

the tower to us, we did not monitor the radio conversations of the B-17 pilots, but I am certain they were very disturbed, especially being inconvenienced by a broken down B-24 stuck on their runway.

Finally a tow truck came out to tow our aircraft off the runway and on to a hardstand. We left the aircraft, went to debriefing and retired quietly to some quarters for rest and food. The next day I requested the ground crew to measure the amount of fuel remaining in the tanks. The report came back that all were empty, except the center fuel tank that had 5 gallons remaining.

We were most grateful that we had been able to find a landing strip and to land and survive. No one at this base knew of our ordeal. We were re-fueled and took off for our field near Torretta, about a half hour's flying time away.

When we got home there were guards posted at each of our tents, since the squadron officer must have assumed that we had been lost in combat.

What a great day! We celebrated our return by going to the chapel and praying, giving thanks for the Lord having watched over us one more time.

The B-24 with its fuel system transfer saved our lives. We had practiced and trained many times for the procedure of fuel transfer. The training on the fuel transfer system saved our lives.

Our crew always had confidence in the aircraft, confidence in each other to perform each of our duties, and especially in this situation, to Sgt Querry, the engineer, for his skill in transferring and balancing the fuel from one tank to another.

Appreciation goes to bombardier Hatfield and the navigator Denninger for their skillful navigation to get us to "Darn Thing" landing strip, and to Bob Sheldon for his skill in piloting our aircraft to a safe landing.

We all completed 33 missions. The name of the aircraft ironically was "Pot Luck," a B-24 G. Captain Reed Sprinkel flew Able One on six of his missions

"The flight experience took me back 46 years when I flew as a pilot on the aircraft. Tracy Denninger, my navigator, joined me on this flight. I relived flying in formation, turning on to the IP and 'bombs away' over our targets. Yes! I think I saw a few ME-109s coming in 12 o'clock high."

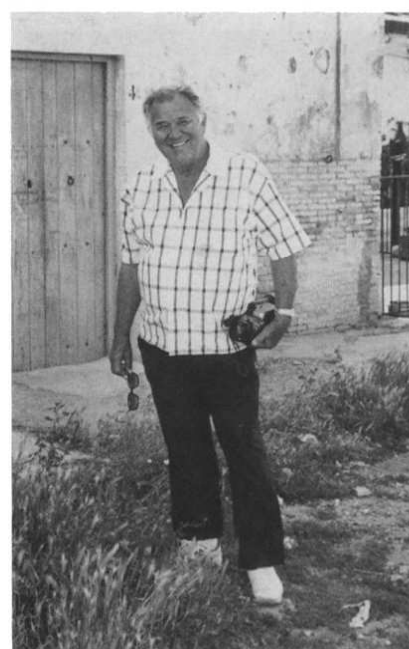


This photo taken at Torretta may be the headquarters area of the 484th

In a recent letter Reed Sprinkel wrote the following:

I experienced a thrilling experience on Sunday March 18, 1990. I piloted the B-24J "All American" for 30 minutes during a flight from Ft Lauderdale International Airport to Kissimmee Airport, Florida.

The flight experience took me back 46 years when I flew as a pilot on the aircraft. Tracy Denninger, my navigator, joined me



on this flight. I relived flying in formation, turning on to the IP and 'bombs away' over our targets. Yes! I think I saw a few ME-109s coming in 12 o'clock high.

Rita and I visited Torretta field last year. It was a great experience to walk around the old buildings and to locate the mess hall, officers mess, headquarters staff offices, and the building where the church services were held, and the briefing room. Of course, all of our tents with tuff block walls are gone as well as the PSP runway and hardstands. The valley to the north,

where we would dip down into to gain airspeed is now a lake.

With best wishes,
Reed Sprinkel , 825 sq