

Peiping
July 1, 1947

Dear Sir:

Today marked the climax of trouble that we have been having with the CAF. Up to this time we have overlooked much of the trouble that they have given us but to day the situation that occurred cannot be overlooked. To bring you up to date I shall relate all of the previous incidents.

On June 4, I hired a weapons carrier from CHT and went to the field to meet an arrival; at this time the vehicle did not have a West Field permit so it remained outside of the gate until I returned. When I did return the truck was filled with CAF personnel to such a degree that there was not even room enough for me to sit down and there was no effort made to make such. I counted the number of people on board and there was twenty two. I tried to explain to them that we could only carry as many as there was seats but this was a futile effort, so we departed for town with men standing on every available inch of space.

Again on June 12, we met our weapons carrier at the gate and this time there were twelve in our group and the driver. Among us was Mark Kauffman of Life Magazine and Bill Gray of Time Magazine and they had all of their baggage and equipment, so with the twelve passenger and all of the luggage the truck was filled to capacity. We had no sooner got onboard and settled than a wave of ten CAF members forced themselves on without even asking permission. I immediately had my lead man Mr. Lee tell them that they could not ride as the truck was overcrowded and it would not be safe for so many. One of them became very indignant and more or less appointed himself as spokesman. He told me that if we wanted to continue to enter the base we would be obliged to let the CAF ride on our transportation whenever they wanted to. I told this person that I intended to report him so I had the mechanic copy the information from his identification patch, and then we discovered that he was nothing more than a bugler ranking as private so I told him that when he gained enough rank to make threats that we would heed them but not until. About five of the soldiers got off but the rest remained and we departed for town.

Two days later CAF Captain Lee, station master, came to our airplane and apologized to Mr. Kauffman and Mr. Gray for their delay and assured them that it would not happen again.

At this time I had already applied for passes for the five mechanics and we were standing by until they came through. However, each day at the gate the guard gave us much difficulty in getting in. Finally the passes came and everything went o.k. for two or three days and then Captain Lee approached us again and told Mr. Lee, the lead mechanic, that the gate had been complaining that none of the CAF personnel had West Field passes and this was definitely untrue as Mr. Lee readily proved by having all of the men show their passes to the Captain. One of them at this time didn't have his because the base had run out of the cards that are used for such so he carried a temporary pass until there were more permanent cards available.

after this incident there was not much trouble to speak of for several days and we were allowed to come and go with the minimum of formality. Then on the 31st of June the Captain came out to our airplane and informed us that as of the 1st of July we would be impounded because there had been no further clearances received from Mankin. The day before we had received a message from Shanghai saying that we were cleared for the month of July and that the written statements were being sent out, so we asked the Captain if he was willing to sign a statement to that effect. He said he would check once more and turned around and walked away. We continued to fly without interruptions.

On July 1, we left the field about 1900, this time we were in a CNRRA weapons carrier with sixteen of us onboard. That included mechanics flight crews, and CNRRA personnel. As soon as we stopped at the gate another wave of CAF men started climbing on, and by the time we got off of the field we had gained eight more passengers. On the left hand side of the truck the seating arrangement was as follows: Two CAF men, Mr. Wong CAT mechanic, Mr. Bushbam CAT pilot, myself, Mr. Young CAT mechanic, and on the end another CAF man. The man on the end asked Mr. Young to move over and make more room for him and the mechanic replied that he could not move. At this point there was some violent discussion and the CAF man struck Mr. Young with the flat of his hand and this immediately started fistcuffs. Mr. Lee and Mr. Gee bot CAT men came to the aid of their companion and tried get hold of the two men. The CAF gave a hand to their man and it was becoming a violent struggle. The truck was stopped by the gate MPs and told to back back throu the gate onto the airfield. This was done and everyone got off of the truck. The CAF man that had started this spoke to the driver of a jeep that came up and the jeep turned and sped off toward the hangers. WE immediately sent for Captain Lee the station master and CAT pilots Stalworth, Bushbam and myself remained at the gate with the mechanics awaiting Captain Lee. By this time the group that surrounded us was about fifty. The jeep returned with a Lt. Dao who was incharge of the men around us and also the man than that had struck the fist blow. As soon as he appeared on the scene the soldiers and his friends became more brave and started the hing all over again by striking at my two mechanics Mr. Lee and Mr. Young. Captain Lee arrived during this but made no attempt to check the riotious stage of his men until he had talked to the Lt. Stalworth, Bushbam, and I had formed a triangle with the tow mechanins inside and thus tried to defend them from the mob for these CAF men were very careful not to hit one of us. At last Lt. Dao shouted some commands and got his men to stop the milling around. Several of the men were armed with stones and the man that had caused the incident in the truck was armed with the lead waight from a trail antenea swung from about ten inches of wire. This condition remained unchecked so I asked to get to Captain Lees office and talk the matter over with only those concerned and this was agreed to.

After twenty minutes of talking we had gained nothing. The Lt. said that all we had to do was find out you started the trouble and let him apologize but it was just a battle of our word against thiers. By this time the crowd we had got away from outside was inside and growing lager all the time. Occasionally Captain Lee who didn't speak english would say some thing to the Lt. but as a hole he didn't seem very interested in what was

ging on until I told him that this would have to be reported to General Chemnault and this seemed to make him take a little more interest for he said that this was just a little disagreement between the chinese and had nothing to do with the foreigners and could be settle right here, but he didn't offer any solution to settle it.

At last we gave in to them and our two mechanics apologize to them. They lost much face. The Lt. told his men that on a three point condition we could go and this is the condition: (1) That our mechanics apologize. (2) That we guarantee that this will never happen again. (3) We tell all of our employees that our men were at fault. He offered these to them with out asking us whether or not we would accept it.

After an hour and ten minutes we were allowed to leave the field. Before leaving I told Captain Lee that I was going to report this to Shanghai but he said that now that everything had been settled that we should let bygones be bygones. With this we left, the mob cleared to let us through.

Oh yes, When my two men apologized the CAF wanted them to kneel down to do so. This I would not adhere to so a hand shake was accepted.

When we arrived at the hotel there was a message for us from the American Consulate asking us to call him as soon as we returned from the airfield. This we did. That evening Mr. Freeman from the consul came to hotel to hear our story. I told it to him in detail. He said that he had been notified by a CALTEX driver that there were some americans at the field in trouble. He immediately called west field and spoke to the man in charge, but this person told him that there were no americans there and that there had been no trouble, as the consul ask to speak to one of us. Mr. Freeman perused the matter further and at last the officer told that there had been some americans there and a small discussion had taken place but everything was alright now and that they had gone away. The time of this call was about ten minutes to eight and at that time we were in the office of Captain Lee. We didn't leave his office until ten after eight.

Mr. Freeman asked us to give him a copy of this letter and he would see if this sort of situation couldn't be checked for he has been troubled with the same thing in his own private car.

As for the five mechanics I have here I think that the safest thing to do is to return them to Shanghai for replacement. I don't send them back because I think they were wrong but because of further cooperation with the CAF I think that it is the wisest thing to do. Mr. Lee and Mr. Young are coming down July 4, on C-46 #524. I am requesting that five replacements be sent to Peiping as soon as possible and then I shall send the remaining three on the first airplane.

I regret very much losing these men for they have been of the highest quality in doing their work, if I can get another crew as efficient I shall consider myself quite fortunate.

If you think this matter handled incorrectly I should be glad to here your opinion.

Sincerely yours

CAF Crew Chief

Gen. Chemnault
Col. Hunter
Peiping American Consulate
John Feeney
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