CAT, Air Asia, Air America – the Company on Taiwan III: Work for the US Government
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I) Flights for the CIA:
CAT flights undertaken for the CIA out of Taiwan were probably the active side of US support for Nationalist China, whose defensive side was the beginning of US Military Aid in 1951. “The turning point came when President Harry S. Truman made his declaration of the neutralization of Taiwan on June 27, 1950. In May of the following year, Major General William C. Chase arrived at Taiwan as head of the Military Assistance Advisory Group. He started with a staff of eleven officers and men. Now [i.e. in October 54] there are under him more than eight hundred selected US Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps officers and non-commissioned officers. The delivery of American aid weapons and war equipment was in keeping with the increased number of men […] and now jet fighters and warships are being delivered to the Chinese government. The Chinese troops are regrouped and trained by members of MAAG according to the experiences gained during the Korean War.”

The main objective of CIA’s Far East operations during the Korean War seems to have been to weaken North Korea and the big supporter of North Korea, i.e. Communist China. As to Red China, this was to be done by supporting local conflicts that might force the Red Chinese Government to withdraw troops from the Korean front line. These operations concentrated on four areas: 1) the southwestern province of Yunnan; 2) North Korea and Manchuria; 3) coastal areas in southeastern China; and 4) anti-communist resistance groups in northwestern China. CAT was involved in supporting all four operations by dropping agents who were to help organize local resistance and or by dropping supplies to those resistance groups. 1) Conflicts in Yunnan province were to be created by remnants of Kuomintang troops who had fled to Burma; CAT’s activities in this context are described in my file entitled Working in remote countries. 2) Anti-communist resistance groups in North Korea and Manchuria were supplied out of Atsugi Naval Air Station in Japan and out of Korea; that is why CAT’s activities in this context are described in my file entitled CAT and Air America in Japan. 3) Conflicts in the coastal areas of southern China were supported out of Taiwan; CAT’s activities in this context are described in this file. 4) Anti-communist resistance groups in northwestern China were supplied by CAT’s long overflights over Mainland China; as these flights were carried out by CAT’s airline DC-4 or by a Western Enterprises B-17, they originated in Taiwan; so CAT’s activities in this context are also described in this file.

Flights for Western Enterprises Inc.
When in Korea, 200,000 Chinese “volunteers” crossed the Yalu River in November 1950, the time had come to organize indigenous resistance elements in China, in order to force the Chinese Communists to divert part of their troops to South China. One of these efforts was to mount commando raids against the mainland coast, and this was to be done jointly by OPC – the Office of Policy Coordination, i.e. the paramilitary side of the CIA2 – and the Chinese Nationalist military (Project BGMARQUE). So after General Chiang Kai-shek and the US

2 Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, pp.4/5.
Department of State had given their approval, Western Enterprises Inc. (WEI) was founded at Pittsburgh in February 51 as a commercial enterprise doing world-wide export-import business and construction work, and a field office was established at Taipei. WEI was to serve as cover for the project. In early February 51, General Chennault and Alfred Cox helped to locate training, billeting and logistical sites to be available to the project, and in late February, Colonels Ray Peers and Robert Delaney took over command of the project. Western Enterprises' first employees appeared on Taiwan in March 51. The primary mission of WEI was political and military activity against Mainland China out of bases built on the Nationalist-held islands lying off the China Coast.

There were four types of missions that CAT had to fly for Western Enterprises Inc in the Southern part of China: Support for the Coastal Islands, airborne intelligence, dropping leaflets or agents on the China coast, and supporting agents in Southern China. Most of the activities concentrated on support flights for the WEI outposts on the islands located along the China coast opposite Taiwan. “The major operation to support pro-Nationalist guerrillas was centered on Taiwan. As Joseph Smith recalled: ‘FE/OPC had more than six hundred persons on Taiwan providing guerrilla training, logistical support, overflight capabilities, facilities for propaganda coverage of the mainland by radio and leaflet balloon, and doing other tasks. They were covered by a factitious commercial company called Western Enterprises. [...] Raymond W. Peers, ex-Detachment 101 commander in Burma during World War II and destined for a distinguished military career, was in charge of operations during the early 1950’s. CAT had been involved in a few CIA operations involving leaflet and agent drops on the mainland since summer 1950. Beginning in spring 1951 these operations expanded considerably. Rousselot was the key to operations. A mission could be assigned to an Agency representative (commonly LaGueux at this period). Rousselot would be responsible for the planning and selection of crew. (The CIA agent in charge had veto power over choice of crew, a power rarely if ever exercised.) The agency was happy as long as Rouss delivered. And, as one former Agency officer recalled, ‘Rousselot always delivered.’”

Along the China coast, as many as 50 large and small islands were either in Nationalist hands or protected by Nationalist naval vessels. On these islands lived thousands of natives, organized as irregulars, living on fishing, smuggling, and pirating, and waiting that Chiang Kai-shek would fulfill his promise to retake the mainland. The Southern group of these islands, located in Fukien Province and immediately opposite Taiwan, comprise – from southwest to northeast – Tung-shan, Quemoy/Kinmen, Mei-chou, Wu-ch’iu, Nan-jih, Pai-ch’üan, and Matsu, while the Northern group, located in Chekiang Province and south of Shanghai, comprise – looking from south to north – Nan-chi Shan, Tung-t’ou Shan, P’i-shan, Ta-ch’én, Yü-shan, and Chou-shan. Beginning in 1951, a small group of Americans from WEI soon populated some of these islands, mainly Quemoy/Kinmen and Pai-ch’üan in the Southern, and Ta-ch’én in the Northern group of islands. The first WEI employees arrived on Taiwan in March 51, when the organization was established in the Taipei Guest House.
The mission of the Americans was training and equipping the guerrillas.\textsuperscript{10} On the islands, WEI was first supplied by CAT C-46s – an operation that CAT called “North”.\textsuperscript{11} In April or May 51, the “Dragon”, i.e. Ed Hamilton, WEI commander on Quemoy, arrived on the island. Frank Holober recalls: “Soon after the Dragon’s arrival, C-46 cargo flights chartered from CAT began making same-day flights to Quemoy, offloading personnel, reinforcements, replacements if necessary for those going on leave, visiting specialists, and all sorts of personnel, recreational, operational, administrative necessities, arriving routinely or in response to cabled requests. Typical items might include decks of cards, paperbacks, mail from home, a forty-five speed record player and records, two five-horsepower generators to keep the lights burning and the record player playing, barrels of oil and gasoline to keep the generators and jeep running, tune-up parts for the jeep, toilet paper, binoculars, personal side arms, and assorted canned goods, as well as explosives, arms and ammunition used for training. It took a month or six weeks after the advance party arrived for the staff to reach full complement. I was the next to arrive, in an airplane piloted by Bill Welk. As was customary, Bill allowed his passenger to join him and his navigator ‘Pinky’ Pinkava in the cockpit. The flight to Quemoy had become routine, but CAT and WEI were both uncomfortably aware of several serious situations. First, there was a war on. Second, the Communists presumably knew early on that Americans were building up a hostile force on an island lying a few miles off the coast of mainland China. At last, the Chicoms, courtesy of the Russians, were in possession of advanced offensive air power. Who would be the first sitting duck to be a hero of the Korean War this far south?\textsuperscript{12}

Training on Quemoy included small-unit offensive and defensive tactics like how to take a defended village, explosives training, weapons inspections, range firing, the care and cleaning of weapons, maintenance of inventory records, intelligence collection and processing, which included plotting order-of-battle information on maps and interrogating prisoners, as well as communications. The idea was that the guerrilla units, after proper training and equipping, would infiltrate into selected coastal areas and then into mountainous areas further inland, relying on air drops organized by WEI. But this did not work: A first assault force of 200 guerrillas left Quemoy in September 51 by boat, but within a few days, Communist troops ended the campaign. Small hit-and-run raids onto neighboring islands, leaving before dawn and arriving back the same afternoon, became the new tactics. In October 51, another raid was organized to attack the small island of Mei-chou. Three days before the raid, a CAT C-46 fully loaded with weapons dropped them into an uninhabited area of Quemoy at about 2000 hours. The guerrillas picked them up, cleaned them and the following day, the guerrillas destroyed a lot of Communist defenses on that island.\textsuperscript{13} On 7 December 51, the Quemoy guerrillas attacked the island of Nan-jih in a similar way, again destroying many enemy defenses on that island.\textsuperscript{14} Raids like this were repeated in 1952, until a sizable MAAG contingent was assigned to Quemoy in 1953, bringing in tanks, a real destroyer and powerful

\textsuperscript{10} Holober, \textit{Raiders of the China coast}, p.34.
\textsuperscript{11} CIA-man Frank Holober arrived on Quemoy on a CAT C-46 in June 51, as Quemoy had a small airstrip, where a handful of AT-6s were based at that time. Most food for the troops, especially rice, as well as military supplies had to be brought in from Taiwan (Holober, \textit{Raiders of the China Coast}, pp.10, 20, and 25). A CAT Memo of 20 December 53 about WEI C-46 210 and WEI B-24 engines (in: UTD/Rosbert/B2F1) confirms that “North” was CAT’s code for Western Enterprises Inc. Probably, the C-46 assigned to operation “North” also flew the Taipei-Taoyuan AF-BeTaipei run, bringing the CAT crews who were to fly the B-17 out of Taoyuan.
\textsuperscript{12} Holober, \textit{Raiders of the China coast}, pp.36/7.
\textsuperscript{13} Holober, \textit{Raiders of the China coast}, pp.38, 44-49.
\textsuperscript{14} Holober, \textit{Raiders of the China coast}, pp.51-53.
artillery, so that the WEI guerrillas were no longer needed.

Most of the coastal islands, however, were not that easily accessible by airplane, because they did not have an airstrip. So, probably already in February 51, WEI intended to acquire a PBY, and apparently registration no. XT-819 was reserved. At the same time, i.e. in January 1951, CAT hired the first pilot who was to fly the PBY: Don Teeters.16

But Civil Air Transport, who was apparently commissioned to look for a suitable aircraft, checked several PBYs available in the Far East without any positive results. For it was not until July 51 that a CAT delegation flew to Noumea to inspect the PBY that CAT wanted to buy,17 and it seems that CAT used it only in August 1951.18 The reason why B-819 is not in CAT’s fleet list of September 51 seems to be that at that time, the PBY-5A was only a “project aircraft” owned by and chartered from Western Enterprises Inc – like the Grumman Goose and the B-17 later,19 and CAT probably had the same strategy as Air America in later years: “Project aircraft” were never included in fleet lists like Air America’s “Flight Operations Circulars” that were open to the eyes of all Company employees. But there is no doubt that the aircraft existed as early as 1951, because Western Enterprises Inc. was established in February 51, when CAT was asked for air support.20 As the official owner of the PBY at that time was Western Enterprises Inc and not CAT, WEI probably reserved the registration number XT-819 as early as February 51, but as CAT did not find a suitable aircraft, it was probably not taken up before August 51, when Taiwan had already received their own nationality prefix B-. So the PBY immediately became B-819, probably in August 51, i.e. at a time, when C-47 XT-821 had already gone, although – for political reasons21 – this C-47 was probably still registered on Taiwan.

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15 Holober, 
17 In his letter to Joe Rosbert, CAT’s Joe Orloski noted on 3 July 51: “Folz will leave for Noumea tomorrow to inspect an Air France PBY which CAT is contemplating to buy. He inspected the TAA and TAAS PBY’s and found that they were in very bad condition” (Letter dated 3 July 51, in: UTD/Rosbert/B2F1).
18 Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, p.79.
19 This was still the case in July 1953; see Leary, Manuscript, p.343, in: UTD/Leary/B19F2.
21 In his letter to Joe Rosbert, Joe Orloski noted on 3 July 51: “The MOC [Ministry of Communications of Taiwan] has still not recognized the sale of the two KNA planes. This problem has really taken on proportions. No one dreamed that there would be such complications. The bilateral agreement between Korea and China has bogged down in red tape.”
In 1952, CAT added several aircraft to its fleet, whose ultimate purpose was to help create local disturbances in mainland China and so to help withdraw Chinese troops from the Korean front. As to Western Enterprises’ activities on the Offshore Islands along the China coast, CAT operated the Grumman Goose (OA9-0002) that Western Enterprises had acquired in July 52, and also a second PBY-5A (B-825) that CAT Inc had bought in July 52. Former CAT pilot 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 Enterprises 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

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22 Holober, *Raiders of the China coast*, p.100.
23 A Memo sent by CAT’s Joe Rosbert on 5 September 56 (mentioned in: Leary, Manuscript, note 469a, in: UTD/Leary/B18F16) refers to the sale of Grumman Goose “serial no. 1153”. Probably this was the msn of Goose OA9-0002.
25 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of CAT Incorporated dated 21 July 1952, in: UTD/CIA/B4F6A.
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.” In 1951, nine Army parachuters were assigned to WEI as kickers. Sometimes, they were asked by the American pilot to sit in the copilot seat of the Goose and fly to those small islands near the China coast. Then, the cargo was sometimes supplies like fruits and cigarettes. In his log book, Connie Seigrist noted this Goose as “002”. Based on this log book, his son Steve observes: “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.”

Western Enterprises Inc Goose OA9-0002 operated by CAT, seen at Tainan in the early fifties (with kind permission from Clarence Fu)

So, since the mid-fifties, CAT’s two PBY-5As (B-819 and B-825) plus a Grumman Goose (OA9-0002) had been used to support Chinese Nationalist positions on islands off the coast of Mainland China. “The PBYs were out of Taipei. [...] Don Teeters was the pilot. He was also the Chief pilot in the Head office in Taipei at 46 Chung Shan Peiliu. No scheduled flights, but they were on demand.” From Connie Seigrist’s log book, it seems that PBY destinations “Pt.A”, “Pt.B”, “(Pt.)BS”, and “Pt.C” were all islands of the southern group with flying times forth and back in the PBY ranging from 3.00 hours to “Pt.B”, 3.43 hours to “(Pt.)BS”, 3.46 hours to “Pt.C” to about 4.00 hours to “Pt.A”. As the PBY had a cruising speed of 125 mph, the destinations were all between 187 miles and 250 miles away from the airport of Taipei where all of those flights began. This fits to the islands of Kinmen, Pai-ch’üan and Matsu, the centers of WEI’s activities in the southern group of islands. As CAT

26 Connie Seigrist, Memoirs, pp. 26/7 + 36/7, at: UTD/Leary/B21F11.
27 E-mail dated 8 December 2013, kindly sent to the author by Clarence Fu.
28 E-mail dated 12 January 2008, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigrist.
29 E-mail dated 18 January 2008, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigrist.
30 E-mail dated 21 January 2006 kindly sent to the author by Ward S. Reimer.
31 On 3 December 2012, Steve Seigrist kindly sent the author some scans from his father’s log book.
served the island of Kinmen at 2 points – the old Kinmen Airport was located on the eastern side of the main island, and Connie Seigrist often landed in the sea southeast of Kinmen. These 2 places are believed to be “Pt.B” and “Pt.BS” (standing for “Point B, southeast”), leaving “Pt.C” for Pai-ch’üan and “Pt.A” for the island of Matsu located further north within the southern group.

Training on the Northern islands of P’i-shan and Yü-shan had begun in 1951, others like Ta-ch’en were under active consideration. In the summer of 1952, Pai-ch’üan (“White Dog”) in the southern group was to become a new base of operations, and so a meeting was arranged on Wu-ch’iu, a small island just north of Nan-jih, which was firmly in the hands of a guerrilla unit. To arrive there, the group took a patrol boat, but for the return trip, they were picked up by a CAT PBY, the usual way to resupply all of the islands except Quemoy/Kinmen, which had an airstrip. While Pai-ch’üan proved to be less suitable, WEI settled on P’i-shan in the northern group in the spring of 1951 and then transferred the trained guerrillas to nearby Yüshan (“Fish Mountain”) to join another group camped there. In spite of the abundance of fish, Yüshan was problematic: There was something like a harbor, but it faced the mainland. “PBY seaplane pilots were also not too enamored with landing in the harbor area, which was rimmed by reefs. If the seas farther out were at all angry, the only way to take off was to turn the plane in a tight circle until one wing was almost hitting the water and one wheel was dangling in the air, gradually picking up enough speed to permit a takeoff.” The first WEI trainer arrived at Yü-shan by PBY in August 51. Later that month, weather became so bad that it was impossible for the PBY to land for 2 days, but the guerrillas were supplied with food and other things by regular C-46 airdrops. In mid-September 51, the guerrillas organized a small invasion into mainland China, but this was a complete failure. Activities then focused on intelligence gathering, and some specialists arrived at Yü-shan by PBY in December 51. But as P’i-shan was considered too vulnerable to Communist attacks and Yüshan too limited for significant operations, WEI decided to choose another island as home of the Northern base of operations: Ta-ch’en.

In the fall of 1951, WEI established a base on Ta-ch’en, as General Hu Tsung-nan, who arrived there by PBY in October 51, could claim six or more battalions of guerrillas scattered over the various islands. At the same time, the Nationalist Navy dispatched a marine regiment of about 1,000 men to Ta-ch’en. Although attempts to build a runway capable of C-46 landings on Ta-ch’en were not successful, the island became WEI’s base in the Northern group of islands, whose main objective was hitting targets along the coast, and a number of raids were undertaken between March 52 and mid-June 53. In the meantime, the island was

33 “Kinmen Airport originated from a military base which was established in 1949. It was located at Si-hung, a small village on the eastern side of the island. In June of 1951 the Defense Ministry ratified Transasia Airways (TNA) to launch its first flight to Kinmen and thus a once-a-week routine flight began operation.” (http://www.kma.gov.tw/english/index_e.htm).
35 Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, p.67.
36 Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, pp.72-78.
37 Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, p.79.
38 Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, p.79.
39 Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, p.84.
40 Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, pp.85-87.
41 Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, pp.108/9.
regularly supplied by C-46 airdrops and by PBY flights. Former CAT pilot Connie Seigrist recalls: “I flew the C-46 for airdrops on the offshore islands. The airdrops were required for delivery of outsized cargo too large to fit into the PBY fuselage entrance or delivery of supplies needed during long sieges of inclement weather conditions or preventing exposure of the PBY on the water at times to possible Chicom endangerment.” The distance between Taipei and the Tachen Islands of the northern group is 239.3 miles, which – at the cruising speed of the PBY that is at 125 mph – would make it a flight of a little bit less than 2 hours to get there. In his log book, Connie Seigrist mentions 2 destinations that were probably islands of the northern group: On 12 May 53, Connie Seigrist flew PBY-5A B-825 on a flight from Taipei to “Pt.Z” (believed to stand for Ta-ch’en Island) and back to Taipei, which – together with a flight in Goose “002” from Tainan to Taipei that would have been a little bit more than an hour – lasted 5.13 hours. On 7 May 1953, he flew the same PBY B-825 from Taipei to “Pt.X” and back to Taipei on a flight that lasted even 7.47 hours. “Pt.X” is believed to stand for Yü-shan, the northernmost island in the northern group, and as in May 1953, the Communists captured five islands in the northern strait south of Shanghai and well north of Ta-ch’en, it is believed that the long duration of the flight also means local evacuation work in that area north of Yü-shan.

A page from Connie Seigrist’s log book kindly supplied by his son Steve: On 5 May 53, we have a flight in Grumman Goose “002” from Taipei to “BS” (probably standing for Kinmen, southeast side) and back, on 6 May, Connie ferried PBY-5A B-819 from Taipei to Tainan, and on 7 May 53, he took PBY-5A B-825 to the north of the northern group of islands on a 7.47 hour flight, “Pt.X” probably standing for Yü-shan.

In October 1952, a group of veterans arrived on Pai-ch’üan (“White Dog”) in the southern group of islands, “courtesy of pilot Connie Seigrist and his PBY.” One day in February 53, one of these veterans and his interpreter visited an uninhabited neighboring island, where both were wounded by a landmine destined for Communist patrols. They made it back to Pai-ch’üan, but needed to be flown to Taipei. However, “the seas were too rough to risk sending in a PBY, but Doctors Marty Marino and Pat Hildreth both volunteered to parachute in if needed. Fortunately, the weather cleared somewhat the next day and they were evacuated to Taipei, thanks to Connie Seigrist and the judicious use of the seaplane’s JATO (jet-assisted takeoff) mechanism.” A similar situation came in the fall of 1953, but this time in the

43 Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, pp.144+146.
44 Connie Seigrist, Memoirs, p. 27, at: UTD/Leary/B21F11.
47 On 3 December 2012, Steve Seigrist kindly sent the author some scans from his father’s log book.
48 On 3 December 2012, Steve Seigrist kindly sent the author some scans from his father’s log book.
49 Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, p.151.
50 Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, p.99.
51 Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, p.102.
northern group of islands. During an excursion to an uninhabited island close to Ta-ch’en, one of the members of the party was hit by a bullet: “It was a nasty wound; as soon as they landed on Ta-ch’en, a PBY was ordered to evacuate him. Connie Seigrist came in about midnight accompanied by a second PBY to illuminate the landing area, and spirited Frank back to Taipei.”

Capt. Connie Seigrist, the pilot who rescued the 2 wounded men, seen here at Pusan, Korea in late June 1951
(photo kindly submitted by his son Steve Seigrist)

In the absence of raids, Pai-ch’üan (“White Dog”) in the southern and Ta-ch’en in the northern group of islands concentrated their activities on intelligence-gathering, which meant watching the ships passing by. WEI and its successor NACC kept an intelligence presence on Pai-ch’üan – “only one person towards the end – until 1958, when the Americans quietly folded their remaining tent, so to speak, and left White Dog to its own devices.”53 WEI’s end came with the unsuccessful attack onto Tung-shan on 16 July 53, an operation in which WEI’s guerrillas had jointly fought with the combined forces of the Nationalist Army, Navy and Air Force: “With no further need for irregulars, they could be converted to regular status, supported by MAAG. […] Sheer momentum and bureaucratic adjustments kept WEI technically afloat for another eighteen months, engaged primarily in intelligence collection. […] By early 1955, taps sounded for Western Enterprises Incorporated.”54 –

During the Korean War, the activities of Western Enterprises also included airborne intelligence flights as well as dropping agents into Mainland China, using aircraft and crews of Civil Air Transport.55 CAT’s own PBY-5A B-825 was specially equipped with:

1. Two jettisonable external auxiliary fuel tanks available.
2. Provisions for mounting 8 JATO motors and stowing 4 JATO motors.

52 Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, p.150.
54 Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, pp.195-222, quotation p.222.
55 For Western Enterprises see: Holober, Raiders of the China Coast; Hagedorn / Hellström, Foreign Invaders, pp.169/70; Conboy / Morrison, The CIA’s secret war in Tibet, pp.37/8, 55, and 58.
4. Carries compressed air supply with low pressure regulator (for rubber boat inflation)
5. Cargo flooring installed.
6. Carries spare parts for sustained operation.
7. Gun tunnel hatch retained.
8. Removable aircraft number plates on fin.  
10. Fuel dump system.
11. Navigator’s station.
12. Port blister padded.
13. Auxiliary power plant.  

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As the photo from *CAT Bulletin*, vol. VI of March 1953 suggests, airborne intelligence flights were flown in CAT’s navy blue PBY-5A B-825. In Connie Seigrist’s log book, these flights...
apparently appeared as flights from Taipei to “X Ray” and back to Taipei. On 15 May 53, such a flight lasted about 4 hours,\(^\text{58}\) on 21 May 53, it was about 2.49 hours,\(^\text{59}\) and on 22 May 53, the “X Ray” flight in B-825 lasted 4.33 hours.\(^\text{60}\)

Pages from Connie Seigrist’s log book kindly supplied by his son Steve: “X Ray” airborne intelligence flights that Connie Seigrist made in PBY-5A B-825 on 21 and 22 May 53 after a flight from Taipei to “Pt.B” (believed to stand for Kinmen) and back to Taipei

But things are even more complicated: In his log book, “Doc” Johnson lists several flights he made as Taipei-“Pt XRAY”-Taipei. Each time, he flew a C-46, and each of these flights lasted between 2.4 and 2.7 hours: On 6 October 51, it was a 2.7 hour flight in C-46 B-876, on 2 January 52, it was another 2.7 flight in the same C-46, on 14 April 52, it was a 2.5 h flight in C-46 B-858, and on 16 April 52, it was a 2.4 h flight in C-46 B-130.\(^\text{61}\) As Kinmen was the only place in the coastal islands where a C-46 could land and as “Doc” Johnson sometimes mentions Kinmen as a destination, these were drops. One might think that “Pt XRAY” here is identical with “Pt X” in Connie Seigrist’s listing, believed to stand for Yü-shan in the northern group, but a flight to one of the northern islands and back to Taipei would have lasted much longer. So these C-46 missions to “Point XRAY” were probably intelligence flights or leaflet drops at an unknown place in the coastal areas of Red China.

Pages from “Doc” Johnson’s log book kindly supplied by his son James: flights from Taipei to Point “XRAY” and back to Taipei that “Doc” Johnson made in C-46s B-858 and B-130 on 14 and 16 April 52

As it seems, flights involving drops of leaflets or agents did not necessarily start at Taipei. On 30 December 51, “Doc” Johnson flew C-46 B-848 on the route Naha-“QAC WX”-Naha-Taipei – a flight that lasted 4.5 hours.\(^\text{62}\) As a C-46 would need 2 hours, 30 minutes to fly from Naha to Taipei,\(^\text{53}\) 2 hours would be left for the trip from Naha to “QAC WX” and back to Naha. On 2 January 52, “Doc” Johnson flew C-47 B-815 on the route Taipei-Hualien (“QAC WX”) on a 2.9 hour flight. It is unknown if the 50 minute\(^\text{64}\) flight to Hualien was just a cover for the special flight to “QAC WX”, which is believed to stand for another leaflet drop, but it

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\(^{58}\) The log book gives the total flight time for 15 May 53 as 6.20 hours, but this time also included a flight Taipei-Tainan-Taipei in C-46 B-864 that probably took about 2.20 hours.

\(^{59}\) The log book gives the total flight time for 21 May 53 as 5.49 hours, but this time also included a flight Taipei-Pt.B-Taipei that probably took 3 hours.

\(^{60}\) On 3 December 2012, Steve Seigrist kindly sent the author some scans from his father’s log book.

\(^{61}\) Pages from the log book of “Doc” Johnson, kindly sent to the author by Doc’s son James on 14 February 2013.

\(^{62}\) Pages from the log book of “Doc” Johnson, kindly sent to the author by his son James on 14 February 2013.


\(^{64}\) See CAT’s domestic flights on a Friday, eff. 1 April 53, in: CAT Bulletin, vol. VI, no. 10, October 53, p.19.
probably was, as Hualien is located on the eastern side of Taiwan, and a trip to the Chinese mainland via Hualien would have been sensibly longer than a non-stop trip from Taipei. And then, these trips included a lot of instrument flying, i.e. flights at night, which underlines their secret nature.

Pages from “Doc” Johnson’s log book kindly supplied by his son James:
CAT flights touching “QAC WX” (C-46 B-848; C-47 B-815) and “Pt X-RAY” (C-46 B-876) on 30 December 51 and 2 January 52. The flight time included some instrumental flying (right column)

The leaflets to be dropped were the task of WEI’s Rodney Gilbert (“Uncle Rod”), while James Lassiter was head of the WEI air group. He would contact CAT or the Chinese Air Force for the actual drops. As to leaflet or agent drops, CAT could use their C-46s, when these flights were to go to areas not too far away from Taiwan. CAT’s Chief Pilot Eddie F. Sims recalls dropping leaflets and agents into Hainan in the spring of 1951, also dropping agents into Hankow about the same time – but this was from Taiwan under Ray Peers. From July to November 1952, CIA man Walter P. Kuzmuk was in Taiwan training Nationalist agents under Ray Peers, apparently parachute jumps. Kuzmuk was also involved with leaflet drops and overflights, and he recalled one flight with William Holden, Bob Rousselet and Pinky Pinkava, when they almost missed Hainan on a leaflet drop. This was arranged thru contracts between the CIA station (operating as Western Enterprises) and CAT Inc. But the PBYs were also used to support agents in Southern China.

“Many of the missions in the early 1950’s, especially the leaflet drops, tended to be casual affairs. In fact, informality was a trade-mark of Western Enterprises at this point in time. Hugh Hicks recalled a typical leaflet drop: He was given little in the way of briefing, certainly nothing as sophisticated as ‘penetration routes’. Instead, he was given several gold bars with which he was to bribe his way out of China if forced down. [...] He headed due west across the straits of Formosa, then north along the coast of Fukien. He arrived over the general drop area, where the Chinese kickers would toss out the leaflets. – Drops involving agents or supplies for groups on the ground were more sophisticated affairs with precise departure times, coastline penetration points, ground speeds, approach corridors to drop zones, check points for braking radio silence, and escape-and-invasion flight paths for return. Navigation was always a problem, and missions were scheduled for nights with a full moon to facilitate navigation by pilotage. Drops could be made on prearranged signals on the ground (fires, lights, etc.). The Chinese Communists did not have any night fighter capability, so the major evasion technique was simply to stay away from large cities. ‘Blind’ drops were not

65 Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, p.16.
66 Transcript of an interview with Eddie F. Sims conducted by W. Leary on 12 April 81, in: UTD/Leary/B43F5.
67 Transcript of an interview with CIA man Walter P. Kuzmuk conducted by Prof. William Leary at Shady Side, MD, on 28 August 1980, in: UTD/Leary/B43F1.
68 Transcript of an interview with CIA man Walter P. Kuzmuk conducted by Prof. William Leary at Shady Side, MD, on 28 August 1980, in: UTD/Leary/B43F1.
69 Interview conducted by the author with Connie Seigrist at Alexandria, VA, on 1 June 2006.
uncommon: young Chinese agents would be dropped blind and be expected to establish resistance networks. Few Chinese agents survived. Those who did became double agents.”

In the log books, leaflets drops and other overflights were always well hidden between other flights. Airports that pilots weren’t allowed to name were often indicated by a fictitious airport code like XXX or QAC: Connie Seigrist’s log book has several entries of this type, one of which seems to indicate a leaflet drop over the China coast. It all begins with a test flight of Goose “002” out of Taipei on 17 May 53 and it all ends with another test flight of the same Goose on 19 May. The first test flight lasted only 39 minutes, and the time of the second test flight is only indicated as part of the total flight time of the day, but may have lasted about the same time. On 18 May, Connie Seigrist made the “Round-the-Island-flight” in C-47 B-801 (Taipei-Hwalien-Taitung-Tainan-Makung-Tainan-Makung-Tainan-Taipei) plus an extra flight from Taipei to Hwalien and back to Taipei, altogether no less than 6.55 hours. The following day, 19 May 53, begins the same way – Taipei-Tainan-Makung-Tainan –, but then adds QAC before returning to Taipei. According to CAT’s domestic flight schedule of 1 April 53, these flights would have taken about 4 hours, plus the test flight of the Goose at the end another 40 minutes, making a maximum of 4.40 hours for the whole day. But the flight time for 19 May 53 is given as 6.06 hours. This makes believe that at “QAC” – which may be Taoyuan Air Force Base some 30 miles west of Taipei – Connie Seigrist took his C-47 or an unknown other aircraft on a flight to the China Coast for a leaflet drop, apparently including the 1.22 hours of night flying listed in the log book.

Overflights over Mainland China

At about the same time, in February 1951, plans were made within the CIA to organize anti-Communist guerrilla activities in Mainland China to weaken the Communist regime. One part of these activities was organized from Taipei, where CIA personnel worked under the cover of Western Enterprises Inc (WEI). Overflights over Mainland China by CAT aircraft at first meant only leaflet drops along the Chinese coast or over Hainan Island. Drops involving agents or supplies required special preparation and were mostly flown during nights with a full moon, as the little moonlight available could facilitate the use of ground reference techniques and as the Chinese had no night fighters at that time.

To support anti-Communist resistance fighters in Northwestern China, WEI started with training a radio team of 4 men in secure radio communications and encryption. “Since the main objective was to provide anti-Communist fighters with a consistent supply of all the

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72 Taipei-Tainan 1.20 hour, Tainan-Makung-Tainan 1 hour, and the way back to Taipei a maximum of 2 hours.

73 On 3 December 2012, Steve Seigrist kindly sent the author some scans from his father’s log book.
accoutrements of guerrilla warfare by air, it was also important that those on the ground provide accurate weather information, in addition to operational data. The same team was thus thoroughly trained at a camp north of Taipei on how to make and report weather observations with a minimum, or even a lack, of equipment. They were provided with a simple instrument for measuring wind direction and speed and a psychrometer, which consisted of a dry-bulb thermometer for measuring air temperature and a wet-bulb thermometer for measuring the moisture content of the air. Besides the instruction on instrument care and operation, the team was also taught how to determine cloud types, amounts, heights, and movements; how to indicate surface visibility; and how to classify various weather phenomena such as dust, fog, and precipitation. Their teacher was the CAT meteorologist, appropriately namely John Fogg.”

Long-range penetration flights from Taiwan began in March 1952, could reach the Inner and Outer Mongolia areas and last up to 14 hours. But to support anti-Communist resistance fighters in Northwestern China (Tibet, Szechwan, or Kokonor), CAT also needed an aircraft that had a better range than the C-46, i.e. a C-54. So, in March 52, CAT chartered an unknown C-54 from Seaboard and Western Airlines, which arrived in poor condition and had to be refurbished. This was the aircraft that was used on CAT's first long distance overflight over Mainland China in March 52. Former CAT Chief Pilot Robert Rousselot recalled those first flights: “CAT had flown long-range flights to northwestern China during the early 1950s. Ray Peers, who had a team there, wanted CAT to undertake resupply missions. Rousselot, Sims, Pinkava, and a ‘customer’ kicker made the first flight in daylight in 1952 in a DC-4 […] They dropped short; however, on a second flight they made visual contact on the ground and dropped successfully.”

A detailed and vivid description of what is said to be CAT’s first DC-4 overflight, but probably was a later flight, can be found in Holober, Raiders of the China coast: “On one late afternoon in mid-March 1952, Bob ‘Rouss’ Rousselot’s jeep turned into the Chinese Air Force airbase at T’ao-yuan, about an hour’s drive from Taipei. Travelling with him were copilot Paul Holden and navigator Cyril ‘Pinky’ Pinkava. […] Since they would, of course, receive no radio guidance from the ground during the mission, the crew had to rely on dead reckoning and recognition of key terrain points along the way, which in turn would require plenty of moonlight and a cruising altitude of roughly ten thousand feet. Knowledge of cloud formations and wind speed and direction were essential to stay on course. […] The briefing finally over, Rousselot, Holden, and Pinky […] walked out to the plane and began kicking its tires and otherwise checking for oversights by the maintenance crew. […] Satisfied with the plane’s exterior, the crew climbed aboard and was greeted by three WEI employees – Henry Holober, Raiders of the China coast, p.177.

See also Conboy / Andradé, Spies and commandos, p. 33. These were probably flights for Project STPhoenix mentioned by Leary (Manuscript, chap. IV, p.376, in: UTD/Leary/B19F2), as the “ST” prefix denoted an operation under the CIA’s China Branch (Conboy/Morrison, The CIA’s secret war in Tibet, p.269, note 24).

Holober, Raiders of the China coast, pp.169/70.

Leary, Manuscript, p.127, in: UTD/Leary/B19F1. In 1952, Seaboard had 2 C-54s: N1543V (msn 3101) and N1544V (msn 7460), both owned between October 51 and July 54.

Leary, Perilous missions, p.136, says: on 15 March 52. It was a blind drop of 4 men and supplies, but the men were immediately captured. A first attempt to reach Szechwan on 11 March 52 failed because of bad weather (Leary, Manuscript, p.127, in: UTD/Leary/B19F1).

According to Leary, Perilous missions, p.136, this was another daylight flight made on 17 March 52, but they flew in clouds 75 % of the time and so missed their drop zone by 65 miles.


Because the overflight described was made in darkness, while the first 2 overflights were made in daylight.
Lee, Jack McKeehan, and Jack W. Henry was the overflight interpreter. The two Jacks had spent the whole day overseeing the loading of the supplies and equipment to be dropped and over the target area would act as PDOs (parachute dispatch officers), or ‘kickers’. The weapons and ammo, constituting the bulk of the delivery, were not necessarily the latest from the U.S. inventory. [...] Also on board was the commo team, tense, nervous, but expectant. They had been delivered to the base about an hour earlier. [...] One by one in proper sequence the engines whined their way into life and the propellers began to whip the air, creating a vacuum that made the whole plane quiver like a horse at the starting gate. The plane lumbered to the eastern edge of the runway and spun around. The tower signaled OK and the plane [...] began a slow charge down the field. [...] Dusk had just settled on the landscape when the plane finally lifted off the runway, picked up its circular feet, and droned off nearly due west. [...] The entry point to the mainland, about ninety miles from T’ao-yuan, was about midway between Amoy and Ch’üan-chou. [...] The plane soon made a bumpy ascent over the Min River, the dividing line between north and south Fukien, and over the Wuyi Mountains, a rounded range reminiscent of the Appalachians. Swinging north of Nanchang, the capital of Kiangsi Province, Pinky routed the plane first over Poyang Lake and then followed the mighty Yangtze until it reached the fringes of Tung-t’ing Lake. [...] Rousselot then swung the plane north until clear of the tri-city [...] commonly known as Wuhan. [...] Now four and a half hours into flight, Rouss headed northwest, passing just south of Sian [...] and aimed the nose of the plane at Lanchow and successive layers of the Great Wall. [...] The Great Wall just north of Sining was the final landmark before the crew headed southwest over Kokonor Lake. [...] On the ground, Ma Ch’i-hua [...] had dispersed five hundred followers, each with a sturdy steed for riding and another as a speedy pack animal, in a wide circle. [...] Suddenly, the sound he had been waiting for, the drone of an airplane at low altitude, came from the direction of Kokonor. It must be friendly: no one in his right mind would simply be wandering around the skies in the middle of the night. [...] Now, with freezing hands, he tried to strike a light and get the blaze going. He tried again and again, nearing panic, hearing the plane make a small circle beyond the fringe of his perimeter. [...] In any event, the mixture of dried grass and twigs suddenly burst into flame. [...] But he heard the plane straighten out in the distance and head further southwest. [...] He sprang into his saddle and quickly divided his attachment into two groups. He led a small advance party of about twenty-five horses, unburdened by pack animals, taking off at a gallop toward the plane. His deputy led the rest of the party in a slow canter in the same direction. High above, the plane crew was also in a conundrum. Running the equivalent of one hundred miles southwest of the lake – considered safe area – they looked in vain for a definite signal from below. [...] They took ten precious minutes to swing in a circle around what they had determined was their rendezvous point. Already nearing the halfway point of their journey, timewise, an immediate solution had to be found. [...] Fuel had to last all the way to the airfield at T’ao-yuan. [...] Rousselot at length made an executive decision. He pulled out of the circle and continued on a straight line to the southwest for another fifty miles. At that point he turned the plane around in a reverse direction and ordered the kickers to start sending the parachutes merrily on their way. First, however, he huddled with the commo team and told them of the situation. Since all the eventualities, including this one, had been covered in their training and final briefings, they were already prepared. Their job was to find cover immediately on landing and make radio contact with Taiwan. If they encountered friendlies, they would be in business. If not, they had other options, including enough gold bars to persuade the rudest of non-Chinese strangers to act friendly, even to the point of joining their team and helping in the search for the rendezvous party. They also had with them a load of personal firepower to help protect
themselves and their vital equipment. Within less than half an hour, the C-54 gave an audible sigh of relief as its heavy cargo, following the departure of the commo team, swooshed out of the cabin doors, one chute after the other, into the freezing outside air. Within minutes, the cargo crashed into the arid land below, forming a linear pattern reaching almost to the original rendezvous point. […] Relieved of its burden, the plane had a new bounce to its step as it surged toward home. A northerly great circle route took the plane north of Sining, then along the Great Wall to a point north of Yenan. […] The routing then called for intercepting the Yellow River at the Shansi border, followed by a glide southward between Chengchow […] and Kaifeng. […] Abandoning the Yellow River at that point, the plane’s southerly bent continued over the Huai River and then over the Yangtze somewhat north of Po-yang Lake. From there it would be a straight shot through north Fukien to the home base at T’ao-yuan. […] When the plane landed at T’ao-yuan, the tired crew was greeted with smiles and back slaps. The mood was as if they had just won the World Series. The agents they dropped had indeed made contact after a couple of anxious hours. They had hooked up with Ma Ch’i-hua and his advance party and were collecting the dropped equipment.”

Many other overflights were to follow this one.

In April 52, CAT bought C-54 N86552, which arrived at Taipei in June 52 and was registered as B-1002. It was immediately put into service for airdrops to guerrilla forces in Mainland China. On 19 September 52, CAT established regular DC-4 schedules for the Hong Kong-Taipei-Tokyo route. “However, several times during the fall of 1952, on nights of full moon, the passenger seats were removed, drop tracks installed, and other modifications made for deep penetration missions. (The aircraft would be back in time for the next morning’s passenger service; at one point with anti-Communist leaflets still stuck in the tail!).”

CAT’s Chief Pilot “[Robert] Rousselot was unhappy with the DC-4, especially with winter approaching, as he feared icing.” So, when an unmarked B-17 – a former USAF aircraft that had become part of the CIA’s Air Branch – became available at Kadena Air Base in the spring of 1952, he and Cyril Pinkava went to Kadena, picked it up, “and flew it to Taiwan, where Welk and Johnson took over the resupply operation.”

The B-17 was usually parked at Taoyuan Air Force Base some 30 miles west of Taipei, where the special missions of CIA-RoCAF started from, and in “Doc” Johnson’s log book, this airfield always appears as “TYN”. James Johnson, son of “Doc” Johnson, notes about the entries in his father’s log

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82 Holober, *Raiders of the China coast*, pp.178, 180, 183, 184, 185, 188, 189, 190/1, and 194.

83 Minutes of Meeting of Directors of CAT Incorporated dated 26 and 27 May 1952, in: UTD/CIA/B4F6A; Leary, Manuscript, p.127, in: UTD/Leary/B19F1; in his memo dated 26 May 52 sent to Hugh Grundy (in: UTD/Rosbert/B2F1). Joe Rosbert notes that “the DC-4 initially will require the installation of a static line, a signal box, and a special door which will be shipped with the plane from Okinawa. The door will be replaced after it has served its purpose. At that time we will have to make a duplicate of the door, because I am quite sure that the one being shipped with the plane will have to be returned to Kadena.”


87 Leary, *Perilous missions*, p.136. This was RB-17G 44-85531 (msn 8440), which was also used on the CIA flights to Tibet in 1957. This RB-17G had already left regular USAF service in May 1950, when it was dropped from the inventory “by reclamation” (e-mail dated 30 October 2013, kindly sent to the author by Archie DiFante of AFHRA/rsa). It probably went to the CIA at that time.


89 “My friend Col. Huang (ret.) […] worked in a small depot just next to the apron where the B-17 usually parked in Taoyuan AFB.” (e-mail dated 23 October 2006, kindly sent to the author by Clarence Fu).
“The first flight listed in the logbook for the B17 was on 13AUG1952 with ‘TYN-TYN’ […] in the from-to block. […] The flight time was 3.7 hrs and ‘1004’ listed as the aircraft number. […] Flying partner was Captain Hughes.”

The third crew member on that flight was S. T. Cheung. As there was no B-17 whose USAF serial ended with 1004, apparently Western Enterprises Inc, owner of the B-17, had registered or at least painted it as a civil aircraft – like their PBY-5A B-819 – in the serial sequence for four-engine aircraft, i.e. the next after DC-4 B-1002, for CAT’s own DC-4 B-1004 did not arrive until late 1953. Most of the time, however, “Doc” Johnson seems to have hidden the B-17 flights in between the C-46 flights that brought him from Taipei Sungshan airport to Taoyuan and later took him back from Taoyuan to Taipei. For example, on 6 August 52, his log book shows TPE-TYN-TYN as a 7.4 hour flight in C-46 B-876 with Captain Rousselot and Y. F. Lam as well as H. Y. King as flying partners. On 12 August 52, we have “Doc” Johnson, Paul Holden, and N.G. Soo on a 4.4 hour flight TPE-TYN-TYN in C-46 B-876. On 14 August 52, “Doc” Johnson’s log book shows him plus Paul Holden and C. L. Cheung on a 2.1 hour flight TPE-TYN-TYN, again in C-46 B-876. On 29 August 52, we have “Doc” Johnson, C. H. Liu and C.M. Wong on a 7.9 hour flight TPE-TYN-TYN-TYN in C-46 B-842. On 7 September 52, “Doc” Johnson’s log book showing B-17 “1004” from TYN to TYN on 13 August 52 and the B-17 overflight hidden between the 2 short 15-minute hops in C-46 B-876 that brought him from Taipei to Taoyuan Air Force Base and back to Taipei on 12 and on 14 August 1952 (with kind permission from James Johnson).

“Doc” Johnson’s log book shows him plus S. Tong and S. T. Cheung on a 6.9 hour flight in C-46 B-138. Most interesting, however, is the situation in early September 52: On 2 September, “Doc” Johnson, S. Pan, and N. G. Soo flew C-46 B-136 TPE-TYN-TPE for only 0.5 hours, and on 4 September, the same crew flew the same aircraft TPE-Taoyun-Taoyun-TPE for 6.9 hours. Apparently the 30 minutes flown on 2 September were just the 2 short hops from Taipei to Taoyuan AFB and back, while, for whatever reason – perhaps mechanical problems with the B-17 –, the real overflight did not take place so that everything had to be repeated on 4 September. This allows calculating the real duration of the overflight. “Rousselot had no problem attracting pilots to covert flying. Money was not a major fact, as ‘hazard pay’ at this time was likely to amount to $10/hour – if you could get it. The combination of patriotism and adventure was no doubt more important. (Sims: ‘I accepted covert assignments without question. I believed in the purpose of the operations. There was also the thrill of being involved in covert missions.’) Pilots involved heavily in covert flying at this time included Holden, Watts, Cockrell, McGovern, Pinkava (navigator), Johnson, Welk, Sims, Snoddy, Schwartz.”

90 E-mail dated 5 September 2012, kindly sent to the author by James Johnson.
91 There is, however, no record of a B-17 B-1004 at the CAA (e-mail dated 20 Nov. 2012 kindly sent to the author by Shen, Chi, Director General of Civil Aeronautical Administration, Republic of China).
Some of these flights were rather hair-raising experiences. Former CAT pilot Roy Watts recalls: “The overflights were staged between commercial passenger runs on full moon light nights. The flights were hair raisers whose distance and duration were impressive. My log book reflects one particular flight [on 10 September 52] that last 14:21 with Paul Holden and Charlie Davenport (radio operator). We had two CIA agents aboard as ‘cruise directors’ and lost #3 engine about four hours after penetrating the coast line. The engine quit with such a jolt that we thought we had taken a hit. One of our greatest irritants was the dispatch and in-flight control exercised […]. We considered we were placed in jeopardy by the insistence […] that we precisely follow flight plans that had us making coastline penetrations at the same geographical locations and altitudes on successive nights. There was no real Search & Rescue or Escape and Evasion apparatus that could in the least have rendered aid or comfort if we went down. The potassium cyanide pills were usually politely turned down when offered in our escape kits. The maps were inaccurate, so many of the flights got no closer than twenty or so miles of the assigned DZ, especially in the Inner & Outer Mongolia areas. On a flight with Harry Cockrell I believe all the agents on board either were killed during the parachute descent or were captured upon landing.”

Eric Shilling recalled a C-54 flight to a drop zone located some 200 miles northwest of Chengdu in the Himalayas that lasted nearly 16 hours – the C-54 took off from Clark Air Base in the Philippines and landed at Kadena, Okinawa. Between 11 March 52 and 30 March 53, CAT made a total of 27 flights to the Szechwan area, but only 10 of these were successful, delivering large supplies of ammunition, weapons, radios and demolition equipment to the guerrillas. CAT also dropped 27 men trained and equipped by Western Enterprises to these guerrillas, but most of them were never heard of again. As to the unsuccessful overflights, many of them had to be aborted due to bad weather or engine trouble, and there were probably also many misdrops, when the equipment dropped fell into the hands of the enemy.

In spite of these risks, CAT continued to make these overflights and even assigned additional aircraft to the operation: “In latter days [of the Korean War] Bob and Norm each had their B-17 which at times they flew in consort from K-16.” According to CIA man Walter P. Kuzmuk, many of the B-17 flights were “saturation” flights, flown by “Doc” Johnson. But CAT’s overflights over Mainland China using one of Western Enterprises’ B-17s came to an end with the end of the Korean War. After that, only the Republic of China Air Force continued to make such overflights, using the same B-17s, which were later joined by more aircraft of the same type. And after the end of the Korean War, there were no longer any agent drops over Mainland China.

What is little known: Western Enterprises Inc had its own air arm, i.e. aircraft that apparently belonged to the CIA, but were flown in RoCAF colors and by RoCAF personnel, and CAT apparently maintained them at Tainan for some time. One of them was B-24 “018”.

96 Roy Watts, interview given to W. Leary on 24 May 1980, written version preserved at UTD/Leary/B43F1.
99 Interview with Robert E. Rousselot, conducted by Prof. William Leary on 10 August 1987, written resume, in: UTD/Leary/B43F4. CAT’s second B-17 was 44-83774 (msn 32415), a TB-17G that had been based at Hickam on Hawaii, Haneda in Japan, and Kadena, Okinawa, during the early 50ties, before it was dropped from the USAF inventory at Tachikawa AB, Japan, on 11 March 1953, also “by reclamation”.
100 Transcript of an interview with CIA man Walter P. Kuzmuk conducted by Prof. William Leary at Shady Side, MD, on 28 August 1980, in: UTD/Leary/B43F1.
101 Fu / Pocock, The Black Bats, p. 18.
102 Leary, Manuscript, p.376, in: UTD/Leary/B19F2.
In his memo dated 23 July 53, CAT’s Acting Director of Operations warned the Company’s Vice-President Assistant and General Manager (VPAGM) Joe Rosbert\(^{103}\) that during his visit to Tokyo – apparently to JTAG, the CIA station at Atsugi NAS – Western Enterprises’ James Lassiter had complained about CAT not giving enough priority to carry out the work on B-24 “018”.\(^{104}\) A couple of months later, in December 53, 2 B-24 engines had to be flown to Hong Kong for maintenance by HAECO in the name of Foshing Airlines. This was to be done by another WEI aircraft, C-46 “210”, which was to be reregistered to Foshing Airlines as B-1442 in early December 53. But then the C-46 reverted to “210”, as the problem behind this arrangement – a flight to Hong Kong carrying 2 of Western Enterprises’ B-24 engines without mentioning WEI’s name – had found another solution: A CAT charter flight from Taipei to Hong Kong on 6 December 53 and a return flight on 7 December 53, both in the name of Foshing Airlines, because “W.E.I. cannot let it be publicly known that they have and operate aircraft.”\(^{105}\)

\[\text{CAT and Western Enterprises aircraft in 1953} \\
\text{(All documents in: UTD/Rosbert/B2F1)}\]

**After the end of the Korean War**

“By August 1953, US policy formally prohibited the CIA from sending Americans on covert overflights.”\(^{106}\) The overflights were then taken over by a special unit of the Republic of China Air Force (RoCAF), whose name changed from “Special Mission Group” to “Technical Research Group” to “34th Squadron, RoCAF.” Of course, these overflights were made in cooperation with the CIA station on Taiwan, whose cover name was equally changed from Western Enterprises Inc. (WEI) to Naval Auxiliary Communication Center (NACC) to

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\(^{103}\) See Leary, *Perilous missions*, p.156.

\(^{104}\) CAT Memo of 23 July 53 about WEI B-24 “018” in: UTD/Rosbert/B2F1. Other B-24s – the US Navy P4Y-2 Privateer version – were added later: “016” is mentioned in Li, Chongshan (李崇善): *Hei bian fu zhong dui : An Ye Chuan Qi : li chong shan xian sheng te ji*, Hsinchu City, Taiwan 2011, p. 26, “022” is depicted in Fu/Pocock, *The Black Bats*, photo section between p.64 and p.65, and “423” was the RoCAF P4Y-2 of the 34th Squadron that was downed by Burmese fighters near the Burma-Thai border on 15 February 61, when trying to resupply the Chinese Nationalist YAVA troops along the Thai-Burma border (see Gibson/Chen, *The secret army*, pp.205/6; and [http://www.taiwanairpower.org/history/shootdowns.html](http://www.taiwanairpower.org/history/shootdowns.html)).

\(^{105}\) CAT Memo of 20 December 53 about WEI C-46 “210” and WEI B-24 engines in: UTD/Rosbert/B2F1; a photo of what seems to be C-46 “210” can be found in: Fu / Pocock, *The Black Bats*, between p.64 and p.65.

\(^{106}\) Fu / Pocock, *The Black Bats*, p. 18.
U.S. Army Technical Group (USATG).\textsuperscript{107} At the same time, CAT’s and later Air America’s role was reduced to supporting Western Enterprises Inc. and later the NACC and USATG.

This meant primarily supporting the Costal Islands. But already since May 53, Communist forces – coming back from the front in Korea – conquered several islands of the Northern group and fortified them systematically. In late 1953, Kinmen was being shelled from the mainland. Former CAT pilot Connie Seigrist recalls: “Kinmen came under intense shelling barrages from the mainland in late 1953. The airfield was in range of those guns and flying activity became almost nil due to the vulnerability of the airfield. The PBY could land in the water on the southeast side of the island about a mile from the airfield out of range of the shelling and consequently became the primary mode of air transportation to Kinmen.”\textsuperscript{108}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image}
\caption{CAT’s “North” C-46 B-876 at Taipei on 17 October 53 (UTD/Kirkpatrick/ photo no. 1KP-18-PB875)}
\end{figure}

By December 53, Communist army, air, and naval forces in the coastal areas became stronger than those of the Nationalists.\textsuperscript{109} But according to CAT’s Operations Reports for the January to March 54 period, for which more details are available, things seem to be normal again on the islands – also on Kinmen. In the Monthly Report for January 1954 published by CAT’s Operations Division, there is a list of total hours flown by all CAT aircraft in January 1954. This list gives 29 C-46 hours and 21 PBY hours for Operation “North” plus the 3 C-46 hours for Operation “Northeast”.\textsuperscript{110} The fleet disposition listed in the Monthly Report for January 1954 gives C-46 B-876 as assigned to Operation “North”, but PBY-5As B-819 and B-825 as assigned to “Special” – which probably means that the PBYs also flew other covert missions.\textsuperscript{111} However, most of the PBY missions were probably resupply flights to the CIA installations on the islands of the China Coast like Kinmen and Matsu, and flights operated for “North” probably also included C-46 flights to and from the CIA’s logistical support base at Kadena, Okinawa. The name “Northeast” suggests that this CAT operation also had

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{107} Western Enterprises Inc. (WEI) was founded at Pittsburgh in February 51, and the first employees appeared on Taiwan in March 51. Its primary mission was political and military activity against Mainland China out of bases built on the Nationalist-held islands lying off the China Coast (Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, pp.7/8, 5, 14). In late 1954, WEI was replaced by the NACC or Naval Auxiliary Communication Center, whose primary mission became intelligence-gathering about Communist China using aircraft of the RoCAF’s 34th Squadron (Fu / Pocock, The Black Bats, pp.23sqq.). In 1965, the cover name of the CIA station on Taiwan was changed from NACC to USATG or U.S. Army Technical Group. Intelligence-gathering now concentrated on U-2 overflights and electronic intelligence (Fu / Pocock, The Black Bats, pp.90-92).
\item \textsuperscript{108} Connie Seigrist, Memoirs, p. 26, at: UTD/Leary/B21F11.
\item \textsuperscript{109} Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, p.151.
\item \textsuperscript{110} CAT Operations Division, Monthly Report, January 1954, pp.2+8, in: UTD/Leary/B21F1.
\item \textsuperscript{111} CAT Operations Division, Monthly Report, January 1954, p.10, in: UTD/Leary/B21F1.
\end{itemize}
something to do with Western Enterprises Inc – maybe some sort of survey flight or leaflet dropping onto areas of the China Coast, i.e. a type of mission normally flown by the Republic of China Air Force at that time. But there were also some extra flights – charters – that were apparently made for the CIA: “There were three C-46 Taipei/Kadena/Taipei weekly banana flights completed during the month in conjunction with the weekly Flight 500. There were three PBY Matsu Island flights completed during the month. […] Three C-46 Taipei/Kinmen/Taipei charter flights were flown.”112 They are also part of the miscellaneous charter flights mentioned in the list of total hours flown by all CAT aircraft in January 1954, where at least the PBY charters to Matsu Island reappear as 7 PBY hours.113

In the Monthly Report for February 1954 published by CAT’s Operations Division, there is a list of total hours flown by all CAT aircraft in February 1954. This list gives 19 C-46 hours and 24 PBY hours for Operation “North” to the Coastal Islands and to Kadena, but again there are also some extra flights – charters – that were apparently made for the CIA: “There were three C-46 Taipei/Kadena/Taipei weekly banana flights completed during the month in conjunction with the weekly Flight 500. One banana charter flight was cancelled on February 3 upon charterer’s request. Three charter flights Taipei/Kinmen/Taipei, utilizing bucket C-46 aircraft, were flown during the month.”114 And the outlook for March 1954 gives the following picture: 25 C-46 hours plus 25 PBY hours for Operation “North” plus 6 PBY hours within the miscellaneous charters.115 Again, C-46 B-876 is assigned to Operation “North”, while PBYs B-819 and B-825 are assigned to “Special”.116

An Air America PBY-5A, believed to be B-825, coming in to land on one of the islands off the Chinese coast
(photo kindly submitted by Leif Hellström)

In May 54, most combat ships in the Chinese Communist Navy were concentrated in the area of the Northern islands. On 1 November 54, the Communists bombed and strafed Ta-ch’en from the air, but WEI decided to hold on. It was probably about this time that Connie Seigrist, on his PBY flights to Ta-ch’en, was regularly challenged by a US Navy destroyer, which, in that way, always attracted the attention of Chinese MIGs to the CAT PBY forcing Seigrist to take evasive action. Connie Seigrist recalls: “I was flying PBY flights from Taipei to the Tachen Islands located 210 nautical miles north, lying close in to the coast of Communist China. The flights were usually conducted at low altitudes to remain below the radar net of any possible monitoring of Mainland Coastal radar stations. – The US Navy kept continuous round the clock watch with a destroyer in the area along our route to the Tachens. Its purpose was to monitor any surface activity and challenge airborne traffic by ground to air radio. – We kept listening watch on the flights with both our VHF and HF radios. We pilots kept watch on VHF and the radio operator on HF. Our flights began getting challenged by the destroyer asking for our challenge return to be in the code of the day. We did not have access to the code of the day. I informed the destroyer controller of this fact, but as ridiculous as it seemed to me, he would insist we give proper response to his code anyway. The code of the day was secret and only available to the US military in the area. After a few challenges I made request to our VPO [= Vice-President Operations], Captain Rousselot, for the code, hoping he would encourage Western Enterprises, an Agency proprietary, to try and get it for us from the Navy. – We obtained the code, although it turned out to be code confusion. The destroyer would challenge us, but our answer back was never accepted by them. The destroyer controller and I would argue and haggle over my response, until I felt foolish in being involved in something important what had become seemingly childish. Also what became astoundingly clear was, every time the destroyer challenged us, the Chinese Communists would dispatch a flight of MIGs from inland heading in our direction. A PBY speed of 110 knots and MIG’s at 350 knots was an uneven match and was not conducive to any relaxed comfort in the cockpit. Our only evasive action was to stay low and head straight out to sea, hoping to outdistance their fuel range before they could arrive to our area. When receiving the ‘all clear’, we would go back in and land at Tachen. Our MIG warning came from the Taiwan Defense Command radar located just outside Taipei. The warnings came over our HF radio. The destroyer never once gave warning to us, nor did we ever hear the destroyer challenge the MIGs. That has always confused me, why they challenged us, their friendlies, but not the MIGs, their enemies. For sure the code of the day and challenge was certainly our enemy.

“Later I made a request to Captain Rousselot to request thru Western Enterprises to the Navy, if it would be possible to have complete radio silence from the destroyer on the days of our flights. This request was not accomplished immediately. We kept getting challenged, and each time MIGs were dispatched. If the Chinese had radar, they were not painting us down low, because they would only scramble, when the destroyer challenged us. Evidently the Chinese knew the destroyer’s position most of the time, and when it made its challenge, they were able to plot our position. A challenge for example went like this: ‘Aircraft heading 005 degrees, speed 110 knots, bearing from this station 155 degrees, at 30 miles distance, identify yourself and state your intentions.’ The Navy destroyer was the Chinese coastal radar net for penetrating unidentified aircraft, because they knew our exact position from monitoring the destroyer’s challenge to us.

“Use of radio for voice communications was very disciplined in those years. Foul language was never tolerated under any conditions. Disciplinary action was mandatory, if not respected. – After more complaining to Captain Rousselot about the continued challenging, Western Enterprises arranged for me to meet a US Navy Captain to work out a system
between his authority and our Tachen flights for radio silence. The very next flight after the
meeting we were challenged again, and the same old story again – MIGs and our evasive
action. I went straight to the Captain before my next flight, we coordinated again our take off
time, and other necessary particulars were supposedly sent to the destroyer for silence. I could
not believe it, but we were challenged again. Out of sheer disgust I picked up my mike and
said ‘Shut your fuckin’ mouth’. It was an immediate response on my part, totally unpre-
meditated, but evidently it worked for some reason, because we were never challenged again.
Then maybe the controller on the destroyer did finally get word thru Navy channels. – The
Chinese must have been getting smarter, because they were immediately airborne or already
in the air close to our area, heading our way after the challenge. The Taiwan Defense
Command simultaneously gave us Alert and take evasive action. Civil Air Transport had
never contacted us by radio before on the Tachen flights, but this trip they were immediately
on the HF, instructing us to take evasive flight. I responded to their warning, giving our
heading out to sea at max power, maintaining 20 feet altitude. Actually the keel was clipping
the tops of the waves while we stayed down, with every opportunity in the trough between
swells. The reason for flying so low: If a MIG made a firing pass at me flying so close to the
water, he would have no dept.
hich perception and just might fly on into the sea unintentionally. –
I was never challenged again by the destroyer nor did I have to take another evasive flight
from MIGs. Surprisingly, I was never called to task for having used foul language over the
air.”

In the meantime, the situation at Ta-ch’en itself got worse: On 10 January 55, the
Communist Navy attacked all Nationalist Navy ships in the area, forcing them to withdraw so
that the situation at Ta-ch’en became hopeless. Between 8 and 12 February 55, the island was
evacuated – regular and guerilla forces, but also most of the civilians – for resettlement on
Taiwan. “The guerrillas were evacuated on Chinese landing craft, but most civilian and
regular military evacuees were taken on board U.S. transports, guarded by seventy U.S.
warships, including six aircraft carriers, and supporting Sabrejets.”

Another victim of Communist shelling was the island of Kinmen (Quemoy), which was
inhabited by civilians. Already in October 1949, the Communists had tried to conquer the
island, but were defeated. At the end of July 50, they tried it again, and were rebuffed
again. Then there was the shelling of late 1953 mentioned above. On 9 July 1954, the
way of flying to Kinmen changed. Former PBY pilot Connie Seigrist recalls: “This day I flew
a flight to Kinmen landing in the water on the southeast side. The tide was out exposing a
long curved wide beach. This was the first time I had landed in the water at Kinmen during
low tide. I rode ashore in the small boat that came out to take our passengers and supplies.
The sand was very firm and I decided to ride the small boat back to the PBY to taxi it up on
the beach to park. In doing so this would expedite off-loading and loading much easier. I
walked the length of the beach stepping off its distance and the sands firmness. The beach
was a mile long being firm throughout. While waiting for our passengers to go back to Taipei
my crew and I climbed aboard the PBY. We took off on the beach, made a short circle, and
landed back on the beach. After making a report back in Taipei of the take-off and landing on
the beach at Kinmen it became the new runway there for C-47’s/C-46’s during low tide
periods.” This was the solution, because in early September 54, another heavy artillery

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117 Connie Seigrist, Memoirs, pp. 34/5, at: UTD/Leary/B21F11.
118 Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, pp.151-57.
121 Connie Seigrist, Memoirs, pp. 26/7, at: UTD/Leary/B21F11.
attack, the “September 3 Artillery War”, struck the island of Kinmen/Quemoy, but Nationalist artillery on Kinmen as well as navy guns gave as good as they received. The results of the 1954 shelling can be seen here:


Another artillery attack by the mainlanders came in August 58. Then, Republic of China Air Force F-86 Sabrejets defeated the MIG-17s sent by Chairman Mao. “A couple of years later, the intimidation process resumed sporadically, including one session of alternate-day bombing. Not until 1978 did the guns finally fall silent.” And today, Kinmen and Matsu are still part of the Republic of China, trying to attract tourists.

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122 Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, p.28.
123 Lilley, China Hands, pp. 92/3.
The RoCAF’s “special” unit 1953-1969

In 1952, the CIA trained 5 Taiwanese pilots and 2 mechanics in Japan in low-level flights and drop techniques, and in June 1953, this new Special Mission Group (SMG) or Special Operations Unit received 2 B-17s on loan from Western Enterprises – with more to follow.126 On 15 July 1956, the Special Mission Group of RoCAF was renamed Technical Research Group (TRG),127 while the personnel used the unit badge of RoCAF 34th Squadron for security reasons.128 In 1956, the TRG had 3 B-17s and 3 B-26s.129 In January 1958, the TRG was officially renamed 34th Squadron, RoCAF.130 Between 1954 and 1959, 3 of these B-17s are known to have been shot down by the People’s Liberation Army: one over Fujian on 26 May 54 by anti-aircraft artillery, killing 4 crew members, one in Jiangxi on 23 June 56 by a PLA MiG-17, killing 11 people aboard, and “815” of the 34th Squadron over Guandong on 29 May 59 by a PLA MiG-17PF, killing 14 people aboard.131

A RoCAF B-26 and the RoCAF RB-17G with their crews taken in the mid-1950s (photos kindly supplied by Jeanne Jeng)

In her e-mail dated 11 January 2013, Jeanne Jeng, member of the family of one of the persons killed in that crash, gives some details about that Black Bat mission and about the crash: “On the night of 5-29-1959, there were 2 B-17s ‘815’ and ‘835’ both of the 34th ‘Bat’ Squadron that flew from Taiwan into China. Both were detected and attacked by the PLA MiG-17PF. The ‘815’ B-17 was the B-17 shot down, killing all 14 on board including Lyland’s paternal grandfather. The ‘835’ made it back to Taiwan that night. The commander of the ‘835’ was still alive in 1992 and was interviewed in the link below about what

126 Conboy / Morrison, The CIA’s secret war in Tibet, pp.57/8. RoCAF’s first 2 B-17s were the ones formerly flown by CAT: One was RB-17G 44-85531 (msn 8440), which had been dropped from the USAF inventory in May 1950 “by reclamation” (e-mail dated 30 October 2013, kindly sent to the author by Archie DiFante of AFHRA/RSA), then probably went to the CIA and was also used on the CIA flights to Tibet in 1957. RoCAF’s second B-17 was TB-17G 44-83774 (msn 32415), which, after several years of service out of Hickam AB, Hawaii, Haneda AB, Tokyo, and Kadena AB, Okinawa, was dropped from the USAF inventory “by reclamation” by the 6400th Air Depot Wing, Tachikawa on 11 March 1953 (USAF Aircraft Assignment Records, reel no. AC-19). It was then flown by CAT, until it was transferred to the RoCAF’s SMG in June 53 (Fu/Pocock, The Black Bats, p.18).
128 Hagedorn / Hellström, Foreign Invaders, p.170; for a detailed history of the RoCAF’s Special Mission Group (SMG), Technical Research Group (TRG), and 34th Squadron see Fu / Pocock, The Black Bats, pp.19-101.
129 Fu / Pocock, The Black Bats, p.33.
130 Fu / Pocock, The Black Bats, p.40.
131 Fu / Pocock, The Black Bats, pp.129; see also: “ROCAF combat losses since 1950”, at: http://www.taiwanairpower.org/history/shootdowns.html , which gives “835” as the aircraft shot down.
happened that night. Here is the link to the story about the ‘815’ shot down on 5-29-1959 as told from the Taiwan side: http://youtien.pixnet.net/blog/post/4603783-%E5%8A%89%E6%96%87%E5%AD%9D%EF%BC%9A%E9%82%A3%E5%80%8B%E6%98%9F%E5%A4%9C%EF%BC%9A%E5%85%B1%E8%BB%8D%E6%94%94%E4%B8%8B%E6%88%91%E7%9A%84%E5%90%8C%E8%A2%8D”

Mrs. Jeng also notes: “Here is the link to an article by the Guandong China Jiangmen Daily News about the B17 shot down on 5-29-1959 and the 1992 recovery. It tells the story of what happened from the China side. There are some very good images in this article. […] http://www.jmnews.com.cn/c/2010/08/12/08/c_1090395.shtml”

132 E-mail dated 11 January 2013, kindly sent by Jeanne Jeng to Paul Oelkrug who forwarded it to the author.
133 E-mail dated 11 January 2013, kindly sent by Jeanne Jeng to Paul Oelkrug who forwarded it to the author.
134 The book by Clarence Fu (Fu, Jing-ping (傅鏡平), Kong jun te zhong zuo zhan mi shi : di sa si zhong dai ji qi ta dan wei de zhuang lie gu shi) contains photos of the wrecks of B-17s “739” (p.35) and “815” (p.61). RoCAF B-17G “357” is believed to be the one that crashed on 22 June 56 (p. 38), and “739” seems to be the one shot down on 26 May 54 (p.33); Fu / Pocock, The Black Bats, pp.96/7 give “739” as the P2V shot down in June 1963; but Li, Chongshan (李崇善): Hei bian fu zhong dai : An Ye Chuan Qi : li chong shan xian sheng te ji, Hsinchu City 2011, also contains a photo (p.134) that clearly identifies “739” as the wreck of a B-17.
135 E-mail dated 30 October 2013 kindly sent to the author by Archie DiFante of AFHRA/RSA.
136 The B-17 serial “835” is mentioned in Fu / Pocock, The Black Bats, p.129.
137 Fu / Pocock, The Black Bats, p. 56.

The wrecks of RoCAF B-17s “739” (in 1954) and “815” (in 1959) (photos kindly supplied by Jeanne Jeng)

A book published in 2006 by Clarence Fu in Chinese language reveals some more RoCAF B-17 serials: “357” and “739”. And there were 2 more B-17Gs that belonged to the CIA and were based on Taiwan: the black 44-85531 (msn 8440), one of the original 2 B-17Gs that, disguised as “639”, flew the first 2 missions from Clark AFB to Tibet in October and November 1957 and was scrapped at Clark in 1958, and 44-83785 (msn 32426), RoCAF’s last B-17. This VB-17G had been dropped from the USAF inventory in September 1956 “by transfer to other agency”. This probably was “835”, while flying with the 34th Squadron. On 26 February 1960, the RoCAF’s last B-17 flew its last overflight mission over Communist China – a mission that was to last more than 19 hours. In November 1960, this last B-17 – 44-83785 msn 32426, probably the “835” mentioned above – left the 34th Squadron. From 29 October to 2 November 1960, “Doc” Johnson flew the last of the B-17s back to the U.S. West Coast, “leaving Tainan and arriving in Burbank, CA via Kadena, Wake Island, and
Honolulu. This aircraft was listed as N809Z and flown with Captain Tom Sailer and Captain Aubrey.” At Lockheed’s Skunk Works it was modified to carry the Fulton Skyhook system and handed over to former Air America pilots Connie Seigrist and Douglas Price on 18 August 1961 as N809Z, i.e. as Intermountain Aviation’s first aircraft. It was later used for a CIA recovery mission in the Arctic.

From the USAF Assignment Records preserved at the Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA) at Maxwell AFB (compact disks nos. AC-19, AC-20, and ACA-10), the 5 B-17s that flew with the Republic of China Air Force can now be identified, and I’d like to express my sincere thanks to AFHRA’s archivist Archie DiFante for helping me read these records. While the first B-17 (44-85531) apparently came from CIA stocks, all the others were the only B-17s that were dropped from the USAF inventory during the 1952-60 period while still in the Far East, while all other B-17s formerly serving in the Far East returned to the US, ending their life on the civilian market, with one of the USAF’s drone squadrons or on the junk yard at Davis Monthan. So these were the 5 RoCAF B-17s:

44-85531 RB-17G msn 8440 (Clark in July 48 > Fairfield, CA in June 49 > Oklahoma City Air Materiel Area in Dec 50) > dropped from the USAF inventory in May 1950 “by reclamation” > apparently with the CIA Air Branch > to CAT in spring 52 on loan from Western Enterprises Inc (as “1004”) > to the RoCAF/Special Mission Group in June 53 (as “639”?) > to Clark Air Base in September 57 as “531” for the Tibetan missions flown in late 1957 (as “639”) > scrapped at Clark in 1958, but regd. as N809Z (no.1) to Atlantic-General Enterprises of Washington D.C. (617 Blair Bldg) on 1 September 60; the identity of N809Z was changed in May 61, when it had become clear that this aircraft did no longer exist (for more details see the B-17 file within my The Aircraft of Air America).

44-83774 TB-17G msn 32415 (Hickam in 1951/2 > Haneda, Japan 1952/3 > 15th Weather SQ, Kadena in 1953 > 6400th Air Depot Wing, Tachikawa) > dropped from the USAF inventory at Tachikawa on 11 March 53 “by reclamation” > to CAT as ? on loan from Western Enterprises Inc > to the RoCAF/Special Mission Group in June 53 (as “739”?) > believed to be the RoCAF B-17G “739” that was shot down over Fujian on 26 May 54 by anti-aircraft artillery, killing 4 crew members.

44-83547 VB-17G msn 32188 (6332nd Air Base Wing, Kadena, on 13 Jan. 55 > 18th Fighter-bomber Wing, Kadena on 14 Feb. 55 > Northern Air Materiel Area, Tachikawa on day “153”, 1955 (= 2 June 55) > dropped from the USAF inventory at Tachikawa on day “067”, 1956 (= 7 March 56), code LI (= loss to organization outside USAF) > to the RoCAF on 7 March 56, probably as “357” > believed to be the RoCAF B-17G “357” that was shot down in Jiangxi on 23 June 56 by a PLA MIG-17, killing 11 people aboard.

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138 Log book of “Doc” Johnson: E-mail dated 5 September 2012, kindly sent to the author by James Johnson.
139 Leary / LeSchack, Project Coldfeet, pp.119-20. For its subsequent history of this aircraft, which became N809Z at that time, see my B-17 file within my The Aircraft of Air America.
140 Fu / Pocock, The Black Bats, p.56; see also the B-17 file within my The Aircraft of Air America.
RoCAF as “835” on 16 September 56 >
to America on 16 Aug. 60 > repainted as N809Z (no.2) for Atlantic-
General Enterprises of Washington D.C. (617 Blair Bldg), which had been
regd. on 1 September 60 with the wrong identity 44-85531 msn 8440; flown
from Tainan to Burbank, CA from 29 October and 2 November 1960, still with
the wrong identity. The identity of N809Z was corrected to 44-83785 in May
61. It was modified by Lockheed at Burbank to be able to carry the Fulton
Skyhook recovery system, probably between May and August 61, and handed
over to former Air America pilots Connie Seigrist and Douglas Price on 18
August 1961 for Intermountain Aviation. It was used during Project Coldfeet
in May / June 1962 and officially re-registered to Intermountain Aviation on 4
October 1962, still as N809Z (no. 2). Then it was converted to a fire fighter in
July 69, coded “22”, “C71”, and “B71”. Intermountain became part of
Evergreen Helicopters, Marana, AZ, on 1 March 75. So the aircraft was re-
registered as N207EV on 6 March 79, but withdrawn from use and stored in
1992. Then it was transferred to Evergreen Vintage Aircraft Inc., McMinneville,
OR, on 29 March 99. The registration N207EV was cancelled on 23 August
2012 (for more details see the B-17 file within my The Aircraft of Air
America).

RoCAF’s 34th Squadron also had some B-26s, mainly used to drop leaflets and counterfeit
money and ration cards over the mainland, but occasionally also to infiltrate agents: In March
54, a small number of B-26s was delivered to CIA operations on Taiwan – among them
probably one of the three B-26s that USAF Korea had turned over to “Top Secret” on 16
February 53 for infiltration into China and North Korea. Of these 3 B-26s, 43-22633 returned
to the USAF at Clark AFB on 5 March 56, while the two others seem to have crashed: 43-
22634 may have been the “634” that crashed during a training flight over Taiwan Strait on 14
April 55, and 43-22622 may have been the “622” that crashed in Zhejiang province, China,
during a night mission on 5 November 57.141 In the fifties, at least 4 more B-26s and one TB-
26B joined the fleet operated by the Republic of China Air Force: A TB-26B – probably

141 Hagedorn/Hellström, Foreign Invaders, pp.169-74.
“888” – was flown from USAF Japan to Hsin-Chu in 1954, B-26Cs “842”, “844”, and “862” probably arrived around 1956, and “822” arrived in 1958. At least “844”, “862”, and

An unknown RoCAF B-26 at Tainan in 1958
(photo kindly submitted by M.S. Chen and E. Ping Chiang)

“888” are believed to have been handed over to Air Asia in March 59, but only “888” is known to have flown out of Tainan. A black RB-26C painted as “844” – in reality former 44-35444 (msn 28723) and N26FK – is now preserved at the Republic of China Air Force Museum at Kangshan Taiwan in full RoCAF colors. In the late fifties and early sixties, the CIA used unmarked RB-69As for peripheral electronic surveillance over Mainland China. These aircraft were manned by Chinese aircrews, flew out of Taipei, landed at Kunsan Air Base in Korea, flew over China and were recovered in Thailand, and still later Taiwan-based Lockheed P-3A Orions were used. These planes were flown by Chinese crews, but were serviced by CAT personnel who were detached to serve at Hsin-Chu.

There was also one operation that may have involved Air America crews. While most of the overflights over mainland China that were resumed around 1958 were probably operated out of Clark AFB in the Philippines or out of Kadena, Okinawa, some flights were apparently also operated out of Tainan on Taiwan: Between 1 February 65 and 25 October 65, Lockheed C-130B-II 59-1531 (msn 3579), an electronic reconnaissance aircraft assigned to the USAF’s 41st AD of Yokota Airbase, Japan, was officially being worked on at Air Asia’s maintenance facility at Tainan. A period of 9 months spent for maintenance is very

142 Fu / Pocock, The Black Bats, 21.
143 This aircraft crashed as reveals a photo published in the book by Clarence Fu, p. 61; according to Fu / Pocock, The Black Bats, pp.35 and 129, this aircraft crashed on 5 November 57.
144 Hagedorn/Hellström, Foreign Invaders, pp.169-74.
147 Trest, Air Commando One, p.82. In 1954, the USAF received seven Lockheed P2V-7U Neptune patrol bombers from the US Navy, which were converted for use as radio trainers and reconnaissance aircraft. They retained their Navy blue paint scheme, but were re-designated RB-69As and adopted the USAF serials 54-4037 to 54-4043. An additional radar nose was put on the MAD boom, and other electronic equipment was added (Jones, U.S. bombers, p.232).
148 In the photo section at the beginning of the book by Clarence Fu, there is a photo taken in 1966 and showing an overall dark blue P-3A “149678” in RoCAF colors.
149 Leary, Manuscript, p.376/376a, in: UTD/Leary/B19F2.
150 And therefore are described in my file entitled Smaller operations: Kadena Air Base, Clark AB.
151 41st AD, Yokota, GF to AAI TTF WQPC on 65032, back to 41st AD, Yokota, on 65298 (see microfilm reel no. AVH-3, preserved at the AFHRA at Maxwell AFB).
unlikely, and then, this was the only C-130B-II ever officially maintained by Air Asia. But in those early days USAF aircraft bailed to Air America more than once appeared as “out for maintenance at Tainan” in the USAF Assignment Records preserved at the AFHRA at Maxwell AFB, AL. It is known that in 1965, the RoCAF’s 34th Squadron, i.e. the unit responsible for penetration flights over mainland China since late 1953, stayed out of Red Chinese airspace throughout nearly the whole year. Instead, missions were flown along the coast of mainland China to collect Signals Intelligence from a safe distance, and American airmen of the NACC often also flew on these peripheral missions.152 So this may also have been the mission of C-130B-II 59-1531 during those months of 1965, and possibly, the aircraft was flown by Air America’s C-130 crews on these missions.

152 See Fu / Pocock, *The Black Bats*, p.89.
In late 1954, Western Enterprises Inc, whose primary mission had been political and military activity against Mainland China out of bases built on the Nationalist-held islands lying off the China Coast, was replaced by the NACC or Naval Auxiliary Communications Center, Taipei, whose primary mission became intelligence-gathering about Communist China using mostly aircraft of the RoCAF’s 34th Squadron. The aircraft that had been owned by Western Enterprises were disposed of. The 2 B-17s and the 3 B-26s were transferred to the covert mission unit of the Republic of China Air Force, as possibly was the C-46. In 1954, PBY-5A B-819 was sold to CAT who continued to fly for the NACC. The Grumman Goose could not be sold for many years, until it was finally sold to an unknown customer as a wreck in May 1957.

The primary mission of CAT’s and later Air America’s PBY-5A’s under the NACC contract remained to support the Chinese Nationalist positions on islands off the coast of Mainland China, and for use as standby for search and rescue missions and for evacuation of CIA personnel in case of an emergency. All this was arranged through the contracts that preceded contract no. N(713)55-169-9-64 between Air America and the NACC (Naval Auxiliary Communications Center), a CIA front company used for special operations out of Taipei. After PBY-5A B-819 had been destroyed in Indonesia in May 58, it was replaced by PBY-5A B-831 in late 1958, and these two PBY-5s (B-825 and B-831) were assigned to the NACC contract until the mid-sixties. Contract no. N(713)55-169-9-64 between the United States Naval Auxiliary Communications Center, Pacific, Box 9, APO 63, San Francisco, CA and Air America was officially signed on 20 August 63 and first covered the period from 1 July 63 to 30 June 64. Its scope was “furnishing flying services of two and aircraft storage services for one PBY type at Taipei and Tainan, Taiwan.” On 7 July 64, this contract is given as expiring on 30 June 65 with AAM as contractor. As Ward S. Reimer recalls: “Quemoy was a small Nationalist held island about 500 miles off of Taiwan where they used to fire artillery shells into the mainland and the mainland firing into the island. We would fly there pretty regularly with the PBY B-825 and B-831.” The story was: ‘Gimo’ sent his laundry to China to get it done.”

In accordance with NACC’s primary mission to gather intelligence about Communist China, there was also another type of clandestine activities undertaken out of Taiwan by CAT’s / Air America’s PBYs: As Brian Sullivan states, “the mission of this NACC contract was to lift Nationalist Chinese navy old time morse L/MF radio operators off Taiwan, then fly

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153 Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, pp.7/8, 5, 14.
154 Fu / Pocock, The Black Bats, pp.23sqq.
155 Leary, Manuscript, pp.362/3, in: UTD/B19F2. For the subsequent history of this aircraft see my Goose file within my The Aircraft of Air America.
157 List of operational contracts of the CAT-Air America complex dated 1 November 63, sent by Hugh Grundy to the FAA, in: UTD/Bisson/B5 microfilm reel no.2.
158 “Aircraft status” as of 7 July 64, in: UTD/Kirkpatrick/B1F1.
159 E-mail dated 24 January 2006, kindly sent to the author by Ward S. Reimer.
160 E-mail dated 21 January 2006, kindly sent to the author by Ward S. Reimer.
them low up the coast of Mainland China (moonlit nights of course, with flat sea conditions), land in the water, put out the L/MF WWII type radio antennas on balloon hoists, then open the net to the left behind agents for intel. Capt. Adams told me what scared him the most, these ancient PBY-5s leaked seawater and fuel so badly that the bilges filled with a combo of seawater and Avgas and the interior of the aircraft became charged with fumes, and here and there are these Chinese morse operators with their side slapper keys throwing blue sparks with each dit-daw. But the gang loved the trips, lots of them were cancelled due to weather at landing area, etc.”

But the importance of those coastal intelligence posts grew smaller and smaller over the years: NACC kept an intelligence presence on Pai-ch’üan (“White Dog”) – “only one person towards the end – until 1958, when the Americans quietly folded their remaining tent, so to speak, and left White Dog to its own devices.” As fewer people require fewer supplies, the number of PBY supply flights that were necessary to feed the intelligence posts on the islands became smaller and smaller. So, during the mid- and late 1950ies, CAT’s PBY pilot Connie Seigrist also flew a lot of missions on other aircraft, mostly the C-46. As to the PBY-5As, there was time enough to use them for other types of flights.

One alternative was commercial flying: The CIA was always pushing CAT to engage in commercial flying for all of its aircraft, but there was little flying for the PBYs. Former PBY pilot Connie Seigrist recalls: “In all, I made only 5 revenue flights using the PBY during the eight years I flew it for CAT in Asia. 27 July 1955 – I flew a charter by NACC dependants on a scenic excursion to the east side of Taiwan landing at Lan Yu and Green Islands. Green Island was a political prisoner island. Lan Yu Island was totally primitive with men in loin cloth and the families living in one room grass type huts. They were totally taken aback to see western women especially blonds. Evidently they had seen western sailors before. The dependants loved the excursion. – 23 May / 1 June 1959 I flew two charters of gold bullion from Hong Kong to the small Portuguese island of Macao located in the mouth of the Pearl River. – 29 December 1958 I flew a charter to Sun Moon Lake in the mountains about midway of Taiwan known as the ‘honey moon retreat’ for the Island.” In December 57, the Chinese Civil Aeronautics Administration requested to use CAT’s PBY aircraft for search and rescue purposes; this was approved on 20 December 57. Connie Seigrist recalls: “I flew another PBY charter for the Chinese Civil Aeronautics Administration to Pratas Island weather station located slightly south of the route laying approximately midway between the southern tip of Taiwan and Hong Kong.” Later, PBY-5A B-825 “was flown for a time, first as a contract recovery aircraft for military pilots ejecting over the South China Sea and for a short time as a fish finder.”

Sometimes, the PBY-5A’s were also used for transporting Chinese Nationalist agents. In 1957 and 1958, CAT’s PBY pilot Connie Seigrist flew three PBY-5A flights to move ChiNat agents from Taipei to the US Navy Station at Sasebo, Japan. This station is located on Kyushu Island, about 45 miles (1.5 hour drive) from the prefecture’s capital of Nagasaki and 78 miles (2 hour drive) from Fukuoka, largest city on the island. Sasebo is about 600 miles by air from

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162 Holober, Raiders of the China Coast, pp.102-7, quotation p.107.
163 The text says “WEI”, but at that time, NACC had already succeeded WEI.
164 Connie Seigrist, Memoirs, p. 27, at: UTD/Leary/B21F11.
165 Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee of CAT Inc and Asiatic Aeronautical Company Limited of 30 December 57, in: UTD/CIA/B6F2.
166 Connie Seigrist, Memoirs, p. 27, at: UTD/Leary/B21F11.
167 E-mail dated 7 August 2007, sent by David A. Weller to Ward S. Reimer, who kindly forwarded it to the author.
Tokyo. Connie Seigrist recalls: “All flights were conducted with the PBY-5A aircraft. The flights originated in Taipei at night so as to land in the bay of the USN Station at Sasebo, Japan after daybreak the next morning. USN Sasebo is located on the west coast of Kyushu Island, 650 nm northeast of Taipei. 24 April 1957 – I made my first flight to Sasebo flying a PBY-5A licensed B-819 under the Taiwan Civil Aeronautical Administration. My crew and I arrived at our airplane early, which was parked on a dark unlighted ramp of the Taipei International Airport. We made necessary preparations for the flight, settled into our appropriate positions for flight, and waited for our passengers. At the exact pre-arranged time a covered Chinese Army truck backed up to the PBY. The driver and his assistant proceeded to unfold a tarpaulin that was large enough to cover the back of the truck and overlap the entrance to the aircraft. The agents were unloaded completely under cover. – We departed Taipei exactly on planned time with the first leg of flight to the Kadena USAF Base located on Okinawa 350 nm east by north of Taipei for enroute refueling. Kadena was located approximately half way between Taipei and Sasebo. The PBY fuel tanks capacity could carry sufficient fuel to fly direct from Taipei to Sasebo without landing at Kadena, but due to the sensitivity of the flight it was preferable to fly with less fuel weight – just in case of power failure of an engine we could still stay aloft with the operating engine to fly to the closest station of either Taipei, Kadena or Sasebo. – We landed at Kadena, refueled, the Agency personnel there arranged our flight clearance with Air Force Control, and we departed on time to arrive about 100 miles south of Sasebo at daybreak. – After departure from Kadena, we flew straight north, cleared all radio frequencies, and flew in uncontrolled air space at low altitudes to Sasebo. Sasebo laid 400 nm north by east of Kadena. At first light, I descended to 500 ft above the water. From this vantage point, I was able to see far enough ahead to avoid any sea traffic or islands by diversion from my intended flight path or by skimming the water low enough to be out of sight passing around sea traffic. Security from sight was pressed as being important because the intent was to arrive and depart without the knowledge of Japanese authorities. – We landed at Sasebo Bay on time, lowered our landing gear in the water, taxied up a ramp out of the water, and parked near some small hangers. The off-loading procedure was picture opposite of the Taipei loading procedure. When the off-loading was completed, we immediately departed and flew back to Taipei with a refueling stop at Kadena. Total flight time [was] 14 hours and 55 minutes. – On 22 October 1957 and 26 April 1958 – I flew one flight each date with all operations repetitious of the first flight made on 24 April 1957.”

There was still another type of flying that CAT did for the NACC since the mid-fifties. In June 53, Hsin-Chu Air Base became home of the Chinese Air Force’s Special Mission Group and their B-17s. In the spring of 1956, the group began flying ELINT (electronic intelligence) missions out of Hsin-Chu, with more Americans joining the NACC’s Air Section based there. As most Americans lived in Taipei, they commuted to Hsin-Chu each week or as required. On 17 January 55, the Board of Directors of CAT Inc approved the purchase of C-47 B-809, while other C-47s were only leased. In January 52, the 3 C-47s to be used for Operation Tropic were purchased so that special modifications could be made on the aircraft. So perhaps this time, the purchase of C-47 B-809 announced that special modifications were to be made on the aircraft before it was leased to the NACC. It is known that the successor to

170 Fu / Pocock, The Black Bats, pp.19, 26, 39.
B-809, C-47 “6110”, had special Government owned communications equipment installed, and perhaps, similar equipment was to be installed on C-47 B-809 as well. Indeed, it is known that B-809 was leased to the NACC until June 61, although it is unknown, since when. At that time, i.e. since late March 1959, CAT Inc had already been renamed Air America Inc. Probably in October 61, the NACC received a new support aircraft for the American NACC people working at Hsin-Chu AB, but living at Taipei: C-47 B-841. In 1962, this new aircraft was given the serial “6110”, and since that time, it was based at Taipei and dry leased to the NACC – Naval Auxiliary Communication Center, Taipei, under the provisions of 2 contracts, that is contract no. N-(713)55-169-15-62 between the NACC and Air America, believed signed in 1961 and covering the dry lease of the C-47 (already a customer requested follow-on contract in 1964, to be continued pending finalization), and contract no. N-(713)55-169-4-63 between the NACC and Air America, believed signed in 1962 covering NACC Maintenance. Both contracts were provisionally terminated on 30 June 65, with continuations requested until finalization. But probably effective 1 July 64, the old maintenance contract was replaced by a new one: contract no. N-(713)55-169-7-65 between the NACC and probably again Air America. Concurrent with contract no. N-(713)55-169-15-62, contract no. 62-56 between the NACC and Air Asia Co Ltd covered the charter of the C-47 to Air Asia Ltd, probably allowing Air Asia to use it occasionally – perhaps for transporting spare parts between Tainan and Taipei.

C-47 “6110” taken during a ceremony in June 1966 by Lu Teh-chi (photo kindly supplied by Clarence Fu)

The two contracts probably mean that the aircraft was owned and maintained by Air Asia, chartered by them to the NACC, but operated for the NACC by Air America. Although

172 USATG letter dated 10 March 67 sent to Air America, in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no.24.
174 C-47 B-841 acquired in “50/10”, that is in October 61 according to Air Asia’s Statement of Property of 31 March 65 (in: UTD/CIA/B26F5).
175 Memorandum “Aircraft Liability Insurance”, by Jerry Fink, dated 11 October 61 (UTD/Fink/B2F15); Acquired in “50/10”, that is in October 61 according to Air Asia’s Statement of Property of 31 March 65 (in: UTD/CIA/B26F5); the US registration N63376 was cancelled on 13 October 61 (Status as of 5 April 74, in: UTD/CIA/B56F4); owned by Air Asia (Air force status as of June 62, corrected to Sept. 63, in: UTD/Kirkpatrick/B1F1); Aircraft status of C-47A msn 13817 as of 28 March 74 (UTD/CIA/B56F4); List Aircraft status as of 7 July 64 (UTD/Kirkpatrick/B1F1).
176 USATG memo of 10 March 67 (in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no.24) makes clear that contract no. N-(713)55-169-7-65 was “for C-47 maintenance”.
177 List Aircraft status as of 7 July 64 (UTD/Kirkpatrick/B1F1).
“6110” is not shown in Air America’s aircraft inventory of November 65,\(^{178}\) it re-emerged in April and May 1966 as dry leased to the USAF’s Detachment 10, 6003 Support Squadron, Taipei.\(^{179}\) At that time, “6110” bore the insignia of the Republic of China Air Force, although it was not the standard color scheme of the Republic of China Air Force, and it was used to fly US personnel between Hsin-Chu Airbase and Taipei city, where the US personnel had their homes,\(^ {180}\) but apparently sometimes also for shopping tours to Okinawa.\(^ {181}\)

![Official Chinese Air Force photo of Hsin-Chu Airbase, Taiwan, taken in 1965/6 (kindly submitted by Kent O. Williamson)](image)

So, during the first half of the sixties, Air America’s flights for the NACC or Naval Auxiliary Communications Center of Taipei continued as described above, using the two PBY-5As (B-825 and B-831) as well as C-47A “6110”. But the PBY-5As were seldom used – for example only 150 hours from May 63 to April 64.\(^ {182}\)

\(^{178}\) Aircraft status list of 1 November 65, in: UTD/Kirkpatrick/B1F1.

\(^{179}\) Aircraft status as of 8 April 66, in: UTD/Kirkpatrick/B1F1; Aircraft status as of 4 May 66, in: UTD/Hickler/B1F2.

\(^{180}\) E-mail dated 2 February 2005, kindly sent to the author by Clarence Fu.

\(^{181}\) See the comments below the photo of C-47 “6110” in: Fu / Pocock, *The Black Bats*, between p.96 and p.97.

\(^{182}\) Minutes ExCom-AACL/AAM of 28 April 64, in: UTD/CIA/B7F3.
In 1965, the cover name of the CIA station on Taiwan was changed from NACC to USATG or U.S. Army Technical Group. Intelligence-gathering now concentrated on U-2 overflights and electronic intelligence.\(^{183}\) For Air America’s 2 PBY-5As, there was no immediate change: In 1965, the old contract between Air America and the NACC — contract no. N(713)55-169-9-64, signed on 20 August 63, effective 1 July 63 and expiring on 30 June 65\(^{184}\) — seems to have been extended for another year. On 30 June 66, Air America signed a new contract with the U.S. Army Technical Group, Taipei: contract no. DA JB-67-C-0001, effective 1 July 66 and expiring 30 June 67, adding in Supplemental Agreement no.1 of the same date that Air America might use aircraft owned by Air Asia. This contract covered “Aircraft Flying Services: The contractor shall make available on standby one (1) PBY-type aircraft at Taipei, Taiwan and one (1) PBY-type aircraft at Tainan Air Base. […] Aircraft Storage Services: The Government shall have, upon the issuance of an appropriate operational order, the option to provide from time to time for the storage of one (1) of the aircraft furnished by the Contractor under this contract at the facilities utilized by the Contractor at Tainan, Taiwan.”\(^{185}\) B-825 was the one based at Taipei, and B-831 was based at Tainan, were it was put into storage in April 66.\(^{186}\) On 12 July 67, the USATG informed Air America that contract no. DA JB-67-C-0001 was to be terminated effective 30 June 67.\(^{187}\)

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\(^{184}\) “Aircraft status” as of 7 July 64, in: UTD/Kirkpatrick/B1F1.


\(^{187}\) USATG letter to Air America dated 12 July 67, in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no.25.
What happened to the 2 PBY’s during the second half of the sixties is well described by David A. Weller: “There were 2 Catalinas in the Tech Training department. One had the commercial Catalina mod, stainless steel firewalls, Flight Engineer position removed, gun turrets removed, and the typical commercial Catalina rudder with balance tab installed. It was flown for a time, first as a contract recovery aircraft for military pilots ejecting over the South China Sea and for a short time as a fish finder. That would have been in the late 60’s. It was offered for sale but no buyers and was eventually scrapped. After a Tainan refurbishment, it did a water landing in Kaohsiung harbor, hit a stump or piling and sank in four of five feet of water.\(^\text{188}\) Stan Allen was in on the recovery. Think they put a temporary patch on it, pumped it dry and flew it back to Tainan where it was again refurbished. The other sat by the shops building in Tainan for many months until it was also eventually scrapped. As I recall, just a few weeks after it was scrapped, a Singapore company made a bid on it to ferry fish.”\(^\text{189}\)

By 1967, all three former NACC aircraft were out of service: PBY B-831, which had been put into a long term storage at Tainan in April 66, was sold in 1967\(^\text{190}\) – probably for scrap – and had gone by May 1968; and by May 68, Air America’s second PBY-5A (B-825), which had still been used on the NACC contract (N (713)55-169-9-64) in May 1966, had also been put into long term storage at Tainan, although this aircraft did not disappear from the Company’s inventories until 1972.\(^\text{191}\) In February 54, it was still Navy Blue,\(^\text{192}\) but probably since about the late 1950ies, it had been repainted all silver,\(^\text{193}\) and when it was scrapped, it had already lost its blisters.\(^\text{194}\)

The end of NACC’s C-47A “6110” is a little bit more complicated: Until 30 June 65, this C-47 was to be covered by 2 contracts: contract no. N-(713)55-169-15-62 between the NACC and Air America covered the dry lease of the aircraft, and contract no. N-(713)55-169-4-63 between the NACC and Air America also covered the maintenance of the C-47. But probably effective 1 July 64, the old maintenance contract was replaced by a new one: contract no. N-(713)55-169-7-65 between the NACC and probably again Air America.\(^\text{195}\) In early 1965, the CIA station at Taipei changed its cover from US Navy (NACC) to US Army (USATG). So probably on 1 July 65, the old NACC contract no. N-(713)55-169-15-62 was replaced: The dry lease contract then became an Air Force contract – contract no. F-0317-66-C-0001 –, apparently connected with the contract between Air America and the USAF’s Detachment 10, 6003rd Support Squadron, Taipei that covered services of C-123 instructor pilots from 1965 onwards. For the successor to this contract for services of C-123 instructor pilots – contract no. F-62-67-C-0001 effective 1 July 66 – had a paragraph saying that “the Government shall be responsible for providing transportation and subsistence, including living accommodations, at all locations other than the permanently assigned station of the Contractor personnel performing within the scope of this contract, wherever the Government decides such services

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\(^{188}\) PBY-5A B-825 struck a sunken unmarked object somewhere on Taiwan on 28 February 65 (Aircraft accidents 1965, in: UTD/CIA/B49F2), but was repaired and based at Taipei and operated under contract N(713)55-169-9-64 on 1 November 65 (Aircraft status as of 1 November 65, in: UTD/Kirkpatrick/B1F1).

\(^{189}\) E-mail dated 7 August 2007, sent by David A. Weller to Ward S. Reimer, who kindly forwarded it to the author.

\(^{190}\) The authorization to sell this aircraft was given on 22 August 67 (Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committees of Air Asia Co Ltd and Air America Inc of 22 August 67 in: UTD/CIA/B8F2).

\(^{191}\) Inventories of 31 March 72 > 30 November 72 (both in: UTD/CIA/B1F10): 1 > 0

\(^{192}\) Aircraft Data Report for February 54, in: UTD/Leary/B22F10.

\(^{193}\) See the photo submitted by Leif Hellström: At that time, it still had its blisters.

\(^{194}\) See the photo in: Rosbert, The Pictorial History, p.232.

\(^{195}\) USATG memo of 10 March 67 (in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no.24) makes clear that contract no. N-(713)55-169-7-65 was “for C-47 maintenance”.

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to be furnished. If the Government does not provide required transportation, subsistence or living accommodations, the Contractor may provide any or all such transportation [...].\textsuperscript{196} So the Air America people involved in the C-123 pilot training under the Air Force contract also had the right to be flown between Hsin-Chu Air Base and Taipei. This probably explains why the dry lease contract was an US Air Force and not a US Army contract.

Modification dated 1 July 66 to contract no. F62-67-C-0001 of 1 July 66 between Air America and Detachment 10, 6003\textsuperscript{rd} Support Squadron, U.S. Air Force, Taipei (in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no. 24)

What makes things so complicated is that in 1967, there was a long and confusing correspondence between the USATG, Detachment 10, 6003\textsuperscript{rd} Support Squadron, and Air

\textsuperscript{196} Modification dated 1 July 66 to contract no. F62-67-C-0001 of 1 July 66, at: UTD/Bisson/B5, reel no. 24.
America about the cancellation date of all three contracts, i.e. of the C-47 maintenance contract (no. N-(713)55-169-7-65, probably effective 1 July 64), the C-47 dry lease contract (no. F-0317-66-C-0001, probably effective 1 July 65), and the contract for C-123 pilot training (no. F62-67-C-0001 effective 1 July 66). The first note came from the USATG on 6 February 67, requesting cancellation of all 3 contracts effective 31 May 67. A couple of days later, on 15 February 67, the USATG corrected the cancellation date of the maintenance contract to 1 March 67. On 10 March 67, another memo from the USATG informed Air America that all three contracts were to be cancelled on 31 May 67, including the balance of the maintenance contract, but that “the services of the mechanic and storekeeper as provided for in Part III, paragraph 6 of the schedule to contract N-(713)55-169-7-65 should be cancelled immediately. […] With regard to the Government owned communications equipment installed on the C-47 aircraft, which your representative recently evidenced an interest in,” Air America should submit a list to the USATG and indicate what they were willing to pay:

USATG Memo of 10 March 67, once more correcting the cancellation date of the maintenance contract and offering the Government owned communications equipment of C-47 “6110” to Air America for sale
(in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no. 24)
The next step was the memo of 17 May 67, in which USATG requested that all three contracts be extended beyond their cancellation dates, i.e. the maintenance (N-(713)55-169-7-65) and the dry lease (F-0317-66-C-0001) contract to 30 June 67 and the contract for C-123 pilot training (F-62-67-C-0001) even to 31 August 67. One week later, on 23 May 67, an USATG memo again corrects the cancellation dates, i.e. the maintenance and the dry lease contract to 24 May 67, while the contract for C-123 pilot training would remain in effect until 31 August 67. So NACC’s C-47A “6110” was returned to regular Air America service, becoming B-933 in June 1967, and since that time, it was mainly operated out of Bangkok.

But this was not yet the end of the story, as on 14 August 67, USATG requested another extension of the contract for C-123 pilot training “through the remainder of calendar year 1967,” and on 29 August 67, Air America’s Director of Flying Contracts sent a copy of the modification to the contract for C-123 pilot training to Detachment 10, 6003rd Support Squadron, U.S. Air Force, Taipei, underlining in his letter not only the new cancellation date (31 December 67), but also that a paragraph “outlining the Government’s responsibility for providing transportation and subsistence, including living accommodations” had been added to the contract. So, after C-47 “6110” had gone, a new aircraft was needed. This was Air America’s Piper Apache N3277P, dry leased in mid-1967 by contract no. A-0317-68-C-0008.

Apache N3277P at Saigon on 8 July 63
(UTD/Kirkpatrick, Slide Box A2, slide no. 1KP-A2-SC 5412)

Then, the story of the termination date repeats itself. On 13 December 67, Fred Walker, Air America’s Vice-President Flying Contracts, informs the Company that “Det 10 ATG” had advised per telecom that “Contract A-0317-68-C-0008 (Apache Dry Lease) will be terminated for the convenience of the Government on or about 20 December 1967” and “that the Government will not exercise its option to extend Contract F62-67-C-0001 which expires 31 December 1967,” noting also that there was a “discrepancy in Contract A-0317-68-C-0008 (Apache Dry Lease) with respect to the labor rate to be charged to the Customer for the

197 All contract correspondence in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no.24.
modification and re-configuration at Tainan of N3277P.” On 26 December 67, USATG wrote Air America that the contract for C-123 pilot training (F62-67-C-0001) was to be extended to 30 June 68. The same day, Air America’s Fred Walker informed the Company’s Department of Planning that the Contracting Officer had advised him that it was impossible to complete the scheduled program “with respect to the use of Apache N3277P prior to 31 December 1967”, but also that “it is not anticipated that the services of the Apache […] will be required until 30 June 1968.”

Fred Walker’s latter dated 26 December 67 regarding the 2 contracts (in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no. 24)

On 25 January 68, USATG informed Air America that both contracts – the one for the Apache Dry Lease and the one for the C-123 pilot training – were terminated “as of 12:00 Midnight, 25 January 1968”, but on 5 February 68, USATG informed Air America that “due to unforeseen circumstances, it is the desire of the U.S. Government to extend subject contract [i.e. the contract for C-123 pilot training] through Midnight, 14 February 1968.” This is the end of the correspondence as documented on the microfilm preserved at the Air America Archives at Dallas. As to Apache N3277P, it was inactivated at Tainan on 5 April 68.

200 All USATG-Air America correspondence in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no. 24.
201 In April 73, 14 days were needed to reactivate N3277P (F.O.C. of 16 April 73, in: UTD/Kaufman/B1F14).
After the end of USATG’s PBY-5A program in 1967 and of USATG’s C-123 pilot training program in 1968, the next flying that Air America did on Taiwan for the US Government was training some Republic of China Air Force pilots since 1970 who were to fly the wiretap mission into North Vietnam. However, this program comprised not only the UH-1H, S-58T, and Hughes 500 training described below, but also some support flights. Since Modification no. P00003 to contract no. DAJB17-72-C-1021 effective 25 August 72, call aircraft flying services were added. While the S-58T and DHC-6 flying services mentioned there were the regular Air America aircraft used in southern Laos for that program, the Modification also mentions call aircraft flying services utilizing Contractor furnished DC-6 and DC-4 aircraft. These aircraft were probably used on support flights, while the training program was run out of PS-44 in Laos, and may have taken people, spare parts or other supplies from Tainan or the CIA’s depot on Okinawa to an airfield close to PS-44, maybe to Takhli in Thailand.

Contract no. DAJB17-72-C-1021, Modification no. P00003, p.2, effective 22 August 72  
(in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no.25)
II) Special training programs:

**CEECO B-26s**

About 25 Douglas B-26s, all owned by CIA/USA/AR/Air Asia, were stored at Tainan, Taiwan, at various times from June 58 to about 1965. In Air America papers, these aircraft are referred to as CEECO B-26s that were to be maintained and modified by Air Asia in 1962, but the question was still open in October 62. CEECO stands for the “Consolidated Electric Equipment Company” and was an Agency proprietary. CEECO may also be identical with the USAF’s Logistical Support Group, as when the remaining CEECO B-26 were to be ferried to the Congo in August 1964, the order came from the LSG – so probably, the LSG was just another cover for the CIA.

Some of these aircraft were possibly inherited from the Agency’s Western Enterprises Inc. and their successors NACC and USATG on Taiwan in the late fifties, when they had flown with the Republic of China Air Force’s 34th Squadron – at least B-26Bs “844” and “862” as well as TB-26B “888” are believed to have been handed over to Air Asia in March 59. But as there is no trace of “844” and “862” in the log books of those Air America pilots who flew the B-26s in the early sixties, not even in the log book of Connie Seigrist who was responsible for keeping the Tainan-based B-26s flying, the 2 regular ex-RoCAF B-26s are believed to have been used for spares only. So, the first B-26s to arrive at Tainan were survivors from CIA Operation Haik against Indonesia, when the CIA supported the anti-Sukarno rebels out of Menado, Indonesia in the spring of 1958. In his Memoirs, Connie Seigrist states that 4 B-26s returned from Indonesia to Tainan in late May 58: “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”. Apparently, at least three of them were flown to Kadena a couple of weeks later. Connie Seigrist notes in his log book that on 31 July 58 he flew an unknown B-26A to Kadena, while on 12 August 58 he ferried B-26A “3522” (believed to be former Indonesian rebel bomber 44-35221) from Tainan to Kadena, and for 23 August 58, his log book shows: “Tainan-test-Kadena; B-26; 3524”, believed to stand for B-26 44-35242 that had also been part of the CIA fleet in Indonesia. Between the summer of 58 and the fall of 59, those B-26s were apparently stored at Kadena, home of Detachment 2, 1045th Operational Evaluation & Training Group that is of the joint USAF-CIA unit that was also responsible for the missions to Tibet.

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202 Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee of Air Asia Co Ltd of 25 September 62, in: UTD/CIA/B7F1.
203 Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee of Air Asia Co Ltd of 9 October 62, in: UTD/CIA/B7F1.
206 See Memorandum no. DFO-64-444 of 17 August 1964, in: http://www.air-america.net/images/SAT/sat-b26a.jpg; in this paper the LSG is given as “AF Logistic Services Group”, but the correct name is probably given in Air America’s list of contracts (p. D-4, in: UTD/Kaufman/B1F14), where it appears as “Logistical Support Group Prov., Headquarters Command, USAF, Bolling AFB, Washington DC.
207 Hagedorn/Hellström, Foreign Invaders, pp.169-74.
210 See the file Working in Remote Countries of this database. So the 4 B-26s that returned from Indonesia according to Connie Seigrist apparently were “3522” (44-35221), “3524” (44-35242), 44-34376, and 44-35625.
211 Trest, Air Commando One, pp.81-83.
“On the night of 27 February 1959, the Black Bats flew their last operational B-26 missions. Three of the four remaining aircraft were flown into storage at Tainan, where a major aviation maintenance depot had been spawned by CAT. It operated under commercial cover as Air Asia.”212 After the survivors of Operation Haik had been put into storage at Kadena in the summer of 1958, only TB-26B “888” is believed to have arrived at Tainan in March 59213 – although the actual place where these CIA-owned B-26s were flown may have been Kadena Air Force Base, home of Detachment 2, 1045th Operational Evaluation & Training Group, reporting directly to CIA headquarters,214 and one of the bases of CIA-owned aircraft in the Far East.215

TB-26B “888” was a very special aircraft, apparently destined exclusively for conversion training: It was the only dual control B-26 flown by Air America crews out of Tainan, and it was black and the only B-26 that had a Nationalist Chinese symbol on the fuselage216 – thus indicating its previous service with the Republic of China Air Force. That may be the reason why it was sometimes referred to as “B-888”, although there are no records of this aircraft in the archives of the CAA of the Republic of China.217 TB-26B “888” was used by a number of Air America pilots for training – at least in November 61 and February 64: Joe Hazen flew it on 17 and 18 November 61 as well as on 22, 24, and 28 February 64.218 Ed Eckholdt also flew TB-26B “888” several times: On 17 November 61, he 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 hour 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.219 Other Air America pilots who flew TB-26B “888” included Tom Jenny, who flew it out of Tainan in training programs on 22 and 23 February 64,220 and Morrie Kenstler.221 What happened to TB-26B “888” at the end is unknown, but it may have been scrapped at Tainan, after the last B-26s had been delivered to Africa in the summer of 1964.

Evidently TB-26B “888” was primarily destined for training, while all the other B-26s served as a stand-by force for any future CIA operation anywhere in the world – especially in South East Asia (Laos, South Vietnam), in Cuba, or in Africa (Congo), and as can be seen in the B-26 file of this database, indeed some of them were delivered to conflict zones in Africa.

212 Fu / Pocock, The Black Bats, p.47.
214 Trest, Air Commando One, pp.81-83.
215 In 1953, the CIA had about 15 sterile aircraft in the Far East – many of which were probably the aircraft operated by Western Enterprises Inc and the RoCAF’s special units – and could also use the Clark-based aircraft of the USAF’s 581st ARC Wing, whose mission was to support the CIA’s transport requirements (Leary, Manuscript, p. 166, in: UTD/Leary/B19F1). In 1955, one CIA-owned C-118A was based in Okinawa and one in Subic Bay, Philippines (Leary, Manuscript, pp. 353/4, in: UTD/Leary/B19F2) – apparently 51-3820 and 51-3822, the 2 aircraft used in 1958/9 for the flights to Tibet (see my file Missions to Tibet). Kadena AFB, Okinawa, was also the place, where CAT picked up the CIA-owned B-17 in 1952 (Interview with Robert E. Rousseleot, conducted by Prof. William Leary on 10 August 1987, written resume, in: UTD/Leary/B43F4).
216 E-mail dated 12 July 2004 kindly sent to the author by Joe Hazen.
217 E-mail dated 26 November 2004, kindly sent to the author by Billy K. C. Chang, Director General, CAA, Republic of China.
218 E-mail dated 7 June 2004, kindly sent to the author by Joe Hazen.
221 E-mail dated 29 June 2004 kindly sent to the author by Morrie Kenstler.
This means that the other B-26s were kept in flyable status for any use that might be ordered, and so, from time to time, Air America pilots who happened to be at Tainan for some other business, had to fly them for a couple of hours. At the same time, the regular B-26s stored at Tainan served for training certain Air America pilots to fly combat missions. For should there be another occasion after Operation Mill Pond aborted in April 1961, a number of Air America pilots should be able to fly these bombers.

Apparently, the first B-26s arrived in 1959 and came from 2 sources: Some of these aircraft were survivors of Operation Haik that had returned to Tainan in 1958 and had then been ferried to Kadena. It was evidently at Kadena that the B-26s received fake serials like “8264”, and after Air Asia had signed contract no. 59-069 with “CEECO” to maintain those B-26s at Tainan, the first of them reappeared at Tainan in its new guise in October 59: On 13 October 59 Connie Seigrist tested B-26 “8264”,222 that is former Haik-bomber 44-35221 (and probably also former “3522”). Some other B-26s apparently came from the CIA fleet that had been destined for Operation Haik in Indonesia, but was kept in reserve at Clark Air Base. These aircraft had had their US markings restored in June 58, and at least 4 of them departed for Japan in early July 58,223 but apparently ended up on Okinawa, where they, too, received new fake serials at Kadena. Two of the other three B-26s that Connie Seigrist flew at Tainan in 1959 are believed to have been former Haik reserve aircraft that had been kept at Clark Air Base until July 58: On 17 October 59, he tested B-26 “8765” out of Tainan,224 and on 12 November 59, Connie Seigrist ferried B-26 “8188” from Kadena to Tainan.225 “6248”, known to be former 44-35625, the forth B-26 tested by Connie Seigrist in 1959, i.e. on 3 November 59,226 is not mentioned by Hagedorn/Hellström among the aircraft used in or destined for Operation Haik, but it probably was the unknown B-26 delivered to Indonesia on 18 May 58.227

So in the fall of 1959, Air Asia Co Ltd, which already had a large maintenance facility at Tainan, had signed contract no. 59-069 with CEECO covering “Flight Personnel Service”;228 and in the beginning, this contract probably only meant maintenance and some flight training. The man in charge of the CEECO B-26s stored at Tainan was Connie Seigrist. Already for 16 July 60, Connie Seigrist 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.”229 From his father’s log book, Steve Seigrist identifies these 4 B-26s as “6248”, “8188”, “8765”, and another one, whose tail number is hard to read, but was probably “8264”.230 These were the 4 B-26s that had arrived in late 1959.

From material released by the CIA in 2009, we know the following background: On 6 October 59, James A. Cunningham, Chief, CIA’s Administration Branch, DPD231 at that time

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222 E-mail dated 25 January 2008, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigrist.
223 Hagedorn/Hellström, Foreign Invaders, pp.124/5.
224 E-mail dated 25 January 2008, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigrist.
226 E-mail dated 25 January 2008, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigrist.
227 Hagedorn/Hellström, Foreign Invaders, p.125.
230 E-mail dated 24 November 2007, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigrist.
231 DPD was the Developments Project Division of the CIA, to whom the CAT/Air America Management reported until late 1962, when it was placed under the Air Branch of the Special Operations Division (SOD), Deputy Director (Support). See Memo dated 11 December 62, Col. L.K. White, Deputy Director Support to Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, p.1, online readable at http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/15/c05260979.pdf.
and years later Air America’s Base Manager at Vientiane, sent a memo to the CIA’s General Counsel that was apparently accompanied by the draft contract no. 59-069 between CEECO (CIA) and Air America.\textsuperscript{232} This letter confirms 2 things: a) The B-26s were made combat ready for missions to be flown in Laos: “As you are aware, DPD is concerning itself with providing for the contingency of close air support to Laos in the event Communist aggression moves to a showdown in that arena. The DCI, with BOB concurrence, has approved an allocation of [erased] from the Contingency Reserve for the first phase of [erased, possibly \textit{Mill Pond}] which calls for preparation of four B-26 aircraft to combat readiness at [erased] Tainan. DPD is administering these funds.”\textsuperscript{233} b) The 4 B-26s were former \textit{Haik} aircraft: “You will recall that these aircraft were involved in the [erased, i.e. \textit{Haik}] operation, at which time they were ‘sold’ to a Mr. [erased] in [erased, i.e. Indonesia] for [erased, probably AUREV] and he in turn ‘sold’ them to [erased].”\textsuperscript{234}

\textbf{MEMORANDUM FOR} : General Counsel  \\
\textbf{SUBJECT} : Proposed [ ] Contract for [ ] Operation  \\
\textbf{REFERENCE} : Draft of Proposed Contract (No. [ ]) between [ ] and [ ] undated, draft attached

1. As you are aware, DPD is concerning itself with providing for the contingency of close air support to Laos in the event Communist aggression moves to a showdown in that arena. The DCI, with BOB concurrence, has approved an allocation of [ ] from the Contingency Reserve for the first phase of [ ] which calls for preparation of four B-26 aircraft to combat readiness at [ ] Tainan. DPD is administering these funds. At the moment, informal estimates from [ ] place the cost of rehabilitation of these aircraft at approximately [ ] though this amount is subject to change.

2. You will recall that these same aircraft were involved in the [ ] operation, at which time they were “sold” to a Mr. [ ] in [ ] for [ ] and he in turn “sold” them to [ ] ownership trail ends. We have given them a new series of numbers and a new lease on life with the proposed rehabilitation.

CIA, Chief Administrative Branch to General Counsel, letter dated 6 October 59, re preparation of 4 B-26s to combat readiness at Tainan\textsuperscript{235}

\textsuperscript{232} Letter dated 6 October 59, CIA Chief, Administrative Branch DPD to General Counsel, CIA, online readable at: \url{http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1818029/195909.pdf}.  
\textsuperscript{233} Letter dated 6 October 59, CIA Chief, Administrative Branch DPD to General Counsel, CIA, online readable at: \url{http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1818029/195909.pdf}.  
\textsuperscript{234} Letter dated 6 October 59, CIA Chief, Administrative Branch DPD to General Counsel, CIA, online readable at: \url{http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1818029/195909.pdf}.  
\textsuperscript{235} Letter dated 6 October 59, CIA Chief, Administrative Branch DPD to General Counsel, CIA, online readable at: \url{http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1818029/195909.pdf}.  

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The next four B-26s apparently arrived at Tainan between mid-July and early August 1960. The man in charge, Connie Seigrist, notes in his Memoirs: “3/4/9 August [1960] – I gave the same four B-26s I had tested in July another shake down flight plus another four just brought out of storage.”

From his father’s log book, Steve Seigrist 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”. Connie Seigrist also explains the arrival of so many additional B-26s at Tainan: “Bob [i.e. Robert Rousselot, CAT’s Vice-President Operations] casually mentioned CAT had a new contract to keep the B-26s in good flying conditions.”

Evidently, this was contract no. 59-069 with CEECO covering “Flight Personnel Service”. For the CIA had made arrangements thru CEECO to fly first 4 B-26s and later another 4 to Tainan for rehabilitation. All of these B-26s were predominantly painted black and were referred to by their crews as “Blackbirds”. One of them, “8765”, crashed near Tainan on 18 February 1962 during a training flight, killing James A. Rasmussen, when he flew into a mountain. Only the last three digits of the serials were painted on the fin, but probably they were deliberately arbitrary to make these aircraft non-attributable. After that loss, there was a total of 7 aircraft according to B-26 pilot Morrie Kenstler, excluding a Chinese aircraft with dual controls, that is excluding TB-26B “888”.

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B-26B “6797” (44-35242) over Taiwan in November 1961
(Photo by Ed Eckholdt, kindly submitted by Leif Hellström)

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237 E-mail dated 24 November 2007, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigrist.
238 E-mail dated 24 November 2007, kindly sent to the author by Steve Seigrist.
241 See list “Operational casualties in SEA”, in: UTD/CIA/B29F1; list “Aircraft destroyed or lost”, in: UTD/CIA/B49F2.
242 E-mail dated 29 June 2004 kindly sent to the author by Morrie Kenstler.
As it seems, contract no. 59-069 did not only cover keeping the aircraft working, but also its guns and even training combat flying, as for late August 1960, Connie Seigrist notes: “30 August 1960 – I dressed up my shooting flying a B-26 on the CAF gunnery range with a CAF Colonel riding as observer.”

This aspect of the contract may have been the result of the fact that when Operation Haik was to be set up in April 1958, the CIA could find only few CAT pilots like William H. Beale and Allan L. Pope who had already had some B-26 experience before. During the operation, Connie Seigrist became another B-26 pilot after some conversion training at Clark Air Base and his conversion checkout at Clark on 14 and 15 May 1958. The next CIA operation involving CIA B-26s in South East Asia was Operation Mill Pond, which was to be carried out by 16 USAF B-26s flown by USAF pilots on temporary duty, but who were to be led by 4 black CIA B-26s flown by CAT/Air America/Southern AT pilots, and these 4 black CIA B-26s – among them “8434” later flown by Tom Jenny – were to be flown from Tainan to Takhli in December 60 for air strikes at Vang Vieng, Laos. But apparently, 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. “On March 21 [1961], Jenny, Beale, Sutphin, and Barnes ferried heavily armed B-26s to Takhli” – probably the remaining 2 black B-26s. Truman Barnes, William H. Beale Jr., Tom Jenny, and Ron Sutphin were the Air America pilots who were to fly the original four CIA B-26s, and who by that time, had probably received B-26 training at Tainan. When the CIA mounted Project Black Watch in Laos from October to December 61, already some more Air America pilots had some B-26 experience, among them Al White and Ed Eckholdt, who flew these reconnaissance missions out of Takhli, Thailand using RB-26Cs “236” and “745”. But for operations in South East Asia and elsewhere in the world, the CIA needed more CAT and Air America pilots able to fly the B-26 in bombing missions, and so the B-26 training at Tainan continued.

Some time after the CEECO B-26s that had participated in the abortive Project Mill Pond had returned to Tainan in August 61, i.e. since late 1961, the Republic of China Air Force range at Hsin-Chu near Tainan became available for gunnery practice. So probably still covered by the “Flight Personnel Service” provided under the provisions of contract 59-069,

244 Conboy / Morrison, Feet to the fire, pp.99-101.
246 Tom Jenny flew B-26 “8434” 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).
247 For Operation Mill Pond see Hagedorn / Hellström, Foreign Invaders, pp. 132-36 and also 169-74; Trest, Air Commando One, p. 110; and Conboy / Morrison, Shadow war, p. 45.
248 The first 2 CIA B-26s for Project Mill Pond probably were “7711” and “8188”, as they are only known by the test flights that Connie Seigrist made at Tainan in July and August 1960 (Entry in Connie Seigrist’s log book, kindly e-mailed to the author by Steve Seigrist on 24 November 2007).
249 Conboy / Morrison, Shadow war, pp. 48 + 52.
250 Interview with Thomas G. Jenny, conducted by Prof. William Leary at Atlanta, GA on 24 May 1988, written resume, at: UTD/Leary/B45F18. This is not evident from Tom Jenny’s log book, which notes only 2 B-26s (“6797” and “8264”) test flown at Tainan for one hour each (Tom Jenny kindly sent photocopies of his log book to the author on 22 October 2004). Probably he was not allowed to log the ferry flight.
251 The 2 CIA B-26s delivered to Project Mill Pond on 21 March 61 probably were “7677” and “8434”, as Tom Jenny flew “7677” out of Tainan on 18 and 19 March 61 and “8434” out of Takhli on 3 April 61 (log book of Tom Jenny, who kindly sent photocopies of those pages to the author on 22 October 2004).
252 Interview with Tom Jenny, conducted by the author on 1 June 2006.
253 Hagedorn / Hellström, Foreign Invaders, p. 135; Ed Eckholdt on his own video tape at 1.18.33 and 1.19.53 minutes.
some Air America pilots flew a number of the CEECO B-26s on training missions for bombing, napalm and low-level strafing practice near Tainan from about November 61 to 1964, one of the instructors being Ed Eckholdt. But although official Air America documents refer to these B-26s as “CEECO” aircraft, 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.”

From the log books that have survived and from other documents, we know that among the Air America pilots who flew or were to fly B-26s on bombing missions in 1961 or later, are first of all Connie Seigrist, who had tested all 8 CEECO bombers in 1960, who then trained Cuban pilots in Guatemala, and who – at the end of the Bay of Pigs operation – flew himself bombing missions against Cuba, and Douglas Price, who also trained Cuban pilots in Guatemala, and at the end of the Bay of Pigs operation flew himself bombing missions against Cuba. The next pilot to be mentioned is James A. Rasmussen who, on 29 November 61, flew B-26B “8264” 2.10 hours with Ed Eckholdt from Tainan to the Hsin-Chu gunnery range, practicing skip bombing, glide bombing, and strafing with live ammunition. On the return flight from Hsin-Chu to Tainan the same day, Rasmussen flew again with Ed Eckholdt, this time in B-26B “6797”, receiving instruction and familiarization training. James A. Rasmussen was killed, when his B-26B “8765” flew into a mountain near Tainan during a training flight on 18 February 62. The official reason for the crash was “flight below minimum safe altitudes resulting in failure to clear obstructing terrain”.

After the loss of B-26B “8765” in 1962, there were still 7 regular B-26Bs at Tainan until 4 of them – apparently “7677”, “7711”, “8188”, and “8434” – were assigned to Project Farm Gate in South Vietnam in July 1963. B-26s “7711” and “8188” are only known by the test flights made by Connie Seigrist at Tainan in July and August 1960. Connie Seigrist had ferried B-26 “7677” from Kadena to Tainan on 9 January 60 and then tested it at Tainan several times in April and August 60; but Tom Jenny also flew this aircraft out of Tainan in training and test programs on 18 and 19 March 61. The fourth aircraft of this group – “8434” – is known to have been one of the 4 black CIA B-26s assigned to Project Mill Pond, where Tom Jenny flew “8434” in test programs out of Takhli on 3 April 61. As “7677”, “7711”, and “8188” were seldom noted at Tainan, they are believed to have been the other 3 CIA B-26s assigned to Project Mill Pond, which remained on stand-by at Takhli until August

254 E-mail dated 5 July 2004, kindly sent to the author by Joe Hazen.
255 For details, see the file Air America at the Bay of Pigs within my History of Air America.
256 For details, see the file Air America at the Bay of Pigs within my History of Air America.
259 “Aircraft accidents 1962”, in: UTD/CIA/B49F2; List “Operational casualties in SEA”, in: UTD/CIA/B29F1; List “Aircraft destroyed or lost”, in: UTD/ CIA/B49F2.
260 For details about their identities see the B-26 file within my The Aircraft of Air America.
61, when most of the Mill Pond aircraft were returned to Okinawa.\footnote{For Project Mill Pond see Hagedorn / Hellström, Foreign Invaders, pp.132-36.} However, at least one of the CIA B-26s – “8434” – returned to Tainan, as at least 2 Air America pilots – Joe Hazen\footnote{Joe Hazen flew B-26 “434” on 22, 28, and 29 November 61 (e-mail dated 7 June 2004, kindly sent to the author by Joe Hazen).} and Ed Eckholdt\footnote{Ed Eckholdt flew B-26 “8434” 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.} – are known to have flown this aircraft in training programs out of Tainan in November 1961.

At the same time, that is during the first half of 1961, training at Tainan was mainly done using the remaining B-26s. Unfortunately, only details from the log book of Tom Jenny are available for this period, covering the time before he left for Takhli to fly in Project Mill Pond. Tom Jenny flew B-26 “8264” out of Tainan in training programs on 3, 7, 12, and 17 January 61 as well as on 20 March 61. He flew “8765” on 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, and 16 January 61 and “6248” on 4 January 61. And he flew B-26 “6797” on 4 January 61 as well as on 20 March 61.\footnote{Log book of Tom Jenny, who kindly sent photocopies of those pages to the author on 22 October 2004.}

The next period of heavy training activity at Tainan that is documented by the surviving log books is the month of November 1961. No less than 5 Air America pilots are known to have been involved in B-26 training programs out of Tainan during that month: Joe Hazen flew “8264” on 18 and 21 November 61; “8765” on 21 November 61 and “6797” on 28 and 29 November 61.\footnote{E-mail dated 7 June 2004, kindly sent to the author by Joe Hazen.} Ed Eckholdt flew “8264” 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), on 28 November 61 (0.50 hour solo in a close formation of 4 aircraft to familiarize with the Hsin-Chu gunnery range), and on 29 November 61 (2.10 hours with James A. Rasmussen from Tainan to the Hsin-Chu gunnery range, practicing skip bombing, glide bombing, and strafing with live ammunition);\footnote{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.} and Ed Eckholdt flew “8765” out of Tainan on 21 November 61\footnote{Log book of Ed Eckholdt, at: UTD/B44/F13.} and in a 4 ship formation from Tainan to the Hsin-Chu gunnery range for practicing on 28 November 61.\footnote{Log book of Ed Eckholdt, at: UTD/B44/F13.} Morrie Kenstler flew all of these B-26s\footnote{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.} and was the pilot of “6797”, when this aircraft was photographed by Ed Eckholdt in the formation of 4 B-26s flown on 28 November 61.\footnote{E-mail dated 29 June 2004 kindly sent to the author by Morrie Kenstler.} The purpose of all this combat training is not known, but probably another attack onto Pathet Lao positions in Laos was planned, although such a combat mission was never flown. Another purpose of this training may have been to prepare Air America pilots for ferry missions. For in December 61, Air Asia personnel – which means Air America pilots – ferried the first 4 Farm Gate B-26s from Tainan to Kadena, Okinawa, where they were picked up by USAF crews.\footnote{E-mail dated 29 June 2004 kindly sent to the author by Morrie Kenstler.}
After November 1961, the B-26 training program at Tainan seems to have been reduced: I have already mentioned the death of Air America pilot James A. Rasmussen on 18 February 62, when his B-26B “8765” flew into a mountain near Tainan during a training flight. Ed Eckholdt flew “6797” and “6248” out of Tainan on 28 March 63 – these were test flights for “CEECHO”. Although on 11 February 1964, all B-26s in South Vietnam were grounded after a wing had failed on an aircraft in the US, CEECO B-26s were still used on training missions for bombing, napalm and low-level strafing practice near Tainan in 1964. But the last training period noted in the surviving log books of Air America pilots was February 64: Joe Hazen flew “6797” on 24, 25, and 27 February 64, and Tom Jenny flew “6797” out of Tainan in training programs on 24 and 25 February 64. This time, the purpose was different: The remaining B-26s were no longer prepared for a potential attack against targets in Laos, but for being ferried to the Congo in Africa, where they were to be handed over to the Cuban exile pilots working for the Congolese government.

Already on 1 February 64, Tom Jenny flew a “non-Company B-26” “per SA/VPFO memo no. 64-009”, which possibly means that he ferried an unknown B-26 to the Congo; on 8 February 64, Tom Jenny was back at Tainan, testing Air America Helio Courier “871”. In August 64, the remaining 3 CIA B-26s – “8264”, “6248”, and “6797” – were ferried from Tainan to Leopoldville in the Congo, apparently after reverting to their old USAF serials. This becomes obvious from a photo of former “6248”, which belly landed in Africa in 1964/65 as “35625”. Four more B-26s were also ferried from Tainan to Leopoldville by Southern Air Transport pilots, but these were former Farm Gate B-26s that had returned from South Vietnam to Clark Air Base and then had been refurbished at Okinawa and at Tainan:

were engaged in and the ingenuity of our people. This story had begun several months earlier back at Hurlbut. One morning Colonel King called Captain Piotrowski to his office and told him to pack his bags and depart for the Air America facilities in Taiwan. Upon arrival he was to locate and, with the help of the local maintenance people, make airworthy six B-26 aircraft. He was instructed to travel in civilian clothes and otherwise obscure his identity as a member of the 4400th CCTS or for that matter of the U.S. military. Air Asia was the maintenance facility on Taiwan that provided major maintenance service for Air America airplanes. Both organizations were leased or otherwise controlled by the CIA. – Upon arrival Pete found the B-26s in the local bone yard […] Besides making the aircraft airworthy, Pete was to install a modification that would permit them to carry external bombs and rocket pods, in addition to the internal weapons that the B-26 was originally designed to carry, […] After the aircraft were modified and ready to go, Pete checked out the Air Asia pilots who then flew the aircraft to Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, where our pilots would receive them. Before departure from Tainan, Pete tried to put Vietnam insignias on these aircraft in accordance with King’s instructions, but the CIA people would have none of that and would not release the aircraft until he affixed USAF insignias.” Although the article speaks about 6 B-26s, according to Hagedorn / Hellström (Foreign Invaders, p.147), only 4 B-26Bs were delivered to Farm Gate in December 1961, all former Mill Pond aircraft: 44-35530 (shot down in the Mekong Delta on 5 November 62), 44-35692 (shot down in the Mekong Delta on 3 February 63), 44-35703 (to Clark AFB on 1 April 64 and then to the Congo) and 44-35855 (to Clark AFB on 1 April 64 and then scrapped).

276 “Aircraft accidents 1962”, in: UTD/CIA/B49F2; List “Operation casualties in SEA”, in: UTD/CIA/B29F1; List “Aircraft destroyed or lost”, in: UTD/CIA/B49F2.
278 Dorr / Bishop, Vietnam air war debrief, p. 30.
279 On the video tape made by Ed Eckholdt at 0.19.40, 0.34.58, 1.19.04 minutes.
280 E-mail dated 7 June 2004, kindly sent to the author by Joe Hazen.
281 For details, see Hagedorn / Hellström, Foreign Invaders, pp.148-55.
284 So, “8264” became 44-35221, “6248” became 44-35625, and “6797” became 44-35242.
285 The photo was kindly sent to the author by Leif Hellström in June 2004.
The first B-26 of this group to leave for Leopoldville was 44-35822: It 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. But then B-26 “35822” crashed 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. Another B-26 to leave for Leopoldville was 44-35804, which arrived in the Congo on 17/8 August 64 and became “804”. B-26 44-35703 was test flown by Tom Jenny at Tainan on 20 August 64 and on 30 August 64, before it left for Leopoldville in August 64. The last B-26 of this group was 44-35890, which Tom Jenny also test flew at Tainan on 20, 21, and 22 August 64. Tom then ferried this aircraft Tainan-Takhli-Bombay-Aden-Addis Abeba-Leopoldville between 22 and 25 August 64. In the Congo, the aircraft became “890”, and Tom Jenny returned Leopoldville-Paris on 27 August 64.

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288 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.
289 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).
290 E-mail dated 1 Feb. 2004, kindly sent to the author by Leif Hellström.
292 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).
293 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. For contract no. AF9604-4194 between SAT and the USAF LSG see Memorandum no. DFO-64-444 of 17 August 1964, in: http://www.air-america.net/images/SAT/sat-b26a.jpg.
294 Hagedorn / Hellström, Foreign Invaders, p. 155.
Technical Training at Tainan:

A few cases are known, when Air Asia used aircraft that were no longer flyable for technical training purposes. One of them was CAT’s good old PBY-5A B-825. As has been shown above, the last contract that the Company had with the USATG for flying services with the PBY – contract no. DA JB-67-C-0001 – was terminated effective 30 June 67.\textsuperscript{296} So after June 1967, there was no longer any real use for the PBYs. What happened to the 2 PBY’s after that date is well described by David A. Weller: “There were 2 Catalinas in the Tech Training department.”\textsuperscript{297} The first to disappear was B-831: It “sat by the shops building in Tainan for many months until it was […] eventually scrapped.”\textsuperscript{298} It was de-registered off its nationality markings on 25 April 1968, scrapped and no longer current on 1 May 68.\textsuperscript{299} The other PBY-5A – B-825 – had already been put in long term storage by 1 May 68 and was still in storage on 19 July 71.\textsuperscript{300} As it did not disappear from the Company’s inventories until 1972,\textsuperscript{301} when it was scrapped,\textsuperscript{302} one might ask why it wasn’t also scrapped after it could not be sold. The explanation is given by David A. Weller: As it was used for training “in the Tech Training department.”\textsuperscript{303}

The other non flyable aircraft known to have been used by the Technical Training Department for training mechanics was a Douglas A-26 appropriately serialled “TTD-001”.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{TTD-001.jpg}
\caption{Air Asia’s training B-26 “TTD-001” at Tainan in 1971 (photo kindly submitted by M.S. Cheng and E. Ping Chiang)}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{296} USATG letter to Air America dated 12 July 67, in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no.25.
\textsuperscript{297} E-mail dated 7 August 2007, sent by David A. Weller to Ward S. Reimer, who kindly forwarded it to the author.
\textsuperscript{298} E-mail dated 7 August 2007, sent by David A. Weller to Ward S. Reimer, who kindly forwarded it to the author.
\textsuperscript{299} E-mail dated 20 March 2003, kindly sent by Mr. Chang Kuo-Cheng, Director General, CAA, Republic of China, to the author; Aircraft status as of 1 May 68, in: UTD/Herd/B2).
\textsuperscript{300} Aircraft status as of 1 May 68, in: UTD/Herd/B2; Schedule of Aircraft Insurance as of 19 July 71: Memo no. DI-71-0415, in: UTD/Herd/B2.
\textsuperscript{301} Inventories of 31 March 72 > 30 November 72 (both in: UTD/CIA/B1F10): 1 > 0
\textsuperscript{302} See the photo in: Rosbert, \textit{The Pictorial History of Civil Air Transport}, p.232.
\textsuperscript{303} E-mail dated 7 August 2007, sent by David A. Weller to Ward S. Reimer, who kindly forwarded it to the author.
This aircraft, former N4852V of Coastways Associates, had encountered mechanical problems on Borneo in mid-April 1967, was ferried to Tainan in May 1967 and stored at Tainan until January 1968, when it was sold to Air Asia. Its status is described in a letter that Coastways sent to the Office of Munitions Control, US Department of State, on 23 July 1968: “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.” In the Air America documentary, which was produced in 1970/71, this white aircraft can be seen with a technical instructor explaining certain mechanisms to a group of students. It is still listed in the Aircraft Inventory of 31 March 1972, but no longer mentioned on the Inventory of 30 November 1972. This makes believe that the A-26 hull was scrapped in 1972.

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304 For details see the B-26 file within my The aircraft of Air America.
305 Letter dated 23 July 68, in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no. 4.
306 Aircraft Inventories of 31 March 72 and of 30 November 72, both in: UTD/CIA/B1F10.
C-123 Training for SO BAC / VIAT and the RoCAF’s 34th Squadron

VIAT or Vietnamese Air Transport was a front for a top-secret South Vietnamese-CIA operation called Bureau 45B or Biet Kích So Bac (Northern Service). It had been set up in 1959 by Captain Ngo The Linh, reported to President Ngo Dinh Diem, and was responsible for spy and commando missions into North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. In 1961, So Bac started air-dropping agents into North Vietnam using C-47s, C-46s and C-54s. In February 63 five gray, unmarked C-123s, which were owned by the CIA, were delivered to the Republic of China Air Force (RoCAF) under the condition that two of them were flown by RoCAF crews on infiltration and resupply missions into North Vietnam. “Their crews, having finished the basic program in the United States, spent the next several months perfecting their techniques in low-level night flying and the use of the planes ECM gear.”

On 15 June 63, two of the four remaining C-123s – one C-123 had crashed in Taiwan in a training accident – departed for Saigon. Here, the Chinese crews were trained in low level flying by Air America pilot Johnny Lee and Air America navigator Jim Keck.

In “July 63, an order came for me to transfer to the Naval Auxiliary Communications Center (NACC), Taipei, Taiwan, to head up a special C-123 project to train pilots in Taiwan and operating out of Saigon.”

“In August 1963, Lee received a cable from Rousselot to report to Taipei. Lee learned that he was to be assigned to the Nationalist Air Force C-123 program at Hsin-Chu that was being run by the NACC. The Chinese had just lost an airplane on a training flight and needed someone to supervise training. Lee had the necessary qualifications: he had trained Chinese pilots during World War II, spoke Chinese, and knew the C-123. NACC had been running a program to mainland China with a P2V. The C-123 program involved agent drops in North Vietnam (launching from Danang). There were two planes and eight pilots in the program. They had had minimal training at Pope AFB and were not really familiar with the C-123. Lee had to motivate and encourage, building confidence in the airplane. He had the backing of the chief of the Chinese Air Force and was given a free hand to get the job done (for example, normal procedures for flying around Taiwan were waived). Lee started from scratch: rank was not important – decisions on aircraft commanders would be based on proficiency. He practiced low level night airdrops: fly 200-300 feet off the water using radar altimeter, simulate penetration of the coast, fly terrain by moonlight, simulate drop. He also demonstrated the capabilities of the airplane: for example, he would come in at 1500 feet over the end of the runway, chop power, dump full flaps, come straight down, flare out, reverse, and land within 1000 feet. In addition, Lee taught rules and regulations for international flights (for ferrying), and practiced ILS approaches at Taipei.

This training at Hsin-Chu Air Base, Taiwan, was done under contract no. N-(713)55-169-12-

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307 The five CIA C-123Bs are believed to have been: 55-4543 (msn 20204) and 55-4551 (msn 20212), both transferred to an unknown MAP on 10 April 63, as well as 54-0643 (msn 20092), 54-0657 (msn 20106), and 54-0715 (msn 20164), all of which left 464TCW, Pope AFB, to an unknown operator on 6 May 63; for further details see the C-123 file of my The aircraft of Air America.

308 Ahern, The way we do things, p.44.

309 RoCAF C-123B “4020” alias 55-4551 crashed into a mountain during a night training flight on Taiwan on 10 May 63, killing 12 people (e-mails dated 14 April 2004 and 29 July 2007, kindly sent to the author by Clarence Fu).

310 Conboy / Andradé, Spies and commandos, pp.60/1.

311 Manuscript of the memoirs of Jim Keck, p. 25, kindly supplied to the author by Jim Keck himself; e-mail written by Jim Keck to the author on 2 February 2002.

312 John E. Lee, interview given to William Leary on 11 February 1987, written version preserved at UTD/Leary/B46F10.

313 John E. Lee, interview given to William Leary on 27 May 1987, summary preserved at UTD/Leary/B46F10.
64, effective 1 July 63 and provisionally terminated on 30 June 65, that Air America had with the Naval Auxiliary Communications Center of Taipei, and that contract was for C-123 Instruction—destined for the Chinese crews who were to fly those C-123s into North Vietnam.

In South Vietnam, the C-123 operations were directed by USAF Lt Colonel Bill Rose. When a China Airlines C-54 operating for VIAT vanished over North Vietnam on 4 July 63, the RoCAF C-123s were the only way to airdrop agents into North Vietnam. During those missions, the C-123s were unmarked, but pull-off RoCAF and USAF insignia were also used while the aircraft were on Taiwan or later in South Vietnam. On 24 January 64, the four CIA/RoCAF C-123s came under the control of the Department of Defense. As Air America had a contract with VIAT to support their operations and to maintain their aircraft as may be called by VIAT, it is believed that those aircraft were also maintained in South Vietnam by Air America between June 63 and January 64. Maintenance on Taiwan was possibly done under the old contract that Air America had with the NACC for aircraft maintenance probably since 1962: contract no. N-(713)55-169-4-63.

The military unit that the original four C-123Bs had been transferred to in January 64 was MACV-SOG, that is Military Assistance Command Vietnam – Special Operations Group, renamed Studies and Observations Group in the second half of 1964. As to the pilot training on Taiwan, contract no. N-(713)55-169-12-64, effective 1 July 63 that Air America had with the NACC for C-123 pilot training, did not expire until on 30 June 65, so wasn’t touched by the change of operational command in South Vietnam. And Air America’s John Lee remained chief instructor of the RoCAF pilots also after January 64, that is after the program had been taken over by MACV-SOG: “Lee flew to Saigon with aircraft in late November 1963. The first mission was launched from Danang on December 4. Other missions followed during the first six months of 1964, mostly into North Vietnam from Danang, and a few from Taiwan to Hainan. Most of the time, however, was spent in training and standby. […] In June 1964, Lee requested transfer to Tachikawa.” Ben Coleman took over the program from John Lee at the end of 1964 and worked as a liaison from Air America to SOG until 1968.

During the second half of 1964, the original four C-123s inherited from the CIA were joined by six C-123s modified with improved electronics and advanced Doppler navigation, the first of which had arrived by August 64 together with new air crews who had been trained in Florida: seven Chinese and three Vietnamese crews. This second group of C-123Bs was called Project “Duck Hook.” The Chinese crews were just given a new project designation:

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314 Aircraft status as of 7 July 64, in: UTD/Kirkpatrick/B1F1.
315 See “A Life for Freedom and Democracy. Special Branch - Northern Service (So Bac) and the Secret War against Hanoi” at http://ngothelinh.tripod.com/Tribute.htm.
316 Photos were published in: Plaster, SOG, pp.71-78.
317 Conboy / Andradé, Spies and commandos, pp.91-94.
318 Contract no. 61-119; see: List of Air America’s contracts, Memorandum of 27 July 62, in: UTD/Fink/B2F16.
319 “Aircraft status” as of 7 July 64, in: UTD/Kirkpatrick/B1F1.
320 Conboy / Andradé, Spies and Commandos, pp.92/3 and 296 note 9.
324 The six “Duck Hook” C-123Bs are believed to have been: 56-4377 (msn 20261), which entered SF service as a special activities aircraft on 28 March 64 (probably the evaluation aircraft); 54-641 (msn 20090), 54-704 (msn 20153), 55-4522 (msn 20183), and 56-4356 (msn 20240), all of which became SF (special activities aircraft) with the 2nd Air Division, Tan Son Nhut, on 9 November 64 and were transferred to a unit outside the regular
While the China Airlines crews who had flown for VIAT had been assigned to project “Nan Hsing” (“Southern Star”), the crews who flew the originally CIA-owned C-123Bs were assigned to project “Nan Hsing No.2”, and the new “Duck Hook” crews were assigned to project “Nan Hsing No.3”.325

A painting of RoCAF C-123B “5661” on the wall of the dormitory of RoCAF’s 34th Squadron (with kind permission from RoCAF Capt. Sung Hung-sen via Clarence Fu)

As to the American trainers stationed on Taiwan, Ben Coleman also supervised the C-123 training offered to the crews destined for Project “Duck Hook”.326 Officially, he was a DC-6B captain flying with Civil Air Transport, “which would take him between Taipei, Hong Kong, Bangkok. It would also take him north from Taipei to Japan and then there were occasional periods when, or days when he would fill in for somebody on what they called the ‘Round the Island’ flight”, because he was qualified in the C-46, C-47 also. […] But during that time, he also was working, I would always hear him refer to the NACC. He had to go to NACC for this or NACC for that.”327 During that time, the family lived at Taipei: “There were frequent trips to the military club facilities, suddenly we were member of the Officer’s Club in Taipei.”328 The family quickly noticed that in the meantime, Ben Coleman had two jobs – he was not only an airline pilot of CAT, but he also worked for the Chinese Air Force: “We did notice that there were times that he would leave in a Civil Air Transport uniform and come home in an Air America uniform, or he would come home in a suit and tie, so it was different. There were many times when he would leave for longer, more extended periods of time. […]

USAF (code TL), i.e. probably to MACV-SOG, on 8 December 64 (64343); 56-4355 (msn 20239) was probably intended to become the sixth “Duck Hook” C-123B, but it was destroyed in a flying accident on 1 November 64 – indeed, on 1 November 64, a C-123 made an emergency landing on the water near Makung, a town of Penghu Island in the Taiwan Strait; it was flown by an American crew from Vietnam to Taiwan for maintenance; the crew was saved by fishing boats (e-mail dated 5 August 2007, kindly sent by the author by Clarence Fu); 55-4528 (msn 20189) may have been a replacement aircraft for 56-4355; for further details see the C-123 file within my The aircraft of Air America.

325 E-mail dated 5 August 2007, kindly sent to the author by Clarence Fu.
Although we had had Thai friends at Bangkok and we had had a lot of third country national Air America employees that had visited our home on many occasions in Thailand, it was different in Taipei because there were more official functions, and it turned out that at that time Dad was working the Republic of China Air Force evidently as an instructor for their C-123 pilots and all that was tied in with some special operations that were occurring in Vietnam and that was part of the reason for those extended trips that he was making. We moved fairly rapidly from the one house that we had started off in Taipei to a very large, elegant home almost directly across the Chinese Air Force headquarters. And I know it was owned by a Chinese Air Force General by the name of General Iy.329 Possibly, this was General I Fu-en, chief of the RoCAF intelligence.330 “It was again just within the past couple of years that I found out that during that particular time frame my dad had replaced an individual by the name of Captain Lee, John Lee”, as a liaison from Air America to SOG and a lot of the SOG operations included the Chinese Nationalist pilots, the Taiwanese pilots that my father was training. […] He was I guess particularly involved in the training of the pilots for a lot of cross border missions that took place, a lot of team infiltrations and exfiltrations that occurred during that time frame of ’65 to ’68.”331

In early 1965, the CIA-station at Taipei changed its cover from NACC to USATG. So a new contract between Air America had the USATG had to be signed effective 1 July 65, for training the RoCAF C-123 pilots. What has survived is the successor to this unknown first contract, that is contract no. F62-67-C-0001 between Air America and Detachment 10, 6003rd Support Squadron, USAF Taipei, effective 1 July 1966. Interestingly, this contract was signed by Air America’s President Hugh Grundy (“Contractor”) and by the same George H. Clark, Contracting Officer, who later also signed all the USATG memos regarding the cancellation date of this contract. So, apparently, Detachment 10, 6003rd Support Squadron, USAF Taipei was a detachment of the Hawaii-based 6003rd Support Group USAF332 whose mission was to support the CIA activities first of NACC and then of USATG, probably also by furnishing other specialists.333

From that contract (no. F62-67-C-0001 effective 1 July 1966), we know a little bit more about the training: “The Contractor shall, within its capability, provide at such place and within such area as may be designated by the Contracting Officer the services of qualified Fairchild C-123 (‘C-123’) Instructor Pilots to provide flight instruction and pilot flight checks and to establish and supervise a Check Pilot System which will encompass standardized C-123 flight training and flight operating procedures, including flight records and the necessary supervision thereof, for qualified pilots provided by the Government in Government-furnished C-123 aircraft. (i) The Contractor-furnished Instructor Pilots will be called upon from time to time to instruct and/or train pilots in parachute jump training missions, low level
navigation missions at minimum altitudes, and other hazardous missions as deemed necessary. It is understood that such pilots will not be previously qualified in these particular phases of their flight training. [...] (d) The Contractor-furnished Instructor Pilots may, at the discretion of the Contracting Officer or his duly authorized representative, be utilized to operate as pilot on other types of Government-furnished aircraft within the scope of their qualifications and proficiency. It is anticipated that such other types of Government-furnished aircraft would include but not be limited to, Douglas C-47 and B-26 type aircraft.334

Contract no. F62-67-C-0001 between Air America and Det.10, 6003rd Support Squadron (in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no.24)

The last sentence quoted here might mean that Ben Coleman often used USATG’s C-47 “6110”, which had special communications equipment installed, and B-26 “822”, which was the aircraft of General I Fu-en, head of the RoCAF intelligence, or another RoCAF B-26 for evaluation and check flights. The missions flown by those RoCAF pilots into North Vietnam are well described by Kenneth Conboy / Dale Andradé and by Thomas Ahern and cannot be repeated here. In 1968, Ben Coleman was replaced by Gordon V. Smith. The project terminated shortly thereafter. In 1968/9, the remaining C-123Bs were converted to C-123Ks and seem to have come under the 14th Special Operations Wing at Nha Trang. In May 1972, some survivors of both groups of C-123Ks went to the Republic of China Air Force as “0601”, “0602”, “0603”, and “0604”, of which “0602” and “0603” have been positively identified.

335 Hagedorn/Hellström, Foreign Invaders, p.170.
338 See also: “A Life for Freedom and Democracy. Special Branch - Northern Service (So Bac) and the Secret War against Hanoi”, at: http://ngothelinh.tripod.com/Tribute.htm.
340 See: http://members.aol.com/SamBlu82/sof.html; Prados, Presidents’ secret wars, pp.255-60.
Training for the wiretap mission into North Vietnam

Probably the most dangerous intelligence mission ever flown by Air America was the secret wiretap mission to Vinh in North Vietnam. The idea to use pilots from the RoCAF’s elite, i.e. the 34th Squadron, for a wiretap mission into North Vietnam was born in early 1971. The mission was to be carried out by 4 aircraft – a specially equipped Air America DHC-6 Twin Otter that was to serve as an airborne command post, and 3 helicopters: An Air America Hughes 500P was to fly into North Vietnam where a wire tap was to be installed on the main phone lines running from Hanoi to the south. Two S-58Ts were to act as rescue aircraft for the commandos and for the Hughes 500P in case it was downed.\(^{342}\)

An unknown DHC-6 in night colors at Udorn in October 1973
(with kind permission from Ward S. Reimer)

Conversion training on the Twin Otter was mostly done outside Taiwan: In early 1971, nine members of the RoCAF’s 34th Squadron were flown to Area 51 in Nevada for three months of training in precision night time navigation and air dropping over the mountains of Nevada.\(^{343}\) In late April 71, Air America’s DHC-6 N774M had arrived at Udorn, Thailand, where a Loran C navigation system and later an improved version of the LORAN were added. In May 71, Air America pilot Don Romes flew the Twin Otter to Taiwan for familiarization flights by the RoCAF pilots,\(^{344}\) who also returned from the US to Taiwan in May 71.\(^{345}\) After a perfunctory check-out, the Taiwanese crews flew the Twin Otter to a secret base in southern

\(^{342}\) See Conboy / Morrison, *Shadow war*, pp.379-86; Conboy / Morrison, *The Quiet One*.
\(^{343}\) Fu / Pocock, *The Black Bats*, p.116.
\(^{344}\) Conboy / Morrison, *Shadow war*, p. 380.
\(^{345}\) Conboy / Morrison, *The Quiet One*, p.44.
Laos called PS-44 (Pakse Site 44), 26 kms north of Pakse, where the Taiwanese crews would be living and trained to fly the Twin Otter on daylight supply drops. Captain Jim Pearson recalls: “Shortly after 74M went into service, another newly manufactured Twin Otter arrived on the scene: N5662. This aircraft had been worked over by the customer after the company accepted delivery from the manufacturer. It had installed a Texas Instruments Terrain Following Radar – the same as on the US F-111 low level fighter bomber aircraft.” On 7 January 72, Captain Jim Pearson was ordered to fly Twin Otter N5662 – “which at this time was the only aircraft equipped with the Terrain Avoidance/ Following Radar manufactured by Texas Instruments” to Taipei. He recalls: “I was ordered to fly the primary radar aircraft to Taipei, drop the American First Officer and proceed to Hsin-Chu, Taiwan for further orders. Up on arrival at Hsin-Chu, I learned I was to train two indigenous pilots on the operation of the Otter on night low level missions. The weather cooperated beautifully. The next morning it was zero zero. The runway was beautiful, very long and extremely wide, especially for the Otter. We went out and I just trained the pilots in instrument conditions as I could give us a GCA from the right seat. They were experienced pilots, so the flying part was easy.” “We flew 8 January 72 through 11 January 72 logging 91 take offs and landings in nearly zero/zero conditions. [...] Capt Moorehouse and I returned to Vientiane, Laos and commenced normal operations on 12 January 72. My next contact with these Chinese Gentlemen commenced on 17 January 72 and continued through 3 February 72. At the completion of my daily flight assignment I was instructed to proceed to PS-44 and commence night TFR training.”

Conversion training on the helicopters was first done on Taiwan. Effective 1 April 71, USATG signed contract no. DAJB17-71-C-0327 with Air Asia covering “flying services with one (1) UH-1H aircraft, which aircraft is furnished to the Contractor by the Government (Department of Army) under a separate bailment agreement. The contractor shall operate the aircraft to and from locations in Taiwan as specified by the Contracting Officer or his duly authorized representative. The Contractor shall furnish within its capacity and capability [...] the services of qualified personnel as follows:

(1) Pilot (Supervisory)
(2) Pilot (Line)
(3) (mechanic (Supervisory)
(4) Flight mechanic (Line)
(5) Ground Maintenance Instructor
(6) Ground Flight Instructor

Item no. 2. The Contractor shall furnish maintenance services (scheduled, unscheduled, modifications and damage repair) for the UH-1H aircraft at the Contractor’s facilities at Tainan, Taiwan, whenever such maintenance services are beyond the capability of the Contractor’s personnel at the operating locations.”

The aircraft covered by this contract was US Army UH-1H 70-15730 (msn 12340), which was flown by Air America instructors and their RoCAF student pilots for the period
between 1 April 71 thru 31 October 71 under bailment agreement no. DAJ001-71-L-0013 (P2B). During their transition training in Taiwan, a photo was taken in May 71 showing 6 senior officers from the 34th Squadron of the Republic of China Air Force sitting in front of the UH-1H with their Air America instructors. The serial painted on the helicopter – which is not visible – may have been “730” or another abbreviation of its US Army serial. As it seems, maintenance of the aircraft was not finished in late October 71, and so on 1 November 71, the contract was extended to 31 January 72 for purposes 2 and 3 (believed to have been maintenance). It also seems that the story ended in the same way that many of the Booklift contracts had ended, i.e. with Air America – even months after the end of the operation – still trying to get its invoices paid.

Contract no. DAJB17-71-C-0327: Modification P0003, Air America memo of 1 December 71 and Air America memo of 26 May 1972, trying to get its invoices paid ...

(in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no. 25)

The next helicopter to arrive at Tainan for training the RoCAF pilots was Sikorsky S-58T “727”. This had been former Air America UH-34D H-79, which had been flown by Duane Keele from Pakse to Udorn on 4 August 71. In August 71, it was probably ferried to Tainan and converted to S-58T. Apparently, training was to begin on 15 August 71, but as the conversion had not yet been completed at that time, all later modifications to contract no. DAJB17-72-C-1021, which covers flying services with an Air America S-58T out of Tainan, give 25 August 71 as the date, when this contract became effective. On Taiwan, the aircraft was painted in the colors of the Republic of China Air Force and serialled “727”, using call-sign “Red band 727”, an abbreviation of its original USMC serial BuA 150727. The

353 Mentioned in the letter sent by Clyde S. Carter to the Dept. of the Army on 2 December 71 as bailed to Air Asia under contract no. DAJ001-71-L-0013 (P2B), but without giving an identity (in: UTD/CIA/B15F2).
354 Conboy / Morrison, The quiet one, p. 44.
356 The original cover page of contract no. DAJB17-72-C-1021 (in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no. 25) gives “15 Aug 71” as the date when this contract, which covers flying services with an Air America S-58T out of Tainan, was to be effective.
357 USMC records give 29 August 1971, at 4836 hours total time, as date of the conversion to S-58T (E-mail dated 19 January 2011 kindly sent to the author by Sid Nanson).
358 See the photos in: Conboy / Morrison, The quiet one, pp. 44/5, where the serial is not visible.
359 E-mail dated 15 June 2006, kindly sent to the author by Clarence Fu.
purpose of this S-58T was to train 6 crewmen of the RoCAF’s 34th Squadron at Tainan, mainly to rescue a downed Hughes 500P, as a Hughes 500P was to be used on a covert wiretap mission into Vinh, North Vietnam. This can be seen in the photo below:

Air America S-58T in the colors of the Republic of China Air Force training to rescue a downed Hughes 500 on Taiwan in 1971 (with kind permission from Ken Conboy)

Contract no. DAJB17-72-C-1021 between Air America and the USATG, at the end dated 25 August 71, also reveals some other details: A minimum of 420 flying hours per calendar quarter was guaranteed, “whether or not the number of minimum flying hours are actually flown.” And: “The minimum hours prescribed shall commence on the day the aircraft departs Udorn, Thailand enroute to Tainan for assignment to performance under this contract

Contract no. DAJB17-72-C-1021: cover page and statement of work for the S-58T (in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no. 25)

and shall terminate when the aircraft is returned to Udorn upon completion of the contract.”

Rates for a permanent Supervisory Pilot, a permanent Pilot and a permanent Maintenance Supervisor were set forth as well as rates for temporary pilots, maintenance people, Ground Maintenance Instructors, and Ground Flight Instructors, but “prices do not include an element of cost for night time flown nor Instructor Pilot time by Pilot personnel. An additional price of $4.48 will be paid for each Night Pilot Hour flown and $9.53 for each Instructor Pilot Hour logged.”

The next step of the training was flying in the hazardous conditions of Laos. Already on 21 January 72, modification no. P00002 had added to contract DAJB17-72-C-1021 prices per flying hour, per night time hour, per instructor pilot hour, and per hazardous flight hour – “when needed due to the nature of the services to be performed and subject to the availability” – for Non-Taiwan-based Flight Crew Personnel, i.e. for S-58T Captains, S-58T First Officers, and Flight Mechanics. Initially, this only referred to “non-Taiwan based flight crew personnel which USG requests to be assigned to S-58T aircraft […] on an ‘as needed’ basis. USG, subject to the availability of such personnel and the prior approval of the Contractor, may call such flight crew personnel for one day (One Day Call).” As it might be difficult to send Air America personnel from Udorn to Taiwan for one day only, this addition possibly announced the transfer of the training program to Laos. For, in the spring of 1972, training was continued at PS-44, a secret location located 26 kilometers north of Pakse in southern Laos, and S-58T “727” was reregistered as XW-PHY. Maintenance was then done at Udorn, and so in March and April 72, S-58T XW-PHY appeared in the list of aircraft assigned and maintained at Udorn, but from June 72 onwards, this S-58T is no longer listed. Apparently, S-58T XW-PHY returned to Taiwan in late May, as Modification no.3 to the contract states that “effective 1 June 1972, call aircraft flying services as hereafter specified as directed by USATG […] utilizing non-Taiwan based Contractor furnished aircraft” were added, including “call aircraft flying services utilizing Contractor furnished S-58T aircraft”. With Air America’s regular S-58Ts operating under contract no. DAJB17-72-C-1021 on a call basis, S-58T XW-PHY was no longer needed. Probably in May or June 72, it returned to Tainan, where it became “727” again, apparently for training additional RoCAF crews, as the Taiwanese S-58T and Hughes 500P crews working at PS-44 returned to Taiwan only in September 72. Modification no. P0005 to the contract states that effective 25 August 72, “flying services to the Government with S-58T tape aircraft” were to be added: “The aircraft shall be provided, maintained and operated by the Contractor in Taiwan as specified by the Contracting Officer” – so now “727” is back in Taiwan. On 5 January 73, S-58T “727” was destroyed near Tainan: This was the S-58T that crashed into the sea near Hsin-Chu Air Base on Taiwan on 5 January 73 during a training flight and was subsequently lifted away by an American twin-rotor helicopter.

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361 Contract no. DAJB17-72-C-1021, p.4, in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no.25.
364 Modification no. P00002 to contract no. DAJB17-72-C-1021, p.3, in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no.25.
365 Conboy / Andradé, Spies and commandos, p. 255.
366 List “Assigned, Maintained aircraft” as of 1 March 72 and 1 April 72, in: UTD/Bisson/B5 reel 23.
368 Modification no. P00003 to contract no. DAJB17-72-C-1021, p.2, in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no.25.
369 Conboy / Morrison, The Quiet One, p. 46.
371 List “Air America aircraft destroyed” dated 3 May 73, in: UTD/CIA/B29F1, and in: UTD/CIA/B49F1.

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Of course, the principal element of the wiretap mission was to be the Hughes 500. On 15 July 71, 4 Hughes 500s were registered to Air America, and two of them were converted to Hughes 500P in the United States, i.e. to copies of the “Quiet One” that Hughes had officially unveiled on 8 April 1971.\(^{373}\) Reportedly, the Air America pilots hired to fly the Hughes 500P came to Tainan in July 71 and were designated instructors for those 6 RoCAF students who were to fly the Hughes 500P later, beginning with transition training on regular OH-6A helicopters.\(^{374}\) But this training was done in the United States – first a US Army basic helicopter training course at Fort Rucker, AL, then the 6 RoCAF pilots to fly the Hughes 500 were trained at Groom Lake, Nevada.\(^{375}\) While the 2 Hughes 500Ps were not covered with Aircraft Public Liability, Property Damage Liability and Passenger Liability Insurance in July 71, Air America’s regular Hughes 500s were covered with this type of insurance in July 71,\(^{376}\) which probably means that, while the 2 Hughes 500Ps were still being worked on, the 2 regular Hughes 500s were flown at Groom Lake, NV, since July 71. On 11 January 72, “the Managing Director […] reported that the Hughes 500 helicopters are scheduled to leave the States and will be operated on Taiwan under contract DAJB17-72-C-1021 for a short period before being reassigned to Contract AID-439-713 for operations in Southeast Asia.”\(^{377}\)

Air America Hughes 500 N353X in Laos in 1972/73  
(UTD/Jenkins)

Apparently, Air America had attempted to expand the transition training in the US in late 1971, using 2 Hughes OH-6As bailed from the US Army: As a reaction, the US Army Aviation Systems Command, Saint Louis had sent such a complicated “Master Bailment Agreement” that on 2 December 71, Air America’s Clyde Carter requested a less

\(^{373}\) The regular Hughes 500s were N353X and N354X, the 2 aircraft converted to Hughes 500P were N351X and N352X. For details see the Hughes 500 file within my *The Aircraft of Air America*.

\(^{374}\) Conboy / Morrison, *The Quiet One*, p. 46.


\(^{377}\) Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committees of Air America, Inc. and Air Asia Company Limited of 11 January 72, pp.4/5, in: UTD/CIA/B9F7.
comprehensive agreement, as the intent was only "to cover two OH6A aircraft for a limited period expiring prior to the end of December 71 and which would be bailed into our custody in the continental United States."\(^{378}\) It is unlikely, however, that the bailment could be materialized within such a short period of time. On Taiwan, Modification no. P0001 to contract no. DAJB17-72-C-1021 added – effective 20 January 72 – "flying services to the Government with two (2) H500 type aircraft. The aircraft shall be provided and maintained by the contractor in Taiwan and specified by the Contracting Officer."\(^{379}\) But effective 1 April 72, this Hughes 500 flying was deleted from the contract\(^{380}\) as since that time, both of the regular Hughes 500s flew in Laos under contract no. AID-439-713.

Letter to the US Army trying to bail 2 Hughes OH-6As for service in the US in late 1971

(in: UTD/CIA/B15F2) and
Contract no. DAJB17-72-C-1021, Modif. P0001 adding 2 Hughes 500s to the fleet on Taiwan

(in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no. 25)

What is missing in contract no. DAJB17-72-C-1021 is anything referring to the 2 helicopters converted to Hughes 500P. After they had been registered to Air America as N351X and N352X on 15 July 71, when they were apparently still regular Hughes 500s,\(^{381}\) they are believed to have been converted to Hughes 500P ("The Quiet One") in the USA between July and perhaps October 71 for a communications-intercept project called "Main Street", which was directly controlled by Washington in September 71.\(^{382}\) At that time, Air America’s

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\(^{378}\) Letter dated 2 December 71 to the US Army (bailment of 2 OH-6As), in: UTD/CIA/B15F2.

\(^{379}\) Modification no. P00001 to contract no. DAJB17-72-C-1021, p.1, in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no.25.

\(^{380}\) Modification no. P00003 to contract no. DAJB17-72-C-1021, p.1, in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no.25.

\(^{381}\) Letter by Clyde S. Carter dated 15 June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B15F5.

\(^{382}\) On 29 September 71, the memo about the meeting of Air America people held at Honolulu (in: UTD/CIA/B19F8) notes: "VPTS was given no information about the Hughes 500 project. On or about January 1 the two rigs will be placed at UTH. The location of the other two rigs has not yet been decided. At first we should do only what we need to do and send the engines back to the states for overhaul until we see what is
management expected that “the Main Street project will last until the end of the year or early January. Smith and Lamothe were hired with the understanding that at the end of the project they would be considered for positions in our regular helicopter pilot pool.”

Conboy/Morrison had given “late 1971” as the time, when the 2 Hughes 500Ps were secretly flown to Tainan, but it may have been a little bit later, that is in January 72. Apparently, ground training on the regular Hughes 500s and advanced training on the Hughes 500Ps was done at the same time, possibly in accordance with the progress made by the individual trainees. This would explain why the regular Hughes 500s remained in the US for such a long time and apparently appeared at Tainan only in late January 72; and this would also explain why Air America had tried to bail 2 additional Hughes OH-6As from the US Army for service in the US in December 71.

The Air America Hughes 500P that was used on the mission to Vinh at PS-44 in December 1972, with US Army colors painted out (with kind permission from Ken Conboy)

At Tainan, the Taiwanese crews of the RoCAF’s 34th Squadron were trained during the spring of 1972, apparently again on the regular Hughes 500s and on the advanced Hughes 500Ps at the same time. “By that time, however, the US instructors were voicing major reservations about the ability of the Chinese to operate the sophisticated aircraft” – another explanation of the way training was done. While USATG returned the two regular Hughes 500s to Air Asia on 1 April 72 after concluding the “Antenna Survey Project” – as they called

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384 Conboy / Morrison, The Quiet One, p. 45.
385 Conboy / Morrison, The Quiet One, p. 46.
the training – on 31 March 72,\(^{386}\) and while Air America used them in Laos on medevac flights since that time as cover for the Hughes 500Ps still to come, these advanced helicopters were reportedly flown in June 72: “Two months later [that is 2 months after April 72], the two Hughes 500Ps had their main rotors removed and were loaded into a single Air America C-130 transport. Flown directly to the isolation area at Takli Royal Thai AFB, they were reassembled and shuttled to PS 44. [...] Soon after, the Chinese Hughes 500P cadre arrived. [...] All of the aircraft would be piloted by Taiwanese to afford Washington deniability. To increase proficiency in night flying, the Hughes 500P pilots began nightly mission profiles along stream beds near PS 44. With a month, however, pilot error claimed one of the two modified choppers as it landed hard in front of the hangar.\(^{387}\) [...] Given the heavy investment in the programme, the need for success now over-rode concerns for deniability. As a result, the six Chinese were repatriated to Taiwan in early September. Repatriated, too, were the S-58T and the Twin Otter crews.\(^{388}\) This date is confirmed by Modification no. P00005 to contract no. DAJB17-72-C-1021, which states that effective 25 August 72, the project S-58T “727” was to be used on Taiwan again.\(^{389}\)

\(^{386}\) Letter dated 2 May 72 sent by USATG to Var Green, Air America’s Vice President at the Field Executive Office, Kadena (in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no.25).

\(^{387}\) This seems to have been N352X, as N351X seems to have survived as OH-6A N6188L. “According to Col Lu, the infrared system was not working properly, and the high ground surrounding PS-44 required the two pilots to land the small helicopter downwind at too high an approach speed” (Fu / Pocock, The Black Bats, p.117).

\(^{388}\) Conboy / Morrison, The Quiet One, p. 46.

\(^{389}\) Modification no. P00005 to contract no. DAJB17-72-C-1021, p.1, in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no.25.
As to contract no. DAJB17-72-C-1021, it had been extended to 30 June 73 on 1 July 72, and was later extended another time, that is to 30 June 74. As to the mission itself, Air America crews were trained to fly to Vinh in North Vietnam and to tap the telephone line, after the Taiwanese crewmen had been sent home. After several failures, that mission was successfully completed in the night of 6 to 7 December 72. After the mission, the 2 Hughes 500Ps were flown to Thailand on board an Air America C-130 in December 72. In 1973, all 4 Hughes helicopters were sold – at approximately the same price!

Air America selling the 4 Hughes 500s to Southern Sky Inc, Dallas: Invoice of 27 June 73 (in: UTD/CIA/B15F5)

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392 Conboy / Morrison, Shadow war, p. 385; Conboy / Morrison, The Quiet One, pp. 46-49.
393 For details see the Hughes 500 file within my The Aircraft of Air America.