

FLYING TIGER HISTORICAL ORGANIZATION

a NON PROFIT 501 (c) 3 ORGANIZATION

EIN # 26-1492466



14th AAF



CBI



AVG

HONORING THE PAST
FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

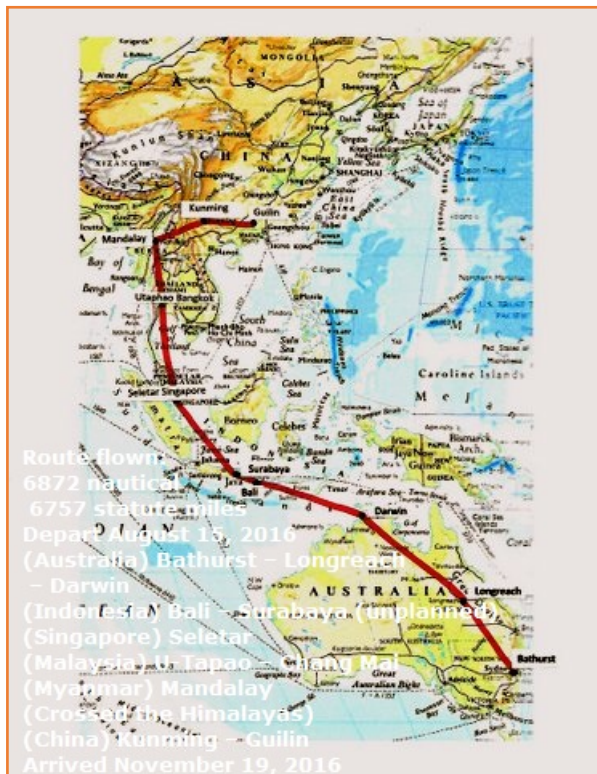


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Hump Flight Reenactment: Part One

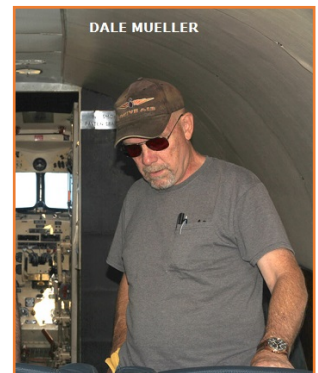


On August 14, 2016, the **Flying Tiger Historical Organization** embarked upon its most demanding project, the **Hump Flight Reenactment**. The idea was to recreate the Hump flight performed under dangerous conditions in WWII to supply China, then blockaded by the Japanese along its ocean borders along with occupying Japanese forces in Southeast Asia. Little did FTHO know that this project set out to honor those who flew in WW II over the Himalayas would become a saga of its own. Prior newsletters have described the financial contribution of Florence Fang Family Foundation of \$175,000 to purchase a DC3/C47 air plane, the acquisition in Australia of that plane (Buzz Buggy, a C47), a history of the

airlift over the Hump, the workhorse military status of the DC3/C47, early problems leading to delays, a final summary of the Hump Flight preparations, and the history of Buzz Buggy itself. Now we turn to the flight.

Originally Buzz Buggy was registered in Australia and FTHO's original plan was to reregister her in the United States and be flown by American pilots. Legal complications soon emerged. The plane was in Bathurst, Australia,

and had to be flown from Australia to the ultimate destination in Guilin where it would become an exhibit at the Flying Tiger Historical Museum. American pilots would be required to pass an English level proficiency certification in Australia, and that proved, among other issues, unworkable to use American pilots. Fortunately, Australian pilots stepped up to the task.



Dale flew from Bathurst to Surabaya



The Australian crew is pictured above. Ralph Chrystal restored Buzz Buggy and agreed to sell her to us at a reasonable price, much below his restoration cost.

Dale Mueller – USAF academy graduate and DC 3 pilot was pilot-in-command from Bathurst to Surabaya. He was unable to join us after the engine failure due to other commitments.

Alan Searle – Australian airline pilot with extensive DC 3 experience was pilot-in-command for most of the flight. (Surabaya to Guilin)

Bob Small – Australian airline pilot, also very experienced on the DC 3, was second-in-command from Surabaya on to Guilin.

Barry Arlow – Australian Engineer is very experienced on round engines and especially the R1830s on the C47.

Mick O'Grady – Australian Engineer also very experienced on round engines and again especially the R1830.

Larry Jobe – American airline pilot with a little time on DC 3 but no type rating acted as relief pilot (when I could get them to relinquish control) – President of the Flying Tigers Historical Organization.

Tom Claytor – American pilot based in Thailand also acted as a relief pilot, provided expertise from Indonesia to Myanmar, set up www.FlyingTheHump.com website, linked his SPOT tracking online for all to follow our progress in real time, and took copious photos and videos from Darwin to Kunming.



The plane was equipped in Australia. The flight was scheduled to take 8 days, crossing Australia, traveling to Bali, Singapore, Thailand, Myanmar, over the Hump, to Kunming, and then finally to Guilin. The plane departed Bathurst without incident and traveled first to Longreach and then Darwin.



Longreach is a very small town in the middle of Australia's

Outback. It was the original home to Qantas Airlines. Pictured is the museum located there with some of Qantas' retired aircraft.



Leaving Australia at Darwin, the next stop was Bali in Indonesia. Again, no difficulties.

On August 18 the plane left Bali; but about one and one half hours out smoke appeared from the left engine, followed by vibration and fire. The pilots shut down the engine and made for Surabaya, also in Indonesia, about 25 minutes away. Landing on one engine, Buzz Buggy came to rest safely and was parked at the Surabaya airport.



There the adventure was to become a saga.

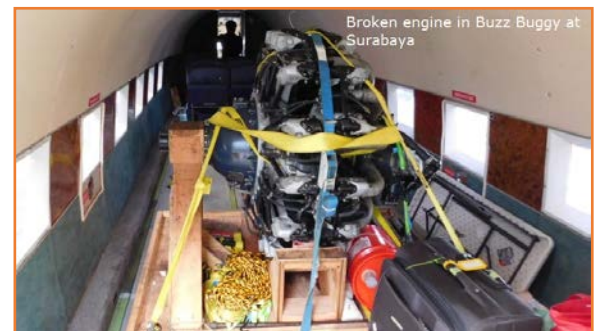
Initially the Indonesian authorities were friendly and cooperative. This was not to last. They wanted to charge \$500 US per day for parking on the apron and \$750 US per day for hangar and tool use. Larry Jobe negotiated this to \$100 and \$350 respectively, but for the FTHO this was still overly expensive. Larry Jobe met with the US Consul General to explain our project and goals and received assurances of assistance. In the meantime, the crew had returned to Australia with the intent of returning to replace the blown engine and continue on. By September 13, with the cooperation of Ralph Chrystall who stood behind the plane he sold the FTHO, a replacement engine was obtained; and also the damaged cowling was replaced along with other necessary parts. Then the import procedure became complicated. The Indonesian authorities wanted a "handling fee" to permit the import of the replacement engine that was to cost about \$20,000. FTHO had been working to secure donations to help defray the unexpected costs but simply could not afford the continuing charges in Surabaya. The US Consulate's office provided little help, but then Larry Jobe and Tom Claytor went to the Chinese Consulate who turned out be an amazing ally. Just as in WW II when the friendship and cooperation of the American and Chinese people was necessary to defeat the Japanese, it was again required to deal with this situation. The Chinese Consulate was able to get the engine through Surabayan customs, get the daily parking fees dropped, get on our side the Indonesian Navy (who own the airport but do not control it), determine what we need to do to depart Surabaya and stood by to handle any other logistical problems. It turned out that it took 9 total days to then switch engines.



Pictures of arrival in Surabaya – Aug. 18, 2017.



Crew works on replacing engine.



We were required to carry the bad engine out of Surabaya by the Surabaya authorities. We were NOT allowed to ship it back to Australia but they demanded we put it on the aircraft when we left. I would assume if we had offered to bribe them we might have been allowed to ship the engine. This caused quite a few problems both weight wise on the plane and logistics wise just getting into position on Buzz Buggy to balance the plane. The Russians saved the day for us by muscling the engine into position. While we met many people we wish we hadn't, we met some very nice and helpful people also. They are pictured below.



Above picture by local flying club. Left engine in feather position.

This kind and helpful friendship was much appreciated after the continuing obstruction by the authorities. This is not to say that we had no cooperation from Surabaya, but it was from a local flying club, a number of whom assisted with the engine replacement and repairs. They presented a painting depicting the Buzz Buggy above a crocodile and shark circling a minaret, the symbol of Surabaya, a gift the FTHO passed on to the museum at the end of the trip in Guilin.



Later, more help came from an unexpected source, the Singapore Flying Club. Its manager invited the crew to stop in Seletar and promised the kind of hospitality that the “war ravaged” Buzz Buggy crew could only imagine.

The final obstacle was a departure tax the Surabayan authorities levied. Engines running and ready for departure, ground control would not issue taxi instructions or a clearance; then an official drove up and demanded \$1,000,000 Rupee, about \$100 USD - in cash – no bill – no receipt. Fortunately, the crew had the \$1,000,000 rupees cash on them, paid the bribe and, finally, free to leave, Buzz Buggy left for Seletar. None too soon for the beleaguered crew.

This historic flight to honor the CBI veterans and promote friendship had truly turned into a flight connecting many people of various nations. Australians, Chinese, Germans, Russians, Indonesians, Americans, Malaysians, Burmese, and Singaporeans, all participated in one fashion or Another



Last evening at Bathurst



Bathurst to Surabaya pictures on this and next page.



Longreach

Bali



Right side of C47



400 miles over water



Over Australian Outback



Engine shut down

Replacement engine



Mick changes engine parts

OK, where
did the
cylinder
go?



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