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# Man Who Set Up C.I.A.'s Airlines Is Honored

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PHOENIX, Dec. 29 — The anonymity that George A. Doole Jr. cultivated in life very nearly followed him to the grave.

Mr. Doole founded the Central Intelligence Agency's network of covert air operations, including Air America, Air Asia, Civil Air Transport and several subsidiaries such as Intermountain Aviation and Southern Air Transport.

In peak periods in the Vietnam War years, Mr. Doole's air operations are said to have employed 23,000 people, more than the parent agency's estimated 18,000 employees worldwide.

Mr. Doole died of cancer last March 9 in Washington Hospital Center in the District of Columbia. He was 75 years old and unmarried. His death went largely unnoticed. Private family services were held in Liberty, Ill.

## Plaque on Remote Hangar

Today a bronze plaque on the wall of a new 60,000-square-foot hangar at a remote airport in the central Arizona desert is the only permanent public acknowledgment of Mr. Doole's connections over more than 20 years with the intelligence agency.

The \$3 million hangar was built by Evergreen International Aviation at Pinal Air Park near the town of Marana, Ariz., midway between Phoenix

and Tucson and far from the interstate highway connecting the cities.

The huge airfield was built and operated by the C.I.A. It is now owned by Pinal County and serves as a storage facility for 60 surplus civilian jetliners, as well as a maintenance center for Evergreen, which is one of the world's largest jet aircraft-leasing concerns.

Mr. Doole was on Evergreen's board of directors at the time of his death, and was a consultant to Evergreen as well as having other aviation interests. The plaque acknowledges that among his aviation achievements he was "founder, chief executive officer, board of directors of Air America Inc., Air Asia Company Ltd., Civil Air Transport Company Ltd."

## The Mystery Lingers

Although Mr. Doole's connections with the C.I.A. and his role in founding the agency's air operations have been documented in books and by Congressional reports, the C.I.A. does not acknowledge the relationship.

According to a spokesman at the agency's headquarters at Langley, Va., Mr. Doole's name is not listed on any official file.

However, Richard Helms, a former Director of Central Intelligence, said of Mr. Doole: "He was very competent at his job. He had a passion for anonymi-

ty. It was a difficult job he handled without fanfare. And nobody had done it before."

Mr. Doole retired from intelligence work in 1971.

A large quiet man with a pixie sense of humor, Mr. Doole interrupted a new career as a pilot with Pan American World Airways in the 1930's to obtain a master's degree in business administration at Harvard University.

## Early Days at Pan American

He returned to Pan American, where he became a master pilot, and helped chart new routes through South America.

In the late 1940's he left Pan American to begin his long career in intelligence activities. In 1950, he chartered the Pacific Corporation in Delaware. It was the parent company to the airlines Mr. Doole would later create.

Air America and Air Asia, the best known of the operations, concentrated their activities in Southeast Asia. Nearly 200 aircraft of all sizes were used for hauling personnel and matériel in several countries, including Laos.

At one point, Mr. Doole was able to make a profit for the agency by acquiring civilian freight contracts to help maintain deception about the real purpose of the operations.