

THE HUNT FOR JIMMIE BROWNE

An MIA Pilot in World War II China

ROBERT L. WILLETT

"Willett has poignantly captured the heroism of his cousin who went missing over 'the Hump' in the China-Burma-India theater of World War II in 1942. It's a story about the pain a family experiences when one of its own is MIA and the lengths that Willett went to in order to seek closure decades later."—Sam Kleiner, author of *The Flying Tigers: The Untold Story of the American Pilots Who Waged a Secret War Against Japan*

"Not only a fascinating account of the short life of the subject but also a synopsis of the various organizations and units that played some role in Jimmie Browne's life. The book recounts the struggles to bring him home. . . . It reveals that many of our MIA processes are in need of scrutiny."—Billy McDonald, author of *The Shadow Tiger: Billy McDonald, Wingman to Chennault*

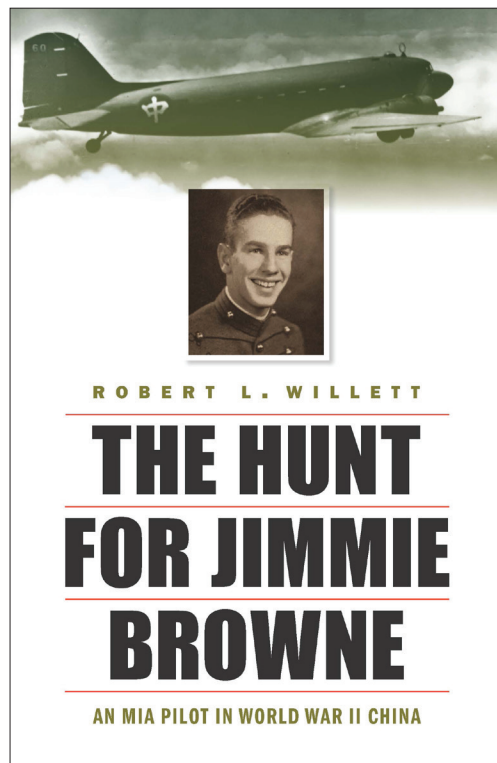
On Tuesday, November 17, 1942, aircraft CNAC No. 60 climbed slowly toward the Himalayas, growing smaller and smaller until it finally faded from sight, never to be seen again—until seventy years later. This is the story of one family's search for answers about the aircraft and its crew, particularly the co-pilot, James S. Browne.

Browne was a pilot for China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC), an airline jointly owned by the Republic of China and Pan American World Airways and flown under contract with the U.S. Army Air Corps. CNAC's mission was to pioneer and fly the dangerous Hump routes over the Himalayas to deliver gasoline, weapons, ammunition, and war goods. These supplies were desperately needed to keep China in the war, for if China left the war, more than one million Japanese troops would be free to control the Pacific.

Browne and his crew were killed in a plane crash while en route to Dinjan Airfield in India for supplies. Rescue missions following their disappearance were unsuccessful. Nearly forty years later, Robert L. Willett picks up where the search left off, hoping to find Browne, his missing cousin. After gathering crash-site information on a trip to China, Willett sends a search team on three ascents up Cang Shan Mountain near Dali, China, and finally strikes metal—the scattered wreckage of Browne's C-47.

From the very beginning of the discovery eight years ago, Willett's efforts to excavate the site and bring Jimmie Browne home have encountered bureaucratic roadblocks with U.S. government agencies and the Chinese government. His search-and-recover mission continues even today.

Robert L. Willett is an international bank consultant and former president of banks in Michigan and Florida. He is also a military historian and the author of *One Day of the Civil War: America in Conflict, April 10, 1863*; *Russian Sideshow: America's Undeclared War, 1918–1920*; and *An Airline at War: The Story of China National Aviation Corporation and Its Men*.



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