

Chungking & Changsha Rotary Clubs under Japanese Bombing

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A photograph taken by Imperial Japanese Army reporters on 16 June 1940 showing bombs from heavy bombers exploding on Yu Chung Peninsula, Chungking (重慶渝中半島)

The Great Bombing of Chungking in 1938-1944

Today is the 80th year after the skirmishing between Japanese and Chinese troops on the frontier led to what became known as the Marco Polo Bridge Incident (七七盧溝橋事變) happened on 7 July 1937 at Peiping of the Republic of China (中華民國北平特別市). The Imperial Japanese Army then made use of the Incident as an excuse to launch full scale aggression to China.

By the end of October 1938, the Japanese had taken Peiping (*Beijing*) (北平), Shanghai (上海), Nanking (*Nanjing*) (南京), and Wuhan (武漢). As a result, Chiang Kai-Shek's (蔣中正) Nationalist government was forced to relocate to the mountainous city of Chungking (*Chongqing*) (重慶) in Szechuen (*Sichuan*) Province (四川省) in Southwestern China. The city is five hundred miles further inland than Wuhan and surrounded by treacherous terrain, meaning that it was out of the Imperial Japanese Army's reach. Confronted with this reality, the Japanese hoped to topple the Nationalist capital, and by extension, the government, by destroying the morale of the people of Chungking with air power. To this end, the first bombing attack was launched on 26 December 1938. This attack was followed by several more over the course of the next month, but none were particularly effective, thanks to the poor weather.

These winter attacks were followed by a brief respite for the people of Chungking, but by the summer of 1939, the Japanese were ready to try again. They hatched a plan called "Operation 100" to bomb the people of China into submission. On May 3, Japanese bombers dropped incendiary bombs on the new capital, burning hundreds of people. The bombers returned the next day and dropped more

incendiaries, burning many more people, some of whom were killed while trying to climb the city walls to escape the fire. "Operation 100" continued until November 1939, with many bombings and thousands of deaths. From the beginning, the Japanese bombed Chungking with the intention of killing civilians in the hope of destroying Chinese morale and forcing the country to surrender. This practice, which was to become widespread throughout the world during the Second World War, was pioneered by the Japanese during their 1931 bombing campaign in Manchuria.

The Japanese bombed Chungking frequently from 1938 until 1944, meaning that the city was the target of the longest sustained bombing campaign of the war. To cope with this long campaign of terror bombing, the people of Chungking constructed an extensive web of bomb shelters, the most of any city in the world. By November 1943, there were 1,823 bomb shelters in the city, with a combined capacity of over 444,000 people. This was still inadequate, however, because the city's population was swollen by the influx of thousands of refugees fleeing the Japanese invasion.

Public and private shelters became an important feature of wartime life for the citizens of Chungking, who spent plenty of time underground to escape the frequent Japanese air raids. However, the shelters were of varying quality, meaning that the poor people forced to use public shelters suffered a disproportionate share of the casualties, in contrast to the wealthy and well-connected who stayed safe in superior private shelters. This disparity in the quality of the shelters was to prove fatal during one 1941 air raid.

On the night of 5 June 1941, Japanese bombers attacked the city, catching the people of Chungking by surprise. More than 10,000 people crowded into a large shelter known as the Great Tunnel, which only had the capacity to house half as many. In addition, the shelter did not have an adequate oxygen supply. As the bombing continued over the course of hours, the tunnel grew swelteringly hot, and the kerosene lamps dimmed as the tunnel ran out of oxygen. When the lamps went out, a panic ensued, and the people crowded in the shelter ran for the exits, which were sealed by gates that only opened from the outside. The result was a deadly stampede that lasted for hours. By the time the air raid ended and government forces finally arrived to help, countless people had been trampled and suffocated to death. The death toll of this great stampede remains disputed to this day, with estimates ranging from 9,000 to 12,000 people killed.

By the time of the last raid in December 1944, the people of Chungking had been terrorized but were not defeated. Throughout the Great Bombing of Chungking, the Japanese dropped around 22,000 bombs on the city, killing around 15,000 people and injuring over 20,000 more in some 268 air raids. Still, the Imperial Japanese militarism was unable to destroy the morale of the Chinese people and eventually surrendered by August 1945.





Chungking street scene before bombing



Chungking after bombing



March 1940 Chungking – A Japanese bomber was shot down. (National Geographic photo)



“Warphans” were organized to form children’s choir in Chungking.

Rotary Carries on in Indomitable Chungking

While Rotary clubs located in cities lying on the northern and eastern China were occupied by the Imperial Japanese military forces, and activities were suspended, new Rotary clubs were gradually formed in the Free China portion of the western mountainous inland, such as Kunming (昆明社) (May 1937); Sian (西安社) (August 1937); Chungking (重慶社) (November 1937); Chengtu (成都社) (January 1939); Lanchow (蘭州社) (November 1943); Kweilin (桂林社) (June 1944) Clubs, etc., of which all these cities were the hubs of the Allied Forces that attracted the frequent bombing by the Imperial Japanese Forces.

The Rotary Club of Chungking (重慶扶輪社) was about two years old in 1939. The Club then had 30 members. Under such a hard time of great bombing, how could the Chungking Rotary Club strive to carry on the services? To have a glimpse of the hard time and difficulties, let us read a piece of meeting report from the regular Chungking Rotary Club newsletter called 《The Gorges》:

--- Chungking Rotary Club Bulletin 《The Gorges》 8 June 1939

The reason why there was no issue of 《The Gorges》 during May is obvious by now to everybody within reach of radio or newspaper. Two of the worst raids came on Thursday; the day of our worst raid showed an attendance of 13!

I am afraid that no Chungking Rotarians will ever be able to hear the words ‘manifest destiny’ relating to any nation’s plans without recalling the piteous wails of little children, torn and mangled, or the screams of men and women burning while imprisoned in the wreckage of flaming buildings.

Last week another meeting of 13 Rotarians gathered together. ‘L. T.’ Chen took the chair in Chaucer’s absence. The time was spent giving reports of our Club members.

We regret to report the death of ‘Steady’ Y. C. Hsu, of the International Peace Committee, after the bombing of May 3. ‘Steady’ was a former member of Tsinan and had only recently joined our Club.

‘Dent’ Chen had his home and office completely destroyed.

‘David’ Ngan had his office hit by a bomb and his home burned. His family were lost for three days, but all safe.

‘Donald’ T. C. Fan’s office was demolished by the same bomb that killed 100 people in the park.

Arnold and Lois Vaught was badly shaken and scorched but not burned.

At least 21 bombs have landed within 200 yards of the Canadian Mission Business Agency but Gordon and Clara are still carrying on.

Secretary Gordon is to be congratulated for his uniting efforts to hold the club together.

Chairman ‘Chaucer’ Wu has the honor to be the Secretary-General of the newly formed government of the Special Municipality of Chungking.

We are glad to report the receipt of \$2,000 from the Shanghai Rotary Club for bombing relief. The Rotarians on the International Relief Commission are asked to administer this.

NEXT MEETING: Y.M.C.A. 1 P.M. (Dug-out Available.)

Some news released by Rotary International to the world-wide readers

--- [The Rotarian] June 1940.

In 'China's Pittsburgh'

"We Are Coming Up" headlines a recent item in *«The Gorges»*, publication of the Rotary Club of Chungking, China. "In spite of the occasional noon 'air alarm' we had 24 present." The editor goes on to report the induction of five new members. Chungking, a city some 900 miles inland from Shanghai, has been styled "the Pittsburgh of China" because of the tremendous industrial development which has been made there during the last year.

--- [Rotary International News Letter] 18 April 1941.

They Know They Have Been Bombed!

The Rotary Club of Chungking, China, with a membership of 26, has sent a check of \$70 (U.S.), representing about \$1,250 (Local Currency), to the Rotary Relief Fund. This Club is located in a city that has the unique experience of being bombed almost constantly for three years. With this contribution was the following letter:

"The Chungking Rotary Club has raised this sum among its members for Rotary International Relief. The response on the part of the Chinese members of the Club was admirable. Quite a number of our members have lost most of what they had in the bombings of this last two years, but they are carrying on in fine spirit and we can boast today of a real live club with a steady improvement in our attendance records.

Out of this end of a war crazed world we have learned that Rotary has real meaning for every last man of us. It is too bad that distance makes it impossible for you to join us in one of our meetings and catch for yourself the spirit of our Club in a place that has supposed to have been wiped out."

Truly a fine statement and contribution. Please read this letter to your club members. They will know what to do! Remember, all checks should be made payable to

Rotary Relief Fund Committee

35 East Wacker Drive

Chicago, Illinois

--- [The Rotarian] October 1941.

They Know What Bombing Means!

Donating \$70 (U. S. currency) to the Rotary Relief Fund, the Rotary Club of Chungking, China, repeatedly the victim of bombings, reports, "Quite a number of our members have lost most of what they had in the bombings of these last two years, but they are carrying on in a fine spirit, and we can boast today of a real live Club with steady improvement in our attendance records."

Reports at the Rotary International Convention

To have more insight, it is better for readers to watch three quoted reports by Rotarians from China who spoke to the world in front of the Rotary Convention congregations.

The first one is quoted from the statement of George Ashmore Fitch (費吳生), Chungking Rotary Club (重慶扶輪社) President 1942-1943, at the Club Presidents' Assembly, 34th Rotary International Convention, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A., on 18 May 1943.

George Ashmore Fitch, was born in Soochow, China (大清國江蘇省吳縣), an American missionary first joined Shanghai Rotary Club (上海扶輪社) in the 1920s, and later Club President in 1930-1931. By 1937 Fitch was the national head of the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) in Nanking (*Nanjing*) when the city was invaded by the Imperial Japanese Army. He promptly joined efforts to form and maintain the International Relief Committee Nanking Safety Zone (國際委員會南京難民區難民收容所) (in which the lives of about 240,000 refugees were saved), soon serving as its director. When the Chinese government fled the city, Fitch also served as acting mayor of the city until the Japanese occupational forces installed their administration.

During the first several months after Nanking was occupied, when the "Nanking Massacre" occurred in 1937-1938, Fitch took and collected still and motion pictures depicting the Japanese atrocities. In February 1938 Fitch smuggled these images back to the United States in the lining of his overcoat and traveled throughout the country giving lectures and showing his collection of films and other evidence of the Japanese atrocities. Due to the fall of Nanking, Fitch moved his YMCA mission to Chungking.

Excerpt below is the story told by George A. Fitch at the Assembly, followed by a pictorial report published on the January 1944 Issue of *《The Rotarian》* Magazine:

You may be surprised to see me, an American, standing before you as president of the Chungking Rotary Club, and may ask: "Why isn't the president a Chinese?" Our clubs over there are all more or less international in their membership, and it has been the custom in most of them to alternate Chinese with foreign---American, British, or Dutch, or other nationals--- as president. And anyway, while I am an American by reason of the fact that my parents were born in this country, I have grown to consider myself more Chinese than American for I was born in that country and my admiration for those people is so great. They are like us in so many ways---in their natural democracy, in their love of independence and freedom, in their splendid sense of humor, in thrift and industry---that I would be very proud to call myself a Chinese.

Incidentally, life in Free China these days is not easy, nor does the Rotary club find it easy to maintain regular meetings. We know what it is to have to rush out from a meeting and take shelter in the caves that honeycomb Chungking. We have seen houses all about us collapse as if they had been made of pasteboard. We have had thousands and thousands killed or brutally maimed almost at our side, and sometimes it just hasn't been possible to hold a meeting for weeks and weeks on end.

There were months when the Japanese came over day and night. I remember one period when for eight days and nights we had hardly any sleep. To my mind it is amazing the way that comparatively small handful of Rotarians in Chungking have stuck by their guns. They are inspired by the principles, the ideals of Rotary, the Chinese and foreign group alike, and are determined that, though Rotary has for the time being been eclipsed in those great coastal cities of China---they can no longer function under Japanese rule---they are determined that Rotary shall not die in Free China.

We speak of problems and we are here to discuss them today. I would like to mention a few that we face out there. I have mentioned the air raids which are a very real problem, although for the past several months we have not had an air raid in Chungking. They have had them in Nanking and some of the other cities, but, thanks to those gallant Flying Tigers under General Chennault, thanks to the mere handful of American army aviators who are now helping in the defense of West China, Chungking has had comparative peace, and with that peace Rotary has been able to meet with complete regularity for the past many months.

But there are other serious problems---a place to meet. Most of the buildings in Chungking have been destroyed. Many have been rebuilt today, of course, but one after another of the places where we held our luncheon meetings, or "tiffin," as we all call it there, were bombed out of existence, or so seriously damaged that they could not be used.

Sometimes we would meet in a Chinese restaurant and have a Chinese meal, only to find that the next week it was gone. Sometimes, for two months, in fact, we met in the New Life Movement headquarters restaurant, where we were served a very simple Chinese meal which we had to eat with chopsticks. More recently we have been fortunate in being able to have the main dining room of the new Victory Hotel. You immediately picture a rather fine hotel building, I presume, but it is a pretty crude structure. The room will only seat fifty people, the furnishings are of the most primitive type, but there, with a good chef who knows how to cook Russian food, we do get a fairly good luncheon each Thursday.

But finances are one of our greatest problems. The cost of living in Chungking, in all West China, has gone up from between sixty- to seventy-fold---not sixty to seventy percent, but sixty- to seventy-fold---six thousand to seven thousand percent. And many of our members are finding it extremely difficult just to exist under those circumstances. Most government offices, the banks and some of the institutions, give living allowances. Of course, that helps their employees to ameliorate this difficulty, but even a vice cabinet minister today receives so little in comparison with what it costs to live and support his family that he has to count the pennies, and when he has to pay out \$35 in national currency---which is only \$1.75 over here---for luncheon, and a pretty light luncheon at that, he has to think twice before doing it.

Of our members, a few are in educational or mission work, and they are the most seriously affected. And yet these men do so feel the importance of carrying on that many of them, practically all of them, are making great sacrifices in order to attend those meetings regularly.

I am proud of the attendance of Chungking Rotary, also the attendance of some of those other clubs in China's great west. We have no great problem in the matter of program, for naturally in a capital city there are many people of interest coming and going, members of the different embassies, newspapermen, professional men of various types, travelers who have come down to us from Mongolia or Tibet, or from the war fronts, and, of course, our own men are always full of things of interest to tell us.

Just before I left, my last meeting, we had the Polish charge' d'affaires speak on the subject, "Poland Flights Back," and he was introduced by a young, very attractive Polish woman newspaper correspondent. And the week before that we had no other than V. K. Wellington Koo, who for years has been ambassador to the Court of St. James in London. Getting good programs is perhaps the least of our problems.

Another problem that is not so serious is the finding of outlets for such funds as we may be able to collect, or the opportunity to be of service. You can easily imagine in a city like Chungking, with refugees coming from the East, forced out as they have been by the millions by the Japs -- between forty and fifty million Chinese have been forced from their homes to wander, most of them they know

not where---that among these are many of the very finest type of people, university professors, professional men, governmental officials, and others.

We have thousands of “warphans,” as they call them, children who have been made orphans by this war, and over five million Chinese soldiers have been killed in this terrible war. We have our air raid victims. One of the most serious disasters occurred during eighteen hours of continuous alert, when people were not allowed to leave the shelters, these underground caverns dug by human hands out of the rock. The air naturally gets bad, stifling, people become sick, panic strikes into their hearts as the bombs fall directly overhead, and disaster occurs. Such a disaster occurred only a little over a year ago when more than two thousand people were trampled to death in a panic which ensued. So our problem in that regard is in gaining enough funds to be of assistance, and I wish at this time to thank those clubs here in America which have remembered us and sent funds to the Rotary Club of Chungking for distribution for these worthy enterprises.

I could go on with other problems that we face over there, but some of them are hardly applicable to the American scene. I thought, though, that you would be interested in knowing that, in spite of these things that we face out there, Rotary in China still carries on and is planning for expansion. A new club will shortly be opened in that great city halfway between Hong Kong and Chungking known as Kweilin, the half-way stop on the old air route. Of course, the planes no longer go to Hong Kong. And we are looking to establish clubs in other parts of that country. We cannot go rapidly, chiefly on account of the very difficult financial situation, the gravity of which I cannot over-emphasize. Aside from its bearing on Rotary, its effect on the whole country is most serious. If the Chinese do not find ways and means of licking this problem now, I fear for the worst.



May 1943 -- Three men from the fronts met at The 34th Rotary International Convention, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A. (middle) George Ashmore Fitch, President of Chungking Rotary Club, China; (left) Colonel Carlos P. Romulo, of Manila, The Philippines, Aide to General Douglas MacArthur and Past Vice-President of Rotary International; (right) Lieutenant “Dick” Harrison, young veteran of three actions.



BORN IN China and long a "Y" head there, the author has survived 400 air raids. Here he (left) surveys damage in downtown Chungking.

Rotary Carries On in Indomitable Chungking

By George A. Fitch

Immediate Past President,
Rotary Club of Chungking, China

"AIR-RAID shelters provided." That inducement to attend next week's meeting appears as a footnote in every issue of *The Gorges*,* the bulletin of the Rotary Club of Chungking. And more

times than I care to count or remember have my fellow Rotarians and I had to avail ourselves of those accommodations. Enemy bombs are no respecters of the Thursday-noon "tiffin" hour.

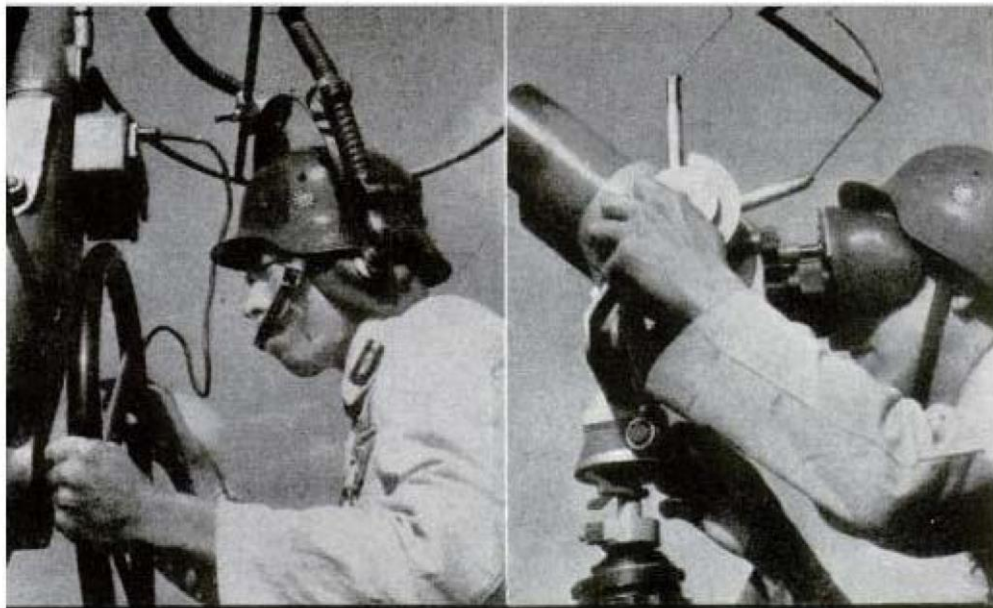
Life in Free China is not easy these days, nor does the Chungking Rotary Club find it easy to meet. We know what it is to jump up from our luncheons and rush for shelter in the caves that honeycomb the city. We have seen houses crushed as if pasteboard, human beings killed and maimed by the thousands. For months the enemy came over day and night—there were eight such days

* So named because Chungking is at the upper end of the world-famous gorges of the Yangtze River.

and nights when we had hardly any sleep.

In the 300 raids of the past four years, most of Chungking's buildings have been destroyed or badly battered, although many have been rebuilt in recent months during the comparative peace Chungking owes largely to General Chennault's gallant Flying Tigers and the handful of American Army fliers now helping to defend Free China.

During those first years, however, one after another of the places where we held our "tiffins" was bombed flat, or so seriously damaged that it could not be used. In one six-month period we ate our Rotary luncheons with chop-



"PLANES approaching!" First warning of impending attack on Chungking comes from the soldier at the sound detector. . . . Then antiaircraft gunners train their sights on gnats in the sky.



THE SIRENS MOAN and set off a routine six years old: the calm trek of the people—books, bedding, and babies in arm—to the shelters. . . . This cave (below) has light, heat, and water.

Photos: China Film from Gaumont; Cancellere from Acme; Kwang; International News



sticks, for we were then meeting at the headquarters of the New Life Movement, where only the simplest Chinese fare was available.

Recently we have been able to reserve the main dining room of the new Victory Hotel. Perhaps you picture a rather elegant hotel building, alive with war correspondents, gold-braided officers, and glamorous female spies. But the Victory is actually a pretty crude structure. The dining room seats but 50 people; its furnishings are of the most primitive type. Still, with a chef who knows how to cook Russian food, we get a fairly good meal each Thursday.

The cost of living in Chungking—as in all West China—has gone up between sixty- and a hundred-fold. Many of our members find it difficult merely to keep alive under such circumstances. Most Government offices, the banks, and some other institutions give their employees living allowances in addition to their salaries, but in spite of such help, even a Vice-Minister in the Cabinet receives so little—in comparison with what it costs to support his family—that he has to count his pennies.

When you have to pay out \$35 in national currency—which is only \$1.75 in the United States—for a Rotary Club luncheon, you think twice before doing it. And once you have laid out your cash, you neither expect nor get much for it. With coffee at 300 Chinese dollars a pound and other imports proportionately expensive, our \$35 luncheons are not feasts exactly.

The cost of living had risen sixty-seven-fold when I left Chungking—not 67 percent, but 6700 percent!—and today it is nearer a hundredfold. Powdered milk,



for example, sells at \$25 (U.S.) a pound. Such prices hit the white-collar class hardest, of course, because the peasants, who form 85 percent of the population, live on the land, and the industrial workers must be paid on a rising scale to assure the production which we must have.

Can this vicious spiraling of prices be stopped? Government officials are doing their utmost. Under Dr. H. H. Kung, Minister of Finance and, an honorary member of Rotary, they have instituted vast financial reforms. They are encouraging the purchase of war bonds. They are collecting taxes in kind—and with increasing success. If her allies awake to the gravity of the situation and give China the supplies she must have to survive, she may be able to solve this problem.

How to pay for his meal is, then, one of the first problems the Chungking Rotarian faces on Rotary Day. Another great problem is the terrific physical inconvenience of getting to meetings. Chungking, remember, is built on a high, rocky promontory at the confluence of the Yangtze and Chialing rivers—which means all of us waste much time simply getting from one appointment to another. Often this involves a ten-minute walk downhill to the river, a 12-minute ride by ferry across the river, another 15-minute hike up hundreds of steep stone steps on the other side, a ten-minute wait, and a 15-minute bus-ride to one's destination. Going to my office every day was, I estimate, the equivalent of walking to the top of a 45-story building and down again. Except for the ramshackle and overcrowded busses, there are few motor-driven

CHUNGKING takes it again
... will dig out tomorrow.



THE ALL-CLEAR has sounded . . . and out of a dugout step Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek, symbols of intransigent China. (They dined shortly after their marriage in the author's home.)

Photos © NEA Service



AFTER THE BOMBS, the search. The city supplies crude coffins free. . . . But life in Chungking goes on, and this health station (below), built by American funds, starts it well for many babies.



vehicles, and not many can afford to use the man-powered rickshaws or sedan chairs.

For about six months when the raids were at their peak, these obstacles blocked Chungking Rotary from meeting at all. On a few other occasions several weeks have gone by without a meeting. Yet with these exceptions Rotarians in Chungking have stuck by their guns and have generally managed, somehow, week after week, to hold their Thursday sessions. They are inspired, both Chinese and foreign members alike, by the ideal of Rotary and by a particular determination that Rotary, which has been blotted out under enemy rule in the great coastal cities of China, shall not be extinguished in Free China. I am very proud of our attendance in Chungking, because I know what great sacrifices are behind the regular records of almost every member.

TRAVEL today is anything but easy anywhere in Free China. You are fortunate if you find yourself on top of an overloaded truck that probably breaks down two or three times during the day. You may have to spend the night in a very humble inn on a brick bed—a bed that is perhaps pretty well inhabited by undesirables before you take to it. Once, heading a convoy of 26 trucks loaded with badly needed goods for the Chinese Coöperatives, I made a trip over the Burma Road—17 days in a Ford car, dodging enemy aircraft, and with the dangerous highway itself providing more thrills to a mile than any other stretch of road in the world.

We have never had any great problem in the matter of Club programs. Naturally, a great many interesting people come and go in a wartime capital—embassy officials, newspapermen, travellers from the war fronts or from Mongolia and Tibet, "experts" of various types. Too, our own members are interesting men, full of interesting things to talk about. At the last meeting before I left Chungking we had the Polish Chargé d'Affaires, speaking on "Poland Fights Back." The previous week we had heard from Dr. V. K. Wellington Koo, China's Ambassador to England.

Another nonexistent "problem" is finding opportunities for service, and outlets for such money as we can collect. I only wish those Clubs in America which have remembered us and have sent money for our relief work in Chungking could see what miracles their gifts accomplish.

Although the Rotary Club of Chungking is comparatively small—there are but 35 members—it is by no means a wartime innovation. It is a Club which I personally helped to organize about ten years ago. A member of the then flourishing Shanghai Club, I had little thought in those days of ever living in Chungking, or for that matter of any of the tremendous events which have since occurred in that formerly inaccessible city at the far end of the Yangtze Gorges.

Chungking's wartime Rotarians are a fascinating combination of the older residents and the new immigrants. George Findlay Andrew, First Secretary of the British Embassy, this year's Club President, is a noted "Old China Hand" who has been everywhere in China and knows the country as few "foreigners" ever do. Our Vice-President is Dr. David Kiang, a prominent local physician. The Secretary, Eugene Lichtenstein, a man of great wit, who composed the last two verses of our Chungking Rotary song,* is an ex-Austrian. Most of the eight Clubs in Free China are international in their makeup, and it has been our custom in them to alternate Chinese with foreign nationals as Presidents. Perhaps this is the place to name those eight Clubs—each a small spark kept alive by great effort, from which the light of Rotary will some day again take flame throughout China. They are: Changsha, Chengtu, Chungking, Foochow, Kunming, Lanchow, Sian, and Wuchow.

Of course, Rotarians in occupied China are scattered or lying low. I was in Hong Kong on a special mission the week before the attack on Pearl Harbor. Fortunately I got out of that ill-fated

* See the October, 1941, ROTARIAN, page 51, for the complete song, the chorus of which runs as follows:
*Chungking, famous Chungking,
Of all the world's cities the most unique thing.
Some folks think it's hilly,
But we think that's silly,
So "Wan Sul," here's to Chungking.*

city by one of the last planes. While there I had dinner one night with Lem K. Chu, general secretary of the Y.M.C.A. in China and an ardent Rotarian. He lived in Kowloon, across the bay from Hong Kong. None of us could know, as we sat together, how close we were to great tragedy. Just five days later Lem, his wife, and four of their children were killed by a direct hit in an air raid. The oldest girl, in nurse's training, was at the hospital and was unharmed. A 10-year-old son was at school. The youngest of the family, like the child in the famous picture of the South Station bombing at Shanghai, sat in the midst of the debris which buried most of her family, unscathed and too young to understand. Lem Chu was a grand fellow, college educated, who had once lived as part of an American family in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Friendship had been his in America, but almost certainly it was scrap iron from America, flown in planes powered by American gasoline, that wiped out his life and that of his dear ones in that air raid.

Rotarian H. C. Mei, of the Shanghai Club, is lost somewhere in The Philippines, perhaps in a concentration camp. His son, Lincoln, is a second lieutenant in the United States Army. His lovely daughter, Julia—my goddaughter—was recently married in San Francisco.

THE problems of Rotary in Free China are only a miniature of the overwhelming and very grave problems that face the Chinese people today. Six years of war have taken the lives of 5 million. Between 5 and 9 million have died this year, or will die as the result of crop failures in the Province of Honan. Fifty million are homeless. Two million are orphans. Inflation spirals viciously upward, in spite of countermeasures. Hemmed in by the tightest blockade in the world's history, without planes to meet their enemy, without transportation to carry food to their starving people, and with all too little consideration from their allies, the Chinese are in desperate plight. Fortunately, Moscow and Cairo conferences assure us that China will not be forgotten.

The next one is quoted from Rotarian Wang Gung-Hsing (王恭行), a member of the Rotary Club of New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S.A., with classification as “consular service”, and who was China’s Consul General in New Orleans 1938-1950. Known affectionately as G. H., he was a nephew (堂姪) of Dr. Chengting T. Wang (王正廷博士). As a former member of Sian Rotary Club (西安扶輪社), Republic of China, G. H. told what he learned from Chungking to the congregation of the 35th Rotary International Convention at Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A., on 19 May 1944:

Rotarian Wang Gung-Hsing:

When the present conflagration broke out, two-thirds of the Rotary clubs in places where the Japanese had occupied, had to be blotted out by enemy occupation, but new clubs in Free China were established, and the Rotarians carry on, with the light of Rotary ideals burning in China.

Now, the problems confronting Rotary are quite numerous. For one thing, it is very difficult to fix a time for meeting because one never knows, when the time arrives, whether he will be in an air raid shelter or he will be able to go to the building where the meeting is to take place. Even if a Rotarian is able to manage to go to the building where the meeting is to take place, he cannot be sure whether that building would be standing up erect or in shambles.

Now, one interesting incident happened to the Rotary Club of Chungking. It was announced that meeting should take place on the fifth floor of a building, an air raid occurred. The next noon, when the Rotarians went to the meeting place, they found, to their great amazement, that that building had all floors blown in except the fifth one, which was still standing. (Laughter) The Rotarians scaled the broken stairways and had their meeting as usual. This shows how difficult it is to extinguish the light of Rotary, burning even in the midst of the darkness of warfare.

Now, the Rotarians are not only doing their duty but, in addition, during the first four months of this year, also organized two new clubs. Just to show you how Rotary is taking up this challenge of the time, to be a part of the long struggle of China, seven and one-half years now, with 5 million military casualties and 50 million made destitute---just to tell you the story of how Rotary responds to that challenge, I would like to ask my colleague from Changsha.

Bombing and the 4 Battles in Changsha

As introduced by G. H. at the same Convention session, Dr. William Winston Pettus (裴文坦醫生), Past President of Changsha Rotary Club (長沙扶輪社), Republic of China, shared his experience with the congregation. Pettus, 1912 born in Shanghai, was an American medical doctor graduated from Yale University. In June 1940, via Hong Kong (香港), from the United States he arrived in Changsha (長沙)---capital city of Hunan Province (湖南省), and set to work immediately at the Central Yale Hospital (湘雅醫院) because there were masses of sick and wounded civilians and soldiers. When the Japanese military took over Changsha city, the United States was still a neutral country, hence American properties were safe. The hospital compound became a major refugee camp. The Hospital, re-named as Xiangya Hospital in new China, is still in effective operation today under the wings of Central South University (中南大學湘雅醫院) (<http://www.xiangya.com.cn/>).

Dr. William Winston Pettus (Changsha, China):

I have been asked to tell you, in a few words, how one Rotary Club has carried on in an actual combat area. Changsha, for the five and one-half years, has never been more than ninety miles from the Japanese lines. During that time it has been the site of three major battles and of a great fire which destroyed 80 percent of the city, a city of over half a million people. That fire also destroyed the charter of the Rotary Club of Changsha and all of its records. Ninety percent of its members were forced to leave the city, so the Club died.

However, a year and one-half later, four Rotarians who still remained in the ruined city, reorganized the Club, and now it has between twenty and twenty-five members. I remember one meeting where we met just forty-eight hours before the city fell. However, the Chinese troops recaptured the city before the time for the following meeting, so we don't have to cancel any meetings because of the battle. (Laughter)

The war conditions have created great difficulties but they have also given us great opportunities for service. In the early years of the war, the greatest need in Changsha was for relief work for war refugees. At the instigation of the Rotary Club, the Changsha Relief Society was formed. This is not a Rotary committee but was organized by Rotarians, and for the past three years all the executive officers have been Rotarians.

During the second battle of Changsha, on three hours' notice this committee afforded protection and quarters for 17,000 refugees. On three other occasions they set up rice kitchens which famine threatened the city and fed 10,000 people for three months.

Rotarian Wang has told us something of the international nature of Rotary in China. Our Club has six presidents from four different nationalities. We use English and Chinese interchangeably in our meetings because all the members know both languages.

However, there is one aspect in which we are not international and that is the food which is served in our meetings. That is pure Chinese. So, when you come to visit us after the war, as I hope many of you will, I advise you to have a lesson or two in how to handle chopsticks before you come so you won't go away hungry. (Applause)

At the same Convention but in another Discussion Forum on 20 May 1944, Dr. William Winston Pettus, Past President of Changsha Rotary Club, China, shared with the congregation some more of his experience:

I might say a word or two more about some of the activities of Rotary in China. I would like to mention the economic aspect. As you know, there is an inflation in China which is worse now than any country that has suffered in modern times, except, perhaps, Germany and Russia during the last war.

The price of rice, which determines the basic cost of living in 1937 was \$7 a bushel. When I went there in 1940 it was \$15. When I left in 1943, in Changsha, it was \$300 and in Kunming, \$1,100. This, of course, has hit the white-collared classes the worst. That is the group that Rotary draws from.

There is one member of my Club, the most outstanding Chinese surgeon in the whole town, who couldn't afford to pay an initiation fee the equivalent of one American dollar. That was literally true. So, that fee was paid by another Rotarian, and, in order to save his face, he was told that he was merely filling the classification of another man who was away.

That man, incidentally, had spent one week, when the Japanese were approaching the city, evacuating the materials of his hospital and utterly neglected his own personal effects, so that when, during the battle, his own house was burned, he lost everything except for a few clothes which his wife had evacuated for him. But a man of that caliber, Rotary, naturally, would do anything to get.

Let me mention a few ways in which Rotary has met this difficulty of economics. One is the fact that Rotary International very generously, in 1937, fixed the exchange for Rotary dues at 2.01 to 1. The present exchange is about 40 to 1 but it is fixed to 2 to 1, so the amount of our dues to Rotary International is about 25 cents American money for six months, instead of \$2.25.

Rotary International doesn't get much out of that financially but they get a tremendous amount out of it from the point of view of men they get in Rotary in China.

The problems of meals was a very acute one in our Club, because if you go to a restaurant, well, in Kunming, you have to pay \$50 to \$100 for a meal, in Chinese money, which would be several dollars in America, which a white-collared man can't afford, when his salary may be \$1,000 Chinese money a month. So, in our Club, the wife of one of our members personally went out and bought the food to be prepared for each meal, and the employees of the college where our meeting is held personally prepared it. So, we were able to keep the cost down to \$5 Chinese money, which is a quarter in American money.

Another difficulty we have is in the matter of transportation. I don't think there has been a District Assembly in six or seven years. To go from our Club to Kunming, where the District Governor is, would take about two weeks, and there are three other clubs which are much further than we. To go from one end of the District to the other would take about two months, so that the District Governor simply can't visit all of the clubs.

We were entirely cut off from Rotary literature about two and one-half years ago. The only things we have received since then have been a few air mail letters. For two years before that time, when our District office was in Shanghai, the Japanese wouldn't let Rotary mail go through because they were suppressing Rotary at that time.



Rotarian G. H. Wang, New Orleans, Louisiana, RI Director John Ilott, Rotarian William W. Pettus, Changsha, China, converse at the 35th Rotary International Convention at Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A., on 19 May 1944.

William Winston Pettus, M.D. --- A Life for China during the Great Battles Changsha

William Winston Pettus's short life (1912-1945) of 33 years spanned three major wars---beginning in the Chinese Revolution of 1911-1912, crossing World War I, and ending with the close of the World War II. His persistence of leading the utmost hospital service under the battles fire was incredible.

Pettus was born in Shanghai, 25 February 1912, where his parents, like many other Americans from interior cities, were refugees escaping from the dangers of civil war between the northern warlords and the southern power led by Dr. Sun Yat-Sen (孫文). His next home was Peking (北京) where his American Christian missionary father, William Bacon Pettus (裴德士), was President 1916-1945 of the College of Chinese Studies (華文學院).

Dr. William Winston Pettus dedicated his life in this part of the Yale-in-China Hospital's (*Hsiang-Ya Hospital*) (湘雅醫院) history in Changsha in the years of 1940-1945, with his body buried in the Hospital garden until today.

The first Japanese aggression to Changsha in 1939

The First Battle of Changsha (17 September 1939--6 October 1939) was the first of four attempts by the Imperial Japan's aggression to take the city of Changsha. It was the first major battle of the war to fall within the time frame of what is widely considered World War II. By October 10, Chinese forces had completely regained their former territories in northern Hunan Province, southern Hupeh (*Hubei*) Province (湖北省) and northern Kiangsi (*Jiangxi*) Province (江西省).

In 1940 Pettus and his wife again sailed for China via Southeast Asia and the British Crown Colony Hong Kong. They finally arrived in Changsha and set to work immediately because there were masses of sick and wounded civilians and soldiers. When the Japanese military took over Changsha city, the United States was still a neutral country, hence American properties were safe. The Chinese staff of Central Yale Hospital, many of them trained in America, and the American nurse, gave the new couple a warm welcome. With the shortage of workers, Pettus's wife, though not officially on the staff, was given official positions when the Hospital was shorthanded (it usually was) and, official or not, she always gave a helping hand. There was much to be done, for work, even in unoccupied China, was affected by bombings and the repeated efforts of the Japanese to advance west. The capture of Changsha, an important point on the Canton-Hankow Railroad (粵漢鐵路), without which they could not cut China in two, was a major objective. Three times over a span of many months, the city or its suburbs was temporarily taken. The first time Pettus was useful as a neutral, protecting Chinese women and children and American property. Pettus took over 70% of the hospital's surgical operations while Maude, serving as the head nurse, cared for 80 patients in the Hospital together with 10 nurses.

Pettus's letters show how indefatigably he served under terrible conditions, his medical and surgical skill in constant use. The months passed quickly.

"We were working against odds because on September 26 four-fifths of the doctors and nurses had left for the South rather than submit to an intolerable tyranny. We had only two doctors and three nurses left, but a dentist and a bacteriologist offered to help. The operation room coolie could give anaesthesia and deliver babies. A nearby lady missionary found a job for herself washing blood and dirt off patients waiting for operations, and a university teacher travelling through Changsha acted as a blood donor.

"The Changsha International Relief Committee had arranged for three refugee camps to be opened if the fighting came too close. One was to be on our mission high school campus, now deserted. We were looking around the buildings late in the afternoon planning where we might house refugees when the gate man came rushing up with the news: 'The Japanese are here!' . . . Petrified men, women,

and children came running from all directions and, forming a mob, tried to jam their way into the hospital. They had seen the soldiers and were rushing for the only safe place they knew---American property. We ushered them across the street to the refugee camp just before the next small group of Japanese soldiers arrived. Later they marched by in full force---long lines of infantry, artillery and cavalry.

“Whenever the soldiers ceased coming for a short time, a group of refugees, arms loaded with baskets, bedding and babies, would run up to the mission gate and pass in. By dark, over 3,000 homeless civilians had entered. . . .

“Two other mission representatives and I hunted up the Japanese army headquarters and called on the General-in-Charge to arrange for the protection of foreign mission property. He agreed to send inspectors around to the various mission compounds and when convinced that they contained no soldiers or military supplies would issue notice forbidding the entrance of Japanese troops. Foreign property would be respected.

“When I returned to the Hospital I was informed that one of our carts carrying five hundred pounds of rice had been commandeered together with four of our men who were pulling it. The missionary escorting it had been threatened with violence if he attempted to follow the soldiers who made off with it. However one of the cart pullers escaped, returned and told us where they had gone so we tracked them down and found the Officer-in-Charge.

“When we pointed out that he was violating American property he offered to pay something for the rice but our provisions were not for sale. After two hours of arguing in sign language and bad Chinese, I found an interpreter to write the following in Chinese characters which the officer could read: 《Your commanding officer promised me this morning that American property would be respected. If you refuse to return the rice I shall have to take the matter up with him.》 The officer’s next move was typically Japanese. He opened one of the bags, examined the rice, made some disparaging remarks about it, asked if all the rest were of the same poor quality and told us to take it away: the rice was too poor for the Japanese army. All faces were saved and everyone was happy.

“The looting of the city was now in full swing. Every shop, even the ones whose entrances had been bricked up, were broken into. Japanese soldiers wandered in groups of two or three from house to house, and street to street looking first for money, then for small valuable articles. Objects too big to carry were generally smashed.

“In a field near the Hospital lay six bodies beginning to decay. All wore Chinese uniforms; all lay on their faces with hands tied behind their backs and bullet holes through their chests---a mute account of what happened to Chinese soldiers who were taken prisoner.

“One Japanese soldier, angered because a woman he sought had taken refuge inside the hospital gate, demanded entrance. The largest foreigner in Changsha (a Norwegian) filled the small door, blocking his path. The soldier placed the sharp end of his fixed bayonet against the foreigner’s chest but the latter was no coward and stood his ground. The bluff failed and the soldier retired. No soldiers entered the front gate of the mission compound where the refugees were, but five or six times every day or night they climbed over the low back wall and rummaged through some of the residences, indulging in petty looting.

“Twice, foreigners who reminded them that they were on American property were roughly handled, following which the soldiers left the way they had come. The news of the establishing of a refugee camp, spread over the countryside like wild fire. Men, women and children, pigs, chickens and cows swarmed to the gates. Many women had blacked their faces and rubbed manure on their clothes to make themselves disgustingly revolting.

“By the third day there were 8,000 refugees in the camp. Every inch of floor space in all the buildings was occupied; many of the doorways were blocked by people lying on the floor. Every tree sheltered a group. One little dugout scooped out of a bank the size of the space under my dining room table was occupied by a woman and her three children. The kitchens worked all day long to supply each refugee one bowl of rice usually served in the recipient’s lap and eaten with the fingers.

“We were forced to close the gates first to men, allowing women and children in, later to all newcomers. A large crowd camped outside the gate begging to be let in. Several Japanese soldiers passed by and searched their belongings for money and lootable objects. A number of men were beaten over the head with rifle butts. Some were commandeered to carry loot for the soldiers. Of these a few never returned and were never seen again by their families. Early on the morning of October 2, the Chinese troops reoccupied the city. What a relief! We could again take a deep breath and feel that we were free. As the fighting moved further to the northeast and transportation by stretcher became possible, the civilians who had been wounded and were still alive found it possible to reach the Hospital. Ninety per cent of the wounds were dirty; almost all of the fractures had developed bone infections which required amputation or months of painful treatment. A number of chest cases were bloated with air which escaped through the skin. They were panting for breath. The air in their cheeks gave them a peculiar facial expression which could be recognized as soon as they came into the dispensary. There were no abdominal cases---they had all died before they could reach the Hospital.

“One old man had a bayonet wound through his head because the five soldiers who searched his house were angered by finding nothing worth taking. About half of the men gave similar histories. One was forced to carry a load for the soldiers; when his strength gave out they left him with three bayonet wounds---one through the chest resulted in pneumonia; one through the spine left him paralyzed on one side of his body; another gave him a deep abscess of the flank. Another man arrived holding his head with his hands because all the muscles in the back of his neck had been severed by an attempted decapitation with an officer’s heavy sword. Six or seven others reached the Hospital in the same condition.

“The Hospital filled so rapidly that we couldn’t keep up. An average day consisted of seeing fifty in-patients, a hundred out-patients and doing five or six operations. I had two deliveries at the same time and one of these was a double-header (twins) followed by a profuse hemorrhage.

“The Japanese bombed heavily to liberate some of their rearguard that had been cut off. More casualties! Fresh ones this time. One man with both legs and an arm and his abdomen injured spent the day in the operating room getting two transfusions and undergoing three operations including an amputation.

“We were beginning to wonder how long we could keep it up at this pace. I was already six operations behind and more cases were arriving every day. It was ten days after the Japanese had left when I looked up at the end of an operation and saw the resident surgeon standing before me. He is not particularly handsome, but he looked mighty good to me. As the doctors and nurses returned in the course of a few days or weeks or months, we would be able to restore many of the bodies which had been injured during this ruthless invasion, but how long would it take to remove the hatred and bitterness which it had planted deep in so many hearts?”

After a brief occupation the Japanese retreated in 1942, and Pettus was among the first to return to Changsha. It was largely due to his efforts that medical work was begun again in the seriously damaged hospital.

In 1943, Pettus picked up a very rare liver problem and the family had to return to the United States for treatment. During his recuperation time, he learned how to fly a plane with the hope to use air

ambulances for emergent cases. He also took the opportunity for advanced study in surgery. In May 1944, Pettus was Rotary China's delegate in attending the 35th Annual Convention of Rotary International held in Chicago, Illinois. As soon as he was fully recovered, he left for China leaving behind his wife Maude and their two little daughters Ann and Sally.

The fourth Japanese aggression to Changsha in 1944

The Pearl Harbor Attack resulted the outbreak of the Pacific War in December 1941 made the United States properties in China were also under attack. The fourth capture of Changsha came after the Battle of Changsha in 1944 (also known as *the Battle of Hengyang* or *Campaign of Changsha-Hengyang*) which was an invasion of the city of Changsha and two invasions of Hengyang (衡陽市). In June 1944, the Imperial Japan deployed 360,000 troops to attack Changsha for the fourth time. The operation involved more Japanese troops than any other campaign in the Second Sino-Japanese War. Changsha was quickly captured by the Japanese.

Eventually Central Yale Hospital decided to retreat to remote inland areas. Pettus, no longer a neutral, decided to evacuate as much of the hospital staff and equipment as possible and go with them. Though civilians were fleeing from Changsha by the thousand, he managed, with the help of officials who valued the Hospital's services, to hire 16 river junks on which he loaded what of hospital equipment there was room for besides the staff and their families. They sailed down river and up a branch, where they anchored till they should learn of Changsha's fate. In a day or two it was rumored that the Japanese had been repelled again. Pettus slipped back by bicycle and government launch to see if it were true. He was one of the two foreigners allowed to enter the city. Pettus rode a bike back to the city, only to find that the Hospital was burnt down. It was a place of desolation. It was impossible to get food. He wrote:

"When we reached Hsiang-Ya (the hospital) late in the p.m. I had the shock of my life. Usually the hospital building is a landmark for a mile or two in every direction. But as we got near it, somehow I couldn't quite figure out where it was. Finally I saw a partially burnt building which looked suspiciously like it, but I actually turned away and went back to look three times before I definitely identified it."

As it turned out, the hospital walls were not badly damaged though the interior was gutted and the striking Chinese roof was gone.

"One part of the Hospital was still burning when we arrived. We helped the five servants who were there to get it under control. Stores of rice and coal, however, burned for days afterwards . . . The most serious loss (in equipment) was the X-ray machine . . . It was too large, heavy and easily damaged to transport. . . . The Japanese tried to destroy the motor and burn the dynamo (of the hospital power plant) but we had taken some of the parts with us and five days after the engineers got back we had running water and will have electricity soon."

"One thing which has impressed me tremendously is the general attitude of everyone toward the Hsiang-Ya Hospital. Before martial law was lifted, (a week ago) the words "Hsiang-Ya" seemed almost as good as the official password. I have been told by the county magistrates and also by several officers that when the Japanese took the Hospital there was a heated debate at the Chinese military headquarters on Yolo Shan (嶽麓山) (the fortified mountain across the river) as to whether or not they should shell the Hospital. Finally they decided that it plays too important a part and they would not shell it even though the Japanese were occupying it. A few days ago the provincial government made a gift to the Hospital of \$60,000 Chinese currency. This will help greatly in making a few temporary repairs---but even this is not enough for our immediate expenses."

Some of the staff stayed on at the mission hospitals en route temporarily, as the Changsha campus was largely destroyed and the work disorganized. The work of Yale-in-China (雅禮協會) (middle school, medical college, nursing school and hospital) was scattered to distant cities farther west, where, though crowded into improvised quarters like old temples and caves, it was relatively free from threats of invasion, though not of bombing. The medical school located in Kweiyang (*Guiyang*) (貴陽), capital of Kweichow (*Guizhou*) Province (貴州省), where they became associated with a government hospital. The way they got there can best be pictured by Pettus's description of the way they left for Chungking when the Japanese in their western advance sometime later threatened Kweiyang.

“Last month during the threat on Kweiyang, it was necessary for the school to evacuate from there to Chungking. At the last minute, through a special channel, they got the use of part of 11 trucks. That enabled them to get out about 60% of the college equipment. All of the students and some of the staff walked. At the half-way point, some of the girls were picked up by trucks of the Friends' Ambulance Unit (公誼救護隊), but the boys walked the entire 350 miles. Much of their personal belongings had to be abandoned. Now there is about one set of bedding for each two students.”

Pettus himself was detained by college business, and some days later brought up the rear with the last members of staff families. He and Wang, the driver, had a party of

“four women, five children, and a new-born baby to take with us. On Saturday morning we loaded up the ambulance; then I took the Chevy sedan over to the U.S. garage for a little final fixing. When I returned ready to start for Chungking, we found both water and oil leaking out of the Ford ambulance. It had a cracked block and water was running into the crank case and diluting the oil. That probably meant waiting another week for it to be repaired or else junking the car completely. I had asked so many favors of the army mechanics that I hated to go to them again (after having bid them farewell three times). But after failing to find anyone else who could do anything about it, I finally went to them. They were not equipped to repair a cracked block, but had some dope which they put in the radiator which might plug the hole. It was partially successful. They said the only hope of saving the motor was to take it out on the road and run it! So with much trepidation, we started for Chungking the next day. By the time we reached Chungking (we did get there) the leak was completely sealed off! With the ambulance fully loaded we were not able to get up the drive-way from the street to the campus, and there were four mountains to cross on the way to Chungking, so we had to unload about a third of the stuff and put eight people in the sedan.

“For the first half of the trip the road was either mud or snow. Without chains it would have been impassable. We saw a number of trucks which had gone off the road or broken down. The ambulance motor was too weak to get up some of the hills. So I would have to get out of the sedan and hold a wooden block behind the wheels of the ambulance. Wang would race the motor and crawl two or three feet up the hill before the motor stalled, whereupon I would block the wheel for him to get another start. This is the standard procedure for getting charcoal burning trucks up the steep hills. We tried to make Tung Tze which was 160 miles, about half way, the first night. But shortly before dark I got a flat tire. Our jack is for a truck and not very suitable for a small car. So I had to lie down in the mud and fiddle with it for a half-hour. After dark I had another flat and the tire was ruined beyond repair. With only three tires we could not proceed. So I sent everyone back to the last town, in the ambulance, for the night and I slept in the sedan. The next morning we patched a tire and got going again, with the inner tube almost sticking out of the bit cut and ready to pop at any time. Then the ambulance motor quit and we found water in the carburetor. We could not figure out where the water came from and whether it meant discarding the gas from that tank, until I remembered that in flying you always have to fill your gas tank at night rather than in the morning, because dew may precipitate inside the empty gas tank during the night. We found dew in our nearly empty gas tank, separated it from the gas, and proceeded merrily on our way, until the sedan motor quit. At that point the sedan had one tire about to pop, no spare, one light out, the generator out of commission,

the battery nearly dead, the brakes almost useless, and the motor dead. I was about to get out and walk the rest of the way to Chungking. Fortunately we had just gotten over the highest mountain and had only 2 miles of level road into Tung Tze. So the ambulance pushed the sedan into town, where we found an American FEA mechanic. He put about ten men on the car and in less than two hours had fixed everything, except the spare tire which was irreparable, and we ran into Chungking without any trouble!"

Medical Mission continued and created Blood Bank in Chungking

After months of unbelievably difficult journey, they arrived in Chungking. There, Hsiang-Ya Hospital joined with the better-equipped Central Hospital as its refuge place. Four hospitals in Chungking and environs invited Hsiang-Ya to share their quarters and facilities. Central, a government hospital, was chosen because of roomier accommodations and clinical facilities.

While in Chungking, Pettus's workload was exceedingly heavy. Of the five surgeons, three were on leave, so he performed 70% of the surgery of all types including chest operations. One time he conducted 8 operations during 30 hours. Apart from that, he had to search for blood supply for operation use.

In October 1944 he resumed his work at Hsiang-Ya, then located at Kweiyang, Kweichow, and later at Chungking.

"Even at that, the (1st and 2nd year) students sleep 30-60 in a room. One building has a wooden floor, the other two are of dirt. The 3rd and 4th year students are living in a couple of thatch-roofed huts. They have only 20-30 in a room. A couple of our professors sleep with the hospital house staff, in the bed of any intern or resident who happens to be out. Luckily, I have a room to myself. . . It is about 12 feet square, with a wooden floor and one glass window. I sleep on a wooden board, but expect soon the luxury of a rope bed. For \$4,000.00 (which is really cheap) I acquired a wicker set of two chairs and a small table which dresses up the room and makes it quite comfortable. There is a light, incomplete partition between my room and the next room, which was originally part of mine. On the other side are two brothers (Y. K. Wu and C. C. Wu). They are perfectly grand fellows and the two with whom I have most to do.

"I was amazed at the quality of work being done at the Central Hospital. In many respects it is superior to many teaching hospitals in America. A week ago I had my first major chest case there. It was a lieutenant who was wounded in the fighting around Hankow (Hankou) (漢口) in 1938. He was shot through the chest, developed an empyema and a non-expansible lung. He has a hole about 3 inches across in his chest with a big cavity. He will need three or four operations starting with a first stage thoracoplasty. His hemoglobin was 60%. So I went on a search for blood. I have now grouped about 15 Americans and British friends, including some of the Friends' Ambulance Unit, all of whom are now willing to give blood. We gave him one transfusion and took another pint to have it ready for the operation. It was the most difficult thoracoplasty I have ever seen, because the ribs were all deformed by the six-year old infection, and our incision was limited by the proximity of a large wound. He went into shock and for 15 minutes we could get no blood pressure. Then we got it at 50 for about an hour. We used the blood and all the saline they had in the hospital. Then a nurse and two doctors gave some more blood. In the meantime we got another boy from the Friends' Ambulance Unit (a Harvard fellow who had previously given 30 transfusions) who gave blood. After 5 transfusions we finally pulled him through. We kept him in the operating room for 12 hours before we dared move him. Now he is doing fine. It was a close call not only for the patient but also for us; because if we had lost our first major chest case it would have taken a long time before we would be able to get any more. . .

“The hospital work in July was exceedingly heavy. We usually have five surgeons, but two were away on vacation (including Y.K. Wu) and another was getting married. So I ended up with all the chest, urology, and men’s surgery patients, amounting to about 70% of all the surgery in the hospital. The wards were loaded with thoracoplasty and nephrectomy cases. There have been so many thoracoplasties that we now turn over most of the 2nd and 3rd stages to the house staff. The busiest time was one period of 30 hours, including two nights, when there were eight major operations on my service. Two of them were intestinal perforations due to typhoid. I had never seen one before, so it was surprising to get two in one day. One evening we had three emergency appendectomies after supper. The hospital is now building a new ward of 120 beds and a new operating suite is planned. That will help a lot, because we now have to refuse about two-thirds of the patients desiring admission because of lack of beds. Hsiang-Ya and Central Hospital together are also putting up some new buildings in which to give short courses to train people for medical rehabilitation work under the UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation) program.”

Pettus joined The Chungking Rotary Club which furnished fun as well as projects, and a meeting place for friends who were too scattered to see each other otherwise. It also furnished music. Pettus wrote of the Rotary Club music:

“Recently I have acquired a new job, assistant, assistant song leader for the Rotary Club. Every Rotary official here has an assistant, and most assistants have an assistant. Each man orders his inferior to do the work, so the man at the bottom is left holding the bag.”

Hospital work and teaching were not meeting all the crying needs of the sick and wounded in Chungking. There were only casual facilities for blood transfusions, and Pettus decided it was time to open a blood bank for the use of all the hospitals in Chungking. Interested friends and organizations contributed various items including broken refrigerators, which were mended (no new ones were obtainable nearer than Calcutta), and other equipment. The Chungking Rotary Club arranged to do all kinds of publicity, printed and visual, a large part of which was making people willing to give blood in a country where blood was considered life. The government press would do the printing free. Then suddenly came the end of the War. This project had to be dropped because its sponsors were leaving Chungking for their old homes and some of the hospitals would be moving too.

In the meantime, the Central Government located at the Provisional Capital Chungking had asked Hsiang-Ya to double its student body and hospital capacity in Changsha when the War should be over, to help meet the need of the new government program of public hygiene and western medicine covering all China.

“We drew up the basic plans for Hsiang-Ya’s work after the war. It will include a 500 bed hospital, 500 medical students, 300 nursing students.”

Pettus’s humor and his “disarming” smile brought him many an adventure, for the Chinese are very like the Yankees. One of his interesting patients was a Chinese general, Lieutenant General Yang Sen (楊森陸軍中將) (Governor of Kweichow Province 貴州省政府主席), whom he had occasionally run up against in his flights between Chungking and other Yale units.

Dr. William Winston Pettus was not merely a true Rotarian in his professional service as a surgeon. Other than treatment for hundreds of wounded and saving lives of thousands, under his able leadership, both of the Changsha Rotary Club and Chungking Rotary Club had joined in the establishment of the early blood banks in China in the cities of Changsha and Chungking, respectively.





Changsha after bombing

The Battle of Changsha in 1939

The city of Changsha, the capital of Hunan, has seen its share of battles. As an integral commercial center, it has also long been a target for those that wish to capitalize off of its successes and weaken the Chinese government. During the Second Sino-Japanese War, Imperial Japan made several attempts to capture the city of Changsha. From 17 September – 6 October 1939, one such attack took place.

As the countries of China and Japan waged multiple attacks against each other, the most populous of cities in China prepared themselves for battle. The cities of Shanghai, Peiping and Changsha were high on the list of places the Japanese wished to conquer. The ensuing war was a direct result of the economic imbalance and imperialist views of the Imperial Japan. They wished to dominate the Chinese and all of the China's economic resources.

In addition, China's abundant supply of raw materials, labor and crops made it a favorable country to try and secure. Japan also wanted to restore the country's morale after being defeated by the Soviet Union and feeling betrayed by the county of Germany. In the years prior to the war, China and Japan mainly engaged in short, intermittent engagements that took place in small village towns. It was not until the Marco Polo Bridge Incident that the true war began between Japan and China.

In 1937, the city of Shanghai experienced defeat as the Japanese claimed a victory over the city. As the battles continued, Japan continued their success by capturing the city of Nanking. Located in a major economic region for China, losing control over Nanking to the Japanese was a huge blow. The Japanese forces forged on as the Imperialist Army attempted to capture the very important city of Wuhan. After Nanking, Wuhan's value increased greatly because of the political, economic and military components that the city now housed. The Chinese were dead set on protecting the city, but unsuccessful against putting a halt to the Japanese Army. This led the Chinese government to move further into the interior and relocate to Chungking. Feeling confident about all of their successes, the Japanese Army moved onto Changsha. To their surprise, the Chinese forces were able to surround and defeat them in a battle that was hard-fought and that experienced thousands of casualties.

The Battle of Changsha (長沙戰役) that occurred in 1939 is said by many to be the start of a series of battles that would happen between the two countries. Even though the Chinese forces were able to hold back the Imperialist Japanese Army in 1939, the Japanese would be back on two more occasions. Changsha was the first major city not to be defeated by the Japanese, but they would also have to defend themselves in brutal attacks that occurred in 1941 and again in 1944. The combined battles would lead to the deaths of over 67,000 soldiers for the Chinese and 25,000 soldiers for the Japanese. It took more than 5 years and several attempts for Changsha to break down the Japanese stronghold and regain control.





In September 1939, the Japanese engaged in large-scale bombing of Changsha. The Japanese troops were unable to directly attack Chungking, and so they launched air attacks on Hunan and the southwestern cities of China, in an attempt to dent the morale of the Chinese.



In 1938, refugees set up wooden beds under a train that has pulled into Szechuen. Chinese civilians fled to Chungking by any means they could find over land or water.