

AIR AMERICA: DOUGLAS B-26s / ON MARKS

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Last updated on 1 June 2009

The types of missions flown by Air America's B-26s and On Marks:

About 25 Douglas B-26s, all owned by CIA/USAF/Air Asia, were stored at Tainan, Taiwan, at various times from June 58 to about 1965. Some were used for CIA or USAF strike missions. The following aircraft are believed to have been used by Air America pilots on various missions during the sixties. Official Air America papers refer to these aircraft as to the CEECO B-26s that were to be maintained and modified by Air Asia in 1962 (Minutes ExCom-AACL of 25 September 62, in: UTD/CIA/B7F1). The question was still open in October 62 (Minutes ExCom-AACL of 9 October 62, in: UTD/CIA/B7F1). CEECO stands for the "Consolidated Electric Equipment Company" (Summary of revenue contracts, in: UTD/Kaufman/B1F4) and apparently was a front for the CIA's Far East Division. CEECO may also be identical with the USAF's Logistical Support Group, as when the remaining B-26 were to be ferried to the Congo in 1964, the order came from the LSG (Memorandum no. DFO-64-444 of 17 August 1964, in: <http://www.air-america.net/images/SAT/sat-b26a.jpg>). On 11 February 1964, all B-26s in South Vietnam were grounded after a wing had failed on an aircraft in the US (Dorr / Bishop, *Vietnam air war debrief*, p. 30). The best source of information about the B-26s and On Marks used by Air America still is the book *Foreign Invaders* by Hagedorn / Hellström, to which Trest (*Air Commando One*, p. 110) adds that 4 black B-26s were flown from Tainan to Takhli in December 60 for air strikes at Vang Vieng; they were to be flown by Air America pilots during the abortive operation *Mill Pond*. Most of the information given below is based on the excellent book by Hagedorn / Hellström, *Foreign Invaders*, especially, pp. 132-36 and 169-74, to which some details have been added that can be found in certain documents, some of them preserved at the Air America Archives. Already the second edition of this B-26 file had been completely restructured, and I am most grateful to Leif Hellström for his invaluable assistance.

Statistics according to official Air America documents:

- Inventory of 1 February 66, in: UTD/Herd/B2: 0
- Inventories of 31 March 72 > 30 November 72 (in: UTD/CIA/B1F10): 1 A-26A owned > 0

The individual aircraft histories:

Type	registration / serial	c/n (msn)	date acquired	origin
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A) Former Western International Inc. B-26Cs

Douglas B-26C	"844"	?	March 59?	Aircraft formerly used by Western International Inc.
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Service history: possibly used by Air America on Taiwan.

Fate: probably scrapped in 64 or 65.

Douglas B-26C “862” ? March 59? Aircraft formerly used by Western International Inc.

Service history: possibly used by Air America on Taiwan.

Fate: probably scrapped in 64 or 65.

B) B-26Bs used by Air America pilots in training programs at Tainan

The origin of those B-26s seems to go back to the survivors of the campaign that supported the anti-Sukarno rebels out of Menado, Indonesia in the spring of 1958. In his Memoirs (in: UTD/Leary/I B9F16), Connie Seigris notes that on “21 May, all four B-26s [...] departed Menado for Tawi Tawi Philippines. [...] The [...] four B-26s remained over night in Tawi Tawi. The B-26s had to be refueled which took most of the night using hand pumps to pump the fuel from 50 gallon drums on the ground up to the wing tanks. 22 May – We proceeded to Clark, refueled, and departed for Taiwan. [...] We flew our four B-26s to our main maintenance base in Tainan to be kept in storage” (p.44). Some weeks later, Connie Seigris ferried 3 B-26s from Tainan to Kadena, Okinawa: On 31 July 58, a B-26A, whose tail number is missing, on 12 August 58 B-26A “3522” (believed to be 44-35221), and on 23 August 58 B-26 “3524” (believed to be 44-35242) – probably three of those 4 survivors. Apparently it was at Kadena, home of Detachment 2, 1045th Operational Evaluation & Training Group, reporting directly to CIA headquarters (Trest, *Air Commando One*, pp.81-83), that those B-26s received their new fake serials, and so, at least some of the first four B-26s to arrive at Tainan in 1959, that is “8264”, “8765”, “8248”, and “8188” (e-mail dated 25 January 2008, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigris) were survivors from Indonesia that had been given new serials.

In 1959, Air Asia Co Ltd, which already had a large maintenance facility at Tainan, concluded contract no. 59-069 with CEECO covering “Flight Personnel Service” (Memorandum “Contract Administration” of 27 July 62, in: UTD/Fink/B2F16). In his Memoirs (in: UTD/Leary/I B9F16), Connie Seigris mentions that in August 60, Bob Rousselot “casually mentioned CAT had a new contract to keep the B-26’s in good flying condition” (p.46). Already for 16 July 60, Connie Seigris notes: “I gave four B-26’s in Tainan a shake down flight each. Test hopping aircraft in fly away storage at CAT’s maintenance base in Tainan was a part of my duties as a pilot with CAT” (p.46). From his father’s log book, Steve Seigris identifies these 4 B-26s as “6248”, “8188”, “8765”, and another one, whose tail number is hard to read, but was probably “8264” (e-mail dated 24 November 2007, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigris). For the 3/4/ and 9 August 1960 period, Connie Seigris notes in his Memoirs (in: UTD/Leary/I B9F16): “I gave the same four B-26’s I had tested in July another shake down flight plus another four just brought out of storage” (p.46). From his father’s log book, Steve Seigris identifies the 8 B-26s flown in the 3 to 9 August 60 period as “6248”, “8188”, “8765”, and “8264” of the first group, plus “6797”, “7711”, “8434”, and “7677” (e-mail dated 24 November 2007, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigris). Only for some of these B-26s the real identities are known from Memorandum no. DFO-64-444 of 17 August 1964, in: <http://www.air-america.net/images/SAT/sat-b26a.jpg>. The purpose of these B-26s seems to have been dual, that is to serve as bombers in areas of trouble in South East Asia (Laos) and elsewhere (Cuba, Africa) and to be used for bombing practice. Four of these B-26s were delivered to Takhli, Thailand, in December 60 to be used in operation *Mill Pond* in April 61, and later returned, 4 were to be used in the *Bay of Pigs*, but probably remained at Tainan, and at the end, probably almost all of them ended up in Africa.

As was noted above, official Air America documents refer to these B-26s as “CEECO” aircraft, but this name seems not to have been used among the pilots. Joe Hazen, one of those

B-26 pilots says: “I don’t recall any special names given to the B-26. Probably less said was better. The flying was done to ‘test’ the armament of the aircraft. We flew to a Chinese Air Force base [...], and had the guns armed and the bombs, which were 100# WSF (water/sand filled) loaded. We then fired the guns and dropped (skip bomb) the bombs at a range on the base, land, de-arm, and go back to Tainan.” (E-mail dated 5 July 2004, kindly sent to the author by Joe Hazen). According to Morrie Kenstler, there was a total of 7 aircraft, excluding a Chinese aircraft with dual controls (e-mail dated 29 June 2004 kindly sent to the author by Morrie Kenstler). CEECO B-26s were still used in 1964 on training missions for bombing, napalm and low-level strafing practice near Tainan, where they were based (on the video tape made by Ed Eckholdt at 0.19.40, 0.34.58, 1.19.04 minutes).

Douglas B-26C “8264” 28500 October 59 44-35221

Previous history: had been declared obsolete at Clark AFB on 11 September 57, modified from RB-26C to B-26B, used in operation *Haik* in 1958, and later delivered to Tainan (e-mail dated 18 Feb. 2007, kindly sent to the author by Leif Hellström); believed to have been the B-26A “3522” that Connie Seigris ferried to Tainan-Kadena on 12 August 58 (e-mail dated 25 January 2008, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigris); identity “44-35221” given in Memorandum no. DFO-64-444 of 17 August 1964, in: <http://www.air-america.net/images/SAT/sat-b26a.jpg>

Service history: test flown by Connie Seigris at Tainan on 13 October 59 and 3 November 59 (e-mail dated 25 January 2008, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigris); flown by Connie Seigris at Tainan on 16 July 60 and again in the 3-9 August 60 period (Connie Seigris, *Memoirs*, p.46, in: UTD/Leary/I B9F16; e-mail dated 24 November 2007, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigris); flown by Tom Jenny out of Tainan in training programs on 3, 7, 12, and 17 January 61, on 20 March 61 (log book of Tom Jenny, who kindly sent photocopies of those pages to the author on 22 October 2004); used in training programs at Tainan in November 61; flown by Joe Hazen as “264” on 18 and 21 November 61 (e-mail dated 7 June 2004, kindly sent to the author by Joe Hazen); black (e-mail dated 12 July 2004, kindly sent to the author by Joe Hazen); flown by Ed Eckholdt out of Tainan on 18 November 61 (2 flights, one 1.00 hour flight training with Bill Beale, one 1.15 hour airwork like single-engine flying), 28 November 61 (0.50 hour solo in a close formation of 4 aircraft to familiarize with the Tsin-Chu gunnery range, and on 29 November 61 (2.10 hours with James A. Rasmussen from Tainan to the Tsin-Chu gunnery range, practicing skip bombing, glide bombing, and strafing with live ammunition (info extracted by Ed Eckholdt from his log book and sent on 11 March 1992 to Leif Hellström, who kindly e-mailed it to the author on 11 July 2004).

Fate: ferried from Tainan to Leopoldville in August 64 (Memorandum no.DFO-64-444 of 17 August 1964, in: <http://www.air-america.net/images/SAT/sat-b26a.jpg>).

Douglas B-26B “8765” (?) October 59 ?

Identity: believed to be c/n 27547 (ex 44-34268), 27625 (ex 44-34346), 27655 (ex 44-34376), 27899 (ex 44-34620), 27922 (ex 44-34643), 27961 (ex 44-34682), 27969 (ex 44-34690), or 29247 (ex 44-35968)

Service history: test flown by Connie Seigris at Tainan on 17 October 59 (e-mail dated 25 January 2008, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigris); flown by Connie Seigris at Tainan on 16 July 60 and again in the 3-9 August 60 period (Connie Seigris, *Memoirs*, p.46, in: UTD/Leary/I B9F16; e-mail dated 24 November 2007, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigris); flown by Tom Jenny out of Tainan in training and test programs on 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, and 16 January 61 (log book

of Tom Jenny, who kindly sent photocopies of those pages to the author on 22 October 2004); used in training programs at Tainan in November 61; flown by Joe Hazen as “765” on 21 November 61 (e-mail dated 7 June 2004, kindly sent to the author by Joe Hazen); black (e-mail dated 12 July 2004, kindly sent to the author by Joe Hazen); flown by Ed Eckholdt out of Tainan on 21 November 61 (Log book of Ed Eckholdt in: UTD/Leary/ I B6F12), believed to be identical with the B-26 “8769” that was flown by Ed Eckholdt in a 4 ship formation from Tainan to the Tsin- Chu gunnery range for practicing on 28 November 61 (info extracted by Ed Eckholdt from his log book and sent on 11 March 1992 to Leif Hellström, who kindly e-mailed it to the author on 11 July 2004; Log book of Ed Eckholdt, in: UTD/Leary/I B6F12)

Fate: crashed near Tainan on 18 February 62 during a training flight, killing James A. Rasmussen, when he flew into a mountain; the official reason for the crash, as given in the list “Aircraft accidents 1962”, in: UTD/CIA/B49F2, was “flight below minimum safe altitudes resulting in failure to clear obstructing terrain” (List “Operational casualties in SEA”, in: UTD/CIA/B29F1; List “Aircraft destroyed or lost”, in: UTD/CIA/B49F2).

Douglas B-26B “6248” 28904 November 59 44-35625

Previous history: was declared obsolete at Clark AFB on 5 September 57, modified from WB-26C to B-26B, and delivered to Tainan (e-mail dated 18 Feb. 2007, kindly sent to the author by Leif Hellström); identity “44-35625” given in Memorandum no. DFO-64-444 of 17 August 1964, in: <http://www.air-america.net/images/SAT/sat-b26a.jpg>.

Service history: test flown by Connie Seigris at Tainan on 3 November 59 (e-mail dated 25 January 2008, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigris); flown by Connie Seigris at Tainan on 16 July 60 and again in the 3-9 August 60 period (Connie Seigris, *Memoirs*, p.46, in: UTD/Leary/I B9F16; e-mail dated 24 November 2007, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigris); flown by Tom Jenny out of Tainan in training programs on 4 January 61 (log book of Tom Jenny, who kindly sent photocopies of those pages to the author on 22 October 2004); also flown by Morrie Kenstler (e-mail dated 29 June 2004 kindly sent to the author by Morrie Kenstler); test flown for “CEECCO” by Ed Eckholdt out of Tainan on 28 March 63 (Log book of Ed Eckholdt, in: UTD/Leary/I B6F12).

Fate: ferried from Tainan to Leopoldville in August 64, probably as 44-35625 (Memorandum no.DFO-64-444 of 17 August 1964, in: <http://www.air-america.net/images/SAT/sat-b26a.jpg>). This aircraft belly landed in Africa in 1965 (photo kindly sent to the author by Leif Hellström in June 2004).

Douglas B-26B “8188” (?) November 59 ?

Identity: believed to be c/n 27547 (ex 44-34268, ex Operation *Haik*), 27625 (ex 44-34346, ex Operation *Haik* reserve aircraft), 27655 (ex 44-34376), 27899 (ex 44-34620), 27922 (ex 44-34643), 27961 (ex 44-34682), 27969 (ex 44-34690, ex Operation *Haik*), or 29247 (ex 44-35968)

Service history: ferried Kadena-Tainan by Connie Seigris on 12 November 59 (e-mail dated 25 January 2008, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigris); flown by Connie Seigris at Tainan on 16 July 60 and again in the 3-9 August 60 period (Connie Seigris, *Memoirs*, p.46, in: UTD/Leary/I B9F16; e-mail dated 24 November 2007, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigris)

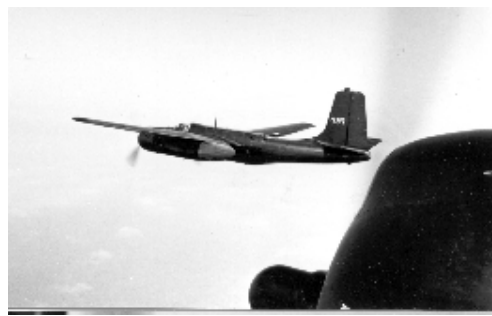
Fate: possibly ferried to Africa for training in 1962 (?)

Douglas B-26B “7677” (?) January 60 ?

Identity: believed to be c/n 27547 (ex 44-34268), 27625 (ex 44-34346), 27655 (ex 44-34376), 27899 (ex 44-34620), 27922 (ex 44-34643), 27961 (ex 44-34682), 27969 (ex 44-34690), or 29247 (ex 44-35968)

Service history: ferried Kadena-Tainan by Connie Seigrist on 9 January 60 and test flown by Connie Seigrist at Tainan on 25 April 60 (e-mail dated 25 January 2008, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigrist); flown by Connie Seigrist in the 3 to 9 August 60 period, after it had been brought out of storage (Connie Seigrist, *Memoirs*, p.46, in: UTD/Leary/I B9F16; e-mail dated 24 November 2007, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigrist); flown by Tom Jenny out of Tainan in training and test programs on 18 and 19 March 61 (log book of Tom Jenny, who kindly sent photocopies of those pages to the author on 22 October 2004)

Fate: possibly ferried to Africa for training in 1962 (?)



Two pictures of B-26B “797” over Taiwan in November 1961
(Photos by Ed Eckholdt, kindly submitted by Leif Hellström)

Douglas B-26C “6797” 28521 August 60 ex 44-35242

Previous history: had been declared obsolete at Clark AFB on 10 October 57, modified from WB-26C to B-26B, used 1958 in operation *Haik*, and later delivered to Tainan (e-mail dated 18 Feb. 2007, kindly sent to the author by Leif Hellström); believed to have been the B-26 “3524” that Connie Seigrist ferried to Tainan-Kadena on 23 August 58 (e-mail dated 25 January 2008, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigrist); painted as “797” (photos of “797” can be seen on the video tape made by Ed Eckholdt at 0.19.40, 0.34.58, 1.19.04 minutes, and in: Hagedorn / Hellström, *Foreign Invaders*, p. 172); identity of “6797” is given as “44-35242” in Memorandum no. DFO-64-444 of 17 August 1964, in: <http://www.air-america.net/images/SAT/sat-b26a.jpg>

Service history: flown by Connie Seigrist in the 3 to 9 August 60 period, after it had been brought out of storage (Connie Seigrist, *Memoirs*, p.46, in: UTD/Leary/I B9F16; e-mail dated 24 November 2007, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigrist); flown by Tom Jenny out of Tainan in test programs on 4 January 61 and on 20 March 61 (log book of Tom Jenny, who kindly sent photocopies of those pages to the author on 22 October 2004); during that period the aircraft was officially registered to Los Hermanos Sebastian y Gómez SA, Panama, as HP-318 in 1961, and then again reregistered as HP-322 in 1961; probably registered on paper only and not taken up; had probably been intended to be used in the *Bay of Pigs* operation in April 61 and was probably to be ferried there by Air America pilots; Air Asia had a contract with Los Hermanos Sebastian y Gómez SA, whose date of termination was indefinite in July 64 (Aircraft status as of 7 July 64, in: UTD/Kirkpatrick/B1F1); again used as

“797” in training programs at Tainan in November 61; flown by Joe Hazen as “797” on 28 and 29 November 61 as well as on 22, 24, 25, and 27 February 64 (e-mails dated 7 June 2004 and 29 June 2008, kindly sent to the author by Joe Hazen); black (e-mail dated 12 July 2004, kindly sent to the author by Joe Hazen); on 29 November 61, Ed Eckholdt flew the aircraft (quoted here as “8797” instead of “6797”) from Tsin-Chu gunnery range to Tainan, giving James A. Rasmussen instruction and familiarization (info extracted by Ed Eckholdt from his log book and sent on 11 March 1992 to Leif Hellström, who kindly e-mailed it to the author on 11 July 2004; log book of Ed Eckholdt, at: UTD/Leary/I B6F12); Application of Registration for N5002X on 4 June 1962 for Gulf Air, Miami, but on 12 July 62, that registration was given to another B-26B, that is to B-26B 44-34415 (e-mail dated 2 February 2004, kindly sent to the author by Leif Hellström); so “797” once more remained at Tainan; test flown for “CEECO” by Ed Eckholdt out of Tainan on 28 March 63 (Log book of Ed Eckholdt, in: UTD/Leary/I B6F12; also flown by Morrie Kenstler (e-mail dated 29 June 2004 kindly sent to the author by Morrie Kenstler); CEECO B-26s were still used on training missions for bombing, napalm and low-level strafing practice near Tainan, where they were based, in 1964; flown by Tom Jenny out of Tainan in training programs on 24 and 25 February 64 (log book of Tom Jenny, who kindly sent photocopies of those pages to the author on 22 October 2004).

Fate: ferried from Tainan to Leopoldville in August 64 (Memorandum no.DFO-64-444 of 17 August 1964, in: <http://www.air-america.net/images/SAT/sat-b26a.jpg>), probably as “44-35242”.

Douglas B-26B “7711” (?) August 60 ?

Identity: believed to be c/n 27547 (ex 44-34268), 27625 (ex 44-34346), 27655 (ex 44-34376), 27899 (ex 44-34620), 27922 (ex 44-34643), 27961 (ex 44-34682), 27969 (ex 44-34690), or 29247 (ex 44-35968)

Service history: flown by Connie Seigrist in the 3 to 9 August 60 period, after it had been brought out of storage (Connie Seigrist, *Memoirs*, p.46, in: UTD/Leary/I B9F16; e-mail dated 24 November 2007, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigrist);

Fate: possibly ferried to Africa for training in 1962 (?)

Douglas B-26B “8434” ? August 60 ?

Identity: believed to be c/n 27547 (ex 44-34268), 27625 (ex 44-34346), 27655 (ex 44-34376), 27899 (ex 44-34620), 27922 (ex 44-34643), 27961 (ex 44-34682), 27969 (ex 44-34690), or 29247 (ex 44-35968)

Service history: flown by Connie Seigrist in the 3 to 9 August 60 period, after it had been brought out of storage (Connie Seigrist, *Memoirs*, p.46, in: UTD/Leary/I B9F16; e-mail dated 24 November 2007, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigrist); one of the four all black CIA B-26s flown from Tainan to Takhli (T-05) in December 60 and destined for Air America crews; flown by Tom Jenny out of Takhli in test programs on 3 April 61 (log book of Tom Jenny, who kindly sent photocopies of those pages to the author on 22 October 2004); used in training programs at Tainan in November 61; flown by Joe Hazen as “434” on 22, 28, and 29 November 61 (e-mail dated 7 June 2004, kindly sent to the author by Joe Hazen); black (e-mail dated 12 July 2004, kindly sent to the author by Joe Hazen); flown by Ed Eckholdt on 18 November 61 (1.30 hours solo flight from Tainan to Tainan doing airwork) and on 21 November 61 (2 solo flights from Tainan to Tainan, one 1.30 hours and one 1.15 hours doing airwork like stalls etc.) (info extracted by Ed Eckholdt from his log book and sent on

11 March 1992 to Leif Hellström, who kindly e-mailed it to the author on 11 July 2004).

Fate: possibly ferried to Africa for training in 1962 (?)

There is no link between the serials of the B-26s used on Taiwan for training and their former USAF serials or manufacturer's serial numbers.

C) B-26s flown by Air America pilots in project *Mill Pond* and *Black Watch*



A black CIA B-26B of project *Mill Pond*, probably in April 1961
(with kind permission from Gen. H.C. Aderholt)

Reportedly, already in December 1960, the CIA secretly flew four black B-26s, probably left over from Operation *Haik*, from CEECO stocks at Tainan to Takhli und placed them under Major Aderholt's command (Conboy / Morrison, *Shadow war*, p. 45). But probably, only 2 B-26s were ferried to Takhli at that time. On 7 January 61, 2 more B-26s were ordered to Takhli, but had not yet arrived by early March 61 (Conboy / Morrison, *Shadow war*, pp. 48 + 52). According to Thomas G. Jenny, "on March 21 [1961], Jenny, Beale, Sutphin, and Barnes ferried heavily armed B-26s to Takhli" (Interview with Thomas G. Jenny, conducted by Prof. William Leary at Atlanta, GA on 24 May 1988, written resume, at: UTD/Leary/I B13F7) – probably the remaining 2 black B-26s. These aircraft were unmarked and were to be used as lead aircraft during operation *Mill Pond* that was to take place on 17 April 61. After that operation had been cancelled, the aircraft remained at Takhli until August 61 (Letter dated 25 Sept. 1990, written by R. L. Allaire to William M. Leary, preserved at: UTD/Leary/I B5F3). The identities of these B-26s are unknown – except for B-26B "8434", which was flown by Tom Jenny out of Takhli in test programs on 3 April 61 (log book of Tom Jenny, who kindly

sent photocopies of those pages to the author on 22 October 2004). While most of the other B-26s mentioned above are known to have been used out of Tainan at some time between December 60 and August 61, two of them do not appear during that period in any log book known to the author: “7711” and “8188”. So they were possibly at Takhli during that period among the B-26s that were to be used in operation *Mill Pond*. The identity of the fourth black B-26 cannot be guessed.



Black Watch RB-26C “236” taken at Takhli in 1961 by B.G. H. Aderholt
(photo no. 1-WL1-28-23-PB368, at UTD/Leary/I B28F23)

Douglas RB-26C “236” 28864 (?) Oct. 61 ex USAF 44-35585 (?)

Service history: modified for photo reconnaissance missions; in service with the USAF out of Takhli in 61 (see photo no. 1-WL1-28-23-PB368, at UTD/Leary/I B28F23); flown by Air America in the reconnaissance operation *Black Watch* in Laos, October-December 61; these flights were flown out of Takhli, Thailand, where the aircraft were based, by Al White and Ed Eckholdt (on the video tape made by Ed Eckholdt at 1.18.33 and 1.19.53 minutes); on 22 October 61, RB-26C “236” was flown by Ed Eckholdt and Al White on a 6.40 hours reconnaissance mission out of Takhli into Laos, including the Tchepone and Ho Chi Minh Trail area; on 24 October 61, a similar flight was aborted at Udorn due to problems with the boost pump; on 28 October 61, Ed Eckholdt and Al White flew RB-26C “236” out of Takhli into Laos on a reconnaissance mission to take photos of Tchepone airport; on 29 October 61, Ed Eckholdt and Al White flew “236” to Udorn and then back to Takhli; on 1 November 61, Ed Eckholdt and Al White flew RB-26C “236” out of Takhli into Laos on a 5.30 hours reconnaissance mission to the Tchepone area, which was quite hot that time, but the crew managed to fly back to Takhli; on 2 November 1961, “236” flown by Ed Eckholdt and Al White took five hits west of the Mu Ghia Pass, when they made a 5 hours reconnaissance flight to Nape, Mahaxay and Lak Sao in Laos: “Got quite well shot up today! Left engine, nose cameras, rear H.F. radio station, etc., five hits from 14.5mm anti-aircraft fire when we came low down the road from Mu Ghia Pass, Vietnam westbound, towards the Mahaxay new bridge works”; leaking oil and fuel, and with damage to the left engine, nose cameras and radio equipment, the crew managed to fly the aircraft to Udorn, where it landed safely (info extracted by Ed

Eckholdt from his log book and sent on 11 March 1992 to Leif Hellström, who kindly e-mailed it to the author on 11 July 2004); the identities of the two RB-26Cs are only based on note no. 5, in: Hagedorn / Hellström, *Foreign Invaders*, p. 135; at the time being, the Air America Archives do not contain any document referring to these two aircraft.

Fate: returned to the USAF as 44-35585 in May 62; participated in project *Farm Gate* in May 62 (a photo can be seen in: Hagedorn / Hellström, *Foreign Invaders*, pp. 140/1) until 1 April 64, then flown to Clark Field, Philippines, stored there, and scrapped in late 64 or early 65.



One of the *Mill Pond* RB-26Cs, plus some B-26Bs, probably at Takhli in 1961
(with kind permission from Gen. H.C. Aderholt)

Douglas RB-26C “745” 29092 (?) Oct. 61 ex USAF 44-35813 (?)

Service history: modified for photo reconnaissance missions; flown by Air America in the reconnaissance operation *Black Watch* in Laos, October-December 61; these flights were flown out of Takhli, Thailand, where the aircraft were based, by Al White and Ed Eckholdt (on the video tape made by Ed Eckholdt at 1.18.33 and 1.19.53 minutes); on 18 October 61, RB-26C “745” was flown by Ed Eckholdt and Al White on a 6.30 hours reconnaissance mission out of Takhli into Laos, including the Saravane area; on 2 December 61, RB-26C “745” was again flown by Ed Eckholdt and Al White on a 4.25 hours reconnaissance mission out of Takhli into Laos, including the Nape area (info extracted by Ed Eckholdt from his log book and sent on 11 March 1992 to Leif Hellström, who kindly e-mailed it to the author on 11 July 2004); the identities of the two RB-26Cs are only based on note no. 5, in: Hagedorn / Hellström, *Foreign Invaders*, p. 135; at the time being, the Air America Archives do not contain any document referring to these two aircraft.

Fate: returned to the USAF as 44-35813 in May 62; participated in project *Farm Gate* in May 62 (a photo can be seen in: Hagedorn/Hellström, *Foreign Invaders*, p. 141) until 20 April 64, then it was flown to Hill AFB, Ogden, Utah, where it was scrapped in 64.

D) B-26s flown by Air America pilots during the *Bay of Pigs* operation

It is known that most of the pilots who flew the B-26s in the *Bay of Pigs* operation against Cuba in April 1961 were Cuban exiles who had been engaged by the Double-Check Corporation (Hagedorn / Hellström, *Foreign Invaders*, p. 126). A list of all Cuban pilots involved in that operation can be found in document no. 141164 published on the CIA's website at http://www.foia.cia.gov/search_options.asp. It is also known that the Cuban exile pilots were trained for the *Bay of Pigs* operation at Retalhuleu, Guatemala ("Rayo Base") between July 60 and April 61, using at least 6 of the 8 B-26s delivered to the *Fuerza Aérea Guatemalteca* in the summer of 1960 (Hagedorn / Hellström, *Foreign Invaders*, pp.89-91, for details and for the identities of those B-26s; a Cuban pilot, whose log book is in the possession of Leif Hellström, notes FAG 400, 404, 408, 412, 420, and 424 as training aircraft: e-mail dated 22 February 2004, kindly sent to the author by Leif Hellström). Other documents equally published by the CIA, however, reveal that CAT/Air America pilots Connie Seigrist, William Beale, and Douglas R. Price also flew B-26 missions. While William Beale seems to have flown the B-26 only on training flights out of Retalhuleu, Guatemala ("Rayo Base") on 14 and 15 November 1960, Connie Seigrist flew B-26 training missions out of Retalhuleu on 14 and 15 November 1960 as well as attack missions during the *Bay of Pigs* invasion, that is on 18 and 19 April 1961, and Doug Price also flew combat missions on 18 and 19 April 61 (Memorandum "JMGLow Bonuses" of 7 September 61, that is document no. 141130 published on the CIA's website at http://www.foia.cia.gov/search_options.asp). The real identities of the B-26s used in the attacks onto Cuba were listed in Hagedorn / Hellström, *Foreign Invaders*, p. 131, but at that time the fake Cuban serials used by the aircraft were unknown. On 14 April 61, just before D-Day, no less than 23 serviceable B-26s were lined up at Puerto Cabezas (Persons, *Bay of Pigs*, p.77). Connie Seigrist, whose alias in the *Bay of Pigs* operation was "Simpson" (e-mail dated 15 February 2004, kindly sent by Leif Hellström to the author) flew B-26 "945" on mission NT-26-37 on 18 April 61, interdicting a convoy of tanks and trucks west of the beachhead of "Blue Beach" and inflicting heavy damage to the convoy; on 19 April 61, Seigrist flew again to the "Blue Beach", but encountered considerable opposition from anti-aircraft artillery and from Cuban aircraft, but the serial of his B-26 is not indicated. Doug Price, whose alias during the *Bay of Pigs* operation was "Peters", flew B-26 "927" to "Blue Beach" on 18 April 61, and the same unidentified B-26 as Seigrist on 19 April 61. Other fake Cuban serials used on the B-26s were "923", "929", "931", "933", "935" (all used on 15 April 61), "915" (shot down on 17 April 61), "928", "930", "945", "985" plus others (all used on 17 April 61), and "950", "955", "960", "965" plus others on 18 April 61; details of the B-26s used on 19 April 61 are not indicated ("Listing of mission results with attached listings" of January 1961, that is document no. 141186 published on the CIA's website at http://www.foia.cia.gov/search_options.asp), but only 3 of the 5 B-26s that actually made it to the beachhead on 19 April 61 later returned; the other 2 B-26s were shot down, killing Leo F. Baker, Wade C. Gray, Pete W. Ray, and Riley Shamburger, 4 Alabama Air Guard B-26 instructors from Puerto Cabezas who had volunteered to fly that mission (Haas, *Apollo's warriors*, p. 159). A Cuban pilot, whose log book is in the possession of Leif Hellström, notes four additional B-26s: "900", "911", "920", and "924" (e-mail dated 22 February 2004, kindly sent to the author by Leif Hellström).

E) Candidates for the *Bay of Pigs* operation that probably remained on Taiwan

Although the following B-26s were registered to Los Hermanos Sebastian y Gómez SA, Panama, in the 1960/1 period (Hagedorn / Hellström, *Foreign Invaders*, p.174), that is to the CIA cover used for the *Bay of Pigs* operation, they probably did not leave Tainan, because one of them, HP-318, is known to have flown as “6797” out of Tainan in test programs on 4 January 61 and on 20 March 61 (log book of Tom Jenny, who kindly sent photocopies of those pages to the author on 22 October 2004), that is exactly at the time when all *Bay of Pigs* players were at Retalhuleu, Guatemala.

Douglas B-26B HP-318 28521 60/1 (?) ex 44-35242 (*Haik*) and “6797”

Service history: officially registered to Los Hermanos Sebastian y Gómez SA, Panama, in 1960/1; probably registered on paper only; had probably been intended for use in the *Bay of Pigs* operation in April 61 and was probably to be ferried there by Air America pilots; Air Asia had a contract with Los Hermanos Sebastian y Gómez SA, whose date of termination was indefinite in July 64 (Aircraft status as of 7 July 64, in: UTD/Kirkpatrick/B1F1).

Fate: reregistered as HP-322 in 1960/1; for the subsequent history see there

Douglas B-26B HP-318-P 27899 60/1 (?) ex 44-34620 (*Haik*)

Service history: officially registered to Los Hermanos Sebastian y Gómez SA, Panama, in 1960/1; probably registered on paper only; had probably been intended for use in the *Bay of Pigs* operation in April 61 and was probably to be ferried there by Air America pilots; Air Asia had a contract with Los Hermanos Sebastian y Gómez SA, whose date of termination was indefinite in July 64 (Aircraft status as of 7 July 64, in: UTD/Kirkpatrick/B1F1); officially registered to Gulf Air, Miami, as N5001X (1) on 4 April 1962; it is unknown if the aircraft actually participated in the *Bay of Pigs* operation, but it is more probable that it remained with Air Asia at Tainan and was used by Air America for crew training all the time.

Fate: returned to the USAF as 44-34620 on 1 July 63 (?); used in operation *Farm Gate* in South Vietnam until 1 April 64; flown to Clark Field, Philippines, stored there, and scrapped in late 64 or early 65.

Douglas B-26B HP-319 27961 60/1(?) ex 44-34682 (*Haik* reserve)

Service history: officially registered to Los Hermanos Sebastian y Gómez SA, Panama, in 1960/1; probably registered on paper only; had probably been intended for use in the *Bay of Pigs* operation in April 61 and was probably to be ferried there by Air America pilots; Air Asia had a contract with Los Hermanos Sebastian y Gómez SA, whose date of termination was indefinite in July 64 (Aircraft status as of 7 July 64, in: UTD/Kirkpatrick/B1F1); officially registered to Gulf Air, Miami, as N5001X (1) on 4 April 1962; it is unknown if the aircraft actually participated in the *Bay of Pigs* operation, but it is more probable that it remained with Air Asia at Tainan and was used by Air America for crew training all the time.

Fate: returned to the USAF as 44-34682 on 10 July 63 (?); used in operation *Farm Gate* in South Vietnam until 4 September 63, when it was written off due to a flying accident; HP-319 was reportedly cancelled on 22 September 66 due to an accident.

Douglas B-26B HP-322 28521 60/1 (?) ex 44-35242 (*Haik*), “6797”, and HP-318

Service history: officially registered to Los Hermanos Sebastian y Gómez SA, Panama, in 1960/1; probably registered on paper only; had probably been intended for use in the *Bay of Pigs* operation in April 61 and was probably to be ferried there by Air America pilots; Air Asia had a contract with Los Hermanos Sebastian y Gómez SA, whose date of termination was indefinite in July 64 (Aircraft status as of 7 July 64, in: UTD/Kirkpatrick/B1F1); remained at Tainan, however; believed to have been one of the B-26Bs that were flown unmarked in Laos between December 1960 and August 1961 for the aborted operation *Mill Pond*; then probably transferred to Air Asia, Tainan, in August 1961 again and used on training missions for bombing, napalm and low-level strafing practice near Tainan by Air America pilots;
Fate: remained at Tainan as “6797”; application of Registration for N5002X on 4 June 1962 for Gulf Air, Miami, but on 12 July 62, that registration was given to another B-26B, that is to B-26B 44-34415 (e-mail dated 2 February 2004, kindly sent to the author by Leif Hellström); so again remained at Tainan as “6797”; see there for the subsequent history

Douglas B-26B HP-323 27655 60/1(?) ex 44-34376 (*Haik*)

Service history: officially registered to Los Hermanos Sebastian y Gómez SA, Panama, in 1960/1; probably registered on paper only; had probably been intended for use in the *Bay of Pigs* operation in April 61 and was probably to be ferried there by Air America pilots; Air Asia had a contract with Los Hermanos Sebastian y Gómez SA, whose date of termination was indefinite in July 64 (Aircraft status as of 7 July 64, in: UTD/Kirkpatrick/B1F1); officially registered to Gulf Air, Miami, as N5000X (1) on 4 April 1962; officially registered to Gulf Air, Miami, as N5001X (1) on 4 April 1962; it is unknown if the aircraft actually participated in the *Bay of Pigs* operation, but it is more probable that it remained with Air Asia at Tainan and was used by Air America for crew training all the time.
Fate: returned to the USAF as 44-34376 on 1 July 63 (?); used in operation *Farm Gate* in South Vietnam until 1 April 64; flown to Clark Field, Philippines, stored there, and scrapped in late 64 or early 65.

F) B-26s ferried by Air Asia / Air America / Southern Air Transport pilots to other customers:

Rumors say that already in 1962, up to 8 B-26s were ferried to the Congo for training.

Douglas B-26B ? ? 1 Feb. 64 ex?

Service: ?

Fate: on 1 February 64, Tom Jenny flew a “non-Company B-26” “per SA/VPFO memo no. 64-009”, which probably was another B-26 that was ferried to the Congo; on 8 February 64, Tom Jenny was back at Tainan, testing Air America Helio Courier “871” (log book of Tom Jenny, who kindly sent photocopies of those pages to the author on 22 October 2004).

Douglas B-26B 44-35822 29101 18 Aug. 64 USAF stocks at Clark AFB, Philippines; ex *Project Farm Gate*; had been refurbished at Okinawa and at Tainan

Service: was to be used in the Congo; see Hagedorn / Hellström, *Foreign Invaders*, pp. 150 and 155. Left Tainan on 18 August 64 at 9 a.m. local time and flew Takhli-Bombay-Aden, where it arrived on 20 August 64. The contract was no. AF9604-4194 between SAT and the USAF LSG (Memorandum no. DFO-64-444 of 17 August 1964, in: <http://www.air-america.net/images/SAT/sat-b26a.jpg>).

Fate: crashed during delivery from Tainan to Leopoldville at Aden on 21 August 64, when the crew (Capt. R. M. Krieg; F/N W. L. Sandors) failed to maintain control of the aircraft on take-off (List "Company operated aircraft lost or destroyed", in: UTD/CIA/B51F12; Aircraft destroyed or lost, in: UTD/CIA/B49F2; Aircraft accidents 1964, in: UTD/CIA/B49F2; B-26 18-21 August ferry flight, that is Attachment A to Memorandum no. DFO-64-444 of 17 August 1964, in: <http://www.air-america.net/images/SAT/sat-b26a.jpg>).

Probably, the other B-26s delivered from Tainan to the Congo were also ferried by Air America / SAT pilots. They were:

44-35890 c/n 29169 arrived in the Congo in August 64, became "890"; test flown at Tainan on 20, 21, and 22 August 64 by Tom Jenny who ferried this aircraft Tainan-Takhli-Bombay-Aden-Addis Abeba-Leopoldville between 22 and 25 August 64; according to Tom Jenny's log book, the test flights at Tainan and the ferry flight were part of Project no. 64-014 within contract no. AF 9604-4194; on 27 August 64, Tom Jenny returned Leopoldville-Paris (log book of Tom Jenny, who kindly sent photocopies of those pages to the author on 22 October 2004). The contract was no. AF9604-4194 between SAT and the USAF LSG (Memorandum no. DFO-64-444 of 17 August 1964, in: <http://www.air-america.net/images/SAT/sat-b26a.jpg>).

44-35804 c/n 29083 arrived in the Congo on 17/8 August 64, became "804" (e-mail dated 1 Feb. 2004, kindly sent to the author by Leif Hellström); flown by Capt. Morrie Kenstler (e-mail dated 29 June 2004 kindly sent to the author by Morrie Kenstler) and F/N L. C. Cartwright The contract was no. AF9604-4194 between SAT and the USAF LSG (Memorandum no. DFO-64-444 of 17 August 1964, in: <http://www.air-america.net/images/SAT/sat-b26a.jpg>).

44-35625 c/n 28904 arrived in the Congo at a later date (e-mail dated 1 Feb. 2004, kindly sent to the author by Leif Hellström); the contract was no. AF9604-4194 between SAT and the USAF LSG (Memorandum no. DFO-64-444 of 17 August 1964, in: <http://www.air-america.net/images/SAT/sat-b26a.jpg>). This aircraft belly landed in Africa in 1965 (photo kindly sent to the author by Leif Hellström in June 2004).

Contract no. AF9604-4194 between SAT and the USAF LSG also covered ferrying the following B-26s from Tainan to Leopoldville (Memorandum no. DFO-64-444 of 17 August 1964, in: <http://www.air-america.net/images/SAT/sat-b26a.jpg>):

44-35221 c/n 28500

44-35242 c/n 28521, and

44-35703 c/n 28982 This aircraft was once flown by Morrie Kenstler according to his log book (e-mail dated 29 June 2004 kindly sent to the author by Morrie Kenstler); test flown by Tom Jenny at Tainan on 20 August 64 and on 30 August 64 (log book of Tom Jenny, who kindly sent photocopies of those pages to the author on 22 October 2004)

According to Morrie Kenstler, a total of 7 B-26s were flown to the Congo in late August 64 (e-mail dated 29 June 2004 kindly sent to the author by Morrie Kenstler).

According to MSgt (ret) Pete Kate, “two gloss black B-26’s [were] parked near the entrance to the Air America ramp” at Udorn in 1967. “They had no markings what-so-ever except for red tail numbers (I think). I don’t recall which month it was but the two were there for about a week” (e-mail dated 22 September 2006, kindly sent to Dr. Erik Carlson who forwarded it to the author). These may have been 2 B-26s waiting for delivery to the Congo by Air America pilots.

There is a report at site <http://home.earthlink.net/~aircommando1/FarmgateCH3.htm> that says that the first *Farm Gate* B-26s were flown from Tainan to Kadena, Okinawa, by Air Asia personnel and that they were picked up by USAF crews at Okinawa. According to Hagedorn / Hellström, *Foreign Invaders*, p.147, the first four B-26Bs were:

44-35530	c/n 28809	
44-35692	c/n 28971	
44-35703	c/n 28982	and
44-35855	c/n 29134	

G) Training B-26Bs used at Tainan:

Douglas TB-26B B-888 ? 59? ?

Service history: there are no records of this aircraft in the archives of the CAA of the Republic of China (e-mail dated 26 November 2004, kindly sent to the author by Billy K. C. Chang, Director General, CAA, Republic of China); had been used by Western International on Taiwan since 1956; used by Air America to train US crews on Taiwan in November 61 and in February 64; this was the only dual control B-26 flown by Air America crews out of Tainan; black; it was the only one that a Nationalist Chinese symbol on the fuselage (e-mail dated 12 July 2004 kindly sent to the author by Joe Hazen); flown by Joe Hazen as “888” on 17 and 18 November 61 as well as on 22, 24, and 28 February 64 (e-mail dated 7 June 2004, kindly sent to the author by Joe Hazen); already on 22 February 64, Joe Hazen had been requalified in “888” by Truman Barnes (e-mail dated 29 June 08, kindly sent to the author by Joe Hazen); on 17 November 61, Ed Eckholdt was checked out by Bill Beale in this solid nose, 8 gun aircraft on a one hour flight from Tainan to Tainan; on 26 February 64, Ed Eckholdt and Bob Abrahms were checked out again at Tainan in a 2.00 hours flight, Ed Eckholdt making one landing, and Bob Abrahms 2 landings; on 27 February 64, Ed Eckholdt made two 2.00 hour flights in B-888 from Tainan to Tainan: in the first flight, Ed checked out Chuck Cameron and Russ Krieg, and in the second one Morrie Kenstler (info extracted by Ed Eckholdt from his log book and sent on 11 March 1992 to Leif Hellström, who kindly e-mailed it to the author on 11 July 2004); flown by Tom Jenny out of Tainan in training programs on 22 and 23 February 64 (log book of Tom Jenny, who kindly sent photocopies of those pages to the author on 22 October 2004); also flown by Morrie Kenstler (e-mail dated 29 June 2004 kindly sent to the author by Morrie Kenstler).

Fate: ?

Douglas A-26A

TTD-001

28047

15 August 68 ex N4852V of Coastways Associates

Previous history: In December 1964, A-26 N4852V (serial 28047) of Coastways Associates Inc. of Washington left the US for a trilateration and photo mapping survey in Liberia on behalf of the Army Map Service; later this survey was extended to areas in Southeast Asia on behalf of Gulf Oil Company. In mid-April 1967, during the final phases of a survey operation, A-26 N4852V encountered mechanical difficulties at Jesselton on Borneo to an extent that neither returning the aircraft to the US for repairs nor completing repairs abroad was economically practical so that Coastways wanted to scrap the aircraft. Between 17 and 20 April 67 and between 18 and 22 May 67, Air Asia sent an aircraft down to Jesselton to pick up the aircraft and ferry it to Tainan, where it was stored until January 68. As part of the payment, Coastways decided to sell the aircraft to Air Asia, asking permission to do so in their letter dated 23 July 68, sent to the Office of Munitions Control, US Department of State. In that letter the status of the aircraft is described as follows: "The aircraft has been stripped of its electronic, and most of the communications and navigation equipment, which was shipped back to the United States. The hull and engines are currently in dead storage at the facility of Air Asia Company, Limited (AACL) at Tainan, Taiwan, and AACL has made us an offer to purchase the remains for scrap and salvage." (Letter dated 23 July 68, in: UTD/Bisson/B5 microfilm reel 4). Air Asia bought the aircraft on 15 August 68.

AIRCRAFT BILL OF SALE		Do not write in this block - for FAA use only.													
<p>Consideration of \$10,000 and the undersigned owner(s) of the full legal and beneficial title of the aircraft described as follows:</p> <p>MAKE AND MODEL Douglas A-26</p> <p>SELLER'S SERIAL NUMBER 28047</p> <p>NATIONALITY AND REGISTRATION MARK N 4852 V</p> <p>done this 15th day of August 19 68 hereby sell, grant, transfer and deliver all rights, title, and interest in and to such aircraft unto:</p> <p>NAME AND ADDRESS <i>(If individual, give last name, first name, and middle initial)</i></p> <p>Air Asia Company, Limited 46 Chung Shan Road, North Second Section Tainan, Taiwan (Formosa)</p>		<p>MICROFILM CODE</p> <p>1C JC</p>													
<p>and to his executors, administrators, and assigns to have and to hold singularly the said aircraft forever, and certifies that same is not subject to any mortgage or other encumbrance except:</p> <p>NAME OF ENCUMBRANCE AMOUNT DATE</p> <p>IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 15th day of August 19 68.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>NAME OF SELLER</th> <th>SIGNATURE</th> <th>TITLE</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Edward R. Donelson</td> <td><i>[Signature]</i></td> <td>Vice President, Coastways Associates, Inc.</td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>ACKNOWLEDGMENT (Not required for purposes of FAA recording; however, may be required by local law for validity of the instrument.)</p>				NAME OF SELLER	SIGNATURE	TITLE	Edward R. Donelson	<i>[Signature]</i>	Vice President, Coastways Associates, Inc.						
NAME OF SELLER	SIGNATURE	TITLE													
Edward R. Donelson	<i>[Signature]</i>	Vice President, Coastways Associates, Inc.													

Bill of Sale dated 15 August 68 covering Coastways A-26 N4852V going to Air Asia (UTD/Bisson/B5 microfilm reel 4)

Service history: current at Tainan in 1970; white; to be seen in the *Air America* documentary, were it seems to have been used for technical training at Tainan; believed to be the A-26A owned by Air America / Air Asia according to the Inventory of 31 March 72, which is no longer mentioned on the Inventory of 30 November 72 (both preserved in: UTD/CIA/B1F10).

Fate: probably scrapped in 1972.

H) The On Marks:

Two specially equipped On Mark A-26 Marksman aircraft were acquired from Intermountain Aviation in April 67 in exchange for Air America's Douglas DC-6A/B N90784 that went to Intermountain, a transaction that passed thru the hands of Pan Aero Investment Corporation, Reno. In his letter dated 28 March 67, Air America's Managing Director George Doole asked the Company's President Hugh Grundy: "The purchase price of the On Mark package should be entered in our books at the same amount as the book value of the properties sold to Pan Aero. We would appreciate being advised by Treasurer-Controller as to this precise price. Included in the package is approximately 40,000 pounds of spares and equipment, which will be airlifted to the Far East by the seller. It is expected the first plane load will depart from the U. S. around April 1. The first of the two On Marks will be ferried under arrangements being made by the seller and will depart from the U. S. about April 15. The second On Mark should be ready to depart in about three months later after certain modifications have been completed. Identification markings reserved for these aircraft are as follows:

MSN 27694 N46598
MSN 28977 N67623

A general description of the aircraft and the electronic equipment installed is attached." (Memorandum dated 28 March 67 by George Doole, in: UTD/Bisson/B5 microfilm reel 4).

2.3.20E
New copy
DC-6 - HMM

MEMORANDUM

COPY

E. I. C.

TO: VADM 1967
W/S

DATE: March 28, 1967

TO: President

FROM: HMM

SUBJECT: On Mark Procurement

REF No: 02877

Air America has exchanged DC-6A/B N90784 for two On Mark aircraft. This transaction is, on your behalf, with Pan Aero Investment Corporation, Post Office Box 2011, Reno, Nevada. The purchase price of the On Mark package should be entered in our books at the same amount as the book value of the properties sold to Pan Aero. We would appreciate being advised by Treasurer-Controller as to this precise price.

Included in the package is approximately 40,000 pounds of spares and equipment which will be airlifted to the Far East by the seller. It is expected the first plane load will depart from the U. S. around April 1. The first of the two On Marks will be ferried under arrangements being made by the seller and will depart from the U. S. about April 15. The second On Mark should be ready to depart in about three months after certain modifications have been completed.

Identification markings reserved for these aircraft are as follows:

MSN 27694 N46598
MSN 28977 N67623

A general description of the aircraft and the electronic equipment installed is attached. Further information will be provided as it becomes available to us.

George A. Doole, Jr.

GAD:hs

Encl.

cc: VPICA (via Pres.)
VPFO " "
VPIS " "
T/C " "

Recorded for: S/LC
SM/P

Memorandum dated 28 March 67 by George Doole, in: UTD/Bisson/B5 microfilm reel 4

In his Memorandum No. SA/P-67-64 dated 13 April 67, Air America's Dave Gluskin indicates the following purpose: "The aircraft were obtained to meet AID's needs, under USOM/T contract 493-66, for aerial survey work to be undertaken by USOM/T for the RTG. Additionally, they may occasionally be called by AID/L under contract 439-713. Amendments to both these contracts, covering On Marks only, are currently under process with performances there under to commence on or about 1 June 1967. It is understood that a request has been submitted to the insurers to have both these aircraft added to our liability policies. The first aircraft will be positioned at UDN for crew training while the second one is being modified. Initially, it is planned that two Captains and two Navigators will be trained by the ferry crew [...] After arrival of the second aircraft, the first will undergo required modification." (Memorandum No. SA/P-67-64 dated 13 April 67, in: UTD/Bisson/B5 microfilm reel 4). The description of the aircraft attached to George Doole's letter of 28 March 67 states that the purpose of the aircraft was "aerial resupply, low-level penetration", and one might guess that those low-level penetration missions were not only to cover parts of North Vietnam, but also parts of Red China.

ON MARK

MANUFACTURER: Douglas
CONVERSION: On Mark "Markman"
DESCRIPTION: Pressurized Twin Engine Light Freighter or Executive Transport with rear, bottom cargo door
ENGINES: 2500 HP with Water Methanol Injection R 2300 CB 16/17
USABLE FUEL: 7500 lbs. (1250 gal.)
RANGE (Dry Tanks): 1600 N.M. (At T.O. Gross Wt. 40,000 lbs.)
RANGE WITH 3 HOUR RESERVE (Latter Power): 1150 N.M. (Notes: Average range equals .215 N.M. per lb. of fuel used)
NORMAL CRUISE SPEED: 230 kts.
GROSS WT. (T.O.): FAA rated 35,000 lbs.; can be operated 40,000 lbs.
EMPTY WT: 27,148 lbs.
CARGO CAPACITY: 4,000 lbs./120 cu. ft.
PASSENGERS: Seven plus crew of three
SPECIAL PURPOSE: Aerial resupply, low-level penetration
SYSTEMS:

Navigation:

1. EDO Loran
2. Doppler/Nav computer (Dual)
3. TAS Indicator
4. Dual VOR/ILS
5. Dual ADF
6. Dual DME

Communications:

1. HF (CW hand key or voice)
2. SSB with upper or lower side band, AM, CW modes
3. Dual VHF
4. Transponder

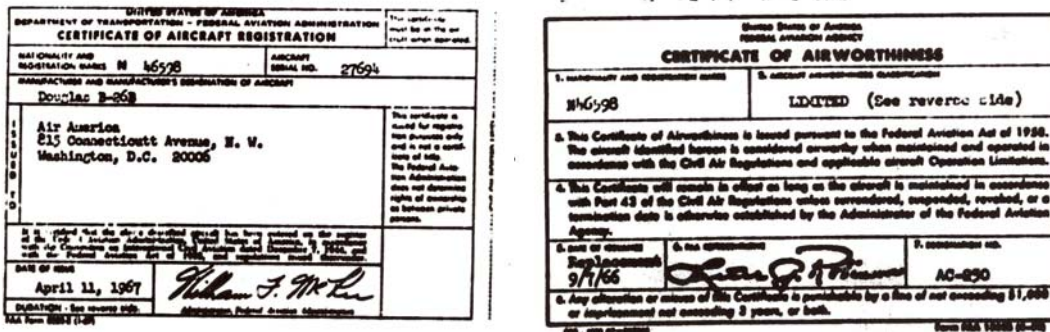
Special:

1. Sperry SP-40 Auto pilot Flight Control System
2. Periscopic sextant and mount
3. Radar altimeter
4. Terrain following radar with:
 - a. Mapping mode (PPI) sector only
 - b. Automatic Terrain Following and Autopilot
 - c. Manual Terrain Avoidance (Vertical and Lateral)
5. "RSTR" electronic jamming (ground)
6. "ATIR" electronic jamming (air)
7. "Vector Sector" electronic position (air)

Description of the On Mark attached to George Doole's letter of 28 March 67
 (in: UTD/Bisson/B5 microfilm reel 4)

The training team consisted of Donald Gearke (Pilot), Kenneth Rockwell (Navigator), David M. Folkins (Maintenance), Donald M. Carroll (Supply), Paul M. Byrne (Avionics), and Edward L. Picarelle (Avionics) (Memorandum dated 12 April 67, sent by MGDR to VPFO, in: UTD/Bisson/B5 microfilm reel 4) and belonged to International Consultants Inc. of

Houston, Texas. Interestingly, the agreement itself, dated 3 March 67, speaks of “two Douglas On Mark aircraft” that were to be ferried “from the United States to Thailand” and of the subsequent training of Air America crews; but the “Inter-Office routing strip”, by which a copy of this agreement was sent to the VPFO on 16 May 67, seems to refer it only to N46598 (Agreement with International Consultants, dated 3 March 67, in: UTD/Bisson/B5 microfilm reel 4). Indeed, subsequent documents are only available for N46598: On 11 April 67, it was registered to Air America, and its Certificate of Airworthiness identified it as having been certificated in the “Limited” classification, which means that the aircraft was not allowed to carry passengers or cargo for hire, and that “special permission must be obtained from foreign countries for flights over their territories” (Memorandum dated 20 April 67, sent by Air America’s D. Gluskin (SA/P) to George Doole, in: UTD/Bisson/B5 microfilm reel 4).



OnMark N46598: Certificates of Registration and of Airworthiness
(both in: UTD/Bisson/B5 microfilm reel 4)

The next problem arose in June 67, when Air America’s J. W. Walker had to propose a pricing: Additional transition training of the crews, relatively short legs to be flown at low altitude, and especially the exceptionally high value of the electronic equipment would mean very high prices. So in his letter dated 10 June 67, J. Walker asked the Managing Director: “We are assuming that our Customer will not be able to find any way to indemnify us for hull risks. We would appreciate your guidance on this item.” (Letter of 10 June 67, in: UTD/Bisson/B5 microfilm reel 4). George Doole’s answer is unknown, as the documentation preserved at the Air America Archives ends with this letter, and there are no further documents referring to Air America’s second On Mark (N67623) either.

A lot of rumors do exist around these two On Marks: One of them says that one of those aircraft crashed in a thunderstorm in 1968, while operating on a covert program into North Vietnam, killing several people. This myth may have come into existence, because a unit called *Heavy Chain*, that is the 1198th Operational Evaluation & Training (OE & T) Squadron, based at Norton AFB, was rumored to have had not only some C-130Es, but also 2



1198th Operational Evaluation & Training Squadron

(the 1198th O E & T Squadron, as at <http://webpages.charter.net/heavychain/reunion2.html>)

A-26As, and this unit was said to have operated into North Vietnam out of Nha Trang. “The two C-130Es that are mentioned were part of Project HEAVY CHAIN, a classified project that has yet to be declassified, that was based at Norton AFB, California. From what I have

been told [...], they were highly modified with special electronics equipment to allow them to operate at low level at night in higher threat areas. Although details of their use are still classified, I have been told by someone who knows that they operated out of Nha Trang, where the Air Force had a special detachment including a pair of modified C-130E-1s that worked with the Special Operations Group.” (e-mail dated 29 August 2003, sent by Sam McGowan to Dr. Erik Carlson, who kindly forwarded it to the author) “HEAVY CHAIN is still classified, although some details have emerged. In addition to the two C-130Es, the project did include at least two A-26s. [...] Nha Trang was home to several classified units, including the DUCK HOOK C-123s, that were reportedly flown by Chinese national pilots, and STRAY GOOSE, which was a USAF project that is still in existence. Their acknowledged missions were to drop and resupply Vietnamese agents that were dropped into North Vietnam, and later into Laos, but there are whispers that more was involved.” (e-mail dated 6 September 2003, kindly sent to the author by Sam McGowan)

Another myth says that one of the On Marks or maybe both of them were used out of Tainan on Taiwan to drop agents into coastal areas close to Hong Kong. This myth could even explain why the On Marks looked like business aircraft, because a business aircraft going astray on its way to or from Hong Kong airport would have been a good cover story, if it was detected over China. What has created that myth is hard to say: perhaps rumors that connected *Heavy Chain* with missions into China – the “whispers” mentioned above – or maybe the assumption that some of the covert flights operated out of Udorn might have gone into China. Whatever may have originated those myths, the facts that can be established from documents and other reliable sources contradict them and are far less poetic.



Air America On Mark B-26 N46598 at Udorn
in April 67 and in June 67
(UTD/Hickler/B33) (with kind permission from Frank Bonansinga)



over Laos on 29 July 67, with Frank Bonansinga at the controls
(photo kindly submitted by Frank Bonansinga)

On Mark Marksman N46598 27694 April 67 ex N900V; prev. USAF 44-34415 + N5002X (2)

Previous history: This aircraft had been regd. as N5002X (2) to Gulf Air Inc, Miami, FL, on 12 July 62, then sold to Intermountain Aviation, AZ, on 30 January 63; sold to On Mark Engineering Corp., Van Nuys, CA, on 12 July 63; converted to On Mark Marksman; sold to Intermountain Aviation, Marana, AZ as N900V on 15 February 64 and rereg. as N900V on 24 February 64; sold to Atlantic General Enterprises Inc, Washington, DC, for tests on 4 August 64; sold back to Intermountain Aviation, Marana, AZ, on 29 March 65. In 1966, Intermountain's N900V was equipped with a



Intermountain Aviation OnMark N900V at Marana, AZ in the mid-sixties
(photo taken by Paul Holsen, kindly submitted by Frank Bonansinga)

terrain following radar; Certificate of Airworthiness issued to N46598 on 7 September 66 (in: UTD/Bisson/B5 microfilm reel 4), so it was N46598 already at that time; tested by LTV Electrosystems, Greenville, TX, until 1967; sold to Pan Aero Investment, Reno, NV, on 3 February 67; sold to Air America as N46598 on 5 April 67; still on the 1 January 68 USCAR as N900V with Intermountain: In the file, the number "46598" was only inserted with pen above "N900V" (all details from the official FAA file thanks to Leif Hellström, e-mail dated 6 February 2004 to the author).

Service history: officially reregistered to Air America as N46598 on 11 April 67 (Certificate of Registration, in: UTD/Bisson/B5 microfilm reel 4); ferried to South-East Asia in mid-April 67, then used for training at Udorn from the second half of April to June 67; seen at Udorn April 67 and July 67; photos can be found in: UTD/Hickler/B33, and Hagedorn / Hellström, *Foreign Invaders*, p. 172; between 31 May 67 and 11 June 67, Frank Bonansinga made several training rides out of Udorn (T-08) in N46598, then, on 12 June 67, he was checked out captain in a flight out of Udorn (Log book of Frank Bonansinga, checked by the author on 10 March 2004 at Frank's home); on 16 June 67, Frank Bonansinga flew a night drop mission in N46598, but received gun fire; on 18 June 67, he ferried N46598 from Savannakhet (L-39) to Udorn (T-08) and back to Savannakhet (Log book of Frank Bonansinga, checked by the author on 10 March 2004 at Frank's home); used for nightly low-level supply drops over Laos, but proved unsuitable for the task, because the aircraft was too fast and too similar to a B-26 bomber, so that people on the ground did not turn on the signal light (Jim Rhyne, in: UTD/Leary/B1 for 30 June 67); on 22 July 67, the right engine of N46598 had trouble during a 2 hours flight out of Udorn, so that an engine change was needed (Log book of Frank Bonansinga); the last flight on the night-drop program was made on 11 October 67, and on that flight there were engine problems (e-mail dated 9 June 2004, kindly sent to the author by Frank Bonansinga);

continued to fly for Air America, but just doing transportation flights; departed Takhli probably on 14 April 68 (e-mail dated 9 June 2004, kindly sent to the author by Frank Bonansinga).

Fate: sold to Overseas Aeromarine Inc, Seattle, on 30 March 68, and registered to them as N46598 on 4 April 68 (details from the official FAA file thanks to Leif Hellström, e-mail dated 6 February 2004 to the author); flown to Takhli Royal Thai Air Force Base in mid-April 68; damaged on take-off from Takhli on the ferry flight to the USA in mid-April 68 (e-mail dated 26 June 2001 by Frank Bonansinga to the author) and burned; Don Gearke remembers: “The crash was caused by a anti-shimmy poppet valve in the nose strut. Seigrist had warned me about that happening several years before. He said they lost a couple of 26's in Bay of Pigs training. I never had a chance to read the (classified) AAR, but it would take a miracle to get the old girl airworthy. It burned, and as I remember, [Jim] Keck had some trouble getting out. It's quite an experience to have an airplane disintegrate under your butt. We had started on the first leg to ferry the thing back to CONUS, and the crash may have saved our lives. The plane had been parked in Laos for several months and had deteriorated badly. We planned the flight for the north route thru the Aleutians with minimum fuel at Attu. A C130 was to follow us. As it turned out the Herk took us home” (e-mail dated 23 April 2005); Air America's Aircraft status report of 1 May 68 (preserved in: UTD/Herd/B2) notes: “returned April 68”; not on the 1 January 68 USCAR. Apparently, the damaged aircraft was given to the 1198th Operational Evaluation & Training (OE & T) Squadron, like its sister ship N67623 that was to follow later. A former member of the 1198th OE&T Squadron recalls the On Mark B-26s: “We picked up two from Intermountain. They gave them to us as no one wanted them. They were just a toy for us. We landed one nose gear up at Norton and I don't know what became of it afterwards. We never used it in missions. It had a DC-7 nose so two pilots could fly side by side. It had a place for an Electronic Warfare Officer over the wing box and in the back were seats and a back door for jumping and jump lights. I left the Sqdn before they were disposed of.” (e-mail dated 29 July 2007, kindly sent to the author). But it seems that the *Blue Goose* did not survive with the Squadron for a very long time – probably because it had been damaged beyond repair in that accident. A former member of the maintenance personnel assigned to the 1198th OE&T Squadron recalls that he was involved in “the total dismantling of both of those aircraft. One in Thailand and the other at Norton and they were sold for scrap. They both had the same problem. Nose gear failure.” (e-mail dated 30 July 2007). This seems to have happened some time after the April 68 accident, as on 18 September 68, the registration of the aircraft was officially cancelled as “scrapped” (details from the official FAA file thanks to Leif Hellström, e-mail dated 6 February 2004 to the author).

On Mark Marksman N800V 28977 67 Intermountain Aviation,
Marana, AZ

Previous history: This B-26B, former USAF 44-35698, had been regd. as N5001X (2) to Gulf Air Inc, Miami, FL, in July 62, then sold to Intermountain Aviation, AZ, in 1963; sold to On Mark Engineering Corp., Van Nuys, CA, in July 63; converted to On Mark Marksman; sold to Intermountain Aviation, Marana, AZ, and reregistered as N800V on 16 January 64; equipped with a terrain following radar in 1966.

Service history: According to the FAA the records were destroyed in March 89 (Letter dated 15 April 2003, sent by the FAA to the author); believed operated by Air America with false registration N46358 (or perhaps N58071??) out of Brownsville,

TX in 1966; intended for nightly low-level supply drops over Laos, but did not fly with the night-drop program (e-mail dated 23 April 2001 sent by Frank Bonansinga to the author); not on the US Civil Aircraft Register of 1 January 68; this second On Mark was part of the deal with Intermountain, when Air America exchanged their DC-6A/B N90784 against the 2 On Marks in March 67 (Memorandum no. C287P dated 28 March 67, sent by Air America's Managing Director George Doole to the Company's President Hugh Grundy, in: UTD/Bisson/B5 microfilm reel no.4); N800V was the aircraft that was to receive some more modifications; Don Gearke recalls: "My records show 800 was in Marana during the time 900 (or it's alias) was being used or parked at Udorn. The flights of 800 at LGB, actually, Norton, was of course, after the aforementioned. I believe the training at this time was to turn 800 over to the Air Force, or whomever. My logbook shows I flew 800 sporadically during the time frame you mentioned [that is April 67 to June 68]. This was just prior to the Norton delivery." (e-mail dated 23 April 2005 kindly sent to the author by Don Gearke); flown by Don Gearke out of Long Beach, CA, in the first week of June 1968 checking out persons who seemed to belong to the USAF (e-mail dated 12 April 2005, kindly sent to the author by Don Gearke). Don Gearke recalls: "My company logbook shows my last flight in said airplane was in the first week in June 1968, and shows local flights from Long Beach. I never had the plane in Long Beach, but during that week I was probably working out of a west coast AFB, and checked out two pilots who I felt certain were Air Force, at least military. Both were very good, and as I remember, the operation was enjoyable. [...] I assumed these guys were probably headed for some mission, since they seemed somewhat familiar with the equipment" (E-mail dated 11 April 2005, kindly sent to the author by Don Gearke).

Fate: transferred to the USAF's 1198th Operational Evaluation & Training Squadron (*Heavy Chain*), Norton AFB, in June 68, probably as N67623 and probably on loan from Air America, who was probably still the official owner; when N800V was acquired by Air America from Intermountain in March 67, it was due to be reregistered (e-mail dated 24 December 2004, kindly sent to the author by Don Gearke) as N67623; this registration had been reserved since at least March 67 (Memorandum dated 28 March 67 by George Doole, in: UTD/Bisson/B5 microfilm reel 4), although a first choice seems to have been N58071 (when John Davis acquired a microfilm of the FAA cards in 1972/3, they had the following entry: "N58071 B-26B 28977, deleted & replaced with 44-35698. 'Now [N]67623.'" (e-mail dated 9 April 2005, kindly sent to the author by John Davis); not on the 1 January 68 USCAR; Norton AFB was the home of the 1198th Operational Evaluation & Training Squadron (*Heavy Chain*) that tested electronic modifications of C-130s at that time (e-mail dated 15 November 2004, kindly sent to the author by Mark Sublette); generally speaking, the 1198th was a highly classified organization created to do classified missions anywhere in the world (1198 Squadron home page, at <http://webpages.charter.net/heavychain/>); a former member of the 1198th OE&T Squadron recalls the On Mark B-26s: "We picked up two from Intermountain. They gave them to us as no one wanted them. They were just a toy for us. We landed one nose gear up at Norton and I don't know what became of it afterwards. We never used it in missions. It had a DC-7 nose so two pilots could fly side by side. It had a place for an Electronic Warfare Officer over the wing box and in the back were seats and a back door for jumping and jump lights. I left the Sqdn before they were disposed of." (e-mail dated 29 July 2007, kindly sent to the author). As the *Blue Goose* was already destroyed in Thailand in 1968, and as "the two a/c [that is N800V and N900V] were identical, even inside" (e-mail dated 23 April 2005, kindly sent to the author by Don

Gearke), the On Mark at Norton must have been N800V or its alias N67623. As the former member of the 1198th OE&T Squadron, who knows about the On Mark accident at Norton AFB, left the unit in 1969, the period when N800V or its alias N67623 landed nose gear up at Norton must have been 1968/9. It was probably after that accident that the On Mark that looked exactly like Air America's *Blue Goose* languished in a secure area at Norton AFB between 1969 to about 1971/2 (e-mail dated 24 February 2004, kindly sent to the author by Tom Wickstrom). In September 1971, Air America, who was probably the official owner of N800V or its alias N67623 still at that time, decided to return a mysterious aircraft (type unknown) to Intermountain (Memorandum of 29 September 71, p. 6, in: UTD/CIA/B19F8). If that memorandum refers to our On Mark, Air America probably learned that that aircraft could no longer be repaired and returned. Seen from outside the Squadron, one day in 1971 or 1972 the On Mark disappeared from Norton AFB (e-mail dated 24 February 2004, kindly sent to the author by Tom Wickstrom). A former member of the maintenance personnel assigned to the 1198th OE&T Squadron recalls that he was involved in "the total dismantling of both of those aircraft. One in Thailand and the other at Norton and they were sold for scrap. They both had the same problem. Nose gear failure." (e-mail dated 30 July 2007). That is what already Don Gearke had presumed: "Just had a chat with Dave Folkins and mentioned 800V. He said it came to it's end by the same problem that caused 900 to crash, except it was in Air Force possession at that time. He didn't know when or where it happened" (e-mail dated 23 April 2005, kindly sent to the author by Don Gearke).

Problems:

It has been reported that *Steel Tiger* A-26As were also flown by Air America pilots, but that is very unlikely, as they belonged to the USAF's 609th Air Commando Squadron and then to the 56th Air Commando Wing based at Nakhon Phanom.



A *Steel Tiger* A-26A taken in the mid-sixties
(Ed Eckholdt collection, photo kindly submitted by Mike LaDue)