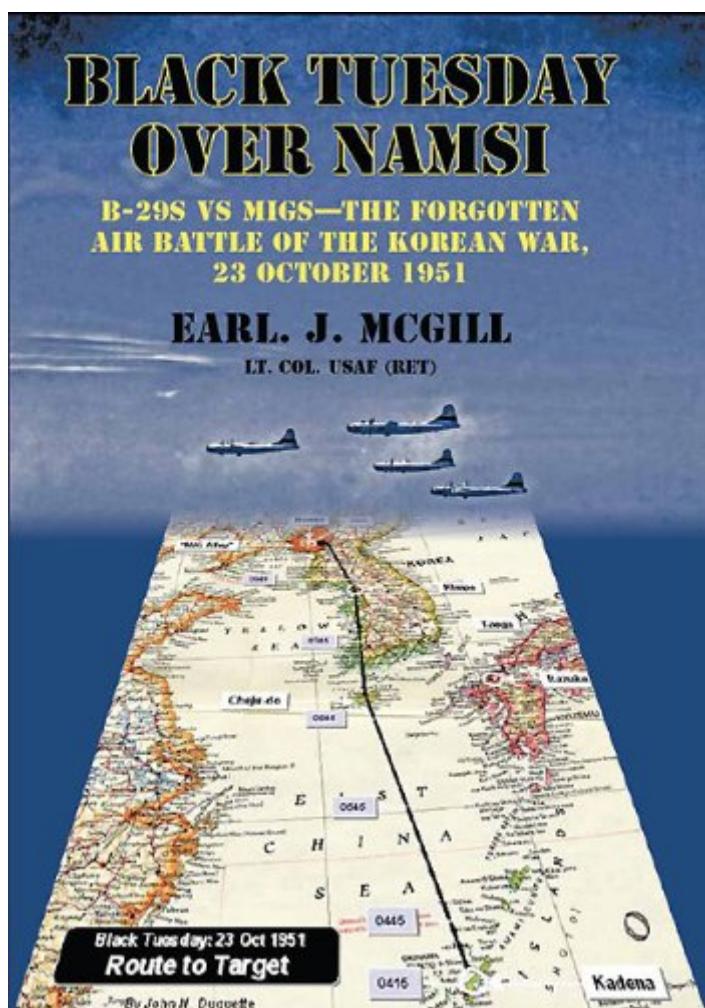


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# Black Tuesday Over Namsi: B-29s Vs MiGs – The Forgotten Air Battle Of The Korean War, 23 October 1951



## **Synopsis**

An hour and a half before sunup, nine B-29s of the 307th Bombardment Wing lifted off from Kadena Air Force Base, Okinawa on a bombing mission against Namsi, a North Korean airfield under construction in the heart of MiG Alley. Five and a half hours later they would engage in an air battle that would forever change the conduct of strategic aerial bombardment. Six of the nine would not return, the highest percentage of United States bombers ever lost on a major mission. Astonishingly, virtually nothing has been published about this event. Official Air Force historical records mention it only in passing and literature of the period too often emphasizes the gung-ho aspect than the grim reality of war. *Black Tuesday Over Namsi* chronicles the calamitous B-29 daylight-bombing mission flown by the 307th Bombardment Wing on 23 October 1951 against Namsi Airfield. What many experts consider the epic air battle of the Korean War and perhaps the greatest jet engagement in the history of aerial warfare has largely become another forgotten battle in a forgotten war. Here, Lt. Col McGill presents the facts and circumstances of the mission from first briefing to final landing. This book also records, from verifiable historical documents, the broader events and conditions that led up to the confrontation, plus the firsthand accounts of aircrew members and ground personnel who were there. Allied and Soviet perspectives are examined; statements made by the MiG pilots describe the attack; and eyewitnesses to the event have supplied photographs of the mission and its aftermath, including the aerial photo of the Namsi Airfield that was used to plan the mission. This thoroughly researched narrative history is enhanced by numerous photographs, a bibliography, and an index to full names, places and subjects. This is the story of the Americans and Russians who clashed in the skies above Namsi, the events leading up to it, Black Tuesday's historical impact on aerial warfare, and, for the first time, fresh conclusions based on a careful analysis of the specific factors that went into the execution of this and other bombing missions.

## **Book Information**

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## Customer Reviews

Simply the most detailed book about a single aerial combat I have ever read. The author, a long-serving now retired SAC airman, was able to interview many of the participants of the battle that day. This includes several of the Russian MiG pilots. He described the names and positions of all the crewman on the aircraft that day, and where they were minute by minute throughout the battle. He is very hard on the Air Force brass who ordered the mission. The book is both very technical and very gameable, which are positives for me, but may put off some other readers. One of the best things was he finished the book with biographies of most of the participants and their ultimate fate. Many are still alive, many have passed away, and it was a fitting conclusion to an excellent read.

Author Earl J. McGill, retired Lt. Colonel USAF, writes with authority about the mission over Namsi that originated on 23 October 1951 from Kadena Air Force Base, Okinawa. He was stationed there at that time. He has thoroughly researched all available Korean War material about that tragic day over Namsi. The book is illustrated with numerous photographs of B-29s and their crews. McGill sorts through many controversial historical accounts and arrives at logical evaluations of the material. He describes the military decisions that led to sending nine B-29s to Namsi on that fateful Tuesday, discusses Russian and American government records of the battle, and concludes with a reasoned evaluation of this event. This must-read book will promote understanding and appreciation of a "forgotten battle" of the Korean War.

Colonel McGill deserves the thanks of all the Air Force personnel that maintained and flew B29s in the Korean War for his is the most correct version of what took place in that conflict on that fateful day. He spent years researching official info, but spent more time contacting individuals that were

involved in the operation of the mission and getting the facts as the participants remembered them. The story is well written and he deserves the gratitude that is due for such an outstanding accomplishment!!!!

My Dad was a B29 crewman in Korea, in the 19th Bomb Group, same as Lt Colonel McGill. Dad was there from the very beginning, and he never really talked about it. I take the opportunity to read as much as I can about the 19th, and Colonel McGill's book is a fascinating study on a little known mission that changed AF Policy. Well written, informative, and studiously researched, Colonel McGill makes the mission come alive, to the point where you can almost smell the fear, feel the airframes shudder as the planes take the hits, and understand what it meant to be a crewman on this mission. I hope that Colonel McGill will write more about this forgotten part of the Korean Conflict, bring more to life and help us understand what happened. This is a very well written, very informative and very captivating story, told by someone who understands the subject matter and knows the story. Allow him to share it with you, and you will not be disappointed.

"Mac" has done a masterful job reporting the facts. I nearly missed it because of the title. It isn't just about October 23rd over Namsi. I can testify to his accuracy on the October 24th mission because I was there. That leads me to believe he has been accurate on the entire story. If you have any interest in Korean War history, don't miss it!

Col. McGill has written an important book on this event and on the Korean War in general. His research and preparation was exhaustive. I was a crewman on that mission and learned much I did not know when I read the book. His interviews with the Russian pilots was particularly impressive to me. His book is even more important when you realize the Korean War is known as the "forgotten war". Thank you Col. McGill for assuring that the sacrifices of those who failed to return will be remembered. Dewell Turner

I love to read military aviation history (the majority of which is centered on World War II) so I was really taken by the subject matter of this book. I feel the author did a great job crafting a book that is both compelling and informative. My exposure to Korean War reading material has been limited, but this book has sparked an interest to learn more. The air battle on the Namsi mission was comparable to some of the major 8th Air Force raids of WWII, yet is hardly known. This book is well worth a look.

This is one of the stories about little known battles over Korea that you rarely hear about. Partly because it was not a great American victory and partly because the war was not well covered. I found it was very interesting because of my interest in first generation jets. I was surprised at how ineffective the F80's and F84's were against the Mig15's. The Mig's just ignored them and attacked the bombers. "Black Tuesday" was a great read that kept me interested.

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