Contact!

Leonard Rosen, Editor
October 2010

Editor's Comment... For the past four or five years, Hal Cope has been concerned that unless someone took on the project of recording many of the events which transpired during the non-sked era, much of the history of that period would not be memorialized and would simply fade away with time. We know the names of the carriers and in most instances their operators. What is missing are the stories of the people that worked for these carriers. The men and women that were on the line day to day. Stories that Ralph Cox could tell about USOA and the recovery of his DC-4 from an ice floe. Stories Jack Pedesky could relate regarding the fate of 070. The adventures of our infamous group of lady flight attendants, etc. How about a Pink Cloud flight to Las Vegas, piano bar and all? The first DC-4 flights to Hawaii with a full load of passengers, baggage and fuel. The Dew Line, the Berlin Airlift, etc.

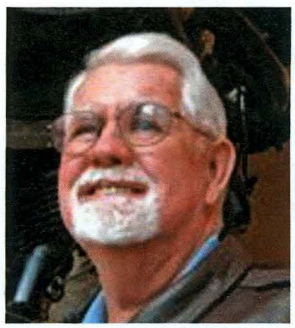
Hal's Herculean efforts to get a book published could not be brought to fruition in a timely fashion, but due to his absolute determination and persistence there is light at the end of the tunnel. Through his efforts we have made an arrangement with Embry Riddle Aviation University to relocate

materials presently in our display at the Burbank Airport to their Prescott Arizona Campus. They will build a display case on the second floor of the Campus library where the material will be on permanent display. In addition, and music to Hal's ears, Embry Riddle will utilize class projects to conduct interviews with APA members and others, collect photos and articles from the non-sked period and compile materials into short stories, a book, DVD and /or website. The folks at Embry Riddle are as enthused about this project as we are and we look forward to working with them in the future.

With the donations already collected from the membership, we will establish an AVIATION PIONEERS ASSOCIATION NONSKEDS HISTORY FUND at Embry Riddle. The fund will be used for, among other things, to build a display case to house the exhibit presently at the Burbank Airport and support the other functions contemplated under the agreement.

If we get enough positive response from the membership, the APA Board of Directors would consider holding an Annual Reunion Luncheon on Saturday April 30, 2011 at Embry Riddle in Prescott Arizona. This would give the membership an opportunity to see the APA display as well as giving the Embry Riddle students an opportunity to conduct interviews with the attendees. Please contact me ASAP if you would like to participate. My email address is lrosen.apa@prodigy.net. My mailing address is L. Rosen, Aviation Pioneers Association, P.O, Box 572442, Tarzana, CA 91357.

Cope Note... Think small grow big! That's what Kenny Friedken did. He started with an old "Bamboo Bomber" and ended up with one of the great airline success stories of the 50-60's. Pacific Southwest Airlines (PSA) including stewardesses in "hot pants".



Not many know Stan Weiss helped Kenny on the road to success. I recall standing on the tarmac at Long Beach Airport in front of Standard Airlines hanger with Kenny and Stan. Nearby sat Standards DC-3 N17186. Kenny said to Stan "I really need a DC-3. How much do you want for one of yours?"

Stan indicated the going price in those days was about $100,000 fully equipped for immediate airline operation. Kenny then said "Stan I really want that DC-3 and I will pay you whatever you think its worth. However I just don't have the money to pay you right now." Stan looked at Kenny and said "Kenny I will sell you a DC-3 to for $97,000 and

you pay me whenever you can." They shook hands and that was that - Kenny had his DC-3.

Not only did Stan sell Kenny a DC-3 on a handshake but we, North American Airlines, ceased to run our own "shuttles" to SFO and SAN booking our continuing passengers on PSA whenever possible. I went back through my pilots log to refresh my memory on which DC-3 Kenny bought on a handshake. I was flying N186, N644 and N297 frequently in those days and the last entry I can find in my logbook for 186 was June 8, 1952. I have to assume that it was 186 Kenny bought from Stan some time around the middle of 1952. The photo is a Friedkin Airlines UC-78 circa 1950.

The Father of Blind Flying ...A typical flight instructor in 1917 would point to the instruments in a cockpit and tell his students to "pay no attention to them." In aviation's early days, pilots flew by the "seat of their pants." They trusted their eyes and gut feelings, even though doing so sometimes killed them, especially when vertigo set in at night or during bad weather. Such loss of equilibrium was considered part of the business, a rite of passage that fliers just had to handle. A pilot who relied on any instruments other than the compass, and perhaps the altimeter, was a lightweight-or even worse, a coward.

William Charles Ocker, "the father of blind flying," didn't buy into such macho posturing. As an Army pilot in World War I, he had known too many competent fliers who became disoriented and died needlessly; he himself had narrowly escaped death in 1918 while testing one of Elmer Sperry's early turn indicators. Lost in clouds with no visibility, Ocker discovered that the indicator showed his plane in a turn while his senses told him he was straight and level. The confusion sent him into a spiral dive: emerging from the clouds, he had just enough time to regain control. Others might have blamed the instrument. Ocker understood that, despite his training and experience, his pilot instincts had failed him.

Throughout his career, Ocker remained haunted by his close call and the reasons why it happened. A routine physical exam in 1926 finally provided him with some answers. The flight surgeon sat Ocker in a Jones-Barany chair, a swiveling, spinning seat designed to measure a person's sense of balance and equilibrium, and challenged him to take the exam with his eyes closed. Ocker discovered that when robbed of visual cues he couldn't tell whether the chair was spinning or stationary, or even what direction he turned. The flight surgeon had re-created the same disorientation that Ocker had experienced eight years earlier.

Ocker devised a way to beat the test by rigging a turn indicator and penlight inside a covered shoe box with a viewing hole cut in one end. Seated in the chair, he held the box up to his face and watched only the instrument. Even though he was "flying blind," he could now tell the flight surgeon precisely which way he moved and how fast. Ocker had proved that conflict can exist between a pilot's subjective perceptions and the readings of his instruments, and that he should trust the

instruments, not his instincts, when that occurred.

With evangelical zeal, Ocker spread news of his discovery to other pilots. Despite the evidence, the

Air Corps stubbornly insisted that "blind" instrument flying was unnecessary, dangerous, and would not become part of its pilot training program. Many pilots learned it anyway under Ocker's tutelage. Some of his superiors remained suspicious of this odd officer who liked to spin in chairs, more than once forcing him to undergo psychological examinations.

Ocker persisted, taking his ideas with him to his new assignment at the Air Corps' main training center at Brooks Field in Texas. Along with the Ocker box, he invented the notion of the covered cockpit, in which a pilot has to rely strictly on instruments in flight training. The Army Air Corps might have disapproved, but Pan American Airlines soon adopted his methods in their flight school. He challenged the instrument-flight skeptics further by making the first cross-country flight in a completely covered cockpit, a nearly 900-mile jaunt from Brooks Field to Scott Field, Illinois, on June 24, 1930.

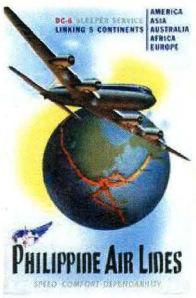
In 1932 Ocker and a co-worker distilled their research into the world's first instrument flight manual, Blind Flight in Theory and Practice. While the U.S. military was slow to acknowledge the book's value, the Soviet air force quickly adopted a pirated edition as a standard text.

Ocker also made some influential friends along the way, including Orville Wright, who called him a "missionary" with "more influence in bringing about the use of instruments than any other person." He counted Eddie Rickenbacker, Billy Mitchell, and Jimmy Doolittle among his supporters. Charles Lindbergh, Amelia Earhart, and pioneering Australian aviator Charles Kingsford-Smith learned about instrument flying from him personally. When he retired as a full colonel, he was the oldest serving pilot in the U.S. military.

Ocker died at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C., on September 15, 1942. The following year, the military authorities finally made his instrument training procedures standard for all pilots. Few remember Ocker today; no airports, aviation companies, or museums bear his name. Yet he would be happy enough to know that he rides with every pilot who relies on instruments to find the way home.

Excerpted from an article by Mark Wolverton.

A Flashback from Bill Heller... Philippine Air Lines, prior to WW2, did not exist. There was PATCO, which was Philippine Aerial Taxi Company and was owned by Andres Soriano, who also owned the San Miguel Brewery. After the war, he wanted to build it into an International Airline. He arranged for TWA to come out to Manila to assist in establishing this new Airline. It was good for TWA because the new PAL could fly places TWA was not allowed to fly. PanAm at the time was the US "Chosen Instrument" and, as such, was the only US Airline flying world routes. PATCO was run by "Pappy" Gunn, later of WW2 fame, and a friend of his, one Harold "Buzz" Slingsby, a Consair Pilot who had frequent layovers in Manila. He helped Pappy operate the old PATCO.



When Corregidor was about to fall, General MacArthur commandeered the two airplanes used by PATCO. They were Twin Beech 18s. MacArthur "took" both Pappy Gunn and Buzz Slingsby, made them Captains in the US Army Air Corps, and sent them to Australia with members of his staff, in the Beech 18s.

Where does this fit into my picture? During WW2, when I was a Squadron Commander of the 360th Squadron of the 303rd Bomb Group in England, a Major Slingsby reported to me for duty. He handed me his file for inspection. I was immediately taken by the large signature of General Douglas MacArthur on papers in the file. Over time he told me the entire story. After he got to Australia he was transferred to the Training Command of the US Army Air Corps. Eventually he was transferred to Europe for combat service. That is how I came to know him. We became friends. He told me a lot about the plans for the new PAL. It eventually had a lot to do with my employment with the post war PAL.

Pappy Gunn was an even more interesting story. Gunn prior to running PATCO had been a retired

Navy enlisted Test Pilot. He had an intuitive mechanical ability. Gunn's wartime masterstroke

was the installation of inordinately powerful armament systems in Douglas A-20 and North American B-25 bombers. At the same time, he saw fit to provide those aircraft with extra fuel tanks that allowed them to have extraordinary range. This allowed these aircraft to take on a new role, that of low-level strafers rather than just medium bombers. With eight forward-firing .50 caliber machine guns, the A-20 Havoc and the B-25 Mitchell went on a wartime rampage through the South Pacific. Pappy Gunn became a legendary figure in the Pacific War—a man who richly deserves to be remembered by future generations for his innovative ideas and far-reaching vision.

Cope Note...Three minus one equals success. After the Pacific Airlines Board of Directors approved the acquisition of a new wide bodied aircraft I strapped an airplane on my backside and

hustled to Seattle to meet with Boeing. I was authorized to purchase four wide bodied aircraft. I much preferred the Boeing product over either Airbus or Douglas.

Early on in my negotiations with Clancy Wilde, Sales Manager Commercial Aircraft and Dean Thornton 767 project manager, we hit a snag. Boeing was only offering a three man cockpit. I wanted, nay demanded, a two man cockpit for the PWA 767's. Boeing allowed as how that was not possible a United Airlines was their lead customer with some ten airframes already on the line in the three man cockpit configuration. I could not sway Clancy that side saddle engineers were a relic from the cave man era, were an unnecessary extra set of hands in the cockpit and carried a heavy burden in operating costs.

Boeing refused to budge. I refused to budge. In the end I told Clancy that I knew damn well Airbus would sell me a wide body aircraft configured for a two man cockpit. Clancy still would not give in. I finally said to Clancy that I was packing my bag for a trip to the Airbus factory and bet him a case of 1969 Port from Harrods in London that I would get my two man cockpit.

On arrival at the Airbus factory the sales department put me in the hands of one of the original engineers on the Airbus product. This old guy took me into a class room, picked up a piece of chalk and in a very few minutes conceived on the black board a two man cockpit. I photographed the black board, pocketed the photo and rushed back to Seattle with a provisional order for the Airbus wide body.

Clancy finally tossed in the towel – "OK Hal you win both the case of port and your two man cockpit 767's. I don't know how in the Hell I am going to explain this to United but that is my problem not

yours." UAL upon hearing of the availability of the 767 two man cockpit turned all their three man cockpit airframes around on the line and had them converted to two man cockpits. I sat next Dick Ferris, President of UAL, at the 767 roll out in Seattle and he said "Hal you did me a hell of a service by sticking to your guns on the two man cockpit. The unions caved after your order."

I don't have any of the 1969 port left from the Harrods purchase, delivered by Scott Gilson, but I can still taste the victory of the two man cockpit and what it did for the airline industry in cost reductions.

Last Boeing 720 Retired The last operational flight of a Boeing 720 took place in Canada on Sept. 29. The aircraft, the engine test bed for Pratt & Whitney Canada, flew for four hours with a turboprop mounted on the nose. At the end of the flight, its airframe time was up. It will make one last flight, either to a museum or a scrapyard. The engine maker has replaced it with a Boeing 747 SP. The 720 was a stubby version of the 707 and was designed for shorter fields. Paradoxically, even though it could get into tighter places, it was faster than the 707. There were 64 720s built along with 88 720B models with turbofan engines.