

AIR AMERICA: GRUMMAN G-21A GOOSE

by Dr. Joe F. Leeker

Last updated on 1 June 2009

For several years, an unidentified Grumman Goose appeared in some of Air America's and Air Asia's financial balances. Apparently, Air America Inc. had acquired this Goose at an unknown date for the sum of \$ 9,156.74, which had then been advanced by the Pacific Corporation and so was to be repaid by Air America Inc at a later date. On 8 April 59, Air America resold this Goose to Air Asia Co Ltd. That is what is shown by Air America's undated Promissory note no. 10 (preserved at UTD/CIA/B9F4). This was probably only a nominal sale for \$ 1,00 or so, as it often happened when aircraft passed from Air America to Air Asia or vice versa. Nevertheless, in Air America's Promissory note no.18 dated 31 March 67 (preserved at UTD/CIA/B9F4), which replaces note no. 10, the amount of \$ 9,156.74 is still listed as "owed to the Pacific Corporation" for that Grumman Goose.

UTD/CIA/B9F4

✓

Air America Promissory Note No. 10 dated 11 November 1959 is in settlement of the following:

Note No. 10 is in settlement of the following:

Helio Courier MSN 531, Regn. No. XM-PCD	\$46,000.00
Grumman Goose (Resold to AACL 4/8/59)	9,156.74
	\$55,156.74

UTD/CIA/B9F4

✓

Air America, Inc. Promissory Note No. 18 dated 31 March 1967 is in settlement of the following:

Replacement for Promissory Notes 9, 10, 11, 12.

Amount owed to The Pacific Corporation for:

Helio, MSN 531		\$46,000.00	(Note No. 10)
Grumman Goose		9,156.74	(Note No. 10)
Helio, MSN 507		46,000.00	(Note No. 9)
Helio, MSN 075		46,434.93	(Note No. 9)
Helio, MSN 087		49,000.00	(Note No. 9)
Helio, MSN 506		15,000.00	(Note No. 9)
C-47, 43-1030		40,000.00	(Note No. 9)
Helio, MSN 566		(45,974.00)	(Note No. 9)
Helio, MSN 541		(35,460.93)	(Note No. 9)
Helio, MSN 504		15,000.00	(Note No. 11)
Advance of Cash to Air America, Inc.		450,000.00	(Note No. 12)
		\$635,156.74	

Promissory notes nos. 10 and 18, both in: UTD/CIA/B9F4

Then, an "Analysis of donated capital" by the Pacific Corporation as of 30 September 69 (in: UTD/Herd/B2) mentions that the sum of \$ 9,156.74 has been donated by the stockholders to

UTD/Herd/B2

✓

THE PACIFIC CORPORATION
ANALYSIS OF DONATED CAPITAL
AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 1969

ASSETS DONATED BY STOCKHOLDERS		
Year Ended June 30, 1951	\$2,119,000.00	
Year Ended June 30, 1952	2,790,000.00	
Year Ended June 30, 1953	7,583,500.00	
Year Ended June 30, 1954	75,000.00	
Year Ended June 30, 1955	200,000.00	
Year Ended June 30, 1956	80,000.00	
Year Ended June 30, 1957	415,896.00	
Year Ended June 30, 1958	387,500.00	
Year Ended June 30, 1959	500,000.00	
	\$ 9,781,896.00	
PAID BY INDIVIDUALS NOT BY STOCKHOLDERS		
Year Ended June 30, 1954	62,169.89	
	\$ 430,000.00	
MS-4	3619	(6/72)
Helio	126	(3/60)
C-47	43-1029	(2/60)
Helio	126	(3/61)
Helio	106	(1/62)
Helio	107	(3/64)
Helio	875	(3/64)
Helio	887	(3/64)
Helio	132	(2/65)
Grumman Goose	1	(3/65)
DC-4	1855	(1/63)
DC-4	2029	(1/70)
DC-4	1869	(1/70)
Proter	156	(1/65)
Helio	568	(3/66)
Helio	556	(3/66)
Proter	176	(3/66)
Proter	4718	(3/67)
Helio	130	(3/67)
Helio	146	(3/67)
Helio	341	(3/67)
Helio	347	(3/67)
Helio	2026	(3/69)
Helio	2930	(1/69)
	43,979.00	
	(21,534.92)	
	\$22,444.08	

UTD/CIA/B26F5

✓

AIR ASIA COMPANY LIMITED
STATEMENT OF PROPERTY & EQUIPMENT (MARCH 31, 1965) Depreciated

Item	Acquisition date	Cost	Life	Method	Current Year	Accumulated	Under-revalued Balance
Airframe - 44架							
B-1000 Convair 440	50/6	117,165,640	6	Diminishing Value	11,856,760	73,944,520	32,266,360
B-1006 DC-6B	47/10	50,393,600	6	"	3,578,520	40,230,080	6,477,000
B-1006 DC-4	44/3	23,866,720	"	Straight Line	-	21,480,080	2,386,640
B-1010 DC-4	51/1	4,467,280	"	"	-	4,467,280	-
B-851 DC-4	51/7	18,598,960	6	Diminishing Value	2,069,160	15,811,800	7,343,920
B-853	51/7	10,881,360	"	"	2,958,640	8,341,480	7,618,440
B-855	44/3	3,354,800	"	"	-	3,019,320	335,480
B-926		3,159,160	"	"	-	2,883,240	315,920
B-817 C-47	44/3	3,075,000	"	"	-	2,707,500	307,500
B-827	44/3	2,280,920	"	"	-	2,054,840	226,080
B-829	47/7	2,101,120	"	"	-	2,075,000	26,120
B-841	20/10	908,440	"	"	-	908,440	-
B-879	53/9	1,815,680	6	Straight line	16,160	304,920	1,494,400
B-825	44/5	2,614,280	"	"	-	2,352,840	261,440
B-831	48/3	1,116,160	"	"	-	775,320	340,840
B-839 Helio	50/9	384,560	"	"	-	157,320	227,240
B-863	50/21	1,265,920	6	Straight line	137,080	436,920	691,920
B-849	51/3	1,213,160	"	"	137,080	436,920	639,160
B-857	51/6	1,275,200	6	"	145,640	304,560	743,000
B-865	51/10	1,073,920	6	"	153,480	420,680	600,160
B-867	52/10	544,560	3	"	109,280	343,840	821,800
B-869	52/11	514,920	3	"	69,320	149,240	305,360
AV-8A2	52/2	898,960	5	Retiring balance	16,640	202,120	443,680
B-875 (AV-NAP)	53/7	912,000	5	"	63,000	392,640	456,360
B-877 (AV-NAP)	53/7	912,000	5	"	56,680	144,320	699,760
B-803 Helicopter	54/2	898,960	5	"	56,720	147,000	695,240
B-855 Helio	54/2	899,000	"	"	42,480	(42,480)	-
B-861				"	89,520	(89,520)	-
B-871				"	16,640	(16,640)	-
B-873				"	(45,000)	45,000	-
Aircraft & Engine		126,660,800	4	"	(56,680)	56,680	-
Propeller		14,569,720	5	"	4,661,000	81,611,840	40,387,560
Dark Com. Equip.		53,810,040	5	"	1,856,000	5,555,560	7,158,160
Other Flt. Equip.		23,797,120	5	"	6,046,640	20,008,040	27,755,360
Notable acc't-parts		87,618,160	5	"	2,318,680	13,752,000	7,326,444
					12,815,160	28,940,080	45,864,884

Analysis of donated capital
(in: UTD/Herd/B2)

Air Asia's Statement of Property
(in: UTD/CIA/B26F5)

Air America to cover the sum due for that unidentified Grumman Goose. The date is given as March 65, believed to be the date of Promissory note no. 10. Nevertheless, such a Grumman Goose does not appear in any of the Company's Flight Operations Circulars and not even on Air Asia's Statement of Property dated 31 March 65 (in: UTD/CIA/B26F5), which also mentions aircraft that were no longer current at that date like Bell 47 B-803. The other thing that surprises in that deal is the extremely low price paid for that Grumman Goose: As can be seen in the "Analysis of donated capital" mentioned above (in: UTD/Herd/B2), it was only a fifth of what the Company would have paid for a Helio Courier at that time, although a Goose is much bigger than a Helio.

The explanation seems to be that that Grumman Goose was no longer airworthy, but just a hull. And this point allows identifying the aircraft. For in 1952, Western Enterprises Inc., the CIA front working on Taiwan, acquired a Grumman OA-9 Goose, appropriately marked as "OA9-0002". In his book about the Republic of China Air Force 34th Squadron, published in Chinese by *Masterbooks*, Taipei, Taiwan in 2006, Clarence Fu reproduces a photo of a Goose serialled "OA9-0002" on p.23, copied here with kind permission from Clarence Fu.



Western Enterprises Goose OA9-0002 at Tainan, Taiwan in the early fifties
(submitted by Leon Callaghan (†) to Clarence Fu)

In his e-mail dated 22 October 2006, kindly sent to the author, Clarence Fu explains: "My Australian friend Leon Callaghan's father was a CAT employee. He took the photo of the Goose in CAT's maintenance shop in Tainan. It had no markings except under the left wing something that looked like OA9-0002. It occasionally showed up in Taoyuan AFB where the special missions of CIA-RoCAF started from. The aircraft was later planned to be used by the VIP squadron of RoCAF as President Chiang's personal aircraft, but two RoCAF pilots crashed it while they tried to land on water in a training flight at Tongkang, Pingtung,

so it did not go into real service.” This Goose already existed in 1952: “My friend Col. Huang (ret.) saw the Goose in 1952. He worked in a small depot just next to the apron where the B-17 usually parked in Taoyuan AFB. [...] He remembers the C-54 and Goose would come to the base occasionally.” (e-mail dated 23 October 2006, kindly sent to the author by Clarence Fu).

This Goose was flown by CAT personnel. Connie Seigris recalls: “The PBY’s main function was for flying to the Mainland Chinese off shore islands of Kinmen, Matsu, and Tachens as an air support for Western Enterprise Incorporated’s outlying stations on those islands. [...] WEI owned an amphibian aircraft called the Grumman Goose, which is less than half the size of the PBY. CAT maintained and crewed the Goose for WEI as required. I flew it at various times while it was stationed on Taiwan from 1952 until 1954. It was flown to the usual PBY destinations mostly for VIP. [...] Don [Teeters] and I were the only two CAT captains checked out on the PBY for a period of about seven years. During that time we were almost always on standby for the boats as most called the PBY. [...] We had two PBYs and later the Company added a Grumman Goose to their inventory we also flew. On occasion Don and I would have flights on the same day. Sometimes we would be scheduled out during the same period of the day. [...] I had an early flight one morning and was returning from one of the islands south of Taipei. As I was approaching the coast of Taiwan Island about 20 miles west of Taipei, the Goose shot past me having come down from behind. I immediately knew it was Don, but wasn’t aware he was supposed to be flying. I later learned he had been called from standby while I was out on my flight. [...] The Goose was faster than the PBY and he was happy with the prospect he was really going to do me in [...]. He made a sharp turn to the left still pulling away with his higher speed. [...] He tightened up his turn and I couldn’t believe what I saw. His Goose flipped to the right in a violent maneuver. I knew Don was a smoother pilot than to treat his aircraft that roughly. [...] When he returned from his flight later in the day he said the Goose flipped out from under him when he tightened up his left turn. We found out later thru some research the Goose was notorious for the flip at excessive speed in a tight left turn.” (Connie Seigris, *Memoirs*, pp. 26/7 + 36/7, at: UTD/Leary/ I B9F16). In his log book, Connie Seigris noted this Goose as “002” (e-mail dated 12 January 2008, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigris). Based on this log book, his son Steve observes (E-mail dated 18 January 2008, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigris): “On the first flight that I’ve found, on 21 Nov 1952, he flew from ‘TAIPEI - PT. Z - TAIPEI.’ On the last flight that I found, 14 Jul 1953, he flew it from ‘TAIPEI - BS - TAIPEI.’ On some PBY flights, BS is also called PT.BS. I notice that there are places called Point M, Point DC, Point X, etc. Maybe these are different regions or islands along coastal mainland China.”

Rumors say that the Goose was operated to about 1955, when Western Enterprises was dissolved, and that it was then put up for sale. It was probably then that it was intended to become a VIP aircraft for Chiang Kai-shek. “Gen. I’s book mentioned that the RoCAF wanted to introduce this Goose to become a VIP aircraft especially for Chiang Kai-shek’s use. Two pilots from the VIP squadron test flew this aircraft in Sun-Moon Lake. They misjudged the height above water and plunged the Goose into the water. The two pilots escaped. I cannot find the time of this accident, but I guess it might be between 1955 and 1957 when they wanted to sell it.” (e-mail dated 6 August 2007, kindly sent to the author by Clarence Fu). This comment could fit with two more entries in the log book of Connie Seigris. As his son Steve Seigris notes (e-mail dated 12 January 2008, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigris), the log book notes 2 flights in an aircraft serialised “002”: They were: “16 Jul 1955; points from and to entry states: ‘TAINAN - TEST’ and 28 Dec 1955; ‘PO - WS’”. But both aircraft are marked as PBY in the log book, and although it is likely that the entries refer to our Grumman Goose “002”, perhaps test flown in July 55 before

being demonstrated to the RoCAF and then in December 55 recovered after the accident, there was also a RoCAF PBY serialled “50002” (see the photo in: Legg, *Consolidated PBY Catalina*, p.147), which would probably also appear as “002” in a log book.

It is unknown what damage that accident did to the Goose, but even an aircraft that was only slightly damaged will probably deteriorate if it has to wait for a buyer for several years. This may explain the extremely low price. The purchaser that was found at the end seems to have been CAT Inc, which became Air America Inc in March 59 – the intention in buying it may have been to use it for training mechanics in Air Asia’s Technical Training Department at Tainan, like the old B-26 N4852V that was acquired in 1968, although it was no longer airworthy. And so it appeared in the Air America papers mentioned above.

The msn of Goose “OA9-0002” can only be guessed. Apparently, the serial was to look like a certain type of Republic of China Air Force serials of the fifties and sixties, where the first 3 digits indicate the type of aircraft – like C-54G “C-54002” (see the photo on p.119 of Clarence Fu’s book) or C-46 “C-46253” (see Davis / Martin / Whittle, *The Curtiss C-46 Commando*, p.144). This would mean that our Goose was not a former US Navy or US Coast Guard “JRF”, but a former US Army Air Corps “OA-9”, of which only 26 aircraft were originally built. Five more aircraft were transferred from the British order for 50 JRF-6B to the USAAC, becoming 42-106979 to 42-106983 (e-mail dated 8 February 2009 kindly sent by John M. Davis to Paul Oelkrug who forwarded it to the author). Eleven OA-9s survived World War II, and the subsequent history of seven survivors is unknown: The Master Goose Directory (<http://www.geocities.com/alaskangoose/List-1.html>) gives them the way they are listed below, with additional information coming from John M. Davis:

- OA-9s 38-559 (msn 1025, withdrawn from use in July 44, condemned in the western hemisphere [e-mail dated 8 February 2009 kindly sent by John M. Davis to Paul Oelkrug who forwarded it to the author]),
- 38-566 (msn 1032, withdrawn from use in June 46, condemned in the western hemisphere [e-mail dated 8 February 2009 kindly sent by John M. Davis to Paul Oelkrug who forwarded it to the author]),
- 38-567 (msn 1033, seriously damaged or destroyed at Pearl Harbor, and condemned 18 January 1942 [e-mail dated 8 February 2009 kindly sent by John M. Davis to Paul Oelkrug who forwarded it to the author]),
- 38-569 (msn 1035, delivered new to Nichols Field, Hawaii on 17 November 1939 and condemned 11 June 45 in Hawaii. Those aircraft destroyed at Pearl Harbor had been condemned in 1942, so this aircraft was apparently a survivor [e-mail dated 8 February 2009 kindly sent by John M. Davis to Paul Oelkrug who forwarded it to the author]),
- 38-576 (msn 1042, condemned at Atkinson Field, British Guiana, on 3 March 47 and broken up for spares [e-mail dated 8 February 2009 kindly sent by John M. Davis to Paul Oelkrug who forwarded it to the author]),
- 38-578 (msn 1044, withdrawn from use in September 45, condemned in the western hemisphere [e-mail dated 8 February 2009 kindly sent by John M. Davis to Paul Oelkrug who forwarded it to the author]), and
- 38-580 (msn 1046, withdrawn from use in June 44, condemned in the western hemisphere [e-mail dated 8 February 2009 kindly sent by John M. Davis to Paul Oelkrug who forwarded it to the author]).

Western Enterprises’ Goose “OA9-0002” is believed to have been one of these 7 aircraft, and

as all other aircraft were condemned in the western hemisphere, the Goose that went to Taiwan was probably msn 1035, former 38-569, that is the aircraft that had survived Pearl Harbor.

© University of Texas at Dallas, 11 August 2008, last updated on 1 June 2009.