

CANDOER News



A quarterly Newsletter dedicated to Communicators AND Others Enjoying Retirement

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Welcome to the latest issue of the Newsletter dedicated to the **CANDOERS** (Communicators **AND** Others Enjoying Retirement). This **Newsletter** will be published quarterly. New issues will be posted on the Web for your reading enjoyment on or about, January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1.

The **CANDOER** web site and **Newsletter** may be viewed at: www.candoer.org.

The success of this newsletter depends on you. I need story contributors.

Do you have an interesting article, a nostalgia item, or a real life story you

would like to share with others? If you do, please send it to me at the following e-mail address: candoercat@gmail.com

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The **Newsletter** will be available in three formats: as a Web Page; as an Adobe PDF file; and as a Microsoft Word document.

The PDF file and Microsoft Word document will allow you to download and print the newsletter exactly as if I had printed it and mailed it to you.

Many people are alive because it is illegal to shoot them!

Cat's Corner

It took forever for summer to arrive here in Southern Maryland and the Greater Washington DC Area, but arrive it did. The

heat and high humidity moved in with a vengeance in July. We had several days in the high 90s with heat indexes over 100 degrees. Then along came August and September with the same heat and very little rain. Fall came immediately. We went from temperatures in the high 80s and 90s to temperatures in the middle to low 70s, virtually overnight. As of September 20 we were 2.75 inches below our normal rain fall here in Southern MD. Then along came December with its cold. As I put this issue to bed, the temperature outside is 18 degrees with a wind chill of 1 degree. At least the weather let me continue to fish until Thanksgiving. On the weekend of the November 26th and 27th I put the boat into mothballs until around the first of April.

If you are near retirement, or thinking of moving, check the below Web link, it lists how each state treats your Federal Retirement Pension. In some cases, the full pension is tax exempt:

<http://www.narfe.org/pdf/StateTaxRoundupTaxYear2015.pdf>.

If you have the Federal Long-Term Care Insurance, you may want to check the following information. In some cases the premiums are going up an average 83 percent:

<http://federalnewsradio.com/benefits/2016/07/long-term-care-enrollees-get-coverage-options-higher-premiums-in-2017/>

Some premiums may go up as much as 126 percent.

The on-liners, titled "These should assist you with most daily decision choices" were obtained from Facebook!

Money cannot buy happiness but remember it is more comfortable to cry in a Mercedes than on a bicycle!

The CIA Built a Special Helicopter to Sneak Into North Vietnam

By Joseph Trevithick

The below story was received from Charles Christian!

On a dark night in 1972, a special helicopter operated by the Central Intelligence Agency slipped into North Vietnam. The crew's mission was to tap phones lines to key government buildings.

But they had to slip past the country's vast array of anti-aircraft weapons and elaborate security measures. They had planned the operation for years - and developed a unique and super-quiet helicopter to do it.

Choppers are amazingly versatile, capable of getting troops and supplies into some of the hardest to reach places. But they're also loud and enemy forces can hear them coming from miles away.

What the CIA built instead was "a 'quiet' helicopter, which would be able to undertake dead-dark operations at low altitudes," according to a heavily-redacted article from Studies in Intelligence, the CIA's in-house journal, declassified in 2014.

The aircraft would have to fly in the dead of night with no lights and close to the ground to have any chance of getting to their objectives.

Ultimately, the Agency rigged up two Hughes 500P helicopters for the mission with help from private companies, the Pentagon and the U.S. Army.

While designed only for the one mission, the heavily modified Model 500Ps provided an opportunity for pilots to explore new tactics for flying in the dark. It also spurred the development of advanced night vision gear.

From what little we know, commandos and spies are flying around in even more advanced stealth choppers today.

As the United States' war in Vietnam began to ramp up, intelligence agencies and the Pentagon scooped up as much information on their new opponents as they could.

In 1968, Washington and Hanoi started working on a peace deal in Paris. American diplomats desperately wanted to know what the Vietnamese side was planning. Unfortunately for the CIA, Hanoi

was adept at hunting down American-funded agents.

Spy planes weren't able to glean enough about anyone's intentions, either. To get around these problems, the CIA proposed a more direct way of getting the information they wanted - tap a phone line used by senior leaders in the city of Vinh more than 150 miles south of the communist nation's capital.

But getting into the heavily fortified country was far from easy.

Natural barriers and one of the most elaborate air defense networks on earth - which Hanoi had expanded to try and blunt the U.S.'s fearsome bombing campaigns - made it hard for agents to creep in unnoticed.

You didn't just waltz into North Vietnam.

"After examining many other options, it became apparent that it would take something like a helicopter to accomplish this mission," the undated CIA article explained.

But the agency wasn't aware of a chopper stealthy enough to survive the dangerous trip. Instead, the CIA's Technical Services Division started searching for an aircraft that would fit the requirements. The technicians then turned to the Pentagon.

At the same time the peace talks were starting in Paris, the U.S. military's Advanced Research Projects Agency was trying to build their own quieter chopper. The Pentagon - especially the U.S. Army - wanted these aircraft so aviators and troops could get the jump on enemy forces.

ARPA chose the Army to oversee the work on what became the Quiet Helicopter Program. The Army hired Bell Helicopter to draw up plans for a modified variant of their OH-58A helicopter.

The ground combat branch understood that helicopters rarely had the element of surprise. This fact severely limited their usefulness in combat, according to one Army report from the project.

The resulting Bell aircraft had wider main rotor blades, a new four-bladed tail

rotor and large mufflers on the engine exhausts.

Scientists standing 200 feet away found the choppers could be as quiet as 77 decibels, Army evaluators reported.

That's about as noisy as a vacuum cleaner. At an altitude of 4,000 feet, the aircraft might be as quiet as someone whispering.

Buoyed by this initial success, ARPA expanded the project and added the Hughes Aircraft Company, Sikorsky, and Kaman - all major helicopter manufacturers - to the roster a year later.

Hughes developed a new version of its OH-6A scout helicopter. Sikorsky modified its larger SH-3 submarine hunter, while Kaman used its HH-43 rescue chopper as the project's baseline.

ARPA and the Army both felt that the Hughes' Model 500P, dubbed "The Quiet One," was the most promising design. After taking a look at the work Hughes had already completed, the CIA agreed.

The Quiet One had a five-bladed main rotor compared to the OH-6's four-bladed arrangement. The Model 500P also had an all new four-bladed tail rotor just like Bell's original test aircraft. A large muffler capped off these noise-cutting improvements.

Still, the Quiet One had its problems. The CIA had to contend with issues the Army did not.

For one, the CIA needed helicopters that could fly long distances without refueling. And the pilots would have to navigate - in an era before GPS - in total darkness.

So the agency's first order of business was to find a new, more efficient motor for its new helicopter. The Allison Division of General Motors had intentionally limited the output of its engines in existing OH-6s to 250 horsepower for safety reasons.

"Talk about bureaucracy," the unnamed author of the CIA journal article, a member of the development team, wrote, "The G.M. people were afraid that we would change one 'hair' on this [engine] without

years of testing, and they cited 'liability' after 'liability.'"

In the end, Allison lent one of its engineers to the CIA so it could do the work in house and away from G.M.'s lawyers. The spooks hand-selected a small number of rebuilt engines from an unnamed company in Burbank, California.

The technicians picked the six best performing engines out of a batch of 100, the CIA article noted. These motors could reportedly produce almost twice the horsepower as the factory models.

With the new motor, the 1,100 pound aircraft could lift more than 2,000 pounds of people, gas and specialized equipment. To safely land in an emergency Hughes suggested the CIA limit the total weight to 2,400 pounds.

The helicopter's added power also meant the aircraft could carry the fuel needed to get deep into North Vietnam. The technicians installed a special fuel tank - like a pair of saddle bags attached together through the main cabin - to hold the extra gas.

To try and keep noise to an absolute minimum, the agency tweaked the new engines so that parts wouldn't rattle or scrape against each other. The technicians also designed a further improved muffler.

"We ... found an engineer who was working at Lockheed who was working on quieting problems of the Rolls Royce RB-211 engine," the Studies in Intelligence piece noted.

Rolls Royce built the engines for the Lockheed TriStar airliner.

RB-211 engines are still used today on commercial planes.

"We tried to obtain his services, but Lockheed said he could not be spared from their programs," the author added. "He wound up doing this [work] in his garage at night, and, within a week had produced a design that was almost perfect."

The heavily redacted article did not state how quiet the final configuration was in the end.

But with a new, muffled engine, the agency's engineers just had to figure out

how the crews would pilot their small choppers into North Vietnam. The technicians decided on a combination of infrared cameras and night vision gear.

Flying 100 feet or less above the ground, the pilots would have to fly their route by looking through a small television screen. The co-pilot would wear night vision goggles to keep an eye out for other obstacles.

It would be dangerous, hard flying. But the helicopter had an inertial navigation system. This is a computer that takes data from a combination of sensors — such as gyroscopes — and figures out where the aircraft is, what direction it's pointed and how fast it's going.

"At the time, the best unit available had an error rate of about one nautical [mile per hour]," the CIA article stated. So manufacturer Singer-Kearfott "put some packages together that used 'selected' gyros that yielded us an error rate of less than one-fourth nautical [mile per hour]."

Today the Kearfott Corporation still makes navigation and guidance computers for aircraft, ships and ground vehicles.

Army aviators "loaned" to the CIA found the modified aircraft handled well. The pilots had no trouble flying the choppers at night using the infrared camera.

Two years after ARPA started its Quiet Helicopter Program, the CIA quietly registered four Hughes helicopters through its Air America front company. The small fleet included two modified Model 500Ps.

"Most official Air America papers speak of only two Air America Hughes 500s," historian Joe Leeker wrote in his deeply researched Aircraft of Air America database. "But those two aircraft only served as cover for two others—the 'Quiet Ones.'"

With approval from the White House, the CIA ferried the top-secret helicopters to a base known by the code "PS-44" in neighboring Laos.

"With[in] a month, however, pilot error claimed one of the two modified choppers as it landed hard in front of the

hangar," Leeker noted.

At the time, Taiwanese crews—who Washington also employed in other secret programs - were training to fly the choppers to Vinh. After the accident, the CIA sent Taipei's airmen home and replaced them with Air America pilots.

On the night of Dec. 6-7, 1972, the agency's aviators flew the remaining Quiet One to Vinh and back without incident. With the Model 500Ps in standard Army colors, the pilots planned to claim they were lost if North Vietnamese forces discovered or shot down the helicopters.

After the operation, Air America discreetly loaded the Model 500Ps onto C-130 transport planes and flew them out of the country.

The CIA then sent the two regular Model 500s to Laos as a way to cover up the entire project.

The mission was reportedly a success, but we don't know exactly what information the CIA's analysts actually got for their comrades' troubles. In 1973, the bulk of American troops left South Vietnam after Pres. Richard Nixon finalized the peace deal with Hanoi.

In late April 1975 - 40 years ago now - North Vietnamese troops captured Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam, effectively ending the country's long-running civil war.

The agency turned over at least one of the Quiet Ones to the Army. We don't know how long the ground combat branch ended up working with the special chopper. But we do know that the Pentagon and the CIA continued developing quiet and stealthy helicopters after the mission to Vinh.

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency still leads various - and sometimes outlandish - military projects. In 2011, the public managed to get a brief glimpse of the next generation of these stealthy choppers.

During the mission that led to the death of Osama Bin Laden in Pakistan, a super-secret chopper crashed at the Al Qaeda leader's compound. This aircraft -

nicknamed a "Stealth Hawk" as it appeared to be a modified UH-60 Black Hawk - probably isn't the only one of its kind in Washington's arsenal.

Help someone when they are in trouble and they will remember you when they are in trouble again!

Southern Africa

By Rudy Garcia

I went on a TDY to Gaborone, Botswana, in the mid 1980's.

Early in the TDY I heard that half a man's corpse landed on the PC Medical Officer's front garden as he was leaving for work. It was a result from an ANC explosion that went off nearby.

One evening I was invited to the GSO's home for dinner. I brought a bottle of wine. Even though I don't care much for it, I drank two glasses to be sociable.

The Embassy had two cars they provide TDYers, a fast one and a very slow one. I was lucky I was assigned the fast one that night. As I left the GSO's house I noticed a pair of headlights right in front of me but didn't think anything about it. Then it dawned on me I was supposed to be on the left side of the road. I swerved to the left just as the oncoming car passed me by. In the rear view mirror I saw him make a U-turn and figured I'd better get out of there. I figured if the guy wanted a confrontation he was probably a South Afrikaner. They are usually big guys who start pumping iron from the age of two, presumably to try out for the Springboks. I sped past several cars and entered the roundabout that brought me to the highway and my hotel. I could see the lights of the chasing car a few cars behind. I ducked into the hotel parking area and turned off the lights and watched the car go zooming by. Close call.

Speaking of Springboks, I flew into Jo'burg from Luxembourg; I was on annual leave and backpacked around Switzerland. I usually take the rear aisle seat as I can stash my carry-on behind my seat instead

of in the overhead storage. The plane, a SAA, was delayed; waiting for someone. He finally came in with the steward following him carrying his duffel bag. The steward dropped the duffel bag on top of my carry-on behind my seat. I had a figurine in my carry-on and feared for its safety, so I saved my bag and put it on top of the duffel. It turns out the guy was Naas Botha, the Springboks captain that year. All the women and girls were taking selfies with him. I wondered why he was traveling coach instead of first class; maybe trying to toughen himself some more.

Talking about explosions, my last tour in AF was in Mbabane, Swaziland, which was a good place for a family but if you were single, didn't dance or didn't gamble, you were in for a boring tour.

I was assigned to a house on the outskirts of town. It belonged to a high government official who was assigned to London during that time. The down side was the ANC's Swazi headquarters was down the hill from the house. The SADF (South African Defence Force) would periodically cross the border and have a shootout with any ANC members there.

I used to go to Jo'burg at least once a month to spend the weekend, get a good English breakfast at the Carlton Hotel, and eat at some good restaurants in town.

One time, upon arriving in the center of the city, I heard an explosion. I wanted to see what was going on so I followed the masses but made sure there were at least five rows of people in front of me; I figured that would be enough of a cushion in case a second bomb went off (usually larger than the first -- which is designed to attract onlookers like me). They had demolished a big concrete planter and nothing else. No further bombs went off, so I went to eat and checked in at the Carlton/Westin Hotel.

One morning a white man came stumbling into the hotel. He had been stabbed in the leg and ran into the hotel for safety. Except for all the blood pouring onto the floor he didn't seem to be in critical danger.

I drove back to Mbabane that

afternoon. I used to get a kick when on crossing the border the SA immigrations would see my dip plates, yell to the barrier guard to let me go through saying I was "Section 8."

I always wonder about an incident. I was shopping for art supplies at an art store just outside Jo'burg. Suddenly this woman started screaming at me saying "Why don't you Yanks leave us alone?" This was during the apartheid period. I never figured out how she knew I was a U.S. citizen since I didn't talk. I am originally Filipino, didn't wear a baseball cap, nor have any other U.S. identifying marks on me. The manager of the store guided her out of the building and came over to apologize to me for her outburst. South Africa was a great place although my passport gave me access normally reserved for whites.

**Alcohol does not solve any problems, but
then again, neither does milk!**

Who Are You?

By John Lemandri

Our Ambassador to Turkey was an 81 year old senior career diplomat who served in that position for eight years. His dog, that accompanied him nearly everywhere he went, was even older. The Ambassador's secretary usually received a heads-up call early in the morning whenever the ambassador arrived, then made his way to his second floor office, one stair at a time, while his sidekick dog trudged along beside him, one paw at a time. The entire process took ten minutes, although most of us could have sprinted the distance in 15 seconds.

I had been at post nearly a week, and had not yet met the ambassador, when early one morning the doorbell rang in my communication office. I opened the top half of the door, looked out, saw no one and went back to work. A half minute later the bell rang once more. I again opened the top half of the door whereupon I heard an ummm, ummm, ummm. I looked down to

see a frail old man looking up at me and demanding to know in a somewhat raspy voice,

"Who are you? Who are you? Who are you?"

A bit taken aback by his sharp questioning and not knowing who he was, I replied, "I'm the Ambassador. Who are you?"

He hesitated for a few seconds as if to reassure himself, then cried out in desperation, "I'm the Ambassador, I really am." He was, and he let me know it.

**Forgive your enemy but remember the
bastard's name!**

Hiring on With State

Chapter III – Getting to Dacca

By Dick McCloughan

My class completed training on a Friday in May of 1972. That morning we cleaned up the classroom and were dismissed around noon. We said our goodbyes and I caught a cab and went out to Dulles to catch an early evening Pan Am 747 flight to New Delhi. The plane was not crowded and I managed to sleep for most of the flight.

Early the following morning we landed in Karachi to re-fuel. After an hour or so we re-boarded and following a flight of an hour, landed in New Delhi.

I collected all my four heavy suitcases and made my way through the line at Indian Customs. I eventually got to the counter and when the official asked if I had ever been in Pakistan I responded with a "Yes". After all, the plane I had just disembarked had landed in Karachi less than an hour previously. He became quite angry and demanded I open all my luggage and proceeded to paw through all my clothes. (The U.S. had supported Pakistan in the Indo-Pak War and Americans were not exactly on the Indian Government's top ten list). After 15 or 20 minutes of this he finally stamped my passport and released me.

I obtained the services of a boy with a

luggage cart and made my way outside. I'd seen crowds of people in S.E. Asia, but what awaited me was totally a new experience. There were hordes of people including countless numbers of beggars. I managed to brush them off and went in search of an Embassy vehicle.

In Washington I had been told by the NEA desk officer he would send a message to New Delhi to have someone from the Embassy meet me and to make reservations at a hotel. After 15 minutes of this I went to the Pan Am desk and called the Embassy. The Marine Security Guard advised a white Chevy Malibu had been dispatched and gave me the license plate number.

Back outside I went with the luggage cart close behind me. We looked everywhere, but could not find a white Chevy.

I exchanged some money for Indian Rupees, and hired a cab for the Embassy.

About halfway there I spotted a Malibu heading in the opposite direction towards the airport. I ordered the cab to turn around and caught up with the Embassy vehicle just as he pulled up in front of the airport. I asked him if he was to pick me up and he replied that no, he had the name of another individual. I was tired, hungry, and becoming more than a little fed up. I ended up commandeering the vehicle and had him take me to the Embassy.

When we pulled up in the courtyard I saw another white Malibu parked in the shade under a large banyan tree. As we drove past I noted the license plate number was the one the MSG had given me. I also saw that the driver was asleep on the front seat. I went in to the Embassy to ask where they had put me up and the MSG said the driver I had seen asleep had the name of the hotel. I went back outside and after several minutes managed to wake him up. He did indeed have the name of the hotel and unloaded my luggage from the first car into his. Although sleepy, the driver managed to get to the hotel which wasn't that far from the Embassy.

I checked in. A bell boy took my

luggage to the room and I found the hotel's restaurant and had a large breakfast. I went back to the room and closed the drapes. I then snuggled in for a much needed nap. I had just fallen asleep when I heard the door open. I cracked an eye open and there was an attractive young girl in a sari standing there. I asked what she needed and she asked if I had any secrets to sell. I replied, "No," and she turned and left.

I recall thinking that this Foreign Service was certainly different than anything I had ever experienced. I slept until early evening and had a good dinner in the hotel's restaurant.

I slept like a rock that night and didn't wake until around 0900 Sunday morning.

There wasn't a lot to do there in the hotel and I stayed in my room with a book I had had the sense to pick up back at Dulles.

Monday morning, after breakfast, I caught a cab to the Embassy to obtain a Bangladesh visa. It was before 0800 when I arrived and the MSG told me Consular wasn't open yet. I was sitting there on a couch when a short, white haired man came in carrying a greasy looking paper bag. The MSG immediately stood to attention, saluted and said, "Good morning, Mr. Ambassador". He glanced over at me and asked if he could help. I told him I needed Consular's assistance in obtaining a visa. He told me he would take me over to their office.

We walked past the MSG's booth, through a set of double doors, and into an open courtyard which had a large shallow pool in the center with a number of ducks swimming around. The Ambassador opened the paper bag and began throwing handfuls of popcorn to the very enthusiastic ducks. He turned to me and said, "I love feeding the ducks every morning. Some days I think it's the only worthwhile thing I do."

He emptied the bag and took me back to Consular which by this time was open for business. (I later learned this was Kenneth Keating, former U.S. Senator of New York. He was the first Ambassador I met).

Consular advised it would take a day to get the visa and I should make flight reservations.

They took me to Travel and I was booked on an Air India flight to Calcutta departing around noon Tuesday. Travel advised they couldn't make reservations to Dacca, that I would have to overnight in Calcutta and the Consulate would make onward arrangements.

The following morning, around 0800 I went back to Consular at the Embassy and was told my passport had somehow been lost en route to the Bangladesh Embassy. They took my picture, made up a new passport and once again sent it off for a visa.

I cancelled my flight to Calcutta and rescheduled to depart on Wednesday. At the hotel that afternoon I received a call from the Embassy advising me my original passport had mysteriously shown up in the Consular Section complete with a Bangladesh visa. Back to the Embassy I went, collected my passport, and visited with the Communications section personnel. They told me they would send a message to Calcutta to meet/assist and make hotel reservations.

One of the guys there in Commo took pity on me when I explained all my trials and tribulations and invited me to his house for dinner that evening. I can't recall his name, but I was thoroughly indebted to him. After an excellent meal and numerous brews he drove me back to the hotel.

The next morning, around 1030, an Embassy vehicle picked me up and dropped me off at the airport. The flight was not memorable. The plane was a decrepit, twin engine British make and less than clean. I arrived in Calcutta around 1300 and once again there was no vehicle to meet me. I caught a cab for the Consulate.

I am certain he gave me the scenic tour which took nearly an hour. I recall seeing more hordes of people than I had in New Delhi.

At the Consulate I went to Travel and was told there was a flight to Dacca at around 1700. They would call the airport,

make reservations, and arrange for a driver to take me there. This time the trip only took around 20 minutes and I got to the airport in plenty of time for the flight. I found the Air India counter only to be told the flight was delayed and wouldn't be departing until 1800. They did have my reservation, so I checked my luggage, and after some searching, found the bar. I'd been in worse, but it had not been since my Navy S.E. Asia tour. I found an empty stool at the bar next to an elderly English looking guy. He turned to me, took one look and said, "Yank aren't you?" I replied in the affirmative and asked what was there to drink. He told me gin, but not to get any ice cubes since there was no telling where or when they had been made. He also advised if I ordered a mix with the gin to make sure the bartender opened up a fresh bottle in front of me.

When the bartender showed up, I followed his suggestions and ordered a gin and tonic. He poured three or four fingers of gin into a glass and added maybe two tablespoons of tonic.

The Brit and I toasted one another and I took a swallow. It burned all the way down, but I did manage to relax somewhat; the past few days had been rather strenuous. I think the Brit and I had three or four warm gins before I staggered off for my flight.

Surprisingly there was no further delay and the flight, another decrepit looking plane, took off at 1800. It was a short flight and landed in Dacca around 1845.

To my surprise there to meet me was the CPO I had met in Washington. (The Consulate in Calcutta had sent a message).

I don't think I was ever so happy to see anyone in my life; here was someone I knew!!! He really wasn't that happy. He'd been at the airport since around 1730, the flight's original arrival time.

The airport in Dacca was in worse shape than the one in Calcutta which at the time wasn't called "Dum Dum" for nothing.

Dacca airport was also populated by hordes of beggars who bothered everyone.

Mike told me the Consulate had lost the

message assigning me and hadn't known about my assignment until he arrived two weeks ago. Therefore they hadn't arranged a house or apartment. I was to stay with him until they could find something.

Nevertheless, I had arrived at my first post after quite a tumultuous trip.

See you next quarter!

KEEP THE STORIES COMING!

Enjoy life, but be safe!