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Plane designer Lin dies at 96

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LOS ANGELES (AP) — Tung-Hua Lin, a civil engineering professor at the University of California-Los Angeles, who designed China's first twin-engine airplane, has died. He was 96.

Lin died Monday of heart failure at Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center, the university announced.

A university faculty member since 1955, Lin studied the soundness of metal structures in airplanes, buildings and bridges. His research on earthquake stress in construction materials led to a fellowship at the prestigious National Academy of Engineering.

Born in 1911 in Chongqing, China, Lin studied engineering in his homeland, then earned a master's degree at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1936.

After some experience at American airplane factories, he

returned to China to teach.

During World War II, the Chinese military assigned Lin to design and build airplanes. He decided to draw up plans for a transport plane, one that could be used after the war for people or cargo.

Lin's workers built the 3½-ton wooden aircraft from scratch in a cave to avoid Japanese detection. Without a wind tunnel or other test equipment, Lin went aloft with the test pilot on the maiden flight of the C-1010 in 1944. The plane was considered a success and the model went into production.

Lin moved to the United States in 1949, earned a doctorate at the University of Michigan and taught at the University of Detroit before coming to UCLA. He was named a professor emeritus of civil and environmental engineering in 1978.