

Separated by Language and Culture but United by a Common Goal

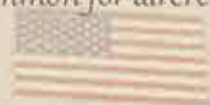
THE LEGACY OF THE FLYING TIGERS

By Margaret Mills Kincannon

Earlier that month, Du had traveled with others who qualified as B-25 pilots from the U.S. by transport planes to Karachi (then in India, now part of Pakistan). They were attached temporarily to the 4th Bomb Squadron at nearby Malir Field and then transferred to the 3rd squadron on March 19. Hank (most often called "Mills" in the military) arrived from New York on March 29 aboard one of two aircraft carriers that brought the first one hundred P-47s to the China-Burma-India theater. He and others who arrived with him were attached to the squadron on April 3. Training of all personnel, with the Americans acting as mentors to the Chinese, was completed in late May. It was time for the combat-ready 3rd Bomb Squadron to enter the war.

After moving more than 1,700 air miles almost due east to Moran Field in Upper Assam, India, the squadron prepared for combat. It was during that time that Du had an experience that taught him the hazards of flying. As he was taking part as a crew member on a test flight in early June aboard a B-25H, aircraft #713, it developed mechanical malfunction caused by failure of the engine's internal lubricating system. With the plane flying at 5,000 feet in conditions of scattered clouds, ceiling about 7,000 feet, and unlimited visibility, oil pressure on the right engine dropped to zero. The right propeller "ran away" and would not feather. The pilot, Capt. Raymond L. Hodges, was unable to maintain altitude, so he made a wheels-up landing in a rice field about eight miles northwest of Moran Field. No one was injured. People who lived nearby brought fruit and water to the downed airmen and gathered up airplane parts scattered in the wake of the crash. Hodges borrowed a bicycle from their chief and began pedaling back to Moran, leaving Du and the other crewman in the capable hands of their rescuers until trucks could arrive to take them back to base.

By mid-July, squadron planes had begun taking part in missions to bomb and strafe enemy targets in Burma, particularly bridges and railroads used to transport supplies and troops. It was during this time that Hank was placed on flying status. He explained that he had no gunnery training and he did not sign up for flying combat missions. "They volunteered me," he said. "I never did request flight duty, but they put a duty list on the bulletin board. I started to see my name on the bulletin board, that I was scheduled for the flight for the next bombing run." He flew his first mission as an aerial gunner the following day. "From then on I was on flight status." He estimated that he flew approximately fifteen missions while the squadron was attacking targets in Burma. Although Operational Intelligence Reports from that period did not include names of crew members, it is likely that Hank flew missions with Sub-Lt. Du since it was common for aircrews to be made up of both nationalities.



(To be continued)

FROM USA

飛虎傳奇：不同語言文化卻因同一目標 而團結奮戰的兩個人

瑪格麗特追思父親漢克與都凱牧烽火下的堅定友情

1944年2月初時，都凱牧與其他合格的B-25轟炸機飛行員，自美國搭乘運輸機抵達喀拉蚩（時為印度領地，現為巴基斯坦第一大城）。他們暫時配屬駐紮於鄰近喀拉蚩馬利爾機場（Malir Field）的第4轟炸機中隊，並於3月19日轉調至第3轟炸機中隊。漢克（在軍中則最常被叫做「密爾斯」）則自紐約搭乘了2艘各載運100架P-47戰鬥機的航空母艦中的其中一艘，於3月29日抵達中、印、緬戰區。漢克則與其他一起抵達的同伴於4月3日時，被配屬第3轟炸機中隊，由美方成員擔任中華民國人員的導師，並於5月底前完成所有人員的訓練，也該是時候讓已經完成戰備整備的第3轟炸機中隊上戰場了。



第3轟炸機中隊所屬官兵
立正聽訓中。

在空中移動超過1,700英里之後，他們來到了印度阿薩姆省最東邊的莫蘭機場（Moran Field），此時整個中隊已經準備好要戰鬥了，然而也正是在這個時候，都凱牧才確切體驗到飛行的危險。當他以機組成員的身分加入在7月初的一次B-25H（機體編號713）測試飛行時，因為發動機內部潤滑系統並未正常運作，進而轉變為整個機體故障。當飛機飛至一處5,000至7,000英尺高，有著寬廣能見度且僅有著零星雲朵的高空時，右發動機的機油液壓突然降至零，且右邊發動機的螺旋槳已經「逃跑」不知去向了。正駕駛雷蒙德·L·哈吉斯上尉（Capt. Raymond L. Hodges）無法維持高度，於是採取機腹著陸（機輪未落下）的方式降落於莫蘭機場西北方約8英里處，幸運的是並沒有任何人員受傷。機場附近的居民帶著水果與飲用水過來送給迫降的機組成員，並且幫忙收集因為迫降導致受損而四處散落的飛機零件。哈吉斯上尉向當地居民借了輛腳踏車，慢慢的踩回機場，獨留都凱牧與其他機組成員及搜救人員於原地待命，等待卡車抵達載送他們返回基地。

到了7月中，第3轟炸機中隊開始參加轟炸與掃射敵軍在緬甸境內高價值目標的任務，尤其是針對用來運輸補給物資及部隊的橋樑與鐵道。與此同時，漢克也被調任為正式的機組成員。漢克解釋他並沒有受過任何有關空用兵器、火炮的訓練，而且也沒有簽屬要參與戰鬥飛行任務。「他們直接幫我同意了。」漢克說道。「我從來沒有要求過要參加飛行任務，但是他們卻把我放在公告上的任務清單裡。我開始在公告上看到自己的名字，然後就被排至下次的飛行任務裡了。」接著隔天漢克就在他的初次飛行任務裡，擔任空用機槍手了。「也就是從那個時候開始，我成了正式機組成員。」他估計自己大約執行了15次第3轟炸機中隊攻擊敵軍位於緬甸境內目標的任務，雖然這段期間的作戰情報報告中沒有包含機組成員的姓名，但漢克與都凱牧應該是從飛行機組成員由中華民國與美國雙方國籍人員開始混合編組時，就已經一同執行飛行任務了。（未完待續）