

### 3rd Bomb History

The committee has given me my assignment. Be brief. Be historic. Be brief. In my business that means holding it to 500 words. With inflation, this account runs to double that.

Vini Vidi Vici. I came I saw I conquered. So said Caesar upon his triumphant return to Rome in the year 47 BC. That famous brief review of events more than two thousand years ago, could well have been paraphrased in 1945 by the Third Attack Group. Vini Vidi Vici. We came We saw We conquered.

The Third Attack Group history spans fewer years than many of its wartime members here today. It Started in 1919 as a surveillance outfit along the Mexican border in the DH4B type machine. Its ground crews maintained, and its pilots and crewmen flew, a lot of planes most of us youngsters never heard of.

That list includes the O-1, the O-2, the A-5, the A-12, the A-17, the A-18, the A-20. and the A-24. All of those before WWII.

The outfit was redesignated the 3rd Attack Group in 1921, and re-named the 3rd Bombardment Group (Light), in 1939.

We even carried the air mail in 1934. On a connective note, The commanding officer of that 3rd Attack airmail venture was Lt. Col Horace Hickam. He was killed flying Army planes later the same year. The new Army Air Field at Honolulu was named in Col. Hickam's honor. His nephew, Elliot Hickam, was a pilot with the 89th Sqdn. during much of the New Guinea campaign. Until his health failed, he regularly attended these reunions. His plane was "Izzy Cheesecake", a solid "Character".

Listed among our group's distinguished alumni was Jimmy Doolittle. While assigned to the 90th swardon in 1922 he broke all records, flying from Florida to California in 22 hours and 30 minutes.

The Third Attack was one of the first Army Air Corps groups sent to the Pacific Theater after Pearl Harbor. Its early war history is not all that glamorous. According to one account in "Memories of Flight", published two years ago, The group went overseas without a single airplane to maintain, or fly. Lt.



Strickland set up shop at Charters Towers up the coast from Brisbane Mar. 10, 1942. He commanded a force of 17 officers and 784 enlisted men. They still had no planes and precious few ground vehicles.

A few old A-24 types arrived after the Philippines fell, and were assigned to the 8th sqdn. Still no planes for the other three squadrons. Commanding officer Col. John Davies managed to "acquire" 24 late model B-25's parked on a runway at Bachelor Field outside Brisbane. They were assigned to the 13th and 90th squadrons. The 89th was saddled with the other squadrons' maintenance, and still no airplanes.

In August of 1942 the first A-20's arrived, and were turned over to the 89th. Pappy Gunn worked his gun wonders, and the rest is history. A-20's were flown by that squadron until the end of the war. Other A-20's arrived, and the three squadrons of B-25's were quickly traded in for the faster, more nimble A-20 type aircraft.

The Third Attack took part in every major campaign for the next 18 months, aiding in the Allied push up the New Guinea Coast, through the Philippines campaign, and on to Japan. Its personnel and planes were moved to Port Moresby, New Guinea, Jan. 28, 1943; to Dobodura, May 20; Nadzab, Feb. 3, 1944; Hollandia, Dutch New Guinea, May 12, 1944; Dulag, Leyte, PI, Nov. 16, 1944; San Jose Mindoro, PI, Dec. 30, 1944; Okinawa, Aug. 6, 1945; Atsugi, Japan, Sept 8, 1945; Yokota, Japan, 1 Sept., 1946; Johnson AB, Japan, Mar. 15, 1950; Iwakuni, Japan, July 1, 1950; Kunsan, Korea, Aug. 22, 1951; Johnson AB, Japan, 5 Oct. 1954.

Its distinguished roster of commanding officers would have to include, from WWII; Col John Davies, Lt. Col Robert Strickland, Lt. Col James Downs, Col. John P. Henebry (who is with us today); Lt. Col Richard Ellis (who later commanded SAC) ; Col. Charles Howe; and Lt. Col. James Sweeney.

Campaigns during WWII? almost too many to list, but they would have to include: East Indies: Air Offensive, Japan; China Defensive; Papua New Guinea, Dutch New Guinea; Bismarck Archipelago; Western Pacific; Leyte; Luzon.

The Third Bomb Group was awarded two Presidential Citations, a Distinguished Unit Citation, and numerous accolades during WWII. Its personnel and planes never failed to perform, as the Aussies would say, "At Full Bore".

Perhaps the very best account of the 3rd Bomb Group and its journey through WWII is the account of our own 89th Squadron. It is titled "Altitude Minimum." Its 148 pages of text and pictures was published by the squadron members in 1945. Much of my information came from that source. Credit where credit is due. Thank You Bill Houha, where ever you are.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to have served with the 89th Squadron, 3rd Bomb Group, 5th Air Force. Thank you for your attention during this brief and incomplete history of same.

Gen. Ron Fogleman