

Separated by Language and Culture but United by a Common Goal

THE LEGACY OF THE FLYING TIGERS

By Margaret Mills Kincannon

It began a bit earlier for Du. While in his sophomore year of university in 1940, he became aware of a special program that involved recruiting Chinese aviation cadets to be trained as pilots in cooperation with the USAAF. Du's primary interest was not to become a pilot, since his career was already planned, but to have a chest X-ray to determine if he had tuberculosis as part of the qualification process. However, he passed all the physical, academic, and other examinations and was accepted to take part in the program. Because he was too embarrassed to drop out, he began training at the Republic of China Air Force Academy in Yunnan Province in early 1941. It was during this time that he changed his name to Du Kai-mu. Afterward he was sent to the United States for additional training in Arizona and later in Colorado.

At war with Japan's superior troops for four years by the time Du entered the program, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist troops had by this time suffered repeated losses. Although numerically superior, they were lacking in supplies, equipment, training and that would allow them to defeat the enemy. The equally debilitated air force was incapable of adequately supporting troops on the ground or opposing the enemy's planes that bombed Chinese cities and other targets. To aid in solving the problem, Generalissimo Chiang brought Claire Lee Chennault, a civilian who had resigned from the U.S. Army Air Corps with the rank of major, to China under contract as his military advisor. It became Chennault's mission to transform the ROCAF into an effective fighting force capable of fending off the invaders by training Chinese pilots to shoot down Japanese airplanes using his tactics of "defensive pursuit". The American Volunteer Group (AVG) that gained fame as "the Flying Tigers" for their daring displays of courage and skill was the result. This mercenary unit was in existence from April 1941 to July 1942, when it was replaced by the China Air Task Force that was officially inducted into the USAAF. The CATF was disbanded in March 1943 and replaced by the 14th Air Force with Chennault, now a major general, placed in command.

It was soon afterward that Chennault, with the Generalissimo's approval and support, implemented a strategy to aid the CAF by taking his plan even further than previous efforts through the creation of the Chinese-American Composite Wing, made up of both Chinese and American members working and flying side by side. An Operational Training Unit (OTU) was established in India and operated by the 14th Air Force to train Chinese fighter and bomber crews for combat operations according to the American model and using American planes. Duplicate command structures were established at all levels. In addition, CAF combat and maintenance crews trained at the OTU with the units to which they would be assigned. On completion of the training of each complement, the American and Chinese officers who had acted as instructors then served as group, squadron, and flight commanders of the combat units, which would then move to China. The CACW eventually consisted of a bombardment group and two fighter groups of four squadrons each. Chennault's intrepid airmen would go on to earn their place in aviation history by carrying on the legacy of the Flying Tigers.

These were the events that worked together to unite Cpl. James H. Mills and Sub-Lt. Du ("Tu" in American records) Kai-mu in the 3rd Bomb Squadron of the 1st Bomb Group, Chinese-American Composite Wing, that was activated on February 22, 1944.

(To be continued)



飛虎傳奇



不同語言文化卻因同一目標 而團結奮戰的兩個人

瑪格麗特追思父親漢克與都凱牧烽火下的堅定友情

然而對都興權來說，這一切卻開始的有點太早。1940年都興權大學二年級的時候，他得知有個特殊的專案，是有關於招募中華民國航空學員，並訓練成為飛行員。成為飛行員並非都興權的主要目標，因為他已經做好自己的生涯規劃了，但是作為合格過程的一部分，需要做一次胸部X光檢查，來確定他是否患有肺結核。話雖如此，但他還是通過了所有生理、學科以及其他的檢測並且參加了這項專案。因為他覺得中途退出實在是太丟臉了，於是1941年初他開始在雲南省的中華民國空軍軍官學校接受相關訓練。也是在這段時間，都興權改名為都凱牧。他隨後亦被派往美國亞利桑那州及科羅拉多州去接受額外的訓練。

相較於訓練、裝備精良的日軍部隊，都凱牧加入了節節敗退的蔣委員長長的國民政府軍。雖然在兵員數量上遠勝於日軍，但是真正能夠讓他們擊敗日軍的補給、裝備以及訓練，卻嚴重不足。中華民國衰弱的空軍無法給予地面部隊足夠的支援，對於轟炸城市及其他重要目標的敵軍飛機亦無法予以有效的還擊。為了解決此問題，蔣委員長找了一位來自美國陸軍航空隊的平民，前美國陸軍航空隊少校克雷爾·李·陳納德，並雇用陳納德至中國作為他的軍事顧問。訓練中華民國的飛行員使用陳納德的「防禦性追擊」戰術，使中華民國空軍從只能迴避，轉變為一股有能力擊落來犯日軍飛機的有效戰力。「美籍志願大隊」也因其無比的勇氣與卓越的技巧，而獲得了「飛虎」的美譽。美籍志願大隊存在於1941年4月至1942年7月之間，後由正式納編入美國陸軍航空隊的「中華民國空軍特遣隊」所取代。中華民國空軍特遣隊後於1943年3月解散，並由時任少將的陳納德所指揮的美國陸軍航空隊第14航空軍取代。

不久之後，因蔣委員長的核准與支持，透由「中美混合聯隊」的創立，讓中華民國與美國的成員能夠一同並肩飛行。為了訓練中華民國飛行員與轟炸機組員執行作戰，第14航空軍於印度成立了以美軍為範本、使用美軍飛機的「作戰訓練單位」，並於各層級都建立了類似的指揮架構。除此之外，中華民國空軍作戰及地勤修護補給人員與他們之後要報到的單位成員，也一起至第14航空軍所屬的作戰訓練單位接受訓練。隨著每一位學員訓練的完成，美國與中華民國軍官們都先後扮演著教官、大隊及中隊等往後將移防至中國的作戰部隊的飛行指揮官。中美混合聯隊最後是由各有4個中隊的1個轟炸機大隊及2個戰鬥機大隊所組合而成。陳納德將軍所率領的這群勇敢無畏的空軍健兒們，往後也都將持續在航空歷史裡傳承飛虎的遺產，並贏得屬於他們的一席之地。

這些都是促使詹姆士·亨利·密爾斯下士與都凱牧少尉一同合作成軍於1944年2月的22日的中美混合聯隊第1轟炸機大隊第3轟炸機中隊的相關事件。（未完待續）