

A HUNTING WE DID GO

by

FELIX SMITH

"Let's get out of here", cried Schwartz, "I can't stand it any longer!—Wild boar hunting with knives, tickling trout, hunting rabbits without guns, and now it's wild horses!" We stalked out of the uproarious saloon, shaking our heads in amazement.

You too will be amazed when you find out what can transpire in a New Zealand pub, for I can no longer repress the distorted sense of responsibility to posterity that keeps nudging me to record these astounding truths, even in the face of being branded a paranoid liar.

"How does this sports idea tie in with an ordinary drinking establishment?", the un-appointed may ask, but friend, the inside of a New Zealand pub is as "ordinary" as the revolt of the Irish Republican Army. And rather than being tagged a pointless "establishment", it should be more aptly referred to as a seething sports arena filled with rowdy choruses of shouts and wild tales, and strange performances.

The rugged New Zealanders, noted for their tough football teams, make just as rough and carefully regulated a game out of drinking beer, with rules well defined as the Marquis of Queensbury's, and the police as active participants rather than just referees or peacemakers.



Capt. Norman Swartz for which wild boar hunting with knives, tickling trout and hunting rabbits sans guns was a strange and wonderful experience.

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Just in case you still doubt the acceptability of this "sports" classification, let me begin with a rough resume of the rules. We'll start out with the exciting part, half-time, six P.M., the time that pubs legally close: cheer-leader-like, the publican strolls through, calling, "Time gentlemen, time please, gentlemen", which seems to be the signal for all participants to drain their glasses and saunter innocently out while the bartender pulls the curtains and makes a great show of locking the door. But this is only the beginning. The team mates either

check in with the wife for dinner, or merely stroll round the block, return to the pub, and give a coded signal on the door bell. The door opens a crack, recognition occurs, the player slips in and orders another pint. The atmosphere eventually becomes very cheery and although the constable on the beat can see light leaking past the curtain or hear loud bellows of "Fill 'er up again mate", or, "This is my shout, cobber!", said opposition cannot charge in and trap all hands in such an uncouth manner. He must press the door bell first. An officer of the law isn't allowed to use subterfuge, and such unsportsmanlike trickery of imitating the coded ring would immediately disqualify him. The policeman must give a long honest ring, at which alarm all hands abandon bar like rats leaving a sinking ship. The alert publican will have a predetermined refuge, one of the most ingenious being the hotel dining room where all drinkers perch quietly as if ordering dinner. Any bona-fide demands for food, however, would be greeted with extreme horror by independent waitresses, who by this time have the tables cleaned and set for breakfast. So the players just sit quietly as if waiting for their various orders until the constable makes his routine check and departs.

As in all sports, there'd be no excitement if the same side always won, so occasionally a few, not fleet of foot are caught red handed against the bar and the next step is for the constable to determine whether or not the suspect is registered at the pub's accompanying hotel. Publicans must have rooms to let before being granted a drinking license, and residents are allowed to drink after hours on the premise that is, temporarily, their home. But if the cornered drinker is not living at the pub, he's in a tough spot. The policeman asks each what room he's in, and great shouts of numbers ring out, and in this way somewhat resembles Bingo. If the drinker duplicates someone else's room number, or says he's living in a fourth floor room when he forgets he is in a two-story building, the jig is up and off he goes for a two-pound fine with the additional humiliation of having his name published in the newspaper as having been caught after hours in a pub. The publican also receives a heavy fine, and if penalized too often, is disqualified and loses his license. So you can see, it's no child's play.

After competition has stretched over a more or less strenuous period of days, a sort of time-out session is observed, the accepted method being to post a look-out at the door. At the appearance of the gunshoe the alarm is sounded, lights are extinguished, noise stops, and the constable strolls past the lonely look-out in the doorway of an establishment that to outward appearances is as quiet as

a dead engine and darker than inside a derby hat. He nods to the solitary figure and strolls on. The all-clear is sounded, the pub explodes into light and merriment, and the drinkers lift their mugs to compliment one another on their fraud. The policeman knows every look-out in town, but the psychology behind it is this: If the policeman sees the look-out, he knows the law is being respected—yes, feared. But let anyone foolishly flout it by assuming no look-out is needed, and brrring goes the doorbell, and it's catch as catch can.

We occasionally hear that American athletes abroad who try rugby football and cricket don't readily take to the British type of sports, but one exception was Pinky, our navigator, of whom we were extremely proud. Pinky learned to excel at his new game, but he did learn the hard way. He was quietly minding his own beer one night at the Grovenor Pub when the shocking cry of "POLICE!" rang out. With split-second reaction that might have been tempered by experience in other raids in his life, Pinky's reflexes had him out the door and half way down the street before a good samaritan could grab him and explain that since Pinky was living at the Grovenor, he had every right to drink there after six p.m., police or no police and he shouldn't have let his beer go flat. Pinky's face sagged into a look of a left-fielder who dropped a fly on the last out of a bases-loaded baseball game, but experience is an able teacher and soon Pinky was rubbing elbows with New Zealand's best.

A New Zealand pub has a comfortable social atmosphere, like a rich man's club. It is here that the philosophers hang out, here that world problems are discussed and experiences exchanged. With Pinky, matching their story for story, meeting their every slang word with an equivalent American expression, Pinky became our ambassador without portfolio.

Norm Schwartz and I invaded Pinky's domain one night purely for academic purposes, and as Pinky led us into the fabulous Barry's, one of the finest pubs in New Zealand, great shouts of "Why there's Pinky, the old clout! Hi there, Pinky, step up and have one! Bring your cobbles with you! The whole pub became alive when Pinky strolled in, but instead of gripping hands overhead, boxer-like, he merely gave out a sly grin, drifted to the bar, and fitted up to it like he was built in. Pinky didn't talk very loud, but whatever he had to say, all hands gathered round to listen in awe for they had met their match, story for story. While the rest of us had been acquiring New Zealand expressions such as "Fair dinkum, mate", "Too right", or "Right, right as rain", Pinky had unconsciously influenced his fellow drinkers into using the standard American colloquialisms plus a few of his own quaint inventions. "That's true", one of the New Zealanders would assert after a particularly amazing story, "And", he would add in deference to his

coach, "If it ain't so I'll bite your calf till you bark like a fox", and meanwhile glancing sideways at Pinky for approval, hoping he had used the expression in the approved manner.

Norm and I looked down the bar at a tall rangy man whose face held the rugged look of the out-of-doors. This man was quietly surveying the scene with a faint smile and a strong scotch and soda. He was Larry Rainey, a great hunter, who later took the pilots hunting and became one of our firmest friends. Other hunters gathered round him to exchange blood-curdling stories of hunting wild boar, armed only with knives, and of the dog who would courageously hold the boar by his jaws while the hunter stepped in for the kill, and stories of "tickling" trout, reaching under a bank and stroking trout as if making friends and then the sudden betrayal of jamming fingers into the gills and flicking him onto the bank. One of the hunters pointed down the bar and said, "And there's a man who goes hunting without a gun, or a knife!" We looked down this speaker's shoulder and past his finger and saw a ragged old character with bowed pants and a thousand-year old hat jammed on his head, and I remarked, "Why he looks like an old Tennessee hillbilly."

"He'd have one of your hillbillys done in nothing flat", bragged Bill Barry from behind the bar. "That man you are looking at is the greatest poacher in the world."

"And what's more, he's never been caught", exclaimed another, almost in reverence.

"He's been caught all right, but never convicted", corrected another.

"That's because he's such an accomplished liar" jeered someone. The Greatest Poacher In The World viewed his critics with haughty disdain and we sidled down the bar to establish contact, waiting to hear what he had to say.

"Well, here's what I was huntin' today, he said casually, pulling a live rabbit from inside his coat. "Caught twenty-five of them without firing a shot. Caught them all with this", he added, reaching in his coat again and extricating a live ferret, a weasel-looking pet that peered nervously around the bar. "Here's his mate", the old poacher added, reaching in and pulling out another. It was like a magic show. An amazed drunk staggered up, pulled up a beer and fell down.

"Let him on the floor", he bellowed, "Let's see if he's tame", whereupon The Greatest Poacher In The World put one of his ferrets on the floor. The ferret ran over to the cuspidor, peered into it like a rabbit hole and promptly keeled over beside his drunken admirer. Before he could reach over to pick him up Barry shouted.

"There's a chicken loose from Mrs. McGrath's yard", and like a streak of lightning, out charged the hillbilly, in the meantime extracting a dirty cloth sack from his magic coat. "He never goes anywhere without that sack", explained Barry.

"Always ready for anything", said another. When he returned, chicken in the bag, the drinkers had the ferret revived, and The Greatest Poacher In The World tucked him in his sweater where he promptly keeled over again.

"Give him air", someone advised. So out the back door he went, with Norm and me close on his heels, not wanting to miss the show. We were so full of admiration for a man so adept at his chosen profession that it must have shown on our faces because The Greatest Poacher In The World favored us with special attention.

"See?" he explained, holding his pet ferret up to one of his rabbits, "This'll liven him up a bit." The ferret snatched at the rabbit's throat with needle-like teeth and hung on, shaking furiously. "They'll never let go once they got a hold on him", he explained. "The rabbit knows this and comes running out of his hole when I poke my ferret down



Felix Smith is probably the only man who ever had to have a registered nurse (Cynthia Chen) extract a silver which he acquired eating with wooden chop sticks.

瘋一的史密斯隊長被護士長陳香蓮女士依法泡製

it. Then I spread this net over the hole and catch the rabbit as he comes out", he said, demonstrating with a wide swipe. "And it doesn't cost a cent. Friend of mine makes these nets out of store string. Besides", he winks, "You may be on someone else's property where you're not wanted this doesn't make any noise". He again demonstrated by pushing his huge fist into the net and silently drawing it shut. "There's people round here that best not know your business", he whispered, glancing suspiciously at the pub. "May try to cut into your game, you know". We were proud of his confidence, proud that we had established a firm friendship and were sorry to see him leave, but The Greatest Poacher In The World had more rabbits to sell. "And rabbits aren't all there is to hunt around here", he said, "There's ducks all over the place but the best time to hunt them is out of

season", was his parting advice. "Only a damn fool would hunt them in season—too much competition". Just then Pat Barry, ex-Olympic swimmer shouted out the door.



The New Zealand countryside where CAT pilots did their hunting.

紐西蘭的鄉野也是本隊飛機們的狩獵處

"Hey, you Yanks: Come back in here and meet the horse hunters. Here, you blokes, these fellows hunt wild horses in the Spring!"

It was here that Schwartz could stand it no longer. "Yeah", I added, "We'll never be able to tell these stories again. People back home would never believe us". We started towards the door, Pinky reluctantly in our wake.

"Hey, Pinky", the drinkers shouted, "Come back! Come on back, buddy, and have one for the road". But a disappointed gloom settled as Pinky's many friends detected no sign of hesitation in his following us past the portals of bizarre Barry's pub.

"And that Bill Barry wouldn't even let me buy the house a drink", mumbled Pinky, "Said it was too much money to spend".

"Yeah. Would have cost a buck and a half", said Schwartz.

"If these ain't the best people in the whole world", choked Pinky in deep emotion, "I'll bite your calf till you bark like a fox".

Earlier this year CAT undertook to haul a large amount of freight between the North and South Islands of New Zealand. Known as OPERATION "RAILHEAD" it enabled a number of CAT employees to work in New Zealand and make friends with the people there. It has been a source of pride to CAT to receive many letters from people there who worked with and knew members of CAT's staff. Without exception they have been unstinting in their praise—both of the work performed and goodwill established by CAT's ground and flying crews assigned to the project. The BULLETIN feels that Capt. Smith's story reflects much of the spirit of that goodwill.

Ed



The highlight of the month was the removal of the Hongkong offices from 75D Robinson Road and the PRO office from 15 Kotewall Road to the Embassy Court, Hysan Avenue.....PRO took the lead moving on Oct. 26 as had been in previous cases when CAT offices were moving down from Shanghai to Canton and from Canton to Hongkong. The next day, Oct. 27, truckloads of desks and cabinets began to pour into the modern-designed offices and in no time each department had its allotted space neatly arranged. The main entrance, flanked by the executive offices which have large windows facing the pavement, has an artistic look with big letters "Civil Air Transport" above. The executive offices on the ground floor to the left include President Whiting Willauer, C. E. Laguenx and E-VP J. J. Brennan, while those to the right are occupied by Earle S. Willoughby and Marsh Stayner, VP A. T. Cox, and Treasurer Bob Terhaar. On the two extreme ends of the hallway are the offices of W. C. Donaldson and C. D. Brito, and Saul Marias. Don has also an office at 208 Edinburgh House together with Max Springweiler, Olive King and Diava O'Driscoll. Lillian Chu, who had been ill for several days, came back to work again in the President's office. In the center of the hallway facing the reception room near the main door is a long screen behind which is the Message Center (Joan Lee) and the General Affairs (Andrew Chic). The RSR is on the left wing while the secretaries, Hussain Rumjahn, Alice Gotfried, Edie Barr and Kay Chiang have their desks near the offices of their respective bosses. PND has a separate office next to the RSR.....The air-conditioned basement is occupied by the Treasurer's office and PRO. Ken Brunner and Ed Mitchell share a room, and Sam Tweedie and Henry Feng each have a room for themselves. Others in the general office include: C. B. Tsién (錢起彰), Danny Yang (楊肇英), Carter Chu (朱嘉德), P. H. Chu (朱寶華), C. C. Yang (楊竟成), S. I. Pan (潘宋一), W. J. Chien (錢文傑), Dumas Dunn (鄧樹嵩), J. Rodrigues and W. I. Chu (褚萬鎰).....PRO has its darkroom on the ground floor near the spiral staircase which leads to the basement. On reaching the basement, one will find his head spinning before he gets to his desk. Offices are so spread out that, one day, Henry Feng opened the door of a storeroom thinking that it was the PRO. The telephones of the executive offices are 20654 and 38617 while the Treasurer's office, PRO and the general offices share the number 36279.....Expected back from the States before this issue comes off the press are C.H.

Schildhauer and Bob Terhaar. Marsh Stayner took off for Stateside via Tokyo for a short stay of three weeks to attend to some official business.....The happy date for Geoffrey A. Hardacre was set on November 19th at St. Andrew's Church, Kowloon, where his marriage to the attractive bride, Norma Egginton, was to take place. The 21-year-old nurse—hobby: horse-riding—hails from Coventry, England. She is expected to arrive at Hongkong on Nov. 16. It was her first air-trip and visit to the Far East. Hardy, a Canadian, is now only 23 and he was born in Harrogate, Yorkshire, England. He told the BULLETIN that the place of the honeymoon was a top secret.



Paul Tsai (左) and Hussain Rumjahn in front of the new office.

蔡國英和任高在新辦公室門前

CAT and its agent, the Ta Hing Co. (H.K.) Ltd., gave a cocktail party at the Roof Garden of the Hongkong Hotel on October 30th to celebrate the opening of the Air Booking Office at the St. George's Building, Ice House Street. It was a well attended party with more than 150 guests.

Following the signing of the Sino-Thailand provisional air agreement, CAT made an inaugural flight of its Taipei-Bangkok passenger service through Hongkong on November 4th. CAT invited a party of 10 Chinese newsmen and UP correspondent Art Gould and his wife to accompany the maiden flight from Taipei to Bangkok where they stayed for one week.



PILOT OF THE MONTH

ROBERT CHARLES SNODDY

From printer's devil to CAT pilot is probably the best way to describe the career of Captain Robert C. Snoddy. In fact the company which prints the CAT BULLETIN told Bob he could have a job with them anytime he decided to come down to earth.

Like many another CAT pilot Bob is a Pacific veteran of world war II where he served as a Navy Pilot with the 115th Bombing Squadron of the 7th Fleet. This unit incidently was a B-24 outfit.

It all started when Bob decided to take up flying in 1940 under the Civilian Pilot Training program in his native state of Oregon. While this training was going on Bob found himself in a deferred Selective Service status. This lasted until 1942 when the pinch really began to hurt so when he got bucked back to his draft board he fooled them by hopping up to Seattle and enlisting in the Navy. With his civilian flight training down on the record it wasn't long before Bob was a Naval Aviation Cadet off to Corpus Christi, Texas to let the Navy take up where the CPT program left off. After Corpus Christi Bob was transferred to Navigation School in Hollywood, Florida. When the Navy decided that Ensign Snoddy had learned all they could teach him he found himself a part of the 115th Bombing Sqd. headed for the Pacific.

During 1943 and until November 1944 Bob had a chance to see quite a bit of the Pacific. Bob modestly admits to holding a Naval Air Medal with four stars on its ribbon, a Purple Heart, several battle stars and some other 'lettuce' not worth mentioning. He is also credited with bringing down two Japanese planes. The record also shows that he participated in the Battles of New Guinea, The Soloman Islands, New Georgia and about all the rest of the slam-bangers that took place in the area until the famed Battle of Surigao Straits which pretty much finished off Japan's Imperial Navy.

Between scheduled battles Bob flew anti-sub, anti-shiping and recon patrols leading up to and through the Invasion of Layte.

In November 1944 Bob along with his outfit returned to the States for reassignment. He found himself reassigned to a reorganized 115th and in 1945 the unit returned to the Pacific. It only got as far as Hawaii when the Pacific War ended. Bob remained in service until 1946 when he took his discharge in Hawaii with the rank of Lt. (SG).

Bob was attending Oregon State University majoring in aeronautical engineering when he entered the service. So after spending another year in Hawaii flying co-pilot for Hawaiian Airlines and Trans-Pacific Airline he returned to the States to go back to college. While in Hawaii Bob ferried one of CAT's first planes from Hawaii to China in 1947.

When he returned he enrolled at the University of Washington to continue his aeronautical engineering studies. In 1943 he joined CAT and says that as a pilot with the World's Most Shot At Airline he has been shot at but not hit.

Bob is a native of Roseburg, Oregon where he grew up and went to school. While in High School he worked as a printer's devil and still maintains an interest in the printing trade.

During his Navy tour in Florida Bob and a very charming young lady by the name of Charlotte Dillard who like Bob hails from Roseburg decided that war or no war they should get married so as soon as it could be arranged they were...in Miami.

Today the six foot one, thirty year old Bob and Charlotte make their home in Tokyo where between flights Bob indulges in his favorite hobbies...pix taking and philately.

Lately Bob chalked up a first to his credit. CAT recently sold one of its CESSNAS to the Tokyo Mainichi and Bob piloted it on its first flight under the Mainichi colors.



CAT Captain Robert C. (Bob) Snoddy.
民航隊長史諾第

OUR HISTORY THEN...AND NOW

L. Michael Kandt, General Secretary and Chaplain, Air America Association

Many dictionaries define 'history' as the branch of knowledge that records and analyzes past events. Yet understanding history is also key to understanding the present, and sometimes the future. That is why few students should leave their school years without several courses, or even years, learning American and international history: but few do. Many of us graduate with little exposure to even our own history.

They have been shortchanged. They have missed the joys of discovering the heroic, fascinating, and at times unbelievable stories that comprise the history of our nation. Some of us engaged in these historic events—through our service to the country—yet departed posts without a full understanding of the importance or historical reverberations of those acts.

History is basically the *diary* of mankind, and also of each of us. Some of the pages in that diary include hidden events or activities, kept from the public for various intervals for national security reasons. So early readings of the diary might mystify us as to why certain actions were taken, or others never mentioned, or quite made sense. When these secrets are declassified and now shared, as happening today at this conference, it presents a rare, important opportunity to amend or set right a number of these historic events, especially those previously subject to misinterpretation. Actions take on new meanings, and what seemed like confusing decisions take on a clarity only available to those who have reliable information. Fortunately, with fresh evidence, all the myths or vindictive counter-theories should return to the

ether from which they were created. The newly released additions to the growing documentary evidence provides surprises and also gives us a chance to engage in lively, honest analysis. We have that chance again today.

A benefit of age is a growing understanding of the importance of history, for we've now lived some of it. Even been a part of significant events. Fellow Air America members who served in Asia in the period between 1946 to 1975—and our invited colleagues, guests, and members of the public—if they did not already know, will leave this conference with a greater appreciation for the importance of our efforts



Two C-46 jets.



Left: Allen Pope.
Right: Ed Sims.



abroad. While we can remember what we witnessed, what we were told from eyewitness accounts, and what consequence those events presented to us personally and to our nation's interests, over the years these memories faced different accounts presented in the media. Some reported the same facts which matched our own first-hand experiences; unfortunately, we also encountered others who claimed to present facts but did not. Today, the real history of those days can be etched deeper into the factual record, augmented by the documents and personal accounts being discussed, shown, and released this week.

The symposium focuses on one particular, harrowing event in 1952. The background leading up to it, and actions of those involved, and the long-running saga of post-action events, is living history in its most unsettling and authentic form. It shows that truth is indeed more compelling than fiction. The documentary film we will see is *Extraordinary Fidelity*. It presents a 1952 operation that captures the risk, bravery, betrayal, privations, dedication, and constancy of certain officers doing their jobs, and what traits sustained them in this appropriately titled film that hints at the guiding principles.

The value of understanding the purpose and consequences of this one 'past event' can be instructive to us all—a take-home message, if you will—as we hear about other historic events, and notice that some are surrounded by versions of stories from

news or online outlets, based on rumors and unnamed, questionable sources, with little resting on trustworthy data. Good historians know that rushing to judgment in the absence of facts is a fool's errand.

Extraordinary Fidelity might make one ask "What inspires such selfless dedication and risk-taking?" A recent YouTube segment caught my eye and provides other examples. Jonna Doolittle Hoppes, the granddaughter of Jimmy Doolittle, was speaking at a banquet of the Historical Flight Foundation. She told of her father's famous raid on mainland Japan early in World War II. Doolittle and the military planners knew this strike would be, to put it gently, a 'calculated risk.' They also knew there would be casualties, and success unlikely. Still, the crewmen were not assigned but were volunteers, well-trained, and strongly motivated by Col. Doolittle himself. Multitudes of historians have written about the attack and aftermath. Most describing it as a great victory. An event which gave the American public a needed boost in morale at an important moment for our Pacific Forces after weeks of bad news. A few opined that the cost in lives and material for such a relatively insignificant military outcome was not worth the effort. However the raid did something intangible yet crucial in war—it showed the world the U.S. determination to fearlessly engage and defeat the enemy—despite any risk or bad odds.

In this short video segment, the gracious Ms. Doolittle Hoppes captured the bravery and honor of her father, and also of his crew, and movingly explained why we all recognize them as the war heroes they are.

In the McDermott library at the University of Texas at Dallas, the Doolittle archives share the History of Aviation collection with the archives of Civil Air Transport [CAT] and Air America [AAM]. Included in the Doolittle exhibit is the only Medal of Honor awarded

Jimmy Doolittle which he accepted on behalf of all his crew.

Why do I mention the Doolittle mission? Because in November of 1952, another operation was being planned that also was facing a grave calculated risk. It was deemed sufficiently important that the unfortunate high level of danger did not diminish the need to move the operation ahead. And, unlike Doolittle and his crews, this operation required it be conducted as Top Secret. That meant no public praise for success, and possible anonymous oblivion for failure. Few operations face higher risks and offer so little to a crew heading off on the mission.

Pilots Robert C. Snoddy and Norman A. Schwartz had challenged the fates before and survived, and were ready to roll the dice again. The two young 'customers' who comprised the crew of equipment technicians also were aware of the dangers, but chose to do the job. Brave, dedicated volunteers were they all.

But this was no spy novel. Betrayal and treachery doomed the mission. It took the lives of the brave CAT crew. And the customers—John T. 'Jack' Downey and Richard G. Fecteau—were considered lost, as well. Only after years of being deemed Missing In Action [MIA] but presumed dead, did the Chinese government announce that both men had been captured and incarcerated in China. One could only imagine—or perhaps, better not to—the treatment they endured all those years. As we learn from the documentary, the Chinese eventually released both of them, decades after that 1952 flight when they vanished into the unknown.

In his book *One Day Too Long: Top Secret Site 85 and the Bombing of North Viet-*

nam,¹ Historian Timothy N. Castle writes: "Those who are prepared to forfeit their lives should have no doubt that in the event of their death or capture their families will be treated with compassion and respect."

And so we are here in Dayton, Ohio, almost 60 years later, to witness how the sacred bond Castle describes was, in fact, faithfully honored, and actions taken that upheld the trust and hopes of the fallen. These acts give comfort to those officers today, who are taking many similar risks on behalf of us all, in an era of unprecedented violence and asymmetric warfare.

For those who take these risks, they ask for no medals of honor—given or expected. Stars on a wall will suffice. But the greatest comfort is the expectation of compassion, respect, and loyalty for their families who might be left behind. It is this last concern that occupies thoughts during those perilous final moments when their own lives are out-of-control and rest in the hands of providence.



Schwartz, Bable, Marsh, and Fore Golfers.

¹ Timothy N. Castle, *One Day Too Long: Top Secret Site 85 and the Bombing of North Vietnam*, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1999.

From *China Pilot: Flying for Chiang and Chennault During the Cold War*,² author Felix Smith writes: "Flying the Hump had put me in awe of Mother Nature's ferocity, but her wildest phenomenon is benign compared to human cruelties. And during our brutalities we're tantalized by exhibition of nobility that flash, in those dark hours, like summer lightning."

THE INVENTION OF AIR AMERICA

Also little-known or well understood outside of a few aviation historians are those early 1950s when CAT became an arm of the fledgling Central Intelligence Agency, to assist with covert operations. Nor did many realize CAT played a role in the creation of Air America.

Using CAT facilities, in 1959 the CIA organized another airline to be used for covert missions. It was known as Air America. This carrier was to fulfill the more clandestine flight operations, particularly in Southeast Asia [SEA]. Air America ob-

tained both fixed-wing and rotor-wing aircraft more appropriate to the mission and terrain. The history of this group, based on material available at the time, has appeared in numerous books and articles published by responsible historians, careful in their sourcing, using well-documented facts. Unfortunately, there were others—historians, writers, journalists, and movie directors—more interested in sensationalism, book and movie sales, and the attention that comes from exposés. Unencumbered by facts, they built pseudo-histories out of innuendo, rumor, gossip, and underpinned on occasion by malicious intent, skewing the record and honor of those who had served in covert operations. Because of remaining classified aspects of the programs at that time, it left a vacuum and little fear of their fictions being countered by the truth, and these bogus histories festered and expanded—taking root and misinforming the public. In more recent years, the truth arrived from several declassification releases which proved the rumormongers, dodgy scholars, and writers wrong.

These latter 'scholars' have sought—wittingly or not—to distort Air America's role in providing U.S. government aviation support in SEA. Alfred W. McCoy in his book *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade, Afghanistan, Southeast Asia, Central America*³ is one extraordinary example of a young graduate student coming to Laos with a pet theory and agenda, cherry-picking whatever stories could be goosed-up to support an already preselected finding and conclusion. And most of it wrong but ideal for one seeking to create a firestorm of public interest, book sales, interviews, and



Thomas Sailer.

³ Alfred W. McCoy, Cathleen B. Read, Leonard P. Adams II, *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade, Afghanistan, Southeast Asia, Central America*, New York, NY: Harper Row, 1972.

² Felix Smith, *China Pilot: Flying for Chiang and Chennault During the Cold War*, Washington, DC: Brassey's, 1995.

misplaced outrage. It also influenced a movie, twisting it from fact into fiction.

Another writer who wrote perhaps the most well-known history of Air America was Christopher Robbins. In the book *Air America: From WWII to Vietnam: The Explosive True Story of the CIA's Secret Airline*,⁴ Robbins told a honest story, with many anecdotes elicited from frank talks with pilots, occasionally conducted in bars in Vientiane and Bangkok. Many of those boozy tales may have been only loosely accurate. Robbins writes in the prologue to his revised edition of *Air America*:

"In many ways, the secret world of Air America depicted here has come to seem as remote as the battles of the ancients. But it should not be allowed to be forgotten. In the circumstances, and until a more comprehensive book comes along, it is a privilege to bring the activities of this band of brave men to new readers, in the certain knowledge that a chronicle of genuine courage never truly dates."

Unfortunately, Hollywood decided to use Mr. Robbins theme about Air America and developed, produced, and distributed a 1990 film *Air America* with Mel Gibson and Robert Downey Jr. The film was an impressive flop, going from a supposed distorted, fictional political sting plot, into one that was a weak, unamusing buddy-action-comedy failure. Those interested in reading Robbins' assessment of the misbegotten film based on his book should turn to his chapter fourteen: "*Air America, the Movie.*"



Left: Paul Holden.
Right: Wallace Buford.



It tells all any intelligent truth-seeker needs to know about the film, Hollywood as historians, and how paranoid the film industry can be [could it be their fondness for cocaine?]. Thanks again Mr. Robbins.

Historian Don A. Schanche wrote about "The Adventures of a Peaceful Man in a Small War" in *Mister Pop*⁵ a well-written biography of Edgar 'Pop' Buell a gentle Indiana farmer. Everyone who ever landed at Sam Thong (LS20) be it by Helio, Porter, Caribou, or if you were very brave in a C-123, knew 'Pop' Buell.

Everyone in Lao knew him or of him, including the enemy who offered a high reward for his capture. His great work with the Lao Hmong was deeply respected. In the preface of Schanche's book, author John Steinbeck, in Laos at the time, wrote:

"I think Pop is an example of how the ancient gods were born and preserved in the minds and graven images of people all over the world. Remember, the story invariable goes—in olden times the people did not live

⁴ Christopher Robbins books on Air America have appeared in numerous editions. They are: *Air America* (Corgi, 1988); *Air America: The Story of the CIA's Secret Airlines* (Hardcover - Jan 1, 1978); *Air America: From WWII to Vietnam: The Explosive True Story of the CIA's Secret Airline* (Paperback - Jan 15, 1988); *Air America: The True Story of the C.I.A.'s Mercenary Flyers in Covert Operations from Pre-war China to Present Day Nicaragua* (Jan 1991) Corgi; New Ed edition (January 1991); *Air America From World War II to Vietnam* (Paperback - 2003).

⁵ Don A. Schanche. *Mister Pop: The Adventures of a Peaceful Man In A Small War - The Inside Story of the American Involvement in Laos*. New York: David McKay, 1970.

well as they do now and they practiced abominations.

Then a stranger appeared and he taught us to use the plow and how to sow and how to harvest. He brought us writing so we could keep records. And he gave us healing medicines to make us healthy, and he gave us pride so we would not be afraid and, when we had learned these things, he went away. He was translated. That is his figure there, carved in limestone.

Well, I don't think Pop is likely to be taken up in a sweet chariot even if he had the time or the inclination, but that ancient story is Pop Buell's story. Whether you believe it or not, there are still giants in the earth."

—John Steinbeck, *Laos, April 1967*

Pop was not a historian, had little concern over what was said or written about him; however, his right-hand man of many years was a Lao former Buddhist Monk, Thongsar Boupha, with different sensitivities and an understanding that bad history needs to be countered with the truth—sooner than later. While Boupha may not have been a historian either, he was a philosopher and poet. Schanche recorded some of Thongsar's philosophic understandings about Buell and others, at the beginning of each chapter of his book.

Thongsar's writings might inspire current historians:

As my Lord Buddha said, "the more you know the more you do right; the more you understand well, the more you can give and explain much to others; the more you practice, the more you get the experience in your knowledge."

— *The Letters of Thongsar Boupha*

And this gem:

Telling the truth; the truth never die, never be rotten, never be broken and never spoil your feelings and thinkings, but the truth makes you believe and finish in what you are wishing and interesting to do.

— From *Answering and Telling Generally Questions* by *Thongsar Boupha*

In his own way he has captured the essence of what is conveyed in the biblical quote on the entrance hall of the modern CIA:

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

— *John 8/32, King James Bible*

The story of Pop Buell is an essential part of the history of Air America. It was because of this man and many others, that the people of Air America felt that what was being accomplished for our U.S. Government customers as well as the Lao people was important and worth the effort. Pilots and mechanics recognized that they could go back to the U.S. and get far better paying jobs with several air carriers, and avoid the danger and hostile flying conditions. Some made that choice, but the majority stayed and flew for guys like Pop and the other respected customers many knew only by their radio call signs.

Flying in Vietnam was quite different for the Air America crews, primarily because of the navigation facilities and the abundance of airfields throughout the four military regions. Also because of the military flight operations in-country, there were more assets for Search and Rescue and cover fire in certain areas were available. Nonetheless, Air America aircraft were subject to the same hazardous weather phenomena and the same potential for

ground fire, even shoulder-fired heat-seeking missiles.

Lao operations in the north and south provided its own somewhat different set of challenges. Historians have recorded a thousand stories from a multitude of different perspectives to detail what certainly is among the most unusual aviation activity ever known.

I thought it would be interesting to know how some Air America passengers might contribute to this history. Once again from the wise and observant Lao philosopher Thongsar Boupha:

Where is our office? On the high fearful air. We are working on the air because when we got a ride in the planes, from the first start of the plane's take-off and until the plane lands down on the ground, I myself always fixed out and think much about the dangerous mountains and valleys that how I could get out from the planes when the planes are bad shot and cracked down.

Sometimes I and Tan Pop and the other fellows have been got a shot and bad hit right to the center of our plane, or sometimes the bullets did hit our plane behind our seat, in front and back, by the group of enemies; but we said that the enemies did play a big trick, and we always said Bopinyan (no matter, never mind), because everything in this world is a possible, there will be nothing to be the act permanent, excepted our goodness, kindness, gratefulness and sincerity at this present only.

— From *Answering and Telling Generally Questions by Thongsar Boupha*

Much of this history—the telling of these extraordinary events—of CAT and Air America centers on the pilots and flight crews. To me, this is as it should be. These are the folks who took the greatest risks, and would have paid—or did pay—the ultimate price, and deserve the highest level of recognition. Those of us who 'flew desks,' counted beans, bent wrenches, ordered-and stocked parts *before* they were needed, and even provided the cold beer and clean sheets the crews needed to be ready for the many days spent facing unfriendly skies, are comfortable with the reflected recognition from those doing the main mission up in the sky. This, too, is as it should be. But was the recognition and appreciation as fleeting as it sounds? Even more important to any flight crew, as mentioned before, is the love and support of their families. Too often, the stark lives that befell the wives and children of lost pilot or crew only came fleetingly before us when their husbands first were lost. Their stories and own struggles to move on, in later years, sometimes has been forgotten. But not by us.

The Air America Association was never meant to be a support group. But the or-



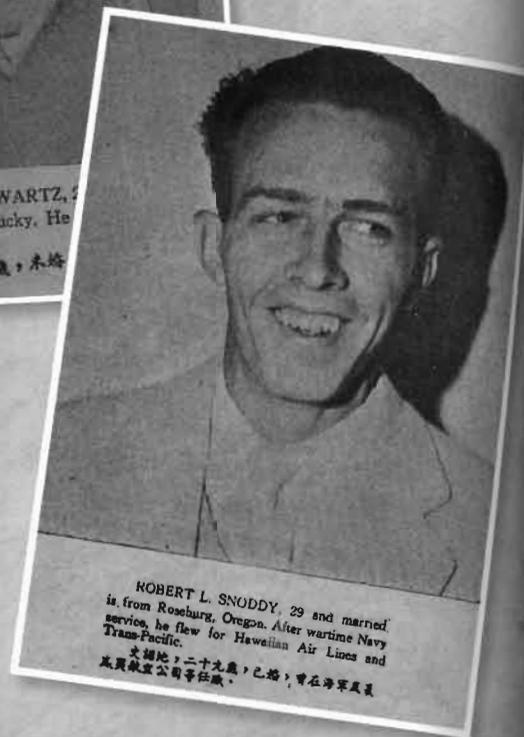
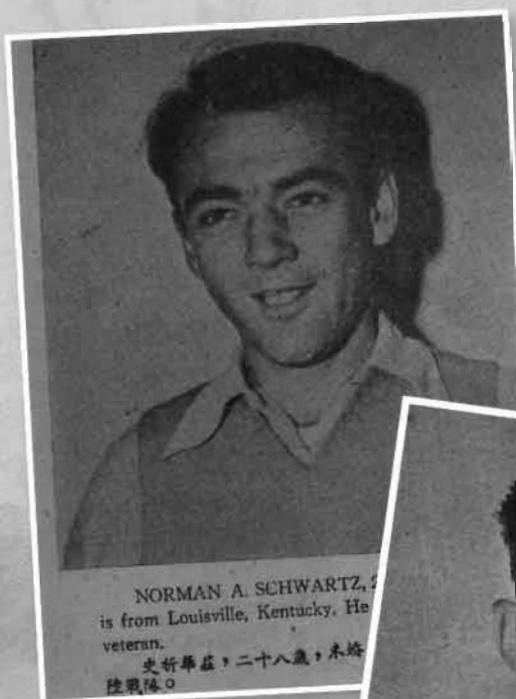
Wells, Snoddy, and Hughes.

ganization has a profound soul and sacred mission that drives us to keep track of the families, invite them to reunions, and celebrate the memory of those who have gone before. It is a way of paying respect and reminding all that we have never forgotten their sacrifices, just as we now will not forget the sacrifices of Snoddy, Schwartz, Downey and Fecteau from *Extraordinary Fidelity*. As we grow older, these relationships, and our shared roles in history, become more important than ever.

As Chaplain of the association, it might seem appropriate that I close this article with some religious references. But I do not think prayer or poetry appropriate during the short reunion memorial services. Rather, I urge each person, during a moment of silence, provide their own religious perspective and pay homage to all those who sacrificed from the beginning, up to this most recent list of those who have passed on. And their families. We owe them that, and so much more.

Recorded history of those war years is still being studied. Some historians have provided very different analyses about these events. Mark Moyer in his book *Triumph Forsaken: The Vietnam War, 1954-1965*⁶ is an example. As is *From Enemy to Friend: A North Vietnamese Perspective on the War* by Bui Tin.⁷ I recommend both. Much is being revised in light of more intelligent and truthful consider-

ation. It is worthwhile to keep up with the current writings, for most of you will feel better from these newer accounts, about why we were involved in what was an important, righteous, meaningful endeavor to help our fellow humans keep and maintain their freedoms. Little human activity is better than that. Ask anyone who suddenly gains freedom. Just a thought.



⁶ Mark Moyer, *Triumph Forsaken: The Vietnam War, 1954-1965*, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

⁷ Bui Tin, *From Enemy to Friend: A North Vietnamese Perspective on the War*, Annapolis, Md: US Naval Institute Press, 2002.

~~SECRET~~

DD/A Registry HR70-14

File *Air America*

DD/A 75

Executive Registry

75-

9 October 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Air America, Incorporated

Sir:

1. Mr. Blake asked me to advise you of the following information. Air America, Incorporated has received an offer of \$3,850,000 from an aircraft broker, OMNI Aircraft, for all of its aircraft and parts. There are 24 aircraft involved--three Caribous, one Twin Otter, two C-46's, eight Volpars, nine Bell Helicopter 204's, and one Bell Helicopter 205--with a company book value of \$763,000. The aircraft parts have a book value of \$2,268,000 for a total book value of aircraft and parts of \$3,031,000. Air America, Inc. estimates the value of aircraft and parts to be between 3.7 and 4.1 million dollars. OMNI Aircraft is a reputable firm with a good credit rating and Air America, Inc. has done business with it before.

2. According to Mr. John Warner, such a sale is legally permissible. We think it is in the best interest of the U.S. Government and Air America, Inc. to complete the sale for the following reasons:

a. It is a quick disposal of the remainder of the company flying assets.

b. Funds from such a sale are required to meet pending claims against Air America, Inc..

c. The sale is an extension of our prior action in selling aircraft and parts and will complete that phase of the dissolution process.

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: 04-May-2009

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d. We believe the price is acceptable.

3. Unless you disagree, we plan to take the following action:

a. Obtain an independent evaluation from a recognized expert in the aircraft field.

b. Arrange to ^{pre-}brief the Oversight Committees in the Senate and House on the transaction.

c. Arrange to brief the Office of Management and Budget and the General Services Administration on our intention in this matter.

d. Be prepared to discuss the matter with the General Accounting Office, if so requested by the Oversight Committees.

e. Mr. Paul Velte will discuss the offer with OMNI Aircraft so as to keep the offer open and to refine the terms of the sale.

Air Advisor, DD/A

Distribution:

Original - DCI
1 - DDCI
1 - ER
1 - General Counsel
1 - Legislative Counsel

OK

WFC
10/9/75

2
~~SECRET~~

CONFIRMATION

DATE: November 6, 1946
FROM: Col. R. H. Wise, Shanghai
TO: Mrs. R. H. Wise, 73 Westcott Road, Princeton, New Jersey
METHOD: Secret Code

DO YOU OR SYKES KNOW SOMEBODY TO LEND ME FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS IMMEDIATELY
OR AS MUCH THEREOF AS POSSIBLE WITHOUT SECURITY BUT ON MY JUDGMENT AN BELIEF
THAT THEY WILL BE REPAID SEVENTY FIVE THOUSAND WITHIN EIGHTEEN MONTHS.
THAT IS THIRTY THREE PERCENT INTEREST AND A PROFIT WORTH TAKING A CHANCE TO
MAKE. PLEASE CABLE LOVE

RICK

APPROVED
FOR RELEASE
DATE:
29-Sep-2009

CONFIRMATION

DATE: November 13, 1946
FROM: Mrs. R H Wise,
TO: Col. Wise, Shanghai, China
METHOD: DLT

Wise care Clavel-

h h T

SORRY DISAPPOINT YOU DONT HAVE MONEY AVAILABLE INVESTMENT NOR KNOW ANYONE
SUGGEST THIS STOP STRONGLY ADVISE YOU NOT INVEST NEW YORK FUNDS UNTIL
LETTERS GIVING DETAILS YOUR FINANCES REACH YOU GOOD LUCK LOVE MOTHER

2-72

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: 17-Dec-2009

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

Embassy of the Philippines
Saigon

12 May 1975

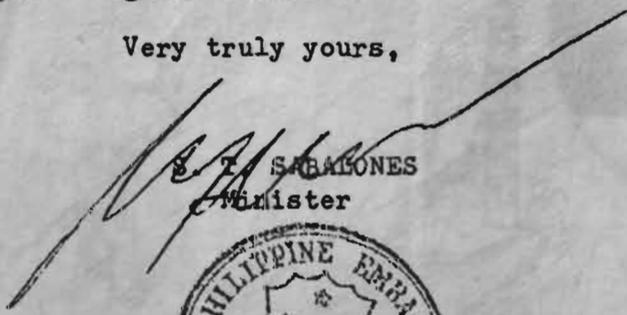
The President
Air America, Inc.
1725 K. St. Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20006, U.S.A.

S i r :

I take great pleasure in commending the outstanding cooperation extended by the Filipino personnel of your Saigon Office shown in the enclosed list to the undersigned and the members of the Philippine Embassy Evacuation Team which made the evacuation of the over 1,200 Filipino nationals and their dependents from Vung Tau, South Vietnam possible. The said Filipinos continuously flew their helicopters over the evacuation camps for several days to see that everything is alright with the evacuees and they finally offered the use of their helicopters in airlifting around 500 evacuees from the evacuation camp to the "RPS MISAMIS ORIENTAL" when the evacuation team encountered extreme difficulties with the local officials of Vung Tau.

Particular mention is made of the Chief Pilot of Air America who unselfishly offered his services to the evacuation team in supervising the airlift.

Very truly yours,


T. S. BALONES
Minister

Enclosure:
As stated

APPROVED FOR
RELEASE DATE:
21-Oct-2009



AGENCY FILE

4
7061

AIR AMERICA PILOT

Assumption:

UH-34 Helicopter pilot, 2 year's service with Air America, flying 90 hours per month for 11 months with one month in leave status, stationed in Udorn, all flying performed in daylight, no deadhead flying:

Basic pay	-	\$2,005.20
Project pay	-	1,123.88
Station allowance	-	230.00
Longevity	-	77.40
		<u>\$3,436.48</u> per month or \$39,998.88 per year (5)

Fringe Benefits

- Travel and transportation (1)
- Reduced travel fares on leave
- Dependent: schooling allowance (2)
- Life insurance (3)
- Hospitalization insurance (4)
- Retirement plan (full vestiture after 15 years of service)

- (1) One free (reduced fare) round trip per year for self & family to home of record in U.S.
- (2) Up to 75% or \$1500 per year
- (3) \$25,000 at no cost to pilot
- (4) Company provided for pilot only
- (5) Includes vacation period pay - average of previous 11 month's base pay, plus longevity and 1/2 of one month's station allowance

APPROVED FOR
RELEASE DATE:
24-Sep-2009

18 FEB 1971

in the Orient...

fly



to Philippines



THE MANDARIN JET

Seoul · Tokyo · Osaka · Okinawa · Taipei · Hongkong · Manila · Bangkok

Some cities in the Philippines
require a passport & tourist visa

ILLUSTRATION BY M. FRANK WOLFF

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UTD The University of Texas at Dallas

McDermott Library

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS MCDERMOTT LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS



隊運空航民



Vertical Chinese text on the right edge of the page, likely a library accession or identification number.

JOHN F. KENNEDY
11TH DIST., MASSACHUSETTS

COMMITTEES:
EDUCATION AND LABOR
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.
January 16, 1952

Mr. C. Joseph Rosbert
Director of Operations
Civil Air Transport
Taipei, Formosa

Dear Mr. Rosbert:

This is just a note to let you know that I am most grateful to you for your kindness and cooperation extended to me, and to my sister and brother when we were recently in the Far East.

I know that, without your intervention, it would have been most difficult for us to have obtained a plane. For that reason, and because you were so willing to lend a helping hand, we are all most appreciative.

With kindest personal regards, I am,

Sincerely,

John Kennedy

Many, many thanks



via Tokyo. My brother was really quite sick but is past the danger point, though he is now in the hospital up in Boston. A little rest and I'm sure he will be alright again.

I hope that some day some how we will be able to repay your kindness.

Sincerely yours

Bob Kennedy

R.F.K. Nov 15

Dear Mr. Robert,

I wanted to write and repeat our thanks for your great helpfulness and kindness to my sister and me when we were attempting to get over to Okinawa. We were very grateful at the time and shall always remain so.

The three of us returned to the United States last weekend

Taipei, Taiwan

3 September 1956

Mr. Aristotle Onassis
Technical & Aeronautical Exploitations Co. Ltd.
12, Merlin Street
Athens, Greece

Dear Mr. Onassis:

The recent news that you are going to operate the Greek airline, Technical & Aeronautical Exploitations Co. Ltd., is of great interest not only to the world aviation industry but also to me.

You might ask: Why is such news of any particular interest to someone way out there in the Far East?

Before answering that question I would like to take a few minutes to tell you about Civil Air Transport. This ten-million-dollar airline (US\$10,000,000) has thirty aircraft (3 Douglas Skymaster DC-4's, 20 Curtiss Commando C-46's, 5 Douglas DC-3's, and 2 Consolidated Catalina PB4 amphibians) and covers the Far East with an airline and maintenance operation second to none within this area. Charter operations reach all parts of the world.

This was all started ten years ago by General C. L. Chennault of Flying Tiger fame. At that time China had two large airlines, but there was little or no surface communication. United Nations relief supplies were not moving to the inland areas where they were needed most. CAT was formed to take on this challenging task. Needless to say, the job was done, and so well that the Chinese Government granted a continuing franchise.

History was made with CAT covering the vast areas of China, especially when the Chinese Communists aided by the Russian Reds started to move down through the mainland. City after city was evacuated. CAT, in addition to the airline job to be done, was forced to move its main base of operations six times! Finally, at the end of 1949, we arrived on Formosa, the only remaining flag carrier of Free China because the other two airlines, infiltrated and weakened by the Communists, defected to the enemy.