



General Claire L. Chennault quietly reads his morning newspaper, sitting in a special chair installed for him in a C-47 making CAT's inaugural flight from Shanghai to Canton. Pilot is Captain Frank Hughes, Co-Pilot is First Officer Doug Smith. Date, January 31, 1947.

CIVIL AIR TRANSPORT AS A SCHEDULED AIRLINE

The end of World War II provided the pause necessary to comprehend the need for the rehabilitation and restoration of war-torn, and war-weary China. America recognized her old friend's plight and began channeling funds and vital supplies of UNRRA, through its counterpart, the Chinese National Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, CNRRA.

It became apparent immediately that if these goods were to reach the areas ~~in~~ ^{where} ~~which~~ they were most needed, some modern method of transportation was essential, not only to move the imported relief and rehabilitation supplies inland from the major port cities, but to move the raw products of the interior to ~~the~~ industrial cities for processing or to ~~the~~ port cities for export.

CNRRA was divided into four major departments: Finance, Allocation, Transport and Warehouse, and Relief and Welfare. The Transport and Warehouse section already had two transportation arms; the CNRRA Highway Transport, ^(CHT) which was concerned with the utilization of the many trucks being imported, and the CNRRA Water Transport, ^(CWT) under whose administration were several ^(Landing Strips) LSTs and barges. It was only natural that some officials ^{were sympathetic to} sympathized with the possibilities of air transportation and began the ^{search} search for ways and means to make such sympathy a reality.

At this point General Claire L. Chennault came on the scene. The General had been in China since May 31, 1937 as Senior American Aviation Adviser to the Secretary (Madame Chiang Kai-shek) of the Commission on Aeronautical Affairs; the General's position was actually that of Chief of Staff ^{of} for the Chinese Air Force, a position he held with the approval of President Roosevelt, even after the formation of the ^{HVG} (American Volunteer Group) in July, 1941. After April, 1942, when

he was recalled to active duty with the U.S. Army Air Corps, the General dropped the title of Senior Adviser but continued as ^{Chief of Staff} ~~Commander-in-Chief~~ of the Chinese Air Force as well as being Commander of the 14th Army Air Force.

With his wealth of knowledge concerning aviation matters in China, the General had long before recognized that air transportation was the major answer to China's transportation problems. Complementing him on the business and administrative side of a proposed airline company was his partner, Mr. Whiting Willauer, whom the General met while Mr. Willauer was serving as Administrator for China of the U.S. Federal Economic Administration. Together they laid out a plan for an airline and began to discuss details with CNRRA and UNRRA officials.

There was considerable opposition from existing airlines. ~~The~~ China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC) and ~~the~~ Civil Air Transport Corporation (CATC), both of whom subsequently defected to the Communists in November 1949, opposed the licensing of another airline. However, CNRRA officials were already con-

vinced they must have an ironclad contract with an air carrier which would give them first priority in the use of ^{its} planes, ^{that conviction, underscored by} and a couple of famines ~~that could~~ ^{whose} have been lessened, had sufficient aircraft in capable hands been available, brought the arguments to a close and ^{an} ~~the~~ agreement was negotiated ^{with General Chennault and Mr. Willauer.}

The most important clause of the contract was ^{one} ~~that~~ giving CNRRA first call at all ^{on the new airline} times. CNRRA agreed to send capacity loads from the coastal areas inland and could, if it so desired, send capacity loads out from the interior. However, recognizing the fact that loads coming out of the interior would ^{always} not be ^{aircraft} nearly as great as those going in, it was agreed that if CNRRA did not ask for space such space could be filled by CAT as a common carrier.

Once the terms were agreed, the documents were drawn up and, on October 25, 1946,

in the Shanghai office of CNRRA's Director General, P.S. Ho, the agreement was formalized. Appropriately, the company was named the China National Relief & Rehabilitation Air Transport. Thereafter, the Transportation and Warehouse department of CNRRA had a "CAT" to complement its "CHT" and "CWT" of its land and water transportation facilities.

The agreement provided that CAT should have twelve planes consisting in part of C-47s and in part of C-46s, in such proportions as to permit the most effective type of operation. Obviously it was necessary to have a greater number if "continuous" operations were to be assured. It ~~(therefore was)~~ decided to acquire a total of ^(operational) nineteen aircraft ~~for flight~~ — five C-47s and fourteen C-46s.

CAT acquired five C-47s, all ^(operational) ~~for flight~~, and seventeen C-46s, of which fourteen were ^(operational) ~~for flight~~ and three ^(were) for cannibalization, i.e. salvage for spare parts.

However, because of damage and condemnation, the number of ^(operational) C-47s was reduced by two and it was agreed by all parties concerned that one of the C-46s intended for cannibalization should be reserved ^(operational use) ~~for flight~~.

Thus, CAT, started with a total of ^(operational) eighteen aircraft for flight, three C-47s and fifteen C-46s.

These planes were purchased from war surplus stocks in the Pacific, mostly in the Philippines and Hawaii; the same applied to ~~the~~ twenty-five additional C-46s acquired later in the Philippines for spare parts salvage to keep the original planes in operation.

^(airline) Initial operations were financed by the personal funds of General Chennault and Mr. Willauer and ^{by} ~~from~~ an eighteen month ⁱⁿ loan from UNRRA-CNRRA equal respectively to US\$1-million and US\$100,000 which, with interest, was paid in full at the end of ^{one} ~~the first~~ year.

Foreign exchange was the gravest financial problem facing CAT on the mainland, although CAT's needs represented only thirteen percent of the foreign exchange value of CAT's services to China -- thirteen percent of the amounts by which CAT's operations enhanced China's own foreign exchange position.

The first CAT office was opened at 12, the Bund, Shanghai; initially there were several temporary offices nearby housing various departments. The head office was moved to 17, the Bund, August 15, 1947, bringing the various scattered offices together. Flight operations were conducted from Hungjao ~~airfield~~, ^{Haiwan} Shanghai.

The intricacies of an airline, even one with only a handful of planes, are difficult for the uninitiated to grasp. Maintenance, refueling, communications, warehouse, weather, medical, accounting, and many other little-known departments are essential to keep aircraft in operation. Therefore, even before the first plane arrived there were 87 employees working out of the head office.

The first aircraft, three of the original five C-47s, arrived from Manila at ~~Shanghai~~ Hungjao airport after a stop at Lungwa on January 26, 1947.* From that time on ^{with military cargo planes} the planes ~~came in~~ more from the Philippines and some from Hawaii.

**Civil Air Transport's first flight as a commercial airline took place at 0930 on January 30, 1947 when a CAT C-46, Number 404, took off from ~~Shanghai's~~ ^{Shanghai's} Hungjao ~~airfield~~ ^{airport} for Canton to inaugurate CAT's commercial service. Loaded with fourteen ~~employees of CAT and of the Chinese Relief and Rehabilitation Administration,~~ ^(employees) and with a cargo of medicine and relief supplies, the plane was flown by CAT pilots, Captain Frank Hughes and Co-pilot Doug Smith. The passengers included General Claire L. Chennault, Mr. Clyde A. Farnsworth, Public Relations Officer, and his assistant Miss Anna Chen, who later married General Chennault, and Colonel P.Y. Shu, the General's long-time "good right hand."*

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AIR ASIA

Date:

To: Jaseul B

Therefore, Vice President Whiting Willauer decided to discuss the matter of maintaining CHT aircraft with Hong Kong Airways, located at Kai Tak Airport, Hong Kong.

On February 5, Mr. Willauer and ~~flight~~ crew flew to Hong Kong for these talks. They arrived in Hong Kong without incident, but the February 7th take-off was almost identical with the January 29th take-off from Shanghai. Low hanging clouds caused icing and, 45 minutes out of Hong Kong, it was decided to turn back.

* Supply sources in Tainan say: ". . . On 18 December, 1946, CAT's first three C-47 aircraft arrived at Shanghai from Manila with supplies and equipment."

** In a different issue of the CAT Bulletin appears this contradictory report of CAT's inaugural flight.

took place on
"The inaugural flight ~~was~~ January 31, 1947, when one of the original C-47s, carrying a jeep, relief supplies — and General Chennault, flew from Shanghai to Canton. On February 2nd, flights began in earnest, the first being ^{the carriage of} 19,000 pounds of medicines and drugs from Canton to Liuchow to prevent the spread of an epidemic."

"CAT was in business."

Insert "A"
~~The inaugural flight was scheduled to have arrived at Canton a day earlier but ~~the~~ original CAT planes, which had been surplused by the U. S. Air Force after performing yeoman service in the tropical clime^s of the South Pacific, were not fitted with de-icing^{er} boots and, 75 miles out of Shanghai after the January 29th take-off, the C-46 was forced to turn back because of heavy icing. The General recounts that Captain Hughes gave him a few bad minutes by flying low along the hill-bounded valleys while trying to lose the ice, but otherwise the abortive trip was uneventful.~~

"Seated just behind the pilot and ahead of the voltage regulators, on a chair brought along especially for this flight, General Chennault was flying over ~~the~~ terrain he had come to know so intimately during his many years in China, but he still recalls ^{ed} a part of the route, particularly around Kweilin, as some of the roughest terrain in the world.

"The first leg of the inaugural flight to Canton on January 30 was made without ~~further~~ mishap."

Insert "A"

AIR ASIA

Date:

To: *London*

*Director, The Board of Whiting
Williams decided to discuss the matter
of manifesting in the aircraft
of the Hong Kong Airways, located
at Mac Tao Airport, Hong Kong.*

*On February 5, 1954, Williams
and [unclear] flew Macao-Hong Kong
by the latter's aircraft.
Hong Kong without incident, but the
February 10, 1954, flight was
identical with the same flight
taken off from [unclear] Hong Kong.
clouds [unclear] out of [unclear]
turn back.*

(C-116)
On February 2nd (No. 404, having been joined by two other CAT planes loaded with a jeep, medicine and relief cargo, took off for Kweilin, via Liuchow, where the General and his party were greeted by Governor S.C. Wang, who was their host for the night; the flight crew members were guests of Monsignor John Romaniello, Maryknoll Prefect Apostolic of Kweilin and a long-time friend of the Flying Tigers, of the 14th Air Force and of CAT.

Governor Wang was ready for his visitors, having just completed a new guest house. Unfortunately, it was not "winterized" and the cold blasts of air numbed the guests, who were further chilled during trips to the bathroom, hygienically located a hundred shivery ^{ung} faces from the house.

On February 3rd, when departing for Canton, the passengers and crew alike had a nightmarish thrill in taking-off from the Kweilin field. The runway, still pockmarked by World War II bombings, ^{stretching} ~~and stretching~~ between deep craters on one side and grease-like clay on the other, was difficult to negotiate ^{even} under ideal conditions. But ^{on} for this particular flight, Captain Hughes had to fight a cross-wind which threatened to push the plane into the clay. After a ^{"dry run"} preliminary taxi down the strip, ^{Captain Hughes successfully took the aircraft off for Canton.} ~~the aircraft took off and landed at Canton.~~

To put it mildly, ^(aircraft) maintenance was a few notches below CAT's later capabilities.

Therefore, on February 5th, Vice President Whiting Willauer plus crew headed for Hong Kong Airways to maintain and repair CAT planes which might come to Hong Kong from South China. The arrival at Hong Kong was without incident but the February 7th take-off was almost identical with that of January 29th take-off from Shanghai. Low hanging clouds again caused icing and 45 minutes out of Hong Kong it was decided to turn back.

This time the severe icing, which was up to two inches thick on the windshields,

Hong Kong's rough terrain, a ceiling of 400 feet, and no ~~ground~~ landing aids forced Captain Hughes to stay aloft for over five hours to try to make a safe landing. Captain Hughes would bring the plane down to within a few hundred feet of the water to clear off the ice sufficiently to permit ~~the plane's nose~~ ^{turn to see} ~~to be pointed toward Kai Tak airfield.~~ ^{airport and attempt a landing} But, when Hong Kong's hills loomed ^{out of} ahead, there was no alternative than to try for altitude, which would cause more icing and require ^{to de-ice the aircraft} more low flying over the relatively warm water. Captain Hughes finally succeeded in bringing the C-46 ⁽⁴²⁾ to a safe landing.

the clouds

Commander Jackson, an Australian serving as Fiorello La Guardia's assistant in UNRRA, was a passenger on this flight and recalls getting "a ~~bit~~ ^{bit} chilled" because all the cabin heaters were closed to direct all available heat to the windshields and to the cockpit.

After getting ~~safely~~ ^{safely} back to Hong Kong and returning to Shanghai on February 8th, old 404 was loaded with more medicines and relief supplies and, on February 10th, returned to Canton.

~~The C-46 laid~~ ^{then,} After ~~laying~~ ^{laying} over several days for minor repairs, on February 23rd, the plane headed for Liuchow and Kunming, with Colonel C.S. "John Barrymore" Lee who was to establish a Company station there with Lincoln Au, Bruno Braga, and S.N. Ing, CAT's administrative Vice President. At Liuchow, festivities ^{most of} put a ~~severe crimp~~ ^{temporarily out of commission} in the flight crew, who partook of a Chinese feast including baby octopus. Captain Hughes shied away from this exotic dish but the others ate to their heart's content only to find that they were almost incapacitated the following day; in fact, Captain Doug Smith noted in his log that he lost about twenty pounds before overcoming the effects of the feast.

On February 24th, after taking on a load of tung oil, the plane was impounded

by the Chinese at Kunming. Every day the crew would pull the props through by hand to keep the engines properly lubricated and to conserve fuel.

During the first year of operation, CAT planes were impounded dozens of times because some base commander failed to "get the word" from his headquarters. Ironically enough, a high percentage of these impoundings occurred at Kunming where the airfield had been named "Chennault Field" by grateful Chinese in honor of the service rendered by General Chennault since his arrival in their country on May 31, 1937.

On March 1st old 404 was freed and took off for Hong Kong with her load of tung oil, returning the following day with a load of medicine; plans called for the plane to return to Hong Kong immediately with another load of tung oil. Again the plane was impounded, this time until March 20th. In the meantime, on March 14th, Captains Joe Rosbert, Dave Davenport, W.J. Bigony and Willis Hobbs arrived in two aircraft.

Needless to say, the flight crews had not yet learned to provide against these impounding delays and as a result Captain Hughes and Co-pilot Smith were sorely in need of "eatin' money." At the last they were completely broke and pooled their resources for one final meal. With watermelon seeds costing the equivalent of US one-cent for a double handful they dug up enough between them for a measly single handful. It was with joy that they greeted their four compatriots who immediately guided them to a restaurant for a Chinese feast, of course permitting the newcomers to pick up the tab. Everyone was still glowing from the good food when they arrived at Chennault Field to find all three planes impounded. On March 20th number 404 was released and flown to Hong Kong.

In the meanwhile, mechanics had arrived from Hawaii and the Philippines and began

checking aircraft. It didn't take long. In addition to countless minor defects it was noted that the wing attachment points to the fuselage had corroded in many places, some were so badly rusted that a hole could be punched through the metal. That was was enough. Philosophically speaking, CAT was going to need spare parts and this was an ideal place to start.

Old 404 was relegated to the spare parts bin. But not until having launched CAT on its commercial way.

AIR ASIA

Date:

To:

Insert A.

In 1951, a CAT C-47, B801, was given a "plush" interior and began operating between ~~six~~ cities of the east and west coasts of the island of Taiwan; they were: Taipei, Haelien, Taitung, Taichung, Tainan and Anakung, in the Pescadore Islands, off the southeast coast of Taiwan. The flights were called the Round-Island-Flight, or RIF.

When this flight was inaugurated, a Supply Station was organized at Taipei's ~~Shan~~ ^{Sung} Shan Airport.

Operating as Civil Air Transport, Scheduled International Flight Services were inaugurated in January 1950 with C-46 aircraft flying Taipei-Hongkong and Taipei-Manila. *The C-46 was backed up a C-47.*

Shortly thereafter, in April 1950, Scheduled International Services Hongkong-Taipei-Tokyo were performed with a DC-4 chartered from Pacific Overseas Airways Siam. *The ^{service} was in addition to the C-46 operation. The joint CAT-POAS service was terminated at a later date.*

Then, on September 19, 1952, CAT established Scheduled International Services with its own DC-4 aircraft serving Hongkong-Taipei-Tokyo-Pusan. *This was again in addition to the C-46 flights.*

"The Mandarin Flight" DC-6B International services were inaugurated in 1958. *in* and on July 28, 1961 CAT inaugurated "The Mandarin Jet" service flying the Convair 880M airliner. This aircraft was sold in January, 1968 and a Boeing 727 replaced it. All "Mandarin Flights", were flown by single aircraft of each type.

Civil Air Transport Scheduled International Services ended with the crash of the Boeing 727 on February 16, 1968.

was with 2 C-46 aircraft between various cities in Taiwan, on the island of Taiwan, ^{some of which made} a stop at the Peenanshan islands ~~also~~ ^{included}.

Civil Air Transport also operated "Around-the-Island" flights between various cities on the island of Taiwan, some of which made a stop at the Peenanshan islands. The service was started with small Cessna single engine aircraft ~~C-47~~ ^{domestic} prior to 1950. In 1950 ^{one} C-47 aircraft ~~was~~ ^{was} substituted for the Cessnas; it was backed up ^{by} a second C-47.

Later, on a C-46, ^{periodically} was substituted for the C-47, to ~~back up~~ these lines, for a period of time, a joint C-46/C-47 operation. The C-47 was eventually phased out of the "Around-the-Island" flights all together and one C-46, ^{backed up by} a second C-46 operated the ~~domestic~~ flights which were terminated on ²⁸ 1968.