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Pacific Crossing

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His way of life into the industrial world of the Philippines, and on this, the only firm foundation, to build the economic security of our people.

FRANCISCO C. DELGADO

Pacific Crossing

God in his infinite wisdom has given life to man for a purpose and man's success in life lies in fulfilling his mission in the divine scheme of things. The measure of his accomplishment contributes to progress; if he were to go through life impelled simply by self-preservation, without thought of serving God, country and people, his life would be utterly shallow and meaningless.

As a matter of fact each man has the solemn obligation of contributing to national efforts at progress and success. A nation earns international respect and admiration not by just keeping in step with the rest but by striving for the lead.

These considerations played a vital role in the trans-Pacific crossing of a light plane, an accomplishment in which I had a modest share with a fellow Filipino.

I am a Filipino, and proud to be one. I love my country and its people. While my profession as industrialist and publisher has enabled me, in all modesty, to participate in the economic development of our country, I have nurtured for a long time a desire to do something that would redound to the credit of the Philippine Air Force, to which I belong as an active reserve officer pilot.

Realization of my dream began to take form about the middle of 1959 when my company arranged for the purchase of a twin-engined Beechcraft Bonanza aircraft to replace an older aircraft which had been in use for years in connection with the firm's development of its agricultural industries in Mindanao.

The new airplane, called an H-50 model Twin Beech Bonanza, is a more modern version of the old one in use. It has super-charged fuel-injection engines, giving it greater speed. This type seemed ideal for the project I had in mind — a trans-Pacific flight from San Francisco to Manila via Honolulu, Wake and Guam. It was proposed that two men, a pilot (myself) and a navigator, man it for the long flight home in early December.

On the surface, the problems involved in the flight appeared simple. Yet it took six months to complete preparations. This is because error at any stage of the project would have given cause for criticism. More, such error could have resulted in failure of the mission. How-

ever, all factors involved in the unprecedented flight were appraised with due care and deliberation, and soon all was in readiness for the project.

My navigator and companion in the flight was Capt. Ricardo Tomacruz, formerly a Philippine Air Force and Philippine Air Lines pilot and navigator, now a top executive of Menzi & Co., Inc., and its affiliated industries. He and I left Manila by Pan-American airliner on November 23, 1959, for the United States.

En route we studied the airports at Guam, Wake, Honolulu and San Francisco, at the same time double-checking on previous arrangements for the supply of fuel and oil at each place which we would cover on our flight. Satisfied that preparations at each airport were adequate, we proceeded to Wichita, Kansas, on November 28, 1959, where the new airplane awaited us.

At Wichita we underwent proper training for the new aircraft under men of the Beech Aircraft Corporation, manufacturers of the new plane. On December 2, 1959, having completed training, we took delivery of the plane, then fully equipped with all instruments and with extra fuel tanks installed in its cabin.

The following day we set out — myself at the controls and Capt. Tomacruz as navigator — on the first leg of our long flight home to the Philippines. Our first destination was San Francisco, 1,750 miles from Wichita. As we began our flight, Capt. Tomacruz and I were full of hope, enthusiasm and determination. We were on our way home and, what is more, we were engaged in actual shake-down flight preparatory to the long Pacific hop.

However, four hours out of Wichita we ran into serious engine trouble and were forced down at Albuquerque, New Mexico. Temporary repairs were made on the plane, after which we flew it back to Wichita where it underwent a complete check. A new set of engines was installed in the plane and it was subjected to further shakedown tests.

Once the test flights were completed, we set out again from Wichita on December 22, 1959. En route to San Francisco we decided to spend the night at Roswell, New Mexico, taking off the following day for the Pacific Coast. Both short hops were uneventful, with the plane performing according to expectations.

At San Francisco we were grounded until Christmas Day by adverse weather conditions both in San Francisco and over the stretch of water from there to Honolulu. On Christmas eve the weather improved somewhat and Capt. Tomacruz and I made preparations for the long hop to Honolulu the following day.

Christmas Day at San Francisco broke bright and clear. It was a crisp morning with unclouded skies. By 9:00 a.m. all was set. Capt. Tomacruz and I boarded our plane, started our two engines,

and cleared ourselves for take-off. Then we shook hands, said a prayer, gunned the engines and began our take-off slowly. We were fully aware that the plane was 1,800 pounds overweight on account of the extra fuel we had on board, and the plane's center of gravity was far behind allowable limits.

But all went well. Soon we were over the coastline, where we gave San Francisco a last glance before setting our course westward. Our calls at Honolulu, Wake and Guam and our successful return to Manila have been fully reported elsewhere.

Thanks to Capt. Tomacruz's accurate navigation we kept very close to our itinerary and enjoyed pleasant flights although at times weather conditions were not particularly favorable. We also confess to spells of loneliness.

At the same time, both Capt. Tomacruz and I felt that the good Lord protected us, and was with us throughout the trip. After 43 hours' flying we touched ground at Manila, tired but happy. We embraced each other, shook hands, and said a prayer of thanks.

The trans-Pacific flight now behind us, Capt. Tomacruz and I were happy that it had fallen to our lot to make this humble contribution to our country and to the Philippine Air Force, to which full credit is due. By our flight from the United States we set records as the first P.A.F. pilots to fly the Pacific in a twin Beech Bonanza; it was the first flight on which the P.A.F. flag was flown across the Pacific; we made excellent time and actually cut down previous established records by a good three hours; and, what is more, Philippine aviation was made known worldwide.

Only a few events in a man's life are treasured deeply in his heart and arouse special sentiments of sincere and fervent gratitude to our Lord. Our Pacific flight is such an event in my life. I am grateful to Him, as I am to the many people who helped make the flight possible.

COL. HANS MENZI

Uniqueness and Category

St. Augustine writes somewhere that a great heresy or error is basically little else than the exaggeration of a great truth. Thus Pelagianism was the exaggeration of the grand truth that human nature is, among all the levels of visible beings, the most perfect and contained within itself, naturally speaking, the source of its own salvation and perfection. Positivism would be little else than the exaggerated explanation of present-day man's beliefs, attitudes and feelings by his past historical traditions and social environment. Marx-