Subject: WTB: Pan Am with Pan American marking on the back
Posted by handworn on Wed, 11 Feb 2026 14:22:18 GMT
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Hi! I collect World War II, and though I have an Army Air Corps 1942 Bulova A-11 already, I'm interested in acquiring a wartime Pan Am that has the PAN AMERICAN marking on the back. I've been looking online for quite some time but haven't had any luck. Many thanks for any help anyone could provide!

Subject: Re: WTB: Pan Am with Pan American marking on the back
Posted by JackW on Thu, 12 Feb 2026 04:50:33 GMT
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Welcome to the forum!

I do like the Bulova A-11 with the 10AK CSH movements. The really nifty ones are the Bulova A-11 in the silver alloy cases. I have two of those and that is a rich selection of them. The only thing better than a Bulova A-11 is one of the Hamilton 987s (or 2987) that has a hacking seconds that was used by the Navy or Marine Corps, built to A-11 specs but with added Navy/USMC requirements. Pricey compared to a Gruen. I collect all of the WWII era US military issue watches. But this is off topic.

handworn wrote on Wed, 11 February 2026 07:22a wartime Pan Am that has the PAN AMERICAN marking on the back
This is a can of worms here... I'm of the opinion that other than certain marked PA watches around the 68k case serial range that these are all otherwise after the war ended, and through 1946. Is this still war era for you?

I got one on eBay not that long ago that has a case serial in the 116k, so these are out in the wild. Patience will help. Unless you are after one of the 14K marked PA watches? That you might be in for a wait. Not seen one for sale in months and with the cost of gold.... sheesh! Also keep an eye on Jones and Horan. I've seen PAs in some of the grouped lots.

If I see one I'll reach out. Maybe MonKee will chime in too and offer one of his for sale. He's the only other regular here that has more WWII era Gruen then I do.

Subject: Re: WTB: Pan Am with Pan American marking on the back
Posted by handworn on Fri, 20 Feb 2026 18:29:48 GMT
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Hi Jack, and thanks for your reply.

I'm somewhat surprised that the early Pan Ams were not all marked that way. But I would assume that the ones that are so marked were sold to Pan Am personnel, and that connection to the aviators of that era is what I'm after. It doesn't have to be during the war (though of course

that would be a plus). Other things being equal, I would prefer one of the ones with a 14K case, but it's not necessary.

Many thanks!

Matt

Subject: Re: WTB: Pan Am with Pan American marking on the back
Posted by JackW on Fri, 20 Feb 2026 20:37:17 GMT
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handworn wrote on Fri, 20 February 2026 11:29I would assume that the ones that are so marked were sold to Pan Am personnel
Hi Matt,

Glad you came back to this thread.

In the 15+ years that I have been collecting Gruen, there has never been anything past speculation that the marked ones were sold exclusively to Pan Am staff or used by the pilots. What little is known suggests that anyone could buy them. Could be that if you bought the watch from the Pan Am gift shop, it came so marked. Anything is possible. But absence of evidence and all that....

A few years ago a 24-hour dialed watch sold via eBay that had a known Pan Am B314 pilots name on it. It was personally engraved and was marked as being given from Gruen to the pilot. It was not marked in the common way for Pan American.

Subject: Re: WTB: Pan Am with Pan American marking on the back
Posted by handworn on Tue, 24 Feb 2026 00:44:34 GMT
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Wow, how much did that one sell for? A Boeing 314 pilot's watch would be particularly of collector interest, I would think, so I would imagine it went for a good sum.

I would assume that the early ones you mention-- the wartime ones in the 86,000 serial number range-- would by definition have been sold to Pan Am personnel, as the wartime ads said that they were only for sale to them.

By the way, those ads show a Pan Am watch with a darker inner ring, as opposed to the lighter inner ring seen on many of the ones on eBay and for sale on the Net. Is that a solid clue?
 (Any other tips for dating them?)

Thanks again for all your help.

Matt

Subject: Re: WTB: Pan Am with Pan American marking on the back
Posted by JackW on Tue, 24 Feb 2026 18:45:05 GMT
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Hello again Matt!

handworn wrote on Mon, 23 February 2026 17:44 would by definition have been sold to Pan Am personnel, as the wartime ads said that they were only for sale to them.

Well... there is a propensity for "truth-in-advertising" but here I think there is not much to this claim. I doubt that the 1/2 dozen watches I have in the 51k to 96k serial range with 24-hour dials were owned by Pan Am staff. Of the couple marked with names and dates, these were regular service members as far as I can tell. Like this one. That guy after the war sold insurance.

The watch that is in the 1943 advertisement? In 15 years of looking I've never seen that style case and dial combination. There is the gold fill Star case from 1946 that some collectors think is the design in the '43 ad, but I disagree with this.

I am not in the mood at present to buy another Pan Am. If there is one that catches your eye, feel free to PM and I'll give you an opinion on it.

Also, check out Bruce Shawkey's article in the NAWCC.
https://docs.nawcc.org/Bulletins/2010/articles/2013/401/401_ 69_76.pdf
I can email it to you if you would like.

Subject: Re: WTB: Pan Am with Pan American marking on the back
Posted by handworn on Wed, 25 Feb 2026 21:53:27 GMT
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That's a nice watch in the first link. Please excuse my ignorance, but is that actually a Pan Am? The ones I've seen all say Precision at the bottom center of the dial.

I greatly appreciate your offer of feedback. I'll keep that in mind while looking. If you (or anyone reading this) happen across one of the sort I'm looking for (even the 14K kind) and would let me know, I'd appreciate it.

I am not able to read that article, not being a NAWCC member. If you could email it to me that would be great. I'll PM you my email address. Thanks!

Subject: Re: WTB: Pan Am with Pan American marking on the back
Posted by JackW on Thu, 26 Feb 2026 03:04:28 GMT

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handworn wrote on Wed, 25 February 2026 14:53but is that actually a Pan Am? The ones I've seen all say Precision at the bottom center of the dial.
Is it a Pan Am? Huh. Good question. My opinion.... no. My take is that the 24-hour dials were not exclusive to the Pan American line. But this is open to debate, if you wish. If you don't think Gruen will bend/stretch the truth in their advertising, then all you need look at is when Gruen started as a business and reflect on the date they declared as their 50th Anniversary. Math doesn't add up. That though is part of the fun with collecting Gruen.

Subject: Re: WTB: Pan Am with Pan American marking on the back
Posted by afire on Thu, 26 Feb 2026 18:24:31 GMT
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JackW wrote on Wed, 25 February 2026 21:04If you don't think Gruen will bend/stretch the truth in their advertising, then all you need look at is...
...about half of Gruen's ads. From pocket watches being illustrated as paper thin in the early days, to absurdly curved Curvexes towards the end.

Subject: Re: WTB: Pan Am with Pan American marking on the back
Posted by JackW on Thu, 26 Feb 2026 20:52:10 GMT
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afire wrote on Thu, 26 February 2026 11:24JackW wrote on Wed, 25 February 2026 21:04If you don't think Gruen will bend/stretch the truth in their advertising, then all you need look at is...
...about half of Gruen's ads. From pocket watches being illustrated as paper thin in the early days, to absurdly curved Curvexes towards the end.

...ain't that the truth! lol!
