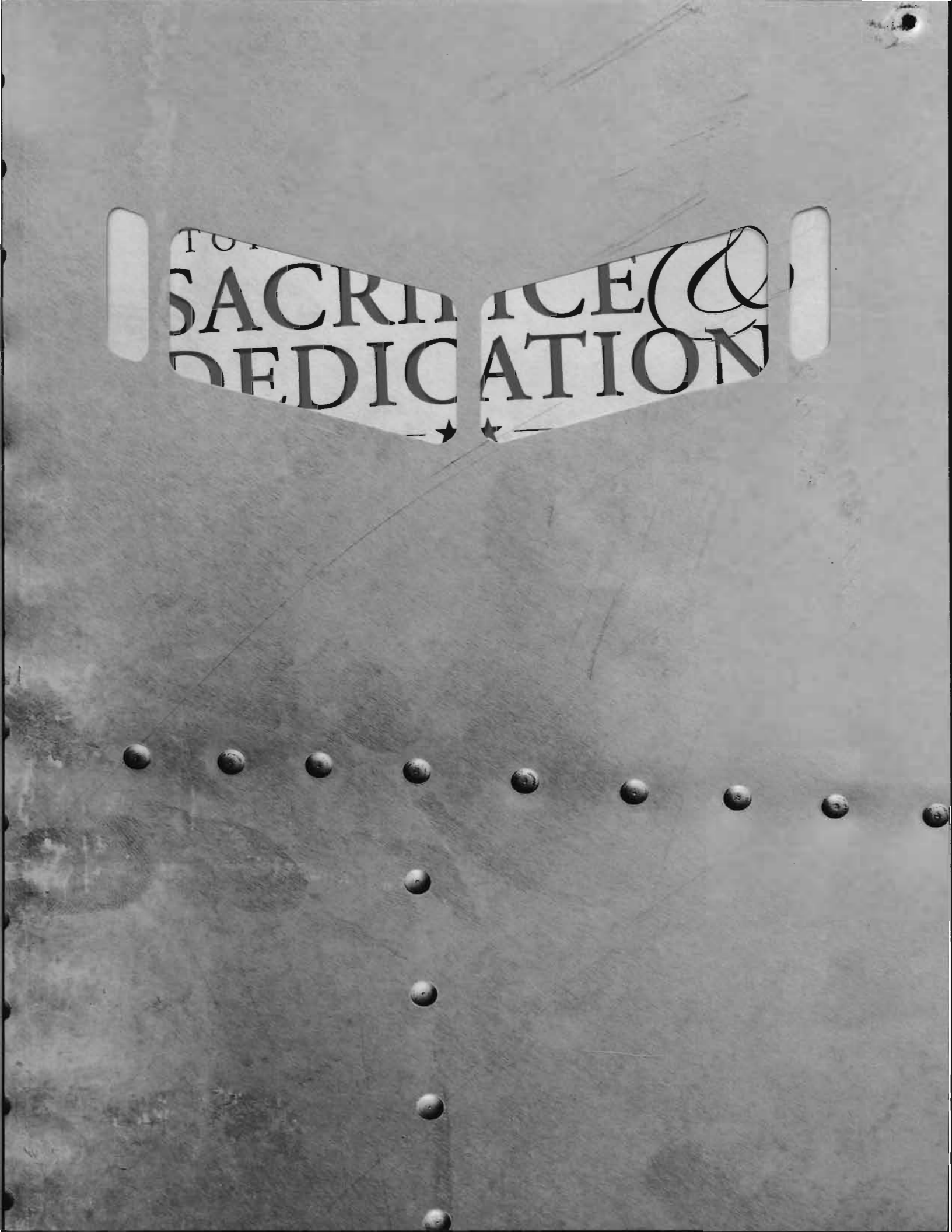
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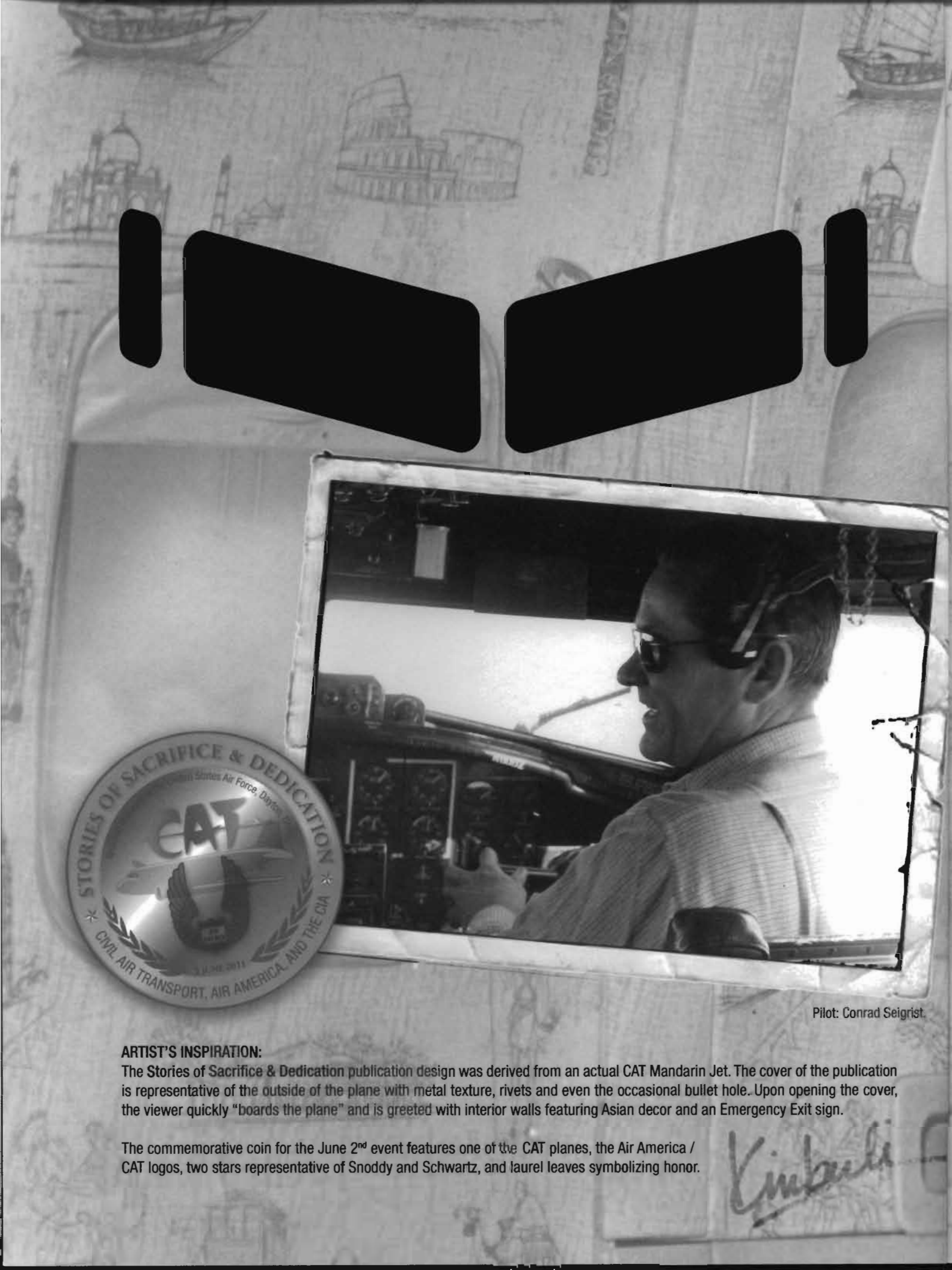


Pilot: Conrad Seigrist.

**ARTIST'S INSPIRATION:**

The Stories of Sacrifice & Dedication publication design was derived from an actual CAT Mandarin Jet. The cover of the publication is representative of the outside of the plane with metal texture, rivets and even the occasional bullet hole. Upon opening the cover, the viewer quickly "boards the plane" and is greeted with interior walls featuring Asian decor and an Emergency Exit sign.

The commemorative coin for the June 2nd event features one of the CAT planes, the Air America / CAT logos, two stars representative of Snoddy and Schwartz, and laurel leaves symbolizing honor.

THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY PRESENTS:

# STORIES OF SACRIFICE & DEDICATION

★ ★

## CIVIL AIR TRANSPORT, AIR AMERICA, AND THE CIA

National Museum of the United States Air Force

DAYTON, OH • 2 JUNE 2011 • 5:30p – 9:00p

HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS

IMS

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF INTELLIGENCE

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

# STORIES OF SACRIFICE AND DEDICATION:
## CIVIL AIR TRANSPORT, AIR AMERICA, AND THE CIA

*National Museum of the United States Air Force at Wright-Patterson AFB*

*2 June 2011 • 5:30 pm to 9:00 pm*

| | |
|---|---|
| 5:30pm – 5:35pm | **WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS**<br>Lt. Gen. (Ret) Jack Hudson<br>Director, National Museum of the United States Air Force |
| 5:35pm – 5:40pm | **THE CIA'S HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM: IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY OF AGENCY DOCUMENTS**<br>Mr. Joe Lambert<br>Director, Information Management Services, CIA |
| 5:40pm – 6:10pm | **KEYNOTE SPEAKER**<br>Hon. Craig Duehring<br>Former Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower andReserve Affairs |
| 6:10pm – 7:15pm | **TEAMWORK AND SACRIFICE AT LIMA SITE 85**<br>Dr. Tim Castle<br>CIA Historian |
| 7:15pm – 7:45pm | **INTERMISSION** |
| 7:45pm – 7:50pm | **INTRODUCTION TO *EXTRAORDINARY FIDELITY***<br>Dr. Nick Dujmovic<br>CIA Historian |
| 7:50pm – 8:50pm | ***EXTRAORDINARY FIDELITY* (CIA DOCUMENTARY FILM)**<br>Produced by CIA's Center for the Study of Intelligence |
| 8:50pm – 8:55pm | **REMARKS ON FILM**<br>Dr. Nick Dujmovic<br>CIA Historian |
| 8:55pm – 9:00pm | **EXCHANGING OF COMMEMORATIVE AWARDS AND CLOSING REMARKS**<br>Mr. Joe Lambert<br>Director, Information Management Services, CIA<br>Lt. Gen. (Ret) Jack Hudson<br>Director, National Museum of the United States Air Force |

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C-46 with buffalo.

The Historical Collections Division (HCD) of CIA's Information Management Services is responsible for executing the Agency's Historical Review Program. This program seeks to identify and declassify collections of documents that detail the Agency's analysis and activities relating to historically significant topics and events. HCD's goals include increasing the usability and accessibility of historical collections. HCD also develops release events and partnerships to highlight each collection and make it available to the broadest audience possible.

The mission of HCD is to:

- Promote an accurate, objective understanding of the information that has helped shape major US foreign policy decisions.
- Broaden access to lessons-learned, presenting historical material that gives greater understanding to the scope and context of past actions.
- Improve current decision-making and analysis by facilitating reflection on the impacts and effects arising from past foreign policy decisions.
- Showcase CIA's contributions to national security and provide the American public with valuable insight into the workings of its government.
- Demonstrate the CIA's commitment to the Open Government Initiative and its three core values: Transparency, Participation, and Collaboration.

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF INTELLIGENCE

The History Staff in the CIA Center for the Study of Intelligence fosters understanding of the Agency's history and its relationship to today's intelligence challenges by communicating instructive historical insights to the CIA workforce, other US Government agencies, and the public. CIA historians research topics on all aspects of Agency activities and disseminate their knowledge though publications, courses, briefings and Web-based products. They also work with other Intelligence Community historians on publication and education projects that highlight interagency approaches to intelligence issues. Lastly, the CIA History Staff conducts an ambitious program of oral history interviews that are invaluable for preserving institutional memories that are not captured in the documentary record.

NATIONAL MUSEUM
OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

The National Museum of the United States Air Force located at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio, is the service's national institution for preserving and presenting the Air Force story. Each year more than one million visitors come to the museum to learn about the mission, history and evolving capabilities of America's Air Force. The museum is the world's largest and oldest military aviation museum featuring more than 360 aerospace vehicles and missiles on display amid more than 17 acres of indoor exhibit space. Thousands of personal artifacts, photographs and documents further highlight the people and events that comprise the Air Force storyline, from the beginnings of military flight to today's war on terrorism.

UT DALLAS
The University of Texas at Dallas

The Special Collections Department is located on the third floor of the Eugene McDermott Library. The Library administration established the Special Collections Department in the mid-1970s to house rare books acquired by the library. In nearly thirty years Special Collections has grown to include the History of Aviation Collection, the Wineburgh Philatelic Research Library, and the Louise B. Belsterling Botanical Library.

The History of Aviation Collection is the largest section of the department, consisting of a world-class aeronautical archive and library. The Wineburgh Philatelic Research Library is an outstanding regional resource for both philatelic and postal history. The Louise B. Belsterling Library holds an extraordinary collection of rare botanical books, including the library's oldest volume.

SYMPOSIUM OVERVIEW

# STORIES OF SACRIFICE AND DEDICATION:
## CIVIL AIR TRANSPORT, AIR AMERICA, AND THE CIA

On 2 June, 2011, the CIA, in partnership with the National Museum of the United States Air Force, will present a symposium recognizing the sacrifice and dedication of Civil Air Transport (CAT) and Air America (AAm). These CIA air proprietary companies routinely supplied and supported covert operations, provided search and rescue capabilities for the US military, and conducted photo reconnaissance in east and southeast Asia from the end of World War II through the Vietnam conflict. This event is being held to highlight the public release of about 900 recently declassified documents from CAT and AAm corporate files and CIA holdings spanning 1946 to 1978.

The event, scheduled from 5:30 pm to 9:00 pm, will be held at the National Museum of the United States Air Force at Wright-Patterson AFB just outside Dayton, OH. The Honorable Craig Duehring, retired Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, will serve as the keynote speaker. Mr. Duehring served as a USAF forward air controller in South Vietnam and Laos and will share his personal story of being rescued by Air America. Major General (ret) John Singlaub, one of CIA's original officers, will be a featured speaker. Gen. Singlaub, CIA's chief of operations for Asia after WWII, oversaw CAT missions throughout the area. The focus of the event will be two specific stories that exemplify the themes of sacrifice and dedication.

The first story, presented by CIA Historian Dr. Tim Castle, covers Lima Site 85, a covert radar installation in the mountains of Laos. On the evening of 10 March 1968 Site 85 was attacked by a rocket and mortar barrage. It was believed that the technicians and CIA personnel could be safely evacuated the next day. Unbeknownst to the Americans, a Vietnamese sapper force had climbed the western face of the mountain and surrounded the USAF facility. At about 3AM the North Vietnamese began firing RPGs and AK-47s into the radar vans and living area. At the time of the attack there were 16 USAF technicians at Site 85. There were also two CIA paramilitary officers and one USAF forward air guide working at the Agency facility located near the helipad. This story recounts the personal heroism and sacrifice of those involved.

The second story, presented by CIA Historian Dr. Nick Dujmovic, covers a CIA mission utilizing CAT flight support to recover an agent inside Communist China. The mission was compromised, resulting in the shoot down of the flight, the death of the CAT pilots, Norm Schwartz and Bob Snoddy, and the capture of two CIA officers. The CIA Officers, John Downey and Richard Fecteau, were held prisoner for twenty years. The highlight of this story will be the public premiere of a film produced by the Center for the Study of Intelligence documenting their ordeal. The film focuses on Downey and Fecteau's dedication and underscores CIA's dedication in supporting the men and their families throughout this ordeal.

We anticipate that the symposium will be attended by 1,500 people including current and retired military, the Air America and CAT associations, the Association of Former Intelligence Officers, students from local universities, and the general public. We will be providing every attendee with a booklet and DVD containing the entire collection of declassified documents as well as the movie, additional video, photos, *Studies in Intelligence* articles and reflections from CAT and AAm personnel.

# REMEMBRANCES OF SACRIFICE & DEDICATION

NORM SCHWARTZ, KUO, BOB ROUSSELOT, EARTHQUAKE MCGOVERN AND BOB SNODDY

IN FRONT OF THE PRINCESS HOTEL – START OF SEA SUPPLY. FEB. 1951

# IN GRATITUDE TO THE CREWS OF AIR AMERICA:
## A SPEECH TO AN AIR AMERICA SYMPOSIUM

*Craig W. Duehring*

The following was a speech Mr. Duehring delivered to participants, including many veterans of Air America service, in a symposium held at the University of Texas at Dallas on 18 April 2009.

As a presidential appointee, I usually speak from a position of having access to the latest policy, or at least I have the implied aura of representing a subject that I deal with every day. In layman's terms, the audience assumes that I know what I'm talking about. This audience is very different. Here I am speaking to a group of peers—of people who have assembled here because of their common experience during a unique period of American history. This period burst on the scene because of countless factors, now visible only through a close examination of history, which provided an opportunity for each person in this room. Like the Robert Frost poem, we faced a fork in the road and, for whatever reason, we chose our destiny. The consequences of this choice still evolve and, indeed, bring us together tonight.

So, what I thought I would do was give you a glimpse into what a Raven saw when he looked at the people who made up Air America. For you were certainly a major, major player in what we accomplished in the 6–7 years that the Raven program and its predecessor, the Butterfly program, was in existence.[1] As I think back to my time at Long Tieng, every picture includes a vision of an Air America aircraft.

My first tour out of pilot training was in the III Corps where I flew O-1 Bird Dogs for the 25th ARVN Division stationed in the farming village of Duc Hoa, about half way between Saigon and the Cambodian border. It was August of 1969 and, because of the ferocity of the fighting in that area during Tet of 1968, the area was rather peaceful with irregular actions, by the Viet Cong, mostly. We had some action but even being shot at was a cause for great discussion at the little army bar that was the venue of our nightly rendezvous. After several months, I learned of a program that involved flying somewhere outside of Vietnam and since I faced the double incentives of a boring war and a boss who I detested, I followed my ambition and applied for the "Steve Canyon" program, or "Project 404," which were the official titles of the Raven program. I waited for word to leave which, inexplicably, never came. In desperation, I flew to Bien Hoa to determine the cause of the delay. I was told that they had tried three times to reach me but, communications being what they were, I never received the message, and so they sent the number-two guy on the list. My only recourse was to extend for a second tour because the next opening wasn't projected to come up for several months. Imagine my surprise a few short days later when I received an urgent call to pack my bags and head to Udorn in early April 1970.

After "sanitizing" in the men's room of base ops, I met the guys at Detachment 1, near your own compound as I recall, and a day

[1] The Ravens were US Air Force forward air controllers flying covert missions over Laos from air bases in the kingdom.

later flew to Vientiane. My new boss welcomed me with the news that I was to be assigned to Long Tieng to fly for Vang Pao and the Hmong people. I was thrilled. Action, at last! His second message was to tell me that the pilot who had preceded me there, Dick Elzinga, had disappeared along with the pilot he was to replace, Hank Allen, on his very first mission. To this date, their bodies have not been found. This was only one of many "silver bullets" that I dodged during the next 11 months at Long Tieng.

My first encounter of a group of Air America pilots was in the Purple Porpoise, run by the British owner and probable intelligence provider, Monty Banks. As I stepped through the circular door I was greeted with his famous call, "Shut the bleeding door." We joined a group of your folks, one of whom was celebrating his first $100,000 with the company. I was extremely impressed but tried not to show it since he was buying.

Long Tieng under siege was a new experience for me. We flew hard. In fact, on my first day on the job, I directed airstrikes on a site northwest of Long Tieng that was being attacked by a large group of NVA soldiers. After putting in three sets of A-1s, the attack was broken off and, according to the Hmong forward air guide on the ground, an estimated 200 enemy soldiers were killed. In retrospect, I believe those figures are suspect but, after only 24 hours in country, it was enough to impress this young pilot, I assure you.

From that point on, our lives were totally intertwined with yours. We ate often at the Air America hostel where you could get the best fried rice ever made, party at the bar or, more importantly, brief up a hazardous resupply mission or even a search-and-rescue mission.

On one occasion, we had two F-4 aircrew members who had spent a very cold night on the PDJ [Plane of Jars]. We planned the next day's mission using two sets of Ravens. The first primary and backup took off in the dark to direct the search and rescue by the Jolly Greens from Udorn. Two more of us launched with Air America helicopters to provide an immediate rescue force for any aircraft that might get shot down that day. We did this because the Jolly Greens had a nasty habit of pulling off and regrouping whenever one of their aircraft was shot up. This way, if we were there, we could keep the big rescue team on task while we tidied up the loose ends. In addition, we wrapped up a rifle, ammunition, food, water, clothing, and radios in blankets and stuffed them in a Pilatus Porter. The idea was, in case we were unable to pick up the crew members by the end of the day, the Porter would fly at extremely low level out of the setting sun and kick the bundles out the door so that our guys could survive the night. It was a nasty battle but the Jolly Greens were successful.


CAT engine repair.

Of course, anyone who flew in that area knew that the primary rescue source was not the Air Force but Air America, simply because they were usually close by. All of us had your frequency set in our radios. When a plane went down, there was a call to Cricket and a call to Air America. Time and time again, you guys dashed into the unknown and saved American lives. After one rescue, this time of a Raven, the flight mechanic offered my friend a cigarette, only to have it refused. "I'm trying to quit" was the answer. At this point the flight mech laughed and said, "That's the funniest thing I've ever heard—a Raven quitting cigarettes—for his health."

There was more humor. One day I took off from Long Tieng in a T-28 and followed a C-123K on its way to Vientiane. I couldn't resist the urge to sneak up behind him and park off his left wing tip until he noticed me there with a noticeable jerk of the yoke. I laughed and pulled out ahead of him, feeling quite pleased with myself. A few minutes later I heard or, rather, felt something out of order. When I finally looked to my right, there he was—two props churning and the doors open on both J-85 pods. A flash of the trusty "bird" on his part brought about laughter in both cockpits, I'm sure.

In a more serious incident, my buddy, Chuck Engle and I were playing "highlow" looking for targets along Route 4 just west of Xien Kouang ville. In this silly game, one aircraft flies low and as fast as he can down a road while the other "flies cover" right behind him. All was well until Chuck took a load of AK-47 fire in the cockpit that shot out his side window. He claimed he could see the bullet pass in front of his face. Another round hit him just above the left ankle, passed completely through his leg and fell onto the floor. He recovered the bullet and had it mounted on a gold chain that he wore around his neck. Chuck pulled off while I shot a rocket in the direction of the soldiers. Then we began the 30-minute flight back to Long Tieng. Of course, our first call was to an Air America helicopter that changed course to intercept us. In the meantime, I tried to keep Chuck conscious, as nausea and pain took over. The entire story is written in the book, *The Ravens*. Eventually, a Huey came into position and I dropped back. The helicopter stayed with Chuck through the landing at Long Tieng. I remember that Chuck, as he saw the aircraft drifting off the side of the runway, took his useless leg and jammed it onto the rudder pedal, causing the aircraft to cartwheel and come to a stop. The flight doc and others pulled him from the aircraft and rushed him onto a waiting Volpar that took him to the hospital at Udorn. In retrospect, the stupid part of that entire mission was "our" doing, while the common sense part was compliments of the Air America team.

I'll tell one last story and then wrap it up. But, in this case, I've saved the best for last. And in this case, the professionalism of the Air America pilots saved my life. You may recall that, during the rainy season, the weather could get nasty for days. Even you guys were forced to sit it out once in awhile. During those times, we would move from the breakfast table to the poker table for an all-day session of dealer's choice, nickel-dime poker. Even on a bad day, you wouldn't lose more than about $25. By 9 or 10 in the morning, the beer lamp was lit with one of us staying sober just in case the weather broke. As it happened, it was my day to drink Coke and, sure enough, sometime in the afternoon, an A-1 descended through a hole over the PDJ and said the area was full of active targets. Cricket did his thing by launching the fleet and I headed to Vang Pao's house to pick up a backseater. We made it to the PDJ and learned that the weather had improved well enough to start popping bad guys. Does the term "sucker hole" conger up any nightmares? We normally planned

to get back to Long Tieng with at least one hour of fuel left, in case we had to divert. Well, Cricket kept laying on the fighters, and I stayed out a bit too long. It wasn't until I tried to make it home that I realized the weather had closed in behind me. I picked my way through mountain gaps that still appeared below the huge cloud banks now resting on the ridge lines. When the most direct route didn't work, I flew west to the lateral valley that formed a "V" with Long Tieng and Sam Tong in between, and attempted to come in what we called the "back door." That, too, was blocked, so I took advantage of the last opening I could find and popped out in the east-west valley that lies between Long Tieng and Sam Tong, just north of Skyline Ridge. The only sign of civilization was the winding dirt road that connected the two bases. I seriously considered crash landing on that road but decided against it because I knew that the wings would likely shear off and, as they pinched the fuselage, the flaps would come into the back seat and decapitate my backseater. So, I reemerged back into the valley west of Long Tieng and flew in circles with the clouds coming down on top of me, the fog filling in the valley below and daylight running out fast. I had 45 minutes of fuel and a one-hour flight to Vientiane, if I didn't hit a mountain on the climb out.

All the time this was going on, I was talking to the other Ravens in the Raven hootch. They said the rain was coming down mercilessly and that it was getting very dark. One of them volunteered to contact the Air America helicopter pilots to see if they could think of something. Shortly, I heard some chatter on the tower radio channel as three UH-1s cranked up on the ramp. Within minutes, they lifted off and flew in trail, slowly, out the "back door" to where I was orbiting in a space that kept getting smaller and smaller by the minute. "Hey, Raven" the first pilot called out, "I see you. Turn left...more...roll out. You are pointed at the back door. The gap is right in front of you." "You're nuts," I replied, "I don't see a damn thing except clouds and mountain." "It's an optical illusion," he said, "the gap is filled with heavy rain." I drove my little airplane straight at the mountain wall with my heart in my throat and past the hovering helicopter as I entered the point of no return. At the last possible second I saw a shimmering "V" coming down out of the cloud bank, only a couple of hundred feet tall. "Turn right, roll out...you are on track." I hit the heavy rain with an audible splash. Hell, everything is audible in an O-1. It poured off the wind screen in a constant torrent, but I found that I could see the ground flashing by on both sides and below me. "I have him," said the second helicopter pilot, "turn left...roll out... slightly right...watch out for that karst." Karst was right! It rushed by me below my left tire, far too close to be comfortable. I passed the second helicopter. "I've lost him," he said. "I've got him," the third pilot said. I was getting vectors from three Air America helicopter pilots hovering in trail of each other, in the heavy rain and fog. "Turn right...roll out. There. You are on extended downwind. Good luck." They headed on their way back to Vientiane, by what route, I have no idea.

I saw the ridgeline falling away a bit to the right, and at that point, I crossed over the compound below. A couple of the other Ravens raced out as they heard my engine, but the rain was too heavy to see anything even though I was much lower than normal. I searched for the runway in the darkness and, miraculously, I saw a silver-blue ribbon to my front left side. It was the runway, totally covered in water, reflecting the last wisps of light that had forced their way through the clouds. Minutes later, all would be dark. I knew that, somewhere in front of me, another hillside loomed, and I needed to turn final just before I got there. I held on as long as I could then pulled the power back and established my best guess at a

The Airmen's Bond – Keith Woodcock

descending left turn to the opposite direction. As soon as I banked, the perspective changed and I lost sight of the runway. One potato, two potato, three potato, and I rolled out on heading. Again the runway appeared although somewhat shorter than I remembered. This was because I had turned early and positioned myself to land long. Never mind, the operative word was "land," which I did, with the water spraying everywhere from my hydroplaning tires. Fortunately, the water was deep enough that it rapidly slowed me down so that I was able to turn off onto the Raven ramp.

I shut off the engine and sat there shaking. Finally, I climbed out of the airplane and just hung on to the strut while I contemplated how close to dying I had just been. My backseater bolted for VP's house, while I searched for my jeep. I also took time to say a prayer of thanks to all those who helped me in my hour of need, especially those wonderful Air America pilots who came through--again.

When I departed Laos, I realized that I had served the longest tour at Long Tieng of any Raven—a record never broken. And, as I think back through a memory that is now getting a bit fuzzy here and there, certain images remain crystal clear—my fellow Ravens, the Hmong, VP, the mountains, the fear, the joy, and the bitter pain of loss. Always in the picture and in virtually every good war story I have, there appears a blue and silver bird or, perhaps, simply a silver bird that, even 39 years later stands as a towering symbol of courage, sacrifice, caring, skill, and honor.

Why did we do it? Why did we forsake all that was comfortable and well known to us to travel to a faraway land to risk our lives for people who will never know our names? Was it for our country? Was it for the money? Was it the feeling of knowing that you are the best at your trade? Or, was it for the fleeting thrill of being young and invincible? Perhaps it was all these. Certainly no one outside of our fold will ever understand, so why try?

Many beautiful words have been written which capture the emotion of this time from Rudyard Kipling to Lt. Gen. Hal Moore of *We Were Soldiers* fame. But, my choice is the poem by Robert Frost that I mentioned at the beginning of this speech entitled "The Road Not Taken." Let me close by reading the final stanza.

*I shall be telling this with a sigh*
*Somewhere ages and ages hence:*
*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—*
*I took the one less traveled by,*
*And that has made all the difference.*

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your program and, on behalf of my Raven friends, thank you for always being there—anytime, anywhere, professionally.

The declassified documents released in conjunction with the symposium are available at www.foia.gov/airamerica.asp, among the special collections listed in the FOIA reading room of CIA's public web site. (U)

# EXTRAORDINARY FIDELITY: TWO CIA PRISONERS IN CHINA, 1952–73

*Nicholas Dujmovic*

*This article draws extensively on operational files and other internal CIA records that of necessity remain classified. Because the true story of these two CIA officers is compelling and has been distorted in many public accounts, it is retold here in as much detail as possible, despite minimal source citations. Whenever possible, references to open sources are made in the footnotes.*

Beijing's capture, imprisonment, and eventual release of CIA officers John T. Downey and Richard G. Fecteau is an amazing story that too few know about today. Shot down over Communist China on their first operational mission in 1952, these young men spent the next two decades imprisoned, often in solitary confinement, while their government officially denied they were CIA officers. Fecteau was released in 1971, Downey in 1973. They came home to an America vastly different from the place they had left, but both adjusted surprisingly well and continue to live full lives.

Even though Downey and Fecteau were welcomed back as heroes by the CIA family more than 30 years ago and their story has been covered in open literature—albeit in short and generally flawed accounts—institutional memory regarding these brave officers has dimmed.[1] Their ordeal is not well known among today's officers, judging by the surprise and wonder CIA historians encounter when relating it in internal lectures and training courses.

This story is important as a part of US intelligence history because it demonstrates the risks of operations (and the consequences of operational error), the qualities of character necessary to endure hardship, and the potential damage to reputations through the persistence of false stories about


[1] Downey's and Fecteau's CIA affiliation was revealed as early as 1957 by a disgruntled former USIA official and by early exposés of the Agency, such as David Wise and Thomas Ross, *The Invisible Government* (New York: Random House, 1964). Later brief treatments can be found in William Colby and Peter Forbath, *Honorable Men: My Life in the CIA* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978), in which former Director of Central Intelligence Colby identifies Downey and Fecteau as "CIA agents"; John Ranelagh, *The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986); William Leary, *Perilous Missions: Civil Air Transport and CIA Covert Operations in Asia* (University of Alabama Press, 1984); Norman Polmar and Thomas Allen, *The Encyclopedia of Espionage* (New York: Gramercy, 1997); Ted Gup, *The Book of Honor* (New York: Doubleday, 2000); and James Lilly, *China Hands* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004). The public also can learn of the case at the International Spy Museum in Washington, DC, and through the Internet's *Wikipedia*.

Robert "Bob" Snoddy

past events. Above all, the saga of John Downey and Richard Fecteau is about remarkable faithfulness, shown not only by the men who were deprived of their freedom, but also by an Agency that never gave up hope. While it was through operational misjudgments that these two spent much of their adulthood in Chinese prisons, the Agency, at least in part, redeemed itself through its later care for the men from whom years had been stolen.

## THE OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

John Downey and Richard Fecteau were youthful CIA paramilitary officers: Downey, born in Connecticut, had entered CIA in June 1951, after graduating from Yale; Fecteau, from Massachusetts, entered on duty a few months later, having graduated from Boston University. Both men had been varsity football players, and both were outgoing and engaging with noted senses of humor. They were on their first overseas assignment when the shootdown occurred.

By late 1952, the Korean War had been going on for more than two years. Accounts often identify that war as the reason for the operation Downey and Fecteau were participating in. While largely true, the flight the men were on was part of operations that had antecedents in the US response to the communist takeover of China in 1949. In accordance with US policies, CIA took steps to exploit the potential for a Chinese "Third Force" by trying to link Chinese agents, trained by CIA, with alleged dissident generals on the mainland. This Third Force, while anti-communist, would be separate from the Nationalists, who were assessed to be largely discredited on the mainland.[2]

This Third Force project received new emphasis after the Communist Chinese intervened in the Korean War. At that point, the project aimed to divert Chinese resources from the war in Korea by promoting domestic anti-government guerrilla operations. This was to be accomplished by small teams of Chinese agents, generally inserted through airdrops, who were to link up with local guerrilla forces, collect intelligence and possibly engage in sabotage and psychological warfare, and report back by radio.[3] The operational model was the OSS experience in Europe during World War II, which assumed a cooperative captive population—a situation, as it turned out, that did not prevail in China.

By the time of Downey and Fecteau's involvement in the Third Force program, its record was short and inauspicious. Because of resource constraints, the training of Chinese agents at CIA facilities

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[2] Declassified reference to Third Force covert operations is available in a National Security Council report on "Current Policies of the Government of the United States Relating to the National Security," 1 November 1952, reproduced in *Declassified Documents Reference System* (Farmington Hills, Michigan: Gale Group, 2006), document CK3100265583. A description of the Chinese Third Force program is also available in the cleared account by former CIA officer James Lilley, later US Ambassador to Beijing, *China Hands: Nine Decades of Adventure, Espionage, and Diplomacy in Asia* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2004), 78–83. Lilley describes the "three prongs" of CIA covert operations against the Chinese mainland at the time: the first was support of Nationalist efforts, the second was the Third Force program, and the third comprised unilateral operations. For a personal story of CIA's China operations in concert with the Nationalist Chinese, see Frank Holober, *Raiders of the China Coast: CIA Covert Operations during the Korean War* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1999).

[3] Lilly, ibid.

in Asia was delayed, and the first Third Force team to be airdropped did not deploy until April 1952. This four-man team parachuted into southern China and was never heard from again.

The second Third Force team comprised five ethnic Chinese dropped into the Jilin region of Manchuria in mid-July 1952. Downey was well known to the Chinese operatives on this team because he had trained them. The team quickly established radio contact with Downey's CIA unit outside of China and was resupplied by air in August and October. A sixth team member, intended as a courier between the team and the controlling CIA unit, was dropped in September. In early November, the team reported contact with a local dissident leader and said it had obtained needed operational documents such as official credentials. They requested air-exfiltration of the courier, a method he had trained for but that the CIA had never attempted operationally.

At that time, the technique for aerial pickup involved flying an aircraft at low altitude and hooking a line elevated between two poles. The line was connected to a harness in which the agent was strapped. Once airborne, the man was to be winched into the aircraft. This technique required specialized training, both for the pilots of the aircraft, provided by the CIA's proprietary Civil Air Transport (CAT), and for the two men who would operate the winch. Pilots Norman Schwartz and Robert Snoddy had trained in the aerial pickup technique during the fall of 1952 and were willing to undertake the mission. On 20 November, Downey's CIA unit radioed back to the team: "Will air snatch approximately 2400 hours" on 29 November.[4]

The question of who would operate the winch, however, was still unresolved. Originally, Chinese crewmen were to be used, but Downey's unit chief decided that time was too short to fully train them. Instead, two CAT personnel trained in the procedure were identified for the pickup flight, but the CIA unit chief pulled them four days before the mission because they lacked the requisite clearances. Downey, who had been at the unit for about a year, and Fecteau, who had arrived in the first week of November, were directed to fill the breach. They were hurriedly trained in the procedure during the week of 24 November.

Late on 29 November, Downey and Fecteau boarded Schwartz and Snoddy's olive drab C-47 on an airfield on the Korean peninsula and took off for the rendezvous point in Chinese Communist Manchuria, some 400 miles away. It was a quiet, uneventful flight of less than three hours. The moon was nearly full and visibility was excellent. At one point, Fecteau opened a survival kit and noted that the .32-caliber pistol therein had no ammunition—joking about that was the only conversation the men had on the flight.

Norman A. Schwartz

[4] For details on the pickup system, see William Leary, "Robert Fulton's Skyhook and Operation Coldfeet," *Studies in Intelligence* 38, no. 1 (Spring 1994), 67–68. The aircraft pickup system in use in 1952 was not, as is sometimes asserted, the Skyhook system developed in the late 1950s by Robert Fulton but was rather a more rudimentary arrangement known as the "All American" system that the Army Air Force had modified during World War II from a system to pick up mail bags.

## MISSION GONE AWRY

The C-47, with its CAT pilots and CIA crew, was heading for a trap. The agent team, unbeknownst to the men on the flight, had been captured by Communist Chinese security forces and had been turned.[5] The request for exfiltration was a ruse, and the promised documentation and purported contact with a local dissident leader were merely bait. The team members almost certainly had told Chinese authorities everything they knew about the operation and about the CIA men and facilities associated with it. From the way the ambush was conducted, it was clear that the Chinese Communists knew exactly what to expect when the C-47 arrived at the pickup point.[6]

Reaching the designated area around midnight, the aircraft received the proper recognition signal from the ground.[7] Downey and Fecteau pushed out supplies for the agent team—food and equipment needed for the aerial pickup. Then Schwartz and Snoddy flew the aircraft away from the area to allow the team time to set up the poles and line for the "snatch." Returning about 45 minutes later and receiving a ready signal, the C-47 flew a dry run by the pickup point, which served both to orient the pilots and to alert the man being exfiltrated that the next pass would be for him. Copilot Snoddy came back momentarily to the rear of the aircraft to make sure Downey and Fecteau were ready. On the moonlit landscape, four or five people could be seen on the ground. One man was in the pickup harness, facing the path of the aircraft.

As the C-47 came in low for the pickup, flying nearly at its stall speed of around 60 knots, white sheets that had been camouflaging two anti-aircraft guns on the snowy terrain flew off and gunfire erupted at the very moment the pickup was to have been made. The guns, straddling the flight path, began a murderous crossfire. At this point, a crowd of men emerged from the woods.[8] Whether by reflex or purposefully, the pilots directed the aircraft's nose up, preventing an immediate crash; however, the engines cut out and the aircraft glided to a controlled

Unmarked C-47.

[5] CIA's Far East Division later assessed that the Chinese agent team probably had been caught and doubled immediately after its insertion in July.

[6] See Fecteau's reminiscences as told to Glenn Rifkin, "My Nineteen Years in a Chinese Prison," *Yankee Magazine*, November 1982.

[7] Twenty years later, after his return, Fecteau remembered the recognition signal as a flashlight signal; Downey thought it comprised three bonfires. Both were used.

Mandarin jet take-off.

crash among some trees, breaking in two with the nose in the air.

Downey and Fecteau had been secured to the aircraft with harnesses to keep them from falling out during the winching. On impact, both slid along the floor of the aircraft, cushioned somewhat by their heavy winter clothing. Fecteau's harness broke, causing him to crash into the bulkhead separating the main body of the aircraft from the cockpit, which, he later said, gave him a bump on his head "you could hang your coat on."

Other than suffering bruises and being shaken up, Downey and Fecteau were extremely fortunate in being unhurt. The Chinese apparently had targeted the cockpit, with gunfire passing through the floor in the forward part of the aircraft but stopping short of where Downey and Fecteau had been stationed, although one bullet singed Downey's cheek. Meanwhile, tracer bullets had ignited the fuel. Both men tried to get to the cockpit to check on the pilots, who were not answering Downey's shouts, but their part of the aircraft was burning fiercely and the two had to move away. Whether due to gunfire, the impact, or the fire, the pilots died at the scene.[9] Fecteau later remembered standing outside the aircraft with Downey, both stunned but conscious, telling each other that they were "in a hell of a mess." The Chinese security forces descended on them, "whooping and hollering," and they gave themselves up to the inevitable.

### ASSESSING FIELD RESPONSIBILITY

Over the years, various explanations arose within CIA to explain Downey and Fecteau's participation in the ill-fated mission. It seemed incredible to operations officers that two CIA employees, familiar with operations, locations, and personnel, would be sent on a mission that exposed them to possible capture by the Chinese Communists. One of the most persistent myths was that the two must have been joyriding because their participation was, it was thought, a violation of the rules...

This article continued in full on the included DVD and at the following web address: *https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol50no4/two-cia-prisoners-in-china-1952201373.html*

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[8] Beijing recently published a highly fanciful, heroically written version of events that night, which claims the Chinese awaited the CIA aircraft with 37 guns—half of them machine guns, the rest antiaircraft cannon—along with 400 armed security forces, all of which fired at the plane! The account also asserts erroneously that Downey and Fecteau came out firing small arms before surrendering. See "The Wipe-Out of the American Spies in An Tu County," in *Documentary On the Support to Resist the U.S. and Aid Korea*, (Beijing: China Literary History Publishing House, 2000).

[9] After years of negotiations, the Chinese government in 2002 finally allowed a US Defense Department excavation team into the area, where they discovered fragments of the aircraft. In June 2004, the team found bone and tooth fragments, which later were identified as Robert Snoddy's. To date, no remains of Schwartz have been identified.

# DCI PRESENTS DIRECTOR'S MEDALS

## REMARKS OF THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GEORGE J. TENET ON PRESENTATION OF THE DIRECTOR'S MEDAL TO JOHN T. "JACK" DOWNEY AND RICHARD G. FECTEAU

*June 25, 1998*

*On June 25, Director of Intelligence (DCI) George Tenet presented the Director's Medal to Judge John T. "Jack" Downey and Richard G. Fecteau. Downey and Fecteau were captured by the Chinese in 1952 while conducting agent resupply and pick-up operations as part of our war effort in Korea. This was their first overseas assignment. In 1954, China sentenced Fecteau to 20 years and Downey to life imprisonment. Late in 1971, nearly 20 years later, China released Fecteau and in March 1973 released Downey. Following their release they returned to work for the Agency and later retired.*

*Below are DCI Tenet's remarks on the occasion of the medal presentation.*


I know that I speak for everyone in this room, and everyone in this Agency, when I say, welcome home, Jack Downey and Dick Fecteau—two great heroes of the CIA! Welcome back to the CIA!

You have never left our thoughts—not during your long years of imprisonment, and not during the decades following your retirement from the Agency. We are forever proud that you are our colleagues. You have been an inspiration to the intelligence officers who served with you, and to the generations who followed you.

Your story, simply put, is one of the most remarkable in the 50-year history of the Central Intelligence Agency.

It is the story of a daring flight over Manchuria during the Korean War. The mission: to swoop down and snatch out our imperiled agent. It is the story of an ambush—of a crash landing—and of capture. Of being declared missing and presumed dead, only to reappear very much alive two years later for a Red Chinese "show trial", where Dick was sentenced to twenty years and Jack received a life sentence.

Even more remarkable is the story of how these brave men endured decades of imprisonment, regained their freedom, and went on to live full and active lives, marked by service to their communities and their country.

Shortly after his return to the United States, Jack told his debriefer: "you come out of captivity basically about the same as you go in." Jack Downey and Dick Fecteau went in as young men—Jack was all of 22; Dick was 25. What they took in with them was the character and the values that they learned from their parents—integrity and honor and commitment to country.

Jack and Dick, I know that your parents are in your hearts and thoughts today, as they are in ours. The medals we present to you today in honor of your unmatched service to our country are given also in honor of your extraordinary parents.

Jack's widowed mother Mary Downey waged a fierce behind-the-scenes struggle for her son's release until her health gave out. Ironically, it was her stroke that became the basis for his eventual release. Mrs. Downey personally petitioned four Presidents beginning with Eisenhower, successive Secretaries of State, Senators, Congressmen, the Catholic Church, and the United Nations. Nobody who met the indomitable Mary Downey will ever forget her.

Phil and Jessie Fecteau—decent, down-to-earth people with an abiding devotion to this country—believed deeply that what their boy was doing was important to US security and that they must do nothing to jeopardize that. Throughout nineteen cruel years of waiting, they put unquestioning faith in their government—in this Agency in particular. I pray that they never felt that their faith was misplaced.

There is no adequate way to describe the uncommon grace and fortitude with which the Downey and Fecteau families bore their burdens of grief. And to that awful weight of worry was the added burden of silence. Thank God, Mary Downey and Phil Fecteau went to their rest in peace, knowing that their sons were free.

Just imagine what it was like to hear that your son was missing and presumed dead, only to learn years later that he is imprisoned in Red China.

Imagine what it was like to have your hopes for his release raised and dashed and raised again.

Imagine what it was like Christmas after Christmas knowing that your son was spending it alone in a cold cell.

Imagine a mother assembling care packages, lovingly filling the cartons with cookies and warm socks and issues of Sports Illustrated, not knowing when, or even if, they'd be delivered.

Imagine turning over and over in your mind all the political and personal considerations, then deciding to make the long journey to China for a prison visit. And all the while you knew that your time with your son would be agonizingly brief, that you wouldn't be able to have a private conversation, and that when you left, you might never see him again.

We cannot imagine. We can only stand in admiration of such courage [DCI leads standing ovation for the parents.]

I know that Dick and Jack feel deeply blessed to have had such wonderful parents, and to have such wonderful families. Dick's wife Peg regrettably couldn't be with us today, due to a very sore back. And, Dick's mother, Jessie, also is unable to be with us to share today's honor with her son, but we send them both our warmest good wishes and know they are with us in spirit. Twin daughters Sidnice and Suzon are here. The girls were three years-old when their father was captured.

Jack's wife Audrey is here. Audrey's and Jack's marriage is a wonderful, life-affirm-

ing story in itself. Jack met Audrey Lee when he went back to New Haven after his release to visit Yale, his alma mater. Audrey is a naturalized American citizen who was born in China, coincidentally ten miles from the place where Jack was shot down. Their son, John Lee Downey, starts Wesleyan University this Fall. We also welcome Jack's brother Bill, who worked tirelessly for his release, together with Bill's wife Jean.

It is wonderful to have multiple generations of the Fecteau and Downey families here today. I'm sure that there isn't a day that goes by that Dick and Jack aren't grateful to be surrounded by your love. I salute you all.

But beyond your immediate families, we would like to think that you also feel that you have another family—your extended Agency family. There are folks here today who kept in touch with your loved ones and managed your personal affairs all those years. I know that they saw it not as a duty, but as a sacred trust.

We also have here today a large representation of officers from our China desk in the DO. You are true legends to them.


Above: Mandarin Jet.
Below: Damage to a C-119.

And there is a contingent of fellow officers, many of whom you haven't seen since your training courses in the early 1950's, who are thrilled to join you today. As your former colleagues will attest, training camp is a bonding experience, and I know you've been swapping stories as you would at any reunion. I understand, Jack, that when they evaluated you at the end of your training, you got a pretty low grade in, of all things: "Survival"!!!

And Dick, although your evaluators thought your great sense of humor was an asset to morale, they were concerned about your lighter side and thought that, for your own good, you should "be more serious." Like Jack's survival marks, the graders got this one wrong too. The following is classic Fecteau.

Shortly after Dick and Jack were captured, they were separated, and spent two years in solitary confinement, much of the time under interrogation and in chains. But Dick's sense of humor never left him.

On the day of their "show trial" in 1954—remember Dick and Jack had not seen one another for two years—Dick is marched into the courtroom through a battery of lights and cameras. Jack is already standing in the dock. For propaganda effect, Jack has been outfitted in a new, black padded suit, clothes, shoes, and a beanie hat. Dick sees that Jack is looking rather down and figures he needs cheering up. They order Dick to go stand next to Jack. He walks over to Jack and whispers: "Who's your tailor?!"

Until Dick's release in 1971, and Jack's in 1973, the two men were listed in our personnel files as serving on "Special Detail Foreign" at "Official Station Undetermined." And serve they did. Not in the ordinary way, of course—but in a most extraordinary way. How did they

serve? By keeping their faith in our country, and by being faithful to it no matter what.

When Dick was debriefed upon his release, he said he never lost his sense of Agency affiliation. He said that he felt he was engaged in a struggle between the Agency and the Security Bureau in Peking. He said that his country was much more than an abstraction to him. When his jailers kept trying to drum it into him that the US was an imperialist country, and that Americans were the scum of the earth, he said he "resented the crap out of it" and "sort of took it upon my shoulders as a representative of my country and my people" to be the opposite of how they portrayed us.

One of the many things we all admire about you is that neither of you have let your experiences make you bitter. When a reporter asked Jack how he'd describe the 20 years he spent in prison, he answered: "They were a crashing bore!" "I won't dwell upon the past because I'm too preoccupied with the present and the future." Since their release, both Dick and Jack have made every day count.

Just imagine being taken right from a Red Chinese jail and finding yourself back home in the United States after a twenty-year absence. Dick and Jack remarked about the rush of colors, the variety and number of cars, the radical change in fashions—it was the seventies after all.

But both men saw more than the superficials. Dick took great joy in the simple pleasures of freedom that all of us take for granted: he told his debriefer: "to me, just to get up and make a nice breakfast and take a shower is beautiful, it makes my day." Jack observed changes in American society—rural Connecticut being overrun with housing developments and suburbia, the positive effects of the civil rights movement.

Dick elected to retire from the CIA in the mid-1970s, after over 25 years of service. He had to be convinced to stay that long. In Dick's words: "I did not want them to make work for me. It would embarrass the life out of me." As if he hadn't done enough for this Agency and this country already! Dick later joined the staff of his alma mater, Boston University, and became Assistant Director of Athletics. He retired from the university in 1989.

Jack also opted for retirement. When he was offered the opportunity to stay, he quipped: "You know I just don't think I am cut out for that kind of work!" After leaving the Agency, at age 43, Jack enrolled in Harvard Law School. He practiced law privately for a number of years, was appointed by the Governor of Connecticut to a number of public service positions, and even started a run for Senator of Connecticut. (Jack calls it his other crash!) In 1987, Jack became a Judge, like his father before him.

Both of these great men refuse to consider themselves heroes. They are not the sort. Their parents and their New England upbringing have a lot to do with that. When Mary Downey was reunited with her beloved Jack in her hospital room, she wagged her finger at him and said: "You're a celebrity now—don't let it go to your head!"

Jack was not about to let himself, as he put it: "be one of those guys who goes through life making a career out of being a CIA agent who was imprisoned in China." And the most Dick will say on that subject is that he supposes that he "did the best he could under the circumstances."

Dick and Jack, you can be as modest as you like. But we cannot see it that way. What you did—the way you did it—is a proud part of our history that we will never forget.

You demonstrated one kind of heroism when you signed on to that perilous mission in wartime and crash-landed and survived and endured those early interrogations.

You demonstrated heroism of a whole other magnitude during those dark decades of captivity that followed. In those endless years, heroism meant getting through another day, and then another, and then another, with your dignity, and your humanity, and your will, and your wit, and your honor, and your hope intact.

Both men would argue that others in this room would have done what they did under the same circumstances. Maybe. We'd all like to think we would. But the fact is, it wasn't somebody else in that prison. It was you. It fell to the two of you to do a hard, hard thing. And you did it. For two decades. Magnificently. Gallantly. With extreme valor.

When they came in 1971 to tell Dick he was being freed, his first question was: "What about Jack Downey?" And after his return home, when Dick was offered piles of money to tell his story, he refused the offers—despite his family's modest means—for fear that publicity would harm Jack's chances of freedom.

Two years after Dick's release, Jack's day of freedom finally arrived. Jack has described his reaction as thinking to himself: "Well, Christ, it's about time."

In this—our 50th anniversary year—it is also about time that you and Dick received the small tribute we confer today by presenting you with the Director's Medal. I do this on behalf of all my predecessors because all of us know that at the end of the day men like the two of you—with wonderful families behind them—have sacrificed everything with grace and courage and in absolute anonymity to serve this agency and our country. We have been truly blessed to call you our colleagues and friends.

The words inscribed on the back of the medal are simple, yet direct—Extraordinary Fidelity and Essential Service. Better words were never written or spoken to describe Jack Downey and Dick Fecteau.

We will always be grateful to you and to your extraordinary families for all that you did for our country.

I would now invite you both to come forward for the presentation of the medals. I would also ask Ben DeFelice, the man who knows better than anyone in this Agency what you and you families went through, and who so caringly handled your affairs during your long captivity, to read the citation.

Left: Richard Fecteau.
Right: Jack Downey.

# THE PEOPLE OF THE CIA...
## JOHN DOWNEY & RICHARD FECTEAU

On March 12, 1973, CIA officer John Downey walked across the Lo-Wu Bridge from the People's Republic of China into the then-British Crown colony of Hong Kong. He was a free man after more than two decades of imprisonment.

Communist Chinese forces captured Downey and fellow CIA paramilitary officer Richard Fecteau when their plane was shot down in Manchuria in November 1952. Both men were riding in a C-47 operated by a CIA proprietary airline, Civil Air Transport, on an operation to retrieve an agent. The team planned to extract the agent with a device that involved a hook snagging a line between two upright poles on the ground. The agent was connected to the line by a harness. Once the hook caught the line, and the agent was jerked off the ground, Downey and Fecteau were to winch the man into the aircraft.

The Civil Air Transport plane, however, flew into a trap. The Chinese agent team on the ground, trained by Downey, had been caught and turned by the Communist Chinese. Antiaircraft fire downed the plane, killing its pilot and co-pilot, Norman Schwartz and Robert Snoddy. Downey and Fecteau survived.

Presuming there were no survivors, the U.S. government was surprised when Beijing announced Downey's life sentence for espionage; Fecteau received 20 years. The announcement came in 1954, two years after the Civil Air Transport plane was shot down. After harsh interrogations, both men faced dismal conditions for most of their incarceration. But they learned to cope through patience, faith in eventual release, humor, and exercise.

The lack of official relations—and Washington's continued insistence that the men were Department of the Army civilians and not CIA employees—ensured stalemate on the men's fate. Throughout their imprisonment, Fecteau and Downey received their CIA pay and benefits in escrow, as well as periodic promotions. The CIA invested their savings and assisted their families.

When negotiations commenced in 1971, leading to President Richard M. Nixon's opening of China, Fecteau was released. Soon after Nixon publicly admitted Downey's CIA affiliation, his life sentence was commuted and he was released.

Fecteau and Downey have focused their lives on the future, not dwelling on the past. Fecteau returned to his alma mater, Boston University, as assistant athletic director; he retired in 1989. Downey returned home to Connecticut and became a respected judge; a New Haven courthouse is named for him.