

FLYING TIGER HISTORICAL ORGANIZATION

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14th AAF



AVG

GUIN. CHINA

HONORING THE PAST □ LOOKING TO THE FUTURE
Flying Tiger Historical Organization Newsletter

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Volume 2: Issue 4

FTTHO PRESIDENT LARRY JOBE SOON TO HAVE FIRST HAND VIEW OF MUSEUM PROGRESS



The Annual American Aviator's VIP Tour to China is scheduled March 20 to April 7, 2013. This is a special event sponsored by Travel Aire Tours organized by President Larry Jobe and his wife Nina. It is a remarkable tour, beginning in Shanghai, with a side tour of Suzhou, the "Venice" of China, followed by a flight to Wuhan where travelers board a Yangtze River cruise boat which over four days travels up river, over the Three Gorges Dam (five locks). Further on the travelers experience Shennong Stream or the Daning River, both displaying stunning views of dramatic gorge hillsides. The river trip ends in Chongqing with a visit to the Stillwell and Flying Tiger museums. Then it's on to Chengdu via one of China's remarkable high speed express trains for an

opportunity to visit the Giant Panda Breeding Research Center where China works to save this endangered species.

Next stop is Guilin where the Flying Tiger Heritage Park is being constructed which includes the Flying Tiger Historical Museum. FTHO had anticipated that there would be a dedication ceremony on this visit but construction will not be complete by the time of the tour visit. Officials do plan a flag raising that will include Chinese, United States, and AVG flags followed by a banquet for tour participants. The Chinese do plan to have a grand opening with dignitaries, recognition of FTHO Board and Advisory members as well as large donors. This may not occur though until the 70th anniversary celebration of WWII hostilities in August, 2015.

From Guilin, tour travels to Xi'an for the spectacular visit to the Qin Terra-cotta Warriors Museum with its burial site of an incredible army of 8000 lifelike clay soldiers. Finally the tour winds up in Beijing with a visit to the Summer Palace, the Great Wall, the Aviation Museum, the Forbidden City with Tiananmen Square, not to mention that Olympic site, the "Bird's Nest" National Stadium. Plenty of time left for shopping and touring before returning to San Francisco on an Air China nonstop flight.

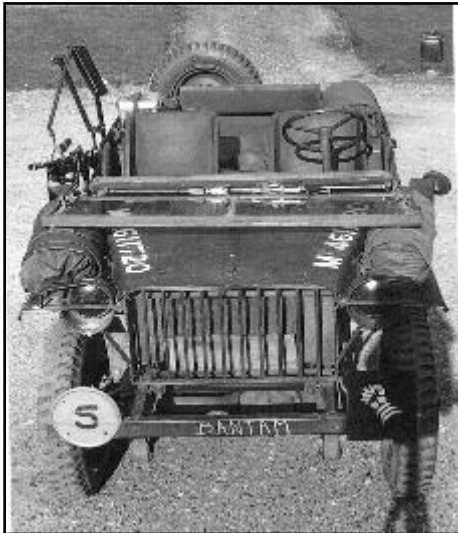
Contact Travel Aire for complete details at 888 669 2288 or the internet at <http://www.TravelAireTours.com>.

Long Ago and Far Away...Memories Of the First American Volunteer Group

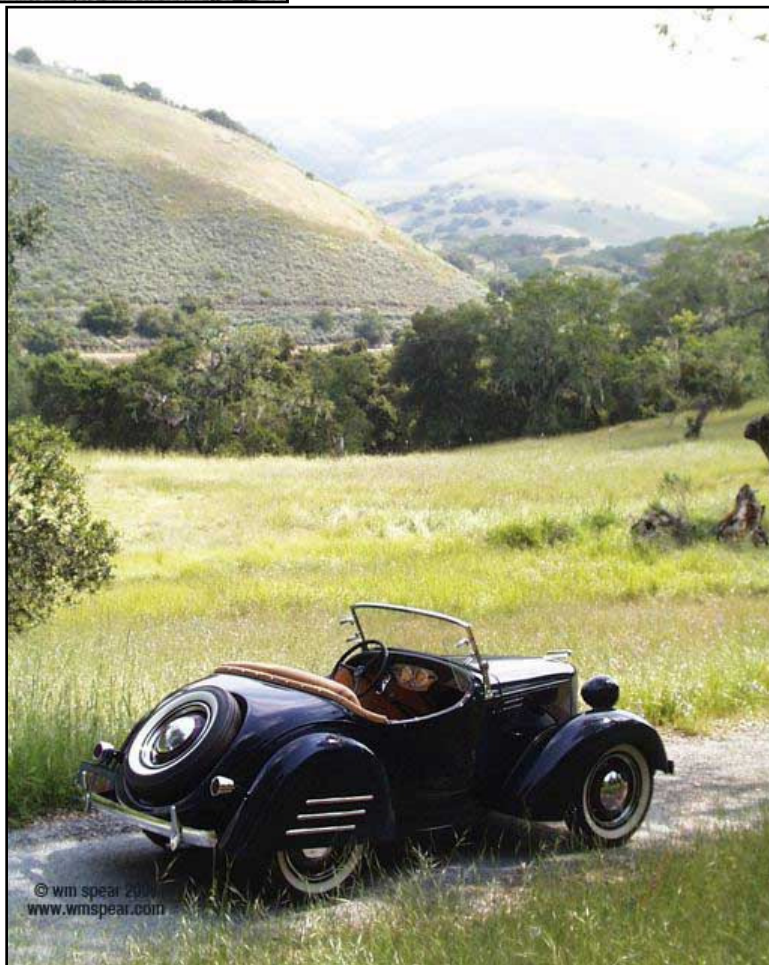
Here comes the Jeep!

The United States Army General Purposes (GP) vehicle was initially manufactured in 1941. Say the letters fast, faster....there you've got it! You are sounding just like the average Chinese in 1941, which translated back into English, is "jeep". If you think about it, armies since Roman times needed a General Purposes vehicle—consider Hannibal's elephants, China's war chariots, to name a few. Is it no wonder that in the late 1930's with war looming in Europe that the United States War Department did not seek such a vehicle? The call went out and three auto companies answered. Perhaps you don't know them all. Ever heard of Bantam? No? That was problem for the War Department also, but the very first jeep that passed all required tests was made by the American Bantam and Austin Motors Company.

This Bantam came with all the tools



Bantams proved they could fly...



Bantam also made this cutie...The Bantam Roadster

Bantam manufactured its roadster in a rather small production facility where it also intended to manufacture its jeep. The War Department chose Ford and Willys to produce the jeep as they had much larger manufacturing capability. Bantam was stuck with a large up-front engineering cost with no pre- production advance. The Bantam plans were then made available to other bidders and while the small auto maker actually was able to produce some war vehicles for Britain, these did little to reduce their debts. By 1943, Bantam went out of business.

Ford built special roads for testing their version, and actually sent a number of test vehicles to prewar Burma in 1940. These arrived on Rangoon docks, followed by test drivers and engineers. They were simply topped off with gasoline and driven through the city's streets to a section with hilly plains and jungle 50 km away.

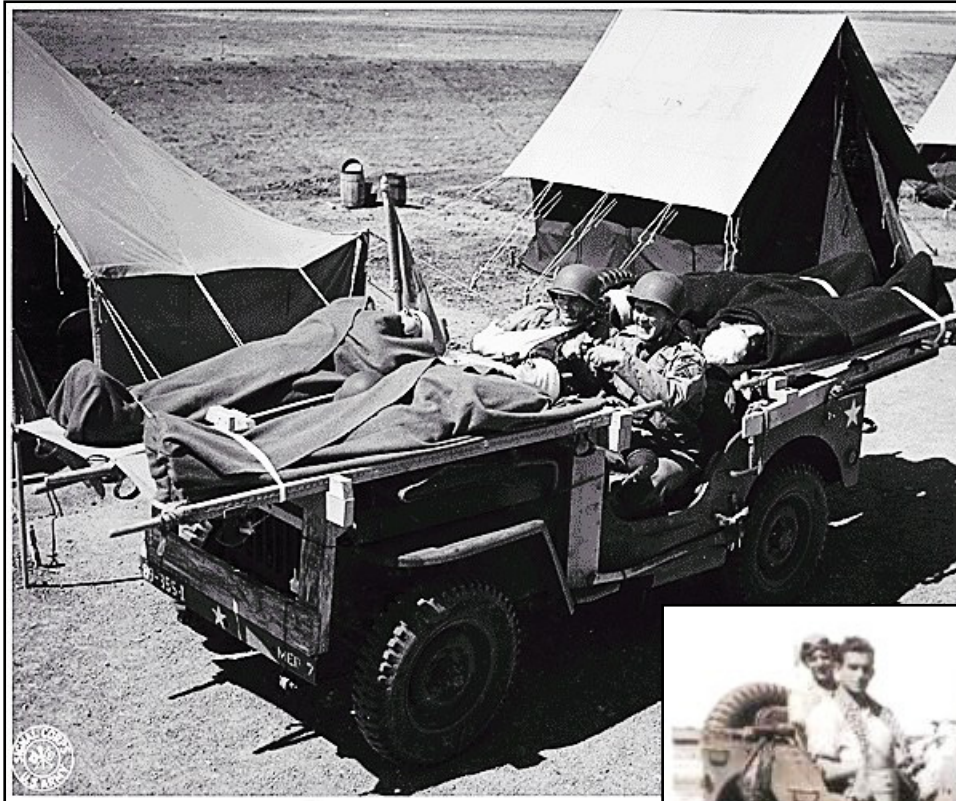


Driving through the streets of Rangoon, Burma.



Overland testing of Ford GVW jeeps in Burma's rolling countryside

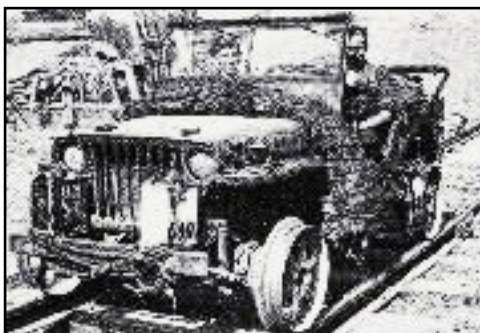
The tests were successful and Ford was awarded the largest share of the contracts. Ford/Willys built thousands of these vehicles for worldwide use. With 4WD and a reliable 4 cylinder engine, the "Jeep" as it had become commonly called was used by enlisted and officers alike, and modified for a new jobs almost every week from carrying the wounded to getting the earliest test pilots of the AVG to their P40's being assembled in Rangoon.



Driving P-40 test-pilot to the Rangoon assembly & flight test area May, 1941



Jeep modified to run on railroad tracks in Burma...



The AVG "Flying Tigers" had some unique uses for their Jeeps. See what follows...



Frank Swartz (L) and Ken Jernstedt use the "Adams & Eves" jeep as a table to feast on water-melon.



Jim Howard, Newkirk and other AVG pilots tour the flight-line checking on their P-40s

For the album: How many Flying Tigers grow in jeep use on the flying field. Front seat, from left: Newkirk, Gerdtschke, Howard; in back: Barling and Taylor. Newkirk, the man making a face, has shot down 33 Japanese, had seven in sight when the picture was taken at the end of January. Newkirk and Howard are squadron leaders. Others there are later arrivals.



Above: Radio-man Alex Mihailo waves from a 2nd Pursuit Squadron jeep. Courtesy C. H. Laughlin.



Dick Rossi, AVG pilot, polishing boots Mingladon Airfield, Rangoon, Feb. 1942

JRR 2

AVG pilot Charles Overend and driver headed to Magwe airfield 1942



AVG pilot Ken Christensen relaxes in Jeep on Mingaldon flight-line



Not to forget about the Willys MA3 Jeep...



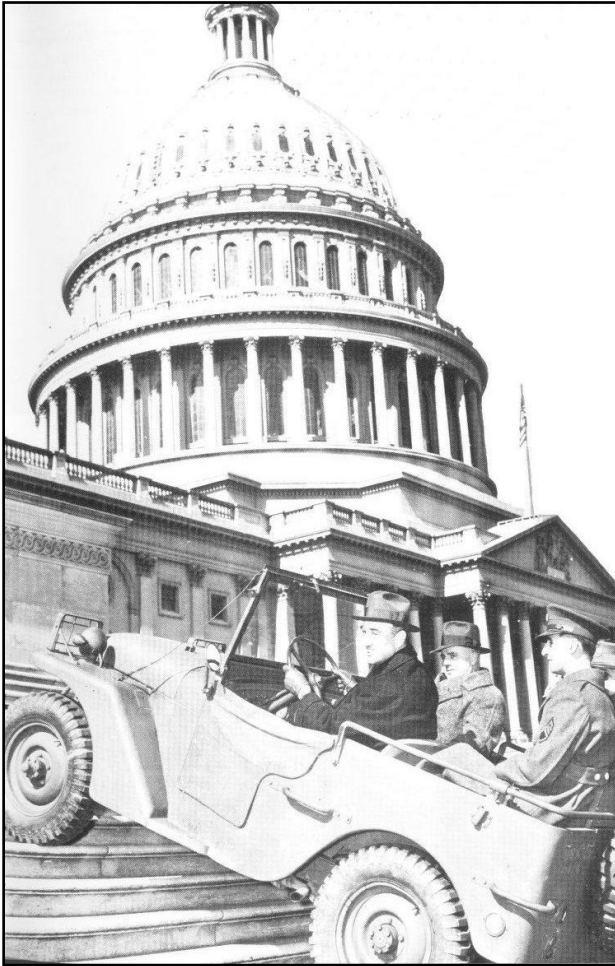
Willys built a slightly lighter but just as rugged version as Ford did. Also approved by the War Department, it reached China later, but nevertheless was extensively used in that theater (above photo is of crossing a bit of desert in China's far west with American GI's. A tow rope is wrapped around the front bumper and the windshield is covered against fine sand which could actually etch the glass. Later electrics were beefed up and the bumper restructured to fit and electric cable winch.)

Perhaps the biggest fan of Jeeps in Burma and China was General Joe Stillwell. He requested water proofed ignition and exhausts, and was often seen not fording but travelling up and down streams in chained wheel assisted Ford Jeeps.

"What the Hell? Drive On - Let him ship some water!"
(Stillwell always traveled with Lt. Baud, his driver & "Butter-cup" his cook).



The trials that really “sold” the Willys Jeep were performed in Washington D.C.



If you can take two Generals and the Secretary of the War Department up the capitol steps in a Jeep, what else was there to say?

Willys eventually produced its military versions in record numbers and post war began selling surplus orders to farmers, explorers, and returning servicemen. Eventually they diversified into several vehicles based on the original Jeep, and joined American Motors until bought out by Chrysler. The Jeep is still with us, as popular as ever, finding countless uses over the six decades since WWII.

Editor's note:



In previous editions I have emphasized the symbolic force of the classic shark mouth of the Flying Tigers, both AVG and after. The shark mouth has been applied to many military vehicles. I recently found the Tiger Girl, a shark mouth decorated B-17. An internet researcher was going through the National Archives for information on the Ploesti, Romania, oil refineries low level bombing mission and found a high resolution version presented here. Those 50 caliber machine guns make a mouthful.

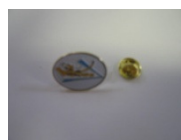
Items Available for Donation to FTHO



Hat \$10.00



Patch \$3.00



Tie Tac \$3.00



Blood Chit



Leather Patches

Silk & Leather Different Squadrons
\$30.00 to \$40.00 \$20.00 to \$30.00



Back

"T" Shirt \$15.00



Front

To make purchases Email your request to: larryjobe1@gmail.com.

You can access our PayPal account on the web site which will allow you to use your bank account or credit card. Notify us at the email address above when you have completed your PayPal transaction and we will mail the merchandise.

Please specify "T" shirt size- S,M,L,XL,XXL. Some women sizes available.

Questions and for list of Blood Chit and Patches available email: larryjobe1@gmail.com.

What does Blood Chit say?

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.

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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