



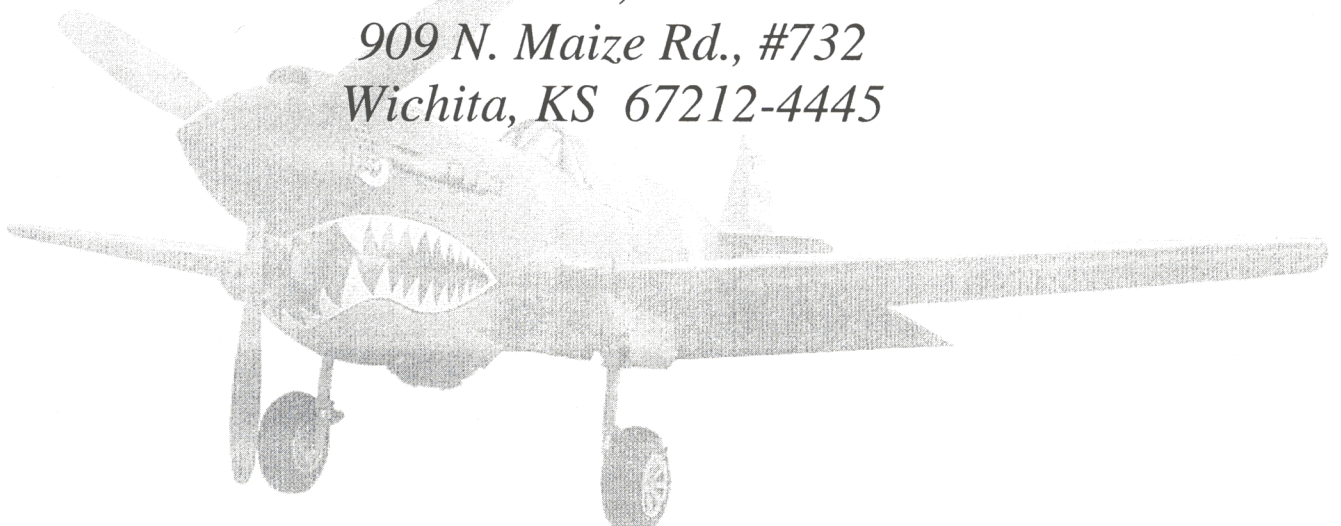
*74<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron Assoc.  
23<sup>rd</sup> Group  
China, 1942 - 1945*



*History of the  
74<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron  
(China)*

*Compiled by:*

*Luther C. Kissick, Col. USAF Ret.  
909 N. Maize Rd., #732  
Wichita, KS 67212-4445*





# 74th Fighter Squadron Assoc. 23rd Group

China, 1942 - 1945



## HISTORY OF THE 74TH FIGHTER SQUADRON (CHINA)

Any history of the 74th Fighter Squadron would be lacking a great void unless its forerunner was made known to all readers. That forerunner was the American Volunteer Group recruited in the United States prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor and known as the "AVG" assigned to China under the leadership of Claire L. Chennault. It was of strategic importance that we assist China to keep her as an ally in fighting Japanese aggression. This valiant "AVG" of flying fighters were named by the Chinese and known as "The Flying Tigers." Their area of operations covered China, Indo-China, Thailand and Burma.

When the United States declared war on Japan, December 7, 1941, USAAF personnel began to dribble into China over "The Hump" in sufficient numbers to form a new organization named the China Air Task Force as a replacement for the original AVG. Slowly the numbers grew with a low priority in China. Europe enjoyed top priority for all war-making personnel, materials and equipment. Allied within the China Air Task Force was the formation, in the field in China, on July 4, 1942, of the 74th, 75th and 76th Fighter Squadrons equipped with the shark-nose painted P-40 aircraft, into the 23rd Fighter Group.

The 23rd Fighter Group had its origin on March 1, 1942 at Langley Field, Virginia, when a Detachment, 23rd Pursuit Group (I) was formed. On March 17, it boarded the converted luxury liner Brazil at Charleston, South Carolina. The Brazil docked at Karachi, India after a sixty-day voyage. On June 12, the Tenth USAF, in India, ordered an advance detail of nineteen men from the 23rd to proceed to Kunming, China.

These squadrons immediately inherited the legacy, heritage, and acumen of aerial combat from the dissolving AVG. It was a transition that set a new standard for USAAF activated units, and in record time because several of the AVG personnel chose to remain on in China to assist and fly with the newly activated 23rd Fighter Group squadrons rather than go home.

It is only proper that the personnel of the AVG be listed who were the mentor's for many members of the 74th Fighter Squadron that would carry out the successful, decisive, conclusion of the air war in China.

The three years that follow saw numerous transformations. On March 1943 the China Air Task Force became the Fourteenth Air Force and the AVG and China Air Task Force leader, Claire L. Chennault, was recalled to active duty with the Army Air Force to become the commander as brigadier and major general.

Major Frank Schiel Jr., AVG, was the original commander of the 74th Fighter Squadron. At first, the 74th Fighter Squadron was stationed at Kunming. Locations were changed during the year that followed, as tactical and strategic situations dictated. Some squadrons and detachments were relocated overnight.

Major Schiel, while flying a P-38 and delivering negatives of a photographic mission to the headquarters of the Fourteenth Air Force, crashed during violent weather in the mountains near Kunming on December 8, 1942. He lies buried on a hill overlooking Kunming.

Major Schiel was succeeded by Major "Ajax" Baumler, who had signed up to become a member of the AVG a year earlier, but the China Clipper on which he was a passenger was off-loaded at Wake Island on December 8, 1941. He offered his services in Hawaii and six months later continued on to China. Major Baumler was the first American ace in the China theater of war. He was the only pilot at the time to hold air victories over all the aggressor nations, having earlier downed German and Italian aircraft in the Spanish Civil War, as well as, Japanese aircraft in the present conflict.

Major Baumler was succeeded by Captain John D. Lombard in April 1943. The 74th Fighter Squadron was then located at Yunnanyi, and the majority of missions flown were armed reconnaissance flights over northern Burma and southwest China. While stationed at Yunnanyi the 74th Fighter Squadron was caught on the ground with no warning from the Chinese net. The squadron sustained loss of lives and aircraft from this Japanese sneak attack. In May 1943 the squadron was moved to Kweilin to cover targets in the Tungting Lake area and along the Yangtze River with escort missions for bombers to Hong Kong and Canton.

On June 30, 1943, Major Lombard took off in a P-40 from Hengyang on a weather reconnaissance of Tungting Lake area. The weather was inclement with rain and heavy overcast. He crashed and his plane was demolished by fire at Taohwakiang.

Major Norval Bonawitz became commander of the 74th Squadron in July. In August, he was transferred to 23rd Fighter Group headquarters in preparation for succeeding Colonel Bruce Holloway in September as commander, 23rd Fighter Group. Captain William R. replaced Major Bonawitz as commander of the 74th Squadron. Captain Paul N. Bell succeeded Captain Crooks as the 74th commander. Captain Bell escorting bombers to Changteh on December 4, 1943, was hit and forced to bail out breaking his leg. He was succeeded by Captain Eugene Lundy.

General Chennault in his book, "Way Of A Fighter" wrote: "We concentrated the greenest pilots in the 74th Squadron at Kunming where AVG veteran Major Frank Schiel could operate the squadron as an operational training school. In one seventeen-day period these neophytes cracked up eighteen P-40's on the Kunming field in landing accidents." Thus the 74th squadron acquired a certain reputation at the very beginning, together with the name, "School Squadron." This title did little to enhance the unit's morale. General Chennault admitted concentrating his best pilots in the 75th and 76th squadrons and the 16th squadron, which was attached.

In the Fall of 1943, the Japanese launched a rice gathering campaign around the Tunting Lake area. The Japanese would steal the newly harvested rice before the Chinese could move it further inland. They launched several hundred ground forces in this type of operation and met little resistance from Chinese ground forces. The Japanese usually increased their air activity in support of these 3 to 4 week operations. The 74th Fighter Squadron would move to Hengyang to join the 75th Fighter Squadron in a combined operation to thwart this Japanese ground effort.

On the morning of December 10, 1943, at 5 o'clock, while the 74th and 75th squadrons were at breakfast, an alert was sounded for all pilots to report to the airfield immediately. At 0510 they were told to get all aircraft airborne. Since the planes were parked in their dispersal areas, there was some confusion during the take off. Ice had formed on the canopies and as it melted, the dust created by the planes taking off formed a coating of mud on the front of the canopy. The difficult visibility made forming into flights a haphazard undertaking. While the planes were taking off, Kawasaki dive bombers and Sally bombers came in over the airfield at 1500 feet accompanied by Zeros.

Lieutenant Altheus B. Jarmon was killed on the ground by Japanese frag bombs after his aircraft had blown a tire on the runway. Lieutenant Cage, taking off, ran into a plane piloted by Lieutenant Koray. Lieutenant Morin's landing gear failed to retract. When all the planes were ordered to land at Lingling, Lt. Morin, in attempting to avoid running down a Chinese guard who crossed in front of his aircraft, swerved off the runway and snapped the right landing gear.

To retaliate for the Japanese attack of December 10, an interception of Japanese aircraft, on December 12, was planned. This was successful. Out of 15 Oscar's, 14 were destroyed or damaged. Captain Lundy's plane was hit causing the engine to quit and he was forced to bail out. Enroute to the ground in his parachute, a Zero attempted to strafe him but was driven off by another P-40.

The period December 4 through 22, 1943 was active for the "School Squadron" flying from Hengyang. It flew a total of thirty-three missions. The 74th is credited with destroying thirteen aircraft, with ten probables and twenty-three damaged.

In another six months the 74th Squadron would again be in one of its toughest battles over the same area, operating from Hengyang, when the Japanese launched their ICHIGO (Number 1) offensive to destroy or capture all the USAAF airbases in the Siang River Valley of Central China.

In the messhall at Kweilin, one noontime, there was a terrific explosion. Everyone hit the floor assuming that the Japanese were pulling a daylight attack. However, nothing more followed. Upon finishing lunch, 74th squadron personnel were informed that their community still, constructed by some enterprising GI's in a 21st Photo Reconnaissance Squadron building just across the saddle of the mountain, had exploded. Injured were three GI's, one seriously; he had to be sent back to India for skin grafting. When the still exploded, Colonel "Casey" Vincent, 68th Wing Commander exploded too! What was left of the 165-proof alcohol distillery was abandoned immediately and the GI's source of a little "kickapoo" juice literally went out the window.

One incident remembered by Captain John Morrison is recorded and verified by official files. Captain Morrison, a 74th squadron pilot owes his life to the quick thinking and swift action of three of the squadron's enlisted men, Sergeant Eugene Arvin of San Jose, California, Sergeant Ralph Scott of Kilgore, Texas and Sgt. William Barowsky of Shenandoah, Pennsylvania. Captain Morrison was returning from a routine flight and approaching for a landing. When he made a sharp turn, his engine stalled, and the plane slipped in. As he hit the ground, the belly tank exploded and the aircraft was enveloped in flames.

In the words of Technical Sergeant Arvin: "We were all stunned for an instant. Then Scotty, Barowsky and I raced for the P-40. I could see the Captains head lolling out of the cockpit and I was sure he was dead. When we got to the plane, Scotty and Barowsky jumped up on the wing and started to haul the captain out, but he was caught. I ran around to the other side of the plane and half-climbed into the cockpit. His leg was caught under the seat. I reached down and got it loose, and Scotty and Barowsky hauled him out of the plane to safety. Well, that's about all there is, I guess.

Arvin and Scott had been in China for almost two years. When Scott was asked why he went out in the face of the flames, he said with a laugh, "I was after the knife in the jungle kit."

Arvin summed it up: "We were just the first ones there. Anybody else would have done the same."

Sergeant Barowsky said laconically, "Just duty".

Countless other incidents of courage and sacrifice could be cited that was performed by 74th Squadron personnel.

The 74th Fighter Squadron began the new year, 1944, by sending several of its pilots out to Suichwan (home of 76th Squadron) to acquaint them with the new P-51A's. The 74th Squadron would soon receive the P-51C's and D's. Morale shot up 100 percent when they began arriving.

Also, about the same period the 74th Fighter Squadron was the first USAAF unit to combat test the first air-to-ground rockets fired from a cluster of three ten-foot plastic tubes attached under each wing. The first mission was flown against a Japanese Naval training airfield on Hainan Island. At least twenty Japanese naval training aircraft were destroyed or damaged on the ground.

In May 1944 the 118th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron was attached to the 23rd Fighter Group. Once again the 74th was to play a training role. The 118th was assigned to fly from the Erh Tong fighter strip, understudying the 74th at Kweilin. The two squadrons practically combined operations to permit as rapid a transition to combat conditions as possible.

Toward the last of May and early June, 1944, the Japanese began to flex their muscles in the Hankow-Ichang-Yochow triangle. Was this the usual Spring rice harvest campaign, or the beginning of something larger? From all the Chinese reports, it was going to be much larger and more powerful than just a normal rice run. There were armored elements as well as large cavalry units reported off-loading at points along the Yangtze River at night. The Japanese was certainly trying to keep these movements under cover. This led most analysts to believe something really big was being prepared.

On June 5, 1944, the 74th squadron was rushed to Hengyang to give relief to the 75th Squadron. The Japanese were on the move south with over 100,000 troops. Also a drive had started north from Canton. It was the beginning of the ICHIGO campaign which eventually led to the evacuation and destruction of Hengyang, Lingling, Kweilin, Luichow and Nanning airbases.

It was during this period of heavy flying activity that Major Barry Melloan's aircraft was hit by ground fire and he was killed. Major Arthur Cruikshank had returned to China for a second tour of duty with his old 74th squadron. On June 15 Major Cruikshank's P-40 was hit and he was forced to bail out. June 15, 1944, was a black day for the 74th at Hengyang as its commander Major Barry Melloan met his death and Major Cruikshank met with disaster.

On the night of June 16, Hengyang was bombed with very little or no warning just ahead of a fast moving weather front. Colonel "Tex" Hill, 23rd Fighter Group Commander, who had been personally directing all the daily operations from Hengyang for the past ten days, knew it would be very unwise to continue operations without a functional air-warning net. "We

cannot survive without warning!" The 75th was sent to Lingling along with some 74th aircraft, and the rest of the 74th aircraft returned to Kweilin. The 74th Squadron had flown as many as six missions per day and were badly shot up by ground fire while working on the deck. Would they still be dubbed the "School Squadron?"

On June 26 Major Arthur Cruikshank, the 74th Squadron Commander was hit on a strafing mission and forced to bail out for the second time in eleven days.

On June 29, while taking off, Lieutenant Aston's aircraft cut out completely at 1200 feet. He attempted to bail out but his parachute only partially opened when his body was found. He crashed on top of a mountain 400 yards from the end of the runway at Kweilin.

On June 30, 1944, Captain John C. "Pappy" Herbst, a former Operations Officer of the 76th Fighter Squadron replaced Major Arthur Cruikshank as the 74th Fighter Squadron Commander. With the 34 year old "Pappy" Herbst in command and the large-scale pincer movement of the Japanese ground forces from both north and south proceeding rapidly, everyone could foresee active, aggressive, and sustained operations in the immediate months ahead.

"Pappy" Herbst was trained by the RCAF. He was sent to England as a pilot officer in the RAF. But "Pappy" was a seasoned pilot having initiated his flying career in 1932. He immediately gained the respect and admiration of the men in the 74th Squadron. He was a natural leader, skilled pilot and the men trusted his judgment.

In the intense air action during the month of July the attrition rate of aircraft and pilots was high. 1st Lieutenant Richard Mullineaux was wounded in the shoulder and neck, Lieutenant Evans received facial wounds, Captain Herbst was bruised and shaken up when he blew a tire on take off. Lieutenants Woodard and Hanover bailed out and Lieutenant Mullineaux was killed in a crash over a target area, Captain Adams and Lieutenant Bates bailed out. Many of the P-40's were hit by small arms ground fire.

While "Pappy" Herbst was recuperating from his bruises in the barracks, Luke Kissick, the 74th Squadron's Intelligence Officer, approached him on relocating the 74th Squadron out to Eastern China and operating from a friendly pocket airbase at Kanchow, China. As the 74th was acquiring P-51's, Kissick visualized new targets, tactics and operations over a wide range of Eastern China as "Guerrillas", because of the many intelligence organizations and operations of OSS, SACO, AAGS and Chinese guerrillas could support the 74th air activities.

This concept appealed to Captain Herbst with his British and past combat intelligence at the Pentagon.

To carry out these plans for movement to Kanchow, Lt. Colonel John Hester, 68th Wing Assistant Operations Officer, Captain "Pappy" Herbst and 1st Lieutenant Luke Kissick met with Governor Chiang Ching-kuo, later President of Taiwan. The 74th Fighter Squadron was welcomed to Kanchow, China with open arms and great hospitality.

Herbst was promoted to Major in August. Leading P-40's he sighted several Oscars over Chaling on the first mission flown from Kanchow. They landed at Lingling refueled and flew another mission in support of Chinese troops defending Hengyang. On this mission they encountered twenty to twenty-five Vals, Oscars and Hamps at low levels. Lieutenant Cook, Captain Adams, Lt. Angel, Herbst and Lt. Evans all scored aerial victories in a hot fight. It was a beautiful sight to see all the enlisted men of the Kanchow detachment of the 74th Fighter Squadron on the flight line to greet the eight P-40's as they came across the landing strip on the deck led by "Pappy" Herbst. When he made two zooming barrel rolls over the field, a thundering cheer went up from all the men simultaneously. Barrel roll after barrel roll followed. Seven Japanese aircraft had been destroyed. What an opening show for the first day's operation at Kanchow.

The 74th Fighter Squadron pilots who did not accompany the detachment out to Kanchow continued to fly missions from Kweilin against the Japanese ground drive.

Barracks at Kanchow were located along the banks of the Kan River; they had been constructed and utilized by the Soviets and the Communist Chinese, less than ten years earlier. They were built of red bricks with green tile roofs and were extremely modern for China, equipped with American bathroom fixtures--toilets that flushed!

The 74th was grateful to "Tex" Hill, who was soon to become the 23rd Fighter Group Commander, for discovering "Pappy" Herbst in some daring low-level flying over the Gulf of Mexico at Eglin AFB, Florida, and had to ground him for such flying. Colonel Hill, after coming to China and requesting the services of Herbst, once again had to ground Herbst in China, not for flying dangerous aerobatics, but for flying too many combat missions! "Pappy" Herbst had gone well over the hundred combat missions when Group and Wing headquarters ordered him to stop. He would go along on missions to supervise his pilots to see if they were flying straight and level. He was always asking Luke Kissick, the Intelligence Officer, where he could find a Japanese aircraft to fight, an easy one with no combat. "Pappy" Herbst just shutdown 10 Japanese aircraft on "administrative flights", after he was officially grounded. He ended his flying career in China as the leading theater ace. General Chennault called him "an amazing fellow". His pilot associates and the members of his squadron knew him as "Guerrilla One". His 74th Squadron was called: "Guerrilla" Squadron.



On August 13, 1st Lieutenant Virgil Butler was forced to crash-land after being hit. On August 14, 1944, Lieutenant Duffy strafing Japanese troops was hit in the cooling system and forced to bailout twenty miles north of Yochow. On August 16, while dive-bombing Japanese headquarters at Chaling, Lt. Wheeler's P-40 took a hit. Sugar Mike Nine, ground target controller gave him instructions to bail out one mile west of Kaishowkiao.

Four P-40's swept Kinhwa airfield and the railroad north of Hangchow. Armed with 250-pound general purpose bombs they attacked four ~~four~~ steam locomotives on the turn table and four others pulling boxcars on the busy railroad, severely damaging eight locomotives. One Tojo aircraft and a twin-engine bomber were destroyed on the ground. Lieutenant Bennett and Lieutenant Latourelle accounted for the aircraft and 5 of the 8 locomotives. These aircraft staged from Kienow airfield, one of three airfields built to recover General Doolittle's B-25's that had flown the first mission to hit Tokyo, that took off from the aircraft carrier, The Hornet.

On August 26 Lieutenant Gibeault and Lieutenant Angel attacked Yangtze River steamers. Tents were burned on Nanchang airfield. Lieutenant Angel was hit and forced to bail out ten miles southeast of Nanchang.

On August 29, 1st Lieutenant Gordon Bennett with 5 P-40's dive-bombed Wuhu docks and shipping, which staged through Nancheng airfield. They were attacked by five Zeros and Bennett's left engine bank exploded in flame. He bailed out successfully at 200 feet over the Yangtze River, swimming to the west bank where he was captured by the Japanese.

On the evening of September 4, 1944, Governor Chiang Ching-kuo and Mayor of Kanchow with several city officials hosted a welcoming party for the 74th Squadron in a large banquet hall. A female hostess was placed next to every man.

About 1 September 1944, the 74th Squadron received their P-51C's. Major Paul Frillman, who had been the AVG Chaplain, and much later attended the Army Air Corps Intelligence School, became one of General Chennault's field intelligence officers. Captain Luke Kissick asked him to collect hundreds of drums of gasoline that had been stored in the surrounding hills of Nancheng and Kienow for General Doolittle's B-25's. Frillman was asked to strain the fuel for moisture and other contaminants. This would permit fuel for staging and greatly increasing the operational range of the P-51's. It was quite a project but it proved to be very worthwhile in the 74th's operations throughout Eastern China.

On 5 September, "Pappy" Herbst in his P-51, named "Tommy's Dad", which had some ejector chute problems that could only be repaired back in Luiliang, took off to look into some administrative business of the rear detachment. Prior to take-off he asked Luke Kissick if there were any Japanese aircraft

enroute. Luke hesitated, he didn't want to tell "Pappy" what he knew because he was supposed to be grounded from any combat. But Luke wanted to get his licks in too against the Japanese whenever possible. He told "Pappy" that an 8 aircraft patrol would be exchanging with another 8 aircraft patrol over Chaling, the Japanese headquarters, at nine, twelve and three o'clock. "Pappy" timed his take-off perfectly so he would be over Chaling when there would be 16 Zeros. "Guerrilla One" single-handedly attacked the two patrol elements. He shot down two of the patrol leaders, but a deflection shot hit "Pappy's" windshield passing two inches in front of his face. His face was badly cut from the shattering canopy. Seeing two Zero's flamed and a parachute passing by him "Pappy" continued to fight until all his guns jammed and he could no longer see to well for blood in his eyes. He dove out and miraculously landed back at Kanchow almost going off the runway. For this particular mission Major Herbst was awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart medals.

On September 16, Major Herbst and Major "Phil" Chapman, who would take over command of the 74th Squadron, made an armed reconnaissance of the Tuyang and Kinhwa areas after refueling at Kienow airbase. Their primary target was to dive-bomb the railway bridge, about 120 feet long, near Paitow. Chapman's aircraft was hit and he was forced to bail out. "Pappy" Herbst spotted a lone Hamp fighter at 2,000 feet just east on the Kinhwa landing strip. He dove out of the sun right up the tail of the Hamp. It burst into flame and crashed, northeast of Kinhwa. Chinese net confirmed this one for Herbst.

Flying P-40's, on 20 September, Lieutenant Latourelle and Denny each burned two Zero's on the ground at Hengyang.

A low-level sweep of Amoy by four P-40's and two P-51's netted seven Zero's on the ground. The seaplane base was strafed with major damage inflicted. The parade ground with troops formed and the officers club was heavily strafed. All ammunition of every aircraft on the mission was expended.

A few of the 74th pilots left at Kweilin were transferred to Luichow and the administrative personnel were moved to Luliang, east of Kunming.

On October 8 and 9, Captain Cook led P-40's and P-51's on missions to Kuikiang and Anking on the Yangtze River. Zero's intercepted but the encounter resulted in no kills. However, the next day strafing resulted in destruction of eleven planes and several oil-carrying barges. Also, on 9 September Lt. Denny and Major Herbst accounted for a black Tojo taking off the airfield at Amoy.

On October 13, 1944, Luke Kissick left for the Swatow area with his jeep driver, Mar Kay, to take care of some vital intelligence business. While near Swatow a Japanese Betty bomber crash-landed a short distance from Luke's location.

He was able to return to Kanchow with five Japanese crew members of the Betty bomber as prisoners and some valuable maps and classified documents the aircraft was carrying.

From October 20 through November 3, Swatow and Amoy were hit repeatedly. Much of the Japanese shipping and many aircraft were reported to be using these coastal bases extensively for refueling and as a haven from the U.S. navy. Lieutenant Bolyard on one mission destroyed two Zero's in the air.

On November 18, Lieutenant Denny led P-51's to Anking on the Yangtze River. Eight enemy aircraft were burned, barges, tugs and barracks were strafed. On the 25th the flight returned to Anking. Lieutenant Evans was hit making a bomb run. His plane crashed in the river. He was seen to bail out above the water and his parachute opened, but no further word was ever heard of him. Four ships were destroyed in the harbor and two of the three Zero's that were engaged were destroyed in some intense fighting.

Anking and Nanking were the targets selected for December 7, Pearl Harbor day. "Pappy" and Luke worked for 10 days on this mission with some recent excellent photographs of the target, Nanking. Sixteen P-51's took off from Kanchow and refueled at Nancheng. The large railroad ferry was the primary target for the dive bombers. Then all the aircraft swept the two airfields. Forty-five Oscars, Tony's and Tojo's intercepted. The total number of enemy aircraft destroyed or damaged in the aerial battle and on the airfields was thirty-nine of which twenty-eight were burned on the ground. Lieutenant McGill, after destroying at least one enemy fighter, called that part of his prop had been shot off. He bailed out safely and returned almost one month later. The "Rape of Nanking" and the attack on Pearl Harbor had been partially revenged.

On the evening of December 10, 1944, four P-51C's were sent to remain at Namyung airfield over night to be ready to take off at the first crack of light the next morning to sweep Tien Ho airfield at Canton. Captain Brown, Fudge and Finberg and Lieutenant Cole caught the Japanese by surprise. The exhaust from the Japanese planes warming up their engines was the only guide to determining whether they were bombers or fighters. Two bombers were destroyed, and two damaged with sixteen fighters destroyed or damaged on the airfield.

Another mission of note was flown on December 18 when Major Chapman led eighteen P-51C's on an escort mission for twelve B-25's to Wuchang as part of a saturation raid on the Hankow-Wuchang area. This mission was flown a half-hour after the Hankow industrial area was bombed by one hundred B-29's followed by B-24's and B-25's, in the largest single air strike ever mustered over any target in China during the war. Two Oscar fighters attacked the bombers and Major Chapman and Lieutenant Hanover met them head on causing both to flame.

Major Chapman confirmed two Zero's on the airfield at Wuchang and one damaged. Returning over Kuikiang, Chapman burned another Oscar on the ground and destroyed one in the air. Colonel Edward Rector, Commander, 23rd Fighter Group observed an Oscar to crash north of the river, downed by Lieutenant Cousins. Colonel Rector destroyed or damaged three fighters on the Kuikiang airfield. Major Herbst shotdown one Oscar and burned one unidentified aircraft on Wuchang airfield. Captain Reis burned one fighter, Captain destroyed one and damaged two more before his guns jammed. Captain Finberg burned and damaged four Oscar's. Lieutenant Chrisman forced one enemy aircraft to crash.

On December 20, Luke Kissick made an abortive trip to Nanfung, China to investigate a downed Japanese transport carrying high ranking Japanese officers. He returned to Kanchow on Christmas Eve with no prisoners. He saw the Japanese transport had been burned beyond salvage by its crew and passengers after its emergency landing. He also met a leading Japanese spy in China. The Chinese guerrillas delivered to Luke and an Irish Catholic priest eight severed Japanese officers heads on the coffin of the Mayor of Nanfung, who was drowned during this unusual incident to bring in these Japanese as prisoners.

On Christmas day, the 74th Squadron flew one of its most outstanding missions, again to Nanking to attack another large railroad ferry and sweep Ming Ku Kung and Tai Chaio Chan airfields. Major "Phil" Chapman led fourteen pilots and they reported damage and destruction with photographic coverage of thirty-four enemy aircraft, as well as, sinking the large railroad ferry and a large floating dock. One casualty resulted, Captain Reis, due to circumstances unknown.

On 27 December, 1944, in attacking the five airfields surrounding Canton, also coordinated with the 118th TR Sqdn., twenty enemy fighters intercepted. At least fourteen were damaged or destroyed. Lieutenant Swim was shot down on Tien Ho airfield. The Chinese labors threw him into an airfield drainage ditch, covered him with sewage so the Japanese dogs would not smell him. He was returned to Kanchow with a broken spine, walking with his head and shoulders bent forward at a painful angle. A miracle escape story.

On the evening of 29 December, 1944, Luke Kissick was almost trapped, with an attempt on his life, by his Chinese Colonel, double agent, in a Kanchow hotel.

The 74th Squadron was ordered on a two-week standown. There was no gasoline. After the standown the first mission was flown on January 14, 1945 led by Major Chapman to Anking harbor and airfield. Four vessels were bombed with damage. For the next few days Yangtze River shipping was attacked.

Luke sent "Pappy" Herbst out on the "Kate Project", a survey of Japanese flights between Formosa and Shanghai by coastal naval and USAAF field intelligence officers.

FLIGHT INTELLIGENCE REPORT

*File*

Secret  
 By Authority of the  
 Commanding Officer  
 74th Fighter Squadron  
 Kanchow, China  
 Report No.

12/25/44  
 Date Initials

1. AIRCRAFT: 14 P-51C's.
2. MISSION: Dive bomb HANKING RR ferry, Primary objective.  
 Strafe and destroy A/C on MING KU KUNG A/D and TAI CHIAO CHAN A/D--  
 Secondary objective.  
 Attack shipping on Yangtze and A/C on Wuhu, Anbing and Kuikiang A/D's  
 target of last resort.

3. TAKE OFF: Blue Flight 0730 Kanchow                      LAND: 0830 Mancheng  
 Green Flight 0830 Kanchow                                      0950 Mancheng  
 Red Flight 1000 Kanchow  
 Blue Flight 1100 Mancheng                                      1530 Kanchow  
 Green Flight 1100 Mancheng                                      1530 Kanchow

Lt. Wagner landed at Suichwan with 4 gallons of fuel.

3. PILOTS : RED FLIGHT                                      BLUE FLIGHT  
 Major Chapman (Formation Leader)                      Lt. Denney  
 Lt. Wagner    F/O Oparowski  
 Capt. Reis    Capt. Fudge  
 Lt. Anderson    Lt. Terry  
 Capt. Brown  
 Lt. Branz

GREEN FLIGHT

- Capt. Pinberg
- Lt. Beethoven
- Lt. Binkley
- Lt. Fandl

4. ROUTE & ALTITUDE: Course of 25° direct to Mancheng, rendezvousing at 4,000' proceeding on course of 80° to target at 11,000' letting down to 7,000' for dive bomb run. Over target at approximately 1230. Bombs released at 2,000' with dive starting from 7,000'. Indicating 550-600 mph at point of release.

5. WEATHER & VISIBILITY: FORECAST: Ceiling unlimited with haze restricting visibility to 4 miles enroute. Target area to have light overcast at 7,000'.  
 ENCOUNTERED: Ceiling of 6,000', 100 miles S of target with haze limiting visibility to 3 miles. Over target area cloud disappaited with visibility increasing to 7 miles.

6. WEATHER & VISIBILITY: RETURN FLIGHT: Heavy haze all the way to Kanchow with visibility of 4 miles.
7. AMMO EXPENDED: 6-500 lb. RDX bombs fused with 1-10 second delay nose.  
8,890 rounds of .50 caliber.  
6-75 gallon external wing tanks.
8. OWN CASUALTIES: Capt. Reis missing in aircraft 44-11058, due to circumstances unknown. Was last heard by Lockjaw, "to call with three". Last sight over target area. Four aircraft sustained minor damage from small arms fire. Wings buckled on one Mustang, landed safely.
9. ENEMY CASUALTIES: Capt. Finberg: 1 OSCAR damaged on the ground.  
2 OSCARS damaged in the air.
- Lt. Beethoven: 1 BETTY bomber confirmed in air.
- Lt. Binkley: 1 TESS destroyed on the ground.  
2 TONYs damaged in the air.  
1 TONY probably confirmed in the air.
- Lt. Fandl: 1 SALLY damaged on the ground.  
1 TONY damaged in the air.
- Major Chapman: 3 TONYs confirmed in the air.  
2 OSCARS damaged on the ground.  
2 LILYS damaged on the ground.
- Lt. Wagner: 1 LILY bomber destroyed on the ground.  
1 OSCAR damaged on the ground.
- Lt. Anderson: 1 TONY confirmed in the air.  
1 OSCAR destroyed on the ground.  
1 OSCAR probably destroyed on the ground (left smoking)
- Capt. Brown: 3 LILYS destroyed on the ground.  
1 SALLY probably destroyed on the ground.  
1 LILY damaged on the ground.
- Lt. Branz: 1 TONY damaged in the air.
- Lt. Denney: 1 TONY confirmed in the air.  
1 TONY damaged in the air.  
1 SALLY bomber damaged on the ground.
- Lt. Fudge: 1 TONY confirmed in the air.
- Lt. Terry: 2 TONYs confirmed in the air.

---

Major Chapman sunk 350' RR ferry with direct hit on Pukow side.  
Lt. Anderson, bomb hit on stern end of ferry.  
Capt. Brown, direct hit on 300' flat top vessel on floating dock on the Nanking side of Yangtze.

- 4
9. **ENEMY CASUALTIES:** Capt. Fudge: Strafed 200' vessel and damage inflicted, gasoline storage tanks strafed. Sulphuric refinery strafed but no damage could be observed. One truck probably destroyed on Nanchang Satellite.
10. **ENEMY COMPOSITION:** Intercepted by 12-15 **TONYS** and **OSCARs** at various altitudes over the A/D's. Very little AA fire over the field. Encountered several bursts of black AA from Fukow and Nanking sides on dive bomb run on RR ferry. Several small flashes believed to be small arms fire observed from barrack area between Ming Ku Kung and Tai Chiao Chan A/D's. Pilots were not eager to engage, and had no team work in their single attacks on our aircraft.
11. **ACCOUNT:** The primary objective of the second Nanking attack was to destroy the alternate RR ferry which handles all rail traffic in the transshipment of cars from the Nanking side across the Yangtze river to the Fukow side, hence, to the West to supply current drive. With the elimination of the RR ferry traffic will congest on Nanking side, impeding all movement to the West. Additional strain will be placed on river shipping, which is pressed by continuous attacks and lack of boats and freighters to transport needed supplies. Targets of secondary nature was the Ming Ku Kung A/D and Tai Chiao Chan A/D, with complement of 60-75 A/C, as shown by photo coverage. A/C were to be engaged on the ground and in the air with destruction of A/C as ultimate goal. Targets on the Yangtze river were to be attacked and destroyed.

Major Chapman led this mission with the following set up: Top cover, eight Mustangs, were to re-fuel at Nancheng and rendezvous over Nancheng at 4,000' hence, direct to target. Formation was to climb to 11,000' after rendezvous beginning high speed let down over Wuhu to 7,000' over the target area, where bomb run was executed. Six Mustangs, carrying 1-500lb RDX bomb fused 1-10 second delay nose and 1-75 gallon external tank, were to take off from Kanchow. Mission proceeded exactly as planned.

Approach on RR ferry, which was sighted just leaving the slips on the Fukow side, was made from NE to SW. Bombs were released at 2,000' at 550-600 mph at point of release. Major Chapman leading in on 75° dive got a direct hit dead center the ferry which had 18-20 cars aboard. Lt. Anderson following obtained a hit on the stern end. The explosion covered the entire ferry, showering debris many feet. All the pilots report the RR ferry definitely sunk.

Capt. Brown and Lt. Branz observing the RR ferry to be hit with 2-500 lb RDX, chose a 300' flat top vessel or floating dock on the Nanking side. Beautiful dive bombing resulted in one near miss and one hit by Branz and Brown respectively on this vessel. It was not observed to be sunk or sinking as Zeros were called out at this time. It is believed this vessel was severely damaged or probably sunk by Capt. Brown and Lt. Branz. Coming off the dive bomb run, as Tonys attacked from above, all dive bombers stayed on the deck and swept their respective targets on the A/D's. Several puffs of black AA was encountered on the dive bomb run from the Fukow and Nanking sides. All appeared to burst above the dive bombers.

4  
11. ACCOUNT: Major Chapman's flight was to sweep the Tai Chiao Chan A/D and Lt. Denney the Ming Ku Kung A/D, with Green flight, led by Capt. Finberg, top cover. Most of our aircraft joined in the aerial battle and did very little strafing.

Capt. Brown after dive bombing made strafing pass on Tai Chiao Chan getting a LILY bomber to burst into flame on the E side. Then two LILY bombers were set afire on the S and W side. One was left smoking and is claimed as probably destroyed. A SALLY was damaged on the ground on the S side of the field as pulled up to engage two TONYs over the field. No claims are made on the TONYs engaged, though good bursts were fired at short range and less than 70° deflection.

Lt. Branz engaged a TONY over the field but was forced to retire from the fight with all guns jammed. Several large boats were observed in the docks at Nanking.

Lt. Denney observed bomb hit by Major Chapman and shortly after saw 2 TONYs diving on dive bombers which he turned into. Obtained good hits on head on pass. Turned with this Tony and followed it over TTC field finally closed in to 50 yards for the kill on direct astern shot. Observed the TONY to crash just SE of TTC field. Followed the TONY down and swept the TTC field damaging one LILY bomber from good hits but no fire started. As he pulled off the target, observed another TONY which was damaged from hits on wing and tail.

F/O Oparowski made contact with a TONY on good astern shot with 15° deflection but led the aircraft too much. Did not observe strikes and makes no claims.

Capt. Fudge who had hit Tony in coolant on deflection shot worked with Lt. Anderson in whipping this ship down to the deck and finally getting in on the astern for the kill. The TONY rolled over slowly and went in on the N side of the river N of Nanking. Slightly NE of town strafed a 200' vessel with hits observed. Gasoline storage tanks and a Sulphur refinery was strafed but no fires or serious damage observed. The Sulphur refinery was in the N corner of Nanking city near the river.

Lt. Anderson and Capt. Fudge found another single TONY N of Nanking and working together, Lt. Anderson confirmed this TONY N of Ming Ku Kung A/D. Previous to this had strafed the Ming Ku Kung A/D and destroyed 1 OSCAR which burned and probably destroyed another on the ground which was hit hard, and left smoking several feet in the air, but no fire was visible.

Lt. Terry confirmed two TONYs both N of Nanking A/D's, observing both to crash, one, just NE of Pukow and the other NE of Ming Ku Kung A/D. On return flight observed 4-100-150' boats at Tatung on the Yangtze below Ankin

Lt. Wagner followed Major Chapman in on TTC a/D and burned a LILY bomber, painted light cream color, on the first pass. On second pass damaged an OSCAR. Pulling off the target a TONY got on his tail and chased him across the Yangtze river going W. Finally lost the Tony 20 miles W of Nanking. In returning Lt. Wagner, (first mission) became lost. He returned across Hankow and down Siang river. He mistook Tungting Lake for Poyang Lake. Finally getting into friendly territory, plots were worked and homing turned on. Lt. Wagner landed at Suichwan with 4 gallons of gasolene. In the dive bomb run Lt. Wagner did a snap roll which buckled wing. The belly tan



4

11. ACCOUNT: believed responsible for this, as it did not release immediately on selectiva.

Capt. Finberg damaged on OSCAR on first pass across the field and then engaged three TONYS over the field. One of the TONYS was hit and pieces were observed to fall off on which, claims for damage are justly made. Acted as top cover for planes on the deck.

Lt. Binkley on first pass on Ming Ku Kong burned a TESS which burned with tremendous flame and smoke. Observing 4 Tonys over head, climbed to meet them. One of the Tonys was damaged as he tried to scissor beneath. Fighting the turn on a Tony trying to come in on his tail. Lt. Binkley got head on pass at a TONY which passed under neath smoking. Claims a probable on this TONY. Observed strikes on the third Tony and claims damage. Motor cut dead and was forced to leave fight. Later, observation, showed a bullet had cut a plate, shorting out the mag which later fell to the lower cowling pane and caught alright.

Lt. Fandl damaged a Sally bomber at MKK A/D. Engaged a Tony over the field and observed hits, but was forced to break off the fight with cracked canopy. Did not rejoin the fight again.

Lt. Beethoven, who was to cover the MKK field to keep aircraft from taking off caught a betty bomber taking off at 1000'. One pass from 3/4 beam sent the Betty crashing into the ground, cartwheeling and exploding. Several flashes were observed from the tail turret, indicating the crew was alerted and at their positions. Pilot was believed hit on the first burst.

Capt. Reis is missing. Was last sighted over the target area and reported by Lockjaw " to call in with three". No other information is available. Flights returned split up to their base at Kanchow. Superior navigation was the leading factor in making this mission successfull both enroute and on the return flight. Haze limited visibility to less than 3 miles. All down safely except Capt. Reis.

LUTHER C. KISSICK,  
Captain, Air Corps,  
S-2 Officer.

JOHN C. HERBST,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Commanding Officer.

"Pappy" "administered" off Yuhwan Island a Tess transport aircraft and one Nell converted bomber down into the ocean on fire. The only combat was "Pappy" firing his guns on his P-51C, attacking from a level six o'clock position.

On the night of January 16, 1945, "Pappy" Herbst and "Phil" Chapman spent three hours in Luke Kissick's barracks room planning a valedictory mission for "Pappy" Herbst. This meeting was prompted by Luke, upon receiving messages that more than 200 Japanese aircraft were evacuating the South Pacific areas and had landed that afternoon in Formosa on mass flights to the north. Luke's earlier estimate was coming true that the Japanese would be landing at the Shanghai airfields to strengthen the Japan perimeter defense. He wanted to give "Pappy" one last good mission which he had spent so much time planning for. Now was the time to strike Shanghai!

The weather was becoming bad and even the Japanese knew this and were timing their flights accordingly. Luke realized there would be no better time in the future to get this mission off. There was no better man than "Phil" Chapman to lead this particular mission. He had travelled most of the flight route on the ground, when shot down and bailing out on his return to Kanchow earlier. Through the 74th's double agent the Japanese had been told that the 74th Squadron could never reach Shanghai in their P-51's. Every facet of this mission was planned to use the economy of force, and especially the element of surprise. On the morning of 17 January, the 74th could only muster 15 commissioned aircraft. Plans called for 20. We would have to ask the 118th TR Squadron for 5 additional aircraft. This was rapidly done with Herbst finishing the briefing of the additional 5 aircraft at the staging airbase, Nancheng. The Flight Intelligence Report tells the story of the greatest mission ever flown, by the 74th Squadron, in China during War II.

General Chennault sent his regards the next day:

"Tell all concerned that Shanghai airdrome strike was the outstanding event of the war to date. Wish I could have seen those Jap planes burning. Am most gratified that all pilots returned safely. Carry on the good work to hasten the day of victory."

Wing headquarters ordered a repeat of the initial Shanghai strike on January 20, 1945. "Pappy" Herbst voiced his displeasure and refused to fly it. Back came the order; "this is a command decision, it will be flown!" Captain Floyd Finberg led 16 74th Squadron aircraft and 11 118th Squadron aircraft. 5 74th aircraft turned back. Shanghai was just waiting for this mission with every gun, smoke and defense measure possible. Flight Officer Seago was lost, Lieutenant Huss made it back to Nancheng with more than 30 holes in his aircraft which had to be destroyed. Four other Mustangs were badly shot up by AA and ground machine gun fire.

File

SECRET

FLIGHT INTELLIGENCE REPORT

USAFA 1997-7-4  
P. T. M. A. Q.

Secret  
By Authority of the  
Commanding Officer  
74th Fighter Squadron  
Kanchow, China.  
Report No. 9

1/17/45         
Date Initials

- 1. AIRCRAFT: 13 P-51C's. ( One (1) P-51C returned from MANCHENG.)
- 2. MISSION : Low level strafing mission to LUNGEWA and HUNGJAO A/D's, SHANGHAI, China, primary target.  
Rail transportation and aircraft at HANGCHOW, China, secondary targets.  
Rail transportation between HANGCHOW and KINEWA and KINEWA L/S, target of last resort.  
Combined with five (5) aircraft of the 118th Squadron.
- 3. TAKE OFF: 0845 KANCHOW   LAND: 0945 MANCHENG  
                  1130 MANCHENG   1545 KANCHOW  
  1500 MANCHENG (Lt. Anderson)  
                  1530 MANCHENG   1630 KANCHOW (High fuel consumption)
- 4. PILOTS :      RED FLIGHT   BLUE FLIGHT   GREEN FLIGHT  
                  Major Chapman   Lt. Anderson   Lt. Binkley  
                  Lt. Conn   Lt. Huss   Lt. Harrison  
                  Lt. Terry   Lt. Gazibara   Lt. Copenhagen  
                  Lt. Sims   Lt. Chmielewski   Lt. Long  
                  Major Herbst  
  
                  Lt. Sims returned from MANCHENG with no flaps and landing gear malfunction.
- 5. ROUTE & ALTITUDE: Flew direct to MANCHENG at 5,000'. From MANCHENG on direct course via YUSHAN, slightly N of HANGCHOW, following railroad direct to SHANGHAI at 5,000'. Returned on S side of railroad to HANGCHOW and KINEWA at 4,000'. Returned direct from HANGCHOW via MANCHENG to KANCHOW.
- 6. WEATHER & VISIBILITY: No ceiling with base limiting visibility to 8-10 miles. Snow on the ground and mountains near target area. Light thin overcast at 5,000', opened N of SHANGHAI.
- 7. AMMO EXPENDED: 14,616 rounds of .50 caliber.
- 8. OWN CASUALTIES: None.
- 9. ENEMY CASUALTIES: ~~Aircraft in the air~~  
Major Herbst: 1 TOJO confirmed in the air between TACHANG

9. BOMBER CASUALTIES: and XIANGWAN A/D's. ✓ Crash observed.

1-0-0

4

Aircraft on the ground.

Major Chapman ✓ ; ✓ Four (4) FRANKS destroyed on the ground (LUNGCHIA)  
✓ Four (4) OSCARS destroyed on the ground (LUNGCHIA)  
✓ Two (2) LILYS destroyed on the ground (HUNGJAO)  
✓ One (1) LILY probably destroyed on the ground (HUNGJAO) 10-1-0

---

Lt. Terry : ✓ ✓ Six OSCARS destroyed on the ground (LUNGCHIA)  
✓ One (1) FRANK destroyed on the ground (LUNGCHIA)  
✓ One (1) BOB destroyed on the ground (LUNGCHIA)  
✓ Two (2) SALLYS destroyed on the ground (HUNGJAO) 10-0-0

---

Lt. Conn : ✓ ✓ One (1) POPPY destroyed on the ground (LUNGCHIA)  
✓ One (1) BETTY destroyed on the ground (LUNGCHIA)  
✓ Five (5) OSCARS destroyed on the ground (LUNGCHIA)  
✓ One (1) FRANK destroyed on the ground (LUNGCHIA) 8-0-0

---

Lt. Binkley : ✓ ✓ Four (4) SALLYS destroyed on the ground (HUNGJAO)  
✓ One (1) DINAH destroyed on the ground (HUNGJAO)  
✓ One NICK destroyed on the ground (HUNGJAO)  
✓ Two (2) LILYS Probably destroyed on the ground (HUNGJAO)  
✓ Three (3) Unidentified planes damaged on the ground (HUNGJAO) 6-2-3

---

Lt. Harrison: ✓ ✓ One (1) OSCAR destroyed on the ground (HUNGJAO)  
✓ Five (5) Unidentified bombers on the ground (HUNGJAO)  
✓ One (1) Unidentified bomber damaged (HUNGJAO) 6-0-1

---

9. ENEMY CASUALTIES: Lt. Copenbarger: ✓ One (1) LILLY bomber destroyed on the ground (HUNGJAO)  
 ✓ Five (5) Unidentified twin engine A/C destroyed on the ground (HUNGJAO)  
 ✓ One (1) Unidentified twin engine A/C damaged (HUNGJAO) 6-0-1

Lt. Long : ✓ / Two (2) BETTY'S destroyed on the ground (HUNGJAO)  
 / Two (2) NICKS destroyed on the ground (HUNGJAO)  
 ✓ Two (2) SALLYS or LILYS destroyed on the ground (HUNGJAO)  
 ✓ Three (3) Unidentified twin engine A/C probably destroyed (HUNGJAO) 6-3-0

Lt. Gazibara; ✓ / One (1) OSCAR destroyed on the ground (LUNGHWA)  
 ✓ One (1) TONY destroyed on the ground (HUNGJAO) 2-0-0

Lt. Anderson: ✓ / One (1) Unidentified bomber destroyed on the ground (HUNGJAO) 1-0-0

Lt. Chmielewski: ✓ / One (1) Unidentified twin engine bomber destroyed on the ground (HUNGJAO) 1-0-0

Lt. Russ : ✓ / One (1) Unidentified twin engine bomber damaged on the ground (HUNGJAO) 0-0-1

OTHER: Major Herbst probably destroyed one (1) locomotive on the HANGCHOW-KINMWA line. One (1) locomotive damaged between CHUMI and KINMWA.

Lt. Gazibara strafed a four (4) door black sedan causing it to crash and turn over near the LUNGHWA A/D. Believed to have killed occupants.

Lt. Long strafed and damaged small early warning radar station SW of H HUNGJAO A/D. Believed temporarily put out of commission.

Two (2) dummies strafed on HANGCHOW A/F and one small building set afire on A/F.

15-20 personnel killed when strafed in hangar, believed to be mechanics. Additional 30-40 crew members of bombers strafed when they scrambled from bombers awaiting take off at HUNGJAO A/D.

One hangar destroyed by explosion on LUNGHWA A/D. Last observed burning. Seaplane hangar strafed with same damage inflicted. One (1) 300' vessel strafed with good hits and superficial damage to sides and super-structure on port side of transport.

**ENEMY CASUALTIES:** Control Tower on Hungjao A/D heavily strafed and severely damaged. 4

**ENEMY OPPOSITION:** Opposition in any form was nil until about the 5th pass on Lunghwa A/D. One AA pit on the E side of the field opened up, tracking to the rear and inaccurate. One (1) gunboat in Hwanpoo river NE of Lunghwa A/D gave supporting fire for A/D defense which consisted of 20mm barrage ack ack and 50 Cal. M/G fire. Several pits sighted, but were not occupied at the strike hour. Some flashes of small arms fire visible from hangars but was meagre and inaccurate. Aircraft strafing Hungjao A/D encountered 5-6 bursts of black ack ack, which was slightly below and good for deflection. This fire was not positioned. Very little ground fire, if any, was encountered from Hungjao. Only two aircraft were sighted airborne over the target area by our pilots. The strike was a complete surprise with no prepared opposition encountered.

**ACCOUNT:** This mission was a Fighter Strike, the first to the Shanghai area. Primary target was sweeping Lunghwa and Hungjao A/D's, destroying aircraft and airdrome installations. Photo coverage on day previous showed a total of thirty (30) A/C on the Lunghwa A/D and twenty-six (26) medium bombers on Hungjao. At 0700-0900 hours, Chungking time, B-29's hit Formosa with Japanese flying additional aircraft to these fields previous to the strike hour from Formosa. An estimated seventy (70) A/C were observed on both fields.

Major Chapman led the combined mission, 5 aircraft of the 118th Squadron and 12 aircraft of the 74th Squadron, to the target. Lt. Sims returned from the staging field, Nancheng, with hydraulic trouble, leaving 12 aircraft to hit the two airfields, Lunghwa and Hungjao. All aircraft staged from the Nancheng L/S, topping off with gasoline and carried no external tanks. From Nancheng it was an operating radius of 380 miles direct to target area. All aircraft were briefed to return to Kanchow, only under extreme emergency would they land at auxiliary fields; Yushan, Nancheng, Kienow, Kwangchang, Chanting, Kian and Suichwan.

Flights were staggered for refueling to limit possibility of attack while on the ground at Nancheng. This made a continuous cover for refueling flights. It took approximately thirty minutes for each flight to top off.

Major Chapman's flight was briefed to hit Lunghwa A/D and Lt. Binkley's flight to attack Hungjao A/D. Lt. Anderson's flight was to be top cover at 6,000 ft. between the city of Shanghai and the extreme SW airfields Tachang A/D.

Mission proceeded as briefed flying course of approximately 38 degree, crossing enemy territory 10 miles NW of Hangchow, hence, following Shanghai-Hangchow railroad into target area at 5,000 feet at 275 mph. Flights peeled-off on their respective fields from 5,000 feet. No aircraft or opposition had been sighted to meet the formation.

On first sweep over Lunghwa A/D, found sixteen (16) Franks and Oscars parked wing tip to tip, with approximately eleven (11) on the N side of NE corner of A/D and five (5) more A/C parked perpendicular to the eleven (11) A/C. Personnel was standing and working around on the field, some looking up in the sun with their hands shielding their eyes. The attack appeared to be a complete surprise

ACCOUNT cont'd: as there was very little confusion on the part of the personnel in the hangars and those working on the aircraft. After the first pass, mechanics began pulling camouflaged netting over the aircraft during the attack, then a mad scramble after the slow realization of what was taking place. There was no organized ground defense visible, although several gun-pits were visible surrounding the perimeter of the Lunghwa Airdrome. Very little warning, if any, was visible from the air.

Sweeping the line of parked planes, two were flamed by Major Chapman on the first pass. Lt. Conn followed, exploding one which rocked and blew debris and planes against each other. Lt. Terry followed next and flamed two more. Making a short 90 degree turn, came back on the next line of 5 and burned all in this line. The whole area was a flaming triangle with secondary explosions. The Seaplane Hangar was strafed, but no seaplanes were visible on the ramp or in the hangar. One plane was strafed by Major Chapman in a hangar near middle of the field and the plane and hangar blew up with large explosion and black smoke. Not until the fifth pass was there ground opposition observed. One M/G began firing on the E side of the main runway and some 20mm fire was observed from a gunboat in the river to the E. Practically all the aircraft had been strafed and most of the damage inflicted before organized meager opposition was encountered. Approximately 25-30 fires were visible on the Lunghwa A/D when last observed. So much smoke and fire made strafing hazardous.

On the Hungjao A/D strafing was progressing just as well as on the Lunghwa A/D. On the first passes approximately 5 medium bombers and 1 Betty were taxiing out and on the runway. All of these were hit on the initial pass and flamed. Crews were observed leaving the planes and fleeing in all directions. Apparently these planes had landed shortly before. All the revetments were observed to be filled with bombers, all believed operational as the gasoline had not been drained. Bettys, Lilys and Sallys were predominate with Nicks and Dinahs visible. One Nick, or fighter bomber, was visible by Lt. Binkley to have cannons in the wings or rocket installations attached to wings. The attachment protruded two feet beyond the trailing edge of each wing.

In the gunnery pattern on Hungjao, Lt. Long strafed a small early warning Radar station, 200 yards off the SW boundary of the A/D and claims damage to control house. A large star is visible painted on the ground just to the SE of the Radar Station.

Lt. Harrison strafed the Control Tower near middle of E side of runway with hits observed and saw broken glass.

One (1) 300' vessel was strafed in the Hwangpoo river with hit scored by Lt. Binkley. M/G fire which was leading and observed across his right wing, 6-7 puffs of black AA visible over the field at 1000' after the 6th pass.

Top cover came down and exploded the only two remaining bombers that would not burn. They observed a total of 28 fires. Lt. Gazibara accounted for a black 4 door Sedan. The car was wrecked and most of personnel believed killed. This automobile believed to be bringing pilots to the field during the alert.

An estimated 50-55 personnel are believed killed including valuable trained crews and mechanics working on the field.

Major Herbst, while at 7,000' between the Tachang and Kiangwan A/D engaged two (2) A/C believed to be Tojos. This was the only

ACCOUNT cont'd: enemy A/C airborne sighted during the attack. Major Herbst hit one (1) of the Tojos, which split, 4 on a diving astern shot. The plane smoked and spiralled, crashing in outskirts of town. The other Tojo chased Major Herbst for 10 minutes before he could gain speed enough to pull away. Evaded Tojo in steady climb.

Seven or eight 300' freighters and transports were observed near Kiangwan docks and in the Whangpoo river to the North.

Secondary targets, rail transportation, was hit on the return by A/C having ammunition. Major Herbst strafed one (1) locomotive just S of Chuki and left it burning and steaming. Claims this locomotive destroyed. Another locomotive pulling 8 cars, two flat cars with two armored vehicles was strafed and damaged just N of Kihwa. All aircraft returned safely to Kanchow, Lt. Anderson landing at Nancheng for gasoline, hence to Kanchow.

LUTHER C. KISSICK,  
Captain, Air Corps,  
S-2 Officer.

JOHN C. HERBST,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Commanding Officer.



On the afternoon of January 23, "Pappy" Herbst led his P-51's back over Japanese lines to Luiliang, except for 4 that were left to defend Kanchow and give the Chinese some support. Lieutenant Gazibara died on take off when his P-51 crashed into a parked P-51 under repair. Three of the four C-47 transports went down and passengers from one were forced to bail out due to terrific headwinds. Only a handful of enlisted mechanics and armorers with Major Chapman, Squadron Commander, Captain Floyd Finberg, 1st Lieutenant Wade Terry, 1st Lieutenant John Branz, pilots, plus Captain Neul Windrow, Flight Surgeon and Captain Luke Kissick, Intelligence Officer, remained at Kanchow.

With an unusual break in the dense fog and heavy overcast, on the afternoon of February 4, 1945, the 4 P-51's and the lone C-47 standing by for this phase of the evacuation of Kanchow, speedily took off. The last of the 74th Squadron personnel departed Kanchow only to meet anxious moments in their flight to western China.

During his seven months command, the 74th "Guerrilla" Squadron under "Pappy" John Herbst never lost a single pilot in aerial combat, shot down 64 enemy planes in the air, destroyed 162 on the ground, probably destroyed another 19 and damaged 49 on the ground, and probably shot down 15 more and damaged 41 in the air.

In a period of two and a half years, 325 planes were destroyed, 88 probably destroyed and 145 damaged.

Luke Kissick led over roads and trails an advance detachment of the 74th Squadron to Tushan from Luiliang. Tushan was a base evacuated by the Japanese and an airbase hewed out on the top of mountains where the 74th Squadron would next be based.

On March 28, 1945, the squadron flew its first mission from Tushan, a low-level strafing attack of Kaitak airdrome, Hongkong--another higher headquarters ordered mission. This mission was flown in conjunction with 16 Pontiac (76th Squadron) aircraft from Laohwangping, which split off to hit the Canton area. Ground fire from ships in the harbor and defensive AA was intense. Lieutenants S. J. Chmielewski and A. H. Sims were shot down crashing on Kaitak airfield. The 74th Fighter Squadron suffered one of its greatest personnel losses when Major Chapman's aircraft was hit over Kowloon. Five feet of the left wing was blown off by AA. Major Chapman made it to Chanting airbase in east China. While checking to determine if he could land the aircraft, it went into a spin and crashed, killing Major Chapman. Major Chapman had led the 74th Squadron on two of its most outstanding missions and accumulated more total aircraft destructions on the ground and in the air than "Pappy" Herbst in a shorter time period, not to mention sinking of the large railroad ferry and several ships destroyed on the Yangtze River. Major Chapman was one very aggressive pilot and Commander of the 74th Squadron.

Captain Floyd Finberg succeeded Major Philip Chapman as Commander, 74th Fighter Squadron.

For the next two to three months the missions were directed against the Japanese ground forces withdrawing from and around Luichow and Kweilin.

A visiting General McClure, United States Army, to Tushan, relieved Major Floyd Finberg of his command of the 74th Squadron because he did not carry out the eleven O'clock curfew regulation, that evening, that he established for China while the 74th Squadron was stationed in eastern China behind the Japanese lines.

On June 10, 1945, Major Bruce C. Downs replaced Major Finberg as commander.

On July 20, Captain Luke Kissick, was asked by the 23rd Fighter Group Commander, Colonel Ed Rector, to take a group of 74th Squadron personnel to occupy Luichow airfield and make plans for all four squadrons of the 23rd Fighter Group to be based there. The apron was first cleared of Japanese bombs and mines but not without casualties to Chinese and American engineer sappers.

The last mission the 74th Squadron flew was a weather and reconnaissance flight by Captain Hagen and Lieutenant Dial over Kukong and Canton area on August 10, 1945.

The 74th Squadron along with its three sister squadrons; the 75th, 76th and 118th remained at Luichow for only a short time after the Japanese surrender. In October, plans were made by the squadron and the entire 23rd Fighter Group to move to the Hangchow area in preparation for transporting its personnel back to the United States and eventual disbandment of the 74th Fighter Squadron. This was accomplished by the end of the year, 1945.

Prepared by: Luther C. Kissick  
Colonel, USAF (Ret.)

SPECIAL NOTE: A more complete and detailed history of the 74th Fighter Squadron is found in the published book, Titled: "GUERRILLA ONE". This book is currently available at:  
Sunflower University Press  
1531 Yuma (Box 1009)  
Manhattan, Kansas 66502  
(Please see attached flyer)