

Miles L. Johnson

Miles L. Johnson, 63, of Boise, died Sunday, Oct. 26, 1997, at home.

Graveside services will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 8, at the New Meadows Cemetery. Cremation was under the direction of Cremation Society of Idaho, Boise.



Johnson was born June 12, 1934, at New Meadows, Idaho, to Percy and Nellie Carr Johnson. He attended New Meadows High School, graduating in 1952. He graduated from Boise Junior College in 1954, and then attended the University of Idaho for one year. From 1953 to 1961 he worked for the U.S. Forest Service in the summers as a smokejumper in McCall, where he made over 75 parachute jumps across the western United States. From 1957 to 1959 he served in the U.S. Army at the Redstone Arsenal, Alabama. From 1960 to 1962 he worked for the Central Intelligence Agency in the winters as a parachute dispatch officer. Two highlights of his career at this time include nighttime overflights in support of the Tibetan revolution against the Red Chinese and providing support and training to Cuban revolutionaries during the Bay of Pigs invasion.

After going full-time with the CIA, Miles spent several years overseas involved in numerous projects of historical significance. These include the first operational use of the Fulton Skyhook for retrieving personnel from an abandoned Russian ice station; training of parachute aerial reinforcement units in Thailand; air operations scheduling of rotor and STOHL aircraft in Vietnam; parachute loft supervisor for Intermountain Aviation in Marana, Ariz., and finally serving in heavy lift operations in Laos. Miles retired from the CIA in 1973.

Upon returning to Idaho, he met Barbara Dodson, who became his loving companion in life; they lived together in McCall, traveling widely, and playing golf until her death in 1995. Miles then moved to Boise.

Miles enjoyed bird hunting and golfing, and the close company of his numerous friends and family. He was also a member of the Masonic Scottish Rite.

Miles is survived by his brother, Tommy "Shep" and his wife, Janice Johnson of Vale, Ore.; stepmother, Dora Johnson of Ontario, Ore.; aunts and uncles, Lorraine and Tommy Carr of New Meadows, Wilma Carr formerly of New Meadows, now of Weiser, Kate Carr of Weiser, Arby Johnson of New Meadows, Dorsey Warr formerly of New Meadows, now of McCall, Al and Evelyn Suerth of Boise; cousin, Joella Boellar of McCall; nieces and nephew, Andrea Johnson of Vale, Ore., Scottie Johnson of Lyons, Ore., Brian Johnson of Salem, Ore., and Bonnie Cole of Tucson, Ariz. The family also wishes to acknowledge Barbara Dodson's family whom Miles considered as extended family. He was preceded in death by his lifelong companion, Barbara; and his parents.

CIA History:

With the removal of Cox and the ascendancy of Doole, control of the air proprietary shifted to Washington. Doole had tight control over the business operations of CAT, enforcing a rigid set of "ground rules" that left little flexibility for Grundy. "The objective was to create an air support vehicle, operated as a commercial airline on a self-sustaining basis, which could serve as the best possible cover for clandestine operations." By 1957, the airline no longer required a subsidy.

In April 1955, Colonel L. K. White was made responsible to the Director for the administration and management of CAT. In practice, White turned over responsible for looking after the airline to H. Gates Lloyd. Doole, overt vice chairman of the board, was named executive agent of the DD/S for carrying out administration and management of CAT. A liaison officer within the Commercial Division but responsible to Doole, carried out coordination within Agency for Doole, while a CAT project officer coordinated between Doole's downtown Washington office and the Agency.

By the end of 1956, Doole had tight grip on field management. Symbolic of the changes brought about by the new regime was the replacement in June 1956 of the Management Committee by the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. Members were Samuel S. Walker, William A. Read, Brackley Shaw, and Doole as chairman. "The organization had been established which would guide the airline through the 1960s."

DD/P Frank Wisner presented requirements and made recommendations for utilization of CAT personnel and facilities for covert operations. Doole was responsible for executing plans, policies, and courses of action formulated by the Executive Committee. Grundy implemented the approved plans.

The new system caused some problems with Chennault and Rosbert. On 7 April 1955 Rosbert "disregarding cover and security" wrote an angry letter to Allen Dulles, sending it through Col. Richard Stilwell (then at the Army War College). He charged that Doole had lied about Cox, resulting in his removal. Rosbert also said that he should have been made president instead of Grundy. The position of CAT with the Chinese government had been weakened, and morale within the company was low.

Rosbert's letter caused concern at headquarters. Helms, chief of operations, DD/P, prepared a response for the DCI's signature that stressed that decision to remove Cox had been made by all the directors and had been approved by Dulles.

Rosbert sent a second letter, via Stilwell, repeating charges. Dulles accepted advice of White and Houston and sent letter to Grundy telling him he had the backing of headquarters, together with letter from White to Grundy which he was to show to Rosbert. This letter said that Rosbert has misused proper channels. He should understand that "neither the Board of Directors nor the Director of this Agency will tolerate continuing circumvention of the established command channels or failure to support company administration whole-heartedly." This silenced Rosbert, who remained as assistant general manager until 1959.

The next challenge to Doole's authority came from the Clandestine Service, sharpening "the long-standing animosity between George Doole and the Clandestine Service." Bissell, who had become DD/P in 1958, decided that all clandestine air assets should be brought under the supervision of DD/P and in May 1959 approved creation of a unit within DD/P responsible for air proprietaries. The unit's new chief, an operations officer, had a meeting with Doole that was "not auspicious." Doole charged that the new unit was filled with amateurs who did not know how to run an operation securely. Doole said "that only he was capable of managing the CAT operation and that if too many bureaucratic, security and technical obstacles were thrown in his path he would retire from the Agency and take Grundy and Wueste with him."

*John Shannon
Carter file*

The new unit chief moved rapidly to take over Air America. He argued that there was evidence that CAT had been growing over the past five years to a size "not wholly consistent with the Agency's best interests." Its cover might get too thin and it might be blown, thus eliminating CAT's usefulness to the Agency. He asked for a statement of Agency requirements for CAT for the next three to five years so that he could develop criteria for determining its future size and the kind of organization "it should be to fulfill its only purpose in life - that of satisfying Agency needs with the least expense of direct subsidy."

With the transfer of Doole and Air America to the new unit about to take place, Doole mounted a counterattack. He complained to White and Houston that the people in the unit were "a bunch of amateurs." Relations between Doole and new unit became bitter. White felt compelled to bring the matter to the attention of General Cabell and Allen Dulles,

telling them that he did not think that the new unit had the competence to manage the air proprietary. Dulles and Cabell decided that responsibility for CAT's management should remain unchanged for the present. On 9 November 1960 a meeting was held at which it was decided to postpone transfer to CAT to the new unit for one year, at which time the unit chief would have greater experience. At the end of the year, however, the new unit had disappeared.

[It seems likely that when push came to shove, Bissell would defer to Cabell on this. As Bissell later commented, "Cabell was a man I came greatly to like and greatly to admire. He had an intense loyalty to the agency and to Allen. He was very supportive (especially in the U-2 project)."]

While the bureaucratic battle was taking place in Washington in 1960, Air America (as it became in 1959) was involved in a rapid buildup in response to developments in Southeast Asia. Grundy, ever cautious, was uncomfortable with this and told Doole that Air America was hiring too many pilots. Doole told Grundy that the increase in personnel was justified in view of the urgent demands of the Agency and USOM in Laos. "Grundy consistently hesitated to hire more people but was pushed."

After Kennedy on 9 March 1961 directed CIA to run the war in Laos, complaints began to come in from the field that Doole/Grundy did not know how to run a war. Doole used insecure long distance telephone lines to communicate with Grundy. Coordination with field personnel was poor. Bissell recommended to Cabell that current Air America management be given some covert training. Also, he wanted clearer command lines, with one running to DD/S for commercial operations, and one to DD/P for covert matters. On operational matters, Doole should report directly to the covert division like any other detachment commander. Although Cabell approved the recommendations, the bureaucratic battle continued. Doole fought with just about everyone. "He harrassed Rousselot. Brackley Shaw resigned as General Counsel because of Doole's demands and insults. General Hewitt quit."

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In February 1962, a report by the Inspector General supported the complaint by field officers that Air America was more interested in commercial activities than in covert operational requirements. The I.G. recommended that Air America remain under DD/S but that Colonel White designate a fulltime project officer for Air America. He also recommended the creation of an Executive Committee for air proprietary operations (ExComAir) consisting of senior representatives of DD/P, DD/S, and the office of the general counsel. This was approved on 18 August 1962. On

5 February 1963, ExComAir came into existence under the chairmanship of Larry Houston.

The I.G. report also had criticized the lack of delegation of authority. All decision making was centralized in Doole and Grundy, with neither man delegating authority to senior subordinates - Grundy "partially out of fear of Doole's telephone quizzing."

Shocked by the severity of the report, White sent Gates Lloyd out to verify its findings. Lloyd concluded that the report was too harsh. Doole was unpopular but greatly respected for his airline ability. Based on Lloyd's conclusions, White refused to fire Doole.

Again in 1964, the question was raised about whether Air America should remain in DD/S or be transferred to DD/P. At this time, DD/P had created another functional division that had an air branch, which it wanted to take over Air America. After a good deal of bickering, DCI McCone on 7 July 1964 directed that Air America remain with DD/S. "And thus ended the long controversy over where within the Agency responsibility for Air America was to reside."

Doole retired in 1971.