

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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THE LEGACY OF THE FLYING TIGERS

Separated by Language and Culture but United
by a Common Goal

EPISODE 7

By Margaret Mills Kincannon

Hank related details many years later: "I was top turret gunner. I rode up with the pilot." As he remembered it, Seacrest told him, "We're going to strafe that train" but warned against firing forward because the concussion from the guns would break the Plexiglas cover. According to Hank, the pilot instructed, "When I get part-way through, I'll pull up real steep and you shoot between the tails" (the plane's two vertical stabilizers). Hank described what happened next: "I turned the guns around and he did what he said. He went in at an angle where he fired, then he pulled up and I put those tracers on that train and fired all the way down and in a little bit one blew up and it made fire—smoke and flame you could see for fifty miles. So that's the only thing I know of that I did that affected anything." He felt pride in that mission. "I got a lot of satisfaction that day. That one day I hurt them."

In addition to successfully flying missions together, an example of the squadron's bi-national cooperation was the celebration on August 14 of Chinese Air Force Day, held annually to commemorate the heroism and sacrifice of Chinese pilots in defense of their homeland on that date in 1937, when the CAF scored its first air-to-air victory over the foreign invaders. The entire squadron, Chinese and American, participated in a flag ceremony at 0800, with two Chinese generals and staff as guests of honor. Banners to commemorate the occasion were presented to the squadron's American component.

Speakers were Gen. Sun S. C. (Song Shou-zhuang), Division Commander, as well as Maj. Wu and Maj. Conrad. Two missions were conducted that afternoon, the first against an important supply depot at Mohnyin on the Mohnyin-Indaw railroad and the second to attack a twin bridge near Lashio, the starting point of the Burma Road's south end. Both missions were flown by American pilots, Maj. Conrad and Capt. Seacrest, with Chinese aircrews and observers. That evening, Chinese members of the squadron hosted a dinner and entertainment that included a two-act Chinese opera. It became common practice for the two national groups to invite their counterparts for celebration of their holidays and other special occasions. (To be continued...)

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