

On the Beak of an Ancient Pelican

This charter is written for the use of those who have got a DC-3 with ferry tanks, and have been “all gassed up with nowhere to go”. The answer is “Western Samoa”, and our tale starts in San Francisco...

Sometime in the early 1960s*, Polynesian Airlines, who had been operating routes around Apia, Pango Pango, Atitaki, Raratonga, Tongatapu, and Fiji, with a single borrowed DC-3, decided to buy one of their own. A pilot was needed to ferry the “new” aircraft, named “*Savaii*”, from California to Samoa, and EK Gann was lured away from his typewriter to fly his first DC-3 for nineteen years. The rest of the crew were:- George Washington (PA’s chief pilot) as navigator, John Best (PA’s mechanical genius) as flight engineer, and Dodie (Gann’s “Girl Friday”) (presumably Dodie Post, captain of the US 1948 Winter Olympics Ski Team, and EKG’s future wife) as co-pilot (she was studying for her PPL) and stewardess. The story of the flight is the last chapter of “*Ernest K. Gann’s Flying Circus*” (ISBN 0 340 20693 4).

“*Savaii*” was equipped with a single ADF radio, but no VOR/DME/ILS radios (the latter would have been of no use in her new area of operations), and a pair of rubber 400-gallon ferry tanks (due to a plumbing fault, they stopped feeding after 770 gallons). She also had an astrodome, which George Washington used to take sun- and star-fixes with an octant (bubble sextant). If you have had problems using one you may be glad to know that his first fix after leaving San Francisco placed them in Central China (he used the South, instead of North, tables, AND got the Zulu Time conversion wrong! On the other hand, his ETA for Apia was only 4 minutes out...

DC-3 Airways charters are normally written for VFR flight altitudes, but EGK specifically mentions cruising at 6000’ on both legs and also having occasionally to fly through, rather than around, cloud, so I have kept to this height. For the final, easterly, portion of the second leg, I have assumed 7000’. I have included waypoint “BRINEY” in the first leg, as it’s there that “*Savaii*” parted from San Francisco control.

As the flights are VERY long, I suggest you fly each of them over several sessions, saving frequently (the thought of FS9 crashing fifteen hours into an unsaved flight is highly unpleasant). Other reasons for doing it this way may involve keeping on speaking terms with your family, and the possibility that DVT can occur with long virtual flights.

Please enjoy this charter, and remember, when setting up, as John Best was PA’s equivalent of Roscoe, they were probably carrying a lot of spares as well...

JohnL (0852) 12Oct06

PS. It is also possible to fly this route in reverse (Polynesian Airlines selling “*Savaii*” to a new owner?) or maybe even with a DC-4...

Timing note

“*Savaii*” seems to have left KSFO about 2200hrs local time, and left KPHNL late enough to pass over Canton Island in daylight, but sufficiently early to get to Apia in time for lunch.

* “It was the year of the Geminis, of plans for the moon, of supersonic transport design, of fighters slashing thrice the speed of sound” seemed to me to suggest 1963. However, “*Savaii*” taxied out for takeoff at KSFO on “Friday the thirteenth”, with “a near full moon rising across the bay”, which doesn’t seem to square with the astronomical data. Dave Bitzer has pointed out that at KSFO, 2200 PST, Friday 13th July 1962 the moon was at 33 deg elevation, 191deg azimuth, 0.88 full, which seems a better solution.

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Scenery Note

There is a small scenery addon package with this charter, which provides:-

- (1) a floating NDB (Ocean Station November) at the point of no return** on leg 1;
- (2) another NDB at Canton Island on leg 2,
- (3) a grass runway at Faleolo in addition to the asphalt one (EKG landed on a grass strip there, and surely you'd like to do the same!

See the Readme files for scenery installation.

From - To	Flight Description. "Allocated runways and related information may change when flying online or using Real Weather"				Course (Leg)	Distance (Leg)	ETE(leg) HH+MM
	Prior to takeoff tune ADF to SF NDB, 379.0						
	Dep. Rwy – 1L	Init. Hdg – 011deg	Init. Alt – 6000ft	Apt Elev. – 13ft			
San Francisco (KSFO), California, USA. to Honolulu (PHNL), Hawaii, USA.	To Fix01. Continue runway heading. Waypoint reached at 1000ft amsl				011	4.2	00+02
	To Fix02. Turn right to 101deg. Waypoint reached after 2 miles				101	2.0	00+01
	To SF NDB, 379.0. Turn right to 141deg and fly direct to NDB				141	5.5	00+03
	To BRINY ISEC. Turn right and track the 214deg OB radial from SF NDB for 24.9nm.				214	24.9	00+10
	To fix ISEC more accurately, tune NDB to JC NDB, 249.0 after 20 miles. Waypoint reached when you intersect the 250deg OB radial from JC NDB						
	To Fix03, N36*24.43', W125*21.20'. Turn right to 233deg. Fly 140nm DR.....				233	140	00+55
	To Fix04, N35*27.04', W127*58.88'. Turn left to 230deg. Fly 140nm DR.....				230	140	00+55
	To Fix05, N34*26.31', W130*32.76'. Turn left to 229deg. Fly 140nm DR.....				229	140	00+55
	To Fix06, N33*22.44', W133*02.86'. Turn left to 227deg. Fly 140nm DR.....				227	140	00+55
	To Fix07, N32*15.64', W135*29.26'. Turn left to 226deg. Fly 140nm DR.....				226	140	00+55
	To Fix08, N31*09.00', W137*46.24'. Turn left to 225deg. Fly 140nm DR. Tune ADF to 4YN NDB, 488.0				225	140	00+55
	To OS November. Continue 225deg. Fly DR until ADF receives signal (NDB range is 75nm), then direct to 4YN NDB				225	128.6	00+51
	To Fix09, N29*01.67', W142*26.24'. Turn right to 232deg. Fly the 232 OB radial, then DR, for 140nm....				232	140	00+55
	To Fix10, N28*00.75', W144*49.68'. Continue on 231deg, Fly 140NM DR				231	140	00+55
	To Fix11, N26*57.39', W147*10.40'. Turn left to 230deg. Fly 140NM DR				230	140	00+55
To Fix12, N25*51.75', W149*28.46'. Turn left to 229deg. Fly 140NM DR				229	140	00+55	
To Fix13, N24*43.98', W151*43.94'. Continue on 229deg. Fly 140NM DR				229	140	00+55	
To Fix14, N23*34.21', W153*56.95'. Turn left to 228deg. Fly 140NM DR				228	140	00+55	

** Point of no return – somewhere halfway between where you started and where you hope to land – if you've used a third of your fuel and haven't got to it, give serious consideration to turning back. If you hang on until half your fuel is gone, I hope you remembered to check the liferaft.

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	To Fix15, N22*22.24', W156*07.32'. Turn left to 227deg. Fly 140NM DR. Tune ADF to NGF NDB, 265.0	227	140	00+55		
	To NGF NDB, 265.0. Continue 227deg. Fly DR until ADF receives signal (NDB range is 75nm), and then direct to NGF NDB. Search on COMM1 for nearest airports, and start descent to 4000ft 5nm after PHNL in range	227	106.2	00+42		
	To Fix16. Turn left to 221deg, slow to 120kts, and descent to 1900ft, for 16nm... ..	221	16	00+08		
	Fly procedural turn to PHNL runway 4L	266	2.4	00+01		
		176	2.0	00+01		
		086	1.0	00+01		
	Land runway 4L (041deg). Length - 6958ft, width - 150ft, surface - asphalt	041	6.0	00+04		
Flight No. 852-03-01	Arrival Airport Elev. - 13ft	Estimated totals for flight>>>			2119nm	13+57

From - To	Flight Description. "Allocated runways and related information may change when flying online or using Real Weather"				Course (Leg)	Distance (Leg)	ETE(leg) HH+MM
	Prior to takeoff tune ADF to HN NDB, 242.0						
	Dep. Rwy – 4R	Init. Hdg - 042deg	Init. Alt - 6000ft	Apt Elev. - 13ft			
Honolulu (PHNL), Hawaii, USA. To Apia (NSFA), Samoa	To Fix01. Continue runway heading. Waypoint reached at 400ft agl				042	4.2	00+02
	To Fix02. Turn left to 312deg. Waypoint reached when 238deg IB radial intercepted on ADF				312	2.0	00+01
	To HN NDB, 242.0. Turn left to 228deg and fly direct to NDB				238	9.6	00+04
	To Fix03, N19*18.83', W159*18.61'. Turn left to 200deg and fly the OB radial, then DR, for 140nm				200	140	00+55
	To Fix04, N17*17.65', W160*32.45'. Continue 200deg and fly DR 140nm				200	140	00+55
	To Fix05, N15*16.04', W161*44.68'. Continue 199deg and fly DR 140nm				199	140	00+55
	To Fix06, N13*14.05', W161*44.68'. Continue 199deg and fly DR 140nm				199	140	00+55
	To Fix07, N11*11.74', W164*05.19'. Turn left to 198deg and fly DR 140nm				198	140	00+55
	To Fix08, N09*09.16', W165*13.88'. Continue 198deg and fly DR 140nm				198	140	00+55
	To Fix09, N07*06.37', W166*21.79'. Continue 198deg and fly DR 140nm				198	140	00+55
	To Fix10, N05*03.42', W167*29.10'. Continue 198deg and fly DR 140nm				198	140	00+55
	To Fix11, N03*00.35', W168*35.98'. Turn left to 198deg and fly DR 140nm				198	140	00+55

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	To Fix12, N00°57.21', W169°42.61'. Continue 198deg and fly DR 140nm	198	140	00+55		
	To Fix13, S01°06.06', W170°48.90'. Continue 198deg and fly DR 140nm. Tune ADF to CTN, 274.0	198	140	00+55		
	To CTN NDB, 274.0. Continue 198deg until ADF receives signal (NDB range is 75nm), and then fly direct to NDB	198	113.9	00+45		
	To Fix14, S05°06.05', W171°45.72'. Turn left to 170deg, climb to 7000ft, and fly DR 140nm	170	140	00+54		
	To Fix15, S07°26.02', W171°48.61'. Continue 170deg and fly DR 140nm. Tune ADF to NK NDB, 394.0	170	140	00+53		
	To NK NDB, 394.0. Continue 170deg DR until ADF receives signal (NDB range is 75nm), then fly direct to NDB	170	104.0	00+40		
	To Fix16, S11°29.91', W171°55.47'. Turn right to 171 deg and fly OB radial, then DR, for 140nm. Tune ADF to FA NDB, 270.0	171	140	00+54		
	To FA NDB, 270.0. Turn left to 170deg and continue DR until ADF receives signal (NDB range is 75nm), then direct to NDB. 40 miles after NDB received, start search on COMM1 for nearest airports, and start descent to 1900ft when NSFA (Faleolo Intl) in range	170	139.3	00+54		
	Turn left to 068deg, slow to 120kts and fly right hand pattern to Faleolo Intl Rwy 26L	068 164	7.7 2.0	00+04 00+01		
	Land runway 26L (258deg). Length - 4400ft, width - 200ft, surface – grass	257	7.0	00+04		
Flight No. 852-03-02	Arrival Airport Elev. - 59ft	Estimated totals for flight>>>			2354nm	15+24