Development of Transpacific Transport Routes by the U.S. Navy during World War II

William Fort

Aerophilately 2014
12 September 2014
### NATS ROUTE SCHEDULES

- Route name & number
- Effective date
- Stops in each direction
- Start days each way
- Arrival & departure times
- Equipment
- Operator
- Notes

#### ROUTE SCHEDULE NOTICE NO. 2-43

**FIJI - NEW HEBRIDES - NEW CALEDONIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
<th>STATION</th>
<th>(READ DOWN)</th>
<th>(READ UP)</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>SATURDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0700</td>
<td>0700</td>
<td>LV SUVA (LAUTHALA BAY)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AR 1640</td>
<td>1640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1040</td>
<td>1040</td>
<td>AR ESPIRITU SANTO (SQUARED CHANNEL)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LV 1100</td>
<td>1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>LV ESPIRITU SANTO (SECOND CHANNEL)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AR 0950</td>
<td>0950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1310</td>
<td>1310</td>
<td>AR PAIF (HAAVINAH HARBOR)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LV -----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1340</td>
<td>1340</td>
<td>LV PAIF (HAAVINAH HARBOR)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AR -----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1520</td>
<td>1520</td>
<td>LV NOUVA (ILE NOU)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>LV 0630</td>
<td>0630</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* PROVISIONAL STOP WHEN CARGO WARRANTS.

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**FIJI - TOEGA - SABA - FIJI**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROUTE #44</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUVA (LAUTHALA BAY)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TONGATABU (NUKUALOFA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TONGATABU (NUKUALOFA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPOLO (SATAPUHALA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPOLO (SATAPUHALA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUVA (LAUTHALA BAY)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** ARRIVAL TIMES SHOWN ARE APPROXIMATE ONLY.

**ALL TIMES ARE LOCAL TIME.**

**CORRECTION LST TO GMT:** SUVA, TONGATABU minus 12; UPOLO, plus 12; NOUVEA, ESPIRITU, minus 11.

**EQUIPMENT - PBM-3 TYPE AIRCRAFT.**

**OPERATOR - AIR TRANSPORT SQUADRON TWO.**

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**THE ABOVE SCHEDULES WERE EFFECTIVE AS OF DECEMBER 21, 1942, AND CONTINUE IN EFFECT UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. AN INCREASE IN NUMBER OF WEEKLY SERVICES ON THIS SCHEDULE IS ANTICIPATED FOR THE NEAR FUTURE.**

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/\ T. E. GILLESPIE, LIEUTENANT COMMANDER, USN, PACIFIC NATS OFFICER, BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDER AIR FORCE, PACIFIC FLEET.
## Transcribed NATS Route Schedules

### Fiji – New Hebrides – New Caledonia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starts After</th>
<th>Operator</th>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Stations</th>
<th>Days One Way</th>
<th>Trips per Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21 Dec 42</td>
<td>VR-2</td>
<td>PBM-3</td>
<td>Suva – Espiritu Santo – Efate - Noumea</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Fiji – Tonga – Samoa - Fiji

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starts After</th>
<th>Operator</th>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Stations</th>
<th>Days One Way</th>
<th>Trips per Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21 Dec 42</td>
<td>VR-2</td>
<td>PBM-3</td>
<td>Suva – Tongatabu – Upolu - Suva</td>
<td>2(^a)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Circular route completed in two days.

Route discontinued 17 Apr 43
NAVAL AIR TRANSPORT SYSTEM

• Established 12 December 1942
• Motivation – Inadequate transport by utility squadrons
• Mission – Delivery of critical equipment, spare parts & specialists world wide (airmail delivery spelled out later)
• Pacific assets:
  • VR-2 - April 1942 - Alameda - XPBS-1 - Transpacific
  • VR-5 - June 1943 - Seattle – R4D’s - Alaska
  • VR-11 - Sept 1943 - Oakland - R5D’s - Transpacific
  • VR-13 – 1944 - Los Negros (Admiralty Islands) - R4D’s - Australia – New Guinea
• Pan Am under contract for Transpacific service
• Other airlines contracted for training, ferrying, servicing, etc.
MAINLAND – HONOLULU ROUTE

• Pan Am emergency flights from 10 December 1941 with American Clipper
• Clippers sold to military
• M-130 Philippine Clipper & B-314 Honolulu Clipper allocated to Pacific
• 50 round trips in January
• Philippine Clipper crashed January 1943
• Two more B-314’s added during 1943
High Priority Pan Am Airmail
NATS SQUADRON VR-2

- Formed April 1942 at Alameda
- To work with Pan Am
- Allocated one Sikorsky XPBS-1
- Crashed XPBS-1 in late June
- Allocated PBM-3 Mariners & PB2Y-3 Coronados in summer 1942
MAINLAND – HONOLULU ROUTE

• Operated by Pan Am & VR-2 with seaplanes
• VR-11 R5D’s added September 1943
• One Martin XPB2M Mars made 78 trips in 1944-1945
Mr. Martin O. Clemens
Contractors
Pacific Naval Air Bases
Barbers Point Project
Honolulu, T. H.
## MAINLAND – HONOLULU ROUTE

Service Frequency – Round trips per week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule Date</th>
<th>PAA/VR-2 Seaplanes</th>
<th>VR-11 Landplanes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 1943</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1944</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1944</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1944</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1945</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1945</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1945</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SOUTH PACIFIC ROUTES

Pan American Airways
Paci City, T. Hawaii
Early NATS Airmail from Brisbane
Money Letter from a Marine

PFC. Leonard Holland
U.S. Marine Corps Unit #570,
C/O Postmaster, San Francisco, California.

Mrs. J. J. Holland
215 Morton Avenue,
Moundsville, West Virginia,
U.S.A.

[Envelope with postage stamps]
## Hawaii – South Pacific Routes

Service Frequency – Round trips per week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule Date</th>
<th>Australia/New Zealand</th>
<th>Noumea</th>
<th>Espiritu Santo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 1942</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1943</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1944</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1944</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1944</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1945</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SCAT from Guadalcanal to Espiritu
CenCATS from Tarawa to Funafuti

Air mail

Lt Col H. L. Miller
USS Indiana
FPO San Francisco

Mrs. H. L. Miller
1728 Wellesley Ave
W. Los Angeles 25
California
NATS Routes
1 January 1943
V-Mail from Tongatabu

AFTER ______ DAYS RETURN TO—

Sgt. C.K. Sparks, 35117917,
Co. "K", 147th Inf., A.P.O. # 930,
% Postmaster, San Francisco, Calif.

U.S.
NOV
18
1942
FREE

V-Mail

MRS. R.L. SULLIVAN,
7 INGLESDIDE AVENUE,
CATONSVILLE,
MARYLAND.
How Much Mail Did NATS Carry in the South Pacific?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Pounds of Airmail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 1943</td>
<td>13,0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1944</td>
<td>202,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1945</td>
<td>545,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1945</td>
<td>1,350,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By one reference
NATS Routes
15 June 1943
Midway to England

Sgt. George Thomas, U.S.M.C.
Battery "B"
6th Defense Bn.
% Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, Calif.

U.S.
JAN 8
1944
A.M.
NAVY

Marine's Mail

1st Lieut. Peter Thomas, C.M.P.
A.P.O. 874, % Postmaster
New York, N.Y.
SHIFT TO THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC
Tarawa to Mainland

Dear Mr. Wagoner,

75 Armstrong Cork Co.

Beaver Falls, Penna.

[Additional postal markings and text]
George A. Roller Em/11 4/44
19 Naval Cnr. Batt. Co. A Pl. 2
7 R.O. San Francisco Cal.

University of California
Extension Division
Berkeley - 4
California

(Attention Miss Christensen)
## HAWAII – MANUS SOUTHWEST PACIFIC ROUTE

Service Frequency – Round trips per week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule Date</th>
<th>VR-11 R5D</th>
<th>VR-2 PB2Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 1944</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1944</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1944</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1944</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1945</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1945</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SHIFT TO THE CENTRAL PACIFIC
Majuro to New Zealand
Battleship USS Iowa at Eniwetok
Major John P. Murphy, USMCR
Div HQ, 2d MarDiv, FMF
Fleet PO, San Francisco, Calif.

Mrs. E. C. Grigsby
2010 Bancroft Way
Berkeley
California
NATS Routes
17 November 1944
Marine on Guam
## CENTRAL PACIFIC ROUTE

Service Frequency – Round trips per week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule Date</th>
<th>Kwajalein VR-2 PB2Y</th>
<th>Eniwetok VR-11 R5D</th>
<th>Saipan VR-11 R5D</th>
<th>Guam VR-11 R5D</th>
<th>Peleliu VR-11 R5D</th>
<th>Samar VR-11 R5D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 1944</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1944</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1944</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1944</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1944</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1945</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1945</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Roi to Kwajalein

ARCM. J. KILPATRICK
VMF 311 MAG 31
% F.P.O.
SAN FRANCISCO

Mrs. E. J. Kilpatrick
15 Kentucky Ave
Lexington 23 Ky.
AUSTRALIA – BISMARCK SEA – PHILIPPINES ROUTE

Service Frequency – Round trips per week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule Date</th>
<th>Manus</th>
<th>Hollandia</th>
<th>Peleliu</th>
<th>Leyte</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 1944</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1944</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1944</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1945</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Marine on Hollandia

Robert Loney Haynes Sr.
11th USMC C-35-2
To RPO San Francisco CA

NOV 7
1944

POSTAGE DUE 6 CENTS

To Miss Louise W. Eversole
512 Westpark St.
Lowell Mass.
Palau to Sydney

The Advent Radio Church
Box 4112 C.P.O.
Sydney, Australia
Engine Repair Ship in Leyte Gulf
USS North Carolina “In Tokyo Bay”
ALEUTIAN ISLANDS ROUTES
NATS Alaska Routes

- **Apr 43 - Dec 43**
  - Attu
  - Dutch Harbor
  - Nome
  - Bethel
  - Kodiak
  - Adak

- **Sep 42 - Dec 43**
  - Fairbanks
  - Anchorage

- **Sep 42 - Dec 43**
  - Northway
  - Whitehorse
  - Juneau

- **Sep 42 - Dec 43**
  - Ketchikan

- **Sep 42 - Dec 43**
  - Seattle

- **Sep 42 - Dec 43**
  - Annette Island

- **Sep 42 - Dec 43**
  - USSR

- **Sep 42 - Dec 43**
  - CANADA

- **Sep 42 - Dec 43**
  - ALASKA
VR-2 Seaplane Route
VR-5 R4D Route to Sitka

Paul B. Jeang SK3c
Naval Air Station
Sitka, Alaska

Passed by Naval Censor

AIR MAIL

John, Henry Schatz
608 Pearl St.
New Albany, Indiana
AFTER 5 DAYS, RETURN TO
Richard L. Eslinger
Pan American Airways
Fairbanks

VIA AIR MAIL

RADIO MFG. ENGINEERS, INC.
111 HARRISON STREET
PEORIA, ILLINOIS
Light Cruiser *USS Detroit* in Aleutians via PAA Contract C-54 Route from Adak
Thank You
NATS Seaplanes

- Martin M-130
- Boeing 314
- Martin PBM
- Consolidate PB2Y
NATS Landplanes

Douglas R5D

Douglas R4D

Consolidated RY-2