



BOEING B-17G BOMBER

(FLYING FORTRESS)

The B-17 was employed by the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) in the daylight precision strategic bombing campaign of World War II against German industrial and military targets. The United States Eighth Air Force, based at many airfields in southern England, and the Fifteenth Air Force, based in Italy, complemented the RAF Bomber Command's nighttime area bombing in the Combined Bomber Offensive to help secure air superiority over the cities, factories and battlefields of Western Europe in preparation for the invasion of France in 1944. The B-17 also participated to a lesser extent in the War in the Pacific, early in World War II, where it conducted raids against Japanese shipping and airfields. From its pre-war inception, the USAAC (later USAAF) touted the B-17 as a strategic weapon; it was a potent, high-flying, long-range bomber that was able to defend itself, and to return home despite extensive battle damage. It quickly took on mythic proportions, and widely circulated stories and photos of B-17s surviving battle damage increased its iconic status. With a service ceiling greater than any of its Allied contemporaries, the B-17 established itself as an effective weapons system, dropping more bombs than any other U.S. aircraft in World War II.

SPECIFIC HISTORY

The Museum's B-17G Bomber was manufactured by Lockheed-Vega and delivered to the U.S.A.A.F. on October 16, 1944. It was modified to be a "Pathfinder" B-17, equipped with the latest ground scanning H2X radar for nighttime bombing. It was used purely stateside in a training role during WW II before being dropped from the U.S.A.F. inventory in May 1959. In 1961, Albany Building Corporation purchased the B-17 and used it for hauling freight, before selling it in 1963 to Donthan Aviation Corp. who used the airplane as an agriculture sprayer. In 1979, Doc Hoppers of Fort Worth, Texas purchased the airplane and restored it to flying condition. The airplane was then sold to Jerry Yagen at the Military Aviation Museum in 2009 before being purchased by Erickson in 2013. Of the B-17 "Pathfinders" that were built, it is the only one left in existence.