

FLYING TIGER HISTORICAL ORGANIZATION

a NON PROFIT 501 (c) 3 ORGANIZATION

EIN # 26-1492466



14th AAF



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HONORING THE PAST
FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE



AVG



CATF

May 25, 2016

Volume 6: Issue 1

Hump Flight Preparations

As reported on the FTHO websites and in prior newsletters, the FTHO has embarked on its most ambitious project - *the Hump Flight Reenactment*. The FTHO was formed to restore General Claire Chennault's command and operations cave in Guilin, China. Since that time, we have participated in helping to build the *Flying Tiger Heritage Park and Museum* that honors the friendship and cooperation between the Chinese and the American people during WWII. Crucial to that cooperation were 'Hump Flights' that provided materiel, weapons and ammunition, fuel, supplies of all sorts and personnel transportation from India and from Burma (Myanmar) over the Himalayas to Kunming in Western China. The reenactment will cast a light on the hardships faced by both nations and will honor the sacrifices made by Americans and Chinese to keep China supplied during WWII, and it will be done in perhaps the single most important plane in that effort, the C 47 (DC 3) cargo plane.

Last year Florence Fang, through her Family Foundation, donated the sum of \$175,000 to the purchase of a suitable airplane for the task. President Larry Jobe commenced search and was able to find a C 47 named the *Buzz Buggy* in Australia that would meet the need. The plane was restored by owner Ralph Chrystal at NP Aviation, Bankstown Airport just outside Sydney, Australia, and on November 24, 2015 it had its first flight from Bankstown. Unfortunately, there were engine problems and one engine would require replacement. Engines of this nature are scarce and expensive. Ralph



Chrystal, owner of *Buzz Buggy* knew of a plane with a bad airframe but two good engines. He secured one and installed it.



In February, 2016, FTHO was pleased with the result and funds from the Foundation were authorized for purchase. On March 10, 2016, President Larry Jobe arrived in Australia to commence equipping the flight for its commencement at Bathurst Airport, east of Sydney. Initially, the date for departure was March 17 or 18, 2016. The actual departure date, largely due to adverse weather, was postponed but the flight preparations went forward. Over a two-week period, President Larry Jobe was able to equip *Buzz Buggy* with many of the things needed for the trip.

Contact was made with the engineer (mechanic) Adrian Heap who will accompany the flight. Log books were acquired. Arrangements were made to leave the *Buzz Buggy* at Bathurst Airport at no cost and with training flights every 30 to 45 days to keep the plane flyable and up to date, pending the final departure.

The crew as currently constructed consists of Dale Mueller, (US Airforce Academy graduate, commercial pilot, DC 3 type rated). Joe Fisher, (DC 3 instructor pilot). Matt Walker, (DC 3 Type rated pilot). Larry Jobe, (commercial and international pilot). Adrian Heap, (Australian engineer who helped restore Buzz Buggy) and photographer Barbara Bussler, (German-born living in the US since 1997, avid traveler and amateur photographer and FTHO official photographer since 2013 who photographed grand opening of Flying Tiger Heritage Park in 2015.)

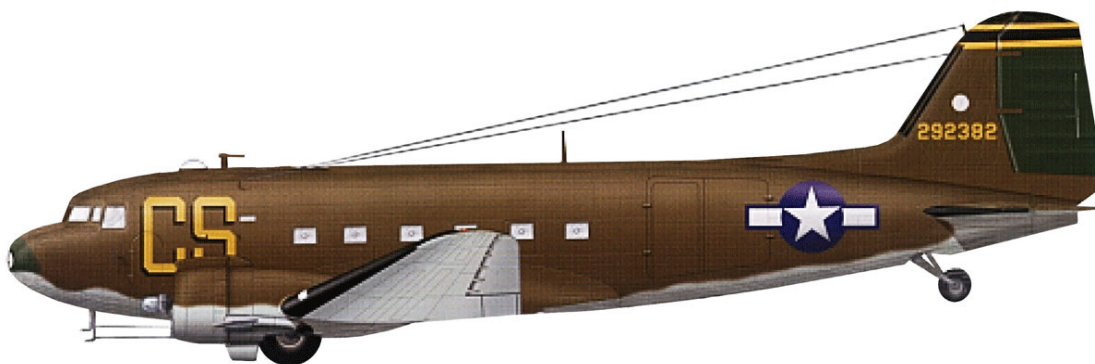
But due to legal and technical reasons, FTHO may have to hire Australian pilots for the flight, at least thru Australia, which further caused the delay from the March 2016 departure date. Currently, the anticipated arrival date in Guilin is August 15, 2016 to coincide with the surrender date of the Japanese. The flight plan remains the same, leaving Bathurst to Longreach to Darwin, Australia, then to Bali and Jakarta, Indonesia to Singapore, then to Bangkok, then Mandalay, Myanmar (Burma) and from there over the Himalayas to Kunming, China. Thereafter, the plane will fly to Guilin Liangjiang International Airport, where the wings will be removed and the plane transported to Guilin to be reassembled for permanent display at the museum site.

The delay may provide other advantages such as a window of opportunity to get the *Buzz Buggy* painted correctly (as "D" Day stripes were done for a European movie production) and to include CNAC logos on one side of the fuselage in recognition of the significant roll CNAC played in the war and Hump flight efforts.



Buzz Buggy was opened up for inspection to the airshow crowd in Bathurst on May 15, 2016. This was the first airshow at Bathurst Airport in 50 years. The show benefited emergency services of Bathurst. An estimated 30% of the shows 6500 attendees looked *Buzz Buggy* over and learned a little of the history associated with these type of planes and the men who flew them in WWII.

C-47A-10-DK ... HUMP Re-enactment aircraft



Born of necessity on a cold winter day, Feb 15, 1944 at the Oklahoma City Douglas Aircraft facility, this C-47A-10 Dakota was destined for events half a world distant, but first she was to join the United States Army Air Force, receiving tail-number 42-92709 on February 19th.

Then, under terms of US Lend-Lease agreements to become ferried along with 299 others of her kind to Amberley Airfield in Queensland, Australia – taking on the RAAF markings on March 20, 1944... eventually starting a new life at a South Australia military air-depot by April 6th. However, at under 2,500-hours in September, 1945 – extensive metal corrosion was noticed and caused a complete overhaul by Australian National Airways, returning the aircraft to service on Feb. 1, 1946 at a new location in New South Wales. A year later it became allocated to the Care & Maintenance Department at Tucumwali, where Qantas Airlines would inspect the aircraft – as many were surplus to the post-war military and about to begin new lives hauling cargo or converted to passenger flights. Of the 300 aircraft in the 1944 shipment, no fewer than 100 became civilian airliners after 1947. The exact count, and dates of transfer are well-kept in files, available from the government once a civilian registry ID was established. Any overseas sales are also listed through first-owner, at least.



A man named MacRobertson bought the aircraft; stripped her military olive-drab paint and RAAF markings, replacing them with his airline name, and set off to ferry passengers and freight to and from Melbourne on Australia's southern coast... beginning late in 1947. It appeared that MacPherson-Miller airlines was profiting from the passenger and freight runs, when they suddenly

leased to Derby Meatworks on May 13, 1949. Again, the aircraft base of operations was moved far from New South Wales, serving an area just below the New Territories in north central Australia (while in the freight and passenger service the air hours and miles had been piling on (10,000 hours by 1963) and it looked for that moment in time as if regional airlines were to steadily become the aircraft's home, but a different fate awaited *our* aircraft...



The great Aussie Beef Scheme –

Kimberlies
'cooled'
beef goes
to freezer
by air...



Cattle were
to become a
BIG industry
in the
Kimberlies

Courtesy of Clara Peller and WENDY's

In ways this may seem strange in light of modern day beef production... but remember our aircraft is "Down Under" and Australia is a very big island with terrain wilder than America's West and every bit as dangerous getting cattle to market in the post-war period, as our nation had after the Civil War in the mid-west & mountain states. Few dirt roads suitable only for 'utes' during dry weather traversed the N.W. Territories. Driving herds long distances meant a 30% loss of beef and all calves younger than 5-months would perish. But butchering the beef, fresh off the range was not a viable alternative as there existed no way to freeze it. They could ice it down only. To the rescue came 'old faithful' in same colours; but the original interior floor removed; de-icing equipment left behind, oxygen system removed and fuel tanks cut in half and welded up. No need for such on the short circuit trips required to take freshly-slaughtered cooled beef to freezer plants further south. Light-weight, easily-cleanable flooring was installed, and the results were the lightest-weight C-47/DC-3 in Australia which permitted an extra 9,000-lbs. of beef carcasses to be carried per trip. 3 to 4 round-trips daily was the schedule – until roads & highways improved, and a closer freezer-plant was built; our aircraft served supposedly until one of larger capacity became available in September, 1969.



12/22/'63 to 09/15/'69

There would still be jobs available for the most durable plane to have graced the world's skies since its debut in 1935, and things were soon to change for our aircraft. We don't know how the flooring was replaced, or modified for passenger service, but once again a new set of colours and airline designation would grace her exterior; she must have had fuel-tank replacements also – as this time she'd be crossing open ocean, albeit the Bass Straits to ferry passengers and freight to Hobart, Tasmania from Melbourne. Ansett Transportation Industries acquired the aircraft September of 1969 and placed her in passenger service from Perth, W.A. to Kalgoorlie until March 7, 1970 when the aircraft reached 47,344 hours.



Early Air Tasmania designation – 1969

Our aircraft looked quite handsome in red with black stripe on white, and this colour scheme with minor variation would see her through many more years of similar services. She was soon sold to Ansett of Papua, New Guinea, commencing from Perth to Lae and return. This ceased in October of 1973.



Returning to Tasmania service in February, 1974, she hauled her 10,000th passenger by July that year, and was converted again to freight-



hauling from Melbourne to Tasmania and named the "Spirit of Port Arthur" during her last year September, 1977 to October, 1978 when retired with more than 55,000 hours.

The aircraft was stored until February, 1983 when Australian film-maker, John Lamond purchased her to make a movie named: "Sky Pirates" returning the colours to camo USAAF with false tail ID and US markings. It then was painted for a documentary in RAAF roundels and restored in a different location. Attempts were made to restore her to flying condition during 2002 – 2006, and eventually she was sold on "mechanic's lean" at auction to Ralph G. Chrystall, of Mudgee, NSW Australia, while stored at Bankston Airport.



Restoration begun
June 28, 2012



It's the fervent hope of our aircraft donor - Ms Florence Fang and the Fang Family Enterprise, that this aircraft will be used to complete a HUMP crossing re-enactment from India to Kunming, followed by a continuing flight to the new Guilin Flying Tigers Heritage Park and Museum at former Yang Tang airbase, there to be placed on exterior display in perpetuity by the museum staff, thus representing both

- the most dangerous WW II flying atop the "Roof of the World" and
- those 1,500 souls who perished en-route as well as the thousands of airmen and soldiers who survived there by keeping China supplied with war materials and necessities between 1942 and 1946.

The Flying Tigers Historical Organization has provided financial and physical backing; hired pilots & mechanic and will bare complete responsibility for delivery of the aircraft from Australia to India's starting point – then fly as close a course to WW II C-47s over the Himalayas (The "HUMP") as possible with modern air-space restrictions to Kunming. Although that city's former end-of-line Flying Tiger airport, WuJiaBa Airport, is no longer operational, the flight will terminate at the new International Airport. At this writing, the only planned activity in Kunming will be the laying of a wreath at the city's HUMP Monument. If all goes well, flying on to Guilin will ensue thereafter.

SPIRIT OF '45 ALIVE

The Flying Tiger Historical Organization is participating in Spirit of '45 Alive. The Hump re-enactment flight is planned for launch on Aug 15, 2016 – 71 years after the end of WWII, and is just one of many special events planned to keep the focus on the year 2020, the 75th anniversary of the end of WWII.

The goal is a worldwide 75th anniversary celebration but more important is that during the years until 2020 we will be educating the young adults and youth of today about the history and significance of that war. By 2020 almost all who fought in WWII will have died thus the Spirit of '45 Alive (www.spiritof45.org) must be remembered, and what was accomplished firmly fixed in world history.

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Flying Tiger Historical Organization News Letter is published quarterly by the FTHO
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