



NEWSLETTER FOR THE TALOA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

February 2015

Send photos & letters to: Jeane Kennedy Toynbee, Editor PO Box 243, Copperopolis CA 95228  
Or email to: [jeanenbob@caltel.com](mailto:jeanenbob@caltel.com) To have items returned, include a note along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope

My mother, [Gloria Grigg](#) worked as a secretary, possibly Orvis Nelson's secretary in Oakland in the 50s. She knew everyone. It was possibly the best time of her life. She used to tell me about how the pilots would come in to her office, flirt, and tell wild scary stories about their adventures. When she left in 1957 to marry, Transocean flew her and my dad to Hawaii for the their honeymoon-- I think on a Constellation. I would love to find any information about her or anyone who knew her. Any help is greatly appreciated. Please find attached a pic of her TransOcean ID. Issued in 52. Thank you, Kirk Steers



south end of Oakland Airport. We flew Cessna 120 and 140 airplanes. My primary instructor was Mr. [George Wilbur](#) and Mr. [Emmet Fall](#) was the chief Instructor if my memory serves me. [Ron Querra](#), CEO of Kaiser Air, a high school friend was training there as well. I was stationed at the north end at NAS Oakland. I'm currently an Operations Safety Inspector with the FAA in San Diego and plan to retire Dec. 31 of this year. Enjoyed finding the article. [Nicholas F. Pipitone](#)

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I worked at the Bradley Field base from December 1955 until they folded it in August of 1961. We had a MATS contract for IRAN maintenance on C-118 and C-124s. Then I worked on all of the B-377s when they came over from England, and we also refurbished a lot of C-54s that had been in the Berlin Airlift. Captains Ringo and Zipfel ran the place along with a guy named Gorski. Are there any former Bradley people out there? [Bruce Pike](#).

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I am a former student at Taloe Academy during the period 1956-1958. The school as I recall was at the



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[ROBESON, Clarence Edwin](#) passed away peacefully on November 17, 2014 at the age of 91. He enjoyed a long career in aviation, having flown with Transocean Airlines, South Pacific Airlines and Pan American World Airways. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Juanita; his brother, Don; his children, Kathy, Dennis and Jeanette; 6 grandsons; and 3 great-grandsons.

Eddie Robeson and Bill Baty in a plane in 20-30 Club Hayward to Las Vegas Race 05-30-1958



Fred Fox and Eddie Robeson 08-24-1958



Eddie and Nita Robeson 08-24-1958



Eddie Robeson, Fred Fox and 'Finny' Finlason 08-24-1958



Hi...I'm now at Landmark Villa Assisted Living, 2100 Mission Blvd, Apt 121, Hayward CA 94541. My new telephone # is 510-876-5205. [Arue Szura](#) \*\*\*\*\*

Please accept this donation to help continue the work of the TALOA Alumni Association. Use it as you see fit, and as best serves the association's needs. Please don't quit! Keep going! Best wishes and continued good fortune to you and all TALOA alumni. [Bill Broussard](#) - lifetime member. \*\*\*\*\*

I saw a photo of King Ibn Saud on a wheelchair being lifted to aboard the plane and I wonder if I can get a good digital copy and its date and who took it. Thanks, Fahd Alsemmar

Hello Fahd, I believe the photographer was Ralph Lewis but I don't have any information about the date the photo was taken. You are welcome to copy the image from our website. I don't, unfortunately, have a better digital image for you. \*\*\*\*\*

Hi Jeane. A couple of questions you might be able to answer. Please?

1. Somewhere I learned that Orvis was flying co-pilot (after end of Transocean) on a DC-4 which was flying from Brussels to Nigeria(?) and that he had told the FAA Representative in Brussels that the aircraft might be carrying weapons. The aircraft was either shot down or ran out of fuel and landed on a Nigerian island. Orvis was imprisoned for a short time and then released.

2. Do you know anything about Orvis' obtaining Douglas C-74 aircraft he used hauling livestock in Europe? One crashed in Marseille.

Thanks, [John Lannom](#)

*Hi John, I emailed Orvis' son Jeff and this is the response I got...*

Question 1. In regards to the crash, dad was paying back a favor to another non-sched who had previously loaned him a plane and crew, something that was common in those days. The pilot in command (owner of the aircraft) showed up intoxicated and dad refused to fly, until he was made PIC. Leg one was to Italy, where they fueled and headed off to the continent. Turned out the owner forgot all food and drinks on the tarmac, as well as placed the wind correction in backwards so they ended up quite far off course. Those days there not even any radio beacons to follow. The four engine Vickers ran out of gas over Cameroon and they crash-landed on a small stream off a large river. The plane broke into several pieces and caught fire, which was extinguished by the Italian mechanic with wet blankets and by simply burning out.

Dad was trapped in the cockpit and had to be cut out by hack-saw, which did not happen until the next day. With a leg broken in 14 places and all his ribs broken, he was transported by French military to a local village where he slept on the mud floor. It took 4 days to arrive to the hospital by dugout canoe. We found out about the crash when his photo came out on the front page of the Oakland Tribune. Mom had to look for Cameroon in the atlas. She was rather upset as he was supposed to be flying flowers out of the Netherlands. That day the state department showed up and relayed his condition etc. He was there for many months healing in the hospital, where a missionary would smuggle in our letters in a hollowed out bible. He was tried for gun running and was released based on time served in the hospital. He claimed he had no knowledge of the guns having been on board, only the destination. That is the best of my recollection.

Some points I did not include...The other pilot left my father to die in the aircraft when it was burning and ran away, only to show up later that day. The mechanic only spoke Italian, which dad had a working knowledge of and he stayed by his side. They dumped as many crates as they could out the aircraft before they ditched and that is when dad claims he found out about the guns. In that aircraft (four engine, propeller) the radios are mounted behind and above the pilot. Those came down and hit dad in the head and the yoke beat him in the chest (breaking his ribs) and the control cables wrapped around his leg and pulled into the aisle between the pilot and co-pilot seat. He said when the French paratroopers appeared, and they had him cut out the next day, they tried to stand him on his feet. He said his leg sounded like celery being crushed as he fell in the mud.

It would take many pages to relate the entire story... Question 2. Aircraft were not C-74's and I never heard of a crash. I have a picture of myself in front of one of the planes.

*Thank you Jeff!*

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[Readers, you may be able to solve this puzzle...](#)

*The following email was first sent by aviation author Bruce Orriss to Bob Harder & then to me. Do you have the information Bruce is looking for?*



[Mr. Harder](#)- I am in the process of writing a history on all of Hollywood's classic aviation films from *Wings* in 1927 to present day. I am currently working on the text for "Island in the Sky" and noticed the article by Frank Kennedy in the Transocean newsletter and also the

follow on article by his daughter. These articles were just great and filled in many gaps in my research on the film. There are just a few questions I have left and that is the identities of the three ex TWA DC-3's they leased from Transocean and also a list of all the pilots who flew in the film besides Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Gann and Jack Elsbree. Any help you could give me would be appreciated. Thanks, Bruce Orriss

Jeane - Mr. Harder forwarded your email address. I sure appreciated the information you wrote about on "Island in the Sky." Very interesting. Am not sure yet but I think that there were three DC-3's used in the film. Your Dad's logbooks identify two of them so I will keep at it and see if I can find the third. Also looking for the name of the other pilots that flew in the film beside your Dad, Mr. Gann and Mr. Elsbree. Thanks again, Bruce

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***2015 Dues are now payable in the amount of \$20.00 or Lifetime memberships for \$100.00***

### ***TALOA Alumni Newsletter***

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Here



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CORRECTION

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