

Mike Law

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 1999 2:58 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Hello

Mike,

Glad you got contact with Abadie. His advice was good. Dick Casterlin is the man who knows about as much as anybody on Air America Helicopters and he was there a long time. His picture is on page 78 of my book and he was helpful in my reconstructing of events. I also mention Casterlin in the narrative on page 78 and page 130. Maybe a couple of other spots but I cannot remember just now.

The following is for your eyes only, as it is not polite to say unpleasant things about the dead. However, Dick Lieberth was a very weak pilot who should have never been checked out. I never flew with him but the word was out at the time, and a lot of pilots and flight mechanics were angry (at the chief pilot's office as most pilots believed he would never be checked out. Maybe that is why Abadie deferred you to Casterlin as he was Chief of Operations at the time and a notch above the chief pilot). The reason of this anger was that Smitty, the FM, was well liked by many people, and he had a wife in Udorn and I believe a new baby. He was from Alabama and I don't know what financial deal the wife got from the company. As I was not married at that time, I never was concerned with those matters. Don't quote me, but that's the way I remember it. Remembering the "let sleeping dogs lie" saying, I did not mention Dick Lieberth in my book. There were a few other events that after careful thinking, I also decided to leave out.

The question of was the helicopter recovered. That depends on what you mean by the word "recovered". Air America would only need the serial number tag from a helicopter or fixed-wing aircraft, and from that, build a new bird around the serial number and use the same call sign. They had super mechanics who could and would do that. Many of these mechanics were Chinese from Taiwan. I cannot honestly say if this process was done on the helicopter that Lieberth crashed.

Details of the crash. I have not thought about it for years, but I believe in low vis, he flew into a mountain. Casterlin might know more about that.

I know nothing about the crash of Sandoval Albert.

Let me know if you have any trouble getting ahold of Dick Casterlin.

Charlie

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