

Post to SEAWINGS – The Flying Boat Website 5/11/2011

Hello everyone,

I am a relatively new member. I was employed in the 70's at Antilles airboats. I flew and maintained the goose, mallard, and Sandringham flying boats.

In response to requests for flying boat stories I will start a new topic. We can all contribute. It might be a productive thread.

I will start with a humorous story. If not, well rec'd we can keep it technical.

Here goes:

I was working day shift Mx, when the boss (Capt. Charles Blair) called and said to get the Sandringham ready for flight. A trip to French St. Martin.

I took the ship dinghy out for preflight. first a circle around the aircraft looking for recent hull damage from small craft or floating debris etc..

Then under the wings to check the floats and look for fuel dripping. Also, to see that one wing was not "down hard" indicating that fuel had migrated across wing during the night. Once on board, start the APU, a single cylinder 4 stroke coupled to a DC Gen by a thick-walled rubber hose with a clamp at each end. It was located just aft of the F/E panel and exhausted overboard by an asbestos wrapped muffler.

Then out the astro hatch to walk the wings. Leading edge platforms secure and grounding switches made good.

Then down stairs to check the bilges. Pumps working okay, and no popped rivets.

Then back to the flight deck, paying particular attention to bleed the throttle exactor units.

As the pax skiff came along side, I heard a familiar voice, but I could not place it. After everyone was on board, Capt. Blair came up the ladder and behind him was John Wayne the movie actor, (the voice I had heard) Also on board was Capt. Blair's wife Maureen Ohara and Noel Holle, a man we had employed from Ansett Airways.

Away we went to St. Martin. About half way there, Capt. Blair decided to go below, leaving me at the controls. After a minute I asked Mr. Wayne if he would like to occupy the Capt. seat and take the controls. He replied that he was quite comfortable and that I was doing a fine job.

I asked the second time and got the same answer. At the third offering, he snapped at me impatiently "Son, I am an actor, I don't know how to fly!!" I thought of the "Flying Leathernecks, The High and The Mighty etc.." John Wayne, a movie legend, an American icon, just a pretender!! I was crushed!!

I flew along a few more minutes, eyes glistening with disappointment. I turned to him again, he looked over his newspaper, said "yes son, what is it now?"

I asked, Mr. Wayne....please tell me... you can ride a horse...right?

He replied that he could.

[AntillesAirman](#)