

# 中華民國的空軍

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中華民國的空軍

ROC AIR FORCE



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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

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