

WINGS OVER ASIA

A BRIEF HISTORY
OF
CHINA NATIONAL AVIATION CORPORATION

來華助戰

洋人

軍民一體

救護

空軍前敵總指揮部

第
號



WINGS OVER ASIA

Volume III

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An outstanding account of a Herculean effort by Holmes,
Hanks and Kusak to walk to the site of Fox's crash landing
on top of the Hump.

Cover

The identification patch that the Chinese Air Force issued to
foreign pilots. It was worn on flight jackets or uniform.

Translation by Colonel Lawrence Kwong;

This man has come to China to help fight the war. He is
a foreigner. Protect him from harm.

Help a foreign friend.

The seal or chop is that of the Chinese Air Force.

In Memoriam



CAPTAIN CHARLES LAMB SHARP, JR. (CHUCK)
April 23, 1908 - January 14, 1974

We honor the man who led CNAC through turbulent times in China, Burma and India. He was an outstanding and able administrator, a superior pilot and a leader of men.

Chuck was a real pioneer airline pilot in China. His accomplishments were many: the first flight over the "Hump," the last passenger flight out of Hong Kong in '41, direction and supervision of the first airlift over the "Hump," to name a few.

He attended grade schools in Fort Worth, attended SMU, University of Colorado and the University of Texas from which he graduated. He received an appointment to the Air Corps Flying Cadet School and graduated from Brooks and Kelly Fields in 1932.

After completing his military service Chuck joined CNAC in Shanghai in 1933. By the time he left the airline as Operations Manager in 1947 it had become the size of Eastern Airlines.

In 1947 Captain Sharp took up his seniority with Pan American Airways and flew it's routes all over the world. His last flights were 707 flights into Hong Kong. He retired because of illness in 1968 and died in Houston, Texas in 1974.

Chuck leaves a wonderful family; his wife Grace, three daughters, Carol Diann, Claudia Jean, Charon Louise, and a son, Charles Douglass. His many friends throughout the world join his family in mourning the death of one of aviation's finest.

As he had wished Chuck's ashes were scattered to the winds over the Atlantic on a crisp, beautiful dawn in February.

W. C. McDonald

* * * * *

Chuck Sharp was 66 when he died. He went quickly maybe like he would have liked to go. His frontiers and his ambitions and his goals were always ahead of him.

An accomplished and versatile aviator his resolve and determination projected him into a career that took him through an era of romance and an area of history.

He was a pilot because he was an adventurer and an explorer, and in an airplane he found the outlet, the freedom and the purposeful feeling of accomplishment that comes with the mastery and union of man and machine.

He was an airline administrator because he was a complete pilot and a professional in a vocation that required outstanding qualities in an individual and a man.

Reserved and dignified in his professional associations he was a leader, admired and respected by his

contemporaries. We will long remember Chuck as an affable individual, a generous friend and the paramount leader.

C. H. Laughlin

* * * * *

Charles Lamar Sharp, 'Chuck' to not only his friends and close associates but to all who knew him or ever heard of him, left us on January 14, 1974 for his trip into the Beyond and the rewards so justly deserved. We who knew him well feel confident that the controller of our final destinies kept a welcome mat out and a special place reserved for him where his hopes and ambitions can attain fulfillment.

Chuck arrived in Shanghai in the Spring of 1933 after completing two years of college, graduating from the U.S. Air Corp Cadet Flying school at Kelly Field in Texas and serving one year of active duty as a Second Lieutenant. Jobs for fledgling fliers were scarce so Chuck and a classmate worked their way to China on a Norwegian freighter hoping to find jobs on arrival. Their timing was opportune and both were hired as co-pilots by C.N.A.C. The other lad, Burt Hall, left China shortly after his arrival and was hired by a Phillipine Airline and had a long and successful career with them.

Demonstrating exceptional intelligence and ability, Chuck qualified as Captain within a few months and continued in that capacity based in Shanghai until the Japanese invasion of China which started in August 1937.

Several of the C.N.A.C. pilots elected to go to South America where they were all offered jobs with PAA Grace but Sharp, being offered the Operations Manager's job with C.N.A.C., decided to remain in the Far East and take his chances there.

The four years of operations out of Hong Kong into Free China across Japanese occupied territory, from the Fall of 1937 until December 1941, created aviation history. Such a project had never been undertaken before, no one was entirely sure it could be done. Needless to say, there were numerous times when it appeared that the project must be

abandoned. That is, it so appeared to others but such a thought, if it ever occurred to Sharp, was instantly dismissed. His steadfastness and determination can only be appreciated in retrospect. He didn't push. He led! No one was ever asked to execute a mission that he wasn't ready to perform himself.

The change of the base of operations from Hong Kong to Calcutta necessitated a complete new buildup of all ground facilities. This was accomplished with a minimum amount of disruption of the airlines' primary goal, which was to provide traffic and communications between the Free Chinese Government and the Allied nations. Under Sharp's leadership the airline paved the way for the "Hump" operation and actually exceeded the performance of the U.S. Air Force in the amount of tonnage delivered to Free China for the first year and a half of the war. Only after the military started using 4-engined equipment and added thousands to their list of personnel were they able to surpass C.N.A.C. in tonnage delivered.

At the end of World War II Sharp returned to the States and exercised his seniority rights with P.A.A. and completed a successful flying career throughout Latin and South America until he reached the retirement age of 60.

Chuck lived a full and eventful life. His closest friends were those who knew him best and were the most closely associated with him.

Goodbye Pal, rest in Peace.

H. L. Woods

STORY OF ANOTHER FIRST FLIGHT

By E. M. Allison

On October 21, 1929 one plane left Shanghai for Hankow and one left Hankow for Shanghai inaugurating the first air mail passenger and express service by Americans in China. A subsidiary of the Curtiss Wright Corp., known as China Airways Federal Inc., started this service.

Mr. Keys, Pres. of Curtiss Wright Corp., had a life long passion for aviation. He entered the field in early days on its financial side as investment counsel for Mr. Glenn M. Curtiss, one of aviation pioneers in America and the world. The air transportation of mail, passengers and express, was to Mr. Keys a vision of progress. This vision of man in his mastery of the air extended even beyond the confines of the United States.

Therefore, when Mr. Keys received an invitation from the Chinese Government to send expert representatives to China to investigate the possibility of promoting aviation service in that country, he welcomed the opportunity and set in motion the first moves leading eventually to China National Aviation Corporation as the operating company in China. The first organization formed by Mr. Keys was Aviation Exploration Inc. My original contract was with this company. However, this contract and other contracts with American personnel were later taken over by China Airways Federal Inc. and Aviation Exploration Inc. ceased to function in China. Aviation Exploration Inc. later also had negotiation arrangements with the Governments of Turkey, Peru and Chile. The first men sent to China were Major Wm. B. Robertson, Pres. of Aviation Exploration Inc. and Mr. Rinald R. Riggs, Secretary and legal counsel of the same corporation. The Chinese Government designated Mr. Sun Fo, (PR. son of Sun Yat-sen) a member of the State Counsel and Minister of Railways to carry on negotiations with Major Robertson and Mr. Riggs. Mr. Sun Fo acted in behalf of China National Aviation Corp., which organization had been formed previously by the Chinese Government for the purpose of handling and controlling all civilian aviation matters in China.

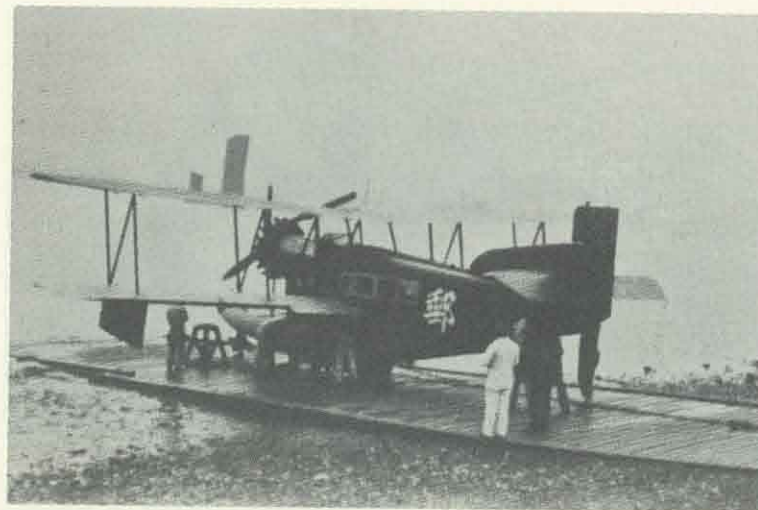


E. M. Allison

The two contracts resulting from these negotiations were signed April 17, 1929. One provided for the establishment and maintenance of air mail, passenger and express routes and the other provided for the establishment in China of aviation schools and other phases of the industry. These contracts were assigned to China Airways Federal Inc. and ratified by the State Counsel, the highest organ of the Chinese Government on April 19, 1929.

By mid-summer Minard Hamilton, Vice-President, Edward L. Fries, Vice-President and General Manager, Harry G. Smith, Vice-President and Operations Manager, Oscar Wilke, Chief Engineer and other operating personnel arrived in China bringing with them five Keystone Loening Amphibian Airyachts equipped with 525 H.P. Pratt Whitney Hornet engines. The majority of these men were key personnel and under contract with Aviation Exploration Inc. My contract was with this company until it was taken over by China Airways Federal Inc. later.

There were just two pilots on the job when the service started - Stephen Kaufman and myself. We arrived in

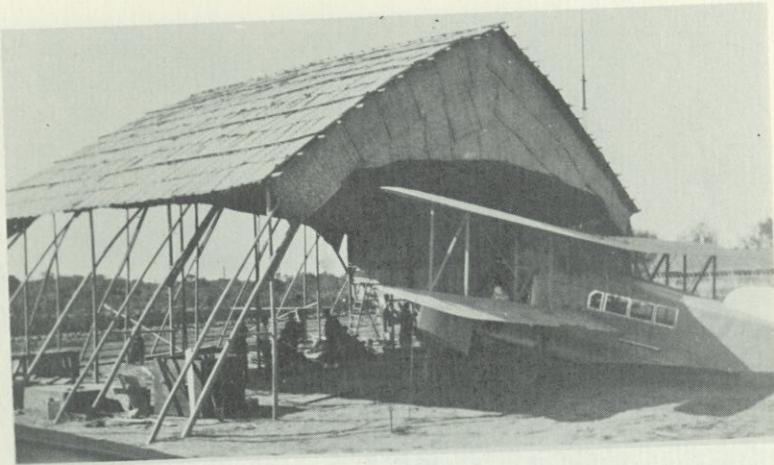


Loening Amphibian

September 1929. Kaufman and I, as well as Harry Smith our Operations Manager had been flying mail for the United States Post Office Department Airmail Service for many years. Operations under Smith were conducted in a professional manner just like we had been doing for years in the States. Occasionally Smith would take a trip so Kaufman or I could have a day off.

The principle difficulties that first year was the lack of any facilities for operating aircraft. The National Government in Nanking selected an area along the Whangpoo River near Lung Hwa for our operation. It was simply the muddy bank of the river. Our first job was to construct a ramp that would permit taxiing the planes from the river to solid ground. This ramp was built by Chinese coolies in two weeks. Much shouting of hay-hoo and burning joss sticks seemed to help those on the job. At the same time two bamboo hangars were constructed that served us very well until the first typhoon came the next summer and blew them away. A new hangar built later was of steel construction with a cement floor and is still standing and in use as far as I know.

Oscar Wilke, our Chief Engineer, organized the assembling of airplanes and directed the Maintenance



CNAC Hangar

Department during the difficult first months before and after the service opened. His headquarters and stock room were in a Loening packing case. Another Loening packing case known as the Empire State Bldg. served as the office for the Operations Manager. Chas. Delay from Omaha, Nebraska, John Riner from Cheyenne, Wyo., Ray Ott from Elton, Maryland, Mike Neuchel from Los Angeles, Harry Cassin from Long Island, Troy Haynie from California and others were in the Maintenance Department.

Capt. St. Louis, a Communication Radio Engineer and six operators from Canada set up the communications system. They did a superb job of both setting up and operating the stations. The Chinese trained by these men were soon fully qualified and took over all radio stations. Mark Wong, one of the Chinese trainees became qualified as a Communications Engineer and was placed in charge of the entire communications system, replacing Capt. St. Louis at the end of his contract.

Airmail, passenger and express service as stated above started October 21, 1929 from Shanghai-Hankow with Kaufman as pilot and I on the same day flew from Hankow to Shanghai. The service operated 100% for the remainder of the month and nearly 100% for the next two years. Our

Chinese personnel in the Operations Department were very cooperative and put forth their best efforts to help keep the planes operating on schedule. The dependability of the service however was due to the efficient and faithful work done by the American ground personnel and pilots. The increase in poundage was very encouraging. For instance from October 21-26, 1929 we carried only 11 pounds of mail but in the period November 26-30 the same year we carried 1060 pounds. Other routes planned and provided for in the contract prior to the opening date were subsequently opened and operated successfully. Therefore, the intent of the original operations contract was fulfilled through the efforts and foresight of both Americans and Chinese.

The Whangpoo River with ramp at Lung Hwa served for all Loening service in and out of Shanghai. When service later opened to Peiping using Stinson land planes we first used a small military parade ground near the ramp. This small military parade ground was gradually enlarged and became known as the Lung Hwa Airport. At Nanking the Ming Palace Airport was used the first few months, later we moved to the Yangtze River west of Nanking. At Kiukiang we used a lake, later the river. The Hankow Military Field was used until the Chinese Air Force objected and operations were moved to the Yangtze River near the center of town.

It is important to mention Capt. George Conrad Westervelt and Col. Wong. Capt. Westervelt, a retired Navy Officer, arrived in China 1930. He had worked with Col. Wong in Seattle building Boeings first planes and thus had occasion to observe Col. Wong and his excellent qualifications as an Aeronautical Engineer. Col. Wong then living in Foochow was induced to join the company as an engineer in charge of rebuilding the Loenings. He brought with him a crew of workmen from Foochow. Col. Wong and his crew did an outstanding job on the Loenings and also later on the Stinsons which were improved by adding ferring and a simplified horizontal stabilizer trim mechanism.

The Loenings in the China operations served us well during the first years as they were sturdy and reliable. During our second year the company rebuilt all Loenings; removing landing gears and tail skids and covered the wheel wells.

Water rudders were installed which gave excellent control on water. These alterations increased cruising speed about ten MPH and permitted carrying a much greater pay load, also take off distance was reduced. The Loenings had at least two definite advantages in China. The few airports then were controlled by the Military and not available for Commercial flying. The Whangpoo River, Yangtze River and lakes were used for flying at all points served. The second advantage had to do with weather. When visibility became poor we could land on the river and continue on the step at about 40 MPH with reduced power. When visibility improved we would simply open the throttle and take off.

The Loenings lacked many facilities for comfort in those days. In the rear there was a small compartment where we kept a large funnel with chamois in place and ready for refueling at the next station. This funnel was about sixteen inches in height, twelve inches in diameter and equipped with legs for holding it upright on the lower wing while refueling. One day my plane suddenly became tail heavy and I looked back in the cabin to see what was causing it. Finally a woman emerged through the small compartment door and took her seat. When we arrived in Nanking and started using the funnel something was wrong - gasoline would not filter through properly. Then I recalled the tail heaviness of the plane a short time before landing. That dear woman had gone into our rear compartment and used our funnel for a toilet.

Seeing China from the air made the job especially interesting. The large cities were always surrounded by a wall and moat. In the Yangtze River Valley the small farm villages were usually built on a river or canal levee. One day I spotted a bandit army actually attacking a village, several people were lying on the ground, apparently shot and the village on fire. On my next trip I saw smoke further up the valley. That bandit army operated in the same general area several days. Months later Chilly Vaughn's plane was hit while flying over a bandit battle near Shasi. The only damage was a hole in the hull of the plane and splinter in Chilly's leg. The War Lords were active in many parts of China from 1929 to 1931. They still defied the Central Government with the result that Civil Wars raged in many districts. The War Lords however were

gradually brought under control and the country started progressing under Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.

During the late summer of 1931 we were hindered with floods in the Yangtze River Valley. At Anking one day I found it difficult to land because of bodies and coffins floating in the river. You may consider this unbelievable but I can assure you it was true. At Hankow during the height of the flood water was four to six feet deep over the entire city. At the airport it reached eight feet in depth. We landed on the water at the airport location and took a sampan to Fenny's Hotel in the city. The water rose to a level of two feet on the first floor of the hotel and remained at that level about ten days. Sampans not only took us to the hotel but rowed us inside the building as far as the bar or the steps leading to the second floor. Many villages on my route could be seen one day and no sign of a village the following day. No one will ever know how many lives were lost in the Yangtze Valley during that flood. The loss of life and property was great and it certainly ranks among the great floods of this century. It was at its worst at the time Mrs. and Col. Lindbergh arrived in China during their "North to the Orient" survey flight. They landed on Lotus Lake, Nanking on September 19, 1931.

The number of passengers carried during the first two years was disappointing. The Chinese did not take to the idea of traveling via air. However, there was a marked improvement in passenger traffic after Madame Chiang Kai-shek came aboard my Loening one afternoon in Nanking for Shanghai and we arrived in Lung Hwa about dark. This was during 1932 when the Japanese were attacking Shanghai. From that time passenger traffic increased steadily. Furthermore, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek started using a private plane for his travels in China. The effect of knowing that both the Madame and the Generalissimo were using airplanes undoubtedly encouraged the public to use our service.

I have spent over thirteen years of my life in China which has been a great experience and I look back on it with pride and a sense of accomplishment.

WHISTLING WILLIE COMES HOME

Special Correspondent
North American Newspaper Alliance.

For three days and three nights, incredibly, the skies over the weather-wretched aerial Burma Road were clear of Japs. For three days and nights the heavy laden, unarmed transports of Pan-American's China National Airways shuttled back and forth over the hump from India with nothing to worry about except the weather. In all this time only one-half squadron of Jap Zeros were sighted—and that patrol turned and high-tailed it back into the Burma hills.

Speculation was rife. Why?

Finally, Radio Tokyo came through with an answer:

ENEMY FORCES (the polite voice announced, in the best University of Southern Cal English) ARE MOVING INTO NORTHERN BURMA IN FORCE . . . (There wasn't a handful of soldiers within 400 miles) . . . SPEARHEAD OF THEIR INVASION IS A NEW AERIAL WEAPON, DESIGNED FOOLISHLY TO UNNERVE THE EMPEROR'S CONQUERING PILOTS WHO HOLD MASTERY OF BURMA'S SKIES. THIS "SECRET WEAPON" SPOUTS STREAMS OF FLAME AND SCREECHES IN HORRIBLE TONES AS IT FLIES. A CHINESE DRAGON, PERHAPS? A PRODUCT OF THE ENGLISH-CHINESE? FOOLISH INDEED! THIS WHITE MAN'S FOLLY TOO WILL BE DRIVEN FROM THE ASIATIC HEAVENS!

Even so, for two more days whatever it was continued to scare the bejees out of any Jap that came within range of the course. But it was too good to last. Pan-American's operations manager of CNAC, Charles "Chuck" Sharp of Fort Worth, sadly shook his head . . . But we're getting ahead of our story—

IN DIRE DANGER.

It all began one dark night when a CNAC DC-3, crowded with refugees fleeing from the battle zone, ran into

trouble. Shuddering as if it would break out of its nacelle, the left outboard engine sputtered, coughed, gagged, then died. Capt. Harold Sweet of Los Angeles kept her in the air long enough to spot a postage stamp emergency field, just over the border in Free China, into which he managed to slip. Quick inspection showed that the extent of the engine's damage was beyond the ability of the flight crew to manage. They'd have to get help.

Meanwhile the ship was in dire danger of the Japanese attack. Hub deep in mud, the crew and all the 54 passengers sweated and tugged but couldn't budge it, when they tried to roll it off the field into some nearby brush. So Sweet did the next best thing. While he drained the gas and oil from all the tanks he set his passengers to work gathering twigs, leaves, branches and grass to camouflage the ship as best they could. He sent a radio to CNAC's headquarters at Chungking for help. Took his passengers into the nearby village, where he put them up with the local missionary, then started out to enlist an army of coolies to help them roll the ship off the field.

Before they could get back, however, the Japs had found their target. Streaking out of the dawn, five Mitsui fighters lined up, one behind the other, and machine-gunned the helpless hulk until their ammunition was exhausted. They left her riddled with bullet holes, but thanks to Sweet's foresight in draining the tanks she wouldn't catch fire. A few hours later, and again early in the afternoon, other fleets of Japs came over for target practice.

With his last bullet the Jap squadron leader almost rolled his wheels on the ground as he made his inspection. The way he zoomed up into the sky told Sweet and his watching crew that the Japs were satisfied that here was another Pan-American transport that would never fly again.

The ship was a shambles. Normally no one would ever think of trying to put such a wreck back together again. But in China airplanes are precious. Sweet got the radio set in

working order, raised Chungking and reported the extent of the damage.

3,247 BULLET HOLES.

Before dark that same night the repair crew arrived, just as the coolies had dragged the wreck off the little field and under the sheltering branches of a clump of bamboo trees. Zed Soldinski (Scranton, Pa.) CNAC's maintenance wizard, with tears in his eyes, viewed the handiwork of the Japs. The engines were hard hit. Two propeller blades were gone. All the glass was blown out. The instrument panel was shot away. The tires were punctured in a dozen places. Control wires were severed. Fuel tanks were like sieves. From wing-tip to wing-tip, from nose to tail, they counted 3,247 holes in her.

With daylight only a few hours away, they had no time to feel sorry for themselves. The Japs might be back any minute. Chinese soldiers, holding off the Japanese in the jungle-mountain country of northern Burma were starving. That ship was needed—needed badly. The crew went to work. New propeller blades were mounted, new cylinders and fittings were put in place, new hydraulic brakes, new fuel tanks, new control cables were installed. An altimeter, a turn-and-bank indicator, a compass, an air speed meter—four of the ship's usual 41 instruments—were fitted to a makeshift panel.

But how to patch the holes in her skin? They had brought enough metal along to cover the holes on the vital control surfaces. But that left nearly 3,000 others. A canvas awning borrowed from the Missionary's garden, a jug of homemade Chinese glue, would do the trick. Little cloth patches—3,000 of them—were cut out pasted over the bullet holes and covered over with "dope."

Fortunately the Japs had done such a good strafing job that they didn't bother to come back the next day. And by nightfall the CNAC crew had the repairs completed, had the form of an airplane together. "She'll fly, too." Soldinski

reported proudly to Sharp, whose own inspection of the wreck left him far from convinced.

"If you say she'll fly, I'll fly her," was Sharp's reply. He clambered into the cockpit with Soldinski. They started the engines, taxied back onto the field, took a tentative run along the strip and then Sharp took her off for a wide circle. She shuddered a little on the turns. The engines were rough and spit out streaks of flame from the exhaust stacks so long that the watchers on the ground thought for a minute that she might be on fire. But she held together. They landed, picked up mechanics and headed for a refuelling point just north of Burma en route to a safe port in India, 1,500 miles away.

IN A BAD WAY.

Sharp fondled that DC-3 like a mother would a new-born baby. Even so, just off the field one of the control wires snapped. They couldn't go back. By now the Japs would certainly know there had been a ship flying in the area and would be over to investigate. Their only chance was to go straight ahead. The pilot throttled back until the ship was on the ragged edge of a stall, in the teeth of a 30-mile headwind. But they kept going. It took them 812 minutes to cover 904 miles—in a 180 M.P.H. plane!

But they made the field at (Kunming). There the mechs quickly ran through a new control cable. Close inspection showed that she was still together. In fact, she looked so much like a real airplane that four Americans and three Britishers who were stranded on the field insisted on going along. They were in such a bad way that Sharp just didn't have the heart to refuse them. He warned them of what they might be in for.

Sharp kept the DC-3 well above the clouds until he came within range of the Jap lines, then dove down into the undercast to hide. The clouds were heavy, black. Rain pelted down on the dural body like sprays of bullets, ran down the windshield in a flood. But the engines hummed steadily and the vibration tone of a plane in normal

flight was baritone—and reassuring. When suddenly—"ping"—a shrill note broke the pattern. Almost immediately another "ping" and another note. Then a thousand pings and a thousand discordant notes screeched and whined and wailed . . .

When their hearts stopped jumping and they got their breath back, they realized what was happening. The rain was washing off those canvas patches and each uncovered hole produced a new and shrill note!

Just before sunset Sharp's heart jumped into his throat, off to the left he sighted a fleet of six planes. At first they were only dots in the sky but they couldn't help but see him. Second-by-second he watched them grow larger. A Jap patrol. And as luck would have it—he was in 50 miles of air without a cloud in it!

On and on they came until they were close enough for the badly frightened crew aboard the transport to read their identification signs. Then, inexplicably, the Japs wheeled about, in tight formation, and streaked back into the sunset!

THE FLYING CALLIOPE.

Less than two hours later, Sharp was circling the Indian field, bringing his treasure-plane into that port of safety. In the dim marker lights he could see forms running out of the shacks. When he landed and rolled up to the line every hand on the field was there to welcome him.

"Whistlin' Willie, what've yuh got there?" an Army major screamed at him over the last throbs of the engines. "What did you radio for? We could hear you comin' for the last 50 miles! What in hell . . . ?"

Well, maybe the Japs did run out of gas for those three days. Or, maybe that flying Calliope—that 2,400 h. p. Banshee—had something to do with clearing the Burma skies and getting the supplies into China's heroic army back there in the jungle-covered hills of Burma.

Captain Sweet would be the last one to say. But, he'll tell you, proudly, that in those three days they set a record for flying sorely needed supplies over the hump and into the hands of the waiting Chinese.

And as far as he knows, the Japs are still prodding about the whole countryside around that little field at Namyung, trying desperately to locate that "Pan-American transport" that Tojo gave them medals for destroying!

THERE ARE NO ATHEISTS IN COCKPITS EITHER

By L. F. "Robbie" Roberts

It had been pretty much a mild run by the time we put down at Teng Chung; up at four a.m. with one of the bearers gently shaking my shoulder through the mosquito netting with the reminder, "You fly now, Captain." Shave, shower, big breakfast because we did not know when we might get another solid meal that day. My co-pilot, C. C. Chin, and the two radio operators, Yon and Lee bumping through the dark, pungent jungle on the 6 by 6 with me to the Dinjan airstrip.

Then the sleepy-eyed operations people in the thatched operations building giving us our manifest and orders for the day beneath naked light bulbs dangling from the ceiling.

"Drums of 100 octane for Kunming, Robbie. You'll be flying No. 64."

The C-47 stood at the edge of the runway, loaded and ready. Chin and I checked the controls, props, the whole pre-flight procedure, feeling carefully in the control cable channel in the top of the tail section to be absolutely certain no contraband had been put there to be smuggled across the Hump. This had become one of the favorite hiding places, but it had the possible side effect of jamming the controls and more than one airplane and crew had been lost because of this. With our max-load of 100 octane gasoline, a jammed control, the loss of an engine, or the slightest judgement error on take-off would make us all just part of one big bonfire.

Checked out and cleared by the tower, Number 64 lumbered down the runway and lifted off. The ceiling was no more than 100 feet and the wheels had barely cleared the ground when we were in the soup and climbing toward Big Boy Mountain. Instrument procedure was to climb on a heading of 85° for 14 minutes, circle back to 270° and climb to 5000', then resume course. We were just coming up on 14 minutes when we broke through the cloud cover with Big Boy a hulking shadow in the faint light dead ahead. A slight heading change to the right and we cleared the peak

and were across the saddle. Dawn came quickly as we headed east across the matted jungles, cut only by sinuous rivers and the Lido Road. Two hours out of Dinjan the sun lifted over the craggy peaks of the Himalayas, glinting on the summit of Tali Mountain rising high above the dark waters of Lake Tali.

We were still an hour out of Kunming when the clouds closed in. Routine position reports were made. We were given clearance for approach, and as we made the standard pattern Number 64 broke out at above 400 feet, with 3 miles visibility, and the Kunming strip almost dead ahead.

The gasoline drums were hurriedly unloaded. The weather on the Hump and over Teng Chung and Myitkina was reported clearing and we were quickly reloaded with bags of rice for a drop to the work crews on the Burma and Lido roads, and with materials for the engineers at Teng Chung. Operations carefully marked our maps for the drop zones, as Japs were in the mountains all around these crews and we were not in the business of supplying the Japs if we could help it.

Number 64 was airborne again before the engines cooled. The drop, made in three low passes over the drop zone, went routinely, with only two bullet holes from small arms fire to show for it later. Then on to the short airstrip at Teng Chung. New, since my last flight over the area, was the charred wreckage of a P-51 on the edge of the strip. I was told it had been hit by ground fire while strafing the Japanese garrison a few days earlier, and the pilot had managed to get in to the strip before the fighter burned.

American and Chinese troops had just secured the Area and Chin and I went into the town while the airplane was being unloaded. The stench of rotting flesh was almost unbearable; bodies of Japanese soldiers lay everywhere, in ghastly piles where they had died in the bombing and strafing, or by their own hands. Our guide, a cousin of Chin's warned us to stay clear of the bodies, as the Japs had a habit of booby-trapping the dead and a man looking for a souvenir might just as quickly get his head blown off for his efforts.

The tour of the high-walled town was a tour of hell; when the Japs saw the inevitability of defeat, they killed their women by herding them into houses, barricading them inside, and burning them alive. More than forty Chinese women, probably prostitutes, were found machine-gunned to death.

The Chinese troops were busy piling the bodies of their enemies into grisly funeral pyres, dousing them with gasoline, and setting them afire, an act not as inhumane as it might appear due to the impracticability of burying them . . . more than 1000 . . . and the threat of pestilence if the rotting corpses were not quickly and efficiently disposed of.

The day's run was over. Our final cargo unloaded we were cleared for Dinjan. The good weather was going too, for above the high ridge ahead of us a line of black clouds rose and stretched to the horizon right and left. With no radar to detect thunderheads, and no way around the weather, we had no choice but to barge into it and hope for the best.

I estimated the tops of the line of thunderheads at 35,000 to 45,000 feet, far above the capability of the C-47. At 11,000 feet, we flew in. From the clear, calm air, we entered a churning, green inferno. The turbulence was immediate and intense. The radiomen, Yon and Lee, had not fastened their seat belts and were both thrown violently from their seats and knocked unconscious. Chin's belt was slack and a sudden lurch brought him into contact with the cabin ceiling, leaving me as the only conscious member of the crew. They were probably just as well off during the minutes that followed. It was a nightmare as a sudden tremendous force slammed the airplane from below. The altimeter spun crazily, the rate of climb was pegged on the up side. Unless the instruments had broken the airplane was climbing at the rate of 120 miles per hour vertically. Solid objects thundered against the wings and fuselage like cannonballs - measurements later showed this to have been grapefruit size hailstones - but my immediate feeling was that the wings would be ripped off by the tremendous stress. The altimeter went from 11,000 to 22,000 in less than 60 seconds, and

then as suddenly as it had begun the upward thrust, the motion was reversed into a wild downward plunge as uncontrollable and as violent as it had been coming up. The needle on the altimeter began to spin the other way, as though it had been wound tight and was now unwinding . . . 17,000 . . . 15,000 . . . 12,000. The ridge beneath us rose to an altitude of 10,000 feet, and totally unable to bring the airplane under any semblance of control because of the severe turbulence, I knew that Yon, Chin, Lee, and Roberts were only seconds away from buying the farm.

I prayed. Oh, **how** I prayed! Not the calm, serene prayer one might make in church on a peaceful Sabbath morning, but a real emergency **gut** prayer, the kind you make when you know the only answer lies in His hands.

And then the nightmare ended. It was as if a pair of all powerful-hands had calmly taken over the controls of old NO. 64. The airplane began to turn, and then with the same abruptness that had characterized the whole incident, the airplane popped out of the clouds. The familiar landmarks below told me we were on the same side of the ridge we had gone in on. I looked right and left at the wings, badly pocked, they were still attached, and I gingerly turned toward Myitkyina in Burma, the nearest haven, and 30 minutes later, with Chin, Yon, and Lee bruised and battered, but alive and conscious, we taxied to a stop at the operations building.

A weathered crew chief was gazing at the airplane and shaking his head as we got out. "Captain", he said, wagging a thumb at the dented and bent hulk, "What the hell kept this thing flying?"

I looked around at the plane. "Sergeant, they say you won't find any atheists in foxholes. Well, I'm here to tell you you won't find many of them in the cockpit of an airplane, either."

COULD THE MAN UPSTAIRS HAVE ENGINEERED THIS?

By Walter Roncaglione

Thirty years after I left China a party of four of us went to a Japanese restaurant in Ft. Lauderdale. There were approximately 50 people waiting for seats. This restaurant has seating for eight at each table and they cook the food right before your eyes at the table. Therefore, if you cannot fill the table yourselves, some one else is seated with you.

They called our name and we were seated at a table for eight leaving four empty seats. We had ordered drinks and started to relax when another party of four were seated at our table making the full complement of eight. A gentleman sat next to me, then a lady and another gentleman and another lady. We properly introduced ourselves. I noted one of the ladies spoke with an accent and I asked her where she was from and she said she was a white Russian born in China. I told her I had spent some time in China myself and she wanted to know where and with what organization. I told her I was with CNAC in the Commissary Department based in Kunming. At this time she asked the gentleman next to me to move so that she could sit next to me. She looked at me and exclaimed, "You're Rocky!" I said, "Yes, I am." She said, "Do you know me?" I said, "I can't say that I do." She said, "I'm Natalie Mickleson, who also worked in commissary" and with that, we embraced.

E. I. Mickleson, as you all know, was killed on "the Hump" Feb. 20, 1944 Imagine meeting some one in an oriental restaurant, thirteen thousand miles from the spot we had met and thirty years had gone by, and amongst fifty people waiting in line for a table, they were placed at our table. With this, Julian Leslie, her present husband, said, "Only the Man upstairs could have engineered this", and we had a toast to thirty years gone by.

* * * * *

When I arrived in China the Black Market exchange rate between CN and U.S. dollars was \$200.00 to \$1.00. I did

much of the marketing after several months and the rate was increasing at a ratio of 5 to 1, I thought the best way to beat this inflation was to buy in huge quantities, thereby avoiding price increases as the months went by. However, the rate of inflation was so furious that prices on food products would double in a matter of days.

So thinking myself a sharp American and knowing the ways of business, I called my assistant, John Chang in and told him that we were going down into town and buy American style—in large quantities.

Our first and most important staple was sugar so we went to a Sugar Shop and I had John ask the proprietor how much a bag of sugar was. I looked around the Shop and there appeared to be approximately 100 bags. He quoted me a price for one bag. I don't recall exactly how much per catty it was but fast figuring it was something like \$50,000 C.N. With that I said, "Ask him how much he wants for the whole shooting match." He quoted me a price of three times the price of a single bag. I said, "John, this man is making a mistake. We are going to buy it all." John explained it all to him and he said, "Yes, I understand he is going to buy it all, but when he buys all of this sugar, I am going to have to replace it and it will cost me at least two and a half times as much and possibly three times or more. Therefore, I make no money and you put me out of business. If I sell a little bit at a time, I raise my prices every day and make some money and stay in business."

So knowing the situation I grasped this, we might take a little lesson from this here in this country because it sure looks as though we are going in the same direction.

THE CHINA INLAND MISSION INCIDENT

By
H. L. "Duffy" Buller

By May, 1949, CNAC was an airline reduced to bits and pieces. There was still plenty of flying, but not over the usual routes or between former major terminals. On this basis I arrived in Hengyang late one afternoon.

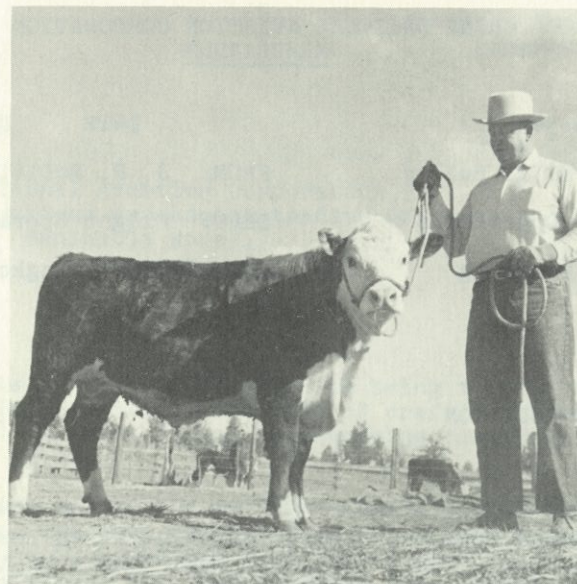
Among the passengers waiting to board was a jubilant, slightly stimulated young American who had been stuck there for several months, and was now going to Hong Kong to get married. With everyone aboard, and the fuel valves and switches positioned, I rendered a hearty, "Clear on the right." Energize! No response. O. K., let's just start all over again and re-check everything. No good. Wait a minute. How about the fuse in the wheel well? It checked normal.

About now I would have been well into my irate configuration, but just the thought of having to break this



HOWARD L. "DUFFY" BULLER
Taipeh - Summer 1949

"Duffy" is on the right!



"MR. SCHOOFER". Note his length! He was not finished for show but was fed out on 75% roughage to weigh 878 lbs. at 13 months and grade straight choice.

news to the guy who's bride was waiting in Victoria kept me chortling all the while. The passengers got off, I started the left engine and put the generator and inverter on the line. The radioman sent a message to the dispatcher at Lung Wha Airfield, Shanghai, and in a few minutes we had the word that the first flight through Hankow in the morning would be diverted, complete with parts and mechanic. The last glimpse I had of the prospective bridegroom revealed that he was babbling incoherently and waving both arms above his head with fists clenched, while a group of his friends dragged him off under protest.

I inquired about RON facilities and was transported to the local compound of the China Inland Mission. The people there were most happy to see me and the entire evening was spent bringing them up to date with news of the outside world. As the group broke up to turn in for the night, the gentleman in charge asked me if I would mind remaining a few minutes longer.

It was obvious that he had something very important on his mind and was having difficulty putting it into words. I told him that I would treat anything he told me in strictest confidence, and would be glad to be of any assistance possible. Finally, he tearfully described their predicament.

They had been short of food for almost two months and had no medical supplies. Their plight was desperate because they had no money and no way to communicate with headquarters. The Communists were reported to be making raids south of the Yangtze, already. Mr. Malins still held a check for something over HK \$600, which no one would cash except at a prohibitive rate. He wanted me to take it back to Hong Kong and return it to their office there.

I had a little over US \$100 "Green" with me and asked him if that would be of any use. He acted like he couldn't believe his ears, and that I had mentioned an amount far in excess of one hundred. He replied, "That would see us through our difficulty. It is like a miracle." Then, he saddened, reconsidered and stated, "But I can't accept it without being able to reimburse you fully, Captain Buller."

The answer was obvious and based on mutual trust. I gave him the "Green" and took his check. When I got back to Hong Kong I cashed it and sent the overpayment to the China Inland Mission office in the Colony. Their "So thankful" note in reply was another example of the involvement of American pilots on the Mainland of China prior to the Communist takeover.

Before I left the compound for the airfield the next morning, I figured out what went wrong with that No. 2 engine starter. I think God was looking after His own.

THE U. S. STATE DEPARTMENT INCIDENT

Submitted By: H. L. "Duffy" Buller

On the morning of June 17, 1949, I departed Hong Kong in a C-46 for a routine scheduled flight to Chungking via Kweilin. Aboard was the usual full load of passengers, plus cargo. One of the passengers was Mr. John Koval, U. S. Diplomatic Courier, who had a brief case chained to his left wrist.

North of Kweilin I encountered a solid overcast while cruising at 10,500 feet. It was "smooth instrument" flying. I continued on autopilot and signaled the co-pilot to monitor it, while I requested the radioman to get the latest weather reports from Peishi-yi. I noticed that the airplane was "porpoising" excessively while the co-pilot "chased it" up and down through two or three hundred feet at a time. This was normal if a small correction was not applied promptly when passengers went aft and created a slight tail-down moment, or if the indices of the autopilot were no longer aligned correctly with the aircraft in level flight. I let the co-pilot try to work it out, but after a few minutes decided to check the trim, myself. I disengaged the autopilot and the heavy control yoke slammed forward against the instrument panel, with no corresponding reaction from the airplane. I moved the wheel back and forth a couple of times, with no response, and became fully aware that the elevators were no longer controlling horizontal stabilization!

I experienced quite a chill at this point, although the cockpit heater was working fine. My right hand automatically moved toward the elevator trim tab control, but I stopped it in mid-air! If the airplane did not respond to the trim tab we were doomed to several hours of terrible anguish followed by an inevitable, uncontrolled crash. What a dilemma! Part of me cried out, "Try it now", but another voice said, "Don't touch it . . . you may find out the worst".

As my hand hovered in the air I became aware of a cramp in my stomach. Finally, almost as if hypnotized, I watched my right hand move inexorably to the trim tab

control and rotate it slightly forward. NOTHING! Oh, MY GOD! An irrespressible sob was just starting in my throat when the nose of the Big Bird gently, very slowly, started down.

It worked! A lag, sure, and don't over-control it, I cautioned myself as I gingerly rotated that beautiful, little black wheel back again and waited confidently for two or three seconds for the nose to respond. I shouted with joy and managed to bump my head even though my seatbelt was securely fastened. Time enough now to work out emergency plans while flying with the ailerons, rudder and elevator trim tab aided by power settings during descent and possible approach for landing.

I was reasonably sure that I had enough control to "belly in" with the landing gear up, providing I had a flat approach to a long, open area preferably near an airport where trained people would be on hand to render immediate assistance. Extra room was needed because I would have to come in faster than usual for control and good response to a possible "go around". Also, little or no landing flap was a necessity under these circumstances.

Fengwanshan Air Field near Chengtu came to mind, as it was a 10,000 foot strip built during World War II to accomodate B-29s. I had never been there but knew I could find it by tracking out from the CNAC Beacon at Chengtu, if the weather was not too bad. The added distance from our destination, Chungking, was a little over 150 miles, well within reach with what fuel we had on board.

I dispatched the following message to Fred Heckman, OW (Dispatcher) at Hong Kong. HAVE LOST ALL ELEVATOR CONTROL NOT JUST BOOST STOP HAVE SOME CONTROL WITH FLETNER STOP AM PROCEEDING FENGWANSHAN FOR POSSIBLE CRASH LANDING STOP HOLDING LEFT ONE. Fred told me later that he had to ask several people what a fletner was, before someone identified it as a trim tab. The only explanation I can think of for reverting to that term is that it was too

precious an item at that time to be referred to as a mere trim tab.

I continued on course to the Peishi-yi Beacon and practiced flying my crippled craft. I told the co-pilot that it would be foolish to try to land on the relatively short field at our scheduled destination, but that we had an excellent chance to land at Fengwanshan without injuring anybody and with but minor damage to the aircraft. We broke out into sunshine as we "touched second base" and altered course for Chengtu, but there was still a lower stratus deck of clouds.

The radioman handed me a weather report from Chengtu giving CAVU with the wind calm! At the same time I could see through the windshield that the lower clouds were breaking up and the weather ahead was indeed as beautiful as reported. This information gave me a tremendous lift and I began thinking for the first time that it might, just might, be possible to land with the gear down without undue risk. I might have to make several approaches and catch everything just right, but it would be well worth a few tries, and would use up excess fuel thus reducing risk of fire if I did have to resort to a belly landing, finally.

My good spirits and new found confidence must have communicated themselves to the co-pilot and radioman and they perked up visibly. I asked the co-pilot to go aft and ask the American with the briefcase to come up to the cockpit. I told Mr. Koval about our difficulties, showed him how we could still get by, and assured him our chances were good to make a normal landing. On the other hand, I suggested he go to the rear of the cargo which was lashed down along the middle of the cabin and sit down against it facing aft. This was the safest place in case of a crash.

Next, I praised the co-pilot and radioman for being calm and asked them to explain to the passengers that we would have to land near Chengtu because of bad weather at Chungking. I also asked them to make sure all seat belts were fastened without making a big fuss about it.

The great 10,000 foot strip at Fengwanshan was clearly visible from about twenty five miles out. During the descent I concentrated on getting used to the delay in response to a nose-up or nose-down correction. I also tried using the landing flaps with the control handle down to the stop (about 15°). The aircraft was stable at 100MPH in this configuration and did not pitch unduly if I changed the power setting or the elevator trim tab slightly. This was good news because "dumping" the flaps on touchdown would destroy considerable lift and "stick" the airplane onto the runway.

I made a low pass over the field to check the condition of the runway, look for obstructions and see if there was any other traffic. The co-pilot had been calling the tower and finally got a reply. It was nice to know that the wind was calm, there was no other traffic, that there were CAF mechanics and other personnel available, that they understood we had an emergency and that we were cleared to make a long, shallow, straight in approach from about 5 miles out after a wide pattern.

As we turned on final approach I was not tense but felt a high degree of awareness to detail. I called for the gear down and re-trimmed with throttles and trim tab. Why, this was just like any other approach I ever made! And look at the length of that runway! If I used up two-thirds of it fishing for the ground there would still be plenty of room to stop. I eased on 15° landing flap and again adjusted for gliding angle and trim. Woops! Need a little more power to flatten out the glide and maintain airspeed at 110 MPH. That's it. Nose up a little, now. Don't over-control! O. K. Three hundred feet. What a break to have the altimeter setting from the tower. I can now descend further without having to rely entirely on my own judgement as to how high we are above the ground.

Looks good. A little fast, but feels good. Better slow it down a little, now. Woops! It sure settles fast when the power comes off. Wish I had more hands. What the Hell, I do! Sure. Betcha if I let go of the wheel and use my left hand

on the trim tab and coordinate it with the throttles in my right hand, I can get this thing in just the attitude I want to touch down in. What about the ailerons, though? Of course, have the co-pilot keep the wings level. He caught on immediately, and I had an uneasy moment when I saw him moving the yoke fore and aft, too, but remember? NO ELEVATORS, HURRAY! Nose up a little bit with my left hand and power off a little bit with my right hand. That's it. Why, this is going to work and no sweat. Easy, now. Break the glide a little more. Too high and too fast! Never mind, that strip ahead is two miles long. Jesus! Why don't we have more runways like this? A guy would never over-shoot. Watch it! Quit giggling. How high are we now, anyway? 100 feet? 50?

A pilot could complicate matters easily by just using up too much runway before touching down. Well, I'm not going any lower until I cross the end of it. O. K. A little less power and a little more nose-up trim. Looks good. What a helluva way to fly . . . cross-handed! Hey, this is still high enough to bail out. Ease her down, man. Don't fly into the ground, now. Oh, balls, Buller, we're still as high as the hangar! Let it settle some more. Nice and easy does it. That's better. My God, I'm about 15 feet above the ground and getting scared.

Maybe I'd better go around and just belly it in with the gear up! No, to Hell with that. There's plenty of runway left and I'm only 10 feet above the ground. Christ, I've dropped 'em in from this high and never even bounced. Yeh, but you had on full flaps and the stick was right back in your gut. Elevators? Who needs them. 5 feet? Just about. Don't change a thing. Everything looks good and she's just about to touch down on the wheels with the tail up in the air where it belongs. Don't sweat it.

Sqwwwwweeeeeeeeeekkkk! Hey, we're on!!!! But get the nose back up a little. Flaps, too. Why, sure enough, we're on the ground and going fast enough to loop without adding power. All right. Just hold it straight, and slow this monster down. I knew we were safe now. The radioman was tapping out our arrival message. After all, nobody ever made a mistake about a thing like that, did he?

I parked the aircraft in a designated spot and everyone disembarked. The co-pilot immediately got into an animated discussion with two CAF mechanics. They moved to the rear of the plane and removed a large inspection plate from the underside near the tailwheel post. As the plate was lowered to the ground, a good-sized bolt and nut fell out of the opening.

One of the mechanics went up to the cockpit and positioned the control wheel in accordance with various shouted instructions, and in a few moments the bolt was replaced in the clevis that secured the control cable to the elevator activating arm. **This** time, the nut was properly safetied!

After much handshaking and shouting of beaucoup "Ding haos", we herded everybody aboard. The elevator control responded perfectly with the Checklist requirement of, "Free and full travel". Besides, the elevators now went up and down as I manipulated the yoke with my head twisted around and stuck out the cockpit side window. There was just time to get to Peishi-yi before darkness.

Mr. Koval stayed in the pilot's compartment throughout this leg. He began to relax and announced loud and clear, "You are coming with me to the American Embassy for the damnedest party you ever saw". In spite of all the criticism of our State Department you will have to admit that in this case it showed good thinking.

The festivities began as soon as we got underway for the 18 mile ride to town in our car with driver. Mr. Koval produced a bottle of Scotch and the "Gambei's" were interrupted only for repeated re-hashing of our recent harrowing experience.

By the time we arrived at the Embassy we were arm-in-arm buddies. Mr. Koval demanded attention and vociferously announced that Duffy Buller had saved his life. Scads of people appeared from all over the staid surroundings and immediately joined in the spirit and conviviality of the

happening. This went on all evening and I didn't protest at all. However, I must confess that somewhere along the line I made the almost sacrilegious remark that I had been as much concerned about my own posterior as I had about the Diplomatic Mail!

I returned to Hong Kong the next day. Only a couple of people asked me about what happened and the thing faded into insignificance under the glare of some fresher incident.

It was a complete surprise, therefore, when almost three weeks later Captain McDivitt posted his Letter of Commendation on the Flight Operations Bulletin Board, along with a copy of a letter from Mr. Koval. This flowery accolade reminded me that the gentleman concerned had appeared more than a little nervous and frightened many hours and many libations after the emergency was over. Oh, well, what else would you expect from a Feather Merchant connected with the State Department?

But, hey, wait a minute now! Hadn't he pressed me for information about CNAC's maintenance setup? How often did we have mechanical failures? Were the mechanics really qualified? Who supervised the work? Things like that. Had that ugly word that neither of us mentioned been in his mind, too? SABOTAGE...could be! Suppose that the attache case chained to Mr. Koval's wrist had contained Urgent or Top Secret documents. Of course! That man was not frightened for his life, or overly concerned about himself during our recent incident. His profuse thanks were due to his most courageous and selfless concern for the papers which had been entrusted to him!

There is no proof, of course, but since when can't a CNAC C-46 driver express an opinion on any subject he might choose? Quite a cadre of pilots, those fellows. They learned from doing. And they learned from each other. The result was an outstanding record of performance under adverse conditions that may never be duplicated, anywhere.

November 30, 1941

FIRST FLIGHT OVER THE HUMP

by

Arthur N. Young, former Director of
China National Aviation Corporation
and Financial Adviser to China



ARTHUR N. YOUNG

Arrangements for the flight, to explore new air and land routes into Western China, had been under discussion for several months. The British made a condition that we should not fly over Tibetan territory without Tibetan consent, and this was not sought as it would have taken more time and in any case a route over Tibet was not necessary. Finally the details were settled. The flight would go from Lashio, Northern Shan States, to Northeast Assam; thence over Fort Hertz, the most northerly post in Burma territory; and thence to Chungtien in Yunnan, Likiang and Kunning. British officers from India were to accompany the flight. The party was to assemble at Lashio on November 20.

On reaching Lashio on that date, we found that the officers from India had been delayed by trouble with the BOAC plane from Calcutta. They were to arrive at Rangoon on the 21st. They did so, but the bomber flying them to Lashio could not make it before dark as the weather was stormy, and was forced down 100 miles away. They finally arrived at 10:00 a. m. on the 22nd. Meanwhile, we wondered whether we could go at all. The weather was stormy at Lashio, and we feared it would be similar to the north. The time of a DC-3 plane is precious, and an important schedule had been delayed. But on the morning of the 22nd the weather was improving and we decided to go.

The party consisted of two British officers from India; five air officers from Singapore and Burma; the British air attache to China; a road expert of the Chinese Ministry of Communications; and W. L. Bond, K. I. Nieh (assistant operations manager of CNAC) and myself representing CNAC. Also there was a servant fired from the CNAC Hostel at Lashio who had to be returned to Hong Kong — and who was taken along because there was room, and who slept nearly the whole time! The pilot was Chuck Sharp, co-pilot de Kantzow (an Australian), and the radioman was Chang. Altogether we were 16.

Before leaving Lashio we prepared about 20 "first flight" airmail covers for the philatelists of the party, and sent them to the Lashio postoffice. By 1:00 p. m. we were ready, and took off in bright weather with broken clouds. We flew over heavily wooded rolling country, with occasional green streams in the jungle. Now and then we saw clearing. Soon we came to Namkham, with red-roofed houses, and then to Loiwing just inside the China frontier. Because of the aircraft factory there, the frontier was marked with huge white crosses to give notice to Jap planes. When the place was raided, however, a year ago, the Japs disregarded the frontier and flew over Burma, even dropping a bomb or two on Burma soil. We could still see some marks of the bombing. Before long we came to Bhamo, an important port on the Irrawaddy River, which is the point of departure for the historic route of Marco Polo into Yunnan via Tengyueh, Tali



At Likiang, Yunnan, with Yunnanese and Tibetans: At right, William L. Bond, K. L. Nieh, Arthur N. Young, and British Air Attache to China.

and Kunming. Large barges and river boats were seen. The rise and fall of the river is very great, and as this is low water season we saw huge sanbars.

We went up the valley to Myitkyina, the end of the northern branch of Burma railways. The river narrowed and boats were smaller. Myitkyina is a pretty and well laid out town in a broad valley. From there we bore northwest towards upper Assam in India. The country became rougher and wilder. There is no really useful land connection between Burma and India, as Burma is afraid of Indian immigration. As we gained height to cross the 8,000 foot pass we could see higher mountains to the north, about 12,000 feet high. West of our route are the famous jade mines. Coming to the Patkai Bum range, separating Burma from India, we found steep gorges with dark colored streams far below us. As we approached India, we saw occasional clearings and villages on the more level parts of the mountains. In broken clouds we skimmed the tops of the passes in the jumbled mountains, dodging through holes in the clouds. There were some fine



Official guard of the plane in Assam. From left: British air attache to China, Arthur N. Young, William L. Bond, British official from India.

rainbows to be seen. The mountain villages were unlike anything I had seen before, the buildings having long oval rounded roofs, some quite big. Soon we could look out on the huge plain of Assam. It is watered by many rivers, the largest being the Brahmaputra, which is several miles wide in places. The land is closely cultivated, like the lower Yangtze plain of China, and there are many trees.

We landed at 4:20 p. m., the first flight to cross the Burma-India frontier. Also we were the first big plane to land at the field in Assam. When we had landed, after circling the field twice, officials came hurrying to meet us, followed by most of the British colony of the area. As it was Saturday afternoon, most of them were at the nearby club. They had received a stupid telegram from Calcutta saying that we would come the next day — as Calcutta had thought we could not make it earlier. So they were not ready to receive us. But they scurried around and found places for us to stay — no small task for so many in a small community. The radioman and servant stayed with the plane and slept on board, with an Indian guard outside. Bondie and I stayed

with Dr. F. C. McCombie, an elderly and hospitable Scotch doctor to one of the tea plantations. He had a large house built on stilts of steel, this having been done in the old days when it was believed that malaria was caused by miasma near the ground. He lives all alone and in grand style, with plenty of servants and good food. Tea is the big interest in Assam. The tea plants are a striking sight from the air, as they are closely packed together and the tops of the plants all cut down to the same level of about four feet. A tea field looks like a huge linoleum rug with its regular pattern. At intervals, there are nitrogenous trees planted to help the soil.

Assam where we were is near to the frontier of northeast India, which few people have crossed. Beyond are wild tribes. The country of the Abors has never been penetrated by white men. The Abors wear no clothes, though it sometimes gets quite cold; shoot poisoned arrows; and collect heads. As we were to fly close to their country, we were not keen about a forced landing. In this valley there is plenty of game—wild elephants, which often come in and destroy villages because they have learned that they can find rice there; tigers; leopards; bullalo; wild pigs; etc. Also there are plenty of snakes of many kinds. In southeastern Assam is the wettest place in the world, Cherraponji. On looking at the Calcutta paper, I saw from the weather report that to November 20 Cherraponji had had a rainfall of 442.8 inches, or 19.4 inches above average to date. The heavy rainfall is due to some peculiarity of topography which causes heavy precipitation from the monsoon. At Shellong nearby rainfall was only 92.8 inches to date. From Sadiya, the end of the Assam railway connecting with Calcutta, the trail goes on into the country of the tribes and thence into Tibet and western China. Few people have made that crossing, which is very arduous and takes months. We were to do it in three and a half hours.

On Sunday morning, before we took off, Chuck Sharp gave a special flight to our hosts and to some of the natives. It was the first flight for most of them, and they enjoyed seeing their valley from the air. While waiting at the field, a large gathering of natives lined up at the edge to see the



At Likiang, Yunnan. Front row from left: Arthur N. Young; Chuck Sharp, pilot; William L. Bond; British air attache to China; K. L. Nieh, assistant operations manager, CNAC.

plane. In the crowd were a few natives with spears from the tribes. I bought one for five rupees and hope some time to bring it back to the U.S. The handle is covered with fuzzy red material, one end has a sharp thin point, and the other end has a broad spearhead. It is a vicious weapon, and meanwhile I am well defended in Chungking.

We took off on Sunday, November 23, at 10:45 and headed east toward Fort Hertz. We flew over more tea plantations and farms, and as we climbed through the clouds we could begin to see the nearer and lower Himalayas to the north. Here we were about 500 miles east of Everest. Soon we could see the first snow mountains to the northeast, on the border of Assam, in glimpses through the clouds. At this stage the cloud formations were very fine, with huge piled-up masses, but they were no help in seeing. A storm had been moving up from Calcutta, but we were apparently well ahead of it. As we flew on, the Brahmaputra valley narrowed and the mountains became higher and more jumbled. We crossed the border range, with mountains 12,500 feet high and some snow in sight. Then we came to a fine broad valley and were

over Fort Hertz about an hour after our start. Fort Hertz is a small settlement, the most northerly post in Burma, at the northwest corner of the famous "Triangle" formed by two branches of the Irrawaddy River, in which country there has been great difficulty of pacification. Crossing the northern part of the Triangle, we could see higher snow mountains to the north of the valley, perhaps 16,000 feet high. Soon we came to the easterly branch of the Irrawaddy, a big blue-black stream with many rapids in a deep gorge. Then after passing through clouds we came out into clearer weather to see far ahead the huge ranges running north and south that separate the three great rivers, the Salween, Mekong and Yangtze. It is a remarkable phenomenon of geography that here the three rivers run parallel within a space of 30 to 40 miles. All three rise in the wastes of Tibet. The Salween flows through Burma, China and again Burma to empty into the Bay of Bengal at Moulmein. The Mekong flows through China, into Indo-China, to Saigon. The Yangtze of course flows by Chungking to Shanghai on the China Sea. At one point in the air we could spot the gorges of all three.

As the snowy ridge of the first range east of the Salween loomed up, the co-pilot came back to urge us not to move around much as the plane was going high. The pilot, co-pilot and radioman took three of our four oxygen tanks, leaving one for use by the rest of us if needed. Soon we were over the Salween, in a very deep gorge but still perhaps 5,000 feet above sea level. We were flying at about 14,000. We turned north to fly for a while parallel with the snowy range and above the gorge. It was a grand sight, with the sides of the gorge so steep that much of it was in shadow even about 1:00 p. m. The river looked like a thin black ribbon, with occasional white streaks showing rapids. I was taking pictures from time to time, but this was not easy as the condensation of breath in the plane fogged the windows. Still some of the pictures came out fairly well.

Then we turned east again toward the Mekong, and as the weather was clear we could cross the range without going above 14,000 feet, though we had expected to go much

higher. We flew past bare rocky heights with snow just outside the windows of the plane. In all directions we could see higher mountains, but at this point those in sight probably were not over about 18,000 feet. We found the Mekong valley broader and less wild appearing, but in all this country there was no sign of any inhabitants. A forced landing would have been just too bad for us.

Crossing the range east of the Mekong we were soon over the Yangtze valley. Here the valley was much broader and we saw small villages and some cultivation. Flying northeast, we saw on the far horizon some very high peaks, three together rising above the other heights. These we learned later were near Atuntze in northern Yunnan and were 24,000 to 25,000 feet high. Soon we spotted Chungtien, which we wished to observe from the air. It is in a broad valley and is a Tibetan style settlement. The temple was a remarkable sight from the air, built on a high hill in the midst of the valley, with huge square structures and a great amount of gold in sight. It was surrounded by other square and rectangular buildings. The whole effect was different from that of any place I have ever seen. I wanted a picture, but the course of the plane did not give a proper point of vantage. This country is on the route to Tibet, the mountains of which we had seen from the air.

Turning south we flew among high mountains to Likiang in a broad valley of the River of Golden Sand. This is really a gold-producing country, and during the war we have bought and exported much of its gold to buy needed supplies abroad. At Likiang we were to pick up Dr. Rock, the explorer, who has been there for some time. He is a great authority on this country and the native tribes and Tibetans. We had telegraphed him that we would come at about this time, and to be ready. We circled the valley and flew up and down the road without seeing any sign of him. We landed at the "airfield" in the north of the valley—a bare level space that is a natural field, but without any improvements and no settlement near. Bondie wanted to say, "Dr. Rock, I presume." But we found no sign of him and no one at the landing ground but a crowd of native tribesmen and Tibetans.

We wanted to wait for him, but the radioman had word of a storm at Kunming and the pilot was unwilling to make a night landing, so after waiting as long as we could and having no word, we reluctantly had to leave.

At the landing field we all got out and walked around. I took some pictures which came out well. The natives were much interested in the big plane, as they had of course never seen one and probably never even heard of one. I wonder what they thought. Also what did the savages think in the wilds over which we had flown?

After walking around and resting at Likiang for over an hour, and looking in all directions for some sign of Dr. Rock, we climbed into the plane. Bondie and I with others ran down the field making signs to the natives to get off the track we were to use as a take-off. This was not easy as people were streaming across the field to see the great sight. But when the engines started up, they began to get the idea and to understand our signs. When starting the engines, one of us stood on each side to keep people away from the propellers. The noise and wind and dust then did the rest. We climbed into the plane, hoping that no one would have to be run down on the runway as we were taking off. At 8,400 feet and with a non-too-long runway, we could not stop once the take-off had begun, and if anyone were in the way it would just be his or her hard luck. But luckily the way was clear, and we made an excellent take-off and were on the way to Kunming. We arrived just at dusk, picking our way past the storms. It had been a wonderful day.

Hong Kong August 26, 1938

PILOT'S REPORT

By H. L. Woods

At 8:04 a. m. August 24, C.N.A.C. Douglas Plane No. 32, piloted by myself departed from Kai Tak Airport, Hong Kong, enroute Wuchow, Liuchow, Chungking and Chengtu.

A few minutes after leaving the boundary of the Colony, at an altitude of approximately six thousand feet and still climbing, I sighted eight planes directly ahead of me which I took to be Japanese, having seen similar flights of Japanese planes in this vicinity. I turned around and came back to the edge of the Colony, to give the planes time to pass, then proceeded on my course of 297 Degrees, at an altitude of 8,000 feet.

As I reached the west end of the bay between Hong Kong territory and the mainland, at about 8:30 a. m., I looked back and sighted five pursuit planes diving in my direction. They were at that time about 3,000 or 4,000 feet above me and perhaps a half mile to the rear. I looked for some clouds into which I could take cover, and noticed a small patch at an altitude of about 3,000 feet just a short distance ahead and slightly to my left. I immediately put the plane in a steep dive and reached these clouds only to find they were covering the tops of some small mountains which projected into them.

I went into the edge of these clouds and was in there for a few seconds and emerged on the other side. Directly ahead of me all was clear, so I started to turn to re-enter the clouds and I heard machine-gun bullets striking the plane. I was conscious of what seemed to be two bullets striking inside the control room. I immediately started descending in a tight spiral. During this spiral I could see the shadow of my plane, also the shadow of another plane directly at my rear.

The terrain immediately underneath consisted of small rice paddy fields surrounded by dykes. I considered it

extremely hazardous to attempt a landing on land due to these dykes, so headed for a river a short distance to my right.

I shut off the engines, cut the motor switches, and disconnected the battery, and glided into a landing on the water. During this time the plane was being struck by machine-gun bullets.

The plane was landed safely near the right-hand side of the river. By the time the water cleared from the windshield, however, the current had caught the plane and swept it into the middle of the current.

I first ascertained that everyone in the plane was unhurt. I instructed that the outside cabin door not be opened, but the steward had already opened it as the water level was approximately two feet below the lower part of the door. I instructed the radio operator to notify all concerned that everyone was safe.

As soon as the plane stopped, the pursuit planes started machine gunning us. I raised the emergency hatch cover in the front of the control room and looked up in the direction from which we were being attacked. At this time I could see the attacking planes clearly and positively identified them as Japanese. They were pontoon bi-planes. Although I could see the markings clearly, I did not take time to notice whether they were single-place or two-place.

The only sampans on the river were being rowed away by their occupants rapidly. I then noticed a sampan tied up to shore directly opposite our position. I turned to the radio operator and co-pilot and told them to instruct the passengers who could swim to jump, and that I was going to attempt to reach shore and secure the sampan. With this I jumped into the water and started swimming toward shore.

It was not until after I started swimming that I noticed the current was so strong. I estimated it later at about four or five knots. As I was progressing toward shore several Japanese

planes dived on me and machine gunned me. At first I submerged myself when they started shooting, but later became so exhausted I could not do this. Many bullets came extremely close; so close in fact that it left no doubt as to whether they were aiming at me or the ship. After what seemed an endless time, I reached the shore in a state of complete exhaustion. I was unable to raise myself out of the water for some time.

Either at the time I reached shore or at the time I finally pulled myself completely out of the water, I saw the Douglas a considerable distance down stream, half submerged, floating in a nose-down position. I believe it was at this time I looked at my watch and ascertained the time to be 8:50 a.m.

It was probably over an hour before I could stand. I was violently ill at my stomach.

As soon as I gathered sufficient strength, I started walking along the bank of the river in the direction the plane had disappeared. After walking approximately a half mile, I came upon a soldier and was led to where another group of soldiers were located. Both the soldiers and myself were trying to get information, but as they spoke no English and I spoke no Chinese, were unsuccessful. Even at this time the Japanese planes were still in the vicinity. Just when they stopped machine gunning the plane and myself, I am not sure.

After numerous unsuccessful attempts on the part of the soldiers and myself to communicate, I was put into a small fishing boat, accompanied by one soldier, and proceeded with the current into the interior. I understand this was a tidal current that was flowing.

We rode for more than an hour and finally landed at a small village. Then we walked for quite some time and finally I was taken to a large soldiers' barracks. There we were still unable to communicate, due to the lack of an interpreter.

After some time we entered rickshas and proceeded to the home of the district magistrate. It was from him I learned

that up to that time only one passenger, who had been wounded, and the radio operator and I had survived.

I then proceeded to Macao in the magistrate's car, accompanied by the wounded passenger. I saw that the passenger was placed in a hospital and then contacted Hong Kong Airport radio by means of the Pan American radio at Macao.

I proceeded to Hong Kong aboard the USS "Mindanao" arriving at 1:00 a.m., August 25.

The attack, I feel certain, was not only unprovoked, but prearranged. Having sighted these planes on several occasions enroute from their base south of Hong Kong to objectives north at about this same position, I have noticed they were always in a climb and at an altitude of between 6,000 and 7,000 feet, which would be about normal, considering the distance from their base. On this particular trip, however, when I first noticed them, they were around 11,000 or 12,000 feet, and from their speed it was evident that they had dived from considerable distance even then. Also I was attacked from such a direction as to make it impossible to attempt turning around and reaching Hong Kong Colony. Then, in my opinion, the most conclusive evidence that shooting down my ship was their definite objective was the fact that after I had been forced to land, and the plane had been sunk, they continued to stay in that vicinity, instead of continuing as they would have done, had they started out on any other objective. I understand Dr. Sun Fo had intended to take my plane that morning, and it is very probable that the Japanese War Office thought they were eliminating him when they shot down my plane.

FOX'S PASS

by Red Holmes



JIM FOX
Calcutta - 1942

James Ransey Fox, Jr., was born March 16, 1919, in Dalhart, Texas, the only child of J. R., Sr. and Burt Fox. We attended the same elementary and high school, two years apart. Due to his popularity he was president of both his Junior and Senior Class. After school and during the summers he worked in his father's store, Fox Hardware and Implement Co. We were frequent guests of Charley Coots at his father's ranch near Nara Visa, N. M., hunting, fishing, finding indian arrowheads, riding horseback, and occasionally participating in work such as branding and cutting calves and digging "Loco Weed." Jim and Charley were good swimmers, but they also became adept at life saving and artificial respiration while unsuccessfully trying to teach me to swim in a 20' deep swimmin' hole. Jim's parents always treated him like a grown-up, allowing us to meet every Sunday afternoon to play poker in the den, with his mother keeping us well

supplied with food and soft drinks. Having learned poker from his father he was a consistent winner. Smoking cigarettes was also allowed in their house as was a brief cocktail hour. During one poker session I ran out of my brand of cigarettes—Old Gold—and declined offers of other brands at which point Jim said he would bet I couldn't tell the difference. F. E. Thomas, Jr., and Andy James, Jr., joined in the challenge of \$1.00 each. Being older and somewhat of a con-artist I decided it was high time I taught these upstarts a small lesson.

I sent Jack Lovell, our favorite kibitzer, to the drug store for a package of Old Gold's and outside of the hearing of the poker table instructed him to also get a 5¢ box of menthol crystals. When he returned I lit up an Old Gold and quickly under the table dunked it in the crystals. I was then blindfolded and given a drag of my Old Gold loaded with the menthol—I nearly gagged—but, kept my composure and identified it properly as an Old Gold. Three times in a row they gave me the Old Gold, then a Lucky Strike and then a Lucky. At this point they all paid off, astounded at my ability to tell the cig's apart. I couldn't resist exposing the trick and pointing out what "suckers" they all were. My offer to give back the ill-gotten gains was refused by all with a vow to get even. During a later session of poker when I began another of my joke telling sprees, I boasted that I could tell a funny joke about any suggested subject. After the first suggestion before I started the joke I asked, "Have I told you the one about the railroad engineer?" Jim said, "Is it funny?" I said, "Yes." Jim said, "Go ahead, you haven't told it."

On March 11th, 1943, the Douglas C-47 flight of Jim Fox, Co-pilot L. Thom and operator K. Wong abruptly ended in a snow covered pass in the middle of the "Hump" at about 10,400 feet elevation, apparently victims of a severe downdraft. According to Asian maps the final resting place of cargo carrying CNAC aircraft No. 53 was within 100 yards of the Burma-China border, in China on the Kao I Kung Shan ridge just west of the Salween River at approximately 25 ° 55' N. Lat. and 98 ° , 41' E. Long.

This "no place" became known to all CNAC personnel as "FOX'S PASS." Jim was my friend, we grew up together

and maintained in contact with each other until his mis-fortune.

The severe winter weather that rages in that area from January through March prevented any possible search and rescue operation. It was perhaps three weeks later that the downed aircraft was first sighted, by Capt. George Huang, and others who had daily checked the area only to find it obscured in heavy clouds. These first sightings revealed the C-47 (cargo version of the DC-3) was amazingly intact and hopes rang high that all aboard had survived and would one day "walk out".

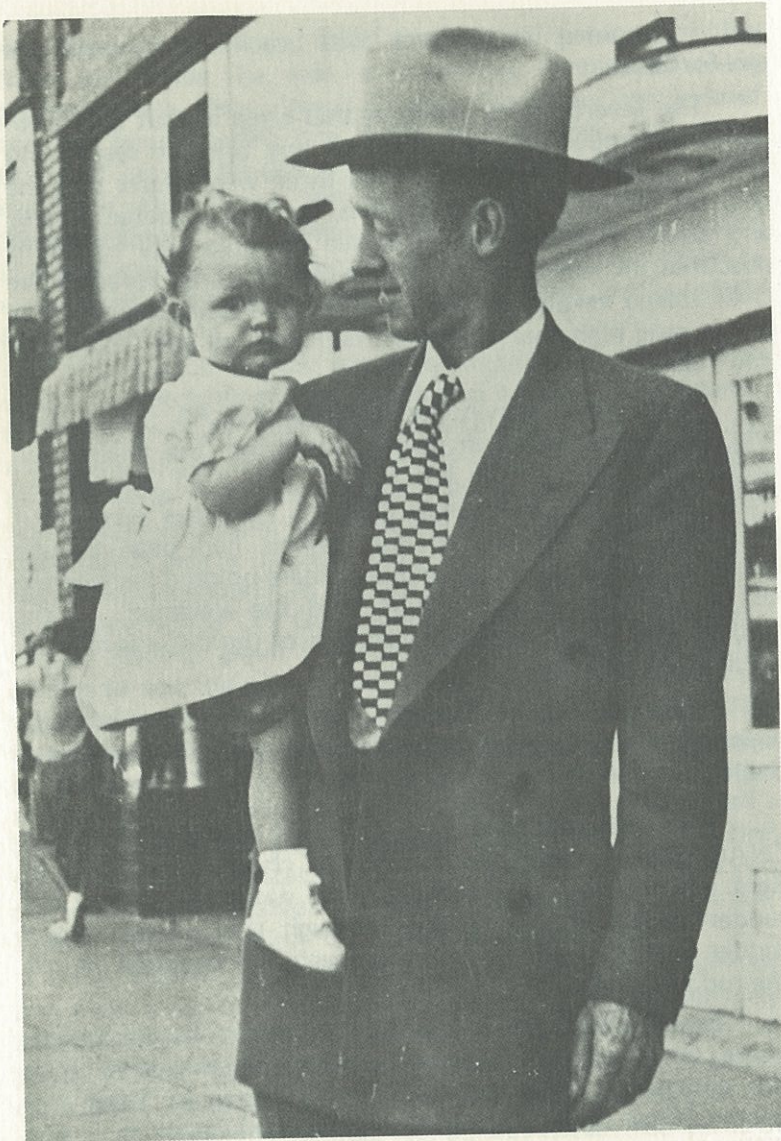
There wasn't a window broken in No. 53, the fuselage was intact, the wings in perfect condition, the tail section undamaged with a little left rudder. The most encouraging thing about the plane was that its elevators were level indicating that no one in the cockpit had been thrown forward, during the crash, and died there holding the steering column forward which would hold the elevators, on the trailing edge of the horizontal surface of the tail assembly, in a full down position.

There was much speculation by all the pilots of what happened and whether Fox and his crew actually escaped the crash.

Then one day following a violent monsoon storm, a CNAC pilot reported the rudder had changed from left to right which meant the southeast wind was able to move the rudder pedals in the cockpit through the linkage to the rudder so it was unlikely that there were feet propped against the rudder pedals.

Every CNAC pilot was sure he could fly his empty plane, on his return trip from Kunming, low enough to see in the cockpit to make certain Fox was not in it. There was always more light outside the plane than inside so it was difficult to get a clear view. Some tried using their landing lights at night time to illuminate the cockpit. The final conclusion was that there were no skeletons in the cockpit.

There were so many dangerously low flights made over No. 53 Chief Pilot Woods put out an order that all low flights had to stop for fear of losing another plane in Fox's Pass.



(Picture of author with first child, a daughter named Patricia "JIM" in Shanghai, China. Named after Jim Fox, because the Chinese Doctor assured me "it" was going to be a boy. A million dollar (Chinese money) baby. Loss of bets, \$2,500.00 due to mis-sexing of child, by Dr. Sun.

Did the crew stay with the plane expecting their CNAC pilots to find them as they flew 25 crossings a day within 25 miles of them? Why didn't Jim Fox send a message on the radio before the battery went dead? If he had abandoned the airplane why didn't he leave the door to the fuselage open, or leave a message or bits of white cloth tied to bushes indicating the direction of their escape?

The Japanese had brought guns 1,500 miles from Rangoon, Burma to Hpimaw Pass, known by all of the CNAC pilots as "V Pass" because it described it perfectly, in an attempt to stop the "Hump" traffic by CNAC through the most traveled and lowest pass at 10,500 feet.

This gun placement was 4 miles north northwest of Fox's plane. Could Fox and his crew have been captured by the Japanese and would the Japanese keep their record consistent by never returning a CNAC captive, torturing them for information until they died?

That morning, of the fateful Fox trip, planes departed Kunming, China, loaded with tin bars, wolfram and hog bristles destined for Dinjan, India, in the ASSAM Valley. As bad weather, known severe icing conditions and heavy snow were sure to be encountered in the overcast above 11,000 feet it would seem safer and more desirable to fly the route selected by Orrin Welch, through the passes and finally through the "V Pass" into Burma so that they would stay at 10,500 feet, just below the treacherous icing. After take-off from Kunming the four picked their way through the passes in semi-formation until they reached the Salween River, 130 miles west of CNAC weather station at Yunnanyi. The "V Pass" was socked in and the formation turned south to what would later be known as Fox's Pass. It looked inviting, as it was 100 feet lower than the "V Pass" and it would allow the formation to keep contact with the ground while passing through scattered low overcast and moderate snow.

The problem with this route was the likelihood of a violent downdraft, from the northwest wind, that was blowing at 60 knots as it broke over the ridge to the right of

Welch's lead plane as it headed southwest. The wind blowing down from the ridge to the open Salween Valley, 2 miles below, was treacherous for the slow C-47. By approaching the ridge of the mountain at an angle, it gave the pilot a better opportunity to turn away from the rising terrain in front of him if he thought he was losing the battle with the downdraft.

Welch was first through this pass and experienced the severe downdraft, next came Captains Al Oldenburg and George Huang, who felt they brushed the tree tops. Fox was next. Behind Fox's plane were Captains Charles Sharkey and Pete Goutiere who saw his plane go in, and as they were losing altitude too fast they elected to turn left in time and proceeded on another route to Dinjan.

With full throttle for maximum climb to try to overcome the vicious downdraft, Jim Fox probably had a forward airspeed of 80 miles per hour and, surface head winds that veered to the west, at the ridge where he touched down, probably approached his forward speed. This explained why the plane did not have any damage to it when it landed.

I was in Miami when I received the last letter from Jim on Feb. 13, 1943, informing me that he had checked out as a Capt. on Feb. 1. He also complained about his bad luck with cards during the nights while flying during the day at high altitudes on instruments which he enjoyed very much.

My last letter to him dated January 3rd, 1943, was marked return to sender.

On March 25 I received a Western Union Message from his mother. "JIMS PLANE TEN DAYS OVER DUE. ON WAY FROM CHUNGKING TO CALCUTTA—MRS. J. R. FOX."

I cried like a baby, contemplated my guilt as an influence on my friends life and vowed to myself to go to that part of the world and seek the body of my friend.

CLASS OF SERVICE This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above, preceding the address.	WESTERN UNION 1201 1943 MAR 25	A. N. WILLIAMS PRESIDENT	NEWCOMB CARLTON CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD	J. C. WILLEVER FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT	SYMBOLS	
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JIMS PLANE TEN DAYS OVER DUE, ON WAY FROM CHUNGKING TO CALCUTTA=

MRS J R FOX.

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

We stayed a couple of days in Calcutta and then went to Dinjan to make our first flights over the "Hump"—AT NIGHT—on October 14, 1943.

Joining CNAC was not easy but I made it and my first round trip was with "nice guy", Al. Wright, who didn't bother telling me that it was his first night flight until the round trip was finished back at Dinjan.

After two weeks of flying nights, on my twentieth flight, Rafe McKinney showed me what the "Hump" looked like in clear, broad daylight. I thought it was frightening.

Ralph was kind in that he navigated to "Fox's Pass," circled and gave me my first look at Jim's plane. It appeared to be parked on its belly, the nose barely touching the trees that bordered the most unusual saucer shaped meadow - the only one of it's kind I ever saw elsewhere on the "Hump." There was no visible damage to any part of the C-47. The surrounding terrain left little hope that it would be easy to

walk out or in. As Rafe headed for Dinjan we must have looked like "the odd crew," him flying and me crying.

Word had spread quickly after my arrival that I was an old buddy of Jim's, and everyone did their best to help me straighten his affairs and supply me with information and details of Jim's short stay with CNAC. I am sure that I never thanked all those involved enough - from "Chuck" Sharp on down the list of those acquainted with Jim.

I brought with me, a power of attorney from Jim's parents to settle his estate. I advertised the finalization of his estate in the local "Statesman" and the company bulletin boards. No one came forward with a claim. Jim shared a flat in Calcutta with Charley Sundby, who brought me his personal affects and rupees for clothing that had been purchased by other personnel. Jim's February paycheck was never cashed and was presumed to be in his wallet, so Sharp had a new one issued, which was sent to his parents.

I began to try to formulate some plan for an attempt at getting in to the scene of his crash. I tended to my job of flying well, even did a few things extra helping out in operations.

In spite of my efforts, I damned near blew the whole deal. Due to a case of mistaken identity. I would have been fired had "Bill McDonald" not intervened. He gave me a second chance when he did not know whether I was telling the truth or not. Bob Hinkle was allowing co-pilot Bob Gentry to fly the left seat to Kunming. In the landing pattern Hinkle fidgetted with and overrode the flight controls. Gentry asked him, "Are you landing or me?" Hinkle said, "You are." Gentry then said, "Then keep your God-damned hands and feet off the controls." Hinkle recorded this in his log book but mistook Gentry for me. Gentry used to tell about the incident all the time. Hinkle busted me on my flight check for this reason. I was reprimanded and was ordered to apologize to Hinkle. Roy Farrell finally convinced me that it was the thing to do. The incident did cost me a couple of spaces on the seniority list, however, I was finally

checked out by Frank Higgs personally. (Dude Hennick of Terry and the Pirates) With the sanction of Sharp, Higgs, McDonald and Hugh Woods I began planning a walking trip to "Fox's Pass," provided I could get the necessary clearances.

On August 17, 1944, Rossi and "Moose" Moss took me into Kunming and introduced me to Major General Claire L. Chennault, who said he would give me a letter to Brig. General Frank Dorn, (see letter) and further suggested I contact Search and Rescue Headquarters in Chabua, India. I picked up the letter on August 18, and shortly afterwards met Col. Christiansen at Chabua, who showed me his map pinpointing the location of over 1,000 downed aircraft, in the hump area.

They knew the location of Jim's plane but had no plans to reach it because it was not an Air Force plane. He did promise all out assistance for contacts, camping gear and survival kits that we might need. He advised that weather conditions indicated the last half of October and first half of November would be the most favorable, autumn temperatures, absence of clouds and moisture.

CNAC would allow two other volunteers to accompany me on the trek. Capts. Fletcher Hanks and Steve Kusak were the first to join up. Steve was the son of a Polish immigrant named Slochkoeveitski who decided to shorten his name. Since he liked the USA he decided he would use these vowels, place all the consonants in a hat, draw one and place it before and after "usa" for his new name. He drew a "K". Steve felt that was pretty lucky that his father didn't draw a "Z".

As we made trips to Kunming we began gathering all the gear we would need at that end as CNAC was going to drop us off at Paoshan.

I took off from work September 1st, through the 17th to get everything ready. I went back on flying status Sept. 18th, and finished two months flying on October 20th, - 238:40 in 32 days.

Kusak and I were ready to depart the next day for Poashan when we learned that Hanks couldn't make it for some reason. Paoshan in the Yunnan Province, was on the Burma Road between the Salween and Mekong Rivers. Fierce fighting had been going to the west into Burma between the Allies and the Japanese. It was imperative for the Allies to keep control of this area because the new Ledo Road was to connect the Burma Road about 100 miles to the southwest of Paoshan. (Also known as Pick's Pike after Gen. Pike.) (Later changed to Stillwell Road.)

FATE IS THE VICTOR

Much to our own amazement our supplies and gear weighed in at six hundred pounds as it was being loaded aboard a C-47. Capt. Rossi landed us at Paoshan October 21st, pulled off the runway and parked for us to unload. We started unloading and it seemed the C-47 was kneeling. Apparently some bomb craters had been filled in with marble sized gravel and as we watched, the big tires sank into the gravel up to the hubs. Two Army L-5 Observation Squadrons operated the field and their heaviest piece of equipment was a weapons carrier, which would not budge the plane. One thing for sure, almost any happening in China will attract a crowd. In no time at all some two hundred Chinese people, (with the help of the weapons carrier tied to the tail wheel) pushing on the leading edge of everything on the plane were able to extract it from the gravel. Rossi took off and decided to reward the helpful people with an Air Show which they enjoyed immensely.

Prior arrangements had been made for the Army to provide us with an interpreter who was familiar with the local area. As we were expected that morning, he was waiting when we went to the Squadron HQ. We were introduced to C. Y. Chang who was to be a big help to us.

Much to our surprise they offered to fly us over the first ridge in L-5's and land us in a clearing along the Salween River. They said it would depend on the weather that day and might not be possible until tomorrow. We soon learned

they had a very good reason for not flying us that morning; they soon fell into formation on the parade ground and General Joe Stillwell personally decorated each member of the squadron for their part in helping to turn back the last offensive of the Japanese ground forces. Steve and I had the honor of being the only American civilians to witness the decoration and were also allowed to take all the pictures we wanted. As the ceremony was ending we saw another CNAC C-47 land and drop off Fletcher Hanks from Dinjan much to our surprise. His arrival did pose one small problem, we were now a bed short because we left his behind when he cancelled. We were very glad to have him with us and quickly found a solution to the bed shortage. We would walk from daylight to dark, which was about 12 hours, camp for 12 hours with each of us doing a 4 hour watch while the other two slept. These beds were actually very fancy sleeping bags with air mattress built in to a pup tent/mosquito netting and blankets.

The Squadron invited us to a delicious lunch, after which we loafed around our gear which was still sitting where we had unloaded it waiting for transportation.

Fighting was still going on to the southwest of Paoshan and we could hear the small arms and occasionally some artillery fire. In the distance toward the firing we saw four men walking toward us. As they came closer we could see two American Officers and two Chinese Officers. Suddenly I recognized the Captain, Bob Butler from my home town of Amarillo, Texas, who I had known for 5 or 6 years. He introduced his Major friend and the Chinese Officers whose names I have misplaced. I asked if they would like a drink of scotch. "Where can we get one?" Butler asked. "I just happen to have one on me," I replied as Steve and Hanks (Christy) opened up our case of Dewar's White Label. We sat down and drank one whole bottle without a chaser, only cigarettes. That night we gave the rest of the case to the Squadrons for their help and to lighten our load.

We explained what we were up to and learned what they had been doing. These four were all that was left of 600

American and Chinese Soldiers who had been chasing the Japanese into Burma for the past seven months.

We slept in the barracks that night. After an early breakfast three L-5's flew us across the first ridge and landed us in some tall grass along the east bank of the Salween River. They said it was the only area they could land along the river. It was in between the "V" and Fox's Pass. The pilots helped

HEADQUARTERS FOURTEENTH AIR FORCE

A. P. O. 627, C/O POSTMASTER
NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK
Office of the Commanding General

August 18, 1944

Brig. General Frank Dorn,
Chief of Staff Yoke Forces,
Headquarters, C.E.F.

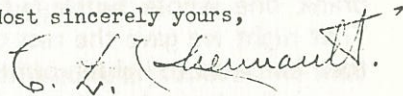
Dear General Dorn:

This will introduce Mr. R. S. Holmes, Jr. C.N.A.C. pilot, who has been appointed by CNAC to investigate the crash of one of their airplanes in the vicinity of Hpimaw. Nothing has been heard from the crew although the crash occurred some six months^{ago} and it is desired to determine the fate of the crew and whether the cargo can be salvaged.

In view of the fact that military operations are being conducted in the area, I am sending Mr. Holmes to you for such assistance as you may be able to render him in conducting his investigation.

With kindest regards, I am,

Most sincerely yours,



C. L. CHENNAULT
Major General, U.S.A.
Commanding.

us unload, bade us good luck and returned to Paoshan. They saved us 75 miles and 3 days walking. We searched the mountainside on the other side of the river with field glasses hoping to find a means of ascent. Nothing. We would have to proceed with our original plan to go up to the "V" pass and back south along the ridge about 4 miles. Suddenly we felt we were being watched and finally located a young Chinese boy peering thru the tall grass at us. When we tried to approach him he ran away.

"Christy" as Hanks was known began plodding through the grass toward the river to see what he could see. Shortly, he yelled for us to "come over here." He had found a low shelter built with corrugated metal and inside were three corpses, apparently Japanese. We reported it at the first opportunity.

During the late morning three Chinese men came walking toward us and Chang spoke to them, telling them we wished to hire some help to carry our gear. In a short time ten people arrived and we were on our way to the ferry we had learned of from the Observation Squadron.

As the ferry dock came into view, we could see that they were quite busy loading, of all things, about a dozen mules. They looked just like the "Missouri Mules" we had back home. Each mule was being stripped of a quaint wooden saddle or back pack and some fairly large maroon colored rocks prior to being loaded on the barge type ferry boat. I asked Chang to find out what the rocks were and he told us it was salt. "SALT!!!" The bulk of the "bartering" supplies we had been advised to carry was salt, Morton's Iodized Salt. We must have had twenty pounds of it, along with a goodly amount of sewing kits, first aid kits and trinkets mostly supplied to us by Search And Rescue in Chabua, to give to the natives.

It was obvious that the ferry was not large enough to take four of us and our gear with the load he already had, which suited the hell out of me, so we waited and watched that motley crew cross the Salween. I don't know the name

Box 15081
Phoenix, Az. 85060

23 July 1973

Dear Red:

Just got a listing of the various crashes from Potty.

He has listed the Fox crash as 2/11/43 and I show it as 3/11/43 (my date is correct). Welch went in two days later (he last reported over the Ft. Hertz valley on course), I almost got it that same day.

I show Huang as copilot on the 11th when Fox went in and extra time on the trip due to checking the crash on the 12th I had R. Chang and on the 13th, on the 16th and 17th I had D. Chang and Anglin.

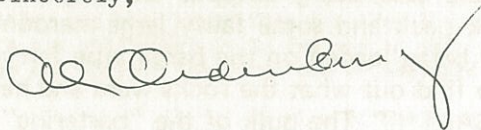
I went to Calcutta on the 19th of March and it was at that time George was planning his trip into the crash of Fox. His was the first of those that we knew where they were.

Cant find anything else that could be of help couldn't find pictures.

Woody might know something or Babs.

Was good seeing you and the rest of the gang. Sorry that I can't be of more help.

Sincerely,



of this ferry point, but I understand it could very well be named the North Ferry because no ferry point exists north of here, which is about mid-point of the more than 1,700 mile long Salween River, the mouth of which is at Moulmein. At this point it is about 100 yards wide, plenty deep and faster than 20 MPH. Elevation here is estimated at about 2,100 or 2,200 feet above sea level.

As you can guess the mules had no love for this mode of transportation and they raised hell all the way across. The swift current carried the boat to a point about a mile south of the west bank landing and had to be rowed and poled back along the shallow waters near the bank. After unloading without incident, the ferry started it's return to the east side, the swift current again carrying them way south of us going completely out of our sight for a long period of time.

While we were waiting a neatly uniformed man of about thirty came and conversed with Chang. His superior, a General or maybe a village magistrate wanted to welcome us to the area and promised to have us over for a banquet on our return. At this point we were joined by two young Chinese soldiers, but I don't remember on whose orders or why.

We were loaded aboard, but not before I reminded Steve and Christy that I could not swim. Incidentally, we paid our fares in Chinese paper money in an amount that we thought was dirt cheap, about like the old Staten Island Ferry. Our crossing was similar to the one we watched, except that from the boat it seemed like we were doing 40 MPH as the current sped us down stream. After we disembarked, we said goodbye to the crew and Chang put out a call for help with our gear. Each of the four of us strapped about thirty pounds on our backs and the dozen Chinese volunteers who came forward toted the balance of our gear.

We headed up a very wide trail, stopping five minutes each hour to rest. Christy led and paced the Chinese or they would have left us far behind. I brought up the rear and managed to keep up pretty well. Steve seemed to tire first and began to lag way behind until he got used to the hiking. Along the trail we occasionally met Chinese, both male and female, going down the trail. The first thing we noticed was the prevalence of goiter in these people, which is caused by the lack of iodine in ones diet. All of the women we encountered and were to encounter in the area suffered from the most severe case of goiter believable. On either side of the neck these goiter sacs hung from the cheek-jowls down to

their breasts, which, incidentally were also visible thru the tattered clothing these women wore. Some of their clothing was so tattered it seemed like mere strips of worn out denim which had lost its thread. We had Chang offer them some of the presents we had brought along, some accepted gratefully while others shyly ran away. About fifty percent of the men we encountered on that side of the river suffered from goiter, but to a much smaller degree than the women.

Near dusk we found an excellent place for a camp alongside a nice mountain stream. We organized our camping routine, built a nice fire which we kept going all night, fixed an evening meal of "C" rations, boiled water, filled our canteens for tomorrow and placed them in the stream to cool. Some of our Chinese helpers returned to their homes for the night, but a few who carried their own rice rations built their own fire and generally took care of themselves, sitting and sleeping by the fire, but mostly talking all thru the night. The ones who went home promised and did return before daybreak the next morning. On that side of the river we never saw any of these people eat anything but rice. Imagine how embarrassed we felt as we devoured our "C" rations in front of these people. We also felt a little apprehension about falling asleep even with one of us on watch constantly—would our variety of food and supplies tempt these people to cut our throats and steal our belongings. I must point out here, that any such fear was totally unfounded, we never lost a single item to theft, nor were we ever in any danger from these people.

I took the first four hour watch and after a while felt that I would be more comfortable with my shoes off as I could feel a slight burning sensation. So off with the shoes and the two pair of socks I had been advised to wear. I examined my feet and found them so badly galled they looked almost like raw meat. I dissolved some of our salt in warm water and soaked my feet for several hours and the next morning they were nearly normal. As I was dressing the next morning, Christy saw me putting one sock on over another sock and said, "Red, why in the hell are you wearing two pairs of socks, don't you know it will gall your feet?" To

this day, I can't remember the name of the "smart-ass" that recommended the double socks.

Our routine remained much the same for several days, the ready made trail was beginning to narrow and get steeper as it zigzagged up the mountain and we remembered seeing this so many times from the air. About the last 1,000' to the top of the pass reminded me of a blouse I once saw a gal wear, kinda loose around the neck, resting about midway of each shoulder, moderately cut, with a single leather string lacing one side of the slit to the other. It would be awhile before we reached this part of the path.

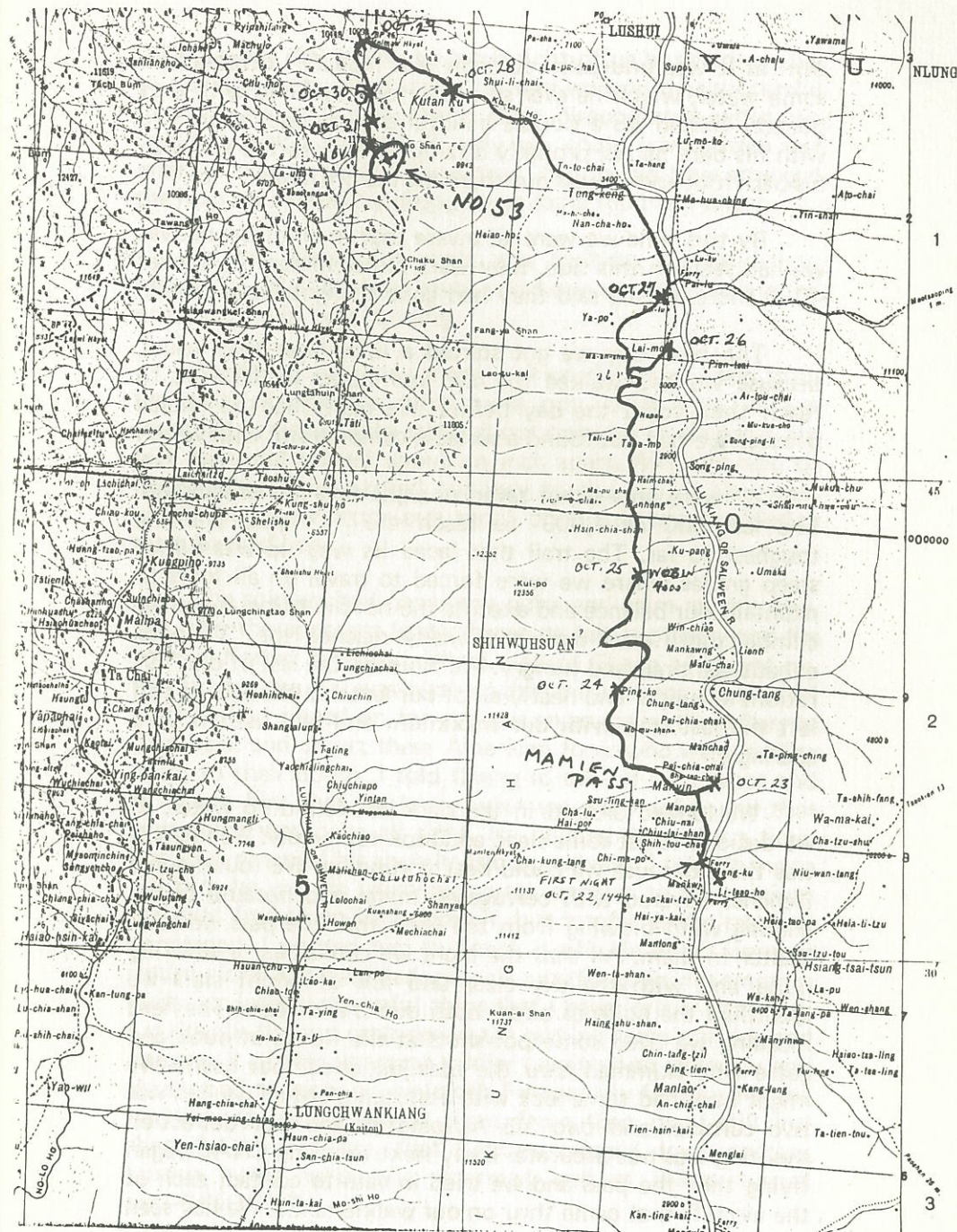
We had a prearranged signal of three gunshots just in case we got separated, distressed or needed help. Once, Steve lagged so far behind that when he came to a fork in the trail he didn't know which way we went. BANG, BANG, BANG. We shouted to him but never received an answer. After back tracking some distance we were able to hear each others shouts and waited for him to catch up to us.

We were using a systematic method of lightening our pack load as the trail got steeper and tougher. We ate the heaviest part of our food—the "C" rations, saving the Mountain rations which were much lighter for when we would need it on top of the mountain. However, as you will see, this turned out to be our first deliberate mistake.

One day another trail merged with ours and we found ourselves meeting up again with the Salt Peddler and his mules. He was on his way to the uppermost village on the trail, which we also had to pass on our way to the top. Being the gentleman that he was he gestured for us to go first and he and the mules would follow. As we found out, some people can be just too damn accommodating. The trail at this point is single file with rest areas few and far between. As we would come to a hairpin curve and reverse our direction we could look down on the mules. I presume everybody knows that a pack of mules has a leader and the others follow where he goes. This pack had it's leader, but this pack also had a younger mule who restlessly and frequently tried to rush the

day when he would become the leader, so at every wide place on the trail he would try to pass the leader and thereby exert his well deserved leadership. This made for an interesting show, seeing him being kicked back into the ranks, but it also had its affect on the leader by spurring him on to greater speeds, probably so the others wouldn't feel it necessary to take sides against him. We became obstacles instead of companions on the trail, that we were. So, at the first wide spot we decided it would be best for us to play second fiddle for awhile. The younger mule misinterpreted this action on our part as a show of faith in his leadership and our group cringed against the side of the mountain in fear of being stepped on, or worse, being kicked off of the trail into the chasms below. After they passed, the Salt Peddler apologized for his mules behavior. He mostly excused the behavior of the younger mule because, as he told our interpreter, "You see, the younger mule knows that the leader is blind in his right eye and feels that this makes the leader inadequate." They quickly out-distanced us to the upper village, the name of which no one there seemed to know or care. According to our map, it could have been Hpimaw, and the entire population of about twenty people seemed to agree with us. (First Americans they had seen.) Proof! Well, we did not see one sign that read "Kilroy was here."

Who knows, maybe now it is Hpimaw, and those people are forever grateful to us for giving their town a name, which fortunately was already on the map. As we had afforded them such prestige, they showed their gratitude by putting us up in one of their empty barns or possibly an empty house, it was hard to tell the difference. We heard some gunshots to the north across a canyon, which they attributed to bandits and robbers who roamed the area pilfering the poor. They indicated to Chang that they would sleep much better that night just knowing that we were there and were capable of returning any gunfire they might throw at us. The elevation here we estimated to be about 9,500 to 10,000 feet. For one thing, keeping a fire going was a constant chore. During my watch that night, one of the citizens came over and ask in perfect language for that area, "If he could borrow some of the live coals from our fire to enable him to start one of his



The hazardous trail to Fox's Pass

own as it was unusually cold on that night." I offered him some water, which he ever so kindly declined and with that politely picked up a double handful of the coals in my fire with his bare hands, properly arranged my distorted fire with his bare foot and bowed out thanking me profusely.

By this time we were all aware that in all of the natives we had seen on this side, they were either under 10, or over 40 or more. Chang said they had gone to fight the Japanese.

The next day we got started a little later than usual, because we had walked the last four hours in darkness to reach their town the day before. We really had no choice because we had not found a suitable camping site with water.

We were now either seven or eight days out of Paoshan. The last 500 or 1,000' to reach the "V" pass was the toughest so far. The trail that laced its way up was full of steep grades where we were forced to travel on all fours to maintain our balance and execute the hairpin turns. Again we climbed until after dark and finally reached the "V" pass, exhausted, tired and hungry. We finished the last of our "C" rations at supper and nearly all of our water, although we had left the last stop with our maximum and had used it very sparingly.

We looked around in the dark but found no water, so we decided to get some sleep and look tomorrow. We knew it was there because we could hear it running. We found some trenches covered with corrugated metal and because of the chilling wind blowing from the west thru the pass we took shelter in them. All thru the night we could hear a whirring noise and with the sky clear and full of bright stars we identified the noise as birds, both ducks and geese. The next morning we tried some pot shots at the flocks of duck and geese who skimmed thru the pass just above our heads. We might have had some luck with a shotgun, but all we had was two carbines and two .45 Automatics and our deflection shooting was not accurate. Early next morning CNAC began flying thru the pass and we tried in vain to contact each of the aircraft that came thru on our walkie-talkie. We had seen

CNAC every day trying to catch sight of us but were unable to contact them. We thought for sure we would be successful in the pass and were more than disappointed when we couldn't make contact. If only we could have gotten our message thru to one of the planes, they could have arranged the help we needed by dropping us some food and water.

As our search for water was fruitless, we decided to tackle the ridge heading south and hope we could locate the water we could hear running.

We found no ready made trail up the steep slope from the pass, at first the terrain was only dead grass. As we ascended, it turned into stalks about one inch in diameter, six feet high and spaced about an inch apart. With the help of two machetes we hacked our way to the top of the ridge, which we knew from our aerial observations resembled a razor-backed hog.

The soldiers had been very quite and calm all this way, but now the apparent leader began to talk profusely and the tone indicated rebellion. When I asked Chang what was up, he told me the guy was bitching that this was not the kind of stuff he had signed on for and was encouraging the others to turn back and desert these American fools who were leading them to their doom. I told Chang to ask his indulgence and to assure him that we knew what we were doing and that everything would be all right. He quieted down for a time, but soon renewed his apprehensions, verbally. I told Chang to tell him he was an uninvited guest, entitled to his opinions and was free to go back himself, but insofar as the rest was concerned, I wanted him to knock it off. He didn't want to return alone and persisted with his mouthing. As my emotion built up, I did a shameful thing that I have forever regretted. I suddenly threw a cartridge in the carbine I was carrying and pointed it at this unarmed soldier cursing him violently and threatened to blow his head off. Fortunately for him and me he shut up and remained silent from then on. I still feel shameful to this day, that I almost gunned down another human being who was unarmed and as things turned out—"RIGHT."

About noon we arrived on the ridge beyond the stalks and found a new easy trail—well used, with fresh tracks of a mountain goat or sheep. In the soft areas of the trail you could easily spot the tracks of a cloven hoofed animal and we made better time on this trail. Up to a point—suddenly the trail ended in a huge rock about fifteen or twenty feet tall, with a sheer drop on either side of the rock. It looked like a dead end into a cave. I went into the cave and instead found a chimney and could see daylight at the top of the shaft. We contemplated this phenomenon and correctly surmised that these goats or whatever navigated this passage. If the goats can do it why not us? After some experimentation we found that it was possible to scale the inside of this chimney by working on all fours. I can't remember who, but one of us stripped off our pack and scaled this shaft carrying a rope to pull up the back pack. Once on top, we found the goat trail, same as before. To us this natural phenomenon was the eighth wonder of the world and a good omen. Even the most timid of our Chinese helpers thought this was a delightful experience, climbing up the inside of that chimney. (It boosted morale)

Darkness, in a short time, forced us to seek refuge from the chilling westerly winds on the east side of another huge rock. Our Chinese helpers had plenty of rice, but no water. They huddled around a common fire with us and as usual talked most of the night, on empty stomachs. It was at this point that I became aware that these people did not lie down to sleep, but instead slept in a squatting position. In all that day we figured we had traversed about one mile from the "V" Pass.

We continued the next day following the goat trail, still hearing the water falling somewhere out of our reach. Surely these goats had to have water and soon we would find a fork in the trail that would lead to water. We explored every fork in the trail, but none led to water. Water was the magic ingredient to go with the helpers rice and with the abundant supply of "Mountain Rations" we carried. As I mentioned before, we should have eaten the lighter mountain rations on the way up and saved the "C" rations.

When we awoke on the third morning atop the ridge, our helpers no longer believed in any miracles and en masse refused to continue south any further. We were completely socked-in. With the help of the interpreter we came to an agreement. Two of us would continue south for one more day searching for our goal, Fox's airplane and water. The process of elimination was very simple. I would be one of those going south. Chang would remain with the Chinese people and the two soldiers. Both Steve and Christy wanted to accompany me, as we all thought we were very close to our goal. The only way to settle who would go south with me was, of course, chance or "fate." I flipped a Chinese silver dollar, first to decide who got to call the toss, heads and Steve would call the next toss, tails and Christy would call the next toss. Nothing could be more fair. Steve won the right to call the second toss. Steve called tails and I flipped the coin high in the air—it came to rest tails. Steve and I started south in the "fog" that we thought would soon lift. In order to be traveling as light as possible Steve and I optimistically carried our canteens and due to the fog wore rain coats. In addition I wore my .45 Automatic. Christy had suggested that he return to civilization and bring back fresh supplies, but when we remembered that the only promise we had was from the other side of the Salween we discarded this idea as impractical.

At the last minute, Steve and I decided to take the compass and the altimeter (which read 12,000') with us. About two hours away from the main group we saw some kind of mountain hen walking down a fallen tree. I tried to get to my .45 which was under my raincoat, but I was so cold and slow that by the time I got my .45 out the hen had slowly walked out of sight into the undergrowth. (The only game we saw on the trek.)

We found several forks in the goat path we were following but none leading to water. The fog persisted all day and we finally decided that it was in fact, clouds, most unusual for that time of year, and it was very cold. About 4:00 P.M. Steve began to feel ill, I felt his forehead and he had fever. We plodded on until nearly 5:00 P.M. and since it

seemed we were going downhill I pulled out the altimeter which read about 11,500'. This revived my hopes that we were approaching the meadow of Fox's Pass. I felt Steve's forehead again and he was really hot, and he did not see how he could go any further. I had remembered reading someplace that moss contained moisture on the north side of trees and rocks. I found some likely looking green moss and proceeded to suck on it as I had read. It tasted like a mouthful of sand.

Shortly, with it becoming dark, we came upon a natural alcove on the leeward side of the mountain top. We decided to stop for the night. I built a fire in the natural alcove which was also large enough for Steve. The air felt so moist that I expected it to rain and solve our water problem. I took off my rain coat, spread it on the brush and directed the lowest part of it to drain into my canteen cup. It never rained, but during the night enough moisture collected into the canteen cup that Steve and I each had a swallow of water the next morning. Steve's teeth chattered all thru the night and his temperature seemed to be rising. We agreed that if he was better in the morning and the clouds dissipated we would continue, otherwise, we would return to the group as prearranged by noon of the following day. If we had not returned, Hanks was to return for help.

I stayed up all during the night keeping the fire going. I had to use some stalk-like firewood similar to that we encountered on the way out of the "V" pass. These stalks were absorbing moisture, although they tasted dry when I sampled them, which made them hard to burn. I found that keeping a fire going at 11,500' with damp stalks is not easy. I broke these stalks over my knees for the proper size, stood them up on the alcove wall to dry as much as possible. In spite of all my efforts the fire did not burn well, and I was continually blowing my breath on the fire to keep it going. Had I gone to sleep, the fire would have died, and Steve was in no shape to be of any help.

I prayed and believed that this unusual cloud would go away by morning, instead it persisted as daylight appeared.

Steve unhesitatingly reminded me of our agreement to return if cloudy. I looked at Steve and although I could make out the outline of a figure, I could not recognize his sex or facial features. My God, I'm blind, I thought. Blowing on the fire to keep it lighted all night had damaged my eyes. Steve was still a very sick man, so sick that he was incoherent. On our return trip to the last camp-site, when we would reach one of these forks in the goat trail he could not help me decide which way was our back-track. I made these decisions myself by the braille method. I would get down on all fours and finger the fresh tracks, separating the goat tracks without G. I. Shoe imprints from those of goat tracks with G. I. Shoe imprints. Thus we made our way along the goat trail back to our group. Steve became some help when the appointed time of noon came, and we fired three shots from my .45. Hanks answered the shots with shots and waited until about 2:00 P.M. for us to arrive. With Hanks, mountain goat that he was, leading us back along the goat trail, and the trail we had blazed ourselves, we arrived back at the "V" pass about midnight exhausted, thirsty and hungry, but knowing that we could survive to Hpimaw and enjoy our "Mountain Rations." We did again execute the natural chimney in reverse, but it no longer seemed like an eighth wonder of the world to me.

We awoke on the eleventh or twelfth day out of Paoshan in the top of the "V" pass, with the CNAC planes buzzing us in our accomplishment, not knowing that we were trying to get home with a Mexican Stand-off. (That philosophy being—lose all, but save your life.) At this point my eyes had shown some signs of improvement, however, I was now seeing quadruple. We arrived back at Hpimaw the next day before noon and with water available for the first time in four days, found the mountain rations delicious.

While still in Hpimaw, I was feeling much remorse and dejection. I felt that Steve and I had entered the meadow of "Fox's Pass," because of the terrain and the fact that the altimeter had read 11,500'. Surely, just out of our sight, maybe 500' or maybe half-a-mile south was our goal, "Fox's Pass."

We descended the mountain over the same trail we had climbed, finding the going down-hill much easier and faster, but with far less the glamour. At one of the mountain villages we somehow acquired a burro (Mexican Canary) who did not relish the thought of being of service to us. We were strapping our supplies on his back when he decided to terminate the whole deal. He broke loose from us and scattered our belongings along the way, although we never saw him again, Steve was rolling the movie camera all the time. What a shame, all of the films we took of the entire trip have vanished.

Descending the mountain path did consume the balance of our mountain rations, and we gave all of our kits and trinkets to the wonderful people we met going up the ladder, without regret. We again took advantage of the North Ferry to get on the east side of the Salween River, looking forward to that banquet we had been invited to on our return trip, which really sounded great as we were now out of food, again.

The same aide to whatever, appeared again and re-confirmed our invitation to a banquet in our honor. We waited the rest of the day to enjoy this magnificent feast of deer, roast pork, duck and everything with all the trimmings. Shortly before dinner time, we received the bad news from another aide. All the hunters had returned empty handed - the Japanese had depleted all of the rolling wild stock and there was nothing with which to create a banquet.

We continued walking existing trails back to the Burma Road. On our next to the last day we arrived at a town that must have had 2,000 to 3,000 inhabitants. That day the path was all down hill and we must have walked 50 miles. Here we saw some farm animals, and especially live chickens. The local magistrate had us put up in real quarters, boards for beds, and we were able to negotiate the purchase of two chickens in exchange for two Chinese silver dollars, which they returned for 2 "C" ration cans. We built a nice fire in the compound provided us and proceeded to cook the chickens over our fire, skewered on a tree stick. We found

that to cook chicken over an open fire one must burn the outside black in order to cook it inside. Rare chicken is no good. The others I remember peeled the burn skin away, while I ate it, burned skin and all. What a delicacy, I still cook my chicken the same way at every opportunity, and I highly recommend that you try it. (I call it "burnt chicken on a stick"). Chang again arranged for some help to carry our belongings the next morning, however, the volunteers were of a slightly different social stature. The next morning we watched as they released inmates from their cells across the compound to accompany us on our journey. Accommodation and good riddance, appeared to be the rule. Altogether, we got along well, to the Burma Road. When we arrived at what was obviously the Burma Road, I fell asleep beside the road exhausted, we must have walked thirty miles downhill that day. My sleep was interrupted by a loud noise. It was a Chinese truck coming down the hill, which I flagged down. He stopped and gave us a lift in the direction he was going - to the U. S. Engineer's group on the east side of the Mekong River where we spent the night. The next morning we caught a ride on a truck back along the Burma Road to Paoshan, arriving shortly before noon and the most delicious lunch any of us ever had. It seems to me that I ate 17 pieces of chicken fried steak, with potatoes, gravy and vegetable.

CNAC picked us up and returned us to our starting point, Kunming. We figure that in the nineteen days we walked from Paoshan back to Paoshan a total of about 300 miles, give or take a few.

Even though the belated mission to Jim's plane was a failure, the total incident solved a mystery of one of Jim's CPT classmates' disappearance. During the contacts I had with Col. Christiansen I became aware that a friend of mine named Joe Hudgins was stationed at Chabua, flying the Hump, and visited him on occasion. One day T. Thornton Oxnard called me from Chabua and I went over there to visit him. In the transient mess hall we ran into Capt. C. Williard "Doll" Smith a former student at Amarillo Air Service. I informed him that his old buddy Joe Hudgins was flying out of Chabua. A few days later while I was checking with Col.

Christiansen, I went by Lt. Joe Hudgins quarters and found his bedding rolled up. The neighbors informed me that he was missing on a flight from Calcutta to the Assam Valley carrying a load of 100 octane aircraft gasoline. I immediately went to the transient quarters to tell Doll. Dolls B-24 crew had departed for China without him, and operations had him listed AWOL.

On checking back with Col. Christainsen he informed me that Joe's plane had been found crashed against a mountain in the Assam Valley. He also told me that a Rescue team had already been to the scene of the crash, and the records showed no survivors, all 4 bodies buried on the scene of the crash.

I told him about Doll Smith's mysterious disappearance. The Col. decided to reopen the case and sent the Doctor and rescue team back to the scene of the crash armed with the fact that Doll Smith had checked out a parachute one hour prior to the departure of the Air Force C-46 from Chabua. Back at the scene of the crash, the Doctor changed his original report to show that a fifth body had been buried and thru dentures had identified Capt. C. Williard Smith as a passenger on that ill-fated flight. I wired his relatives that he was with Joe as Joe's parents had been officially notified of his demise.

CONCLUSION

"FATE" seemed to have more than the passing role it was accorded in a preceeding paragraph.

Had it not been for my suggestion and influence, Jim might have been accepted by and joined the U. S. Marines, instead of pursuing the flight training of CPT, in which case, he would not have joined CNAC, thus, not this story.

I would have not been in that area to visit T. Thornton Oxnard and accidentally met up with "Doll" Smith at Chabua and put him in touch with friend Hudgins.

In spite of "FATES" intervention, could I have altered the outcome with better planning of the walking excursion, so that we did not run out of food and water?

Would the "flipping of the Chinese silver dollar" resulting in our proceeding south that day have altered the outcome? Why was Steve destined to become very ill when it meant so much to achieving our goal?

Why was our travel on top of the mountain hampered by the bad weather that persisted for two days, when the weather is normally clear for a month, at that time of year?

Now that I have shared the blame with the "THREE WEIRD SISTERS," of fate, (namely, Clotho, who spins the thread of life; Lochesis who twists the thread and measures it's length; and Atropos who cuts the thread off with the shears), is there a message we all failed to heed? There is written, you know, a philosophy that says, "There is some good in everyone." Maybe even in the "FATES." Is the 'good' in them trying to tell us not to give up, but try again? Did they want us to publicize the plight of the starving, goiter ridden people on the mountainside just west of the Salween River?

The plight of these people that we witnessed has had an everlasting effect on me—I deplore the waste of food and even the containers our food comes in. I mentioned earlier that the people close to the "Burma Road" preferred a "C" ration can that could be used as a drinking cup to an almost pure silver "Chinese Dollar."

I failed to mention one Chinese gentleman we met on our trek west of the Salween. I would have to say that he was one of the oldest that we met. He had fashioned a pipe out of a piece of copper tubing that he said (thru our interpreter) came from one of the "fiji's" that had crashed. I saw no tobacco on the trip, he must have been smoking grass. Should we warn him that "the Surgeon General has depicted that smoking may be dangerous to your health?"

In closing, I believe that the only CNAC downed plane that was never reached was that of Jim Fox. Do you suppose that the "CNAC ASSOCIATION" could participate in interesting some organization like NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE in making another attempt to reaching "Fox's Pass," and the people below the "V" pass? Today it would be an easy trip, with the "PUMA" helicopter, which I believe is based in Burma. Myitkyina would be about thirty minutes away from "Fox's Pass" by helicopter.

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