



FAM 14

Prepared by the SAN FRANCISCO AERONAUTICAL SOCIETY

Presidents Message

Spring 2014

SFAS Scholars Program Continues to Recognize Local Students

SOCIETY'S HAPPENINGS

The San Francisco Aeronautical Society takes pride in partnering with the San Francisco International Airport to preserve the aviation legacy built by yesterday's pioneers and continued by today's visionaries. SFO runs on design and engineering genius. In the fall of 2013 the Aeronautical Society recognized the continuity of vision at the airport; honoring legends of yesterday while supporting today's partners and recognizing the ideas and projects of today as the foundation for tomorrow's innovations. Our gala event, *SFO: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* was a stunning celebration of the airport's vision from a municipal airport at Mills Field in the 1920's through today's planning for the future of air and space travel.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the San Francisco Aeronautical Society, I would like to thank all of the Honorary Committee members, sponsors and all of the aviation leaders and supporters who joined us on October 25, 2013 for your support of the Society and the Museum and for helping us to continue our Scholarship Program. Pictures from our gala are included in this edition of FAM14.

This past year we awarded three college scholarships and this coming Spring we will continue our support of Bay Area high school seniors who have shown an interest in aviation history.

Make sure you take a few minutes to visit our new website www.sfaero.org and check out the online store. We are excited about this endeavor and add to our inventory regularly.

Best wishes for a warm and relaxing summer and hope to see you at the Museum!

Louis A. Turpen
President

In the Fall of 2011, the San Francisco Aeronautical Society launched the SFAS Scholars Program, in recognition of the historical contributions made by the many legends of aviation. Since it's inception, the SFAS Scholars Program has awarded eight scholarships totaling \$9,500 to high school seniors attending public high schools from the following school districts: San Francisco Unified School District, San Mateo Union High School District, Jefferson Union High School District and Sequoia Union High School District.

Applications for the scholarships must include a biographical essay on a legend of aviation and over the last two years we have enjoyed reading the students' essays on everyone from Charles Lindbergh and Amelia Earhart to Otto Lilienthal and Bessie Coleman. This Spring the Society will award three \$2,500 scholarships. Applicants must be anticipating completion of a high school diploma at the time of application, planning to pursue a degree at an accredited post secondary institution and carrying a minimum 3.0 G.P.A. at the end of their junior year of high school. Applicants must submit an application and a single-sided, two page (maximum), double spaced biographical essay on a legend of aviation.

The SFAS Scholars Program is made possible by generous donations received at our Annual Gala. Interested applicants can pick up a scholarship application from their high school career centers or by visiting the Society website.

CAPTAIN MOON F. CHIN

Captain Moon Fun Chin was never a member of the U.S. military, yet he was awarded four prestigious medals by the U.S. government: The Distinguished Flying Cross, Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal (Silver Star), The Air Medal, and The Presidential Unit Citation. He became one of the most decorated civilian pilots by the U.S. military.

Moon Fun Chin was born in 1913 in the Zhongshan, Guangdong province in China. At the age of nine, Moon moved to the United States with his father, an American citizen of Chinese descent. He was immediately fascinated by airplanes. Fortunately the Curtis Wright Company, one of America's top aviation companies, operated a flight mechanic and pilot institute in Baltimore, Maryland where Moon and his family lived and ran a family restaurant. Moon's father agreed to pay for the expensive mechanic and pilot lessons for Moon and in 1932, Moon received a limited commercial pilot's license. Moon

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FAM 14 is the abbreviation for the world's first transoceanic Foreign Air Mail route, which originated in San Francisco and linked the East and West by air. The FAM 14 masthead photograph, on page one, was taken by Clyde Sunderland and shows the Pan American Airways' China Clipper over the city of San Francisco on November 22, 1935, departing on the first trans-Pacific commercial flight to Manila, Courtesy of Pacific Aerial Surveys.

worked briefly for Curtis Wright but opportunities for continued employment and especially for getting ahead were very limited for Chinese Americans. Limited employment opportunities and the effects of the great depression led Moon, like many Chinese Americans, to move to China to look for work. Shortly after arriving in Shanghai in January 1933, with help from a family member, Moon was hired as an airline mechanic by the China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC), a joint venture airline operated by Curtiss Wright and the Chinese Nationalist government. In 1936, at the age of 20, Moon was promoted to "captain".

Capt. Chin began his flying career as a copilot of the Loening Seaplane. The Loening Seaplane was one of the first of the civilian aircraft that could land and float on sea water. By the time Capt. Chin became a captain, he flew on several other



Circa 1940. (Photo courtesy of China Exploration & Research Society)

types of aircraft, such as the Stinson, Douglas Dolphin, Sikorsky S-38, DC-2 and also the DC-3.

During World War II (1939 to 1945), even though Capt. Chin was only a civilian aviation pilot, he volunteered actively in frequent military rescue missions and subsequently secured the lives of many US military personnel. Among those military personnel he daringly rescued, was Lt. Col. James Dolittle who led the USAF squadron in the bombing of Tokyo following the attack on Pearl Harbour in 1942. He rescued Dolittle and transported him from Kuming to Myitkyina, a city in northern Burma. Capt. Chin also ferried many American navy personnel to and from the Gobi Desert where the American Navy had a weather station. Likewise, he was involved in rescue missions to evacuate civilians from distress regions. In one particular incident, in Myitkyina, after loading 80 passengers on his aircraft, Capt. Chin flew non stop to Calcutta.

Soon after the war, in 1946, Capt. Chin left CNAC to work for

China's Central Aviation Transport Corporation (CATC) as head of operations. As the head of operations, he initiated the purchase of new aircraft, recruited and trained pilots and other flight crew. Moreover, he oversaw operations in mainland China when CATC became part of the Civil Air Transport (CAT) of Taiwan in 1947. Eventually, due to his vast experience in civil aviation, Capt. Chin started his own airline called, "Foshing Airline" in 1951 with aviation services from Taipei to Taitung in Taiwan.

His most extraordinary heroic act of rescue occurred during the post war year of 1954, when he was already the "Chairman of the Board" for Foshing Airlines, when a US Air Force C-119 crew bailed out over the stormy sea between Taiwan and Guam. There were already two USAF amphibious aircraft on location but the pilots and crew were reluctant to risk their own lives to execute a rescue operation. Subsequently, Chairman Chin upon hearing the news of the distress situation, personally took it upon himself to fly a PBY Catalina "flying boat"; locate the distressed crew, land in the turbulent water, and rescue all of the six personnel.

In 1992, Foshing Airline changed its name to TransAsia Airways. Many years later, Chairman Moon retired from the airline company he founded and returned to the U.S. Capt. Chin recently celebrated his 100 birthday and currently resides in the Bay Area.

Even though he was never in the U.S. armed services, the U.S. government recognized and appreciated his contributions on behalf of the U.S. armed services. Capt. Chin was awarded *The Distinguished Flying Cross, Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal (Silver Star), The Air Medal, and The Presidential Unit Citation*. In 2005, Congress passed new legislation that granted veteran status for merchant marines who had served during WWII, as well as the few remaining American civilians who had flown supplies across the Himalayas. Captain Moon Chin is now officially a U.S. veteran.

The San Francisco Aeronautical Society is honored to call Capt. and Fun Chin a friend of the Society.



L-R: Society President, Louis A. Turpen, Capt. Moon F. Chin, Mrs. Turpen and friends at the SFO Gala SFO: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow Oct 2013

SFO: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow October 25, 2013

Louis A. Turpen Aviation Museum

Last October aviation enthusiasts celebrated another milestone with the Society's gala event SFO: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow at the Louis A. Turpen Aviation Museum. The evening's program highlighted the bold vision that has moved SFO through history from an early gamble on a dirt field in the 1920s, to preparing for the burgeoning Jet Age in the 1950s, to a Master Plan that prepared the airport for a new millennium in the 1990s. The reputation of San Francisco as the city that knows how can be traced throughout the development of its municipal airport for over the past eight decades. It is a



history of constant foresight, preparedness, and leadership in the fast paced frontier of commercial aviation. The success in meeting the challenges and providing the public with the utilities needed for access to the world's airways is attributed to the partnerships formed and managed between the public and the private providers needed to design, engineer, build, and operate an international airport. From each phase and milestone achievement in the airport's history, a tradition of success has been forged that continues to set a course for the future.

The Society would like to thank everyone who made this evening possible from our very generous sponsors and Honorary Committee members to the lovely former flight attendants who acted as our hostesses. It was a pleasure and an honor for the Society to celebrate this aviation milestone.



With Our Thanks...

SFO: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

Honorary Committee

Tony Bill | Honorable Willie L. Brown, Jr.
Honorable Dianne Feinstein | Will Hearst | Jon E. Krupnick
Amanda Wright Lane | Honorable Edwin M. Lee
Erik Lindbergh | John L. Martin | C.W. (Pete) Runnette
Charlotte Mailliard Shultz | Capt. Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger
John Travolta

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Special Thanks

The National Aviation Heritage Area, Dayton Ohio | The Peninsula Hotel | The Royal Hawaiian | San Francisco Giants
SFO Repographics | Taste Catering | Tastes on the Fly
United Airlines Historical Foundation | URS Corporation | Vino Volo | Virgin Galactic | Winslow & Associates
World Wings International



CURRENT EXHIBITIONS **Louis A. Turpen Aviation Museum**

**Airport Play: Commercial Aviation
Toys and Games**
May 2013 – March 2014

Airship Odyssey
The Zeppelin and Goodyear Dirigibles
November 2013 – June 2014

China Clipper
Continuous

Airline Identity
November 2013 – April 2014

Hours of Operation

No admission charge, open free to the public.

10:00am to 4:30pm Sunday through Friday.
Closed Saturdays, Holidays, and during private events.

CONTACT! For Society general membership and other programs, please contact:

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The San Francisco Airport Commission Aviation Library and Louis A. Turpen Aviation Museum is located at San Francisco International Airport, International Terminal, Pre-Security, Level 3. It is open Sunday - Friday from 10:00 am to 4:30 pm. The telephone number is (650) 821-9900. For additional information and to learn about volunteer opportunities, please contact the SFO Museum at (650) 821-6700, or email curator@flsfo.com or visit www.sfomuseum.org.

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