

31st APR Scout Jamboree 2017



I had a great time at the Asia Pacific Regional Scout Jamboree in Mongolia this past July. Not only was the jamboree a fun experience but the group of American's that I met up with were a good group of scouts and scouters. I expected that I might meet up with my friend who was the contingent leader, Pete Armstrong, in Beijing on our way to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, but I was totally surprised when I got on a bus for transporting passengers from one terminal to another and on the bus were the American scouts and scouters. I travel in uniform so it was easy for them spot me. Now, being with the group made it easy for me to get me from one end of the long terminal to the departure end because with a group, there were many sign readers!



The American scouters were Pete Armstrong, the contingent leader and a good friend. Alan Leopard, a professional scouter, volunteer scouter and Eagle Scout. In general, I do not have many positive things to say about professional scouters but Alan is an exception; a great guy and I believe that is because he is both an Eagle Scout and a volunteer scouter. There were two women scouter that were nurses and very helpful to me because I had been in an accident before the jamboree; Ruthie Rosenstein and Joan Biesksha. Another scouter that the scouts liked as a leader was Lisa Gittings. There were more scouters but these stock out in my mind.



American Contingent

The scouts that I remember well were Nick, Alan's son, who had a great experience; Carl, Lisa's son, who had managed well with his broken arm; and Nadine a Venturer who is not afraid to attend international jamborees without a parent.



Nick, Carl and Nadine

Pete had been to a Mongolian Jamboree before so he had a number of friends in Mongolia some of which had come to the U.S. to staff at Philmont and his council summer camp. This worked out well because we had scouters who picked us up at the airport in Ulaanbaatar and took us to the hotel in the middle of the night.

The next couple of days we caught up on our sleep and explored the city.

What fascinated me was that if you need work on a cell phone, printer or any such device, there were shops that would do the work as you waited. In the U.S. we just buy new devices; seldom do we repair a device. I watched them work so quickly and efficiently. Very impressive!



Then off to the jamboree. The scouts and the leaders checked in and went off to set up camp and since I was on the International Service Team (IST), I was put up in a cabin with a bed. Wow, did I luck out. I shared the room with two scouters from Australia and a scouter from New Zealand.



IST Cabins



Jamboree view from my room



scouters including Reiko Suzuki, the contingent leader from Japan. She was such a friendly person and it was not until after the jamboree that I learned that she had received the Bronze Wolf early this year. It is the highest honor that can be given a volunteer Scout leader in the world.

Everyone seemed to have a great time at the jamboree.

Overall, the weather was good. I designed the patches and pin for our contingent so I had fun trading with other contingents. During the trading, I meet so many nice



Scouting in many countries is primarily run by volunteers. Countries like Mongolia do have a few paid scouters but not highly paid like BSA scouters. For this reason, I chose to give to the Mongolian Scout Association and in return, they awarded me with the Silver Falcon. The falcon is their national bird. The presentation was done at a nice dinner in a fancy Mongolian ger and also presented to my two friends Pete Armstrong and Chinchu Chen from Taiwan for their donations.



Silver Falcon recipients; Pete, Chen & Craig

There were a number of nice evening shows at the jamboree. Everyone would gather and because there were viewing screens, everyone could see all the presentations. It was very well done.

At the close of the jamboree, Pete's Mongolian friends took us back to the hotel in Ulaanbaatar. We would spend the next three days touring parts of Mongolia before taking the train to Beijing. On one of those days, we took an interesting bus ride to Genghis Khan, the world's largest equestrian statue. It was too bad that that was probably the worst weather day we had. That evening we slept in gers.



Genghis Khan

At the close of the jamboree, Pete's Mongolian friends took us back to the hotel in Ulaanbaatar. We would spend the next three days touring parts of Mongolia before taking the train to Beijing. On one of those days, we took an interesting bus ride to Genghis Khan, the world's largest equestrian statue. It was too bad that that was probably the worst weather day we had. That evening we slept in gers.



Mongolian Gers

Our train ride to Beijing was long but interesting. Along the way we saw wild herds of two hump camels and yaks. At the border, they had to change the rail wheels because they were a different gauge between Mongolia and China. That took a good while but during that time, the Chinese could check luggage and all those other boarder things. We traveled in cars with beds so we were able to get some sleep during the long train trip.



Leaving for Beijing



Camels we saw on the way to Beijing



Yaks we saw on the way to Beijing

When we arrived in China, the tour company that we had given a deposit to did not have the train schedule and apparently had not made our hotel reservations. It was really looking bad but when we did make contact with them, they tried to put us in a dump of a hotel. I must say that Pete stood his ground well and in the end, all turned out well as we stayed in a Holliday Inn.

In China, we did the normal touring; Forbidden City, Great Wall and several other interesting Chinese structures. I had a great time with a group of nice people. A trip I will long remember.