

5-1-1989

*Passenger reminiscences - Mrs Trippe*EXCERPTS FROM MRS. TRIPPE'S ACCOUNT OF
PAN AM'S FIRST TRANSATLANTIC PASSENGER FLIGHT

NEW YORK -- Among those aboard the first commercial transatlantic passenger flight, made 50 years ago, on June 28, 1939, by a Pan Am flying boat, was the wife of the airlines's visionary founder and president, Juan T. Trippe.

Mrs. Trippe's own extensive account of that event makes fascinating reading even today. Immediately evident in her narrative is her considerable familiarity with the technological basis of the historic achievement and her keen awareness of its commercial significance--along with understandable pride in the foresight and determination of her husband in bringing it about.

The following are excerpts from what she wrote in 1939:

"The 28th of June has come and today is the day I am to take off on the first passenger flight to Europe. I am excited and thrilled beyond words at the thought of going, but not one bit nervous or in any way apprehensive.

"Hundreds of people have tried to secure passage on this, the inaugural flight, but there are hundreds of thousands who wouldn't go for anything in the world, they consider it so dangerous. They just don't know how far aeronautical science has developed and, like primitive people, if they don't understand they don't trust, and are consequently afraid.

"We taxied out across Manhasset Bay and then the nose of the great plane was turned into the wind, and with a great roar of the four 1,500-horsepower engines we were on our way. We counted the seconds watching for the last sign of sprat from the keel of the boat. "49 seconds," someone said, and we were off for Europe:

"The ship is so large that the passengers are well scattered in the various compartments, and as they wander about looking over the ship, new faces appear. The steward has just handed me the passenger list, which makes me feel as if we were children making believe we were going to Europe. But it is true, ture, true!

"The plane is divided into a number of sections, with five seats on each side facing one another. There is one larger cabin which measures about 10 feet wide (the width of the plane) and 12 feet long. This is where the meals are served, with four people at each of the three tables. This is also the smoking room, so it is used most of the time, and two of the sections are used more when one wants to either read or write. Two other sections are made up as berths, and there is a stateroom aft which is one of the nicest places on the plane to sit. There is both a gentlemen's and ladies' room, with hot and cold running water, although I must truthfully say the water is none too plentiful, but quite enough, considering how clean one keeps by traveling by air in contrast to boats and trains...

"After dinner, the two stewards make up additional berths as most of us are ready to turn in, tired from the excitement of the day and also anxious to be up in time for our arrival in the Azores. The berths are very comfortable and even larger than those on a train. Thought of sheer comfort seems ridiculous when one

considers the seriousness of the activities of the nine members of the flight crew in the chart room on the deck above us and in the control room.

"I turn the little light out by my bed, exhausted, but my pulse is racing, thinking of a million things: I must remember to tell Juan they should carry more blankets. Should all the berths be made up before leaving to make it easier for the stewards? But then there would not be so many places to sit. What about serving ice water at meals? Can't the heating system be more uniform... It's no use, I can't sleep; I am much too keyed-up. The sky is beautiful, with the dipper going along beside us like an old friend and the Pleiades leading us a little farther ahead. The stars all seem brighter and bigger as they pop out sometimes from behind a cloud. The moon is on the other side of the plane, and earlier in the evening cast a lovely light on a mass of clouds below.

"(An Atlantic crossing) took Columbus 79 days, I read in the paper this morning; the first steamship took 29 days, 11 of which she had to go under sail because they couldn't carry sufficient fuel--and here we are, crossing the same ocean in 24 hours. With this great advance in science, this trip seems much less adventurous than those made under sail, when they were at the complete mercy of the elements, often blown far off their course with decks awash and sails carried away by strong winds, or else becalmed for days on end with no touch with the outside world and only a compass to go by. In contrast, here we are in constant radio communications with Port Washington, the Azores and ships at sea. Delicate instruments give us altitude, motor revolutions per minute, engine temperatures, miles per hour and a score of other

technical data, and yet we, making this flight merely as passengers, are considered pioneers by some, and fools by others, to run the risk of flying the ocean.

"This plane, built by Boeing, is the result of years of scientific development in design. The largest plane yet built capable of carrying a practical payload across the ocean, she weighs 82,000 pounds and her four engines total 6,000 horsepower. For the first time, the motors can be reached through a tiny passage in the wings and, if necessary, can be repaired while in flight.

"Juan recognized the possibility years ago and, through Pan American Airways, stimulated the work of countless men, which has made this flight possible today. Andre Priester and Pan American engineers worked out specifications for this ship that seemed to some impossible to even hope to fulfill. Boeing's bid was accepted and now, three years later, the six ships are delivered. The direction-finding radio system and equipment were all worked out by the company through Hugo Lenteritz, the Pan American radio engineer.

"The technical aspect of the trip has been 100% from every standpoint; in fact, the passengers seem to have had such confidence in the ship and flight crew that they don't even talk about it, but have talked about the steward service instead. The stewards have worked like dogs and have given excellent service, considering they have served meals to 34 people, including the crew, and all from a galley which is the size of very small closet and only big enough for one person to be in at a time. In addition, they have handled all the baggage, made up the berths and one of them has acted as purser, taking charge of passports and landing papers.

"The food presents a problem all its own, as everything is partially cooked before coming on board and must be reheated and finished on a steam table in the galley. Boiled eggs for breakfast are out of the question, as a normal three-minute egg, as well as coffee, takes 12 minutes to boil at altitude. Bread turns stale, cream turns sour and with the limited weight ice is, of course, at a great premium. The meals we have had have been delicious and extraordinary, considering the many difficulties involved."

Mr. Trippe crossed the Atlantic shortly after his wife, in a Clipper taking a northern route to Southampton, England, and the two were reunited in Paris, where they spent the evening celebrating at Maxim's.

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