



TOP SECRET

OPERATION "Heroic Airlift"

EYES ONLY

'The Hump' from India to China

These Heroic Aviators Kept the Flying Tigers in the War

WORLD WAR II BEGAN IN 1937 FOR CHINA when the Japanese attacked with 1.25 million troops. The Communists and nationalists joined forces and China countered this invasion with 3 million soldiers who were joined by the legendary Flying Tigers under Claire L. Chennault in 1940. If this invasion was successful this would free up a million Japanese soldiers to invade other theatres against American troops.



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The supply route started as a 1,000 mile road through Burma (now Indonesia). The Empire of Japan sought to cut this supply route and invaded the British province of Burma in December, 1941 with 100,000 troops and 700 aircraft. Burma was lost in April, 1942 which resulted in China being completely cut off except by air. The US Army anticipated this and, through the Air Transport Command, began the airlift on April 8, 1942 when Col William D. Old delivered aviation gas for Jimmy Doolittle's Raiders prior to their attack by (16) B-25s Mitchell bombers on Tokyo.

From the steamy, hot jungles flew fully loaded Curtiss C-46, Douglas C-47 and Consolidated B-24 transport aircrafts into the Himalayan mountains that the military aviators called the 'Hump'. The route from India to China varied up to 720 miles over mountains that rose up to 16,000 feet. The extreme terrain combined with incredible weather where 150 mph jet stream winds and extreme weather at high altitudes caused a significant amount of crashes. If they weren't fighting thunderstorms or icing the transports could be attacked by Japanese fighter planes.

The C-46 was rushed into production because it could fly over the Himalayas which would eventually increase safety. Earlier in the war C-47 transports could not climb high enough to clear the mountain peaks so they were forced to weave their way through the valleys which was virtually impossible when the extreme weather set in. The number of aircraft eventually grew to 700 transports supported by 84,000 military personnel. The amount of supplies peaked at 10,000 tons per month delivered by a transport flying over the Himalayas every 2 minutes.



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Map illustration by Zaur Eylanbekov/Air Force Association

ALLIED AIRCREWS DIED while transporting supplies to China from India during WWII. 700 Allied planes were shot down or crashed while taking the lives of over 1,600 airmen who were often newly trained aviators. Because of the severity and remoteness of the terrain in this part of the world, 500 of the planes that crashed remain lost to this day.

Whether bailing out or crashing, the aviators were often over enemy held territory.

Often, rescue was not an option: the rescuers would face the same hazards.

To prove this point, part of the mission's early training protocol was how to take one's own life with the last bullet of their service pistol. ★

China's Quiet Role in World War II



Photo by William Vandivert/The LIFE Picture Collection/Getty Images

ONE OF THE GREAT UNTOLD, and often misunderstood, stories of World War II was the Lend-Lease program which was approved by the United States Congress in January 1941 and signed into law on March 11, 1941 by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR). The goal of Lend-Lease was to send much needed war materiel to numerous Allied nations throughout the world. The philosophy was simple – just like lending a garden hose to your next door neighbor to help put out a fire. The logistics of such an undertaking were nothing short of a miracle. In an extremely short period of time, the United States had to convert its all-but stagnant post-depression factories, including Ford and General Motors among others, into a war production machine second to none in order to overtake the highly-advanced technologies of both Germany and Japan. Aircraft were only one component.

Lend-Lease also included engines, ammunition, tanks, ships, submarines, uniforms, and food – anything to do with rearming and supporting the world as the war unfolded. 36 nations were involved in the Lend-Lease program including Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and China. Even though the true financial values of the distributions vary, it is estimated that of the US \$50 billion (roughly US\$680 billion in today's dollars) associated with the program, nearly US\$1.6 billion (US\$22 billion today) went to China; small in comparison to the combined aid given to Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. Not only was the air route over the Himalayas expensive to fly, it was extremely dangerous, resulting in the loss of numerous aircraft and crews.

THE COURAGE AND SACRIFICE OF THE AMERICAN AIR CREWS CANNOT BE OVERSTATED. The war between Japan and China, known as "The Second Sino-Japanese War," accounted for an estimated 10 to 25 million Chinese civilian casualties with somewhere in the neighborhood of 80 million refugees. It is important to mention that China played a significant role in the war against Japan. Nearly 40,000 Chinese soldiers fought alongside American and British troops in Burma during the 1944 campaign; yet, China's contributions have never fully been recognized. Lend-Lease in China, as in the former Soviet Union, helped buy time for both nations against the savagery of the Axis powers. It was only through the mutual collaboration and the extraordinary courage and sacrifice of the men and women of all nations, working together as Allies that resulted in the ultimate victory in World War II.

FDR had great hope for the future of the world after end of war under the combined leadership of Great Britain, the Soviet Union, China, and the United States. Unfortunately, he died in office two weeks prior to the end of the war in Europe and his vision perished with him. The Lend-Lease program ended without fanfare or further support to China or the Soviet Union shortly after Japan's surrender in 1945. ★

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Operation Magic Carpet: How Alaska Airlines Rescued 49,000 Yemenite Jews

ALASKA IS RICH IN HISTORY, especially when it comes to aviation. From the first flights of Noel Wien and the bush pilot pioneers to World War II to current time, Alaska continues its global reach and influence.

Just recently, another amazing chapter in Alaska's aviation history was uncovered. In 1949, Alaska Airlines helped transport Jewish citizens from Yemen to Israel as part of a program known as Operation Magic Carpet. It is estimated that at the end of WW II, slightly over 49,000 Jews lived in Yemen, where in pre-Islamic times circa 1300 years ago, there had been a Jewish kingdom: the Himyarite kingdom. Their plight was desperate and all conventional means of relocating them to Israel were cutoff. Alaska Airlines came to their aid, setting up a base of operation in Asmara, Eritrea that included ground crews, pilots and DC-4 and C-46 aircraft.

As part of the airlift and relief effort, Alaska Airline crews flew from Asmara to Aden each morning to pick up their passengers and refuel. Aircraft were reconfigured with benches instead of seats enabling them to transport 120 passengers instead of 50. Extra fuel tanks were also installed down the length of the fuselages. In all, the round trip flight took approximately 20 hours.

Defying enormous odds & extreme danger, Brave Alaska Airlines pilots airlifted 49,000 refugees to Israel.

The route took the refugees along the Red Sea and Gulf of Aqaba to Tel Aviv where they were unloaded. From there, the pilots flew the aircraft to Cyprus to safely spend the night. The next morning, they returned to their home base in Asmara to pick up their next load of appreciative passengers.

These were not just a routine passenger flights. Pilots were typically flying 16-hour days. The desert sand was hard on the aircraft and



Photos courtesy of Alaska Airlines

engines. Fuel was in short supply and navigation was pretty much non-existent, requiring pilots to fly by dead reckoning. Aircraft were also shot at risking the lives of all on board. Approximately 380 flights, carrying 48,818 refugees, successfully relocated nearly all of Yemen's Jewish population to Israel by September 1950. Miraculously not one death or injury occurred among the pilots, passengers, or crews. The program was kept secret for security reasons and to prevent the risk of sabotage. Word of this incredible and note-worthy effort was not made public for quite some time. To Alaska Airlines and all involved in this humanitarian relief effort, well done! ★

For more information on Operation Magic Carpet and the role of Alaska Airlines and others in this inspiring rescue mission, be sure to visit the Alaska Jewish Museum at :

www.alaskajewishmuseum.com

"On the Wings of Eagles"

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Operation Magic Carpet

The Alaska Airlines Airlift Rescue of 49,000 Jewish Refugees From Yemen

On the Wings of Eagles

The airlift would continue through 1950 with Alaska Airlines making more than 380 flights, using two DC-4s and a C-46 aircraft. At the end of the mission, Alaska Airlines had carried 49,000 Yemenite Jews from Aden to Tel Aviv.

After decades of persecution, the Yemenite Jews believed God's prophecy had been fulfilled, as they had been brought back to their homeland "On the Wings of Eagles."

www.alaskamhm.org

ALASKA MILITARY HERITAGE MUSEUM

Alaskan World War II Veterans Who Flew in China



THEODORE FULTON STEVENS

HE WAS BORN ON NOVEMBER 18, 1923 IN INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA. He joined the US Army in 1943 at 19 years old and earned his Army Air Corps wings in 1944. Lt. Stevens was assigned to the 322nd Troop Carrier Squadron, under General Claire Chennault, where he flew Curtiss C-46 and Douglas C-47 transports from India to China as support for the world famous Flying Tigers. He served until 1946 and earned several medals including a two Distinguished Flying Crosses, 2 Air Medals and the Chinese order of Yuan Hai.

After the war, Stevens attended the University of California and Harvard Law School. He was elected to the state house of representatives in 1964. He was then appointed to the US Senate in 1968 to fill the vacancy by the death of E. L. Bartlett. Stevens served to 2006

where he rose to the office of president pro tempore of the Senate, he was 3rd in line for the Presidency.

Stevens married Ann Cherrington in 1952. The couple had 5 children named Beth, Susan, Ben, Walter & Ted Jr. Ann was lost in a plane crash in 1978. Stevens remarried in 1980 to Catherine Chandler. The couple had 1 daughter Lily. In 2000, Senator Stevens was named "Alaskan of the Century" and the Alaska Legislature renamed Alaska's largest airport the "Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport". Senator Stevens died in a plane crash on August 9, 2010. ★ [LEARN MORE CLICK HERE](#)



HAROLD GEORGE BROWN

HE WAS BORN IN RURAL WISCONSIN IN 1922. He joined the Minnesota National Guard in 1941. In 1943, he finished flight school. That same year he met Margaret "Peggy" Krause, the love of his life, and they married in 1944. George received orders to the India-China theatre where he flew over the Himalayas. Captain Brown earned the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal for his heroic action of flying over the famous 'Hump'.

The Browns headed to Alaska in 1951. The couple opened The Lucky Wishbone Restaurant in downtown Anchorage. Peggy traveled to Washington DC in 2002 to receive Alaska's Small Business of the Year and was introduced to President Bush by their long time friend Senator Stevens. In 2005, George and Peggy traveled to China, officially invited by the

Chinese Government on the 60th anniversary of the "Hump Pilots" to honor their efforts in World War II. Peggy passed away in 2011. In 2010, George received the Wright Brothers Master Pilot award, granted to master pilots with 50 years of safe flying. George passed away in 2018. ★



Join the Crew

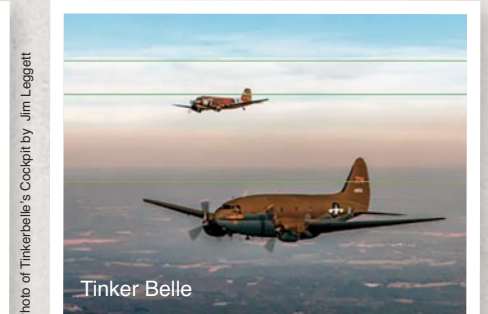
THE MISSION OF THE ALASKA MILITARY HERITAGE MUSEUM is 'To Tell The Story' of the US military's past, present and future in the great state of Alaska. Proper curating of military artifacts is not only museum protocol set forth the State Historical Preservation Office but also is the right thing to give honor to our veterans and military. This is why the living portion of our museum is called Alaska Honor Squadron. Honor means to cherish, to hold in esteem, to treasure. ★



C-46 Underwriting & Flight Ops

• Aircraft purchase and pilots & mechanic travel	\$300,000
• WWII paint job	\$ 40,000
• Annual operating costs (25 days x 4 hrs/day x \$1,400/ hour)	\$140,000
• Museum operating costs for the C-46	\$100,000
• Pilot & Co-pilot costs (25 days x \$900/ day)	\$ 22,500
• Annual	\$ 30,000

Total Cost for 2019 \$632,500



Dave McKay is our Chief Pilot with 32,410 flight hours and has recently been nominated for the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award for 50 years of professional flight.



Lars Gleitsmann is our Museum Curator. He is lead of artifact investigations, recovery and proper curating. Lars has flown 52 different types of aircrafts in 11 countries on 5 continents.



#To Tell the Story

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This program-development project supported & sponsored
by **The Alaska Veterans Foundation** . Anchorage, Alaska

Cover photo: Tinker Belle by Neil Castle