# MEXICO CITY 2 ENGINE FERRY February 9, 1974

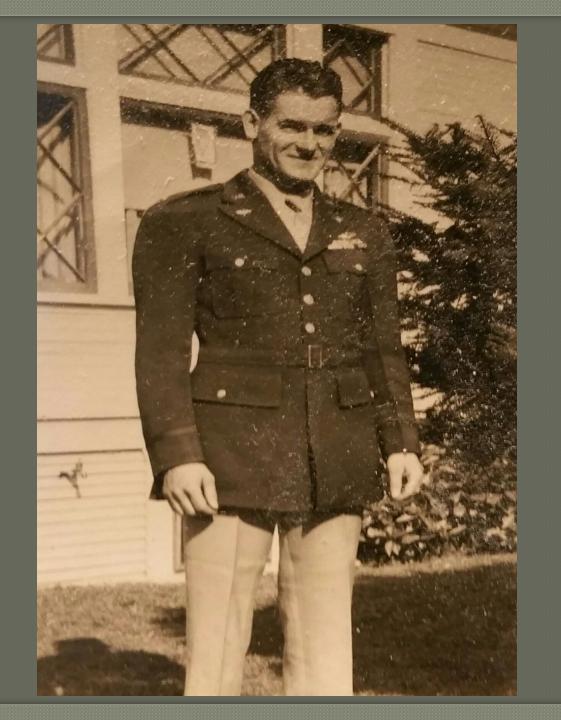
Extracted from a powerpoint presentation prepared by TFA Member Jim Towne in honor of his father, Paul B. Towne's experiences as a decorated pilot in World War II and for Eastern Air Lines.

[Lineage: William(1)-Edmund (2)- Joseph (3)-Amos (4,5) - Ezra (6) -Ira (7) - William L. (8)- Paul B. (9, 10)] Jim's sister, Paula Towne is also a TFA member.

[Jim Towne] Before we get into his Eastern days, I just wanted to give you a little history about my dad. He grew up on a farm on the Washington/Idaho border, one of seven children. From his earlier days he showed an interest in airplanes. He and his younger brother Clark used to sit on the kitchen floor of their farm home making wooden airplanes. He was even able to talk his father into taking him to an air show in Spokane when it came there.



As the U.S. Entered WWII, Dad enlisted in the Army, with the hope of flying in what was the Army Air Corps. After overcoming a serious illness, which was pneumonia where he was hospitalized tor 2 months and wasn't sure if he would be able to fly, he was able to achieve his dream and became a 1st Lt. B-17G pilot in the Army Air Corps.







Here is Paul as a 1<sup>st</sup> Lt.







The crew of the "Mission Belle"

Pilot Navigator Engineer

Towne, Paul B. Larson, Harry W. Emerson, William H Wing gunner Williams, William

1st. Lt. Co-Pilot 2nd. Lt. Bombadier Radio S/SgL S/Sgt Tail gunner Kovash, Andrew

Sies, Lawrence D. Jayson, Lawrence Vanderbrink, Wesley R. Wing gunner Eisemann, Byron J.

151. Lt. 2nd. Lt. Cpl S/Sgt.

Here is Paul and the crew of the "Mission Belle." Paul is on the top left. This picture was taken in Africa in May 1944. He was active duty from July 28, 1943 – April 30, 1945 to crew 50 missions.

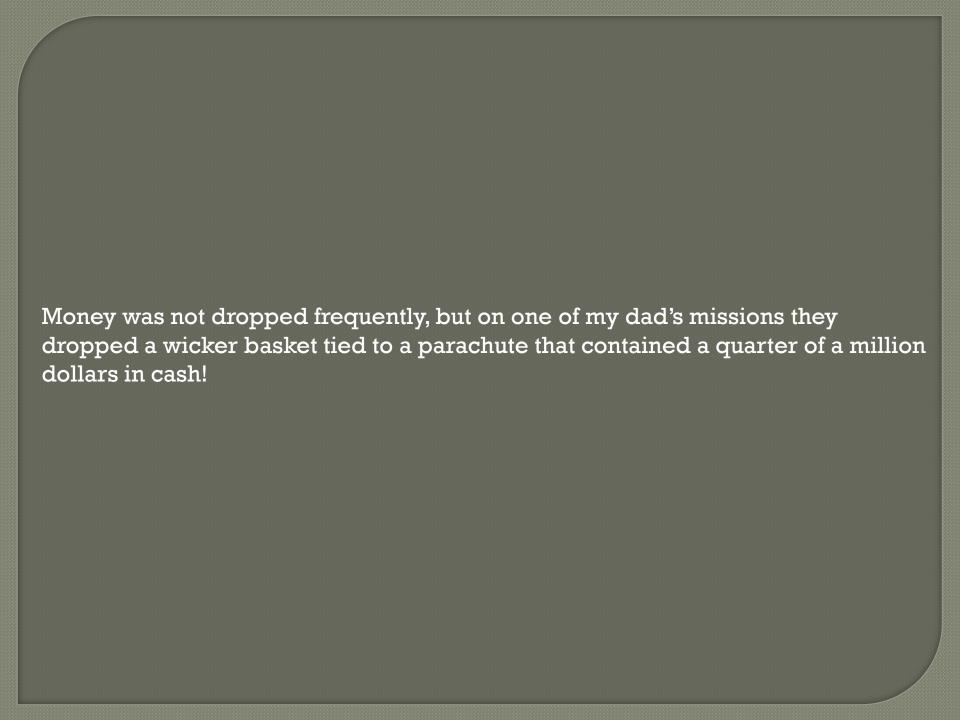


Crew of the Mission Belle 50 missions

In this picture Paul is on the top right. He flew 50 combat missions, 10 bombing missions over Italy, and 40 secret missions as a member of a special top secret flight section of the 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force, the 885<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron (H) (Special) in a B-17G that he named the "Mission Belle."

That special flight section was a carefully chosen group, crews being picked from different units so no one would suspect that special section was in existence. It required pinpoint target aim and skillful flying to drop chutes. Mechanics had modified the ships by painting the bellies black, fixing the flame dampeners on the exhausts, and removing the ball turrets to install special dropping hatches. The squardron used its night flying instrument skill to negotiate weather that bomber formations wouldn't even get close to. Its planes flew through fifty-mile fronts with icing at 4000 feet, severe turbulence and hail.

After flying through cumulus storms, crews would come back from otherwise successful missions trembling. St. Elmo's fire would send sparks flying off wing tips and gun muzzles until they looked like giant Fourth of July sparklers, light up the propellers like pinwheels, and make the plastic nose glow like a neon tube, enabling the bombardier to read his maps by the light of the static electricity. Sometimes crews came back convinced they had been fired upon – when all they had seen were meteors.













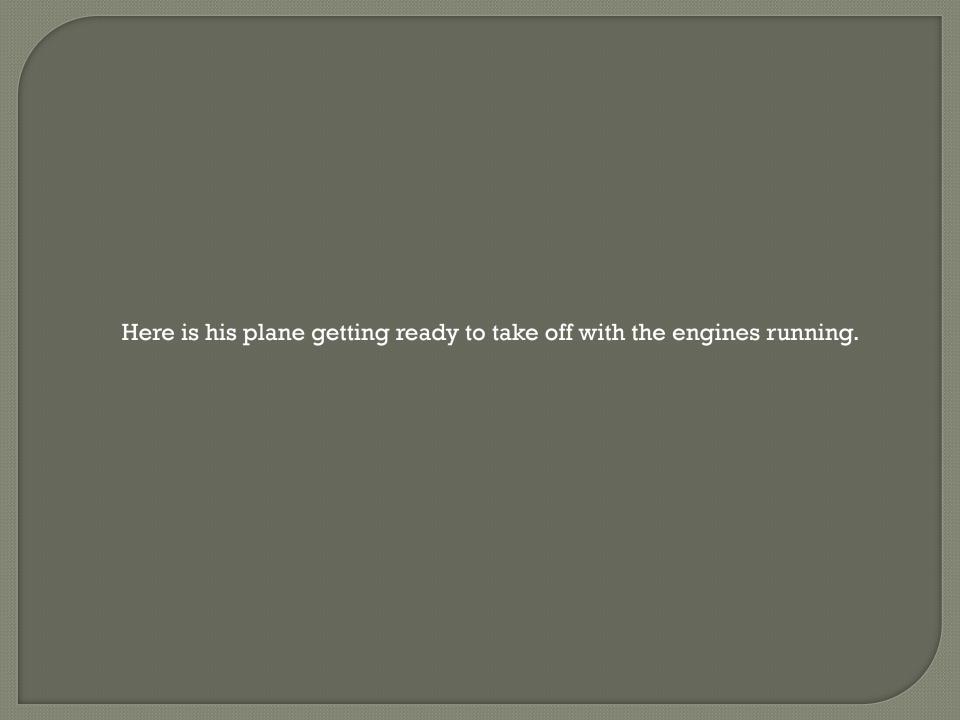












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### 885TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) (SPECIAL)

Completed.

		CONTRACTOR SECTION	· 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 10
From: 1	ISSU 6	Oper. No.	533 Date: 12-13 August 1944.
Type of Aircraft. Aircraft No. Aircraft Letter.		B-17 171 G	: P Towne, Paul B. lst. Lt. : CP Sies, Lawrence D. lst. Lt. : N Larson, Harry W. 2nd. Lt. : B Jayson, Lawrence 2nd. Lt.
Time Up.	wn.	20:54 03:50 6:56	E Emerson, William H. S/Sgt. R Vandenbrink, Wesley R. Cpl. WG Williams, William S/Sgt. WG Eisemann, Byron J. S/Sgt. TG Kovash, Andrew S/Sgt.
Load: Ouvrage	2 P	ack 400 ack 200	
Etoile	3 A	g'ts 600 4140	Airdrome: Blida.
Target:	4:	3 23 46 N 42	vrage 46 50 N 16 14 E
Time :	Height	Place	
2320 :	8000	: Cape Creus	: Crossed French Coast.
2337	6500	Ouvrage	: Arrived at target. Three lights in : row which went out at times, end : light blinking letter "U".
2347	6000 (1000)	Ouvrage	: Dropped 14 containers & 4 packages. : Mag. Heading 330° IAS 130 mph.
0014 :	5000	Etoile	: Identified.
0017	3400 (750)	Etoile	Dropped 3 agents & 2 packages. Mag. Heading 240° IAS 130 mph. Chutes opened.
0036	8300	: Lake Leucate	: Crossed French Coast.
三十十二			

Remarks: Observed convoy moving east out of Carcassonne.

The missions did involve a lot of low-level late night flying and I wanted to read to you one of them in which they received the "Presidential Unit Citation."

This is the actual mission paperwork.

It was on the night of August 12, 1944, almost 9 PM, where 11 heavily loaded heavy bombardment-type aircraft took off from Northern Africa and individually, alone and unescorted, set course for their respective destinations in the complete darkness of a moonless night.

By use of celestial navigation and such recognition points as could be discerned, with virtually no radio navigational aids available, all targets were accurately reached. Under these adverse conditions, the pilots, flying on instruments over 1200 miles, were required to fly at low altitudes over hostile and unfamiliar terrain, despite the presence of mountain peaks in the immediate vicinity of their targets. Reaching their objectives, their descents were made to altitudes as low as 500 feet, where dropping runs were made at retarded air speeds.

Flying in the immediate vicinity of numerous fighter airdromes, within range of all light and heavy arms fire, these gallant crews successfully accomplished their assigned tasks with unerring accuracy.

On the return flight, though pursued by enemy aircraft, they successfully evaded the hostile ships and returned safely to base. Through their extraordinary skill in night navigation and instrument flying, each crew reached its specified target and carried out their objectives with 100% success. A total of 67,000 pounds of arms and munitions were dropped to the French Forces of the Interior, at strategic points for the immediate use in support of the pending invasion of southern France, code name "Operation Dragoon." Eighteen active agents (2 of whom were women radio operators) were safely dispatched to take their vital part in the organization of the underground army.

The outstanding success achieved by the squadron provided valuable stores of arms with which the Marquis was able to give invaluable aid to the Allied invasion of southern France. By their outstanding courage, professional skill, and determination of the combat crews, together with the superior technical skill and intense devotion to duty of the ground personnel, the 885th Bombardment Squadron (H)(Special) has reflected great credit upon itself and the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

And just how special the 885<sup>th</sup> was is shown by the fact that it was probably the only four-engine outfit anywhere to have a plane return from a mission with a rifle slug that entered the "top" of the wing.



Navigators of the 885th Squadron plot their course for a secret flight. Theirs was the most important job of all.

HE 885th Bomb Squadron—Heavy Special, Top Secret—never dropped a bomb. But behind its veiled activities lay one of the most dramatic stories of the war. For the sole purpose of the 885th was to drop supplies to partisans of the Allied cause in France, Italy and Yugoslavia. Hundreds of thousands of pounds of arms and ammunition cacaded from the bellies of its bombers. Their targets were secret zones, always in the wildest terrain, and a typical load consisted of Sten guns, rifles, ammunition and sometimes "Joes," the daring American and Allied agents who risked a spy's death to parachute out and help organize resistance forces.

Incredible is this saga of the daring planes which parachuted spies and supplies to partisans.





# NIGHT MISSIONS **WON HONORS FOR** FORTRESS PIL

Dropped Supplies to French Patriots.

Santa Monica, Calif., Nov. 13 .-An American Flying Fortress circles over a French town in the night . . . a parachute blossoms from the plane and drifts to the ground . . . eager hands seize the wicker basket tied to the parachute. It contains a quarter of a million dollars.

This is part of a story told by First Lieutenant Paul Towne of Tekoa, Wash., B-17 pilot now

awaiting reassignment at the Army Air Forces redistribution station in Santa Monica, Callif.
As a member of a Special Flight Section of the 15th Air Force, Lieut. Towns made 41 secret night flights, dropping American supplies to French patriots of the underground. For these missions Lieut. Towne was awarded the French Croix de

Guerre with a gold star.

Lieut. Towne, son of Mr. and
Mrs. Paul Towne of Tekoa, Wash,
and husband of Mary D. Towne
of Portland, Ore., holds in addition the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with five clusters, and the Mediterranean theatre ribbon. Prior to his special assignment, Lieut. Towne flew 10 bombing missions over

The special flight section was a carefully chosen group, crews being picked from different units so no one would suspect that special section was in existence. It required a pin-point target aim, skillful flying, to drop the chutes. Money was not dropped frequently; usually it was food, elothing, surgical instruments, sometimes an underground agent.

Parachutes almost caused a crasl on one flight, when two of them opened out of the bomb bay. Because of low altitude and air speed the plane almost went down before the chutes could be cut off.

In speaking of some of the difficulties they encountered, LA Towne said:

"One of the biggest difficulties was weather. We seldom got re-Lieutenant Paul B. Towne ports so we never quite knew what to expect. And we had 1000 miles to cover over the water at night."

"Flak was bad sometimes," he continued, "because we were flying so low. Then we were always dodging searchlights. Get

## Wins High Medals For Many Missions

From the Army base at Santa Monica, Calif., comes the following release about one of our Tekoa boys:

"An American Flying Fortress circles over a French town in the night . . . a parachute blossoms from the plane and drifts to the ground . . . eager hands seize the wicker basket tied to the parachute. It contains a quarter of a million dollars.

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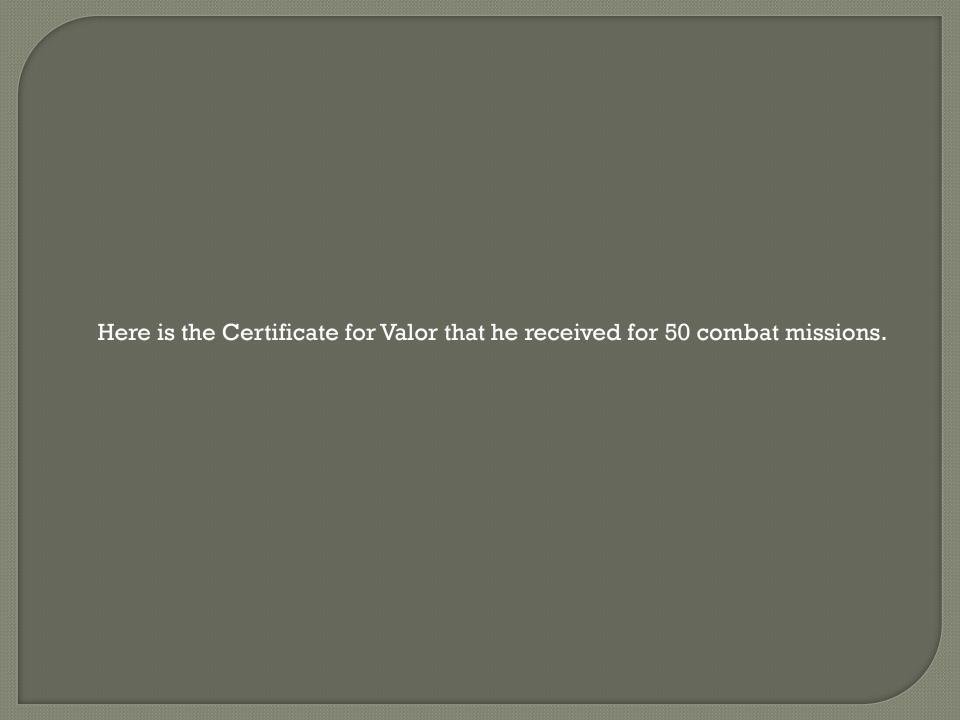
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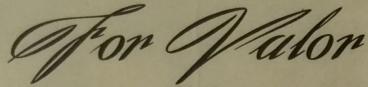
'One of the biggest difficulties was weather. We seldom got reports, so we never knew quite what to expect. And we had 1000 miles to cover over the water at night. Flak was bad sometimes,' he continued, 'because we were flying so low. Then we were always dodging searchlights. Get pinned in a glare like that and it's a job to get out. About the only thing we could do was to try a vertical bank and side-slip,' he added."

Lt. Paul Towne was home for a brief visit with his parents early in October, as he was enroute from Africa to Seattle.









# ARMY AIR FORCES

MEDITERRANEAN THEATRE OF OPERATIONS

It is with great personal pride that I present this certificate to

1st Lt. Paul B. Jowne AC.0152009 Pilot who, having been engaged in 50 combat missions in the Mediterranean theatre in air battles of great intensity, has gallantly and repeatedly carried the offensive against heavy opposition to the heart of the enemy and has, by his unfaltering courage, earned the gratitude and praise of his fellow—countrymen, as well as his Commander.

Lieutenant General U.S. Army
Commanding

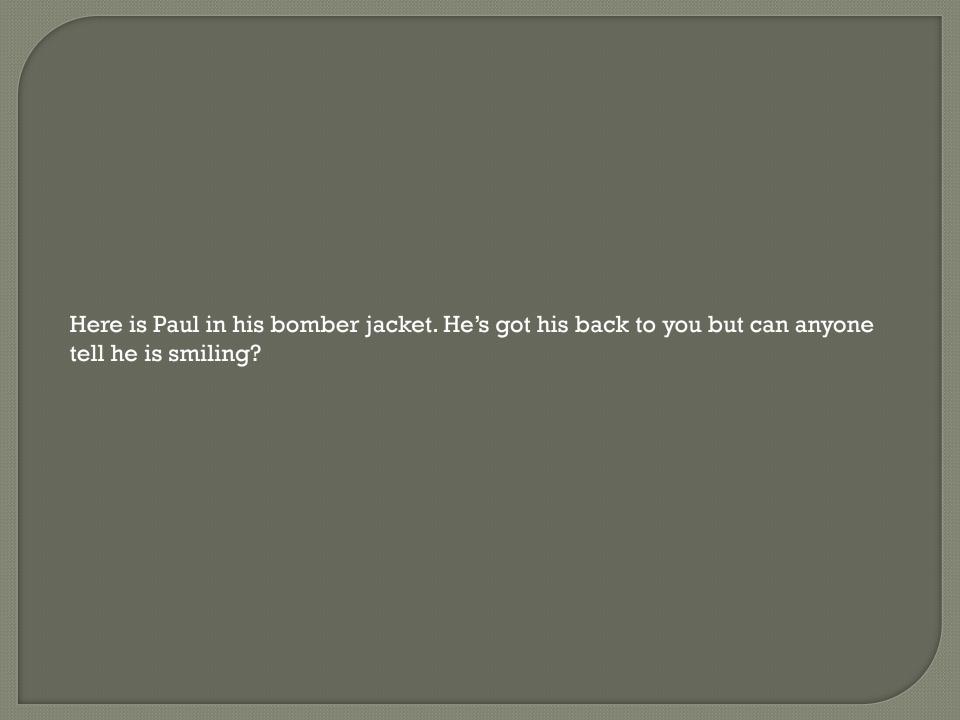
This is a shadow box I bought to display his medals and ribbons. On the top left is the Croix de Guerre w/gold star that he received from the French. To the right is the Air Medal with 5 oak leaf clusters, then to the right, the Distinguished Flying Cross.

He also received the American Defense Ribbon, the <u>European/African/Middle Eastern Ribbon</u> with 3 bronze stars.

The Presidential Unit Citation is the purple ribbon on the bottom left.

On the bottom right is a piece of flak that he took out of his plane after one of his missions.







Now I want to tell you about his time at Eastern.

In 1945 Eddie Rickenbacker was in need of pilots wth multi-engine experience and appealed to his friend, Henry "Hap" Arnold a 4-star general in the USAAF for help. 1st Lt. Paul Towne was one of those recommended by his commanding officer. He got out of the military on April 30, 1945 and 8 days later on May 8th 1945, which was VE Day, he started with Eastern Airlines where he worked for 34 years, ten of those flying the line and then he transferred to the flight test and acceptance department where he worked until he retired in 1979.











VOID AFTER DEC 29 59

AUTHORIZED AREAS A-1 B-1 B-5 B-6

NAME PAUL B. TOWNE

COMPANY EASTERN AIRLINES

EMPLOYED AS REPR

DATE 12-29-58

IDENT. UNIT ALLINES

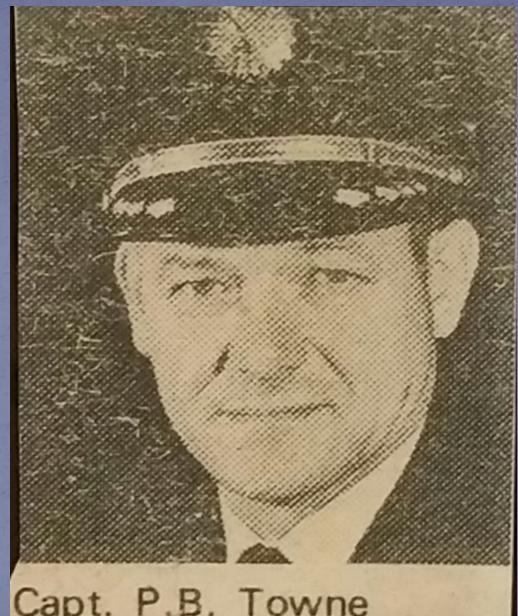


AIRLINE RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE



7/1/69
NO. EXPIRES
PAUL B. TOWNE
NAME
EASTERN AIR LINES
AIRLINE





Capt. P.B. Towne



This is a picture of (318) Landing in Miami, also known as "The Ghost Ship."

One day I received a call from a guy named Michael Simses. He told me that he was a writer/director and was fascinated about what he had read in a flight safety article, a book called "From the Captain to the Colonel," and a couple of other online articles and wanted to know if that flight really happened.

I combed parts from the safety magazine article and an online article I read called "Confessions of a Trolly Dolly," which I will read.

On an Eastern L-1011 (318) flight #903 from JFK to Mexico City on February 8<sup>th</sup> 1974, one of the flight attendants, Fay Meriweather, on this particular Trijet was in the lower galley of the jumbo (they had used the galley from 310 that had crashed in the Everglades in 318) when in the course of her duties she happened to glance into the window of one of the ovens. There looking back at her was the face of Don Repo, the 2<sup>nd</sup> officer who had lost his life in the Everglades crash of Flight 401 a few months earlier. He had been below checking the position of the Jumbo's nose gear when the Trijet slammed into the marsh at 227 miles an hour. The mystified and not unstartled flight attendant went topside and asked another flight attendant and the plane's 2<sup>nd</sup> officer to go below and take a look.

Sure enough, when they returned Repo's face still stared out from the oven door, although now it looked like he was trying to say something. Suddenly, all three clearly heard the appiration say, "Watch out for fire on this plane."

The next day, the airplane, 318, was in Mexico City when a problem developed in one of its three engines, #3. The flight crew in Miami wass called to deadhead to Mexico City and perform a two-engine ferry back to the maintenance base in Miami for an engine change. They put minimum fuel to go from Mexico City to Acapulco and there were going to put in enough fuel for the trip to Miami.

On takeoff from Mexico City, a mile and a half above sea level, at 50 feet, the #1 engine had a compressor stall, backfired several times and shut down.

Only through the flight crew's\* almost unbelievable expertise in handling the big jet they were able to come around and land safely on one engine.

## THEY NEVER GOT ABOVE 400 FEET!!

\*Flight crew Captain Paul Towne, 1<sup>st</sup> Officer Bruce Bichan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Officer Mark Gordon



### interoffice correspondence

S EASTERN

TO: Captain Paul Towne

FROM: T. J. Royall

SUBJECT: Engine Failure

ADDRESS: MIAFR

ADDRESS: MIAFR

DATE: February 21, 1974

Paul, I just had a look at the flight recorder read-out of your experience in Mexico City.  $\,$ 

Let me say once again, I am proud of the skill you and your crew displayed in recovering from a very close situation. Your experience proves that a cool head, good hands, and a proper training pays off when the chips are down.

The L-1011 is an honest aircraft. I have complete confidence in its performance. For your information, the recorder showed the following events:

The flight lasted seven minutes and twenty-six seconds from 50K acceleration to 50K deceleration.

Number one engine failed suddenly. EPR went from 1.58 to 1.2 in four seconds. Aircraft was at 35 feet. Airspeed was 150K and within six seconds flaps were retracted to  $4^{\circ}$ . Aircraft climbed to 400' in one minute after failure. For only 12 seconds after failure EPR on #2 showed 1.68. Upon reaching 200' EPR was reduced to 1.60 for approximately two minutes then it was reduced to 1.54.

The maximum altitude reached was 525'. The maximum airspeed reached was 178K.

The control inputs showed smooth inputs and positive control of the situation.

T/. J. Royall Director - Aircraft Acceptance/Flight Test

T.TR : 1

#### FLIGHT RECORDER READ-OUT

Flight time 7 min. 26 sec.

Lost engine #1 at 35ft

Max. altitude / air speed: 525ft / 178 knots

VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF PILOT

February 14, 1974

Captain P. B. Towne 248 West 50 Street Hialeah, Florida 33012

Dear Paul:

The reports I have received indicate that the engine-out ferry of 318 at Mexico City on February 9 would certainly have ended in disaster but for the superb airmanship which you displayed when the number one engine failed immediately after takeoff.

Please accept my congratulations for this outstanding demonstration of flying skill!

Sincerely,

W. R. Krepling

One evening I gave Mark Gordon [shown] a call and I had a very nice conversation with him. These are my notes from that conversation.

Sitting next to Paul when we were deadheading to Mexico City, Paul and I were talking and we were saying that this was nuts. They had the performance figures that you said you could do it ok, but if you lost another engine, you wouldn't make it.

Wheels up immediately after takeoff

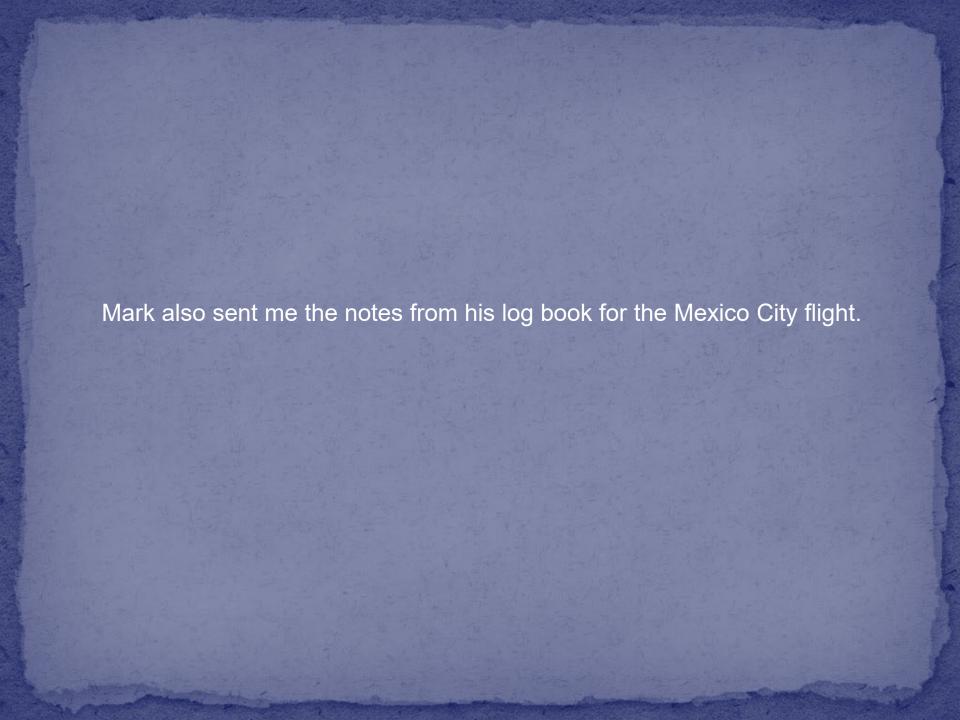
Mark called out, "Engine failure #1" and started dumping fuel over runway into stand pipes

When Mark was trying to "blow the rat" (ram air turbine), he cut his thumb badly trying to break the safety wire so he grabbed the cover and yanked on it and broke the wire which allowed him to deploy the rat

Mark called to put flaps up, but Paul said, "I will leave them where they are!" The procedure in the book says to bring the flaps up. Mark said, "If we would have brought them up we would have crashed."

#1 Engine had a compressor stall, backfired several times, and shut down. No engine fire.





Hi Jim, I dug out my old log book and this is what I found, Mark:

# MEXICO CITY 2 ENGINE FERRY FLT#7900, 9 FEB 1974

#### Aircraft # N318EA

Depart Mexico City 11:40am, Landed Mexico City 12:00pm, (flight time 20 minutes),(times approximate)

#3 engine plugged, #1 engine failed at 50', emergency declared, right traffic back to land on same runway (5R), highest altitude achieved 400ft AGL (above ground level), Max Airspeed 164 KIAS, Flaps 4. Altitude and airspeed were observed by S/O. (Not from onboard recorders)

Gross Weight 275,000lbs

OAT (outside air temp) 70f

RAT (Ram Air Turbine) deployed at 70ft (from flight recorder)

Fuel dumped 5,000lbs (Dumped to standpipes)

Captain - Paul B. Towne

First Officer - Bruce G. Bichan

Second Officer - Mark W. Gordon

This is a picture of the rat that comes down from the belly of the 1011.



After I had gotten Brice Bichan's emal address from Mark, I sen him a note and this was his reply:

Jim, your dad was highly admired by Mark and myself, his stick and rudder skills and steady hands saved all or our lives that day! Paul was a quiet, unassuming, easy-going captain, always cam through when the chips were down! Always a pleasure to fly with! Mark has a unique memory for details, but I would be happy to assist you in any way possible. Regards, Bruce

Then, about a week later I spoke with him on the phone and we had a long conversation. These are my notes from that conversation:

It was an afternoon flight, very bad visibility, very heavy smoke.

Flight time: around 20 minutes, but seemed a lifetime!

Right after takeoff when #1 engine quit, didn'have enough airspeed to bring the flaps up, 1 degree forward then another if we didn't lose any air speed.

Couldn't make a right turn right away or the wing would have hit the ground. Had to go a good little ways to be able to get enough altitude to make a turn-around, 180 degrees

The way Bruce recognized the runway because of the heavy smoke was the reflection off of the golden roof of a temple. He knew that was downwind where they wanted to be.

Bruce and Mark were giving the altitude/air speed constantly, "We're losing a knot, we're losing 2 knots," and Paul was hand flying it all the way around, not saying a word, just concentrating. He told us when to put the flaps, when to put the gear down, that was "only" when he thought we were In a position to make a "dead stick landing" should the other engine fail. The landing was flawless! We didn't even blow a tire! When they landed and handed the log book to the lead mechanic mark said, "He was shaking worse than we were!" Afterwards Bruce and Mark went into the terminal and walked it 2 or 3 times before the adrenaline work off.

Later, when Bruce and Mark were figuring out the weight/fuel ratio, their fingers fell off the page in the book. When it comes to fly-ability, it said it wouldn't fly on 1 engine.

I thank Paul for saving my life and Mark's too.

You can really be proud of your dad! He was a real gentleman, never raised his voice, a great captain, and me and Mark really enjoyed flying with him!

About a half-hour after the incident they were on an Eastern 727 back to Miami.

When they went to the out-brief and the powers that be from the L-1011 program, chief pilot, flight training instructor, etc. were there. Bruce said they were saying things like you know, "The manual says you should do this, that and the other!"

Bruce said, "Looks like that didn't work!" Mark said that if they would have brought the flaps up they would have crashed.

They replicated the airport situation (the wind, temp, etc.) and put it into the flight simulator and they crashed it "every" time!!!

They could not duplicate what they did on that flight and not crash!!

We talked about the documentary that a writer/director wants to do and he said, "That would be a great honor to your dad. He really deserves it!"



Mark also told me about a key chain memento that he had gotten from the acceptance flight of L-1011, (317), that Paul, Bruce and he had done and asked me if I would like to have it. I told him I would love to.

This is the letter that came with it.

Hi Jim, The key chain I have enclosed is from L-1011 N317EA. Your father, Bruce and I did the acceptance flight on it the day before its first flight for Eastern Airlines. It is a pleasure to hear from you after all of these years. As I mentioned, during our phone call, I was only 25 years old when this happened. The years I spent flying with your father were transformational for me. He taught me not only how to fly, but how to do the job. He was a great captain, teacher, mentor and friend.

In subsequent years, whenever I had a problem I only had to think "What would Paul do" It worked for me my whole career. I look forward to meeting you in person.

Best, Mark



Also Bruce emailed me his log book notes for the 317 acceptance flight.

## **EASTERN AIRLINES L-1011**

**AIRCRAFT # N317EA** 

**FLIGHT # 7999** 

**DATE 8/14/1973** 

FLIGHT TIME 4HRS 34MINS FROM PALMDALE, CA. TO MIAMI, FL.

NEW AIRCRAFT CHECKED AND DELIVERED TO EASTERN AIRLINES TO PUT IN SERVICE THE NEXT DAY, 8/15/1973.

**CAPTAIN: PAUL B. TOWNE** 

**FIRST OFFICER: BRUCE G. BICHAN** 

**SECOND OFFICER: MARK W. GORDON** 

From Bruce Bichan log book

I found a picture of 317 on the internet and this is the way I have it displayed on my wall.



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#### 9/7/2017

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Best, Mark Gordon



# Mexico City 2 Engine Ferry February 9, 1974



Captain -- Paul B. Towne



1st Officer -- Bruce G. Bichan



2<sup>nd</sup> Officer -- Mark W. Gordon



Eastern Airlines L-1011 (N318EA)

"Achieving the impossible"

I wanted to thank Bruce and Mark for all of the information, stories and the wonderful things that they had said about my dad. I had these metal signs made and I was pretty sure they had not seen the new Eastern pilots' memorial at Hartsfield Jackson Airport that had their names on it. My wife took me to the airport one day very early, so we didn't hit any traffic, and I took pictures of the new memorial and each of their names. I sent them a sign, a framed picture of the memorial with their names on it and one of these t-shirts for Christmas.

They were overjoyed!

# Eastern Pilots Memorial Hartsfield Jackson Airport



BIALKO, P.J. 12/5/1966 BIANCHI, L.J. 2/5/1962 BIANCO, J.D. 7/11/1966 BIBLE, J.T. 2/20/1967 BICHAN, B.G. 2/13/1967 BIDDLE JR, C.B. 9/23/1957 BIDLACK, D.T. 7/27/1970 BIE, W.C. 5/6/1957 BIEBERSTEIN, J.R. 11/15/19 BIEL, R.K. 2/5/1962

TOUGAS, G.E. 9/24/1942 TOWER JR, N.L. 10/24/1955 TOWERS, J.C. 7/27/1970 TOWNE, P.B. 5/8/1945 TOWNE, P.B. J.R. 7/1/1968 END, H.C. 7/17/1972 END JR, J.O. 1/9/1967

Y. W.J. 4/11/1985

GOODWIN, R.N. 1/29/197 GOONEN, D.R. 3/25/1980 GORDON, D.A. 9/23/1957 GORDON, D.G. 5/8/1967 GORDON, J.B. 5/9/1966 GORDON, J.W. 2/14/1980 GORDON, M.W. 8/17/1970 GORDON, T.T. 11/3/1980 GORDON, W.J. 8/5/1940 GORE, G.R. 2/14/1980 GORE, S.T. 2/20/1967 GORMAN, B.W. 11/1/1965 GORMAN, B.W. 11/1/1965 GORMAN, E.T. 5/3/1940 GORMAN, R.G. 1/13/1954

# WALL PICTURES

This is the way that I have my office room displayed in my dad's memory.















## "Mexico City 2 Engine Ferry"

February 9th, 1974



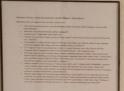
























Now I would like to tell you a little story that goes back to a mission in WWII and then to the ferry flight.

Imagine that you are back in WWII in 1944 and are at your base in Blinda, Northern Africa. You take off at night in your B-17G, "Mission Belle," and you head north over the Mediterranean at low altitude for over a thousand miles all alone. Then you finally cross of the the French coast and you are heading to your target destination to drop supplies and munitions to the partisans in France like you have done many times before. When you get close to your target you can see the 3 signal lights in a row lit up on the ground and to the side you see another one flashing the code letter. You are getting ready to make your dropping run then all of a sudden 2 chutes accidentally deployed out from the dropping hatches.

You are already flying at very low altitude and at almost stall speed. The only thing that you know is that you are losing altitude and air speed rapidly and the only thing you can think is that you are going to go down. Then, when you are almost about to crash, they are finally able to cut the lines of the parachutes and you are able to pull out of it safely!

This is the kind of story that you see in the movies, but this is actually something that happened on one of the missions my dad flew.

Now picture yourself in the cockpit of the 1011 (318) in Mexico City on February 9, 1974, when the #1 engine quit at 50 feet. According to Bruce and Mark, Paul was hand flying that jumbo all the way around not saying a word, just concentrating and he landed it safely.

I think all of the missions that he did in WWII and all of the things that happened to him is the reason why he was able to do what he did on that flight and that they could not duplicate it in the fight simulator without crashing it every time!!

I was only 14 years old when this flight took place. The only thing I ever knew about it was the letter that I had seen to my dad from Walt Krepling. I wish I had known all of this information and could have talked to him about it when he was still alive.

A series of coincidences led me to learning all this information. I am so grateful to that gentleman Michael Simses for sending that first email to Jim Holder that got this whole thing started. I would never have known all of this information or have had the wonderful conversations with Bruce Bichan and Mark Gordan and the awesome things they had to say about my dad!

The only other thing I would like to say is that with everything that I have learned about my dad's military career and his 34 years at Eastern Airlines is that I think he was one "bad ass" pilot and I'm very proud to have called him my dad.

## THE END