

## "LIFE PAYMENT (BLOOD CHIT)"

**By J. R. BAILEY**

ON DECEMBER 7th, 1941, THE DAY THE U.S. WAS BROUGHT INTO WW II, THE AVG (AMERICAN VOLUNTEER GROUP) "FLYING TIGERS" WERE PREPARING FOR COMBAT WITH JAPANESE FORCES. HOWEVER, IT WAS NOT UNTIL DECEMBER 20, 1941 THAT THE AVG SAW IT'S FIRST COMBAT WITH THE JAPANESE OVER KUNMING, CHINA.

ONE OF THE ITEMS ISSUED TO THE AVG PILOTS BY THE CHINESE WAS A "BLOOD CHIT", A PIECE OF SILK (7 1/2 X 9 1/2) SHOWING A CHINESE FLAG WITH CHINESE CHARACTERS STATING "I AM AN AVIATOR FIGHTING AGAINST THE JAPANESE, PLEASE TAKE ME TO THE NEAREST COMMUNICATIONS CENTER". THESE BLOOD CHITS HAD A SERIAL NUMBER ON THEM AND PAYMENT WAS PAID FOR THE SAFE RETURN OF THE PILOT, "LIFE PAYMENT" IN CHINESE BECAME "BLOOD CHIT" WHEN TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH. THESE BLOOD CHITS WERE SEWN TO THE BACK OF FLIGHT JACKETS AS DEPICTED BY JOHN WAYNE IN THE MOVIE "FLYING TIGERS". THE BLOOD CHIT WAS THEN ADOPTED BY THE U.S. AND PUT INTO SURVIVAL KITS ISSUED TO CREWMEN.

THE TYPE 2 BLOOD CHIT WAS MADE OF RAYON, HAD A CHINESE FLAG ON IT, A LITTLE DIFFERENT WORDING AND A SERIAL NUMBER THAT BEGAN WITH A "W" WHICH IDENTIFIED IT AS ORIGINATING IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE TYPE 3 BLOOD CHIT HAD AN AMERICAN FLAG ON IT, A SERIAL NUMBER AND WAS WRITTEN IN FIVE LANGUAGES (CHINESE, BURMESE, S. SHAN, SGAW KAREN AND W. SHAN) IT STATED "I AM AN AMERICAN AVIATOR, MY AIRCRAFT WAS DESTROYED. I CANNOT SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE. I AM AN ENEMY OF THE JAPANESE. TAKE ME TO THE NEAREST ALLIED MILITARY OFFICE, YOU WILL BE REWARDED." THIS CHIT WAS PRODUCED IN LIMITED NUMBERS.

THE TYPE 4 BLOOD CHIT DIFFERED FROM THE TYPE 3 IN THAT IT WAS WRITTEN IN SEVEN LANGUAGES (FRENCH, THAI, ANNAMESE, LAOSIAN, CHINESE, KOREAN AND JAPANESE). PERHAPS THE

CREWMEN WHO FLEW FROM SHEMA WILL REMEMBER THESE BLOOD CHITS.

THE BLOOD CHIT WAS ALSO USED DURING THE KOREAN WAR, BAY OF PIGS, VIETNAM AND DESERT STORM. THE DESERT STORM CHIT HAD THE SERIAL NUMBER IN EACH CORNER SO IT COULD BE CUT OFF. IT WAS MADE OF TYVEK INSTEAD OF RAYON (TYVEK IS AN ALMOST INDESTRUCTIBLE MATERIAL LIKE THE TAGS FOUND ON THE BOTTOM OF FURNITURE).

THE BLOOD CHIT PROVED ITS WORTH IN THE KOREAN WAR WHEN A KOREAN MAN SAVED THE LIVES OF 7 B-29 CREWMEN. IN EARLY 1993 THE MAN FOUND OUT THAT THE BLOOD CHIT WAS WORTH LOT OF MONEY IF HE WOULD TURN IT IN. IN DOING SO HE WAS REWARDED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WHO PAID HIM \$100,000. IT IS NOT KNOWN HOW MANY CREWMEN WERE SAVED BY THIS DEVICE SINCE THE INFORMATION IS STILL CLASSIFIED.

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