



Memories . . .

.....by Les Forden

Some loyal reader, possibly house-bound all those years in an upstairs Accounting office, requested a "remembering" of all the airplanes Transocean operated, from the two-place putt-putt Taylorcraft that Tom Buckelew rented to the Academy, to the PBV boats in the Trust Territories, to the big Boeing Stratocruisers in passenger service at the very last. The full story will take more research, but there is one comparison that's hard to believe.....

Former Talcoa and now Transamerica Captain Tommy Noyle must sometimes marvel as he takes the left seat in a Boeing 747, configured for 565 people. Five crew seats up front in what some like to call the "Control Cabin," plus 14 seats scattered all over the place for the Stews -- (no, the Flight Attendants), plus 546 seats for passengers. (Remember when we used to talk about "coach," and "high density"?)

Legend has it that Tommy started his airline career pumping gas on Wake Island for Standard Oil's Jack Butler. Hardly seems possible that many years have gone by.

I remember Jim Corbett from the early days when the Traffic Department tallied 3 people -- Jim, John Hoover and Betty Lee Hodge in a small office in the old (nonsked) terminal building, originally the airport hotel, now in later years the home of Sierra Academy School.

I was in Dispatch in Hqr. 5, working for Ray Foster, who had succeeded George Smith, who had succeeded Louie Lombard. Mostly we carried contract laborers to Pacific bases, and departures were often hectic, often late, often critical on fuel loads. We'd give Traffic the Allowable Load, and after they'd weighed in passengers and baggage, John or Betty Lee would call us the actual load. It might be one or two hundred pounds overweight, and being zealous Dispatcher types, we would protest. "Hold the phone," John would say, and you'd hear him cranking his adding machine again, then he'd come back with a figure just barely legal, saying "Must have made an error in the baggage weights."

If Jim Corbett was in the office, and not out in the lobby pacifying the passengers, you might hear him chuckle at this exchange. It took me a long time to realize that over-grossing a DC4 was not the great sin that we



newcomers thought it was, but the thing that sticks in memory, is Jim's refusing to get upset about it; he always found something to laugh about in the worst of situations. I'm sure that spirit carried him through the many frustrating periods that Talcoa people endured, and on into a successful travel agency of his own. We will miss his laughter.

I first knew Joe Dillard in 1959, when he flew for Overseas National on a Pacific military contract. I was the Duty Dispatcher one dark night when the Travis departure diverted into Oakland with an engine problem, and I remember walking out on the ramp and up front on the DC7 to talk it over with the Captain. I can't recall who was copilot or engineer, but I do remember Joe sitting tall in the left seat discussing the problem with the other two. All three men seemed to know what they were talking about, and obviously were about to reach some definite conclusion with no vacillation and no mickey-mousing around as to cancelling or continuing.

I contributed what I could as to available buses and hotel space, and I remember thinking, now there is a man who deserves the title of "Captain," -- maybe there are a few heroes after all.

I worked for Joe later, at Saturn, where we all admired and applauded his spirit in continuing as Director of Operations despite a serious illness. I thought of him then as a hero, a good boss and a great guy.

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In addition to the two eulogies above by Les Forden, the editors also received those following. Names of contributors noted at the end of each eulogy. Additional contributions welcomed.

"Who knows? Who is to say? What matters, from day to day. Is it the warm-blooded bird Who sings to the sun? Or is it the tree who lives on the side of Father Time? Father Time, so precious In the days and years, And yet he executes the most of us."

H. Graham Emery

On July 10, 1983, Homer Graham Emery, "Red" to many, died of arteriosclerotic heart disease. Homer died at home, peacefully.

I write to you, not as his nephew but rather as one of his very best friends, because I think it is important to keep his spirit alive; recall his marvelous sense of humor; reflect on his generosity and sensitivity; remember his sybaritic tastes; appreciate his creative and artistic instincts; and revel in the fact that we all were lucky enough to have been touched by this man.

Please take some time to remember the man I loved so much. Recollect the special times; the practical jokes, the champagne times, the camaraderie you once had with him; recall whatever treasured experiences you shared with him and diminish the recent past; it would be his choice I am sure.

Indeed, Father Time does execute the most of us. What he can never take, however, is the wonderful memory we all carry of Mon Uncle Rouge. A very dear part of us all has left forever. Yet, what remains is so valuable to us that Homer will never die in spirit; he truly has left a mark in this world.

I raise a crystal glass to you, H.Graham Emery, and salute you for being such a sweet and wonderful man. You will always be with me---Cheers!

Gregory Kent
Seattle, Washington

Red Emery was Transocean thru and thru. He was a legend in his own time while station manager of Wake Island during seven turbulent years - 1949 to 1956.

He loved every minute of it, and when he returned to Oakland he also returned to the vocation for which he was trained in graphic arts and became advertising manager in Oakland Sales. Red could translate ideas verbalized around a conference table into line and form on paper and always in an innovative way.

His output of work was prodigious and was always on schedule and always very professional. He accomplished this calmly amongst the hubbaloos of the second floor

Hangar 5 Sales Offices. Red was never ruffled, never discourteous and never said no to demands on his time and talent.

He was on the committee that organized the second reunion and did all the artwork and compositioning. He also helped organize the alumni association and worked hard for our group.

Red started his college career at Harvard in English literature - not many people knew that. A serious illness forced his return to Colorado, and he finished his education at the University of Colorado. He was never really well, never really strong after that, and not many people knew that either.

He worked in a Denver department store in the advertising department, and when the war started he went to work in a S. F. shipyard as a welder. He tried to enlist, but was given a medical 4F status. Somewhere along the line he went to work for Consair at Travis and prior to joining Transocean he was with P.O.A.

I knew Red for 35 years. He was more than a friend, he was a member of our family. He was -- to put it in two words -- a gentle man.

Don Willhalm

I first met Shelby Pitts in 1950 when he came to Transocean Air Lines. However, I really didn't begin to know him until he became a member of the Negotiating Committee and we went through the trauma of writing and negotiating a working agreement.

After Transocean, we had a short tour of duty with Twentieth Century Airlines before joining Lufthansa in early 1961. We became very close as we worked as Captains Instructors and Check Pilots until 1967 when Shelby went with TIA and I to World. After that, we shared an occasional drink (bottle).

Shelby was shot down over Germany (B17) during WWII and was held prisoner until the end of the war. He was in a Stalag near Frankfurt where we were based with Lufthansa. The point I'm bringing out is that with this background he still did more than his share to make Lufthansa one of the world's great airlines.

He had a smile and a firm handshake for everybody and made life much richer for those who had the good fortune to know that a great gentleman and professional pilot this man really was.

Nick Bountis

Burr Hall Gone West May 22, 1981.

Burr Hall was one of the first pilots with old Transocean Air Lines. I flew up and down and across the Pacific many times with Burr.

He helped pioneer the routes for PAL and trained their pilots.

Big, quiet, unassuming, very conscientious, he was a "pilot's pilot."

Vern Shrewsbury

In Memorium

Maury Clough
Ray Elsmore, Jr.
Jack Harvey

Board of Directors

A meeting of the Board of Directors was held on October 14, 1983. In attendance were: Ed Landwehr, Ginny Costa, Jack Colquhoun and Arue Szura. A report on the reunion was given by Ginny Costa and Ed Landwehr.

Ginny advised that she had received notes and telephone calls complimenting the committee on the success of the reunion.

Ed reported that the committee broke even financially.

Jack Colquhoun and Bill Leonard were appointed to the Board of Directors.

Reunion Rundown

September 24, 1983 dawned bright and sunny - a perfect day for the Transocean Air Lines reunion held at the Ruby Hills Country Club in Pleasanton.

We'll over 100 of the faithful showed up for the event - some coming from quite a distance, such as Bill and Jean Murray who arrived from Montana in their "home on wheels" (who can call it merely a RV?), Bill Oliver from Honolulu, and Red and Peggy Wickkiser from Washington, to name but a few.

The delicious buffet dinner, sparkling swimming pool, and other recreational facilities, all took second place to table-hopping and talking with friends from the good old days at Transocean.

Stu and Elva everyone spent many hours on a labor of love for everyone to enjoy - a hand made exhibit of TAL. They were also responsible for the smashing Talcoa Tee-shirts and caps that were for sale. For you unlucky ones who didn't get one, Stu has a few more available. Contact him at 505 Acorn St., Vallejo, Ca., 94590 - /07-554-0882.

A big thank-you! to Stu, Elva, Gun and Ed Landwehr, Jack Brissey, Arue Szura, Les Forden (who got up at the crack of dawn to run around putting up signs), and to Nadine Kendall.

Special thanks to Ginny Costa, who chaired the event, and made so many telephone calls she had to pry her fingers from the receiver. Ginny did a fantastic job pulling all the strings to get it all together.

Whatever Happened To.....?

RON BACKUES - Glendale, Arizona:
"I had a varied career as a TAL pilot, 1949 thru 1953 - Co-pilot, C54, C46, Flight Instructor, Talcoa Academy, and Indonesian Cadet Program, Minter Field, Bakersfield. Also, Navy Program, Melbourne, Florida. Then JAL, Tokyo. Then 23 years, OAR and SPO, Lockheed Lodestar with Union Sugar Company. Finally retired with 17,000 hours and some 2-1/2 million miles. Wish I could do it all over again."

DEE BROWN - Lodi, California:
"So good to read about all of you. Miss those wonderful, crazy days, and the great people we worked with. They were a different breed, and I am glad they were because it makes them unforgettable. I worked Tank Crew C-54's 1949 to 1959 with Aemco. I am living in a mobile home in Lodi and very happy. Keep those interesting newsletters coming."

BERNARD SMITH - Fremont, California:
"Last winter I received a copy of the newsletter just after I returned from a five day trip - stuck in the big DCA snow storm, where I marveled at what a poor job United Airlines (my employer since 1955 where I've been since leaving TAL after 4 years) was doing in getting back to operations with my B767. I commented that with all the problems at Transocean, in the old days that TAL would have done better than United's Dulles people were doing. The B767 (I was in the first class) is, needless to say, an electronic/digitized marvel. Quite a contrast from dear old TALOA DC-4 days. But I wouldn't have missed them for anything. Again, thanks for the great newsletter to you all who are responsible. I find it incredible that a group of employees from a company defunct for 25 years can maintain such vitality. And at our age, too!"

DICK CAHILL - Panama
"Greetings. Regret that I cannot attend the unique gathering of men and women who have so helped make modern air transport possible for today's world.
Recall when Panagra advised all the ASTA and IATA travel agents in Latin America that if they sold any Transocean tickets that they, Panagra, would cancel their agency agreements and put them out of business.
Recall when Braniff refused to loan or provide a ramp to discharge our passengers at Tocuman (Panama) Airport. A direct quote of Braniff being: 'Find a rope to disengage with!' However, the industry has changed - the high and mighty about vanquished, alas Braniff, long gone Panagra, and ailing PanAm. You, my friends, it is just that you wonderful group of people that made Transocean were all born thirty years too soon."

DOUGLASS HOPMANN - Granada (Bradley, Conn. base) in 1953 and remained with Transocean.

ARTHUR J. RISCHMAN - Santa Cruz, Ca.
"I joined the company in 1951 - was assigned to Alaska as co-pilot on C46 and C47 - then to the East Coast - Guam from 1955 to 1958 Flying the SA-16 - then Oakland until the last days. Enjoyed the last reunion and I am looking forward to the next. I really enjoyed the newsletter."

BARBARA KILIAN - San Leandro
"Bob and I enjoy the paper very much. We even take out the Transocean book as a reference with all the stuff going on in the Middle East the last few years.
I started in Materiel at Aemco in 1948, went to Sales at Transocean in 1950 just in time for the War Bride tours to Europe. Our next big thing was the Chamber of Commerce tours to Hawaii. I went to Reservations next, and finished my job with Transocean in 1954 when I became a tour conductor for the Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce. I could not have gotten the experience any place else in 12 years that I received at Transocean for 6 years. Those were exciting years. I retired to raise a family, one boy and one girl, and that, too, was exciting. Went back to work in 1969 at my husband's boat business, where I'm still working. We've also enjoyed the reunions. Hope they can continue."

STUART (STU) DOWNING - North Reading, Mass.
"Learned with surprise and pleasure of the Talcoa association, newsletter, etc. from Mrs. Charles Dobrescu, whose husband was a Talcoa pilot. I was a B-377 Flight Engineer out of Hartford and Oakland during the last year or so of operations, then went on to ONA and DC-6 F/BE. Presently with IBM as a Customer Service Rep. in the area just outside Boston."

PAUL SPENCER - Culver City, Ca.
"Keep the newsletter coming. It's nice when I get home to have the letter waiting, and I get caught up on all the latest."

HELP WANTED

We volunteers need some volunteers!

Who would be first to come forward with news or other contributions? It would be interesting to have someone reporting from the East Coast, other states, and from overseas, since correspondence is slowing down. We'd be happy to add a few letters to the editors, ads or personals (C-rated only), or whatever.

If you've had a secret yen to be a Lois Lane or Clark Kent, now's your chance to break into print!

Write or call Arue Szura - 4021 Meadowlark Court, Castro Valley, Ca. 94546 - 415-538-4822.

Correction

Apologies to Gwen Raymond who was erroneously listed in the Memorium column in the last newsletter.

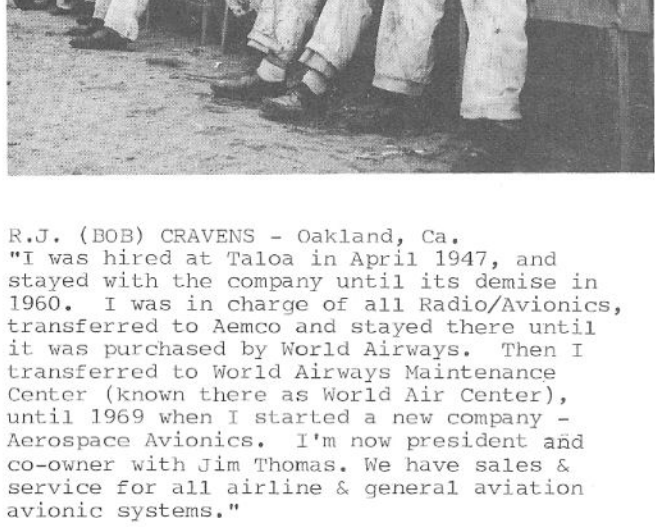
Gwen showed up hale and hearty at the reunion to prove we were wrong, wrong, wrong!

1984 DUES

1984 dues are being accepted and credited now. Your contribution of \$5.00 will help pay for the cost of printing and mailing newsletters and for the up-to-date roster of the Alumni Association members prepared by Ed Landwehr. Make checks payable to Talcoa Alumni Association and mail to Ed Landwehr, 1515 Buckeye Ct., Pinole, Ca., 94564.



until the final closing of the hangar story. The recent article (The Transocean Story) concerning our leader, Orvis Nelson, was well-received and appreciated. I got to know the great captain quite well here in Los Angeles in recent years, and was with him at dinner the night before he passed away. He was truly a pioneer in airline aviation."



R.J. (BOB) CRAVENS - Oakland, Ca.
"I was hired at Talcoa in April 1947, and stayed with the company until its demise in 1960. I was in charge of all Radio/Avionics, transferred to Aemco and stayed there until it was purchased by World Airways. Then I transferred to World Airways Maintenance Center (known then as World Air Center), until 1969 when I started a new company - Aerospace Avionics. I'm now president and co-owner with Jim Thomas. We have sales & service for all airline & general aviation avionics systems."

THE SPOTLIGHT'S ON.....

M. J. (Mike) Lewis helped keep 'em flying for Transocean Air Lines for over 11 years.

As Assistant Superintendent of Maintenance, Mike was involved in projects such as the dismantling of the Resort Air Lines DC-4 cargo plane which overshot the runway at the Ogden Municipal Airport January 4, 1953.

"Transocean was the low bidder for the repair and rebuilding of the heavily damaged aircraft," recalls Mike.

"With a crew of 10 mechanics I went to Ogden in March that year to dismantle and load the aircraft aboard 4 railroad flat cars for shipment to Oakland.

"When we arrived, we found that the plane had been moved from the end of the runway to a place near the terminal building, and it was parked in about 2 feet of snow.

"After getting a snow plow to clear the area we went to work removing all 4 engines, the nose section, and so on.

"A huge mobile crane was required to lift the 9,000 lb. fuselage, and the center section of the ship, which weighed 18,000 lbs.

"Within 2 months after we got it back to Hangar 28, the aircraft was in the air again.

"I think working for Transocean was a really good experience - one that you don't get working for anyone else - and I especially enjoyed all the people."

Mike retired as Vice President-Technical Service, Maintenance & Engineering, for World Airways last August, but was coaxed back to work 2 days a week as a consultant when they discovered they couldn't do without him.

He keeps busy and happy taking his daughter and her family out to dinner once a week, bowling, and going dancing at least twice a week.

"We go over to the Hyatt at Union City for Tea Dancing on Sundays," says Mike. "The minute I hear that big band music, I'm ready to dance!"

