

'Dutch' Holloway Dies at 90; Managed Ethiopian Airlines

by Ed Betts

Pioneer airman Captain Halbert H. Holloway, better known to TWAers as "Dutch", passed away on March 24 at the age of 90. A native of Bakersfield, California, he learned to fly during World War I as a cadet assigned to a school at Chateauroux, France. His instructor spoke no English, and Dutch spoke no French, so the inflight training was usually by slamming the control stick from side to side. The training plane, vintage 1911, was a Cagron, which used warped wings for lateral control rather than the conventional ailerons.

After receiving his "brevet" (license) Holloway was assigned to the 41st Squadron of the U.S. 4th Pursuit Group, then flying the famous French "Spads".

In 1920 Dutch bought his first plane, a "Standard" biplane, for \$3,000 and established his "H.H. Holloway Aerial Service" near Bakersfield. Besides the usual barnstorming, he was available for charters and local rides for the thrill-seeking public. Dutch had an advantage over his competitors because he could squeeze two in the front cockpit, at \$10 each; other planes of the day such as the Curtiss "Jenny" could carry only one. He also did some flying out of Santa Barbara, and in 1921 he sold his thriving business and bought a flying boat, which he had to assemble.

On one flight he landed on Avalon Bay, Catalina Island and met William Wrigley, of chewing gum fame. Wrigley, who owned the island, authorized him to operate a flying service there. Dutch changed his advertising message, "Airplane Trips Anywhere", to "Fly With Me", which he painted on the bottom of the plane's hull.

Number 8 in Seniority

The seaplane experience was to land him a job with Western Air Express which in 1928 bought Pacific Marine Airlines, then operating regular schedules from Los Angeles harbor to Avalon, a distance of 22 miles. Western had modernized its fleet by replacing the old Curtiss flying boats with the Boeing 204 flying boat, Sikorsky S-38 and Leoning "Air Yachts". That same year Western began operating between Los Angeles and San Francisco, using the tri-motor Fokker F-10.

On June 15 that year, Holloway and another seaplane pilot, Franklin Young (who also learned to fly in France during WWI), joined Western. The following year (July 7, 1929) Transcontinental Air Transport (TAT) inaugurated 48-hour transcontinental air/rail service. WAE had begun a similar but less publicized service a few weeks earlier, flying the Fokkers as far as Kansas City. Holloway flew this route, and the following year flew the first four-engined airliner in the U.S., the 32-passenger Fokker F-32. Later in 1930 the two companies, Western Air Express and TAT-Maddux, merged to form Transcontinental & Western Airlines (T&WA). The Catalina shuttle was not part of the merger.

Holloway became #8 on the captain's seniority list; Young was #9 and George Rice was #10. As a senior pilot, Dutch flew them all: the Fokkers and Fords, the single-engine mail planes, the DC-1,

DC-2, DC-3 and Straoliners in the pre-war years; the C-54 and C-87 during the war, and the post-war Constellations.

On March 1, 1933 the Post Office awarded TWA its first addition to the transcontinental mail route, an extension to San Francisco by way of Bakersfield and Fresno. Rice flew the inaugural northbound flight in the Northrop "Alpha" and Holloway the first southbound.

In January 1934 Dutch had a "close one" flying the mail run to Albuquerque in a Lockheed "Orion". A mechanic at Winslow had neglected to fill the plane's reserve tank and Dutch ran out of gas just short of destination, crash landing in the sage brush. The plane was badly damaged but Dutch escaped with only minor facial cuts.

TWA was relatively small in those days and everybody seemed to know everybody around the system, either personally or by means of the *Skyliner* (also known as the *Windsock* in those days). Irv Greenwald, the reporter for Los Angeles, was always telling of the escapades of the station's two favorite bachelors, Dutch and Eddie Bellande (who flew the first transcon). Eddie broke a lot of feminine hearts when he married actress Molly Lamont in 1937. Dutch remained a bachelor.

During the war Holloway flew 70 Atlantic crossings with the ICD operation, flying troops or supplies (and the wounded home) to Europe, Africa and India. After the war he was assigned by TWA to manage Ethiopian Air Lines, then being established under Harry Truman's Point 4 aid program. Ethiopia had just been reclaimed from Italian rule, and living and working conditions were primitive.

Emperor Haile Selassie was an avid aviation enthusiast and would often come to the airport in the evening, sit in a plane and talk with Holloway informally. (It was a very different matter when he was seated on his throne in Addis Ababa; everybody bowed when they entered and again when they left; and nobody turned his back on the emperor—one backed out of the throne room.)

In 1948 Dutch returned to TWA, flying the Constellations, usually on the San Francisco-Chicago run.

Jealous of Left Seat

Following the resignations of Jack Frye and Paul Richter in April of 1947, Dutch became the most senior pilot on the system, a graduate of "seat of your pants" flying to instrument flying. Bob Buck, who joined TWA in 1937, told of his first six months flying the line as co-pilot for Dutch on the DC-2s and 3s. Bob was often promised a landing, but there was always a reason why this was postponed—too much crosswind, the weather wasn't just right or it was getting dark. On one flight they landed at Saugus when Burbank was fogged in. They spent the night in the plane and ferried it the next day. Bob was allowed the takeoff, but once in the air Holloway yelled, "Okay, I've got it! Gear up!"

On a personal note, my first two dozen trips with Dutch were in early 1949, San



'Dutch' Holloway (left) with pilot/author Bob Buck.

Francisco-Midway on Connie flights 35 and 36. Like Bob Buck, there was mention of getting a landing sometime, but the conditions somehow never were favorable. On the other hand, Frank Busch claims to have been given the privilege of many takeoffs and landing when he flew co-pilot with Dutch. The conditions must have been just right.

I never flew with any captain who knew his geography as well as Dutch. He didn't need a map. When circumstances permitted, he'd fly over the Hawthorne, Nevada area and study the terrain below. He owned some mining property there and was always on the lookout for another possible claim.

On layovers he would always order the bottom half of a grapefruit for breakfast—it was his secret to good health and longevity. (The bottom half collected most of the vitamins, he reasoned.)

Dutch retired in January of 1956, the second pilot to reach the mandatory age 60 (Franklin Young was the first, a year earlier), after 39 years in the cockpit. For

the next 26 years he devoted full time to searching for gold. He never struck the bonanza, but did make money with the sale of property through the years. For the last several years he lived in a nursing home in Ventura, California. He is survived by his niece, Luella Seibel, of Ventura.

(Editor's note: Roberta Sturgis Theurer of Port Huenene, California, who was a flight hostess for TWA 1935-37, was thoughtful to send a notice of "Dutch" Holloway's death from her local newspaper. She recalled flying with Dutch and said she'd written to him, as suggested in the *Skyliner* last year, and received a note of appreciation from his niece. "I'm pushing 74 (gently)," says Mrs. Theurer, adding that articles on TWA's history "keep those days alive for us." She remembers when pilots used to go hunting at the end of airport runways and will never forget the scene as they sat de-feathering the quail they'd shot. In pistol competition, they always beat the Kansas City police team.)

Sons Follow in Father's Footsteps



Capt. Clay Whitney retired four year ago after 35 years with TWA but two of his sons are carrying on the family flying tradition. Pictured above are Capt. Whitney with Kenton (left), a captain for Com-Air, a Cincinnati-based commuter airline, and Clay Jr., a pilot for Air Exchange of Midland, Texas. Both sons have been flying since they were teenagers. The aircraft in the photo is Capt. Whitney's Beech Sundowner.

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