



When the B-24 was first designed. Fighter attacks were assumed to come from the rear, and armor plate was installed as shown in this drawing. The Luftwaffe's bold head on attacks rendered this placement useless.

Aviation Archeology

In England crash sites were evacuated and hard items were found: such as guns, engines, and propellers that would survive a crash, even after decades in the hard ground. The aircraft parts were lifted out, cleaned up and put in small museums at former USAF airfields in the East Anglian farmland. When asked why the English wanted to preserve the material of the American Air Forces, their reply was, "It happened here on our land."

Curiosity about The Air War 1939-1945

There was similar curiosity when one of the 484th aircraft was shot down over Europe and the Balkans where citizens, enemy or friendly, took great interest in the crash site. They wanted to know all about the mission, how the plane was brought down, and so on. Citizens and soldiers alike would often care for the wounded and dead by seeking medical aid, and arranging for humane burials.

Now with the cold war over, and many citizens of the former communist countries of Eastern Europe are enjoying their new freedoms, they are more curious than ever about the air war. They seek information from the National Archives in Washington DC, and at Maxwell Field in Alabama. They seek aircraft numbers, crew lists, bombing missions, and related data. Regular mail inquiries began about 12 years ago, from men who witnessed the war as children in Germany and Austria, and related to us their experience of dodging bombs while being awe struck from the drama of thousands of bombers awakening the neighborhoods with their thunderous engine roar. Of sunlight bouncing off the silver airplanes, and too of fluttering aluminum parts that would catch the light like a falling metal leaf.

The Success Of E-Mail

Since the advent of E-Mail, the number of inquiries from Europe and the USA that are being mailed to this website is growing. There are interested parties who are trying to fill out their own knowledge of the air war. Their interest in WWII is the same as with the English, it happened over and on their land. This new interest is heartening to members because of the need for more information. This hopefully will bring all peoples of the world closer together. Also it can awaken need for the preservation of privately held WWII documents and personal histories and result in increasing the pressure for more libraries and archives.

Europe's Hospitality

We have had inquiries from overseas from interested parties who want to know everything about the bombing missions of the American Air Forces. Because of the effect the bombing had on their lives, the memories are forever etched in their minds. They have expressed special interest in the disposition of the flight crews, and the aircraft, serial number, and the aircraft name. Some association members have returned to the spot where they fell. The citizens of friendly and former enemy countries who witnessed a particular crash have invited the Americans back with their families. Members who have returned to Europe have reported that these visits were very enjoyable.

No Tests Given In Training

In training during the war, due to the expediency of getting troops into battle quickly, grades were not often given at the end of classes. If one hoped to survive and return home after the war, the soldier had to pay close attention to what was being taught. A flyer had to learn his aircraft and weapons like the back of his own hand. There was no cheating or use of crib sheets in combat. It was best to get the information stuffed between your ears for instant recall, or your butt and those of your aircrew buddies would be put in peril.

The Torretta Flyer and Membership

The above is an example of what appears on the pages of the 484th's magazine, "The Torretta Flyer." The Flyer is mailed to all regular and associate members of the association. "The Torretta Flyer," a 40 page slick paper magazine is issued twice a year. Regular membership is open to any veteran of the American forces who was assigned to Torretta Field, Italy during 1944-1945. Associate membership to bona fide veterans of the USA of any war or service is available too within the limits specified by the IRS. At the time of this writing associate memberships are open.