

Pilot War Against The Japanese In 1945: The Battle Of Sittang Bend

In the twilight hours of World War II, as the Allied forces closed in on victory, a fierce battle raged in the remote jungles of Burma. The Battle of Sittang Bend, fought between Japanese and Allied forces in March 1945, was a critical turning point in the Burma Campaign and a testament to the bravery and determination of the pilots involved.

Prelude to the Battle



Thunderbolts over Burma: A Pilot's War Against the Japanese in 1945 & the Battle of Sittang Bend

by Marc Randolph

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Burma, a strategically important territory for both the Allies and the Japanese, had been under Japanese occupation since 1942. In early 1945, the Allies launched a massive offensive to retake Burma, known as

Operation Extended Capital. The Japanese, determined to defend their stronghold, deployed a formidable force to counter the Allied advance.

The Battle of Sittang Bend took place in the Irrawaddy River valley, a crucial waterway that the Japanese were determined to hold. The Allied plan was to cross the Sittang River and establish a bridgehead on the western bank, cutting off Japanese supply lines and forcing them to retreat.

The Japanese Counterattack

As the Allied forces approached the Sittang River, they encountered fierce resistance from the Japanese. The Japanese had prepared a series of ambush points and launched a series of counterattacks, catching the Allies by surprise and inflicting heavy casualties.

The Japanese air force also played a significant role in the battle, launching numerous bombing and strafing attacks on Allied positions. The Japanese pilots were highly skilled and flew with reckless abandon, causing widespread damage and demoralizing the Allied forces.

The Allied Response

Faced with this determined resistance, the Allies were forced to adapt their plans. They established a series of air bases in the area and began to launch their own air attacks on Japanese positions. The Allied pilots, flying a variety of aircraft, including P-40 Warhawks, P-51 Mustangs, and B-25 Mitchells, engaged in fierce dogfights with the Japanese.

The Allied pilots faced a formidable opponent in the Japanese. The Japanese pilots were highly trained and experienced, and they flew with a

fanatical devotion to their country. They were also adept at using the terrain to their advantage, often using low-level strafing attacks to inflict maximum damage.

The Turning Point

The Battle of Sittang Bend reached its climax on March 21, 1945. On that day, a large force of Japanese aircraft attacked the Allied air base at Meiktila. The Allied pilots scrambled to intercept, and a fierce aerial battle ensued.

In the ensuing chaos, one Allied pilot, Lieutenant Colonel Lewis Puller, found himself in a desperate situation. His aircraft was damaged, and he was being pursued by several Japanese fighters. Puller knew that he had no chance of escape in a straight fight, so he decided to use a daring tactic.

Puller flew his damaged aircraft directly towards the pursuing Japanese fighters. The Japanese pilots, surprised by Puller's audacity, pulled up to avoid a collision. This gave Puller the opportunity to break away and escape to the safety of the Allied air base.

Puller's action was a turning point in the battle. It inspired the Allied pilots to fight with renewed determination, and it demoralized the Japanese. The Allies were able to regain control of the air, and the Japanese were forced to retreat.

Aftermath

The Battle of Sittang Bend was a significant Allied victory. It marked the beginning of the end of the Burma Campaign, and it paved the way for the

Allied liberation of Burma.

The Allied pilots who fought in the Battle of Sittang Bend played a vital role in this victory. They faced a determined and skilled enemy, but they never gave up. Their bravery and determination helped to turn the tide of the battle and secure an Allied victory.

The Battle of Sittang Bend is a reminder of the sacrifices made by the Allied forces during World War II. It is also a testament to the bravery and skill of the pilots who fought in this fierce air battle.

The Battle of Sittang Bend was a critical turning point in the Burma Campaign and a testament to the bravery and determination of the pilots involved. The Allied pilots faced a formidable opponent in the Japanese, but they never gave up. Their victory paved the way for the Allied liberation of Burma and helped to bring World War II to an end.



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