

Captain Arthur E. Hillier oral history interview

Accession number: 1999.244.0031

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Collection creation date: 1999 March 22

Processed by: Debbie Kahn

Processing date: 2012 October 24

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Preferred citation: Captain Arthur E. Hillier oral history interview – 1999.244.0031; SFO Museum, San Francisco, CA.

Contributors: Perry, Mauree Jane (interviewer)

Extent: This collection comprises 4 audiocassettes with accompanying transcript of 80 pages.

Language of materials: English

Biographical or historical note

Captain Arthur E. Hillier was born in Ogden, Utah, in 1920. He received instruction in the Civilian Pilot Program in Rock Springs, WY and gained his private pilot rating in 1941. He worked for the Civil Aeronautics Administration in 1941 as a field clerk and surveyor. He trained further at Meisinger Flying Service and worked as a flight instructor at Plains Airways in Fort Morgan, Colorado. He then joined the US Army Corps in 1942, where he trained on gliders. He was released from active military service into the Naval Reserve with the rank of Lieutenant to begin his employment with Pan American World Airways later that year. He worked as a Fifth Officer, a Fourth Officer, a Third Officer (flight engineer), Second Officer (navigator), First Officer (Copilot), and Captain (Pilot) until his retirement in 1980.

Scope and contents

This interview describes Captain Hillier's experiences as a pilot with Pan American Airlines from 1942 to 1980; his military training in Fort Morgan, Colorado; his civilian training with Pan American in Walnut Creek, California; and the work he performed. He discusses his flights originating at Treasure Island and the culture of Pan American workers in the San Francisco Bay Area between

1942 and 1945. He describes the aircraft he flew, including the Martin M 130 China Clipper; the Boeing 314, 377 Stratocruiser, 707, and 747; the DC 3 and DC 4; and the Grumman Goose.

Captain Hillier discusses his experiences while flying routes in the Pacific Division, including flights from San Francisco to Hawaii, Palmyra, Canton Island, Wallace, Fiji, Funafuti, Noumea, Brisbane, Auckland, Korea, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Singapore, Vietnam, and Guam; in the Latin American Division, including flights from Miami to Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama, Venezuela, Guiana, Brazil (Belem), Buenos Aires, Cat Cay, and Andros Island; and the around-the-world routes. He describes at length the process of celestial navigation. He discusses his experiences while flying during wartime and Pan American's cooperation with the United States military. Captain Hillier discusses the changes he experienced as aircraft technology advanced and required fewer crew members and the work disruptions he experienced as a result; he also briefly describes the Airline Pilot's Association. He describes meeting Juan Trippe, Charles Lindbergh, and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor during his career.

Subject headings

Aircraft industry

China Clipper (Airplane)

Pan American World Airways, Inc.

Boeing 314 (Seaplane)

Boeing 377 (Transport plane)

Boeing 707 (Jet transports)

Boeing 747 (Jet transports)

Douglas DC-3 (Transport plane)

Douglas DC-4 (Transport plane)