

8/3/01

Tom,

Here's a little about post-Hump CNAE. As noted, I'll add some more about the operation as I get around to it. My health is pretty good so I don't have to hurry (I hope) we're all getting a bit past our primes, but it's amazing how many of us have made it thus far. It was a great deal for us and when added to wartime combat operations made for a pretty eventful and interesting life. Wouldn't trade this life and fun for any other I can think of. Have you been getting much post-war input from our guys?

Best regards

Oliver Glenn



Built prior to World War II for the China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC), SanHuPa was located on a 2100 foot island in the Yangtze River just below the City of Chungking, China. Towering mountains, rising right from the rivers edge, meant the Chungking residents had to descend 767 steps from their mountain city to the river level and SanHuPa—but that was a convenience compared to the four hour ride over rutty mountain roads to the nearest other airport, Peishiyi.

CNAC, besides flying throughout China beginning in the 30's, pioneered the world famous "Hump" route over the Himalayas, the highest mountains in the world between India and China. With the fall of Burma, CNAC was for many months the sole source of supplies to the whole country of China.

SanHuPa's lone 1800 foot runway was made

even shorter by the presence of high tension electrical wires running from mountaintop to mountaintop across the Yangtze on the approach end of the runway. These wires connected power for the City of Chungking, which straddled the Yangtze.

Approach procedure, after crossing the homer on the city mountaintop was, after breaking out, to fly down the river until you cleared the wires, slowing to 90mph while making a 90° to the left to the private tennis court situated on a flat spot on the side of the mountain, at which point you had full flaps and with a quick 90° to the right were ready to touch down on the first few feet of the runway. The river, winding between the mountains, prevented any possibility of a go-around. You had just one try.

Take-off was to make a 180°, holding the brakes while you revved up to full throttle and releasing the brakes to start your roll. Lift-off was at mini-

mum flying speed and climb-out at maximum rate of climb until you cleared those same high tension wires again.

But the electrical wires and mountainous terrain were not SanHuPa's only hazards. Each spring the airport disappeared under the raging floodwaters of the Yangtze River. The terminal building and other facilities had to be dismantled and lugged up the mountainside to a safe spot above the floodstage. When the water subsided, they would then be carted back down to the island, again opening SanHuPa.

Today, the road to Peishiyi has been improved and, with a tunnel through the mountains, is now only about an hour from the city. While you can still see signs of the SanHuPa runway, the island now supports a bridge across the river, effectively ending the use of SanHuPa.

8-1-01

Dear Willard / Roy / Christy / ^① _{90M}

Since this is just a little story about flying out in China, it's sort of impersonal so we're not giving away family secrets. The pages you sent me, Willard, from "The China Connection", probably written in 1945 or 1946 - because he speaks of bombing Jap Cities - speak of Chungking, the wartime capital in 1939 when the Japanese were bombing the helpless Chinese. I read some of Theodore White's stuff and thought it was pretty good. It was deservedly critical of Chiang Kai Shek's ^{REGIME} ~~Allegiance~~, but Chiang really had plenty of problems. This bit that White reported about the 767 steps up to the city from the San Hu Pa airport in the river is quite correct. I'm enclosing a picture of the airport and you can see the bank on the opposite side of the river. ^{THE CITY IS BEHIND THE PHOTOGRAPHER} The main course of the Yangtze runs between the airport and the buildings on the far side of the river. Our hostel was one of those buildings you can see in the background above the plane. I can't pick it out, but that's where we went if we RON'd in Chungking. ^{Remain Over NIGHT} We had a good reliable fast boat to take us across the river. The river was fairly fast and you could end up several miles downstream if the engine crapped out. Our hostel manager (also a CNAE employee) ran a real nice place. The food was excellent, the place was clean, and we could get a hot bath. At the time (I'll talk about fall of 1946) Shanghai had not begun to recover from the war and the plumbing throughout Shanghai had been

②
strapped by the Japs to make shells to fire at those damned
Americans. A hot bath ^{in Shanghai} had to be arranged with the
#1 house boy. He put several buckets of cold water into
the bath tub, then poured in a couple of real hot buckets
of water that had been heated by a street vendor over
a charcoal ^{BRAZIER} brazier. It cost about 50¢ to get that much
hot water, but what the hell, you couldn't have B.O.
So - when we were in Chungking, we always enjoyed a hot
bath. On one occasion, I slept cold after taking a hot
bath and caught pneumonia. I felt OK in the morning,
but half way down to Hankow (about 3 hrs flight) it
hit me and I had tremendous pain and maybe a
102-103 fever. I could hardly see outside the
cockpit and practically made an instrument landing
on a beautiful clear day.

Anyway to go back to our little field at San Ku Pa,
you can see from the description under the picture, that
you practically had to be a stunt pilot to get in there.
On one of my early trips in there, I'd been sent over to
the north field, Pai Shiyai, to pick up several of the
C-46 pilots who had to R.O.N. Coming back into
little San Ku Pa they all got in the back of the plane
and placing their hands against the overhead (C-47's
were small) began to jump up and down ^{in unison} ~~in unison~~.
If you bounced the landing, your reputation as a pilot
sank 50%. Of course you might ask if they were crazy
to stick their necks out to make you have a lousy
landing, but we had a lot of faith in each others flying.

I'd sort of expected that, so I made a Navy 3-point landing, tail wheel first. My reputation was saved and nobody had to swim. — That runway was interesting, since for a couple of months in the spring it was under a flood of boiling floodwater. The Chinese cut the stone blocks about 18-20 inches square and three feet long, then buried them in the sand of this little ~~island~~ island on three ends. The runway was at least 3 feet thick and fairly smooth, but a little short for a full load (26,500# on the C-47) take off. Only one of our pilots, Jeff Weiner, ever had a problem. In rather poor visibility, he wrapped that power cable for the city of Chungking around his landing gear and put out the lights for 1 1/2 million people for a few days. Needless to say he was fired immediately, but went to work for one of the other two airlines the next day.

I went up to the Chungking business district only twice. It was a hell of a ride up there in that sedan chair and I was a working man, not a tourist. In the 40 or 50 flights I made from Shanghai to Chungking, we got off fairly early in the morning and flew 3 hours to Hankow (now Wu Shen) and 3 hours to Chungking, starting for home (Shanghai) about noon. If the evening weather was good, we were home by 6:30 or 7:00 PM. Sometimes winter weather in the evenings forced us to stay in Hankow. Again there was a boat ride from the field on the south side to the city on the north side of the Yangtze. At that point it was a lot wider but not nearly so swift. ^{AS Chungking} ~~Hankow~~ was a rather nice city. The hotel was good and the streets

were lined with trees. Sewage was in open trenches on either sides of the streets about 2 feet wide and 3-4 feet deep. Don't fall in. During 8 years or so of the war, the Japanese made Hankow a big supply base and had a number of airfields from which they conducted their raids on Chungking, Chengtu, and Kunming. Ocean going vessels came up to Hankow and the Trans-Siberian railroad crossed the Yangtze river on its way south to Hong Kong. Thus, the Japanese could supply their forces with ships and railroads all over China. The locomotives and rail cars crossed the river on large ferries.

On one of my visits to downtown Chungking, the jeep in which our crew was riding was waved over to the side of the street and down the street came twenty or thirty policemen waving Tommy guns. In the center of the procession was a guy riding in a rickshaw with his hands tied behind him nibbling on a green apple that was being held up to him by a guy walking beside him. Our driver said he'd be shot in the back of the head at a bandstand or platform in the intersection of the streets we'd just passed a couple of blocks back. His body would be wrapped in a bamboo mat and left there several days as a warning to other miscreants. He'd robbed a person in a car (you'd be a big shot to have a car) a week or so previously. Odd how little incidents like that stick in your mind.

Only sixty or eighty miles west of Hankow, the Yangtze comes out of the mountains at Ichang (one of our good radio checkpoints) and that is where the Chinese stopped the Japanese army for most of 8 years. It is also not many miles from the huge 3-Gorges dam, the Chinese are building now.

⑤

Navigating our way around China was not bad for ex-Navy pilots. Good dead reckoning navigating was just as effective there as it is over water. All of our scheduled destinations had fairly strong non-directional radio beacons and we lived by our ADF's (Automatic Direction Finder). From about 100 miles out (providing thunder storms weren't interfering too badly) you could pick up a fairly reliable signal. On departure, watching the signal behind you gave you a good drift reading for about 100 miles and if you could spot a landmark you had your ground speed. Plugged into my little Dalton computer, we had the wind speed and direction at our altitude and could establish a good heading and ETA (estimated time of arrival) to our destination. Another trick was to measure a bow and beam bearing on a radio beacon we were passing to the side of our course. On a 30°, 60°, 90° triangle, the short leg is 1/2 the longest (hypotenuse); so you measure the time it takes to pass from a bearing 30° ahead of your bow until you come abeam of the station. The distance you flew in that time is approximately half the distance to the station. It wasn't real accurate at 70 to 100 miles but it gave us some help on our navigation. There were just not enough radio stations to be able to receive two at once for a nice accurate cross bearing.

Our let-downs were on the ADF's and only brought us to the airfield except for Shanghai where we could split the runway and did so a dozen times in training under the hood. At other stations they located the homing beacon antennas wherever they could best be protected from the communists. Sometimes that was at the field but usually it

was in the city and required ^⑥ 2 1/2 minutes after passing the radio beacon. One of our senior captains (Sharky) apparently dropped a minute on his timing at Tsingtao and flew almost 3 1/2 minutes instead of the proper 2 1/2 minutes and crashed into a hill beyond the airfield. It's very easy to drop that minute when you're going through all the landing preparations, flaps, props, mixture, landing gear, pitot heat, and trying to keep a constant heading and airspeed on instruments while making the final let down. To avoid that hazard, I purchased a large stop watch one of the first times I was down in Hong Kong and hung it from a string on the control wheel where it was easy to track the minutes and seconds for all the events from the initial overhead, the procedure turn, to the final approach to the runway.

The weather in China was not really bad. In south China for instance going from Kunming to Hong Kong, it was possible in certain seasons of the year to pick up the monsoon rains. On one trip, it rained so hard that I was afraid I was going to lose my engines during a brief 20-30 minute period. I had to drop the gear to create drag and then put the engines ~~into~~ almost take off power to keep the cylinder head temperatures up. They dropped from a normal 205°C to about 75. I don't know how cold the engine could get and still run, but I was hoping I wasn't going to find out. Usually the weather was pretty nice across there. A good part of that trip was marked "UNEXPLORED" on the map. East of Kunming, it was pretty high, we did an awful lot of flying up and down the

⑦

Yangtze river valley. Shanghai was close to the mouth, Chungking about 1000 miles west and Hankow in the middle. The area around Chungking was rich farm land and Szechwan province, by Chinese standards, was quite wealthy; so it generated a lot of traffic, passengers and cargo. Our C-46's carried about 38 passengers in canvas bucket seats along the sides of the cabin and most of the freight and baggage was lashed down in the center (a small amount in the belly) leaving a foot or so from the passengers' feet to the cargo. Rather than trip over that many feet to go aft to the potty, (a chemical toilet behind a canvas curtain) we tried to make sure we could hold our water till the next landing. Usually a lot of the passengers got airsick and the company didn't provide airsick bags; so it frequently smelled horrible. On one flight from Mukden, Manchuria to Peiping (Peking/Beiping) my wife Rosemary was aboard and she found a couple of packs of chewing gum in my flight case. She tore them into enough little pieces so that everyone could have a piece. By gestures and demonstration, she tried to show the Chinese how Americans chew gum. On about a 3 hour flight she distracted them so well that not a one of them got sick. Air travel in China was even worse than the present coach travel on American airlines, but was a damnite better than any other possible means of travel. Railroads were all cut by the communists, automobile/bus/truck roads were almost non-existent, and travel by sampan frequently was interrupted by communist target practice. You might say we had a lock on the travel business. As such, it seems probable that we held off the communists by maybe a year in their conquest of China.

Sian (xian) which by astronomical observations reported in history had been the capital of China in 2600 BC and which again was the capital when the first emperor of

(D)
all of China completed the Great Wall and had a recently discovered 20,000 terra cotta man^{ARMY} buried at his grave site (221 BC) and was the capital again during the first 'Golden Age' of China during the TANG Dynasty (600-900 AD) was one of the cities we attempted to save from the communists as long as we could. It was the terminus of the Silk Road and while not on the Yellow River was close and surrounded by good agricultural land. They raised a lot of cotton which we flew out to Hankow where it could be taken down the Yangtze on sampans. I'm not sure of the economics of flying bales of cotton, but it was better than coming back empty and the value of what we flew in to Sian was enough to justify the round trip. (I even carried 10,000 pounds of rock from Chungking to Shanghai instead of going back empty. Shanghai is on an alluvial plain like New Orleans and rocks only arrive by barge (or airplane)) The company wanted to build a rock garden in front of the terminal which would be something that nobody in Shanghai and few in New Orleans see.

Between Hankow and Sian are some fairly tall mountains 8-9000 feet some approaching 10,000 and some rather wild weather. In winter we frequently began picking up ice on our wings and propellers at 5-6000 feet and were still in ice at 14,000 feet. There was enough mixing of the air (by the winds thru the mountains) that it was difficult to climb into the subfreezing air above the icing level. I didn't like to take passengers that high but a couple of times I had to go to 16,000 feet with passengers to get through the ice. We didn't have to stay that high very long. With no passengers I did a few trips out 19,000 feet. For those old propeller driven planes with no pressurization, that was pretty high. The "Hump" pilots did that and more, but that was military exigencies. At Sian, the mountains we had to cross going south to Hankow were quite

3

close, and we frequently had to shuttle back and forth over the radio beacon to climb to a safe altitude in the clouds before heading south en course. Frequently we took off for a destination that was fogged in, expecting it to burn off by the time we arrived. It usually worked out OK, but one time several of us arrived at Sian and it was still socked in; so rather than burn gas on six or seven planes milling around waiting for the weather to clear, we went to a nearby abandoned military field to wait it out. The weather looked clear from above, but visibility was down to a few hundred yards down near the ground. One of the fellows, who was a little more senior, volunteered to stay above the field and give us directions to the runway. "A little more to the right" "Too much." "Left a bit" "That's good - about half a mile straight ahead" - "I have it in sight". We had very good, reliable radios, the old four channel VHF from WUIT. When everybody was on the ground, we guided the "on-top-guy" onto the runway by sound. Everybody associated with the military knew about Ground Controlled Approach (GCA), but this was my first (and only) experience with an airborn controlled approach. We all were completely confident in our own and each others flying ability and were willing to try anything. After an hour the fog cleared and we went over to the main field and resumed operations.

North China weather, Sian north to Peking and east to Mukden Manchuria, is quite like North Dakota, Montana and South Central Canada, dry and cold in winter, dry and hot in

(10)

summer. It may not always have been that way because deep erosion, hundreds of feet deep against the walls of the western mountains, indicate there once was heavy forest and vegetation to protect them, but that's been gone a thousand years. West of these mountains is the Gobi which stretches several thousand miles and which has no cities to require air service except a few on the eastern fringe. On one of my few flights west from Peking, I passed over Kalgan, Mao Tse Tung's capital, and thought of those piddling little communists hoping to take over China. How pitiful. Little did I appreciate that in a couple of years they were going to chase me out of China and take over the whole country. Out west of Peking I passed over a couple of camel trains carrying coal out to the few people and settlements that were out in the Gobi (Gobi means desert, so Gobi desert is redundant). The camel trains were several hundred Bactrian (two humps) camels nose to tail and stretching a couple of miles. The terrain was quite level and I believe the communists have attempted to distribute some of their population out there, so they probably built a railroad. It wouldn't have been difficult.

Peking (or Peiping) now Beijing was a pretty city with fairly wide streets and very clean by Chinese standards. We did a lot of operations out of there and spent considerable time there both winter and summer. In the summer of 1946 a railroad ran from Taku Bay, near Tientsin, up to Peking and brought up gasoline and supplies which we took to Taiyuan, Tsinan, and as I said out in the Gobi. There was quite a U.S. Marine presence at Tientsin and Tsingtao and the marines rode the railroad, a ~~train~~ on each train

(11)

As long as the US Marines rode those trains, the communists kept their hands off of them. Then Roosevelt and our US government tried to give China more self respect, and pulled the marines off the trains. Next day the communists blew all the bridges and there was no more railroad. These "North China Marines" had tremendous respect among the Chinese. I don't know whether it harked back to their defense of the Legation Quarter in Peking during the Boxer Rebellion at the turn of the century or what, but they enjoyed it. God old Charleton Heston. The marines lived like kings and even the privates had servants. They operated the airfields at Tientsin and Tsin-tao. When the communists were coming in, Washington told them to leave all their equipment there. Taking this literally, the marines gathered everything and pushed it into an enormous heap with bulldozers.

After the demise of the railroad, it was still easy to truck everything up to Peking from Taku Bar and Tientsin. The river was pretty shallow at Tientsin and only LST's could get to Tientsin, but ocean going ships came in to Taku Bar regularly.

In the spring, winds whipped up the dust to 10,000 feet and it was practically insurmountable flying in the sunshine. In the struggle to feed their tremendous population, most trees and ground cover had been removed to plant food grains, primarily wheat, millet, and barley. It's too dry to grow rice, so the people of northern China developed foods made from these grains, noodles (chow mein - fried noodles) yowdsa (ravioli) and dishes like that. Breakfast of boiled peanuts with an egg mixed into the soup (miso) was served steaming hot at 4:30 AM anyplace but our primary hostel, the Wagon Hotel in Peking. There, we had regular American type meals, with a slight British twist, bacon and eggs with toast and

marmalade with even orange juice as a concession to us Americans. There might be some fish available for the Brits. Wagon lits is the European counterpart of Pullman in America, and Peking being on the railroad from Le Havre in France to Hong Kong, was the hotel run by the railroad (in the good old days). It was excellent and we enjoyed staying there as long as we couldn't be home in Shanghai. During the spring and summer, there was great sight-seeing in Peking, and in the winter there was ice skating on the lake at the Winter Palace. Some enterprising individual had some ice skates we could rent and, if that didn't appeal after 12 hours in the cockpit, there was a very nice bar in the hotel. Back in the early 1700's, there was a very enlightened emperor, Chien Lung, who struck up a pen-pal acquaintance with Louis XIV and he gave some French Benedictine friars some land just west of the big west gate of the city (it still had walls and gates ~~gone~~ when we were there). They did what the Benedictines do best, they made some of the best liquors and champagne you ever tasted and delicious champagne was \$1.00 US. a bottle. At Shanghai we had Mumm's Cordon Rouge and Piperi Heidsieck and this was every bit as good. On the occasional day the weather shut us down in Peking, all of us pilots would congregate in the bar and play ~~Swiss~~ Dice for champagne. With maybe nine or ten playing, we could drink up about two quarts of champagne between someone losing and having to buy the round of drinks. Around and around it went and it is possible to get drunk on champagne. The halls, rooms, and lobby were all carpeted, I suppose, in locally manufactured carpet. The famous Nicholas Carpet factory was there in Peking. They made a big rug for the China's gift to ~~the~~ Queen Elizabeth for her coronation

(13)

I doubt if our hotel carpet was crafted by Nichols, but the people in Peking sure knew how to make carpet. I put in a deposit with Nichols in late 1948 for several rugs, but they returned my deposit to me in early '49 saying they couldn't fill my order because of the communist army approaching. I should have done it a year earlier, but we had no idea how fast China would fall. When it started, it was like a house of cards. The first cities that fell were in far northern Manchuria; Chang Chun and Harbin, up near the Siberian border. Mukden (now Shenyang) held out for several months. The Japanese had built many manufacturing plants there during about a 13 year occupation and it was important to the Nationalist forces. It is on the Chinese section of what is called the Trans-Siberian railroad. It is also the city where a branch goes south to North and South Korea and a very important railroad junction. (If Korea was cold, how much colder was Mukden in the winter?! Lots!)

We always took care to avoid staying overnight in Mukden, but occasionally we'd get caught. When shutting down the engines in the winter, we had an oil diluting system that injected 100 octane into that 90 weight oil to thin it out for morning starting. At least the pistons weren't glued to the cylinder walls and all the gears and crankshaft frozen into a solid mass because it could get down to 40 below zero (Fahrenheit and Celsius are equal at -40 and that's cold). Then the oil was drained from the oil reservoirs while it was still liquid. It was kept warm and heated up to a maximum to pour into the plane in the morning. We were supplying Mukden from Peking, about 200 miles southwest and not nearly so cold; but without runway and airport lights we

(1#)

Couldn't always return to Peking before dark. To keep us from burning up the planes pushing them too fast, the company gave us a straight 12 hours pilot time for two round trips a day from Peking to Mukden. Between CNAC, CATE, and CAT airlines, we probably averaged 15 to 20 planes shuttling back and forth. Part way between Peking and Mukden the Great Wall of China terminates at the sea coast so we got to see the Great Wall four times a day for several months. It wasn't the beautifully restored section that all the tourists see close to Peking, but it was still recognizable and impressive.

Since Mukden was obviously falling, my wife, Rosemary, wanted to get in there in hopes of picking up some bargain. Working for the Naval Attache in Shanghai, she asked if it would be all right for her to go. Her boss said it was too late to get any official permission so nobody could refuse her permission if she wanted to take it upon herself to go. She came up to Peking and sneaked aboard my plane while the crew and I were in the terminal eating lunch. We weren't allowed to carry anything more than our maximum load of whatever we were carrying that day. It was reasoned that if we could carry any more than was being loaded, we could carry that much more of our cargo. Since I was in charge of my plane and the copilot and radio operator (both Chinese) weren't going to tell anybody, once we closed the cargo door, she was home free. After take-off, I told the copilot to give her the right hand seat and go back and take it easy. She got a good view of China right from the cockpit window. She got the hotel room that had been reserved for the Secretary of the aid mission that was supporting the Nationalist

Government. Well, the ⁽¹⁵⁾ hotel clerk understood the secretary was single and I had a hard time getting into that room. No hanky panky was permitted. The Chinese were very moral. After shopping a couple of days, she had to come out to the airfield in a taxi. The brake was pulled up by rubber bands cut from inner tubes. A Chinese General rode out in the same taxi and when they got to the field, Rosemary had to carry her own heavy (from shopping) suitcase. The general would lose much face if he should carry a bag and besides women were inferior to men and were expected to do the menial work. Which reminds me of the seniority in our home according to our cook boy and the amahs (we had 5 servants). I was #1, our older son was #2, younger son #3, and Missy (my wife) was #4. They didn't really know how an American family works.

Our cargo going into Mukden (Shenyang) was a lot of rice and some general merchandise, later it became small caliber ammunition and machine guns. Coming back to Peiping were a lot of rich Chinese and their baggage. As things (military matters) grew worse, we began to carry out wounded troops. Sometimes it was better to stay in the cockpit with the door closed until the plane aired out a little, because quite a number of the wounded had gangrene around their wounds and were helpless to take care of their bodily functions so the stench was quite overwhelming even by Chinese standards. There was almost no medical care except what they could give to each other, no doctors, no nurses, no corporals. These were ~~men~~ (boys) who their officers thought could survive to fight again; otherwise they would have been left behind to be taken by the communists. My first flights to Mukden were March 24th 1948 and my last ones October 15th. A note in my log

Book says Mukden fell ⁽¹⁶⁾ to the Communists about Oct 22nd or 23rd. The effort that had been devoted to Mukden shifted to Taiyuan and Sian (now Xian). The provincial governor in Taiyuan was a very determined individual and his people apparently supported him. As the communists closed in on the city, we lost our regular airfield and used a new one which was closer to the city. It was layed in a box canyon with no possibility of pull up if you missed your landing, so we were very careful. On the other hand, I remember almost none where I had to pull up and go around at any other airfield. At several landings every plane we got pretty proficient at getting that plane on and off the ground. We had a number of trips into Taiyuan with full loads (over 10,000 pounds) of TNT at the regular airfield and a couple of loads into the new emergency field with max loads of old mouldy dynamite.

After Mukden fell about Oct 23rd 1948, the Communists advanced more rapidly. On December 13th, I note, we evacuated equipment and CNAC personnel from Peking. On the 16th, we had a maximum effort to rescue civilian personnel from the city. There were over a dozen planes from all three airlines (CNAC, CATC, and CAT) on the south field, which had been exclusively China Air Force. Surprisingly the large truck convoy bringing the civilians out from the city (about 4 or 5 miles) was delayed. For the two or three hours we were delayed, the Communists decided to make things interesting for us. They brought around some 75MM guns into range of the airfield. They fired a few rounds probably from ~~extreme~~ ^{EXTREME} range. They missed our planes by half a mile but gave us a warning of things to come. We all started our engines. About that time the convoy arrived. Probably 30 or 40 trucks loaded

(17)

to the maximum with men, women, and children. They pulled up close to our planes and the people began climbing aboard. The C-46 had a boarding ladder about 8 feet high which is easy to climb if you don't have your life's savings in bags and gold bars sewn into your coats. My copilot and radio operator (both Chinese) were back at the door helping people aboard. One little fellow they pulled in and slid across the deck had so many gold bars sewn into his coat he could hardly get up. These were the wealthy Chinese who had the money to bribe someone to sell them a ticket and who would quite likely be executed by the communists if they fell into their hands. They should have got out weeks earlier if they were smart.

As they were coming aboard, the communists got the range and the shells began landing close by. We all started taxiing at slow speed with the trucks keeping up with us. I think we got everybody who was supposed to be on board and at that time one of the shells burst close enough to shower our plane with dirt. We pulled in the ladder, slammed the door closed and taxied quickly over to the runway. There wasn't such a thing as a control tower and it wouldn't have made any difference. As soon as we got on the runway, we each poured on the coal and got the hell out of there. Nose to tail, it didn't take long before all dozen or more of us were airborne. We had to take off toward the direction those shells were coming from. Some of the guy pulled up in rather steep turns, but I kept it down to about 50 feet and was past the guns before they saw me. That was the closest we came to getting killed by the communists. We took our passengers over to Tsinatao where they were taken by ship to Shanghai.

Piping, Tientsin, Tsinan all fell at about the same time, mid-December 48. The next big effort was to supply a Nationalist army trapped by the communists on the plains about 170 miles northwest of Nanking, which was the Nationalist capital. It was Christmas time and Rosemary and our two sons had departed Shanghai for the U.S. December 8th. We had shipped out our furniture, sold our car, and I along with a couple of other captains had moved out to the Columbia Country Club of which we were members. My total belongings in China were reduced to three large suitcases, of which the communists captured one when we could no longer get from the city to our airfield about five miles south.

Being Christmas time (1948), Chenault's "Civil Air Transport" hosted a dinner for all the American personnel of our three airlines engaged in air dropping supplies to the Chinese Nationalist army surrounded by the commies north of Nanking. ~~For some forgotten reason~~ I had to go back to Shanghai to pick up oil for our shuttle planes, many drums of it. CAT didn't have any planes going back (about 170 miles) so they asked me to bring up ~~some~~ ²⁵ turkeys for the Christmas meal. Many of the CAT and CATE pilots were former CNAC employees so there was a fraternity amongst us Americans. The CAT people in Shanghai brought the turkeys over to Lungwa airfield where we and CATE operated from their field at Hung jao and put them on my plane. Notes in my log book indicate the weather in Shanghai was lousy and down to the minimums at Nanking ^{Christmas EVE}, but all the families had evacuated Shanghai and they needed these turkeys up at Nanking so we cleared out an instrument landing and bumped up to Nanking for an instrument landing &

There weren't any air drops that day nor the next three. Nanking being the capital of China, there were many embassies and this being the last of a sinking ship all the doors were thrown open for a round of parties. We visited several and the food was fantastic. Even the Soviet embassy was open. Associated Press bureau chief Harold Miller and his wife hosted an open house. About three years earlier, when we had evacuated Shanghai up to Nanking to avoid a typhoon, he had predicted this and now it was here. I looked him up later in London before he became bureau chief in Moscow. The media people, much better than most of the people ever in the State Department, knew what was going on. Unfortunately they weren't allowed to print anything that didn't conform to U.S. stated policy.

One of the Time magazine correspondents had ridden in my plane on one of these missions earlier and soon after I read his report in the rice paper edition printed over in Tokyo. It didn't come within miles of what we both had observed. When over a few beers in the evening I asked him how he could write that. He told me that he had to write what "Time" wanted him to write or they wouldn't print it and he'd have to look for another job. That was the last time I bought "Time" magazine.

From Dec. 24th to 28th we were grounded by the weather. Since things were desperate, we went out on the 28th but had to bring the loads back because weather was so bad in the drop zone. The area held by the army was three or four miles long and two or three wide but no radio we could home in to find the drop area. On the 29th and thereafter for a week we redoubled our efforts, but it wasn't enough and the last large Nationalist army had to surrender. Nanking fell shortly thereafter.

Local defenses held out at a number of the larger cities and Tsingtao and Taiyuan were still in our hands. Except for those flights to deliver explosives to Taiyuan, our deliveries were via air-drop, primarily rice and flour. Tsingtao is an excellent seaport and was the base for the U. S. Navy as long as the Nationalists held China. The U. S. Marines ran the airfield. We usually had one or two cruisers and several destroyers based there, so we Americans felt real secure. One night, after we had been flying our planes off for days at a time, it began to snow heavily, a real opportunity to relax. The hotel where we stayed was also popular with the Marines. Since we were earning almost as much before noon as most Marines were making in a month and drinks in China were reasonable, we stood for the drinks. It became quite wet out and I was informed next day that I had (playfully, I hope) swung at a Marine sergeant and hit one of my fellow pilots. I didn't remember going to bed, but I certainly remember getting up. The weather miraculously cleared and at 4:30 in the morning, the little Chinese boy assigned to do that, shook my shoulder and repeated, "Captain, you get up. You going to fly." No flight surgeon any place in the world would have certified anyone of us qualified to fly, but fly we did. After an unremembered breakfast we got into the cockpit and went on 100% oxygen trying to sober up. That was fruitless and there were twelve to fifteen drunken pilots mulling around ~~the~~ C-46's in that snow trying to get airborne. Fortunately we were all on the same frequency and we knew that the next guy was feeling just as lousy as we were so we were careful to let each other know what we were going to do.

(2)

We all got airborne and there wasn't even one scratched plane, Stangovers didn't start until about noon. We had all been flying so much that it was almost robotic. It was the only time I ever flew drunk and it was no picnic.

Dropping rice and other things was rather like low level bombing we did during the recent war. The rice or other goodies were double bagged so they wouldn't split open and spill when dropped. The inner bag was tight and probably always broke when it hit the ground, but the loose outer bag caught all of it. The "kickers" piled the bags high to the top of the door and waited for my signal to push them out. I had a switch in the cockpit that rang a very loud bell right by the door when I wanted them to push the bags out. It was sport to see how close we could come to the center of any drop area. Contrary to some of the things that were written, I didn't ever see any tracers coming up at us on any of the drops. Probably a few soldiers fired their rifles at us and we'd occasionally find a rifle caliber hole in our plane, but there was no real anti-aircraft fire with tracers or bursting shells. It sounds more heroic if you can throw in lots of anti aircraft fire, but we were just out there earning our pay.

The CNAC engine shop in Shanghai had been overhauling two Pratt and Whitney R-2800's per day for our C-46's and two R-1830's for our C-47's, but as it became obvious that the Nationalists couldn't protect Shanghai all of the shop equipment was loaded on a LST and sent to Hong Kong. Anticipating this eventuality, we had stockpiled a lot of piston/cylinder assemblies to repair our engines as required when an engine began burning

(22)

too much oil, the mechanics ran compression check, and replaced one or two cylinders that were the worst and put it back in service without ever removing it from the plane. This sounds like a real mucky mouse way to go, but we didn't have a bit of trouble. Our mechanics (all Chinese) were just darn good, and the procedure was approved for this situation all the way back to Pan American in New York since we were a subsidiary of theirs. CNAC had shops for everything on the planes; engines, propellers, instruments, and radios, CATC was owned and operated by Moon Chin, an American Chinese and had almost no shops but they got spare engines, propellers etc, from about 100 fairly new C-46's that had been left on the Lungkuwa airfield by the U.S. Army. Obviously the Chinese Nationalist government had a large part ownership in CATC just as they had in our airline, and the C-46's came to CATC via the government which was being supported by the United States. CAT (Civil Air Transport) was Channault's airline and they had put their shops and spares on a LST which could be sailed into any port convenient to the operation. CNAC and CATC operated from adjacent hangars at Lungkuwa airfield about 5 miles south of the city while CAT was over at Hungjao airfield three or four miles west. There was a gravel strip and some jerry built shops, but if necessary, they certainly would have used the beautiful Lungkuwa airstrip with its wide concrete runway (only one) and high intensity lights.

TO BE CONTINUED