



The Flying Tigers: The Untold Story of the American Pilots Who Waged a Secret War Against Japan Before Pearl Harbor

Samuel Kleiner

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The thrilling story behind the American pilots who were secretly recruited to defend the nation's desperate Chinese allies before Pearl Harbor and ended up on the front lines of the war against the Japanese in the Pacific

Sam Kleiner's *The Flying Tigers* uncovers the hidden story of the group of young American men and women who crossed the Pacific before Pearl Harbor to risk their lives defending China. Led by legendary army pilot Claire Chennault, these men left behind an America still at peace in the summer of 1941 using false identities to travel across the Pacific to a run-down airbase in the jungles of Burma. In the wake of the disaster at Pearl Harbor this motley crew was the first group of Americans to take on the Japanese in combat, shooting down hundreds of Japanese aircraft in the skies over Burma, Thailand, and China. At a time when the Allies were being defeated across the globe, the Flying Tigers' exploits gave hope to Americans and Chinese alike.

Kleiner takes readers into the cockpits of their iconic shark-nosed P-40 planes—one of the most familiar images of the war—as the Tigers perform nail-biting missions against the Japanese. He profiles the outsize personalities involved in the operation, including Chennault, whose aggressive tactics went against the prevailing wisdom of military strategy; Greg “Pappy” Boyington, the man who would become the nation's most beloved pilot until he was shot down and became a POW; Emma Foster, one of the nurses in the unit who had a passionate romance with a pilot named John Petach; and Madame Chiang Kai-shek herself, who first brought Chennault to China and who would come to visit these young Americans.

A dramatic story of a covert operation whose very existence would have scandalized an isolationist United States, *The Flying Tigers* is the unforgettable account of a group of Americans whose heroism changed the world, and who cemented an alliance between the United States and China as both nations fought against seemingly insurmountable odds.

The Flying Tigers: The Untold Story of the American Pilots Who Waged a Secret War Against Japan Before Pearl Harbor Details

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From Reader Review The Flying Tigers: The Untold Story of the American Pilots Who Waged a Secret War Against Japan Before Pearl Harbor for online ebook

Rucker Culpepper says

Great original research and very readable!

Casey Wheeler says

I received a free Kindle copy of The Flying Tigers by Sam Kleiner courtesy of Net Galley and Penguin Viking, the publisher. It was with the understanding that I would post a review on Net Galley, Goodreads, Amazon, Barnes and Noble and my fiction book review blog. I also posted it to my Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google Plus pages.

I requested this book as I am interested in american history and the description made this book sound interesting. This is the first book by Samn Kleiner that I have read.

Prior to reading this book, my entire knowledge about "TheFlying Tigers" was based on the 1942 movie of the same name starring John Wayne. As is usually the case, this book is much better than the movie. It is well written and researched.

Kleiner does an excellent job of tracing the history of the American Volunteer Group (official designation of The Flying Tigers) and the crucial role played by Claire Chennault in making it happen and his contribution to the group disbanding in 1942 when it ws incorporated into the United States Army. He covers those who lost their lives during the time they spent in China and what happenned to the key players after the group disbanded.

I recommend this book to anyone who has an interest in the role the Flying Tigers played in China just prior and during the early months of World War II.

KOMET says

"THE FLYING TIGERS: The Untold Story of the American Pilots Who Waged a Secret War Against Japan Before Pearl Harbor" is a well-written, comprehensive account of one of the most unique fighter units of the Second World War.

Officially known as the American Volunteer Group (AVG), the Flying Tigers was conceived and brought into being in July 1941 through the efforts of its commander, Claire L. Chennault (a former U.S. Army Air Corps fighter pilot who resigned his commission in 1937 to offer his services to China in its war with Japan), President Roosevelt and various members of his Administration. Five months later, with America's entry into the war, the AVG, following an extensive training program, was put on a wartime footing. Indeed, between December 20, 1941 (when the AVG first saw action against Japanese military forces) and July 5, 1942 (when

the AVG went out of existence and U.S. Army Air Force fighter and bomber units arrived in China to continue the fight against Japan), the Flying Tigers established, against great odds, an outstanding combat record in fighting Japan in both China and Burma.

This book also presents photos (some never before seen in any previous AVG history) and fascinating, heart-warming personal stories of the pilots and personnel of the AVG - including a nurse, Emma Foster, and a special, enduring relationship she developed with one of the AVG pilots - which make the Flying Tigers story more tangible and real to the reader.

"THE FLYING TIGERS" is a story that will appeal to anyone who loves human interest stories and seeks inspiration from them.

Jacob Hibbard says

Sam Kleiner does an excellent job with this source material. His writing is sometimes academic in tone, and yet he is able to humanize these hero-volunteers and the sacrifices they made.

This felt like an “authorized” biography of the Flying Tigers because Kleiner uncovered previously unpublished stories and anecdotes, thoughts and emotions through his conversations with some of the Flying Tigers themselves and by gaining access to journals and other writings via family members.

This is an enjoyable read that is engaging and entertaining, especially the Claire Chennault anecdotes throughout. It is full of heroic aviation accounts that, as Kleiner points out, even Hollywood thought were too amazing to be true! It also provides a sobering account of the loss of life and sacrifice these men made, something that when left understated has been minimized in the past because of their astonishing record of kills versus deaths.

Indydave1958 says

For many of us Baby Boomers who grew up with the Flying Tigers as larger-than-life heroes, this narrative will knock them down a couple of pegs. Maybe it’s the cynicism that comes from a generation of unjust wars. Or maybe it’s simply the perspective that seven decades has finally revealed. Whatever the case, this volume is an important piece of reckoning.

Our generation revered the Tigers not as mercenaries — which they essentially were — but as dashing patriots who risked their lives to fight for a valued ally. But their story is much more complicated than that. Many of the Tigers, for example, after fighting for months from hidden, primitive bases with nonexistent logistical support, balked at the idea of joining the Army Air Forces after Pearl Harbor and the official entry of the United States into World War II. They were weary of the fighting, and many of them went home. Understandable, but not exactly the dashing narrative we had come to love. Even Claire Chennault, the legendary founder of the Tigers, is something of a conflicted figure in this telling: Revered in China, he was seen as a middling officer by those in the U.S. military. He was disrespectful of the chain of command and eventually was forced into retirement.

Sam Kleiner has done a nice job rounding up sources close to the American Volunteer Group and studiously

mined contemporary accounts. Some anecdotes were surprising to me. Wendell Willkie actually did that? Claire Chennault actually bad-mouthed the Doolittle Raid? These and other revelations — including a good tangent on the early exploits of Greg “Pappy” Boyington — enrich the story of the fabled Flying Tigers.

But Kleiner, perhaps in the interest of brevity, because the book is only a little over 200 pages, glosses over a lot of detail. Combat descriptions are cursory, as are details on some of the colorful characters who made up the AVG.

I guess I’ll have to check out the autobiography of the pilot with whom I share a name and who was the First World War II figure I remember reading about.

Small flaws, perhaps, but Kleiner left me wanting more.

Steve says

A great as well as an interesting book on the AVG (American Volunteer Group). These were American pilots who volunteered to protect China from the Japanese before Pearl Harbor. That were later known as the Flying Tigers led by army pilot, Claire Chennault. They flew the shark-nosed P40 Warhawks up against the superior Japanese aircraft. This book also tells of the legendary Black Sheep Squadron, led by United States Marine Corps pilot and ace Major Greg "Pappy" Boyington who had the most kills as well as his Black Sheep Squadron of Japanese planes in the Pacific Theater during World War II.

Lisa says

Very good and informative non-fiction story about the Americans who fought in China before America was in WWII. Claire Chennault, led these men as they flew P-40s. The first group arrived in Burma in 1941. These pilots flew against Japanese aircraft over Burma, Thailand, and China. Chennault was a more aggressive leader and pilot which changed prevailing military air strategy. You get to know the men who flew, the Chinese that they supported, and how there was an alliance between the US and China as both nations fought against the invading Japanese.

David says

I loved the author's style and scope, telling the heroics and showing the honest warts and doing so in context. I didn't really know much about the AVG and this book shows that there is more to every story than the official version

Paul says

Just finished an autographed copy I got at a Pentagon book signing in June. Good overview of a deniable military unit in China before we entered WWII.

David McClendon, Sr says

If you like to read about fighter pilots or World War II like I do, you will enjoy *The Flying Tigers: The Untold Story of the American Pilots Who Waged a Secret War Against Japan* by Sam Kleiner.

This is a good account of what went on during the top secret days before the war. It is the story as taken from letters written back home to the families and friends of those infamous Flying Tigers.

This is a very interesting story written, while trying to be factually accurate, to tell the story of the leader and founder of the Flying Tigers and his fight to keep the Tigers flying.

To be honest, I never knew how involved the U. S. was with China at the time. Most of the books I have read mentioned the war in China more as a footnote than anything else.

We learn a little more about Pappy Boyington and his Black Sheep. We read about how a direct descendant of Robert E. Lee is buried in the rose garden at Lee's home.

We give *The Flying Tigers* four out of five stars. It is a good book, but it just does not get to the level of "Can't put it down."

We were sent a complimentary copy of this book. We are under no obligation to write any review, positive or negative.

We are disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.

Taylor says

A fantastic record of the exploits of the Flying Tigers from before their inception through the ends of their lives. The detailed history enclosed is delivered in a riveting account not only of the course and fate of an organization, but of the experiences of the men who gave it life... Some at the cost of their own lives.

Jim Gleason says

Given the rave reviews I ordered this book despite being so far behind in my pile of readings. Glad I did! Once begun, I couldn't put it down as I read the awesome stories of the Flying Tigers flying dangerous missions against the Japanese who were overtaking China back in the early days of WWII. So many deaths as they fought their secret battles. The author takes us into their daily lives with accounts of daily life from

their diaries and his interviews with these airmen even as they came together up through 2017 when only two (of three yet alive) gathered for their annual reunion. What a wealth of references filling those last 53 pages with an index to boot.

I can't wait to mail this reading to my long time friend in a distant sate, hoping he will enjoy the tales as much as I just did in two days of frenzied reading, a sing of how good this book really is.

Jimmy says

This is the story of a military aviation volunteer group comprising mostly of Americans that fought against the Japanese in China during the 1940s. I have heard of the Flying Tigers for many years but know so little about them until I got a hold of this book. What prompted to read this book was the result of reading a previous book on China and America titled *The Beautiful Country and the Middle Kingdom*. That book talked about the Flying Tigers and their commander Claire Chennault and although it was too brief the reference to the Flying Tigers that book made me want to find a longer discussion of the famous fighter outfit. I'm glad I read this book.

Although it was called the American Volunteer Group (AVG) it is probably best known by its nickname "The Flying Tigers." It was led by a Louisiana native former US Army pilot named Chennault. The book tells us the story of Chennault's upbringing, early military career and also the Chinese approaching him to form the volunteer group to help China's air force in light of the Japanese war against China; this all took place before the US went to war against Japan in World War Two. At first ostracized by even American government officials such as embassy officials and the Army Air Force eventually when the US was attacked on Pearl Harbor these "Flying Tigers" were elevated in status as American heroes who were already taking the fight to the enemy.

I love the book for its description of the various colorful characters in the outfit and in history during that time; but it was also insightful of other historical figures such as the Nationalists president Chiang Kai-shek and his famous wife. Readers will enjoy the stories of the AVG being undersupplied, undermanned and fighting against all odds to be an operational combat group. I also enjoyed the stories of various pilots first encounter with the Japanese in combat and the various other battles that followed. But even in training before they were in combat it was dangerous; there's stories of pilots in fatal plane crashes training in Burma and China. The book tells readers of the various accomplishments of the Flying Tigers. Readers will also learn of the politics of the regular Army Air Force marginalizing the Flying Tigers and how the men and leader of the Flying Tigers not appreciating this.

One of the interesting thing I learned from this book as the result of the author's research compared to older books on World War Two is that secretly all along the United States was behind the Flying Tigers; they were not as vigilante as people thought they were. President FDR was the one who condone the idea of approving actual service members to be deployed for a year to China before the US entered World War Two. For those who are Marine Corps World War Two history buffs I also thought it was a treat to read of one of the members of the Flying Tigers was Pappy Boyington. Boyington would later become a famous Marine combat pilot and leader in the Marines' campaign in the Pacific. What a small world!

Overall I enjoyed this book and recommend it!

John Purvis says

"The Flying Tigers" eBook was published in 2018 and was written by Sam Kleiner. This is Mr. Kleiner's

first publication.

I received an ARC of this novel through <https://www.netgalley.com> in return for a fair and honest review. I categorize this novel as 'PG' because it contains scenes of Violence. The story takes place from just before World War II until just after it. While the primary character is US Army Colonel Claire L. Chennault, there are many others whose story is told.

China had been at war with Japan for years and it was suffering. The Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek and his wife approached Chennault in the late 30's to leave the US and form up a volunteer group to train Chinese pilots. This group eventually evolved into what is now known as the Flying Tigers (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flying_...), an all-volunteer combat fighter group. They got their name from the shark face painted on the nose of the P-40 fighters that the group flew. This group was recruited before Pearl Harbor but flew their first combat mission only a few days later on December 20, 1941. The Flying Tigers did not last long, being disbanded in July of 1942, but it had a significant role in the early months of the war.

While this is not the first book on the Flying Tigers that I have read, I did enjoy the 7+ hours I spent reading this 304 page history. I liked the deep backgrounds that were given on many of the important personalities. I like the cover art. I give this novel a 4 out of 5.

Further book reviews I have written can be accessed at <https://johnpurvis.wordpress.com/blog/>.

Slatteryjm says

The US volunteers were very brave
