

BOOK REVIEW

When Flying Tigers Ruled the Sky

The Flying Tigers:
American Outlaw pilots
over China in World War II
By Bill Yenne ISBN
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By Walter Ko

For Americans, WW II started when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. However, this book started its focus in Asia Pacific when Japan began her aggression to China since September 18 1931 Incident. China lacked the air power to defend. Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek's English speaking wife, Madam Soong Mei Ling invited Claire Lee Chennault to come to help.

With many negotiation and persuasion, Chennault got President Franklin D Roosevelt approval of the creation of American Volunteer Group, composed of resigned young American pilots coming to China under different professions, none associated with US Government. Chinese government offered attractive salaries and bonuses.

The British unwanted P-40 fighter planes were sent to China. The Bengal Tiger over V Letter created an awesome logo and the plane heads were painted as shark with sharp teeth. This air team was known as Flying Tigers in three squadrons known as The Adam and Eve, The Panda Bears, and the Hell's Angels.

Chennault, a veteran pilot was able to train the young American pilots by taking the advantage of capability of P-40. He gained knowledge of Japanese and staff manuals with Chinese translation into English for training guide. With these training, the young Americans were dared no devil. They gained their fighting experience in China with five hundred dollars bonus after they shot down a Japanese plane. They were reported to make 299 claims. Such American team was able to curb Japanese

bombing Chinese cities and massacring Chinese people notably in the Rape of Nanking.

This book composed of different pilot stories with incredible details. Bill's description made the young men come alive in the pages with their heroic fighting spirits. It is interesting to read about Dr. Margaret "Mom" Chung who started an American aviator's Club called Fair-Haired Bastards and adopted some 1,500 pilots through WW II, inviting them to Sunday dinners (P.103). This Chinese in America and American Flying Tigers in China fostered mutual friendship and respect.

Bill's book is a long forgotten China and American chapter on comrades-in arm history. This book reflects American and Chinese, American and Japanese, domestic politics and international politics, young pilots and senior trainer, P-40 and Zero planes. When Flying Tigers ruled the Chinese sky, it destroyed the Japanese pride and halted Japanese attack. The Tokyo Rose even called Bob Scott a war criminal as he shot down 13 Japanese planes.

Bill wrote this book to remind the friendship and goodwill between China and America as they were allies in fighting the common enemy, Japan for peace and freedom. Chinese people suffered under the iron boots of Japan always treasured the fond memory of Flying Tigers as their action changed from famous to legendary over time. As in 2015, San Francisco Chinatown, a Chinese civilian opened a WW II museum with the whole second floor honoring the Flying Tigers with display of ample collection of materials and two "blood Chit" jackets.

This book is an exciting read in real life story and combat history. To know the Flying Tigers pilots is to esteem and honor.