



Air America C-123



Air America Pilatus PC-6B Porter

**CAT**



### The CAT/Air America Archive

In 1987, the CAT Association and the Air America Association designated the History of Aviation Collection at the University of Texas at Dallas as their official archive. The CAT/Air America Archive at the University of Texas at Dallas is the only resource of its kind in the world. Hundreds of personal paper and manuscript collections are held in the Archive ranging from pilots and ground crew to corporate officials. The Archive also holds the CIA Corporate Records. More than 400 archival boxes of processed materials including correspondence, legal briefs, logbooks, maintenance records, accident investigations, government documents, corporate records, photographs, audio and video tape, and film make up this diverse collection. Chronologically, the holdings cover the origin of CAT in China to Air America's evacuation of South Vietnam in 1975.

### The History of Aviation Collection

The University of Texas at Dallas houses a unique resource of aeronautical history known as the History of Aviation Collection (HAC). Located on the third floor of the Eugene McDermott Library in the Special Collections Department, the core of the History of Aviation Collection consists of four large main collections: the CAT/Air America Archive, the George Williams World War I Aviation Library, the Admiral Charles E. Rosendahl Lighter-Than-Air Collection, and the General James H. Doolittle Collection. The HAC also holds several hundred individual collections ranging from aviation pioneer Omar Locklear to commercial aviation. In addition, the History Aviation Collection includes an aeronautical library of over 50,000 books, magazines, and newspapers.

### The CAT/Air America Archive: The Future

The history of CAT/Air America must be preserved for future generations. The historic events in which CAT and Air America employees played a role are key to understanding the history of the United States in the post-1945 period. Since 1987 the History of Aviation Collection at the University of Texas at Dallas has collected and preserved documents that explain the CAT/Air America story. Materials safeguarded in the Archive have been used by historians and researchers to write books and produce documentaries on the CAT/Air America experience. The archival staff at the History of Aviation Collection encourages the donation of any CAT and Air America related materials: correspondence, diaries, logbooks, documents, photographs, film and the like to the CAT/Air America Archive.

Over the years, members of the Air America Association and the CAT Association have been generous in their financial support of the Archive. Currently the CAT/Air America Archive supports several endeavors: the CAT Oral History Project and the CAT/Air America Photograph and Film Project. To contribute funds to the CAT/Air America Archive or any of the above projects please send your tax-deductible donation to the following address.

Special Collections Department  
P.O. Box 830643  
Eugene McDermott Library  
Richardson, Texas 75083-0643  
phone: (972) 883-2570  
fax: (972) 883-4590

<http://www.utdallas.edu/library/special/cataa.html>

# THE CAT / AIR AMERICA ARCHIVE



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS  
HISTORY OF AVIATION COLLECTION





CAT Pilots

## The History of CAT/Air America

Civil Air Transport (CAT) was a unique airline formed after World War II in China by General Claire L. Chennault and Whiting Willauer. The history of CAT is marked by adventure and international intrigue. Using surplus aircraft from the war, in 1946 CAT began to airlift supplies and food into war-ravaged China. During the Chinese Civil War, under contract with the Chinese Nationalist government and later the Central Intelligence Agency, CAT flew supplies and ammunition into China to assist the Chinese Nationalist forces on the Chinese mainland. With the defeat of the Nationalists in 1949, CAT helped to evacuate thousands of Chinese by air to the island of Taiwan.

In 1950 the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) bought the airline to use in clandestine missions to fight communism in Asia. CAT continued to fly scheduled passenger flights while simultaneously using other aircraft in its fleet to fly covert missions. During the Korean War, CAT airlifted thousands of tons of war materials to supply United States military operations. In 1954 CAT aircrews airdropped supplies to the French at Dien Bien Phu in Indochina. Throughout the 1950s CAT flew this fascinating combination of scheduled commercial flights and clandestine missions.

With the spread of communism throughout Southeast Asia, CAT's mission changed. In 1959 CAT was renamed Air America. Under the new corporate name, (though CAT continued to fly scheduled passenger flights out of Taiwan), Air America flew all other type of air operations in Laos and South Vietnam. Operating in mountainous terrain, Air America crews flew with skill and courage in supplying the anti-communist forces



The CAT/Air America Memorial Plaque

in Southeast Asia. Air America flew a variety of fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters because of the region's unforgiving topography. Missions included airdropping thousands of tons of food, evacuating civilians, rescuing downed U.S. aircrews, and emergency medical evacuations. In 1975, Air America helicopter crews helped to evacuate Americans and South Vietnamese from South Vietnam during the fall of the country. In 1976, Air America's twenty-six year tenure as the CIA's airline came to a close. The CAT/Air America experience is unparalleled in commercial aviation history. More than two hundred and forty civilian CAT and Air America employees gave their lives in Asia from 1946 to 1975.

## The CAT/Air America Memorial Plaque

The CAT Association and the Air America Association selected the Special Collections Department of the Eugene McDermott Library at the University of Texas at Dallas to display the CAT/Air America

Memorial Plaque. The CAT/Air America Memorial Plaque was designed and paid for by funds from the memberships of both the CAT Association and the Air America Association. In 1987, the CAT and Air America Memorial Plaque was dedicated during a solemn service. The plaque stands as a memorial to the sacrifices made by CAT/Air America personnel during the Cold and Vietnam wars. Each year dozens of family members and friends visit the plaque to honor the memory of those who died in the defense of freedom.



CAT Convair 880 Mandarin Jet