

The Untold Story: Red Christmas - The Tatsinskaya Airfield Raid 1942

December 25, 1942, marked a significant turning point in World War II. While the world celebrated Christmas, a secret and daring operation was taking place deep within enemy territory. This operation, codenamed "Red Christmas," would go down in history as one of the most audacious and successful raids of all time.

The Battle for Stalingrad

The Tatsinskaya Airfield Raid was a part of the larger Battle of Stalingrad. The battle, which lasted from August 23, 1942, to February 2, 1943, was a critical turning point in the war, as the Soviet Union fought to defend its strategic city of Stalingrad from the invading German forces.

The German Luftwaffe, having established control over vast areas of Soviet territory, needed airfields closer to Stalingrad in order to support their ground forces. The Tatsinskaya Airfield, located around 170 kilometers west of the city, became a vital logistical hub for the Germans.



Red Christmas: The Tatsinskaya Airfield Raid 1942

by Robert Forczyk (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 22158 KB
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Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 83 pages
X-Ray for textbooks	: Enabled



The Plan

As the Soviets realized the importance of the Tatsinskaya Airfield, they devised a plan to cripple the German supply lines and disrupt their operations. The plan involved a large-scale airborne assault, aiming to destroy enemy aircraft, fuel depots, and ammunition dumps, effectively paralyzing the airfield.

Months of meticulous planning and preparation led to the selection of the 8th Airborne Guards Division, under the command of General Vasily Glazunov, to carry out the mission. The division consisted of experienced and highly trained soldiers who were ready for the perilous task ahead.

The Raid

On the night of December 24, 1942, under the cover of darkness and amid freezing temperatures, the Soviet airborne troops were dropped near the Tatsinskaya Airfield. They faced numerous challenges, including minefields, barbed wire fences, and enemy patrols.

Despite the difficulties, the airborne troops pushed forward with determination and resilience. They swiftly overwhelmed the German defenses and launched a surprise attack on the airfield. In a matter of hours, they took control of the airfield, destroyed over 40 aircraft, and sabotaged fuel and ammunition supplies.

The success of the raid relied heavily on the element of surprise. The Germans, caught off guard and anticipating no major attack during the Christmas holiday, were ill-prepared to defend against such a large-scale assault.

The Aftermath

The Tatsinskaya Airfield Raid was a resounding success for the Soviet Union. The impact of the raid went far beyond the physical destruction it caused. It was a psychological blow to the German forces, as it shattered their perception of invincibility and dealt a significant blow to their logistical capabilities.

The German response was swift, as they sought to reestablish their control over the airfield. However, the damage had already been done. The raid had disrupted the German supply lines and forced them to rethink their strategy.

The Tatsinskaya Airfield Raid also showcased the bravery and skill of the Soviet airborne troops. Their audacity and ability to execute such a daring mission in adverse conditions were instrumental to the success of the operation.

The Legacy of Red Christmas

The Tatsinskaya Airfield Raid became a symbol of Soviet resilience and determination in the face of overwhelming odds. It remains one of the defining moments of World War II and highlights the importance of strategic planning and execution.

The success of Red Christmas had a ripple effect on the Eastern Front. It gave the Soviet Union a much-needed boost in morale and dealt a blow to the German war machine. The raid also showcased the effectiveness of airborne operations and their potential impact on future conflicts.

As we remember the heroes of Red Christmas, it is crucial to never forget their sacrifice and the pivotal role they played in shaping the outcome of World War II. Their daring raid serves as a reminder of the bravery and determination required to overcome seemingly insurmountable challenges and achieve victory.

The Tatsinskaya Airfield Raid, codenamed Red Christmas, was a remarkable military operation that had a profound impact on the outcome of World War II. The audacity, skill, and determination of the Soviet airborne troops showcased in this raid remain an inspiration to this day.

The legacy of Red Christmas serves as a testament to the power of strategic planning, effective execution, and the resolve to overcome adversity. The heroes of Red Christmas will forever be remembered as true champions of freedom and as individuals who changed the course of history with their unwavering courage.



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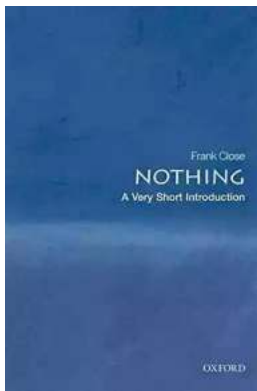
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By December 1942, the Soviets had surrounded the German 6th Army in Stalingrad, cutting off all lines of supply except through the air. Seeking to sever this last German lifeline, Soviet Command decided to launch a raid with the entire 24th Tank Corps to seize the airfield at Tatsinskaya, the primary operating base for the German airlift efforts. On 17 December, the 24th Tank Corps advanced toward Tatsinskaya, seizing the airfield on Christmas Eve. The Soviet tankers succeeded in destroying many Luftwaffe aircraft on the ground, but afterwards

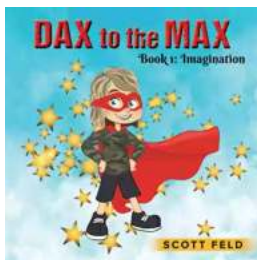
found themselves isolated and out of fuel behind the German lines.

Generalfeldmarschall Erich von Manstein rapidly organized a counterattack with elements of two panzer divisions, crushing most of the raiding force between 26 and 28 December. Just before the raiding force was annihilated, it received permission to abandon its heavy equipment and escape back to Soviet lines on foot. Thus, the raiders accomplished their mission of severely disrupting the airlift to Stalingrad, but at the cost of an entire tank corps.



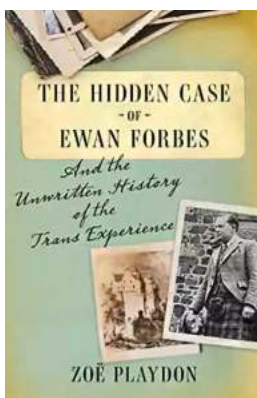
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