

# History of the 823rd Squadron

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## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE 823RD TACTICAL MISSILE SQUADRON 1943-1962

The 823rd was formed in theater and joined by air crews sent from the United States.

During World War II the members of the 823rd Bombardment Squadron gloried in the sobriquet, "Flying Tigers". That was a name that appealed to all the personnel of the squadron, commissioned and enlisted, air and ground, alike. On occasion, for variety, members of the 823rd used other combination of words in referring to themselves or their outfit, combinations such as "Terrible Tigers" or "Tiger Terrors", that connoted flying ability or ferocity or both. But "Flying Tigers" was the favorite (though not formally or approved by Headquarters, Army Air Forces or the War Department) *nom de guerre* of the squadron. As it turned out, the name was one of which every member could be justly proud. It follows, then, that any place at which officers and men of the 823rd pitched the squadron's tents and stowed their gear, whether in New Guinea, Morotai, Luzon, Okinawa, or Japan, became "Tiger Town" and the commanding officer of the squadron, in addition to being the "Skipper" and the "Big Wheel" bore the honorary title, "Mayor of Tiger Town". The 823rd Bombardment Squadron, Medium was constituted and assigned to the 38th Bombardment Group, on 29 March 1943. It was activated in Australia on 20 April 1943 at a time when the Fifth Air Force, to which the 38th was assigned, was engaged in the Allied campaigns against Japanese forces in New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago. For more than two months personnel were not assigned — not in any numbers, at least — to the new squadron. On 22nd June, however, a contingent of more than 150 enlisted men and some 20 officers arrived at Durand Airdrome at Port Moresby, New Guinea, to provide a nucleus for the ground echelon of the 823rd. Some of the newcomers soon were transferred into the 38th Group's 405th Squadron and were replaced in the 823rd by trained and experienced personnel from the veteran outfit. The members of the 823rd set about at once to turn a tract of land, covered with grass about two feet tall and infested with mosquitoes into a squadron area. Members of the squadron worked zealously and efficiently and had their base ready for operations long before they had any combat crews or aircraft to conduct operations. But at long last the long and anxiously awaited day arrived. On Sunday, 10 October 1943, the crews of the 823rd brought their planes in low over the squadron area and then flew on to the field to land. They soon were mingled with the members of the ground echelon, getting acquainted with their squadron mates and with the place in which they were to live, for how long no one could tell. Crews of the 823rd flew practice missions on the 12th and 13th of October. Then on 15 October came the first combat missions. Eight of the squadrons B-25's escorted by P-38's, dropped fifty three 300 pound bombs on Nambariwa, Sio, and Kiari "with generally unobserved results." Since visibility was admittedly good, the quoted phrase may in fact mean that no good results were observed. If such was the case, the fact is not surprising for good results are seldom achieved by any crew on its first combat mission. Inexperience, coupled with over-anxiety, is almost certain to result in more misses than hits. Toward the end of the trip back to base all eight planes were low on fuel, one of them so low that its pilot attempted an emergency landing at Lae. Both engines conked out on the final approach to the airdrome, and the plane crash-landed in the sea about 100 yards from the end of the landing strip. It stayed afloat for 7 minutes and all of the crew members were rescued; the navigator and radio-operator were hospitalized with injuries. On the following day nine B-25's from the 823rd, escorted this time by P-47's, bombed and strafed airdromes, revetments, and supply dumps in the vicinity of Alexishafen. Intense, medium and accurate antiaircraft fire encountered during the last half of the bomb run, caused serious damage to one plane and lesser damage to another. One plane crashed on landing because of a blown-out right tire; three crew members were slightly injured. Several more missions, none of them particularly successful, were flown in October. November began with a mission for practicing formation flying. On the following day the crews of the 823rd were idle. On 3 November nine of the squadron's planes took off to bomb and strafe barges and buildings along the coast from Alexishafen south to Bogadjim, New Guinea. Heavy and moderate antiaircraft fire was encountered; though inaccurate it damaged some of the B-25's; one of them, probably because of ack-ack damage, crashed in the sea between Bili Bili Island and the mainland.; the 5 crew member were last seen, apparently uninjured, in a life raft rowing toward Bili Bili Island. They were not heard from again. This represented the second B-25 and the first crew members lost by the squadron. Nine of the 823rd's aircraft took off early on the morning of 6 November to attack targets at Hansa Bay. Because of an enemy air raid at Nadzab, the fighters that were to have provided the escort failed to keep their rendezvous with the bombers over Marilinen. For lack of fighter cover the bombers returned to base. On the same day the squadron's courier plane was strafed at Gusap by two Zeros, but neither plane nor crew members suffered any damage. An attempt on the following day to attack enemy targets at Wewak was thwarted: again the attempt failed because the fighter escort did not keep their rendezvous, and again the cause was an enemy air raid at Gusap. On 9 November nine planes of the 823rd rendezvoused with the three other squadrons of the 38th Group and three squadrons of P-38's to strike enemy air facilities at Alexishafen. Good results were achieved with .30 and .50 caliber bullets and 75mm shell as well as with bombs. One bomb scored a direct hit on a grounded Sally. Two Zekes that attempted to intercept the bombers were driven off by excellent work on the part of the P-38's. Five more missions were flown in November, in which some excellent bombing scores were achieved by the crews of the 823rd; the squadron was shaking down into an experienced outfit. One B-25, with crew, was lost to antiaircraft fire. A number of strikes were either cancelled or recalled for one reason or another; generally weather at the Durand airdrome, or in route to, or over the target. December's 19 strikes were divided between New Guinea and New Britain. Missions were flown during the first half of December against New Britain in preparation for the invasion of the Island that began

on the 15th of the month. Targets included the Borgen Bay area (attacked four times), Arawe, Lindenhaven Plantation, and Kokopo. Two missions against Cape Gloucester had been planned for early December, one was cancelled, and the other recalled, in both instances because of the weather. They were flown however on the 25th and 26th of December. These operations were, of course, in support of the invasion which began on Christmas Day New Guinea targets included Madang, Alexishafen, Wewak, and Bogadjim. After having flown five missions in five days, the 5th on New Years day, the crews were given a rest on Sunday, 2 January. The following two days were likewise mission less days. Operations resumed on 5 January with a strike against a bivouac area at Kiari, New Guinea, followed by another day of idleness. An attack on anti-aircraft emplacements and dumps at Uligan harbor, New Guinea. by 7 of the 823d's B-25's cost the squadron one B-25 and its entire crew. The plane was set afire by ack-ack; and crashed in flames in the midst of buildings that surrounded the Uligan mission; some of the buildings were set on fire by the burning plane. Supply dumps and anti-aircraft positions at Brimshafen Plantation near Bogadjim were attacked by seven of the squadron's B-25's on 10 January; a barge sweep from Bogadjim to Herwath Point, New Guinea, was flown on the eleventh; and Uligan Harbor was revisited, with good results, on the following day. Then came almost week-long six days, to be exact, of inactivity for the combat crews. For other members of the squadron, those days were filled with activity as usual. On 22 January, 2 officers and 2 enlisted men of the 823d took off in a plane piloted by the commanding officer of the 822nd squadron on a routine flight to Dobadura, New Guinea. Altogether there were 12 officers and enlisted men aboard the B-25. The plane never reached Dobadura, nor was it heard from after takeoff. The only clue to the disappearance of the plane was the sound of an explosion heard by some natives about ten miles south of Kokoda. An intensive search of the entire area revealed no trace of the missing men or the airplane. Three officers and three enlisted men who volunteered on 2 February, despite impossibly bad weather to continue the search were never heard from. Two of the 823d's B-25's left Townsville, Australia, on 27 January to rejoin the squadron at Port Moresby. One of the two turned back because of engine trouble. It took off again the next day but failed to arrive on schedule. Searches, hampered by bad weather were kept up for several days; but no trace of the missing plane was found. A few days later, on 3 February, another of the squadron's B-25's was reported missing in an operational flight from Durand airdrome. During February the planes of the 823d flew several missions from an airdrome at Dobadura. These missions like many flown by the squadron during January, February, and March 1944 were part of a campaign against the Admiralty Islands, northwest of New Britain. On a strike flown from Dobadura against Kavieng, New Ireland, one of the squadron's planes, hit by ack-ack over the target, crashed and exploded. D-day in the Admiralties campaign was 29 February 1944. The 823d had flown a number of missions during the last part of February in direct support of the projected campaign, attempting to soften up Japanese defenses and bombing and strafing airfields in New Guinea, New Britain, New Ireland and the Admiralties to make them unserviceable and thus prevent effective enemy air opposition to the planned landings on Los Negros. On D-day weather made it impossible to execute the air phase as planned. Only seven planes out of three Liberator squadrons had been able to penetrate the weather and carry out the bombings that had been expected to accomplish before the landings, and only three planes out of the 38th Group's four squadrons were able to do the follow-up bombing and strafing that had been assigned to them. Two of the three planes were from the 823d squadron. After D-day at Los Negros the Royal Australian Air Force largely took over the task of providing air support for the Admiralties, and the crews of the 823d turned their attention again to the New Guinea. Early in March the 823d, along with the rest of the 38th Group, moved from Port Moresby to Nadzab, about 200 miles to the northwest of Port Moresby. Members of the squadron found Nadzab a much desirable site for a base than Port Moresby. The air crews were particularly happy about the move; no longer would it be necessary for them to fly over the "hump"—the ridge of mountains that extends from southeast to northwest across the interior of New Guinea. At the beginning of April the enemy airdromes at Wewak had been almost completely neutralized; they were in use only occasionally, and then only briefly. Airstrips at Awar and Nubia were no longer in use, and those at Madang and Alexishafen appeared also to be abandoned, but the enemy was reinforcing his air strength in Hollandia. Hence, on 3, 5, 12 and 16 April the 823d squadron, with the rest of the 38th Group and other elements of the United States Army Air Forces, carried out extensive and devastating attacks on the airdromes on Hollandia and on shipping, installations, and stores at Humboldt Bay. Similar softening-up missions were flown against installations in the Tadjai-Aitape area. On 22 April successful landings were accomplished at Hollandia and Tadjai; air support was furnished by carrier-based Navy aircraft. The 823d on that day bombed Potsdam Plantation. On 28 April the squadron began a series of bombing and strafing attacks on Wadke Island. During April the squadron flew 117 sorties and dropped 81 tons of bombs, 98.5 percent on target. In the first half of May the 823d continued its bombing and strafing attacks on the Sewar-Maffin Wadke area. An attack on Sewar on 17 May completed the softening-up process, and successful landings were carried out at Thoem Village on that day. On the following day a landing was affected at Wadke. On 24 May eight aircraft and crews were sent to an advanced base to carry out a series of strafing and bombing attacks on enemy troop concentrations at Babo, Otawiri, and Timoeke. At Babo the squadron was attacked by 5 to 8 Zekes, a Tony and an Oscar; two Zekes were definitely destroyed, the first enemy aircraft in air combat by the 823d. The softening-up process carried out by the light, medium and heavy bombers of the 5th Air Force along the coast of Netherlands, New Guinea that made possible the capture of Wadke and other islands, also facilitated the invasion of Biak by United States ground forces on 27 May. During June aircrews of the 823d continued to operate from advanced bases against targets along the northern coast of New Guinea. During a 16 June attack on Samate and Jefman airdromes the squadron's formation shot down a Val and an Oscar; on the return to base a Betty was spotted and shot down. On the following day the 823d planes attacked shipping at Sorong. In the month of July, crews of the 823d, continued to operate from advanced bases, attacking shipping and a variety of enemy installations. In one mission flown on 15 July in direct support of ground troops on Biak Island they bombed an enemy troop concentration. On 27 July a six plane formation from the 823d delivered a bombing and strafing attack on Gelele airdrome in the

Halmahera Islands, this was the squadron's first blow in the campaign against the Halmaheras. In 9 of the 10 missions flown in July, aircraft of the squadron suffered damage from ack-ack. But there were no casualties among squadron personnel. During the month four enemy fighter aircraft were destroyed on the ground. With as much of New Guinea as they needed, safely in their hands, the Allies continued their advance towards the Philippine Islands. With bad weather prevalent throughout the most of August, the crews of the 823d were able to fly only three missions during the month. One of these, flown on 20 August 1944, was the longest mission that had been carried out by B-25's in the Southwest Pacific Theater. The squadron flew 740 miles to attack the village of Beo, in the Talaud Islands. The route was all over water. The target was thoroughly worked over with 100-pound parafrag bombs and .50 caliber ammunition. When the planes landed after the strike, it had been nine hours since takeoff. In the 17 August attack on Namlea Township airdrome in Ambon, three enemy aircraft were destroyed on the ground. The third and last mission of the month was an attack on the Kace airdrome in the Halmaheras. During the first half of September the combat crews of the 823d performed their assigned role in the softening up process prerequisite to a successful landing on Morotai, by flying seven missions against targets in the Halmaheras; these targets were Pitoe, Tobelo Village, shipping in Dodinga Bay, personnel at Gelele, the south coast of Wasile Bay and Wajaboela Village. One of the squadron's most unusual missions was a non-combat mission. On 15 September some five hours after the initial landing on Morotai, four of the squadrons B-25's, equipped with special tanks, sprayed the rear landing areas and proposed camp sites with a DDT solution. After Morotai, the crews of the 823d turned their attention, in the latter part of September, to the Celebes and flew one mission against Langoan and two against Mapanget. For their last mission of the month they went back to New Guinea and bombed an enemy held airdrome at McCleure Bay. The object of the 823d squadron in October was to attack enemy shipping, airdromes, personnel, gun emplacements, barracks, and harbor installations. Six strikes were flown against targets in the Halmaheras and other islands of the Netherland East Indies, and seven strikes against targets in the Philippine Islands. The fourteenth mission of the month, flown on 23 October, was an attempt to destroy shipping and installations in the vicinity of Tavi Tavi in the Sulu Archipelago. No shipping was found, but near Tavi Tavi a Rufe float plane approached the formation as if to intercept. It was strafed by the three B-25's of the first element; tracers were seen to enter the fuselage, and the pilot made a crash landing on the water. The planes of the second element renewed the strafing. There was no fire or explosion, but participants in the action believed that they destroyed the plane. It was listed as a "probable". On 30 October, during a highly successful attack on the airdrome at Zamboanga, intense antiaircraft fire scored a direct hit on the bomb bay of one of the 823d's Mitchell's and set it afire. The pilot of the stricken plane, displaying superb coolness, completed the bomb run, during which the bombs were dropped on the target, and then crash-landed his plane in the sea. Two of the crew members were lost, but the remaining four were rescued, in the face of heavy fire from enemy shore guns, by a Navy Dumbo. On 15 August 1944 the 823d Bombardment squadron and the rest of the 38th Bombardment Group began operating from Morotai. Carving a camp site out of a snake and insect infested jungle was a rugged task, but the job was accomplished with alacrity and good will. The squadron area, when completed, was the most attractive the outfit had ever had. In 37 missions during November, crews of the 823d dropped 1,556 bombs of which 1,404, or more than 90 percent were on target. Most of the targets—airdromes and shipping being favorites—were in the Philippines. Twelve enemy aircraft were destroyed on the ground, at the cost of five of the squadron's B-25's. Three crews—eighteen officers and men—were listed as Missing In Action and one enlisted man was fatally wounded by ack-ack. There were also some almost miraculous escapes from disaster, as when one B-25 was compelled—because of an enemy raid on its intended landing field—to land on an abandoned Japanese airstrip that had been heavily mined. Thanks to good piloting and even more perhaps to good luck, it succeeded in avoiding all booby traps in its path. In the last month of 1944 the 823d flew 25 missions, totaling 209 sorties and 284 hours of flying time. Its crews visited the Celebes 5 times, the Halmaheras 6 times, Mindanao 9 times, Negros 3 times and Jolo Island 1 time. The other mission was a long range attack by one B-25 on the oil wells at Tarakan in distant Borneo. Bombing accuracy was slightly under 90 percent, 89.5 to be exact. Aircrews of the 823d squadron flew only 8 missions in January 1945. They attacked the Menado powerhouse and barracks in the Celebes; the Frabica airdrome on Negros, twice, warehouses and barracks at Sangkoelirang, Borneo; Malabang airdrome on Mindanao; the Bacalod supply area on Negros; Miti in the Halmaheras; and the Binalbagen sugar center, on Negros. These were the last missions flown from Morotai. During the last two months of 1944 and the first month of 1945, the 823d had been under the operational control of the Thirteenth Air Force. Upon moving to its new base, which was in the Philippines, Lingayen Gulf, it returned to the operational as well as the administrative control of the Fifth Air Force. The squadron's crews made up for their relative inactivity in January by flying 18 missions in February. These included ground support attacks on Luzon, softening-up raids on Formosa, and shipping searches in the South China Sea. In 117 strike sorties the squadron flew 649 combat hours. Tonnage of bombs dropped was 63.5, of which more than 62 tons were hits in the assigned target areas, a bombing efficiency average of 98.8 percent. Squadron gunners expended 180,550 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition. Two enemy aircraft were destroyed on the ground, and 4 damaged. Squadron losses were one crew member killed and six missing, one B-25 was lost. March was even a busier month for crews of the 823d than February had been with 130 combat sorties in 22 missions. Tonnage of bombs dropped was also higher: 77.7 tons, with 70.8 tons on target. For a somewhat lower average of 94.5 percent. Results were somewhat disappointing, but the squadron claimed 3,875 tons of shipping destroyed and 2,100 damaged. The squadrons losses were heavy: four B-25's lost and three damaged. One of the aircraft lost was crash-landed at sea by the co-pilot, after the pilot had been killed by antiaircraft fire. Three of the crew members—co-pilot, navigator and engineer gunner—were rescued by a Navy Patrol plane, the gunner had apparently been thrown from the plane when it ditched and could not be found. The pilot of another of the four lost planes had been forced to crash-land in China: he and his crew landed safely, fell into friendly hands, and rejoined the squadron a few weeks later.

Members of the other two crews were listed as missing but almost certainly been killed. The 17th of March was celebrated by personnel of the 823d as both St. Patrick's Day and Decoration Day.; Brigadier General Jarred V. Crabb, Commanding General, V Bomber Command, with Colonel Edwin M. Gavin, Commander of the 38th assisting, personally distributed Air Medals and Oak Leaf Clusters, Distinguished Service Crosses, Soldier Medals and Purple Hearts to some 40 officers and enlisted men of the squadron. The aircrews of the 823d were really busy in April 1945. They flew at least one combat mission on every day of the month except the 4th, 19th, 20th. They flew two missions on each of ten days, three on each of two days and four on one day, for a total of 150 sorties in 45 missions. They dropped 69.47 tons of bombs and expended 196,300 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition. Of 955 bombs dropped, 943 scored direct hits, for a bombing efficiency of 99.2 percent. Almost half of the month's missions were weather reconnaissance or heckle missions flown by one or two planes; most of the others involved five or six planes; they included attacks, generally low level against airdromes, railway facilities and towns in Formosa, and ground support missions flown against Baguio, Reina Mercedes, and other targets in the Philippines. On one mission a lone Zeke attempted an interception but did not get close enough to do any damage; there was no other air opposition. Antiaircraft fire, although entirely lacking on some missions, caused some damage, generally consisting of two or three bullet holes a plane, on several occasions; on one mission, two crew members suffered slight wounds from small arms fire. April's record was bettered in May; with fewer sorties, 116, in fewer missions, the 823d dropped a record tonnage of bombs, 136, for a record efficiency of 99.5 percent. Fourteen of the missions were four&mdash;five or six plane strikes against targets&mdash;notably sugar refineries and alcohol plants&mdash;in Formosa and the Philippines. No air opposition was encountered, and anti aircraft fire&mdash;again lacking on several missions&mdash;did serious damage on only two or three occasions. Two B-25's were lost but there was no loss of personnel; one crew member was slightly wounded. The destruction wrought by the squadron's bombs and bullets&mdash;265,805 rounds, another record&mdash;could not be estimated with any degree of exactness; but it must have been extensive. The 823d was a little less active in June than it had been in the immediately preceding months, with missions down to 30 and sorties to 115. During the first two thirds of June the favorite targets of the 823d were troop concentrations, supply dumps, and towns on Luzon; results could seldom be observed because of the dense jungle foliage that effectively concealed most of the targets. On almost every mission propaganda leaflets were dropped. During this period the squadron paid close attention to Formosa. On 21 June the air echelon of the 823d moved to Puerto Princess, Palawan Island, to join with the 42nd Bombardment Group of the Thirteenth Air Force in a series of missions designed to soften-up Balikpapan, Borneo for invasion. Napalm fire attacks on the harbor at Balikpapan were delivered by six of the 823d's planes on each of three days, 22, 24, and 25 June. Weather on 26 June precluded an attack on Balikpapan; hence the squadron's six planes dumped their napalm bombs on the little town of Nedeb, Borneo. Six planes of the 823d returned to Balikpapan on 28 June, this time carrying 500 pound demolition bombs, they unloaded 6 tons of them on what was left of Balikpapan. The squadron concluded it's June Campaign against Borneo with another six plane attack in which napalm bombs were dropped. On the last day of the month the air echelon returned to the squadron's base at Luzon. The 823d squadron lost two of its B-25's during the month of June. Neither to enemy action. On 28 June one of the squadrons pilots who had finished his tour of combat duty and was sweating out the arrival of orders returning him to the states, and a flight officer who had recently joined the 823d and had not yet flown a combat mission, volunteered to test-fly one of the unit's new planes. Trouble developed soon after takeoff; the pilot called the tower to say he was coming back to land, but the plane crashed into a rice paddy and both occupants were killed. The second disaster occurred on the following day six of the 823d's B-25's along with other medium bombers, were scheduled to conduct a low altitude attack bombing and strafing attack on Balikpapan immediately after a strike by heavy bombers. There was a snafu in the timing; and as the Mitchell's roared in toward the harbor, skimming the tree tops, one of them was caught in a bomb blast from one of the heavies and plunged into the water. The radio-gunner and the tail-gunner were thrown clear as the plane broke apart on impact. They were immediately picked up by alert personnel from one of the navy ships anchored off-shore, but the pilot, co-pilot, navigator and engineer-gunner were never seen again. As the squadron historian put it, Words of praise sound hollow now. "Freedom has a high price" July 1945 was not as busy a month for aircrews of the 823d as the five months, February through June had been. There was only one combat mission during the first half of the month: a six plane attack on the Toyo sugar refinery at Getrubi, Formosa. One-plane weather reccos were flown on 4, 8, and 12 July and a one-plane propaganda leaflet drop on 5 July. On 25 July the Squadron, along with the rest of the 38th Group, moved to Yontan Strip on Okinawa, in order to be within reach of the Japanese homeland. During the last six days of the month crews of the 823d flew a mission a day against Japanese shipping. On 28 July, 8 B-25's loaded with 500 pound bombs, bombed strafed and probably&mdash;if not certainly&mdash;sank two small cargo vessels. Not satisfied with that accomplishment they went on to Japan and bombed and strafed the railway yards at Sadohara. Six of the squadron's Mitchell's set out from Yontan on 29 July to see what they could find. Again it proved to be two small cargo vessels. A trio of direct hits was more than enough for one and a near miss took care of the other. With their appetites whetted three of the 823d's crews, accompanied by six planes from another squadron, headed for Honshu, Japan and bombed and strafed that Islands town of Sendai. Totals for the six days were 38 sorties, 25.5 tons of bombs and 59,955 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition. Two planes and crews were lost. Antiaircraft fire cost the squadron one B-25 and its entire crew during the mission on 26 July. On the following day, a bomb skipped through a Japanese ship and hit the tail of one of the 823d's planes causing it to crash head-on into the sea; there were no survivors. So ended July 1945. During the two weeks that there remained of the war in the Pacific, members of the 823d had little respite. No missions were flown on 2 and 3 August, but on each of the other days from 1 through 12 August at least six of the squadron's B-25's took to the air, helping to destroy the enemy's ability and will to fight. Targets were shipping (two missions), Kagachiura, Taramizu, Kagashima, a railroad bridge near Kagashima, Noma, railroad and

highway bridges and a factory near Taurusaki, Naga and Otono, Minato and Saga. All of the towns, except Minato. Are on Kyushu; Minato is on Tsu Shima. The shipping strikes resulted in the sinking of four cargo vessels and one destroyer. The 823d encountered no enemy air opposition during August, and its B-25's suffered only slight ack-ack damage. Following the Japanese surrender, members of the 823d settled down to the business of becoming part of the postwar occupation forces. On Sunday, 16 September, a typhoon hit Okinawa and played havoc with the tents and other gear at Yontan airdrome. Rain added to the discomfort of everyone present. It was estimated that 85 percent of the living quarters and 50 percent of the offices were badly damaged. More than a week was required to restore the squadron area to something like its normal state. On 9 October an even more violent typhoon raked Okinawa, wreaking even greater destruction on Tiger Town than had been caused by the wind and rain of 16 September. As the squadron's historical officer wrote: "It tore up the tents, tore down the shacks, and tossed the mess hall, telephone exchange and latrine into the 822d's area. To quote again: "Two tents from the enlisted men's area were last seen on a compass heading of 160 degrees followed by three air mattresses, the supply tent, and six cases of PX beer". When at last the long wretched night was over, and the inky darkness was dispelled by the light of dawn, a chaos of destruction was revealed. Debris, ankle deep, littered the entire squadron area. Sadly and wearily, the officers and men of the 823d, for the second time within a month, went about the task of rebuilding and restoring order to Tiger Town. On 10 November 1945 the members of the ground echelon of the 823d embarked on the long awaited journey to Japan. For six days their ship lay at anchor in Buckner Bay, on the south east coast of Okinawa; they arrived at Sasebo on 20 November and on the following day were setting up their camp at Fukuoka, Kyushu, Japan. The air echelon, left behind to clean up, rejoined the squadron 25 November. Flying time for the air crews of the 823d totaled 206:20 during November. There were 44 training, 10 ferry, 6 courier, three weather, and three instrument flights and two test hops. During December all squadron personnel were busily engaged in efforts to make their new home more livable. The officers' club and the Enlisted men's Club opened with Christmas Eve parties, at which, it is reported, wine and song were plentiful. The new mess hall opened in time to serve an excellent turkey dinner on Christmas day. On 10 January 1946 the 823d Bombardment Squadron, Medium was reduced to a record keeping status of one officer and one enlisted man. The great majority of the officers and men of the squadron were redeployed to the Zone of Interior; the few that were not eligible for redeployment were reassigned to other units. The 823d Bombardment squadron was inactivated, effective 12 April 1946. The squadron took a new lease on life on 10 September 1962; a Headquarters, United States Air Force letter redesignated it the 823d Tactical Missile Squadron, activated it, and assigned it to the United States Air Forces in Europe for organization, and for further assignment to the 38th Tactical Missile Wing, on or about 18 September 1962.

**ASSIGNMENTS** 38th Bombardment Group, Medium 20 Apr - 12 Apr 46 United States Air Forces in Europe 10 Sep \_c.- 18 Sep 62 38th Tactical Missile Wing c. 18 Sep 62 &ndash;

**STATIONS** Australia 20 Apr 43 &ndash; 22 June 43 Durand Airdrome, Port Moresby, New Guinea 22 June 42 - Mar 44 Nadzab, New Guinea Mar 44 - 15 Oct 44 Morotai 15 Oct 44 - 29 Jan 45 Lingayen, Philippine Islands 29 Jan 45 - 25 July 45 Yontan Airdrome, Okinawa 25 July 45 - 16 Nov 45 Fukuoka, Kyushu 21 Nov 45 - 12 Apr 46

**COMMANDERS** Capt. (later Maj.) Barney Johnson by 24 June 43 unknown Capt. (later Maj.) Holland Legg by Oct 43 22 Jan 44 Capt. (later Maj.) Leonard Geissel by 21 Aug 44 Dec 44 Capt. (later Maj.) Vernon D. Torgerson Dec 44 31 Mar 45 Capt. Zane E. Corbin 31 Mar 45 Jun 45 Capt. (later Maj.) Jack D. Johnson Jun 45 9 Nov 45 1st Lt. Richard L. Creed 9 Nov 45 11 Jan 46 Capt. Everett J. McLean, Jr 11 Jan 46 12 Apr 46

**AIRCRAFT** B-25 Mitchell - 10 Oct 43 - 10 Jan 46