

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 8

By Margaret Mills Kincannon

The 3rd Bomb Squadron moved to China in early September, only to evacuate from Guilin two weeks later as the Japanese advanced on the base as part of Operation ICHIGO. Their goal was to capture Allied airfields from which raids were being successfully launched and to open a corridor between Japanese forces in China and French Indochina. The new base was Baishiyi Field near Chongqing, but rain and inadequate gasoline supplies severely limited missions while the squadron was there.

When 3rd squadron planes were back in operation as part of Task Force 34 flying out of Zhijiang in November, mission reports began to comprise more details, including aircraft numbers and names of all aircrew members. The first on which Du's name appeared was on the 17th, when four B-25s of the 3rd and 4th squadrons with mixed crews flew in box formation to hit enemy installations, stores, and personnel in the eastern section of Hengshan. Flying as copilot aboard #714, a 3rd squadron B-25J that took fourth position in the formation, 2nd Lt. Du was part of an all-Chinese 3rd squadron crew augmented by a 4th squadron navigator. The bombers carried a total bomb load of forty-four 100-lb. demolition bombs, seventeen M41 stabilized fragmentation bomb clusters, four 500-lb. M69 incendiary bomb clusters, and two 100-lb. M50A1 incendiary bomb clusters. They were escorted and covered by eleven P-40s of the 27th Fighter Squadron of the CACW's 5th Fighter Group.

On their first approach, the bombers overran the target and were unable to release bombs. They flew past the target and then turned 180 degrees and made a bombing pass at 1015 from the opposite direction on a heading of twenty degrees, releasing the demos and frags. More than ninety-five percent were on target, the pattern lying between the waterfront and the principal street parallel to it. The incendiaries failed to release so the pilot of the lead plane made another pass on which a good dispersion was believed to have been made. Crew members observed five or six small secondary explosions and smoke that rose to two thousand feet. The fighters left the formation after escorting the bombers out of enemy territory. The B-25s returned to base and were on the ground at 1115. Task Force 34 was operational until mid-January 1945, when 3rd squadron planes and personnel rejoined the remainder of the squadron moving from Baishiyi to Liangshan. (To be continued...)

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