



# **ALL UNDER HEAVEN AND SHARED SKIES**

Memorialisation of Aviators in Nanjing  
between "Patriotism" and "Internationalism"

**Gotelind Müller**

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## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Memorialisation of “martyrs” (*lieshi* 烈士) is ranking high on the agenda of present-day China. In 2014, China established an official “martyrs’ memorial day” (*lieshi jinianri* 烈士纪念日) on September 30, i.e. at the eve of October 1, the official founding day of the People’s Republic (PRC). This recalls Mao Zedong’s 毛泽东 symbolically laying the foundation for the “Memorial stele to the people’s heroes” (*renmin yingxiong jinianbei* 人民英雄纪念碑) on Tian’anmen Square in 1949, to honour those who had “laid down their lives for the people” of China, contributing to the revolution’s final success.<sup>2</sup> As will be noted with this naming of the monument, at that time – and in concordance with Soviet practice – the preferred term was the more “positive” “heroes” (*yingxiong* 英雄), not *lieshi*, translated in China officially into English as “martyrs”, even though the Chinese term *lieshi* has a decidedly more “active” ring than the English translation which evokes Christian associations.<sup>3</sup> Different from a “hero”, though, a *lieshi* is supposed to not having survived his efforts for “the cause”, which is the apparent basis for the choice of the translation “martyr”.

*Lieshi* and variants,<sup>4</sup> however, had been favourite terms already of the GMD (Guomindang 國民黨, National People’s Party) government preceding the PRC-government, evoking with this classical term also pre-modern models of upright protest against “unjust” power. During its reign, the GMD had built up a system of “martyrs’ shrines” for those who had “laid down their lives” for aims in accordance with the GMD vision.<sup>5</sup> This included revolutionary cases, with the Huanghuagang 黃花崗 Memorial in Guangzhou for the 72 “martyrs” of the last failed uprising in spring 1911 against the Qing dynasty before the fall of the Chinese empire and founding of the Chinese Republic as the most important one;<sup>6</sup> but also soldiers who died “for the nation” (*xunguo* 殉國), when under GMD government, not the least during the “Anti-Japanese War of Resistance” (1937-1945), as the Second Sino-Japanese War is called in China,

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<sup>1</sup> Technical note: Chinese characters will be given in traditional or abbreviated form, depending on the source or time and place referred to. For Romanisation of Chinese, Hanyu Pinyin is used but for some cases better known otherwise like Chiang Kai-shek, Sun Yat-sen, or Taipei. (Pinyin will be additionally provided at first occurrence.)

<sup>2</sup> The monument took time to build, though. It was inaugurated only in 1958. See Wu Hung: *Remaking Beijing: Tiananmen Square and the Creation of a Political Space*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005, pp. 24-36.

<sup>3</sup> The Soviets therefore used the term “heroes”. The term “martyr” (literally: witness [of faith]) was closely associated with Christian usage in Soviet people’s minds. The Chinese term *lie* 烈 implies passion, while Christian martyrs (who are not supposed to have actively pursued martyrdom but rather to have remained steadfast in spite of persecution) are rendered in Chinese as *xunjiaozhe* 殉教者 or *xundaozhe* 殉道者, focussing on the sacrificial death (*xun* 殉) induced by others.

<sup>4</sup> Variants included the term *lie*, e.g. *zhonglie* 忠烈, accentuating loyalty, or *xianlie* 先烈, accentuating their preceding ancestral role for the present society. One may note that these variants were in line with the GMD then being in power, re-defining the former “anti-government potential” of the “revolutionary martyr” into “service to the nation”.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Linh Dam Vu: “The Sovereignty of the War Dead: Martyrs, Memorials, and the Makings of Modern China, 1912-1949”, diss. Berkeley 2017. After the GMD’s “retreat” to Taiwan in 1949, when the unlikelihood to ever “retake” the mainland was apparent, a “National Martyrs’ Shrine” was built in Taipei (Taipei) in the late 1960s to continue this practice.

<sup>6</sup> For the Huanghuagang memorial, see Virgil Kit-yiu Ho: “Martyrs or Ghosts? A Short Cultural History of a Tomb in Revolutionary Canton, 1911-1970”. In: *East Asian History* 27, 2004, pp. 99-138.

were covered. This double meaning reveals a basic tension in the concept. The *lieshi* in traditional understanding were individual examples of upright protest *against* those in power, while with the soldiers and their “loyal” (*zhong 忠*) dedication as a group to the needs of their own government and nation, a shift in the concept had been introduced. This was connected to the new role of soldiers in a modernising society. No longer were they only a group of paid mercenaries, but – at least in theory – they were a self-conscious group who represented the people as “citizen soldiers”.<sup>7</sup> By their memorialisation, their “didactic value” for the living rendered them even more “important” (in a social sense) in afterlife than during lifetime.<sup>8</sup>

For the PRC, in turn, the pointed and increasing use of the term *lieshi* over time marks a readjustment of the early more “upbeat” and “heroism”-focused Mao years, when the people were spurred on with enthusiasm to create the “new China”, to now stressing the sacrifices of the past, and the obligation for the younger generation “to remember”. This becomes ever more urgent as the generation of witnesses of pre-PRC times is passing, and the realm of history is replaced by the realm of memory,<sup>9</sup> while PRC-times are supposed to have rather produced “heroes” than “martyrs” (though the concept was redefined and broadened in the last years to make it applicable also to recent cases of altruistic heroic sacrifice).<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, the passing of the generation of witnesses of pre-PRC times precisely opens up the possibility for posterity to rewrite historical narratives more freely, defining memory according to agendas of the present, even codifying it with “memory laws”.<sup>11</sup> While the *lieshi* in CCP (Chinese Communist Party) view were at first those suffering for being Communists, mainly those persecuted by the GMD (the former political arch enemy) during that party’s reign, today the memorialisation of pre-PRC “martyrs” is anchored most prominently in the “Anti-Japanese War of Resistance”, when China fought an uphill battle against the Japanese.<sup>12</sup> In various ways, all generations, not the least the younger one, are confronted with stories and images of those “heroic” times, to “not forget” (or rather learn about) the heavy toll earlier generations paid for the “happiness” the present generation enjoys. This “common” history of fight against the

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<sup>7</sup> See Henrietta Harrison: “Martyrs and Militarism in Early Republican China”. In: *Twentieth Century China* vol. 23, no. 2, April 1998, pp. 41-70.

<sup>8</sup> Rebecca Nedostup touches upon this for Chinese military casualties and their later treatment in “Burying, Repatriating, and Leaving the Dead in Wartime and Postwar China and Taiwan, 1937–1955”. In: *Journal of Chinese History* no. 1, 2017, pp. 111-139.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Nora who argues that his famous concept of sites of memory (“lieux de mémoire”) is closely connected to the fact that these “lieux de mémoire” reflect the disappearance of the former “milieux de mémoire” (environments of memory) in the move from history to memory. See his short English summary of his extensive French work on the subject: Pierre Nora: “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire”. In: *Representations* no. 26, special issue: “Memory and Counter-Memory”, 1989, pp. 7-24.

<sup>10</sup> PRC-time “martyrs” include casualties of military confrontations like the Korean War (1950-1953), the Sino-Vietnamese War (1979), or skirmishes at China’s frontiers, namely with the Soviet Union and India, but more recently also some who perished while fighting against natural catastrophes or pandemics. For a present official presentation of “martyrs”, see the PRC government website: <http://yinglie.chinamartyrs.gov.cn/LieShiYingMingLu/index.html>.

<sup>11</sup> China has recently introduced some “memory laws”, e.g., the “Law on Protection of Heroes and Martyrs” of 2018. In this endeavour, China is of course no isolated case: parallels with Russia and her state-directed views on the “Great Patriotic War” are obvious, but also elsewhere historical memorialisation is often enmeshed with politics, if with mandatory “democracy” values. Cf. Nikolay Kaposov: *Memory Laws, Memory Wars: The Politics of the Past in Europe and Russia*, Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press 2018.

<sup>12</sup> For a recent discussion of this topic, see Rana Mitter: *China’s Good War: How World War II Is Shaping a New Nationalism*, Cambridge/Mass. and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press 2020.

Japanese – beyond all party politics – is also a rallying cry to re-unite all Chinese in the present, be they in the PRC or in Taiwan or even overseas, by appealing to “patriotic” feelings over history and memory.

In the context of wartime contributions of the military, aviators are assigned a special role. This particular attention to aviators is per se not peculiar to China, since the aviators enjoyed a myth-making also elsewhere, given that fighter pilots – usually the focus of attention and morally less ambiguous than bomber crews – flew alone or in two, turning air-to-air fights into personal contests of bravery and bravado. “Top-scoring” aviators (with criteria defined somewhat differently between countries) were hailed as “aces” and turned into celebrities, eagerly mediatised since WWI times as individual heroes,<sup>13</sup> in contrast to the rather anonymous mass of “normal” soldiers. Beyond the lore fed by the ancient Western Icarus myth about men’s dream to fly, its Chinese counterparts,<sup>14</sup> or the semi-religious imagery easily associated with the aviators’ closeness to heaven, aviators stood out also as people with professional training and technical skill, and their airplanes were capital- and technology-intensive machinery they had to master. Certain acrobatic or tactical moves even were named after their inventors.<sup>15</sup> Their solo performances and dogfights invoked images of medieval knighthood with an ethos of equal and fair combat, and their “scoring” (i.e. number of testified “kills”) alluded to the language of sports as if in game.

But beyond this general picture, what makes the memorialisation of aviators in China special is that in China’s fight against the Japanese, the air force was the Achilles heel, and memorialisation thus means to dwell on China’s particular weakness. Though Chinese aviation as such had started rather early, the establishment of a centralised national Chinese Air Force (CAF) was still under development when the full-scale Sino-Japanese war began in 1937.<sup>16</sup> The Japanese, in turn, who had roughly started aviation at the same time as China,<sup>17</sup> but without being hampered by similar political upheavals and fragmentation, had built up military aviation forces attached both to the army and to the navy over the years. They were experienced in manufacturing aircraft themselves by then, even disposed of aircraft carriers, and they were up-to-date in technical developments and innovative themselves. China therefore needed foreign help to a large extent, in material as well as in personnel, to counter the Japanese.

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<sup>13</sup> See Linda R. Robertson: *The Dream of Civilized Warfare: World War I Flying Aces and the American Imagination*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minneapolis Press 2003. WWI produced the first “aces”. This, in turn, left the bomber crews dissatisfied since usually only “solo kills” were counted and their own war contributions were, they felt, neglected.

<sup>14</sup> On ancient Chinese ideas (and experiments) on flying, see the “classical” study by Berthold Laufer: *Prehistory of Aviation*, Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History 1928, pp. 14-43.

<sup>15</sup> E.g. the “Immelmann turn” was a tactic named after WWI German fighter “ace” Max Immelmann.

<sup>16</sup> Although the current Taiwan Air Force claims 1920 as its founding date when Sun Yat-sen, “father of the Republic”, established an aviation bureau in his temporary local government in Guangzhou, the “national” CAF came into being only in 1929 and was developed over the 1930s.

<sup>17</sup> For the beginnings of Japanese naval aviation which went parallel to the one of the army, see Mark R. Peattie: *Sunburst: The Rise of Japanese Naval Air Power 1909-1941*, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press 2001, chapter 1.

Given this background, after the Sino-Japanese War, the memorialisation of the “aviation martyrs” in China, both Chinese and foreign, got enmeshed in the ever changing political climate: the ensuing conflict between the GMD and the CCP; the ultimate alignment of the GMD with the U.S. and of the CCP with the Soviet Union; the victory of the CCP on the mainland in the Civil War, causing the GMD to “retreat” to Taiwan, formerly Japan’s colony; the PRC’s later split with the Soviet Union and cautious reopening of ties with the U.S.; the crumble of the Soviet Union; and the recent reappraisal of Sino-Russian relations. This is reflected in the peculiar site of the “Nanjing Cemetery of Aviation Martyrs” which is supposed to serve today for fostering both “patriotism” and “internationalism”, connecting China, which traditionally perceived herself proudly as “all under heaven”, with the U.S. and the Soviet Union, in the context of China’s former weakness in the air. The commemoration of the fallen aviators who once shared the sky over China, is thus framed to this end.

## **China’s military aviation in historical perspective**

Although the first Chinese military aviators flew in the 1910s already,<sup>18</sup> including Étienne Tsu (Zhu Binhou 朱斌侯), China’s first “ace” who learnt to fly in France and flew for the French in WWI,<sup>19</sup> the early Chinese military aviators flying in China were mostly under local warlord command, and thus were engaged initially in inner-Chinese conflicts. The first use of aircraft bombing in China seems to have been during the 1914 Bai Lang 白朗 rebellion against Yuan Shikai 袁世凱, though done by foreigners flying for Yuan, who was then president of the Republic, if contested because of his dictatorial ambitions.<sup>20</sup> When warlord Zhang Xun 張勳 tried to briefly reinstall the last Qing emperor in 1917, even the Forbidden City was bombed once on orders of the then-governing Beiyang 北洋 warlords – something the young ex-

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. Lennart Andersson: *A History of Chinese Aviation: Encyclopedia of Aircraft and Aviation in China until 1949*, Taipei: AHS of ROC 2008, p. 3. (This encyclopaedia, done by a Swedish aviation history enthusiast for Taiwan’s aviation modelling company, declares its narrative to be mainly based on Western-language and Soviet sources, with a Chinese collaborator adding some Chinese secondary literature information. It pays particular attention to the technical side, namely the various types of aircraft.)

<sup>19</sup> See the biographical entry on the Chinese-language website run by the [Taiwan-]Chinese Air Force Veterans Association which has a study group on the history of the Sino-American aviation cooperation, more precisely the CACW or “Chinese-American Composite Wing” when American and Chinese pilots flew together from 1943 to the end of the war: “Zhongguo diyi wei kongzhan yingxiong: Zhu Binhou zhuanlüe” 中國第一位空戰英雄. 朱斌侯傳略 (China’s first air warfare hero: a biographical sketch of Zhu Binhou). Available online: [http://www.flyingtiger-cacw.com/new\\_page\\_461.htm](http://www.flyingtiger-cacw.com/new_page_461.htm). While the Escadrille La Fayette consisting of American volunteers sustaining the French side in WWI has become a famous example of “internationalist” help, Zhu Binhou flew in the “normal” French Escadrille 37 and was quickly forgotten.

<sup>20</sup> See Philip Billingsley / Youwei Xu: “From ‘Peasant Bandit’ to ‘Prominent Personality’: Bai Lang in the Scales of History”. In: *Kokusai bunka ronshū* 國際文化論集 / *Intercultural Studies* No.30, July 2004, pp. 51-89, there p. 60. (Bai Lang built up some connection with Sun Yat-sen, the first provisional president of the Republic of China, who had resigned in favour of military strongman Yuan Shikai. Bai Lang and Sun both opposed Yuan Shikai at the time and thus were drawn to each other.)

emperor Puyi 溥儀, at that point still living there, remembered in his “autobiography”,<sup>21</sup> this time by a Chinese-piloted aircraft, resulting in one casualty among the eunuchs. At the time, the Nanyuan 南苑 airfield south of Beijing functioned as key location of the early attempts at building an air force by the Beiyang warlords, with mainly the French supplying training and planes.<sup>22</sup>

On the other hand, it had been Sun Yat-sen (Sun Yixian 孫逸仙, in China more commonly referred to as Sun Zhongshan 孫中山), the Chinese revolutionary and “father of the Republic”, who had stressed the new potential of aviation, civil as well as military, early on. Near San Francisco, where he passed by often during his long years abroad, given the many fellow Cantonese living there, sustaining his revolutionary endeavours, a young technical autodidact, Feng Ru 馮如, had built a first airplane in 1909, inspired by the brothers Wright’s first successful flight of 1903. Feng’s first flight was reported also in the U.S. media and became a source of pride for the Chinese in San Francisco. After the crash of the first plane, Feng constructed a second one in 1911, and then moved his “aviation factory” from Oakland back to Southern China, where he would, however, crash to death already in 1912.<sup>23</sup>

Sun Yat-sen, with a lifetime of travel all over the world, since his failed first revolutionary uprising in 1895 by necessity to avoid the Qing government’s grasp, but also to garner support for the revolution, considered building up China’s infrastructure a top priority after the successful 1911 revolution. Realising the technical potential of aircraft to supplement ground transport, he also acknowledged the military advantages. He thus embraced the motto of “rescuing the nation with aviation” (*hangkong jiuguo* 航空救國) – a slogan repeatedly used in the times to come and associated with him. Via his connections in the West as well as in Japan, Sun arranged in 1911 for having airplanes transferred to China. When the planes arrived, however, he had already stepped down from the provisional presidency of the Republic, and they finally ended up in the hands of his political rivals.

Sun also started to hire flying staff, namely Chinese-American pilots trained in the U.S., usually of Cantonese background like Tan Gen 譚根 whom he asked to serve as an aviation instructor in China. On the other hand, he encouraged Chinese students to go to North America to learn flying. One of his close collaborators in the early times was the son of his wealthy overseas Cantonese friend of Hawai’i where Sun had spent years of his youth, who in fact was named

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<sup>21</sup> Puyi’s “autobiography” (a politically highly sensitive and closely supervised publication) reflects this briefly in his account on the short restoration attempt in 1917. See Aixinjueluo Puyi 爱新觉罗溥仪: *Wo de qianbansheng* 我的前半生 (The first half of my life), Beijing: Qunzhong chubanshe 1964, p. 103.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Andersson: *A History of Chinese Aviation* (2008), p. 11.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Rebecca Maksel: “The Father of Chinese Aviation”. In: *Air & Space*, August 12, 2008. Available online: <https://www.airspacemag.com/history-of-flight/the-father-of-chinese-aviation-7979767/>. See also the contemporary Chinese obituary in *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌 (The Eastern Miscellany) 1912, Vol. 9, no. 5, pp. 20-21: “Zhongguo feihangjia Feng Ru jun xingzhuang” 中國飛行家馮如君行狀 (The trajectory of the Chinese aviator Mr. Feng Ru).



by his father in reverence of Sun Yat-sen (Sun Yixian 孫逸仙): Young “Sen Yet” (Yang Xianyi 楊仙逸). Young had learnt to fly in New York’s Curtiss Aviation School and had some training in aeronautical engineering as well. Furthermore, he experimented with weaponry to arm the airplanes.<sup>24</sup> He would build up a small air force for Sun with mainly American airplanes, based in Southern China where Sun had moved to in 1917 to challenge the Beijing government, and was later praised by Sun as “father of revolutionary aviation”. In a local contest with a warlord in Guangdong, air bombing by Sun’s planes seems to have proven effective for Sun’s defeating his opponent, securing his foothold for the time being in Guangdong.

While the engines were imported from abroad, planes started to be assembled in China herself, too. Though the Beijing government did so apparently first,<sup>25</sup> the famous one would become the “Rosamonde” airplane of 1923 which Young Sen Yet helped to build – together with two foreign engineers – in Guangzhou. Its name was derived from Sun Yat-sen’s (last) wife Song Qingling 宋慶齡 who had been educated in the U.S., her English name being “Rosamonde”. The plane was photographed with the Sun couple in front and publicised widely, though its impact was more on a symbolic than practical level. In fact, it was destroyed by fire shortly thereafter, while Young, its co-constructor, died early by an accidental explosion in September of the same year, 1923. He was finally buried – in 1924 – at Huanghuagang, the already mentioned main GMD memorial in Guangzhou, as a sign of particular acknowledgment of his service. At the time, Sun even declared the day of Young’s death, who embodied to him the “rescuing the nation with aviation”, as China’s annual “aviation day” in commemoration.

The famous case of the locally built “Rosamonde” airplane notwithstanding, the rule remained import of aircraft also in the years to come. After the end of WWI, much war material, including airplanes, was no longer needed in the West, and manufacturers looked for new markets. To block the in-flow of weapons into China, by then ridden with internal conflicts between various warlords, the Great Powers declared an embargo for the sale of weapons to China in 1919, though scope and implementation as well as interpretation of the embargo by various sides varied widely. To get around the embargo, import of aircraft to China was therefore officially for civilian use only, and Chinese civil aviation, too, was slowly developing,<sup>26</sup> the flying staff

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<sup>24</sup> For a brief summary of Young’s life, whose relatives are still living in Hawai’i, see the website of Peter Young: “Aim High to Reach the Heaven”. Available online: <http://imagesofoldhawaii.com/sen-yet-young/>. And the Hawai’ian website by Leigh-Wai Doo, son of Young Sen Yet’s daughter, dedicated to his grandfather: <https://senyetyoung.com/Sen-Yet-Young>. Doo has published on him and did a TV Face Time in the PRC in 2015. (The link to the video can be found on this website under “Articles and Links”).

<sup>25</sup> Andersson: *A History of Chinese Aviation* (2008), p. 17, lists cases for 1913 and 1917.

<sup>26</sup> For an English-language treatment of China’s civil aviation, see William Leary: *The Dragon’s Wing: The China National Aviation Corporation and Development of Commercial Aviation in China*, Athens: University of Georgia 1976. (This book is based on English-language sources only.) For the development of civil aviation as a “failed modernisation attempt” under GMD aegis, see China historian Bodo Wiethoff: *Luftverkehr in China 1928-1949: Materialien zu einem untauglichen Modernisierungsversuch* (Aviation in China 1928-1949: materials on an unsuitable modernisation attempt), Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1975.

including also a few Chinese female pilots over time.<sup>27</sup> However, in spite of the “civil” declaration, delivered planes were often de facto adapted for military use on arrival.

Background to this was the intensifying rivalry between the warlords in China to build up their respective air forces. These played an increasing, if only supporting, role in warfare, mostly with reconnaissance or transport of supplies, occasionally also for attack or bombing. Namely the Manchurian warlord Zhang Zuolin 張作霖 built up a sizable air force in the 1920s, with planes bought from several nations and mainly with training pilots from France, after he and his allies had suffered a defeat in 1922, not the least due to the competing Zhili 直隸 warlord-clique’s use of aircraft bombing.<sup>28</sup> Zhang Zuolin’s son and successor (after the Japanese had killed the father in 1928), Zhang Xueliang 張學良, had been instrumental for building up this air force for his father which he then inherited, being himself an aficionado of aviation. Some warlords in Central and above all in Southern China followed suit over the 1920s in accentuating spending on aviation,<sup>29</sup> if on paper for civilian use only, to circumvent the embargo. And Western manufacturers were happy to sell, while their governments often turned a blind eye to the further use of the planes. Thus, the very first inner-Chinese air-battles did occur in the 1920s between the various warlord air forces. But strictly speaking, battle casualties among aviators were rare in the 1920s, though crashes frequently occurred with at times fatal outcomes.

In the Northern Expedition (1926-1928) planned by Sun Yat-sen which then was realised only after his death (1925) under the military command of his de facto successor Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi 蔣介石), a few pilots participated, namely Soviet ones,<sup>30</sup> as well as some Soviet-trained Chinese. Sun had engaged Soviet advisors for his 1924 inaugurated Whampoa Military Academy near Guangzhou (in the context of the First GMD-CCP United Front) to build up a modern army for the endeavour of the Northern Expedition to unify China. The 1927 break-up of the First United Front enforced by Chiang Kai-shek, however, put a stop to Sino-Soviet military cooperation for the time being, and the Soviet military advisors and aviators left China accordingly.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> For the story of three of the most outstanding Chinese aviatrixes of the 1930s, see Patti Gully: *Sisters of Heaven: China's Barnstorming Aviatrixes: Modernity, Feminism, and Popular Imagination in Asia and the West*, San Francisco: Long River Press 2008.

<sup>28</sup> See Guangqiu Xu: *War Wings: The United States and Chinese Military Aviation, 1929-1949*, Westport and London: Greenwood 2001, pp. 13-14.

<sup>29</sup> For an overview on warlord aircraft, see Andersson: *A History of Chinese Aviation* (2008), pp. 29-92.

<sup>30</sup> Some remarks and documents on the Soviet pilots who had served at the Whampoa Military Academy, from where the Northern Expedition started, training Chinese aviators, can be gleaned from C. Martin Wilbur and Julie Lien-ying How: *Missionaries of Revolution: Soviet Advisers and Nationalist China 1920-1927*, Cambridge/Mass. and London: Harvard University Press 1989, p. 162, p. 219, pp. 233-234, pp. 336-337, pp. 571-572, pp. 640-643, pp. 781-789. See also Heinzig’s comment on the Soviet aviators’ role for conquering Wuhan in 1927: Dieter Heinzig: *Sowjetische Militärberater bei der Kuomintang 1923-1927* (Soviet military advisors to the GMD 1923-1927), Baden-Baden: Nomos 1978, pp. 261-262.

<sup>31</sup> Notably, when Chiang Kai-shek purged the Communists in 1927, he was only after the Soviet *political* advisors, while the Soviet *military* advisors, including the aviators, were treated differently, though having to leave China nonetheless on Stalin’s recall. Cf. Heinzig: *Sowjetische Militärberater* (1978), pp. 286-287.

In Chiang Kai-shek's subsequent fights against "rebellions" by former warlord allies, or in his "encirclement campaigns" against the CCP in the early 1930s, aviators played a supporting role, too,<sup>32</sup> and some of them even lost their lives, most often caused by accidents. The number of casualties among aviators, though, remained rather small, and the political fragmentation of military aviation in China continued into the 1930s. Only when the Japanese threat, not the least epitomised in the so-called "Manchurian Incident" of September 1931 when the Japanese Army occupied China's Northeast, followed by the fighting in Shanghai in early 1932, pushed "patriotism" in China, also in the air more unity was achieved, integrating much of the warlord resources into the nominally centralised air force, the CAF. Since the late 1920s, China's military aviators were also trained in growing numbers under GMD command. However, even shortly before the 1937 outbreak of full-scale war with Japan, the local air forces of the "unruly" Guangdong and Guangxi warlords combined numbered more than those directly under central government command.<sup>33</sup> Unity was thus only achieved under foreign threat, and it would remain shaky.

### **The international aviators' role**

Given the inner-Chinese fragmentation in air power, Sun Yat-sen's call to "rescue the nation with aviation" was repeatedly invoked by the GMD to argue for the need to allocate funds to the endeavour of building a strong CAF. In 1936, Sun Yat-sen's sister-in-law, Song Meiling 宋美齡, (last) wife of Chiang Kai-shek and younger sister of "Rosamonde" Song Qingling, would take over the role of "mother of the air force", strengthening the ties to the U.S. where she, too, once had been educated.<sup>34</sup> But before this, in the early 1930s, the Chiang couple looked to other countries likely to help, too, given the American reservations about official military contacts, though civil or private endeavours were sustained. While planes were bought from various quarters, also training pilots were invited from abroad. Main suppliers were the Americans, the British, and the Italians, with some Germans and French in addition, serving for civilian as well as military aviation, and keen on selling aircraft to China. The Soviets, in turn, played a role on the military side only, first at the Whampoa Academy, as mentioned, and then (after the 1927 crisis) again in 1937 in the context of the Sino-Japanese military conflict.

The Americans, who initially kept the official embargo on weapon sales to China (in place 1919-1929) more strictly, given the in-fighting between the warlords, as well as the general enduring U.S. wish to remain neutral until well into the Sino-Japanese War, tended to restrict themselves – at least officially – to civil aviation and sale of planes without weaponry. They also opened aviation schools in China and trained Chinese (sometimes Chinese American)

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<sup>32</sup> See Xu: *War Wings* (2001), pp. 91-97.

<sup>33</sup> See Guangqiu Xu: "Anglo-American Rivalry for Military Aviation in Southern China in the 1930s". In: *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, Fall/Winter 1998, vol. 7, no. 3/4, pp. 187-216, there p. 212.

<sup>34</sup> When she stepped down from her formal position in 1938, brother Song Ziwen 宋子文 (T.V. Soong) would take over, while Song Meiling kept her role on an informal level.

pilots in America, too. The largest aviation school in China herself was American-led and would be established by the Jouett mission in 1932, most of the time located in Hangzhou.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, several private Americans would offer their flying services to China in civil capacities or acted as instructors for the military. In fact, the first foreign casualty in Sino-Japanese air skirmishes was American: Robert M. Short who trained Chinese military pilots and was involved in battle during the early 1932 Sino-Japanese fighting in the Shanghai area while flying a plane under Chinese colours (see below).

Beyond the Americans, the British were involved in China's aviation, too, often using their colony Hong Kong as a convenient entrepôt to ship planes to China's interior. They were less strict about enforcing the embargo during the 1920s – much to the chagrin of American businessmen who saw them (and on a second line the French) as main competitors in the fledgling Chinese market, and sold planes with potential military use to warlords in Southern China more freely.<sup>36</sup> Fascist Italy (before her alignment with the Japanese) sold some planes, too, but was mostly training aviators in aviation classes in Nanchang (and partly in Luoyang) from 1933 to 1937 in official mission from Mussolini.<sup>37</sup> The Germans mostly sold planes (before their own alignment with the Japanese) as did the French, while the Soviets would then send planes and aviators together in a purely military context after the outbreak of the full-scale war with Japan.

Though the Chinese GMD aviators, increasing in numbers since the late 1920s, also fought internal rivals, including not only the warlords but also the Communists (which renders today's commemoration delicate), the most important adversary were to become the Japanese. In fact, the lesson of the “Shanghai Incident” in 1932,<sup>38</sup> where the CAF had soon to retreat to save its remaining aircraft from annihilation, had spurred the Chinese into action to invest into their air force before confronting the Japanese again. The Japanese, in turn, had developed air forces already, attached to the army and to the navy, which guaranteed a broad range of possible action, were advanced in domestic aircraft production – something China still largely lacked –,<sup>39</sup> and they were technically innovative, as they would show not the least with their creation of the famous Mitsubishi “zero fighters” during WWII. In China, they would use their supremacy in sky extensively in the late 1930s and early 1940s to bomb from above, not the least cities further inland, the war-time capital Chongqing becoming the most outstanding

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<sup>35</sup> See Xu: *War Wings* (2001). On the Jouett mission, there pp. 59-68.

<sup>36</sup> See Xu: *War Wings* (2001), pp. 18-19.

<sup>37</sup> See Orazio Coco: “Il nazionalismo cinese e il fascismo italiano: un decennio di cooperazione politica ed economica (1928-1937)” (Chinese nationalism and Italian fascism: a decade of political and economic cooperation (1928-1937)). In: *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica* (Dimensions and problems of historical research), 2017/ 1, pp. 185-214. On the Nanchang military aeronautic mission, there pp. 195-200. Chiang Kai-shek even chose the Italian Captain Cigerza as one of his personal pilots. (He, e.g., flew him back from Xi'an after the “Xi'an incident” of 1936 which had pressured Chiang into a second United Front with the Communists against the Japanese. See Coco 2017, note 65.)

<sup>38</sup> On the Shanghai conflict and its “lessons”, though only briefly commenting on the CAF, see Donald A. Jordan: *China's Trial by Fire: The Shanghai War of 1932*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press 2001.

<sup>39</sup> Xu: *War Wings* (2001), pp. 132-137, details the available production sites. In 1937, of roughly 700 airplanes in China, only 12 were produced in China herself. (See there p. 116).

case.<sup>40</sup> The Chinese, in turn, had lost most of their functioning aircraft in the early phase of the war and, in marked difference from the Japanese, had hardly any replacements.<sup>41</sup> Repair facilities were very limited as well. China therefore desperately needed help with planes as well as with trained personnel – pilots and technicians – from abroad to at least put up some resistance in the sky,<sup>42</sup> not to speak of counterattacks.<sup>43</sup>

However, at the outbreak of full-scale hostilities in July 1937, the U.S. (and other Western countries) tried at first to avoid taking sides, and thus only the Soviets were ready to consider providing secret help against the Japanese, their main rivals in the Far East, by sending planes and pilots as “volunteers” in decisive numbers. The “Xi’an Incident” of December 1936 when Chiang Kai-shek had been pressured into suspending his attacks on the Chinese Communists and agreeing to a Second United Front with them, and the subsequent non-aggression pact between Chiang’s government and the Soviet Union in August 1937, had paved the way for this clandestine Sino-Soviet anti-Japanese cooperation. Stalin thus started to send planes (fighters as well as bombers) and experienced, ideologically impeccable aviators in increasing numbers via Siberia and Xinjiang.<sup>44</sup> In China, the aviators used pseudonyms, blurring their identities.<sup>45</sup> After the Soviet-Japanese clashes in Mongolia which culminated in the “Nomonhan Incident” in 1939 where the Soviets prevailed, a Japanese-Soviet cease-fire agreement was signed, and thus Stalin started to reduce his help to China.<sup>46</sup> In April 1941, the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression pact with the Japanese, and after Hitler’s attack on the Soviet Union in June, Stalin needed not only the pilots but also the planes at the Western front himself. Thus,

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<sup>40</sup> Cf. Edna Tow: “The Great Bombing of Chongqing and the Anti-Japanese War, 1937-1945”. In: Mark Peattie, Edward Drea & Hans Van de Ven (eds.): *The Battle for China: Essays on the Military History of the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-1945*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 2011, pp. 256-282.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Guangqiu Xu: *War Wings* (2001), p. 118. For the Japanese side, with a focus on the navy’s air war, see Peattie: *Sunburst* (2001), chapter 5, and for a comparison of the Japanese to the Chinese side, see Hagiwara Mitsuru: “The Japanese Air Campaigns in China, 1937-1945”. In: Peattie / Drea / Van de Ven (eds.): *The Battle for China* (2011), pp. 237-255.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Zhang Baijia: “China’s Quest for Foreign Military Aid”. In: Peattie / Drea / Van de Ven (eds.): *The Battle for China* (2011), pp. 283-307.

<sup>43</sup> The few attempts at counterattacks from the Chinese side included the symbolic one of 1938 when Chinese pilots managed to fly undetected to Kyūshū in Japan to drop anti-war leaflets. The Soviet “volunteers”, in turn, would raid targets on Taiwan, Japan’s colony, while in 1942 the better-known Doolittle bombings of Tokyo were under U.S. command, though starting from Chinese soil. Taiwan, too, would be occasionally attacked in the later phase of the war by the Allies.

<sup>44</sup> Chudodeev points out that the “volunteers” were also selected for ideological “reliability”. Cf. Yu. V. Chudodeev: *Na zemle i v nebe Kitaya: sovetskiye voyennyye sovetniki i lotchiki-dobrovol'tsy v Kitaye v period yaponsko-kitayskoy voyny, 1937-1945 gg.* (On the soil and in the skies of China: Soviet military advisors and volunteer pilots in China during the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945), Moscow: Institut vostokovedeniya RAN 2017, p. 62.

<sup>45</sup> This, obviously, rendered their later recognition difficult. The GMD government even bestowed a medal on a Soviet aviator, using his alias. See *Wuhan shangkong de ying* 武汉上空的鹰 / *Orly nad Ukhanem* (Eagles over Wuhan), Wuhan: Wuhan chubanshe 2015, pp. 184-185. In his memoirs, former “volunteer aviator” Slyusarev also repeatedly pointed out that the Soviets were often not credited during the war due to their “covered” identities. See S.V. Slyusarev: “Protecting China’s Airspace”. In: *Soviet Volunteers in China, 1925-1945: Articles and Reminiscences*, Moscow: Progress 1980, pp. 247-284. However, in China, the existence of the Soviet “volunteers” was rather an “open secret” at the time, and also the Japanese soon realised this. Officially, though, they turned a blind eye to it for the time being.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Stuart Goldman: *Nomonhan, 1939: The Red Army's Victory That Shaped World War II*, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press 2012. For Stalin’s reduction of help to China after Nomonhan, cf. Hans J. van de Ven: *War and Nationalism in China, 1925-1945*, London and New York: Routledge 2003, p. 237.

the remainder of Soviet “helpers” left China, and Stalin’s active support came to a stop for the time being.

The U.S., in turn, became more active on an official level only at this time. In late 1940, U.S. President Roosevelt granted military aid to China, and in spring 1941, China was integrated into the Lend-Lease Programme, while Japan was put under embargo in summer after her occupation of airfields in Indochina. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December of the same year, the U.S., now fully drawn into the war, finally stepped up the before nominally civilian and private endeavour of the “Flying Tigers” (the popular designation of the AVG: American Volunteer Group) under Claire Chennault to official military help.<sup>47</sup> Chennault, retired from service in the U.S., had acted as a private advisor to Chiang Kai-shek on aviation since 1937 on the invitation of Chiang’s wife Song Meiling. On a visit to the U.S., CAF general Mao Bangchu 毛邦初 had been impressed by Chennault’s performance as part of an aerobatics group in 1936, and recommended him to Song Meiling who was then taking on responsibility for the aeronautical commission in China. Chennault was supposed to make an assessment of the CAF and offer training and advice, but given the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War and the quick decimation of the CAF, it was evident that support from foreign aviators and planes were needed. Chennault acknowledged the professional skill of the Soviet “volunteers” sent by Stalin since fall 1937, but besides training a new generation of Chinese pilots, he pressed for recruiting foreign pilots on his own to build up an “American Volunteer Group”, sustaining the Chinese war effort in nominally “civilian” capacity. This became the more urgent when the Soviets started to leave. Washington finally agreed to the “private” endeavour and its equipment with U.S. planes, and thus in late 1941, the AVG went into operation over South China and Burma, though combat missions against the Japanese were flown only after Pearl Harbor, when the U.S. had officially entered the war.

The “Flying Tigers”, a designation often applied rather loosely to whatever American aviator sustaining the Chinese side, became a household name not only in China but soon also in the U.S., not the least because of Walt Disney (who also designed the “flying tiger” logo, though the typical adornment of the planes was, in fact, shark’s teeth)<sup>48</sup> with his film of 1942, starring John Wayne. In China, the “Flying Tigers” were hailed by Chiang Kai-shek who preferred U.S. aid to the Communist Soviet one anyway. After the U.S. had entered the war, the AVG “Flying

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<sup>47</sup> For the origins of the “Flying Tigers”, Buchan, granddaughter of Bruce Leighton, an American key figure in the aircraft business in China, has recently challenged the received Chennault-centred narrative by use of neglected materials in pointing out the crucial role the British, namely Churchill, played. See Eugenie Buchan: *A Few Planes for China: The Birth of the Flying Tigers*, Lebanon: ForeEdge 2017. (The book ignores, strangely, the work by Guangqiu Xu in English and does not use any Chinese sources.) For Claire Chennault’s own views, see his *Way of a Fighter: The Memoirs of Claire Lee Chennault*, edited by Robert Hotz, New York: C. P. Putnam 1949.

<sup>48</sup> Chennault (*Way of a Fighter* 1949, p. 135) remarked that the sharks’ teeth had been a device used earlier on some German as well as British military air planes and that he was unaware wherefrom the nickname of “Flying Tigers” was derived. The “flying tiger” was, in fact, no new expression but was used in Chinese already earlier as a symbol of particular power. It had been applied also to Chinese aviators before, but finally stuck with the AVG, not the least after the naming had been picked up by Western media. Cf. “‘Feihu’: Kongjun zhanshi” “飛虎”。空軍戰史 (“Flying tigers”: war history of the air force). In: *Shibing yuekan* 士兵月刊 (Soldiers Monthly), no. 7-10, 1942, pp. 4-5.

Tigers” were soon integrated into the U.S. Air Force in 1942 to make them part of the military hierarchy. When in 1942 Japan closed China’s southern life-line during the first phase of the war, the “Burma Road”, airlifts over “the Hump”, i.e. from British India over the Himalayas to Southwest China, were the only way to bring in supplies from outside. These risky, often deadly,<sup>49</sup> airlifts were technically under official U.S. military command, while Chennault was responsible for air force activities in China herself at this point and thus at the receiving end of the route. In fact, Chennault would later argue from the side line in his settling of accounts after the war, that the death rate on the “Hump route” was to his mind unnecessarily high and less due to natural odds than to wrong management and command, sending many inexperienced pilots flying not yet tested or not properly maintained planes on the route.<sup>50</sup> In any case, it is the “Hump” casualties that make up the largest portion of the overall U.S. aviator casualties in China, and Chennault was not the one to command this route, as is sometimes blurred in Chinese very Chennault-centric narratives on American air support for China.

After the Japanese capitulation of 1945, the “Flying Tigers” (the composition and official naming of which changed over time, from 1943 onward integrating Chinese pilots under official U.S.-CAF command as the CACW, i.e. Chinese-American Composite Wing) were disbanded. But since in China the Civil War ensued, the GMD-led CAF went on fighting, while some of Chennault’s men remained to sustain the GMD effort as civilian pilots, e.g. with cargo flights. Chennault himself co-created the CAT (Civil Air Transport) in 1946 to this avail.<sup>51</sup> Some of his men even went on to serve after Chiang Kai-shek moved his government to Taiwan, now flying for Taiwan, if in civilian capacity.<sup>52</sup>

In terms of memorialisation of the foreign aviators in China, there is a stark contrast between the Soviets and the Americans.<sup>53</sup> While the “Flying Tigers” and the risky routes over “the Hump” became an icon of Sino-U.S. cooperation during the Sino-Japanese War, things were different with the Soviet “volunteer aviators” of the early phase of the war. Those who survived their service in China and went back to the Soviet Union thereafter, were at least honoured by Stalin at the time of their return,<sup>54</sup> but they were less remembered by the U.S.-leaning anti-Communist GMD-government after 1945. This also meant that those who had lost their lives in China, often individually and at places at some point occupied by the Japanese, were largely

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<sup>49</sup> According to recent assessments, more than 500 planes crashed, with more than 1600 dead or missing crew members. See John T. Correll: “Over the Hump to China”. In: *Air Force Magazine* 2009, October, pp. 68-71, there p. 71.

<sup>50</sup> See Chennault: *Way of a Fighter* (1949), pp. 233-234. Chennault’s book is a long and detailed defence of his own strategies and attack on his opponents inside the American military bureaucracy.

<sup>51</sup> At first, the acronym CAT meant “Chinese National Relief and Rehabilitation Administration Air Transport”, but was renamed subsequently. See Chennault: *Way of a Fighter* (1949), pp. 358-361.

<sup>52</sup> Some American aviators wrote memoirs of their time in service “for China”. See, e.g., Felix Smith: *China Pilot: Flying for Chiang and Chennault*, Washington and London: Brassey’s 1995.

<sup>53</sup> This has been one of the motives already in 1980 from the Soviet side to “remind” China and the world of its services, including in China’s air war, by publishing reminiscences of veterans in English translation: *Soviet Volunteers in China, 1925-1945: Articles and Reminiscences*, Moscow: Progress 1980. On the air war, see there Slyusarev: “Protecting China’s Airspace”. (His account of the months before his own arrival in spring 1938 is not fully accurate, though.) The Russian original of his memoir was of 1977.

<sup>54</sup> Some were awarded the distinction of “hero of the Soviet Union”.

ignored after the war.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, many of their surviving comrades, i.e. Soviet pilots flying for China in the late 1930s during the first years of the Sino-Japanese War, would go on fighting on the Soviet European Western Front thereafter, which would overshadow their former role in China (and sometimes already earlier in the Spanish Civil War that waged from 1936 onward).<sup>56</sup>

Furthermore, in contrast to the Soviet “volunteers” of the first phase of the Sino-Japanese War, the Soviet military aviators who took part in the last days of the war in Northeast China in August to September 1945 during the so-called “August Storm”,<sup>57</sup> following the Soviet Union’s official declaration of war on Japan, could be remembered as those who “successfully liberated” China, especially in the eyes of the Chinese Communists who quickly occupied most of those areas thereafter. The aviators could and would be buried there locally if fallen in 1945 during action as regular part of the Red Army, and their memorials and cemeteries were usually (and more easily) preserved into PRC times (though not spared of vandalism during the Cultural Revolution years, 1966-1976).<sup>58</sup> Although their identity as aviators is at times highlighted, e.g. with a small airplane on the tombstone, they were at that point part of the regular Soviet military forces with whom they were buried together and which also highlighted other military branches equally, e.g. with tanks.<sup>59</sup>

In short, in terms of commemoration, the Soviet “volunteer aviators” of the early phase of the war who lost their lives at various places in China, mainly in 1938-1939,<sup>60</sup> were the ones most easily obliterated after the war. Although they had been sent by Stalin, they flew under Chinese flag (similar to later during the Korean War of 1950-1953 when Soviet aviators were sent by Stalin secretly again), and they were thus not perceived like those of 1945 as regular part of the Soviet Red Army. However, different from the fallen Soviet “volunteer aviators” during the later Korean War who fought with the PRC and North Korea and who would be locally concentrated in Manchuria and thus usually added to the already existing Red Army cemeteries in the region by their Chinese Communist ally, the graves of Soviet “volunteers” of the early

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<sup>55</sup> This “neglect” is one of the complaints of the Russian side today which tries to “set straight” the wartime record internationally. Cf. Gotelind Müller: *Ambivalent Remains: China and the Russian Cemeteries in Harbin, Dalian and Lüshun*, Heidelberg and Berlin: CrossAsia Repository 2019, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11588/xarep.00004181>, pp. 58-59, for the cases of the final phase of WWII in 1945 up to the Korean-War-period Soviet soldiers and aviators and their commemoration in Lüshun. Russia set up a programme (2011-2015) to care for Russian/Soviet military tombs abroad which included also China. Cf. Müller: *Ambivalent Remains* (2019), p. 44, for the case of Dalian’s Qingyunjie cemetery and its restoration, like in Lüshun officially done by a private foundation.

<sup>56</sup> Both the fighting in Spain and the one in China were labelled in the Soviet Union as “internationalist” help provided by “volunteer aviators”.

<sup>57</sup> On the “August Storm”, see David M. Glantz: *Soviet Operational and Tactical Combat in Manchuria, 1945: “August Storm”*, London and Portland: Frank Cass 2003.

<sup>58</sup> For an overview of Soviet Red Army cemeteries in China, see Tian Zhihe 田志和: *Yongheng de huainian: Zhongguo tudishang de Sulian hongjun bei ta lingyuan* 永恒的怀念。中国土地上的苏联红军碑塔陵园 (Eternal cherishing: Monuments and cemeteries for the Soviet Red Army on Chinese soil), Dalian: Dalian chubanshe 2010. In 2007, a Sino-Russian accord was signed to guarantee the preservation of Soviet military tombs on Chinese soil. See Müller: *Ambivalent Remains* (2019), pp. 34-35.

<sup>59</sup> For some photos, see Müller: *Ambivalent Remains* (2019), pp. 86-88.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. the list of Soviet aviator casualties in China 1937-1941, reprinted in *Wuhan shangkong de ying* (2015), pp. 219-229 (Chinese translation with amendments), pp. 230-240 (Russian original).



Sino-Japanese War were more scattered. This was even more so after not only Nanjing, but also Wuhan, the subsequent interim de facto GMD capital, had fallen to the Japanese in late 1938 (see below).

## **The Nanjing “Cemetery of Aviation Martyrs” between the U.S., the Soviet Union and China**

Today, Nanjing provides a very peculiar memorial “cemetery” which integrates “tombs” of international pilots who died in the fight for China and against the Japanese in the 1930s and 1940s, with “tombs” of Chinese ones. That way, this site is unique in China’s memorial culture in that it combines China, the U.S., and the Soviet Union.<sup>61</sup> Today, it is to stand for “patriotism” and “internationalism” at the same time, according to official description, and the “cemetery” is now part of the “Nanjing anti-Japanese aviation martyrs memorial hall” (official translation of *Nanjing kang-Ri hangkong lieshi jinianguan* 南京抗日航空烈士纪念馆). This naming shows two things: first, it is designed as a site to memorialise the “anti-Japanese aviation martyrs”. The “war of resistance against the Japanese” is supposed to be an undisputable heroic time for any “patriotic” Chinese, and the “anti-Japanese” component is thus constitutive. Second, the whole is – somewhat strangely – subsumed under the naming “exhibition hall”, which puts the stress on the educative function of the exhibition, not on the “cemetery”. In fact, as the general layout shows [ill. 1], today’s visitor is to first go through the exhibition with its narrative, to then move on to the “cemetery”. This way, the “cemetery” is mainly to serve as an authentication device for the narrative provided before. The former direct access from the road to the “cemetery” is therefore closed to channel the visitor through the exhibition first.

Historically speaking, this site is where the GMD-government once set up a cemetery in their then-capital Nanjing to commemorate the pilots, *all Chinese*, that died during the Northern Expedition (1926-1928), the inner-Chinese anti-warlord fights, and the early anti-Communist “encirclement campaigns”. The establishment of this cemetery at the Northern slope of Purple Mountain (*zijinshan* 紫金山) followed the one of the well-known memorial cemetery close-by on the Southern slope, set up for the officers and soldiers of the Army who had died during the Northern Expedition. The famous newly-built pagoda at that cemetery was designed by Henry K. Murphy, an American architect blending “Western” and “Chinese” styles, which became one of the milestones in modern architectural history in China.<sup>62</sup> That memorial cemetery,

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<sup>61</sup> Two Koreans are integrated as well in the name lists. Some information on one of them is provided in the locally sold materials at the memorial: Zhang Pengdou 张鹏斗 (ed.): *Bixue changkong zhonghun wu: Kang-Ri hangkong yingliezhuan* 碧血长空忠魂舞. 抗日航空英烈传 (Dance of loyal souls to offer their precious blood in the vast sky: Biographies of heroes and martyrs in anti-Japanese aviation), Nanjing: Nanjing chubanshe 2016, pp. 146-149.

<sup>62</sup> See Jeffrey W. Cody: *Building in China: Henry K. Murphy’s “Adaptive Architecture”, 1914-1935*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press 2001, especially pp. 191-196. See also Edward Denison and Guang Yu Ren: *Modernism in China: Architectural Visions and Revolutions*, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd 2008, pp. 126-129.

decided upon in 1928 and officially named “Cemetery for the fallen officers and soldiers of the National Revolutionary Army” (*guomin gemingjun zhenwang jiangshi gongmu* 國民革命軍陣亡將士公墓),<sup>63</sup> was placed on the grounds of the Buddhist temple Linggusi 靈谷寺, an old 6th century temple which had been revived (and relocated) in Ming times.<sup>64</sup> The memorial cemetery was on purpose situated in the vicinity of Sun Yat-sen’s mausoleum which was under construction and would be inaugurated with great pomp in 1929 as the GMD’s main “pilgrimage site” on Purple Mountain. In fact, the GMD-government clearly intended to set up the whole area of Purple Mountain, especially the Southern slope where Sun Yat-sen’s mausoleum was placed, itself being situated near (and higher than) the first Ming emperor Zhu Yuanzhang’s 朱元璋 tomb,<sup>65</sup> as a national “necropolis”.

As has been argued, the “necropolis” on Purple Mountain was the key architectonic (and memorialisation) contribution of the GMD-government to Nanjing, their new capital.<sup>66</sup> Beyond Sun Yat-sen, it would also “host” the tombs of other key political figures, e.g. Tan Yankai 譚延闓 who received a state burial in 1930 when he died in office as acting premier, or former potential successor of Sun Yat-sen, Liao Zhongkai 廖仲愷, assassinated in 1925, whose Guangzhou tomb was transferred there in 1935.<sup>67</sup> Also some former companions of Sun Yat-sen who had died before him were transferred to the area subsequently, like Fan Hongxian 範鴻仙 who had been assassinated in 1914 when helping Sun to oppose Yuan Shikai. He finally received a state burial in 1936 near Sun’s mausoleum. Or Han Hui 韓恢 who sustained Sun against rivalling warlords and was executed in 1922. He was transferred and would receive a

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<sup>63</sup> Vu’s dissertation on war memorials in Republican times (“The Sovereignty of the War Dead” 2017, pp. 81-85) briefly discusses this cemetery while it strangely omits the one for the aviators. I do not follow Vu’s translation of *gongmu* 公墓 as “public cemetery”, though, since to my mind the reading of *gong* – which has a broad range of meanings, including “official” as well as “common” – as “public” is not appropriate here: it was a special place of remembrance and honour set up by the state for the specific target group as a collective (*gong*), and one could not be buried there without being entitled and assigned to it – different from a normal “public” cemetery.

<sup>64</sup> The temple was moved to the present site under the first Ming emperor since he chose its original location for his mausoleum. The temple had been closely connected to the first Ming emperor in his lifetime.

<sup>65</sup> For the connection between the two tombs, see Rebecca Nedostup: “Two Tombs: Thoughts on Zhu Yuanzhang, the Kuomintang, and the Meanings of National Heroes”. In: Sarah K. Schneewind (ed.): *Long Live the Emperor! Uses of the Ming Founder Across Six Centuries of East Asian History*, Minneapolis: Society for Ming Studies 2008, pp. 355-390.

<sup>66</sup> This has been justly argued by Musgrove in his work on Nanjing, devoting a chapter to the “necropolis”. He does, however, not mention the aviators’ cemetery and the ensemble of tombs set up in the area, not yet fully teasing out the “necropolis” issue. See Charles D. Musgrove: *China’s Contested Capital: Architecture, Ritual, and Response in Nanjing*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press 2013, chapter 4. The chapter concentrates on the Sun Yat-sen mausoleum, mentioning also the cemetery for the fallen of the Northern Expedition and the tombs of Tan Yankai and Liao Zhongkai.

<sup>67</sup> See the entry on Liao in Yang Guoqing 杨国庆: *Minguo mingren mu* 民国名人墓 (Tombs of Republican luminaries), Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe 1998. Cf. also Gotelind Müller: *Chinese Grave Problems: The Historical Trajectory of the Republican-Era Sun-Chiang-Soong Families as Mirrored in their Tombs*, Heidelberg and Berlin: CrossAsia-Repository 2021, pp. 36-37. Available online: DOI: <http://doi.org/10.11588/xarep.00004474>. For the contextualisation with Sun’s mausoleum, see Li Gongzhong 李恭忠: *Zhongshanling: Yige xiandai zhengzhi fuhao de dansheng* 中山陵。一个现代政治符号的诞生 (“Sun Yat-sen’s Mausoleum: The Making of a Political Symbol in Modern China”), Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe 2009, pp. 195-196.

burial by the Nanjing government near the at the time nearly finished mausoleum already in 1928.<sup>68</sup>

This special area, said to be also geomantically well-placed, “attracted” more side burial (*fuzang* 附葬) aspirants, with Chiang Kai-shek reserving himself a place there early on (though at his demise in 1975 in Taipei it would be out of question to use it, his coffin still being in Taiwan, awaiting interment to this day).<sup>69</sup> But also Sun’s close collaborator and later “traitor” and head of the Japanese-orchestrated “puppet regime” in Nanjing, Wang Jingwei 汪精衛, wanted to be buried “near Sun”. His tomb of 1944 was blown up by Chiang Kai-shek after the war as a retribution for his “treason”, and as to not “defile” the area.<sup>70</sup> Chiang, in turn, had his “spymaster” Dai Li 戴笠 buried in the vicinity when the latter died in 1946 from a dubious air crash.<sup>71</sup> (This tomb would be blown up by the Communists when they took over – like Chiang Kai-shek had done with Wang Jingwei.)<sup>72</sup> The GMD-government, in fact, pursued the plan to set up a whole “state funeral area“ there up to its final days on the mainland.<sup>73</sup> Notably, even the Communist PRC made positive use of the site of Purple Mountain, appropriating it to rebury Deng Yanda 鄧演達 (1895-1931) there. Deng had been a close friend of Sun Yat-sen’s last wife Song Qingling who became a nominally leading figure in the PRC. He had tried to challenge Chiang Kai-shek (though not being an outright Communist himself, aiming at a “Third Party” instead), for which he had paid with his life in 1931. His new PRC-era tomb was placed where the “second burial area” for GMD soldiers in the “Cemetery for the fallen officers and soldiers of the National Revolutionary Army” had been set.<sup>74</sup> The latter was thus “written over” by Deng Yanda’s placement.

After the officers and soldiers’ memorial cemetery at Linggusi, initiated for the fallen of the Northern Expedition, but subsequently “hosting” also further GMD military casualties, had been decided upon in 1928 (and then built over the following years), the head of the new aviation bureau (*hangkongshu* 航空署), Huang Bingheng 黄秉衡, suggested to set up an extra one for the aviators.<sup>75</sup> The aviators, thus, were to be treated as a class apart, in spite of the yet

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<sup>68</sup> See Fan Fangzhen 范方镇 (ed.): *Shiji weiren: Zhongshanling* 世纪伟人。中山陵 (Great personality of the century: The Sun Yatsen Memorial), Beijing: Zhongguo dabaiké quanshu chubanshe 1998, pp. 163-167.

<sup>69</sup> See Müller: *Chinese Grave Problems* (2021), p. 26 ff.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Jeremy E. Taylor: “From Traitor to Martyr: Drawing Lessons from the Death and Burial of Wang Jingwei, 1944”. In: *Journal of Chinese History* vol. 3, no. 1, 2019, pp. 137-158.

<sup>71</sup> On Dai Li, often called “China’s Himmler” in U.S. media of the time, see Frederic Wakeman, jr.: *Spymaster: Dai Li and the Chinese Secret Service*, Berkeley: University of California Press 2003. On the plane crash and the tomb, see there pp. 355-358 and pp. 363-364. According to a handwritten report of March 21, 1946, to Chiang Kai-shek on identification measures, archived in Taiwan’s Guoshiguan 國史館 (Academia Historica) (document 002-080102-00038-010), the crash resulted in 13 casualties, including Dai Li..

<sup>72</sup> For the trajectory of Dai Li’s tomb, see Fan Fangzhen 范方镇: *Zhongshanling shihua* 中山陵史话 (Story of the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum), Nanjing: Nanjing chubanshe 2004, pp. 89-90.

<sup>73</sup> See the archival plan held in Taiwan’s Guoshiguan: “Caogushan guozang muyuan 曹古山國葬墓園 (Caogushan state cemetery)” (document no. 014-010603-0013), of October 9, 1948.

<sup>74</sup> See Fan Fangzhen: *Shiji weiren* (1998), p. 163. For an outline of the spatial arrangement of that cemetery, see Vu: “The Sovereignty of the War Dead” (2017), p. 82.

<sup>75</sup> For excerpts of archival material around the setting-up of the aviators’ memorial, see Nanjing-shi dang’anguan Zhongshanling guanlichu 南京市檔案管中山陵園管理處: *Zhongshanling dang’an shiliao xuanbian* 中山陵檔

very small number of casualties. This could be considered as the often seen “elite” status of aviators, the training of whom also involved far more than with “normal” soldiers. In fact, Chiang Kai-shek’s last wife Song Meiling who set up schools for orphans (“warphans”) of fallen soldiers on Purple Mountain and saw care for the bereaved as one of her tasks, would also later receive the widows of the fallen aviators as an extra group, separately from other bereaved.<sup>76</sup>

The casualties among aviators were at the time only rarely caused by in-air fighting (with warlord airplanes). Since specific anti-aircraft weaponry was hardly available in China yet, in general casualties among aviators were also less due to being shot down from the ground (some low-flying planes were attacked with machine guns, or parachuting pilots were shot on the ground) than to technical reasons or accidents, e.g. caused by bad weather.<sup>77</sup> But still there were casualties, and thus Huang Bingheng suggested in 1931, when some aviators had perished during the ongoing inner-Chinese conflicts,<sup>78</sup> to build an extra cemetery for the aviators, granted by Chiang Kai-shek in August of that year (and thus clearly before the “Manchurian Incident” of September!).<sup>79</sup> In fact, end of July 1931 the establishment of a funding committee of 7 people was already announced in the Chinese press,<sup>80</sup> and in mid-August the site “close to the President’s [i.e. Sun Yat-sen’s] mausoleum on Purple Mountain” had been chosen.<sup>81</sup> This means that contrary to the oft-repeated claim until today, simple chronology proves that the original motivation for building the cemetery was *not* connected to Japan!<sup>82</sup>

The aviators’ cemetery was, however, very soon needed more urgently due to the several weeks of fighting with the Japanese in Shanghai early in 1932, who attacked above all with airplanes,<sup>83</sup> which indeed involved more combat deaths among CAF aviators. This was a first hard test for the young CAF which had to withdraw in the end to save itself – which spurred a heightened activity in building up the air force thereafter. As it seems, Huang Bingheng offered to resign in 1932 as a consequence of the “loss of face” of the CAF during the 1932 “Shanghai

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案史料選編 (Selected archival materials on the Sun Yat-sen mausoleum), Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe 1986, pp. 734-739. One may, however, note, that these reproduced “selected” sources circumvent the naming of anti-Communist battles, holding up the key narrative of anti-Japanese resistance for the site.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Nedostup: “Burying, Repatriating, and Leaving the Dead in Wartime and Postwar China and Taiwan, 1937-1955” (2017), p. 132.

<sup>77</sup> The short entries on single aviation “martyrs” in the history of the CAF on Taiwan’s Air Force websites suggest this, too. Available online: [https://air.mnd.gov.tw/TW/History/History\\_List.aspx?FID=7&CID=165](https://air.mnd.gov.tw/TW/History/History_List.aspx?FID=7&CID=165).

<sup>78</sup> Cf. the early 1931 entries on Taiwan’s Air Force “martyrs” website: [https://air.mnd.gov.tw/TW/History/History\\_List.aspx?FID=7&CID=165](https://air.mnd.gov.tw/TW/History/History_List.aspx?FID=7&CID=165).

<sup>79</sup> For Chiang’s approval, see *Zhongshanling dang’an shiliao xuanbian*, pp. 737-738.

<sup>80</sup> See, e.g., the announcement in the Chinese daily, *Shenbao* 申報, of July 29, 1931, p. 8. And in the *Hangkong zazhi* 航空雜誌 (Aviation Journal) vol. 2, no. 7, 1931, p. 8, as a notice of July 28.

<sup>81</sup> See the notice in *Shenbao* August 17, 1931, p. 8.

<sup>82</sup> One may note that today’s “standard narrative” also tries to insinuate a link to the “Manchurian Incident”, starting in Mukden (Shenyang, province of Liaoning), via pointing out the role in the air force of aviators hailing from there. See, e.g., Li Weimin: “Bixue danxin guan changkong: Mianhuai kangzhan zhong zhuanglie xunguo de Liaoning hangkong yinglie” 碧血丹心贯长空。缅怀抗战中壮烈殉国的辽宁航空英烈 (Precious blood and loyal hearts permeate the sky: In memory of the Liaoning aviation martyrs who fell heroically in the War of Resistance). In: *Dangshi zongheng* 党史纵横 (Party history criss and cross) 2011, no. 2, pp. 49-51.

<sup>83</sup> For a view on the Japanese side in the conflict, see Peattie: *Sunburst* (2001), pp. 50-51.

Incident”,<sup>84</sup> which is, again, notable given the present-day usual upbeat characterisation of the CAF’s role as “heroic” in that conflict. In fact, Chiang Kai-shek sent Huang Bingheng and others on a long inspection tour of aviation abroad when the aviation cemetery was opened in August to inter also the dead of that conflict.<sup>85</sup> Huang himself, though being the person behind its establishment, strikingly did not even mention his role in setting up the aviator’s cemetery in his autobiography decades later when he had moved permanently to the U.S., due to his final fall-out with Chiang Kai-shek after the lost Civil War (1946-1949).<sup>86</sup> In his autobiography, he also preferred to skip the 1932 Sino-Japanese confrontation altogether. In short, the beginnings of the cemetery were fraught with more ambiguity than later narratives try to make believe.

The aviators’ cemetery, originally designed by Jinling University’s professor of architecture, Qiu Dexiao 丘德孝,<sup>87</sup> was finished and inaugurated in the summer of 1932, “hosting” at first some 30 aviators and being the first (and most important) of its kind in China.<sup>88</sup> By then, the “Shanghai Incident” with its first Sino-Japanese air skirmishes had happened. The speeches commemorating the “martyrs fallen for resisting Japan and died for quelling rebellions”, held at a memorial meeting on July 16 of 1932, i.e. before the interments, pointed out the heroic contributions of the aviators (including those against the “red bandits”),<sup>89</sup> but critical voices from among the air force subsequently analysed their deaths as often evitable, since most were

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<sup>84</sup> Cf. Andersson (2008), p. 108. The Guoshiguan in Taiwan holds archival material of March 8, 1932, about Chiang “admonishing” Huang and Mao Bangchu 毛邦初 to “improve” the air force. (Document no. 002-060100-00046-008.)

<sup>85</sup> See the archival document held in the Guoshiguan of August 16, 1932, no. 002-070100-00027-030, of Chiang sending Huang and others on “inspection tour” to Germany.

<sup>86</sup> See his autobiographical accounts published in 1981 (i.e. after Chiang Kai-shek’s death of 1975) in *Zhuanji wenxue* 傳記文學 (Biographical literature) no. 228, pp. 35-41, and no. 229, pp. 111-116: Huang Bingheng 黃秉衡: “Huang Bingheng bashi zishu” 黃秉衡八十自述 (Huang Bingheng’s autobiography at eighty). As becomes clear from his hindsight accounts, his brother Huang Guanghan 黃光漢, an aviator, too, who was hailed as a hero at the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, was nearly executed months later by Chiang Kai-shek because he was said to have failed to protect a newly arrived Soviet “volunteer” who was shot over Nanjing (probably Nezhdanov who died on November 22, 1937, as one of the very earliest Soviet casualties in China). Only strong pleading saved his brother. (Cf. also the plea of General Qian Dajun 錢大鈞 of April 8, 1938, on his behalf, archived in Taiwan’s Guoshiguan, document 002-080200-00496-042.) Huang Bingheng defended his brother in his autobiography and expressed also criticism concerning the 1942 Doolittle Raid on Tokyo which had been U.S. directed but agreed to by Chiang as a strong sign against Japan, because the planes did not make it on their return beyond enemy lines and crashed (though the crews parachuted in time). (De facto, three American aviators who were captured, were executed by the Japanese.) After the lost Civil War, Huang apparently evaded Taiwan after 1949 for years, staying in the U.S. or Hong Kong, and finally settled in the U.S. where he died.

<sup>87</sup> Unfortunately, there is hardly any more detailed information on this architect. His name reappears only in passing in documents of 1934 of the Ministry of Defence. (I am grateful to architectural historian Wang Lianming for this information.)

<sup>88</sup> One may note that it was not the only aviators’ cemetery since close to the Hangzhou Aviation School another small “Cemetery of Aviation Martyrs” (*hangkong lieshi gongmu* 航空烈士公墓) was founded. See the notice in *Shenbao* of September 25, 1932, p. 12, about the founding after a major crash. Historical photographs can be found, e.g., in the Republican-era journal *Kongjun* 空軍 (Air Force).

<sup>89</sup> See “Zhuidao kang-Ri zhenwang kanluan xunnan kongjun lieshi” 追悼抗日陣亡戡亂殉難空軍烈士 (Commemorating the air force martyrs fallen against Japan or died for quelling rebellions). In: *Zhongyang zhoubao* 中央週報 (Central Weekly) no. 215, 1932, pp. 1-4. Notably, some objective “difficulties” were also pointed out which hampered the pilots, thus indirectly hinting at the fact that some deaths could have been avoided under better circumstances.

caused by technical reasons,<sup>90</sup> not by combat. At this point in July 1932, Huang Bingheng himself summarised the deaths of the “over 30” casualties of the “last five years” who were honoured with the commemoration, as connected to the “quelling of rebellions” (i.e. against the warlords), to training accidents, to suppressing the “bandits” (intending the Communists), and to resist Japan (in early 1932). With all this, they had contributed to the unity of the nation, though he emphasised, not the least prompted by the “Manchurian Incident” of September 18, 1931, which had happened in the meantime, and reinforced by the fighting during the “Shanghai Incident” of early 1932, that from now on – in accordance with the opinion of many in China and as a pledge to the “martyrs” – aviators should only die for fighting against outer enemies, not inner ones.<sup>91</sup> This positioning was very likely ill-received by Chiang Kai-shek at the time who saw precisely the elimination of inner enemies as his prime target before tackling the outer ones. He, too, addressed the audience of the commemoration celebration. In short, the role of the CAF was contentious even at the first official commemoration of its “martyrs”, and Huang Bingheng’s statement at the July commemoration, which was summarised in the press at the time, is important as a means to countercheck the text provided on the on-site stele of the Nanjing “aviators’ cemetery” of today (which focuses on the Japan factor). China’s factual fragmentation was, however, still on the agenda in the years following the cemetery’s inauguration, and thus some more fallen aviators were added over time (i.a. of inner-Chinese fights with warlord armies or connected to the “encirclement campaigns” against the Communists).<sup>92</sup> Accordingly, annual commemorations lost any “anti-Japanese stance” again for the time being.<sup>93</sup>

Things changed when the war against Japan broke out in full in 1937. Fallen pilots during the early days of the war were now added to the Nanjing cemetery. These were mostly those who died in the Battle of Shanghai – the high time of the CAF – and the subsequent Japanese advance on Nanjing. The August 13 outbreak of full-scale fighting in Shanghai quickly involved the CAF which landed surprise air attacks on August 14 on the Japanese in Shanghai and fended off the Japanese attempts of attacking the CAF Hangzhou base in turn, commemorated later as the new “day of the air force” (which it continued to be for Taiwan’s

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<sup>90</sup> See, e.g., the quite outspoken comment of Lin Junneng who had been to an aviation school in France, noting bitterly that most had died for technical reasons or lack of training. See Lin Junneng 林鈞能: “Canjia zhongyang kongjun kang-Ri zhenwang kanluan xunnan zhu lieshi zhuidiao dahui ganyan” 參加中央空軍抗日陣亡烈士追悼大會感言 (Afterthoughts on attending the great memorial for the martyrs of the CAF, fallen for resisting Japan or died for quelling rebellions). In: *Feibao* 飛報 (“The Chinese aeronautical gazette”) 1932, no. 167, pp. 1-2.

<sup>91</sup> For Huang’s statement, see “Zhuidiao kongjun zhenwang lieshi” 追悼空軍陣亡烈士 (Commemorating the fallen air force martyrs). In: *Zhongyang zhoubao* 中央週報 (Central Weekly) no. 216, 1932, pp. 9-11, there pp. 10-11.

<sup>92</sup> For a summary with photograph from the Communist side of “enemy [i.e. GMD] planes shot down” during the CCP’s Long March (1934-1935), cf. “Changzheng zhong hongjun jiluo diren 6 jia feiji” 长征中红军击落过敌人 6 架飞机 (Six enemy planes shot down by the Red Army during the Long March), August 18, 2016. Available online: <http://military.people.com.cn/n1/2016/0818/c1011-28646903.html>.

<sup>93</sup> E.g., in the following year, commemorative couplets by various GMD notables, and commemorative texts by General He Yingqin 何應欽 and Huang Bingheng were published in Nanjing’s *Junshi zazhi* 軍事雜誌 (Military Affairs Magazine) 1933, no. 51 (p. 173) and no. 52 (pp. 180-181).

Air Force after 1949).<sup>94</sup> This was, however, again not the unqualified “heroic” day it would be made into subsequently in Chinese narrative. In the West, August 14 in Shanghai entered history books as “Black Saturday” or even “Bloody Saturday” since two of the CAF planes which were supposed to attack the Japanese cruiser *Izumo*, lost their bombs instead over the densely populated and “neutral” International Settlements and French Concession,<sup>95</sup> creating a carnage of well over 1000 civilian victims of all kinds of nationalities, Chinese included. As the local English-language *North China Herald* commented at the time: “The Chinese Air Force made a ghastly debut.”<sup>96</sup> Although things went better for the CAF at their Hangzhou base that day, which was celebrated as a great victory for China, “Bloody Saturday” meant not only many civilian victims from “friendly fire”, but also an international public relations disaster for the GMD government.

Bitter fighting continued in the Shanghai area for weeks with the CAF participating, and moved up the Yangzi towards the capital, Nanjing, with the first Soviet “volunteer aviators” joining in from late October onward, while the CAF lost its best pilots during these weeks. The fallen aviators of those battles who were transferred to the Nanjing aviators’ cemetery had to be buried in a hurry and collectively in one common tomb, because then Nanjing herself was threatened. The city was conquered by the Japanese on December 13, followed by horrible weeks of what is nowadays usually called in the West the “Rape of Nanjing”, picking up the title of Iris Chang’s bestseller of 1997.<sup>97</sup> The gruesome “Nanjing massacre”, as it is called in China, is memorialised there and in all over China today with ever more stress, and in Nanjing in the respective memorial.<sup>98</sup> Predictably, the aviators’ cemetery containing tombs of Chinese pilots who had fought against the Japanese in 1932 and in the weeks preceding the Japanese occupation of Nanjing in 1937, was anathema to the Japanese occupiers who seem to have levelled it. (The soldiers’ cemetery of the Northern Expedition, in turn, which was not “anti-Japanese” in association, apparently fared better and would become a useful asset later, together with Sun’s mausoleum, to the Wang Jingwei “puppet-regime”).<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> E.g., in 2007, Taiwan’s Air Force organised a celebratory aerobatic show for this “Day of the Air Force”. Cf. Jimmy Chuang: “Air Force plans fly-by in Taipei to celebrate ‘814’”. In: *Taipei Times*, July 11, 2007, p. 2. The article points to the fact that the Japanese, however, retaliated immediately that very day in 1937 by attacking the Hangzhou base of the CAF, flying precisely from Taiwan, their colony at the time. (Though the Japanese attack was not “successful” that day, it would be repeated.) The atmosphere at the Taipei 2007 celebration in the presence of foreigners, including Japanese, in any case was, according to the article, “a little awkward”.

<sup>95</sup> The U.S. advisor Claire Chennault who had only recently arrived in China and helped plan the attack, referred to (and tried to explain) this shocking performance later in his *Way of a Fighter* (1949), p. 45. For a recent portrayal of events on the basis of Western eye-witness accounts, see Paul French: *Bloody Saturday: Shanghai’s Darkest Day*, London: Penguin 2017.

<sup>96</sup> See “A Tragic Lesson”. In: *North China Herald*, August 18, 1937. Other misplaced bombs fortunately did not result in such damage.

<sup>97</sup> The bestseller created a stir at the time, bringing the topic to international attention. Some hailed the book as “proof” for the obliterated “Chinese holocaust”, others criticised it because it was not very accurate in historical details. Some Japanese right-wingers deny the historical event altogether to this day.

<sup>98</sup> The literature on the Nanjing Massacre is voluminous. Suffice it to refer here to Joshua A. Fogel (ed.): *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography*, Berkeley et al.: University of California Press 2000. The memorial, too, has been treated several times. A relatively recent discussion can be found in Kirk A. Denton: *Exhibiting the Past: Historical Memory and the Politics of Museums in Postsocialist China*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 2014, pp. 143-149.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Linh D. Vu: “Mobilizing the Dead in Wartime Chongqing”. In: *Journal of Modern Chinese History* vol. 11, no. 2, 2017, pp. 264-287, there p. 267. For a post-“puppet-regime” photo of Chiang Kai-shek, visiting that

In sum, when the aviators' cemetery was set up and up to the fall of Nanjing in December 1937, it was dedicated to *Chinese* aviation casualties only. After the Sino-Japanese War's end, the cemetery became again a commemoration location of the revived GMD-capital, Nanjing, in 1946. For better access to the whole site which had been largely destroyed by the Japanese, the GMD-government employed Japanese POWs to build a road when it rebuilt the cemetery after the war.<sup>100</sup> Some tombs of aviators scattered around China or formerly buried in the air force cemetery of the war-time capital Chongqing were moved to Nanjing, if relatives agreed.<sup>101</sup> Today's oft-repeated claim that foreigners were moved to Nanjing's aviator cemetery then, too, is however doubtful. Specifications as to who this should have been, are not provided, and those "there" today were not (see below). The Chongqing "Cemetery of Martyrs of the Air Force" (*kongjun lieshi gongmu* 空军烈士公墓), which served for interments of aviators as long as Nanjing was "lost" to the GMD-government, apparently had only "hosted" Chinese.<sup>102</sup> The Americans had their own cemetery in Chongqing.<sup>103</sup> Western sources of the time suggest that after the war, the U.S. were tendentially "concentrating" their war dead in Shanghai (to then repatriate them).<sup>104</sup> The British, in turn, usually opted for moving their fallen from China to their colony Hong Kong after the war.<sup>105</sup> Some dead aviators, though, remained in various places in Southwest China where most of them had died. In sum, there are still several locations in China today where foreign aviators are buried, mostly in the Southwest (Americans / Western Allies) and in the Northeast (Soviets).

In general, with only some rare exceptions, cemeteries at the time were either foreign or Chinese, given the different creeds and customs, and thus a "mixed" cemetery of aviators in 1946 in Nanjing, as is claimed today, is not very likely. There are claims that two (or even four) Soviet casualties (again without specification, who) were transferred from Wuhan (see below)

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cemetery in September 3, 1948, see Guoshiguan, archival document no. 002-050101-00010-275. It shows rows of identical blocks of tombstones in high grass, i.e. apparently not looked after properly at that time, but fairly intact.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. the entry "Nanjing hangkong lieshi gongmu" 南京航空烈士公墓 (Nanjing cemetery of aviation martyrs) on the already mentioned website of the veterans' association of the CACW in Taiwan: [http://www.flyingtiger-cacw.com/new\\_page\\_931.htm](http://www.flyingtiger-cacw.com/new_page_931.htm). One may assume that the veterans were familiar with the pre-PRC site in Nanjing.

<sup>101</sup> See Tang Xuefeng 唐学锋: "'Chongqingqu Wangshan kongjun lieshi gongmu cixutu' jiemi" "重庆汪山空军烈士公墓次序图"解密 (Deciphering the "arrangement map of the Wangshan air force martyrs' cemetery in Chongqing"). In: *Hongyan chunqiu* 红岩春秋 (Red Crag [locality in Chongqing with a strong Communist link] Annals) 2016, July, pp. 26-33, there pp. 32-33.

<sup>102</sup> Tang Xuefeng's article ("Chongqingqu Wangshan kongjun lieshi gongmu cixutu' jiemi" 2016) provides a reproduction of the published layout on p. 27, which reveals that no Soviet and no American pilot was listed in the 1946 layout. (Tang compares two layout plans found in Hong Kong and Taiwan of the Chongqing Air Force Martyrs' Cemetery for the single names, correcting some misspellings and discovering that also ground personnel was buried there, while pilots buried often died of non-combatant causes like accidents.)

<sup>103</sup> See the photo of the "American Air Force Cemetery in Chongqing" in *Zhongguo kangzhan huabao* 中國抗戰畫報 (Chinese War of Resistance Pictorial), May 1947, p. 325.

<sup>104</sup> E.g., the Americans sent a mission to Hong Kong to gather remains of missing pilots for transferal to Shanghai. See "American Airmen: Remains of Six Found in Colony: Burial in Shanghai". In: *South China Morning Post*, January 20, 1946, p. 10.

<sup>105</sup> See "British War Dead: To Be Brought To Colony From China". In: *South China Morning Post* October 15, 1947, p. 6. The transferred war dead which included 20 Royal Air Force personnel fallen over Southwestern China were interred in the Hong Kong Sai Wan Cemetery. (Cf. also Gotelind Müller: *Challenging Dead: A Look into Foreigners' Cemeteries in Macau, Hong Kong, and Taiwan*, Heidelberg and Berlin: CrossAsia Repository 2018, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11588/xarep.00004145>, p. 16).



to Nanjing to represent the Soviet side which might then, if so, be the only foreign “addition” to the otherwise Chinese cemetery in the immediate post-war era. In 1946, the first commemoration together with the Americans and a Soviet-trained GMD aviator (obviously instead of a representative of the Soviet Union) was held in Nanjing.<sup>106</sup> Thus continued the practice of common commemoration ceremonies for the fallen among the Allies since 1944 (though not being specifically for aviators in that case).<sup>107</sup> On the other hand, already before the war, foreigners had been invited to attend burials of the CAF.<sup>108</sup> From the “mixed” presence at the ceremonies – as substantiated by historical photographs – one therefore may not simply conclude that Chinese and foreigners were buried there together. In 1947 and 1948, too, commemorations were held in Nanjing’s aviators’ cemetery.<sup>109</sup> In general, the annual “martyrs’ commemoration” date was March 29, the day of the Huanghuagang Uprising of 1911, i.e. a decidedly “Chinese” date. The Americans, on their part, held their own ceremony for their fallen in the war on Chinese soil on May 30, i.e. Memorial Day, going back to the American Civil War. As a Chinese newspaper report in the “Central Daily” (*Zhongyang ribao* 中央日報) of May 31, 1946, details, the U.S. Army and Navy representatives as well as the consul general in Shanghai participated in this ceremony in Shanghai’s “Bubbling Well” foreigners’ cemetery, while Chinese were attending as observers.<sup>110</sup> The U.S., however, complained to the Chinese about the neglect of care for their military tombs in Shanghai over the year, prompting the speeding-up of the repatriation moves.<sup>111</sup> In contrast, the Soviets usually left their dead where they were, though the bulk was of 1945 and in the Northeast, while the 1937-1940 “volunteers”, who did not survive, had been scattered cases, if not buried in Wuhan “in time” before the Japanese occupation (see below). In short, the claim of foreigners’ burials in the Nanjing aviators’ cemetery at the GMD-government’s return after the war, is doubtful, at least for the Western cases.

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<sup>106</sup> According to Chan Yang (*World War Two Legacies in East Asia: China Remembers the War*, London and New York: Routledge 2017, chapter 3, note 34), there is a report in the *Zhongyang ribao* 中央日報 (Central Daily) of April 4, 1946, on the ceremony at the “Kongjun xunzhi jiangshi gongmu”. However, a verification check in the *Zhongyang ribao* did not turn out such an article there unfortunately. In the *Haiguang* 海光 (“The Hai Kwang Weekly”) no. 19 of 1946, April 10, p. 3, in turn, the inauguration of the “Kongjun xunzhi jiangshi gongmu” 空軍殉職將士公墓 (Cemetery for the officers and soldiers of the air force died on duty) is mentioned with an American representative participating, offering a wreath.

<sup>107</sup> See Vu: “The Sovereignty of the War Dead” 2017, p. 279.

<sup>108</sup> See the photographs of 1936, titled “Hangkong lieshi gongzang dianli” 航空烈士公葬典禮 (Burial of the Air Force Martyrs). In: *Geming kongjun* 革命空軍 (Revolutionary Air Force) vol. 3, no. 15, August 1, 1936.

<sup>109</sup> One family member of a Chinese “aviation martyr”, whose remains are said to have been moved with 27 others to the Nanjing cemetery in 1946, recalls his elders having taken part in all these three post-war commemorations. See Cheng Weiwei 程薇薇 (staff member of the memorial hall in Nanjing): “Zhengui lao zhaopian: chuanqi fei jiangjun” 珍贵老照片。传奇飞将军 (A precious old photograph: A remarkable flying officer). In: *Dang'an yu jianshe* 档案与建设 (“Archives & Construction”) 2017, December, pp. 53-55, there p. 55. The commemoration text of 1948 was printed in *Guofang yuebao* 國防月報 (National Defence Monthly) vol. 6, no. 2, 1948, pp. 71-72.

<sup>110</sup> See Chen Xiangmei 陳香梅 (i.e. Chennault’s later second wife Anna, then a news reporter): “Xie zai Meiguo zhenwang jiangshi jinianri” 寫在美國陣亡將士紀念日 (Written for the American commemoration day for the fallen). In: *Zhongyang ribao* 中央日報 (Central Daily), May 31, 1946, p. 4. The article provides also two photographs, one showing the Christian tombs.

<sup>111</sup> See, e.g., the complaint of 1946 by the U.S. military to the mayor of Shanghai, announcing repatriations for the following year, preserved in the Shanghai Municipal Archives. Cf. Gotelind Müller: *Between History, Heritage, and Foreign Relations: Extant Westerners’ Cemeteries in Guangzhou and Shanghai*, Heidelberg and Berlin: CrossAsia-Repository 2018, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11588/xarep.00004163>, p. 31, note 124.

In terms of monuments and architecture, the cemetery as rebuilt after the Sino-Japanese War figured an archway as entrance to the cemetery, with inscriptions of Chiang Kai-shek and General He Yingqin 何應欽, Chiang Kai-shek's military "right hand".<sup>112</sup> Chiang inscribed the backside of the upper beam of the archway with the motto of the "patriotic" Song-time general Yue Fei 岳飛 who is said to have asked his mother to tattoo this on his back: *jingzhong baoguo* 精忠報國 (lit.: repay the country with supreme loyalty) [ill. 2], and a couplet of his own.<sup>113</sup> General He Yingqin inscribed the front side with the cemetery's name and a couplet.<sup>114</sup> A stele with inscription of Huang Bingheng of August 1932 commemorated the erection of the cemetery, while the backside showed the amount of money collected of donors [ill. 3,4]. The main sacrificial hall contained the spirit tablets for the fallen, while three tomb areas provided more than 160 tomb slots, each tomb figuring a small stone tablet detailing the buried individual.<sup>115</sup>

Regarding the pre-PRC overall layout, an interesting photograph (in bad quality [ill. 5]) is shown at the on-site exhibition (as of 2018), signed by GMD general Zhou Zhirou 周至柔 who also acted as aviation advisor to Chiang Kai-shek and was a key figure in the CAF. It is dated to 1948, i.e. shortly before the take-over of Nanjing by the Communists, and discloses the main features at this point in time, i.e. after the cemetery's post-war restoration. It therewith allows for a comparison between the layout of the time and the present one, showing the differences. Namely, in the GMD-era cemetery, the setup recalled the bell shape that had been used also for the Sun Yat-sen mausoleum near-by. There, the bell shape had been explained as a reminder that with Sun, the bell, China was finally "awakened".<sup>116</sup> This means that the aviators' cemetery design was to align itself with the all-dignifying presence of Sun's mausoleum on Purple Mountain. Today's layout, though, discards the bell shape and opts for a streamlined upstairs movement to the central monument [ill. 6]. In a way, the dead or rather their "tombstones" are "stepping stones" towards the greater national goal high above [ill. 7]. In a bird's eye view of the layout [cf. ill. 1], it now rather resembles a parachute – symbol of salvation, though the official reading as a squadron formation is more warlike.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore,

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<sup>112</sup> General He Yingqin who has been conventionally portrayed very negatively in Western-language scholarship as incapable and corrupt, has recently been reappraised by Peter Worthing: *General He Yingqin: The Rise and Fall of Nationalist China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2016.

<sup>113</sup> On a side note one may point out that Mao Zedong also provided this "Yue Fei phrase" in his own handwriting for the tomb of the most high-ranking military casualty on the Chinese side in all of the war: General Zhang Zizhong 張自忠 who was killed in 1940 and buried in Chongqing. One may assume this "tomb inscription challenge" had also an ironic twist on Chiang Kai-shek.

<sup>114</sup> Since the Japanese thoroughly destroyed the cemetery after their occupation of Nanjing in 1937, inscriptions had to be added anew in 1946. Cf. Xia Sisheng 夏四胜: "Hangkong lieshi gongmu" 航空烈士公墓 (Cemetery of the aviaton martyrs). In: *Zhongshan fengyu* 钟山风雨 (Rainstorm at Bell Mountain [an alternative name for Purple Mountain, referencing also Sun "Zhongshan's" 中山 "bell-shaped" mausoleum, used with "rainstorm" in a poem of Mao Zedong at the occasion of the Communist takeover of Nanjing]) 2004, no. 3, p. 58.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. the already named CACW veterans' website entry: "Nanjing hangkong lieshi gongmu": [http://www.flyingtiger-cacw.com/new\\_page\\_931.htm](http://www.flyingtiger-cacw.com/new_page_931.htm). As mentioned, one may assume that the CACW veterans were familiar with the pre-PRC site in Nanjing, while the post-1949 description is obviously based on PRC accounts.

<sup>116</sup> For the bell symbolism with the Sun memorial, see the art historical article of Delin Lai: "Searching for a Modern Chinese Monument: The Design of the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum in Nanjing". In: *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 64, no. 1, 2005, pp. 22-55, especially pp. 48-51.

<sup>117</sup> Ni Hong, who has worked at the site for years, advised various TV series, showed around many foreigners, and has written also some comments on the layout, associates the form with a fan which should imply the orderly

this 1948 photograph as well as the layout of the already mentioned Chongqing “Cemetery for the Air Force Martyrs”,<sup>118</sup> which the GMD had established in the interim war-time capital (a cemetery which soon fell into disuse after the war when the government moved back to Nanjing),<sup>119</sup> show that the GMD followed Chinese custom in that the most important building was the sacrificial hall with the spirit tablets. The tombs lay behind and uphill. This layout focused on the commemoration and veneration of the dead. The present-day layout in Nanjing, instead, focuses on the national victory to which the fallen only contributed.

In terms of “tombs”, it is stated on Nanjing governmental websites today that the memorial cemetery “hosted” more than 40 graves before the outbreak of the war in 1937.<sup>120</sup> This figure at first glance coincides more or less with Taiwan’s Air Force list of “martyrs” with short biographies for that time period (though the place of individual burials is not listed there).<sup>121</sup> As can be gleaned from those single short biographies, they de facto included, as mentioned, also aviators who died during the anti-Communist “encirclement campaigns” as well as during “rebellions” of warlords. According to the stele inscription of Huang Bingheng for the cemetery’s inauguration of August 1932 as one finds it today on site, and – more importantly – also according to his speech at the July 1932 commemoration summarised in the press of the day, referred-to above, “over 30” Chinese aviators were buried there at that time. In Taiwan’s Air Force biographies, however, only around a third are detailed for the period up to 1932, which means that around 20 cases are not listed there. Later casualties in the mid-1930s bring the total on Taiwan’s Air Force website to some 40 “martyrs” before the Sino-Japanese War started in full in July 1937 (though some aviators might have been buried elsewhere than Nanjing, given that, e.g., the Hangzhou Flying School had a cemetery, too). One may thus conclude that the numbers should not be considered definite. In any case, in the fall of 1937, a large group of 24 fallen aviators was added after the fierce battles in and around Shanghai collectively.<sup>122</sup> This was the last interment before the Japanese occupation.

After the Sino-Japanese War, the GMD reburied the remains of several “anti-Japanese” aviation fighters in the rebuilt Nanjing cemetery, as mentioned, if families agreed. Also,

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“airplane formation”. Cf. Ni Hong 倪洪: “Nanjing jianshe liangda: guoji kang-Ri hangkong jinian jianzhu shimo” 南京建设两大。国际抗日航空纪念建筑始末 (Nanjing builds two big ones: details of the constructions to memorialise the international Resistance-to-Japan aviation). In: *Zhongshan fengyu* 钟山风雨 (Rainstorm at Bell Mountain) 2016, no. 2, pp. 4-8, there p. 7. (He, however, claims the foreigners are really buried there – p. 8, which is obviously wrong.) His interpretation is apparently what the official narrative on the site should be.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. the reproduction of the layout provided by Tang Xuefeng: “Chongqingqu” (2016), p. 27. Tang, though, does not tease out the implications of the layout. Roughly, also the Chongqing cemetery resembles the bell shape.

<sup>119</sup> In 2008, Chongqing set up a new Air Force Cemetery on the very ground with a “Memorial Park for the Air Force in the War of Resistance” (Tang Xuefeng: “Chongqingqu” 2016, p. 26), i.e. adapts and appropriates it for the building of a “tradition” there for the PRC Air Force.

<sup>120</sup> “Hangkong lieshi gongmu” 航空烈士公墓 (Cemetery of aviation martyrs). Available online: [https://archive.is/20160628131911/http://www.nju.gov.cn/web\\_info/public\\_detail/detail/169/14565.shtml](https://archive.is/20160628131911/http://www.nju.gov.cn/web_info/public_detail/detail/169/14565.shtml).

<sup>121</sup> See today’s Taiwan’s Air Force website, based on the “martyr files”: [https://air.mnd.gov.tw/TW/History/History\\_List.aspx?FID=7&CID=165](https://air.mnd.gov.tw/TW/History/History_List.aspx?FID=7&CID=165). GMD “martyrs” as such (i.e. of all kinds of military or GMD-revolutionary credentials) are, as mentioned, memorialised in Taiwan today in the National Martyrs’ Shrine in Taipei.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. the official “Jiangsu Culture Database” entry on the “cemetery”: “Kang-Ri hangkong lieshi gongmu” 抗日航空烈士公墓 (Cemetery of anti-Japanese aviation martyrs). Available online: <http://www2.jslib.org.cn/was5/web/detail?record=1&primarykeyvalue=rowid%3D%270436F11F6.0000013B.6DF1%27&channelid=23979>.

aviators of whom no remains were found, could be honoured with a substitute tomb (*yi guan zhong* 衣冠冢). (This practice of tombs with “clothes and cap” (*yi guan*) in place of an absent corpse, is said to go back to the mythical Yellow Emperor who is said to have ascended to heaven, leaving clothes and cap behind, while, e.g., more practically fishermen lost at sea often necessitated burials without corpses present.)<sup>123</sup> Their spirits were enshrined and “comforted” this way. Furthermore, recent casualties, including those fighting for the GMD in the Civil War against the CCP, were added. All in all, present-day summaries state, 28 aviators were (re)interred in Nanjing in 1946, 49 in 1947, and some more in 1948.<sup>124</sup> These cases are said to have included also the pilot of the deadly airplane crash of Chiang Kai-shek’s “spymaster” Dai Li in 1946.<sup>125</sup>

This, roughly, was the state of things at the site when in 1949 Nanjing changed hands once again, now taken over by the CCP, and losing again its role as capital. The GMD-government’s aviators’ cemetery in Nanjing became “problematic” at this point in time, and it was seemingly largely neglected and then vandalised, most thoroughly in the Cultural Revolution. As Chinese staff responsible for the site afterwards stated, the archway was the *only* structure that survived the Cultural Revolution,<sup>126</sup> though the inscriptions of Chiang Kai-shek and He Yingqin were predictably chiselled away. The stele with Huang Bingheng’s 1932 text on spot today thus is a remake. The “sacrificial hall”, once the key building holding “ancestral tablets” for the dead, had to be rebuilt, too, but now without its semi-religious function. (At the time of visit in 2018, it was closed.) In sum, the post-war rebuilding of the site of the GMD was thoroughly undone by the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution.

Only in the 1980s, the site was again receiving official attention. The aviators’ memorial, originally called “cemetery of aviation martyrs”, was re-labelled as “cemetery of anti-Japanese war aviation martyrs”, therewith stressing the “common enemy” Japan. With this renaming, it was possible to reappraise the site in the PRC context, since the Chinese commemorated were de facto non-Communist ones, and those who had fought against the Communists (or other Chinese) were, needless to say, eliminated from commemoration in the process. (They are, at least in part, still to be found today on the already referred-to website on former “heroes and martyrs” of Taiwan’s Air Force, which also has set up its own “successor” cemetery in Taipei

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<sup>123</sup> See Xu Jijun 徐吉军 and He Yun’ao 贺云翱: *Zhongguo sangzang lisu* 中国丧葬礼俗 (Chinese burial customs), Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe 1991, pp. 214-215.

<sup>124</sup> See, again, “Kang-Ri hangkong lieshi gongmu” of the “Jiangsu Culture Database”, available online: <http://www2.jslib.org.cn/was5/web/detail?record=1&primarykeyvalue=rowid%3D%270436F11F6.0000013B.6DF1%27&channelid=23979>. See also “Hangkong lieshi gongmu” 航空烈士公墓 (Cemetery of aviation martyrs) (2015) on the Nanjing government website: [https://archive.is/20160628131911/http://www.nju.gov.cn/web\\_info/public\\_detail/detail/169/14565.shtml](https://archive.is/20160628131911/http://www.nju.gov.cn/web_info/public_detail/detail/169/14565.shtml). The short biographies on Taiwan’s Air Force websites ([https://air.mnd.gov.tw/TW/History/History\\_List.aspx?FID=7&CID=165](https://air.mnd.gov.tw/TW/History/History_List.aspx?FID=7&CID=165)) figure roughly 48 pages à 12 “martyrs” as the total up to 1949, who obviously only partly were interred in the Nanjing aviators’ cemetery at some point.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Fan Fangzhen: *Zhongshanling shihua* (2004), p. 90.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. the 2014 journalistic report, based on an interview with a local historian: “Zui zao kang-Ri hangkong lieshi gongmu yingxiang pilu paishe yu 1932 nian” 最早抗日航空烈士公墓影像披露 拍摄于 1932 年 (Earliest photos of the anti-Japanese aviation martyrs’ cemetery disclosed, photographed in 1932). In: *Jinling wanbao* 金陵晚报 (Jinling [i.e. Nanjing] evening news), October 7, 2014. Available online: <https://web.archive.org/web/20160626071431/http://auto.chinanews.com/cul/2014/10-17/6690420.shtml>.

for post-1949 “aviation martyrs” there. That new Taipei cemetery does not closely follow the Nanjing predecessor’s model in layout, though.<sup>127</sup>)

When the 40th anniversary of the Sino-Japanese War’s end in 1985 was approaching, the Nanjing site’s potential of uniting the Chinese “two sides” of the GMD and the CCP via reference to the famous slogan of “rescuing the nation with aviation”, associated with Sun Yat-sen, was revived. An important aspect was therefore to extend a hand to Taiwan with the reconstructed cemetery.<sup>128</sup> In this context of careful reappraisal, the families and descendants living in the PRC, who had suffered from the “GMD-connection” of the aviators before, dared to come forward with requests to acknowledge their forebears’ deeds as “patriotic” and as “for the Chinese nation”, rather than for the former GMD-government, pointing to positive comments on the air force’s merits during the Sino-Japanese War by Zhou Enlai 周恩来 as the spokesman for the Communists and later PRC-era premier. In fact, PRC acknowledgements of “martyr status” – usually reserved for CCP “martyrs” – of these aviators (with the respective benefits for their descendants) were finally granted in the 2000s.<sup>129</sup> The delay was said to be due to lacking documentation and proofs, given that these had been often destroyed by the families out of fear during the Cultural Revolution.<sup>130</sup>

The Nanjing aviators’ “cemetery” was reconstructed on a larger scale after the 1985 anniversary and was completed in 1995 for the 50th anniversary of the war’s end with the new monument on top. This new reconstruction and monument were commemorated in strict parallel to the inauguration of 1932 with a stele detailing the process [ill. 8], placed in symmetry to the one with Huang Bingheng’s 1932 text and donations on the rear, to the other side of the central stairway, again with donations detailed on the rear. These include donations by a Taiwanese and a Korean, as well as by the CACW veterans’ and the Russian veterans’ association [ill. 9], showing that the site’s “unifying” function via the “anti-Japanese war” focus was well received. (Obviously, this new 1995 stele solicited some ideology-driven vandalism of visitors attacking the CCP appropriation of this former GMD site [ill. 10,11].) Furthermore, in a pavilion on the way up on the central axis, the motto of “rescuing the nation with aviation” in Sun Yat-sen’s calligraphy of 1923 is carved in a stone tablet. The original commemoration

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<sup>127</sup> For a short description of the Taipei cemetery by Taiwan’s Ministry of Defence, including a map of the layout, see: “Kongjun lieshi gongmu jianjie” 空軍烈士公墓簡介 (Short description of the cemetery of the air force martyrs). Available online: [https://air.mnd.gov.tw/TW/Service/Service\\_List.aspx?CID=44](https://air.mnd.gov.tw/TW/Service/Service_List.aspx?CID=44). This cemetery has different sections for the “fallen” and for the personnel that died otherwise.

<sup>128</sup> The long-time responsible figure in Nanjing, formerly working for the Sun Yat-sen mausoleum, Fan Fangzhen, mentioned later that the call for reconstruction of the aviators’ cemetery was actually coming from the “United Front Bureau”, i.e. the entity responsible for reaching out to non-Communist Chinese. Cf. *Wuhan shangkong de ying* (2015), p. 25.

<sup>129</sup> Chan Yang (*World War Two Legacies in East Asia* 2018, pp. 66 ff.) has pointed out that in some cases of strong “anti-Japanese” credentials, “martyr” status could be claimed already in the early 1950s in the PRC when “the people” sustained it and no ideologically incriminating evidence could be found. This, however, was the exception to the rule, did not necessarily involve benefits to the descendants in this case, and would also end in the 1960s.

<sup>130</sup> See, e.g., cases mentioned in “Tian: Ju tou san chi you yingling” 天。举头三尺有英灵 (Heaven: Raise your head and just above you are the heroes’ spirits). In: *Guoji zhanwang* 国际展望 (International Outlook) 2007, no. 73, pp. 30-32.

hall with the spirit tablets for the enshrined GMD aviators (*jitang* 祭堂), once the key structure for the ceremonies, was, as mentioned, rebuilt, if without any “religious” function.

On the top of the whole layout, a new monument was set up in 1995 to define the site in the Soviet-U.S.-China context. Thus, the staircases lead up to this V[ictory]-shaped monument stele [ill. 12], symbolising also two wings standing in an angle suggesting a triangle. Black stone walls with the names of casualties engraved, divided according to nationalities (Soviet, American, Korean, Chinese [ill. 13,14,15,16]), were added and placed in radial fashion.<sup>131</sup> The new monument’s inscription was provided by PRC general Zhang Aiping 张爱萍 [ill. 17,18], an early Communist who had been responsible for guerrilla activities in the Nanjing area during the Sino-Japanese War for considerable time. He is said to have helped rescue some American aviators after their famous 1942 Doolittle bombing raid of Tokyo when they crashed on return to China behind enemy lines.<sup>132</sup> Thus, in spite of not being of the Air Force himself, Zhang Aiping could be seen as connected to the foreign aviators and fitting to mark the appropriation of the site with his inscription.<sup>133</sup> Zhang Aiping was furthermore a key figure responsible for the modernisation of the PLA (People’s Liberation Army) and also for the nuclear programme in PRC times. However, there seems to be an additional layer to his inscription at that time. He had been among those of China’s military who had voiced opposition to the use of the PLA to quell the 1989 demonstrations on Tian’anmen Square when he was already in retirement.<sup>134</sup> As is well-known, the decision went otherwise, and the critics were side-lined thereafter. The fact that he could provide this inscription in 1995 can thus be read as a tacit “rehabilitation” of him, too. While the triangle of the monument suggests the three “main” contributors: China, the U.S. and the Soviet Union, two statue groups, a ready-to-fight Soviet-Chinese (for the first phase of the war) and a victory-celebrating American-Chinese (for the later phase of the war) pair of aviators respectively, are placed to both sides [ill. 19,20].

In the present setup of the “tombs”, too, a divide is maintained between the U.S.-Americans and the Soviets at the two sides of the central stairway leading up to the memorial (with the Chinese “tombs” distributed to both sides). Today, on the “U.S. side” of the central staircase there are four “tombstones” for American aviators. The first is of Robert McCawley Short who died in 1932. The GMD-era Nanjing cemetery did, however, *not* include the U.S. aviator Robert M. Short who became a celebrity when he died in February 1932 during a skirmish with the Japanese when they flew their attacks on Shanghai (the so-called “Shanghai Incident”). Short, who was recruited by the Chinese government to train Chinese military aviators and on his way to shuttle an airplane under Chinese flag away from Shanghai, found himself suddenly

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<sup>131</sup> See the leaflet of the memorial hall: *Nanjing kang-Ri hangkong jinianguan* 南京抗日航空纪念馆 (“Nanjing Anti-Japanese Aviation Memorial Hall”), Nanjing n.d. See also the short description of the memorial site in Yang Guoqing: *Minguo mingren mu* (1998), pp. 153-156.

<sup>132</sup> Other American participants, though, were captured by the Japanese and executed or imprisoned. For this, the Americans, in turn, executed the responsible Japanese after the war. Cf. “Shanghai Trials: Preparations Virtually Completed: Doolittle Aviators”. In: *South China Morning Post*, January 28, 1946, p. 10.

<sup>133</sup> For his role in rescuing crew members of the Doolittle Mission, see his obituary in the *Los Angeles Times*, July 9, 2003: “Zhang Aiping, 93; Headed China’s Military, Nuclear Bomb Program”.

<sup>134</sup> Cf. the obituary in *The Times*, July 10, 2003, p. 32: “Zhang Aiping: Chinese Defence Minister who modernised the Army and emphasised the country’s need to upgrade its own armaments industry”.

surrounded by Japanese planes over Suzhou. He shot down a Japanese himself but was hit subsequently and crashed to death.<sup>135</sup> The fact that the Chinese airplane had been steered by an American who thus became a foreign casualty in this conflict was embarrassing to both the Japanese and the Americans, but used by the Chinese to boost domestic morale and to draw the officially neutral Americans closer to the Chinese side. Short was at that time buried in Shanghai's western Hongqiao district where the aerodrome was located. His burial was big news in the Chinese and international press at the time.<sup>136</sup> Near Suzhou, where he was shot down, a memorial had been erected early on and was renewed in PRC times. His clearly new cenotaph is one of the four "tombstones" for U.S. aviators *now* in Nanjing, and since 2014 his name is even second on a Chinese ministerial chronological list of "anti-Japanese heroes" in the context of extending the dating of the "anti-Japanese war" – which in any case was not officially declared – back in time from the full-scale war of 1937 to start with the "Manchurian incident" in 1931.<sup>137</sup> (This, ironically, copies a long-standing argument in *Japanese* scholarship!) It is, in fact, notable that such a recent PRC "hero list" covers also foreigners, and non-Communist U.S. citizens on top of this. Among the other foreigners on the list, some more pilots can be found: the U.S. aviator William Reed (see below), but also Soviet aviators Marchenkov and Kulishenko (see below).<sup>138</sup> They, however, died during the "core" time of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945). (Foreign non-aviators on the list include the Canadian Communist doctor Norman Bethune, Austrian Communist journalist Hans Shippe – actually a pen name of Mojzes Grzyb, and the Japanese POW and willing "collaborator" with the CCP, Miyakawa Hideo 宮川英男.) Robert Short, the "early" foreign hero of 1932, was even honoured with an exhibition in the PRC as "China's American Hero" in 2015.<sup>139</sup> Very clearly, Short is made to serve again Chinese political agendas, as his death did back in 1932.

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<sup>135</sup> See the report in the *New York Times*: "American Killed in Air Fight in China: R.M. Short Shot Down After Slaying Japanese Observer in Battle over Soochow". In: *The New York Times*, February 24, 1932, p. 16.

<sup>136</sup> There was even a short film of the event. Short's mother and brother had come over to Shanghai for the funeral in April 1932. For a representative press article with a photo, see the Shanghai newspaper *Shenbao* 申報: "Quan shi xia banqi. Xiaode zuori anzang (fu tupian). Zai Hongqiao jichang xing jun zangli. Zhifuzhe shuqian guanzhong shiwan. Feijishi yu guan jijin rongai" 全市下半旗. 蕭德昨日安葬(附圖片). 在虹橋機場行軍葬禮. 執紼者數千觀衆十萬. 飛機師昇棺極盡榮哀 (Whole city lowers flag. Short buried yesterday (with photo). Military burial at Hongqiao airfield. Thousands of participants, hundred thousand spectators. Aviators act as pallbearers to pay their last respects). In: *Shenbao* April 25, 1932 (No. 21213), p. 1. Chiang Kai-shek and Song Meiling sent wreaths, and her brother Song Ziwen (T.V. Soong) read a eulogy. For an American report, see the *New York Times*: "Slain American Flier Honored by Chinese; Shanghai Throng Acclaims Short as a Hero". In: *The New York Times*, April 25, 1932, p. 1.

<sup>137</sup> This "first list" of 2014 by the Ministry of Civil Affairs can be found online: "Minzhengbu gongbu diyipi 300 ming zhuming kang-Ri yinglie he yingxiong qunti minglu" 民政部公布第一批 300 名著名抗日英烈和英雄群体名录 (The Ministry of Civil Affairs announces the first list of 300 famous anti-Japanese heroes and martyrs and heroic groups) (September 2, 2014). Available online: [http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2014-09/01/content\\_2743269.htm](http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2014-09/01/content_2743269.htm).

<sup>138</sup> According to the Russian list of Soviet "volunteer aviators" casualties, Marchenkov died in Wuhan of his wounds in July 1938 and was said to have been buried there. He is represented in the Wuhan memorial (see below). Kulishenko has a cenotaph in the Nanjing cemetery but was buried in Wanxian (now belonging to Chongqing municipality) (see below).

<sup>139</sup> An American newspaper article mentions that Short's niece was invited to visit the Nanjing cemetery. Obviously, she was told his remains had been transferred there in the meantime. See Craig Sailor: "Tacoma pilot is revered as a hero in China but nearly forgotten at home". In: *The News Tribune*, November 12, 2017. Available online: <https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/article184009651.html>.

Beyond Short, the “American tombstones” *now* in Nanjing include three “Flying Tigers”: Robert Mooney who died in combat in 1942 over Yunnan (and has a memorial there),<sup>140</sup> Robert Little who died over Burma in 1942, and squadron leader William Reed [ill. 21] who died in 1944. Reed’s real tomb, however, is in Iowa since his body was returned home after the war.<sup>141</sup> Thus, it is rather questionable whether in the other cases the Nanjing “tombs” contain (or ever contained) any human remains. In fact, the non-governmental “American War Memorials Overseas” organisation in its listing of the Nanjing site refers to the “memorial” black stone walls only, with the names “recording” those Americans who flew for China, including those gone missing.<sup>142</sup> The single entries (largely based on the “Find a Grave” website) for those of whom remains had been found, lists none of them as ever buried in Nanjing. The “Find a Grave” website, in turn, though not always reliable, registers 62 individual entries of the over 2000 Americans named on the stone walls,<sup>143</sup> but does not figure any of the four “tombs”. In fact, checking for the four names on those “tombs”, beyond William Reed, the website mentions a burial place in the U.S. for Robert Mooney, too, while Robert Little is classified as “lost at war”. Furthermore, in one case of the 62 individual entries on names inscribed on the Nanjing stone walls, one may note that individuation procedures are still going on in the U.S. where the remains are held.<sup>144</sup> In sum, the U.S. still care for proving whose personal remains are where, and none is listed as being in Nanjing. One may thus conclude that all the four “U.S. tombs” are as much cenotaphs as the black stone wall names are a memorialisation.

On the “Soviet side” of the Nanjing “cemetery”, in turn, there are six “tombstones” today. These include the “tombstone” of Ukrainian Grigory Kulishenko [ill. 22] who commanded a squadron of Soviet aviators and died in 1939 on his way back to Sichuan. His plane dropped into the Yangzi River after he had attacked Wuhan, at the time held by the Japanese since months. In fact, he seems to have flown a bomber with a crew, most of whom could get out in time and survived, while he drowned. His remains were found downstream days later.<sup>145</sup> He was buried there, i.e. in Wanxian, now Chongqing municipality, where the tomb is to this day a “heritage protection unit” and a local important patriotic education site of itself. Thus, his Nanjing “tombstone” is clearly only a cenotaph. Kulishenko, like Robert Short for the U.S., is however particularly picked out for Soviet help to China and covered, like Short, by the “First list of 300 famous anti-Japanese heroes and martyrs”. He had been especially praised as a hero by Chinese President Xi Jinping 习近平 (see below), and was honoured in 2015 at the 70th anniversary of the war’s end with a film (where he was presented for more dramatic effect as

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<sup>140</sup> His Yunnan memorial is also officially visited by the American consul. See “U.S. and China Honor American WWII Hero in Yunnan Province” (April 6, 2015). Available online: <https://china.usembassy-china.org.cn/u-s-china-honor-american-wwii-hero-yunnan-province/>.

<sup>141</sup> See his entry on the U.S. Flying Tigers’ website: “Reed, William Norman ‘Bill’” (June 13, 2013). Available online: <https://flyingtigersavg.com/reed-william-norman/>.

<sup>142</sup> See “The Monument to the Aviation Martyrs in the War of Resistance Against Japan”. Available online: [https://www.uswarmemorials.org/html/monument\\_details.php?SiteID=495&MemID=768&keyword=nanjing](https://www.uswarmemorials.org/html/monument_details.php?SiteID=495&MemID=768&keyword=nanjing).

<sup>143</sup> “Monument to Aviation Martyrs Nanjing Memorial”. Available online: <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2584193/monument-to-aviation-martyrs-nanjing-memorial>.

<sup>144</sup> See the entry of John Dean Armstrong, an AVG member, whose at the time “unidentifiable” remains were recovered together with others in 1947 and first buried in a U.S. cemetery in India, not China, and then moved to Hawai’i. In 2016, his remains were finally identified. (Available online: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/148851288/john-dean-armstrong>.)

<sup>145</sup> See his biographical sketch in Zhang Pengdou: *Bixue changkong zhonghun wu* (2016), pp. 131-132.



perishing while flying all alone in a monoplane, though the film focuses not on him but tellingly on Chinese care for his tomb).<sup>146</sup> This “importance” might be one reason to represent him with a cenotaph in the Nanjing memorial, though the fact that he was Ukrainian and not Russian adds a special nuance to his memorialisation today, given the Ukrainian-Russian strained relations of which the Chinese are well aware (see below).

One further Soviet aviator, Burdanov, represented with a “tombstone” in Nanjing today, died in the aerial defence of Nanjing in 1937 and is said to have been buried there at some place,<sup>147</sup> right before the Japanese took Nanjing only days after; another (Kurdyumov) was apparently the very first Soviet aviator casualty in China in late October 1937, who died over Suzhou 肃州 in Gansu by accident when the first Soviet planes were ferried into China, and is said to have been buried at some place in Nanjing;<sup>148</sup> one further (Veligurov) died over Anhui in 1938;<sup>149</sup> and two (Shturman and Rubashkin?) of whom only Chinese inscriptions are provided [ill. 23,24], are stated to have died in Nanchang, Jiangxi province, in that year as well.<sup>150</sup> They might be the two who – according to PRC-era accounts – have been transferred in 1946 by the GMD to Nanjing for the 1946 “commemoration”, if that was the case, since the remains of the Soviet aviators who had died over Nanjing could not be found any longer.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> The film *Xiangban Kulishenke / “A Promise to the Kurichenko’s”* (sic!) 相伴库里申科 was produced by the PLA (People’s Liberation Army). Kulishenko dies in the very first minutes of the film, leaving the whole rest of the film for the storyline of a Chinese mother and son who dedicated all their lives to the task of caring for his tomb.

<sup>147</sup> According to the Archives of the Russian Ministry of Defence, he was buried in Nanjing: cited in: Anatolii Demin: “Soviet Fighters in the Sky of China (1937-1940)”. In: *Aviatsiya i Kosmonavtika* 9.2000, translated by George Mellinger. Available online: [http://www.j-aircraft.com/research/George\\_Mellinger/soviet\\_fighters\\_in\\_the\\_sky\\_of\\_ch.htm](http://www.j-aircraft.com/research/George_Mellinger/soviet_fighters_in_the_sky_of_ch.htm). (Demin has published subsequently a three-volume work on aviation in China: *Aviatsiya velikogo sosedya* (Aviation of the big neighbour), Moscow: Fond sodeystviya aviatsii “Russkiye Vityazi” 2008-2013. Vols. 1 and 2 deal with the times prior to the Sino-Soviet split, with vol. 1 treating the Soviet “volunteer aviators” in more detail.)

<sup>148</sup> It might be assumed that the name given on the “tombstone”, as there are many spelling errors, intends Kurdyumov who is mentioned by Demin (2000). The initials and the death date fit. Kurdyumov is listed as buried “in Nanjing” in the Russian list. Cf. *Wuhan shangkong de ying* (2015), p. 223. There was also a foreigners’ cemetery in Nanjing, though, at the time.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. also the short comment on him in Hakan Gustavsson: *Sino-Japanese Air War 1937-1945: The Longest Struggle*, [Stroud]: Fonthill Media Limited 2016, chapter 3.

<sup>150</sup> Checking through the name list of Russian aviators who died at the time in China, provided in Russian in *Wuhan shangkong de ying* (2015), pp. 230-240, the closest fitting are senior lieutenant Anatoly Dmitrievich Shturmin, noted as died on June 26, 1938 – as on the Nanjing “tombstone”, and lieutenant Anatoly Dmitrievich Rubashkin, noted as died on September 15, 1938 – unlike on the Nanjing “tombstone” where the given death date of September 6, 1938, however, cannot be matched with any entry of the Russian list and where also the provided military rank does not fit –, both in Nanchang. (In the numbered Chinese list (pp. 219-229), the translation characters of Shturmin, no. 204, and Rubashkin, no. 149, do not correspond to the likely misspelling on the Chinese-only “tombstones” which even feature for Rubashkin (?) a weird “traditional” character not to be found in any lexicon.) Furthermore, according to the Russian list, there were 9 Russians “buried” in Nanjing (six who died in the days before the Japanese occupation of December 1937, three later which begs the question as to how they could be buried there then), who do, however, not coincide with the six “tombstones” now there, but for the cases of Burdanov and Kurdyumov.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. *Wuhan shangkong de ying* (2015), p. 30, referring to an interview with Fan Fangzhen. (However, according to Fan Fangzhen’s earlier statement elsewhere, there were even *four* Soviet casualties transferred from Wuhan: see Fan Fangzhen: *Shiji weiren* 1998, p. 168. He, however, does not provide any details or sources for either claim. Theoretically, the “two” could be the ones with Chinese-only “tombstones” today, transferred by the GMD – if

The two Chinese-language Nanjing cemetery Soviet “tombstones” are in line with the designs of the Chinese ones. It is not clear when the 6 present “Soviet tombstones” were set up, but there are hints by a local history bureau member that the whole setup was only of the reconstruction time since the 1980s.<sup>152</sup> In 1985, the Soviets with whom the ties at the time just started to warm again after the Sino-Soviet split,<sup>153</sup> were invited to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the war’s end, and thus veterans or their associations’ representatives participated.<sup>154</sup> In 1997, a Russian overview on Soviet military casualties buried in China – the outcome of a delegation visit to China in 1996 – stated that in the 1950s (when Soviets theoretically could visit the Nanjing site), there were not 6, but 4 and different (!) Soviet “tombs” in this Nanjing cemetery, providing the cases of Alekseev, Andreev, Petrov and Popov.<sup>155</sup> These died during the defence of Nanjing, just days before the Japanese entered the city. Soviet archival material claimed five further cases who were connected to Nanjing: Nezhdanov, Burdanov, Kostin, Vdovichenko and Kanashko.<sup>156</sup> (However, as mentioned, only Nezhdanov and Burdanov died before the Japanese occupied the city, which renders a burial of the later other three in Nanjing unlikely.) Notably, though, in 2015 a CCP-affiliated website detailed the “6 cases” of those Soviet aviators who are recorded to have died “in the defence of Nanjing”,<sup>157</sup> stating that *none* of their remains could be located yet, hoping for hints from the people. These 6 intended Nezhdanov, Burdanov, Petrov, Andreev, Alekseev and Popov. In sum, even Burdanov, in spite of his present-day “tombstone” in Nanjing, could never be found.

Apart from the 10 foreigners’ “tombstones”, Chinese “tombstones” are the more numerous at today’s site [cf. ill. 7, ill. 25]. Official figures claim 59 tombs that are “preserved” on either side of the stairway in the Nanjing “cemetery”,<sup>158</sup> although elsewhere it has been admitted that there are now no human remains beneath anywhere any longer, i.e. also in the Chinese cases.<sup>159</sup> Unofficial history suggests, too, that all former tombs had been completely raised during the 1960s. Thus, the “tombs” are reconstructed cenotaphs throughout.

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so, the “four” instead the group claimed by the Russians to have been there in the 1950s – see below: Alekseev, Andreev, Petrov and Popov, who are now *not* represented.)

<sup>152</sup> Cf. the interview in the already mentioned journalistic report: “Zui zao kang-Ri hangkong lieshi gongmu yingxiang pilu paishe yu 1932 nian” (2014).

<sup>153</sup> Full normalisation of Sino-Soviet relations was achieved only in May 1989 during the historically crucial visit of Gorbachev in Beijing amidst the unfolding student protests on Tian’anmen Square.

<sup>154</sup> For the participation of Soviet veterans, see Fan’s statements as provided in *Wuhan shangkong de ying* (2015), p. 26. The Soviet veterans, in turn, spurred the Soviet Ministry of Defence to provide a list of Soviet aviator casualties in China which resulted in a name list of 236 presented to China between the 1985 and the 1995 commemoration events. (Cf. *Wuhan shangkong de ying*, 2015, p. 29, though the list provided in the book’s appendix figures “only” 214 cases.)

<sup>155</sup> See [V[asily] Ivanov et al.]: *Vechnym snom spyat v Kitayskoy zemle: Memorial’ny al'bom* (Resting eternally in Chinese soil: Memorial Album), Moscow: MAS 1997, p. 22. (I am grateful to Maxim Korolkov and Anastasiia Dmitrenko for access to this source.) Unfortunately, the book of Ivanov provides only the photo of the Chinese-only dubious “tombstone” (Rubashkin?).

<sup>156</sup> Ivanov: *Vechnym snom spyat v Kitayskoy zemle* (1997), p. 23.

<sup>157</sup> “Nanjing 1937: 6 ming Sulian kongjun zhiyuanzhe jia yi-16 tongji Ri jun” 南京 1937. 6 名苏联空军志愿者驾伊-16 痛击日军 (Nanjing 1937: 6 Soviet volunteer aviators steered [Polikarpov] I-16s hitting the Japanese) (July 16, 2015). Available online: <http://old.xatdj.com/news-14341-39.html>.

<sup>158</sup> See the Jiangsu Culture Database entry: “Kang-Ri hangkong lieshi gongmu” 抗日航空烈士公墓 (Anti-Japanese aviation martyrs’ cemetery). Available online: <http://www2.jslib.org.cn/was5/web/detail?record=1&primarykeyvalue=rowid%3D%270436F11F6.0000013B.6DF1%27&channelid=23979>.

<sup>159</sup> Cf. Fan Fangzhen: *Shiji weiren* (1998), p. 169.

Accompanying the reconstructed “cemetery”, an “exhibition hall” (in four parts) was added subsequently and opened in 2009 to reinforce the educational usability of the site, providing the official narrative before moving on to the “cemetery”. It gives credit to each represented group, though it should be noted that the U.S. side which had the far most casualties, is represented by Chennault [ill. 26] and his “Flying Tigers” in a kind of “private” vein – in spite of the command later being official part of the U.S. military,<sup>160</sup> whereas for the Soviets nowadays equated with Russia (but on a second line also Belorussia), and their technology [ill. 27], there is a distinct official-diplomatic feel to it, in spite of the “volunteer” status of the Soviet aviators at the time. In fact, the Russian and Belorussian consuls of Shanghai visit the site in Nanjing on a regular basis and have actively provided materials, while the U.S. seem to be more reluctant on an official level, though veterans visited on a private basis.<sup>161</sup>

Although historically, as mentioned, the CAF was no match to the Japanese who relied heavily on their supremacy in the sky in their war with China, the present-day exhibition suggests the currently “politically correct” view of the Chinese having been the main actors in fending off the Japanese even in the air. The foreigners were only there “to help”.<sup>162</sup> In terms of aviator casualties, though, the U.S. head the list by far with 2197 – a very high figure, given the many casualties on the “hump” route, followed by the Chinese with 870, then the Soviet Union with 236 and finally Korea with 2.<sup>163</sup> To these, in 2015 at the 70th anniversary of the end of the war, which was widely celebrated in China, 990 further names were added since it was said that those who had served in subaltern positions and should be honoured for their merits as well, were not yet represented. These new names “ameliorated” the Chinese ratio somewhat with additional 586 Chinese vs. 404 additional Americans.<sup>164</sup> And the present (as of 2018) explanations at the exhibition hall which at times (where deemed particularly important) are supplemented with English and Russian (partial) translations, try to get the number of Chinese finally above those of the Americans in presenting a figure of Chinese casualties including

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<sup>160</sup> Unsurprisingly, Chennault’s anti-Communist stance (evident throughout his *Way of a Fighter*, 1949) is not mentioned. He had, however, many positive things to say on the professional performance of the Soviet “volunteer aviators” he encountered in China (cf. his *Way of a Fighter* 1949, chapter 5), and cooperated with the Communists pragmatically during the Sino-Japanese War. He was officially appreciated by President Xi Jinping, too. A major driving force for his acknowledgement in the PRC seems to have been his last (Chinese-born) wife, Anna Chennault (Chen Xiangmei 陳香梅), who was an active, if informal, player in Sino-American and PRC-Taiwan relations. While a pro-Taiwan and anti-Communist “hawk” and member of the “China Lobby” in the 1950s to 1970s, she started closer relations to the PRC in the era of Deng Xiaoping 鄧小平. (On her role from an American point of view, see Catherine Forslund: *Anna Chennault: Informal Diplomacy and Asian Relations*, Wilmington: SR Books 2002.)

<sup>161</sup> E.g., at the 2009 opening ceremony of the exhibition hall, only Russian diplomatic staff seem to have participated. See Li Weimin: “Bixue danxin guan changkong” (2011), p. 51. (Li Weimin participated in the event as representative of the Chinese “martyrs” families.)

<sup>162</sup> Consequently, the Chinese “heroes” and “martyrs” are detailed more extensively, followed much more briefly by the U.S., the Soviet Union and Korea.

<sup>163</sup> See the official website on the memorial: “Nanjing kang-Ri hangkong lieshi jinianguan” 南京抗日航空烈士纪念馆 (Nanjing anti-Japanese aviation martyrs’ memorial). Available online: <http://www.chinamartyrs.gov.cn/GuoJiaJiKangZhan/GuoJiaJiLingYuanJianJie/jnss35.html>.

<sup>164</sup> See Jiangsu online TV’s “Hangkong lieshi gongmu jinianbei xin zengke 990 ming yinglie” 航空烈士公墓纪念碑新增刻 990 名英烈 (The aviation martyrs’ cemetery memorial stele is inscribed with 990 additional names of martyrs and heroes). (September 2, 2015). Available online: <http://news.jstv.com/a/20150902/95689.shtml>.

ground staff to arrive at 6164 casualties, to be then tellingly followed by the Soviet number (236) and only then the U.S. one (here: 2590).

The memorial “cemetery” and exhibition hall declare to commemorate the “martyrs and heroes”, meaning by “heroes” those who had merits but did not die there. Thus, strictly speaking, the memorialised cases go beyond casualties, and the exhibition hall also blends the whole with a more general overview over the historical development of Chinese (military) aviation. By integrating the Chinese side with the foreigners, the memorial is now to serve as a “combination site” for “patriotism and internationalism”.<sup>165</sup> Notably, the Nanjing municipal government discussed in 2015 to apply for having the memorial “cemetery”, which since 2002 is a provincial-level heritage protection unit of Jiangsu, upgraded to a “national-level protection site”.<sup>166</sup> In this context, the “cemetery” necessarily prevails over the “exhibition hall”, as it is the one part that could claim “heritagisation” potential and thus figures with its original name: “Nanjing Cemetery of Aviation Martyrs”.

Over the general stepping-up of memorialisation of the Second Sino-Japanese War, the Nanjing site was, however, also integrated in the “patriotic education” campaign since the 1990s. In this context, a (first) series of “100 patriotic education showcase bases” was created which was also accompanied with a booklet series for young readers, the main target generation of the campaign, on the single sites. Notably, in the booklet on the Sun Yat-sen Memorial, some additional sites on Purple Mountain are covered, including the tombs of some of the buried individuals like Liao Zhongkai (and his wife He Xiangning 何香凝, a well-known figure in the PRC in her own right), Tan Yankai, Fan Hongxian, Han Hui, and the PRC-reburied Deng Yanda there, which should be honoured by the youths of today, but it also covers the “Nanjing Cemetery of Aviation Martyrs” (though not the one for the GMD officers and soldiers).<sup>167</sup> Here, the fact that no human remains have been left after the Japanese up to the Cultural Revolution interferences, is admitted, as well as the fact that only the “anti-Japanese” casualties received a new cenotaph, bringing the number to 159.<sup>168</sup> But the cemetery’s recreation after the Cultural Revolution, with the monument and art work of 1995 at the 50th anniversary of the war’s end,

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<sup>165</sup> See the locally sold materials like the already mentioned Zhang Pengdou (ed.): *Bixue changkong zhonghun wu* (2016), preface. This book is based on smaller earlier publications since the contents largely overlap to the letter with the serialised booklets edited by the memorial since 2012: *Wanli changkong zhonghun wu: Kang-Ri kongzhan xiao gushi* 万里长空忠魂舞. 抗日空战小故事 (Dance of loyal souls in the Great Sky [the wording referencing the Great Wall]: Stories of aerial combat against Japan). Notably, though, whereas the booklets cover some more cases and include also China’s early female aviator and well-known actress Li Xiaqing 李霞卿, often termed the “Oriental dragonfly”, the book of Zhang Pengdou focuses more strictly on those who served in the army as “heroes” or died as “martyrs” and thus skips cases like her. (Li Xiaqing, incidentally, had been blocked from flying during the war and left China after the war for Hong Kong to then move to the U.S. She is treated as one of the cases of famous Chinese aviatrixes in Gully: *Sisters of Heaven*, 2008.)

<sup>166</sup> See “Nanjing zhengxie weiyuan huyu shenbao Nanjing hangkong lieshi gongmu wei quanguo wenbao danwei” 南京政协委员呼吁申报南京航空烈士公墓为全国文保单位 (The Nanjing Political Consultative Committee members call for an application for the Nanjing Cemetery of Aviation Martyrs to become a national-level heritage protection unit) (2015). Available online: <http://china.huanqiu.com/hot/2015-01/5429648.html>.

<sup>167</sup> See Fan Fangzhen: *Shiji weiren* (1998). The reason to not include the better-known GMD cemetery of the fallen officers and soldiers at Linggusi might be its reminder of inner-Chinese conflicts, while the sites covered in the booklet are of better use to serve “patriotism”.

<sup>168</sup> See Fan Fangzhen: *Shiji weiren* (1998), p. 169.

was the basis for using the site in terms of “patriotic education”. As the Second Sino-Japanese War is since the 1990s used as the mainstay of Chinese nationalism (a term one evades in favour of “patriotism”), stretching out a hand to the Taiwanese and the overseas Chinese,<sup>169</sup> the site had the significant additional potential for upgrading China’s “international” role. (It will be recalled that China’s bid to join the World Trade Organisation – realised in 2001 – was pending for approval at the time of the mid/late 1990s.)

In the context of a further stepping-up in memorialisation of the war in the last years, also the on-site art work is to underline the key narrative that this cooperation of China, the U.S., and the Soviet Union served to fight the larger “common enemy” of once, the “fascists”: Germany, Italy and Japan, thus enlarging the significance to a world perspective. The sculptures are supposed accordingly to be integrative also in style. In fact, one may note a general referencing of Western memorial devices also beyond the black stone walls with names (which recalls the Washington Vietnam Veterans Memorial), e.g. with the sponsored planting of memorial trees [ill: 28]. Key figures are represented by statues [ill. 29,30,31,32]. This “integrative” approach is repeated in more explicitly hierarchised version in the sculpture in front of the exhibition hall, called “god of justice” (*zhengyi zhi shen* 正义之神), showing the Chinese mythical archer Hou Yi 后羿 shooting at the sun (token of Japan),<sup>170</sup> with two additional heads (the U.S. and the Soviet Union) growing out of the Chinese archer’s body, and a total of six arms, riding on a winged flying tiger [ill. 33,34]. In sum, the memorial does not put the accent on the “tombs” by the design, but on symbolic representation. This might have to do with the fact that in the end the CCP has had hardly any role in these “martyrs”, and that in spite of the site still being called a “cemetery”, there are no dead buried there any longer, the “tombstones” being cenotaphs throughout. But this does not hamper the site’s use for education and memory-building, linking it to the war against Japan exclusively. In fact, in 2014, it was integrated in the national-level first list of “War of Resistance memorials”,<sup>171</sup> underlining this site’s redefinition.

### **By way of comparison: The Wuhan “Tomb of the Martyrs of the Soviet Air Force”**

In Wuhan, site of the most intensive air battles during all of the Second Sino-Japanese War, it is again particularly aviators who are remembered, but in this case, they are exclusively Soviets whose deaths were connected to Wuhan in the early phase of the war. This means, that whereas the Nanjing aviators’ cemetery was originally set up by the GMD-government for Chinese aviators, the present Wuhan site is a CCP-government creation for Communist non-Chinese only, i.e. the Soviets. While the Nanjing aviators’ cemetery with its GMD background became

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<sup>169</sup> In fact, Chennault’s widow Anna, Chinese-born Chen Xiangmei, took part in the 1995 celebration.

<sup>170</sup> According to legend, there were ten suns in heaven and Hou Yi shot them down to leave only one.

<sup>171</sup> See “Guowuyuan guanyu gongbu diyipi guojiaji kangzhan jinian sheshi, yizhi minglu de tongzhi” 国务院关于公布第一批国家级抗战纪念设施、遗址名录的通知 (State Council circular on promulgating the list of the first batch of national War of Resistance memorial facilities and sites) (2014). Available online: [https://www.chinamartyrs.gov.cn/x\\_gzdt/ssbh/202011/t20201103\\_42957.html](https://www.chinamartyrs.gov.cn/x_gzdt/ssbh/202011/t20201103_42957.html).

problematic after 1949, the purely Soviet Wuhan memorial was less ambiguous, at least in the early times of the PRC before the Sino-Soviet split. Later on, given the “volunteer” status of the aviators, it was also possible to frame the site in a “people’s diplomacy” context to bolster “Sino-Soviet friendship” also beneath the state-level. Notably, though no *Chinese* aviator was ever buried there, it also functions today as a “*patriotic* education base” for Wuhan.<sup>172</sup>

At present, the site is called “Tomb of the martyrs of the Soviet Air Force’s volunteer group” (*Sulian kongjun lieshi zhiyuandui mu* 苏联空军烈士志愿队墓) [ill. 35,36], but had been labelled in 1956 at its inauguration more simply “Tomb of the martyrs of the Soviet Air Force”. As such, a plaque declares, it was classified immediately as a Hubei Province heritage protection unit [ill. 37]. At the high-time of Sino-Soviet friendship, the Soviet Air Force status of the aviators could be openly acknowledged, underlining that it had been de facto the Soviet state, not just individually recruited “volunteers” (as in the American AVG case originally) to “help” China.

In 1956, the site was tellingly established in Wuhan’s “Liberation Park” (Jiefang gongyuan 解放公园) newly created at that time. Since then, the area of the park as a space for public recreation and entertainment encloses this memorial space [ill. 38].<sup>173</sup> As an on-spot explanation states, the “martyrs” tombs had been transferred there from the close-by earlier “International Cemetery” (*wanguo gongmu* 萬國公墓). All in all, the site figures 29 names of Soviet fallen aviators today.

As one can glean from some available materials, also here history was more complicated. The so-called “International cemetery” had been established for the foreigners’ community of the former concessions areas in Hankou 漢口 (one of the three towns constituting the city of Wuhan), of which the French one was still in place at the time of the Battle of Wuhan (1938).<sup>174</sup> The cemetery was located at the fringes of the neighbouring former German Concession (1895-1917).<sup>175</sup> What happened to the cemetery after the Japanese took over control in Wuhan is unclear.<sup>176</sup> The Japanese would have had much reason to suppress material remnants of their

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<sup>172</sup> This is similar to the “Soviet Martyrs’ Cemetery” in Lüshun. Cf. Müller: *Ambivalent Remains* (2019), p. 63.

<sup>173</sup> One may note, that a similar arrangement could be found in Harbin where the former “Cemetery of Soviet Red Army Martyrs” was located in the “Culture Park” (originally a large cemetery area levelled for all non-Soviet tombs in the 1950s to create a space for recreation and entertainment). See Müller: *Ambivalent Remains* (2019), especially pp. 12-13, p. 22, and p. 34.

<sup>174</sup> The French concession ended in 1943, given the Vichy government’s alignment with the Japanese, while the other concessions had ceased to exist earlier. Cf. Dorothee Rihal: “The French Concession in Hankou 1938-1943: The Life and Death of a Solitary Enclave in an Occupied City”. In: Robert Bickers and Isabella Jackson (eds.): *Treaty Ports in Modern China: Law, Land and Power*, Abingdon and New York: Routledge 2016, pp. 220-242.

<sup>175</sup> The site was recently “re-discovered” during construction works. See “Wuhan wanguo gongmu jiuzhi xian yingwen mubei. Muzhu siyu 1932 nian” 武汉万国公墓旧址现英文墓碑。墓主死于 1932 年 (An English-language tombstone appeared at the old site of the International Cemetery of Wuhan. The tomb owner died at 24 years). (April 21, 2015). Available online: <http://www.chinanews.com/cul/2015/04-21/7221280.shtml>.

<sup>176</sup> Unfortunately, MacKinnon in his book on Wuhan in 1938 mentions the existence of the Soviet aviators only in passing and does not refer to the casualties and burials. Stephen R. MacKinnon: *Wuhan, 1938: War, Refugees, and the Making of Modern China*, Berkeley: University of California Press 2008.

enemies,<sup>177</sup> although officially non-belligerent Soviet-Japanese relations at the time might have blocked active destruction of Soviet tombs. After 1945, some Soviet aviator casualties found all over the country are said to have been shifted to Wuhan, thus “centralising” the Soviet “volunteer aviators” there.<sup>178</sup>

The picture of the situation during the very first years of the PRC is better documented. A first collective “tombstone” naming the then 7 known Soviet “martyrs”, and one for further 8 at the time not yet fully identified Soviet casualties, is documented by some old photos of 1951 which also show the old surrounding “International Cemetery” at that time.<sup>179</sup> Thus, in 1951, a first PRC memorial was set up at this previous site of the “International Cemetery”.<sup>180</sup> At the time, there was – as elsewhere in the PRC – a move to “separate” the “martyrs” from the “normal” people and the other (“non-contributing”) nations which were also represented in the “International Cemetery”. In the context of Communist “brotherhood”, the 15 (i.e. 7+8) Soviet aviators (or whatever remained) were moved over from the “International Cemetery” to the “Liberation Park” in 1956, while the “bourgeois” “International Cemetery” was levelled, as most foreigners’ cemeteries in mainland China were by then,<sup>181</sup> converting the spaces into parks or into sites for construction. To memorialise the “martyrs” duly and to use them for “patriotic” education efforts, the new “Tomb of the Martyrs of the Soviet Air Force” in the “Liberation Park” was set up with a more impressive layout and a new big stele, though not all of its planned layout was realised.<sup>182</sup>

The site underwent an ordeal under the “problematic” phase of the Cultural Revolution when Sino-Soviet relations were at their worst and when violence in Wuhan became particularly extreme.<sup>183</sup> The tombs were largely destroyed during the time, and it is possible that all remains

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<sup>177</sup> Some of Japan’s leading aviators were shot down by Soviet ones, though, as mentioned, officially the Soviets were flying under Chinese flag and thus the “kills” would count as “Chinese”.

<sup>178</sup> E.g., an aviator who died in Fuzhou and one who died in Nanchang were shifted by the GMD to Wuhan according to Fan Fangzhen. See *Wuhan shangkong de ying* (2015), p. 31, where the information is claimed to have been provided by him. An official website states the GMD already “centralised” the Soviet fallen in the “international cemetery”. Cf. the entry on the Communist Party history website: “Sulian kongjun zhiyuandui lieshi mu (Wuhan pian)” 苏联空军志愿队烈士墓（武汉篇）(Tomb of the martyrs of the Soviet Air Force’s volunteer group (Wuhan)) (2013). Available online: <http://www.dswxyjy.org.cn/n/2013/0509/c222137-21425664.html>.

<sup>179</sup> See the 2013 report of a Chinese journalist’s visit to Russia which reproduces two photos he received there and which are said to be of 1951. One may note that the stele for these known 7 “Soviet aviation martyrs” (in Russian and Chinese) is in the former graveyard (presumably the “International Cemetery” of Wuhan) in a potentially “Russian” section as one may spot an orthodox cross in the background. “Wanguo gongmu jian Sujun lieshi jinianbei jin 7 wei Sulian lieshi liuming” 万国公墓建苏军烈士纪念碑仅 7 位苏联烈士留名 (When the International Cemetery erected the memorial stele of the Soviet military martyrs, only 7 Soviet martyrs were named). (August 16, 2013). Available online: <http://news.cjn.cn/sywh/201308/t2331590.htm>. The photos are also reproduced in *Wuhan shangkong de ying* (2015), p. 50.

<sup>180</sup> Cf. the newspaper article referred to in *Wuhan shangkong de ying* (2015), p. 54.

<sup>181</sup> For some exceptions, see Müller: *Between History* (2018) for Guangzhou and Shanghai, and Müller: *Ambivalent Remains* (2019) for Harbin, Dalian and Lüshun.

<sup>182</sup> For the full intended layout drafted in 2013 by an involved architect according to memory, see *Wuhan shangkong de ying* (2015), pp. 16-17.

<sup>183</sup> The so-called “Wuhan Incident” of 1967 marked a turning point in the Cultural Revolution by its extreme violence and involvement of the PLA. For an assessment by a former Red Guard in English, see Shaoguang Wang: *Failure of Charisma: Cultural Revolution in Wuhan*, Hong Kong et al.: Oxford University Press 1995.

once there went lost. A cautious rebuilding of the site started after the Cultural Revolution. Identification efforts of those 8 of the 15 who had been still unnamed in 1951, had been successful by 2003.<sup>184</sup> As it turned out, the group included beyond pilots also 2 technicians.<sup>185</sup>

More recently, with the increasingly “positive” relations between Russia and China and in response to high-level political agendas, not the least epitomised in Chinese president Xi Jinping referring in 2013 during a state visit to Russia to the Chinese people’s gratefulness to (Ukrainian-Soviet) “martyr” Kulishenko (see above) – who was connected to Wuhan, if as an attacking bomber pilot when the city had fallen to the Japanese,<sup>186</sup> Chinese journalists from Wuhan’s major newspaper *Changjiang ribao* 长江日报 (Yangzi Daily) travelled to Russia in 2013 to find out more about these Soviet “volunteers”.<sup>187</sup> They also counterchecked with Nanjing’s aviator memorial discussed above which collected materials on the Soviet aviators in China more generally.<sup>188</sup> The Russian side, in turn, had checked the military archives to add further 14 names of Soviet aviators who died in the battles over (or near) Wuhan in 1938-1939 and were said to have been buried there,<sup>189</sup> thus bringing the total to 29,<sup>190</sup> although over 100 Soviet aviators actually died during the months-long Battle of Wuhan in 1938 alone.<sup>191</sup> (It is not clear where these were buried at the time). Since the “added” 14 names are recorded but

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<sup>184</sup> See, e.g., the journalistic piece of 2003: “Jiefang gongyuanli de Sujun lieshimu” 解放公园里的苏军烈士墓 (The Soviet army martyrs’ tomb in the Liberation Park). Available online: <http://www.cnhubei.com/200310/ca350728.htm>. It may be noted that this 2003 article often gives other numbers than later articles. It provides photos of the time of writing [2003] showing these 15 name plaques behind the stele.

<sup>185</sup> Cf. *Wuhan shangkong de ying* (2015), pp. 129-130.

<sup>186</sup> Cf. *Wuhan shangkong de ying* (2015), p. 8. Xi mentioned the story of the mother and son in Wanxian, Chongqing municipality, who saw caring for Kulishenko’s tomb there as their lifetime obligation which was turned into the Kulishenko film (see above). For Xi’s speech, see “Guojia zhuxi Xi Jinping zao Mosike guoji guanxi xueyuan de jiangyan (quanwen)” 国家主席习近平在莫斯科国际关系学院的演讲(全文) (Speech by President Xi Jinping at the Moscow Institute of International Relations (full text)) of March 24, 2013. Available online: [http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2013-03/24/content\\_2360829.htm](http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2013-03/24/content_2360829.htm).

<sup>187</sup> *Changjiang ribao* ran serialised articles over 4 months on the Soviet “martyrs” of Wuhan, based on interviews of some of their relatives in preparation for the 70th anniversary of the end of the war in 2015.

<sup>188</sup> Main contributor here was the already mentioned Russian-speaking Fan Fangzhen who also translated Russian materials.

<sup>189</sup> In the short descriptions of the 14 “new cases” provided in *Wuhan shangkong de ying* (2015), pp. 214-216, a few are, however, said to have been buried elsewhere than Wuhan. In fact, the same holds true for some of the “original” 15. The most recent account of Chudodeev (*Na zemle i v nebe Kitaya*, 2017) also gives some other burial places, e.g. Matveev who died in November 1938, i.e. after Wuhan had fallen to the Japanese, was buried in Lanzhou, though he is among the names on the Wuhan memorial. Similarly, Opassov was obviously buried in Nanchang, but figures in Wuhan. The Soviet casualties of a plane crash in Xinjiang in August 1938 are said by Chudodeev, in turn, to have been buried in Nanjing (!) (p. 202), which is more than unlikely since at the time Nanjing had long been taken by the Japanese. In fact, the Russian list in *Wuhan shangkong de ying* (2015) provides for the respective burial places: Urumqi or “unknown” (N. M. Smirnov).

<sup>190</sup> For more on the single cases, see *Wuhan shangkong de ying* (2015). The book also provides, as mentioned, the Soviet list of their casualties in all of China 1937-1941, provided by the Russian embassy, on pp. 230-240, adding a Chinese translation on pp. 219-229. The list of 214 names shows that most casualties occurred in 1938. One case of those newly named in Wuhan (Aleksandr I. Lysunkin) actually died over Hunan but is said to have been buried in Hanyang (a further town constituting the city of Wuhan).

<sup>191</sup> For a chronological list of deaths, see Demin: *Aviatsiya velikogo sosedya* vol. 1 (2008), pp. 538-541, though enumerating “only” 212 casualties of Soviet aviators in China. Demin bases this information on a Russian list of 1998, covering the “internationalist” Soviet casualties 1923-1941, including those in the Sino-Japanese War. The Russian Ministry of Defence on its online accessible “memorial” database (<https://obd-memorial.ru/html/>) provides an even older typewritten list of 1991, i.e. still of Soviet times, which listed “only” 210 cases. Thus, a few names could be added in the meantime.



without remains ever identified, the design with the 15 tombs in a row with the names on the wall behind was kept, but the additional 14 added by similar cenotaphs in 2015 to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the war's end [ill. 39]. That year, the collection of the journalists' articles, for which they were honoured by Russian President Putin, was published as a book, *Wuhan shangkong de ying* 武汉上空的鹰 (Eagles over Wuhan).<sup>192</sup> Under the same title, in 2015, a 5-part TV series was aired by Phoenix TV, where the Soviets, though, are carefully “balanced” with China's air battle contributions and “martyrs”, integrating Taiwanese scholars as interviewees, too, who also comment on colonial Taiwan's role as a “closer” airbase to the mainland for the Japanese – as long as they had not conquered the various CAF airfields in Eastern China.<sup>193</sup> In any case, both the PRC and Russia were obviously interested on a high level to stress this “common history” at the time of the anniversary of the war's end.

Furthermore, in the run-up to 2015, exhibitions in China and in Russia on the war were organised in 2014, while the Chinese CCTV cooperated with the Russian State TV to publicise the topic of the respective “wars of defence” in general,<sup>194</sup> and the story of the “martyrs” which bound both countries together at the time, in particular.<sup>195</sup> A small exhibition on the Soviet aviators' help to China was envisaged nearby the Wuhan memorial at the time of visit (2018) and seems to have opened in the meantime.<sup>196</sup> As a motivation, one may assume that with the thriving Sino-Russian relations, there is also a wish to show that the more “famous” American volunteer “Flying Tigers” of General Chennault who were, after all, closely connected to Chiang Kai-shek, were not alone in “helping China”, but that the Soviet Union under Stalin cared for China during a phase when the West still tried to “appease the fascists”.<sup>197</sup> In fact, as noted in my earlier study on Russian cemeteries in Manchuria, a Sino-Russian agreement on the care for Russian/Soviet cemeteries in China was signed in 2007. This followed the report of a delegation of the Russian Ministry of Defence that had toured various sites in China, including Wuhan, proposing at home to look after the tombs abroad. In 2010, Russian foreign minister Lavrov accentuated this by visiting Wuhan to lay down a wreath when he was in the city for political consultations with his Chinese and his Indian counterpart.<sup>198</sup> Russia also

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<sup>192</sup> I am grateful to Martin Banka for pointing out the book version. Notably, in 2020 the Chinese journalists were again receiving a prize, this time coming from the Russian Minister of Defence, showing the topic is still very much on the agenda of both sides.

<sup>193</sup> For a Japanese perspective on the Battle of Wuhan, see Hagiwara: “The Japanese Air Campaigns” (2011), pp. 244-246.

<sup>194</sup> Incidentally, the responsible for the Russian TV programme “Wait for me” on wartime heroes and their families, with whom the Wuhan journalists cooperated, was a grandson of Soviet “martyr” Kulishenko.

<sup>195</sup> For details, see *Wuhan shangkong de ying* (2015), pp. 197-209.

<sup>196</sup> The plan was announced by *Changjiang ribao* on October 31, 2017. Available online: <http://news.cnhan.com/html/minsheng/20171031/879912.htm>. The exhibition has apparently opened by now. Cf. “‘Sulian kongjun zhiyuandui chenlieguan’ zai Han jiancheng kaifang” “苏联空军志愿队陈列馆”在汉建成开放 (The “Exhibition hall on the Soviet air force volunteer group” has opened in Wuhan). In: *Yangzi wanbao* 扬子晚报 (Yangzi Evening News), October 6, 2020. Available online: <https://www.yangtse.com/zncontent/887655.html>.

<sup>197</sup> See, e.g., the purported comment of a Chinese student visiting the site, in “Jiefang gongyuan 29 kuai mubeiyou you gushi; zhedian jiuxin lishi wajue bu yi” 解放公园 29 块墓碑后有故事。这段揪心历史挖掘不易 (There are stories behind the 29 tombstones in the Liberation Park; it is not easy to dig up this compelling history). (July 2, 2017). Available online: <http://news.cjn.cn/sywh/201707/t3031650.htm>.

<sup>198</sup> This constellation was similar to 2007 when Lavrov opened the relocated Soviet Cemetery in Harbin during such trilateral consultations. Cf. Müller: *Ambivalent Remains* (2019), p. 35. One of the key figures to promote Sino-Soviet/Russian commemoration of Soviet military contributions was Vasily I. Ivanov, a participant of the 1945 “August Storm” campaign of the Soviet Union in Manchuria against the Japanese and later active in the

provided funds for renovations of Soviet-Russian tombs. In scholarship, too, more attention was given in Russia to the Soviet aviators in China. Thus, in 2017, a book on Soviet advisors and aviators in China covered the “volunteer aviators” in more detail.<sup>199</sup>

On the Russian side, an important trigger for more activity regarding Soviet memorials of “war heroes” abroad had been the riots by Estonians of Russian ethnicity around the removing of the by-then controversial Soviet memorial (including soldiers’ tombs) by the Estonian government from down-town Tallinn to a military cemetery in 2007.<sup>200</sup> Russia therefore decided to react to the questioning of its war-time role as a “liberator”. With the upcoming 70th anniversary of the war’s end in 2015, Russia tried to counter the commemoration of the U.S. role in WWII with a stress on the Soviet contribution by giving more care to Soviet soldiers’ tombs abroad, where possible, and China was one of the shrinking number of countries ready to demonstrate “gratefulness” to the Russians for the Soviet role in the war. The “volunteer aviators” of the early days of the Second Sino-Japanese War who were not connected to any “Soviet occupation” thereafter (which is, needless to say, the accusation behind the contestations around Soviet memorials in post-Communist Eastern Europe), are thus an ideal and “untainted” case to memorialise Soviet positive contributions to the war “against fascism”,<sup>201</sup> for which Russia should be given unqualified credit.

However, the by now 29 Soviets commemorated in Wuhan were not all Russians [ill. 40]. Three of the 14 “new” cases were, in fact, Ukrainians,<sup>202</sup> and the Ukrainian diplomatic staff in China thus occasionally visits Wuhan. The Ukrainian embassy also provided more information on the three Ukrainians, though avoiding to visit together with the Russian embassy. In fact, the choosing on the Chinese side of the Ukrainian Kulishenko as the main figure for commemorating “Soviet help” to China during the war who is connected to Wuhan but memorialised in Nanjing (and buried in Wanxian, Chongqing municipality) can be seen as a multi-layered move, leaving both the (post-Soviet/post-Communist) Russians as well as the Ukrainians somewhat uneasy.

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veterans’ association’s Far Eastern Branch. As mentioned above, he also led the group in the 1990s to establish the state of the Soviet casualties’ tombs in China, resulting in the book *Vechnym snom spyat v Kitayskoy zemle* (1997). He also made arrangements for the Wuhan journalists during their visits in Moscow in 2013.

<sup>199</sup> See Chudodeev: *Na zemle i v nebe Kitaya* (2017). Chapter 3, the longest, is dedicated to the Soviet “volunteer aviators”.

<sup>200</sup> China referred to this Estonian “negative example” to underline her own “gratitude”. See Müller: *Ambivalent Remains* (2019), p. 64.

<sup>201</sup> In fact, already in the 1970s when the Soviet Union tried to warm up ties with the PRC, the Soviets pointed out their “good relations” with the Chinese at those times early in the Second Sino-Japanese War, mentioning also the “cooperation” of aviators, i.e. not only Soviets flying in and for China, but flying *together* with Chinese, if being the commanding partner in practice. See Slyusarev: “Protecting China’s Airspace” (1980), p. 273. (As mentioned, de facto all planes were flying under Chinese flag.) This might reflect the wish to parallel the subsequent Sino-American cooperation, namely with the CACW of the U.S. side.

<sup>202</sup> See the overview on the Ukrainians’ role in the memorial of Wuhan and other places of Olena Shevchenko of the Ukrainian Embassy in China, available online: [https://sinologist.com.ua/shevchenko-o-ukrayinski-sokoly-v-nebi-kytayu/?fbclid=IwAR2dvqJo0JXgVvrRZiKcMl\\_zg1Z0rNyLsGkXZ88bvcEnRMVnf8GOIdQTlGs](https://sinologist.com.ua/shevchenko-o-ukrayinski-sokoly-v-nebi-kytayu/?fbclid=IwAR2dvqJo0JXgVvrRZiKcMl_zg1Z0rNyLsGkXZ88bvcEnRMVnf8GOIdQTlGs). I am grateful to Martin Banka for this reference.

## Concluding remarks

In historical studies, the common assumption on war dead stresses that commemoration with tombs and memorials have become a necessity in modern societies to make up for the human loss the “nation” required of its populace by the individual soldier’s sacrifice, leaving their families as the bereaved behind who are entitled to be cared for. George Mosse or Reinhart Koselleck, e.g., argued that with modern warfare and the mobilisation of “normal” citizens, the state needs to atone for the deaths of young people, and to show to posterity that their untimely deaths were necessary.<sup>203</sup> In the case of “volunteers” who sacrificed themselves for the community, the moral weight for the survivors and the descendants is even higher for commemorating them duly.<sup>204</sup>

Still, not all who fell in war are commemorated. Part of the problem is that, needless to say, the winner side will dominate the discourse on whose death “counts”, at least on the official level. Enemy deaths will be obliterated in the context of modern national agendas.<sup>205</sup> As the Nanjing case demonstrates well, the repeatedly changing political situation in China over the last century turned commemoration into a sensitive topic: the GMD would commemorate their dead, the Communists their own, the Japanese intervened, and the “puppet” regime in Nanjing, too, which also had its own war dead. The memorialisation “problem” of the aviators, who have been a special group on all sides due to their more easily individually assignable “solo” performances and visual exposure – namely in the case of fighter pilots –, beyond the high technical requirements and the substantial investment airplanes incur, is a burning lens. Beyond the GMD aviators in the Sino-Japanese War (given that the Communist had basically none at the time, which in turn “saved” the commemoration for the GMD aviators as “anti-Japanese resistance fighters” into PRC times due to lack of Communist alternatives),<sup>206</sup> also the “puppet” regimes had their aviators,<sup>207</sup> often trained by the Japanese to fight on their side. The same holds true for Taiwan which was a colony of the Japanese until 1945, serving as a crucial base for the Japanese to attack the Chinese mainland during the war, not the least by air with large-

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<sup>203</sup> See George L. Mosse: *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*, New York et al.: Oxford University Press 1990; Reinhart Koselleck, Michael Jeismann (eds.): *Der politische Totenkult: Kriegerdenkmäler in der Moderne* (The political cult of the dead: war memorials in modern times), Munich: Fink 1994; Reinhart Koselleck: *Zur politischen Ikonologie des gewaltsamen Todes: ein deutsch-französischer Vergleich* (On the political iconology of violent death: a German-French comparison), Basel: Schwabe 1998.

<sup>204</sup> See Mosse: *Fallen Soldiers* (1990), chapter 2.

<sup>205</sup> Beyond the private realm, the official remembering of war dead is always bound up with national legitimization efforts in modern societies. Cf. Manfred Hettling, Jörg Echternkamp (eds.): *Gefallenengedenken im globalen Vergleich: Nationale Tradition, politische Legitimation und Individualisierung der Erinnerung* (A global comparison of commemoration of the fallen: national tradition, political legitimization, and the individualisation of memory), Munich: Oldenbourg 2013. As Koselleck has pointed out, this has not always been the case everywhere and at all times, since there have been examples where friend and foe were remembered together, acknowledging that both sides gave “their due”, acknowledging the other as an opponent on equal footing. Cf. Reinhardt Koselleck: “Die Transformation der politischen Totenmale im 20. Jahrhundert” (The transformation of political monuments to the dead in the 20th century). In: *Transit* no. 22, 2002, pp. 59-86.

<sup>206</sup> For early Chinese Communist aviation, which prior to 1949 had only some captured planes at its disposal, see the entry of George M. Mellinger: “Chinese Communist Air Force”, in Walter J. Boyne: *Air Warfare: An International Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO 2002, pp. 128-130, there p. 128.

<sup>207</sup> See the popular book by Philip S. Jowett: *Rays of the Rising Sun: Armed Forces of Japan’s Asian Allies 1931-45, vol. 1: China and Manchukuo*, Solihull: Helion & Company Limited 2004.

scale bombings of not only military targets, but also of civilians to demoralise the Chinese. Thus, when the GMD-government “retreated” to Taiwan in 1949, memories of the role of aviation in the Sino-Japanese War were divided between local and mainland perspectives, and the local one (which included “passive” experiences of bombing too, not the least of Taipei) was predictably silenced.<sup>208</sup> More than with the ground forces, into which Taiwanese had been enlisted on the Japanese side as well, aviation with its long-distance cross-Strait range of action and ever more destructive bombings from above, resulting in carnage among civilians in a dimension unknown before, marked one of the fields of greatest divergence of war-time experience between “mainlanders” and Taiwanese in the society of post-war Taiwan.

In the PRC, the Nanjing memorial demonstrates that the Second Sino-Japanese War serves as the key “filter” for distinguishing the “good” and the “bad” casualties among the aviators. Those who had died in “anti-Japanese resistance” (and were not “tainted” by any other “negative” fighting past) could be counted as “good”. This way, also some CAF fighters could be integrated in the mentioned recent “list of 300 famous anti-Japanese heroes and martyrs”,<sup>209</sup> not the least since Zhou Enlai had honoured the GMD aviators’ “martyrdom” already during the war. Their statues are therefore also represented in today’s memorial space in Nanjing as “heroes” for Chinese youths alongside the Soviets and Americans. But beyond the Chinese fallen, the use of the Nanjing cemetery site as an “internationalist” one with the integration of the commemoration of the U.S. and the Soviet “helpers” against the “common” enemy, puts this site beyond the usual “patriotic” ones.<sup>210</sup> The site offered itself for this not the least since the Chinese commemorated were no Communists and thus in many senses not “ideal” for “patriotic” uses according to today’s agenda of the PRC. But it offered by this also the possibility to attract Chinese living in Taiwan or overseas. The fact that there are no human remains there any longer, is not openly stated to the visitor, but in any case, this does not hamper the symbolic use of the site. Wreaths are offered, and “tombs” are to be swept by schoolchildren as a part of education of the younger generation to learn about its obligation to fulfil this “patriotic-internationalist” duty.

In China, traditionally, the “name” was the most important, even more so than the body, not the least to prevent “uncared-for” dead turning into ghosts haunting posterity – above all their kin,<sup>211</sup> which led to the practice of “substitute tombs”. Though modern Chinese official understanding rejects any association with “feudal” belief in “haunting ghosts”, the tradition of “substitute tombs” can be built upon to anchor the state’s declared obligation of present-day society “to remember” the “good” war casualties under the given conditions. In this perspective,

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<sup>208</sup> Targets on Taiwan had been bombed at several occasions, including an early attack by Soviet “volunteers”, and later mainly by American bombers. The largest bombing raid was the one on Taipei on May 31, 1945.

<sup>209</sup> Available online: [http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2014-09/01/content\\_2743269.htm](http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2014-09/01/content_2743269.htm).

<sup>210</sup> In Nanjing there is, e.g., the purely “patriotic” “alternative” for school outings of the “elite” cemetery Gongdeyuan 功德园 (Garden of Merit) with Communist “martyrs”. Cf. the just released book of Andrew B. Kipnis: *The Funeral of Mr. Wang: Life, Death, and Ghosts in Urbanizing China*, Oakland: University of California Press 2021, pp. 39-42. (Kipnis provides an anthropological view on present-day urban funerals in China, basing himself mainly on recent fieldwork in Nanjing).

<sup>211</sup> For an in-depth study of the Vietnamese case, in many ways similar to China, in specific relation to war experience, see Heonik Kwon: *Ghosts of War in Vietnam*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2008.

the fact that the “tombstones” in Nanjing’s “cemetery” are only cenotaphs, weighs less in importance, at least for the state (if not necessarily for the relatives). The individual cenotaph-“tombs” are nevertheless deemed necessary to represent some of those individuals on whom more is known, while the mere naming on the stone walls is perceived as the only secondary device to remember all those who contributed to China’s cause in the air during the Sino-Japanese War. The cenotaph-“tombs” thus function as an “authentication” device for the site.

To enhance its use, there were, in fact, even suggestions in the mid-2000s to copy foreign models and further upgrade the site, which was declared in 1992 a Nanjing Municipal Cultural Relic Protection Unit and in 2002 upgraded to a Jiangsu Province one, either to a Chinese national military cemetery like the U.S. “Arlington National Cemetery” (though the Nanjing site is only dedicated to aviators as of yet which once more suggests the “exemplary” function of aviators), or to a national symbolic landmark like foreign examples who use the “unknown soldier” to commemorate all those “fallen for the nation”.<sup>212</sup> The cult of the “unnamed soldier” as a stand-in for the many soldiers of whom no remains could be found, or for those remains found that could not be identified, had been created in the modern West in the context of WWI. This was, however, often inscribed into a Christian context: “an American soldier known but to God” (as the U.S. Arlington National Cemetery has it). The French positioned it in the context of “patriotism” only: “a French soldier died for the fatherland” (as the Arc de Triomphe has it). And the Soviets would phrase it more generally after WWII: “Your name is unknown; your deed is immortal” (as the Kremlin has it).

Notably, in China, the background to this suggestion was the recent rekindled debate on the Japanese premier’s visits to the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo (contested because its enshrined war dead include convicted war criminals of WWII).<sup>213</sup> Where, the argument now went, is China’s Yasukuni? In fact, though with a somewhat different, more “pro-Japanese” thrust, this question as such was not new: already in the early 20th century, long before the Second Sino-Japanese War, the Yasukuni had been seen by Chinese revolutionaries living in Japan at the time as a model. Republican China’s “martyrs’ shrines” would, in fact, build upon this Japanese model.<sup>214</sup> Although the PRC disposes today of the “heroes’ stele” on Tian’anmen Square, mentioned in the beginning, which commemorates the “fallen for the people” in a more “abstract” fashion – according to this argument, the Yasukuni Shrine with its religious connotations is particularly effective since it provides a space for worship. In short, this suggestion amounted to an advocacy of return to GMD-style veneration of the dead – something in tension with official atheism. One may also add that the PRC does have a “national cemetery” of sorts in the Babaoshan 八宝山 Cemetery in its capital Beijing, though

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<sup>212</sup> See Ling Yun 凌云: “Zhongguoren, qing ditou: Zhuixun bei yiwang de kangzhan yinglie dibiao” 中国人，请低头。追寻被遗忘的抗战英烈地标 (Chinese, please lower your heads: Pursuing a landmark for the forgotten heroes of the War of Resistance). In: *Guoji zhanwang* 国际展望 (International Outlook) 2007, no. 13, pp. 14-19.

<sup>213</sup> For the notorious Yasukuni problem on which much ink has been spilt already, suffice it to refer here to John Breen (ed.): *Yasukuni, the War Dead and the Struggle for Japan's Past*, London: Hurst 2007.

<sup>214</sup> See Harrison: “Martyrs and Militarism in Early Republican China” (1998), p. 54.

this is a place defined over its “revolutionary”, not military, credentials.<sup>215</sup> Nanjing, not being China’s capital any longer, could thus supposedly be put back on the map as a place to honour the military over the historically least contentious part (in terms of CCP-GMD relations), the “anti-Japanese” aviators.

Furthermore, to “fight back” Japanese complaints about PRC “official anti-Japanese propaganda” – a problem the Japanese saw as behind the 2005 anti-Japanese riots in China,<sup>216</sup> China pursued the listing of the Nanjing Massacre Documents in the UNESCO register of “memory of the world” (which was achieved in 2015) as international acknowledgement of this documented war-time history.<sup>217</sup> In consequence, Nanjing and the Second Sino-Japanese War came into international spotlight again, though in terms of memorial culture, the Nanjing Massacre Memorial is the clearly dominating site in this context, representing China’s people as a victim of Japanese war-time atrocity. This non-military site overshadows the Nanjing aviators’ memorial in prominence, focusing on civilian horror and tragedy vs. Japanese military bestiality. The aviators’ cemetery, however, has the potential to stress active resistance and “internationalist” cooperation in the “just cause” of fight against “fascism” at a city strongly associated by now with Chinese war-time victimisation, handing it back some agency.

Via memorialisation, the once “shared” skies over a China that viewed herself traditionally as “all under heaven”, a bridge is built to link the “patriotism” of modern socialist China with “internationalism”. While China acknowledges foreign “help” from both the capitalist U.S./Allies and the Stalinist Soviets (which in the PRC’s perception represents the “good times” of the Soviet Union before she took the “wrong turn” under Khrushchev),<sup>218</sup> this also suggests the importance of China during WWII as the “often neglected” contributor to the common war effort (if under GMD command).<sup>219</sup> This is notably done by taking over the perceived “international standard” of commemoration by referencing the Washington Vietnam Veterans Memorial’s black wall of names visually which also substantiates Koselleck’s observation for the West that while violent death is remembered nationally,<sup>220</sup> iconology of death is (more and more) international.<sup>221</sup> This choice and reference, although not disclosed or commented upon on-site, had the further advantage from a Chinese perspective that Maya Lin, the designer of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, is a second generation Chinese-American related to China’s

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<sup>215</sup> For an official overview on the Babaoshan Cemetery, see He Husheng 何虎生 (ed.): *Babaoshan jishi* 八宝山纪事 (Babaoshan chronicle), 3 vols., Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe 1998.

<sup>216</sup> James Reilly has questioned this assumption as somewhat simplistic in his book *Strong Society, Smart State: The Rise of Public Opinion in China's Japan Policy*, New York: Columbia University Press 2012.

<sup>217</sup> See the UNESCO entry, available online: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/documents-of-nanjing-massacre>.

<sup>218</sup> For this Chinese reading of the Soviet Union, see Gotelind Müller: *Documentary, World History, and National Power: Global Rise in Chinese Eyes*, London and New York: Routledge 2013, especially chapter 4. See also Gotelind Müller / Nikolay Samoylov (eds.): *Chinese Perceptions of Russia and the West: Changes, Continuities, and Contingencies During the Twentieth Century*, Heidelberg and Berlin: CrossAsia-eBooks 2020.

<sup>219</sup> Cf. Rana Mitter: *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937-1945*, Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013.

<sup>220</sup> In fact, the Vietnam Memorial, being a “veterans” memorial, only inscribed the names of the American war dead which prompted criticism and the creation of Chris Burden’s “The other Vietnam memorial”, a museum installation of metal plates with Vietnamese names.

<sup>221</sup> See Koselleck: *Zur politischen Ikonologie des gewaltsamen Todes* (1998), p. 5.

“first female architect” Lin Huiyin 林徽因, wife of the most outstanding of Chinese architects in the 20th century, Liang Sicheng 梁思成, both educated in the West in the early 20th century, too. Maya Lin’s family background includes also “martyrs” buried at the chief GMD memorial of once, the Huanghuagang memorial in Guangzhou,<sup>222</sup> and, incidentally, an uncle (Lin Heng 林恆) who was an aviator and fell in an air battle over Chengdu during the Sino-Japanese War in 1941.<sup>223</sup> Different, though, from Maya Lin’s arrangement of the angled wall leading down into the earth to commemorate the individual dead of the American side in the Vietnam War without a definite “message”,<sup>224</sup> the Nanjing site’s solution with the nation-specific walls of names arranged radially to point to the central V-monument, together with the “tombstone”-cenotaphs as steps leading up to it, underlines the message that above all, the service of “patriotic” and “internationalist” aviators for China’s final “victory” over Japan is what counts. This is what must be memorialised. The rest is history.

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<sup>222</sup> Cf. Donald Langmead: *Maya Lin: A Biography*, Santa Barbara et al.: Greenwood 2011. Chapter 1 and 2 detail her larger family background. One of the most well-known of these 1911 Huanghuagang “martyrs” is Maya Lin’s relative Lin Juemin 林覺民 who left a famous “letter to my wife” widely disseminated in the revolutionary press at the time.

<sup>223</sup> On the air battle of Shuangliu 雙流 in which Lin Heng perished, see Taiwan’s Air Force website: [https://air.mnd.gov.tw/TW/History/History\\_Detail.aspx?FID=7&CID=141&ID=299](https://air.mnd.gov.tw/TW/History/History_Detail.aspx?FID=7&CID=141&ID=299). His sister, the architect (and poet) Lin Huiyin, wrote a famous poem on her fallen brother to mourn him. See the CACW veterans’ website: [http://www.flyingtiger-cacw.com/new\\_page\\_666.htm](http://www.flyingtiger-cacw.com/new_page_666.htm).

<sup>224</sup> This request had been formulated in the announcement for the competition, given the inner-American contestations about the Vietnam war’s evaluation. For the forms of memorialisation of the Vietnamese war dead in Vietnam, in turn, which also had to deal with the former political North-South divide internally, cf. Heonik Kwon: *After the Massacre: Commemoration and Consolation in Ha My and My Lai*, Berkeley: University of California Press 2006.

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1 The layout: exhibition halls in form of airplanes to the right, “cemetery” to the left ©2018



2 Today's archway inscription once provided by Chiang Kai-shek ©2018

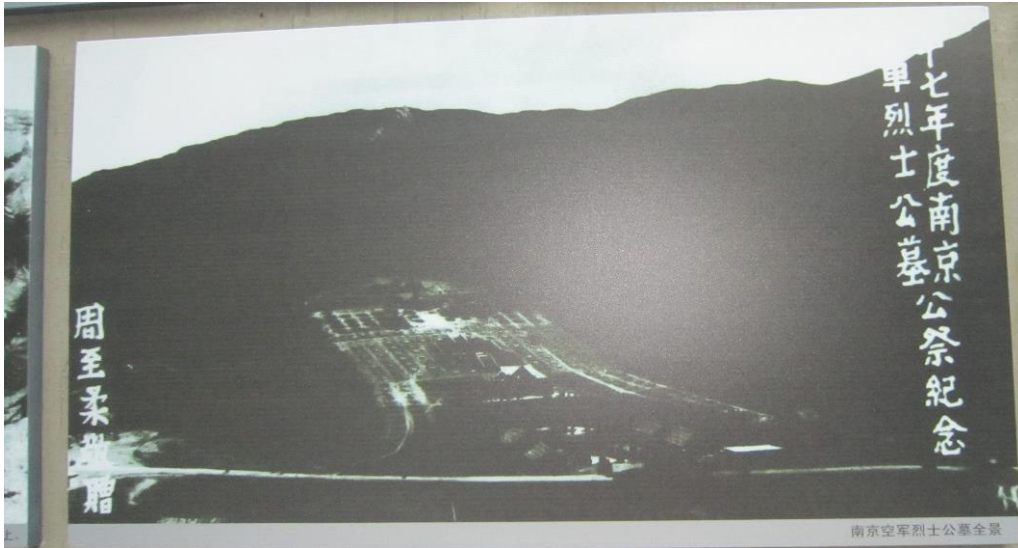




3 Today's stele with text by Huang Bingheng of 1932 ©2018



4 Rear side of the stele with donations ©2018



5 The setup of the cemetery before the establishment of the PRC (dedication of Zhou Zhirou of 1948) ©2018



6 Stairway to the monument ©2018



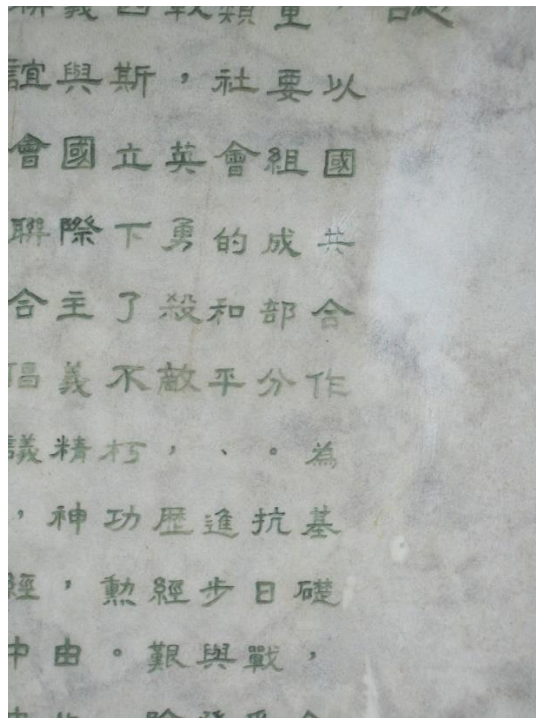
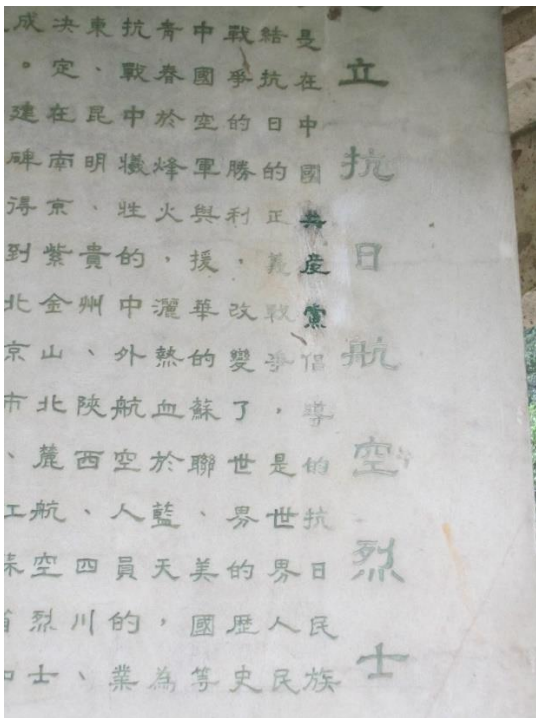
7 “Tombstones” as steps ©2018



8 Stele commemorating the 1995 inauguration of the new memorial monument ©2018



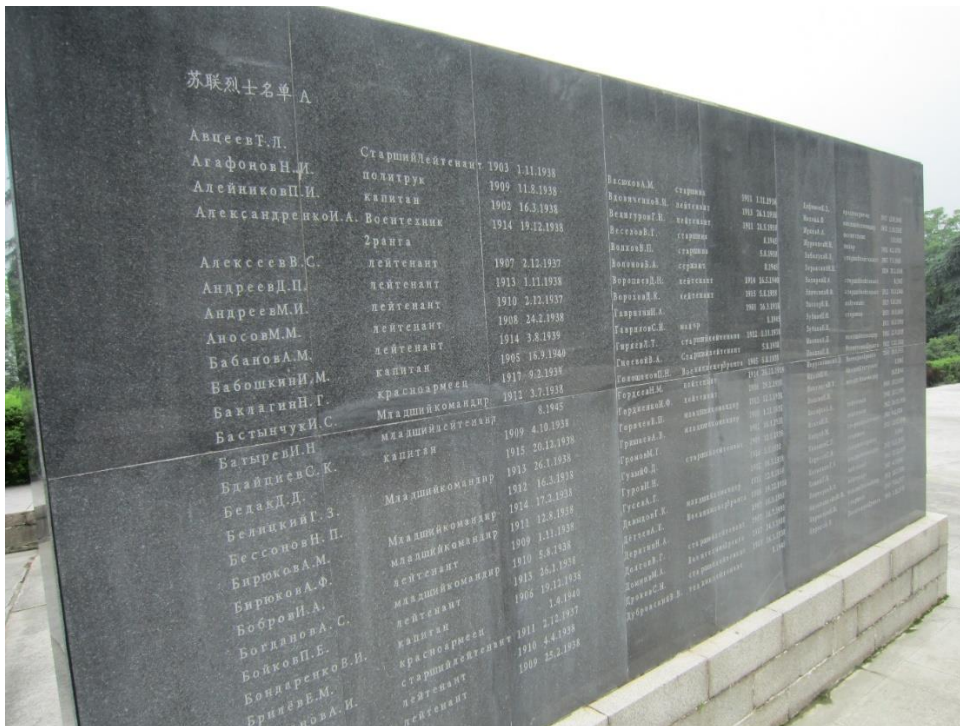
9 Rear side of the 1995 stele with donations, including also three in U.S. dollars (by a Taiwanese and a South Korean as well as the CACW veterans' association) and one of the Russian veterans' association given in German marks. ©2018



10, 11 Ideologically motivated vandalism: scratched and rewritten parts of the 1995 stele ©2018



12 The monument ©2018



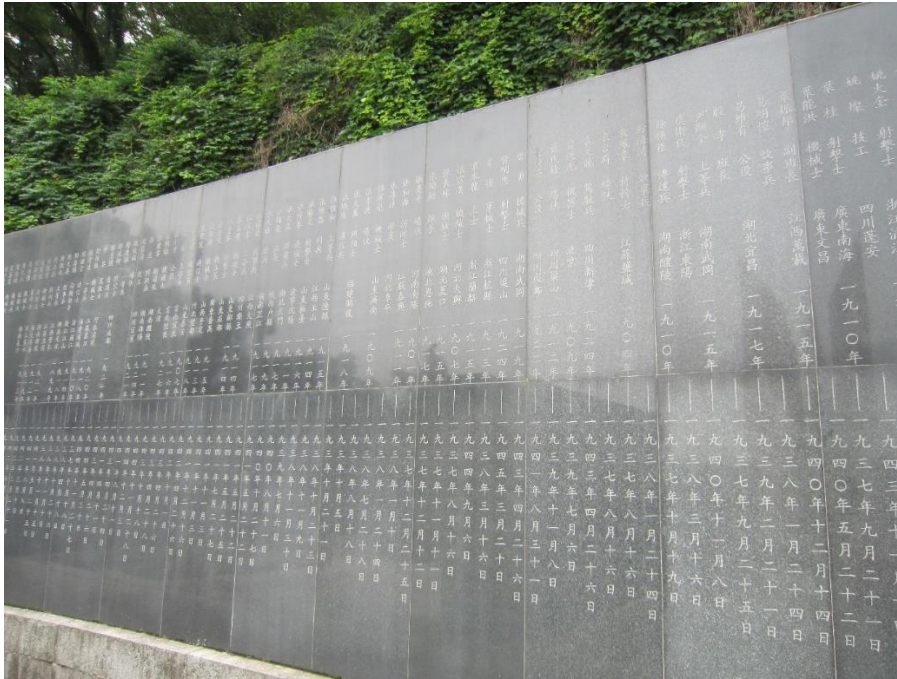
13 Wall of names: Soviet ©2018



14 Wall of names: American ©2018



15 Wall of names: Korean ©2018



16 Wall of names: Chinese ©2018



17 Chinese inscription of the monument ©2018



18 English inscription of the monument ©2018



19 Pair of Sino-Soviet aviators ©2018



20 Pair of Sino-American aviators ©2018





21 Cenotaph of William Reed ©2018



22 Cenotaph of Grigory Kulishenko ©2018



23 "Tombstone" of Shturmin ©2018



24 "Tombstone" of Rubashkin? ©2018



25 Example of “tombstone” of Chinese aviator: Chen Qiwei ©2018



26 Statue of Claire Chennault ©2018



27 Exhibition hall: Soviet Polikarpov I-16 under GMD-Chinese flag ©2018



28 Sponsored planting of memory trees ©2018



29 U.S. aviator (Flying Tiger) and “ace” Frank Schiel, jr. (Different from the statement on the Chinese plaque, he died in December 1942 and from a plane crash, as reported in the U.S. press, not in battle in 1943. After the war he was transferred back and buried in his hometown in Arizona.) ©2018



30 Statue of Ukrainian-Soviet aviator Kulishenko ©2018



31 Statue of Chinese “ace” Gao Zhihang who commanded the defence of the Hangzhou airbase on August 14, 1937 ©2018



32 Statue of Chinese “ace” Yue Yiqin who died in the defence of Nanjing ©2018



33 “God of justice” [archer Hou Yi] in front of exhibition hall ©2018



34 Hou Yi, supported by the Soviet Union and the U.S., shoots the sun: front perspective ©2018



35 Wuhan: “Tomb of the Martyrs of the Soviet Air Force’s Volunteer Group”: today’s front side of the monument ©2018



36 Today’s rear side of the monument ©2018



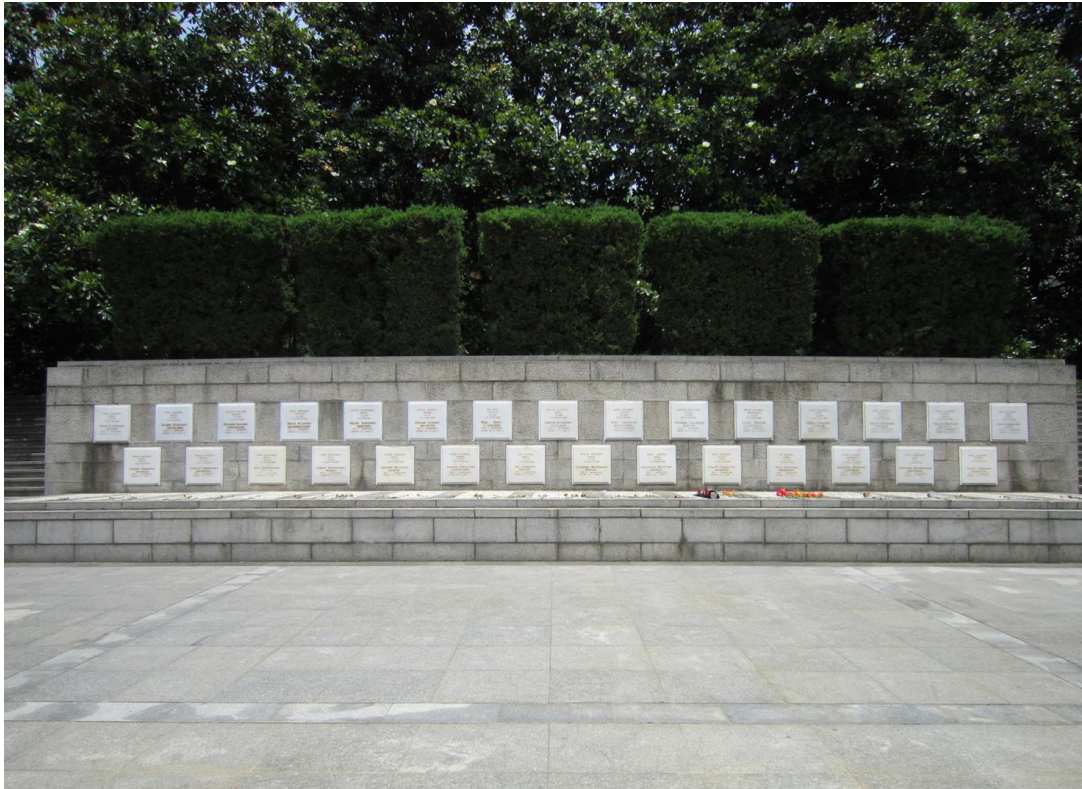


37 Plaque of the provincial-level heritagisation in 1956 ©2018



38 Present setting in Wuhan's "Liberation Park": in front an admonition to not use the space for "inappropriate" behaviour (i.e. forms of entertainment or sports) ©2018

*All under Heaven and Shared Skies*



39 Name plaques (15+14) ©2018



40 Name plaques of Russians and a Ukrainian (Shuster) ©2018