

*Chrono*

President

June 13, 1966

MGDR

F136Y

IDENTIFICATION OF AIR AMERICA, INC.

You undoubtedly have already seen the New York Times and Time magazine articles dealing with the award given Air America by the Aero Club of Washington, which is a chapter of the National Aeronautics Association. This had been planned well ahead of time as a means of giving more identity to Air America; as you know, such identity has been lacking and is felt to be desirable. The award was originally to be for our promotion and development of certain short-field aircraft, but at the time of presentation the speech of General Adams became more elaborate and his remarks have been very well received as being a credit to the company. Also attached is a copy of a letter from Mrs. Baker, which is not unlike several which have been received.

During the last several years we have made more and more effort to give identity to The Pacific Corporation and Air America, but in some cases these efforts have not been too successful. The D&B analytical report has helped, but it has not gone far enough. We are now directed to prepare certain institutional-type press releases and a public relations firm will probably be retained to assist us. Our press items will, of course, concern themselves with our affairs and not the affairs of our customers. We will also try to find opportunities to insert institutional-type advertising in the trade press. Any ideas you have along this line would be appreciated.

George A. Doole, Jr.

- Atts. (1) Article from New York Times, 5/25/66  
(2) Article from Time, 6/3/66  
(3) Letter from Eleanor H. Baker, 5/25/66

GAD:bp

APPROVED FOR  
RELEASE DATE:  
29-Apr-2009

## SHY AIRLINE GETS HONOR FOR VALOR

Air America, Inc., Believed  
an Arm of C.I.A. in Asia

By EVERT CLARK

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 24—

An executive of the world's shyest airline received an award today for his company's achievements "under extremely trying political conditions" in Southeast Asia.

The airline, Air America, Inc., is widely reputed to be an air arm of the Central Intelligence Agency in Asia and elsewhere.

It does not advertise and its primary customers are the United States armed forces and aid missions.

Neither the executive, George A. Doole Jr., nor the Aero Club of Washington, which gave him the award, will confirm that there is any relationship between the airline and the C.I.A. The agency was no more communicative.

"One wouldn't know" if a particular contract to haul cargo or passengers was actually for C.I.A. work, Mr. Doole said. "If that were the case, they wouldn't tell me, would they?"

### Brief Word of Thanks

The award is given monthly to a club member for "some noteworthy aviation achievement or act." Mr. Doole accepted it with a brief word of thanks at a luncheon in the Washington Hotel.

A citation accompanying the award said the "extremely sensitive political conditions" in Southeast Asia made it "essential that a nonmilitary air service be used, even under conditions of actual warfare."

It noted that "a number of Air America planes have been downed."

For some years, planes of Air America and related companies have had the risky job of supplying remote refugee camps and American outposts in such places as the Laotian and Vietnamese jungles. Newspaper ac-

counts show that planes and helicopters frequently are shot down and the crews killed or captured.

More recently, the company has also been maintaining and repairing many of the American fighter planes being used in Vietnam.

Brig. Gen. Joseph P. Adams, a past president of the Aero Club and chairman of its awards committee, said Air America has about 8,000 employees, 600 pilots and 16 types of aircraft.

### Notes High Risk

In presenting the award, General Adams noted there is "a high risk of life in this operation," and said, "Air America has met this challenge."

Mr. Doole is managing director and chief executive officer of Air America. He is also president of the Pacific Corporation, which wholly owns Air America he said. Both are American companies.

Air America, in turn, wholly owns a Chinese aviation engineering company, the Air Asia Company, Ltd., in Taiwan. The Pacific Corporation also owns 40 per cent of Civil Air Transport Company, Ltd., a Taiwan-based airline that works closely with Air Asia and Air America, both in contract flights and in maintenance of American fighters.

Mr. Doole said Air America was "a contract carrier, operating in a variety of places in the world, but particularly active now in Southeast Asia."

He said his company contracted "to anybody, all comers—anyonek who wants a load of materials lifted from here to there." In Asia, most of the work is for the military services or admissions, he said.

Mr. Doole protested after the luncheon that the citation might have been "a little flamboyant."

General Adams, asked if Air America worked for the C.I.A., said:

"They may do some things we don't know about. But they couldn't very well have a secret operation with 600 pilots, 8,000 employees and all that. Now some of their missions—that's a horse of another color. I wouldn't know about that. Nothing I have here indicates anything like that."

"We just decided he (Mr. Doole) was our outstanding member for the month of April."

## ASIA

### Rice in the Sky

The world's shyest airline may well be Air America, which calls itself "a private air carrier" and underlines its privacy by often flying unmarked aircraft, by never advertising, and by refusing to discuss its operations. It has only one major customer: the U.S. Government. And, as anyone who has seen its silver planes around Viet Nam, Laos and Thailand might surmise, Air America is a special kind of enterprise. It is so special, in fact, that virtually everyone in Asia assumes it to be the child—or first cousin—of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Whoever thought the head man of so secretive an outfit would stand up and accept an award for running an airline under "extremely sensitive political conditions"? Yet there was George Doole Jr., Air America's managing director, smiling like a Rotarian and receiving a citation for the line's achievements from Washington's Acro Club at a luncheon in the capital last week. After the luncheon, Doole, a former Pan American Airways pilot, shrugged off newsmen's questions about his company's activities. "One wouldn't know," he said, if any particular contract was actually for the CIA. "If that were the case, they wouldn't tell me, would they?"

**Admiral on Board.** On paper, the airline, which was founded in China in 1946, belongs to the Pacific Corp., a Delaware holding company, whose board chairman is retired Admiral Felix Stump, former U.S. commander in chief in the Pacific. Air America's home office is in a Washington, D.C., building which is suspected of housing companies that operate with CIA backing.

Air America's field headquarters remains on Taiwan, where the company also runs a huge repair facility, which currently collects about \$20 million yearly for repairs on U.S. aircraft from Viet Nam. Air America's total fleet numbers about 150, including little single-engined Helio Couriers and Pilatus Porters, which can land in 250 feet or less, a Super Constellation with peculiar humps on its fuselage, and Huey helicopters. Most of the repairs and ground work are handled by Air America's 9,000 Nationalist Chinese and Philippine employees. The line's 400-odd pilots are nearly all recruited from the U.S. military services, draw an average \$18,000 in base pay, plus bonuses for hazardous flying conditions, which can raise the annual total to \$25,000 or more. The flyers wear plain airline-type grey uniforms, stay mostly to themselves in special Air America clubs, and are tight-lipped about their missions. Says one Air America man: "So

long as we get paid, we don't care what the customer puts in the back."

**Decorations in Private.** In some respects, Air America operates like a regular airline, providing scheduled service for the U.S. military between Okinawa, Japan and South Korea. But much of its work is strictly irregular. It was Air America pilots who dropped supplies to the French defenders of Dienbienphu before the stronghold fell in 1954. The company's next big assignment came two years later, when the U.S. moved to support the Laotian royalists in the Communist-inspired civil war. Thirty or so Air America planes dropped the rice and weapons that enabled royalist troops and Meo tribesmen to fight the Communist Pathet Lao to a standstill. Though Laos has been relatively peaceful for the past two years, Air America has continued to drop hundreds of tons of rice to the displaced Meo tribesmen. Says one pilot: "There is a whole generation of Meos who are going to be damn surprised when someone tells them that rice doesn't grow in the sky."

Part of Air America's functions in Laos and Thailand have now been taken over by Continental Airlines, but Air America has stepped up its activities in Thailand, where it ferries supplies and ammunition to remote government outposts in the troublesome northeast. From Thailand, Air America also operates a helicopter rescue service that plucks downed U.S. flyers out of North Viet Nam and whisks them to safety. In South Viet Nam, Air America has become the aerial backbone of both the U.S. AID mission and the Vietnamese rural reconstruction program, ferrying as much as 6.2 million tons of cargo into isolated areas within a single month. At least 50 Air America aircraft are regularly based at Saigon's Tan Son Nhut airport.

So far, Air America has lost to enemy action more than 20 aircraft and 50 flyers, including a pilot and copilot who were shot down last January in the Mekong Delta and then were executed by the Viet Cong. For Air America's men there still are no public awards. But for their heroism a number of Air America flyers have been awarded U.S. decorations in private ceremonies.

4 Thurston Avenue  
Newport, R. I.  
May 25, 1966

REC'D WAS MAY 26 1966

Air America Inc.  
815 Connecticut Avenue NW  
Washington, D. C.

Attention Mr. Doole

Dear Mr. Doole:

Today in the Providence Journal, I just happened to notice an article entitled "Head of 'Quietest' Airline is Honored," which caused me to read on. Congratulations to Air America for finally being recognized. When our son first signed with Air America, there was an article in one of the magazines which belittled the company so much that I was tempted to write to Air America and ask how they could let such an article be published; especially when such worthwhile work in Asia was being done by the company. So, when I read this article today, it pleased me to hear that your achievements had been recognized.

Needless to say, every time I hear the name of Air America mentioned or see it in the papers, I perk up with interest because I remember how much Howland felt about the work he was doing with the company and how very dedicated he had become. My thoughts are so often with the pilots and men who serve in Laos, and I so often wonder what has happened to the boys who were his friends. Several times I have heard about pilots being killed and others being captured, but never do I see the names published and I wonder if their names were on the card sent to us. The other Newporter, Bill Sherman who, with Mike LaDue, represented the company at my son's funeral, spent Christmas Eve with us this year. But, like all your boys - questions netted me nothing. I did hear that Tom Griener was back and that his brother was with him. I do hope someday that I have a chance to meet Tom - his note to us was so nice, and I

G.A. Doole

May 25, 1966

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had a feeling that what happened had bothered him a great deal.

We will always feel grateful to "Air America" for the manner in which they handled things at the time of Howland's death and his arrival back home. We at least have him back and though we will never understand why he was taken - we do have many little things to be thankful for.

Again my congratulations to you and the men of "Air America" for a long overdue award.

Most sincerely,



Eleanor H. Baker  
(Mrs. C. Douglas Baker)