



P-40 FLYING TIGER IS THE SUBJECT AT THE BALDWIN COUNTY & SOUTH ALABAMA MOAA CHAPTERS JOINT MEETING

The two Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) local chapters BC-MOAA (Baldwin County) and SACMOAA (South Alabama) will have a joint meeting on Thursday, June 15, 2017. The Baldwin County Chapter will host the event at the Venue, 105 South Section Street, Fairhope, Alabama. William (Billy) C. McDonald III will speak on his book *The Shadow Tiger*.

The social will begin at 6:00 pm. Cost is \$30 per person. Reservations

are required no later than Monday, June 12th to: Jim Beck at jeb.jimbeck@gmail.com. Checks and cash will be accepted at the door or mail checks to Frank Connell at P. O. Box 1277, Fairhope, Alabama. Make checks out to BC-MOAA. **Business attire is recommended.**

Tammy Wintzell, of the Tamara's Restaurant Group, will cater the event. Dinner will include fettuccine alfredo, penne pasta with marinara sauce, chicken, meat balls, mixed vegetables, Caesar salad, garlic bread, coffee, tea and bread pudding. There will be a cash bar with mixed drinks, wine and Sangria.

Door prizes include the table decorations and a metal, resin coated model of a Flying Tiger, P-40 Fighter airplane with a wingspan of 18" and depth of 8". The plane is suitable for hanging or resting on a desk or table. Tickets are \$5.00. All proceeds will be donated to the Alabama State Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Spanish Fort, Alabama.



Pictured: Lieut. W. C. McDonald, Maj. C. L. Chennault and Lieut. J. H. Williamson

ABOUT THE PRESENTATION

Billy McDonald's book, *The Shadow Tiger* captures the unique first-hand account of his father, Alabama native William McDonald, Jr. McDonald's flying career began in 1928 at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery and continued as a U.S. Army cadet and wingman in General Claire Chennault's famed aerobatic flying group *Three Men on a Flying Trapeze*.

Much of the book focuses on McDonald's time in China where he worked hand in hand with Chennault to lay the foundation for what would become the *Flying Tigers*.

He served as a combat pilot, trained the Chinese Air Force, and made hundreds of life saving flights through the Himalayas. Through McDonald's presentation, guests will experience first-hand adventures including the Japanese invasion of Hong Kong, a harrowing landing in the middle of the Yangtze River, and countless flights ferrying world-famous passengers and high-value cargo for the China National Aviation Corporation.

The basis of the McDonald's book is more than 30,000 pages, letters, and photos his father shared with friends and family during his 11 years as a pilot in China and the USA.

The 30,000 pages, weighing over 160 pounds were requested by the Smithsonian Museum for their archives. They were officially presented to the Museum on May 15th. The Smithsonian only makes 75 such requests each year, adding to the significance of the book. To date over

1,000 books have been sold.

ABOUT THE *FLYING TIGERS*

The First American Volunteer Group (AVG) of the Chinese Air Force in 1941–1942, nicknamed the *Flying Tigers*, was composed of pilots from the United States Army Air Corps (USAAC), Navy (USN), and Marine Corps (USMC), recruited under presidential authority and commanded by Claire Lee Chennault.

The shark-faced nose art of the *Flying Tigers* remains one of the most recognizable image of any individual combat aircraft or combat unit of World War II.

The group consisted of three fighter squadrons of around 30 aircraft each. It trained in Burma before the American entry into World War II with the mission of defending China against Japanese forces. The group of volunteers was officially members of the Chinese Air Force.

The group first saw combat on 20 December 1941, 12 days after Pearl Harbor (local time). It demonstrated innovative tactical victories when the news in the U.S. was filled with little more than stories of defeat at the hands of the Japanese forces, and achieved such notable success during the lowest period of the war for both the U.S. and the Allied Forces as to give hope to America that it might eventually defeat the Japanese.



AVG pilots earned official credit, and received combat bonuses, for destroying 296 enemy aircraft, while losing only 14 pilots in combat. The combat records of the AVG still exist and researchers have found them credible. On 4 July 1942 the AVG was disbanded. It was replaced by the 23rd Fighter Group of the United States Army Air Forces, which was later absorbed into the U.S. Fourteenth Air Force with General Chennault as commander. The 23rd FG went on to achieve similar combat success, while retaining the nose art on the leftover P-40s.

The *Flying Tigers*, from 1942 to 1945, decimated over 1,000 Japanese aircraft, 184 merchant ships, destroyed 817 bridges and 1,225 locomotives. They also killed over 60,000 Japanese troops. The Flying Tigers, with their shark-faced Tomahawks not only raised millions of Chinese and American spirits, but also showed that a seemingly invincible opponent wasn't as strong as they once thought.

Today, the *Flying Tigers* are known throughout China as an admirable squad of courageous soldiers. Across China there are several

monuments, memorials and museum exhibits honoring the Flying Tigers. In fact, the only exclusive Flying Tigers museum is located in the village of Zhijiang in Hunan Province.

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