

## FEATURE

# Putting the Country's Interests First

By Stanton Jue

More than 12,000 Chinese young men and women willingly joined the armed services of the United States during WWII. They honorably served and proudly performed their duties in military operations with valor and sacrifices. Above all, they put their country's interests first, not their own.

It seems a bit strange and indeed audacious for a Navy veteran without ground combat experience to come to a reunion of WWII veterans of the 14<sup>th</sup> Air Service Group and the 987<sup>th</sup> Signal Communications Company.

Yet I look at it differently; as an opportunity to pay my respect and express my admiration for their brave and heroic participation in the American war efforts in China during WWII.

I had heard much about the famous "Flying Tigers" but rarely the good work of two Chinese American military units, the 14<sup>th</sup>, and the 987<sup>th</sup>. They took part in the hazardous flights over the "Hump" to deliver war supplies to American units fighting in China's interior provinces, they performed communications support services including "Recon Patrol" that penetrated deeply into Japanese occupied territories, often on horseback, and with the Chinese indigenous army on the mainland.

These heroic activities demonstrated beyond doubt their loyalty and patriotism to their adopted country, the USA. In retrospect, their participation has had a profound impact in paving



*WWII 14th Air Service Group*

the way for their children and grandchildren to gain public recognition and acceptance into mainstream America in postwar years.

I feel it is important, however, to keep in mind that if history is not recorded, as in the case of Chinese American

experiences in the war, the truth will never be told, and the present indifference and ignorance will persist and can completely erase the past. That would be a tragedy, as so many Americans today, including young Chinese Americans, are unaware of the real accomplishments of our service men and women.

Let me just cite a few examples of how Chinese American heroic efforts in WWII has had an enormous effect on our present status and acceptance into mainstream America. First, it helped reduce racial discrimination against persons of Chinese origin, thus facilitating our moving out of Chinatown ghettos to be integrated into the main-stream so we could buy land to build our homes and own farms and businesses. Second, it paved the way for us to enter many high professions not opened to us before the war, such as scientists, engineers, teachers, healthcare professionals, journalists, lawyers, foreign service officers, etc. And third, it enabled us to advance our civil and political rights and gain new opportunities in becoming congressmen, senators, state and local government officials, cabinet secretaries and chairmen and financial officers of major corporations. Frankly, all we seek is equal opportunities, not special privileges.

Thus, we should not and must not forget our past - the patriotism, loyalty and service of our GIs, men and women, who served in WWII that made all this possible. We are genuinely grateful to them and we salute them, our true unsung heroes and heroines who served America so well.

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*Stanton Jue is a Navy WWII veteran. During an amphibious assault on Biak Island, near New Guinea in June, 1944, his ship, the USS Kalk was hit by a Japanese plane virtually cutting it in half. The ship was towed back to Pearl Harbor where he had shore duty to help plan the American assault on Okinawa. During the '50s when the communist encroachment into Southeast Asia became menacingly real, he was recruited into the US Foreign Service to serve as the first Chinese Affairs Officer in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. He has had a 35-year professional career in American diplomacy, serving in Taiwan, Japan, Vietnam, Korea, Australia, China, and in Washington D.C.*