

"Memphis Belle"

19th May 1943

by Osprey



The crew of the B-17 Flying Fortress "Memphis Belle" is shown at an air base in England after completing 25 missions over enemy territory on June 7, 1943.

They are, left to right: Tech. Sgt. Harold P. Loch of Green Bay, Wis., top turret gunner; Staff Sgt. Cecil H. Scott of Altoona, Penn., ball turret gunner; Tech. Sgt. Robert J. Hanson of Walla Walla, Wash., radio operator; Capt. James A. Verinis, New Haven, Conn., co-pilot; Capt. Robert K. Morgan of Ashville, N. C., pilot; Capt. Charles B. Leighton of Lansing, Mich., navigator; Staff Sgt. John P. Quinlan of Yonkers, N. Y., tail gunner; Staff Sgt. Casimer A. Nastal of Detroit, Mich., waist gunner; Capt. Vincent B. Evans of Henderson, Texas, bombardier and Staff Sgt. Clarence E. Wichell of Oak Park, Ill., waist gunner

Nevertheless, the sheer tonnage of explosive delivered by day and by night was eventually sufficient to cause widespread damage, and, more importantly from a military point of view, forced Germany to divert resources to counter it. This was to be the real significance of the Allied strategic bombing campaign—resource allocation.



It wasn't just bombs which were dropped.

This leaflet wages a mind war on the population by outlining a comparison of bombs dropped against each other.

Formations of unescorted bombers were no match for German fighters, which inflicted a deadly toll. In despair, the Eighth halted air operations over Germany until a long-range fighter could be found. In late 1943, the P-51B Mustang was introduced to the European Theater. It could fly as far on its internal fuel tanks as the P-47 could with drop tanks. However the P-51B was introduced as a tactical fighter, so the first deliveries of the P-51B in November 1943 were assigned to three groups in the tactical Ninth Air Force at the expense of VIII Bomber Command, whose need for a long range escort fighter was critical. The first escort mission for the bombers was not flown until December 5.



B-24 Liberators were heavily involved but overshadowed by the popular B-17 Fortress

The effect of the Mustang on the Luftwaffe was swift and decisive. The result was that the Luftwaffe was notable by its absence and over the skies of the Europe after D-Day and the Allies were starting to achieve air superiority over the continent. Although the Luftwaffe could, and did mount effective attacks on the ever larger formations of Allied heavy bombers, the sheer numbers of B-17s and B-24s attacking enemy targets was overwhelming the German fighter force, which simply could not sustain the losses the Eighth Air Force bombers and fighters were inflicting on it. However the daylight raids came at a price. In total the Mighty 8th suffered 47,000 casualties in European raids.



B17G's had to fly through heavy and accurate flak.

THE BOMBING EFFORT STATISTICAL SUMMARY

	UNITED STATES ARMY AIR FORCES	ROYAL AIR FORCE
TONS OF BOMBS DROPPED	1,463,423	1,307,117
BOMBER SORTIES	754,818	687,462
FIGHTER SORTIES	931,730	1,695,049
CLAIMED ENEMY AIRCRAFT DESTROYED AND PROBABLY DESTROYED	33,783	21,622
BOMBER PLANES LOST	9,949	11,965
FIGHTER PLANES LOST	8,420	10,045
PERSONNEL LOST IN ACTION	79,265	79,261
BOMBER PLANES ASSIGNED TO COMBAT UNITS	March 1945: 7,177	April 1945: 6,956
FIGHTER PLANES ASSIGNED TO COMBAT UNITS	May 1945: 6,203	August 1944: 7,726
PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO COMBAT UNITS	August 1944: 619,020	July 1944: 718,628

‡ All Royal Air Force statistics quoted in this report are preliminary or tentative

‡ includes fighter bombers and reconnaissance planes

‡ Maximum strength of each air force

.....some interesting claims by USAAF

65% total sorties flown yet claimed 70% more enemy destroyed ;:-)

Memphis Belle was the B-17F Flying Fortress during the Second World War that inspired the making of two motion pictures: a 1944 documentary film, *Memphis Belle: A Story of a Flying Fortress*, and a 1990 Hollywood feature film, *Memphis Belle*. It was the first U.S. Army Air Forces heavy bombers to complete 25 combat missions. The plane and crew then returned to the United States to sell war bonds. The original airplane is undergoing extensive restoration at the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Dayton, Ohio.

The *Memphis Belle*, a Boeing-built B-17F-10-BO, serial 41-24485, was added to the USAAF inventory on July 15, 1942, and delivered in September 1942 to the 91st Bomb Group at Dow Field, Bangor, Maine. It deployed to Prestwick, Scotland, on September 30, 1942, to a temporary base at RAF Kimbolton on October 1, and then to its permanent base at Bassingbourn, England, on October 14.

Captain Robert Morgan's crew flew 29 combat missions with the 324th Bomb Squadron, all but four in the *Memphis Belle*. The aircraft's 25 missions were:

November 7, 1942 - Brest, France

November 9, 1942 - St. Nazaire, France

November 17, 1942 - St. Nazaire

December 6, 1942 - Lille, France

December 20, 1942* - Romilly-sur-Seine, France

December 30, 1942 - Lorient (flown by Lt. James A. Verinis)

January 3, 1943 - St. Nazaire

January 13, 1943 - Lille

January 23, 1943 - Lorient, France

February 14, 1943 - Hamm, Germany

February 16, 1943 - St. Nazaire

February 27, 1943* - Brest

March 6, 1943 - Lorient

March 12, 1943 - Rouen, France

March 13, 1943 - Abbeville, France

March 22, 1943 - Wilhelmshaven

March 28, 1943 - Rouen

March 31, 1943 - Rotterdam, Netherlands

April 16, 1943 - Lorient

April 17, 1943 - Bremen, Germany

May 1, 1943 - St. Nazaire

May 13, 1943 - Meaulte, France (flown by Lt. C.L. Anderson)

May 14, 1943 - Kiel, Germany (flown by Lt. John H. Miller)

May 15, 1943 - Wilhelmshaven

May 17, 1943 - Lorient

May 19, 1943* - Kiel (flown by Lt. Anderson)

* Sources disagree on which two of these three missions the *Memphis Belle* received mission credits for.

Morgan's crew completed the following missions in B-17s other than the *Memphis Belle*:

February 4, 1943 - Emden, Germany (in B-17 DF-H 41-24515 *Jersey Bounce*)

February 26, 1943 - Wilhelmshaven (in B-17 41-24515)

April 5, 1943 - Antwerp, Belgium (in B-17 41-24480 *Bad Penny*)

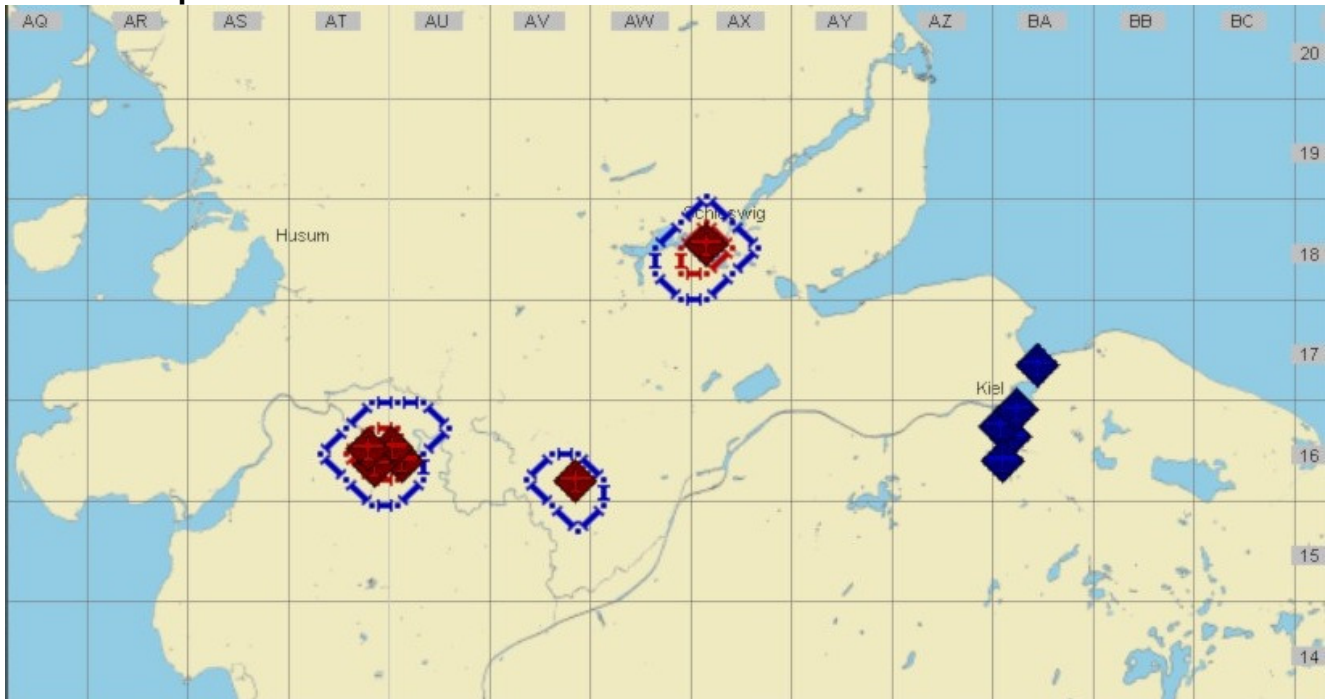
May 4, 1943 - Antwerp (in B-17 41-24527, *The Great Speckled Bird*)

The aircraft was then flown back to the United States on June 8, 1943, by a composite crew from those who had flown combat in it, led by Capt. Morgan, for a 31-city war bond tour. Morgan's original co-pilot was Capt. James A. Verinis, who himself piloted the *Memphis Belle* for one mission.



Crew of the *Memphis Belle* after the 25th mission (likely a staged photograph)

Mission Map



This map features 2 bomber streams at 8000m. The first are B17F's and the second are B24J's and they are heading to Kiel harbour to level bomb. The bombers do not target anything however it is possible that they may strike part of the flotilla in the harbour. Each bomber is worth 170 points and carries a 30 point bonus*.

**subject to adjustment*

Even though the mission is 1943, in order to utilise a more interesting planeset 1944 is in use.

Allied Mission

The 8th will attack the flotilla at Kiel today from 8000m. Use the Mustang or Thunderbolt to see your stream safely in and out of the target area. There are 2 factories, 1 oil storage area and a Cathedral which can be bombed using the B17 and B24 airstart. These targets carry 450 points each with a blue bonus of 150 points each and will not be struck by the AI bomber stream. Be careful, Germany has new fighters available and radar in operation

The P51D-20NA and P47D-27 are available for escort.

Axis Mission

The allies are attacking in great numbers again. Scramble and bring down the bomber force. Although there are no limits on the available aircraft there are limits to the numbers which can spawn at the bases.

A new Me-262 is available it carries a high price. 109G6, 6AS, 10 and 14 are available as are FW190 A6, A9 and D9. There are base limit and loadout restrictions in place. Wing mk108's are not available for any type, only for the nose of the 109's (where available)



U-Boats at Kiel