

DETAIL OF B-25 MITCHELL TRANS-PACIFIC FLIGHT

Crew: Lt. Vincent Jamme, pilot - FO. Don Hettinger, pilot - Lt. Robert Bucholz - navigator - Corp. Tom Croke, radioman - Corp. Denver Bryant, engineer (Gunner Martin Bernstein crossed by boat)

1. First Hop - Wednesday, August 2, 1944

Fairfield Suisun, Cal. To Ridgers Field, Oahu, Hawaii

Take-off at 0603 a.m. California time - last sight of America - Golden Gate Bridge at 13:17 GCT (Greenwich Civil Time) - passed Diamond Head, Oahu at 01:09 GCT - landed at 0614 p.m. (California time) - Total flight time was 12 hours, 26 minutes. On course all the way, estimated Time of Arrival (ETA) was off by 30 seconds. Meteorological winds predicted were perfect - type of navigation was dead reckoning (DR) by metro winds zones - solid cloud undercast (6000 feet) all the way. Checked position and ground speed by sun lines of position (LOP) and one sun line fix (Meridian altitude and sun line advance), and compass bearings off 3 radio surface ships (every 500 miles) and each was seen below at respective ETA times. Noted engine vibration and oil leak (hub) on left engine - Hickam Field and Hilo radio beams picked up on radio compass 3 to 500 miles out at 0 degrees bearing - ground speed was 177 knots and distance 2108 nautical miles - 24:52 GCT Oahu sighted dead ahead - weight was about 33,000 pounds - course was 242 degrees true - very rough, hard landing on concrete strip (pilot fatigue - depth perception) but no damage to our aircraft - On August 3 toured Honolulu (shops, Wakiki Beach, etc.) Had lunch with Jamme and Hettinger at Hickam officers club - entire layout had country club look - Honolulu crowded with soldiers, sailors, marines - took scenic bus ride to Camp Catlin but was unable to locate cousin Don Westcott (USMC).

2. Second Hop - Friday, August 4, 1944

Rodgers Field, Oahu, Hawaii to Christmas Island

True course 178 degrees - 1162 nautical miles. Take-off at 16:54 GCT (Oahu) or 0725 Hawaiian time - landed at Christmas Island at 23:32 GCT - Flying time was 6 hours, 37 minutes at 176 knots average ground speed - averaged 3 course sun lines for track indication - metro winds again very good. Engine held up well after Oahu check. Honolulu and Christmas Island radio beams very strong - course error within 16 miles - land sighted almost 35 miles away - white beach surf very prominent - binoculars on board to verify island and not cloud shadow - ETA was 6 minutes off - spent 45 minutes in doldrums cumulus front - "soup" and took evasive action around cloud heads. Island primarily coral, 5 foot elevation - typical coconut palm trees, camouflaged, screened huts - brilliant sun - numbers of B-25's and C-47's - fruit juice, "coke" and beer welcomed - Red Cross girls at stand served. Personnel mostly in shorts - total distance flown so far is 3270 nautical miles in 19:03 hours - roughly half way across ocean.

3. Third Hop - Saturday, August 5, 1944

Christmas Island to Canton Island

An uneventful trip - metro held up fairly well - land sighted within 3 minutes of metro ETA - used 2 average speed sun lines for final ETA - 22:31. Arrived at 22:34 (3 minute difference) - a half hour out - corrected 18 degrees left by radio bearing and homed in - a real horseshoe shaped coral island with 8000 ft. runway - excellent facilities altho small - island is Air Transport Command

(ATC) terminal point between Hawaii and Australia - fine swimming - very nice officers club and food - numbers of fine looking DC 4 planes - early sunset - men in these outposts eager for news talk or media in any form - land sighted over 40 miles out - 916 nm. in 4:50 hours for 1891 ½ knots ground speed. Christmas take-off at 17:41 GCT and landed at 22:39 at Canton. Total so far 4186 nm., 23:52 hours.

4. Fourth Hop - Sunday August 6, Monday August 7, 1944

Canton Island to Nandi, Viti Levu, Fiji Islands

Flew formation (loose) with 2 other planes, staying in sight of each other - passed through 2 sub-equatorial fronts, not too bad over water - used 2 sets of sun lines - fair ETA - a mountainous island - nice climate it being winter - crossed International Date Line (takeoff on Sunday, land on Monday) - used metro zone winds and dead reckoning with sun lines - left engine again threw considerable oil - considerable cloud low over the mountains - thatched roofs - woolly haired native factotums - tomorrow we hop all the way to Australia via Tontouta, New Caledonia - missed ETA to Yawawa Island by 3 minutes - the lead navigator went straight to Nandi along the shore instead of following island approach and turning left. Getting tired - 1107 nautical miles, 5:51 hours. - Take-off at 19:33 and landed at 01:29 ½. Formation's lead ship navigator responsible for position reports but radio transmission error occurred - result was Navy searched for our formation with two ships. 5293 nm./29:43 hours.

5. Fifth Hop - Tuesday, August 8, 1944

Nandi (Fiji) Viti Levu to Tontouta, New Caledonia

Take-off 18:41 - in a formation again - heavy undercast - landed at 22:40. In "soup" for 2 hours at beginning of flight - used pilotage ground speed for ETA (from liftoff to Mare Island - ETA ½ minute off - 5 miles south of course at Mare Island. Joined formation and came in on radio at 248 degrees compass heading - rugged mountainous country - a 2 hour layover 5980 nm. / 32:25 hours

6. Sixth Hop - Tuesday, August 8, 1944

Tontouta, New Caledonia to Townsville, Australia

Take-off at 00:25 - heavy undercast all the way - 3 sets of sun lines - gave 181 ½ ground speed - pilotage point at Marion Reef, 312 miles out. Heading in and checking by radio - one hour out we ran into a nasty front forcing a descent and return climb - Arrived at 06:33, ETA one minute off. Townsville a dusty, wild west looking place - mini trains. A relief to be down at last! 7090 nm/38:32 ½ hours.

7. Thursday, August 10, 1944

Flew as passengers - our crew and a B-24 crew on a C-47 from Townsville to Port Moresby, New Guinea 4 ½ hours - low overcast on hills about island - hot and humid. Had a short day (Wednesday) of sightseeing in Townsville.