

War Stories (cont.)

It was mandatory they fly as directly as possible between ports.

A chamber with some liquid and a small bubble added to the marine sextant made it usable in the air. A passenger, General Emmons on a flight to the island of Horta in the Azores, noted the accuracy in their arrival.

The world's first celestial navigation school was established at the University of Miami with both American and British service men. The first class, comprised of 200 cadets, about half military and the other half college graduates with no military training. Graduates were in high demand.

In 1944 Pan Am began the first overseas air line flying from Mitchell Field in New York to Europe via Newfoundland, Iceland into England and New York via the Azores into Casa- Blanca and later, Paris (when it was recaptured). We returned via Paris to Crest to the Azores, then to Newfoundland and back to Mitchell Field. Andy Kelly made that round trip over 70 times. Prior to that he ferried 14 different aircraft to Tunis, Italy, India, England, etc. Celestial navigation became so successful it outgrew itself.

Global satellites made celestial navigation obsolete. It went from guinea pig to pioneer to obsolescence in less than 30 years. Pan-Am created history as the first to fly celestially over the oceans, created the world's first overseas airline and was the inspiration for a whole new industry of commercial flying.

Kelly included celestial navigation in his HUMP flying from January to December, 1943. One experience Kelly regrets is the mid-'43 trip in a C-87 from Chabua to Kunming when he flew alongside the top of Mt. Likiang at 23,000 feet. The charts showed it at 17,000. The discrepancy was never forwarded to the other bases resulting in the loss of 31 transports on 2 August on that mountain. His regret was his failure to follow-up dissemination.

WOMEN AND WAR

by Andrew P. Kelly, Col. Rtd.

Much has been said and written about the roles of women in war. The wives of two world famous statesmen on opposite sides of the Globe during

WWII were instrumental in the course and outcome of the war.

Mrs. Roosevelt quietly traveled around the Globe as a personal messenger for her husband to the various heads of government keeping him up to date with information on which he could rely. Her travels through troubled areas brought them to his attention.

Madame Chiang likewise represented the Generalissimo plus providing him with a major asset. Her brother worked in the White House. This was of great importance to her husband and even greater importance to General Claire Chennault, of "Flying Tiger" fame. Chennault had been engaged by Chiang Kai-shek in 1937 to head up his air force. Chennault had very definite and positive ideas about how China could play a much stronger role against Japan. He was able to present them to, and secure the support of, President Roosevelt to put those ideas into action via the cooperation of Madame Chiang's brother in the White House, despite strong opposition from General Stillwell.

Stillwell was head of ground troops in the CBI theatre and felt he was the best way to defeat Japan. General Stillwell and his boss, General Clayton Bissell, had a long standing feud with Chennault and did little to support him or his views. However, Madame Chiang, via her brother's contact with President Roosevelt gained a meeting at the White House for General Chennault to present his plans of how to more quickly thwart Japan's plan to take over China.

President Roosevelt gave Chennault permission to solicit the Army, Navy and Marine Corps. to secure 100 volunteer pilots to form the American Volunteer Group (AVG), 100 airplanes and 150 ground crews. The AVG sounded as though they were civilian volunteers while in fact they were all military on detached service. After the Pearl Harbor attack they reverted to their military rank and became known as the Flying Tigers.

The AVG, or Flying Tigers, were very successful in the destruction of the Japanese Air Force in Western China and forced them to withdraw to the Russian border. Japan had to concentrate in other areas, spread their troops more widely, beginning their downfall and an earlier end to the war.