

Joe Michiels

OJAI VALLEY INN



OJAI, CALIFORNIA

JOINT REUNION



FLYING TIGERS

American Volunteer Group • Chinese Air Force



CNAC

China National Aviation Corporation

23rd, 24th, and 25th of July, 1959

In Memoriam



LT. GEN. CLAIRE LEE CHENNAULT

1890-1958

FLYING



TIGERS

(AMERICAN VOLUNTEER GROUP • CHINESE AIR FORCE)
INCORPORATED

ALL CORRESPONDENCE: 737 BETHANY ROAD, BURBANK, CALIFORNIA

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USAF (DECD.)
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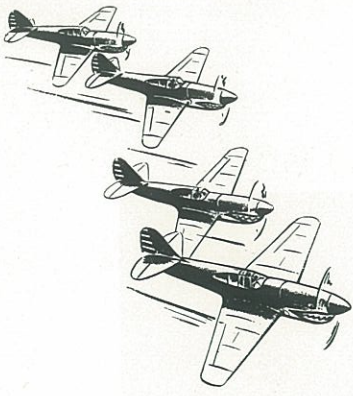
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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ORIGINAL FLYING TIGERS

(American Volunteer Group — Chinese Air Force)

Books have been written and movies made about a group of American men and women who went to Burma in 1941 and in seven months of fighting added an imperishable military record to the nation's great annals of warfare.

Now it is nearly 20 years since the landing at Rangoon and the first air battle there but the anecdotes of those early days of World War II and the adventures of the AVG still live vividly in story and film and reunion and the name hung upon the little group by war correspondents — Flying Tigers — is familiar to most Americans.

How the Flying Tigers came into being is a story as unusual as what happened to them between their first battle in December, 1941, and their disbandment in July, 1942.

In the mid-30's, an Army captain, Claire Lee Chennault, had retired from a pioneer military flying career and had written a book about his concept of aerobatics. The text came to the attention of the Chinese, then engaged in a hit-and-run war with Japan. The beleaguered Chinese asked Chennault to help them develop an air force, and in 1937, he went to China.

Four years later, with war spreading over the globe and the Chinese situation critical, Chennault was empowered by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek to seek a core of American airmen to help train the Chinese. President Roosevelt consented to allow members of the American Armed Forces to volunteer for duty with Chennault. A total of 252 men — 87 pilots and 165 ground personnel — signed up for a year's service and were shipped to Burma, where 100 P-40 fighters were sidetracked from other military assignments for their use.

Formed into three squadrons — Adam and Eve, Panda Bears and Hell's Angels — they had experienced hardly three months of training as fighting units before the aroused Japanese hit them at Christmastide of 1941 over Rangoon.

The fact that they not only survived the Japanese assault but repulsed the enemy with heavy losses electrified the Allied side of the war, which had been repeatedly defeated by the Axis powers. The American victory was once more, as at Lexington some 165 years earlier, a shot that was heard around the world, and the Tigers flew on through the Burma skies to an ever-lasting place in American history.

Often out-numbered as much as eight to one and fighting under primitive conditions with shortages of both food and supplies, their planes held together by the determination and resourcefulness of ground crews, this handful of less than one hundred pilots checked the Japanese invasion of China.

Their official record in the seven months of fighting as the AVG was 299 aerial victories and 240 more enemy planes destroyed but not confirmed. However, it is probable that their total score against the enemy ran to more than a thousand planes, many of which disappeared forever into the seas, mountains and jungles of Burma and China. Their own losses were unbelievably few.

The tribute paid them on the occasion of their tenth reunion by Chiang Kai-shek sums up their story in simple but glowing language:

"The heroic deeds of The Flying Tigers will go down in history as one of the great military feats free men have accomplished for the cause of righteousness."

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CNAC

(China National Aviation Corporation)

"CNAC" is a name synonymous with Flying Tigers among those who had a part in the great China adventure of World War II.

Many of those who flew with General Chennault during the AVG days later stayed on in China to fly with CNAC.

Actually, CNAC came into being long before the Tigers reached Rangoon. Set up by Pan American World Airways to fly commercially in China, it had been in operation several years before the start of World War II in 1939.

When the World War spread to China, CNAC began flying supplies and personnel to areas which had been isolated from land connections by the enemy. In fact, many Tigers and their supplies were flown to Chennault bases during the days of the AVG in 1941-42. Eventually, CNAC became the main source of supply for the AVG, flying into Burma and China from India.

It was during this time, early in 1942, that CNAC pioneered the establishment of the world-famed "Hump" route over the Himalayas from India to China — the last link in the world's longest military supply line.

Originally, CNAC was a small core of experienced transport pilots. To their ranks were added many Tiger pilots as well as adventure-seeking commercial pilots, some of whom had never flown anything bigger than a Cub. Most of them had never been at the controls of multi-engine equipment or done any instrument flying. But these were the men who manned CNAC's small fleet of C-47's, later reinforced with C-46's, and became China's prime contact with the outside world.

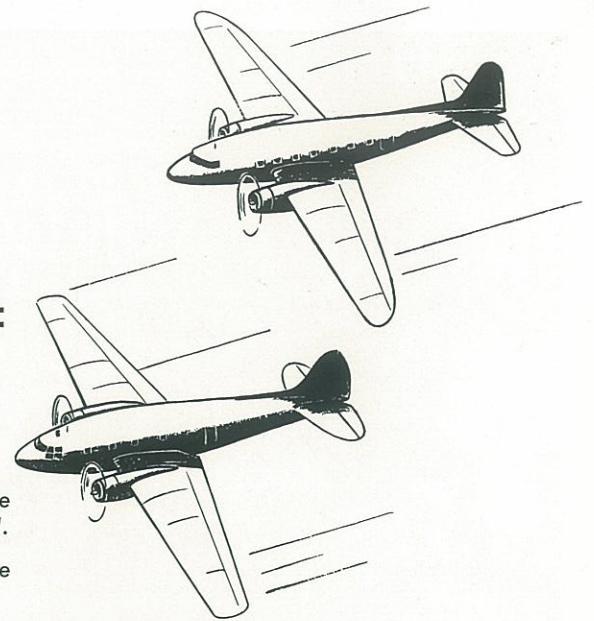
For many months, these Hump pilots, now flying night and day over the world's roughest and highest terrain in all kinds of weather, fair and foul, provided almost the entire airlift for all the U. S. forces in China.

With little or no radio aids — under constant harrassment by enemy fighters and flying unarmed over inadequately charted areas on daily flight schedules in which 16 to 20 hours of work was routine, they poured an ever-increasing trickle of supplies into starving China.

It was an operation as rough as the country and many CNAC crews and their planes are still out on the Hump, a never-to-be-forgotten monument to the sacrifice that built a supply route which eventually made its all-important contribution to V-Day.

By the war's end, hundreds of Air Force planes were flying the Hump with radio aids and controlled traffic, alongside the small group of CNAC planes which continued daily to bring in hundreds of tons of munitions, supplies and personnel. A trip and a half a day over the 500-mile Hump route was common. There were many CNAC pilots who came out of the war with 500-trip records over the Hump and some with trip totals as high as 700.

These were the men — CNAC — who plugged the dike until the great might of United States manpower and supplies could be massed to stem the enemy tide.



M E M O



1952 at Los Angeles

5 + 11 + 10 + 2



1954 at New York



1956 at Milwaukee

R I E S



1957 at Ojai



1958 at San Francisco

1959 REUNION PROGRAM

THURSDAY, JULY 23RD

10:00 A.M.

Transport leaves
Hollywood for Ojai

12:00 P.M.

Luncheon

Afternoon

Use of Ojai Valley Inn's
Recreational Facilities

6:30 P.M.

Cocktail Party

8:00 P.M.

Outdoor Western
Steak Fry

Jimmy Jackson entertaining

FRIDAY, JULY 24TH

Morning

Breakfast at
Your Convenience

11:00 A.M.

AVG Business Meeting

Luncheon

At your convenience

Afternoon

Showing of AVG and CNAC
Films by Members
and Golf Tournament

6:30 P.M.

Flying Tiger Line
Cocktail Party

8:00 P.M.

CNAC Banquet

Introduction by Dick Rossi

Tall Tales of the
Himalians
Under the
Monitorship
of
Roy Farrell
and
Bob Prescott

SATURDAY, JULY 25TH

Morning

Breakfast at
Your Convenience

11:00 A.M.

CNAC Business Meeting

Luncheon

At Your Convenience

Afternoon

Golf Tournament
or
Enjoy Yourselves

6:30 P.M.

Canadair
Cocktail Party

Hosts and Hostess
Peter H. Redpath
Mr. and Mrs. Miller Smith

8:00 P.M.

AVG Banquet

Introduction by Dick Rossi

Art Linkletter
Master of Ceremonies

Introduction of Rhonda Fleming
Miss Flying Tiger of 1959

Introduction of Guests

AVG presentation to:
Anna Chennault

Presentation of
Flying Tiger Pilot Award

FLYING TIGER PILOT AWARD

In 1952, at the first reunion of The Flying Tigers on the tenth anniversary of their disbandment, the Group voted to establish a memorial award to be presented at each reunion. The award is made to a pilot whose achievements in aviation constitute a record of distinction, emblematic of the AVG. The trophy thus designed, based upon the history of the Group and its own record, is awarded by a poll of members and is called "The Flying Tiger Pilot Award."

1959 AWARD WINNER



MAJOR WALTER W. IRWIN
United States Air Force

In May, 1958, flying a USAF Lockheed F-104A Starfighter of the Air Defense Command, Major Irwin set a new world speed record of 1404.09 miles per hour at Edwards Air Force Base. The J-79 powered fighter, at times reaching speeds in excess of 1500 MPH, broke the previous record of 1207.6 MPH by nearly 200 miles an hour. Emphasizing that Major Irwin set this record with a weapon already in use in the nation's defense, General Thomas D. White, USAF Chief of Staff, said the aircraft could perform combat operations in the Mach 2 speed range. At the time, Major Irwin was a member of the 83rd Fighter-Interceptor Squadron at Hamilton AFB, the USAF's first operational twice-the-speed of sound squadron. His flight was made over a 10-mile course at an eight-mile altitude. A veteran of 86 combat missions in World War II, he was the first captain to hold a world record since 1952 and has served in the Air Force since 1943.

PREVIOUS

1952 AWARD WINNER

Capt. Russell J. Brown, USAF, first American pilot to down a MIG-15, November 8, 1950, in Korea (on the right).



1956 AWARD WINNER

George F. Smith, Test Pilot for North American Aviation, the first pilot to survive a supersonic low altitude bail out.

1954 AWARD WINNER

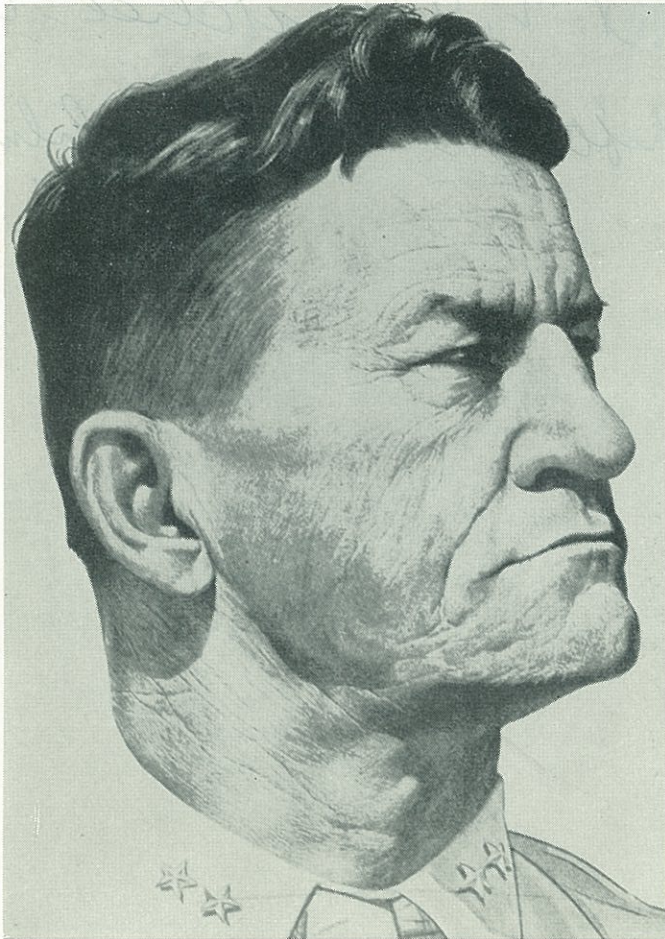
William B. Bridgeman, Engineering Test Pilot for the Douglas Aircraft Company, pioneering speed and altitude flights in the Skyrocket and X-3.



AWARDS

1957 AWARD WINNER

A. M. "Tex" Johnston,
Chief of Flight Tests,
Boeing Airplane Com-
pany, first to fly the 707
jet transport and the
Air Force KC-135 Jet
Tanker Transport
(holding helicopter
door).



1958 AWARD WINNER

Lt. Gen. Claire Lee Chennault,
father of the modern concept of
aerobatics, founder of the AVG and
Commanding General of the 14th
Air Force in World War II.

NOTES AND AUTOGRAPHS

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Dick Rossi 32619 Shifting Sands Trail, Palm Springs

NOTES AND AUTOGRAPHS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Canadair

The Flying Tiger Line

and the participation

of our Friends and Guests



