

B-24 LIBERATOR PRODUCTION SERIAL NUMBERS DEBUGGED THE MOST PRODUCED ALLIED AIRCRAFT OF WORLD WAR TWO

B-24 SERIAL NUMBERS

HOW TO IDENTIFY YOUR LIBERATOR

The aircraft serial number can tell you which of the five factories the B-24 was made in and can reveal the model number and sub group as well. The first two digits signify the fiscal year the contract was signed for a particular batch. Thus the prefix 42- shows a fiscal 1942 contract date. The planes in most cases were delivered after that date. Later on during the war, the first digit was often dropped from the one shown on the horizontal stabilizer, it being assumed the war would end before 1950, so there would be no need to show the number 4 signifying 1940-49. The next number was assigned in blocks of five to the various manufacturers. Thus 44-41149 was a B-24J-200 model built by Consolidated Aircraft in San Diego, California. The numbers 149 in the above example are the serial numbers 44-41(149). The two letter code following the model designator stenciled on the left side of the aircraft below and slightly forward of the pilots sliding window identified the factory and location.

CF=Consolidated, Ft Worth, TX
 CO=Consolidated, San Diego, CA
 DT=Douglas, Tulsa, OK
 FO=Ford, Willow Run, MI
 NT=North American, Dallas, TX

Thus a B-24L-20 FO would be a Ford built at Willow Run, Michigan B-24L Sub-model 20.

Model Numbers of the B-24 Series

Model	No Built	Factory
XB-24	1	CO
LB-30A	6	CO
YB-24	1	CO
B-24A	9	CO
LIB II	140	CO
B-24C	9	CO
B-24D	2728	CO,CF
B-24E	801	CF,FO,DT
B-24G	430	NT
B-24H	3100	CF,FO,DT
B-24J	6678	CO,CF,FO,DT,NT
B24L	1667	CO,FO
B-24M	2593	CO,FO
XB-24N	1	FO
YB-24N	7	FO

It can be seen from this list that more H and J models were built than any other. Original equipment for the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups were either J or H models. It is reported that a few earlier models may have been substituted as it is known that the groups of the 15th Air Force did swap planes from time to time as needs dictated. Replacement crews ferrying aircraft to the groups delivered J, and H models as well as L and M models.

All B-24 types manufactured, including the C-87 all cargo version, and naval patrol bombers total 19,256. There were more B-24 series built in the United States than any other aircraft type, including the B-17.

Selected serial numbers of models used by the 461st & 484th Bomb Groups. Each block number represents variations to the basic model. The factories were dependent on the many vendors who manufactured and supplied parts to aircraft factories. As an example, the Buick division of General Motors manufactured the R-1830 engines for certain block numbers while Pratt & Whitney provided engines for other blocks. Chandler-Evans and Stromberg supplied carburetors. The Chandler-Evans carburetor had different fuel flow settings than the Stromberg, and had to be adjusted accordingly. While these slight differences were reflected in different model numbers, the flight characteristics were often quite noticeable. Some crews had very strong dislikes for Ford built aircraft while others preferred them.

The sub model numbers are not shown in the following serial numbers:

41-28574 to 41-29006	B-24H-DT
41-29116 to 41-28608	B-24H-CF
42-7465 to 42-7769	B-24H-FO
42-50277 to 42-50451	B-24H-CF
42-50452 to 42-50508	B-24H-CF
42-50509 to 42-51076	B-24J-FO
42-51077 to 42-51225	B-24H-DT
42-51226 to 42-51430	B-24J-DT
42-51431 to 42-52076	B-24J-FO
42-52077 to 42-52776	B-24J-FO
42-64047 to 42-64394	B-24J-CF
42-64432 to 42-64501	B-24H-CF
42-72964 to 42-73514	B-24J-CO
42-78475 to 42-78794	B-24J-NT
42-94729 to 42-95503	B-24H-FO
42-95504 to 42-95628	B-24J-FO
42-99736 to 42-99935	B-24J-CF
42-99936 to 42-100435	B-24J-CO
42-109789 42-110188	B-24J-CO
44-10253 to 44-10752	B-24J-CF
44-28061 to 44-28276	B-24J-NT
44-40049 to 44-41389	B-24J-CO
44-41390 to 44-41806	B-24L-CO
44-41807 to 44-42722	B-24M-FO
44-44049 to 44-44501	B-24J-CF
44-48754 to 44-49001	B-24J-FO
44-49001 to 44-50251	B-24L-FO
44-50252 to 44-51928	B-24M-FO

Model variations and manufacturing differences could result in varying flight characteristics. Fuel burn out, to use an example, could vary considerably. This might explain why some crews flying certain aircraft on a particular mission would use more fuel than the mission plan and run into great difficulty reaching base, while others would land with reserve fuel. When it was practical from an operational standpoint, crews were often assigned to one or two aircraft in the squadron for this very reason, so that they could become familiarized with a particular plane's idiosyncrasies.

Also of interest is to note that the first B-24 weighed about 30,000 pounds while a fully loaded B-24J would gross about 71,000 lbs making them increasingly difficult to fly in formation at operational altitudes of 19,000 to 21,000 feet. A formation stick that worked through the C-1 autopilot was added to later models to relieve the strain on the pilots.

