

CHAPTER 8

110th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron “The Musketeers”

The 110th TRS moved from Tadjik to Biak in September 1944 with a mixed collection of P-40Ns which they had swapped for their previous P-39Ns and Qs, their mainstay platform in New Guinea. The P-40Ns were a temporary squadron inventory pending acquisition of Mustangs, the first of which the unit started receiving at Lingayen in February 1945. Nearly all of these were F-6Ks and P-51Ks, however around mid-1945 it began receiving P-51D-20s as replacements.

Major Rubel Archuleta from New Mexico was the 110th TRS commander who oversaw the unit's transition to the Mustang, replaced by Captain (later Major) George Noland in mid-1945. A schoolteacher before the war, Archuleta had first taken command of the squadron in the USA as an Air National Guard outfit based in St Louis.

The squadron moved to Ie Shima on 28 July 1945, and after the war moved operations to Chofu, Japan, on 6 October 1945. The 110th TRS lost no Mustangs to combat, however seven were lost to various other causes including one mid-air and one runway collision. An unusual airframe loss occurred on 11 April 1945 when Lieutenant Harry Johnson's Mustang was blown over on its back after landing in high wind at Lingayen.

Markings

The 110th TRS used squadron numbers in the 10 to 39 range for its Mustangs. In addition to applying the number to the fin, the squadron also applied the number to the forward underneath of the fuselage. The most ubiquitous spinner markings were a white forward half with a black band behind, with the rear section left in NMF. Some aircraft only had one invasion stripe on the fuselage whilst others chose to apply a white band between the two invasion markings. By mid-1945 most of the 110th TRS's Mustangs also had the squadron logo applied to both sides of the fuselage. All fins had a white tip with thin black piping.

The unit insignia first featured a Missouri mule against a backdrop of telescopes and machineguns. However, the 110th TRS changed its name to The Flying Musketeers once it acquired the Mustang. Both logos featured a yellow background with blue border.