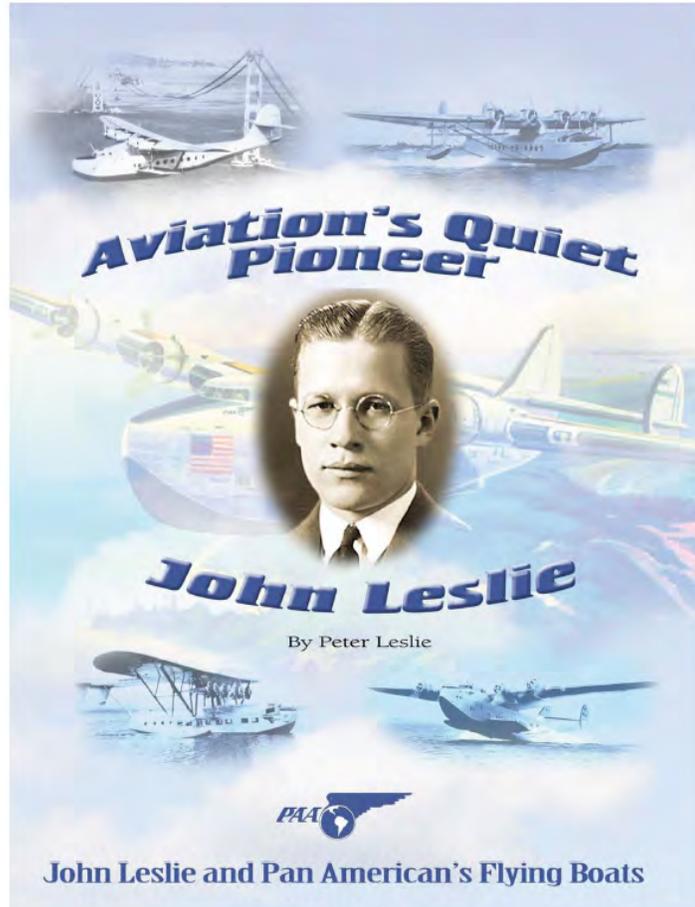

Aviation's Quiet Pioneer



John Leslie
by Peter Leslie



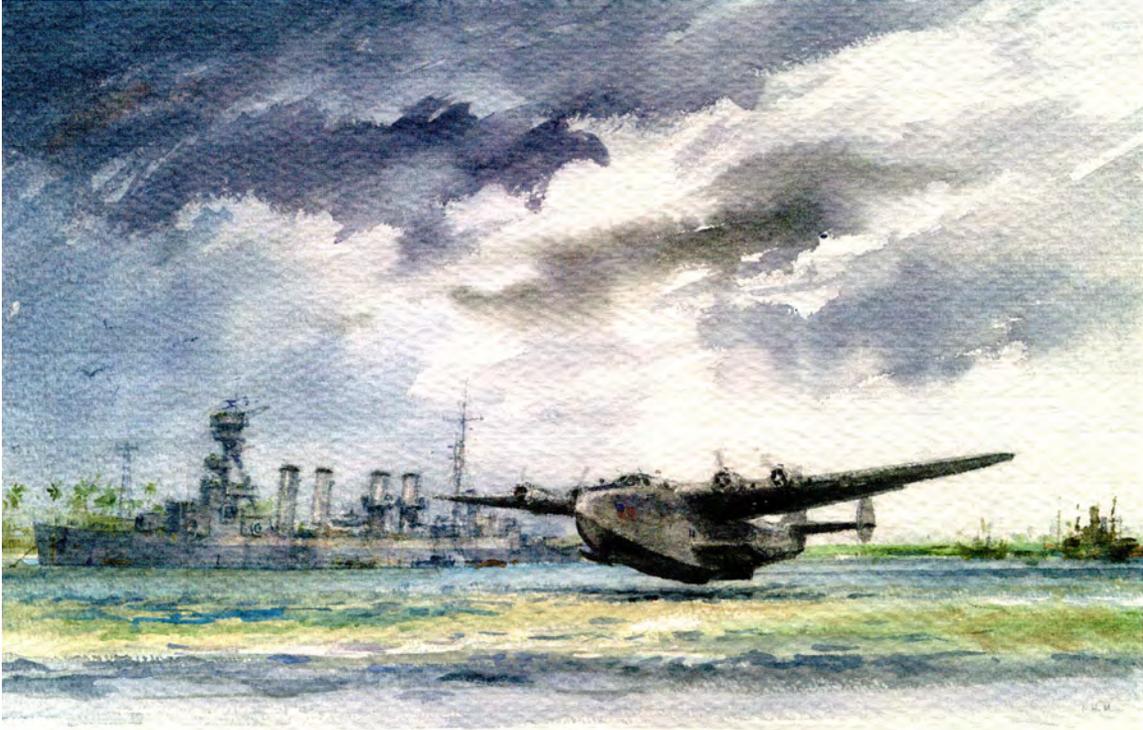
This book about my father's 42-year Pan Am career is compiled from the documents, memoirs, clippings, photos and mementos he left behind. In a sense it is the scrapbook he was too busy to get around to. My words are few, just factual history to tie together 200 plus quotes, letters, documents and photos.

-- Peter Leslie, Director, Pan Am Historical Foundation

Proceeds from the sale of this book will benefit the Pan Am Historical Foundation and its mission.

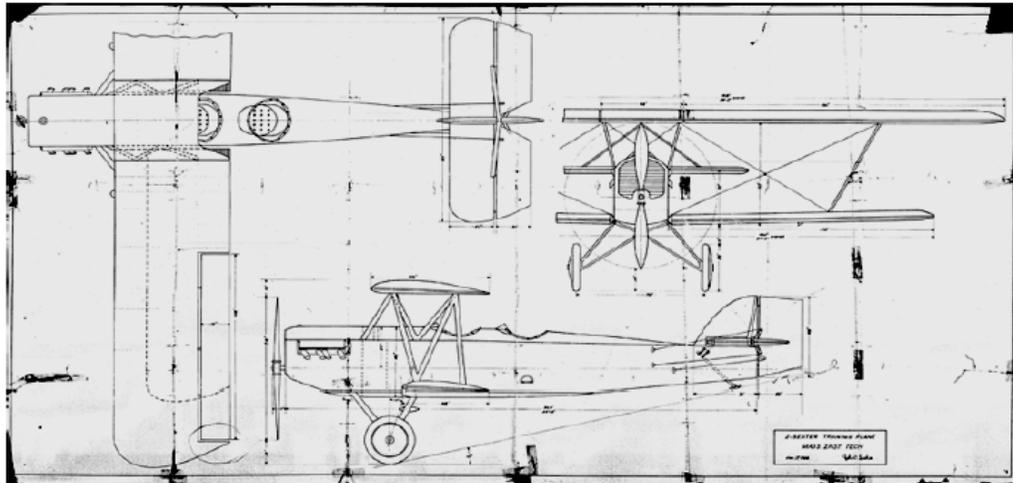
John Leslie's Legacy

Clipper One with FDR aboard alights alongside the USS Memphis on the Gambia River in Africa.

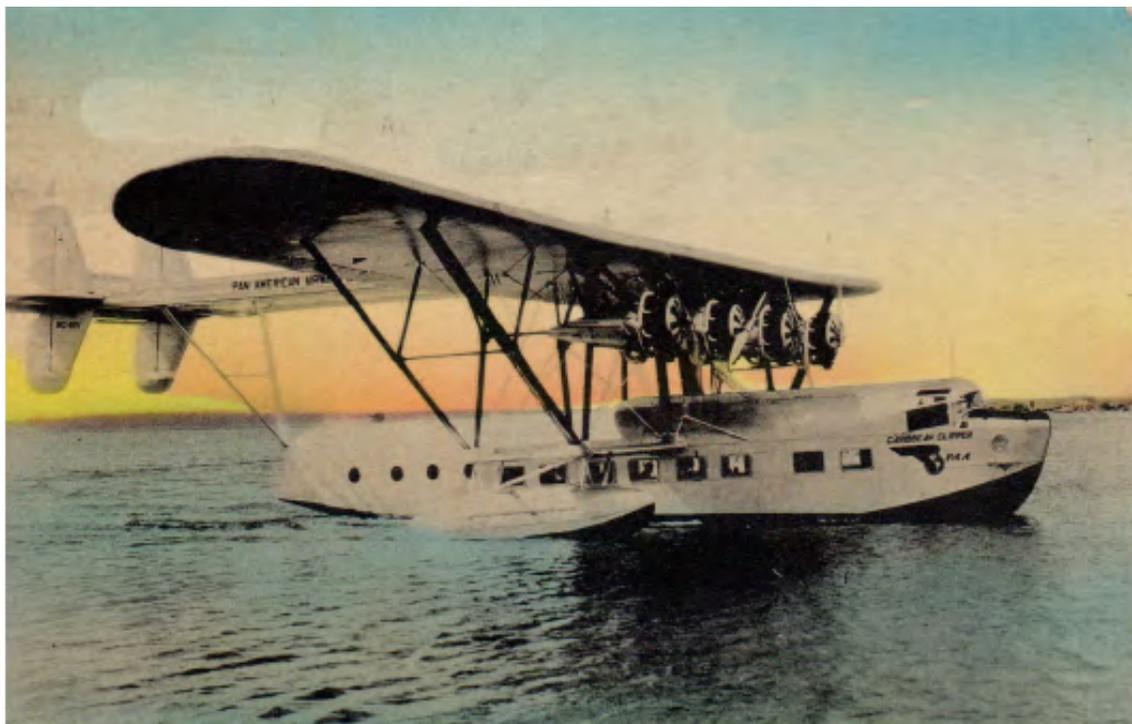


Painting by Ian Marshall

When John Leslie, in charge of President Roosevelt's 1943 Pan Am Special Mission flight to the wartime Casablanca summit, named the presidential aircraft *Clipper One*, he started an American tradition. That legacy lives on today and the phrase *Air Force One* instantly symbolizes American prestige and power around the globe.



John Leslie was Pan Am's first aeronautical engineer. Leslie designed this aircraft in 1927 at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



Leslie was hired in 1929 and worked in Miami on Pan Am's earliest aircraft: The Fokker F-10, the Sikorsky S-38, the Consolidated Commodore and this Sikorsky S-40 shown in a postcard sent to him by his niece in 1935.



Leslie was called the "Father of Long Range Cruising." He tested his theories and techniques with his good friend Captain Ed Musick at the controls of a Sikorsky S-42.



AS DIVISION ENGINEER FOR THE PACIFIC DIVISION IN 1935 HE DEVELOPED THE ENGINEERING TECHNIQUE FOR LONG RANGE FLIGHT WHICH MADE POSSIBLE THE FIRST COMMERCIAL AIR SERVICE ACROSS THE PACIFIC.

In 1935 Leslie was transferred to San Francisco to prepare for the epic Pacific crossing flights. In a teletype press release naming Leslie to the Pan Am board of directors, Juan Trippe credited him with developing the engineering techniques that made the flight of the China Clipper possible.



Juan Trippe greets Leslie at the Marine Air Terminal in New York in 1941. During World War II Leslie was Pan Am Atlantic Division Manager. Pan Am flying boats performed essential missions in the war effort. One was supplying the British essential materiel just before the Battle of El Alamein, which turned the tide against Field Marshall Rommel's Afrika Korps.

Aviation's Quiet Pioneer

Endorsements



Leslie said in the 1972 speech at Philip Barter Academy:

"Finally, we were ready to transfer our base of operations to San Francisco. This was in the early part of 1935. Our planned route across the Pacific, between Honolulu and Manila involved fueling and overnight stops on the islands of Midway, Wake, and Canton. I arrived in San Francisco on the very day that our supply ship was about to leave for these islands. I vividly recall going down to the docks that night and boarding the SS North Haven. I knew that she had aboard far over a million different items of supplies and equipment, of everything needed to establish communications and operating facilities on three and a half million miles of coastline plus 74 construction workers... everything needed to establish communications and operating facilities on three and a half million miles of coastline, about 1,000 miles westward from Honolulu, was occupied only by a few men manning a radio relay station. Wake, some 1,500 miles east of Midway, had never been visited by anyone. Lines were run, of course, because the United States had given up Spain in the Spanish-American War (1898) and it had long been a US Navy base.

"Landing up at the ship, back side of that vessel in the huge San Francisco harbor and realizing the indispensable part that it had to play in our forthcoming adventures, gave me a feeling of awe and a sense of anticipation. I could talk for an hour of course, concerning our advances in constructing these island bases. I would just say that one fact of modern history equipment and tools, in comparison to those used only a few years later for extensive base construction during World War II, was spectacular. I just don't see how you men did it.



"This lively, fascinating and authentic account makes the operations of Pan Am during its pioneering years come alive. The book features the personal papers, photos and memorabilia of a young engineer who joined the company in 1929, became Pacific Division Engineer during the launch of Trans-Pacific service, and Atlantic Division Manager during WWII."

--Charles Trippe, Pan American World Airways Vice President

"With intimate detail, this narrative reveals the life and character of a Pan American Airways unsung hero: John C Leslie. In this captivating book, Leslie's private and humble personality is shared in a way not found in any Pan American Airways history. The book is colourful both in format and content and will leave any reader wanting more."

--Professor Gabrielle Durepos, Schwartz School of Business, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia

Lutie liked to tell the story of the arrival at New Zealand. He described himself as "biting" on the spacious flight deck as they approached in challenging weather conditions.

He was appraising the north side of New Zealand, which is a strip of rather high hills, maybe 200 feet high, which form a barrier to a wide valley of some 50 miles. Off to seaward were some rather high mountains called the Three Kings. The weather was extremely grey and murky with rain, and we were consequently flying over the ocean at about 500 to 1000 feet. Knowing these obstacles were somewhere ahead, but in the absence of radio navigation at that time, not being in care of where they were, we were all in the cockpit peering forward through the windshield.

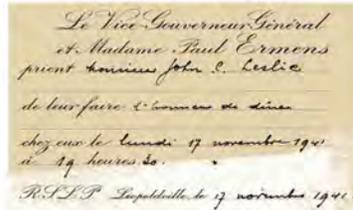
We were not in a dangerous condition, but were hoping to make our landing with a reasonable margin. All of a sudden I noticed through the windshield a long white cloud standing out against the grey, murky background, and as anyone would who knows about weather and terrain I said, "There's your land, boys!" and we made the cape pretty soon after that.

I was telling this story to the Mayor of Auckland, New Zealand at a reception a couple of nights later and he stopped me in the middle and said, "Did you say long white cloud, Mr. Lutie?" and I said, "Yes, Sir, why?" He said, "That is the formal pronunciation of the Maori name for New Zealand, Aotearoa."

In other words, the Maori paddling canoes down from the North from whence they originated undoubtedly saw the same weather that we saw coming in our flying machine, California Clipper and a British Short flying boat in Auckland Harbor, New Zealand.



Lutie was invited by the Lieutenant Governor of the Belgian Congo to dinner the same day his Clipper arrived there, November 17, 1941.



Airlines Division Manager Lutie, wearing a white suit and a white pill box, confers with Belgian military and government officials in Leopoldville.



AMERICA'S NEW LIFELINE TO AFRICA



Lutie described in his memoirs a crucial contribution made by Pan American personnel at a pertinent time in World War II.

Pan American Airways-Africa Limited, was being organized to build up the airway from West Africa to the Nile at Khartoum and down to Cairo, where the British forces were preparing in July 1942, to repel a major advance by Rommel's Afrika Korps. The British Eighth Army, commanded by Montgomery, found itself almost completely cut off from their bases. Seven planes loaded with 13 tons of tank shell fuel were rushed to the front by P-44-Africa pilots to bring the desperate British artillery back into the game. The British victory in the Battle of El Alamein was a major turning point in the war. Thus the airlift we built and our pilots played their part in the turning of "the hinge of fate," — as it was later described by Winston Churchill.

Both images on this page are from a Pan American poster illustrating the contribution to the war effort.

A Boeing B-24 flying boat is overhauled while Pan American Airways-Africa and British Royal Air Force mechanics work its powerful wings.



Aviation's Quiet Pioneer

8.5" x 11"

100 pages - full color

Easy to read 12 point type

Available in soft cover at [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) @ \$25.00 plus shipping

