

## Who Won the War in the Pacific

(LTC Joseph B. Shupe (UAS Ret.) excerpted the information below from an article "Prelude to Armageddon" by Richard P. Hallion printed in the Fall 1995, Vol. 42, #3 issue of AIR POWER HISTORY. Dr. Hallion is the Air Force Historian and he has given Col. Shupe permission to print all or any part of the article but added "... be sure to include the fact that WITHOUT THE EXPERIENCE GAINED BY THE B-29 CREWS in the CBI/TO, the results of the war in the Pacific might have been different.")

\* \* \*

There's an old WW I joke about a horse, a cow, and a mule who argued about who won the war. The horse said we played a vital part in transporting the supplies and cannon to the front. The cow said we did more; we provided the bully beef - the Army marches on its stomach you know. The mule responded that if it wasn't for our guys in the State Department, there wouldn't have been a war for you fella's to have won in the first place.

Well, we can say the same for the CBI Theater of Operations (CBI T/O) for our vital contribution to winning the war in the Pacific. We all know that it was the B-29s delivering the A-bombs on Japan

that brought the Japanese to the peace table; otherwise we could have suffered a million or so additional casualties in invading Japan. Well, it was the CBI T/O which provided the learning experience for the B-29s.

In August 1943, the Air Staff of Hqs Army Air Forces (AAF) prepared a plan to use a new weapon (the B-29) from Chinese territory to attack Japan pending capture of island bases nearer to Japan. Gen. "Hap" Arnold (CG AAF) wanted the first B-29s operational in China by April 15, 1944. The last of the initial batch of 150 B-29s were combat ready and on their way to China by that time to begin the bomber offensive. (A total of 3898 B-29s were produced during World War II at an average cost of \$639,188 each in 1944 dollars.) So, the B-29 went from a design concept to an operational weapon in five years; less than three years separated their first flight and the Hiroshima mission.

Initial planning for the China-based B-29s envisioned a force of 780 B-29s supported by the ATC from India, across the "Hump," attacking Japanese targets in Manchuria and Japan. This plan was later revised by Generals Stilwell and Stratemyer to forward base the B-29s from permanent and secure bases in India. Under this plan (called OPERA-

TION MATTERHORN), they anticipated that largely self-sufficient B-29s would carry their own fuel and bombs from India into China. Unfortunately, this did not work out.

Then, there was the problem of who would command the B-29s. In China, Gen. Chennault wanted to have operational control; likewise did Lord Louis Mountbatten (Cmdr. SEAC); as did Gen. MacArthur for those based in the SW Pacific.

The final solution was a compromise by placing them under the direct command of Gen. "Hap" Arnold as the executive agent for the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The new bomber force was designated as the 20th Air Force, and formally established on April 4, 1944, with two subordinate commands, the XX Bomber Command (XX BC) under BGen. Wolfe, and the XXI Bomber Command (XXI BC) under BGen. Hansell to be based in the Marianas after their seizure from the enemy. Theater commanders were directed to support them.

Ironically, the major use of the B-29s against Japan would not be from bases in China but rather from bases in the Central Pacific.

### OPERATION MATTERHORN:

The B-29s first flew in combat on 6/5/44. Ninety-eight planes from bases in India raided the Makasan rail center in Bangkok. It was not a good start, damage was light; five were forced to ditch; 14 others aborted early, and one crashed at take-off. Less than 20 bombs fell on the target area.

Following the above raid on June 14, 1944, 68 planes (out of 92 which left India) took off from bases in China and raided iron works at Yawata, Japan. Seven B-29s were lost due to mechanical problems and accidents. This raid indicated the difficulty of operating from India to China, thence to Japanese targets, particularly when the B-29s were still immature systems. On that raid, Gen. Arnold wanted 70 planes over the target, but only 47 actually made it to Yawata; and only one plane hit the target with one 500 pound bomb.

The B-29s could not carry all the bombs and gas needed to support operations in China. Instead, they had to call on the ATC to carry no less than 25%, and up to 100% of the monthly tonnage required by the B-29s. So, sup-



A B-29 over the Himalayas - Reg L. Campbell Photo

plying them took considerable resources away from the 14th AF, which did not please Gen. Chennault. Subsequent analysis indicated that the XX BC was only free to use 14% of its B-29s against the Japanese. The other 86% were used as ferry tankers keeping the B-29s supplied with fuel. As Gen. LeMay recalled after the war:

*"When ordered to fly a mission out of China, we had to make seven trips with a B-29 and off-load all the gas we could, leaving only enough to get back to India. On the eighth trip, we would transport a load of bombs, top off with gas in China, and go drop them on Japan if the weather was right. Then we'd start the process all over again. So, the logistical situation was hopeless in China."*

Right after the Yawata raid, Gen. Arnold ordered another long strike (steel mills in Manchuria). The Cmdr XX BC (Gen. Wolfe) protested, so Gen. Arnold replaced him with Gen. Curtis LeMay from Europe. When the latter took over, he found a pretty desperate situation. As a result, the XX BC didn't fly another mission until early July when it returned to Japan for a series of small strikes; then followed by a strike on a Manchurian steel mill on 7/29.

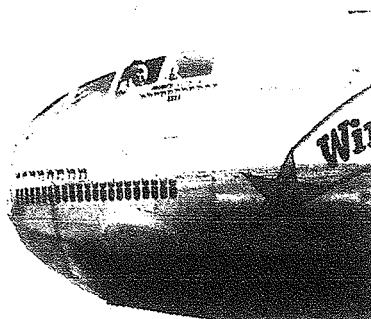
Thereafter, through the end of 1944, XX BC flew an additional 33 major missions against targets in Japan, Manchuria, China, and SE Asia.

Several of these strikes were quite successful, especially the destruction of the dock area at Hankow by incendiaries. The success of the latter raid greatly influenced LeMay's subsequent raids on Japan. He recognized that targets in Japan were vulnerable to incendiary attack. So, the CBI operations by the XX BC in 1944 was a learning experience.

The XX BC staggered on throughout 1944 leaving its bases in China by the end of 1/45 in favor of basing in India before finally moving to the Marianas and being absorbed into the 8th AF on Okinawa in 7/45. All in all, it had been a disappointment.

LeMay after the war wrote:

*"Despite some modest successes and the lessons learned from the Hankow raid, we really didn't accomplish as much in China as we had hoped. That would come later when we moved the B-29 bases to the Marianas. In the*



*The Windy City had made 19 Hump flights and 26 bombing missions when this photo was taken.*

*Reg. L. Campbell Photo*

*meantime, I recommended that Arnold not send any more B-29s to India after 11/44, because we really couldn't supply them adequately at the bases in China. The Marianas would be the beginning of the end of the road to Tokyo."*

So, later the XX BC became primarily a theater air arm for operations in the CBI; first from bases in China, and then from bases in India. Of the 15 missions after 11/1/44 to the end of 1944 only three (20%) hit Japan. Of the 37 missions in 1945, only four hit Japan, and there were no raids on Japan on the 26 missions flown from 1/17/45 onwards.

Like its namesake, MATTERHORN was one tough mountain to climb.

M/Gen. LeMay left the XX BC and took over the XXI BC in the

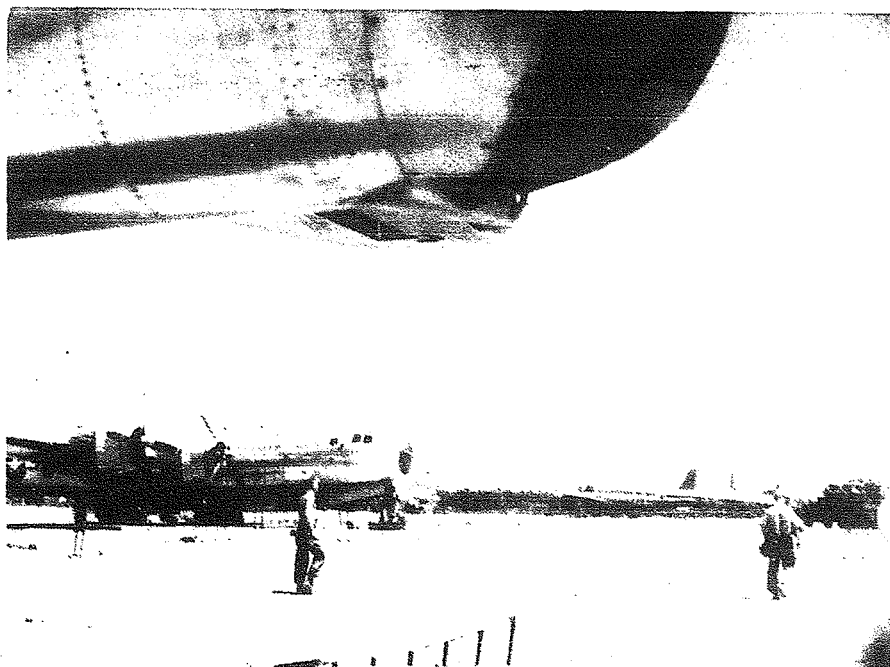
Marianas replacing BGen. Hansell on 1/20/45. Gen. Arnold was not pleased with Hansell's early raids against Japan (from high altitudes to avoid fighter interceptors, and in uncertain weather). His raid on 1/19/45 was initially reported as 38% effective.

Hereafter, the new commander, Gen. LeMay, used the same program he employed in China emphasizing low altitude incendiary attacks aimed at the heart of Japanese cities.

Whatever failings of the early campaigns in China and the Marianas offered no comfort to the Japanese. The lessons learned earlier spawned furious attacks later that almost consumed many Japanese cities and industrial areas, rivaling those of the atomic weapons.

The rest of the story is that Japanese leaders sacrificed the nation in a fight to the finish. That victory is a tribute to the B-29 crews and to those who supported them. The fact that they succeeded is the legacy of the troublesome gestation through 1944 in the CBI T/O and the Marianas which took an immature airplane and raw personnel to bring final victory over Japan.

So, we who served in the CBI can take pride in that we nurtured and supported the force that eventually made the final victory possible.



*B-29s on hardstands at Kharagpur, Dudhkundi, or Piardoba, India. (I failed to ask the photographer - Ed.)*

*Reg L. Campbell Photo*

## History of the Army Air Forces in the CBI Airline to China - Part 1

After December 7, 1941 we recognized China's position was vital; that China must be given enough aid to keep her in the war; not only for China's sake but as a base for a counterattack against Japan. The fall of Rangoon, in March 1942, cut off the flow of supplies by land over the Burma Road. There remained only the air.

On February 25, 1942, President Roosevelt said that the pathway to China must be kept open. Plans were then made to build up the China National Aviation Corporation's (CNAC's) fleet of DC-3s so that 20 or 25 of these craft should maintain essential communication between Calcutta and Chungking. At the same time the AAF was planning to start a service from Sadiya, a railhead at the eastern end of the Brahmaputra River Valley in Assam, 200 miles over the rugged mountains of North Burma to Myitkyina. At Myitkyina, cargoes were to be loaded on barges to Bhamo, then transloaded once more for truck shipment over the Burma Road to China. Seventy-five C-47s and C-53s were to arrive at Calcutta by June 15th. In the meantime, work was rushed to construct a suitable hard-surfaced airfield at Myitkyina. It was hoped that 75 two-engine transports would be able to deliver 7500 tons a month of cargo to that point.

By the middle of June, ten C-53s were delivered at Karachi for use by either CNAC or the Chinese government. In addition, 39 Douglas planes for use by the AAF

had been flown out, but in July only nine were in use for air movement eastward from Assam. Meanwhile, their task was made more difficult when the enemy on May 8th took the Myitkyina airfield.

So, the only way to supply China was a direct flight from Assam across the high Himalayas to Yunnanyi, Kunming or to other points in Yunnan Province in China. The route from Dinjan to Myitkyina had been forbidding enough but not as forbidding as over the high Himalayas.

### The Hump

Dinjan to Kunming was 500 air miles. Chabua was 90 feet above sea level, a spot near Dinjan where our main base was located. From this level, the mountain wall rises quickly to 10,000 feet and higher. Flying eastward out of the valley, the first pilot first topped the Patkai Range, then passed over the Upper Chindwin River Valley, bounded on the east by a 14,000-foot range, the Kumon Mountains. He, then, crossed a series of 14,000-16,000-foot ridges separated by three river valleys. The main "Hump," the name of the whole awesome mountainous mass, and to the air route which crossed it, was the Santsung Range, often 15,000-feet high between the Salween and Mekong rivers. East of the Mekong, less rugged and the elevations more moderate as one approached the Kunming airfield, itself 6,200 feet above sea level.

At minimum altitudes, violent turbulence was commonly encountered. To avoid this, pilots had to climb to levels at which severe icing was prevalent during several months of the year. In spring of 1943, Col. E. H. Alexander commanding ATC's India-China reported:

*"The weather here has been pretty awful. The icing level started at 12,000 feet. Today, a C-87 went to 29,000 feet on instruments and was unable to climb any higher, and could not get on top of the overcast. It has rained about 7-1/2 inches in the past five days. All aircraft are grounded."*

This was in the last week of March. The hot weather of mid-May ushered in the monsoon, in which during 5-1/2 months a rainfall of 200 inches is common. To all this, was added attacks by the enemy, particularly active in the winter months of 1942-43 and 1943-44. The Hump route was short in comparison with the air route from California to Australia, or even over the North Atlantic. Few will challenge that the Hump was an air transport route of surpassing danger and difficulty. No other ATC route around the world was the sole means by which a combat theater was supplied. In contrast, every item needed by the Chinese or American forces during nearly three years of war was flown in by air from India.

Besides, most military supplies required in China had to be brought into India by water or by air. The water haul was very slow coming into India ports. One shipload of men and supplies, which like most of the 1942 shipments, debarked at Karachi, was at sea for 58 days, then transhipped by primitive railroads to Assam. Calcutta, menaced by the enemy in 1942, so few supplies or men were sent there from the USA. But, Calcutta was still almost 600 miles from Assam.

In spite of these handicaps, the aircraft was initiated in 1942. In July, a handful of C-47s delivered a meager 85 tons to China. In the same month, CNAC planes carried about 221 tons. In July 1943, ATC lifted 2,916 tons; by July 1944, almost 19,000 tons. In July 1945, it reached a peak of 71,042 tons.

### Early Efforts - to May 1943

Initially, the Ferrying Command was directed early in 1942 to activate a ferrying group of three



*This is just a small insight into the amount of human labor that was necessary to build the airfield in the India-China Command. Earth was moved in the same fashion as it had been for thousands of years. Also, note rollers pulled by crew.*

squadrons, each having 350 men and 25 C-47 or C-53 aircraft.

Responsibility for planning in the field fell to MGen. Lewis H. Brereton of the 10th AF and to his Chief of Staff Earl L. Naiden, who had to provide for the command control of the entire operation. Most vital was the need for airfields. They asked the RAF to provide three fields in Upper Assam, including one being built at Chabua, and two more preferably at Myitkyina and Bhamo. Because of the monsoon, Naiden told Washington that he could operate no more than 25 aircraft eastward from Assam. Under pressure from Dr. T. Soong, the Ferrying Command was required to push delivery of the 75 planes already assigned to the India-China airlift. The 1st Ferrying Group was activated early in March and had started its ground echelon on the long sea voyage to Karachi before the month was over. Over 100 pilots (reserve officers who were airline pilots) were assigned. Between April 19th and May 1942, a total of 26 planes and crews were sent from Morrison Field, Florida, to India. Others followed after an interval.

Brereton and Naiden then established the Trans-India Ferrying Command and the Assam-Burma-China Ferry Command. The latter command was under Col. Caleb V. Haynes. With four Douglas transports and ten Pan American-Africa planes and crews borrowed from the Trans-African route, he began delivering over the Hump aviation gasoline intended for refueling in China the Doolittle Tokyo raiders. Before this, the transports were diverted to help Gen. Stilwell's forces in North Burma. They flew out refugees, wounded, most of Stilwell's staff and dropped supplies to Stilwell and his party on their famous trek out of the jungle. In June, crisis in the Middle East caused Brereton to be transferred there; along with tactical planes of the 10th AF and 12 of its transports, leaving Naiden to carry on as best he could in India.

The weight of cargo and personnel from India to China increased gradually. In December, was the first month in which the lift exceeded 1,000 tons. Not until August were planes and men of the 1st Ferrying Group moved up from Karachi to Assam, and the transfer was completed only in November.

The failure of the Hump Opera-

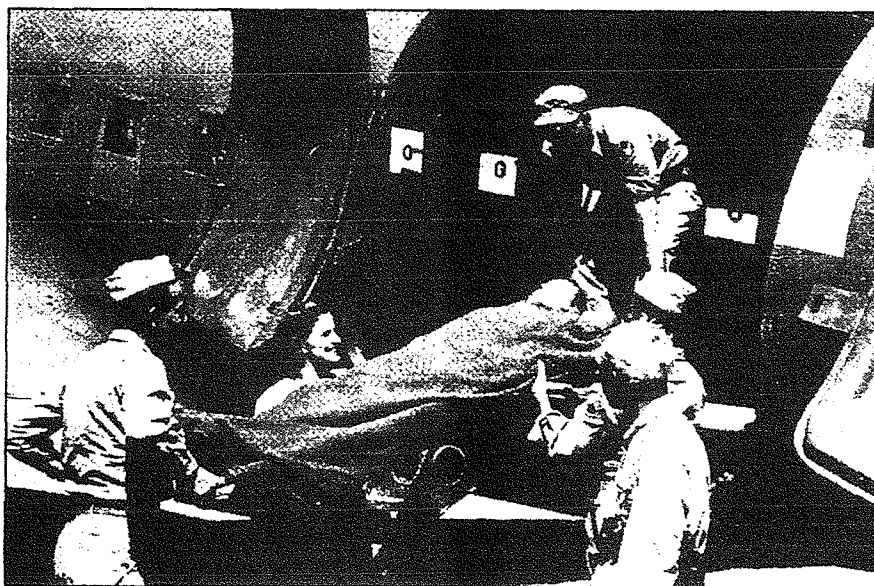
tion to deliver in 1942 was because not enough planes were delivered (62 DC-3s by December 1942); of those 16 were lost due to mishaps; four went with Brereton to the Middle East. Of the 43 left, many could not fly because of engine trouble or lack of spare parts, and some were used on the Trans-India route. Also were problems of weather, communications and enemy attacks; pilots were often reluctant to fly loads in excess of stateside airline standards.

Frank Sinclair, Aviation Technical Advisor of China Defense Supplies, Inc., made a study of the Hump airlift problem. He believed that if 125 planes with proper supporting facilities were assigned to the Hump project, it would be feasible to carry 10,000 tons a month from India to China by air.

ATC Headquarters, studying above report led to an October 9th recommendation that the India-China air supply route should be transferred to the ATC. On October 21, that command was instructed to take over. General Arnold gave full control of the operation to ATC. General Marshall then told Stilwell that the India-China transport operations was to be transferred to ATC on December 1, 1942, with Col. Edward H. Alexander of the India-China Wing as CO.

ATC proposed to send 12 C-87s and during 1943 some C-46s. By the second week of March 11 C-87s and 76 DC-3-type aircraft were on hand.

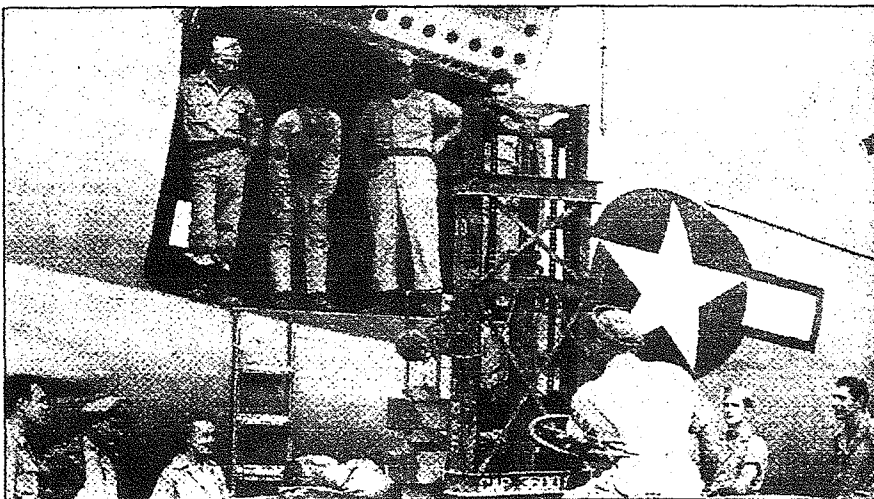
Still this fleet was insufficient from meeting the commitments of Gen. Arnold and ATC Headquarters. Gen. Stilwell and Chiang Kai-



*Hand Loading on C-46.*

#### AIR EVACUATION FROM CHINA

*Hoist Loading on C-54*





shek were anxious to get an early offensive action. Gen. Arnold, visiting CBI, sent orders to build up ATC's India-China fleet to 112 DC-3s, plus the 12 C-87s and also a Troop Carrier Squadron with the Douglas planes. The latter to be assigned to Stilwell. With those planes, Alexander felt that he could transport 4,000 tons into China per month. Arnold then said that 4,000 tons a month was not enough.

Even with 4,000 tons a month objective, there was a shortage of aircrews. The crews on hand were often flying more than 100 hours a month. So, on February 13, 1942, Alexander asked ATC Headquarters for 308 additional aircrews.

During winter months of 1942-43, ATC was operating out of three fields, Chabua, Sookerating and Mohanbari; but with heavy rains in March, the latter two fields were not used. By mid-April a new field at Jorhat, 87 miles southwest from Chabua was available for a squadron of 25 C-47s.

Given the handicaps they face, still they fell short of the 4,000-ton objective during the first eight months of ATC control.

Meanwhile, Washington started to substitute C-46s for the smaller DC-3s, after Alexander reported that the DC-3's inability to attain sufficient altitude to make it unsuitable for his Hump operation. On March 4th, Gen. Arnold told

Alexander that 30 C-46s will be sent by April 15th. Then 10 more each month until the total of 50 was attained; also that starting June 15th, 10 C-87s were to be sent out each month until reaching 50. Thereafter, 24 C-54s would be dispatched.

As usual, deliveries fell behind schedule; still, the first 30 C-46s, with 250 men, left Florida on the 5th, 10th and 14th of April. After some training at Gaya, but before May, the C-46s initially based at Jorhat began to fly the Hump. Then, the faults of the plane became evident. It was a mechanic who looked at the plane's faults and said, "Boy, a regular plumber's nightmare." The plane was nicknamed "DUMBO" by the pilots, and a menace equal to the Hump weather and terrain. The plane required hundreds of time-consuming modifications; but it had one advantage - when the plane got through to China, its cargo compartment carried four tons of gasoline or other supplies.

#### The 10,000 Objective

Neither Chennault, nor Chiang, were satisfied with the tonnage - Madame Chiang pleaded to President Roosevelt and he to Congress for more supplies to China. The President then ordered ATC to raise its Hump tonnage to 7,000 tons by September and each month thereafter. Priority was to be given to the 14th AF of 4,700

tons per month and Gen. Stilwell to get 2,000 tons a month to equip the Chinese Armies for a campaign along the Salween River. As a consequence, Gen. Marshall directed Gen. Wheeler, the SOS commander in CBI, to complete by July 1st airports at Chabua, Mohanbari, Sookerating and Jorhat. By September 1st, three additional airfields in Assam were to be available.

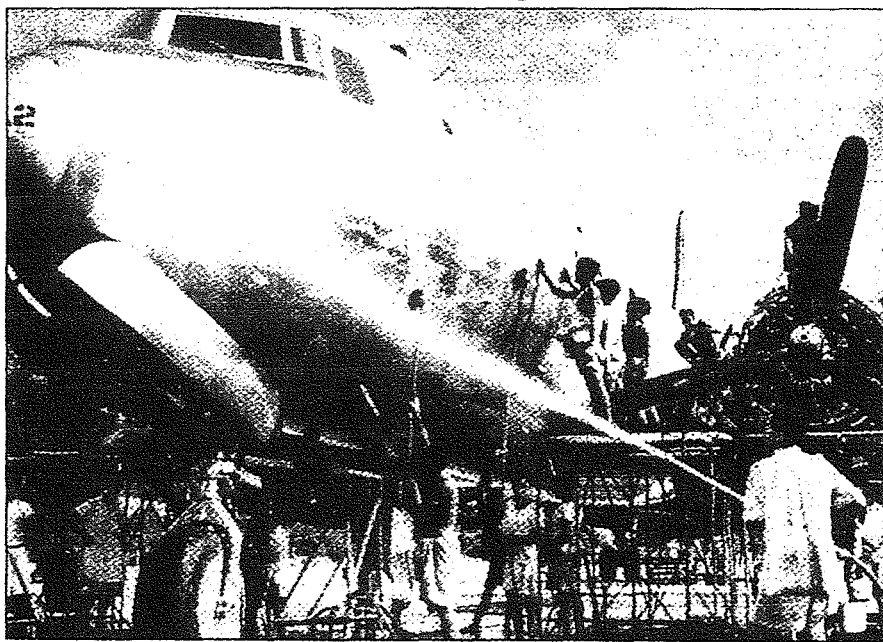
The planes and men were quickly assembled in Florida and moved out by the end of June. By the middle of July, 1,961 men left by air across the South Atlantic.

When July began, only two of the four airfields were fully completed; hardly one-third of the personnel reached India and their training was inadequate. Most of the pilots who arrived before July 1st had never flown a multi-motored plane; they were far from ready to fly the C-46. Alexander had to setup a school at Karachi to qualify the newly-arrived pilots. Also, spare parts for the C-46s were scarce; maintenance personnel were too few and inexperienced. Even the best of those had to work at night (too hot on other rainy days). Meanwhile, the X Air Service Command could not keep up with the third and fourth echelon maintenance.

In spite of the monsoon, the British engineers continued construction. As the training program for newly-arrived pilots began to bear fruit, tonnage hauled over the Hump crept up gradually. From August-November, the lift was helped by the services of Project 7-A (25 flight crews and 34 maintenance and operations men, all civilians, supplied by American Airlines). They faced the same handicaps, but during the first four months of their service they delivered approximately 2,100 tons of cargo to China. They operated from Tezpur, a newly-opened field 71 miles west of Jorhat; they had from 7-10 C-87s.

In August, total Hump tonnage was 1,000 tons more than in July; the goal of 7,000 tons was finally reached and passed; three months later in October. In December, all records were broken - 12,590 tons to China.

There was still urgent need for more planes and maintenance people. The rate of attrition on C-87s and especially C-46s was very high; yet the fleet continued to



This veteran C-54 shows the effects of the much publicized - and severe - "Hump" weather. No amount of washing could remove the dimples caused by heavy hail on the skin of the aircraft. Serial numbers were often peeled off.

grow until 229 major transports was reached in October 1943.

Meanwhile, there were gains in personnel. In June, they had 2,759 men and by December there were 10,851.

Early in September, Gen. George of ATC Headquarters, inspected the India-China Wing; with him was Col. Thomas O. Hardin (CO of ATC's Central African Sector), a hard-driving airline's executive. On September 16, Hardin was transferred to India and given direct charge of the Hump operation. In October-November, he gradually introduced a policy of night flying. BGen C. R. Smith reported from the field in December:

*"Hardin is steaming like an old fire engine. I have never seen a man work harder. He has probably broken by now most of the Air Force rules about operations. If Tech orders were now enforced here, I doubt that there would be an airplane in the air."*

As a result of his September inspection, Gen. George directed his headquarters to set up a weekly flight to carry the parts most in demand from Fairfield, Ohio, to India.

This was the start of the much-publicized FIREBALL run. Further help came in December when new C-46s were loaded with C-46 parts.

Another aid in hauling over 12,000 tons in December was the use of ATC planes sent to carry materiel for constructing a gasoline

pipeline from Assam to China. So, ATC set up Project "S" and provided 16 C-47s and 40 C-46s for this job from a new base at Misamari. This project was later merged with the normal Hump operation.

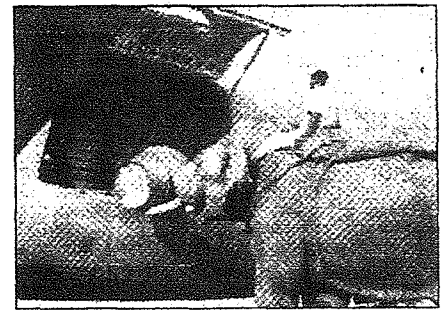
The same visit by Gen. George led to command changes. Gen. Alexander was replaced by BGen. Earl S. Hoag.

Based on the record set in December for cargo hauled. The India-China Wing was cited in War Department General Orders. The next day, President Roosevelt himself directed the citation to the Wing and sent his personal thanks to every officer and man concerned. Col. Hardin, who got the chief credit, was ordered back to the States for a month's leave and was promoted to BGeneral.

The operations of the India-China Wing took a grave toll of men and aircraft. Between June-December 1943, there were 155 major aircraft accidents in the Wing, 135 on the Hump route. Crew fatalities totaled 168. Start of the 24-hour-a-day flying in October helped push the monthly total for November up to 38 major accidents on the Hump; in the month of December the number dropped to 28. Despite the regrets for the many casualties, officials felt obliged to push the job, as one official said:

*"We are paying for it in men and airplanes. The kids here are flying over their head - at night and in daytime and they bust them up for reasons that sometimes seem silly. They are not silly, however, for we are asking boys to do what would be most difficult for men to accomplish; with the experience level here we are going to pay dearly for the tonnage moved across the Hump. With the men available, there is nothing else to do."*

To reduce accidents, the ATC set up programs to upgrade flight personnel. Also, the Wing was developing an aggressive search and rescue program to save men who crashed or bailed out over mountains or jungle. The early search missions were impromptu affairs; when a plane crashed, the first available crew and plane that could be spared was assigned to the search. At Chabua, there gradually developed a better system under Capt. John L. (Blackie) Porter. His men became known as "Blackie's Gang." Theirs was a difficult tree-skimming mission. One



*The transport business was able to accommodate all sorts of help in those difficult days during the India-China campaign. Here, an elephant demonstrates his fork-lift technique.*

of their first tries involved the crew and passengers (20 including Eric Sevareid, CBS commentator) who had abandoned a disabled C-46 on August 2nd over the much-feared Naga country in North Burma. Needed supplies were dropped and LCol. Don Flickinger, a flight surgeon, and two medical aides parachuted to help the survivors. A rescue party walked in and the mission was a complete success.

Late in October, a special search and rescue unit was established at Chabua with Capt. Porter in command. After a very successful series of rescues, Porter was killed on November 10, 1943 when his B-25 and another rescue plane were lost to enemy action.

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(Extracted from the History of the AAF in WW II by Joe Shupe; Part 2 the final part of AIRLINE TO CHINA will appear in a future edition of SOUND-OFF.)

### Change of Address?

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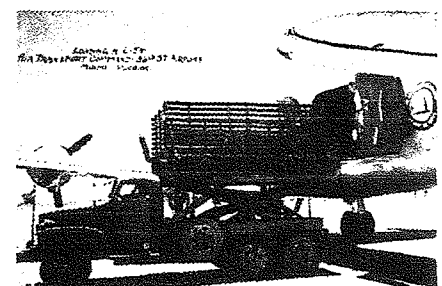
Adj/Fin. Officer Ken Ruff

PO Box 78078

Orlando, FL 3287-0678



*A sign at the Chanyi Airfield in China, on the Chinese side of the "Hump" said, "You made it again - good work." And you were especially fortunate each time the job was successfully completed to be able to get a smoke.*



*Loading a C-54 Air Transport Command, 36th St. Airport, Miami, Florida.*

## History of the Army Air Forces in the CBI Airline to China - Part 2

### A New Program of Expansion, 1944

The success in exceeding the 10,000 ton objective led ATC officials to fear that they would be asked to increase that amount. Many diversions from the Hump effort occurred.

In February 1944, the Japanese drive in the Arakan Sector: our Troop Carrier Command undertook the task; when they were withdrawn the ATC transports dropped some 446 tons of supplies; in March, the enemy moved in the area surrounding Imphal. This was a threat to the Assam ATC bases, so ATC planes helped moved British Indian troops from Arakan to meet this new threat. In April, 20 C-46s of the ATC were used to

support the Allied defense of the region. They delivered over 2,100 tons of supplies to Allied troops.

Late April, Gen. Stilwell started his offensive toward Myitkyina. The ATC flew about 18,000 Chinese troops from Yunnan to Sookerating; this reduced Hump tonnage by about 1,500 tons. Then, when Myitkyina was captured, the ATC flew in some 2,500 combat troops, including 250 airborne engineers with their heavy equipment. This was called the GALAHAD diversion, which affected Hump deliveries.

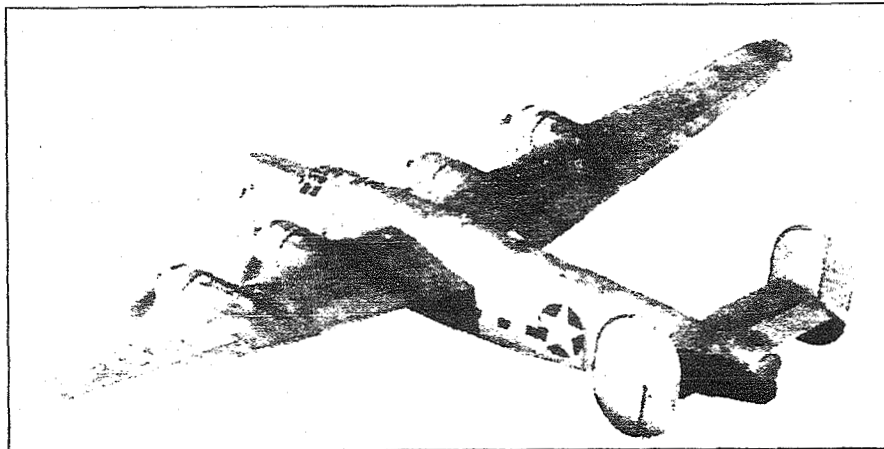
Meanwhile, the enemy drive in East China threatened Kunming and Chungking. This new emergency intensified the urgency of delivering cargo, especially to the

14th Air Force. Between July 1-Sept. 30, the ATC delivered over 300 tons of ammunition and equipment to Kweilin; then in November when the fall of Liuchow was imminent, ATC made 44 trips to evacuate 298 passengers and 138 tons of cargo. To counter this threat, ATC moved over 18,000 Chinese troops within China and the return of Chinese units from Burma; some 14,000 troops.

With the deployment of B-29 units of the XX Bomber Command to China, ATC had to supply that unit. ATC had 20 C-87s devoted to that operation. By the end of the year, nearly 30,000 tons were delivered; also another 4,573 tons to the 312th Fighter Wing defending four large B-29 bases in China. A very large portion, over 13,000 tons, was delivered under great pressure in October and November, in connection with missions against Formosa.

In March 1944, officers from ATC Headquarters in Washington reported that the India-China Wing needed more resources or to obtain help from other than the ATC. Later in June, Gen. Stratmeyer appointed a board headed by BGen William Old to study how CBI could help. Their conclusion - make better use of existing resources. This was substantiated by the India-Burma Wing of the ATC when in June it delivered a record 15,845 tons to China. Also, a group under BGen William Tunner (Commander of the ATC Ferrying Command) studied the problem. They reported that Hump capacity could be built up to 20,500 tons in October, 27,500 in November and 31,000 in December, provided CBI could make three extra fields available in East Bengal and that AAF ship up to 300 experienced mechanics to India; they also recommended that planes be delivered as scheduled, and also that landing facilities be made available in the Myitkyina area. These recommendations were approved by Gen. Arnold in Washington; although all these conditions were not met. The actual record of deliveries over the Hump far exceeded the planned accomplishment from 24,075 tons in August 1944 to 31,935 tons in December 1944 (except in September it was 22,314 tons).

The average number of aircraft on the Hump operation in June was 108.4; in December, 246.6. Trips to China increased from



*Consolidated C-87*

*Douglas C-54*



3,702 in June to 7,612 in December. This increase required more airfields. To relieve Kunming, the opening of Luliang in August gave Hump planes a second all-weather alternate, in addition to Chanyi. Increased long haul deliveries to XX Bomber Command bases in the Chengtu area decreased the pressure on Kunming. The last two months of 1944 saw the beginning of operations across the Hump with C-54s and C-109s (Liberator-type tankers) from Kurmitola-Tezgaon in East Bengal. Meanwhile, personnel in the India-China Division more than doubled.

Early in September, Gen. Hardin was recalled to the U.S. His successor was BGen William H. Tunner of ATC's Ferrying Division. He brought with him several key officers from his old staff. What the men surrounding him came to call the "age of big business" in the India-China Division (ICD) was already underway. These men who brought into practice some of the techniques of large business enterprise, built upon the foundation laid by Gen. Alexander and more particularly Gen. Hardin. The latter had forced Hump deliveries up from 4,624 tons in September 1943 to 23,675 in August 1944. As a parting tribute, the men of the division on August 22 celebrated "Tom Hardin Day" when they delivered 1,300 tons of cargo "over the Rockpile."

### **Big Business in the Air 1945**

As tonnage increased, there was less and less talk about the maximum possible achievement. Gen. Tunner and his staff acted on the thesis that virtually any amount could be delivered if only the necessary resources were provided. Tunner insisted upon increased efficiency and upon fuller exploitation of the existing facilities.

In July 1944, a technical inspector recommended the establishment of production line maintenance (PLM). This called for towing planes through a succession of stations, at each of which a fresh group of maintenance men performed specific maintenance operations in which they were skilled. Gen. Tunner adopted this idea. Some problems and resistance resulted but Gen. Tunner reported PLM as an over-all success.

The transition to PLM was made possible by a standard practice of

assigning only one type of transport to a given base. The total number of aircraft for the Hump operation increased substantially at the start of 1945, but thereafter it remained practically constant. The average number in commission in December 1944 was 249.6; January 1945, 287.4, February 336.8, April 325 and July 332. Personnel assigned to the Hump bases likewise increased only moderately after the first of 1945. From a total of 17,032, in December, 19,025 in January to a peak of 22,359 in April. In China, ATC personnel rose from 2,530 in December to 5,959 in August 1945. In addition, the India-China Division employed some 47,000 civilians, mostly for labor duties such as loading and unloading aircraft.

In January, tonnage increased to 44,098 tons. This was due to Allied victories in Burma; planes were now able to fly farther south at lower altitudes. Also, more C-54 planes were now being used; they were useless in the excessive altitudes of the northern route. They could carry over seven tons two times that of a C-109 tanker and 70 percent more than the C-46. On January 1st, a direct run from the Calcutta area to Kunming was

started. Then, later, they began using the fields in East Bengal (Tezgaon and Kurmitola).

In spite of more men, equipment, lower altitude routes and increased deliveries to China, the Hump was still a fearsome barrier taking a heavy toll of men and planes. In January, 23 major accidents occurred; February 38, and in March 46. These accidents took the toll of 134 crew members, dead or missing. This caused increasing concern. Gen. Tunner warned his base commanders "in striving for high aircraft utilization, we will not sacrifice flying safety, one hour of daily utilization can be made up later. The loss of one load of passengers can never be recovered." When minor corrective measures failed to halt the accidents, ATC Headquarters in early March reacted strongly; Tunner was told that there must be a big reduction of accidents, irrespective of comparisons with tonnage transported and hours flown.

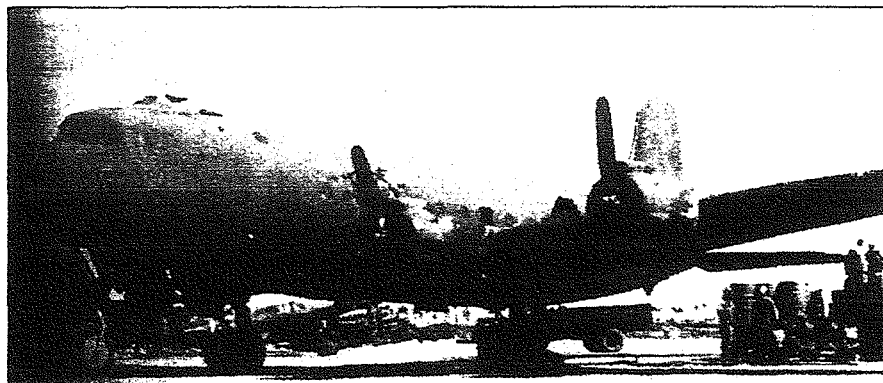
Under such pressure, Tunner in turn increased the pressure upon base commanders who were caught between two fires - the continuing demand for more tonnage delivered and on an absolute decrease in accidents. General



*Production-Line Maintenance, Tezgaon, India.*

### **ATC ON THE RAMP**

### *Refueling China Base*





Stratemeyer then was disturbed when the India-China Division on the 15th cut its forecast for April tonnage from 48,000 to 42,000 tons; so he took up the matter with Gen. George in Washington. He urged George to consider the Hump operation a combat job and to modify its policy accordingly.

Gen. George insisted that the ATC Headquarters has always regarded the Hump run as a combat operation. Stratemeyer intervened in favor of more tonnage. In the end Gen. George agreed to follow a relative standard - accidents per thousand airplane hours - rather than an absolute standard.

In spite of this controversy, base commanders somehow succeeded in achieving what their superiors demanded. They reduced the accident rate as well as increasing deliveries over the Hump as indicated below:

1945	Tons	Accidents	Accident rate per	Crew Fatalities
Jan.	44,098	23	0.301	36
Feb.	40,677	28	0.497	50
March	46,545	44	0.580	45
April	44,254	44	0.511	28
May	46,393	44	0.372	24
June	55,386	26	0.323	17
July	71,042	23	0.358	37
August	53,315	8	0.239	11

Gen. Tunner believed that an important cause of accidents could be removed with the promised substitution of C-54s for C-109s and C-87s. The accident rate on the latter two was about 500 percent higher than on the C-54s. Stratemeyer and ATC Headquarters agreed; the only problem lay in finding the needed C-54s.

One program, the "272 plan" was to build up the C-54 fleet to 272 planes on October 1945; by April 1946 to 540; also 410 C-46s. With that addition of aircraft, it was estimated to produce a Hump lift of 86,300 tons a month.

By May 1945, it was evident that the promised C-54s would not be available. But, after the capture of Rangoon, the India-China Wing was reinforced by the 7th and 308th Bomb Groups, the 443rd Combat Cargo Group and the 3d and 4th Combat Carrier Groups; in addition two combat cargo squadrons of the 1st Combat Cargo Group, with the addition of support of 12 airdrome squadrons. Between them, 207 additional aircraft were available on the last day of June, plus 261 a month later.

Fitting these in was not easy. The rated tactical officers tended to look down at the ATC as a non-combat outfit and assignment to a nontactical mission as degrading and they became indignant when they heard they were to be given a week of special training for flying the Hump. However, this friction did not prevent the tactical organizations from making a large contribution to the India-China lift. Starting toward the end of June, they carried 6,488 tons that month, over and above the new record of 48,899 tons hauled in the ATC aircraft. They enabled the India-China Division to achieve its first 50,000-ton month. In July, the peak was reached of 51,518 tons.

Gasoline and oil accounted for 60 percent of the Hump tonnage in 1945. The rest consisted of all other types of supply and equip-

ment, personnel and even PX supplies.

The westbound lift was always smaller than eastbound, and in 1945 they flew almost empty westbound. Nevertheless, there was some traffic out of China. Thousands of Chinese troops were transported from China to India for training or for combat. They also carried strategic materials as tungsten ore, mercury, silk, etc.

After the division in October 1944 of CBI into the India-Burma and China Theater, MGen. Albert Wedemeyer controlled cargo assignment through the "Hump Allocation and Control - HUMPALCO." On the India side, the Hump Regular Office - HUMPREG controlled the dispatch of cargo and personnel to China.

Well into 1944, the ATC considered its mission accomplished when the cargo was unloaded in China. Then the cargo landed in Kunming or another base, it still had to travel several hundred miles to the user. This was by a crazy combination of Chinese and American trucks, such railroads as the meter gauge line between

Kunming and Chanyi, riverboats, sampans, junks and steamboats. By April 1944, Chennault also had in service 11 C-47s of the 322d Troop Carrier Squadron. B-24s of the 308th Bomb Squadron likewise flew intra-China, as well as over-the-Hump transport missions. Chennault was against an intra-China ATC service, but in October 1944, he consented to ATC basing 50 C-47s in China; but in December he insisted that further expansion by ATC in China should be postponed until ATC could deliver 15,000 tons a month for air operations only.

The number of aircraft assigned to the India-China Divisions intra-China operation remained practically constant (66 to 72) from the beginning of 1945 until after V-J Day, though the proportion of C-46s as compared to C-47s increased. These intra-China aircraft were based at Chengkung, Chanyi, Luliang and Kunming. Intra-China tonnage fluctuated from month to month with a peak in May of more than 11,000 tons.

As the scope of ATC operations over the Hump and within China expanded, the route across India grew in importance. Its main reason was to support the Hump operation, it was also an extension of airways from the USA through the Azores and over North Africa to Karachi. As such, its cargo was very different from that carried over the Hump. The much smaller Trans-Indian lift was for mail, personnel and high priority supplies, carried by DC-3 and C-46 planes, with an average of 76 in February to 60 in May; tonnage ranged from 18,362 in March to 12,083 in April.

In 1945, as in the previous year, much of India-China Division's capacity was to airlift troops and their equipment. The ROOSTER movement (April-May 1945), the Chinese 6th Army was transported from Chanyi, Chengkung, Luliang and Kunming to defend the 14th Air Force base at Chihkiang. With the collapse of enemy resistance there, ATC helped move Chinese troops into Shanghai and other forward areas. The ROOSTER movement resulted in 30 C-46s assisting the intra-China fleet to carry 25,136 troops, 2,178 horses, and 1,565 tons of equipment and supplies, for a total tonnage of 5,523. Also, some 369 tons of gasoline were flown to Chihkiang for 14th Air Force fighters. The

DISC project for transporting Chinese troops from Burma to Nanning was of like magnitude, between June and August. This entailed moving 23,000 Chinese troops and equipment, along with 2,000 mules.

Another special movement in 1945 was the transportation of the MARS Task Force, including 6,235 American ground troops with their equipment from Burma to China. They were flown into China mostly by ATC C-47s based at Myitkyina between March 14th and May 25th.

When the war ended, the Allies had to take over control of large areas. The 10th AF was responsible for transporting the 6th Chinese Army from Chihkiang and ATC from moving the 94th Chinese Army from Liuchow to Shanghai.

With the end of the war, there were still some tasks ATC had to do. Until seagoing vessels could unload at Chinese ports, air transports must continue to supply our forces still in China. Gen. Tunner directed that the moment of victory should be the signal for removing "the high pressure, daily trip consciousness . . . from each operating base, since the primary mission of the base is now safety and service rather than tonnage." Consolidated-type aircraft were to take off only during the day and gross take-off weights were reduced. The ABLE route, crossing the highest and most dangerous portion of the Hump, was abandoned and other safety measures were put into effect.

The eastbound lift of gasoline and other supplies into China declined rapidly. The official figures tell the story: July, 71,042 tons, August 53,315 tons, September 39,775 tons, October 8,646 tons, November 1,429 tons. At the end of November the Hump was officially closed, though some special mission flights were made. Meanwhile, the India-China Division flew our men (47,000) across the Hump to the embarkation port of Karachi.

From a primitive barnstorming enterprise, the air service from India to China had burgeoned into a large-scale operation. A grand total of some 650,000 tons of gasoline, munitions, other supplies and men went over the Hump into China; more than half of the total in 1945. The tonnage could have been hauled in approximately 79 Liberty ships, if ports were available, or in 6,500 of our freight cars, if only a

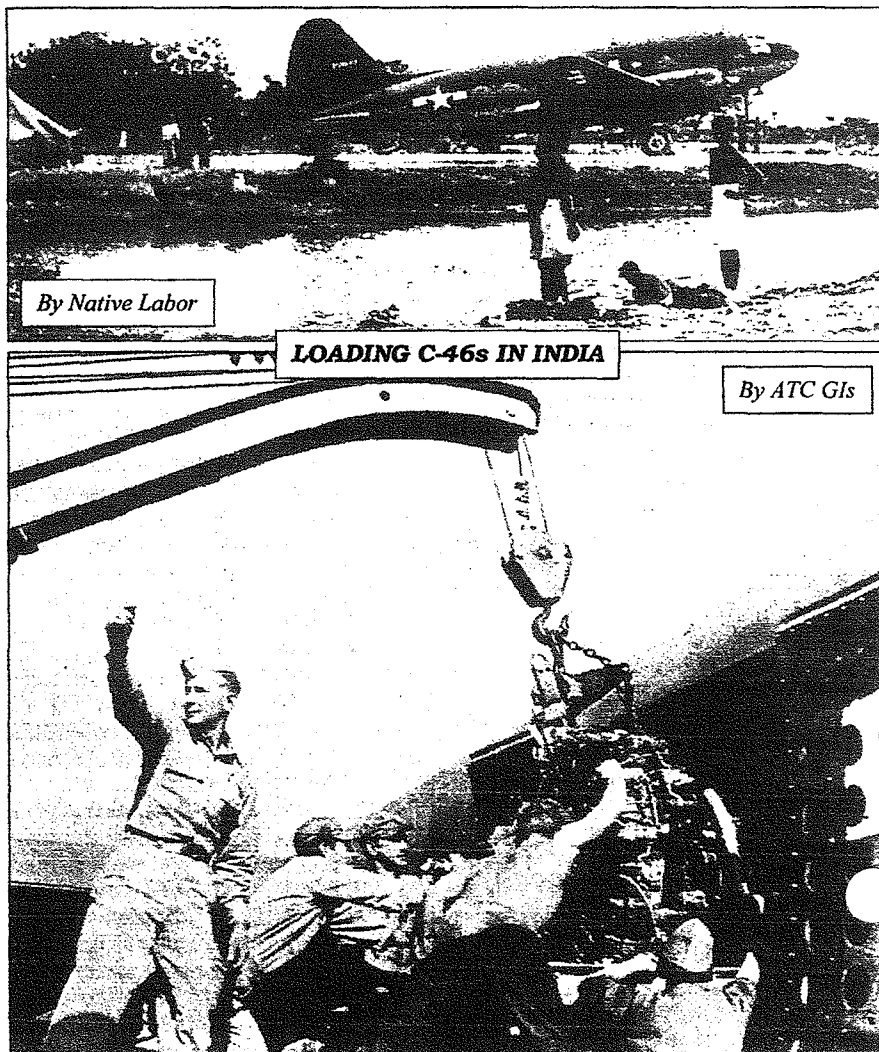
railroad existed. The Hump airline, in effect, was an emergency communication system.

But, a fundamental question remains. What good end was served by the emergency delivery of 650,000 tons of this and that into China? Little went to help the Chinese people, relatively little to the Chinese armies, though it can be argued that the regime of Chiang Kai-shek would have collapsed without the support of General Chennault's command and that Chennault's men were wholly dependent upon the Hump lift. It can be argued that it helped to prevent the Japanese from overrunning all of China and preserved for the forces of the United Nations a base for launching an air attack upon Japanese shipping, upon vital Japanese industrial installations in eastern China, upon Formosa and even upon the Japanese homeland. Thus, it may have speeded somewhat the conclusion of hostilities against Japan. Most

important in the long run, no doubt, the ATC crowded airways to China were the proving ground, if not the birthplace, of mass strategic airlift. Here the AAF demonstrated conclusively that a vast quantity of cargo could be delivered by air, even under the most unfavorable circumstances, if only the men who controlled the aircraft, the terminals and the needed materiel were willing to pay the price in money and in men. In military and civilian circles alike, men were forced to modify their thinking of the potential of airlift. The India-China experience made it possible to conceive the Berlin airlift of 1948-49, and to operate it successfully. When the Korean War, in 1950, required the emergency delivery of large numbers of men and equipment to the Far East, the precedents and the techniques for doing so were at hand.

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Extracted from the History of the AAF in WWII by Joe Shupe.



# History of Army Air Forces in CBI

(Extracted from AAF History of WW II)

## Part I

### Commitments to China

At the close of Allied resistance in the Netherlands East Indies, General Lewis F. Brereton (who commanded our Air Forces in the Philippines and later in the ABDA (American, British, Dutch and Australian) Command, under instructions from LGen. George H. Brett flew to India for the purpose of organizing an American Air Force in the India-Burma area. Gen. Brett was the deputy to LGen. Archibald Wavell, the commander of the ABDA Command in Java.

That command lasted from Jan. 15, 1942 to early March 1942 when the Japanese overtook Java. Brereton had been preceded by Col. Francis M. Brady who was accompanied by a few AAF personnel who would form the nucleus for a new air force. Heavy bombers were flown up from Java and orders were issued for all planes and crew enroute to the Netherlands East Indies from Africa ferry route to stop in India. Three vessels which had left Freemantle in Australia on Feb. 22, 1942, in company with the ill-fated USS Langley and Sea Witch, were on their way across the Indian Ocean with the ground echelon of two squadrons of the 7th Bombardment Group (H), the 51st Air Base Group, personnel of the 51st Pursuit Group, and ten P-40s.

At Patterson Field, Ohio, the 10th Air Force had been activated on Feb. 12th. It was assigned to the newly created CBI Theater, and Gen. Brereton assumed command on March 5th. Such were the meager beginnings of the organization forced to operate at the end of a long supply line that of any existing American air force, with distances within its theater much more than by the bounds of the United States, and in an area with few industrial facilities upon which air power is dependent.

It was the third difficult assignment for General Brereton a former commander of the Far East Air Forces in the Philippines, and later in the ABDA Command. He was now in command of an air force based in India to support China. Key decisions would involve consideration of the interests, not always identical, of two major allies. Once again, he had to improvise an organization in the face of a rapidly advancing enemy whose conquest of Burma, which held the key to any plan to help China. This had to be completed before the 10th AF could be given the means to fight. Lacking personnel, planes, and other equipment that make up an air force, Brereton would not even command the major air unit operating within the theater. For

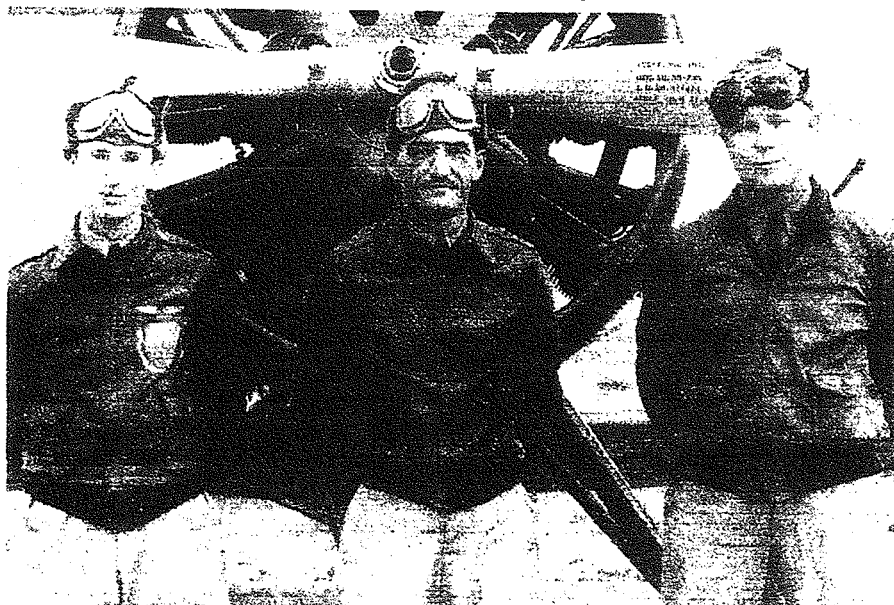
before the famed American Volunteer Group (AVG) had been inducted into the AAF in July 1942, Gen. Brereton was transferred, with such striking force as the 10th AF possessed, to the Middle East.

#### The AVG

The decision to conduct aerial operations in support of China came as a result of American policy going back to the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in 1931. At that time, the American people were not prepared to go beyond a policy of nonrecognition of such conquests. But, as we watched the progress of Japanese forces in China, we admired the Chinese continuance of their resistance. Our concern became more acute by 1941, when all approaches to China were sealed off, except for the Burma Road. Our isolationist tendencies were being lessened in our concern over the prospect of an early involvement in war with both Germany and Japan. If we were to fight both of them (recently allied, clearly against the United States), it was in our interest to help China. Strategic plans then taking shape called for holding effort against Japan until the major foe in Europe had been defeated.

In anticipation of the passage of the Lend Lease Act of March 11, 1941, Mr. Lauchlin Currie had gone to China, as economic advisor to President Roosevelt for study of her needs. He was followed in the spring by B. Gen. Henry B. Clagen, who was sent from the Philippines as an Air Corps officer to find out Chinese needs and on the potentialities of the area for air operations. China wanted trucks for the Burma Road and aircraft to defend her cities. Trucks and technical assistance for the Burma Road were readily provided, but there was a critical shortage of aircraft. Our own air corps was expanding, and help to the British and Russians had higher priority.

Nevertheless, we promised more than 300 training and combat aircraft, mainly models considered obsolescent for AAF and RAF needs; also to provide cadres of American pilots and ground crews to give assistance in maintaining and employing the planes. It was agreed that 500 Chinese fighter pilots, 25 bomber crews, and 25 armament and radio mechanics would be trained by the Americans, the first contingent to start



Three Trapezers (l-r) Lt. Hayward S. Hansell, Capt. Claire L. Chennault, Sgt. John H. Williamson.

its training by October 1st. In that month, B. Gen. John Magruder reached China with an advisory group.

Much quantities of material had been delivered or underway by then, but strengthening of the Chinese Air Force required more time. Time though, was growing short as the Burma Road was now within range of Japanese bombers. The Chinese Air Force was unable to defend the road, and it was out of the question for the Americans to undertake that task, as we were not as yet in the war. But, an answer to that problem had been suggested by a retired Air Corps officer, Claire Chennault, who since 1937 had been serving as a special advisor to the Chinese Air Force.

Known to Americans chiefly as a member of the "flying trapeze" team which in preceding years had electrified spectators at air shows and races by its demonstration of formation flying. Chennault was also a diligent student of fighter tactics. Retired from the Army in 1937, because of defective hearing, he accepted an offer from the Chinese government to put some of his theories into practice under combat conditions. In China, he found that the procurement of aircraft was a difficult problem.

The Soviet Union had been China's main source of supply for aircraft, but when she entered the war in 1941, that supply was cut off. Chennault got the idea of recruiting an international air force that would include American planes and pilots. The Spanish civil war offered a precedent. He got the OK from Chiang Kai-shek and returned to the United States in early 1941 with General P. T. Mow of the Chinese Air Force.

In Washington, he was helped by Chinese Foreign Minister T. V. Soong, and after discussing the matter with the War, Navy and State Departments, Chennault presented the plan at the White House. This was a "ticklish" matter since we were not yet in the war, but the clinching argument was the need to provide aerial protection for the Burma Road.

So, this paved the way for the problems of recruitment, training, and equipment. It was decided to try to organize a fighter group of Americans. To Chennault, time was of the essence; only by recruiting well-trained pilots and

ground crewmen would it be possible to put the group into operation with the speed required. No source existed outside the Army and Navy, but there he found a natural reluctance to give up experienced people at a time when the services were expanding.

With the men themselves, caution seemed to outweigh the promise of adventure and attractive financial rewards, until they were assured that it was with the services blessings, that they would be on inactive service without loss of seniority. The required 100 pilots finally were signed together with about 200 ground crew personnel, and by July 1st the first contingent of the AVG was on the West Coast ready to depart.

It was easier to get the planes than the men. Current production of all late model pursuits was insufficient to meet needs of our and British air forces, which had a higher priority; but 100 P-40s (Tomahawks considered obsolescent by the AAF and RAF). These were previously allocated to Sweden, but were released so that they could reach Rangoon by September.

The Central Aircraft Manufacturing Company, owned by Curtiss-Wright, and the International Company of China, acted as agents between the AVG and the Chinese Government. The AVG

members signed a contract for one year with that company. The British made available a training base at Toungoo in Burma, which was safe from Japanese air attack.

Some difficulties were encountered to implement these plans. No provision was made for replacements, and some resignations occurred. Only 43 of the original 100 planes were serviceable and only 84 pilots remained fit for combat.

Some of the critically needed equipment was sent by air, but little success was made in procuring additional recruits. Chennault would have to do with what he had. On the eve of the war, the War Department had under consideration to use Philippine-based planes if the Japanese attacked the Kunming terminal of the Burma Road.

Chennault's plan was to avoid commitment of his force until it was well trained and never to commit to piecemeal. But, after Dec. 7, 1941, Rangoon came under threat of a Japanese attack; and in response to a British appeal, the squadron of the AVG was sent to Mingaldon on December 12th. During the following week, the other two squadrons were moved to Kunming, now subject to attack from Thailand. There, the AVG first entered combat when, on December 20th they inflicted a heavy loss of Japanese bombers, attempting



*Original pilots of the AVG's Hell's Angels Squadron line up before a P-40 in 1942. The plane bears the unit's insignia - a nude angel - and five "kill" flags.*



an attack on Kunming. Three days later, the P-40Bs at Mingaladon inflicted comparable damage on enemy planes attacking Rangoon.

As the battle of Burma increased, Chennault rotated assignments so that each squadron would get brief periods of relaxation at Kunming, where missions were less frequent. He resisted pressure to commit the entire AVG to Burma and divided his planes, so that he was able to collaborate with the RAF in the defense of Rangoon, and give some support for Chinese ground forces along the Salween River. This was a piecemeal effort he tried to avoid, but it enabled him to assist in holding the port of Rangoon open until some of the supplies stockpiled there could be moved out for China.

The tactics Chennault used entailed a two-ship element of hit and run. The pilots got the full advantage from the superior diving and level-flight speed of the P-40B, while nullifying the enemy fighter's superiority in maneuverability and rate of climb by avoiding dogfights. Against Japanese bombers they also used a diving attack, frequently coming out of the dive to strike the bomber from below. The ruggedness of the P-40 and its superior firepower, together with an emphasis on accurate gunnery, constant reliance on the two-plane element, and the valiant work of ground crews, enabled the "Flying Tigers" to destroy an almost incredible number of the more fragile Japanese planes while sustaining minimum losses. Even when the enemy after seeking to wipe out the RAF and AVG in Burma by sending overwhelming fighter escorts with his bombers, the air discipline of the AVG held and kept

down their losses.

More serious losses were sustained in strafing attacks on the airfields they used, but the AVG to the last, managed to keep a few planes in condition and offered at least a token resistance to almost every enemy attack. By the end of February, however, Rangoon had become a shamble, and during the first week in March the AVG withdrew to Magwe. Following a heavy attack on Magwe, they retreated to Loiwing across the border in China. By the close of April, the campaign in Burma was approaching its end, and the squadron was forced back to Kunming, where it rejoined the remainder of the group.

The Burma Road was now useless, and Chennault, who had been recalled to active duty in April and promoted to brigadier general, sent part of his force to Kweilin and Hengyang. This helped to protect cities in unoccupied China and more opportunity to engage Japanese air forces.

The AVG for all practical purposes had long since become a part of our forces and plans had been made for its incorporation into the AAF. But, being the AVG was a volunteer group, many of its personnel had no former identification with the AAF, and upon dissolution of the organization they had freedom of choice. So, at the request of the Generalissimo, formal action had been postponed until regular AAF units could be sent to assure continuity of operations. Meanwhile, a shipment of P-40Es were assembled in Takoradi, Africa, for ferrying to China. A few of these planes reached the AVG before the fighting in Burma had ended; others followed in May and June. In June, pilots of the 23rd

Fighter Group (pursuit units were redesignated "fighter" on May 15, 1942) which had been selected to replace the AVG, began to arrive. So there would be no break in the support given to China by American pilots.

### The 10th Air Force

Following the assignment of the recently activated 10th Air Force to the CBI, an advance bombing detachment (FORCE AQUILA), under Col. Caleb V. Haynes was prepared for a flight to Karachi, with the eventual mission of bombing Japan from China. Even as the end of resistance in Burma approached, plans were made for another bombing project in China, one similar to Doolittle's Tokyo mission. This was called HALPROP for its commander, Col. Harry A. Halverson.

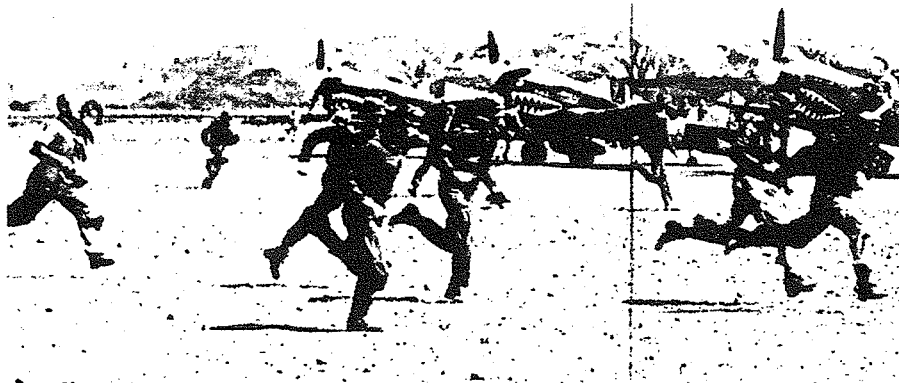
Its departure was so delayed that it reached the Middle East during the crisis there in June. It was pressed into service against the Germans. In fact, the Halverson Detachment, together with the detachment flown in from India by Gen. Brereton, formed the nucleus of the 9th Air Force which fought in the Middle East until the Fall of 1943. So, HALPRO never reached the CBI.

Col. Haynes reached India in early April but with an insufficient force to execute his original mission.

The air force over which Gen. Brereton assumed command in March, largely existed on paper. He had eight heavy bombers; the six brought up from Java, and two B-17s which had come in from Africa, eight bomber crews, and a few staff officers. They were put to work from March 8-13 in an emergency operations which transported 474 troops and 29 tons of supplies from India to Magwe in Burma, evacuating on the return trip some 423 civilians.

Toward the close of this operation, reinforcements arrived from Australia, but instead of a fully equipped pursuit group, as expected, there were only 10 P-40s. Most of the equipment had been left in Australia. The British had evacuated Rangoon, and Calcutta was deemed unsafe. The loss of all Burma seemed imminent, an invasion of India not unlikely.

The first convoy from the US for India - carrying Hqs and Hqs Squadron, 10th Air Force, the ground echelon of the 23rd Pursuit



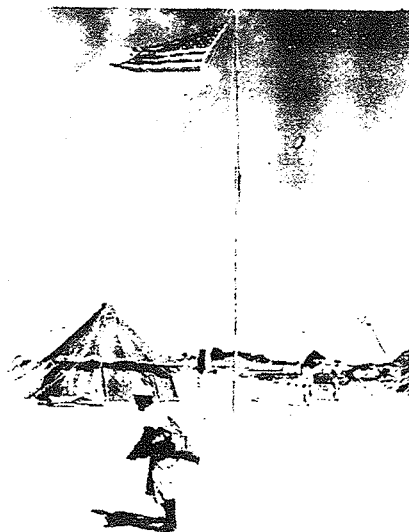
Group, the 3rd Air Depot Group, and personnel of the 1st Ferrying Group, left March 19th from Charleston, SC, via South Africa and would not reach India until mid-May.

Fighter planes had been shipped by water to the west coast of Africa for delivery by ferry to India. The first of them began to arrive into Karachi in April, but losses in transit were heavy and the planes themselves were destined ultimately for China. As for the sorely needed bombers, production as yet unequal to the urgent demands of the several theaters and for training in the US. Also, the ferry route across the Atlantic and Africa was not yet fully developed. Bad communications and faulty records in the War Department which estimated a greater number of planes in the CBI than actually existed.

In March, with the impending loss of Burma, Karachi became the main port and a center for the preparation of incoming units. To Gen. Brady was assigned the task of establishing there a training center that eventually, together with the installation of the ATC, became one of the major centers of AAF activity in India. The several hundred AAF personnel, recently arrived from Australia took over a partially depleted British encampment. Pilots and crews there grew stale there while they awaited their turns with the few planes on hand. Morale was low due to lack of supplies, post exchange items and no mail since they left the US.

Gen. Brereton located his headquarters at New Delhi and conferred with the British on questions pertaining to the establishment of the 10th AF. Due to the critical shortage of shipping, the policy of living off the land would have followed. In April, a technical mission, headed by Mr. Henry F. Grady, arrived from the US for a survey of Indian resources that our forces needed. This freed Gen. Brereton to concentrate on purely military matters. He urged AAF Headquarters in Washington that fully trained and equipped units be sent to CBI.

For his own force, he pleaded especially for medium bombers. Limited target areas, located at distances which precluded the use of fighter escorts and lack of photographic units, and unfavorable atmospheric conditions combined to make high altitude bombing of questionable value and argued for



*Karachi Air Base, 1942*

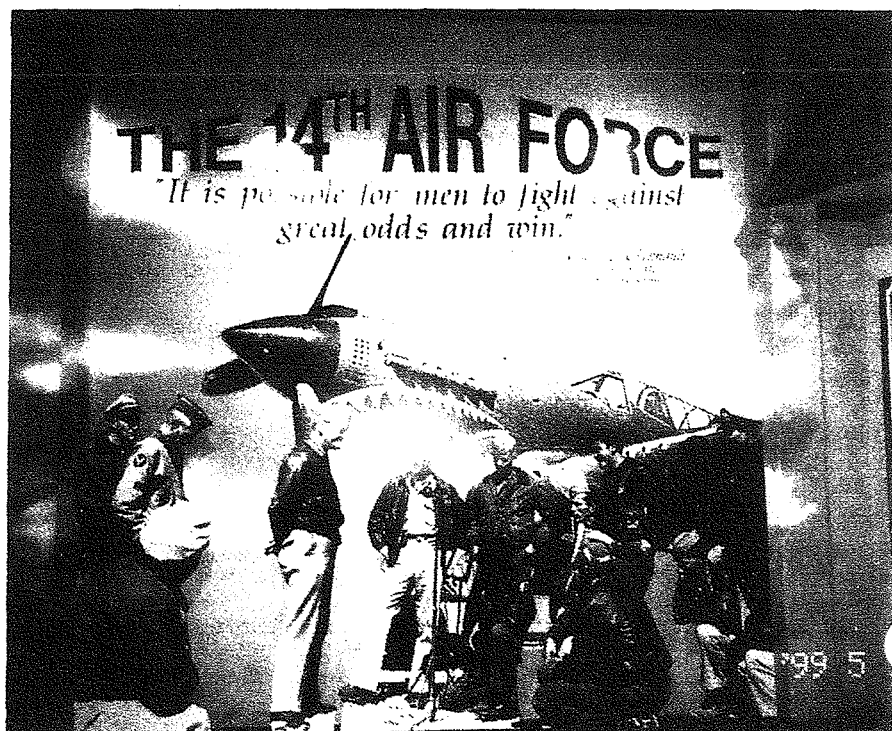
the superior speed of the mediums. Supply, however was unequal to the demand so only in April was it agreed that the 7th Bomb Group be converted into a composite group of two heavy and two medium squadrons, the latter to be equipped with B-25s. Not until July did the B-25s arrived in sufficient numbers to allow one of the squadrons to engage in combat. He also sought fighters superior to the P-40s and received the promise of P-38s sometime in the future. But, the 10th would get along with the

P-40 for more than a year, and for a while yet with a few of them.

Gen. Brereton brought out of Java a few personnel but needed a few more qualified men so he asked Washington to assign Col. Victor Strahm to be his operations officer and BGen Elmer Adler to establish an air service command. The latter arrived on April 26th along with a LCol. Rueben Hood, Jr. and Capt. Gwen Atkinson, So. on May 1st, the air service command was activated.

Brereton's Chief of Staff BGen. Earl L. Naiden took on the task of planning on air transport service from India to China. Foreseeing the loss of Rangoon, the War Department had directed Brereton to survey an air route for the movement of supplies from India to Chungking. At the time, it was felt that central and northern Burma could be defended so the problem appeared to be that of an airlift of supplies from Assam to bases in Burma for transfer to Chungking by road. Naiden's survey indicated that the normal run should be between the RAF base at Dinjan and Myitkyina with occasional runs as far as Yunnanyi after the monsoons.

Only one airdrome was suitable at Dinjan and three would be required, but the monsoons left little hope that additional fields could be ready before fall. A field at Myit-



*A portion of the Hump Pilots display at the Aviation Museum at Robins AFB.*  
Staff Photo

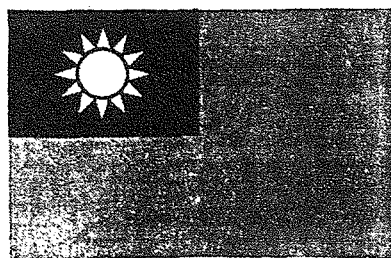
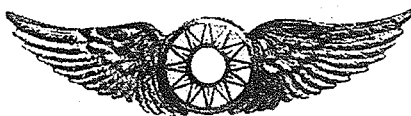
kyina could be made available by May 15th and two others by November. So, he doubted that more than 25 planes could be operated and that the service would be uncertain during the monsoons.

Though we had not yet had time to explore the Indian transportation system, so it was evident that air transportation from Karachi and Dinjan must be used. So, by the end of March, plans were made by Naiden for two transport commands: the Trans-India between Karachi and Dinjan, and the Assam-Burma from Dinjan to Myitkyina and occasionally to Loiwing. The latter included a plan to extend service to Kunming to Chungking. Col. Robt. Tate eventually took over the Trans-India operations. Col. Haynes, then enroute with a flight of transports and bombers, was chosen for the other command. Pending Haynes arrival, Col. William D. Old proceeded to Dinjan during the first week of April to take charge of preliminary arrangements.

His first task was to assist in the delivery of 30,000 gallons of aviation gasoline and 500 gallons of lubricants to China for Col. Doolittle's Tokyo raiders, then already at sea aboard the HORNET. Ten Pan American DC-3s from the trans-African contract services had been made available to haul the gas, of which 8,000 gallons were in Calcutta, which had to be moved immediately. There was not enough storage space at Dinjan, and so two of the transports on April 6 and 7 hauled the fuel from Calcutta to Asanoli in western Bengal, whence it was later transferred via Dinjan to China.

Col. Haynes arrived in Dinjan on April 23rd. With him was Col. Robert L. Scott, and they were joined there by Col. Merian C. Cooper. The task facing them was discouraging. They only had 13 DC-3s and C-47s, the single airfield already had two British squadrons; so crowded as to make proper dispersal of aircraft impossible.

While barracks were under construction, the men were housed in mud and bamboo bashes with dirt floors. Messing facilities were poor; the quality of the food worse. They were quartered 10 miles from the field, and had to depend upon the British for transportation. There was an absence of defense against



Chinese Air Force wings (top) and a patch bearing the Chinese Nationalist flag and flier identification (below) were worn by the Flying Tigers.

air attack. A single British pursuit squadron had no air warning system and there were no anti-aircraft guns. To avoid disastrous effect of an enemy attack, we had to get our planes into the air by dawn and servicing and cargo loading had to be done fast. So, ordinary working hours were out of the question; worked long before daybreak and until late at night.

The Japanese advance in Burma continued after the capture of Rangoon. Unable to challenge seriously the enemy's supremacy in the air, the meager RAF and AVG forces withdrew. During the last week of April, Lashio, railhead for the Burma Road, fell. Early in May, Mandalay was captured. The campaign drew quickly to a close. On the 6th, the enemy took Akyab, the point picked by General Brady as a base for our bombers. The following day, they moved into Bhamo, and on May 8th the enemy captured Myitkyina, the key base in the current plan for an air cargo line to China. Thus, allied resistance on the ground ceased, the AVG squadron withdrew to Kunming, and Stilwell walked out of Burma.

To the Allied defense against this drive, the 10th Air Force made

no direct contribution. Brereton told Stilwell on March 24th that his air force would not be ready for combat for another month - an optimistic estimate. Its help in combat was limited to indirect aid by a few bombing missions which was of nuisance value only.

The first combat mission of the 10th was on the night of April 2nd. Two missions were planned, one against the Rangoon area and another against shipping near the Andaman Islands, where a Japanese fleet was ready to attack Ceylon. At Asanoli, one of the two B-17s assigned to the Rangoon mission cracked up on take-off with loss of its crew; the second took off but had to turn back because of mechanical failure. That night the second mission, led by Brereton and flown by two B-17s and one LB-30 successfully attacked enemy shipping in the Andaman Islands. Having dropped eight tons of bombs from 3,500 feet, the crew claimed hits on a cruiser and a transport. Anti-aircraft fire was encountered and before the bombing, the planes were attacked by enemy fighters. Two of the bombers were damaged, but all returned to base.

On April 3rd, six bombers took off from Asanoli to strike the docks and warehouses in Rangoon. Incendiary and demolition bombs were used to start three large fires; no resistance from enemy planes was encountered; one B-17 was lost on the return trip, cause unknown. By April 16th, the planes were put in good shape to send again six bombers to Rangoon. They took off from Dum Dum near Calcutta. They first dropped flares and then unloaded 42 - 250 and 300 pound bombs. No enemy fighting was met, and heavy flak was evaded, but numerous searchlights did not make it possible to evaluate results of the bombing.

Again, on April 29th, the docks at Rangoon were hit by 500-pound bombs. The enemy put up interceptors and anti-aircraft fire, but all planes returned without damage. On the nights of May 5 and 6, the bombers hit Mingaladon, a former RAF base near Rangoon which the Japanese were using as a base for interceptors.

On the night of the 5th, two flights of two B-17s each scored hits on a hangar and parked planes. It was estimated that 40

planes had been destroyed and 25 damaged, but searchlights and attacking planes made accurate observation difficult. On the following night, three B-17s scored a direct hit on a fuel dump.

On the night of May 9th, six B-17s engaged in a joint attack on Mingaladon and the Rangoon docks. Though attempted interception by the enemy failed, it prevented accurate observation of bombing results.

At this point, attention was drawn from Rangoon by the capture of Myitkyina on May 8th. Its capture represented a serious threat to the air cargo project. Dinjan was within easy range of fighters based at Myitkyina; so that became the prime target of 10th Air Force bombers.

On May 12th, four B-17s from Dum Dum heavily damaged the runways and fired several parked aircraft in a daylight attack on Myitkyina airfield. Two days later, the attack was repeated with further damage to the runways and several buildings. Another two days later, another attack followed. Reconnaissance after the mission revealed no signs of activity on the field, which for a time was unusable.

To the transport pilots had fallen the most dramatic role in the attempt to defend Burma. Immediately on arrival at Dinjan, they made emergency deliveries of ammunition, fuel, and supplies, to the Allied forces in Burma. They brought out the wounded and civilian refugees on the return flights. When it was obvious that Myitkyina and Loiwing were doomed, our pilots began to ignore the normal load limits. Planes that normally carried 24 now carried more than 70 passengers. Some of the civilian pilots were against this but when they saw military pilots flying incredible loads without mishap, they too did the same. In the process, the DC-3, and its Army equivalent, the C-47 established a lasting reputation for dependability and durability under the most adverse flying conditions.

Both Haynes and Old took regular turns as pilots during these emergency operations. All crews were badly overworked, but not a plane was lost, though they were unarmed and at the mercy of enemy planes. As Allied defenses in Burma crumbled, the emphasis on cargo transport gave place to evacuation of personnel, and in a

series of hairbreadth escapes, most of Stilwell's staff was flown out to India.

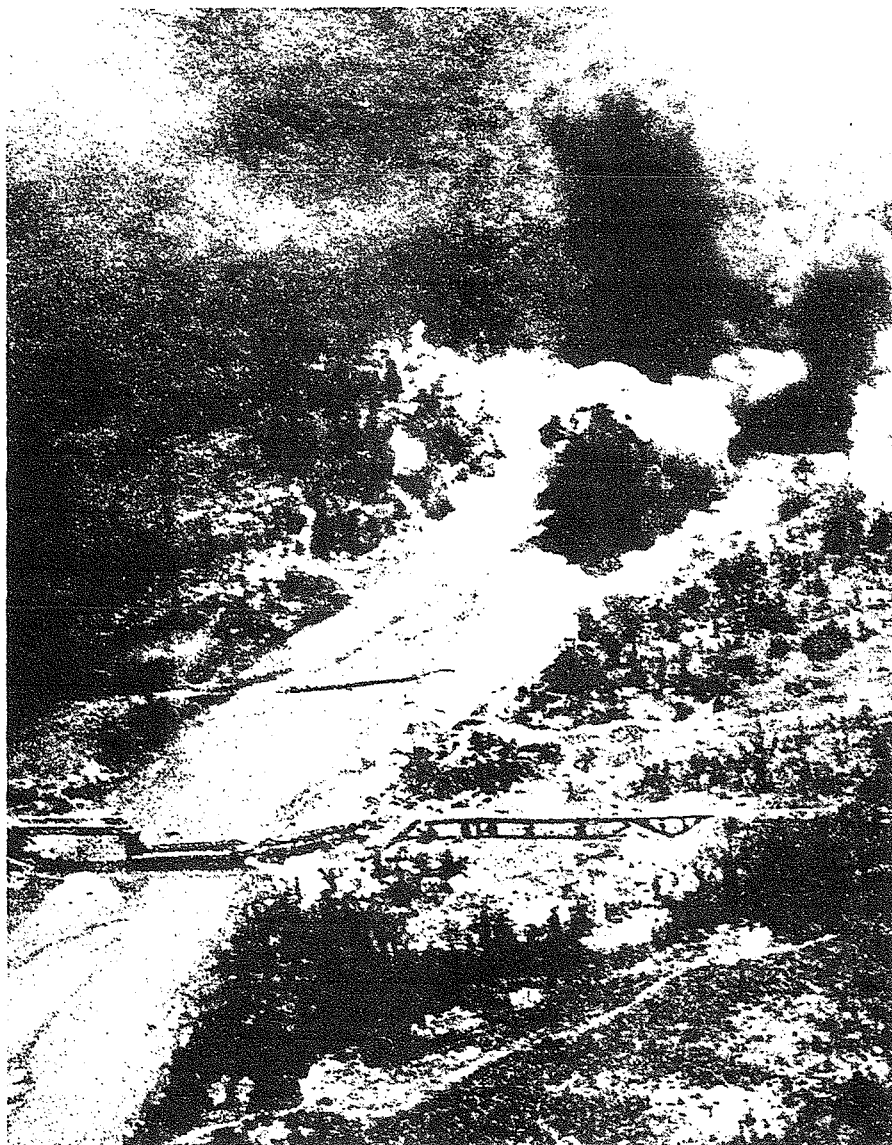
After the general himself elected to remain and walk out with what was left of his command, the transports dropped food and medicine to his columns on their slow trek to safety.

On May 21st, Stilwell reached a village near the Burma-India border, whence he proceeded by air to Dinjan for conference with Generals Wavell, Brereton, and Naiden; and the major part of the air transport operation was over. But, for the assistance of columns which had chosen to move north-

ward, food and supplies continued to be dropped whenever possible; and after it became apparent that the enemy would not take Ft. Hertz, one of the DC-3s successfully landed on a field, under 1,000 feet long, and off with a load of disabled Ghurkas. The strip was eventually lengthened to make landings less hazardous, and Ft. Hertz assumed importance as a way to stop on the India-China transport line.

\* \* \*

AAF History in the CBI, by Joe Shupe, will be continued in a future edition of SOUND-OFF



*A Tenuous Thread in the Jap Life Line  
Is Snapped by American Medium Bombers*

The original railroad bridge (foreground) at Meza had been knocked out earlier. This raid destroyed the temporary wooden bridge beyond it. Smoke from bomb bursts fills the narrow canyon. Air Commandos began disrupting communication lines and bombing Jap airfields in Burma 1-1/2 months before the glider landings.



## History of Army Air Forces in CBI

(Extracted from AAF History of WW II)

### Part II

(1942 Continued)

*Part I of this series of History of Army Air Forces in CBI appeared in the Spring issue of SOUND-OFF - Editor*

#### Questions of Command and Missions for the 10th AF

The rapid advance through Burma called into question most of the assumptions upon which original plans for the 10th Air Force has been based. The 10th now faced the question of whether its mission should be limited to the defense of India; whether there was much point in thinking of support for China until India has been made secure against the enemy in Burma, the Bay of Bengal, and the Indian Ocean. In any case, it was clear that earlier concepts of air transport operations to China had been overly optimistic. The crucial air link in the supply line would have to be longer than was expected. Plans would have to be revised after considering new hazards that would require more people and equipment. All this had become involved in a complex problem of command.

Command problems arose with the 10th's first combat mission on April 2nd. Stilwell and Brereton agreed in March that the 10th, when ready, would be in support of Allied forces in Burma. Stilwell later got the news of the Andaman Island mission; and Gen. Lewis Brereton who felt the job of the heavy bomber as distinct from that of air-ground support. So, he was surprised to get a request from the CBI commander for a report for its use in critical ground operations.

The British proposed to Washington that there be close defense efforts between the 10th and the RAF. On April 15th, the War Department informed Stilwell that the 10th be used in the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean area north of Ceylon to go along with British plans. But, Stilwell withheld the appropriate orders to Brereton fearing a reaction by the Chinese. When Brereton found out about the order from the RAF, he sought the advice of the War Department since he was in the middle of a controversy. Washington advised him to cooperate with the British. But, this left a delicate problem of his relations to the theater commander.



Gen. Lewis Brereton

Photo by Willard Griffing

The 10th, at the time, had only six bombers. But, this revealed some of the perplexities of the CBI concerning air operations. It was necessary to have a base in India to support air operations in China and yet to defend India. The forces for both missions, however, were insufficient. Fortunately, the fear of enemy action in the Indian Ocean was soon eased as the Japanese fleet withdrew to Singapore. Fort Moresby in New Guinea, rather than Ceylon, was their new objective. So, on May 24th, the War Department rescinded a previous order committing the 10th to operate under the RAF. Stilwell then recommitted the 10th primarily to support China.

Still problems remained. Stilwell's headquarters in Chungking, while Brereton's was in India; but the 10th's main combat area was to be in China. So, he suggested that the AVG be inducted into the AAF as a pursuit group under Chennault assigned to the 10th AF. On May 10th, the War Department informed Brereton that

the 23rd Pursuit Group, scheduled to replace the AVG would not immediately be assigned to the 10th. About the same time he learned that HALPRO, as a special bomber project, would operate in China independently.

At this point, Stilwell intervened that this would be a problem having two independent air groups. So, on May 17th, Stilwell told the War Department, that unless ordered otherwise, the 10th would be in charge of HALPRO, the AVG, and the 23rd Group, after the induction.

So, on July 4th, the AVG (to include only those who elected to join the AAF) was disbanded and was inducted into the AAF. The AVG's contracts were due to expire on that date. It was planned to place in China a small force of medium bombers in addition to the 23rd Group whose elements moved forward to come under the command of Chennault. Because of the geographical distance separating China from India and of Chennault's experience and prestige, AAF fighter and bomber units in China would be organized into the China Air Task Force (CATF) assigned to the 10th AF and commanded by Chennault. Activation date was set for July 4th.

Meanwhile, AAF detachments moved into China during May and June in preparation for the change-over. These movements were slow and difficult, and not without disappointment - even tragedy. The first B-25s earmarked for the CATF reached Dinjan on June 2nd with Maj. Gordon Leland in command. It was planned that on the following day, the flight would be completed to Kunming after a bombing of Lashio enroute.

The planes belonged to the 11th Bombardment Squadron (M), recently assigned to the 7th Group and detached for service in China. In the face of an unfavorable weather report and against the advice of Col. Haynes, the six planes took off early the next day. They unloaded their bombs on the Lashio airfield, but subsequently three planes, including that of Maj. Leland, crashed into a mountain-side while flying through an overcast at 10,000 feet, and another plane was abandoned when it ran out of gas near Chanyi, China.

Only two of the aircraft landed at Kunming, one with its radio operator who had been killed in a

brush with enemy fighters. Six other B-25s, led by Maj. William E. Bayse, veteran of the Java campaign, arrived at Kunming without mishap during the next two weeks. Some of the pilots had participated in the Doolittle attack on Tokyo.

Movement of the P-40s from Africa continued to be slow, and the induction of the AVG, from the first a perplexing problem, proved disappointing in its results. It had been hoped that the transition might be made without serious loss of personnel or reduction in the effectiveness of an organization which had so well demonstrated its fighting ability. Several weeks before induction, however, it had become obvious that only a few of the men could be retained.

War-weary and eager to visit their homes before undertaking another long period of foreign service, they desired immediate leaves which the induction board was not authorized to grant. Some preferred to take better paying positions with the China National Airways and Hindustan Aircraft companies rather than accept the grades offered them by the Army; many formerly belonged to the Navy or Marines and preferred to return to those services; some expressed resentment over the manner in which the induction was handled; and a few were not able to pass the required physical examination. Eventually when the induction board, presided over by Chennault and made up largely of 10th AF officers, completed its canvass of the personnel, they found that only five pilots and a handful of ground men had chosen to stay with the AAF in China. Approximately 20 of the pilots agreed, however, to remain on duty until further replacements could arrive, and one of them lost his life in combat during this extra tour.

Activation of the CATF (China Air Task Force) on July 4, 1942 marked an important turning point in the war in China. But, the AVG as it now passed into history had set the pattern for subsequent air operations in that theater, and its score of almost 300 enemy planes destroyed at a cost of less than 50 planes and only nine pilots provided a challenging record for its successors.

Meanwhile, uncertainties existed regarding the control of the air supply line upon which operations in China depended. Upon being informed early in March that

development of the air ferry to China would be a responsibility of the 10th, Gen. Brereton had requested that ferrying personnel and equipment sent to the theater be assigned to the air force. BGen. Robt. Olds of the Air Corps Ferrying Command objected on the ground that such an arrangement would result in diversions from the transport service to combat organizations. Brereton having renewed this request on April 9th, the War Department replied that policies relating to the movement and supply of planes would be administered throughout by a central office in Washington, but that insofar as ferry operations were affected by military developments in India the control would be exercised by Brereton. To this rather ambiguous explanation there was added the information that the air freight service from Assam to China would be operated by the 1st Ferrying Group under the control of Stilwell. Gen. Arnold, after Brereton had indicated a continuing concern over the uncertainties and confusion of command responsibilities, attempted to clarify the problem in a message to Stilwell which said that Brereton held responsibility and authority over aircraft between Karachi and Calcutta, while Gen. Stilwell would control aircraft designed for service to China. The latter was also vested with authority to change the location of operating stations and ferry control detachments in both India and China. It further was promised that an officer who fully understood ferrying operations would be provided for Brereton's staff. But, the administrative division between Trans-India and India-China operations ran counter to the arguments of experience gained in operating the service.

While in Dinjan, Col. Caleb V. Haynes had discarded in effect the original plan for separate operation of the Trans-India and Assam-China lines. Manpower and storage space at Dinjan were unequal to the demands of a plan requiring transfer of cargo, and frequently Trans-India planes were sent on into Burma and China. Eventually, the two transport commands were merged as the India-China Ferry, which continued until the Air Transport Command took over in December 1942. Haynes was transferred to China in June for command of the bombers in the CATF, and Scott was reassigned to

China to command fighters. Col. Tate, commander of the Trans-India Ferry, subsequently took command of the India-China Ferry.

Despite uncertainties that would not be fully clarified for another six months, the pioneering pilots and transport aircraft of the Assam-Burma-China Ferry had shown the way for the famed "OVER THE HUMP" service that would follow. Although the volume of freight hauled had not been great, it had been carried under the most trying conditions and with a degree of success which encouraged the continuation of plans that would depend upon air transport to a much greater extent than had been originally considered. Cargoes included passengers, gasoline, oil, bombs, ammunition, medical supplies, food, aircraft parts, a jeep, and two disassembled Ryan trainer aircraft. More than 1.4 million pounds were moved eastward from Dinjan and about 750,000 pounds were brought west on return trips. Also, they had explored the possibilities of troop-carrying and supply-dropping over Burma - services destined for the key to victory when Burma was reinvaded two years later.

Meantime, the arrival in mid-May of the convoy from the US had permitted much progress toward the establishment of a service command. In addition to needed supplies, it brought the 3rd Air Depot Group. Agra was chosen as the location of that Group, which arrived on May 28th with Col. R. R. Brown as depot commander and LCol Isaac Siemens in command of the Group.

The service command would serve both India and China. To assist in this mission, the 59th Materiel Squadron, later redesignated 59th Service Squadron, was divided into small base units to serve combat stations. The unit's headquarters was located at Allahabad, selected as a base for the heavy bombers, and there, too, was stationed Base Unit #1. Other base units were assigned to Kunming, Agra, Dinjan and Chabua, Chakulia, and Bangalore, the latter being the location of the Hindustan Aircraft, Ltd., which was to be changed over by agreement with the British from a manufacturing plant to a repair and overhaul depot for American-made aircraft. On May 23rd, LCol. Daniel Callahan was made chief, maintenance and

repair division, and Col. Robert Oliver became chief of staff to Gen. Adler.

By late June, Adler's command was up and running, but the command suffered from the difficulties common to the theater at the time.

The combat force of the Tenth proper was still limited to a handful of heavy bombers, some of them badly worn. Its combat operations were limited. Turning on May 25th from its effort to neutralize Myitkyina airfield, it struck again that night with five B-17s at targets in the Rangoon area. One of the planes was forced to turn back, two were damaged. Attacks on Myitkyina were resumed on the 29th, when four planes bombed from 23,000 feet. The following day a similar attack was made, but as no enemy activity was in evidence on either occasion the attacks were discontinued.

During the first week in June,

the small force undertook its final flights over Burma before the weather and shortage of spare parts combined to ground the last of them. Five planes attacked the Rangoon docks on June 1st, reporting that one tanker had been sunk and that another had been left listing. Three days later, two bombers hit the same target without observing the results; attacked by 10 fighters, one plane was destroyed, another seriously damaged. And, this was the last until the monsoon lifted.

#### **Brereton's**

#### **Departure for the Middle East**

By mid-June 1942, when the monsoons had come, we were beginning to appreciate the magnitude of the job ahead in establishing and operating an air force in India. The report of the Grady mission, plus three months of the experience gained by the 10th AF, had revealed that even for a small force the logistical problem was

staggering. Unable to use the more direct routes through the Mediterranean and across the Pacific, and forced to sail in convoys for protection against enemy submarines, ships from the USA required two months to make the 13,000-mile voyage. Furthermore, the demands of more active theaters for cargo ships, transports and escort vessels were so heavy that bottoms allotted to Asia were kept to the barest minimum. And after the ships reached India, the logistical problems were by no means at an end. Japanese naval and air action in the Bay of Bengal restricted the use of Calcutta and forced incoming ships to dock along the west coast, where only three ports of any importance were available - Cochin, Bombay and Karachi. Only Karachi was available for our use. The use of Karachi posed the additional problem of dependence on Indian railroad.

Outside NW India, the railway system was not highly developed. In Eastern India, further delays were imposed by the use of ferries instead of bridges for crossing numerous streams; on the important Calcutta-Assam line of communications, there existed not a single bridge over the Brahmaputra River and its tributaries. After a two-month voyage from the US, equipment generally took six additional weeks in moving from Karachi to Assam. For goods to reach Kunming from Karachi, unless entirely carried by air, it generally took longer than a voyage from the US. The highway system was even worse than the railroads. Even if good roads were available, this would not have helped because few trucks were available. The communications system was equally bad.

In setting up an air transport service to help in overcoming these difficulties, there were still other problems. Existing airfields were located for commercial rather than military needs. Runways were generally too short and too lightly constructed for use by speedy pursuits or fully loaded bombers and transports. Repair and maintenance facilities, in addition to barracks, had to be provided on existing fields, while strategic requirements called for the construction of many entirely new installations. Local materials and labor had to be used, which was another problem.



**HONORABLE DONATION** - from left, Palmer Public Library Director Mark Contois, Palmer High School Librarian Donna Guerin, and Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School Librarian Martha Barrett are presented with copies of the "Pictorial History of the 7th Bombardment Group/Wing" by Palmer Veterans Agent Peter Pappas. Pappas was a ball turret gunner aboard a B-24 bomber in the 436th "Outlaw" Bomb Squadron, 7th Bomb Group, (H) 10th Air Force in the China-Burma-India Theater of War from 1943 to 1945.

(Printed in the May 31 Journal Register of Palmer, MA. Turley Publications photo.)

Then, too, there was the climate. India had been described as "too hot, too wet, too dry." During the monsoons, it was excessive rainfall which retarded construction and restricted operations; dust conditions during the dry season caused heavy wear on aircraft engines. Also, the greatest trouble arose from the effects of excessive heat and humidity on personnel. This made our people easy victims of the many endemic diseases. Only constant alertness could prevent malaria, typhus, cholera, heat rash, and fungus growths from seriously crippling the air force.

Yet, by the end of June 1942, appreciable progress had been made in establishing the 10th AF and preparing for post-monsoon operations. Approximately 600 officers and 5,000 enlisted men were on hand, while aircraft strength had increased sufficiently to permit a general eastward deployment of combat units.

The 11th Bombardment Squadron (M), the 16th Squadron of the 51st Fighter Group and the three squadrons of the 23rd Fighter Group were already in Kunming; Headquarters of the 7th Bomb Group had moved to Barrackpore, near Calcutta, while its two heavy squadrons, the 9th and 436th, were established at Allahabad; advance parties of the two remaining squadrons of the 51st Group were in Dinjan to prepare for the arrival of its air echelon; and the 22nd Squadron (M) was expected to begin operations from Andal at the end of the monsoon.

But before June had run its course, the build-up of the Tenth received a serious setback. The Combined Chiefs of Staff had regarded the Middle East and Far East theaters as interdependent, and had stipulated that plans for their reinforcement should remain flexible in order that units might be shifted on short notice to whichever area appeared to have the greater need. And, now in Africa, Rommel again had the advantage over the British, and indeed in position to challenge the whole Allied cause in the Middle East. Consequently, on June 23rd, Gen. Brereton received orders to proceed to the Middle East with all available bombers and to assume command of our forces there to assist the British. He was authorized to take with him all personnel nec-

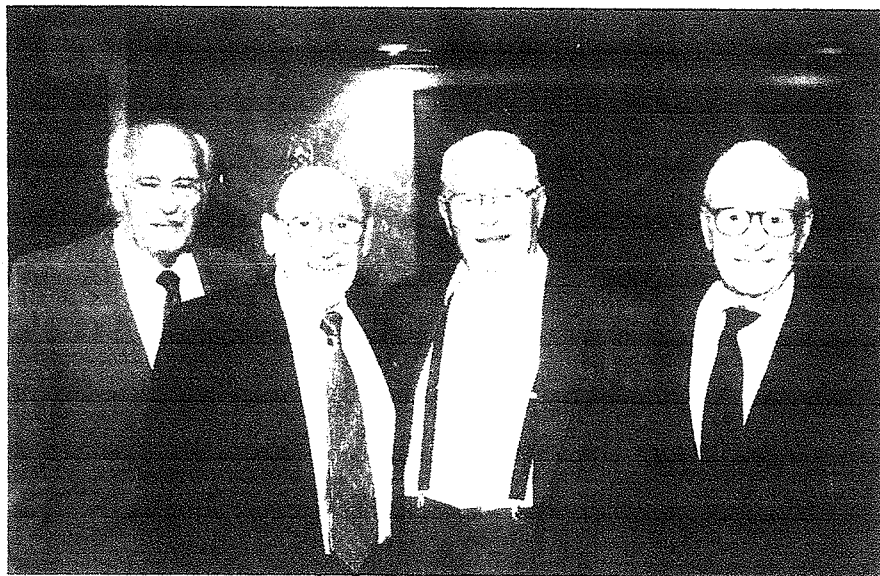
essary for the staffing of a headquarters, and all cargo-type planes required for transportation. Further, he was instructed to appropriate whatever supplies and equipment might be needed from India-bound cargoes passing through the Middle East. Three days later he left India, taking with him BGen Elmer Adler, Col. Victor Strahm and several other key officers, and he was soon followed by the planes and crews of the 9th Bombardment Squadron (H). The most dependable ferry pilots were selected to transport ground personnel and equipment for the bombers.

Gen. Naiden, Brereton's succe-

## Unit Reunions

### 1891st Eng. Avn. Battalion

The 17th annual reunion will be held at the Howard Johnson Oak Hills Hotel (Hospital Area), in San Antonio, Texas. The dates are Sept. 17, 18, 19, 20. Attendees are urged to bring family members and relatives with them. For further information, call the chairman, Francis Larson (830-563-9244) or the hotel direct toll free (1-800-468-3507).



### Old China Hands Hold Reunion

Four former staffers of the China Edition, *Stars and Stripes*, observe the 55th anniversary of the closing of the paper (April 1946) in Washington, DC, recently. Left to right are Jim Becker of Honolulu, Hawaii; Abe S. Rosen, Lower Southampton, PA; Jack Anderson, Bethesda, MD and Alpheus W. (Bill) Jessup, Washington, DC.

Becker, a former Honolulu columnist and civic leader, covered war trials in Korea and served AP and UPI in England, India and Hawaii for many years. Rosen, presently a public relations counselor, is former Philadelphia city representative and president of the Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau. Anderson wrote the Washington Merry-Go-Round column for years and is a radio-TV commentator. Jessup set up *Fortune* magazine's Far East office after World War II and is a noted writer.

Submitted by Abe S. Rosen

sor in command of the 10th AF was left with a crippled air transport system, a skeleton staff, and virtually no combat strength outside the task force in China. The future of the 10th, and with it the extent of our continuing aid to China, now depended upon news from the Middle East.

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(Extracted from the History of the Army Air Forces in World War II by Joe Shupe. Part III will be published in a later edition of the SOUND-OFF.)

## DEADLINES!

January 1 - April 1

July 1 - October 1

## 1st Air Commandos

The First Air Commando Association (CBI - WW II) will hold their 57th anniversary reunion in Philadelphia, PA, October 3 through 7, 2001. All members who served in this group are invited to attend. For information, contact Reunion Chairman Felix Lockman, 201 Amosland Rd., Norwood, PA 19074-1502; phone 610/532-1942.



## History of Army Air Forces in CBI

### Part III

#### The Situation in India Following Gen. Brereton's Departure

To BGen Earl L. Naiden, Brereton's former chief of staff, fell the task of trying to build anew a combat air force in India. Loss of key officers to Brereton's new command in the Middle East created vacancies in important staff positions for which there were no qualified replacements. The loss of transport planes and pilots out of the theater was a severe setback to the development of the air supply line into China, and authority granted to Brereton to move 10th Air Force supplies passing through the Middle East made the acute supply shortage even worse. Also, Brereton and other officers who had left India were still assigned to the 10th AF so the possibility of their return made Naiden's tenure uncertain enough from giving full play to his own initiative.

On paper, the 10th AF consisted of the 7th Bombardment Group (C), with two heavy and two medium squadrons each. But only six of the 10 squadrons were combat ready, one of these (the 9th Bomb Sqdn.) being with Brereton in the Middle East and the other five with Chennault in China. In India, the 436th Bomb Sqdn (M), and the 22nd Bomb Sqdn (M) were scattered from Karachi to Calcutta, incapable of combat until planes,

spare parts, and personnel fillers had been received. The 11th Bomb Sqdn (M) was in China. The two squadrons of the 51st Group left in India had given up personnel and equipment to enable its 3rd squadron (the 16th) and the 23rd Fighter Group to operate with Chennault. A small detachment from the 51st was stationed at Dinjan but the group itself remained at Karachi awaiting planes and personnel.

Comparative safety from enemy attack because of the monsoons temporarily relieved Naiden of one worry but left him with enough problems. Protection of the air supply line had become the major mission of the 10th, and as soon as the monsoons lifted, the Japs were expected to sever this last communication with China. The China Air Task Force (CATF), under Chennault, was capable of protecting the China end of the route, but defenses of the India end were woefully inadequate. It was expected that two squadrons of the 51st Fighter Group would be ready to operate from Assam bases by the end of the summer (42), but effective defense was impossible until the air warning system was improved.

Naiden made repeated requests

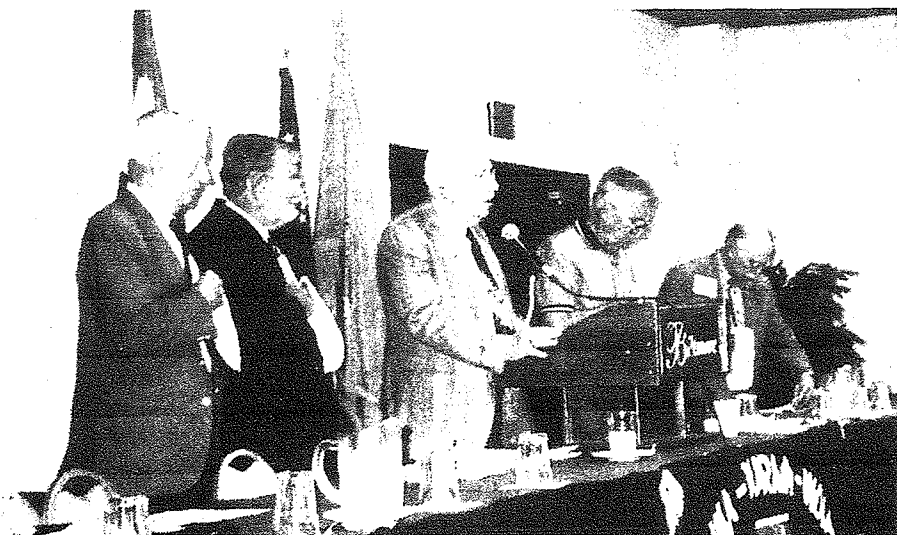
to Washington for this purpose. He also asked for a weather squadron to replace the provisional unit already set up in the theater. Approval was granted but departure of the squadron was left undetermined. Requests for additional anti-aircraft batteries received the same treatment. Four months of experience in India had shown that commercial telephone and telegraph services were so undependable as to be practically worthless for military purposes, and radio service was frequently interrupted by weather and enemy jamming.

Naiden therefore proposed starting a land-line telephone system. He was advised to revise his estimates downward because of shortage of ships to India. He was then advised that some communications equipment and personnel would be sent but no definite commitments could yet be made.

Gen. Naiden and Col. Robert C. Oliver, who was in command of the X Air Service Command in the absence of BGen Elmer E. Adler, also tried to clarify the situation regarding basic equipment. None of the units assigned had yet received all their equipment. So, eight squadrons had equipment efficient for only two. Some lesser equipment could be obtained locally, but heavier equipment, especially motor vehicles, was not obtainable. Naiden appealed to Washington that all authorized equipment be shipped on the same convoy that brought over the unit.

Meanwhile, Naiden struggled with the build-up of the air freight line to China. The five AAF squadrons, recently sent to China were dependent upon his efforts. Tonnage of such supplies had to be increased, but Naiden was beset by problems. Twelve transports and crews went with Gen. Brereton. The planes remaining in India were wearing out; tires especially; engines needed overhauling or replacement, no spares were available. Engines for Chinese P-43s were adapted for use by the C-47s, but were limited. The result was the frequent grounding of planes. Although eight of the transports were returned from the Middle East within six weeks, they too needed overhauling.

The shortage of planes was only one of the problems. The defeat in Burma had increased the perplexity of the situation. As long as the airfield in Myitkyina was in friendly hands, the flight from Assam to



Chaplain Wendall Phillips offers the invocation at the opening session of the 54th Annual Reunion in Oklahoma City, August 30, 2001.

Photo by Ed Wolf

Kunming could be made at lower altitudes, but its loss required going farther north over the Hump which placed more strain on pilots and planes and increased gas consumption.

The sudden change in temperature over the mountains was hard on men and aircraft, and especially serious because of ice forming on the wings. Poor visibility made blind flying necessary for much of the time, and some of the planes did not have the proper instruments. From May to October, heavy rainfall hampered ground crews in their activity. Landing strips looked like lakes. Landings were perilous, and any planes removed from hard-surfaced sections were likely to be hopelessly mired. The Dinjan-Kunming flight had the reputation of involving more hazards than any regularly used route over a comparable distance.

Inadequacy of airfields in Assam probably would have prevented any big increase in the airlift to China during the summer of 1942. The British from the first had been skeptical of meeting our demands for construction, which included 34 airdromes in addition to other installations. The British were dependent upon unskilled native labor and upon materials locally available.

At Chabua, Mohanbari, and Sookerating, the workers, many of them women, broke stones by hand and moved soil in baskets upon their heads. On occasion, they refused to work while it was raining, and absenteeism was common on the numerous religious holidays. The construction program fell behind and when expected aid from the US in the form of heavy machinery and labor troops did not materialize, it became apparent that other fields would not be ready before late autumn. As a result, the overcrowded Dinjan field remained the main transport station throughout the summer.

At Dinjan, morale became a serious problem. Pilots cracked because of long hours of hazardous flying, while the monotony of existence in Assam became almost unbearable to ground personnel. Living conditions, the worst in the theater, showed no signs of improvement. Inadequacy of quarters, rations, mail, medical care and recreational facilities were sufficient causes for discontent, but, when it was learned that per-

sonnel and material intended for the 1st Ferrying Group were being diverted to combat units, the morale built up during the first weeks of ferrying operations died, morale dropping to a danger point.

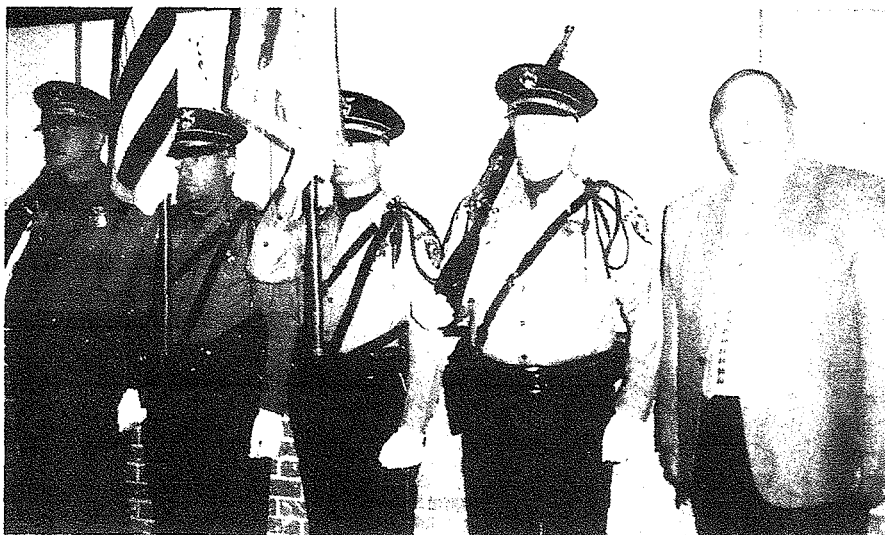
Apparent lack of progress in July led to consideration in Washington of a plan whereby the China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC) would have full control over all flights from India to China. Gen. Stilwell conceded that the CNAC had a fine reputation for efficient operations but had serious objections to the plan. He

thought it was unfair to have military personnel working beside civilians who were drawing more pay for identical work; nor did he believe it wise to place military personnel under civilian control in a combat area. Also, he felt that the Ministry of Communications, to which CNAC was responsible, was more concerned with maintenance of nonessential Chinese commercial air routes than in transportation necessary to the prosecution of the war. He considered it desirable that CNAC continue to operate over the Hump if



Commander Jack Hardebeck delivers his welcoming message at the beginning of the business meeting during the 54th Annual Reunion.

Photo by Ed Wolf



Oklahoma City Police Dept. Honor Guard - Vice Mayor Jerry Foshee.

Wilkat Photo

its activity could be confined to hauling essential materials, but he maintained that giving it operational control of the Hump flight would be an admission that the US Army Air Force had failed, and would permit CNAC to take credit for all that the Army Air Forces had done on the Dinjan-Kunming route. He later recommended that he be allowed to make arrangements with the Chinese for lease of all CNAC planes to the Army Air Forces to assure that they would be used only in furthering the war effort. If the Chinese refused, he advocated that no more transport aircraft be allocated to them. He was authorized to go ahead with his plan, although there was some doubt that he would be able to obtain Chinese permission for leasing CNAC planes.

In August, however, he announced that Chiang Kai-shek had agreed, and late September he told the War Department that the contract had been signed.

Stilwell also felt that some improvement could be made in clarifying problems resulting from Breton's departure for the Middle East. Believing that there was no prospect for the early return of Breton and his staff, Stilwell argued that these men be relieved of assignment to the 10th AF and that suitable replacements be provided. He suggested that Naiden should be relieved of command of

the 10th AF and be allowed to devote full time to the Hump mission. He recommended that BGen Clayton L. Bissell (air advisor on his staff) command the 10th AF.

On August 18th, Gen. Bissell assumed command of the 10th AF, but Naiden's services with the air cargo line were lost when he returned to the US for hospitalization. Col. Robert Tate then took over Ferry operations. Although Stilwell had been notified that Breton and Adler would not return, at the end of August neither Breton nor the personnel who had accompanied him had been officially relieved of duty in the CBI. Stilwell reminded Gen. Marshall of this, and asked for clarification.

Eventually, in September, a message was received that these men were under orders to relieve them from duty with the 10th AF. The air echelon of the 9th Bomb Sqdn, and the transport crews would continue on temporary duty in the Middle East for some time, but the ground crews would be returned to India within a month.

Meanwhile, Bissell appealed for additional personnel to replace those reassigned to the Middle East. He decided to organize all combat units in India into an air task force comparable to the one operating in China, and to designate Col. Caleb V. Haynes to command it. When the activation of the India Task Force (IATF) should be

accomplished, the 10th AF would consist of the CATF under Chenault, the IATF under Haynes, the X Air Service Command under Oliver, and the India-China Ferry Command under Tate, and the Karachi American Air Base Command under BGen. Francis F. Brady.

It had been the failure of the air cargo line to come up to expectations that indirectly led to Bissell's appointment to command the 10th AF, and from the beginning he was constantly reminded that his most urgent task to keep the supply line to China open. The monsoon, lack of spare parts and maintenance facilities, loss of transport bases in Burma, and transfer of cargo planes to the Middle East combined to prevent even an approximation of the desired 800 tons a month to China. In fact, deliveries during the summer months fell below those of April and May. Bissell knew that he was being asked to do a nearly impossible task. To meet the challenge, he transferred service troops to Assam, gave highest priority to maintenance of transport planes, placed every available aircraft on the Hump route, and did everything possible to speed up construction.

By September, in spite of the monsoons, rising tonnage figures began to reflect his efforts. By October 6, he announced that the fields at Mohanbari, Sookerating and Chabua had so far progressed that the 1st Ferrying Group was prepared to operate 75 transports from India to China. Additional aircraft were not immediately made available to him, but during October the airlift was increased again. Late in the month, however, just as it seemed that the 10th AF might find a solution to the problem, Stilwell was notified that on Dec. 1st that the entire Hump Operation would be taken over by the Air Transport Command. This change would obviously relieve the commander of the 10th AF of some of his most trying problems, but since ATC operations were controlled by a Washington Headquarters, the already complex command structure of CBI would be made more complicated than ever.

The 10th AF, however, still had responsibility for the protection of the Hump route, so there was no letup in efforts to improve and expand the existing air warning net for Assam. Since proximity of high



The Oklahoma Governor's Honor Guard of the Oklahoma National Guard presents the Colors to open the 54th Annual CBIVA Reunion. Staff Photo

mountains to airfields made it impossible to establish an orthodox radar net. Brereton had placed small detachments with light radios and portable generators in the hills to the east of Assam. He had enlisted the aid of loyal natives and used all types of transportation to set up a few outlying stations, so isolated that they had to be supplied by air. Because of the large area covered by these few detachments, the system was relatively ineffective. Planes could slip through without being sighted, and those sighted could get over prospective targets almost by the time the warning was received. To make the system more dependable, the existing gaps had to be filled and other stations placed further out. Bissell appealed to Stilwell for help, who then asked the War Department to provide adequate anti-aircraft defenses for major bases.

When the monsoons lifted, the Japs made several damaging attacks on Assam bases. This showed the inadequacies of the existing net. A few additional outposts had been established from theater resources, but after the raids, Bissell asked for enough men and radios to set up 15 more warning stations. He only got five; the men and equipment to be sent out by air. The people arrived on time, but not the equipment. The radios were eventually located at Natal, where they had been unloaded and left unnoticed for several weeks.

They finally arrived in March 1943, hardly in time to deploy the new detachments before the next monsoon.

Meanwhile, Bissell was becoming acquainted with the many problems faced by the 10th AF. Within 10 days after he took over there arose in India a crisis which for weeks threatened to wreck all the plans for our military operations, and which, as months passed, placed many obstacles in the way of attempts to develop our air power in the theater. Indian agitation for political autonomy, fanned by enemy propaganda and encouraged by British reverses, seemed at the point of turning into widespread civil strife. Ghandi's "quit India" policy in the early months of 1941 had led an impasse. On August 9th, the British arrested Ghandi, Nehru and other Congress Party leaders. Riots immediately broke out in most of the urban centers. Before these

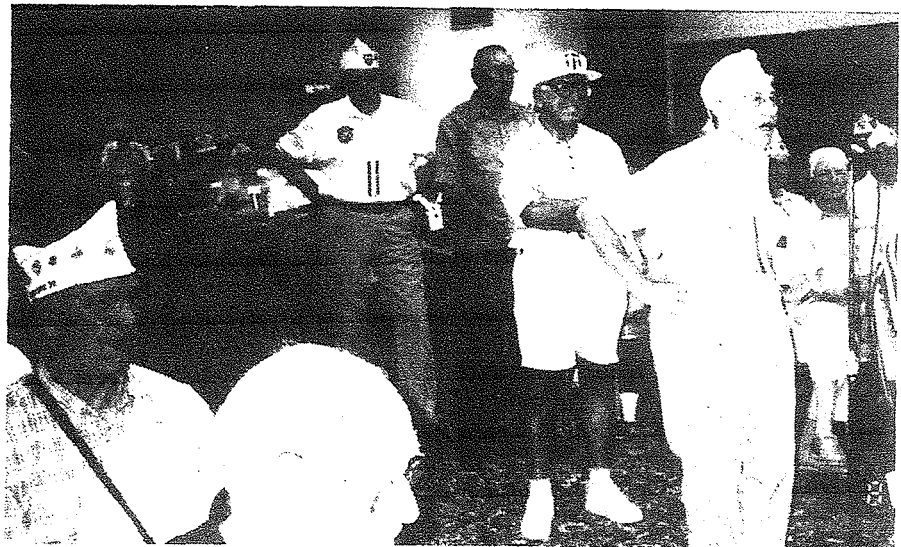
abated, organized saboteurs disrupted transportation and communications in large areas. Strikes brought many large construction projects to a standstill. British officials insisted that the trouble would soon be over, but as the disorders and strikes continued our officers became alarmed at the gravity of the general political outlook. While we took precaution against sabotage, we avoided involvement by keeping our men out of areas of greatest disorders. By the end of 1942, conditions had improved slightly, but the danger had by no means passed.

That no serious troubles involving our troops occurred is a credit to our men and leaders. When we first arrived in India, propaganda leaflets were passed out by the natives to enlist our sympathy in the cause of Indian independence. Our men had been cautioned to avoid involvement. The enemy tried to create ill feeling between the natives and our troops by propaganda broadcasts in native languages, charging that the Americans were in India to stay and would exploit the country and its people. When rioting was at its worst, many of our commanders restricted troops to their camp areas to avoid trouble. This avoided unpleasant incidents with the result that relationships between our troops and the natives continued on a friendly basis.

Meanwhile, Bissell was notified by the Commanding General of AAF of shortcomings of the 10th AF. Less than a month in command, Bissell received a message stating that an Inspector General



Herman Stanley of LaGrange, KY, and Fred Fragela of Cocoa Beach, FL, are shown at the Oklahoma City CBIVA Reunion after having discovered that both served at Sookerating, Assam, in World War II. Stanley said although he has been a member of Louisville's Derby City Basha for 19 years and attended many National CBIVA reunions, he had never met anyone who was at Sookerating (1337th AAFBU) at the same time he was there. Stanley told Fragela that the USAF Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton, OH, exhibits a C-46 which also was at Sookerating during 1944-1945. Herman concluded "This proves that it's never too late to find someone we rubbed shoulders with, daily, so many years ago." Staff Photo



"First-timers" introduce themselves and tell us how they won the war!

Photo by Ed Wolf



from Washington, recently returned from India, reported that promotion of junior officers in the 10th was so slow as to create a serious morale problem. Bissell replied that promotions were governed by Table of Organization (T/O) vacancies, and that promotions were made when vacancies occurred. Promotions in other theaters were faster. Also, replacement officers in higher grades had denied promotions to many deserving 2nd lieutenants.

The War Department, unwilling to permit promotions beyond T/O limitations suggested that 2nd lieutenants, with combat experience, could be returned to the US and promoted there, thus raising the level of experience in training units in the US. Gen. Stilwell believed that men deserving of promotion should be rewarded in the combat zone rather than after their return to the US. Bissell shared with Stilwell a conviction that an exchange of experienced 2nd lieutenants for inexperienced 1st lieutenants, and captains would be detrimental to the combat efficiency of the air force. Fortunately, opportunities for promotion were soon provided through activation in the theater of four bomb squadrons.

Other flaws were reported by the inspectors. Bissell replied that these were made before he took

over, and that they were corrected since. The 10th AF, he affirmed, could be made into a first-rate fighting force if only the materiel necessary for operations was supplied. Many difficulties were attributable to poor transportation in a theater of great distances, he replied:

*From the base port of Karachi to the combat units in China is a distance from San Francisco to New York. From Karachi, supplies go by broad gauge railroad, a distance about as far as from San Francisco to Kansas City. They are then transshipped to meter gauge and to narrow gauge and go on a distance by rail from Kansas City to St. Louis. They are then transshipped to water and go down the Ganges and up the Brahmaputra, a distance about equivalent to that from St. Louis to Pittsburgh. They are then loaded on transports of the Ferrying Command in the Dinjan area and flown to Kunming - a distance greater than from Pittsburgh to Boston. From Kunming, aviation supplies go by air, truck, rail, bullock cart, coolie and river to operating airdromes - a distance about equivalent from Boston to Newfoundland. With interruption of this communication system due to sabotage incident to the internal political situation in India, you can readily appreciate that regular supply presents difficulties.*

*If morale was low among enlisted men, it was because of an almost complete lack of mail for many months, language difficulties in an alien land, absence of newspapers and books, lack of feminine companionship, bad radio reception, excessive heat and humidity, weeks of terrible dust conditions, unfamiliar foods, poor housing conditions and failure of equipment to arrive. Irregularity of payment to men resulting from inadequate finance arrangements had been corrected. Earlier messing conditions had been unsatisfactory due to dust storms and the use of British rations in an effort to save shipping space, but messes now were better and cleaner.*

Like his predecessors, Bissell sent periodic requests to the War Department for personnel and materiel necessary to transform the 10th AF from a skeleton organization into a fully operational air force, and at the end of the monsoon the urgency of his requests increased. On August 24th, he had given notice that the depot at Agra was not equipped to overhaul combat aircraft. This was the result of lack of spare parts. A fortnight later, he reported that five B-17s and five P-40s were out of commission and could not be repaired until spare parts arrived.

In mid-September, he stated that the combined capacity at Agra and Bangalore for overhauling engines could be increased from 60 per month to 200, if needed personnel and supplies already on requisition were received. He also asked about the status of an air depot group previously promised to the 10th.

In the same week, Bissell reported that because many incoming pilots had done practically no flying for several months prior to their arrival in CBI, numerous crashes of combat planes had resulted. Recognizing that training overseas was uneconomical, he nevertheless felt that a brief period of transitional training at Karachi was necessary. Through Stilwell, he asked authority to activate a squadron at Karachi and to divert eight twin-engine advanced trainers from Chinese allocations. But, activation was denied because resources could not be spared from the training program in the US, nor could diversion of the trainers be accomplished without prior consent from Chiang Kai-shek.

In setting forth his ideas on air-



*A Native-American princess prays The Lord's Prayer in sign language as a recording of the anthem is played on the room's sound system. A very moving invocation for the Puja Dinner.*

*Staff Photo*

craft requirements, Bissell echoed many of Brereton's suggestions. He considered the B-17E unsatisfactory because of its insufficient range and its excessive oil consumption – the latter trouble because of ill-pervasive dust. The current B-25 model had insufficient gasoline capacity for missions flown from India bases, and the "cash register" bombsights with which they were equipped had proved unsatisfactory. Moreover, leaking hydraulic fluid, together with mud and dirt, had so obscured visibility from the bottom turret that it was not worth the weight and drag on the plane. Inadequacies of the P-40 were also reviewed, and the need for fast climbing fighters in the Dinjan area was stressed.

When the monsoons ended, the aircraft situation was far from reassuring. In June, an agreement had been reached between Gen. Arnold and Air Chief Marshal Arthur Portal of Great Britain on the size of US AAF which was to serve in Asia. The agreement stipulated that by October the 10th AF would consist of one heavy bomb group with 35 planes, one medium bomb group with 57 planes, and two fighter groups with a total of 160 aircraft. In preparation for reception of these aircraft, certain shifts in organization were made. The 7th Bomb Group (C) again became a heavy group, composed of the 9th, 436th, 492nd and 493rd Squadrons, the latter two activated in the theater. The 11th and 22nd Squadrons (M) formerly of the 7th Group were joined with the newly activated 490th and 491st Squadrons to form the 341st Bomb Group (M). Organization of the two fighter groups, 51st and 23rd remained unchanged.

Although the 9th Bomb Squadron (H) had returned from the Middle East by Nov. 3rd, it was not until December that the 10th AF finally received a total of 252 aircraft, per the Arnold-Portal-Towers agreement. At the end of 1942, there were 259 combat aircraft on hand but the distribution by types was not according to specifications. There were present 32 heavies instead of 35, and 10 of these were non-operational B-17s; only 43 medium bombers were hand although 57 were due; and in fighters there was on average, 184 being present as against 160 designated. In the case of fighters,

however, the figures were misleading, four were P-43s which were used only for reconnaissance, and more than a score were old worn-out P-40Bs which were unfit for combat. The fighter squadrons had full complements of planes albeit many were practically useless, but two heavy and two medium bombardment squadrons were still in the cadre stage.

In December, three service squadrons, two depot squadrons, two quartermaster companies, one ordnance company, seven airways detachments, and fillers for the 23rd Fighter Group and the 490th and 491st Bombardment Squadrons (M) arrived. As usual, though, much of the organizational equipment had been left behind. This brought forth another problem. Gen. Bissell was anxious to stop the pilfering of air cargoes along the ferry route to India. These were intercepted enroute in other theaters.

Bissell also urged that the T/O for the Hqs and Hqs Squadron of the 10th AF and the X Air Service Command be approved, because promotions were being held up and hurting morale. Bissell also suggested another change. The 16th Squadron of the 51st Fighter Group had been in China for some months and no early likelihood of return to India. So, he proposed that it be formally transferred to the 23rd Group in China. To fill

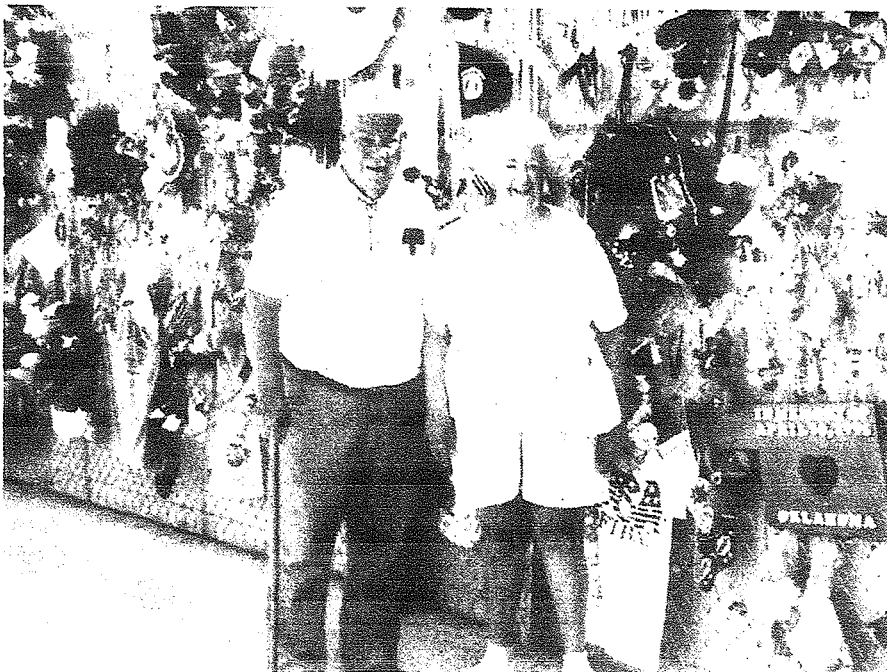
the gap in the 51st Group, he would activate in the theater two additional fighter squadrons, thereby providing India and China each with a four-squadron fighter group. The two new squadrons could be activated without receiving additional resources from the US. The proposal was refused. So, the peculiar organizational arrangement would continue until a more substantial reserve had been built up in CBI.

Shortly before the end of the year, the 10th AF received attention in another report from the Inspector General, but in contrast to the one submitted during the summer the comments were almost entirely favorable in tone.

The most serious faults noted in CBI were the method of keeping lend-lease records and inadequacy of the defense for the docks at Calcutta, but neither responsibility belong to the 10th AF. Particular approval was expressed for the successful execution of the policy of living off the land, in spite of the fact that the bulk of lethal supplies was received from the US, more than 50% of the total supplies for our forces had been obtained in the theater.

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(Extracted from the History of the Army Air Forces in World War II, by Joe Shupe. Part IV will be published in a future issue of SOUND-OFF.)



Earl and Lee Wenzel at National Reunion in Oklahoma City at wall of National Memorial.  
Photo by Leon Salada

## History of the Army Air Forces in CBI

### Part IV

#### China and Task Force (CATF)

Under Generals Naiden and Bissell, significant developments had taken place in China. On July 4, 1942, the 23rd Fighter Group, the 16th Fighter Squadron, and the 11th Bombardment Squadron (M) had become the China Air Task Force (CATF) under Chennault. Wholly dependent on air supply, this small force with headquarters in Kunming, operated in an area almost completely surrounded by the Japanese and defended only by the disorganized and poorly equipped Chinese Army. Ordinarily, this would have been considered tactually unsound, yet there were reasons for this gamble. One was to fulfill our promises of air aid to China; the risk involved was offset by the importance of encouraging Chinese resistance. Also, while it was recognized that the enemy could occupy any part of China they desired, it was believed that they would be unwilling to divert from other combat theaters the necessary ground troops to conquer the area where the CATF was based.

Chennault felt confident that no ground effort would be made against the Kunming-Chungking area. Protection of our bases was a consideration, yet with the aid of the air warning system which Chennault had planned, the AVG had shown that a small number of

our planes could prevent the enemy from doing any real damage. Success, though, was hinged on the ability of the 10th AF to fly in the necessary supplies. However, because of that limitation, it was necessary that the CATF use to the maximum the labor and materials at hand. So, normal housekeeping functions were turned over to the Chinese War Service Corps which had served the AVG. They also used Chinese for maintenance and repair of aircraft. So, at the outset, CATF functioned much the same as had the AVG.

Chennault hoped to achieve the following objectives:

- (1) To destroy enemy aircraft more than before.
- (2) To destroy enemy military establishments in China and encourage Chinese resistance.
- (3) To disrupt Japanese shipping.
- (4) To damage enemy dispositions in Indo-China, Formosa, Thailand, Burma and North China.
- (5) To break the morale of the enemy while destroying a considerable percentage of their aircraft production.

It would seem that with the limitation of people, supplies, repair facilities, and the vast area he would operate in, that his objectives went far beyond his capabilities. Yet, he had certain advan-

tages. Four of his five squadrons of P-40s with which Chinese and AVG ground personnel were familiar; he used former AVG shops for maintenance, and he had unserviceable P-40s from which he cannibalized spare parts. Also, operationally, he had advantages - the efficient air warning system to enable them to intercept approaching enemy planes. Likewise, our pilots lost over China could be directed back safely by ground outposts.

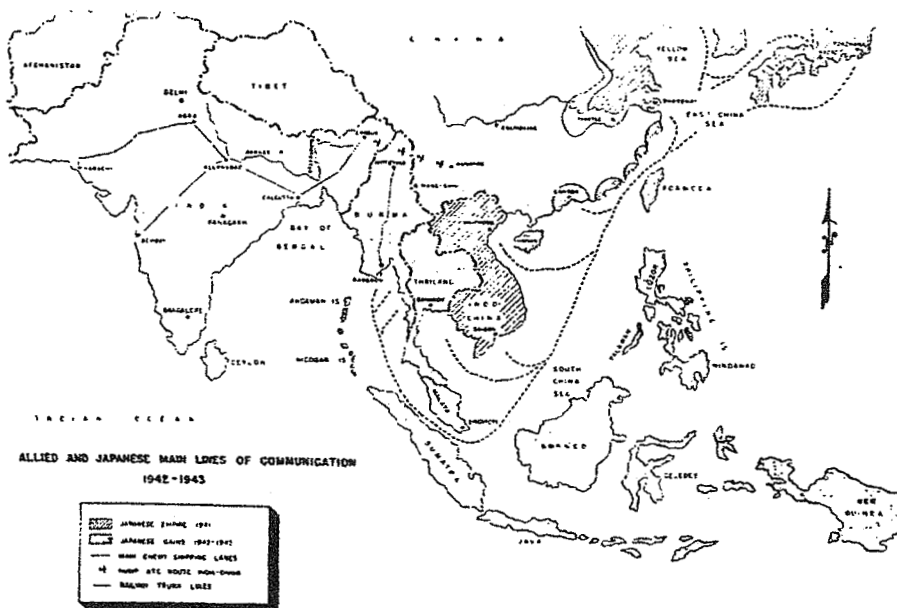
It was a simple system - circles of warning stations throughout China. Reports of enemy aircraft were relayed along the line to the CATF. We also had the advantage of interior lines of communication between airfields so located as to make many major enemy installations accessible.

In unoccupied China, there were many airfields in a roughly elliptical area including Chengtu and Chungking to the NW and north, Fengyan, Ling-ling, and Kweilin to the east, Nanning to the southeast and Kunming and Yunnan to the south and west.

From these bases we could operate over Hankow, key to the enemy supply system along the Yangtze, the Hong Kong-Canton port area, Haiphong and North Indo-China, Chienmai in Thailand, and all parts of NE Burma. By switching squadrons from base to base, Chennault could keep the enemy guessing where the next mission would originate. Since there were not as many squadrons as there were airdromes, some fields had to be left undefended but in some cases planes based at one could give some protection to the others. Only the effective war warning system made this arrangement work. Of importance was the almost uncanny ability of Chennault to outguess the enemy. His long experience in China and with the AVG was a big advantage.

Late in June 1942, when the AVG would be dissolved and the CATF would come into being, there was an air of uneasiness at our bases in China. Organization was complete; Col. Robert L. Scott assumed command of the 23rd Fighter Group and Col. Caleb V. Haynes of the bombers.

The fighter squadrons could not be brought to full strength by July 4th, and if only a few AVG pilots joined the AAF, a determined enemy might succeed in wiping out the CATF before it was fully orga-



nized. Rumors were current that the Japanese knew of the changeover and greatly disturbed about the presence of B-25s in China, so they were planning to attack our bases on July 4th.

Chennault, to circumvent the enemy, planned to strike first using about 20 of the AVG pilots whom he persuaded to remain on duty for two additional weeks.

To Hengyang he sent the 75th Fighter Squadron, under Major David L. Hill, former AVG ace with about half the volunteer AVG pilots attached. The 76th Fighter Squadron under another Ex-AVG ace, Major Edward F. Rector was sent to Kweilin along with the other volunteer pilots. Yunnani (150 miles west of Kunming) was manned by the 16th Fighter Squadron under Major George W. Hazlett. The 74th Fighter Squadron, under Major Frank Schiel, still another Ex-AVG flyer, was left at Kunming for defensive purposes and to assist in training incoming pilots. Headquarters of the single medium bombardment squadron remained at Kunming, but detachments were to shuttle between the home station and the eastern bases at Kweilin and Hengyang from which they were to fly most of their missions.

Under this plan the three vital bases on the east had two fighter squadrons, while the two other squadrons were left in the Kunming and Yunnani area. The Chengtu-Chungking region, less likely to be attacked, was to be protected by what remained of the Chinese Air Force. This plan offered offensive possibilities, too. Medium bombers from Kunming, with escort provided by the 74th Squadron could go southward to objectives in Indo-China, Thailand and Burma. By staging at Yunnani, where the 16th Squadron could act as escort, they could penetrate even farther into Burma. The best targets, however, were in the east. From Hengyang and Kweilin they could reach Hankow, Canton and Hong Kong, and the 75th and 76th Squadrons could share responsibility for escort and air base defense.

On July 1st, Major William E. Basye, commander of the 11th Squadron, led a flight of four Mitchells, covered by five P-40s, to bomb Hankow's docks. The effects were inconsequential, but the next day a raid on the same target brought good results.

The following night, the enemy retaliated by bombing Hengyang, completely missing the field. The next day, from Hengyang, we bombed the airdrome at Nanchang, probable base of the preceding night's raiders. We probably destroyed several parked aircraft, but before damage could be assessed enemy interceptors made contact. One P-40 and two enemy fighters went down in the ensuing fight, but our pilot was saved. That night, July 3rd, the enemy attacked Hengyang, but again missed the target.

Later, from Hengyang, five B-25s raided Tien Ho; no enemy planes were found in the air but extensive damage to buildings, runways and parked aircraft resulted. The enemy selected Kweilin as the target on the same day, but they were jumped by P-40s waiting above resulting in the destruction of 13 enemy planes. So, the most critical point in the career of the CATF had been passed.

In the two weeks following this four-day flurry, the CATF ran four offensive missions, and only once did the Japanese dare to retaliate. On July 6th, the Canton water front was successfully attacked; two days later one Mitchell bombed an enemy headquarters at Tengchung in SW China; on the 16th, a large fire was kindled in the storage area in Hankow which burned

for three days; and on the 18th, Tien Ho airdrome was hit.

After the attack at Hankow on July 16th, the B-25s had just landed at Hengyang to gas up before returning to Kweilin when they were warned of approaching enemy planes. They took off hastily for Ling-ling, but the Japs turned back without attacking. But, because of the confusion, one of our pilots mistook a B-25 for an enemy bomber and shot it down, fortunately the entire crew was saved.

On July 19th, to help the Chinese who were attacking Linchuan, our bombers attacked that city. This made possible the Chinese entry into that city. On July 20th, we made our last mission for the month hitting Kiukiang where a cotton-yarn factory was destroyed.

It was quiet until July 30th when the enemy tried to dislodge the CATF from Hengyang. Enemy planes came over time after time for 36 hours, but the warning net and the stubborn resistance put up by the fighters prevented major damage to the base. Seventeen of the estimated 120 attacking planes were shot down, while we lost only three planes.

The action, during July, set a pattern to be followed for the next six months. In the B-25, Chennault had for the first time a satisfactory offensive weapon, and while he was rarely able to send



*Crew in China after raiding Tokyo. About noon on 18 April, the medium bombers from the Hornet reached Tokyo and near-by cities. After dropping their bombs they flew on to China where they ran out of fuel before reaching their designated landing fields. The crews of only two of the planes fell into Japanese hands. The others lived in the mountains for about ten days after assembling and were later returned to the United States. The news of the raid raised morale in the United States and while the damage inflicted was not great, it proved to the Japanese that they needed additional bases to the east to protect the home islands of Japan.*



out more than four or five at a time, he repeatedly directed them against heretofore-untouched enemy installations. Usually P-40s accompanied the B-25s, often carrying bombs to supplement the bombers. After the B-25s bombed, the fighters strafed targets of opportunity, often causing more damage than did the bombers.

Shifting rapidly from one sector to another, we struck at supply bases, airdromes, and docks and shipping, rarely meeting resistance. Jap raiders, in trying to knock out eastern bases, were bitterly resisted and consistently suffered higher losses than we did. Whereas we lost only five P-40s and one B-25, we netted about 24 fighters and 12 bombers with negligible personnel losses.

In August, while the fighters from Hengyang continued to harass the enemy at Linchuan, Yochow, Nan-chang and Sianning, the Mitchells hit Hankow, Canton

and Tien Ho. On August 9th, they made their first attack in Indo-China. There they damaged docks and warehouses at Haiphong and sank a freighter in the harbor.

In the middle of the month, shortage of gas at advanced bases and need for rest and repairs brought offensive action to a halt for two weeks. Meanwhile, at Kunming, two personnel changes were made in Chennault's staff. LCol Henry E. Strickland was made adjutant general and Col. Merian C. Cooper became chief of staff. Cooper, formerly in China in connection with the Doolittle project and more recently with Col. Haynes in Assam, had served with the Polish Air Force following World War I and became invaluable for planning "guerrilla warfare."

After the rest period, some of the B-25s were moved to Yunnan for bombing missions over Burma. Encountering heavy interception

on August 16th, they successfully bombed Lashio. Two days later, the Mitchells in the east resumed offensive actions in Indo-China. The following day, the Yunnan-based bombers again hit Lashio and the last two days of the month hit Myitkyina.

In September, eastern bases once more became the center of activity of the CATF. Fighter sweeps over the Yangtze Valley, south of Hankow, were interspersed with bombing missions to Hankow and against the Hanoi-Maiphong area in Indo-China. On September 19th, a B-25 mission to Lung-ling in West China discovered unusual enemy activity; a heavy movement of enemy troops and supplies along the Burma Road from Lashio toward the Salween front. Because this would further endanger the already hazardous air route from Assam to Kunming, the CATF gave support to the Chinese Army by attacking depots, dumps and barracks. In eleven missions, the air task force did extensive damage to Tengchung, Mangshih, Wanting, Chefang and Lichiapo.

In October, heavy bombers from India made their first strike in China. Using B-24s with which the 7th Bombardment Group (H) was being re-equipped, a small flight of the 436th Squadron flew to Chengtu. Led by Major Max R. Fennell, who had been borrowed from the 9th AF because of his familiarity of the region to be attacked, the bombers took off from Chengtu October 21st to bomb the Lin-hsi mines near Kuyeh (beyond Tientsin) hoping to destroy power plants and pumping stations. If successful, the mines which produced 14,000 tons of coal per day would have been useless for several months, but the bombs failed to do the job.

Four days later the CATF executed one of its most successful missions. Knowing Japanese convoys stopped at Hong Kong, Col. Cooper planned to attack Kowloon docks while the harbor was crowded. On October 25th, news came that the harbor was packed with enemy ships, twelve B-25s and seven P-40s took off from Kwellin, our planes dropped many bombs before they were jammed by some 21 interceptors. We lost one B-25 and a P-40, but in a long flight the enemy force was virtually annihilated. Bombing continued that night in an attack of a power



Airfield Construction, CBI.

Above: Cheng-kung, China. Below: India Base.