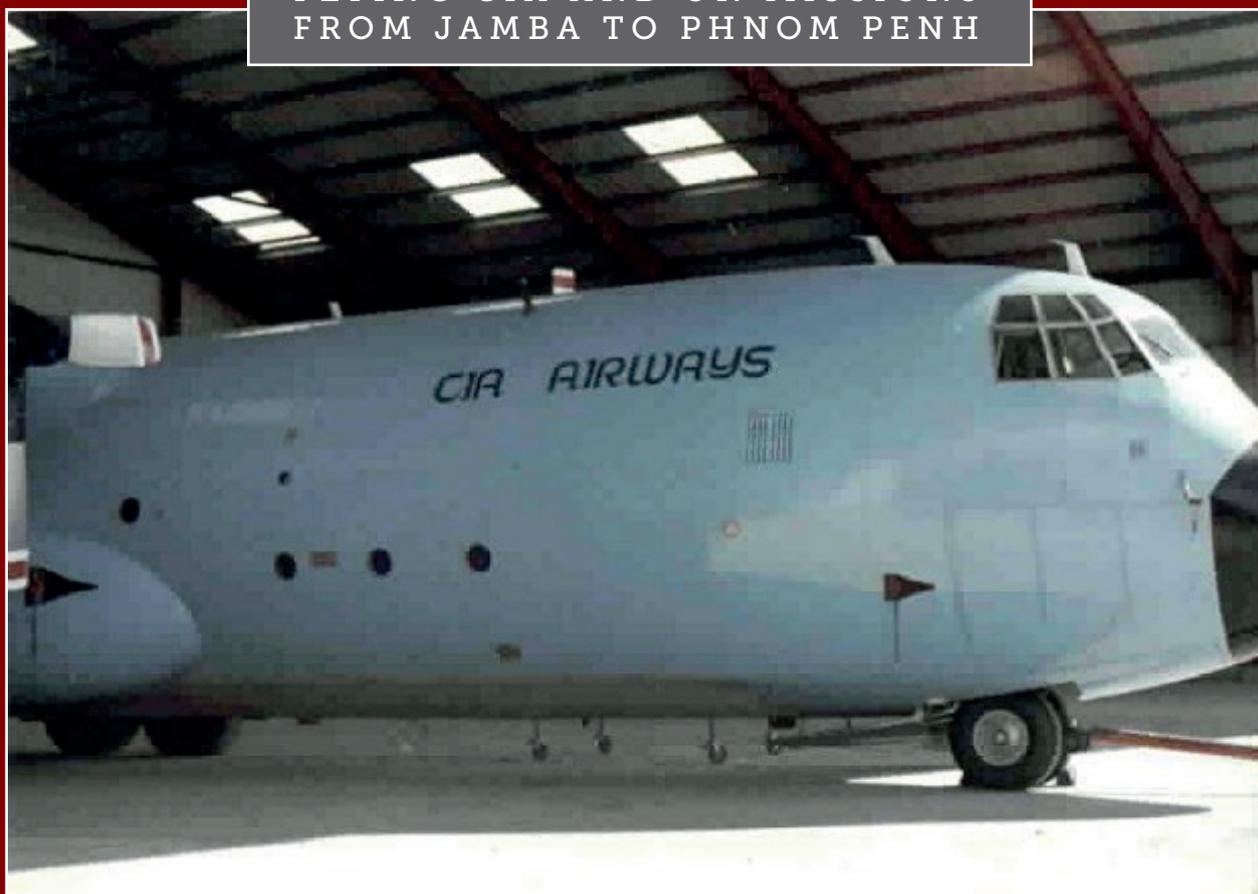


Don Rogers

HOTEL HERCULES

FLYING CIA AND UN MISSIONS
FROM JAMBA TO PHNOM PENH



TransArms Editions Chicago - 2015



Editorial

Hotel Hercules, Flying CIA and UN Missions from Jamba to Phnom Penh

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Cover: The picture shows a “revealing” moment of the prepping of St. Lucia Airways J6-SLO in early 1987 [?]. The plane was a Lockheed L-100-20 Hercules, manufacturing number HC4129. It was being re-painted at Hewanorra airport (St. Lucia) after a New York Times article revealed the connection of the plane with clandestine deliveries to UNITA in Angola. The plane was soon after bought by Tepper Aviation and re-registered as N9205T. The Hercules eventually crashed at Jamba, UNITA's Headquarters in Angola's Cuango Cubango province, on November 27, 1989. St. Lucia Airways was, as is Tepper, a CIA proprietary airlines. Credit Photo Don Rogers

Editor's Note:

Sergio Finardi passed away unexpectedly in December 2015. He had just begun working on the publication which you are now reading. Unfortunately, it is not the 300 page publication he had envisioned, because sufficient material was not yet available. His final request to the International Peace Information Service (IPIS) was to finish editing what was there. We hope to publish an updated version in the future.

Final editing: International Peace Information Service vzw.

Book and Cover design by TransArms

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Abbreviations

AF: Air Force

AFB: Air Force Base

CIA: Central Intelligence Agency

DC-3: Douglas DC-3, is a fixed-wing propeller-driven airplane

FE: Flight Engineer

FNLU: Identifier for Luanda airport, Angola

FO: First Officer

L329 Jetstar: Lockheed 329 JetStar, is a fixed-wing jet airplane

Msgt: Master Sergeant

SAAF: South African Air Force

1. Foreword

by Sergio Finardi¹

Hotel Hercules is the fruit of a strange encounter, one of those that hardly could have occurred without the Internet. In early 2010, Alexandre Avrane of Aerotransport Databank² and I were cooperating on the case of a Boeing 727-200F registered in Guinea Bissau as J5-GCU. The aircraft - in provenance of Panama - was found incinerated at an "informal" airstrip about 150 km north of Gao³ in the Mali desert on 2 November 2009. The landing and subsequent destruction of the aging aircraft⁴ was later proved to be connected to one of the cocaine operations of a network of Spanish, French, and Colombian nationals and their accomplices, both businessmen and government officials, in Mali and Guinea Bissau.⁵ Aviation expert and writer Tim Wright was at that time inquiring on the fate of a ghost aircraft⁶ and was also in contact with Mr. Avrane.

In 2011, Peter Danssaert (IPIS vzw) and I published *The Arms Flyers - Commercial Aviation, Human Rights, and the Business of War and Arms*.⁷ The report included some interesting cases for Mr. Wright's new investigation on ghost planes worldwide⁸ and Mr. Avrane put us in contact.

Mr. Wright noted that one of the chapters in our report dealt with the Iran-Contra Affair (*From Nicaragua's Civil War to the 'War on Terror'*) and the airlines that supported the U.S. government's covert operations. Among those airlines was St. Lucia Airways. Its former manager had been Dietrich Reinhardt. During the joint U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives Committees on the Iran-Contra Affair, the activities of the "CIA proprietary airlines" were discussed, one of which was St. Lucia Airways. It happened that Wright knew one of the flight engineers, Don Rogers, who had operated on St. Lucia and Tepper

1 TransArms director and founder.

2 See www.aertransport.org

3 "Crash ou incendie d'un avion à Bourem: Pourquoi le silence des autorités?", *Le Républicain*, 11 November 112009; "The future of the Sahara: What choice is left for the Tuareg?", *Sahara Focus*, 2009: p. 4.

4 On 5 November 2009, three days after the destruction of the plane, the Guinea Bissau CAA "alerted" its last known owner - Youssoupha Guèye, a.k.a. Ibrahim Gueye - that the life-cycle of the aircraft would end on 31 October 2009, i.e. just some days before the last flight. In reality, Gueye was part of the scheme. See: "Affaire dite du "Boeing de la drogue" : Le Procureur Sombé Théra interjette appel contre la décision du juge d'instruction", *MaliActu.net*, 2 July 2012, <http://maliactu.net>

5 From the end of 2009 to 2012, several persons were indicted and incarcerated, in Mali and in Morocco, where the cocaine ended up. However, the trials ended nowhere. TransArms is preparing a report on the case.

6 See: Wright, T.: "The 727 that Vanished", *Air & Space*, September 2010, www.airspacemag.com

7 Finardi, S., P. Danssaert: *The Arms Flyers - Commercial Aviation, Human Rights, and the Business of War and Arms*, and *Documents Addendum*, TransArms/International Peace Information Service vzw, 2011, p. 147 (main text) and p. 52 (Addendum), available at www.transarmsusa.org and www.ipisresearch.be

8 See: Wright, T.: "When Airlines Vanish", *Air & Space*, October 2014, www.airspacemag.com

Aviation aircraft when the companies were servicing CIA operations in support of UNITA between 1986 and 1988.

Mr. Rogers found our account to be accurate, accepted to establish contact with us, and began sending very interesting texts and photographs. Later on, another acquaintance of Mr. Rogers and Mr. Wright, Peter Gardiner, joined the conversation. Mr. Gardiner – a British-South African pilot who recently retired as director of flight operations of Transafrik – had flown for South Africa's Intelligence in support of UNITA,⁹ opening another window into covert South African operations.

In the 1980s, Capt. Gardiner had flown various aircraft (from Learjet to King Air 200, to DC-3s and L329 Jetstar) for Pasload Flights, a South African covert intelligence airline that flew Savimbi and UNITA officials to Ivory Coast and Europe, but also re-supplied the UNITA stockpiles and flew journalists to its headquarters in Jamba¹⁰.

Pasload Flights aircraft were serviced, and part of them owned, by Wonder Air - based at the Wonderboom airport (Pretoria) and owned by a former SAAF technician and pilot with close links to the South African military, Gert De Klerk. Pasload Flights was closed down in 1992. Between 1989 and 1990, Capt. Gardiner also flew for a U.S. operation intended to maintain a military and anti-Nicaragua presence in Honduras after Oliver North's operations were shut down by the disclosure of the Iran-Contra scandal. It is interesting to note that two U.S. private airlines flanked the operation with the help of a Tegucigalpa-based airline, Aero Servicios (1958-1993). The two companies were Fowler Aeronautical Services (based at Van Nuys in California, incorporated on 21 March 1988 by Gilbert P. Mose) and Deutsche Aviation Inc. (incorporated on 18 December 1986 in Oklahoma, but with an address in Rancho Santa Fe, California, under the name of C.R. Rittenberry). Capt. Gardiner flew for the two companies with a De Havilland C4A Caribou that had started as a military CV-2A (manufacturing number 55) in 1962, with last assignment at the Kwajalein Missile Range, Marshall Islands. This aircraft was sold in 1987 to a civilian buyer, a Mr. Darryl Greenamyre (who had bought other similar planes). Greenamyre registered the C4A Caribou aircraft as N9011R and resold it to Mose in February 1988. Both Fowler and Deutsche, as well as De Klerk had a strange and troubled history: Wessel Albertus Vermaas, a South African, bought Deutsche in 1987 from C.R. Rittenberry, a Tulsa-based oilman, gold mining magnate and Deutsche pilot, with a loan from a Tulsa Bank. Vermaas later defaulted amid accusations of over-invoicing from the South African authorities. The two companies were suspended for not filing tax returns in 1989

9 In the 1980s, Capt. Gardiner had flown various aircraft (from Learjet to King Air 200, to DC-3s and L329 Jetstar) for Pasload Flights, a South African covert intelligence airline that flew Savimbi and UNITA officials to Ivory Coast and Europe amongst other services, such as re-supply UNITA stockpiles and flying journalists to its headquarters in Jamba.

10 It is interesting to note that the US military maps for aerial navigation that were declassified in the early 1990s did not report Jamba's airport, nor any location called Jamba in the place where UNITA's headquarters was located. The only US military map for aerial navigation that did have Jamba as a location remained classified.

and 1990 and the aircraft passed from Fowler to Deutsche and back two times, while allegedly connected with a South African "Chieftain Air" to carry out covert operations.

De Klerk started an Avia Airlines company in 1995 that went bankrupt the same year. (See: Aerotransport Databank on Wonder Air; "The shady past of new airline's boss", *Mail & Guardian*, 19 May 1995, and Brummer, S.: "New airline's boss is no virgin", *Mail & Guardian*, 26 May 1995, on De Klerk; DelCour, J.: "Tulsa Bank Fights to Recover Airplanes from South Africa", *Tulsa World*, 17 July 1989 and "South Africa Links", *Tulsa World*, 24 July 1989 on Vermaas; Treaster, J.B.: "U.S. troops arrive at Honduras base to show support", *New York Times*, 18 March 1988, on the beginning of the post-North operations in Honduras; Caribou Roster, Rev. 10 (3 September 2010) on the N9011R; "1954 USAF Serial Numbers, Last revised July 8, 2015" and "Geoff Goodall's Aviation History Site" at www.goodall.com.au on the N677DG. See also for the Iran-Contra Affair, Finardi, S., P. Danssaert: *The Arms Flyers - Commercial Aviation, Human Rights, and the Business of War and Arms*, TransArms/International Peace Information Service vzw, 2011)

The memories that Rogers sent all appeared to be very unusual accounts on the normal life of people who carried out missions totally outside the normal. Rogers did not attempt to embellish or romanticize his stories and they appear a real antidote to all the absurdities and exaggeration in literature and movies on covert operations and clandestine arms transfers. However, they also include many interesting elements for understanding the dynamics of certain professional aviation environments.

In addition, to our best knowledge, it is the first time that an American publicly acknowledges to have flown to UNITA headquarters in Jamba (Cuango Cubango province) as a member of CIA missions to supply Savimbi's army from Zaire (now D.R. Congo). While those missions were well known even at that time - Don called them "the best-known (in the Herc community) super-secret operation" - personal testimonies by people who flew the missions never appeared in print before.

Like many other aviation professionals, Rogers believes that everyone is familiar with aviation acronyms, country and airport locations, and aircraft types. Of course, this is hardly true and therefore our efforts have focused on adding maps, charts, and footnotes to the narrative. We hope that they help the reader to better understand the contexts of Rogers' narrative. The narrative follows a timeline from 1985 to Rogers' retirement.

On a personal note, I can say that I "met" Rogers about thirteen years ago, when I was writing a book on the logistics of warfare which included chapters on the Iran-Contra Affair and the Angola civil war. The involvement of St. Lucia Airways in the Iran-Contra Affair and clandestine supplies to Savimbi's UNITA were known since the February 1987 revelations

by the New York Times and Washington Post.¹¹ One of the historians of covert operations, John Prados, wrote¹² that “there was also a series of four flights between January and April 1986 from an American military base to an airfield in Zaire identified as a CIA supply point for UNITA rebels fighting in Angola.” Looking for independent information on St. Lucia activities in Africa, I found an advertisement in the *Flight Engineer World Wide Web E-Mail Listing* (2002)¹³ that read: “Flew commercial Hercs for St.Lucia Airways, Transafrik Intl (Hercs & B-727) & Frameair in Africa for ten years. Now DC-10 FE for Gemini Air Cargo. Vietnam vet. (MSgt Don Rogers, Ret. 1985)”. Not knowing at that time that St. Lucia had also flown humanitarian relief missions to Darfur in 1985, for me, that advertisement was a confirmation by one who had participated in those missions.

I am glad to have later had the opportunity to know the real picture and to offer our readers a more significant portion of Rogers’ experience.

Chicago, August 2015

11 Confirmed by the 1988 report of the U.S. Senate Select Committee on “Secret Military Assistance to Iran and the Nicaraguan Opposition” and by the 1989 Belgian Parliamentary “Enquête parlementaire Commerce des armes”.

12 See: Prados, J.: *Presidents’ Secret Wars: CIA and Pentagon Covert Operations from World War II Through The Persian Gulf*. Ivan R. Dee Publisher, expanded and revised edition 1996 (original 1986), chapter XVIII, p. 375.

13 <http://www.2xtreme.net/fekc10/engineer/>

2. About the Author and the Aircraft He Flew

by Sergio Finardi



Don Rogers (FE, first on the left) with Mike Atkinson (FO), and 'Non-Sked' Fred Kreppein

Don Rogers served in the U.S. Air Force from 1963 to October 1985, after retiring as a Master Sergeant (MSgt E-7)¹⁴ at Dyess Air Force Base (AFB) in Abilene, Texas. He served in Vietnam (1966-1967), Germany (1967-1970 and 1977-1983, at the Rhein Main Air Base), as C-130H Mechanic and Flight Engineer (FE) and as flight mechanic on C-118A Liftmaster.¹⁵ Near the end of 1985 he started working in the private sector, joining St. Lucia Airways¹⁶ (October-November 1985, March 1986- and 1988), Galaxy Airlines¹⁷ (1985/6), Tepper

14 A MSgt is a Senior Non-commissioned Officer in the Air Force, with technical and leadership responsibilities. E-7 refers to the pay grade from 1 to 9. See: "Air Force Instruction 36-2618, Personnel. The Enlisted Force Structure", 1 December 2004, www.e-publishing.af.mil

15 The AF version of the DC-6A.

16 For the history of this airlines, see Box 2.

17 Founded in 1983, with base at Fort Lauderdale, Florida. It ceased operations in 1988, following the 1985 crash of one of its chartered Lockheed Electra L-188 that killed 70 people and a series of federal investigations into its maintenance and financial records, as well as another crash in the same year. During its existence, the company operated eight Lockheed Electra L-188 freighters of various specification and one Convair 990A (www.aerotransport.org).

Aviation (December 1987-Summer 1988), Transafrik International¹⁸ (1989-1995), CZX/Unitrans (1991),¹⁹ Frameair²⁰ (1991), and Gemini Air Cargo²¹ (1996-2003).

Don Rogers worked as flight engineer on various aircraft, but in particular, he flew L-100-20 and L-100-30 Hercules, L-188A/AF/CF Electra, Boeing 727F, and DC-10-30F. A brief description of the characteristics of those planes follows.

The **L-100-20 and L-100-30 Hercules** are the longer and more powerful civilian version of the military transport 4-engine turboprop aircraft C-130. The L-100-20 first flew in 1968 and the production ended in 1992. The L-100-30 first flew in 1970. In standard conditions,²² the -20 and the -30 have a structural limit payload of 52,805 lbs or 23,950 kg and a designed range of 1,780 n/m or 3,297 km.

Ferry range (no payload) may reach 3,680 n/m without external pylon tanks and 4,685 n/m with pylon tanks (standard fuel capacity is 9,680 US gallons or 36,640 l). The max cargo capacity is equal to 4,460 square feet or 126.3 square meters. Max and cruise speed are 308 and 292 knots, respectively. Take-off and landing field lengths with external pylon tanks are 6,250 feet (1,905 m) and 4,850 ft (1,478 m), respectively (take-off runway lengths could be reduced by about 100 ft if external tanks are removed). Don Rogers flew L-100-20s and -30s for St. Lucia (J6-SLO), Tepper (J6-SLO became N920ST), CZX Productions/Unitrans (N9724V), Frameair (PJ-TAC), and Transafrik (L-100-20: S9-NAL; L-100-30 and C-130H: S9-NAD, S9-NAT; S9-NAJ, D2-EHD, CP1564, CP-1376).

L-188A/AF/CF Electra. Lockheed L-188 Electra²³ (initially named CL-310) is a US 4-engine turboprop airliner that first flew in December 1957 (as N1881) and was introduced in commercial flights on 25 November 1959. Fatal accidents (in particular on 29 September 1959 and 17 March 1960) led to the discovery of structural problems (wing and engine mounts were faulty, causing a chain of disruptive reactions).

Cancellations of orders followed, even when the problems were later fixed. Production ended in 1961. 170 frames were built and several aircraft of this type were converted to

18 Founded in 1985, registered in Sao Tomé, and administered from Fujairah (UAE), with maintenance base in Entebbe (Uganda). See: "Aerotrtransport Databank" at www.aerotrtransport.org.

19 Unitrans Intl. Inc., based in Punta Gorda, was incorporated 2 September 1976, with St. Lucia director Dietrich Reinhardt as president and director. The company was dissolved 9 October 1992. CZX Productions was domiciled at 3422 Old Capitol Trail, Wilmington, Delaware. The registration number of the aircraft owned by CZX was N9724V and Unitrans re-registered the aircraft in Saint Lucia, as J6-SLQ. Service with CSZ/Unitrans is documented at <http://ruand.com/CSX.htm> (no more available, but partly retrievable from wayback machine).

20 Founded in Curaçao (NA) by Portuguese interests in 1981, ceased operations in 1998.

21 Founded in 1995 and based at Washington Dulles airport, ceased operations in 2008. "It specialized in the 70/80 tons market, with a fleet of eight converted DC-10-30Fs and four MD-11Fs." See: Allaz, C.: *History of Air Cargo and Airmail from the 18th Century*, Christopher Foyle Pubs., 2004.

22 All information on performance of "L-100-30/L382, 5225" from *Derco Airspace Inc.* at: http://www.dercoairspace.com/newsletters/0709/newsletter_downloads/5225_sell_sheet.pdf
http://www.dercoairspace.com/acsales_pdf/5225_configurationstatus.pdf

See also: <http://www.militaryaviation.eu/transporter/Lockheed/C-130.htm>

23 All information from Gates, P.J.: *Electra! The Lockheed L-188* and [airliners.net](http://www.airliners.net) at www.aussieairliners.org/scrapbook/l188/l188story.html and www.airliners.net, respectively.

freighters, with a max payload of 12 tonnes for a max range of 1,900 n/m. In standard conditions, max speed is 364 knots and cruise speed is about 324 knots. "The key feature of the L-188 Electra is its power source: four turboprop engines noted for their high-performance short-take-off and landing (STOL) capabilities."²⁴

In standard conditions, the L-188 has a max speed of 364 knots, a structural limit payload of 52,805 lbs or 23,950 kg, and a designed range of 1,912 n/m or 3,541 km. Ferry range (no payload) may reach 3,680 n/m. The max cargo capacity is equal to 4,460 square feet or 126.3 square meters. Take-off and landing field lengths are 5,500 feet (1,676 m) and 5,500 ft (1,676 m), respectively. Don Rogers briefly flew the L-188 Electra for Galaxy Airlines (whose fleet included the N-359Q, N853U, N-188LC) and Transafrik (whose fleet included the S9-NAH and the S9-NAF).

The Boeing 727F. The 3-engine Boeing 727²⁵ was manufactured from 1962 to 1984 and proved to be one of the most successful airliners (1,832 aircraft were built). The certification was granted in December 1963 and the first commercial flights for the first version B-727-100 started in early 1964. The stretched and more powerful B-727-200 received certification in December 1967. In addition to the three jet special design, the aircraft featured various other innovations. In standard conditions, the aircraft was able of a max speed of 549 knots and a cruise speed of 495 knots. The freighters had a max payload of 43,600 pounds (727-100) to 65,015 pounds (727-200), with a design range of 1,385 n/m and 1,597 n/m, respectively, with full payload.

At the time Don Rogers was working with Transafrik (1989-1995), the company operated seven B-727-100s out of fourteen -100 and -200 it operated in all its history: S9-NAZ; S9-TAO; S9-CAB; HR-AMH; S9-TAN; and S9-TBA. Five were converted freighters and one was a converted tanker (S9-NAZ). The origin of those aircraft was marked in their "model" designation, with the number assigned by Boeing to the airlines that first bought it. For example, the S9-CAA was designated as a B-727-100-95(F), meaning that the aircraft was converted into a freighter from a passenger aircraft firstly owned by Northeast Airlines (95).

The DC-10-30AF. Also known as the DC-10-30F. This was the all freight version of the DC-10-30. Production was to start in 1979, but Alitalia did not confirm its order then. Production finally began in May 1984 after the first aircraft order from FedEx. A total of ten were built. At the time in which Don Rogers was working with Gemini Air Cargo (1996-2003), the company operated twelve DC-10-30F²⁶, of which only one remains active today.²⁷

24 http://www.icepilots.com/fleet_electra.php

25 www.airliners.net/aircraft-data/stats.main?id=89; www.aertransport.org/php/go.php; www.boeing.com/resources/boeingdotcom/company/about_bca/startup/pdf/freighters/727F.pdf

26 See [aertransport.org](http://www.aertransport.org): [N600GC](#); [N601GC](#); [N602GC](#); [N603GC](#); [N604GC](#); [N605GC](#); [N606GC](#); [N607GC](#); [N608GC](#); [N609GC](#); [N612GC](#); and [N614GC](#).

27 <http://www.aertransport.org>, the N612GC, presently in service with the Venezuelan Solar Cargo as YV-524T.

Saint Lucia Airways:

Saint Lucia Airways (or St. Lucia Airways, STL) was founded in 1975 and incorporated in Saint Lucia (PO Box 253, Castries, Saint Lucia). In 1984, its apparent owner was Ms. Allison Lindo, a Saint Lucia resident (according to a document filed in the United States by STL in 1984).²⁸

The company shares were acquired in 1984/85 by a Saint Lucia lawyer, Michael Gordon. Actual director of the company was Dietrich Reinhardt, a German, born in June 1946, residing in Florida, and a self-declared personal friend of Angolan UNITA chief Savimbi.²⁹ St. Lucia Airways had offices in Miami and in Frankfurt (as "Airline Consultants"),³⁰ and an operative office at Ostend airport, Belgium,³¹ where its B-707s and L-100/20 routinely flew until April 1987 (Ostend airport records, 1984-1987). During the 1987 hearings of the Congressional Committees investigating the Iran-Contra affair, St. Lucia Airways was identified as a CIA proprietary company.³² Proprietaries are business entities, wholly owned by the Central Intelligence Agency, which either actually do business as private firms, or appear to do business under commercial guise.³³

Until May 1987 the company was a contractor of the Belgian Sabena Airlines.³⁴ St. Lucia Airways had also contracts with U.S. Military Airlift Command. After revelations of its involvement in the illegal arms shipments to Iran, the company apparently ceased operations in May 1987. In addition to the flights to Iran, STL operated covert flights for the CIA in DR Congo and Angola.

28 Gup, T.: "Tiny St. Lucia Airline Used in Iran Missions", *Washington Post*, 24 February 1987. St. Lucia premier, John Compton, in an interview to Gup, stated that Allison Lindo was a front owner.

29 See Chambre des Representants de Belgique: *Enquête Parlementaire*, 1989: p. 352.

30 Gup, T.: "Tiny St. Lucia Airline Used in Iran Missions", *Washington Post*, 24 February 1987.

31 See: *CleanOstend* at www.cleanostend.com/

32 "The arms were eventually delivered to Iran by St. Lucia Airways, a CIA-owned cargo carrier, according to Hakim. In his deposition before congressional investigators last month, Hakim said that Lake Resources paid \$127,700 to St. Lucia, 'which I now believe to be a CIA proprietary company that was chartered in November 1985 to deliver Hawks to Iran.' ("Plan to Sell Iran U.S. Arms in '87 Told by Secord", *Los Angeles Times*, 8 May 1987); In the written records of the Iran-Contra hearings, the name of the company is censored. See also "Tiny St. Lucia Airline Used in Iran Missions", *Washington Post*, 24 February 1987; "Plan to Sell Iran U.S. Arms in '87 Told by Secord", *Los Angeles Times*, 8 May 1987; "Some 'Secrets' in North Case Already Disclosed", *Washington Post*, 12 December 1988; Prados, J.: *Presidents' Secret Wars: CIA and Pentagon Covert Operations from World War II Through The Persian Gulf*, Ivan R. Dee Publisher, expanded and revised edition 1996 (original 1986), chapter XVIII, p. 375..

33 Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities, Book I – Foreign and Military Intelligence. United States Senate, 1976, Report N° 94-755: Chapter XI – Proprietaries, p. 205-256.

34 See Chambre des Representants de Belgique, *Enquête Parlementaire* 1989: p. 123.

Saint Lucia government records³⁵ showed that on 28 January, 21 March 21, 5 April and 18 April 1986, STL aircraft landed in Saint Lucia en route to and from Kelly AFB and Cape Verde, a refueling point for flights to DR Congo, under assignment of the US Air Force. The aircraft (B-707s and the L-100) then reached or departed from DR Congo's Kamina AFB. Over the years, STL operated various aircraft, registered in Saint Lucia, Turks & Caicos and the United States. At the time of the flights to Iran, however, the company operated only two B-707s (r/n J6-SLF and N525EJ) and one L-100-20 (J6-SLO).

Carib Air Transport:

Florida Corporations Registry further shows that a company called Unitrans Intl. Inc., based in Punta Gorda, was incorporated 2 September 1976, with Dietrich Reinhardt as president and director. The company was dissolved on 9 October 9 1992. The same records also show that a company called Majus Aviation Inc. was incorporated 22 August 22 1988, same address and dissolution date as Unitrans. Dietrich Reinhardt and an attorney, Morris J. Turkelson (based in Littleton, CO), were listed as director and president, respectively.

The dissolution of St. Lucia Airways did not lead to Reinhardt and Turkelson going out of business. On June 10, 1991, a C-130A Hercules crashed during take-off from Luanda airport (FNLU) in Angola. US Congressman Curt Weldon (R-PA) investigated the crash, in which Weldon's nephew and other crew members died.³⁶ He discovered that the aircraft was at the center of a web of companies, all leading to Dietrich Reinhardt and the outfits that had hired crews in the US and Europe, supposedly for relief aid flights in Angola. At the time it crashed, the Hercules was under contract by the Angolan government and operated on lease by a Saint Lucia-based company, Carib Air Transport Co. Ltd, incorporated in 1985 (file n. 095/1985, struck-off 4 January 2001).³⁷ The aircraft bore a Saint Lucia registration (J6-SLQ).

In the first months of 1991, in a rapid sequence of events, the aircraft ownership passed from a Delaware-based company, in which Reinhardt was a partner, called CZX Productions (3422 Old Capitol Trail, Wilmington), to Reinhardt's Unitrans. The registration number of the aircraft owned by CZX was N9724V415 and Unitrans re-registered the aircraft in St. Lucia as J6-SLQ on 30 March 1991. After the change, the aircraft was leased on 15 April 1991 to a company called Questline, supposedly based, but never incorporated, in Florida. The accident report for the Hercules was never made publicly available by the Angola government or the US authorities, despite the efforts by Weldon and the families of the other victims. (*See Appendix 1*)

35 Gup, T.: "Tiny St. Lucia Airline Used in Iran Missions", *Washington Post*, 24 February 1987.

36 US Congressional Records Special Orders, *Curt Weldon speech*, 6 August 1993.

37 Saint Lucia Government Gazette, 17 March 2003.

Tepper Aviation:

Tepper Aviation (still active) was incorporated in Florida 2 July 1987 by Bobby L. Owens (president) and Jack Owen (director). Tepper business seemed similar to the one STL had just left. The N9205T aircraft, carrying troops and weapons, crashed on 27 November 1989 while approaching UNITA's South-eastern headquarters at Jamba, Angola, in a CIA covert re-supply mission.³⁸ The nominal head of Tepper at that time, Pharies "Bud" B. Petty, a veteran CIA pilot, was killed in the accident.³⁹

Richard Kolb, in the May 1999 issues of *Veteran of Foreign Wars* magazine, wrote that "during 1990, the CIA began supplying additional weapons to UNITA using Tepper Aviation, based in Crestview, Fla." These so-called "gray ghost" flights became a daily routine. By June, three C-130 Hercules were taking off from Kamina Air Base for Jamba every day. According to one account, "The CIA furnished advisers who operated the military equipment."⁴⁰

Tepper Aviation continued to serve the US intelligence community in various countries, including Iraq and Afghanistan, and participated in the infamous "extraordinary renditions" program and in the "War on Terror".⁴¹

38 George, A.: "Angola CIA Hercules air crash kill Tepper Aviation Chief", *Flight International*, 13-19 December 1989

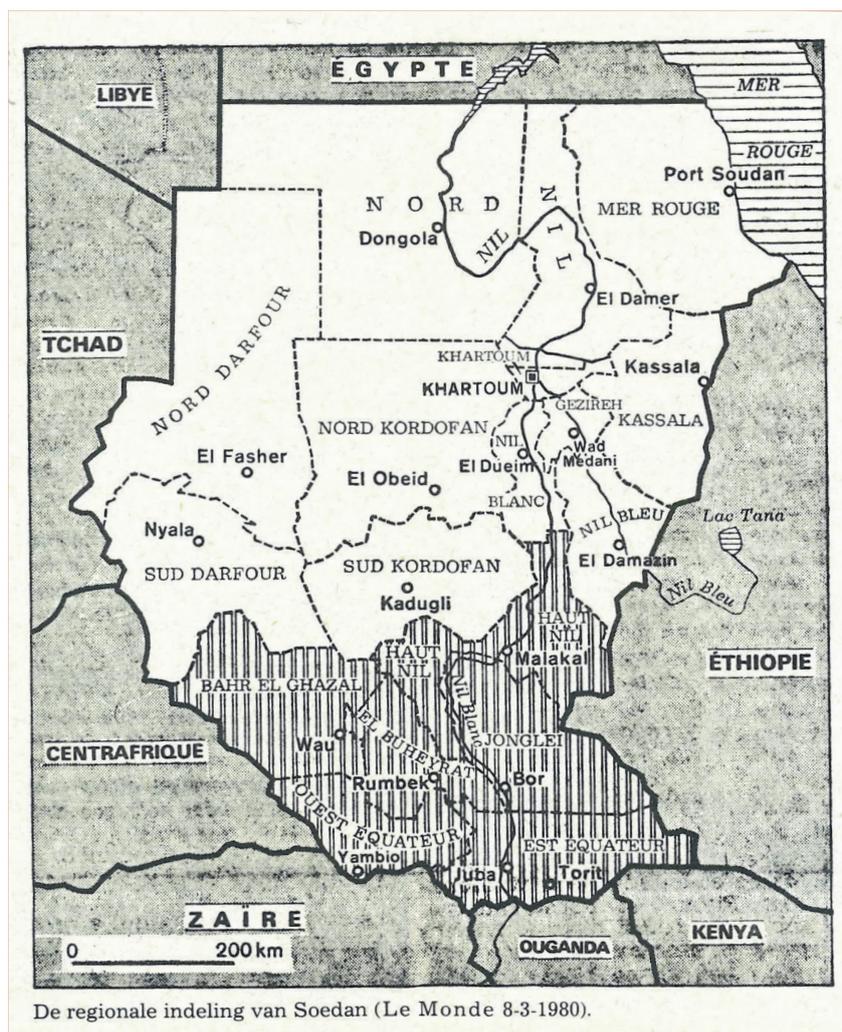
39 Gup, T.: *The Book of Honor: Covert Lives and Classified Deaths at the CIA*, Random House, 2001.

40 Kolb, R. K.: "Into the Heart of Darkness: Cold War Africa Part 2, Angola", *Veterans of Foreign Wars Magazine*, May 1999.

41 See Claudio Fava, Rapporteur, European Parliament of the European Union's Temporary Committee "to investigate the alleged use of European countries by the CIA for the transport and illegal detention of prisoners", Brussels, 2006; Shane, S., S. Grey, and M. Williams: "C.I.A. Expanding Terror Battle Under Guise of Charter Flights", *New York Times*, 31 May 2005; Amnesty International/TransArms, *United States of America. Below the Radar: Secret Flights to Torture and 'Disappearance'*, Amnesty International, 5 April 2006.

3. Flying Famine Relief into Darfur for St. Lucia Airways

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, part of the Western Sudanese region inhabited by the Fur people (DarFur) was inflicted by desertification, resulting from improper and intensive agriculture on arable land, deforestation, and a fall in precipitation in an already arid land region. Meanwhile, a large number of people had moved from the North of Darfur toward the central farming areas, which in turn provoked an over-use of the remaining arable lands. When rain failed to bring sufficient water to the region in 1983 and 1984, the drought devastated the crops and a terrible famine started. The Sudanese central government refused to acknowledge the reality. The disastrous government policies gave rise to the displacement of large number of people, and eventually resulted in a humanitarian disaster that killed nearly 100,000 Darfurians. Entangled in a war with Libya and Chad, confronted with renewed civil war in South Sudan, and incompetent to deal with the famine in Darfur, the US-supported government of president Nimeiry collapsed in early 1985 and was overthrown by a military junta led by Sadiq Al-Mahdi. [Ed.]



I got out of the Air Force in December 1985 after 23½ years, retiring as a Master Sergeant (E-7) at Dyess Air Force Base (AFB) in Abilene, Texas⁴². Since I had so much accrued leave time, I started my terminal leave in October. My then-wife and I were actively looking for employment for me as a flight engineer (FE). One day in early October, I read in an aviation employment newsletter called Flight Crews International⁴³ a notice looking for Hercules pilots, flight engineers and loadmasters for a company called St. Lucia Airways.⁴⁴ I immediately sent off a resume to their offices in Hialeah, Florida. A few days later, I got a call from Dietrich Reinhardt, the managing director, asking me to come for an interview. A loadmaster friend of mine from the United States Air Force (USAF), Rick Poole, also received this call. We drove to Dallas/Ft. Worth⁴⁵ airport in my truck – which I still drive, by the way – and flew to Miami⁴⁶ from there. I don't exactly remember how, taxi probably, we wound up in Reinhardt's office in Hialeah. It was there that I met Lucy, the receptionist (she later married one of the Herc captains), and Captain Fred Kreppein, or 'Non-Sked' Fred⁴⁷, who was also there for an interview.

Anyway, Fred was called in first and was in there for about an hour. I was next. I went in and Reinhardt, with a slight German accent, asked me to sit down in front of his desk. Also in the office was another German named Harvey Schrann. He and Reinhardt were talking in German about Fred. Since I had spent 9 years at Rhein Main AB near Frankfurt, West Germany, I understood some of the language. They were discussing how Fred was a bit eccentric, but had excellent qualifications. Later on, I'll expand on Fred's history; it's quite interesting – flying as a Constellation FE on the North Slope in Alaska, flying Libyan C-130's for Khadaffi, etc.

Reinhardt said he was looking for qualified flight engineers. I told him I had my FE writtens, but needed a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) check ride. He said that shouldn't be a problem as he had just leased a Southern Air Transport Herc, but also needed mechanics. The FE pay was \$2,500 per month plus \$45.00 per flight hour! At that time, \$45.00/hour

42 ICAO: KDYS. See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dyess_Air_Force_Base: "Since 1961, various models of C-130 Hercules aircraft have been stationed at Dyess AFB. The C-130s were originally assigned to the 64th Troop Carrier Wing (TCW) and from 1963 to 1972 the 516th Troop Carrier Wing was the host C-130 wing. In 1972, the 516 TCW was replaced with the 463d Tactical Airlift Wing (463 TAW). During the Vietnam War, TAC C-130 crews routinely rotated to forward based C-130 wings in the Pacific theater to support operations in Vietnam. In 1974, the 463 TAW was reassigned from Tactical Air Command TAC to Military Airlift Command (MAC) as part of a USAF-wide initiative to place both strategic and tactical airlift assets under MAC control."

43 Flight Crews International, a "crew leasing, consulting, and pilot employment company", was founded in the mid-70s and incorporated on 8 June 1979 in Los Angeles by Captain Hal McNicol Jr. (b. 1920), a WWII Navy pilot who later flew more than 25,000 hours for several airlines all around the world. He sold the company to Air Inc., Atlanta, GA, in early 2000s and retired. See: www.oldboldpilots.org/mcnicol.htm

44 Saint Lucia Airways (or St. Lucia Airways, STL) was founded in 1975 and ceased operations in May 1987.

45 ICAO: KDFW. Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport.

46 ICAO: KMIA. Miami International Airport

47 "Non-Sked Fred" flew USAF C-130E's for Byrd Air into Phnom Penh, Cambodia. He, then went on to fly Khadaffi's C-130's back and forth between Libya and Nicaragua. From there, he flew for Southern Air Transport and Transamerica., later also St. Lucia Airways, Transafrik and Frameair. His last flying job was flying C-130B's for the Botswanan Air Force. He passed away in 2014.

was unbelievable. Long story short: I got the job and would be leaving for Khartoum in the Sudan later that month. My friend Rick was also hired, as was Fred.

Rick and I then somehow made our way back to the airport, then to DFW, and made the 2 hour drive back to Abilene, TX.

Since I was technically still on active duty, I checked with some friends at Little Rock AFB, Arkansas, to see if there was an FAA designated check airman there. Little Rock AFB is a huge C-130 training base, training crews from all over the world. Maybe I could get my check ride here. There was a designee – it was a Chief Master Sergeant (CMSgt) George Crews – and I made the arrangements. When I got there, he gave me my orals and, since all simulators were in use, we went to the Command Post where he had them call in a C-130 that was doing some training in the area.

The C-130 Hercules world is extremely small and close-knit. The FE getting training on our airplane was a Technical Sergeant (TSgt) Parnell. He and I were 2-striper⁴⁸ C-130 mechanics in Vietnam back in 1966/67! Anyway, we did one trip around the pattern, landed and got off. Since it was illegal for the check airman to be monetarily compensated, I bought him breakfast at Base Operations. I was now a fully qualified Turboprop flight engineer.

In October 1985, I was on a Lufthansa Boeing 747 to Frankfurt, West Germany, to meet with Reinhardt at his European office. I didn't know crap about the commercial side of flying – in fact, all I brought with me were blue jeans and t-shirts. Reinhardt supplied me with some uniform shirts and pants. Non-sked Fred was also there. The next morning, we were on a Lufthansa flight to Khartoum, Sudan.

As we were taxiing to the terminal at Khartoum, I heard Fred mutter, "Oh, crap!" I asked him what was the matter and he replied that he was on a medical leave of absence from Transamerica Airlines. Well, guess what. There were 2 Transamerica Hercs loading up on the cargo ramp.

After clearing customs and immigration, we were met by the Portuguese project manager, Jose Gabriel, and taken to the Friendship Hotel. There we met the rest of the crews and mechanics. The other two mechanics with whom I would be working were one American named Dan Crawley and another from St. Lucia. The aircrews were mostly Americans, Germans, British, French and a bearded Swiss. The three captains were Non-sked Fred (American), Matt Gaudio (American) and Urs Anderegg (Swiss)⁴⁹. The first officers (FO's) were Archie St. Hill (Brit), Mike Atkinson (Brit) and von Bardo (German). The flight engineers were Jim Wellborn (American) and Will Sweeney (American).

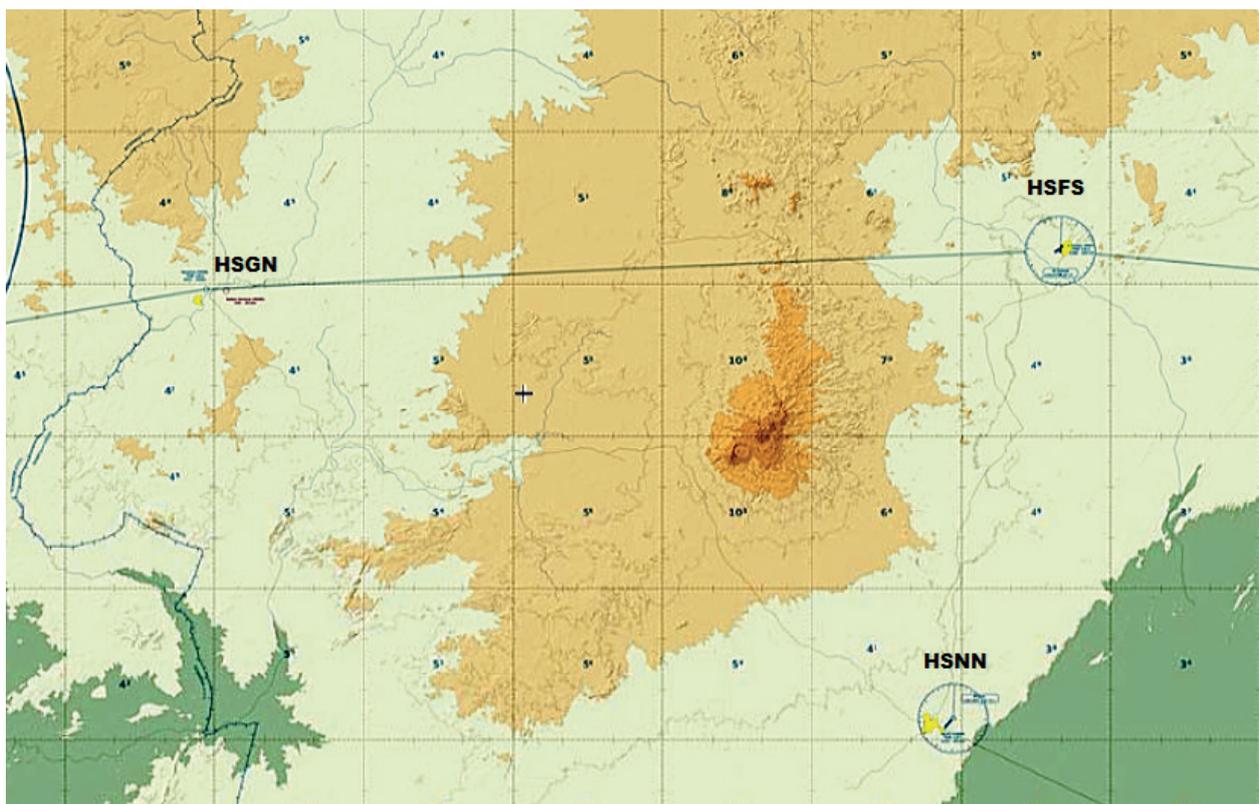
I won't go into the boring details of being a mechanic – changing tires and brakes, fixing discrepancies and generally maintaining the airplane.

48 Airmen Second Class.

49 He was a Swiss captain who lived in Miami with his Lebanese wife. He not only flew this airplane, but also flew a C-130A for Reinhardt. He also flew Frameair's PJ-TAC. Urs was killed in a plane crash in 2008. He was doing a test flight for Air Tahoma. (http://www.10tv.com/content/stories/2009/05/06/story_crash.html)

When Sweeney went home, I was promoted to a real FE. To get checked out, I flew a few trips with Jim Wellborn, a roly-poly, chain smoking ex-USAF gunship FE. My captain was Urs the Swiss and the FO was the German, von Bardo. The loadmaster was a chubby Frenchman named – appropriately – Frenchy.

We were flying famine relief flights for the British organization Oxfam and the Catholic relief agency Caritas. Our trips out of Khartoum were to places like Nyala, El Fashir and Gemina, mostly fairly short dirt strips. All the loads were floor loaded, no pallets or rollers. The Sudanese loaders were really huge and very black. As they loaded, they'd get a chanting rhythm going that would rattle the entire 80,000 pound airplane. It was really neat!

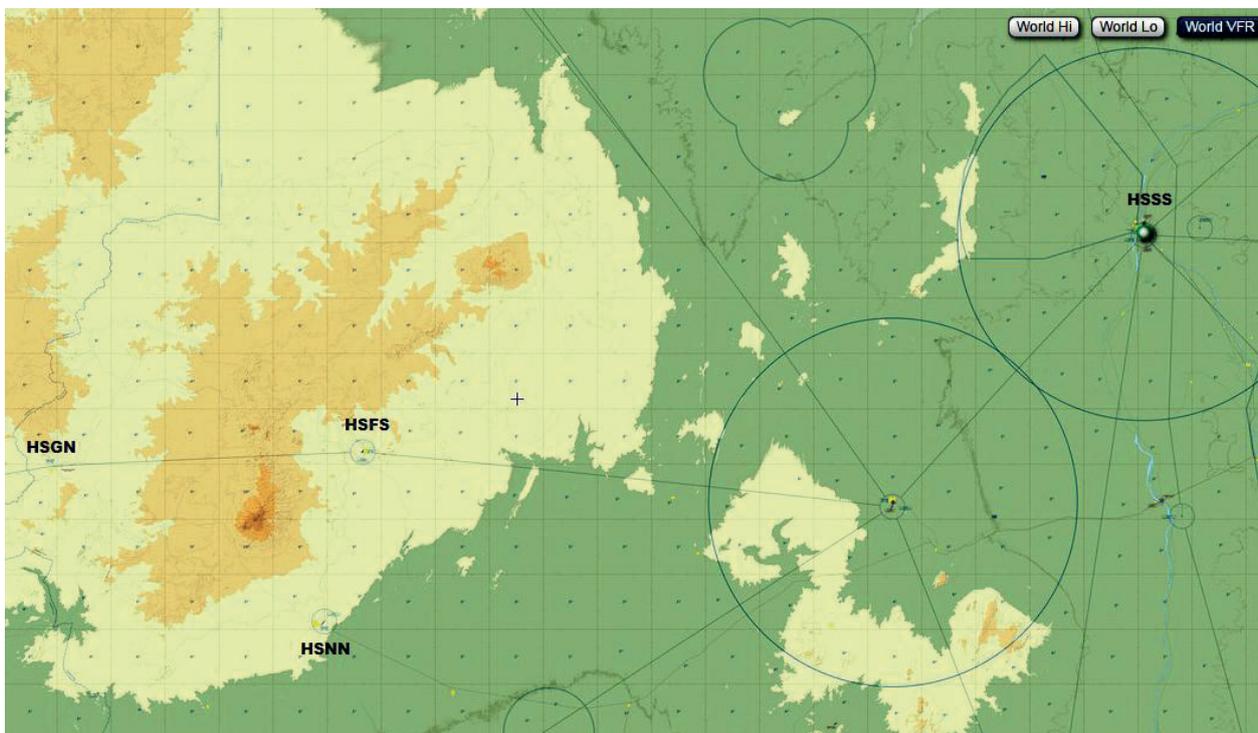


On one flight on 11 March 1985 to El Fashir, we lost our #2 engine *en route*, but landed there anyway. A 3-engine take-off is usually no big deal in the Herc. In fact, in my opinion, it's actually a 2-engine take-off because full power is applied on the two symmetric engines and the FE slowly brings the power into the third engine, slowly so as to maintain directional control. By the time the nose gear comes off the ground, all three engines are at full power. I don't think Urs had made very many 3-engine take-offs before, because he almost lost it when we were about 100 feet off the ground.

When we got back to Khartoum, the mechanics gave the engine its



last rites. The project manager talked to Frankfurt and it was decided to 3-engine ferry to Brussels, Belgium, where the engine would be changed by Sabena mechanics at their maintenance facility.



We prepared all the flight plans and left the next day on 3 engines. We were scheduled for a fuel stop in Athens, Greece, and then on to Brussels. We had a problem at Athens, though. We couldn't start #1 engine. I had to get out and do some shade tree magic to get it started.

After spending about ten days in Brussels for having the engine changed and some other needed maintenance, we were on our way back to Khartoum with a planeload of Stella Artois beer – *and I do mean a planeload!!!* The Sudan is a Muslim country where alcohol is forbidden. We offloaded the beer into one of our maintenance Conexes and over the next few days, took it all back to our hotel. A cold beer or two (or more) is one of life's rewards after flying a grueling 12+ hour day in Africa.

We flew the rest of that contract with no more exceptional happenings and on 15 November 1985 we departed Khartoum. We arrived in Miami via Brussels and St. Johns, Newfoundland, on the 18th of November and parked the airplane in "Corrosion Corner". I went home to Virginia thinking my job was over.



*The day of our departure from Khartoum.
Don Rogers is at lower left (with hat and mustache).*

4. Galaxy Airlines

When I got back from my Khartoum adventure, I assumed my job with St. Lucia was finished, so it was back to sending out resumes. I landed a job with a company called Galaxy Airlines, flying two L-188 Electras. The company had a contract with the USAF flying cargo out of Kelly AFB, TX, to different bases around the southern USA.⁵⁰ Since this was an American company with US registered airplanes, there were FAA rules to be followed. Before I



N5535 - Miami, FL 1987

N5535 (an L-188AF - freight conversion of the original L-188A) was leased from Evergreen Intl. (another company serving the CIA) from May 1985 until May 1987 (Aertransport Databank).

could fly by myself as an FE, I had to attend a six-weeklong initial ground school. It was taught by a retired Electra captain named Don Pascoe. He knew a lot about the Electra, but wasn't a very good at imparting that knowledge to his students. The ground school was in a hangar at Meacham Field, a small airport near Ft. Worth.

In early 1985, Galaxy's owner, Phil Sheridan, was targeted by federal investigations after one of its chartered aircraft crashed in Reno, Nevada, killing 70 people (Sun Sentinel, 24 March 1985). From 3 February 1959 to 28 January 2010, Electra aircraft suffered⁵¹ a total of 67 accidents for various reasons, of which 30 led to a total of 1,042 fatalities.

After the ground school, I drove to Kelly AFB near San Antonio, TX. There, I would begin my flight training. My instructor there was a cocky young Electra FE. We did three or four training flights and then I got teamed up with the owner of the company. His name was Phil Sheridan, also an FE. He had no pilot certificates, just a turboprop FE certificate. This was before cell phones, so every time we landed at some air base, he'd be off to find a phone. He used to tell the pilots "Don't break my airplane."

⁵⁰ Following the tragic crash of two of its Electras, one of them killing 70 people, and technical problems on two other Electras employed in the contract, the USAF finally suspended the charters. See: "Galaxy suspended from military charters", *Associated Press*, 26 March 1986.

⁵¹ See *Aviation Safety Network database* at <https://aviation-safety.net/database/: L-188>.

Phil Sheridan was a real gangster. He would bend and even break a rule if it helped his cause and bank account. He finally ended up in prison for his maverick ways.

After three or four flights with Sheridan, I was getting pretty fed up that I wasn't scheduled for a check ride with an FAA examiner. I kept getting the run around for everyone and finally decided to quit. I was only getting \$50.00 per diem anyway. One night, I composed a letter of resignation, left it with another new-hire FE, jumped in my truck and drove home to Atlanta – *non-stop!!!* My wife was pissed when I showed up jobless.

I remember the time frame – I was home watching TV one day and saw the Challenger space shuttle blow up.⁵²

Anyway, I got a job at Lockheed making a panel for the USAF C-5 Galaxy. See any irony there? Galaxy? Galaxy? I hated that job – a one hour commute from Morrow, south of Atlanta, to Marietta, to the north of Atlanta and return. I was cutting, welding and riveting a single panel; ten or eleven hours per day, five days a week. The pay was pretty good, but I was bored to tears.

I called Reinhardt at St. Lucia and asked him if he needed any FE's. He was pissed that I had never returned his calls to go back to work. I told him that I assumed my employment with him was terminated after the Sudan contract. When I left St Lucia, I was living in Virginia with my wife and in-laws. He didn't have my new Atlanta phone number.

He hired me back right over the phone! He did get his revenge, though. Although I was now receiving my monthly salary, I wasn't making any money for flight hours. He kept me at home, on the ground for about four weeks. I finally begged and groveled and he sent me to Kamina Base in Zaire, where they were just starting up an operation.

So, there is the story of my short employment with Galaxy Airlines. The company closed its doors a few months after I left.

52 The disaster occurred on 28 January 1986, killing the crew of five astronauts and two payload specialists. See: Rogers Commission: *Report of the Presidential Commission on the Space Shuttle Challenger Accident*, Washington, DC, 6 June 1986, at history.nasa.gov/rogersrep/51lcover.htm

5. Zaire and Angola

War came to Angola in 1961⁵³, when the *União das Populações de Angola (UPA)*, followed by the *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA)*, began a protracted guerrilla war against the Portuguese for national liberation. There is disagreement about when the MPLA was formed. It is alleged that the MPLA “backdated its origins in order to situate its birth earlier, in 1956, and inside [Angola]. This was done in order to legitimize its constitution and shore up its credibility [...] This revision of its origins challenges the legitimacy of the MPLA’s claim to have launched the anti-colonial war [...]”⁵⁴. The most prominent anti-colonial movement prior to 1961 was the *União das Populações de Angola (UPA)*⁵⁵, out of which the *Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA)* came forth in 1962. A rivalry, between FNLA and MPLA, ensued over which movement would lead Angola to independence. Jonas Savimbi left the FNLA in 1964, after disaffection with the FNLA’s pro-American stance. The charismatic Savimbi⁵⁶ created the maoist *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA)* in 1966, and sought closer ties with China.⁵⁷

The FNLA, operated out of Congo (later Zaire)⁵⁸, and was in contact with the CIA⁵⁹. It received military aid from China, Romania, North Korea and various other countries. The

53 On Angola, see: Guimaraes, F.A.: *The Origins of the Angolan Civil War*, MacMillan, 1998.; Gleijeses, P.: *Conflicting Missions. Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976*, The University of North Carolina Press, 2003.; George, E.: *The Cuban Intervention in Angola, 1965-1991. From Che Guevara to Cuito Cuanavale*, Frank Cass, 2005.

54 Guimaraes,,1998: p. 44-45.

55 Created as the *União das Populações do Norte de Angola (UPNA)*.

56 Worth to note for the analysis of Savimbi’s political role is the article by G. Calchi-Novati: “Jonas Savimbi, il Contras dell’Africa”, *Il Manifesto*, 24 February 2002.

57 See footnote 61.

58 Holden Roberto, strong man of the FNLA, was the brother-in-law of Mobutu, President of Zaire. In 1960, Congo became independent. The Congolese nationalist Patrice Lumumba became the first freely elected prime minister. The United States was convinced that Lumumba was a dangerous communist extremist. Immediately thereafter Congo faced several major crises – an army revolt instigated by Belgium, and, more importantly, the secession of Katanga with aid from the Belgian government and *Union Minière*. Lumumba turned to the Soviet Union for help, thereby enforcing the United States’ prejudices. He would become the victim of two assassination plots by the Belgian government and the CIA. In these trying times he also requested help from the United Nations. According to Ludo De Witte (*De moord op Lumumba*, Van Halewyck, 1999) this was not without implications. The UN Secretary-General Hammarskjöld had taken sides, against Lumumba. De Witte supports his claim by quoting documents from the UN archive. In a secret exchange with US diplomats, Hammarskjöld had said that “Lumumba must be broken”. Lumumba had appointed Mobutu as Chief of Staff of the *Armée Nationale Congolaise*. In September, Mobutu took control and received prompt covert aid from the United States. Lumumba was arrested in early December by the Congolese army. Mobutu delivered Lumumba into the hands of the Katangese secessionists. On the 17 January 1961, Lumumba was murdered by Katangese soldiers and Belgian officers. In 1965, Mobutu staged a coup and appointed himself to President of Zaire. (See also Howland, N. D., D. C. Humphrey and H. D. Schwar (eds.): *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964–1968, Volume XXIII, Congo, 1960–1968*. Government Printing Office, 2013: See especially documents 22, 30 and 68.)

59 Bender, G. J.: “Angola: A Story of Stupidity”, *The New York Review of Books*, 21 December 1978; Stockwell, J. and reply by G. J. Bender: “The CIA in Angola”, *The New York Review of Books*, 17 May 1979. Holden Roberto received a yearly retainer of USD10,000 from 1961 until 1976 from CIA (DoS Cable 1977State038950).

MPLA, operating from Congo-Brazzaville, was aided by the Soviet Union⁶⁰, East Germany... UNITA received military training from China.⁶¹ The 1974 left-wing coup in Portugal meant the end of the colonial era.⁶² In January 1975, it was agreed that Angola would become independent on 11 November 1975. A transitional government (consisting of the three liberation movements and Portugal) would govern the land until independence day. With independence near, a power struggle began between the three liberation movements. The old rivalry between FNLA and MPLA escalated.⁶³ The situation was further exacerbated by the Portuguese government allegedly favouring MPLA over FNLA.⁶⁴ Since February 1975, sporadic violence was witnessed between FNLA and MPLA forces, but armed confrontation reached a new level late March 1975.⁶⁵ UNITA kept its distance. In June 1975, UNITA was forced to take sides in the conflict after the massacre of 50 UNITA supporters.⁶⁶

With the three liberation movements at odds with each other, an arms race between the three ensued. In July 1974, the CIA began to fund the FNLA covertly. The Soviet Union and its allies responded by sending arms shipments to the MPLA via Congo-Brazzaville. Major

60 DoS Cables 74LUANDA 00197, dated 4 April 1974; 74STATE 223686, dated 10 October 1974.

61 Stockwell, J.: *In Search of Enemies – A C.I.A. Story*, Norton, 1978. Stockwell was Chief of the CIA Angola Task Force in the mid-1970s. See also DoS cable 75LUSAKA00538, dated 25 March 1975: “[...] as for Chinese, Savimbi said he had dealt with in early days of UNITA but found them unreliable, being strong on promise but short on delivery, he not anti-Chinese but implied he does not expect much from them nor from Soviets [...]”. According to Gleijeses (2003), Chinese aid was minimal.

62 The movement that led to the overturning of the dictatorship firstly emerged as an opposition to the government’s decision (mid 1973) to commit militia officers to the colonial wars. Later, in February 1974, when the book *Portugal e o Futuro* was issued, in which the author – general António de Spínola, a veteran of the colonial wars – argued the possibility of a negotiated solution to solve the problem of the independence movements in the colonies. He also supported the opportunity to find an alternative to the rule of Caetano. On the wave that this book provoked in Portugal, part of the Armed Forces, led by Francisco da Costa Gomes, attempted a coup. The coup was successful and ended nearly half a century of dictatorship (25 April 1974). Censorship was abolished and democratic structures introduced. The coup also ended the colonial rule in Angola, Mozambique, Portuguese Guinea (Guinea-Bissau), Cape Verde and East Timor. (On issue of decolonization, see also DoS Cables 74LISBON01735, dated 3 May 1974; 74LISBON02065, dated 23 May 1974; 74LUANDA00379, dated 28 May 1974; 74LUANDA00595, dated 23 July 1974; 74LISBON03454, dated 13 August 1974.)

63 DoS Cable 74LUSAKA 01920, dated 18 September 1974. Roberto also held a grudge against Savimbi. According to Roberto, the latter had tried to discredit him “at 1964 OAU Conference in Cairo, accusing him of being USG/CIA puppet” (DoS Cable 74KINSHA08971, dated 24 October 1974).

64 See for instance DoS Cables 74LUANDA00638, dated 30 July 1974; and 75LISBON03419, dated 18 June 1975.

65 See DoS Cable 75LUANDA00321, dated 7 February 1975 on possible FNLA actions and the possible prospect of civil war. These speculations started from the incorrect assumption that the FNLA could field more troops. (See Stockwell, 1978). Nor did it take into consideration the long supply lines for FNLA. In regard of UNITA, DoS Cable 75LUANDA00392, dated 11 April 1975 from the American Consulate in Luanda to Department of State, ends on a very positive note. According to the consulate “we must take seriously UNITA’s claim to have 30,000-40,000 soldiers available or in training” (Stockwell estimated a number of 4,000), but it was lacking arms and ammunition. UNITA’s Secretary-General “did not seem particularly concerned by the [...] problem and brushed off probing questions on it with cryptic reply that UNITA will have weapons by the time they need them”. Yet the report concludes “UNITA is not yet militarily significant but it must be assumed that it will be able to field the largest, if not the best equipped, armed force by the time of independence”...

66 Guimaraes, F.A., 1998: p. 106.

weapon systems for the MPLA began to arrive in March 1975. In July 1975, the CIA approved its USD64 million covert paramilitary program for Angola without the knowledge of the U.S. Congress.⁶⁷ U.S. military aid got flown in from Kamina AFB (Zaire) to UNITA and FNLA. Mobutu sent army units to Angola to fight alongside FNLA and UNITA.⁶⁸ In the autumn of 1975, Cuban regular troops were sent to support MPLA.⁶⁹

Meanwhile, in early August 1975, South Africa⁷⁰ had secured the strategically important Calueque and Ruacana hydro-electric dams, allegedly to protect South African investment. This action was followed by the insertion of South African special forces to train and arm FNLA and UNITA troops. In October, a South African covert army unit⁷¹ crossed the Angolan/Southwest African border and swept north.⁷² UNITA's acceptance of South African aid would be the undoing of UNITA in the long run.⁷³

The revelation of covert CIA involvement in Angola brought immediate action by the U.S. Congress in December 1975. The Tunney Amendment (Clark Amendment) was passed, which forbade U.S. aid to groups or individuals for conducting military or paramilitary operations in Angola.⁷⁴ The Clark Amendment was repealed in August 1985 during the

67 According to Guimaraes (1998), USD64 million of military aid was given to FNLA, UNITA and Zaire.

68 On 10 November 1975, one day before independence, and 25 km outside of Luanda, the FNLA/Zairian force got routed by MPLA/Cuban units. The remnants fled to Zaire, pillaging and raping along the way.

69 George, E.: *The Cuban Intervention in Angola, 1965-1991. From Che Guevara to Cuito Cuanavale*, Frank Cass, 2005.

70 Up to this day there is still much discussion if there was any official cooperation between South Africa and the United States vis-à-vis Angola. As Gleijeses puts it: "in the declassified record South Africa is virtually invisible" (Gleijeses, P., 2003: p. 291). According to Stockwell, field agents of the CIA did cooperate with the South Africans but this was not official U.S. policy. (Stockwell, J., 1978: p. 185-190). Stockwell alleges that any attempts by the CIA to make the cooperation with the South Africans formal, e.g. providing South Africa with arms and ammunition for UNITA or FNLA, was blocked. (Stockwell, J., 1978: 189-190). Gleijeses is very skeptical because of contradictions in the written record (Gleijeses, P., 2003: 291-293).

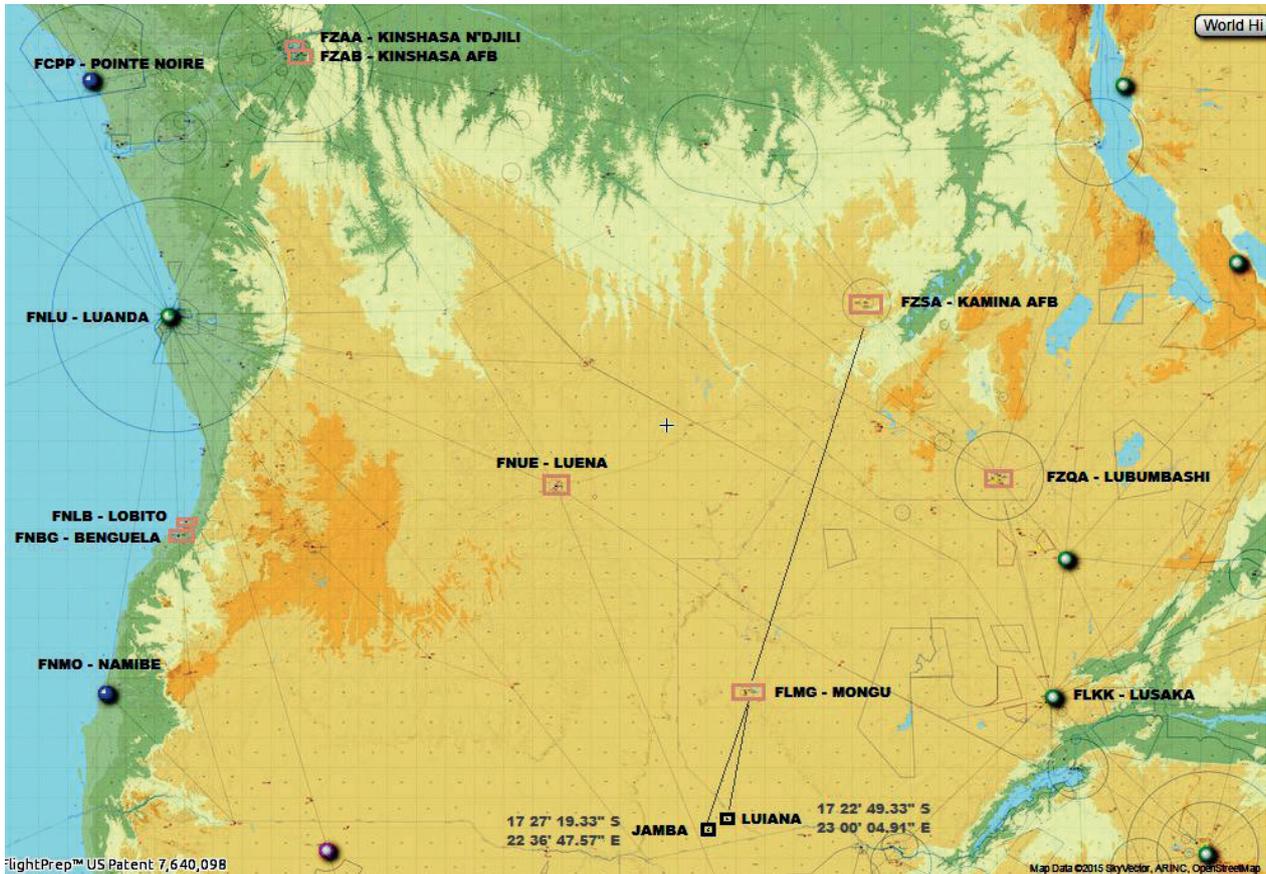
71 "The invasion force – Task Force Zulu – was hastily assembled from two Angolan groups the SADF had been training since late August [...] The first was designated Battle-Group Alpha... and consisted of two companies of Bushman soldiers, many of whom had served in the Portuguese Flechas (commandos) as irregular tracking units hunting down the FNLA and UNITA [...] Battle-Group Bravo [...] would be three companies of Chipenda's troops [FNLA], and who less than a year before had been fighting the Bushmen." (George, E., 2005: p. 71). Bravo Group would form the nucleus of the SADF's 32 'Buffalo' Battalion. Members of 32 Battalion would, after its disbandment in 1989, join the private military company Executive Outcomes, and fight against UNITA on behalf of the Angolan government. ("Gunships for Hire", *Flight International*, 21-27 August 1996; "Africa's new enforcers", *The Independent*, 15 September 1996).

72 After a 800 km advance into Angola, the South Africans halted 300 km south from Luanda. The South African invasion force had to deal with various constraints. According to George (2005), the South African leadership was divided about the necessity of direct intervention. Therefore no clear objectives were set for the invasion force. Instead of moving directly to Luanda, the invasion was done in stages, causing delay. Guimaraes (1998) points out that the United States had possibly opposed the taking of Luanda by the South Africans. The most preferred option had been the FNLA taking Luanda. In 1976, South Africa withdrew its troops, but South Africa would be involved in the Angolan civil war for the next thirteen years.

73 See Stockwell, J., 1978: p. 154. Savimbi's contacts with South African authorities started in early 1975 (Gleijeses, P., 2003: p. 276) Documents have surfaced that in the early seventies Savimbi was in collusion with the Portuguese (Gleijeses, P., 2003: p. 239). A diplomatic cable to Department of State dated 30 June 1975 (75LUANDA00837) reported that Portugal in 1975 tried to arm UNITA once violence had erupted.

74 "Clark Amendment", <http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/history/johnson/clark.htm>

Reagan administration, allowing for covert non-lethal assistance to UNITA.⁷⁵ Quickly, lethal aid was included in the covert aid package.⁷⁶ St. Lucia Airways became one of several aviation companies involved in ferrying aid to UNITA. [Ed.]



As in most of Africa in the 1980s, civil war was raging in Angola. It was one of the longer and more fiercely fought wars – between the Marxist government led by President Eduardo dos Santos and the UNITA rebels led by a huge black man, Jonas Savimbi. The US supported the rebels with arms and, more importantly, Stinger missiles. The South African government was also supporting UNITA with arms. Russia and Cuba supported the Marxist government.

In 1986, St. Lucia Airways was contracted by the CIA to fly Stinger missiles from Kelly AFB, TX, to UNITA headquarters at Jamba in southern Angola. When the Sudan contract was over, Reinhardt had the airplane (J6-SLO) ferried from Miami to Brussels to have it painted blue by Sabena Technics. Reinhardt then flew a crew (me as the FE) from the USA to Brussels to pick it up. When I saw the paint job, my first thought was that this doesn't look like a very "super-secret" airplane. Anyway, Reinhardt had us fly from Brussels to Pisa, Italy. The USAF has a small detachment there and we were to pick up some empty rubber fuel bladders and bring them back to Miami. The USAF master sergeant there was very

75 "House Acts to Allow Angola Rebel Aid", *New York Times*, 11 July 1985; "Reagan Says U.S. Favors Covert Aid to Angola Rebels", *New York Times*, 23 November 1985.

76 Scott, J.M.: *Deciding to Intervene. The Reagan Doctrine and American Foreign Policy*, Duke University Press, 1996.

reluctant to turn over his fuel bladders to a crew on a blue Herc with a St Lucian registration. After a few phone calls, everything was ironed out. When we started the Kamina operation in Zaire, the fuel bladders proved invaluable.

The missiles came from Kelly AFB to Kamina aboard a St Lucia Airways Boeing 707, registered J6-SLA. They were off-loaded at Kamina and loaded onto the L-100-20 Hercules with the registration J6-SLO. One 707 load was two loads for the Herc. *En route* to Kamina, the 707 would stop at Kinshasa, Zaire, take on a full load of jet fuel. On arrival at Kamina, the fuel would be pumped out and into bladders, leaving the 707 with enough fuel for the return flight to Kinshasa, where it would again take on fuel for its return flight to Kelly via Ostend airport (Belgium). I'm sure the refuelers in Kinshasa were scratching their heads – *"Didn't we just put a bunch of fuel in this airplane a few hours ago?"*

Kamina Air Base

Kamina Base is an old Belgian Air Base in central Zaire. It was built after WW II and mainly used for local pilot and paratroop training. The base is huge, with two parallel 8,858 foot (2,700 meters) runways and four huge hangars. When the Belgian Congo gained independence in June 1960, Belgium initially retained control of the base, but in October 1960, control of the base was taken over by the UN. It wasn't until early 1964 that Kamina was handed over to the Congolese Armed Forces.

Kamina Base was also the staging point for the 1964 Dragon Rouge rescue operation, consisting of USAF C-130's and Belgian paratroopers. They were tasked to rescue the white expatriates who were held captive and later massacred by rebels who called themselves Simbas – Swahili for "lions".



View from the tower of the Herc and the Boeing 707

The 707 was used for the first few months of the operation and then it was decided to use a USAF C-141. I always got a kick out of those USAF guys. They thought they were real

cowboys, wearing civilian clothes and side arms. Incidentally, "cowboys" is what we called the CIA guys at Jamba.

We would take off in the early evening with a scheduled landing after dark at Jamba. Initially, we were landing at another UNITA airport called Liuianna, right on Angola's border with Zambia. Our routing was to fly directly south from Kamina and turn west at Mongu, Zambia. That was the routing to Liuianna as well as Jamba, which was just further west from the border in central Angola.

While on the ground at Jamba, we would always keep one engine running to assure we could start the other ones. There would always be a crewmember in the cockpit to monitor the gauges. One time, I was on my way to the cockpit to relieve the first officer (FO) and as I was passing the crew entrance door, I noticed that we were moving! I got to the cockpit and immediately flipped a toggle switch that selected the brakes from "normal" to "emergency". That was where the switch should've been in the first place! The FO was a Brit who lived in St. Lucia and ran a charter boat business. He may have been a good boat pilot, but he sucked as an airplane pilot.

Anyway, the airplane had moved so much that the nose wheel was off the runway and in the sand. After the off-load was finished, we cranked up the other three engines and tried to reverse out of the sand. We had a very sick #2 engine that would bog down whenever the propeller was put in reverse, so we could only use the outboards. We finally had to chain two big South African military trucks to some 25,000 pound tie down rings on the cargo floor. With the two trucks and the outboards in full reverse, we finally got the airplane back on the runway.

I know it's not nice to speak ill of the dead, but that FO was a real idiot. He was the captain on this same airplane when it crashed on approach to Jamba on the night of 27 November 1989. I was gone from St. Lucia Airways by then. In fact, by then, St. Lucia Airways was no more. It had been bought in 1987 by Tepper Aviation in Crestview, FL, and the registration was changed from the St. Lucia registration (J6-SLO) to the American registration (N920ST). With the N-number came all of the FAA rules and regulations. Also came polygraph tests. That was my demise at Tepper. What we were doing in Angola was the best-known (in the Herc community) super-secret operation. I had told my father-in-law about it. I felt that if something happened to me, at least he would know where I was and who I was working for. The "suits" in the CIA didn't like that, so I was given "the golden handshake". Fine with me!

That Tepper crash was an accident looking for a place to happen. The entire crew was very inexperienced. I already mentioned the captain. The FO was Bud Petty, the president of Tepper Aviation. He was a very likeable guy, but had almost no experience in the Herc. He was a retired US Army warrant officer flying helicopters in Vietnam. The FE was a German, Gerhard Reiger, also an extremely likeable guy. He only had about 300 hours as an FE. He was hired by St. Lucia as a mechanic, having worked for Transamerica in Frankfurt before that. He left behind a very pregnant wife. The loadmaster was also a German, named George Bensch.



Sergio,

I got this photo from Sean O'Brien. He works the tower at Shannon Airport, Ireland. No date or location, but to me, it looks like Miami, FL

Don R.

There was also a new hire captain observer on his first flight to Jamba. His name was Kim Heller. He had much more time in the left seat of a Herc than the combined time of the rest of the crew. I knew him from Transafrik. I remember drinking some beers with him in Luanda while sitting around the pool. He was sick of Transafrik and being away from his family for three months at a time and was picking my brain about Tepper. I told him of the few plusses and many minuses about the job. He went anyway.

The Book of Honor : The Secret Lives and Deaths of CIA Operatives, by Ted Gup, (p. 318 – 337)

In November 1989, Jimmy Spessard received an unusual set of orders. He was to go to Zaire and then on to Angola, part of a covert mission of particular sensitivity. It was the last chapter in the Cold War [...] The lumbering cargo plane that would take him into Angola was to be one of the "Gray Ghosts", so named for their slate-colored paint [...] On board that night was a seasoned crew of six. Even by Agency standards, it had a distinctly international flavour. Heading the team was Pharies "Bud" Petty, a veteran Agency pilot who, at least on paper, presided over a Florida firm called Tepper Aviation, located in Crestview, just off Eglin Air Force Base. The other crew members were all ostensibly employees of Tepper. The CIA often uses such contracts as a mask to conceal its activities from public scrutiny, suspicion, and ultimately, accountability [...]

In 1981, Petty had gone to work for the Agency, living for a time in Washington, D.C. Later he moved to Florida and set up a series of dummy companies and Agency proprietaries that provided the CIA with planes and crews. During the mid-1980s he played an unseen role in what would come to be known as Iran-Contra. He was a part of that tight-lipped circle of pilots and crew associated with St. Lucia Airways as it ferried missiles to Iran, supplied anti-Communist insurgencies, and engaged in other Agency-sponsored activities [...]

Also on board were eleven of Savimbi's men and a fuselage full of supplies, including crates of ammo. So secretive was the operation that even at Kamina the men lived

under aliases. When airborne, flight records listed them not by name, but by number. The two nightly flights were simply designated "Flight One" and "Flight Two." Even Savimbi was referred to only by an Agency code name. All knowledge of the operation was compartmented on a need-to-know basis [...]

Spessard's flight represented the first resumption of the resupply effort in many months. It took off without incident and for the next five hours was tracked closely by the Agency, which was in constant communication with the aircraft. It was an Agency communications officer in Kinshasa who first reported that he had lost contact with the plane [...]

Six months later, in Hagerstown, Maryland, Debra Spessard received a phone call from a woman who identified herself as Teresa Petty, Bud Petty's daughter. She was sobbing and said that she suspected her father's coffin had been empty. She was convinced she had been lied to. She had no proof to back up her accusation, but she was certain she and other family members had been duped. Then her grief gave way to anger. She said that the Agency had concluded that the plane had gone down due to pilot error. She said her father was too good a pilot to let that explanation stand. Later her family challenged that finding and the Agency seemed to amend its findings, in part to mollify Petty's survivors. There was talk of a faulty altimeter or other instrument.



I remember when we initially set up housekeeping at Kamina, we had to bring in *everything*. On my first trip on 18 March 1986, we left Brussels for Pisa, Italy. The USAF had a detachment on the military base there. Here we come, showing up in a baby blue Herc. We were there to pick up some fuel bladders for the operation in Kamina. The Air Force representative didn't really want to give up his bladders to a non-US registered blue C-130, but after a few phone calls, he relented.

We even built a swimming pool outside of our "home". After one of our six week tours, we bought bags of cement, rebar, a pool pump and filter at the local Home Depot in Port Charlotte, FL, and the next crew took it back to Zaire and had the locals dig a hole and build the pool. I spent a lot of off time sitting out there reading and drinking beer. A friend of mine took a photo of it in 2006 and it's just a cement hole in the ground now.



Then (1987)



Now (2006)

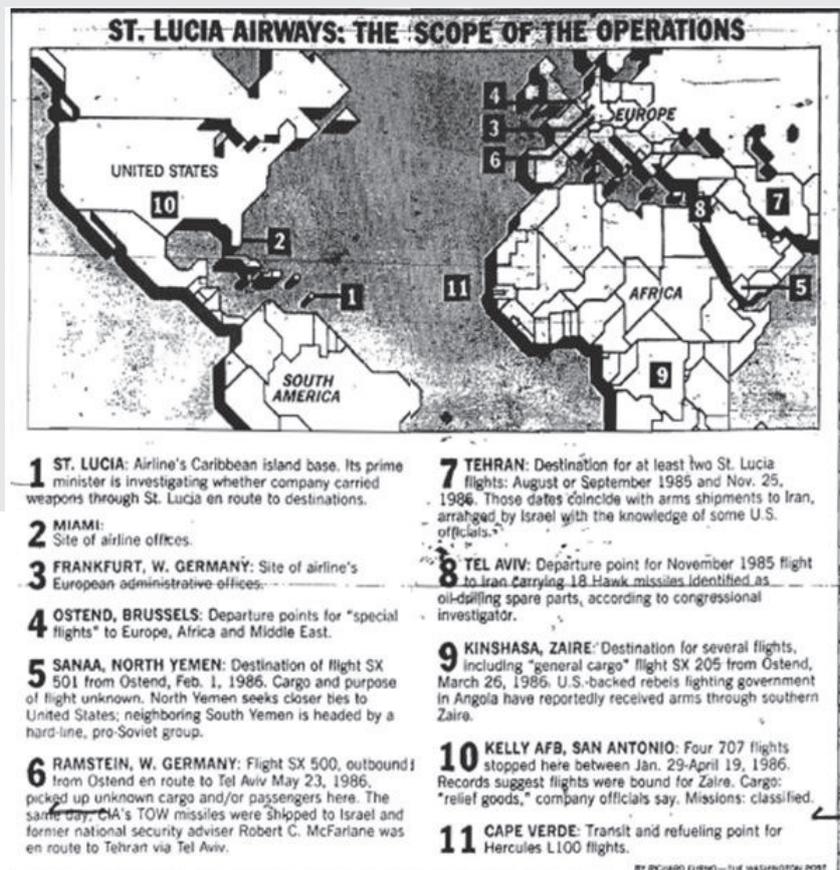
Speaking of home, our "home" was a large room in what used to be the Base Operations building. It reminded me of my days in USAF basic training back in 1963, living in open bay barracks.

You could walk out of the bedroom and into the hallway and be watching a movie or eating breakfast in about five steps.

The cook at Kamina Base was a local; he was called "Monsor", a close pronunciation of the French word. We also had a local who cleaned, made our beds and did our laundry. I remember he would ask us "Do you want this laundry tomorrow or *to-now?*"

I don't think I've ever drank more beer or watched more movies than at Kamina. Reinhardt had a deal with a local video store owner in Port Charlotte, FL, where he would rent 40 or 50 movies at a time for six weeks and we'd load them up and bring them with us.

During one of our six-week stays in Kamina, there was a lull in operations, so a King Air was sent from the US Embassy in Kinshasa to pick us up and take us to Lubumbashi (Elisabethville under the Belgians) for a



few days of R & R. The loadmaster volunteered to remain behind to keep an eye on the airplane. Of course, he was also broke.

I had heard a story about Reinhardt having a 707 stolen from him when he owned Pearl Air in Zaire. It was stolen in Athens by his partner and flown to Lubumbashi and parked. It had been there for so long that the landing and parking fees were more than the airplane was worth. Well, as we were deplaning, there it was parked in a far corner of the ramp – still with the big “C” on the tail. It’s always sad (but not at all uncommon) to see a perfectly good airplane decaying in the hot, humid African climate.

Lubumbashi is in the Katanga Province, an area rich in copper. Hence, the big “C” on the 707’s tail.

We were there three or four days, staying at the Lubumbashi Sheraton, a very nice hotel on top of a hill overlooking the city. I did a lot of walking around, exploring the city. Ironically, I felt more secure walking around that city than I would have felt walking around Atlanta, GA, where I was living at the time.

Then, a few days later, we were back to the night-time flights to Jamba. That may sound exciting to the uninitiated, but it was actually pretty boring. Of course, night landings on a short dirt strip in darkest Africa can get adrenalin pumping, especially for the pilots.

To land on that dirt strip at night, UNITA would have fire pots along the runway and would light them when we were about one minute out. The take-offs were equally exciting. Almost immediately after take-off, the fire pots would be extinguished and I, as the FE would turn off the landing lights. To anyone familiar with the Herc, you may be wondering why the FE would control the lights. In my 32 years on the Herc, the lights were controlled by the FO, as the switches were directly in front of him next to the landing gear handle. Well, on this particular model, the landing and taxi light controls were on my overhead light panel. It’s the only Herc I’ve ever seen with the switches up there. Probably a specification ordered by the original buyer – Zambian Air Cargo.

Since I’ve mentioned the original owner, I may as well relate the history of this airplane. As I said, it was originally delivered to Zambian Air Cargo in April 1966, registration 9J-RBW. In 1969, it was bought by Maple Leaf Leasing and immediately leased to Pacific Western Airlines in Canada as C-FPWN. In August 1969, it was damaged in a landing accident at Eureka, NWT, where it was temporarily repaired and ferried to the Lockheed factory in Marietta, GA. There, during the repairs, it also had a 5 foot plug installed forward of the wing and a 3’ 4” plug aft of the wing to make it an L-100-20. That added one more pallet position. From there, it was leased to Alaska International Airlines and registered as N109AK. It mainly flew supporting the North Slope oil explorations in Alaska. In 1977, it was sold to PWA and again registered as C-FPWN. In May 1984, St. Lucia Airways bought it and registered it as J6-SLO. When I originally met her in October 1985, she was still in the PWA livery with the St. Lucia logo on the tail. Sometime in 1986, she was painted in the all

blue colors. Then, on 1 February 1987, an article appeared in the *New York Times*⁷⁷ that shed some light on a blue Hercules and a blue 707 delivering arms to the UNITA from Zaire. It was decided to ferry the airplane to Hewanorra airport in St. Lucia to have it repainted again; still with the basic blue, but with other shades of blue accenting the lines of the fuselage. Up until the last paint job, it had "Juicy Lucy" on the nose, the St. Lucia Airways name on the fuselage and the logo on the tail. "Juicy Lucy" was given its nickname by a French Herc crew in Khartoum. They were with a company called SFair and were operating a Herc leased from Safair. Our call sign there was the registration, which started with "Juliette 6.". The French just started calling us "Juicy Lucy," named after a British band.

In January 1988, Tepper Aviation bought all of St. Lucia's assets and registered the Herc as N9205T. It also applied the name to the "Gray Ghost", since the airplane was now painted all gray. The rest is history.



Mentioning the all blue color scheme reminds me of another story. In early December 1986, we were contracted to fly some cargo for the CIA from Little Rock AFB, AR to Swan Island, 90 miles off the coast of Honduras. The island is uninhabited except for a small Honduran Navy detachment and a CIA post. It also has a 3,800' grass strip in a cow pasture.

We made two or three flights into there – daytime landings, for a change. My captain this time was Matt Gaudio, the 35-year old ex-USMC C-130 pilot. On our first landing there, the grass was extremely wet, making our landing similar to landing on ice. We touched down at the end of the "runway" and immediately brought the props into reverse. One of the outboard props was slow to reverse and we wound up making a 180° turn at about 100 knots. There was also a lot of slippery cow crap on the runway. After our flights into Swan Island, we flew to Charlotte County airport in Florida, where the airplane was now based. The mechanics had to rent a commercial pressure washer to get out all the crap packed in the landing gear!

We never told ATC that we were landing there. We'd just request a lower altitude to do some VFR (Visual Flight Rules) training and then after taking off, we'd request clearance back to Little Rock AFB.

⁷⁷ Brooke, J.: "C.I.A. said to send weapons via Zaire to Angola rebels", *New York Times*, 1 February 1987. Among other information, Brooke reported that "on Jan. 24, police agents in Lubumbashi, Zaire, prevented the writer of the dispatch above from boarding a plane to Kinshasa. In a one-hour interrogation, the agents repeatedly asked if the correspondent, James Brooke, was investigating allegations that Zaire is a transfer point for arms to UNITA. On Jan. 26, the United States Ambassador to Zaire, Brandon H. Grove Jr., conveyed a message from the Zairian Government to Mr. Brooke that if he wrote about the Zaire-UNITA relationship, the Zairian authorities would never again grant him an entry visa. The Ambassador stressed that he was merely passing along the message." See also Gup, T. "Tiny St. Lucia Airline Used in Iran Missions", *Washington Post*, 24 February 1987.

Little Rock is a huge military C-130 training base, with as many as 200 or more camouflaged C-130's parked on the ramp. We were required to have our baby blue Herc off the airbase before sunrise

Well, as it happened, we had some sort of radar problem that wouldn't allow us to depart. A USAF avionics specialist was dispatched to fix the problem. I'm sure he was expecting to climb aboard a camouflaged C-130, not our pretty bluebird. He fixed the problem and Matt slipped him a \$100 bill from the captain's funds, but by now the sun had come up and here we were parked directly in front of Base Operations, surrounded by green camouflaged C-130's. The Wing Commander saw that we were still there and almost had a cardiac arrest. He calmed down after our explanation and a few phone calls, but he still wasn't happy.



St. Lucia Airways J6-SLO, Brussels, Belgium 1986

Another funny anecdote from this Swan Island escapade was the refueling operation at Little Rock. We got our fuel from USAF fuel trucks. All the USAF airplanes have their own individual DoD credit cards for fuel. Well, when we finished the first refueling,

the little 2-striper fuel truck driver asked for the credit card. Matt asked her how much did the fuel cost – in cash! The poor girl had to call her supervisor out to figure it out. I don't remember the cost, but it was substantial. Matt paid her in \$100 bills and told her to keep the change. She had a Security Police escort to the on-base bank to make a night deposit. The kid probably still tells people about the crew on the blue C-130 that paid big bucks in \$100 bills for the fuel – probably as much as she made in a year!



On one of my trips to Kamina I was with Non-sked Fred. It was also my last trip with St. Lucia as it had been bought by Tepper Aviation. Luckily, at the time, I smoked cigarettes. Fred, a chain smoker, would have a cigarette in his mouth from engine start to shut down. Our FO was the St. Lucian, Mike, who was a non-smoker. Although I thought he was an a\$\$hole, I still felt sorry for him. He was trapped in his seat with two heavy smokers basically surrounding him – and we took full advantage of his predicament.

On the ferry flight home, we usually stopped at Libreville, Gabon, for fuel and catering. After crossing the South Atlantic, we would stop again for fuel in Barbados and then Key West (for customs and immigration) to Charlotte County airport.

On this return trip on 26 September 1987, our final destination was to be Bob Sikes Airport in Crestview, FL – the headquarters of Tepper Aviation. Fred also changed our first tech

stop from Libreville in Gabon to São Tomé, a small Portuguese-speaking island nation about 150 miles off the coast of Gabon. I didn't realize the significance of that change until we got to Crestview. At São Tomé, Fred said he'd be right back while we refueled. He was gone for quite a while and when he got back, all he said was "Let's go."

When we landed that evening at Crestview, we were instructed to park by the Fairchild Aviation hanger. After we shut down and before the props have even stopped winding down, there were mechanics all over the airplane taping over the registration and logos. A sad demise of J6-SLO and "Juicy Lucy", and the birth of N9205T and the "Gray Ghost".

Bud Petty, the president of Tepper, was also there to meet us. He took Fred aside and they had what looked like a very animated conversation with a lot of finger shaking. I found out later that Bud was pissed because of our tech stop at São Tomé. That is where all of Transafrik's fleet is registered. Fred had seen the writing on the wall and was campaigning for a new job. Within a few weeks, I was out on the streets – Fred would follow a month or so later...



One of my longest "non-stop" flights with St. Lucia (well actually it was Tepper by now) was from Kamina to Charlotte County Airport, FL. It began on 12 December 1987, just a week or so before Christmas and we had one more flight to Jamba that night before going home. We decided to do the Jamba trip and then, at Kamina, refuel for the flight to Roberts International Airport in Liberia for our fuel tech stop. From there, we did the usual Barbados (for fuel), Key West (for customs and immigration) and Crestview airport. Total flight time was 33 hours and 28 minutes. From there, I drove the 100 miles to my home in Tampa, FL. I don't think I was much fun that Christmas. Oh, by the way, that was also my final flight on "Juicy Lucy".

6. Transafrik International

When I left St. Lucia in the middle of 1988, I took the rest of the year off doing nothing. I could afford it. Well, one important thing I did was get a divorce. My wife was 17 years younger than me and didn't like me being away for extended periods of time. She did like the money that I brought home, though.

Actually, she left me in the summer of 1987. She had been messing around with one her younger brother's Air Force friends while I was away. I really can't blame her, in a way. I was gone for 6 weeks at a time – but I was also home for 6 weeks at a time. I remember the day she left – she was going to visit her girlfriend in Atlanta, GA, or so she said.

We had bought a nice ranch-style house in Valrico, FL; a few miles east of Tampa. When we bought the house, we decided I needed to be near a large international airport for my job, but I also didn't want to be too close to Port Charlotte where St. Lucia's offices were located. Valrico was perfect – 90 miles north of Port Charlotte and 15 miles from the airport.

The day she left, I remember her telling me from her car, "Don't worry, there's no one else." Bullshit. She was going on a road trip with her boyfriend only I didn't know it at the time! When I hadn't heard from her in more than a week, I called her girl friend. Her dad answered and told me he hadn't seen her in months. When she finally did come back, I had all her clothes in the closet in the guest bedroom. In retrospect, they should've all been out in the front yard!! She moved up to Virginia a few days later to live with her parents.

OK, enough of that crap. This is starting to sound like a freekin' soap opera. This is about my aviation career, but usually divorce and aviation go hand in hand.

As I said, I took the rest of the year off and around October, Non-sked Fred called me and asked if I was ready to go back to work in Africa. He turned me onto a company called Transafrik. I FedEx'd them my resume to their offices in London. About a week later, I got a call from Mr. Peterken offering me a job. I had to send them my passport so I could get an Angolan visa. I also had to send them my flight engineer certificate so I could get an Angolan endorsement as one of the airplanes I'd be flying was registered there. The rest were registered in São Tomé and Príncipe; a small island nation off the west coast of central Africa. There were also two Hercules leased from the Bolivian Air Force.

On December 28th, I was on my way to Tampa airport to catch a Delta flight to Atlanta. From there, it was Sabena to Brussels with a 10 hour layover there. The next evening, I was boarding a Sabena DC-10 to Luanda, via Kinshasa, Zaire. If you've ever flown from Europe to Africa as a passenger, you know the check-in and boarding procedures are quite different than flying to any other continent. It's all very isolated from the rest of the airport. Africans know how to stand in line – the only problem is that the line is 3 people long and 20 people wide! I'm sure the flight attendants on these flights got some sort of hazard pay. It only took me that one flight to learn that paying the difference to upgrade to business class was well worth it.

Arriving in Luanda at around 6:00 AM was a real culture shock. The airport was typical African – it was hot, crowded, filthy and smelled of urine. To make matters worse, after standing by the baggage carousel for 45 minutes, I realized that my luggage went somewhere else besides where I was. Thankfully, the lost luggage representative for that flight was a Belgian Sabena employee. She checked and found my bag still in Brussels. She said it would be on the next flight – in 4 days! Thankfully, I never check my flight bag – ever.

I was met on the other side of customs and immigration by Marcos Brandalezze, the assistant director of operations. He was a white Mozambican. He took me to Transafrik's offices which were at the time in downtown Luanda. The ride there was another culture shock. At the office, I gave them my licenses for them to make copies. I also signed my contract.

From there, we went to flight operations on the parking ramp at the airport. There I met Fernando Brito, "Brito" to everyone. He was the Director of Operations. He knew everything going on with the flights. He was a white Angolan, one of the Portuguese whose family didn't flee when Angola got its independence from Portugal in 1975. There were quite a few of them with Transafrik. Brito told me to go to get some rest and he'd put me on the schedule with the chief flight engineer (FE) for some orientation flights in the next few days.

Marcos told me we were now on our way to Corimba I. Corimba I? That was our compound about 40 minutes south of the airport. It used to be the Philippine Consulate. There was a brass plaque at the entrance saying so. I wish, in retrospect, that I had "lifted" that plaque before I resigned, but someone beat me to it.



Corimba I Main Entrance

Corimba would be my home for the majority of the next 7 years, off and on. The compound was a pleasant change from my experiences at the airport and the trip downtown. There was a mess, a small swimming pool and various buildings scattered around about an acre of property. Getting my priorities straight, my first one was to get a cold beer.

The camp manager was South African, if I remember correctly. He assigned me a room in what everyone called the "snake house." Although in my 7 years with Transafrik I never saw a snake, I never liked that name.

It was there that I met Tim Holt, an American Herc FE. He was not a beer drinker, preferring the hard dark stuff. Here it was nearly 11:00 AM and he had a glass of coke that smelled a lot like Jack Daniel's. He went down to the mess and brought back some beers for me. The beer was called Diamond Beer; specially brewed for the diamond mines.

Tim took pity on me when I told him of my lost luggage plight. He was nice enough to loan (give) me a couple of pairs of "tighty-whities" and some t-shirts. I thanked him, drank a few beers with him and then crashed.

A couple of days later, I was on the schedule – night flights to Dundo, a diamond mine airport in northern Angola. Besides Luanda, Dundo was the only airport that had runway lights. Because of that, everyone went to Dundo after dark.

We arrived at Luanda airport at dusk and I saw one of the most amazing sights I had ever seen. There were 5 Hercs on the ramp in front of operations, 2 Electras and across the ramp, 2 DC-8's. Two of the Hercs were in Transafrik colors, two others in Bolivian Air Force colors (a C-130H and an L-100-30) and the 4th was all white with a yellow and green cheatline and an Angola flag on the tail. All were being loaded with either diesel fuel, mining equipment or bags of rice or beans. The two DC-8's were also in Transafrik colors as were the Electras. Those were being loaded for the next morning's flights.

Tonight, we would be flying the Bolivian C-130H to Dundo with a cargo compartment full of mining equipment – not just one flight, but more like 4 flights before we finished the next morning long after sunrise.

The crew consisted of Ben Hurt, the chief FE, myself and Jose Aguiar, a grumpy Portuguese captain. The first officer (FO) was an Angolan name Joao Amaral. He used to fly Mi-8 helicopters for the Angolan Air Force. He was one of the better Angolan pilots that I flew



Snake House



Dundo, Angola

with. Ben and I didn't hit it off right away; in fact, we never became "good buddies." He was a retired USAF AC-130 gunship FE and he never let anyone forget that.

Luanda to Dundo is about a two hour flight. When we arrived overhead Dundo, we contacted the tower and told them our position. They told us of other traffic in the landing pattern; perhaps 3 or 4 other planes below us. There were an Angolan Air Charter Herc and a couple of Russian An-12's. The procedure was to arrive overhead the airport and spiral down to landing. All these airplanes and *no one* had any exterior lights on! I don't know what was more dangerous, lighting up the airplane like a night game at Yankee Stadium for the UNITA rebels to shoot us down or keeping the lights off and risking a midair collision.

There was actually a midair a few years later between a Transafrik Herc and an Angolan Air Force Antonov 26. Both airplanes landed safely, but still and this was over an international airport in the daytime! JB Ramos was the Filipino captain on the Herc. He retired from flying this year (2011), having racked up more than 37,000 flying hours – all on the Herc. He is, and probably always will be the highest time Herc pilot ever!

I did this same boring routine for the next week or so; never seeing Dundo in the daytime. Hurt stayed with me for about the next 5 days and then signed me off to fly by myself. Most initial checkrides consisted of just a couple of flights, but mine was much longer. I think Hurt wanted some extra money in his paycheck by flying as a check airman.

When I showed up for second night of my Dundo trips, Brito told me that my luggage was at the terminal. I got Amaral to go with me since my mastery of the Portuguese language was non-existent. Thankfully, my bag had not been broken into. Now I could get out of the same pair of pants I had been wearing every day. Luckily, I had been given 3 pairs of uniform coveralls for the flights.

My first up-close experience with an airplane crash happened on the 9th of April 1989, less than 4 months after my arrival in Angola.

I can't remember all the circumstances, but we were flying from somewhere to Luanda when someone came up on the radio and said, "S9-NAI is on the ground and burning at Luena." Non-sked Fred replied saying he was on the way there. He was flying D2-EHD from Dundo to Luanda. He picked up the crew and brought them to Luanda.

Later, Fred told me that when he got to the infirmary where the crew was being checked, they all came out sharing a bottle of whiskey and smoking Cuban cigars. The crew consisted of Jose Aguiar, a Portuguese captain, Noel Navrette, a Filipino FO and an old American FE, Joe Jackson. The loadmaster was a white Angolan named Jorge Neto.

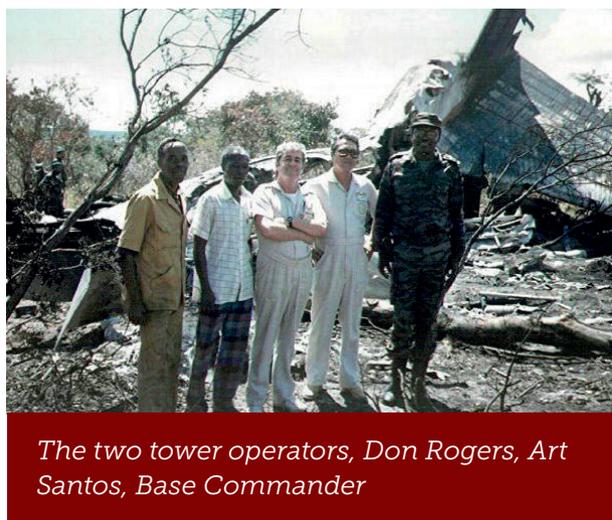
Joe later told me that Jose was flying a "B-52 bomber pattern" into Luena. In other words, he didn't spiral down, as was the procedure. Instead, he flew a pattern where he was on a very long and low, very slow final approach to the runway. They were hit by UNITA small arms fire and lost #2 engine. The cockpit immediately filled with smoke – so much so that neither pilot could see their instruments. Jose flew, hoping that he was keeping the wings level while Joe messed with the throttles trying to keep the power on the remaining

3 engines symmetrical. Thankfully, they did crash wings level and all the crew exited through the captain's swing window. The FO slightly injured his ankle when he landed on Jose. The loadmaster was the last to exit as he had been thrown from the bunk on impact and wound up by the first officer's feet.

Immediately upon impact, the airplane burst into flames. That's why the crew couldn't get out through the escape hatch on the roof of the cockpit. Oh, by the way, did I mention that the cargo consisted of 23,000 liters of jet fuel for the Angolan Air Force?

I remember that it occurred on a Saturday morning because exactly one week later I was scheduled to be part of a crew to fly a Lloyds of London insurance claim adjuster to Luena to check out the crash. The crew consisted of a Filipino captain, Ramon Dumlao, a Filipino FO, Art Santos and a Filipino loadmaster, Delfin Masipag.

Delfin stayed to off-load the airplane and the rest of us jumped in 2 Soviet versions of the Jeep. The Angolan base commander, plus both tower operators came, too. They just shut down the tower and left – nothing new in Africa.



The crash scene was amazing. The cockpit was completely gutted by the fire and separated from the rest of the airplane. The nose radome was under the vertical stabilizer which was lying on its side. There were pieces of airplane strewn all over the place – probably due to when the fuel tanks exploded.

The interesting thing in about 99% of Herc crashes is that the vertical stabilizer survives. This one was no exception. In fact, if one were to go to Google Earth and go to Luena, one would still see the stabilizer at the crash site. Of course, if one were to move around the runway at Luena on Google Earth, there are a few other airplane crashes to be found there.

As I mentioned earlier, besides the Herc, Transafrik also flew the Lockheed Electra with all-Filipino crews. One day, there was an Electra off-loading cargo at Luena. Luena is a joint use military/civilian airfield with a couple of Mig Russian made fighter jets based there. The Electra would park on the civilian ramp in front of the tower with the Mig's facing them. One of the Angolan Air Force mechanics was doing some maintenance on a Mig and accidentally fired off a missile. The missile skipped off of the ground and went right through the open cargo door of the Electra and out through the fuselage! Luckily, no one was injured nor was there any damage besides the gaping hole in the fuselage. The Filipinos just finished off-loading, closed the door, started engines and flew back to Luanda for repairs!

During my 7 years with Transafrik, I watched those Luena based Mig's slowly deteriorate in the African heat and humidity. I watched the same thing happen at most of the other air bases we visited. I used to fly with a British/South African captain who would see things like that and say, "AWA – Africa Wins Again!"

Since its beginning in 1985, Transafrik has lost seven Hercs. One of the airplanes lost was D2-EHD. It was my favorite Herc. When I first arrived in Luanda, it was owned by ENDIAMA (Empresa Nacional de Diamantes E.P), Angola's state run diamond company. Although owned by ENDIAMA, it was flown and maintained by Transafrik. It was an amazing airplane, averaging more than 18 hours a day -- seven days a week!

Sadly, it was shot down by the UNITA rebels on the second day of 1999 with the loss of all four crewmembers and all five passengers. After takeoff from Huambo, Angola, they flew at a fairly low altitude looking for the crash site of another Transafrik Herc that had been shot down a week earlier – again, with the loss of all lives. One of the passengers on the second shoot down was a young South African pilot named Hilton Wilkerson. His father was the captain on the plane they were searching for. That was the third and final shoot down of D2-EHD.

In February 1989, after taking off from Dundo, Angola, it was hit by a SAM missile fired by the UNITA rebels. It was hit in the right wing and caught fire. The Canadian captain managed to get it back to the airport. Shortly after stopping, the right wing burned off. It was repaired on site with a new wing flown in.

The second shoot down occurred in January 1993 after takeoff from Luena, Angola. This time it was hit in #3 engine by an RPG (rocket propelled grenade) again fired by the UNITA rebels. #3 propeller was blown off but again, they landed safely back at Luena. It was ferried to Luanda and then on to Lisbon, Portugal for repairs.

Thankfully, I had already left Transafrik when D2-EHD was lost, but I knew all the crewmembers on both of those Hercs shot down that week. The crew on D2-EHD was Ramón Dumlao, the chief Hercules pilot (Filipino); Victorino Alexandre, FO (Angolan); Rossi Coleman, chief Hercules FE (American) and Bernarbe Vicarme, loadmaster (Filipino.)



*Transafrik L-188 Electra
Miami, FL 1991*



*D2-EHD ENDIAMA
Dundo, Angola January 1993*

The following is a list of all of Transafrik's losses – just the total losses, not all the major or minor incidents; which were many, considering the environment we were flying in.

*April 6, 1989 – S9-NAI
(msn 4303), Luena, Angola.
Shot down by UNITA
rebels. No casualties.*



*March 16, 1991 – CP-1564
(msn 4833), Malange,
Angola. Shot down
by UNITA rebels. No
survivors.*

*December 26, 1998 –
S9-CAO (msn 4561),
Huambo, Angola. Shot
down by UNITA rebels. No
survivors.*



January 2, 1999 – D2-EHD (4839), Huambo, Angola. Shot down by UNITA rebels. No survivors.



December 10, 1999 – S9-BOP (4477), Luzamba, Angola. On landing, slid off wet dirt runway into 40 foot ravine. No casualties.



June 6, 2004 – S9-BAT (msn 4134), Sharana AB, Afghanistan. Hard landing, went off runway. No casualties.



June 10, 2005 – S9-BAS (msn 4472), Lokichokio, Kenya. Hard landing, hit another airplane on runway, tail broke off. Written off. No casualties.



July 13, 2006 – S9-BOF (msn 4586), Kigoma, Tanzania. Landed short of runway, burned. No casualties.



October 10, 2012 – 5X-TUC (msn 4362), Kabul, Afghanistan. Flew into mountain on approach to airport. No survivors.

Transafrik also flew a number of clapped out old Boeing 727's. Only two written off.

March 27, 1994 -- S9-TAN (msn 18893), M'Banza Congo, Angola. Landed short of runway, slid off into the village. No crew casualties, but seven casualties on the ground.

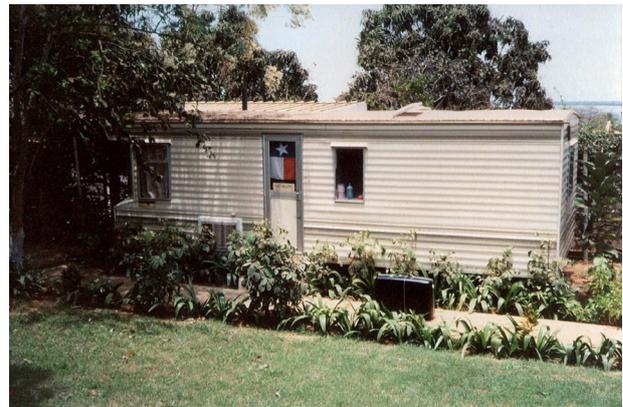


December 2, 2000 – S9-NAZ (msn 19404), Luanda, Angola. Very hard landing in severe thunderstorm. Tail broke off. No casualties.

After about an 18 month stint with Frameair, I returned to Transafrik. My reasons for leaving are discussed in the Frameair chapter. Basically, I was fed up with the management and the late paychecks

I went and talked with Brito about hiring me. He did because he had just lost an FE and a loadmaster in a bus accident. I think it happened on Christmas Eve. A crew bus was bringing two Hercules crews back to Corimba when an oncoming Angolan dump truck crossed the center line and sideswiped the bus. A South African FE and loadmaster were killed. The rest of the passengers were severely injured. A 727 crew was put together and the injured were flown to Johannesburg for treatment. Thankfully, all made full recoveries.

So, I was now back with Transafrik. I got one of the crew bus drivers to take me to the Panorama Hotel where I packed up all my belongings and moved back to Corimba 1. This time, I was assigned a "caravan." That's South African for trailer. Transafrik had bought 8 or 10 of them as living accommodations. My roommate was a young Swedish 727 first officer, named ????. I basically had the place to myself since he was in love with a local girl and spent the majority of his time off with her. I think he wound up marrying her. What a pair! He was a blond, blue-eyed, very white Swede and she was an extremely black Angolan.



My caravan

Brito had informed me that, even though I had already spent almost 3 months in Angola with Frameair, I would have to finish up the deceased South African's contract which was about 6 more weeks. After doing that, I went home for my one month's vacation.

Cambodia

In June 1993, towards the end of my 1 month vacation, I got the usual phone call with the details of my travel back to Africa. This time, though, I was going to Phnom Penh, Cambodia!

The only bad thing about that was that I had left most of my personal belongings in Corimba. I had to buy a new headset (\$360.00) and some other crap.

The next thing I knew, I was on United Airlines to Bangkok, Thailand. From there, it was on a French Air Force C-160 to Phnom Penh.



Phnom Penh, Cambodia 1993

Transafrik had a contract to support the United Nations who were not only monitoring, but running the presidential elections in Cambodia. What a fascinating place it is! But first, a little history.

In Cambodia, genocide was carried out by the Communist Khmer Rouge (KR) regime led by Pol Pot between 1975 and 1979 in which one and a half to three million people were killed. The KR had planned to create a form of Agrarian socialism which was founded on the ideals of Stalinism and Maoism. The KR policies of forced relocation of the population from urban centers, mass executions, use of forced labor and malnutrition led to the deaths of an estimated 25 percent of the total population. The genocide was ended following the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. Up to 20,000 mass graves, known as the Killing Fields have been uncovered. In 1984, a movie was produced about this event; winning 3 Academy Awards.

I visited one of the prisons where a lot of the populace were held; mostly scholars, teachers, officers of the military and politicians. It was pretty awesome how these people were treated. The prison used to be a high school in what used to be an upscale neighborhood. It is now a museum.

Our job in supporting the UN was to supply the election stations in the country. We flew out of Phnom Penh to exotic named places like Batambang, Sianoukville (where the French Foreign Legion were based), Siem Reap (where the ruins of the Angkor Wat temples are located), Kampong Chan and a few more. We also made many trips to Singapore and U-Tapao Air Base in Thailand. U-Tapao was one of the bases built by the US Air Force during the Vietnam War. It was home to squadrons of B-52 bombers.

During our layovers at U-Tapao, we would stay in one of my favorite places – Pattya Beach. The girls there are so pretty and the beers are so cheap. In fact, everything was cheap. Our luxury hotel, the Welcome Plaza Hotel cost around \$27.00 US per night, if I remember correctly.

The project manager for this operation was a drunken Irishman named Mike Deasey. Not only was he a drunk, but he was extremely annoying and had a nasally whiney voice.



*Welcome Plaza Hotel
Pattya Beach, Thailand 1993*



*Crew house
Phnom Penh, Cambodia 1993*

Our accommodation in Phnom Penh was a villa paid for by the United Nations to the tune of \$15,000 US per month. We had a common refrigerator where we would all keep our personal things – mostly beer. While we were out flying, Mike would drink our beer, usually mine, for some reason.

M'Banza Kongo, Angola

One of my favorite destination airports in Angola was M'Banza Kongo, the capital of the northwestern province of Zaire. When Angola was a possession of Portugal, the town was known as São Salvador. The town and airport sit atop a flat topped mountain. When not being used by arriving or departing aircraft, the 5,905 foot (1,800 meter) runway serves as the main street of the town.



We used to fly food supplies to there provided by the Catholic relief agency, Caritas. They were flown in by Transafrik's United Nations chartered Hercules and Boeing 727's. The approach was a bit tricky with a sharp rise at each end of the runway. There were also strong wind shears at times. Like the vast majority of Angola's airports, it was also a daylight-only destination. Also, like most Angolan airports, when offloading the pallets of cargo for the relief agencies, the military usually took the first pallet for themselves. Not so at M'Banza Kongo. The, the Portuguese Catholic sisters would beat back the soldiers with sticks and small whips. The Catholic church there got all that we delivered.

On one such trip there on the afternoon of 27 April 1994, a Transafrik Boeing 727, S9-TAN got caught in a wind shear just before crossing the threshold of the runway. The landing gear was torn off and the airplane continued onto the runway finally veering off and crossing a road. The right wing hit a pickup truck full of UNITA soldiers, killing seven. There was a small fire that burned itself out causing little damage, although the airplane was a write-off.

The crew, fearing for their safety, was taken in by the Catholic Church there. After a lot of radio chatter between the crew, the UNITA and Transafrik operations in Luanda, it was decided that the only restitution required by the UNITA was anew pickup truck. A shining example of how cheap life is in Africa.

The 727 crew was picked up later by a Transafrik Hercules. The Filipino Herc captain said there was still quite a wind shear on approach.

7. Frameair

Frameair was a company based in Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles. It actually had a confusing lineage. Although based in Curaçao, all the administrative duties were in Lisbon, Portugal in the offices of a company called Atomex. The titular boss was an Arab/Portuguese named João Corvo. When I was with Frameair, it was a one-airplane operation. After I left and went back to Transafrik, Frameair leased a couple of Hercs from Safair.



*PJ-TAC (msn 5225)
1991, Windhoek, Namibia*

I was hired in the early summer of 1991. I was getting fed up with Transafrik and one day, when I was home on vacation, my old friend from my St. Lucia Airways days, Urs Anderegg called me. He told me he was with a new company and they had a brand new Hercules. They needed a flight engineer and that was it – I was hired right away. I notified Brito at Transafrik and the next thing I knew, I was on my way to Portugal.

I was taken to a very plush hotel in Lisbon; I think it was called the Hotel Zurich. There I met the rest of the crews; or at least most of them. Besides Urs, there was another captain, a British/South African named Peter Gardiner. "Non-sked" Fred Kreppein was also there. I had flown with him at both St. Lucia Airways and Transafrik. The other flight engineer was Jim Porter, an American who used to be an instructor at the Lockheed Hercules simulator in Marietta, Georgia. There were three first officers. An American named David Gross, another American named Don Kessler and a Norwegian named Jürgen Keske. All with some very unique personalities.

We stayed in Lisbon for a few weeks waiting for the airplane. Then, one evening, we were told to pack out bags and head for the airport. There, we would board a TAP Air Portugal Lockheed L-1011 Tristar bound for Luanda.

Upon arrival in Luanda, after clearing customs and immigration, we were taken to the only inhabitable hotel in the city; The Presidentè. It was a real 5-star hotel in the middle of such desolation and poverty.

Fred, Urs and I were "old African hands," but the rest of our colleagues were pretty much awestruck. None had any experience operating in the harsh flying environment of Africa. Jürgen had flown with Urs on Dietrich Reinhart's A-model, but not in Africa (check the St. Lucia Airways chapter). Gross was a C-130 FE with the US Air Force Reserves in Marietta, GA and as I mentioned, Porter was an instructor at the Lockheed Hercules simulator. Kessler had flown a corporate jet in Saudi Arabia.

After about a week of doing nothing but relax around the hotel bar drinking beer, the airplane arrived with an all-Portuguese crew. The captain, Jose Henriques, would be the chief pilot. I'm sure that pissed off Fred, because he had been talking about being offered the job. The FO was just along for the ferry flight and returned to Lisbon the next day. The FE was named Pasqual. They brought along about 10 mechanics. The entire crew and mechanics were ex-Portuguese Air Force. The chief mechanic was a drunk named Fonseca. Besides Fonseca, Henriques and Pasqual, only 2 of the mechanics spoke English. That would prove to be a problem later on. They all had the military way of doing things engrained in their minds. It was impossible and extremely frustrating to try to change their ways of doing things to the commercial (and money-making) way of doing it. We filled up almost one floor of the hotel.

Henriques, Pasqual and Fonseca had all served in Angola before its independence in 1974. One day, while driving past some beachfront villas, Fonseca asked the driver to stop. He said that one particular villa was where he and his family lived almost 20 years before. One could see that it had been a beautiful building back then. That could be said for the entire city. Now, though, there were at least 5 families crowded into that one villa. He said, "Look at that. What it took the Portuguese more than 500 years to create; it's taken the Angolans less than 5 years to destroy." Under Portuguese rule, Luanda had been known as the Riviera of Africa.

Flying with Frameair was nothing like flying with Transafrik. We did no night flying, nor did we do any flights for the Angolan military. It was almost exclusively for the diamond mines and an occasional flight to Windhoek, Namibia to pick up supplies for a supermarket trying to start up in the now-peaceful Luanda.

We also made flights to Ondjiva on the border with Namibia. Supermarket wares were trucked from South Africa, through Namibia to Ondjiva. One of the drivers told me it took almost a month to make the trip. I never understood why we didn't fly to South Africa to get the cargo. Not my place to question African "logic."

On one particular trip, we were to pick up cases of beer. This was one of the very few flights flown for the military. It turned into three or four flights because of the amount of beer. Unlike real world cargo hauling, the security here was nonexistent. Check out how the locals would walk by and help themselves to a can or two. We also would take a case or two back to our hotel. At least we had refrigerators to cool the beers down.

Although I did mention earlier that we didn't do many military flights, another memorable flight was to Lubango pick up sides of beef for the Officer's Club at Negage. These sides of beef weren't refrigerated and when we arrived, they were just sitting on



Ondjiva, Angola 1991

the ground waiting for us. Lucky for us, there were locals there to load the cargo. The amount of flies was amazing. This photo was taken after arrival in Negage, where I had kept the cargo compartment a cold as possible; not to protect the beef, but to keep the fly population to a minimum.



Luena, Angola, 1991

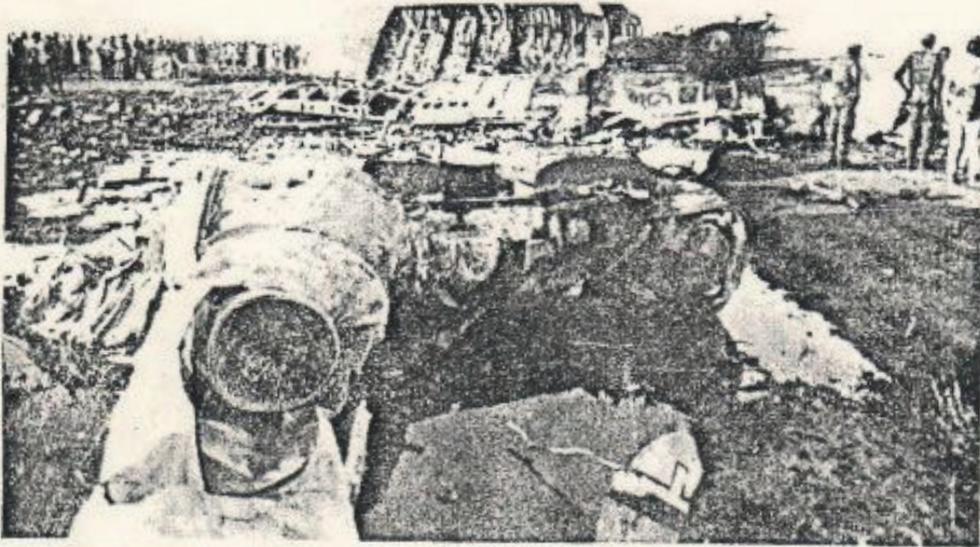
Appendix 1: Crash report J6-SLQ

TERÇA-FEIRA, 11 DE JUNHO DE 1991

PREÇO NKZ. 50.00

Ao descolar.

Avião caiu em Luanda



Destruções do Hércules acidentado ontem no aeroporto de Luanda (Fotos de Carlos Lousada)



Corpos das vítimas do acidente

UM avião "Hércules" despenhou-se ontem de tarde sobre o aeroporto de Luanda, ocasionando a morte de todos os seus dez ocupantes, incluindo os quatro tripulantes.

O acidente ocorreu às 16 horas locais, quando o cargueiro, operado pela TAAG Charter, levantava vôo com destino à localidade de Cafunfo, Lunda-Norte.

Segundo a versão produzida por vários funcionários do aeroporto, o acidente deu-se quando o "Hércules L-100" inclinou para a direita logo após ter levantado vôo e, ao tentar fazer-se à pista, bateu com a asa direita no solo. A aeronave explodiu de imediato.

Para além dos dez ocupantes, o avião transportava diversa mercadoria, pertencente ao Sr. José Simão Neto, comerciante angolano registado na Lunda-Norte, que pereceu mais a esposa e uma criança (que se presume filho do casal) ainda de tenra idade. Das cerca de quinze toneladas de mercadorias constantes do manifesto de carga, destacavam-se enormes quantidades de sabão, cerveja em lata, sal, peixe congelado, óleo alimentar, açúcar, motorizadas e bicicletas.

O director da ENANA, contactado pelo "JA" no local do sinistro, recusou pronunciar-se sobre as

causas do acidente, admitindo, entretanto, que poderão ser várias, incluindo uma "deficiente centragem da carga". Essa possibilidade foi, no entanto, descartada pelo director da TAAG Charter, comandante Ribeiro, que de imediato atribuiu, como causa provável, "deficiências de ordem técnica", ainda por especificar. "Causas definitivas só após o inquérito", adiantou o comandante Ribeiro.

A TAAG, num comunicado emitido ainda ontem confirma que a carga de 15 Ton era constituída por produtos diversos, a maior parte dos quais perecíveis e que para o percurso previsto a carga máxima permitida é de 18 Ton.

Mais acrescenta que está descartada a possibilidade de ter havido um desprendimento de carga, em virtude de ter havido, antes do vôo, uma verificação por parte da direcção da TAAG Charter.

A aeronave encontrava-se fretada à TAAG desde Janeiro do corrente e era propriedade da subdivisão austríaca da Caribbean Air Transport Corporation, uma empresa registada em Santa Lúcia.

Peter Meyer, representante dessa empresa em Luanda informou no local que a aeronave durante o dia de ontem tivera já operado para as cidades

do Kuito e do Negage, "não se tendo verificado qualquer deficiência".

"Eu próprio estava para acompanhar o vôo para Cafunfo, o que só não aconteceu porque tive que aguardar pelo nosso transitário" — acrescentou aquele cidadão alemão para acentuar a confiança que lhe merecia o estado de manutenção da aeronave.

Opinião contrária exprimiu um técnico da Charter que revelou à nossa reportagem que o referido avião se encontrava em más condições técnicas e que "ficara 50 minutos a **checar** instrumentos antes de levantar" para o vôo fatídico.

De salientar que a empresa proprietária do aparelho se responsabilizava, ao abrigo do acordo de fretamento, pela respectiva manutenção e tripulantes. Estes últimos eram de nacionalidade norte-americana e italiana.

A caixa preta da aeronave foi já encontrada e a sua descodificação servirá de apoio aos trabalhos da comissão de inquérito que será constituída nas próximas horas.

No local do acidente, para além das centenas de residentes das imediações do aeroporto que ali acorreram, registava-se a presença do vice-ministro do Interior, Espírito Santo, e do comandante provincial da Polícia e respectivo adjunto.

2. ANALYSES

After comprehensive analyses of the disaster, including the attached reports and the interviews with eyewitnesses, this Commission found that:

A. J6-SLQ had already made two (2) flights on that same day without experiencing any reportable anomaly. Nor was any type of problem recorded concerning the pallets, or the fastening and stowing of the cargo.

B. During the takeoff that resulted in the accident, the equipment on the aircraft in question was fully functioning, i.e. everything appeared to have been operational, inasmuch as this Commission was at least able to observe the wreckage of the instrument panels used by the captain, copilot, and flight engineer, and these did not exhibit any abnormalities. This commission also found that both the mixture and power throttles were set at "full power," which is the correct position. None of the engines, propellers, the tabs in general, the flaps, rudders, etc. showed any traces of an emergency.

C. The Loadsheets, Table No. 1 attached, was analyzed carefully and the identical distribution of cargo that had been carried on board J6-SLQ was simulated. Pallets and the following weights were used: (1) 6,600 lbs; (2) 6,600 lbs; (3) 7,700 lbs; (4) 7,040 lbs; and (5) 4,400 lbs. These resulted in the trim being within the normal limits, having as maximum value 22.0 percent of the take-off MAC, hence the aircraft was perfectly navigable.

D. We analyzed the hypothesis of a possible total detachment (slippage of cargo) occurring in such a way as to fill the loader of the aircraft with the weights distributed as follows: 6,600 lbs., 6,600 lbs., 7,700 lbs., 7,040 lbs., and 4,400 lbs. according to simulated studies of the loadsheet (Table 2) also attached. In this specific case the aircraft would have as a value: Maximum of the take-off MAC 28.0 percent, which means that the aircraft would still be navigable, since this value is within the so-called "envelope."

E. Small fragments from the aircraft had fallen along its trajectory during takeoff from Runway 24, specifically in the right lane. These were not burned, by which we mean they were "fresh fragments," not fragments from old fractures. [They were found] approximately 300 to 400 meters from the crash site, and are thus the only valid vestiges of this accident. They demonstrate that some problem, a sudden and complicated one, certainly occurred in the air before the crash of Aircraft J6-SLQ.

F. CARIB AIR TRANSPORT LTD., had only sent the DNAC [National Administration for Civil Aviation ?] some documents containing data on J6-SLQ for purposes of issuance of the Model "A" certificate needed for it to operate in national airspace (Angolan territory). No documents had been submitted concerning the crew, such as: photocopies of their respective flying licenses (Aeronautical License), flight logs or other personal records, which makes it impossible to do any analyses on this

aspect in terms of background, specifically: individual flight experience, expertise, skills, etc.

G. The Lockheed L-100-10 aircraft would be listed as old aviation equipment. Despite everything, perhaps due to the hasty removal of the wreckage, this Commission can decidedly not make any determination in that regard.

REMARKS:

Upon inquiring, on June 22-25, 1991, into the unfortunate action of wreckage removal, the Commission learned from Jaime Willacarlos, driver of the tractor for Empresa Transafrik Ltd. who did the work, that it was Comrade Alfredo Sabino, 2nd Lt. of the aviation safety services assigned to the air regiment of the FAPA/DAA [People's Air Force of Angola/Air Defense], who ordered (took charge of) that improper operation shortly after the accident.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

A. Shortly after the accident, i.e. a little less than an hour and a half later, the wreckage was hastily removed by the tractor and employees of Empresa Transafrik Ltd. without proper authorization from either the appropriate agency (DNAC) or the management of the February 4th airport. This meant that the terrain was, a priori, useless in terms of an investigation of this type.

B. It took a lot of courage for the Commission to assume the responsibilities assigned it from above despite everything, and simply to do its job up to this phase.

C. It is regrettable, furthermore, that the aforementioned wreckage was not protected by those who have authority to do so. The crash site was invaded by outsiders (the public), people not assigned to the area of the February 4th airport.

D. Note that a team of technicians from the TAAG maintenance department was sent but, unfortunately, they could not find either the cockpit voice recorders or the flight data recorders.

The technical manual (maintenance instructions) states that the aircraft had to have the equipment in question installed so it is presumed that perhaps it was not on board or that it was probably removed intentionally from the aircraft by unknown persons.

The representatives of Carib Air Transport Ltd. were interviewed, and they alleged that the aircraft was fully operational. According to them, this means that all its components were on board; however, they do not know the whereabouts of the CVR and FDR.

E. The fact that there were six passengers on board an unscheduled "cargo" plane, in addition to its four-member crew, with the aggravating circumstance that all these people were killed, really cannot help but be of concern, at the very least!

D. The cargo, consisting in its entirety of miscellaneous goods owned by an Angolan businessman who resides in Lunda Norte, had been transported to its destination (Cafunfo) and returned to Luanda two days previously on another Hercules, [belonging to] SAFAIR, owing to lack of [compliance with] formalities. The shipment was unloaded and stored by its owner. It was only 48 hours later that it was reloaded on the third flight, using the same pallets and lashing. These were in place when the aircraft experienced the aforesaid crash.

4. CONCLUSIONS:

Probable hypotheses as to the cause of the accident were checked and explored, including the following:

A. Verification of the position of the engine power throttles as well as their indicators. Fortunately, it was possible to observe these as well as other elucidative elements, and they led this commission to presume that at the time of the crash the craft was functioning perfectly.

B. Simulated observation of the loadsheet and confirmation of the respective cargo, inasmuch as the same shipment had already traveled to its destination (Cafunfo) and returned to Luanda. Only then did it continue on the ill-fated flight, secured with the lashing with which it had previously arrived.

C. Observation of the distance traveled by the aircraft between the hypothetical moment of rotation into the air until it fell to the ground, about 300-400 meters.

D. Trajectory followed by the aircraft and its position on the ground after the crash.

E. Small pieces of the craft picked up by members of this Commission, such as the main support member of the landing gear, pieces of the fuel tank (which we assume to be the one that lies above the landing gear zone), an engine exit nozzle clamp, besides tiny fragments of sheet metal. These were found precisely in the 300-400 meter space that preceded the position of the wreckage on the ground, leading this Commission to the following conclusions:

The accident is deduced to have originated with a probable internal explosion of an unidentified foreign object that perhaps had as its site of action an area of the fuel storage area on the right wing of the aircraft. When the explosion occurred, it would have caused the craft to dip to the right owing to the lack of support on the aerodynamic planes on that side and then to fall to an angle of more or less 45 degrees with runway 24 due to asymmetry in the weight of that wing. Greater weight on the [left] side may have caused the aircraft to stall, because the first impact actually was made by the tip of the left wing striking the ground, prior to the fire that destroyed it totally.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. It is recommended that DNAC draft and publish in due course rules on the investigation of serious civil aviation accidents/incidents that occur in Angolan territory (national air space) in order to prevent what happened, in organizational terms, in the case of this crash.

B. It is recommended that DNAC arrange for civil aircraft to be monitored and inspected during their arrivals and departures, without causing unnecessary delays, paying particular attention--among other aspects, of course--to the presence of "black boxes" on board the aircraft, as well as noting their positions in the various types of aircraft being used.

C. It is recommended that DNAC arrange for appointment of a permanent national Accident/Incident Investigation Commission, in order to prevent what happened in this case.

D. It is recommended that DNAC and all other operators encourage the training of experts in accident/incident prevention and investigation.

E. It is recommended that those in authority, if they see fit to do so, institute a parallel inquiry, of a judicial nature, into the improper removal of the wreckage which so greatly hindered the work of this commission. That action would have contributed to the possible disappearance of the obsolete equipment generally known as the "black box" and

therefore [helped to place] a clear limitation on our proceeding with a second phase, which is the most important of this process.

Note No. 2

This report may be subject to possible changes if this Commission finds more evidence on the subject, since it really needed to analyze both the cockpit voice recorders and the flight data recorders in order to be more certain of what actually happened in this accident. It is well to "remember" that, unfortunately, those pieces of equipment have not yet been found.

Luanda, June 28, 1991.

The Commission

Names

Entity Represented

[names are not legible]

[Most members were from TAAG. One from DNAC, one from ENANA]

*Translated from the Angolan newspaper
June 11, 1991*

ONE AIRPLANE "HERCULES" CRASHED YESTERDAY AFTERNOON ABOVE THE AIRPORT LUNDA, ON THIS OCCASION ALL INCLUDING 4 CREWMEN. THE ACCIDENT OCCURRED AT 4:00PM LOCAL TIME. THE AIRPLANE WAS OPERATED BY TAAG CHARTERS, AND WAS EN-ROUTE TO CAFUNFO, LUNDA-NORTH.

A SECOND VERSION FROM VARIOUS EMPLOYEES AT THE AIRPORT, AT THE TIME OF THE ACCIDENT THE "HERCULES L-100" WAS MAKING A RIGHT TURN AFTER TAKE OFF WHEN THE RIGHT WING HIT THE GROUND. THE AIRCRAFT EXPLODED IMMEDIATELY.

THE PLANE WAS CARRYING CARGO AND PASSENGERS. ONE PASSENGER, MR. JOSE SIMON NETO, WAS A BUSINESS MAN FROM ANGOLA WITH BUSINESSES IN LONDA-NORTH. WITH HIM WAS HIS WIFE AND CHILD, CARGO CONSISTED OF SOAP, BEER, SALT FISH, OIL, SUGAR, AND A MOTORCYCLE ACCORDING TO THE MANIFEST.

THE DIRECTOR OF ENAÑA REFUSED TO GIVE MORE INFORMATION ON THE CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT. HE STATED THAT THE PROBABLE CAUSE WAS THE CARGO NOT BEING LOADED PROPERLY. THIS WAS THE REASON GIVEN TO THE HEAD OF TAAG CHARTERS, MR. RIBEIRO. MR. RIBEIRO STATED THE HE THOUGHT "IT WAS TECHNICAL DIFFICULTY". TAAG CONFIRMED THE AIRCRAFT WAS CARRYING 15 TONS OF VARIOUS CARGO BUT THE AIRCRAFT IS CAPABLE OF CARRYING 18 TONS OF CARGO. TAAG DISCARDED THE POSSIBILITY THE AIRCRAFT WAS OVERWEIGHT BECAUSE ITS WEIGHT WAS VERIFIED PRIOR TO TAKEOFF.

THE AIRCRAFT WAS LEASED BY TAAG CHARTERS IN JANUARY FROM CARIBBEAN AIR TRANSPORT CORPORATION WHO IS REGISTERED IN SANTA LUCIA.

PETER MEYER, A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMPANY STATED THAT THE AIRCRAFT WAS FLOWN YESTERDAY WITH NO DEFICIENCIES REPORTED. MR. MEYER WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ON THIS FLIGHT BUT HAD TO WAIT FOR THE NEXT ONE DUE TO UNFORESEEN PROBLEMS.

CONTRARY OPINION OF A TECHNICIAN WHO REVIEWED AND REPORTED THAT THE AIRCRAFT ENCOUNTERED GOOD AND WAS CHECKED 50 MINUTES PRIOR TO TAKEOFF.

TAAG CHARTERS WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THE AIRCRAFT AND ITS PASSENGERS. THE BLACK BOX (FLIGHT RECORDER) WAS FOUND AND HOPEFULLY WILL TELL WHAT HAPPENED TO THE AIRCRAFT.



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
OFFICE OF LANGUAGE SERVICES

Translating Division

LS No. 137421
DHS/LM
Portuguese

PRELIMINARY REPORT

This report concerns the crash of a Hercules L-100-10 airplane, registration No. J6 SLQ, owned by Carib Air Transport Corporation Ltd. The crash occurred on June 10, 1991, on runway 24 of the February 4th Airport at Luanda, Angola.

INTRODUCTION

On June 10, 1991, a Hercules L-100-10 aircraft, registration No. J6-SLQ, owned by Carib Air Transport Corporation Ltd. [but] in the service of TAAG Air Charter [Angolan Airlines Air Charter] under a leasing arrangement was attempting to make its third (3rd) flight of the day from Luanda to Cafunfo, designated [flight number] DTA 1228, when at about 1542 local time, i.e. moments following takeoff, it crashed on Runway 24 of the February 4th Airport at Luanda, approximately 30-50 meters from the holding bay. All aboard died and the airplane was totally destroyed.

1. Introduction

1.1 History of the Flight

The L-100-10 aircraft, registration No. J6-SLQ, was attempting to make one more unscheduled cargo trip to Cafunfo, i.e. the third flight of the day to that destination, designated DTA 1228, under charter to businessman José Simão Neto. The purpose of the flight, among other possible objectives, was certainly to supply provisions to that province.

J6 SLQ contacted the tower at Luanda at 1512 local time in order to start its engines. It was told that it could not do so until 1530 local time, which is what he did. Then it asked for clearance to roll out, and was authorized to go only as far as the holding position on Bravo Taxiway, i.e. it was instructed to stop before crossing Runway 26, where it waited about 6 minutes due to the heavy traffic on that runway at the time. Not until 1540 local time did it receive clearance to cross Runway 26 to Runway 24 in order to line up and move immediately. A few moments after takeoff, when at an altitude of approximately 50-60 meters (about 150-180 ft.), the aircraft lost its aerodynamic characteristics possibly because of an unbalanced, severe and particularly uncontrollable shaking, occurring on the right side, before it went into a stall on the opposite side, which was surprising because its commander had said nothing [about] being in any emergency

situation. After it stalled, the first part of the J6 SLQ to make impact was the left wing, which struck the ground before the plane caught fire. The personal and material damages listed in sections 1.2, 1.3, and 1.38, respectively, of this report, were recorded.

1.2 PERSONAL DAMAGES

INJURIES	CREW	PASSENGERS	OTHERS
Mortal	4	6	/
Serious	/	/	/
Slight	/	/	/

1.3 DAMAGE TO THE AIRCRAFT

1.3.1 FUSELAGE

Totally destroyed

1.3.2 LANDING GEAR

Totally disintegrated (destroyed)

1.3.3 RIGHT WING

Totally destroyed

1.3.4 LEFT WING

Disintegrated, thrust forward and totally destroyed

1.3.5 ENGINES 1, 2, 3, and 4

Totally destroyed

1.3.6 PROPELLERS 1, 2, 3, and 4

Completely twisted (total destruction)

1.3.7 EMPENNAGE: VERTICAL (STABILIZER) was fractured and burned. HORIZONTAL (STABILIZER)--half of it was destroyed and the other half burned.

1.3.8 ELECTRONIC AND ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

These were totally damaged and destroyed.

1.4 OTHER DAMAGE: In short, the aircraft is considered a total loss.

1.5 INFORMATION ON THE CREW:

A. Pilot and Commander (Captain)

Mr. ROBERT THOMAS SNELGROVE, native of Alabama, (U.S.A.), an American citizen born on February 27, 1944, bearer of passport No. 014528151 and holder of an American pilot's license, [details] unknown.

B. Co-Pilot (Flight Officer)

Mr. STEFANO PAOLETTI, native of Firenze (Italy), an Italian citizen born on May 27, 1961, bearer of passport No. 0981850, probably holder of an Italian pilot's license and a British or American license, [details on] all of which are unknown.

C. Flight Engineer

Mr. ROBERT WILLIAM WELDON II, native of Pennsylvania (U.S.A.), an American citizen born on August 5, 1960, bearer of passport No. 014511207 and holder of an American flying license, [details] unknown.

D. Load Master

Mr. W. HENDRICKS CHARLES [sic ? Charles W. Hendricks], an American citizen, born on February 12, 1956, holder of American license No. 9840-4384 issued on July 3, 1988, and valid until July 31, 1992, bearer of a passport, [number] unknown.

1.6 INFORMATION ON THE AIRCRAFT

1.6.1 Hercules 100-10

Built By: Lockheed (USA)

Serial Number: 56-0542

A. STRUCTURE:

Type: L-100-10

Date of manufacture: unknown

Date entered service: unknown

Last inspection: unknown

B. [ENGINE] BUILDER: Allison

Model / Type: /

ENGINE NO. 1

Serial No.: unknown

Total hours: /

Hours since last overhaul: /

ENGINE NO. 2

Serial No.: unknown

Total hours: /

Hours since last overhaul: /

ENGINE NO. 3

Serial No.: unknown

Total hours: /

Hours since last overhaul: /

ENGINE NO. 4
Serial No.: unknown
Total hours: /
Hours since last overhaul: /

C. PROPELLERS:
Maker: unknown
Model / Type: /

PROPELLER NO. 1
Serial No.: unknown
Total hours: /
Hours since last overhaul: /

PROPELLER NO. 2
Serial No.: unknown
Total hours: /
Hours since last overhaul: /

PROPELLER NO. 3
Serial No.: unknown
Total hours: /
Hours since last overhaul: /

PROPELLER NO. 4
Serial No.: unknown
Total hours: /
Hours since last overhaul: /

NOTE No. 1: According to Certificate of Airworthiness of Aircraft J6-SLQ, No. 79, issued by the Civilian Aviation authorities of "Eastern Caribbean States" in St. Lucia, West Indies, valid until July 4, 1991, everything indicates that [illegible words] flyable.

1.7 METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

CAVOK - Means that the weather was good.

WIND: 300/ [figure illegible ? 12] knots

1.8 COMMUNICATIONS

Two-way communications between the aircraft and the Luanda tower proceeded normally.

1.9 INFORMATION ON THE AIRPORT

- A. Runway: 24/06
Length: 3700 meters
Width: 60 meters
- B. Runway: 26/[final two digits illegible]
Length: [figure illegible ? 2500] meters
Width: 60 meters
- C. ELEVATION: 74 meters
- D. GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES: 08° 51' 15" S
13° 14' 12" E

1.10 FLIGHT RECORDERS:

Unfortunately, the cockpit voice recorders (CVR) and the flight data recorders (FDR) were not found among the wreckage, a circumstance that naturally restricts the progress of the investigations being done by this Commission, in addition to making it difficult to check this preliminary report by decoding them under normal conditions.

1.11 IMPACT AND WRECKAGE

The first impact occurred when the left wing struck the ground and fell off. Subsequently the aircraft was completely destroyed by fire.

Appendix 2: 1987

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