



Smithsonian

National Air and Space Museum

16th Fighter Squadron Photograph Collection [Li]

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National Air and Space Museum Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	16th Fighter Squadron Photograph Collection [Li]
Identifier:	NASM.2013.0053
Date:	(bulk 1944)
Creator:	Li, Kuo Ching "K. C.", Jr.
Extent:	0.2 Cubic feet (1 slim document box; 74 copy photographs; 8 x 10 inches) 1.87 Gigabytes (43 digital image files (TIFF))
Language:	English .
Summary:	This collection consists of 74 modern 8 x 10 inch gelatin-silver print photographs and 41 digital image files (black and white and color) copied from photographs of the 16th Fighter Squadron and related subjects taken in 1944 by Kuo Ching "K. C." Li, Jr., a United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) fighter pilot assigned to the unit. Subjects include squadron personnel, aircraft, and local scenes in China. Several portraits of Li and his North American P-51 Mustang "The Vicious Virgin" are included.
Digital Content:	Image(s): NASM 9A10787, US Army Air Forces pilot Kuo Ching "K. C." Li, Jr. in the cockpit of his North American P-51 Mustang "The Vicious Virgin"; China, 1944.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Robert L. Liles, Gift, 2013, NASM.2013.0053

Processing Information

Arranged and described by Allan Janus, 2013; revised and encoded by Melissa A. N. Keiser, 2021.

Preferred Citation

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Restrictions

No restrictions on access.

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Biographical / Historical

Kuo Ching "K. C." Li, Jr. was born in Glen Cove, New York, in 1921, the son of Dr. Li Kuo Ching. He attended Friends Academy, Locust Valley, New York, and Kent School in Connecticut. Li studied engineering at Cornell University before enlisting in the Army Air Forces in June, 1942. He received his training at Craig Army Airfield in Selma, Alabama, in December, 1943. Li flew sixty-four missions in his P-51 Mustang "The Vicious Virgin," and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Soldier's Medal, the Air Medal and the Purple Heart. After the war, Li received a degree from Swarthmore College. Later, he took over management of his father's company, Wah Chang International Corporation, selling it to Teledyne Inc. (later known as Allegheny Technologies Incorporated) in 1967. Li later opened a restaurant, K.C.'s, on West 10th Street in New York City.

The 16th Fighter Squadron was constituted on November 20, 1940 as the 16th Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor). Equipped initially with Curtiss P-40 fighters, the squadron was activated at Hamilton Field, California on January 15, 1941. Assigned to the Tenth Air Force, the squadron deployed to the China-Burma-India (CBI) theater in March 1942. The squadron initially defended the Indian terminus of the vital "Hump" airlift route over the Himalayas between India and China, operating from the Assam Valley of northeast India. The squadron flew strafing, bombing, reconnaissance, and patrol missions in support of Allied ground troops during a Japanese offensive in northern Burma in 1943. In October 1943, the 16th Fighter Squadron was assigned to the Fourteenth Air Force and redeployed to southeast China for the defense of the Chinese end of the Hump and the air bases in the Kunming area. In 1944, the squadron was reequipped with North American P-51 Mustangs. The squadron returned to India in the fall of 1945 and sailed for the United States in November. The 16th Fighter Squadron was deactivated on December 13, 1945.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of 74 modern 8 x 10 inch gelatin-silver print photographs and 41 digital image files (black and white and color) copied from photographs of the 16th Fighter Squadron and related subjects taken in 1944 by Kuo Ching "K. C." Li, Jr. Subjects include identified portraits of squadron personnel, aircraft (including the Consolidated B-24J Liberator, Curtiss C-46 Commando, Curtiss P-40 Warhawk, Lockheed P-38 Lightning, and the North American P-51C and P-51D Mustang) and several photographs of other squadrons (the 9th Photo Reconnaissance Squadron and the 118th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron), and details of aircraft nose art. Several portraits of Li and his P-51 "The Vicious Virgin" are included. Places identified include Nanking, Chengkung and Kwelin, China.

Arrangement

The collection is divided into two series; Series 1 (Physical) consists of 74 print photographs arranged in their original order. Series 2 (Digital) consists of 41 digital image files grouped into three subject folders: Aircraft and Activities, Aircraft Nose Art, and Views of Local Area.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Aeronautics
- Consolidated B-24J Liberator
- Curtiss C-46 Commando

Curtiss P-40 Warhawk Series
Lockheed P-38 Lightning Family
North American P-51C Mustang
North American P-51D Mustang
World War, 1939-1945 -- Aerial operations
World War, 1939-1945 -- China

Types of Materials:

Photographs

Container Listing

Series 1 (Physical), 1944

Box 1

Scope and Contents: This series contains 74 modern 8 x 10 inch gelatin-silver print photographs copied from photographs created in 1944. Photographs in this series have not yet been digitized.

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Series 2 (Digital), 1944

Scope and Contents: This series consists of 41 digital image files (black and white and color) scanned from photographs originally shot in 1944 and loaned by the donor in 2013 for copying by the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum.

[Aircraft and Activities](#)

[Aircraft Nose Art](#)

[Views of Local Area](#)

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