

WARTIME MEMORIES

IN GRATITUDE

A former New Jersey politician comes to Southwest China to find her hero, **Xing Yi** and **Dong Xianwu** report in Guiyang.

It is a cool afternoon in Guiyang, capital of Southwest China's Guizhou province, when Wang Chenghan puts on a traditional Chinese suit and waits to meet an old friend.

He hasn't seen Mary Preville in decades.

On Aug 17, 1945, two days after Japan had announced its surrender in World War II, a B-24 bomber took off from China's southwest. Onboard were six US soldiers and Wang, who was then a Chinese interpreter. The operation, dubbed "duck mission" was to rescue hundreds of people imprisoned by the Japanese in Weifang in East China's Shandong province.

Preville was in that camp, too.

"I never thought the day would come," Preville says, crying with joy upon seeing Wang, now 91.

Preville, 84, has come from New Jersey to Guiyang to thank Wang for the help that changed her life.

The Weihhsien Internment Camp was one of the largest detention centers established by the Japanese for civilians from Allied countries living in northern China during World War II.

The rescue team did not know what to expect from the armed Japanese guards despite their surrender. The plane flew low while approaching the camp. Then, the door opened and they jumped.

"When I jumped out of the plane, the wind made me dizzy. I almost lost consciousness. Then a pain in my shoulder woke me up. I saw the ground," Wang recalls of his landing in a sorghum field near the camp. "It took fewer than 10 seconds."

And it was Wang's first time parachuting. Then 20 years old, he had only received basic simulation training on the ground. They didn't have to fight with the outnumbered Japanese guards to take over the camp, and were welcomed by thrilled internees, who didn't know they were free until they saw the US plane.

Recalling her memories of that day, Preville says: "I had a stomach pain and was in bed, but I heard people crying and



Mary Preville, a survivor of a prison-of-war camp, meets her rescuer, Wang Chenghan, in Guiyang. PHOTOS BY YANG JUN / CHINA DAILY



Wang Chenghan shows a photo of survivors of the Weihhsien camp in Shandong province. In 1945, he joined a rescue operation in the Japanese interment camp.

shouting outside ... They rushed out of the camp gate to welcome the heroes.

"When I saw the American plane hovering, my ache disappeared."

In the following weeks, the rescue team registered the interned civilians by nationality, then coordinated with the Allies to send them back home.

Telling his story, Wang, who was then known by his English name Eddie, says: "Every night after dinner, Mary and other little children would play softball with me. We had a lot of fun together and became good friends."

Preville spent three more weeks in the camp before

being transferred to Xi'an in northwestern China to reunite with her missionary parents.

As the war ended, Wang went back to university and continued his studies. After graduating in 1948, he worked as a teacher, and later as an engineer.

Preville and her parents returned to the United States, where she worked in the education sector before being elected to the New Jersey assembly in 1998.

In the 1990s, Preville decided to find the soldiers who had liberated the Weihhsien camp, so that she could express her gratitude to them in person. It was not too hard for her to

locate the US soldiers, although two of them had died by then. But she couldn't find Wang, who didn't tell anyone except his family members about the heroic mission.

It was by chance that Wang's grandson, who works in the US, saw Preville's posts on a Weihhsien camp survivors' website that finally brought the two together over the phone last year.

Recalling how she found him, Preville says during a meeting with Wang in Guiyang: "When we were talking on the telephone and you said that Betty (Preville's friend) taught you dancing. I thought: 'OK, this is for real!'"

Wang is the only man still

alive from the team of rescuers.

"This is the last chapter of my pilgrimage to find my heroes," says Preville. "They all said that they are not heroes. But to all of us who were in the Japanese camp, they became heroes when they jumped out of that plane."

Preville hasn't come alone. She has brought several "thank you" messages from others. The letters were written by US ambassador to China Max Baucus, New Jersey state senator Stephen Sweeney, Donald Norcross, a congressman from New Jersey, and several former internees from all over the world.

"If you and your brave comrades hadn't saved us, I would probably have died before I reached 19," wrote former internee Pamela Masters-Flynn from California.

"Thank you for giving me 70 more years of life ... with all the wonderful people who touched my life along the way."

In another letter, Audrey Nordmo Horton from Norway says: "I was one of the few Norwegians you rescued. So in Norwegian I will say, *tusen takk* — a thousand thank yous — and I will add in English a million more."

Contact the writers through xingyi@chinadaily.com.cn



Online
Watch the video by scanning the code.

MUSIC

Pop star Carey cheekily promotes docuseries *Mariah's World*

By ASSOCIATED PRESS
in Beverly Hills, California

Mariah Carey called on six half-naked muscle men, champagne and lots of attitude as she playfully promoted her upcoming docuseries, *Mariah's World*.

Carey made her entrance for a roomful of TV critics after the shirtless gentlemen formed a chair for her to sit on. She then moved over to a rococo velvet-and-gold couch to field questions and toss a few wisecracks around.

"So this is perfectly normal," she said, smiling. Carey's daytime outfit: a sparkling, scanty black costume with a glittering microphone as accessory. A pair of hair and makeup artists came onstage to provide a touch-up during the 30-minute news conference.

"I hope you don't mind. This is part of my world," she said, slyly. Carey asked if anyone else wanted a touch-up, adding, "It's very expensive."

As a pop star, she was asked, could she share the names of up-and-coming female artists she admires?

"There's a few. They would be lovely ladies — and it's not their day," she said. Her tone sometimes veered intriguingly into the realm of 1930s movie sexpot and quipster Mae West.

Will ex-husband Nick Cannon, the *America's Got Talent* host, be part of the series and what does he think of it, Carey was asked. She and Cannon have 5-year-old twins.

"I can't speak for what he thinks because he is his own

guy and we are not together anymore. But he's cool about being on the show and he comes around and he's with the kids," she said.

So he'll be on the show? "I didn't say that, darling. I said he came around. I don't know what makes the final cut," she said, dryly. "I'm sorry, was that rude? I am so not trying to slay anybody."

As for their kids, "they could have their own show, because that's how funny they are," Carey said. But she and Cannon will make a mutual decision on their inclusion.

The eight-part E! series details the kickoff of her *Sweet Sweet Fantasy* concert tour and planning for her marriage to Australian billionaire James Packer. *Mariah's World* premieres in the United States and Canada on Dec 4, followed by airings on E!'s international channels in Europe, Asia, Latin America and elsewhere.

During her Q & A, Carey combined tongue-in-cheek replies with occasional and apparent seriousness, including when she was asked about her experience as an *American Idol* judge. She and fellow judge Nicki Minaj famously clashed during their one season on the talent series.

"Oh, it was the most abusive experience. By the way, you've just driven me to drink," she chided the questioner, sipping from glass of bubbly.

Does she throw shade — slang for trash talking — and if so why?

"I don't, I don't throw shade," she said. "I don't know why people think this."



Mariah Carey attends a panel for the television series *Mariah's World* in Beverly Hills, California, on Aug 3. REUTERS

PROFILE

Mandarin makes Canadian diplomat's China journey easy

By MEI JIA
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years in Beijing and Hong Kong.

Before his posting as ambassador here, the Canadian newspaper *Globe and Mail* said he was among the few high-ranking Canadian diplomats who spoke Mandarin.

Saint-Jacques says his Mandarin has made him a "better" ambassador. He recalls that in 2012, when he was presenting his credentials to then-Chinese president Hu Jintao, he was offered eight minutes for the meeting. But as he spoke in Chinese he gained more time with Hu, saved from the lack of translation.

And on CCTV, where an annual program for ambassadors sees them promoting their countries to Chinese investors, Saint-Jacques makes the most of the few minutes he gets on air by speaking Chinese.

"I sweated so much to learn the language, and if I have the advantage, I will use it every time."



Guy Saint-Jacques has spent 13 years in Beijing and Hong Kong. FENG YONGBIN / CHINA DAILY

Saint-Jacques got his degree in geology from the University of Montreal in 1974, and a master's in land planning and regional development from Laval University in 1976. A year later, he joined Canada's foreign ministry and his postings have taken him to the United

States, Mexico, Britain and China.

He says his fascination with China goes back to his university days, but his first posting in Africa saw him make a number of friends among Chinese diplomats there.

"You have to hope that life

will be a succession of happy coincidences," he says, adding that he and his wife, Sylvie, had wanted to come to China for a long time.

After learning Mandarin in Hong Kong for two years, he arrived in Beijing in 1984, where he was stationed until 1987.

"When I left in 1987, it (China) was a very poor country. And I still have the bicycle that I used to go to work then," he recalls.

He returned with his family in 1995, and found Beijing to be a completely different place.

This confirmed the success of the economic reform that has led to the unleashing of the potential of entrepreneurs and helped to lift China and its people's living standards, he says.

"There are no other examples in the world."

To him, Beijing has become a very modern city with visible creativity and openness. The Chinese middle class has more money and is becoming more

sophisticated in taste.

Saint-Jacques has witnessed and experienced the deepening of ties between his country and China that are not just close trade partners. They celebrated the 45th anniversary of diplomatic relations last year.

He estimates that 500,000 Chinese visited Canada and more than 600,000 Canadians visited China in 2015.

"One of the best ways to know each other and to develop the relationship is to anchor people-to-people exchanges," he says. "Education and tourism are two main ways."

According to him, there are more than 500 academic exchange programs between universities in the two countries.

In 2014, Canada became the first Western country to offer 10-year multiple-entry visas to Chinese citizens. He says there will be more air links between the two countries and more

Canadian visa centers in China.

As part of the ongoing series of events related to the China-Canada year of cultural exchanges that began in 2015, the ambassador has been to Yugong Yishan bar in Beijing, where he joined a young audience to watch a performance by Canadian singer Felix Doyotte in March.

Saint-Jacques has a preference for Chinese architecture and films. He is also a reader of classical works as well as works by Nobel winner Mo Yan and the crime novelist He Jiahong.

He also goes to the gym and enjoys sports, but hasn't fostered a taste for *baijiu* (white liquor) yet. "I'm convinced that *baijiu* is used in rockets to put satellites into orbits," he jokes.

Speaking of links between the two countries, he says there are 1.4 million Canadians of Chinese origin.

"So there are a lot of family links between the two countries."