

**CNAC**  
ASSOCIATION



*Eve Coulson*

Eve Coulson, Editor  
291 Russell Road  
Princeton, NJ 08540  
eecoulson@gmail.com  
(917) 439-4702 cell

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Peggy Maher, President  
PO Box 294449  
Kerrville, TX 78029  
PeggyMaher@starband.net  
(830) 896-5030

40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

MOON CHIN, 100, IN THE COCKPIT OF CNAC #100



*Moon Chin*  
Moon Chin, DC-3 pilot Vera Martinovich, Liz Matzelle, Historic Flight Foundation

## AFTER 40 YEARS, WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO SAY?

Plenty, apparently. There is much that has happened since the last issue but also much that you need to read today as we prepare for some exciting events next year. But first, pause and consider...under two editors, this publication has been going strong for 40 years. Next year we will be celebrating the 70<sup>th</sup> year of the existence of the CNAC Association. We have lost members, but we have also gained new ones, be they the second (or third) generation family members, historians, writers, aviation buffs, or members of other now defunct WWII groups. By continuing to exist we have helped some to learn things they never knew about an uncle, a cousin, a father, including reporting the discovery of crash sites that had been shrouded in mystery for decades, bringing closure for family members. Last year I had the unexpected pleasure of seeing for the first time moving pictures of my father, taken at Jules Watson's wedding in 1946, thanks to his son Frank Watson. This summer Bill Johnston learned through the CNAC.org website that his father George "Robbie" Robertson was a CNAC pilot, an amazing coincidence given that Bill has (more details about both in this issue) who we hope to meet next year at the reunion. The connections we make are personally and historically important, and sometimes they surprise us.

In this issue you will read about the last reunion and get details so that you can begin to plan to attend next year's, which you do not want to miss. We are working with the SFO Museum at San Francisco International Airport to create an exhibition on the history of CNAC. It will be open for several months, *including during the time of our reunion*—and we need lots of participation from this group to make it successful.

There's also a report by Craig Chinn about the trip to Seattle to visit to the Museum of Flight and the Historic Flight Foundation. We must give special thanks here to Cale Wilcox and Key Donn at the Museum of Flight for making this very memorable event a reality.

Felix Smith provides us with some new insight into the lives of CNAC pilots. The son of George A. "Robbie" Robertson finds he has a connection to CNAC (thanks in large part to Tom's website), and learns more about his father in the process. After reading about this new connection, read Peter Goutiere's account of Robbie, one of the many characters of CNAC. An unfinished story by Bert Coulson, written in April 1946, recounts the adventures that can be had in pursuit of the perfect shave.

Since this isn't exactly a table of contents, I'll let you discover the rest for yourself. Read on!

Eve  


Dear CNAC Family, and Friends:

As the busy holiday season approaches, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the entire CNAC community around the world.

Over the years many milestones have been marked and much has been accomplished—including museum exhibits here in the States and China, and hometown memorial projects. Books and articles have been written, websites established and university archives enhanced. We've been invited to speak at and attend many interesting events.

This success increases our visibility locally, nationally, in China, and the rest of the world. Every year we grow and get stronger. We are building a memory into perpetuity. We all can be proud of the hard work done. There are lots of opportunities to keep alive the memory of what CNAC accomplished, how they accomplished it, and who they were, going forward for many years to come.

The SFO Museum would like to make an exhibition on the history of CNAC to be coordinated with our September 2014 reunion. Only you can make this happen by loaning your artifacts. To understand how you can be of help please read the pages that follow. **Contact Craig Chinn ASAP with pictures of what you can loan.** John Hill of the SFO Museum has made lending safe and easy for you to do. Please help us to share the memories of the great men and women of CNAC any way you can. It is also important to have a good turn out for this reunion to show our support of this event and future events.

Reunion 2014 Embassy Suites Airport \ Water Front, Burlingame, CA

September 3-7, 2014 Call For Reservations [1-800 362-2779](tel:1-800-362-2779)

Ask For CNAC Assoc Special Rate \$142.00 + tax

REFERENCE CNAC GROUP CODE "CNA"

Make reservations early. You can always cancel. There are a limited number of rooms available at this rate and this special rate is only available until the room block sells out.

Thank you for your ongoing, generous support of CNAC Association, making us stronger through your participation, dues and contributions, all of which enable us to continue to have reunions, create exhibits and events, publish the Cannonball, maintain the website and communicate with you from time to time. We are profoundly grateful for all that you do on behalf of CNAC Association, and we wish you and your families a happy and healthy holiday season.

See you in September!

Peggy Maher

President, CNAC Association

[\(830\) 896-5030](tel:830-896-5030) [PeggyMaher@starband.net](mailto:PeggyMaher@starband.net)



Your Board of Directors has been working with the SFO Museum at the San Francisco International Airport to develop an exhibit focused on China National Aviation Corporation. In order to make this happen, the SFO Museum will need a substantial number of original artifacts to display. At our 2013 CNAC Reunion many indicated a willingness to lend artifacts for such an exhibit. Since this exhibit is planned to run through the 2014 CNAC Reunion, we will have an opportunity to view the exhibit and receive a guided tour of the exhibits by John Hill, Assistant Director, Aviation.



This can only happen if the CNAC Association membership is generous in lending much needed artifacts, especially uniforms. Please review the following concept document provided to us by the SFO Airport Museum. As you will read, the exhibit is underwritten by the City and County of San Francisco. This exhibition will showcase CNAC to the entire world.

In 2012, 44.5 million passengers passed through San Francisco International Airport. With displays throughout the airport, many will have the opportunity to learn about CNAC.

**The timeline for providing artifacts is as follows:**

**By February 15, 2014    Notify Craig Chinn what you will loan to the museum**

Craig Chinn, 333 Main Street, Unit 8B  
 San Francisco, CA 94105  
 Telephone (925) 935-7153  
 Email cchinn2520@att.net

**By April 15, 2014    All loan objects received by museum**

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| April—July 2014     | condition reporting and conservation of objects, installation design, publicity, brochure printed |
| July 15, 2014       | Exhibition opens  |
| September 3-7, 2014 | CNAC Reunion events including education program, Captain Moon Chin evening reception and banquet  |
| January 2015        | Exhibition closes   |
| By April 15, 2015   | All loaned objects returned   |

(above photo from the permanent CNAC exhibit in the National Museum of the US Air Force, Dayton, Ohio—artifacts donated by Valerie Kendrick and others)



## CNAC Exhibition Concept

The SFO Museum at San Francisco International Airport is exploring the feasibility of mounting an exhibition in 2014 on the history of the China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC). With its focus on the development of commercial air transport throughout the Pacific Rim, the San Francisco Airport Commission Aviation Library and Louis A. Turpen Aviation Museum—located in the SFO International Terminal—is an ideal location to present the important and exciting history of CNAC. The exhibition would focus on the 1930–1949 period.

The determining factor in scheduling such an exhibition is locating enough CNAC artifacts that can be secured for temporary loan purposes. While there are likely numerous sources for two-dimensional materials such as photographs, a substantial number of three-dimensional objects must be located and made available for this purpose. The types of objects needed to create such an exhibition include:

- Flight crew uniforms
- Cabin crew uniforms
- Uniform badge and wing insignia
- Flight jackets
- Ground crew uniforms/clothing
- Scale model aircraft
- Navigational equipment
- Radio equipment
- Maintenance equipment
- Kit bags and contents
- Aircraft/engine parts
- Flight logs
- Charts and flight documents
- In-flight meal service wares/china/silver
- Menus
- Flight bags
- Promotional items
- Promotional printed material
- Company printed materials/letterhead
- Timetables
- Route maps
- Informational packets
- Luggage labels
- Luggage tags
- Posters
- Airmail covers
- Company house organs and publications
- Employee records and documents
- Annual reports
- House flags/banners
- Posters
- Photographs
- Books and periodicals

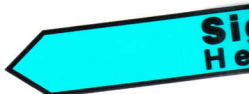
If you have such CNAC objects that you would be willing to loan or know where there may be objects available, please contact Mr. Craig Chinn of the CNAC Assoc. per the below information. All objects will be insured per loan agreement, and shipping costs will be assumed by the City and County of San Francisco. The SFO Museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.

Craig Chinn  
333 Main Street – Unit 8B  
San Francisco, CA 94105

tel. (925) 935-7153  
e-mail: [cchinn2520@att.net](mailto:cchinn2520@att.net)



<http://www.flysfo.com/museum/aviation-museum-library>



## REUNION RECAP

On August 28<sup>th</sup>, newcomers and old timers alike began arriving in the newly renovated lobby and atrium of our home away from home, Embassy Suites, Burlingame, near the San Francisco Airport. We were particularly happy that Margaret Soong, a CNAC flight attendant, flew in from her home in New York. Nancy Allison Wright (author of *Yankee on the Yangtze*) arrived from Seattle with her daughter Liz, and first timers son-in-law Matt and granddaughter Sophia.

Frank Watson's daughter and her fiancé AND flight instructor joined us and were already making plans to be with us next year at breakfast on Sunday! Barry Martin spoke about his book *Forgotten Aviator*, and Liz Matzelle of



the Historic Flight Foundation in Seattle came in to speak to the group, and local Amy Ng assisted her in documenting some of the talks. Less than a week before the reunion started, Lillian, Lady Q (creator of the cantata *Green Path and Rainbow*) decided to join us all the way from Kunming (that's her hugging Peggy Maher in the photo above). I know I risk slighting *everyone else* by mentioning these people. Please understand that I got started thinking about those who were new and who came the farthest. Every one who attends is valued!



On Thursday morning, a carefully planned surprise, several months in the making was revealed. Last spring, Peggy Maher had learned about the granddaughter of Jimmie Doolittle, Jonna Hoppes, an author who speaks to groups about the importance of recording our stories. Central to that message is the theme that **there are heroes among us.**

(Joe Doolittle, Moon Chin, Jonna Doolittle and Peter Goutiere)

*Moon Chin*

Sign Here

We contacted Jonna, told her *our* stories, and invited her to join us as a special birthday surprise for Moon (recalling that Moon had flown her grandfather out of China) and knowing that all of us would be thrilled to meet her. She not only accepted our invitation, she brought her father, Jimmie's son Joe Doolittle, an accomplished pilot in his own right. Words can't adequately describe the excitement in the room when our guests came forward to meet Moon. They stayed for lunch, after which Jonna gave her presentation to the group, and we were able to visit with them later that afternoon and at Moon's house the following day. We loved having them with us and hope to see them again next year! Jonna wrote the following note shortly after the reunion:

*Thank you for including my father and me in Moon Chin's birthday celebration. We had a wonderful time. Please express our gratitude to the members of CNAC. Fondly, Jonna*

RENEE!



At Moon's house we surprised Renee Robertson with a special award. It was the second to go to a member who is neither a retiring officer nor a former CNAC employee (we gave one last year to Angie Chen, for all that she did in making the 2012 China trip a reality). We love Renee and she is always thinking about ways to keep CNAC's story and legacy alive for future generations.

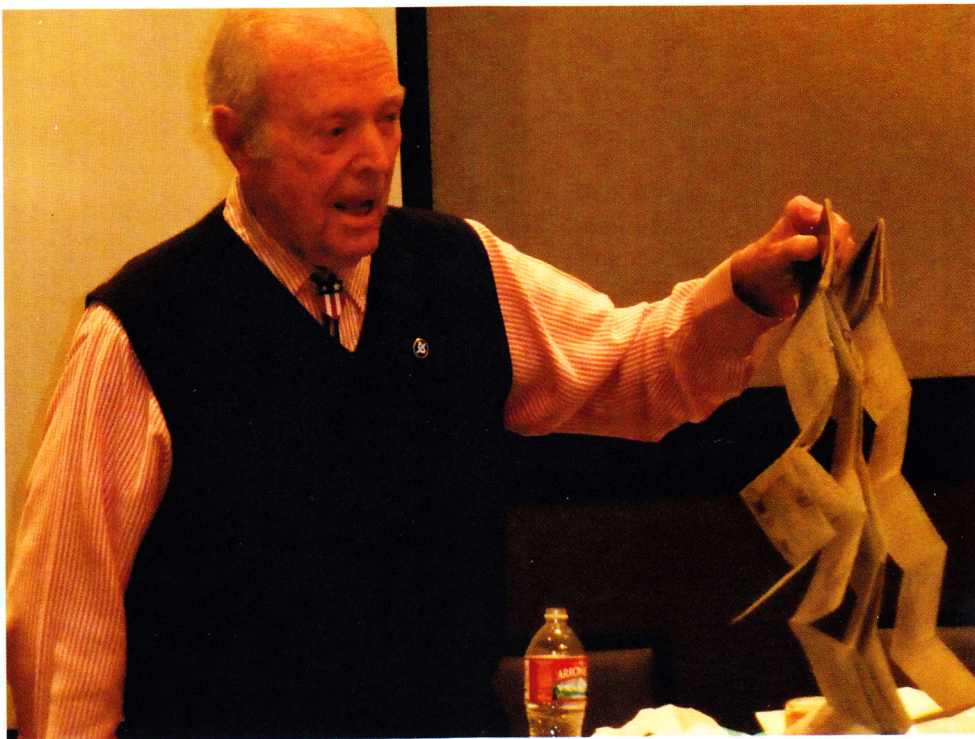
Renee's award is imprinted with the following:

RENEE LIM ROBERTSON

With respect, affection and appreciation for your contributions to the vitality and longevity of the CNAC Association August 31, 2013

Pete Goutiere regaled us with stories throughout the reunion, and two in particular during the formal presentations. One, about the TWA Flight 800 crash and the controversy regarding the circumstances and cause of the crash. Like the Warren Commission and the conspiracy theory around JFK's death, there is room for interpretation of the facts, particularly when so many lives were lost. Rather than do a second rate job of recounting his story, perhaps we will have a publishable account in the next Cannonball. Peter?

His other story was essentially the story of his life and travels as told by his 21 passports. Really. Or was it 20? One by one, we heard about the vicissitudes of his citizenship status, and the losses and gains along the way. The best part of his presentation involved the dramatic unfurling of the accordion passport. Which country came up with this creative solution to needing more space? And how many passports? Remind me and I will print the answers in the next Cannonball.



This summer we lost another dear friend, Oliver Glenn. There was a military funeral complete with a fly over. Oliver was a Commander in the USNR as well as a flight instructor, prior to joining CNAC. He was one of the ones that stayed until CNAC disbanded in 1949. You can write his son Larry Glenn at 1745 N. Lima Street, Burbank, CA 91505.

Dolly Wang created a breathtakingly beautiful art piece for Moon in honor of his birthday which you can see on the next page. She included a poem written by Gary Claud Stocker, which she got at the memorial celebration of life for Donald Hassing in August 2012.



CREATED FOR MOON CHIN on his 100<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY by Dolly Wang



Flight is freedom in its purest form,  
To dance with the clouds which follow a storm;

To roll and glide, to wheel and spin,  
To feel the joy that swells within;

To leave the earth with its troubles and fly,  
And know the warmth of a clear spring sky;

Then back to earth at the end of a day,  
Released from the tensions which melted away.

Should my end come while I am in flight,  
Whether brightest day or darkest night;

Spare me your pity and shrug off the pain,  
Secure in the knowledge that I'd do it again;

For each of us is created to die,  
And within me I know,  
I was born to fly.

-Gary Claud Stocker

## A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH FELIX SMITH

*Your editor asked Felix Smith to write something for this issue. I had wondered if he could make something of the question---Tell us something about CNAC we don't know" or tell us about your cohort, how you see it from this long view.*

*EVE: Since so many of us now with the CNAC Association are the next generation, in our late 50's-early 70's, we look with awe, wonder, pride and respect at you, Moon, Peter, and others, including those who have died recently like Bill Maher, Carey Bowles, and think we have much to learn from you, and emulate if we could only figure it out. Its not just the heroics of the Hump, it's how you have lived afterwards. I wonder what you were like before CNAC, did you stand apart from your peers to begin with? Would you say you were in any way negatively affected by the experience, or was it just a grand adventure? Or, like many Holocaust survivors, were you so glad to have survived the treacherous flights over the Hump that you are just happy to be alive?*

FELIX: Your questions are so helpful, I can answer them if you read them as an amateur's ideas. Simply the reaction one of the many guys who saw a very small part of WW2 via CNAC.

Interesting, it was, for me; and probably Bill Maher & Carey Bowles also because all of us were curious about the world we had never seen. We didn't know enough about flying in adverse weather--icing, thunderstorms, etc., to know the hazards; so we were "protected" by the confusion of probability with familiarity.

We weren't familiar with the dangers and therefore ignored the probability of these happening to us. After we lost a few friends we thought, this really happens to young, smart guys, it could happen to us. One defense we used subconsciously, it seemed to me--after every fatal crash a few fellow pilots surprisingly blamed the incident on pilot error even before the circumstances were known. It seemed to me, after tossing that around, the unfair adverse reaction by some fellow pilot was a protective mechanism. "If the unthinkable occurred because of a dumb error which I myself would never make, I'd never get killed." That's only my amateur guess.

When we first got off the Army Air Corps C-54 in Calcutta, India after a relatively brief journey from the luxurious USA, we saw, on the drive to the high class hotel in a good section of Calcutta, rats the size of cats scatter along gutters, and human corpses on the street. That night we saw homeless guys sleeping on downtown sidewalks on nothing but a rag for a sheet. When they ate, the food was scraps on the dirty sidewalk they picked up with filthy hands. Some beggars held dead infants. Some of the live kids were blind, which the beggars pointed out. This seemed to be too shocking for only a couple of guys out of a dozen. They couldn't accept the horror of the reality. One friend of Bill Maher, an intelligent strong guy, was so upset, medics put him in a British Army prison cell to await a flight back to the USA. I visited him and we talked through the bars;

and he seemed O.K. to me. Perhaps because he knew he was getting out of this unbearable, awful environment.

It seemed to me, Maher, Bowles, Tud Tarbet and the other newly hired "Junior Birdmen" were so curious about this environment, our curiosity trumped the awful sight; or perhaps a psychiatrist might say our growing-up experience, parents, etc provided life-long security -- a point which was made in the survey your kindly sent.

*[Felix is referring to the Grant Study, a longitudinal study of 264 sophomore men at Harvard, started in the late 1930's/early 1940's, who have been regularly assessed and interviewed throughout their lives to determine what conditions contribute to happiness and a good life. To learn more about it, read the excellent book, Triumphs of Experience, by George E. Vaillant]*

The next guy resigned from CNAC and scooted home after we went to a movie in Calcutta. Indian infants went to the evening cinema with their mothers. The kids wore pants, which were split at the rear. When a kid had a bowel movement, the parent held the kid in the theater aisle and let the poop plop on the floor -- sometimes between the theater's empty seats.

At a Chinese restaurant in Kunming, a kid was set on a cuspidor alongside our booth while we were elbow to elbow with his admiring mother who encouraged him to poop which he did eventually. That induced another CNAC new-hire to resign.

The day we arrived at the first class hotel in Calcutta, a British Army ambulance waited at the entrance while four dead British Army officers were carried out. They had just died from cholera. At the entrance to the hotel, the Brits had posted a huge sign of a delicious-looking ice cream bar. It was very hot outside, and humid. The word "DEATH" was printed over the ad for ice cream bars. We were told to eat only cooked food, drink boiled water and refuse ice in drinks because water used for ice had not been boiled. At night in a double-decker bunk at the airport we heard jackals howl. Mosquitoes buzzed outside the mosquito net and we sweated. No air conditioning in those days--I caught the mosquito-borne dengue fever, which feels like your eyeballs are being rubbed in sand; all your bones ache. The natives called it "Breakbone fever". And so on.

However, the thrill of flying the Hump remained. There were good weather days; and it seemed safer than in the wild stories we had heard. The old timers in CNAC-- superb pilots and good guys for the most part -- showed us how to survive. I learned the most about flying in those early years with CNAC. Before that I had been an instructor in training planes.

I had been in the Merchant Marine after high school and in the early part of WW2 -- our ship was under attack in Manila Bay six hours after the attack on Pearl Harbor. I read many stories from seamen -- Union Paper-- and was interested to read that if only one seaman survived a torpedo and subsequently

was on a raft all alone for more that 30 days, eating flying fish, the survivor went "bonkers;" but if the lone survivor was a Chinese seaman he'd be psychologically healthy at the end of his ordeal. I never asked a psychologist, but I wonder if it was the Chinese feeling of security no matter what. After I saw Chinese infants (no babysitters) either with Mom or with an older, perhaps 6 year old sister holding the kid -- they held the kids next to their bodies with a rag or scarf. In other words, for the first couple of years the kid spent most of its waking hours feeling a loved one's skin and hearing his or her voice-- no matter what -- while the elder worked, danced or ate in a strange restaurant. Warmth and security was always present. Even the coolies of China who I admired because they are the guys who built the Great Wall with no machinery and few tools had this sense of security. Their future looked dim, but they were happy and joked around. And it occurred to me that the Chinese are very sociable. They talk with and argue with complete strangers. Perhaps this continuous close human contact is what gives them this inner stability. If I were a college student majoring in psychology I'd love to make a study d of this interesting phenomenon.

This theory, to me, seems to fall in line with today's stress. While I was growing up before WW2, there was human contact no matter what you did-- almost --. The corner grocery was managed by your neighbors, who usually became friends. No "on line" purchases. We knew the milkman, the iceman, etc. I drove the grocer's wife to the hospital to see him when he was sick. Vice-versa, when my mom was sick, the grocery store family sent flowers. He was the butcher and his wife was the cashier. Maybe that's why we are stressed-out. We bear this stuff alone.

Not much flying in this piece, just our life off the airport. Have to put in at least one flying story -- happened to me. Got to Calcutta with one thousand hours total time, approximately in single - engine training planes. Checked out in a CNAC C47 at Calcutta's major airport, which was named Dumdum. "Dumb Dumb," I thought this airport is named after me. Sitting in the captain's seat with instructor Harvey Mahrt in the right, I looked back and saw the huge fuselage and thought, I'm sure I can get this huge piece of machinery into the air, but how the hell can me, a kid from Wisconsin land it? So on the first approach I got the C-47 what i thought was a foot or two off the runway and waited for it to land itself. It'd made a few short bounces like a crow hopping along the ground looking for food. I thought, by God, its true, aviators actually call this crow hopping. Harvey Mahrt, a taciturn guy never said much. But he was a savvy instructor. He read my mind. He said, "I know you think you can't land this tin beast, but why don't you try???? Just for the hell of it????"

The fact that I became a CNAC captain attests to the patience, skill and generosity of many of CNAC's old-timers. They were the best in the business. Thanks for bringing back those memories, Eve. Love, Felix.

## A TRIP TO SEATTLE AND BEYOND

by Craig Chinn

On September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013, a beautiful sunny day in California, Moon Chin, Gianni Lie, Craig Chinn and Carol Chinn started driving up to Seattle to attend an AVG/CNAC Symposium at the Seattle Museum of Flight. The drive was smooth and as we entered Oregon, it started to rain. We overnighted in Salem, Oregon and the next morning we drove in the rain towards Beaverton for a quick stop at the Major Arthur Chin Post Office. We took a few photo ops and then headed north for Seattle.

We checked into the beautiful Cedarbrook Lodge, which is a short distance from the Museum of Flight. After a restful night we took the short drive to the Museum of Flight for our scheduled September 28<sup>th</sup> AVG/CNAC Symposium. We were met outside in the heavy rain by one of the organizers, Key Donn. Inside, we were met by Public Programs Coordinator, Cale Wilcox. We were treated to a brief overview of the museum by Key.

The program started with a presentation by Keith Lee about the Chinese in the American Volunteer Group. Keith provided an impassioned look into how the Chinese ground crew provided support to the aviators.

After a lunch hosted by the Museum of Flight, Greg Crouch gave a talk about his "discovery" of CNAC and how his book *China's Wings*, came about. I have heard his talk numerous times and I always enjoy his depth and breadth of knowledge of CNAC. Nancy Allison Wright then took the stage to talk about her father Ernest M. Allison and her book *Yankee on the Yangtze*.

After the symposium, Craig was nominated to go out in the absolute drenching downpour to get the car. We all managed to get back to the Cedarbrook Lodge to dry out.

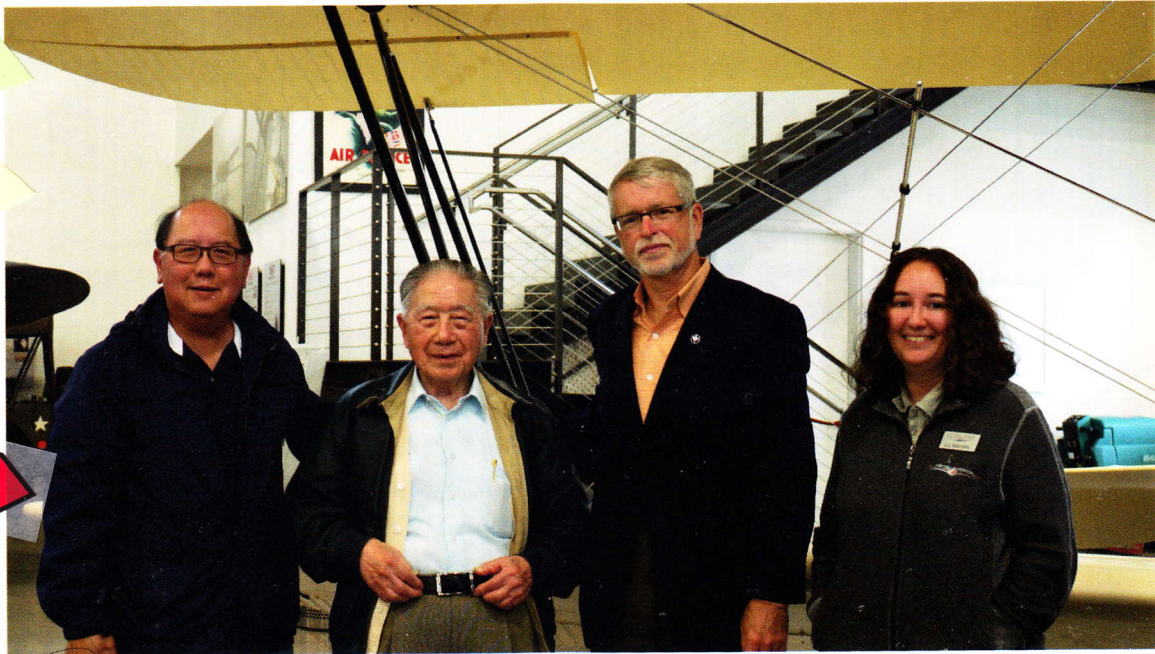


and one more time after conversion to a DC-3.

Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, turned out to be yet another great experience for the four travelers. We drove north in light rain to Mukilteo to visit the Historic Flight Foundation (established in 2003) the proud owner of a DC-3 that first started out as a CNAC - 47. Pete Goutiere took delivery of CNAC 100 in Miami on August 15, 1944 and flew east to Calcutta. Later, my father, Harold Chinn, flew CNAC 100 twice,

We were met by Liz Matzelle and HFF founder John Sessions. They gave us a tour of their immaculate hanger of fully restored and maintained aircraft for flight. After a brief CNAC talk by Greg Crouch, Greg and Moon answered questions from a very aviation centric audience. The highlight of our visit was to see and board CNAC 100. It seemed as if Moon was back home again. He was invited to sit in the left seat and HFF DC-3 pilot Vera Martinovich sat in the co-pilot's seat. They talked about all things DC-3.

We all had a truly enjoyable visit and were sad to leave Historic Flight Foundation. You can check out more of HFF at <http://historicflight.org>



Craig Chinn, Moon Chin, HFF founder John Sessions, Liz Matzelle

*Moonf (A)*  
The next day we went off on the final leg of our journey, Vancouver, BC. It was on again, off again rain on the entire drive. We toured around Vancouver and then Moon said, "Hey, I have never been to the north side of Vancouver." So we made a right turn at Stanley Park and headed over the Lion's Gate Bridge.

We stopped at the Capilano Suspension Bridge to do something non-aviation, to walk on one of the highest and longest suspension bridges. The staff seemed to think Moon might have been the oldest ever to walk on the bridge. The rain stopped for just a moment so we could take a picture of one happy guy.

After Vancouver, it was time to go back to California. After a rainy drive, we stopped at the Seven Feathers Hotel and Casino, which we were told is a very popular stopping point along Interstate 5. On the next day, as we crossed the California border, all the clouds magically disappeared.

Again, many thanks to Cale Wilcox and Key Donn for making possible such a wonderful experience!

## BATTLE OF THE BEARD

Unfinished story by Bert Coulson

Main character, Captain Wayne Powell Snyder of Kokomo, Indiana

Snyder's beard was a fearsome thing. With one day's grace from the razor, it could have been employed best to debark a mahogany cutting. Two days growth qualified it as a barnacle-remover. And Snyder knew it.

I know Snyder knew it, for he approached that resistant stubble daily with all the grim determination of a claustrophobe crawling through a ventilation shaft to escape fire. And though he was a massive Himalaya of a man, he was afraid of that awful beard. Afraid, perhaps, he some disastrous morning might discover it was on its own, impervious to control.

Since Snyder and I were often posted on the same flight schedule, I had many opportunities to observe the big man's struggles with his near-Nemesis. And it became a routine. Whether in the scalding water at our India base, or the tepid latherings of our China point of departure, it was always in the same pattern. The houseboys would awaken us, and I could whisk through my acceding beard while Snyder was still reverently stropping his long razor. So as excuse for watching the fascinating operation, I always lit my pipe, leaned against the wall, and vocally disturbed the morning air with any nonsense that came to mind.

It was never a conversation...rather more like a monologue with sound effects. If my companion in chin scraping agreed with my observations, he would grunt and take a firmer bight on his tortured face. If he disagreed, he merely balanced his razor in a hairy hand, glared at me once, and went back to the battle of the beard.

My case history of Snyder's beard was interrupted by a severe attack of malaria, and I was grounded in Calcutta for ten days. During my fever-periods, I, in common with all malaria victims, experienced a series of fantastic dreams. Fever induced by malaria tends to produce dreams of such clarity that they not only are remembered easily on awakening, but are often retained for days, weeks, and years. Although some of my malarial dreams were as classically delightful as pastoral Grecian romances, most of them were horrendous nightmares filled with Dali-like vistas through which I struggled to the strains of Wagnerian music.

And strangely enough, many of the nightmarish visions were concerned with a malevolent beard to which a protesting Snyder was attached. I dislike disappointing the pseudo Freudians, but I never had a fetish for a beard. But always it was there...pursuing me through an aluminum-plated jungle, smothering me in tangled phosphorescent masses on an ocean floor, or forming a thousand-fingered lightning storm through which I could not fly. Nothing stealthy or cautious about that beard of bad dreams...it always seemed as inexorable as an avalanche. And always attached to it in horrified wonder was Snyder's terror-filled face...what you could see of it, that is.

Having recovered from malaria, I couldn't wait to see Snyder and wave his damned beard in his face. In fact, I was a bit peevish about the whole thing...I was convinced that if he hadn't always attacked that thing with such determination, I should never have imagined he had a feeling about it, and should have given it no opportunity to insinuate itself into my shaving habits, and in turn, my nightmares.

I flew up to our Indian base at the western slope of the Himalayas, spent a dreamless night, and joined Snyder in shouting to the Hindu houseboys for "Gharum Pani! Gharum Pani! Jaldi!"

The hot water was rapidly forthcoming, and I began my lament.

"Tell me, Snyder, aren't you afraid that beard bountiful might someday go flying out the window and get tangled up in your propellers? Why, you couldn't even bail out...unless you had a blowtorch to cut yourself loose with...why don't you take that stubbled cross-cut file based on your face into the jungle and polish some ivory with it...the elephants would be so scared they wouldn't move...keyboards on the hoof! Or better still, let it grow a couple of hours and sell it to the Navy for steel cable? Someday, Snyder, you'll be too decrepit to fly...why not consider growing that thing across Niagara Falls? You'd be the first man in history to totter across the falls on his own beard! And think of this, Snyder..."

"You think of this, Limber-Lip," Snyder interrupted, waving his razor like a Samurai sword. "One more crack about my beard and your puny shaving worries are over. Do I make myself clear?"

Since that last remark rhymed with "ear to ear" and the big man looked as if he meant it, I subsided, somewhat.

"Okay, Man-Mountain, but why all the noise? If you knew how many nightmares that beard has inspired, you'd have it pulled out follicle by root and safely filed in the Museum of Horrors!"

And I explained to him some of the more disturbing encounters I had had with the subject under discussion. He went reluctantly back to his shaving ordeal, but stumbled as he went. "Yeah, but if you had a brain between those ears instead of a spinning gyro-top, you merely have dreamed of crack-ups and Milt Caniff's Lace-gal, as all normal pilots should. But this beard's a sensitive subject with me, and I'll tell you why."

The overgrown kid from Kokomo, Indiana blew a washtub of lather away from his mouth and mumbled on. "When I was in school, I played a Middlewestern brand of basketball—half basketball, half mayhem. I was big and awkward, and came in for a lot of cracks from the second-guessers in the pass seats. Even then my beard was purple as a black eye, and they started callin' me "The Bluebeard of the Basket Bouncing Bums."



"Well," he went on, "that didn't help me any with the campus queens until I found a little red-headed vixen who must have considered it a challenge."

I relit my pipe while Snyder hacked at his face again. "So you married the lovely, and she made you shave four times a day, you cut her throat, and that's why you're in China?"

"Nah, you airport bum...you been drinkin' your own bathwater again. So I threw a hard pivot block into another ball chaser one night, he mentioned my beard and her name in a manner not meant to be polite, and I lowered the boom on him. Come to find out, I caught him on the side of the head and paralyzed th' bum, which washed him up for a couple of years. My biddy took a dim view of me battli' on the court hurtin' a poor defenseless rival, and gave me th' brusho. So I don't lose my temper anymore, but I don't take no more cracks about this spinach, either."

That's what he thought, as it turned out later. But I was willing to sleep under a malaria-proof mosquito net from now on, anyhow, and I didn't even think about asking what ever happened to the redheaded heartthrob. And the redhead doesn't live who was born to be overlooked.

In the next few days our attention was diverted to a quantity both serious and earnest: the weather. It seemed as if all the lousy weather around and about the globe had decided to have a reunion right over the middle of the hump. And that middle became an aerial Styx wallowing up planes and crews. The Kokomo lad and I didn't meet for several days, but when we did, it was no occasion for idle chatter.

"Who's overdue now?" I wanted to know. I was also curious about Snyder's haggard look and the four day growth fringing his drawn features.

"Leo Atwater, Gawdammit!" Snyder replied. "Supposed to be down over the ridge someplace, but I think he's in the Mishmi Hills. From his last radio I know he's in there someplace, and I been down there lookin' for him."

The big man scratched his chin with the back of an oversized hand. "What th' hell...I been flyin' with Leo for years—we came over together—and I know he wouldn't bust into a bunch of storms. He went south and had trouble down there. As long as I can get gas and planes, I'll search every square mile of that area."

Meanwhile CNAC and the Army were conducting their usual efficient searches, and a few of the stricken planes were found. None of the few survivors had trickled out of the mountains and jungles, and Atwater had been given up as lost. Even by Snyder.

A week following the big storm, Snyder had returned to India from his final search sector, drawn and downcast. Eight days and nights of pushing throttles and peering anxiously into the sun and fog accounted for that harried, beaten

look, and eight days parole from the razor had made that beard all I suspected it might become. In truth the beard was now wagging the man, and vengefully.

It was a day on the ground for both of us, and I, having shaved, bathed, gorged, and smoked, went looking for Snyder. I found him, grimacing before the mirror and cursing like a pilot-hating mechanic.

"...this ding-dong excuse for a piece of steel! In a week it's lost its set, and wouldn't even shave the calf of a blonde! How'm I gonna uproot this spinach?"

"Try a lawnmower," I suggested. "Or better yet, that limey doctor up the road has a Burmese houseboy who swings a mean Figaro. Get a shirt on, and I'll ease up there with you."

Snyder didn't like the smell of this suggestion, but finally had to comply. The mid-afternoon sun was beating down on the tea bushes as we ambled into the doctor's compound. Beating off a score of mangy jungle-dogs and two dozen pot-bellied Assamese pickaninnies, I shouted for the medico.

"I sy, Majah, aw you the'ah? Drunk or sober, we're comin' in!"

The major didn't answer but Tawa Ga, the Burmese houseboy did. "Salaam, Shaib. Doctor Sahib am going for veesits on jungly people...Tawa Ga making burrapeg drinks, Sahib?"

"Salsom, Tawa Ga, and give the good doctor my Salaams. Yeah, stir up a couple drinks and sharpen up your razor while we have 'em. Burra Sahib Snyder here," I nodded, "has need of your skill."

"Acha Good, Sahib," the twinkling houseboy replied. "Me shave Snyder Sahib smooth like new baby."

"I always wondered," Snyder put in, "just where all those signs led to. This must be the original Burma Shave."

"You have said a facefull, Son," I told him. "The Major found him in Rangoon some years ago, and the two have been inseparable ever since. The Doc saved him from typhus, and not so long ago, Tawa Ga reciprocated by literally carrying our British Hippocrates out of a jungle. They've been all over the Orient together, and between them speak enough languages to shame the Tower of Babel."

Snyder nodded. "I believe you. A few drinks like this and the Sphinx would wrap her clapper around the Unknown Tongue—if the Sphinx is a 'her'. Tastes like a Sazerac laced with high-octane."

"I don't know what gender the Sphinx claims, but I can vouch," I assured him, "for the potency of this nectar. The Doc claims the battle for petroleum would be over if he could market this stuff in quantity."

Meanwhile Tawa Ga had dragged a bamboo lounge into the shade of a plum tree in the compound, and smilingly indicated he was ready to begin. As Snyder lay

back on the cushions, our Burmese barber squatted on his heels and deftly stropped his disreputable-looking razor on the heel of his hand.

Snyder was about to protest the appearance of the razor—it looked more like a machete—but merely groaned and shut his eyes when I frowned.

"Easy does it, bucko," I told him. "This lad shaves a meaner chin in cold water than Luigi of the Ritz ever did with modern conveniences."

Tawa Ga raised his expressive eyes to me. "Cold water, yis, for you, Sahib—you have the easy face. But Snyder Sahib, observe, the beard like burra water-buffalo. So Tawa Ga say to Tawa Ga, "Beard like buffalo, cut him whiskers with juice from buffalo!"

And with this deliverance our enterprising lad dived his hand into an earthen jug of pungent goo and slapped it vigorously onto Snyder's protesting face. Snyder jerked upright, and glared from Tawa Ga to me with a comic mixture of dismay and anger.

"Lay down, Big Boy, lay down," I admonished. "I've just inspected this shaver's delight and it won't kill you. And it is buffalo-juice, in a sense, since it's nothing but tallow rendered from a water-buffalo's hide. Maybe we've discovered something."

Our victim rumbled like Krakatoa and suspiciously eased back down. "Okay, wise-apple, but this better be good. Otherwise, one not-so-sharp airplane driver will be getting home sooner than expected—in a box!"

Since Tawa Ga winked reassuringly, I shrugged and squatted beside him to enjoy the pig-scraping.

It would take the Barbasol man himself on a network commercial to describe the smooth slickness with which my protégé removed that offensive beard. That bit of hirsute-jungle wasn't shaved off—it was peeled off like turf under the knife. With nary a nick. The only cockroach in the buffalo grease appeared when Tawa Ga couldn't determine how far down to shave. For that beard knew no limit—it flowed right down Snyder's neck and chest in a matted mass reminiscent of a bear rug.

So to assist the operation, I picked up a bit of limestone, drew a neckline of demarcation a pope would envy, and Tawa Ga declared an armistice at the hairy boundary. Since the long-suffering shavee did smell like a ripe old cheese, our Burma-boy liberally sprinkled the work of art with Carew's Fine Old Brandy. A cracked mirror registered Snyder's pleased wonder, I puffed my chest with pride, and Tawa Ga beamed all over the compound. Even the fastidious Mountbatten, ensconced as area commander down at Ceylon, could have felt justifiable pride in this admirable effort of one of his minions.

I signaled Tawa Ga for two more of his liquid mallets, and thus demobilized, Snyder and I relaxed once more.

"I've never been so efficiently de-adorned," Snyder rumbled. "Tell me, what's the baksheesh for such a job?"

"I usually give 'im a rupee," I explained. "But for a job like yours, why don't you up the ante to two. That looks like a sixty-cent pitch to me."

So when Tawa Ga floated the next round of drinks at us, Snyder indicated his pleasure and extended two silver rupees. And as an afterthought, "By the way, Number One, how about getting me a jugful of that buffalo-juice, as you call it. That would really fix me up!"

"Can do, Burra Sahib, can do. But Sahib not paying Tawa Ga, maybe—not paying for buffalo-juice," and his brown features wrinkled as if struggling to express another idea.

Here it comes, I thought. Here it comes—that old Oriental squeeze they all take for granted. He probably wants his family flown from China, or needs a new bedsheet, or perhaps a few bottles of American beer. How wrong can a man be?

"...not paying Tawa Ga for jug, but Tawa Ga giving one jug if Snyder Sahib riding number two jug to Kunming China in flying bird, maybe?"

Her rapidly went on, "Tawa Ga having Chinese barber friendly in Kunming, and him needing buffalo-juice lak damhell! Sahib can do, hellyes, maybe?"

This must have been highly important to Tawa Ga, since he never cursed unless excited. Tawa Ga eyed Snyder anxiously until Snyder nodded and agreed to transport the precious buffalo-juice across the Himalayas to Tawa Ga's "Chinese Barber friendly".

According to the address on jug number two, the barbering colleague was T.P. Huang, 464 Aolingtao, Kunming, China. Tawa Ga having emphasized the importance of transporting jug number two so as not to forget the location of the indicated barber pole, we departed in high good humor. So high, in fact, that Snyder bravely vowed to permit his beard to sprout until an opportune moment for sampling the skill of said T. P. Huang.

As it turned out, it was three or four nights later that we arrived in Kunming simultaneously with the sun's setting on Chiang Kai Shek Airport, and decided to make delivery that evening. Naturally, the trip into Kunming would call for a few liters of Yunan wine and "Chinese chow". I'm a fool with a brace of chopsticks, as any bespattered diner at the table across the room will tell you. It was no trouble for a couple of sturdy rickshaw-men to deposit us at 464 Aolingtao. Located near one of the ancient gates of the city, the stone front was decorated on the right with a deftly chiseled likeness of Confucius, and on the left with a faded metalchrome of the beloved Sun Yat Sen. Upon entering, the interior more resembled a quiet temple than a barbery—an impression soon dissipated by the hollow gonging of brass to our right and left. For a moment I was scared out of my skivvies and fervently wished for Kilroy.

Our host, T.P. Huang, soon appeared, shooed the juvenile moon-faced gong-busters away, and welcomed us with Oriental courtesy. Rather than a barber, he reminded me of what I would expect Lin Yutang to look like.

With the glass ornaments tinkling faintly, Snyder rumbled our mission, "Habbu Ao, T.P. Our friend Tawa Ga asked me to deliver this to you. And if your razor is sharp, I could use a shave."

Accepting jug number two as if he were receiving the long lost Ming Jade, T. P. bowed, rustled his kimono, and gracefully seated us.

"Ten sousand sank-yous, gentlemen," Huang bowed. "Never will it be known except sroo your revered ancestors the so worsy sing you are done. And please, the seeds of sunflower nearby, and I go for refreshments—some champlagne of the orange, yis?"

And away he went through the tinkling glass and the brocaded drapes at the rear of the temple-like room, carrying the jug of buffalo-grease before him, like a sub-deb's first orchid.

Orange champagne such as he would probably have sounded good to us, and we stretched like a couple of lazy cats. But not for long. Before an ace could say "on my back at thirty thousand feet" all auditory hell erupted behind the curtains. Since it sounded like an engine divorcing its propeller or FPA cornered at a DAR tea fest, we eased back for a gander.

There in the glow of a brazier was our T.P. struggling as Yutang likely wouldn't, a raffish looking Chinese on either shoulder and another trying to wrest jug number two from him. Not tempest in a buffalo-pot, this, so Snyder swung on the nearest, I blinked and konked another with a convenient wine bottle, and Snyder took the count as number three unlimbered the prized buffalo-jug athwart his head. It was all very confusing to me until the odorous one Snyder had first clipped redoubled in stars with a clincher to my downy chin. We, as the estimable limeys put it, hod hod it.

Upon having navigated my way through all those constellations back to consciousness, I contemplated my navel and looked about. There was Huang, collecting, rather frantically I thought, fragments of the troublesome jug from Snyder's head and shoulders. It looked like a good time for his shave, what with the wonder-working buffalo-juice plastered all over his head and face. But Snyder merely wanted to know whatthehell, and so did I.

Clutching a wad of buffalo tallow in a chubby hand, Huang squatted on the floor and gave us the word.

"In 'lis hand, gentlemen, is most valuable piece of tleasure you are so klindly dleivered." His eyes twinkled momentarily at our stupid stares. "Gleat Fliend Tawa Ga send lost eye of Holy Chinese War Buddha, stolen by traitors from temple."

Deftly producing a silk handkerchief, Huang busied himself a moment with the glob of smelly grease, and began to polish a marble-like piece of greenish stone some three inches in diameter. Only when he had turned it to the light did it resemble a fiery orb, with reddish lights shining from the pupil. Like the eyes of a truly genuine oil, it seemed to be looking straight at one.

As Huang unraveled his story, we learned that a group of Chinese traitors had stolen this mass of jade from the visage of the War Buddha in Hankow some three years previously for sale to the Japanese. As a result, the hard-pressed Chinese had suffered a severe loss of face, in that many of the ignorant peasants making up the Chinese irregulars had lost faith in the Nationalist cause, and had deserted companies and battalions. Since all of China was being quietly searched for the lost Eye of Buddha, it had been passed to a traitorous Chinese soldier for delivery to the Japanese in Burma.

Snyder and I had the same thought—we might have piloted the plane carrying just that man into Burma for the jungle-fighting. Somehow, through great good fortune it had come into the hands of Tawa Ga and his British master, and we were the final agents to deliver it back to China. No doubt the knowledge of the Eye's whereabouts was grapevined only a few days behind it, and Tawa Ga had to move it soon. As he did. Otherwise, the three who mobbed T. P. Huang would not have rendezvoused so closely on the heels of our delivering it.

When we had heard the gist of Huang's narrative, we moved back to the barber's front parlor and Snyder wanted to know what had happened to the three musclemen. Shrugging indifferently, our host explained. "Such mans not important now. Chinese police permit two sleep in jail tonight. Number three like American fish—him get away. Maybe shoot two after sun shine tomorrow."

For two Chinese, this was a rather sadder fate than most had to face. No doubt they would have preferred to have been shot immediately, in accordance with the superstition that if a condemned man is shot before the sun rises, his soul would join those of his ancestors. Otherwise, it was doomed to wander forever in a perpetual search for them. I think even T. P. felt a bit of Oriental sadness on their behalf, in spite of their being traitors.

But death is more common than inflated dollars in China, and I was a bit concerned about that precious Orb Huang was nursing in two hands.

"What now, venerable wielder of the face blade? Can we expect another platoon of tongmen to descend upon us?"

Huang permitted himself a bland smile. "No dlice for me struggling now. Chinese police I send for when you alive now come—Holy Eye all safe and be sent soon to Chungking, where War Buddha moved when Japanese capture Hankow. All very very good."

I was about to remind old T. P. that a little of that tardy champagne would be in order what with our battle scars, head and jaw, when Huang unwound his tongue again.

"Now, Gentlemen, we drink the kam peis short whites, I give you good shaving and body massages, and maybe pretty soon have fine Chinese dinners, Yis?"

Rattling off a mouthful of Cantonese, the old boy had the little moonfaces scampering all over the place and out the doors on various missions calculated to get these pleasant ideas under way.

A few down-the-hatches had us feeling alive again, and we were ready for shaves, massages, and dinners. Producing his own jug of whisker-softener, T. P. gave our faces odorous treatments, and followed with a brand of body-slapping he must have learned from Strangler Lewis.

Before permitting us to dress again, Huang mixed some buffalo-grease with a small fistful of what appeared to be fine white salt, and carefully rubbed the goo into our chests. Snyder bore the brunt of this novel treatment what with his bear-like chest of hair. We then received close-fitting silk undershirts to put on with the warning that they must be worn for six days.

*(Here endeth this tale of Snyder's beard. if anyone has an idea where this story was headed, I'd love to hear your ideas!)*

#### GOOD READING

Whether or not you met Jonna Hoppes at the reunion, her book *Calculated Risk: The Extraordinary Life of Jimmy Doolittle* is one you may want to have in your collection. Jonna is a great storyteller and her grandfather Jimmy Doolittle's personal story is one that should be of interest to us, especially given our connection to the public persona through Moon's rescue flight.

I read Greg Crouch's review of *Vanished: The Sixty-Year Search for the Missing Men of World War II* by Wil S. Hylton in the Wall Street Journal a couple of weeks ago. His name actually jumped out at me after the fact, but of course, he is the perfect choice to review this tale of the ten year search for a B-24 that went down near Palau on September 1, 1944. I have not yet read it but many of us will want to.

This past week I noticed a gentleman on the train who was wearing a USS Intrepid cap. He was talking with someone and I overheard, "I flew with the Navy". I butted in with "my father did too" which led inevitably (under my guidance) to a brief conversation about CNAC. My new friend Peter Weiland currently volunteers at the USS Intrepid Sea Air and Space Museum in New York City—and he is the author of a children's book *So Big Yet So Small*—"An aircraft carrier may seem big to you, but it can also seem very tiny to a pilot attempting to land on it." I am well aware that navigating the Hump did not require aircraft carriers but I can't help but think a book written for this man's granddaughter might be of interest to some of the youngest in our aviation oriented families.

## RECONNECTING WITH MY FATHER

This summer Peggy got an email from a Bill Johnston, who was in the process of realizing his father had once been a CNAC pilot. As he put it, "One day I typed "George Arthur Robertson" on Google, up popped a photo of a pilot who worked for CNAC. There was a photo of his signature, which corresponded to the signature on the letter from my natural father. I then typed CNAC and came up with China National Aviation Corporation and the CNAC Association.

"Is it possible for me to join the Association? What you all are doing is fantastic in keeping alive the memories of CNAC and aviation in general, without memories we cannot advance the future."

"I have done a bit of research here at work—as I explained I work closely with Airbus who are like Boeing but based here in Toulouse, France. Here is a picture of an Airbus A320 aircraft in the colors of ZHEJIANG Airlines photo taken in 2009. Zhejiang Airlines belonged to the CNAC, China National Aviation Corporation. In 2004 Zhejiang Airlines was incorporated into the Air China Group of companies. On checking my papers at home, in 2003 I was working for Airbus and more than likely performed the delivery and acceptance process of A320 aircraft to CNAC without knowing my personal relationship to the company."



"The photo shows that the aircraft is an A320 fitted with CFM56-5B engines. I was responsible in 2003 for all A320 aircraft fitted with CFM engines! Strange world."



## GEORGE A. "ROBBIE" ROBERTSON

From: Bird's Eye View by Peter Goutiere

During the WWII period of 1942 to 1945, the company of China National Aviation Corporation known as CNAC and nicknamed C-NAK, was contracted to fly vital war supplies from the Assam Valley in northeast India, across the Jap occupied Burma, on to China and its main base in Kunming. Kunming was the hub of the US 14<sup>th</sup> Air Force, commanded by General Chenault of the famed AVG Flying Tigers.

CNAC's base of operations was called Dinjan. It was in conjunction with the US Combat Cargo, who had their separate headquarters and barracks at the Dinjan base. The living quarters for CNAC was a rented tea planter's bungalow about eight miles from Dinjan near the Brahmaputra River. The chief pilot of operations was Captain Hugh "Woodie" Woods, a congenial and well liked individual. The bungalow housed all the CNAC crews that were hired to fly across the Hump route to China.

The CNAC pilots came from many different areas of the States. Some pilots from the AVG joined CNAC when that outfit folded in July of 1942. Those pilots that were not scheduled to fly for that particular month usually spent their time and money in Calcutta. They also had their own apartments there.

The group that would be at the bungalow was a rowdy mob! There was always a lot of chatter and jokes flung around, they would sit and drink the local "Carew's Booze" mixed with canned grapefruit juice! Others would sit and play poker. They all carried their own pistols as they sat around.

Amongst this rowdy mob, there was one that stood out a bit more. His name was George A. Robertson—"Robbie". His mode of dress "(uniform) made him more so! A show off, he usually had his trouser legs tucked into fancy, knee length boots, known as Natal Boots. He carried his pistol, which he called his "hog-leg"!! It was a 38. Western?

It seems that Robbie was originally from New Hampshire. He wound up living around Atlanta, Georgia. Here he picked up his southern drawl. Also where he learned to fly before the war. Another habit he picked up was chewing large hunks of raw tobacco! He always seemed to have his cheeks bulging with the tobacco cud! Every so often he would spit streams of the juice off the bungalow porch. He also sported a front gold tooth! Robbie was rather a robust type fellow about five foot eleven. That is, when he wore those Natal boots!! It was not difficult to note which CNAC plane he had just flown because of the long, brown tobacco streak from the pilot's side of the window, where he had spat tobacco juice!!!

Robbie also had a habit of bragging a bit. He always wanted to play poker, but had never seemed to win! But felt he was a great player. Then of course, he loved to say he was a great marksman with that "hog-leg" he carried.

Early in the time of CNAC when they had just started their Hump operation, it was not to the knowledge of some, of another character pilot that CNAC had. His name was Privensal—"Pri", Privensal had joined around mid 1942. He previously worked for the Colt Gun Company in Hartford, Connecticut. He used to test the Colt pistols! So, here was Robbie shooting his mouth off that he could out shoot anyone. However, before that shoot out would take place between these two, a little bit about Pri. He had been with CNAC about the time the AVG pilots had joined. It was now Christmas of 1942. Pri and an ex-AVG pilot had finished their flights for the month of December. They were relaxing at the bungalow and boozing it up! As they sat on the upstairs porch late that afternoon of Christmas Day, Skippy Land of the AVG said, "'Hey, Pri, I do understand you are some sort of super shot with the pistol?" Pri, also half drunk, nodded that he had worked for the Colt Pistol Company. This led Skippy to say, "Pri, I'll bet you fifty rupees you can't hit my foot from where you sit." Then he propped his left foot on the table about ten feet away. Pri took out his gun and drilled a neat hole right through Skippy's foot, just above the ankle! The house bearer Suklo took off shouting to Woodie that a pilot had been shot! Woodie arrived on the scene and took a look; then shook his head!!! It was declared an accident. Privensal was sent back to the States and Skippy Land into the Calcutta hospital. He then showed up later and everyone got to autograph the cast on Skippy's leg! When well enough he too returned to the States.

About six months later Privensal returned to fly for CNAC again. It was now August/September of '43, when the Monsoon rains were in full flow. There was Robbie still claiming his marksmanship etc. It was then that Privensal came forward and challenged Robbie! Everyone on that upper porch stopped their chatter and poker game to witness the shootout. Robbie got an ace of spades from a deck of cards and walked to a tall Sal tree about twenty yards from the bungalow. Here he stuck the card on the tree. He told Pri he was betting 100 rupees per shot for the nearest the card. Robbie then got his hog-leg pistol out and took the first shot. The bullet didn't even hit the tree. Pri hit the card, but not the ace itself. One hundred rupees to Pri. Rest results the same. This slowed Robbie down quite a bit. As for Privensal, it would be a couple months later after landing at Kunming the Japanese bombed the field and Pri was killed. He was a great guy and a good pilot.

Robbie continued his flying and was a good pilot with a lot of Hump trips under his wings. At times we would all gather at one of the various clubs and bars in Calcutta. Then Robbie started to go a bit off the regular handle; with a couple other fellows he would wind up at the famous prostitute area known as Karia Road and Acre Land. They would spend a lot of the time there when not flying.

In due course Robbie wound up with one of the more famous prostitutes of India. Her name was Margo.

Margo came into being through a strange circumstance of her young life. Before the United States was struck at Pearl Harbor, the British military were already fighting the Japanese in the Orient. Then, when the Japs struck and invaded the Chinese and South Asia, the British had their forces already in Burma along with the RAF. It was at this time that Margo met one of the RAF pilots whom she married in Calcutta. They had a baby boy who they named Scott. While the RAF pilot fought in Burma, he was shot down and killed. This left Margo destitute because the RAF did not recognize the marriage and gave nothing to her. Margo was of Portuguese descent and most attractive. She had no alternative but to turn to prostitution. She would go out with a man for the evening to clubs, etc, and spend the night for a certain amount of money. In this manner she made out well. Towards the end of the war, Robbie, got to know Margo and promised her many things. He finally convinced her that he could double her money. She trusted in him; gave about the equivalent of 30.00 dollars. I believe he took that to buy opium and smuggled it to China. He was caught in Chungking. It was a serious offence and could mean death. Robbie escaped and was smuggled out by CNAC. In spite of that Robbie and Margo were married in Calcutta. By 1948 sometime they moved to Manila.

Robbie and Margo wound up in Miami where he got a job ferrying planes to South America. Some years later he returned to Calcutta and started ferrying some C-46 aircraft back to the States. This he did in the late fifties. He eventually returned to Florida.

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#### GOOD ADVICE

Over the past number of years we have seen a dramatic increase in senior having their Social Security number stolen. Filing a return very early in the tax season, even if not necessary, prevents someone else from filing a tax return with your Social Security number.

#### PLEASE LOOK NOW FOR ITEMS YOU ARE WILLING TO LEND TO THE 2014 CNAC EXHIBITION AT THE SFO MUSEUM

I RARELY USE ALL CAPS TO COMMUNICATE but I want to make sure that we all take the time to see if we have something to lend so that this upcoming exhibition is as wonderful as we are capable of making it. We have **a little less than 2 months** to locate and photograph artifacts and notify Craig Chinn either by phone, email or US postal service. His contact information is on the fourth page of this newsletter.



**CNAC CANNONBALL**

Eve Coulson, Editor  
291 Russell Road  
Princeton, NJ 08540

*Eve Coulson*



**CNAC #100**

*Mr. Tom O. Moore Jr.*

**Mr. Tom O. Moore Jr.  
1 Via Santa Ramona  
Rancho Mirage, CA 92270**



Happy holidays  
Trenton, PA DC 086  
FRI 20 DEC 2013 P

