
AIR AMERICA: UPHOLDING THE AIRMEN'S BOND

April 18, 2009

The University of Texas at Dallas
Conference Center Auditorium

A Symposium to Acknowledge and Commemorate
Air America Rescue Efforts during the Vietnam War

*Presented by the Central Intelligence Agency
and
The University of Texas at Dallas*



The University of Texas at Dallas
800 West Campbell Road
Richardson, TX 75080-3021

AIR AMERICA: UPHOLDING THE AIRMEN'S BOND

During the Vietnam War, Air America (AAM), a secretly owned air proprietary of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, was the agency's indispensable instrument for clandestine missions. While some of its work may never be publicly acknowledged, much of AAM's critical role in wartime rescue missions can now be told. This symposium presented by the CIA and UT Dallas provides a forum for the release of thousands of pages of heretofore unavailable documents on AAM's relationship with the CIA, and brings together AAM veterans with some of the men they rescued, and the CIA "customers" who often placed their lives and missions in the hands of this once-secret air proprietary.

AAM crews were not required to monitor military emergency radio calls, fly to the location of military personnel in distress, or place their lives at risk of enemy ground-fire and possible capture. They received no extra compensation for rescue work and sometimes lost wages for their efforts. However, in their flying community it was enough to know that a downed aviator was in trouble and that airmen should always come to the aid of other airmen. It was simply the Airmen's Bond.

On the heels of this symposium, the UT Dallas McDermott Library will receive copies of approximately 10,000 recently declassified CIA documents on Air America, which will become part of the University's History of Aviation Collection.

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PROGRAM

12:30 p.m. Arrival, check-in, and opportunity to view CIA and UT Dallas exhibits

1 p.m. Opening Remarks
Dr. Larry Sall, UT Dallas
Dean of Libraries

Welcoming Remarks
Dr. David Daniel, UT Dallas
President

The Importance of Openness
Mr. Al Tarasiuk, CIA
Chief Information Officer

Answering Your Country's Call
Honorable Silvestre Reyes
Chairman, U.S. House
Permanent Select Committee
on Intelligence (HPSCI)

An Overview of CIA's Association
with Air America
Mr. Jim Glerum
Senior Operations Officer,
CIA, Retired

2 p.m. Laos Rescues: Lima Site 85
and Other Military Rescues
Dr. Tim Castle, Chair
Center for the Study
of Intelligence, CIA

Panelists
Mr. John Daniel, USAF
Retired Site 85 survivor,
rescued by Air America

Mr. Loy "Rusty" Irons,
Air America Flight Mechanic,
Site 85 rescue helicopter

Mr. John Woody Spence,
CIA Retired, Paramilitary
officer at Site 85, rescued
by Air America

PROGRAM (CONT.)

Panelists	Admiral Donald Boecker, USN, Retired A6 pilot, downed July 1965, rescued by Air America
	Mr. Sam Jordan, Air America Participated in rescue of Admiral Boecker
3:15 p.m.	Break opportunity to view CIA and UT Dallas exhibits
3:45 p.m.	The Final Days: 1975 Rescue Efforts during the Fall of South Vietnam
	Dr. Joe Guilmartin, Chair Professor, Ohio State University, former USAF "Jolly Green" combat rescue pilot
Panelists	Mr. Ed Adams, Air America, Conducted rescue operations in Laos and South Vietnam
	Mr. Marius Burke, Air America, Conducted rescue operations in Laos and South Vietnam
	Mr. Robert Grealy, CIA, Retired Senior Operations Officer in Vietnam
5 p.m.	The Role of Declassified Information in Providing Historical Content
	Mr. Joe Lambert, CIA, Director of Information Management Services
	Appreciation Presentation to CIA and Closing Remarks
	Dr. Larry Sall, UT Dallas, Dean of Libraries
5:15 p.m.	Reception and CIA and UT Dallas exhibits

BIOGRAPHIES

(in order of appearance)

Al Tarasiuk

Chief Information Officer for the Central Intelligence Agency, Tarasiuk's responsibilities span the agency's global information technology infrastructure enterprise. Before becoming CIO, Tarasiuk was the director of the CIA's Information Services Center with responsibility for development, deployment and operational support of the CIA global IT infrastructure. Tarasiuk reports directly to the director of the CIA, and is a member of the CIA corporate board.

The Honorable Silvestre Reyes

A native of Canutillo, Texas, he has represented the state's 16th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1996. He served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War, and later worked for the U.S. Border Patrol. Reyes is chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, which has oversight of the CIA.

Jim Glerum

A retired CIA senior operations officer, Glerum spent 18 years closely involved with CAT/Air America, including seven years undercover as a CAT/Air America executive. Other senior assignments included chief of the CIA's Special Operations Group, chief of the International Activities Division, and director of personnel.

Tim N. Castle, Ph.D.

Castle is a career intelligence officer with wide-ranging Asia experience, including two wartime tours in Southeast Asia. While serving as an enlisted man at Nakhon Phanom Air Base, he participated in 38 combat support missions with the 21st Special Operations Squadron and received the Airman's Medal for heroism in the rescue of a crashed and injured pilot. He currently directs the CIA efforts to develop lessons learned on counterterrorism and military programs and has been a frequent traveler to war zones.

John Daniel, U.S. Air Force (ret)

On March 11, 1968, Daniel was wounded at Site 85. He was hoisted onto a Huey helicopter by Air America mechanic Rusty Irons at 7:35 a.m. At the time Daniel was a member of the U.S. Air Force serving as a "Lockheed employee" at Site 85.

Loy M. "Rusty" Irons

Irons served in U.S. Army Helicopter Aviation for six years as a mechanic and inspector. He worked at Air America for seven years as a flight mechanic. On March 11, 1968, the pilot of his Huey followed a signal to Site 85, where they pulled several men up rescue cables during an enemy attack. He served in the Los Angeles County Fire Department Air Operations for 30 years as a helicopter mechanic. He retired in 2004, and now works as a consultant for the department.

John Woody Spence

A former Montana smoke jumper and one of two CIA paramilitary officers assigned to the Site 85 radar station, Spence and fellow CIA officer Howard Freeman gave eight-digit bombing coordinates to the U.S. Air Force to try to save Site 85 from enemy attack. Woody suffered permanent hearing loss during the persistent shelling. He was rescued around 8:54 a.m. on March 11, 1968. Woody was with the CIA in Vietnam from May 1970 to April 1975.

Rear Admiral Donald Boecker, USN (ret)

Boecker participated in the Cuban blockade and deployed to Southeast Asia as personnel officer in the first A-6 squadron. On July 14, 1965, he was on a combat mission when he had to eject over enemy territory. He was rescued after 18 hours of evading the enemy. His distinguished U.S. Navy career includes three Legion of Merit awards, six Air Medals, two Navy Commendation Medals with Combat V and several Vietnam decorations.

Samuel T. Jordan

Jordan flew for six and a half years with the U.S. Marine Corps as an unrestricted pilot in fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters. He joined Air America in 1961, initially flying helicopters in support of operations for the Royal Laotian military forces, as well as refugee relief missions throughout the country. Search and rescue operations later became part of the effort, and he performed several daring rescues in enemy territory on UH-34Ds, including the rescue of Admiral Boecker and crewman Admiral Eaton. In 1967, he switched to fixed-wing aircraft involving transport of U.S. embassy personnel, photo reconnaissance, medical evacuations to Bangkok and scanning for enemy ground radio signals. He transferred to Saigon where, as directed by the U.S. Embassy, he flew in both Cambodia and South Vietnam. He left Air America after the fall of Saigon in April, 1975. He later served with the Department of Defense in Iran and with the U.S. State Department in Cairo on training assignments. He was later employed by American Airlines as a training officer and check airman until his retirement in 1996.

John F. (Joe) Guilmartin, Jr., Ph.D., Lt. Col. USAF (ret)

Guilmartin is a professor of history at Ohio State University, where he teaches military and naval history. He has taught at the Air Force Academy, Rice University, the Naval War College and the U.S. Military Academy. He has published extensively on the theory and practice of war and on the Vietnam War. During the Vietnam War, he served two Southeast Asia tours as a rescue helicopter pilot assigned to the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service. He logged more than 120 combat missions over Laos and North Vietnam from 1965 to 1966, and flew in the Phnom Penh and Saigon evacuations in 1975. His decorations include the Silver Star with one Oak Leaf Cluster and the Air Medal with five Oak Leaf Clusters.

E.G. Adams

Adams is a former U.S. Air Force pilot and Air America fixed-wing pilot who, during the emergency evacuation of Saigon on April 29, 1975, flew the last fixed-wing aircraft out of Saigon. He estimated the 52-seat plane was jammed with about 152 people. Adams later worked for the Department of State managing a C-123 program in Lima, Peru. He worked as manager of international operations for AMR/American Airlines, as a customer service representative for several companies, and owned a retail business and restaurant. He lives in Dallas.

Marius Burke

Burke flew helicopters and jets for the U.S. Marine Corps from 1958 to 1963. He joined Air America in 1963 and was a chief pilot based in Udorn, Thailand, flying the Bell 47, 204B, 205, UH1H, Hughes 500, H-34, S-58T, CH 47C Chinook and the T-28. While base manager in Danang, he ran the air evacuation when it fell to the North Vietnamese. Subsequently he was sent to Nha Trang under similar circumstances and helped coordinate its evacuation. Burke flew the last civilian aircraft out of Saigon on the evening of April 29, 1975. After returning to the U.S., Burke eventually became involved in emergency medical services air operations and was senior vice president/director of operations for Air Methods Corp., currently the largest EMS company in the world. He has BS and MBA degrees from San Jose State University, and is now retired, living in Florida.

Robert Grealy

A retired CIA Senior Operations Officer, Grealy served as the CIA base chief in Danang and Saigon during the final months of the Vietnam War. Following his tours in South Vietnam, he served in numerous CIA positions. He and his wife, who assisted in the evacuation of dozens of Vietnamese orphans from Danang and Saigon, live in northern Virginia.

Joseph W. Lambert

Lambert is the director of information management services at the CIA, where he is responsible for records management, national security classification management and declassification and release programs. Joining the CIA in 1984, he also served on the support staff of the National Intelligence Council, and as information management officer for both the National Photographic Interpretation Center and the Directorate of Intelligence, where he focused on improving the records associated with the President's Daily Brief. He also served as the director of information management for the National Imagery and Mapping Agency and the National Reconnaissance Office. He is a recipient of the Intelligence Community's National Intelligence Certificate of Distinction.