THE HAWAII CLIPPER DISAPPEARS OVER THE PACIFIC

PAN AMERICAN AIRWAYS
MARTIN M-130 FLYING BOAT DISAPPEARS WITH SIX PASSENGERS & NINE CREWMEN EN ROUTE FROM GUAM TO MANILA ON JULY 28, 1938

Pan American initiated trans-Pacific airmail service on 22 Nov. 1935, and began carrying passengers in Oct. 1936. The flying boat service between San Francisco Bay and Manila Bay required about 60 hours of flying time over six days, with intermediate stops at Pearl Harbor, Midway Atoll, Wake and Guam.

Hawaii Clipper departed Guam on the last leg of the west-bound journey at 11:39 local time. The last radio contact was 3 hours 29 minutes later, when the aircraft reported flying through layers of clouds and moderately rough air 565 miles from the Philippine coast.

The US Army transport ship USAT Meigs found an oil slick along the course of the lost aircraft about 500 miles from the Philippine coast.

Hawaii Clipper was the first of the initial three long-range Martin flying boats to be lost. It was the worst Pacific airline accident at the time, although fatalities were higher when the crash of Jan. 21, 1943 (crashed into a California mountain) killed 19, and 23 were killed when China Clipper crashed on Jan. 8, 1945 in Trinidad.

DETAILS

A few minutes before 6 am on July 29, 1938, PAA Airways Captain Leonard Terletzky taxied the Clipper out of Apra Harbor, Guam. Terletzky was more than halfway through the six-day, 9,000-mile flight from Alameda, CA. to Hong Kong. He'd already made stops in Honolulu, Midway, Wake Island and now Guam, Manila and Macao and Hong Kong were still to come. The longest part of the trip (Alameda to Hawaii) was behind him. Half the passengers had disembarked in Honolulu, leaving only six to be ferried by Terletzky's eight-man crew on the island-hopping voyage across the Pacific. Other than leaving Guam 29 minutes late, everything on Pan

LATE BREAKING NEWS

105 years ago, on New Years Day, 1914, a small plane lifted from the yacht basin in St. Petersburg, Florida's downtown with just one passenger. 23 minutes later the plane landed in Tampa, thus launching the world's first regularly scheduled airline.

Today, exotic plans are underway to honor that event by the "Flight 2014" committee. Flight 2014, Inc. was formed to initially celebrate the Centennial of the First Airline in 2014. An array of events were held during the year leading to the Centennial climaxing in a reenactment flight across Tampa Bay. The Centennial celebrations were covered by 138 media sources reaching 173 million people world-wide. After the Centennial, Flight 2014 continued on with the goal of erecting this new monument to the First Airline near the original hangar site on St. Petersburg's downtown waterfront.

Flight 2014 is a partnership between the FAHS, the St. Petersburg Museum of History, the Tony Jannus Distinguished Aviation Society and the St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce. Flight 24 Board Members are all volunteers and there is no paid staff. The metal full-scale replica, a surrounding plaza and educational panels will make-up the project, located on the Pier in St. Petersburg.

So far we have raised $390,000 for the $750,000 needed. If you would like to contribute to this worthy aviation project, send your donation to: Flight 2014 treasurer, 1636 1st Ave., North, St. Petersburg, FL 33713. (website: www.airlinecentennial.org.)

IT ALL STARTED HERE— IN TAMPA BAY, FLORIDA!

Let the world know.
Am trip No. 229 was normal. As Terletzky throttled up the big Martin’s engines, the plane surged forward and began to skip across the wave tops. Fully loaded, the 52,000-pound aircraft needed 45 seconds to get airborne.

The Hawaii Clipper was a thing of beauty. An all-metal, high-wing with a riveted hull, it had a 130-foot wingspan. One notable feature was its sponsons, or sea wings, near the waterline. These improved stability on the water, replacing the wing-mounted pontoons found on many other flying boats. In addition to providing aerodynamic lift, they kept ocean spray off in the tail surface's during takeoffs and landings.

When Juan Trippe, PAA’s CEO set out to establish the world’s first transoceanic air service, he needed a flying boat with greater range, speed and payload than the Sikorsky S-42 the company was then flying. After a design competition between Sikorsky and Glenn Martin, Trippe settled on ordering three Martin M-130s at a cost of $417,000 apiece. PAA service was the first of its kind when it kicked off in November 1935. Though it was initially limited to airmail and freight, passengers followed within a year.

The M-130’s four Pratt & Whitney, Twin Wasp radial engines were important to its success. Any two of the 950-hp engines could keep the flying boat aloft. And with a 3,200-mile range, a cruising speed of 130 mph and a 17,000-foot service ceiling, the M-130 had the ability to cross the Pacific.

The Hawaii Clipper had already enjoyed a notable career. Built in Martin’s Baltimore factory, it was the third of Trippe’s M-130s (the first was the China Clipper, the second the Philippine Clipper). Delivered to PAA in March 1936 the Hawaii Clipper flew to Honolulu in May and in October, it completed the first scheduled passenger flight across the Pacific. Pan Am’s chief pilot, Captain Edwin C. Musick, was at the controls along with navigator Fred Noonan. That flight put Musick on the cover of Time magazine, helping to establish him as one of the world’s most famous pilots. Noonan gained notoriety the next year, when he served as Amelia Earhart’s navigator.

The 1,600-mile leg between Guam and Manila normally took 12.5 hours. Since the Clipper had enough fuel for nearly 18 hours in the air, there was a comfortable safety margin.

Leo Terletzky was flying one of the era’s most advanced airplanes. The M-130 not only had dual flight controls and a double hull, but also a Sperry automatic pilot. The flying boat boasted six watertight compartments (any two of which could keep it aloft) and every conceivable safety device. These included three radios, a saltwater still, hundreds of small balloons that could be released as search markers, inflatable life rafts, signal flares, a shotgun, fishing tackle and enough food to keep 15 people alive for a month. Four “international orange” stripes were painted on the wing tops to help search and rescue personnel spot the plane if it was forced down at sea.

Terletzky was a senior captain with 9,000 flying hours, 1,600 of which had been spent over the Pacific in the M-130.

Pan Am’s Clippers were paradigms of luxury, with service modeled after that aboard Pull-man railroad cars. A round-trip to Hong Kong cost $1,937 (roughly $32,000 today).

Perhaps the most unusual passenger on this trip was 38-year-old Wah-Sun Choy. An American of Chinese descent who called himself “Watson.” Choy was the wealthy owner of a small New Jersey-based restaurant company. Choy was on his way to Hong Kong to visit his mother and sister, and also hoped to see his brother Frank, an air force pilot with the Nationalists. He was carrying $3 million in gold certificates (approximately $50 million today), which as head of the Chinese War Relief Committee, he intended to donate to Chiang Kai-shek.

Terletzky began encountering rough weather shortly before lunch. Soon Hawaii Clipper was bucking heavy clouds fat with rain. The flight’s 33-year-old radio officer, William McCarty, was sending routine position reports every half-hour at that point. At 12:11 p.m. local time, he sent the following message, “Flying in rough air, 9100 feet. Temperature 13 degrees centigrade. Wind 19 knots...Position Latitude 12 degree 27’ North, Longitude 130 degree 40’ East—dead reckoning...rain...sky above covered by stratocumulus clouds, base 9,200 feet...flying last half hour on instruments.”

Eduardo Fernandez, the radio operator on Panay Island,
near the Philippine coast, acknowledged receipt of the message. But when he indicated that he wanted to transmit the latest weather report, McCarty responded: “Stand by for one minute before sending as I am having trouble with rain static.” Fernandez did as he was told. But when he tried raising the Clipper 60 seconds later, there was no response.

It wasn’t unusual for a plane to temporarily lose contact. The Hawaii Clipper wasn’t due in Manila for another three hours, so Fernandez decided to wait before raising any alarm. But as time passed and he still couldn’t contact Terletzky’s plane, he grew worried. Clearly something was wrong. At 12:49 pm Fernandez alerted stations to stand by on emergency frequencies. The Hawaii Clipper was missing.

Since McCarty’s last reported position was only 300 miles off the Philippine coast, Pan Am expressed confidence that the Clipper had landed safely in the water and world soon be found. When time passed and the flight failed to arrive in Manila, however, those hopes dimmed.

The U.S. Navy immediately organized one of the largest sea searches in its history. By midnight at least 14 ships from Manila’s 16th Naval District, including six submarines and three destroyers, left port. Additionally, the U.S. Army dispatched six long-range Martin B-10 bombers to survey the flying boat’s last known position, while four amphibious planes scoured the Philippine coast.

The Army transport Meigs, which had been only 103 miles away from where the Clipper presumably went down, immediately changed course. When the vessel arrived at the specified location at 10 that evening it was raining and overcast. Still the crew started to search right away. By the time the destroyers arrived, the weather had cleared and the seas were exceptionally calm, with winds only 6 mph. In other word, conditions were ideal for finding debris from a plane crash.

By August 5th, when the search was suspended more than 160,000 square miles had been covered. The samples from Meigs’s oil slick showed it was actually bilge water from a ship. The Hawaii Clipper had simply vanished.

It had been a rough year for Pan Am. The Pacific Division lost half a million dollars in 1937. Add to that the loss in January 1938 of the Samoan Clipper—a Sikorsky S-42B flying boat that exploded in midair, killing everybody on board, including chief pilot Ed Musick—and it seemed like Pan Am’s luck had run out.

The day before the crew departed Alameda, it had participated in an emergency landing test, including an “abandon ship” drill that involved deploying a life raft. Captain Terletzky and his crew had reportedly been the “best of spirits” during their stopover on Wake Island. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary.

Eighty year later, the question still remains: What happened? If the flying boat suffered a structural failure, wreckage would have been spread across the Pacific, and searchers should theoretically have spotted it. But the Clipper simply vanished. Not a trace was ever found; no debris, no oil slick, nothing.

Since then, there’s been no shortage of theories about what happened to the Hawaii Clipper. Some have speculated Japanese fighters shot it down. Others say it must have been sabotaged. After all, at least three of the six passengers aboard could have been construed as having anti-Japanese sympathies. Still, there’s no evidence to support either theory.

Amelia Earhart’s disappearance in the Pacific the year before only added to the Clipper mystery. Retired Air Force pilot Joe Gervais was researching her disappearance when in Nov. 1964, he was shown the wreckage of a flying boat on the Pacific atoll of Truk. Believing it might be the Hawaii Clipper, Gervais forwarded photos to Pan Am. He was especially interested in stories that native guides told him about 15 Americans who had been executed by the Japanese before the war and buried under a concrete slab on a nearby island. But when Pan Am reviewed Gervais’ photos, the wreckage proved to be that of a Short Sunderland flying boat.

The story didn’t die there, however. In his 2000 book, Fix on the Rising Sun: The Clipper Hi-jacking of 1938, Charles N. Hill wrote that he believed the Clipper had been commandeered by two Japanese naval offices who had stowed away in the baggage compartment while the aircraft was at Guam. Then armed with a revolver they committed the world’s first skyjacking. Hill speculated that the officers had diverted the flying boat to a Japanese occupied island and eventually to Truk, where the passengers and crew were executed.

Motivation for such a hijacking has varied depending on the source. Some believe the Japanese wanted to copy the M-130’s design for their own flying boat, while others think they actually wanted to get their hands on the engines. Hill’s theory is that the Japanese were determined to prevent Watson Coy from delivering 23 million to Chiang Kai shek.

Guy Noffsinger, a former Navy intelligence officer raised nearly $4000 to fund a Feb. 2012 trip, his second, to Micronesia. Using ground-penetrating radar, he searched under several concrete slabs for the bodies of the Clipper’s missing though he has yet to find evidence of their remains, Noffsinger is still “110% convinced” that they must have been murdered by the Japanese and buried near Truk.

After WW II there were rumors that American military officers had found the Clipper painted in Japanese colors at Yokosuka naval base. A slightly different version of the story often repeated by Trippe, was that magnetos bearing the same serial number as those from the Clipper had been found on Japanese engines. There is no firm evidence for these claims.

In 1979 Horace Brock, PAA pilot, noted, in his book Flying the Oceans, “There is no question but that Terletzky ran into a very bad storm.” Perhaps the turbulent either caused a catastrophic structural failure related to the sponson struts. It seems unlikely we’ll ever know for sure. But until someone comes up with conclusive evidence, it’s easier to assume the Hawaii Clipper succumbed to what Brock calls “a predictable tragedy” than to believe it was hijacked by renegade Japanese officers. Either way, the Hawaii Clipper mystery lives on.

(FAHS Tampa member Tony Johnson has made two trips to Truk with a rather large group of historians attempting to find the burial place of the 15 crew members and passengers. A cement slab was partially destroyed in a typhoon and has hindered further exploration. If you are interested in visiting Truk Island with the group, contact Tony at[...])

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PAA CLIPPERS? The era of the Clippers was short, 1935-1945. Today, nothing remains of the four Martin 130s. The Hawaii Clipper was lost in the Pacific in 1938; the Hong Kong Clipper was destroyed by the Japanese in Dec. 1941; the Philippine Clipper crashed into the side of a California mountain Jan. 21, 1943; the China Clipper crashed in Trinidad Jan. 8, 1945. Of 12 B-314s that saw service, there are but a few pieces of NC 18602, which can be seen at the Pacific Museum of Flight in Seattle. The remaining Clippers were scrapped in 1946.

AVON PARK Air Force veterans...Kathy Couturier is writing a book on the history of the Avon Park Air Range in Florida, and she would like to interview you. Her phone: 863 452 4288, email: kathy.couturier.cso@us.af.mil
Several original, limited prints by famed artists (Taylor, Trudigan, etc.) Me109, The Battle of Britain, framed, signed, $300, negotiable. Paul Lesser, 1829 Foxboro Ct., Oldsmar, FL 34670, phone: 727 781 6569.

“Letters From the Cockpit,” by FAHS’ Neil Cosentino. 110 pages of sheer delight (!) from Vietnam to the Bahamas, interesting tidbits of a man who’s experienced the life you wished you had spent. Contact Neil for details, 813 784 4669.

“ON GOD’S WINGS,” A daughter’s inspirational story of her Dad and his miracle, by Teri Louden, $24.95, call 619 894 8374.

Bill Dyer Jr., would like to purchase Book 3 of “CLOUD COUNTRY by Jimmie Mattern. It was written about 1936. Bill Dyer, Jr., 1607 Cambridge Dr., Kinston, NC 28504.

FORT CROP DUSTER TO AIRLINE CAPTAIN, The biography of FAHS’ and the Florida Aviation Hall of Fame’s Capt. LeRoy Brown assisted by FAHS member Dr. Leo F. Murphy. Hard cover, 218 pages, ISBN 10-1-60452-076-0, price $34. Order on line at www.bluewaterpress.com/captain.com or autographed by Capt. Brown at P.O. Box 144, Zellwood FL, 32798.

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“375 YEARS OF THE AMERICAN CITIZEN SOLDIER...”, published by FAHS’ Britt Borchard. The story of America’s militia, the “National Guard.” 178 pages. Contact Smyrna Media Group, P.O. Box 1061, Clearwater, FL. 33757, This is a must read... A book available from Amazon.

“IT'S BEST TO BE LUCKY,” the combat experiences of FAHS member Curtis C. Truver in Korea flying F-80s and F-86s and in Vietnam flying the F-105. Send $10.50 to the author at 4152 Prima Vista Circle, Jacksonville, FL, 32217.

“GEORGE PREDDY, TOP MUSTANG ACE,” is sold out in both hard & soft cover editions. However, it has been placed on Kindle and Nook. Also placed there is the first book on Preddy: “Wings God Gave My Soul.” They are priced at $4.99 each. The DVD Preddy The Mustang Ace is still available at $19.95. Call Joe Noah, 434 374 2781 or write Joe at noahjoe@gmail.com.

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“THE BLIMP GOES TO WAR,” 90 minute VHS video documentary produced by FAHS member, Richard G. Van Treuren. $35, to Atlantis Productions, P.O. Box 700, Edgewater, FL, 32132.


PAN AMERICAN WORLD AIRWAYS relics, insignias, timetables, posters, flight manuals, postcards, labels, photos. Trades available. Contact FAHS member and former PAA Captain David McIay, P.O. Box 170 Safety Harbor, FL, 34695.

“THE GOLDEN AGE OF FLYING,” Frontier Air Lines 1946-1986, by Capt. Tex Searle. E-mail: texsearle@msn.com, available at Barnes & Noble and Amazon, and former PAA Captain David McIay, P.O. Box 7170 Safety Harbor, FL., 34695.

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FIRST LIGHT SOCIETY in Kitty Hawk, NC is looking for new members. You will receive 4 newsletters covering society events plus other interesting articles. Send check $35 to FFS, PO Box 1903, Kitty Hawk, NC 27949.

“SEA DART,” by FAHS member B.J. Long, the story of the experimental supersonic seaplane interceptor. 73 pages soft cover. ISBN 0-942612-23-X.


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VALIANT AIR COMMAND, Preserving history for the future. Membership available, donations welcome. Warbird Museum open, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Contact Lloyd Morris, 407 268 1941 or write 6600 Tico Rd, Titusville, FL., 32780.

THE FLORIDA AIR MUSEUM AT SUNN’FUN is looking for members and volunteers to help maintain Florida’s official “Air Museum.” To become a member, send $35 to P.O. Box 7670, Lakeland, FL., 33807-7670; phone 863 648 9261. The Museum is located on Lakeland’s Airport. This is the cousin-organization of the FAHS, since we both have a joint-relationship with the Florida Aviation Hall of Fame and Florida aviation archives, both located in the Museum.


“FLYING MACHINES OVER PENNSYLVANIA,” by FAHS’ retired USN CDR, Dr. Details the early history of Naval Aviation in Pennsylvania to 1929. ISBN 978-0-7866-4, soft cover, 70 photos, $40, including postage & taxes. Relates the entire story of Ford’s contribution to winning both WW I and WW II. Tim O’Callaghan, P.O. Box 512, Northville, MI 48187. Web page: www.fordatwar.com

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Pt. Barrow, Alaska, Aug. 15, 1935...Wiley Post, 36, round-the-world pilot, and humorist Will Rogers, 56, perished today in the crash of their Lockheed Orion fuselage and Lockheed Explorer wing. The plane apparently had stalled on take-off from Walakpi, an Eskimo village, apparently out-of-fuel since there was no fire and no gasoline was seen on the shallow water crash-site.

Will Rogers left us but much of what he said then is still current today...for example:

I never expected to see the day when girls would get sunburned in the places they do today. A fool and his money are soon elected. What the country needs is dirtier fingernails and cleaner minds. We don’t seem to be able to check crime, so why not legalize it and then tax it out of business? When the Oakies left Oklahoma and moved to California, it raised the IQ of both states. This country has come to feel the same when Congress is in session as when the baby gets hold of a hammer. The only way you can beat the lawyers is to die with nothing. One Ad is worth more to a paper than 40 editorials. Make crime pay, become a lawyer. Live in such a way that you would not be ashamed to sell your parrot to the town gossip. It’s not what you pay a man, but what he costs you that counts. I don’t make jokes, I just watch the government and report the facts. If you ever injected truth into politics you would have no politics.

Everything is changing...people are taking their comedians seriously and the politicians as a joke. Don’t let yesterday use up too much of today. Everyone is ignorant only on different subjects. Advertising is the art of convincing people to spend money they don’t have on something they don’t need. Alexander Hamilton started projects. Advertising is the art of convincing people to spend money they don’t have on something they don’t need. Alexander Hamilton started projects. Advertising is the art of convincing people to spend money they don’t have on something they don’t need. Alexander Hamilton started projects.

The WASPs flew target towing for some of the biggest names in aviation. The WASPs flew target tow planes in support of the war effort. They flew planes that were designed specifically for towing targets. The WASPs were part of the WACs (Women's Army Corps) and were trained to work alongside male pilots on the flight deck.

The WASPs also played a significant role in the Battle of Britain. They were responsible for towing targets for the Royal Air Force's night fighter pilots. This allowed the pilots to practice their skills in taking down enemy aircraft.

The WASPs were also involved in aerial Reconnaissance and mapping. They flew over enemy territory to gather information and help the military plan their next moves.

The WASPs were instrumental in helping to win the war. They were a force to be reckoned with and their contributions were recognized by the military.

The WASPs were a testament to the courage and determination of women during World War II. They proved that women were just as capable as men in the aviation field and paved the way for future generations of female pilots.
**FLIGHT SURGEON REPORT**

**WHEN TO DRINK WATER**

How many folks do you know who say they don’t want to drink anything before going to bed because they’ll have to get up during the night? Here are the answers from the Mayo Clinic:

- Drinking one glass of water before going to bed avoids stroke or heart attack because it avoids “thick blood” or dehydration. Secondly, gravity holds water in the lower part of your body when you are upright (legs swell slightly). When you lie down and the lower body (legs) seek level with the kidneys, it is then that the kidneys remove the water because it is easier. Also, you need your minimum water to help flush the toxins out of your body.

- When is the correct time to drink water? Drinking water at a certain time maximizes its effectiveness on the body: 2 glasses of water after waking up—helps activate internal organs. 1 glass of water 30 minutes before a meal—helps digestion. 1 glass of water before taking a bath—helps lower blood pressure. 1 glass of water before going to bed—avoids stroke or heart attack.

Water at bedtime will also help prevent night time leg cramps. Your leg muscles are seeking hydration when they cramp and wake you up with a Charlie Horse. (Gator-aid also works, replacing electrolytes and fluid.)

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**NEW MEMBERS & RENEWALS**

Adams, John E., Sarasota, FL.
Gen. Earl G. Peck, Clearwater, FL.
Hetherington, C. W., Coral Springs, FL.
Herold, Robert D., Tallahassee, FL.
Barnes, Dudley H., Orlando, FL.
Youngs III, Luther A., Long Key, FL.

**GONE WEST**

Charles G. Harris, Clearwater, FL.
Duncan McDonald, Salt Lake City, Utah

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**NEW ADDRESSES**

Dr. Leo Murphy, Port Orange, FL.
Frederick “Bill” Wagner, Tampa, FL.

**BENEFACTOR SOCIETY MEMBERS FOR 2018 (donations of $100+)**

Baron, Joseph, Clearwater, FL.
Dr. Jack St.Arnold, Dunedin, FL.
Fred McMullen, Tampa, FL.
Morton W. Lester, Martinsville, VA

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FAHS, AWAPS, Albert Whitted Airport, 451 8th Ave., SE, St. Petersburg, FL. 33701

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Simply lick the back of your hand three times, let dry, then sniff. If it smells bad, you do have bad breath.

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Located at the Florida Air Museum at Sun ‘n Fun, Lakeland, FL.

Douglas Baker, pilot (2003); George “Ted” Baker, founder of National Airlines (2004);

- Thomas W. Benoist, pioneer aircraft builder (2011); Jacqueline Cochran, pioneer aviatrix (2003);
- Leroy Brown, native pioneer Florida, crop-duster, air pilot and leader in the U.S. Aviation Industry Museum project (2009); Dr. Warren J. Brown, flight surgeon & aviation journalist (2017);
- Glenn Curtiss, pioneer pilot, inventor and founder of three Florida cities (2006); Jimmy Doolittle, pioneer pilot and war hero (2007); Amelia Earhart, pioneer aviatrix lost on round-the-world flight in 1937 (2010);
- Percival Farniok, founder of the World’s First Airline (2003); Chalmers H. Goodlin, fighter pilot WW 2 and test pilot (2005); George Haldeman, test pilot and holder of numerous records (2006); Edward Vernon Rickenbacker (2014);
- Ed Hoffman Sr., pioneer pilot; Howard Hughes, pioneer pilot and movie producer (2007); Jack Hunt, Navy blimp record holder & founding president Embry-Riddle University (2011); Anthony T. Jannus, pilot of the 1st Airline (2003); Colin Kelly, 1st WW II hero (2011); Joseph W. Kittinger, Jr. balloonist and test pilot (2003); William Krusen, pioneer Florida aviator (2011); Col. & Mrs. Charles E. Lindbergh, pioneer pilots (2004); Lewis Maytag, CEO of National Airlines (2007); David McCampbell, USN pilot, Medal of Honor winner with 34 victories over the Japanese (2010); A.B. McMullen, builder of many of Florida’s airports (2004); Zack Mosley creator of “Smokin’ Jack” (2008); Charles E. Richburg, Navy test pilot (2006); Edward Vernon Rickenbacker, CEO of Eastern Air Lines (2003); John Paul Riddle, founder of Embry-Riddle University (2005);
- Lawrence Sperry, Inventor of the auto-ilot, turn & bank indicator and artificial horizon (2011); Nicole Stott, Astronaut (2011); Paul W. Tibbets, Jr., pilot of the B-29 which dropped the Hiroshima atomic bomb (2005); Juan Terry Tripe, founder of Pan American World Airways (2003); Phil Waldman, ferry pilot (2016); Kermit Weeks, Curator of “Fantasy of Flight” air museum (2008); Robert M. White, flight pilot WW 2 and test pilot (2008).

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I'm going to pick her life.

Did you go to the beach?

Chinese Wong.

Learn Chinese in 5 minutes and behold their car was stolen! He pushed and she pushed, he pushed and then she pushed, he pushed and then she pushed, he pushed and then she pushed, he pushed... FINALLY...

“A TOURIST ASKS THE GUIDE, “Doctor showed him the eye chart that displayed the letters C and A Czech man goes to an optometrist to have his eyes checked... at home with my mother; that is why I didn’t get any breakfast.”

“A Tourist asks the Guide, "Where is the Mexican border?" Johnny, "The Mexican border is standing in a garage makes you a car. You are never too old to learn something stupid. To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit the target. Going to church doesn’t make you a Christian, any more than the target. Emergency Notify... I answered "a doctor." something stupid. Standing in a garage makes you a car.

He is so romantic... every time he speaks to me he starts by saying

"Fair Lady." "Romantic my foot! He used to be a bus driver..." FINALLY... Beer is cheaper than gas! Drink, don’t drive!

BAD ENDING TO A HOT DATE... A young fellow and his date drove off to the local necking park in his father's car. Just as they pulled in the car stalled. He pushed and she pushed, he pushed and she pushed, pushed and then she pushed and then—they looked up low and behold their car was stolen!

THE SAM BROWN BELT

General Sir Samuel Browne VC (1824-1901) was a Calvary officer in the Indian Army who served with distinction during the Indian Mutiny and the Second Afghan War, but his name is known for the diagonal brown belt he designed.

On Aug. 31, 1858, the then Captain Sam Browne fought in an action in Uttar Pradesh that earned him the Victoria Cross, but it also cost him his left arm. As a result of this injury he developed the belt that bears his name.

Having only one arm made it difficult for him to draw his sword, essential for a cavalry officer of the day. His right hand was able to grip the hilt but without his left hand to hold the scabbard he couldn’t complete the task in a fluid movement.

So he designed a diagonal belt to hold the sword’s scabbard in position and allowed him to draw his sword one-handed.

The design became fashionable among officers and later when they began carrying revolvers, the belt was found to support the weight of the heavy weapon.

The belt gained wider approval during the Boer War and eventually became a standard part of the uniform for officers.

The Sam Browne belt spread to several armies, and is still part of the uniform in Finland and Poland. In the U.S., it was introduced by Gen. John J. Pershing, commander of U.S. Forces in WW I but it is no longer worn. Mussolini and Hitler wore Sam Browne belts with some of their uniforms.

In the British military, the Sam Browne was traditionally worn only by officers and warrant officers who carried swords, but later spread to all officers. It was also used by civilian police offices for a while, especially in Commonwealth countries and it’s still part of the dress uniform of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

From World War II, it has been replaced in day-to-day use by webbing, which is used to carry far more than just a revolver.

FORGOTTEN (?) FLORIDA AIRLINES

Air Florida

Air Florida began operations in September 1972 as a Florida intrastate airline serving Miami, Orlando and Tampa-St. Petersburg.

In 1977, C. Edward Acker, former president of Braniff Airways, organized a group that injected new capital into the company sufficient in amount to allow the airline to purchase a DC-9 and the latest Boeing 737. Together with Eli Timoner, Air Florida President and founder, Acker lured top officials from Braniff, Continental Air Lines, Eastern and the FAA to join the management team.

Acker had a reputation in airline circles as a top administrator. When he was with Braniff, he was a principal negotiator for the purchase of Panagra at a cost $30 million to reinforce Braniff’s competitive stance in the South American market.

Air Florida’s first major step toward expansion occurred in 1977, when legislation was passed permitting intrastate carriers in California and Florida to interline traffic with CAB regulated carriers. Its hold on the Florida market was strengthened in late 1978 when it acquired the commuter carrier, “Air Sunshine,” and took over the route to the Florida Keys.

Five 737s were purchased in 1979 and two 737s were on lease from Frontier Airline and two more were on order from Boeing.

By 1980, Air Florida was operating all-jet service to Daytona, Ft. Lauderdale, Freeport, Gainesville, Grand Turk Island, Panama City, Pensacola, Philadelphia, Rock Sound, St. Croix, Tallahassee, Tampa, Toledo, Treasure Cay, Washington D.C. and West Palm Beach.

During the summer of 1979, the airline industry was shocked by Air Florida announcing that it would like to acquire National Airlines foreign routes and overseas jets -a rather marked departure for this small airline. As one pioneer pilot put it, “Sounds like Juan Trip.”

Air Florida folded in the mid-1980’s.

FLORIDA AIRLINES

Florida Airlines began operations as Florida Air Taxi out of Tampa in 1971. In that year with the purchase of one aging DC3 to add to the fleet of small planes, the taxi service became Florida Airlines. By 1974 Florida Airlines was operating a fleet of 8 DC-3s. By 1976, Martin 404s were added and the airline merged with Air South operating out of St.Simons Island, GA. It ceased operations in 1981 with legal & financial problems.

KAMIKAZE BATS & BALLOON BOMBS

A Pennsylvania dentist, Lytle S. Adams, was driving home from Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico, when he heard about Pearl Harbor. Remembering the millions of bats in the caverns, Adams wondered why they couldn’t be armed with tiny incendiary bombs. He sent his idea to President Roosevelt, who agreed to give it a shot. The Army and Navy spent 27 months of research and $2 million on what came to be called Operation X-ray.

The plan was simple enough. Hundreds of thousands’ of bats would be captured and stored, asleep, in freezers. A one-ounce bomb would be attached to the loose skin on each one’s chest. The bats were to be dropped from a plane over Japan in containers that would open at 1,000’.

Startled, the bats would head for the nearest cracks and crevices of buildings and chew off the bombs which would explode, shooting a two-foot-high flame into the air for eight minutes. The mostly wooden buildings of Japan would ignite!

Early testing at an Army Air Force base in California had mixed results: some bats slept through free fall and dropped like rocks. Others escaped and set the entire base on fire including a general’s car. The army then passed Operation X-ray on to the Navy. But the project came to an abrupt halt in 1944, as the military worked on a bomb far more powerful than anything a bat could deliver.

Meanwhile, the Japanese were working on Operation Fu-Gu—a plan to wreak havoc in America with balloons towing incendiary bombs. Made of rice paper and inflated with hydrogen, the balloons measured 33 feet in diameter. Toward the end of 1944 more than 300 of them sailed the jet stream across the Pacific to the West Coast.

In May 1945, one of the balloon bombs exploded in Oregon, killing a woman and five children on a picnic—the war’s only casualties in continental America. In 1987 several of the Japanese women who had made that balloon sent notes of sympathy to the victims families, along with 1,000 folded paper cranes, a Japanese symbol of peace.

The speed of rotation of the Earth’s surface increases steadily from zero at the poles to a bit over 1,000 miles an hour at the equator, (New York City’s latitude travels only about 790 mph.)

The speed of sound—known as Mach 1, named after the Austrian physicist Ernst Mach—is different at different heights. At sea level, for example, it is 760 mph. Above 36,000 feet Mach 1 is reached at about 660 mph.

Daredevil Pilot Hanna Reitsch was the first woman to test a rocket plane, the ME-163, and may be the only person to have “travelled” for in-flight observation in a test model of the V1-V2 rockets. Testing she inevitably crashed many times; it was said that there was not a single bone in her body that hadn’t been broken at least once. Hanna appears in history books as the lone pilot who flew into the Nazi capital to rescue Adolf Hitler at the very last moment. Hitler, supposedly, insisted on staying behind and killed himself in his bunker.
It’s a number so huge that the Amazon CEO can painlessly siphon off a billion dollars every year to fund his boyhood dream: his other company, Blue Origin. Jeff Bezos’s money earned from Amazon has paid for the building where he sits, the air-conditioning, and the 60-foot rocket lying on its side in a nearby hangar, waiting to be tugged to a launching pad and shot into the thermosphere. Also, the salaries of about 1,500 Blue Origin workers, including the 35 or so engineers in the room and another 10 or so on a video screen, dialed in from the company’s H.Q in Kent, Washington.

When they run down the checklist for the next day’s launch of that rocket, the New Shepard, Bezos sits. He asks one question—do the helicopters that will track the rocket’s flight know, that weather balloons will be in the area?

Starting in 2019, Bezos plans to use New Shepard to send passengers on jaunts into space. Clad in cool Star Trek-style jumpsuits, customers will settle into a comfy capsule and shoot up over the atmosphere for a quick peek at their home planet through panoramic windows and a few moments of weightless ecstasy. Though Blue Origin hasn’t announced the fee, it’s been reported to be a couple hundred thousand dollars per head. And Bezos anticipates ramping up quickly to a few flights a week. But suborbital tourism is just the beginning of his vision for Blue Origin. The second part of his plan is already under construction in a giant factory in Cape Canaveral, Florida: an imposing rocket meant to orbit and beyond.

Bezos tends toward discretion when it comes to his businesses, but earlier this past year he offered to usher me into Blue Origin’s sanctums, with one stipulation: “I had to promise that before I interviewed him about his long-term plans, I would watch a newly unearthed 1975 PBS program.”

So one afternoon, I opened my laptop and clicked on the link Bezos had sent me. Suddenly I was thrust back into the pre-digital world, where viewers had more fingers than channels and remote shopping hadn’t advanced past the Sears catalog. In low-resolution monochrome, a host in suit and tie interviews the writer Isaac Asimov and physicist Gerard O’Neill, wearing a cool, wide-lapelled blazer and white turtleneck. To the amusement of the host, O’Neill describes a future where some 90% of humans live in space stations in distant orbits of the blue planet. For most of us, Earth would be our homeland but not our home. We’d use it for R&R, visiting it as we would a national park. Then we’d return to the cosmos, where humanity world be thriving like never before. Asimov, agreeing entirely, called resistance to the concept, “planetary chauvinism.”

That vision captivated a generation of space nerds, including Bezos, who believed it back then, as a brainy schoolkid. And he believe it now, with increasing convictions every passing year. Earth is destined to run out of resources, he explains patiently to anyone questioning his priorities. Humans need a plan B. While he readily concedes that building a space company qualifies as a cool adventure the ultimate point he always insists, is getting people to live in space. He often remarks with astonishment and disgust that there has never been more than 13 humans in space at one time. He’s out to change that, by creating the backbone needed for O’Neill’s mil- lions, billions, maybe even a trillion people to reside off-planet.

He’s not the only tech magnate with his head in the stars. Though Bezos has touched many more lives than Elon Musk, Blue Origin has received far less attention than Musk’s private rocket company, SpaceX. That’s in part due to Musk’s personality but also to his rocket company’s longer list of feats. SpaceX has had 60 successful launches of its Falcon 9 rockets and employs 6,000 people. Blue Origin has proceeded more slowly and with less oomph. Other gazillionaires—Richard Branson and the late Paul Allen—were also funding startup space ventures. All men talk of creating the basic infrastructure for easy access to space, kind of like the railroad or the internet.

In the fall of 2002, Bezos met with Musk for dinner but nothing came of it. “He’s a good guy, we’re kindred spirits,” Bezos told his friends, “But we decided to do our own thing.” Bezos now describes the meeting as more of a social event, a convivial dinner with their spouses. It’s fair to call this the high point of their relationship.

In the years that followed Blue Origin built and flew actual rockets, including a 2011 test flight that ended with a dramatic accidental explosion. When it began sending the New Shepard, in April 2015, Blue successfully separated the capsule from its booster, which houses the propulsion system, and then reclaimed the capsule. Later that year, New Shepard landed a booster for the first time. When SpaceX landed its first rocket, eight months later, Musk got peeved at Bezos’ “Welcome to the club” tweet. Bezos insists it was sincere and not a jibe.

By then, Blue Origin was looking more like a traditional aerospace company. It moved from the envelope factory to a modern facility in Kent, about 20 miles south of Seattle. Using custom rockets built in Kent, Blue Origin has conducted 9 suborbital flights.

By most people’s metrics, however, Blue Origin lags behind SpaceX, which has placed dozens of satellites into orbit and carried cargo to the International Space Station. Bezos counters that Blue Origin’s pace is not a bug but a defining feature. The company’s mascot is a tortoise (leaving unsaid who the hare is). Its motto, translated into Latin is Gratamin ferociter”—Step by step, ferociously.” Bezos described the upcoming tourist flights: The whole trip will last about 11 minutes, making it seem like a very expensive Disney ride. It almost make you wonder why, when Blue’s long-term goals are so high-minded, it is pursuing a project so seemingly frivolous. Bezos’ response is that tourism is a squire of revenue, but also something bigger— best way to make space travel seem routine. If people you know are popping into suborbital space, it will start to feel more normal and less risky. Commercial air travel also followed this path, with passengers engaging in prayer on the runway.

In Cape Canaveral, 1,400 miles from the Bezos’ Texas ranch where he will transport people into space, Bezos has built a new $250 million facility. No prefab here: it’s a statement building, BLUE ORIGIN is spelled out in huge block letters clearly visible to visitors at the nearby Kennedy Space Center. The lobby is a shrine to the Company’s achievement: On the right is the rocket that has gone to space and landed on its feet five times. On the other side is a capsule with six tortoises painted between the windows, to mark each of it sorties. It’s here that Blue Origin is building New Glenn. If New Shepard is Bezos’ ploy to get people comfortable with space travel, New Glenn is the company’s galactic workhorse. It’s taller than SpaceX’s Falcon Heavy rocket and just shy of the Statue of Liberty in size. Besides New Glenn, the company is now designing a new moon lander called Blue Moon. “All aboard, Space Craft leaving this year!”

In 1978, when the first new class of U.S. astronaut candidates in eleven years was being formed, more than 8,000 persons applied. Thirty-five were chosen for a two-year program of training. The group included six women, a few candidates who could not fly an airplane and were not expected to learn, three blacks, and a Japanese-American.
During World War II, Tampa was a center for military aviation. Drew Field was a sleepy airport until the military rapidly developed it into a huge air base. Then there was the creation of MacDill Field out of a rattlesnake-infested jungle. About the same time an auxiliary field to the north of Tampa was constructed out of scrub country and named Henderson Field. After the war it became Tampa’s industrial park with many industries located there. Later it became the University of South Florida and Busch Gardens. Today only isolated patches of the old runways remain.

It was at Henderson Field that as a young daring teenager, I enjoyed some exciting and foolish adventures. The field had a stout barbed wire fence with the usual “Keep Out” signs and sentries. This did not stop a few of us dare-takers from slipping in and getting to a vantage point where we could watch those beautiful Marauders practice landings. I can still hear the squeal of the tires as they touched down. I recall the planes taxiing off the main runway and stopping. There, the flyers slowly emerged and walked over to a wooden building and disappeared inside. Watching machine gun testing was a real thrill too. The field had a large concrete cave-like structure where airplanes would fire their guns. What a sight to us kids, real machine guns blasting! This excitement should have been enough but no, there’s more.

Not far from the field was a circular area set up as a bombing target with an observation tower. Here the planes would fly over and drop 100-pound blue practice bombs. These bombs were filled with sand. In the bomb-fin area there was a small cylinder of black powder, which when exploded made a great big puff of white smoke to mark it’s location. Occasionally, one of the smoke charges failed to go off. These were sought as a real prize. The firing mechanism of the bombs was rather primitive: a 28 gauge shotgun shell was set into the black powder charge; a sliding weighted firing pin was mounted in a cylinder over the shotgun shell primer so when the bomb was released a safety wire between the primer and the weighted firing pin was withdrawn thus arming the bomb. During the war, farmers and ranchers were allowed to purchase a limited number of 12 gauge shotgun shells to control varmints but no one could buy 28 gauge shells. The army had them all! What did we do with the black powder? We made our own smoke bombs and set them off in unmentionable places. A favorite place near my home was Burt’s Junk Yard. Burt had a contract with the government to buy airplane junk. What a bonanza for us boys! All kinds of wrecked airplanes to snoop around in. I remember truck-loads of B-26 engine cowlings being dumped. They were painted many different colors. One day we found a great treasure: a huge yellow life raft with paddles and a big fiber pump. Wow! This was really something for us guys. It was all two of us could do to drag it out through a crack in the board fence, roll it up and lug it home. One side and both inflatable sets were sound but the other side had a terrible 6” x 6” corner rip. Undaunted, we sewed it up as best we could and smeared rubber cement on it but it leaked out as fast as we could pump. Many experiments later found the rip covered by an out-sized tire patch that worked. So, down to the Hillsborough River, four of us took our big yellow prize. Two guys to paddle, one to steer and one to keep pumping up the sagging side of the boat. We were really having a grand time! Probably the only teenagers in the country with a real army life raft. The population was aware however that some German saboteurs had come ashore on the east coast of Florida in rubber boats. Seeing this rubber boat close to home must have scared the daylight out of some for no sooner had we lugged the thing home when a shiny new automobile drove up and discharged two business like gentlemen—FBI. They observed us wet kids, saw the sagging side with the bubbling patch and told us to stay out of trouble. They didn’t even take the raft! We continued to paddle and pump our big yellow boat until it completely wore out and never again did we have to face Uncle Sam.

There was another feature of the raft that provided an opportunity for more mischief. Stuck to the inside were two yellow pouches labeled “SEA MARKER.” We did not know what to make of the red powder contained in the package but the words “Sea Marker” must mean to color the sea so we took a spoon-full and dumped it in a wash tub of water. Immediately it turned a brilliant green! Now, just north of town is the hamlet of Sulfur Springs where the main attraction is a huge spring fed swimming pool. I dove down to the spring head clutching the bag of Sea Marker, ripped it

At the start of the Revolutionary War, the Governor and the mayor of New York, both British loyalists, successfully turned some of Washington’s personal guards against him. They were ready to strike, but Washington found out. The conspirators were arrested and interrogated in secret. Then Washington gathered 20,000 troops and citizens in an open field and had one ringleader hanged for all to see. That sent a clear message to the Loyalists, without revealing the plot.

The New York Provincial Congress had established the Committee on Conspiracies’, a top-secret team of civilians with a mission to gather information about the enemy and detect and thwart the enemy’s intelligence operations. As the plot against Washington got bigger, people started to talk, and this little committee—lead by John Jay—wound up bringing the whole thing down. It was the beginning of America’s counterintelligence efforts.

When we think about the Revolution, we think about the colonists here who are fighting the British coming from over there. In reality, there were lots of people in the Colonies who took the side of the British, and lots of people from England who joined the colonial side. Some changed allegiances back and forth. This created an environment of distrust and fear. It also led to lots of double-crossing and espionage.

The assassination plot is hidden history. When the British are coming, the last thing Washington wanted to say was, “Hey, everyone, my own men just turned on me.” That is not the picture of leadership you want when you are in charge of the military. It’s clear that he didn’t want anyone to know this story. Thus, this story remains one of the little-known facts of the Revolution.

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Robin Olds was born at Luke Field Hospital on July 14, 1922 to Army Air Corps Capt. Robert Olds & wife. When he was 4, his mother died and Robin became an “Army Brat,” contemplating becoming a fly boy like his Dad. Moving to Virginia he became the captain of the high school football team at 6’2” 190 lbs. and tried to join the RAF in 1939 at age 17. His father refused to sign the papers and he then returned to the Millard Military Prep contemplating an assignment to West Point. Robin was accepted to the class of 1944 at West Point and during the ensuing years made All-American as a line-man. With the advent of Pearl Harbor he was sent to the Spartan School of Aviation in Tulsa, OK for flight training. Basic training ended by Christmas of 1942 & Robin was back at West Point having to graduate early due to the war, in June 1943. Just before graduation Robin lost his Dad. With graduation and new 2nd Lt. bars on his collar he is sent to Chandler, AZ for P-38 fighter training & then to Muroc Dry Lake in the Mojave Desert. Further training at Glendale resulted in 1st Lt. bars and a frustrating extensive looking for a place to send a West Pointer for a flight commander position. He is finally shipped overseas and arrives in Scotland and is now newly arrived at Wattisham, England and has finally seen action on D-Day. Aug. 1, 1944 comes and Robin is still frustrated with zero victories. Robin is now on patrol in France when he suddenly sees an opportunity…..resulting in downing his first two kills—Focke-Wulf 190s. Two weeks later. On Aug. 25, 1944, 11 days after Robins first two victories the fighter group was assigned to a sweep in front of a bomber group. Robin was attempting to aid a fellow pilot when his plane went into compressibility and started a downward dive…..the day ended with Robin scoring three more victories to make him the squadron’s first ace. They were now transitioning from Lightnings to Mustang fighters and they have just accompanied a bomber flight close to Berlin, missing their timed assigned bomber group and now awaiting the fireworks….Noticing a camera had been placed in Robin’s wing just prior to his next bomber escort mission. After a difficult camera bombing run Robin is now hi-tailing it for home…Robin has just finished his R & R and has arrived back in England to begin his second round of aerial combat. He soon took some heat from a command Major during an escort run…..

Encounters with the Me-262s (new German jet-fighters) became routine. We learned to insert ourselves between them and the bombers. This seemed to discourage them for the most part. I never did get a decent shot at one of them, but a few of the new cross pilots did manage to get into their traffic pattern with some success. Major Jeffrey would get the first Me-262 kill for the group. By then we all knew the jets were faster but couldn’t turn worth a."… We scornfully called them the “blowjobs.”

Real action came again on the nineteenth, when I was leading sixteen guys on a bomber escort and fighter sweep. We sighted bogeys at 8000’ over the Munster area, a mixed bag of about 18 Me-109s and Fu 190s flying a P-51 U.S.-style formation in elements of two. That rally pissed me off, but I had to admit, these guys were exceptionally competent, aggressive, and fearless. We got into a hell of a tangle, with everyone split S’ing all over the place. As good as they were, we were far better. The proof was in the final score: 434th Squadron got six, Germans zero. Two of them were mine, one Me-109 and one Fw-190. It was a good day, and we earned an exceptionally memorable O club party that night.

I took official command of the squadron towards the end of March. We finished the month with a tally of 25 missions flown over Germany and many more kills for the group. Taking over the squadron meant taking over the CO’s log, and I took great liberty in adding important and memorable events. A teletype was slipped anonymously under my door late one evening. No one knows who composed the epistle, but it was noteworthy. (It concerned a bar-racks mouse offensive using left over breakfast cheese.)
YESTERDAY’S FLORIDA AVIATION HISTORY

THE FABULOUS THIRTIES

1930...Miami—PAA receives the first Sikorsky S-41 flying boats. They replace the slower S-38a introduced in 1928. The German Zeppelin “Graf Zeppelin” flies from Spain to Brazil up the Florida east coast to Lakehurst N.J. In 1937 it will be decommissioned after making 590 flights including 144 ocean crossings and a trip around the world. It was dismantled in 1940 for scrap.

1930...St. Petersburg—Pioneer pilot Johnnie Green is hospitalized ending his flying career.

1930...Winter Haven—The Babson Company announces plans to build an airport. $3000 is raised for improving the present airport; two buildings are erected for a H.Q. and a flying school.

Jan., 1930...West Palm Beach—Flying shifts from the beaches to Bethune Point (Daytona Beach). A Florida State Airways, Inc. which is supplying passenger service to Florida cities and the Bahamas with Ryan planes, flies a plane from Bethune Point Airport on a charter flight to Palm Beach. It descends at Lake Worth to land but plunges into a lake at full power. The pilot Bill Lindley, V.P of operations for the new line is killed. The passenger survives.


Jan. 15, 1930, Miami—Eastern Air Transport buys 6 Curtiss Condors, 14 Kingbirds and one Ford Trimotor. Two Fokker Trimotors are leased from another airline.

1930...The artificial horizon is introduced to take the place of the old needle, ball and airspeed indicators.

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1930, Opa-locka—Glenn Curtiss puts his “Aero-Car” travel-trailer into production. It is used to transport passengers from the 36th St. Field to Dinner Key and it is used as an ambulance and a school bus.

Jan. 15, 1930, Miami—Eastern Air Transport buys 6 Curtiss Condors, 14 Kingbirds and one Ford Trimotor. Two Fokker Trimotors are leased from another airline.

January 1930...Tallahassee—Joe Musleh puts on an acrobatic show in a Waco 9 formally dedicating Dale Mabry Field.