

# Whiting Willauer: *A Life of Duty, Risk, and Legacy*

by Whiting Russell Willauer, Jr



Tommy, Louise, and Whiting Willauer

## *Introduction*

My name is Whiting Russell Willauer, Jr (AKA “Skip”), a grandson of a man I never knew, Whiting Willauer, AKA Whitey. He died three weeks after I was born.

By the time I reached the age of conscious memory, nobody said much about my grandfather. I knew that he spoke five languages fluently – English, German, French, Spanish, and Chinese; and owned an airline in China with the Flying Tigers guy. But, beyond that, I did not know much about him or that period in American History.

When I was asked to do a presentation in October 2025, I realized this would be an important challenge. I needed to do some research.

My research focused on actual words spoken by my grandfather via senate testimony in 1961, an oral history he did in 1960, and various former Top-Secret documents. I also consulted books like *Perilous Missions* and a book about his uncle, Kenneth Whiting. This past summer, I interviewed his daughter, Aunt Sally Willauer Nash, who provided valuable insight as well.

I also looked at the family tree and found some interesting things to share. This presentation represents what I have learned about a man, a life, and a time I knew little about.

## ***Family Lineage***

Whiting Willauer was the first of four kids, born on November 30, 1906, in New York City. His parents were **Arthur Ebbs Willauer** and **Katherine Whiting**.

**The Willauers** came to America in 1727, led by Christian Willauer (1706-1771), who arrived in Philadelphia from a place called "Willau" in the Rhineland region of what is now Germany. They were "Pennsylvania Dutch" – really "Deutch" for Germans that settled in the state.<sup>1</sup>

A century later, Major **Seneca G. Willauer** (1833–1916), Whiting's grandfather<sup>2</sup>, fought in the Civil War for the Union Army and played a key role in the capture of President Abraham Lincoln's assassin, John Wilkes Booth, in 1865.<sup>3</sup>

**The Whitings** arrived in Boston in 1630, led by William Whiting, an Englishman of significant means who headed West, joined by Robert Day and Thomas Hooker in establishing Hartford, Connecticut. Whiting founded and became the first treasurer of the Connecticut Colony and maintained a monopoly on all trade outside the colony.<sup>4</sup>

A century later, from 1840 - 1870, **Francis Whiting** built a wallpaper empire in New York City<sup>5</sup>. His son, **Eliot**, married **Florence Daisy Day** (a descendant of Robert Day). Together, they had 4 children.

Unfortunately, **what Eliot held in charm he lacked in motivation**. The family business and the wealth he inherited collapsed, and he was unable to support the family.

**Daisy, strong-willed, fiercely independent, tough, determined, and hard-working**, had no time for her lazy husband and took it upon herself to support her children by developing a very successful interior decorating business and ultimately, in time, moving the family to Larchmont, New York, on the shores of Long Island Sound.<sup>6</sup>

## ***Childhood & Early Loss***

Whiting Willauer's father, an architect, died at age 36 of appendicitis in 1912 when Whiting was only six. His mother remarried<sup>7</sup> in 1913. Unfortunately, she died of the Spanish Flu pandemic in 1918, leaving Whiting (age 12) and his three younger siblings orphaned.<sup>8</sup>

Their stepfather, who had been abusive to his family, luckily refused to raise them.<sup>9</sup>

They were sent to their grandmother, **Daisy Day Whiting**<sup>10</sup>.

**Daisy Day and her son, "Uncle" Kenneth, are key heroes in this story** – key to the "making" of my grandfather.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, although she lived in Pasadena, California, **Aunt "Jo" (Josephine Willauer Jackson** – Arthur's Sister) provided fun summers for all 4 Willauer Children at her house in West Chop on Martha's Vineyard. Aunt Jo purchased and gifted houses on the Vineyard to all four kids.

When interviewed many years later, Willauer barely mentioned his mother. However, he spoke fondly with much admiration, love, and respect for his grandmother, Daisy.<sup>12</sup>

Whiting credited his grandmother with teaching him about hard work and money – and for guiding his education from prep school to Princeton and Harvard Law School.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Uncle Kenneth Whiting (1881 -1943)***<sup>14</sup>

Daisy had a good experience raising boys – starting with her own son. Kenneth was a terrible student but a great leader. Handsome, daring, funny, and mischievous, he was drinking like a sailor at the age of 14 with a gang of kids that followed him around. He was an excellent sailboat racer. One prominent Admiral called him "a wizard in a sailboat."<sup>15</sup>

Kenneth wanted to go to Paris and become an artist. His mother said, "Absolutely not," and got him into the US Naval Academy, where he flunked

out in his first year. Daisy pulled strings, got him back in, and he graduated near the bottom of his class.<sup>16</sup>

While a terrible student, once in the Navy, he made quite a name for himself.

Kenneth became both a submarine commander and a naval aviator trained by Orville Wright in 1914. He was the first man to escape through the torpedo tube of a sunken submarine and later conceived, developed, and commanded the first aircraft carrier after leading the Navy's First Aeronautical Detachment to France.<sup>17</sup>

(I guess he finally got to Paris!)

After the war, he commanded the USS Langley (first aircraft carrier) and later the Saratoga.

For these achievements, he is remembered as the Father of the Aircraft Carrier.

“Whiting Field” Naval Air Station in Pensacola, Florida, is named for him.

Kenneth was known as “a **daredevil**, a man who lived to seek the next most dangerous activity. He lived like a man on fire, searching for new achievements - with a glint in his eye and a grin on his face, others would gladly follow him into the flames.”<sup>18</sup>

Whiting and his uncle **thrived in action** – and enjoyed stories over drinks.

On Thursday, April 22, 1943, Kenneth visited his nephew in Washington. While Willauer was startled by his uncle's poor appearance, noting that “he looked like hell,” the two went out for drinks.

Kenneth was not well the next day, was sent to the hospital, and died that night of meningitis at Bethesda Naval Hospital (April 24, 1943 – Kenneth's 31st wedding anniversary)<sup>19</sup>.

### ***Sailing and Meeting Louise (1929-1930)***

Whiting's childhood summers on Martha's Vineyard (**thanks to Aunt Jo**) cultivated both a love of the sea and a spirit of adventure. He worked as a sailing instructor on the waters where his brother, Eliot, founded the Vineyard Haven Yacht Club, serving as Commodore.<sup>20</sup>

In 1929, during a sailing trip from Martha's Vineyard to Nantucket with a friend, **my grandfather met my grandmother, Louise Knapp Russell.**<sup>21</sup>

Louise was descended from the original English founders of Nantucket (1659). Her great-grandfather, Captain Daniel Russell, had commanded the famous whaleship Essex. In 1820, this ship was sunk by a whale while under the command of his former first mate, George Pollard, the story of which inspired Herman Melville's Moby-Dick.

Louise's father, Benjamin Franklin Winslow Russell (yes, we are related to Ben Franklin), had married "quite well" to the daughter of George Owen Knapp, founder of Union Carbide.

Quite taken by Louise, Willauer asked her father,

"If I were to ask your permission to marry your daughter, would you approve?"<sup>22</sup>

The answer was Yes!

There was just one problem. Louise was engaged to another man!

Upon his departure, Willauer said to Louise, "If it doesn't work out, here is my phone number."<sup>23</sup>

Not sure exactly what happened, but somehow, they were engaged seven months later February 28, 1930, and married on June 21, 1930.<sup>24</sup>

### ***Education & Early Career (1924-1939)***

Willauer graduated at age 16 from The Stone School<sup>25</sup> and did a post-graduate year at Phillips Exeter before matriculating to Princeton, where he

captained both the football and lacrosse teams (All-American Lacrosse) - graduating cum laude in 1928.

Gutsy and aggressive, he suffered multiple injuries, including the dislocation of his right shoulder 26 times. He could not raise his arm above his head.<sup>26</sup>

Daisy encouraged Whiting to go to Harvard Law School. He graduated in 1931 among the top ten percent of his class.

Newly married with kids, he lived in Dedham, MA, and practiced admiralty law at Bingham, Dana & Gould in Boston (1931 – 1939).

While this was a nice life, he wanted to serve his country like his uncle Kenneth.

### ***Washington, D.C. (1939 - 1941)***<sup>27</sup>

Willauer found a job in Washington (1939) with the **Civil Aeronautics Board**, where he helped coordinate the establishment of **Washington National Airport**.

He also served in the **Department of Justice's Criminal Division**, where he investigated judicial corruption and conspiracies involving Nazis and Communists.

“It was during this work,” he recalled, “that my eyes were first really opened to the techniques of international subversion. Although the major enemy in those days indeed seemed to be the Nazis ... we also got a fairly good beginning into an indoctrination as to the aims and methods of the Communist conspiracy.”<sup>28</sup>

Next, at the **Federal Power Commission**, he was responsible for aspects of the St. Lawrence Seaway project connecting the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes for shipping.

In June 1941, as war loomed, Willauer wanted to be in the fight.

He held a reserve commission in naval intelligence and volunteered for active duty.

However, he failed the physical examination because of his college injuries and recurring thrombosis.<sup>29</sup>

Distressed at the prospect of remaining behind a desk during times of crisis, he called his best friend from Exeter, who had been his roommate at both Princeton and Harvard, **Howard F. Corcoran.**

Howard put him in touch with his brother, **Thomas “Tommy” G. Corcoran.**

**Tommy** had become a **top advisor** to President Franklin D. **Roosevelt.**

Acting under orders from President Roosevelt, Tommy created an organization called **“China Defense Supplies” (CDS).**

His brother, **David M. Corcoran,** was hired as **president.**

**Willauer** was hired as **Executive Secretary.**

**The Corcoran connection changed the course of my grandfather’s life for years to come.**

### ***World War II and China (1941 -1943)***

According to Willauer, “The primary function of **CDS** was to aid in the **formation of General Chennault’s American Volunteer Group (AVG), known as The Flying Tigers,**”<sup>30</sup> in support of Chiang Kai-shek’s Nationalist government against the Japanese and the rising Communist forces.

In Willauer’s words, “The Flying Tigers soundly defeated Japan in the air over Burma and China. I well remember in the dark days after Pearl Harbor that the victories of the Flying Tigers were the only bright spots in a series of disasters to U.S. forces throughout the Pacific.”<sup>31</sup>

Willauer enjoyed the excitement, personal danger, and sense of purpose provided by his wartime duties. In a letter to Louise, he said, “I shall have a hell of a time going back into anything much less exciting than the war job.”<sup>32</sup>

Sally said that her father was a “daredevil - gutsy, but he was smart. He was a survivor. He thrived in that environment.”

“He got to be very good friends with General Chennault, who was also a talented, gutsy, fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants kind of guy – a very bright perfectionist”<sup>33</sup> – much like her dad.

### ***Civil Air Transport (CAT) (1946 - 1954)***

According to Whitey, “I don’t know whether General Chennault or I got the idea first; I think we really got it simultaneously... With all our time working closely together, General Chennault and I became fast friends and fellow workers... After the war, it seemed a natural thing for us, with our mutual love for China, to return to China together to try to help in the reconstruction of that vast country by starting an airline.”<sup>34</sup>

The story of actually “getting there” with funding took time.

Making a long story short...

On October 25, 1946, Civil Air Transport (CAT) was founded in Shanghai.

The airline was conceived to ferry relief supplies across China’s devastated interior, where roads and bridges had been destroyed and famine stalked the countryside. Willauer was EVP and later President, while Chennault was Chairman.

CAT performed daring missions- increasingly and specifically in support of Nationalist troops fighting the Chinese Civil War against the Chinese Communists.

Pilots flew into besieged cities, landing on makeshift runways while under fire. They airdropped grenades, ammunition, and food to Nationalist troops. They evacuated tens of thousands of civilians and even carried out

missions to rescue Bank of China silver reserves from Communist-held territories.

**As the war was slowly being lost** with the Nationalists and CAT in **periodic retreat**, the challenge of moving heavy **airplane maintenance equipment** was solved by Willauer.

With the Communists 20 miles from Shanghai, in May 1949, Whitey leased a 327-foot World War II **Tank Landing Ship (“LST”)** to serve as a floating airplane maintenance hangar. The idea was a success and handily transported the equipment away from danger.

### *War Lost - Sale to CIA*

On October 1, 1949, the **Chinese Communist Party (CCP)**, led by **Mao Zedong**, declared victory and the beginning of the **People's Republic of China (PRC)**.

December 7, 1949, was the final retreat of the Chinese Nationalist KMT (Kuomintang) party, led by Chiang Kai-shek, to Formosa (now Taiwan), which became the **Republic of China (ROC)**.

CAT had initially escaped to Hong Kong, but relocated to Formosa (Taiwan).

If CAT was to continue, it needed big money fast. Whiting Willauer pulled out all the stops and successfully negotiated its **sale to the CIA in 1950** for \$1 million.

The airline continued operations and was eventually transformed into “Air America in 1959, serving U.S. operations in Korea, Laos, and Vietnam. CAT had transitioned from a commercial airline to a strategic instrument of Cold War power.

Through this experience, Willauer had bridged private enterprise, humanitarian relief, and covert operations, setting the stage for his next chapter in Central America.

## *Diplomatic Service (1954 -1961)*

### **HONDURAS**

With communism spreading to the back door of the United States, President Eisenhower called on several people well-versed in the threat of Communism to serve as ambassadors in Latin America, including Whiting Willauer (Honduras), John Peurifoy (Guatemala), and Robert Hill (Costa Rica).

Willauer was appointed U.S. Ambassador to Honduras in 1954.

According to Willauer, he was instructed to give all possible assistance to the CIA team preparing a rebel force to overthrow the Guatemalan government. This meant securing Honduran cooperation, smoothing the way with officials, and providing the necessary political cover for what was a covert action directed from Washington.<sup>35</sup>

Guatemala President Jacobo Árbenz was a growing threat because of his communist policies, which included land reforms that undermined the United Fruit Company.

The overthrow was a success. With no bloodshed, on June 27, 1954, Árbenz resigned, and Castillo Armas assumed the presidency.

**Key to the success was air cover** via a tiny but potent “Liberation Air Force” that gave the illusion of overwhelming power, shattering morale, and giving the rebels legitimacy. Árbenz’s commanders, believing a full US invasion was imminent, refused to fight.

Allen Dulles, Director of the CIA, sent Willauer a telegram:

**“The revolution could not have succeeded but for what you did.”**

This became a model of Cold War Success:

A Communist-aligned government had been toppled without direct U.S. military intervention.

## **COSTA RICA**

Eisenhower appointed Willauer as Ambassador to Costa Rica in 1958. He needed help again... convincing Washington that communism was an ongoing threat to the United States.

In Cuba, Fidel Castro had overthrown American-friendly Fulgencio Batista in January 1959 and was consolidating power. While some U.S. officials initially saw Castro as a nationalist reformer, Willauer and Eisenhower knew he was a Communist.

“In 1957, Dad had me write up his feelings about Communism and Fidel Castro. He was trying to convince Washington that there was more of a threat than they realized. Dad saw Castro making a wonderful splash at places like Harvard. People thought Castro was terrific. People were naming their dogs and cats ‘Castro.’ Castro was a hero.”<sup>36</sup>

Willauer began sending official cables to the State Department warning about Castro starting on January 27, 1959, with two more in March and July of 1960.

## **CUBA (1960–1961)**

By early 1960, President Eisenhower was convinced Castro had to go.<sup>37</sup> CIA planning commenced with the training of rebel forces in Guatemala and Florida.<sup>38</sup>

**On December 6, 1960,** Eisenhower briefed President-elect John F. Kennedy on the CIA Cuba plan.<sup>39</sup>

**December 7, 1960,** Eisenhower memo selects Willauer as Special Assistant to the Secretary of State to better organize the government's “total program with respect to Cuba,” stating that there should be no doubt as to Willauer’s authority in this position.<sup>40</sup>

**On December 10, 1960, Secretary of State Christian Herter asked for Willauer’s help:**

“President Eisenhower and I have a very special job which you have been chosen to do. What we want you to do is this: There has been going on since March 17, 1960, the preparations for an invasion, backed by the CIA but run by Cubans...I want you to be the **senior partner alongside the principal manager of CIA operations, Officer Tracy Barnes.**”

“You are to have access to every piece of information. Get in there and take a good, hard look at this plan. Give us your real opinion on it. There is quite a lot of doubt about whether this plan is correct, what the timing should be, and various problems about pulling this thing together.”<sup>41</sup>

Just promoted from Ambassador to “Special Assistant to the Secretary of State,” Willauer dug into the plan.

On **January 16, 1961, Willauer presented his critique of the CIA plan and recommendations**<sup>42</sup> to: Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), CIA, representatives from the Department of State, and Defense. This was the first time the military of the United States was formally brought into the plan.<sup>43</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

#### **The existing plan was destined to fail.**

“One of the great weaknesses of the plan is the lack of air cover...The operation has practically no chance of success without this air cover<sup>44</sup>,” said Willauer. He was convinced the plan should not move forward unless there was “practically no chance that it would fail.”<sup>45</sup>

My grandfather’s experience had taught him that covert wars could succeed *only* if air power was overwhelming and visible — even if officially “deniable.”

He recommended the following<sup>46</sup>:

1. Air-Cover: Pre-invasion air strikes to destroy Castro’s small air force (T-33 jets and B-26 bombers).  
Ongoing fighter air cover during the landings to protect the Cuban exile invasion force.

2. Recognition of a provisional Cuban government-in-exile, to provide political legitimacy and open the door for U.S. assistance if needed.
3. U.S. forces should stand by ready to help if needed
4. A larger invasion force — at least 10,000 Cuban exiles and 5,000 Latin American volunteers — to hold ground and sustain operations once ashore. (Only 750 were in the existing plan – was increased to 1,400 in the executed plan)

Just weeks later, President John F. Kennedy inherited the plan.

On February 8, 1961, after a meeting with new Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Willauer was told rather bluntly by Adolf Berle (new advisor to Kennedy):

**“You are not needed.”**<sup>47</sup>

On February 15, 1961, Willauer was informed by CIA Officer Barnes, **“We can’t talk to you anymore. We can only talk to other people.”**

The Kennedy administration had blocked Willauer from the planning.<sup>48</sup>

Willauer’s advice went unheeded due to political concerns about U.S. attribution.

This omission later proved disastrous.

**The lack of effective air cover was a primary reason for the invasion’s failure.**

**The invasion, launched on April 17, 1961**

1. President Kennedy, worried about plausible deniability and public optics, **cancelled most of the air cover** – much of it at the last minute.
2. The invasion force landed at the Bay of Pigs on April 17, 1961, with minimal air support.
3. Castro’s T-33s destroyed most of their transport ships and pinned them on the beaches.

4. Kennedy refused to call in the Navy and Marines, which were on standby.
5. Rather than finish the job, Kennedy backed off, humiliating himself and the country.<sup>49</sup>

As predicted, Castro's government emerged stronger, and Cuba soon declared itself Marxist-Leninist and aligned fully with the Soviet Union.

Many people were upset with Kennedy.

The key conclusion of the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee on July 27, 1961:

**The one man who should have been included in the Bay of Pigs operation was fired for trying to make sure the invasion did not fail.**<sup>50</sup>

**The experience left my grandfather bitter, disillusioned, and depressed.**

Sally said, "The Bay of Pigs walloped him. While my dad seemed tough, he was very sensitive and thin-skinned. He took things personally. After the Bay of Pigs, he dabbled in a few things, but he could not let it go. He had put his heart and soul into stopping Castro and the spread of Communism. He cared too much. The experience killed him."<sup>51</sup>

### **Death, 1962**

On August 6, 1962, Whiting Willauer died in Nantucket at the age of 56 of a heart attack.

One author hit the nail on the head:

"Ambassador Whiting Willauer **died of a broken heart**, knowing that, **had** he been kept on the job, seven million people would have had a chance of liberation from Communism. Though he had been praised as an American hero by Senators only the year before, his exclusion from the Cuba planning left him deeply wounded."<sup>52</sup>

## October 1962 Soviet nuclear missiles discovered in Cuba – Cuban Missile Crisis

The US discovered Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba.

President Kennedy imposed a naval "quarantine" and demanded their removal.

A two-week standoff and Soviet challenge put the country and world on the verge of nuclear war.

A secret deal was struck: the Soviets removed their missiles from Cuba, the U.S. pledged not to invade Cuba, and the U.S. also removed its missiles from Turkey.

### *Intergenerational Impacts*

Telling this story, I can't help but recognize some "Willauer" characteristics which were passed down to my father...and to me.

Of her father, Sally Willauer said, "**Work came first—before anything.**

**His Priorities were in order: Job – Accomplishments – Social Activities-Family**

**"He cared for us, but he did not show it."**

"Your father", she said of my father, "was the same way."

"He cared a lot about you, but you weren't going to find it.

It was in your accomplishments that you could see his approval."

Sally explained that her father's stoicism stemmed from the childhood trauma of being abandoned twice: "This made him emotionally reserved, focused on duty and work."

The downside to all this was a **very challenging life for his own children** (Whiting, Sally, and Tommy), who were **often left to the care of others**.

### **Example: Christmas 1948**

The family evacuated from Shanghai to Canton on November 18, 1948 (a traumatizing event).

Sally (age 14) and her brother Tommy (age 8) were informed by their father,

**“There will be no Christmas this year!”**

The parents abandoned their kids with their employees in Canton to be together in yet-to-fall Shanghai on Christmas, as Whitey had to work and Louise wanted to celebrate her Christmas Eve birthday with her husband.

Sally took it upon herself to buy presents and stuff stockings to celebrate Christmas with her brother, Tommy, who believed in Santa Claus.

Life for the Willauer Kids involved being taken in by various Aunts and Uncles so their parents could focus on fighting communism. The toll on the family was significant.

### **Family Stories**

Here are a few family stories from Sally to finish off the portrait of my grandfather.

#### **Daredevil. Flying Story:**

**“Dad learned how to fly – but you did not have all the navigation instruments back then – so you really needed to navigate by dead-reconning – airspeed, ground speed, altitude, sight.”**

On a foggy day in Nantucket, my little brother, Tommy, and I were to fly with Dad to Cape Cod on the small 4-seat plane (a Navion) he owned with Allen Holdgate. Dad, always willing to help someone in need, offered to give some random nerdy nervous guy a ride to the Vineyard.

We made several unsuccessful attempts to find the fogged-in airport on the Vineyard; Tommy threw up, and Dad opened a window to drop the bag out. The mystery passenger was visibly uncomfortable, quiet, and white as a sheet.

Dad was forced to give up and fly on to the Cape. We had trouble finding that airport in the fog as well – but suddenly, there it was, so we landed.

A bunch of people came running out, yelling emphatically, “You cannot land here! This is Otis Air Force Base.”

Dad explained which airport they were attempting to find – they pointed him in the right direction and told him he needed to leave.

Our nervous passenger jumped out of the plane, disappeared into the fog, never to be seen again!

We took off, flew at extremely low altitude, and found the correct airport and landed safely.

### **Ambassador story**

Dad preferred casual to formal – and loved wearing pilot suits to parties.

At a reception in Antigua Guatemala, a guest had a conversation with a pilot, exclaiming how excited she was to meet “THE” Ambassador. Whitey played along –eventually getting a good laugh when he introduced himself!

### **Skiing Story**

When we went skiing, Dad “wore his Princeton football helmet and shoulder pads under a great big wind jacket – with his arm tied to his waist so his shoulder would not go out.”

I giggled at him because he “looked like a giant bug.”

“He wasn’t afraid to look silly when being practical.” He was comically practical.”

In wrapping up, here is a summary of the key characteristics that defined my grandfather.

### **Whiting Willauer – Character Legacy**

Whiting Willauer was a daring, driven, and deeply sensitive man who lived for great missions, cared too much, and left behind the spirit of a fighter with a human heart.

**Daredevil spirit** – thrived on challenge, risk, and adventure

**Mission-driven** – lived for the “fight” and high-stakes purpose

**Hard-working and disciplined** – shaped by early loss and tough mentors

**Approachable and casual** – preferred humor and authenticity over formality

**Practical yet comical** – not afraid to look silly if it worked

**Emotionally reserved** – showed care through duty and accomplishment, not words

**Cared too deeply** – sensitive, took things personally, carried wounds heavily

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### **Key Players:**

**General Claire Lee Chennault** (9/6/1893-7/27/1958)

**Anna Chennault** (6/23/1923-3/30/2018) – Second wife of General Chennault.

birth name: **Chan Sheng Mai**,<sup>[1]</sup> 陳香梅 (pinyin *Chen Xiangmei*)

**Whiting Willauer** (11/30/1906 - 8/6/1962)

**Louise Russell Willauer** (12/24/2008 – 09/03/2001)

**Chiang Kai-shek** (31 October 1887 – 5 April 1975)

#### **Nationalist Kuomintang Party (KMT)**

Known as “Generalissimo,” he was a general and then the Head of the Chinese Government

Mainland 1928-1949 – Republic of China(ROC)

Escaped to Taiwan - Republic of China 1949 – 1975

**Soong Mei-ling** – known as “**Madame Chiang**” – wife of Chiang Kai-shek

**T.V. Soong** (Madame Chiang’s brother) – Premier of China (#2 in ROC)

**Mao Zedong** - Mainland 1949 People's Republic of China (PRC)

#### **Chinese Communist Party (CCP)**

**The Corcoran Brothers** **Key College Life Contacts:**

Helped with conceiving and financing the airline

**Thomas “Tommy” Gardiner Corcoran** (12/29/1900 – 12/6/1981) (age 80)

**Brown University BS and master’s degrees, 1922, Harvard Law 1926.**  
Clerked for Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, 1926-1927, then practiced law in NYC.

1932: Joined the “Reconstruction Finance Corporation” and became special counsel, 1934-1941.

He was a key advisor to President Roosevelt and his “New Deal” - known as one of the “Gold Dust Twins” with Benjamin V. Cohen – both on the cover of Time Magazine, Sep 12, 1938.

Later, he became the first “lobbyist” in what was a murky, controversial political world.

**David Merle Corcoran** (8/28/1903 – 6/4/1990) (age 86)

**Princeton, 1926, Harvard Business School**

Worked in the Tokyo office of General Motors

**President of China Defense Supplies** in the late 1930s, helped organize the Flying Tigers, and President of Stirling Drug for 40 years. In late life: director of the Waterville Valley Resort in New Hampshire.

**Howard Francis Corcoran** (1/25/1906 – 5/11/1989) (age 83)

**Whiting Willauer’s Roommate Princeton 1928 & Harvard Law School 1931**

Judge of the United States District Court, Washington, D.C. 1965 – 1989:

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<sup>1</sup> The “Willauer” book page 7 by Aaron L. Willouer 1960

<sup>2</sup> The “Willauer” book page 65 by Aaron L. Willouer 1960

<sup>3</sup> MC Pheeters Antique Militaria History on Major Seneca G. Willauer

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Whiting, page 41, Felix Haynes 2023

<sup>5</sup> Kenneth Whiting, page 41,42 multiple quotes this page and next

<sup>6</sup> Kenneth Whiting pages 42,43

<sup>7</sup> Dr. Roland B Whitridge

<sup>8</sup> His Siblings: Arthur Osborn “Oz” (Architect 1908-1978 – age 70), Katherine Kay (1909-1952 – age 43), Eliot “Elly” Butler (Architect 1913-1972 age 59)

<sup>9</sup> Sally Willauer Nash Interview July 2025

<sup>10</sup> Mrs. Eliot Butler Whiting

<sup>11</sup> Kenneth Whiting page 7

<sup>12</sup> Perilous Missions page 7

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- 13 Perilous Missions page 7
  - 14 All quotes from "Kenneth Whiting, Remembering a Forgotten Hero of Naval Aviation and Submarines
  - 15 Kenneth Whiting page 47
  - 16 Kenneth Whiting page 44
  - 17 Kenneth Whiting book multiple pages
  - 18 Kenneth Whiting Page 49
  - 19 Kenneth Whiting page 270
  - 20 Katherine (KC) Willauer Obituary Oct 28, 2004,
  - 21 Told by Louise Willauer Jackson to her Grandson, Whiting R Willauer, Jr February 1990
  - 22 Sally Willauer interview July 2025
  - 23 Told by Louise Willauer Jackson to her Grandson, Whiting R Willauer, Jr February 1990
  - 24 Copy of Wedding Book shows key dates
  - 25 The Stone School is now called The Storm King School
  - 26 Notes by Whiting Russell Willauer in his father's oral history page 2.
  - 27 Oral History Whiting Willauer page 2.
  - 28 Perilous Missions page 8
  - 29 A blood clotting disorder which today would be treated with blood thinners. He suffered several incidents throughout life.
  - 30 Oral History Whiting Willauer page 2.
  - 31 Oral History Whiting Willauer page 2.
  - 32 Perilous Missions page 9.
  - 33 Sally Willauer interview July 2025.
  - 34 Whiting Willauer Oral History Dec 1, 1960, page 4.
  - 35 Senate Hearings pages 865-867 July 27, 1961, Whiting Willauer
  - 36 Sally Willauer interview July 2025
  - 37 FRUS 1961-1963 Volume X Cuba, 1961-1962 DEPARTMENT OF STATE Washington
  - 38 Why the Bay of Pigs Went So Wrong. Klein, page 1.
  - 39 Piero Gleijeses. "Ships in the Night: The CIA, the White House and the Bay of Pigs."
  - 40 Eisenhower memo to Doug Dillon Dec 7, 1960.
  - 41 Senate Testimony pages 874-881 July 27, 1961, Whiting Willauer
  - 42 FRUS 1961-1963 Volume X Cuba, 1961-1962 DEPARTMENT OF STATE Washington
  - 43 Bay of Pigs Chronology page 21
  - 44 Jan 13, 1961 Willauer Briefing Joint Chiefs of Staff
  - 45 US Senate Testimony page 875-876
  - 46 Jan 13, 1961 Willauer Briefing Joint Chiefs of Staff page 4
  - 47 Senate Testimony page 876
  - 48 Senate Testimony page 877
  - 49 Why the Bay of Pigs Invasion Went So Wrong. Klein. June 30, 2025, page 2-4.
  - 50 Don't Worry, the Reds are Still 90 Miles Away. Declassified CIA document in 2014.
  - 51 Sally Willauer interview July 2025
  - 52 Don't Worry the Reds are still 90 Miles Away page 2