

Since returning many of you have asked me how our trip to China was. Well here is the answer as briefly as I can put it.

Two NightHawk Robotics students and I just wrapped up our trip to Xi'an and Beijing, China. The 2 students, Bryce Longacre and Franz Froehlich, were there for 31 days as interns for China RobotC and I was there for 24 days as a consultant. RobotC is the software that we use to program our robots. China RobotC is the Chinese division run by an amazing gentleman named Terry Sy who Franz and Bryce met at this year's VEX Robotics World Championships. The software and curriculum was developed by Carnegie Mellon University. Below are some highlights:

We observed, judged, and taught at two different robotics camps, one Lego and one VEX. Both robotics camps were held in Xi'an, China which is centrally located in the country. The Lego camp had nearly 50 students in addition to 25+ secondary and university teachers looking to bring robotics to their schools. The VEX camp had 25 students including many of China RobotC's own employees who were looking to expand their knowledge using VEX robots. Bryce, Franz, and I did a lot of the teaching at this camp as China RobotC is fairly new to VEX. See Lego Camp and Presentation pics.

The NightHawk logo and numerous pics of our robotics students were prominently displayed on HUGE banners at both camps and a large STEM Education Expo at the Xi'an Convention Center. See Banner pic

Bryce and Franz were both featured on the China evening news for building the tank robot for China RobotC. China RobotC wired Bryce nearly \$4,000 to buy all the parts and build the tank here and deliver it upon our arrival. It was a crowd pleaser everywhere we went. See News Screenshot and Tank pics

In Xi'an we were able to see the Terra Cotta Warriors which many refer to as the 8th wonder of the world. A farmer digging a well in 1974 discovered the remains of a Terra Cotta Warrior and this area has since become one of the largest archaeological sites in the world. To see these warriors and other statues in such remarkable condition after being buried for over 2,200 years was awe inspiring. See Terra Cotta 1 & 2 pics

Xi'an also boasts a large city wall which we toured on bikes. The famous Muslim Quarter is also in this area which houses one of the tightest streets I've ever been on. Between all of the vendors, people, scooters and shops boasting their wares it is certainly an area full of excitement. Add in an inch of rain in about 30 minutes and things get really interesting. The Bell Tower and Drum Tower are also in this area and are a sight to see at night. See City Wall Bikes, Muslim Quarter, and Bell Tower pics.

Our last 3 days in China we were lucky enough to travel by overnight train to Beijing where the sights certainly didn't disappoint. The Olympic Park (site of the 2008 Olympics) was very cool. I always thought the Birds Nest was an amazing piece of architecture on TV and it was even better in person. Tiananmen Square was another beautiful area and the site of so much Chinese history. Last but certainly not least was the Great Wall. To say it was amazing would be an understatement. The Great Wall and Terra Cotta Soldiers are of similar age as they were both built under the same Emperor over 2,200 years ago. The terrain that this wall covers has to be some of the roughest I've encountered and we didn't have to lug more than a bottle of water and a camera. The views were breathtaking and it is without a doubt the most appreciated tourist attraction I have ever visited. See Olympic Park, Tiananmen, & Great Wall pics.

After our 12 hour train ride back to Xi'an, it was time for some badminton with the China RobotC

employees and a farewell feast they prepared for us. Apparently dumplings are customary for a farewell party and we indulged in the wonderful food for the last time before departing.

Then it was 24 hours of planes and airports to get back home. The 3 of us are beyond grateful for this opportunity as we met some of the most generous and friendly people imaginable. We were able to provide them with some robotics guidance and they were able to change our lives. I speak for all of us when I say that this trip is something we will always be grateful for. Thank you Terry Sy and China RobotC!



Banner



City wall Bikes





Great Wall 1



Great Wall 2





Great Wall Steep



Lego Camp





Muslim Quarter



News Screenshot



Olympic Park Birds Nest





Presentation



Tank 1





Tank 2





Terra Cotta 1



Terra Cotta 2





Tiananmen Square Emperor Franz





Tiananmen Square Entrance



Xi'an Bell Tower