckland harbour. Their odyssey was just beginning.

The crew haunted the overwhelmed communications room at the US Embassy in Auckland every day for a week waiting for a message from Pan Am headquarters in New York. Finally they received word - they were to try and make it back to the United States the long way: around the world westbound.

For Ford and his crew, it was a daunting assignment. Facing a journey of over 30,000 miles, over oceans and lands that none of them had ever seen, they would have to do all their own planning and servicing, scrounging whatever supplies and equipment they needed; all this in the face of an erupting World War in which political alliances and loyalties in many parts of the world were uncertain at best.

Their first assignment was to return to Noumea, back the way they had come over a week earlier. They were to pick up the Pan American station personnel there, and then deliver them to safety in Australia. Late on the evening of December 16th, the blacked-out flying boat lifted off from Auckland harbour and headed northwest through the night toward Noumea.

They maintained radio silence, landing in the harbour just as the sun was coming up. Ford went ashore and sought out the Pan Am Station Manager. "Round up all your people," he said. "I want them all at the dock in an hour. They can have one small bag apiece." The crew set to work fuelling the airplane, and exactly

two hours later, fully fuelled and carrying a barrel of engine oil, the Clipper took off and pointed her nose south for Australia.

It was late in the afternoon when the dark green smudge of the Queensland coast appeared in the windscreen, and Ford began a gentle descent for landing in the harbour at Gladstone. After offloading their bewildered passengers, the crew set about seeing to their primary responsibility, the Pacific Clipper.

Captain Ford recounted, "I was wondering how we were going to pay for everything we were going to need on this trip. We had money enough for a trip to Auckland and back to San Francisco, but this was a different story. In Gladstone a young man who was a banker came up to me and out of the blue said, 'How are you fixed for money?' 'Well, we're broke!' I said. He said, 'I'll probably be shot for this,' but he went down to his bank on a Saturday morning, opened the vault and handed me five hundred American dollars. Since Rod Brown, our navigator, was the only one with a lock box and a key we put him in charge of the money. That \$500 financed the rest of the trip all the way to New York."

Ford planned to take off and head straight northwest, across the Queensland desert for Darwin, and then fly across the Timor Sea to the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), hoping that Java and Sumatra remained in friendly hands.

The next day, as they droned into the tropical morning the coastal jungle gradually gave way to great arid stretches of grassland and sand dunes. Spinifex and gum-trees covered the landscape to the horizon. During the entire flight to Darwin the crew didn't see a river big

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enough to set down the big flying boat should anything go wrong. Any emergency would force them to belly land the airplane onto the desert, and their flight would be over.

They approached the harbour at Darwin late in the afternoon. Massive thunderheads stretched across the horizon, and continuous flashes of lightning lit up the cockpit. The northernmost city in Australia, Darwin was closest to the conflict that was spreading southward like a brushfire. A rough frontier-town in the most remote and primitive of the Australian territories, it was like something out of a wild west movie.

After they had landed, the Pacific Clipper crew was offered a place to shower and change; much to their amusement their "locker room" turned out to be an Australian Army brothel.

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

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

of the tropics.

Surabaya lay at the closed end of a large bay in the Bali Sea. The second largest city on the island of Java, it was guarded by a British garrison and a squadron of Bristol Beaufort fighters. As the Pacific Clipper approached the city, a single fighter rose to meet them; moments later it was joined by several more. The recognition signals that Ford had received in Australia proved to be inaccurate, and the big Boeing was a sight unfamiliar to the British pilots.

The crew tensed as the fighters drew closer. Because of a quirk in the radio systems, they could hear the British pilots, but the pilots could not hear the Clipper. There was much discussion among them as to whether the flying boat should be shot down or allowed to land. At last the crew heard the British controller grant permission for them to land, and then add, "If they do anything suspicious, shoot them out of the sky!" With great relief, Ford began a very careful approach.

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

When they disembarked, the crew of the Pacific Clipper received an unpleasant surprise;

they were told that they would be unable to refuel with 100-octane aviation gas. What little there was severely rationed, and was reserved for the military. There was automobile gas in abundance however, and Ford was welcome to whatever he needed. He had no choice.

The next leg of their journey would be many hours over the Indian Ocean, and there was no hope of refuelling elsewhere. The flight engineers, Swede Roth and Jocko Parish, formulated a plan that they hoped would work. They transferred all their remaining aviation fuel to the two fuselage tanks, and filled the remaining tanks to the limit with the lower octane automobile gas.

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

They flew north-westerly across the Sunda Straits, paralleling the coast of Sumatra. Chasing the setting sun, they started across the vast expanse of ocean. They had no aviation charts or maps for this part of the world; the only navigational information available to the crew was the latitude and longitude of their destination at Trincomalee, on the island of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka).

Using this data, and drawing from memory, Rod Brown was creating his own Mercator maps of South Asia. Ford was not only worried about finding the harbour, he was very concerned about missing Ceylon altogether. He envisioned the Clipper droning on over India, lost

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

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

It was another hour until they reached the island, and the Boeing finally touched water in the harbour at Trincomalee. The British Forces stationed there were anxious to hear what Ford and his crew had to report from the war zone to the east, and the crew was duly summoned to a military meeting.

Presiding was a pompous Royal Navy Commodore who informed Ford in no uncertain terms that he doubted Ford would know a submarine if it ran over him. Ford felt the hackles rise on the back of his neck. He realized that he could not afford to make an enemy of the British military; the fate of the Pacific Clipper rested too heavily in their hands. He swallowed hard and said nothing.

It was Christmas Eve when they began the takeoff from Ceylon

and turned the ship again to the northwest. The heavily loaded Boeing struggled for altitude, labouring through the leaden humid air. Suddenly there was a frightening bang as the number three engine let go. It shuddered in its mount, and as they peered through the windscreen the crew could see gushes of black oil pouring back over the wing.

Ford quickly shut the engine down, and wheeled the Clipper over into a 180 degree turn, heading back to Trincomalee. Less than an hour after takeoff the Pacific Clipper was back on the waters of Trincomalee harbour. The repairs to the engine took the rest of Christmas Eve and all of Christmas Day. One of the engine's eighteen cylinders had failed, wrenching itself loose from its mount, and while the repair was not particularly complex, it was tedious and time-consuming.

Finally, early in the morning of December 26th, they took off from Ceylon for the second time. All day they droned across the lush carpet of the Indian sub continent, and then cut across the north-eastern corner of the Arabian Sea to their landing in Karachi, touching down in mid-afternoon.

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

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

had just completed from Karachi.

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

They took off into the grey morning and climbed through a solid overcast. They broke out of the clouds into the dazzling sunshine, and the carpet of clouds below stretched westward to the horizon. "We flew north for about twenty minutes," Ford said, "then we turned west and headed straight across Saudi Arabia. We flew for several hours before there was a break in the clouds below us, and damned if we weren't smack over the Mosque at Mecca! I could see the people pouring out of it; it was just like kicking an anthill. They were probably firing at us, but at least they didn't have any anti-aircraft."

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

AROUND THE WORLD SAGA OF PAN-AM "PACIFIC CLIPPER"

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

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

The endless brown of the Sudan gave way to rolling green hills, and then rocky crests that stretched across their path. They flew over native villages and great gatherings of wildlife. Herds of wildebeest, hundreds of thousands strong, stampeded in panic as the Clipper roared overhead. The grassland soon turned to jungle, and they crossed several small rivers, which they tried to match to their maps.

Suddenly, ahead they saw a large river, much bigger and wider than others they had crossed, and off to their right was a good-sized town. The river had to be the mighty Congo, and the town was Bumba, the largest settlement on the river at that point. From their maps they saw that they

could turn and follow the river downstream to Leopoldville. They had five hundred miles to fly.

Late in the afternoon they raised the Congolese capital of Leopoldville. Ford set the Boeing down gently onto the river, and immediately realized the strength of the current. He powered the ship into the mooring, and the crew finally stepped ashore. It was like stepping into a sauna. The heat was the most oppressive they had yet encountered; it descended on them like a cloak, sapping what energy they had left.

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

After a night ashore they went to the airplane the next morning prepared for the long over-water leg that would take them back to the western hemisphere. The terrible heat and humidity had not abated a bit when the hatches were finally secured and they swung the Clipper into the river channel for the takeoff. The airplane was loaded to the gunnels with fuel, plus the drum of oil that had come aboard at Noumea. It was, to put it mildly, just a bit overloaded.

They headed downstream into the wind, going with the six-knot current. Just beyond the limits of the town the river changed from a placid downstream current into a cataract of rushing rapids; pillars of rocks broke the water into a tumbling maelstrom. Ford held the engines at takeoff power, and the crew held their breath while the airplane gathered

speed on the glassy river! The heat and humidity, and their tremendous gross weight were all factors working against them as they struggled to get the machine off the water before the cataracts.

Ford rocked the hull with the elevators, trying to get the Boeing up on the step. Just before they would enter the rapids and face certain destruction, the hull lifted free. The Pacific Clipper was flying, but just barely.

Their troubles were far from over, however. Just beyond the cataracts they entered the steep gorges; it was as though they were flying into a canyon. With her wings bowed, the Clipper staggered, clawing for every inch of altitude.

The engines had been at take-off power for nearly five minutes and their temperatures were rapidly climbing above the red line; how much more abuse could they take? With agonizing slowness the big Boeing began to climb, foot by perilous foot. At last they were clear of the walls of the gorge, and Ford felt he could pull the throttles back to climb power. He turned the airplane toward the west and the Atlantic.

The crew, silent, listened intently to the beat of the engines. They roared on without a miss, and as the airplane finally settled down at their cruising altitude Ford decided they could safely head for Brazil, over three thousand miles to the west.

The crew felt revived with new energy, and in spite of their fatigue, they were excitedly optimistic. Against all odds they had crossed southern Asia and breasted the African continent. Their airplane was performing better than they had any right to expect, and after their next long

AROUND THE WORLD SAGA OF PAN-AM "PACIFIC CLIPPER"

ocean leg they would be back in the hemisphere from which they had begun their journey nearly a month before.

The interior of the airplane that had been home to them for so many days was beginning to wear rather thin. They were sick of the endless hours spent droning westward, tired of the apprehension of the unknown and frustrated by the lack of any real meaningful news about what was happening in a world besieged by war. They just wanted to get home.

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

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

The sun set as they crossed the mouth of the Amazon, nearly a hundred miles wide where it joins the sea. Across the Guineas in the dark they droned, and finally at 3-00 a.m. the following morning they landed at Trinidad.

There was a Pan Am station at Port of Spain, and they happily delivered themselves and their weary charge into friendly

hands.

The final leg to New York was almost anti-climactic. Just before six on the bitter morning of January 6th, the control officer in the Marine Terminal at La Guardia was startled to hear his radio crackle into life with the message, "Pacific Clipper, inbound from Auckland, New Zealand, Captain Ford reporting. Overhead in five minutes."

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

The significance of the flight is best illustrated by the records that were set by Ford and his crew. It was the first around-the-world flight by a commercial airliner, as well as the longest continuous flight by a commercial plane, and was the first circumnavigation following a route near the Equator (they crossed the Equator four times.)

They touched all but two of the world's seven continents, flew 31,500 miles in 209 hours and made 18 stops under the flags of 12 different nations. They also made the longest non-stop flight in Pan American's history, a 3,583 mile crossing of the South Atlantic from Africa to Brazil.

As the war progressed, it became clear that neither the Army nor the Navy was equipped or experienced enough to undertake the tremendous amount of long distance air transport work required. Pan American Airways was one of the few airlines in the

country with the personnel and expertise to supplement the military air forces. Captain Bob Ford and most of his crew spent the war flying contract missions for the US Armed Forces.

After the war Ford continued flying for Pan American, which was actively expanding its routes across the Pacific and around the world. He left the airline in 1952 to pursue other aviation interests.

The crew of Pacific Clipper:

Captain Robert Ford, First Officer John H. Mack, Second Officer/Navigator Roderick N. Brown, Third Officer James G. Henriksen, Fourth Officer John D. Steers, First Engineer Homans K. "Swede" Roth, Second Engineer John B. "Jocko" Parish, First Radio Officer John Poindexter*, Second Radio Officer Oscar Hendrickson, Purser Barney Sawicki, Asst. Purser Verne C. Edwards.

*Poindexter was originally scheduled to accompany the Pacific Clipper as far as Los Angeles, and then return to San Francisco; he had even asked his wife to hold dinner that evening. In Los Angeles, however, the regularly scheduled Radio Officer suddenly became ill, and Poindexter had to make the trip himself. His one shirt was washed in every port that the Pacific Clipper visited.

John A. Marshall



OAKEY CARIBOU GRAVEYARD



Left: Aerial view of the Oakey Caribou graveyard.

Right: Line-up of Caribous at Oakey showing "45 Years of Operations" nose-art.



Left: Departure of A4-234 to HARS.

Right: A4-195 sealed against the elements.



All photos this page - Mick Raftery.

QLD AIR MUSEUM AERO ENGINE RUN DAY

The 14th Jan 2012 was the day that the Queensland Air Museum planned its Aero Engine Run Day. The staff (most are volunteers) arrived early and the set-up was done like a well-oiled machine.

The museum houses quite a unique collection of not only Queensland aviation history but also Australian aviation history and I will not bore you with facts and figures other than the 40+ aircraft displayed are all fine examples of their type. There is a well appointed shop for the visitor and I found the staff to be most helpful to the many visitors on the day.

There are plans to expand the covered area for display by double what is there now and this would allow the addition of more fine, ex RAAF aircraft to be displayed as is now the requirements of Government Aircraft

disposal. It could also allow the separation of Civil and Australian Military types as the examples of ex RAAF and ex RAN probably make up a fair percentage of the aircraft displayed.

Your help and assistance towards this would be appreciated.

Back to the engine run; for me the sound of a radial is something which is slowly disappearing but the Museum has a great Pratt and Whitney (Ex-RAAF Caribou) mounted on a truck bed and it was just great to see and hear from her.

Wirraway (VH-WIR) is one of the showpieces of the museum and after the ferry flight from South Australia she was lifted over the fence line and has been well looked after. So after a few turns of the prop she to was "alive again" and Matt Denning was

able to cycle her systems so the growing crowd could see more than just the spinning prop.

A fine example of inline (DH Gipsy Queen) engine borrowed on long term loan from VH-MAL was started and although not as noisy she held the attention of all there. Helos were represented by the engine from a Bell Sioux and from some of the young the question was "it's the wrong way up Dad".

The local industry supported the QAM with a good display from a Yak-52 and the local skydivers putting up a number of persons who for whatever reason find it fun to exit a good flight at height!!

In the end a lot of people had a lot of fun supporting a very good cause.

Tom Fisher
"Aircraft Tragic"



All photos this page - Tom Fisher.

Left: A crowd surrounds the Wirraway on start-up.

Below: Plenty of smoke and noise for fans of the "round mound of sound"!

Below: Truck-mounted ex-Caribou Pratt & Whitney engine run.



Fly Drive Day



Heyfield Lions Club Inc

Sunday 11th March
Lower Cowwarr Road
Cowwarr

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- Vintage Cars
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- Camping Available
- Security Provided
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More information
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INGHAM WINGS AND WHEELS AIRSHOW 2011

The inaugural Ingham Wings and Wheels Airshow was held over the weekend of September 3-4, 2011.

Warbirds featured prominently and were a highlight of the show, including playing host to hordes of eager school-children on the Friday afternoon.

Displays included one of Steve Searle's Grumman Avengers, Kim Rolph-Smith's T-28 Trojan, NQ Warbirds Harvard, Winjeel and Nanchang, Steve Lawson's Townsville-based CT-4 and the Saario Brothers Antonov An-2. Mark McDonald's Atherton-based Yak-18T also put on a spirited aerobatic display.

A UH-1B "Huey", whilst in civilian markings, was acknowledged as a Vietnam War veteran and with local pilot Don Blanch at the controls, participated in a staged re-enactment of a pilot extraction under fire.

Kim Rolph-Smith provided mock strafing and rocket runs in the Trojan for this scenario. The Avenger was also featured in a mock ASW role, attacking a nimble quad-bike mounted Nazi U-boat ("Das Boot") which had sneaked onto the runway!

It was disappointing not to have any vintage civil aircraft in attendance - we couldn't even get a Tiger Moth! - but hopefully this situation will change in future years.

A variety of military re-enactors and Warbird Pinup Girls complemented the Warbird displays. Restored military vehicles, restored and current motorcycles, marque sports cars and veteran and vintage vehicles were on show, as were exotic Italian and other European supercars.

Whilst Saturday's crowd was reasonable, adverse weather around the region (rain and wind north and south of Ingham) saw crowd num-



Above: Steve Lawson's Townsville-based CT-4 VH-DGY inbound to Ingham over the iconic Hinchinbrook Channel, with Alan Middleton at the controls. (Photo - Leroy Simpson).

bers well down for the Sunday with a subsequent loss of over \$120,000 for the organiser (but all accounts have been paid!).

Despite the setbacks, "the show went on" both days and was critically acclaimed by both participants and patrons alike.

Feature aerobatic acts such as Matt Hall and Paul Bennet thrilled the crowds and there was a reasonably varied number of other aircraft on display both days, including an RFDS King Air, Border Protection Reims, MAF GA-8 Airvan, ag aircraft and several types of helicopter.

Approximately 20 private aircraft flew in on the Saturday but most

exited early due to weather concerns on their home legs.

Post-event debriefs indicate that the Council, Chamber of Commerce and the majority of those involved want to see the event continue. We are currently working on ways to reduce costs, increase sponsorship and gain extra grants to ensure the event can be viably staged again in 2013.

The event also recently won "Community Event of the Year" in the Hinchinbrook Shire Australia Day Awards, recognizing the efforts of all who participated to make this a memorable first event.

*Christian Smith
Event Coordinator*



Above: Grumman Avenger in action. (Photo - Leroy Simpson).

INGHAM WINGS AND WHEELS AIRSHOW 2011



Left: Military re-enactors Michael Formilan (Townsville) and Gary Luxford (Ingham) added authentic atmosphere to the Warbird and military vehicle displays and really got into the spirit of the event. (Photo - Leroy Simpson).

Right: Sydney-based flight-gear collector, Phil Buckley (Heritage Flying Gear) donned a period flying suit for his photo shoot in the Grumman Avenger. As a “downed Allied airman”, Phil was also the subject of regular manhunts by the German and Italian re-enactors and was “captured” several times over the weekend! (Photo - Leroy Simpson).



Left: Looking across a section of the Warbird displays with the Mareeba-based North Queensland Warbirds Nanchang CJ-6A and CAC Winjeel in the foreground. (Photo - Leroy Simpson).

Right: Free school tours of the available Warbirds and aerobatic aircraft took place on the Friday afternoon. Kim Rolph-Smith, AWAL President and owner of T-28D Trojan “Huff ‘n’ Puff” spoke to an attentive audience of students and potential future pilots. (Photo - Dirk Mohrmann).



INGHAM WINGS AND WHEELS AIRSHOW 2011



Above: Matt Hall thrilled the crowd. (Photo - Dirk Mohrmann)



Above: Innisfail identity Bob Harris is rounded up by the local constabulary after a very convincing "drunk pilot" routine. (Photo - Leroy Simpson).



Left: Atherton-based agricultural pilot Mark McDonald gave a spirited performance in his Grumman Ag-Cat and also demonstrated his beautifully-restored Yak-18T. (Photo - Dirk Mohrmann).

Right: Ingham-based agricultural pilot Don Blanch showed off the UH-1B "Huey" in style, before taking part in a Vietnam War re-enactment scenario. (Photo - Dirk Mohrmann).

Below: Students inspect the Avenger as part of the free tours. (Photo - Dirk Mohrmann).

Below right: Paul Bennet's aerobatic routines and triple ribbon-cut were also popular with the spectators. (Photo - Dirk Mohrmann).



Calendar of Events 2012

Date	Event	Start	Airfield	Contact
Feb. 18	Korea to Vietnam Showcase	1000	Temora YTEM	02 6977 1088
Feb. 18-19	Annual Fly-In	1000	Cobden YCDE	Chris Bodey 0419 351977
Feb. 26	QVAG Kilcoy Kapers	1200	Kilcoy YKCY	Mal Shipton 0427 618271
Lunch-time fly-in, catered by QVAG/AFM Inc. Opportunity for air-to-air photography. RSVP for catering.				
Mar. 4	First 50 Years	0830	Tyabb YTYA	Peter Fitton 0412 073208
Mar. 11 th	Clifton Fly-In (Bange's)		Clifton Airfield	Trevor Bange 0429 378370
Darling Downs Sport Aircraft Assn. Inc. Come late pm Saturday, 10 th for BBQ, drinks. Fly or drive in, see ERSAs. On field camping, bring your swag. Advise for catering. Contact Trevor Bange - phone 0429 378370, a/h 07 4695 8541. E-mail: trevorbange@bigpond.com				
Apr. 15	Wondai Wander Fly-In	0900	Wondai QLD	Phill 4164 1269
Lunch-time fly-in hosted by Barambah Aero Club.				
May 5-7	Wings & Wheels		Childers, QLD	E. Rutherford 0409 609971
May 12-13	Wings, Warbirds and Wheels		Maryborough	Tony 0408 988081
June 9-10	Best of British Fly-In		Warwick	
Queen's Birthday weekend - in conjunction with MG car club, "Race the Train" to Goondiwindi and Qld Recreational Aircraft Association. Evening BBQ dinner Saturday, breakfast fly-in from 0800 Sunday.				
June 23-24	'The Few' Spitfire Fly-In		Willowbank	Brian Scoffell 0438 734845
Aug. 19	Gympie Gathering	0800	Gympie	Breakfast Fly-In
Oct. 28-29	Wings of Yesteryear		Kingaroy	Kingaroy Peanut Festival

New Competition—Mystery Aircraft



Left: If you can correctly identify this aircraft, please e-mail the Editors at info@qvag.com.au.

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