



# *The Tiger Rag*



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**1976 MINI - REUNION AT OJAI**

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## THE 1976 MINI-REUNION AT OJAI

The mini-reunion of 1976 was almost a week of glorious weather and great fun and games and even greater stories as 67 of us gathered around the oaks of Ojai from July 1 through 5 of 1976.

The most distant traveler was Felix Smith who stopped off, en route between jobs, or at least the hope of a job judging by the number of cables he was exchanging between Ojai and Ceylon. He had arrived from Bora Bora via Honolulu. Felix received an unlimited amount of advice on composition of the cables he was answering from Ceylon. However, the success of Felix and his advisors remained in doubt a month after the reunion when Dick Rossi was advised of a cable from Ceylon telling Felix that the planning at that end was extremely complicated because of no word from Felix. Rossi planted the information in many centers where he thought Felix might have surfaced but we will be forced to wait until the next bulletin to let you know how he came out since total silence was the response to Rossi's search party.

Glenn and Shirley Carroll with Billy and Peggy McDonald led the Ojai invasion, arriving nearly a week before the official date of July 1, which gave them ample time to polish up their golf games. It helped Shirley, but Glenn was saying little that we understood. However, Billy was in great form as was Peggy. Best evidence of this was McDonald after the 18th each day, standing in the patio while the faithful filled his hand with bills. If his heart attack and open heart surgery after the 1975 reunion had slowed him down at all, he showed no signs of it, either on the links or in the evening social activities. Jules and Peggy Watson arrived by plane, almost at the Inn. Jules put it down in nearby Santa Paula and to prove it, he took Bob Conrath over the next day to show him how it was done. Conrath may now give up his boat for a plane.

The first night was a rousing success and then things got better. Roy Farrell took over the emcee position and finally got Ricketts in high blower. Ricketts' stories, of which he is truly a master, cleared the dining room of most of the Inn's other guests except one hardy soul who tried to match Rick. Suffice to say, he was shot down in flames. Rick continued the story-telling on the patio the next night and drew an even larger audience.

Everything was in full swing on the second day, the daytime activities of which were featured by the sharp, sterling golf of Prescott, McDonald and Farrell, the outcome of which was in some doubt except for the easily overheard conversation of Farrell who must have lost part of the state of Texas judging from the vehemence of his words. Prescott, despite a heart problem followed by a bout with throat cancer, was belting the ball better than ever, looked great and while he wasn't quite as conversational as in the past, when the occasion called for it, his repartee was as effective as ever. Great silence surrounded the feats of Tex Hill, Bus Keeton and Watsch. Meanwhile, there was a lot of action around the swim pool area, which involved more looking that swimming. P. J. Greene showed up with his hair-do--the envy of all the ladies.

The evening after Ricketts won the gold medal in the story-telling event, Kista Olsen and Maizie Hill led the group with all the songs from Battle Hymn of the Republic to Tiptoe Through the Tulips. This also cleared out the dining room and filled the patio with most of the group entertaining themselves with more of Rickett's stories, Farrell's masterful platform guidance and hymn-

singing such as was never heard in any church, led by Maizie and Kista and all of their students.

The dinner scene of July 2, the second day of the 1976 bash, was captured by a surprise birthday celebration, arranged by Maizie Hill and Meta Keeton, who spent the afternoon in Maizie's room cooking a cake for Anne-Marie Prescott. The result, after several vodkas, was a magnificent production followed by a speech by Anne-Marie whose witticisms rivalled Rickett's tall tales. This was followed by a very loud "Happy Birthday" song, which inspired Mesdames Hill and Olsen into the group-singing exercises.

The next day was more golf, swimming and drinking, followed by an evening of dancing and more drinking, in which Red Holmes proved another Fred Astaire on the floor. The evening also included a series of taped table and floor interviews by a number of commentators of the group, the last of whom, Bob Conrath, blew the fuse with an unprintable response to a question of his views on the world and everything in it. Rode has the tape, which he will have to play in a closet.

Sunday was golf and swimming, preceded by a brunch which Hank and Janie McKinney cooked up at their nearby ranch and lasted well past dinner-time. For the 1977 event, the McKinneys are looking for a bigger ranch. Everything came to a standstill after Monday, when a few of the faithful, including Iron Man McDonald, were still looking for more golf contributions. (Note to any debtors: we understand he has opened a new account with an Ojai bank.)

#### ATTENDANCE

Mr. & Mrs. Glen Carroll	Dr. L. J. Richards
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Chew	Mr. & Mrs. Freeman Ricketts
Mr. & Mrs. Bob Conrath	Clark Roberts
Mr. & Mrs. Roy Farrell	Mr. & Mrs. Don Rodewald
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Gomes	Mr. & Mrs. Dick Rossi and Tony
P. J. Greene	Mr. & Mrs. Eric Shilling and family
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Haven	Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Shrawder
Mr. & Mrs. Tex Hill	Sue Shrewsbury
Red Holmes	Felix Smith
Mr. & Mrs. M. R. Hubler	Bob Smith
Mr. & Mrs. Victor Jeukoff	Mr. & Mrs. Lewis Smith
Mr. & Mrs. Bus Keeton	Mary Smith
Leonard Kimball	Mr. & Mrs. Oakley Smith
Bob King	C. P. Tung
Mr. & Mrs. Bob Lee	Mr. & Mrs. John Uebele
Mr. & Mrs. Billy McDonald	Mr. & Mrs. Jules Watson
Mr. & Mrs. Hank McKinney	Mr. & Mrs. Don Walker
Al Oldenburg	John Williams
Kista Olson	Rosie Lee
Mr. & Mrs. Bob Prescott	

#### FIRST ALERT -- THE 1977 REUNION

As worked out by the group in 1975, the next Reunion will be held at Ojai in 1977. With the Fourth of July falling on Monday, President Tex Hill announced that the meeting will be a long (lost?) weekend, starting as usual on Thursday and breaking up on Monday. The dates will be June 30th through July 4th. There will be further word on this in January.

All again are reminded that the reservation policy, established for the 1977 reunion, will give priority to AVG/CNAC members up to 30 days before the reunion. No guests will be assigned rooms in the Inn until June 1st; however, on that date they will be assigned in the order of their reservation dates to the rooms still available. After the first of June, all members and guests will be on a first come, first served basis.

Now for the good news. The Inn is adding sixteen rooms.

ERNEST ALLISON  
ON TO "HOGY TAW"

Erniest "Allie" Allison, whose memories of pioneer days in aviation were a feature of several AVG/CNAC reunions, passed on in the spring of 1976 at his home in Arcadia, California. He last appeared at the 1975 reunion.

Allison, who was 81 at the time of his death, began his flying career with the U. S. Army Signal Corps in Omaha in 1917. At the age of 75, he began glider flying, so his actual aerial career covered more than 50 years. He was a pilot for the U. S. Postal Airmail Service from 1920 to 1927 and participated in the first transcontinental airmail flight.

In 1929, he went to China to establish an airmail route, and was the first pilot with CNAC. Prior to that, while he was an instructor with the Signal Corps, General Chennault was one of his cadets. Allison, a characteristically brief and blunt man, reported after a flight check with Chennault, "this man can be taught to fly". Chennault became his greatest student.

He served as the first chief pilot for CNAC and later was operations manager. He made all of the survey flights for the new CNAC routes and checked out all the pilots. W. L. Bond wrote of him that he "was of medium height but powerful and rather formidable in appearance but those of us who knew him well also knew he was by nature kind and gentle with a powerful bark but I am sure that in all his life he never bit anyone".

ADDRESS CHANGES

AVG & CNAC Lists

Dr. Lewis J. Richards  
1146 Road 23  
Madera, CA 98637

C. J. Rosbert  
c/o B. G. Carter  
P. O. Box 130  
Sugar Loaf Shores, FL 33044

Robert Lindstedt,  
1309 Park Western Drive, #16  
San Pedro, CA 90732

John Williams,  
9917 Park Crest Lane,  
San Diego, CA 92124

CNAC List

Neumi Dillow  
AMC Air Conditioning  
P. O. Box 40577  
Ft. Worth, TX 76140

Joe Hall  
515 N. Pavlini #7  
Anaheim, CA 92805

Jim Moore  
Apt. 601 Aree Ct. Soi 26  
Sukumvit, Bangkok, Thailand

Please advise Don Rodewald, 1220 No. Fifth St., Burbank, CA 91504 of any new or changed addresses for all AVG & CNAC People.

1976 CHILI COOK-OFF  
(A la Red Holmes)

Red Holmes, who gets mixed up in all sorts of things, now lets it be known that he is a wheel in the International Chili Society. He says the 1976 Official World Championship Chili Cook-Off will be held in the California desert at the Tropico Gold Mine, near Rossmond, on Sunday, October 24. This is no minor event. Last year, about 15,000 worshippers showed up. Cooks from 30 states are expected, so Red says that if you can cook the stuff, show up; if you can eat it, show up; and if you can drink, by all means show up.

IT'S NOW R. S. RIDHOLMS

In case you missed it at the mini-Reunion, "Red" Holmes is now officially known at the Ojai Inn as R. S. Ridholms. It happened this way:

"Red" sent his reservation in and it came back to him thus:

"Mr. R. S. Ridholms, 9 Hopeful Drive, Story Brook, N.Y."

Up until that time, "Red" thought he was:

Mr. R. S. "Red" Holmes, Jr., 9 Hopewell Drive, Stony Brook, N. Y.

Upon receiving his new handle and address, "Red" wrote the inn that he was commending the Postal Service for their prompt delivery of his mail. Apparently, the Post Office had no trouble finding "Red" with the new name and address--and besides some people think it sounds even better than the old one. At least that's the way the story goes.

DICK AND ELMER  
FROM HUMP DAYS



"Red" Holmes sent this bit of nostalgia from China Days for reproduction in the current Tigerag. He entitles it "A Pair of Hump Flyers". Between them, Dick Stratford and Elmer made 600 trips. One has a hairy tail and other can tell you some. Notice, they both wear "wings".

## NEW FLYING TIGER EXHIBIT AT SMITHSONIAN AIR MUSEUM

Bob Prescott reports that there is a new Flying Tiger exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., which is worth anyone's time if he is visiting in the area or lives there and has not yet seen it.

It is in a new National Air and Space Museum on the Mall, east of Seventh Street and was opened only last July 4th. Exhibits focus on aviation history and the space age. The Flying Tigers Exhibit includes one entire wing, with a P-40 as the central part of the exhibit. Records of the AVG and General Chennault, including his medals, are displayed.

Pictures taken at the museum are shown in this issue of Tigerag.

## FLYING TIGER EXHIBIT AT SAN DIEGO AEROSPACE MUSEUM

John Williams called in to report on the Flying Tiger exhibit in the San Diego Aerospace Museum. He now lacks only one picture to complete the entire AVG roster! The needed picture is that of Harold J. Blackwell. He was down to two missing when Tex Hill came up with a pic of George Lum, so now we need help from someone who will gain immortality by supplying that last photo to complete the collection.

At the start of the AVG exhibit there were thirty missing pics, and John was able to track down twenty nine of them, which was quite a feat. So please look through your collections and see if you can come up with the final missing link for the record. John will be happy to buy you a drink at Ojai next year in exchange for the contribution.

25-14, 2-chome,  
Kitashinagawa, Shinagawa-ku,  
Tokyo

July, 26, 1976

Dear Mr. Robert Prescott,

This is my first letter to you. I am chairman of the Comrade's Club which consists of 150 members who are the survivor of the Hayabusa Air Forces - Hayabusa means a falcon.

I hope my sister, Michiko Mango called you about our story from San Francisco the other day. As she told you we fought you in Central China, Southern China and French Indo-China many many times. ~~You~~ had a base at Hankao under the command of General Chennault.

*We* Whenever I recall those days, I cannot help admiring at your brilliant pieces of tactics and your wonderful aggressive spirit. My fellow soldiers and I think you were the best Air Forces in the world and respect you very much.

We lost 113 friends through that unhappy and abhorrent war. Every year in May we come together to Tokyo to give our prayer to those who were killed at the war. In Tokyo there is a shrine called Yasukuni which is sacred to the spirits of those who laid down their lives for their country.

(6)

When we gather at this shrine we talk about those hard and unhappy days and also about how each member of us is getting along. Some years ago one of the members said, "Perhaps those American soldiers who fought with us have a Comrades Club like us. I hope we could know them and become friends." and all of us said, "I have long been thinking of that, too!"

Some thirty years has passed since the war ended. Those friends who passed away hoping the coming of the peaceful days must be very glad to see both America and Japan are very good friends now. We also feel satisfaction at doing our best for the country in our young twenties. And we will be much happier if we shall be able to see you, shake hands, talk of those past days, and become good friends forever. I think both your friends and ours who were killed in the war, be comforted their minds, too.

We have been seeking you since two years ago. And at last we could know you and some of the members are in Los Angeles. So my sister called you and I am writing to you now.

Of course I do not know you at all. But I quite forget that you are an unknown person to me when I am writing to you now. I don't know why, but I believe it will be the familiarity that we fought at the same battle at the risk of our lives that makes me feel that you are one of my old pals. I even feel like flying to you at once.

Both P-51, your plane and Hayabusa are dear sweet ones of long time ago. P-51 must be your sweet-heart and so is our Hayabusa. I sometimes dream that P-51 and Hayabusa could fly over the Pacific in a formation. And we do hope we could meet you in Los Angeles or in Tokyo some day.

I shall be very happy if I may hear from you. We are eager to know you and your friends very much.

Paying our sincere respect to you, members of the brave Air Forces more than thirty years ago and praying our earnest prayer for your unhappy friends !

Sincerely Yours,

*Masaaki Inoue*

Masaaki Inoue

China Post

Aug 3, 1976

## EDITORIAL

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### 14th Air Force Association Reunion

The U.S. 14th Air Force Association will hold its annual reunion between August 3 and 8 at the Grand Hotel in Taipei.

More than 250 members, many of whom served under General Claire L. Chennault, known as the Flying Tigers, will attend this reunion. Mrs. Anna Chennault, widow of the General and vice president of the Flying Tiger Line, has already arrived to take part in the reunion.

It is fitting and proper that the 14th Air Force Association should choose for the second time to meet in Taipei. It met here last time in 1968 and there have been many changes during the past eight years. The Republic of China has suffered the grievous loss of its great President and valiant leader President Chiang Kai-shek who passed away more than a year ago. But the government and people have been able to transform their profound sorrow into strength and strive on to achieve unprecedented unity and prosperity.

For the hundreds of Flying Tigers who fought during the Second World War under the leadership of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and General Chennault, this reunion would have special significance in recalling the past and dedicating for the future so that what they fought for would not be in vain.

All members of the 14th Air Force Association have contributed much to the cause of freedom democracy, and world peace in defeating Japanese aggression. Their presence in the anti-Communist bastion of Taiwan will enable them to see the fruits of their valiant efforts in helping preserve what they fought for. Today, in the Republic of China, more than in any nation in Asia, there are unfettered freedom, democratic government and peace despite the constant Chinese Communist threat of aggression. Chinese Communist shelling of the offshore islands every other day is only a vivid reminder of how shaky is the present peaceful atmosphere.

But the people of the Republic of China are not at all intimidated by the constant threat of aggression posed by the Maoists. We are sure that we have invincible armed forces backed by the whole-hearted unity of the people to counter that threat. Our confidence is redoubled by the ever-increasing power struggle now going on on the Chinese mainland where Mao Tse-tung, on his death bed, is attempting to get rid of all his old comrades and cadres so that his actress-wife Chiang Ching may take over the reins of government. But it is doubtful that his power struggle will ever succeed as the people on the Chinese mainland are seething with unrest and hatred of the tyrannical rule of the Maoists.

The contrasts between the Republic of China and the Maoist mainland are truly as sharp as day and night. They provide convincing indications that our recovery of the Chinese mainland will be merely a question of time. Judging by the natural catastrophe that hit the mainland last week, it looks like the day of reckoning is rapidly approaching.

AUG 3, 1976



## Flying group reunited here

# Every man a Flying Tiger? Depends on when he flew

By DAN M. HUFF  
Citizen Staff Writer

When is a Flying Tiger not a Flying Tiger?

There's no easy answer to that question because it all depends on who you talk to.

But if anyone would know for sure, it would be David "Tex" Lee Hill, 61. Every Tiger — no matter what color his stripes — agrees that Hill is a "genuine" Flying Tiger, whatever that is.

Hill explains it this way:

The Flying Tigers were airborne mercenaries under contract to Chinese government to provide air support for Gen. Chiang Kai-shek's army fighting the Japanese invasion forces from July 1941 to July 1942.

After their contract expired in 1942 the group was known as the Chinese Air Task Force, an official operation of the United States.

And not long after that it evolved into the 14th Air Force.

Hill says the "real" Flying Tigers were in business for only a year. And all those who joined the 14th Air Force later are not really Flying Tigers, although that's what they call themselves.

"Hell, the 14th had one of the finest combat records of the war, so they don't need to rest on the Flying Tiger name," Hill said.

Naturally you'll hear growls of disapproval from the so-called latecomers, 200 or so of whom are holding their 28th annual reunion here through Saturday.

But no one is likely to take Hill on tooth and claw because as a squadron leader through all three outfits, he's practically the granddaddy tiger.

Guys like Myron Levy, 58, merely point out that their revered commander, Maj. Gen. Claire L. Chennault, who died in 1958, said more than once that everyone who served under him in China was a Flying Tiger. Chennault founded the outfit back in April of 1941 and took it through the war.

Hill, now a rancher in San Antonio who also moonlights as a special adviser to the Taiwan government, talked about those early days in the "original" Flying Tigers.

"Sure we were mercenaries, but not the way people think of them today," he said. "We were really working for the U.S., though we were paid by the Chinese."

Hill went on to say they weren't exactly paid by the Chinese.

"We worked for CAMCO — the Central Aircraft Manufacturing Co. — which was owned by William D. Palley. He was a representative of the Curtis-Wright aircraft company. So it was actually CAMCO that was paid by the Chinese — and, of course, they got their money from the U.S. So I guess we were really working for the U.S. all along."

Palley, later U.S. ambassador to Cuba, made a hefty commission off plane sales to the Tiger because he purchased them through Curtis-Wright, Hill said.

But Hill was making what he considered a fortune in those days, too. As a squadron commander he earned \$750 a month. In addition, "there was this gentleman's agreement between us and the Chinese government where we got \$500 for every Jap plane we shot down."

Hill earned more than \$6,122 on kills alone — that works out to 12¼ enemy planes. "Four of us divided one Jap Zero," he explained. He used the money to buy a Texas ranch.

Before joining the Tigers, Hill had flown off the U.S. Navy's aircraft carrier Ranger, as did a number of other Tigers.

"The U.S. released us from the service so we could go to work for CAMCO," Hill said. "Things were heating up in the Pacific and that was the only way we could do anything about it at that time."

The original Tigers were officially a patrol operation, Hill said. Their mission was to keep open the famous Burma Road, also called China's "back door". It wound 700 miles across mountains and through thick jungle from Lashio, Burma, to Kunming, China, in several areas following the ancient Marco Polo trail.

Hill said the original Tigers managed to destroy 297 Japanese planes while losing only 14 pilots — four in aerial combat and 11 who were killed by ground fire while making strafing runs along the road.

"That was probably the best kill-to-loss ratio in American history," he said. "And it will stay that way because we'll never have that type of war again."

One day he landed his P-40 and war immediately made a major in the 14th Air Force's 75th Fighter Squadron. "There was no physical, no nothing. They just told me to fly," he said.

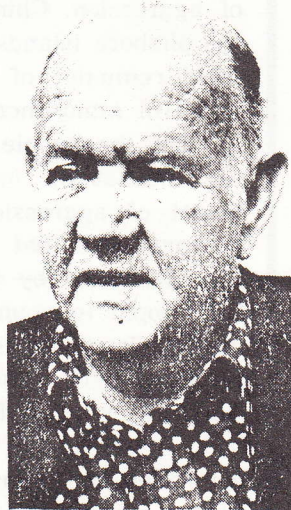
And fly he did, gaining six more kills during the course of the war.

Levy, who was the 75th's adjutant and now works for McDonnell-Dougllass Aircraft Co. in St. Louis, tells how Hill's fellow pilots couldn't stop talking about how "Tex" made a head-on pass at a Zero.

"Both of them were blasting away at each other and neither would fall off. Finally the Jap exploded," he said, "and Tex flew right through the wreckage. One pilot who saw it said it reminded him of a Texas marshall with his guns blazing."

During his hundreds of missions in the Chinese theater — which included one aerial dogfight over Hong Kong Harbor — Hill was never wounded, though he was shot down once.

"Was I ever scared up there?" Hill asked. "You bet I was. But I guess it's kind of like any activity — once things started happening I was too busy to be scared."



**'Tex' Hill**  
Flying ace

THE **FLYING TIGER LINE** INC.

ROBERT W. PRESCOTT  
PRESIDENT AND  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

August 19, 1976

Ms Betty Beard  
The Arizona Daily Star  
Tucson, Arizona

Dear Ms Beard:

An article under your byline appeared in The Arizona Daily Star in Tucson, Wednesday, July 28. It was purported to describe a convention planned in Tucson for the "Flying Tigers".

It has been a source of considerable annoyance to us who were the original Flying Tiger group under General Chennault known as the American Volunteer Group to see our name bandied about by such groups as this. They are operating under a totally false banner and simmer in their adopted glory with great enthusiasm. This Mr. Chesin whom you mention in the article was never a member of the Flying Tigers, and the statement that he joined the Flying Tigers in 1941 lured by the \$500 monthly pay from the Chinese is totally an outright lie, and we are positive that most of the people that are coming to the convention you mention were never part of the original Flying Tigers.

Just recently the 14th Air Force which took over when our group was disbanded in China in 1942, also calling themselves the Flying Tigers, convened in Taiwan and adopted the same tactics that these people are using.

We would just like to correct for you the facts in the matter so that you might be guided by any future contacts with these people. If you desire any further information I will be glad to supply it for you.

Sincerely,

Robert W. Prescott

COCKTAIL PARTY TIME



Two guests, Mary Lynn Elliott, Felix Smith and Lydia Rossi



Two Bobs-King and Lee, Mrs. Briggs, local guest



The Watsons, Peggy & Jules & Hank McKinney



Oakley Smith, Dick Rossi, Glen Carroll, Bus Keaton, Pat Smith, Lydia Rossi, Mary Lynn Elliott



Back of Bob Lee, Mr. & Mrs. Bill Briggs, local guest, Angela Shrewder, Bob Conrath, Roy Farrell



The Golfers, Prescott & McDonald



More Golfers, Watson, Maisie Hill, Carroll, McDonald, the Peggys, Watson & McDonald



The Doc Gets an earful from Sue



A Threesome - Tex Hill, P. J. Greene and Freeman Ricketts



Ladies Table - Marjorie Farrell, Peggy Watson Pam Uebele, Peggy Lee & Peggy McDonald



Colly Colquette, John Williams, "Rode", Don Walker, Bill McDonald



The Ladies, Maizie Hill, Barbara Rick-Lydia, Doc Rich & Sue etts, Marjorie Farrell & Kista Olson

*Handwritten signature in blue ink, possibly 'John Williams'.*



P.J.Greene & Anne-Marie Prescott, Roy Farrell in background



"Caribou", Jules & Roy



All Aboard for golf-P.J.Greene, Peggy Watson, Pam Uebele, Marjorie Farrell, Peggy McDonald & Roy Farrell

