

CNAC
ASSOCIATION



APRIL 2010

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LETTERS, WE GET LETTERS...

Well, the truth is these days, it's more often emails, but we love communication in any form. Recently, Nancy Allison Wright emailed the above photo to see if anyone could identify the man in the glasses. She included the following information, taken from the North-China Daily News of 10-7-47, (noting that she didn't say KC Wu is on the right):

C.N.A.C. inaugurates its much-praised trans-Pacific air service between Shanghai and San Francisco via Guam, Midway, Wake and Honolulu. Mrs. K.C. Wu, the wife of the mayor of Shanghai, christened the DC-4 Skymaster, "Spirit of Nanking" with a sprinkling of seawater. Mayor Wu and C.N.A.C. Manager Col. C. L. Liu (left) attend the memorable occasion.

Anyone have any information? Please contact Nancy directly by email or phone: nancy.brucewright@verizon.net or (360) 387-2009

Bob Sherwood's wife, Audrene, recently wrote this nice note:

Dear Valerie-

March 3, 2010

Although Bob's travel days are over, he'll still keep up on his dues. His health is still pretty good for 95 years old. He's just slow--sleeps a lot--and just keep reading his last "Cannonball" over and over! He still has a sense of humor. We go out someplace every day, so he keeps a little active. I still drive going on 90--can't believe it!

Audrene

We also got an email in March from Ced Mah's niece and nephew, Alicia and Rob, about his recovery from a serious operation in January which said:

"Ced's condition is touch and go and he is still hospitalized. Although his heart operation was successful, Ced had a stroke, and is now struggling to recover from the effects of the stroke. We are in Montreal and Ced is in Edmonton, on the other side of Canada, but we are in constant contact with Ced's very good and long time friend Paul Tymchuk, who visits Ced every day and usually twice a day. So we are getting regular updates from Paul. The best we all can do right now is to send our prayers and positive thoughts to Ced, and the best way to get a message to Ced is to send letters to Paul who will be able to read them to Ced. We want to thank you and all of Ced's friends for your concern for Ced, a great man who we all love dearly"---Alicia and Rob

The address is: Ced Mah
C/O Paul Tymchuk
11034 83rd Street Apartment 2A
Edmonton Alberta, Canada
T5H 1M3

We know Ced is tough. In fact, to illustrate it, we have a story in this issue written some years ago by Ced about a little adventure of his in 1949.

IT'S NOT TOO SOON (OR TOO LATE!) TO SIGN UP FOR THE CNAC REUNION SEPTEMBER 8-12, 2010 BURLINGAME EMBASSY SUITES SAME GREAT RATE - DETAILS & REGISTRATION FORM ON PAGE 19

CNAC ASSOCIATION GOES TO CHINA:

The dream becomes a reality

At our last reunion, we spoke of the possibility of traveling to China as a group. Well, the China trip itinerary has been finalized and is scheduled for September 12-26, 2010. We now have enough people to make it a go, but we may have room for a few more people. The trip begins in Hong Kong, continues to Yunnan Province, with time in Kunming, Pianma, Dali and Shanghai. All arrangements in Yunnan are through the painstaking work of Diego Kusak, a Kunming resident for the past several years. The tour, including international and intra-China airfare, hotel accommodations, some meals, bus transportation, city tours and most government taxes is priced at just under \$3000. If interested, please contact Bob and Donna Willett at (321) 454-3016 for details. Lynda Sewall (321) 453-1702 of GO Travel will field questions May 6-29, when Bob and Donna will be traveling.



Best Man Robert "Duke" Hedman, Bert Coulson, his new bride Joan Coulson and Mary Hedman, March 10, 1949, Los Angeles, California, moments after the Coulsons were married on the radio show "Bride and Groom". Coulson was inspired to end his deliberations and propose (get married or go back to China? that was the question) while best man at the wedding of Jules Watson.

ALL CBI VETERANS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS, YOU ARE INVITED to the FINAL All West reunion--don't miss out! We invite YOU to join with us in Reno May 23-28 at the Circus Circus Hotel. It is vital that you make your hotel reservation and send us your registration immediately as the time is near. Questions? Phone Mel or Jennifer McMullen (909) 886-1162 e-mail: jenndayne@aol.com). We look forward to meeting new and old friends and hopefully seeing you there.

In news from the Maher family, Peggy tells us that, "Dad is doing well, very busy taking care of his wife around the clock who has cancer. The doctor says his good care is what is keeping her going". Peggy is recovering from cancer surgery, chemo, and radiation. She sends her "thanks to everybody for kind words, notes, and thoughts. It means a lot".

(If you find you want to email or send a card to Peggy or Bill, their addresses can be found on the first page of this issue of the Cannonball)

On these next pages, three letters from the archives (courtesy of Bill Maher) remind us of the rich history of CNAC---

(a memo that appeared on China National Aviation Corporation letterhead, dated 10th September, 1945, Calcutta)

Dear Copilot P.H. Cheng

In 1937 when the Japs invaded Shanghai, C.N.A.C. was forced to move operations to Chungking and later to India. December 1941 this Department was forced from Hong Kong to India. For some time during those early war days conditions looked very dark, and for a considerable length of time there was some doubt as to whether the Company would hold together or not.

For some reason it did hold together. Not only did it hold together, but it solidly bridged the gap that was so vital in maintaining communications between India and China. The reason why it has remained intact can be found in the firm courage displayed by each member of this department in discharging his duties.

Now that hostilities have ceased, I should like to take this opportunity on behalf of the management, of expressing deep and sincere appreciation for the loyalty and cooperation demonstrated by each and every member of this department during the hard and difficult years of this war with Japan.

You have done a grand job and you are to be congratulated for the splendid manner in which you have discharged your duties during these trying times.

With all best wishes for the future to you and to all those whom you hold dear, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

C. L. Sharp, Operations Manager
October 20 1945

Trip to Akyab and Mandalay, Burma:

On the 21st of March Bill McDonald, our Chief Pilot, asked me to report to his office in Calcutta as he had an interesting project and he needed a volunteer.

Across the Bay of Bengal on the west coast of central Burma was the airstrip and town of Akyab. The U.S. and the British had just taken Akyab and the RAF and the U.S. 8th Photo Recon were using the airstrip.

The airstrips at Myitkyina, Poashan, Tenchung, Mandalay, Lashio and Bhamo had been used by CNAC in 1942 during the evacuation of Burma. The airstrips at Myitkyina, Paoshan, and Tenchung had been recaptured and we were using them. The others had just been or were about to be recaptured and CNAC would like to start using them again if needed. McDonald knew that I had friends in the 8th Photo Recon Group so he had made arrangements for me to fly with them and stay with them at Akyab. From there I would be able to scout out the other airstrips.

I flew in a B-25 to Mandalay and to Akyab on March 22nd, but never got to Lashio or Bhamo as I was wounded on March 24th. At Akyab we were bombed by one Japanese airplane every night about midnight. The fireworks from the tracers and the anti-aircraft shells were spectacular, like a good 4th of July. On the night of the 24th, while sitting in a slit trench I was hit by shrapnel on the outside of my left thigh, inside my left forearm and just back of my left shoulder. All of the wounds were minor but they sure bled a lot. Especially my left forearm.

After the raid I was taken across the airstrip to the hospital tent where first an American then a RAF Doctor patched me up and told me to stick around for a few days. The nightly raids continued and because the living conditions at Akyab were pretty primitive the wound in my shoulder became infected so they flew me back to Calcutta where I could get better care. I had to spend a couple of days in the barracks next to our small hospital (Dr. Lewis Richards) and then they released me. While in the hospital McDonald, as a joke, pinned a Purple Heart on my tee shirt and threatened to kiss me on both cheeks. I told him that I would rather have the Nurse kiss me. Then he took the medal back to whomever he had borrowed it from.

All those trips across the "Hump" and all those spooky supply missions and not a scratch. What started out as a fun trip was shortstopped and I was sent home to the States a short time later.

Jim Dalby (Jim Dalby)

4559 KAHALA AVENUE
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96816

TELEPHONE: (808) 734-4771

June 3, 1982

Ms. Jeanne Jones Holder
S. 2707 Rhyolite Road
Spokane, Washington

Dear Ms. Holder:

During World War II, I was a foreign correspondent for Life. At one time I was in Burma, covering "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell's headquarters at Maymio. The Japanese invasion of Burma had already begun. Our headquarters were being bombed daily. About ten days after I arrived, Washington ordered Stilwell and his Americans to march north to meet Chinese forces, and then to march together with the Chinese into India. (All of this is recounted in Barbara Tuchman's book on General Stilwell).

I decided not to go on that long march, but to try to get to India (or China). It didn't matter too much which. I was given a jeep by Stilwell, and I went to a small town in Burma called Lashio, where there was an airport, and where I thought I could get a CNAC plane flight to Chungking, China. I knew my friends, General Chiang-Kai-Shek and Madame Chiang in Chungking would fly me back to India.

When I reached Lashio airport, it was deserted except for a major called Boatner, who had orders to blow it up at nightfall. He said he didn't think any more CNAC planes would land to refuel. But one did. It was loaded with Chinese officers who were headed for Chungking. The pilot told Boatner, "No more passengers." I went out to the plane, and said, "But you can't leave me here to the tender mercies of the Japanese." He looked at me and laughed. "Guess I can't," he said, and he put out his hand. "I'm Dude Higgs," he said, shaking my hand. "But what the hell is a woman like you doing in a deserted airport in this awful country?" "That's a long story I'll tell you on the plane," I said. "My name's Clare Boothe Luce." "Okay, Burma Boothe," he said, "hop on board. You'll have to be co-pilot."

There's more, but I haven't time to tell it. Hope this much will add a little to the many romantic stories told about your gallant uncle.

Sincerely,
The Hon. Clare Boothe Luce

(Jeanne Holder, niece of Captain Frank "Dude" Higgs, sent this to us in 2006)

CHINA NATIONAL AVIATION CORPORATION
MEMORANDUM

Captain McDonald _____
Operations _____
Shanghai _____

Date March 17, 1947
From Captain H. J. Hardin
Dept Operations
Location Shanghai

Crash Landing of CNAC Plane No. 142

On March 17, 1947 at Wuchang Field, Hankow, China, at approximately 02:45 G.M.T., it was necessary for me to crash land CNAC airplane No. 142, and this is my report thereof.

At 0230 G.M.T., I started the engines on Plane No. 142, and after the usual Cockpit and Radio check, I received clearance from the tower to taxi to the Northeast end of the runway for a Southwest Takeoff. I parked the airplane on the taxi strip there to make my engine runup check. On the runup of each engine, all instrument readings were normal, and the Power Check and Magneto Checks were good on each engine.

At 0244 G.M.T. Co-pilot C. H. Loh called the tower for Takeoff Clearance and when this was given, I taxied airplane onto the Runway, lined up, and then stopped and applied the parking brakes. After another Cockpit Check to determine that everything was okay for Takeoff, I started opening the throttles and released the parking brakes.

I advanced the throttles to 50" Manifold Pressure, and as the engines were not quite synchronized, the right one being slightly faster than the left one, I attempted to somewhat even the R.P.M.'s with the Propeller Pitch Controls. At an Indicated 90 M.P.H., I started retrimming the airplane with the Elevator Tab Control so that the airplane would fly off the ground. After the airplane was airborne and at an altitude of approximately 50 feet or more above the ground, I called to the Co-pilot for "Gear up". Simultaneously with this command for "Gear up", I felt the airplane lose power and speed as one engine cut out completely. As the plane started to Mush badly with an Indicated Airspeed of only 100 M.P.H., I immediately decided that it was very foolish to try to "Go Around", and decided that the best course of action was to make a "Belly Landing". Therefore, I closed the throttles completely and landed the airplane on the belly on the left hand side of the runway. As the airplane slid along the ground I cut all the switches. After the airplane stopped Radio Operator M. Huang went out the rear door and I opened the Cockpit window on my side of the airplane and saw that the oil under the left engine nacelle was burning slightly, so I went out the window and requested the Co-pilot, who was still in the Cockpit, to hand me the Fire Extinguisher. He did this immediately and with the help of the Ground Crew, who had arrived by this time, the fire was quickly extinguished.

PERTINENT INFORMATION:

Weather Clear, Visibility about 8 to 10 miles, Wind was South about 5 M.P.H., Altimeter Setting 30.42
Gasoline Load 1200 gallons, Oil - 72 gallons. Total Useful Load - 7914 kgs. Cabin Load ---4127 kgs.

I feel that my course of action under the circumstances was the only one open to me, and that it was in line with good Pilot technique and judgment, as well as company Procedures.

Signed Captain H. J. Hardin

(Leslie Hardin Bojarski sent us the above memo written by her father, Captain Henry Joseph Hardin)

THE BATTLE OF HUAI HAI

-by Captain Ced Mah

The battle of Huai Hai of Hsuechow lasted 65 days. It began November 5, 1948 and ended January 10, 1949. It happened on the Plains of North China Southwest of the railroad crossroads where the east-west Lunghai Railroad intercepts the north-south Pukow to Peking Railway. Southwest of the city a major battle between the Koumintang Nationalist Army and the Communist Peoples Liberation Army was fought.

Here on the sere-flat south of the Yellow River the contest for China where a million men engaged in battle took place. Life Magazine called this the biggest land battle on earth. Between the Lunghai Railroad and the Huai River the Nationalists had arrayed 50 KMT Divisions, his 500,000 troops supported by aircraft, tanks, trucks, artillery and the latest in American firearms and armor. The Communists accepted the challenge. They switched from that of hit and run tactics of guerilla warfare to that of positional warfare. The Communist East China Field Army after the grain harvest had assembled divisions amounting to 500,000 men.

Chiang Kai-shek's commanders had advised him to position his forces to use the Huai River as his back up. He insisted on doing battle on the open plains where his tanks could maneuver freely. His aircraft could attack with ease.

The battle opened on November 6, 1948. Since all airlines are an adjunct to the air force in war, CNAC, CATC, and CAT were impressed to do battle. Night and day they were airdropping food and supplies to the besieged. By mid-November the KMT Fourth Group Army composed of 340,000 men were completely surrounded. Cut off, an urgent cry to supply the southwest army was made to the airlines. Both night and day units of Chiang's 120,000 crack army who were American trained and equipped were being isolated. The garrison army of Hsuechow was sent forth to render relief.

Earlier in the fall, units of the Red Army were deployed to help the farmers in their harvesting. Now that the food supply was assured, the farmers cooperated and became the Communists mobile supply line. The foot borne delivery system was unstoppable. The Nationalist supply system of tanks and armored vehicles was stymied by deep ditches, which served as tank traps. The railroad embankments were undermined and the rail line removed. The battle raged on and on, and short on supplies, the Nationalist depended on the airlift.

Around the clock, the CAF and the three airlines dropped their loads. Radios were dropped to vector the aircraft for the supplies needed. At times the position would be overrun and planes were met with a hail of bullets. Chaos would continue into December. In the bitter cold of the North China Plains, the KMT Central Field Army was trapped.

Mid-November, 340,000 troops of the Nationalist 4th Army Group was isolated and encircled. Among them were 120,000 of Chiang Kai-shek's best-trained troops; American trained and equipped, they had to be saved. Therefore, from the south and west troops were flown to Hsuechow to act as reinforcements.

Roadblock, and deep ditches effectively blocked all aid. The vehicles thus blocked were ripped apart by the captured American artillery. In the bitter cold, the southerners lightly clad were ineffectual. In December, Commander Tu Yu Ming in a desperate gamble ordered his Hsuechow garrison troops to move out and affect junction. Strung out along the Pukow to Peking Railroad the Communist Generals Chen Yi, Liu Po-cheng, and Teng Shao-ping fell on them.

The relief army was surrounded and annihilated. General Tu Yu Ming was captured. Late in December, of the 66 nationalist divisions only 130,000 remained standing. It was reported that the Koumintang had lost 550,000 men. The Reds claim that 327,000 had surrendered.

Southwest of Hsuechow, bounded by the Pukow-Peking railroad to the east, and trapped by the Lunghai Rail to the north and the Huai River south, the holdouts had formed a laager.

A steady airdrop was called for. Night and day we flew. No sooner did we land when a box of sandwiches and a thermos was handed to us. As they refueled and loaded we slept. What seemed like only minutes we heard the ladder recovered. Both cabin doors had been removed to facilitate the jettisoning of cargo. At altitude the -40 F. could be felt in our bones.

Then on January 9, 1949 a maximum air effort was called for. We were allowed to sleep in bed from midnight to 4 A.M. at which time we were shaken awake. A hurried breakfast and we were away. That evening on the last trip of the day, Len Parish of CNAC, Earthquake McGoon of CAT and I, Ced Mah of CATC were attempting to locate our target. I called the VHF operator for our area on the radio. No answer.

Could their position be overrun or captured? My brother, Al Mah, of CATC heard, "Hi, Ced—I'm over the target area finishing my drop. They must have lobbed a shell on the radioman. When you are ten minutes out, blink your landing lights. Have Len and Earthquake do the same. Mind the ground fire is heavy. The cone of fire reaching for my lights will give you the target. I'll be climbing to a height of nine thousand and be out of their range."

That night we were allowed to sleep until four A.M. On January 10, 1949, in the pink of dawn we approached the field of engagement. The battle smoke hung heavy as the morning sun began to peep over the horizon. The sun's rays glistened off the split windshields and inclined planes of the Army vehicles. The Dodge

trucks faced outwards and were lined in a gigantic circle. A call to the ground controller received no answer. Hundreds of transports were circling.

Then what seemed like an interminable period the radio came alive. The words "Woy Nanjing! Woy Nanjing!" were the only words spoken by the pitiable voice. "Return Nanking! Return Nanking" were the only instructions.

I remained circling as the CAF B-24's pulled alongside and released their bombs outside the perimeter. Suddenly, a fire ignited in the circle behind the trucks.

"My God!" I exclaimed. "They're setting fire to all the supplies we dropped."

The crucial battle of China had been fought. Mao Tse-tung, aided by two million peasants from the Yellow River Plains had won the Battle of Huai Hai. Nanking, the Nationalist capital lay exposed and fell on April 22, 1949. Shanghai was to follow on May 27, 1949; the rest of China on October 1, 1949, when Canton capitulated. Chiang Kai-shek had retreated to Taiwan to hold out.

The pilots flying in the battle of Huai Hai had observed history in the making-- Dynastic China becoming a Communist Republic.

Winners of the CNAC Banquet Benefit Award Drawing
Saturday Sept 12, 2009

as reported by Valerie Parish Kendrick

Master of Ceremonies-Tom Moore

Ticket Drawers- Margaret Soong (CNAC Stewardess) and Morgan Lew (Angie Chen's husband- His Dad was with 14th ASG)

Eve Coulson....CNAC's "Miss Vanna White". She ran around holding up the prizes before each drawing... everyone was laughing and having a great time!!!

Winners

1st prize....big plane Russ Coldren

2nd prize...little plane Frank Watson

3rd prize...1 set of Lisk painting Uncle John- he gave them to Valerie (teehee!)

4th prize... the poster and movie Nancy Allison Wright

5th prize... Carey's map Tom Moore Carey signed and plotted the map.

6th prize...bonus prize Dragon Wings DVD Craig Chinn won it, but already had it so he donated it back; Dr Cecil Folmar won the second drawing on this one

Carey and Cynthia Bowles are as gracious at home as they are in San Francisco! On a wintry evening in late February, Eve Coulson and her husband Nelson Obus stopped in for a visit and were treated to a tour of their lovely lakeside New Jersey home, including Cynthia's artist's studio, their extensive collection of art and memorabilia--and a delicious home cooked lamb dinner. It was great visiting with them.

C-NAC CANNONBALL

(one of many versions, author unknown, to the tune of the Wabash Cannonball)

Refrain:

Hear the mighty engines
Hear the Captain call
I'm headed back to Dinjan
On the C-NAC Cannonball

Verses:

I've got a girl in Dibragar
She's long and she's tall
She's coming down to Dinjan
On the C-NAC Cannonball

The Captain says, "We're going down"
The co-pilot says, "Ding Hao"
If you haven't got an engine
You'd better bail out now.

The mighty mountains are rough
The army boys do say
The army gets the medals
The C-NAC gets the pay

When you get to China
You'll find a cozy ditch
Then back to dear old Dinjan
A needle from Doc Rich

Few people now remember
Those days of which we sing
When C-NAC planes were flying
From Dinjan to Kunming

A lonesome plane is flying
Over old Moulman
After years of silence
C-NAC flies again

Harken to the engines
Across the cloudy draw
We're headed to our maker
And a meet in Hoky Taw

ANYTHING FOR A LAUGH

(an essay on everyday life as a CNAC pilot, by Captain Bert Coulson, circa 1944)

On many of our hops across the Himalayas we had numerous occasions to laugh at situations we found ourselves in, but I hasten to admit that the humor was usually seen in retrospect after we had tempted our luck too far. However, the possibility of tragic consequences with the ensuing relief in escaping them has always been a basic element in the definition of humor, and in such a manner we enjoyed a number of good laughs at our own expense.

Such was the case on one occasion when we were flying at night to evade the threat of Nipponese aircraft presumed to be nearby. My fellow damn-fool and I were engrossed in inventing parodies of any kind of song and singing them over the interphone to the ribald glee of all aboard. I might interject that all aboard included two Chinese crewmen and fifteen Chinese soldiers we were transporting...airsickness and all...into Burma. With such pleasantries to entertain us we were as imperturbable as our Chinese passengers, but our engines were not sufficiently impressed.

We discovered that aircraft engines will not function efficiently without fuel when the one on my side sputtered, spit and quit.

"Got an engine, Russ?" I anxiously begged Russ Bevins, my fellow vocalist in the seat across the aisle.

"Hell, yes," his Missouri drawl bragged, as his engine also gave up the ghost.

We were both all over the cockpit turning on auxiliary gas tanks we should have turned on some minutes before. The fact that our fuel gauges were defective was no excuse at all. As it was, we were losing altitude into huge portions of black night. We finally persuaded the engines to receive the gasoline properly and broke out of the clouds over a moonless green valley. The valley could just as well have been a very resistant mountain peak, and we would have represented just another case of "Men Against the Mountains", literally. It was almost a month before anyone but volunteer crewmen would fly with us, and understandably so, in spite of our fond belief that we represented the best duet on the Hump.

Some of the laughs we had were forced, some macabre, some cheering and a few were downright funny. One of the more amusing situations involved the personality of the man responsible for it, lean and lanky Jim Moore of Oklahoma..."India Jim" to us because while in England with the Eagle Squadron the British discovered he was from Oklahoma and were convinced he was a true American Indian. He may have been at that ...Cherokee when sober, but Creek and mean when in his cups.

At all odds, "Indian Jim" and I were dodging in and out of valleys and passes on a clear day on the assumption that if any "Zeroes" were in the vicinity we could

evade detection by flying at a low and camouflaging the plane against the green roof of the jungle. This technique had proved quite effective in practice, inasmuch as the plane was flying at a lower altitude than the mountains forming the valley, and thus was visible in only one valley at a time. Since our transports were slow and unarmed, we couldn't risk being intercepted by enemy fighter planes any more than necessary. By finding a dip or pass at the end of each valley we could often remain quite low in even high mountains. Of course, "low" had to be a relative term, inasmuch as on some portions of the Hump the minimum altitude was nine thousand feet, while at other places you were forced to maintain at least fifteen thousand feet.

On this particular day I was flying the ship and told Jim I wanted to try the next narrow valley ahead for size. He reckoned it looked all right to him, so we hugged the valley floor and headed for a V-shaped depression at the farther end. Under certain atmospheric conditions it becomes difficult to judge the altitude of mountains until you are quite near them, and such was the case here. When quite near the end of the valley I realized we could not gain sufficient altitude to clear the pass safely, and knew I had only one alternative...the plane had to be turned completely about in the narrow defile, and headed back in the direction from which we had come where we could spiral slowly upward for more altitude. "Indian Jim" had realized our predicament at the same moment I had, and was unconsciously helping me wheel the lumbering old airtruck about. We finally managed it at the dangerously slow speed of ninety-five miles per hour, and once we were in the clear, I realized how slim the margin was by which we had escaped danger. I recall a fleeting thought to the effect that one of the questionable compensations of flying lies in the fact that quite often one has reason to appreciate how good it is to be alive. Jim, however, had been speculating in a different direction of thought, and broke in upon my musing with something akin to a loud guffaw in the middle of a nocturne in E minor: "Ye know, my fine-feathered birdman, I just thot Ah'd teh ye...we may not be the best damn pilots in the world, but we shuah as hell are learnin' fast!" I hoped he was right.

It is axiomatic, of course, that one must continually be learning something new about his job if he hopes to do it well. I recall an incident that impressed upon me the necessity of constantly checking and re-checking little details that might be of serious importance. "Woozy" is the only word for it...I was at nineteen thousand feet and grew so "woozy" that I may as well have been a goldfish trying to read a clock under water as a pilot trying to read the instruments. Every time I concentrated on blind-flying we were all over the sky, and I was airily bewildered at my inability to manage control. I set it down to an attack of vertigo, a condition in which the middle-ear mechanism ceases to insure your sense of balance. I thought it would pass, but try as I might, my erratic actions became even more exaggerated.

Finally, after two hours of struggling to keep the plane on an even keel, I discovered my oxygen system to be in perfect working order with the exception that the feeder tube had worked out of its socket, and I had received no oxygen for two hours in atmosphere over three miles above sea level. Anoxia, or lack of oxygen, has the effect of giving one more and more confidence that "everything is all right" until it is too late to realize what the trouble is.

The situation could have been disastrous, and only became laughable on landing and reading the flight report. For some operations clerk, who for lack of some better reason for flying an unloaded aircraft across the Hump, had filled in the space calling for "Purpose of the Flight" as follows: "Indoctrination and Instruction of New Pilot in Use of Oxygen Equipment; Instructor, Yours Truly (myself)." So I learned about oxygen from that!

And so those of us who took ourselves seriously enough to assert we took nothing seriously gradually developed a feeling that "anything for a laugh" should be our touchstone in easing over the rough spots we had to cross.

The laughs, however, were not altogether confined to incidents relative to flying. As a matter of fact, most of the examples of truly good humor occurred around our hostels and ready-rooms immediately following strenuous flights or during the time we were standing by for the next ones. This is readily understandable when one realizes that a good laugh...no matter how inspired...is a most effective safety valve for unconscious nervous tensions and pressures.

None of us, I am sure, shall forget the contributions "Bathless Dick" Marchant made to our risibilities. When he first joined CNAC, he seemed quite reserved and reticent, and there were many who were slow to accept him as "one of the boys". However, this was all changed in a few minutes when the now notorious "Ping-Pong" incident occurred. Captain Jack Brown, an exuberant Kansas pilot who would never grow up, was considered one of the better wielders of the table tennis paddles, and challenged Marchant to a game: "Dick, I'll bet you a hundred rupees I can battle you to a standstill at this little pastime."

Dick looked up soberly from his treatise on integral calculus, eyed Brown mock-contemptuously, and took the wager, "I'll kiss your backside if you can!"

This delighted Brown, who had nothing to lose but one hundred rupees, so the game went on. It went to deuce-game, and we all gathered 'round to witness the outcome. We were all highly edified to see Brown win and shout, "Okay, Sucker...pay me; come around anytime you happen to have another hundred rupees!"

"Button your lip, Shylock," Marchant rejoined. "You'll get your ill-gotten money, as well as your pound of flesh. Take down your Gawd-damned pants!"

Brown, to say nothing of the rest of us, was astounded to see the erstwhile serious-minded Marchant so willing to pay off his bet in such full measure. But we insisted, and when Brown had exposed his fundament to the atmosphere,

Marchant very soberly bent himself over and planted a resounding kiss on one of the pink and rosy cheeks. It was too difficult to ascertain who was more embarrassed after the incident, but it served to initiate Marchant properly, and to lessen the inhibitions he had placed upon his previous actions.

Besides a very good imitation of "Gildersleeves" and his laugh, "Bathless Dick" Marchant kept us amused in many other ways. For one thing, he was a notoriously poor speller and could never write a letter without surrounding himself with dictionaries, collections of synonyms, antonyms, etc. Out of this preoccupation with learning to spell came some of his choice synonymic gems. One example in passing has to do with his penchant for calling everyone "Sad Sack", or some one of his synonyms for "Sad Sack", such as "Lugubrious Luggage", "Pensive Poke", "Baleful Bag", "Lachrymose Lad", and so on.

And so, when "Bathless Dick" encountered one of the worst storms in the history of India, and a series of flying conditions no combination of skill and luck could have overcome, we finally gave up "sweating him out" and numbered him among the many men sacrificed to the "Hump Run". There is no time or need for maudlin sentimentality among men who fly, but a man achieves a genuine immortality through the impressions he makes as he goes along. Such was the case with the many men we lost, and it is pleasant to recall the laughs they provided us along the way.

Another man who contributed much to our good spirits and that indefinable entity called "morale" was one of the best mechanics who ever picked up a wrench. Fred Stinson was a big Raw-boned Scandinavian who had served his apprenticeship on merchant vessels as a boy, and had transferred to aviation during the First World War. It was always a pleasure to land after a difficult flight and on sticking your head out the window to hear Stinson's inevitable greeting, "Vell, Coussin, wat 't Gott-tammed hal iss 't condition off your flyin-machine? By Yiminy, if Ay can't make her run, py Gott Ay bay a fresh-vater sailor!"

And he always expected a routine answer, "And what makes you think a square-headed Sandihoovian could ever be anything but a fresh-water sailor?"

"Vy, cousin, Ay done poured more salt-vater out from my boots 'dan you effer flew across!"

That Stinson was a salty individual was undisputedly true, but it was his irrepressible good nature that set him apart. He feared neither man nor beast nor deity, but was fond of extending broad hints that he actually wasn't "toff" at all.

"Come on, Coussin," he would say, "Git chore ugly face shafed, so ve can go tew da villich an' beat da hal' oudt from zom cripple! Ve'll git trunk an' diss-odor-ly and challench da guy with elephan'titus...maybe we can whip him, Hanh?"

Actually, "Ol Stins" was more considerate of the unfortunate cripples of India and China than most and would not tolerate their being ill-treated by anyone. Too, his English was quite good when he desired it to be, but he preferred hiding this particular light under a bushel, and trotted out his careful pronunciations only when the ladies were present.

Stinson's standard joke, with variations, was always a good subject for a laugh. He was continually trying to sell stock in a mythical corporation, which he blithely called "The Brahmaputra Evacuation and Ferry Service, Ltd." He had dreamed up this imaginary corporation at the time when the Japs were threatening to break through from Burma into India via Imphal and Kohima. There was a very remote possibility that they might somehow cut off our landing strip, and he was all prepared to evacuate us at a moment's notice.

His mythical fleet consisted of native dugouts and canoes. We were to pay a fantastic number of rupees for this emergency transportation, and we were promised "hot an' cold runnin' vimmen in effery tam boat!"

So it went with "Ol Stins", and we often wondered which we appreciated more, his skillfully intelligent mechanic's fingers, or his infectious good humor and raillery.

Upon landing on the Indian side of the Hump, only one man was as consistent as Stinson in meeting incoming ships; whether at night or day, we could invariably expect to be caustically greeted by Jim Phillips, one of the operations managers, who came tooling up in a jeep at the precise moment we wearily cut our engines. He was a man of terrific drive and native energy and gave the impression that sleep was something to be scorned as a waste of time. Too, he was the only one of the "shoe-clerks", a slightly scornful category for anyone not a pilot or a mechanic, who was by nature a genuine member of this, or any other unorganized chapter of the American Foreign Legion. For Phillips, like most of us, would have been in the Orient, or in some other place where the urge might drive him, war or no war. His biting wit had the sting of salt spray, but was as refreshing as a dash of cold water in the face.

Phillips was responsible for seeing that "we got the stuff to where it was going" in large and rapid quantities, and he was utterly ruthless in the way he drove us to achieve a record number of trips to China with acutely needed supplies. Having been a novelist, publicity expert, and jack-of-all-trades, Jim knew human nature well, and used his insight into human nature to keep us flying, day and night. Scorn, invective, imprecation, cajolery, flag-waving and bluff were all at his command, and though he was not averse to sending us out into almost impossible weather conditions, no one "sweated us out" with more real concern once he got the air full of us and planes. Some of the men hated him, as was natural, but most of us realized we weren't engaged in a Sunday-school picnic, and relished our verbal tiffs with Phillips.

Phillips provided us with as many laughs as anyone, even if most were at our own expense. To him, we were "intrepid birdmen", "muscles-headed truck drivers of the airways", "human automatic-pilots", "frustrated Lindberghs", and so on; he was never overawed by the fact that we could do a falsely be-glamorized job that he couldn't do. We were supposed to do a certain job, it was his responsibility to see that we did it, and a sarcastic brand of humor was his whip.

I recall in particular only one of his devices for keeping us on our toes, and how it was met with varying degrees of mirth, indignation and threats to dump Phillips out of a plane, sans parachute, over some remote section of the Himalayas. It was posted on our bulletin boards somewhat as follows:

SAVING FACE WITH PHILLIPS:

Representing in simple language suitable for the immature intellects of Aerial Truck Drivers, a symposium of "Helpful Hints on How to Win the War, Single Handed, With a Minimum of Brain Power." This symposium is organized after long and disgusted cogitation to accomplish the following ends:

A. Saving "Face": Since all of you are Flight Captains of the Chinese Airways Middle Space Kingdom, it is generously conceded you have "face", or prestige, to start with. These suggestions will assist in maintaining present, or saving lost, "face", an all-important factor in dealing with our beloved Chinese allies, and with your beloved Operations Manager, myself the undersigned.

B. A.M. and P.M.: In the event you are scheduled to take off at 4:00 A.M., it behooves you to know that 'A.M.' is the abbreviation for the Latin expression, 'ante meridian', translated by all high school freshmen to mean 'before noon'. By a like sign, 'P.M.' means 'post meridian', or 'after noon'. So to be as reasonable as possible, the Operations Department will appreciate your reaching the airport in time to be airborne before the dinner-bell rings. Of course, it is understood that a take-off at four o'clock in the morning is desired, but growing boys must have their sleep.

C. Customs: Since we are merely guests in Britain's "Mother India", we are required, as you know, to pass through British Customs before taking off into that wild blue yonder for Burma, China or points beyond. All valuables must be declared honestly...even, Reginald, that tube of lipstick or pair of silk stockings for lady loves across the border. If this requirement irks you, it will avail you nothing to turn your flying machine about and blow the Customs tent and its occupants into the next county with your powerful slipstream. For in their muddling way, the British will have erected another by the time you are ready to go again. It is suggested that you go ahead and show the nice Customs officials your little souvenirs, for who knows; what with the surplus of daring pilots after the war, you will probably want to return to "Intriguing India" and sell these self

same officials grosses of lipsticks, silk stocking and even Fuller brushes. Even ex-heroes must eat, you know.

D. Recognition Equipment: When flying over U.S. Army installations near enemy lines, it is suggested you turn on your recognition equipment, and make friendly signs at the poor groundlings below. For the anti-aircraft units of the U.S. Army in this area are made up of sharp-shootin' Sergeant Yorks, and if they don't shoot you down for a Jap, they'll "ventilate ye fer uh revenoo-er"...you'll be just as full of holes either way.

[These "Helpful Hints" went on and on in the same vein, and involved suggestions relative to matters too technical to be discussed here. The postscripts, however, bear recording and follow below.]

P.S. Number One: Relative to "saving face", or "gaining face", a quotation from a great Manchurian sage is in order: "They who risk neck to save face will not hear the prattle of their grandchildren, but will soon eat rice with their ancestors in the Land Beyond the Last Gate."

Freely translated, this means, "Don't stick your neck out or it'll be pushing up little daisies." We know you are "hot-rock" pilots, and accomplished aces; there is no need to prove it to all and sundry by such questionable "show-off" devices as:

a. Pulling treetop "buzz jobs"...the trees in the jungle are in no need of pruning by your wing tips, and it scares the monkeys, anyhow.

b. Stunting a loaded transport; the book says they can't be looped, we know you can loop them, and if the wings come off, we don't have any spares. Too, it might make the passengers nervous.

c. Carrying unauthorized passengers; you might be aiding and abetting a deserter, or worse, a spy. There ain't no lovely Mata Haris in the CBI Theatre, at any rate.

P.S. Number Two: Seriously, your worst enemies are the weather and the rock filled clouds over the Himalayas...you are truly "men against the mountains". It is fervently hoped you will not define the word "against" too literally..."in contact with or collision with..."

Yours with love, thumb "against" the nose,

Jim Phillips

In view of Jim's sarcastic admonitions, it might be well to amend our credo for mirth a bit. "Anything for a laugh', hey? Well, *almost* anything.

**COME ONE, COME ALL!
CNAC ASSOCIATION REUNION 2010**

September 8-12, 2010
(Sunday, September 12—breakfast and goodbyes)

Where: Embassy Suites
150 Anza Boulevard, Burlingame, CA 94010
(650) 342-4600

Reservations: Call Rachel Fuller, Sales Dept. TODAY!
(650) 340-0327 ext. 151
Ask for your special CNAC room Rate of \$109.00

What: Registration Start Sept. 8 at 1:30
Presentations, fun, socializing, Thursday, Friday, & Saturday

Friday: Cocktails by the Pool & Dinner at Moon's House,
reservation required

Saturday Evening: CNAC Banquet (at hotel) Reservation (\$55 per person)
required by August 30th

CNAC Reunion 2010 Registration

Registration Fee: \$55.00 per person Number of people ____ Total \$_____

Yearly Dues \$40.00 Number of people ____ Total \$_____

Saturday Banquet \$55.00 per person Number of people ____ Total \$_____

Grand total \$_____

Friday Dinner - Moon Chin Host Number of people ____ (we are Moon's guests)

(check payable to CNAC Association)
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