

Sino-American Hump Airlift Memorial School

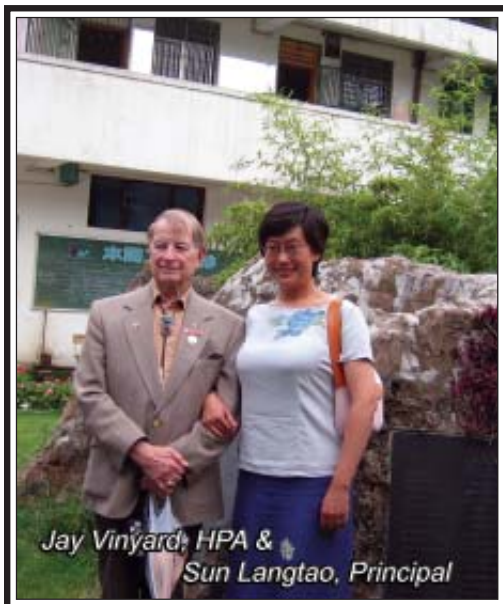
by J.V. Vinyard

During my visit to Kunming in July/August of this year one of my most enjoyable experiences was the opportunity to visit the Hump Airlift Memorial School. There we had the opportunity to meet and visit with a most gracious lady, Ms. Sun Langtao, the Principal and Senior Lecturer of the school, and a number of the school's students.

We were greeted at the school as real heroes from the time we stepped off the busses. As we off loaded from the busses each veteran, and companion, was individually greeted by a student who acted as a personal escort until we were seated in the school auditorium where a welcoming ceremony took place.

We were welcomed by Ms. Sun and presented with gifts. We were then serenaded by a small group of students who sang some well know American songs in English. Several veterans were then given an opportunity to speak to the students. Then the students and veterans had an opportunity to intermix informally to ask and answer questions. These students dress and act just like students any where.

Back during the 1990s our late Chinese friend, General Hua Renjie, began a personal program after retirement to try and improve relations between the U. S. and China through interaction with the U. S. World War II China Veterans. During WWII he was a pilot



Jay Vinyard, HPA &
Sun Langtao, Principal

with CNAC, making 96 trips over the Hump, and later became a General in the PRC Air Force. He promoted a large tour of U. S. Veterans to China prior to his death in July 2001. Also he was instrumental

Kunming and the renaming of the Kunming Foreign Language School as the Hump Airlift Memorial School.

This was my first opportunity to visit the school. I knew nothing about it. I knew that Gen. Hua felt very strongly about the school and hoped it would be recognized by U. S. Veterans through donations to the school and recruiting to find American school teachers who might be interested in going to China to teach for a period in the school.

What I found at the school was truly amazing. In my minds eye I pictured a small one or two story school house with a small number of students. I was very wrong about that.

The school is a very large and has a well developed campus. It is located on a complete city block entirely enclosed by a 5 or 6 foot



concrete wall and security gates. It has several very large buildings on site and contains a complete soccer field. There are basketball backboards and hoops adjacent to the soccer field.

Attendance at this school is comprised of junior and senior high school students. A number of different foreign languages are taught, with emphasis on English. Students at the school also receive indoctrinations about the Hump operations of WWII. Also students take annual field trips to the Hump Memorial Monument located high up on a mountain side west of Kunming within a city park. It is a beautiful area, very heavily wooded. The students do some cleaning up around the monument when they visit.

It was a real joy to visit this school and meet Ms. Sun and students from the school. And just before leaving Kunming on August 2nd I was presented a certificate from the school that recognized me as an Honorary Principal of the school. I felt truly honored to be so recognized.

This school is still hoping for support from American veterans and family members. And they still are searching for American teachers who might be interested in going over for a teaching term in