Another side to Flying Tigers' Story

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When people think about one of the most famous fighter plane outfits in World War II history — the Flying Tigers — they usually think about the American Volunteer Group (AVG) pilots who helped China fight the Japanese.  
Yet there were also some Chinese pilots who joined the Flying Tigers and fought alongside the Americans, and who are too often left out of the spotlight.  
Liu Hang, a visiting scholar at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, brought the untold side of the Flying Tigers story to Americans with an exhibit of photos displayed in North Carolina on Memorial Day.  
Liu is a Chinese journalist who has interviewed and photographed more than 30 Chinese veterans of World War II over the past 13 years.  
"They are forgotten heroes, and I hope their stories can be known by more people — they deserve to be remembered and honored," Liu said. "I got this chance to show Americans their stories, which is very meaningful to me."  
Liu said one of the veterans he photographed, Chen Bingjing, was one of the first 12 Chinese pilots to join the Flying Tigers. Like Chen, most of the Chinese pilots were sent to the US and trained at an air base in Arizona before they joined the US-China joint force.  
On Oct 13, 1943, Chen's bomber engaged with more than 30 Japanese Zero fighters while returning from a mission. His plane was hit, badly damaged, and he had to jump.

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