



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even on Air Asia's Statement of Property dated 31 March 65 (in: UTD/CIA/B26F5), which also mentions aircraft that were no longer current at that date like Bell 47 B-803.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 34<sup>th</sup> 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 Seigrist 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 Seigrist, *Memoirs*, pp. 26/7 + 36/7, at: UTD/Leary/ I B9F16). In his log book, Connie Seigrist noted this Goose as “002” (e-mail dated 12 January 2008, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigrist). Based on this log book, his son Steve observes (E-mail dated 18 January 2008, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigrist): “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 Seigrist. As his son Steve Seigrist notes (e-mail dated 12 January 2008, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigrist), the log book notes 2 flights in an aircraft serialled “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.