

# FLYING TIGER HISTORICAL ORGANIZATION

a NON PROFIT 501c3 ORGANIZATION

EIN # 26-1492466



14th AAF



AVG

## GUILIN CHINA

HONORING THE PAST • LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

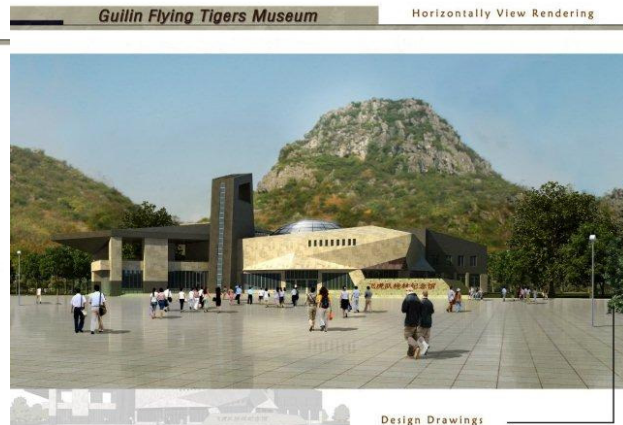
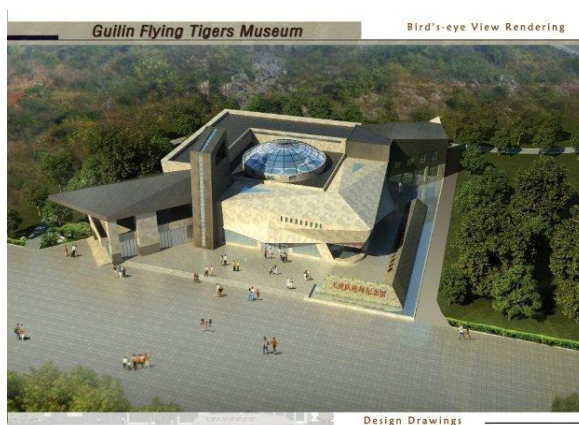
# Flying Tiger Historical Organization Newsletter

May 22, 2011

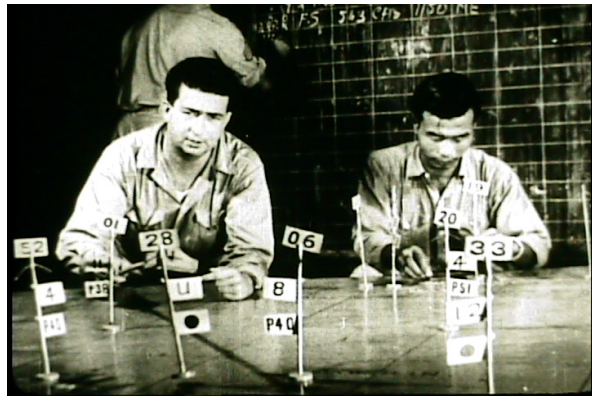
Volume 1: Issue 2

## Park Progress

In March, 2011, as part of Travel Aire's annual "American Aviator's VIP Tour to China" the tour group traveled to Guilin. President and Director of FTHO Larry Jobe and Director KC Ma held a meeting with the Vice Magistrate of Lingui County, and the Director and Party Secretary of Lingui County Bureau of Tourism. President Jobe expressed his concerns with the construction progress of the Historical Site Park. The Vice Magistrate explained that there have been some twists and turns and the progress was not satisfying, but confirmed that a team has been formally set to lead the construction, financing through the government has been clarified, and specific plans including artist's rendering and blue prints have been drawn of the memorial hall.



Copies were provided to FTHO for our record and review. The restoration of the cave itself is separate from the hall and is the primary focus of the FTHO the goal being restoration to original livery. FTHO has various photos and documentation to guide that process.



The exterior of the museum hall is expected to be 80% complete by March, 2012. The land for the site and other future amenities is 120 acres, up from 47. An Assistant Director of the County has been permanently assigned to the Museum project. The airstrip is unfortunately gone due to construction development.



It was this construction development that prompted the site preservation from the outset



## PROGRESS ON ARTIFACTS

Collection of artifacts continues. On the March Travel Air VIP Tour, significant amounts were transported in and as luggage and these artifacts were successfully delivered to Lingui County representatives on arrival in Shanghai. The artifacts cover a broad range of items including uniforms, blood chits, patches, an AVG suitcase, and other items.



Anyone wishing to donate relics and historical items to display at the Flying Tiger Historical Park are invited to do so. They can be sent directly to FTHO 21133 Jimmursal Lane, Groveland, CA 95321 or we can make arrangements for shipment or pickup.

## RECOGNITION AND PUBLICITY

Following the dinner in San Francisco to which the entire FTHO Board was invited by Consul General Gao in October, 2010, many artifacts and a Congressional Certificate were presented to Consul Gao. Director Michael Bianco spoke to the Cathay Post American Legion located in Chinatown, San Francisco on March 12, 2011. Cathay Post is one of the oldest Chinese American Posts of the American Legion with a history of over 60 years. The members were enthusiastic in offering support as well as an introduction to General Chennault's son who lives in San Francisco and as well a former

Flying Tiger pilot who lives in Hillsborough. Director Bianco will follow up with the Cathay Post Commander about connecting with several other Chinese American Posts in Seattle and NYC. He is seeking all available ways the Cathay Post can support the FTHO.

A major motion picture on the Flying Tigers, under the internationally renowned director John Woo, has been in the works for some time and is anticipated for release in 2012. In the meantime, a four part miniseries will show on the history/military channel in June 2011. This is currently scheduled for June 7, 14, 21, and 28, 2011, at 9 pm and promises never before seen film footage on TV.

### **PROGRESS ON FUND RAISING**

Our donations are at the \$25,000 level with several potential ideas to mature. We are on Facebook seeking to take advantage of social networking. David Lee, a guide often employed on Travel Aire's VIP Aviator's Tour, made a donation of 1000 Yuan. Mr. Lee presented his donation to FTHO Directors Mr. KC Ma and Mr. Larry Jobe aboard ship while going up the Yangtze River on our last tour. As a young man he learned about the Flying Tigers, how they helped the Chinese people and wanted to participate in honoring them. When you understand that the average wage of a Chinese worker in the city is 2000 Yuan a month you can begin to appreciate the magnitude of Mr. Lee's donation.



Larry Jobe

David Lee

KC Ma

# **YANG TANG AIRFIELD –**

## **from Beginning to End – Part 1**

China as a developing nation, freed from dynastic rule by revolution in 1911, quickly embraced the airplane. Her leaders grasped the military aspects of the airplane as well. While Yunnan Province is often called “The Godfather of Chinese Aviation” the construction of simple airfields all over China began during the third decade of the last century – only hampered by a lack of modern equipment, but



encouraged in response to Japan’s invasion. Research establishes that Yang Tang (the airfield at Guilin, formerly called Kwelin) began construction in 1938. It was later enlarged by Chang Kai-Shek as he sought B 17’s under US Lend Lease. The site was a good spot from which to launch bombing raids to any place in China, attack shipping, and even hit mainland Japan. After Pearl Harbor put an end to these plans, the AVG occupied and put

the field to use.



For a moment take another look at that same airfield in 1937 – notice the tall skinny farmer on the left; that cocky Chinese General, an American officer a US pilot – Of importance in the scheme of coming events...

Of course, all of this is 1200-miles from where Yang Tang is barely getting started....



where 10,000 men, women & children have begun the task of turning a peaceful valley, once spotted with rice-paddies and grain-fields; surrounded by Karst limestone peaks which they began leveling, hand-hammering and sizing stone - the raw building material necessary (and available) to produce a kilometer and a half long main runway - wide enough for bombers, a shorter 50' wide one for fighters and a series of connecting roads to 22 as yet un-constructed buildings, which will eventually become the largest Eastern China airfield. This would eventually create a military presence S.W. of GuangSi's capitol city, Kweilin and was often referred to later as the Kweilin airbase, but in reality there were two other smaller airfields soon to be built... Ehr Tang & Li Chia Chen, both E. across the "Dragons Teeth" mountains. Eventually they were all connected by winding dirt roads & wooden bridges.

If you're wondering about the name "Yang Tang" it's taken from the nearest village in that prefecture, Yangdang, just 1.5 kilometers N. beyond smaller karst peaks which happen to have some rather important caves in them, as you will later see...

There's a lot to building a runway and maintaining it as the following photos will reveal – it's not just filling-in and covering with stones – it's back-breaking work.





There is NO shade! But slowly the first layment of stones approach the half-way mark. There is NO rest; NO tea-breaks... one bowl of rice-soup and the equivalent of 10-cents per day if you make your quota. A year passes, the Winter is cold and work is inconsistent; then the Spring rains come and slow progress even more.

It's 1938 – The Nationalist government has plans for Yang Tang... they want it finished so Chiang Kai-Shek can order B-17 bombers from the Americans. He reasons that by being able to bomb the Japanese advancing throughout N.E. China and perhaps even their homeland, he can save his people...





To achieve the harder runways these heavily-laden bombers will require means that each layer of stones from large to smaller, to gravel, must be 'cemented' with a mud slurry and compacted with rollers. More airfield workers are enlisted to hurry the construction along. Then the orders come to build two dozen administration, offices, a main gate and quarters along the far Eastern edge of the valley; to connect them by strong roads and taxiways and supply them with water and electricity - for this, a team of special workers must be assembled. Brick-layers, carpenters, cabinet-makers, and those that know plumbing & electrical trades. They will be busied by this project, while thousands more toil on the runway construction day-after-day.







And after the mud dries hard it takes 120 workers to pull the large stone roller that compact and level the surface even more.





The specialists have arrived... bringing bricks, lumber, roofing tiles. Shown here is a typical 3-wing service or office building about half completed Hey – these guys must be getting better pay... because they're 'mechanized'. The initial walls were brick, stuccoed over; camphor wood flooring, window and door-frames... Most interesting were the light-blue roofing tile made locally. Here's Yang Tang's almost done – this is the BIG roller and required 300 to pull



And this was how Yang Tang appeared in 1940 – wide, hard, almost smooth with inspection teams about to complete their jobs...



Notice: you can see several of the buildings which hugged the Eastern mountains in this view looking Southwest. Even after the rolling and re-rolling there was still hand-work on the runways... these women are checking evenness; smoothing high spots mid-runway, W. side





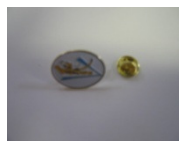
## Items Available for Donation to FTHO



Hat \$10.00



Patch \$3.00



Tie Tac \$3.00



Blood Chit  
Silk & Leather



Leather Patches  
Different  
\$30.00 to

Squadrons

\$40.00 \$20.00 to \$30.00



Back

"T" Shirt \$15.00



Front

ver" issued to members of the American Volunteer Group, the CATF, and the 14th Air Force during the 1930s and 1940s. The main text reads:

The foreign person has come to China to help in the war effort. Soldiers and civilians, one and all, should rescue, protect, and provide him medical care.

The "Life Saver" sewn on the back of a Flying Tiger's flying jacket was signed with the stamp of the Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.

### What does Blood Chit say?

The picture of the blood chit and its interpretation was taken at the Flying Tiger museum in Chongqing. Many Flying Tigers owe their lives to this item which was used extensively in China.

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Every effort is made to present factual and accurate information; however there are always some

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