

12 August, 2003

Mr. Allen E. Cates

Dear Al:

Answering you question--when, and on which A/C did the USAF train me?

C-119. 1 May to about 5 May, 1953, at Clark Air Base, Philippines. Ground School--learning the A/C systems; and flight training which included the techniques of aerial delivery.

Purpose: to be pilot-in-command of C-119s which the U.S. Government had loaned to the French Air Force for operation in French Indochina. USAF A/C maintenance personnel, led by a USAF Major, maintained the A/C during our operation with the French Air Force. We were based first at Hanoi, and then at Haiphong.

C-130 April, 1960. For about 5 days. Probably the last week ~~ing~~ April, at an air base near Itazuki, Japan. Ground school + simulator training + flight training which included short-field landing techniques + a flight from Japan to Iwo Jima & another to Seoul, Korea.

Purpose: To be be pilot-in-command of C-~~119s~~<sup>130</sup> which the USAF had loaned to the CIA for the aerial delivery of supplies to Tibetan Freedom Fighters during China's invasion of Tibet.

According to the book, *ORPHANS OF THE COLD WAR: AMERICA AND THE TIBETAN STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL* (Public Affairs Press, New York City, 1999, ISBN Nr. 1 891620-18-5) by John Kenneth Knaus, four decades an operations officer in the CIA who participated in the planning, direction & execution of attempts to aid the Tibetan resistance--and now an Associate at the Fairbanks Center for East Asian Research--this operation was supported by the U.S. State Department and the Department of Defense (Page 155).

On 1 May, 1960, soon after the completion of our training, Gary Powers, flying a U-2 over Soviet Air Space, was shot down. President Eisenhower, among other actions, stopped the covert flights to Tibet. Some time after that, I was assigned to CAT's newly acquired CV880 Jet. And since operations policy precluded the cross-training of pilots (switching them back & forth between props and jets), I wasn't returned to the C130s when the Tibetan operation was resumed.

Regards,

Felix Smith