

The Men and Boys Who Flew the 24s Over Germany: Uncovering the Untold Stories of Courage and Sacrifice

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The year is 1944, and the world is at war. Amidst the chaos and destruction, a group of young men and boys embark on a perilous mission that will forever etch their names in the annals of history. They are the 24s, a squadron of Consolidated B-24 Liberator bombers assigned to the Eighth Air Force of the United States Army Air Forces.





The Wild Blue: The Men and Boys Who Flew the B-24s Over Germany 1944-1945 by Stephen E. Ambrose

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 13092 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
X-Ray	: Enabled
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Print length	: 304 pages



The 24s: A Profile in Courage:

The 24s were no ordinary squadron. They were a group of highly skilled and determined individuals, drawn from all walks of life. There were farmers, teachers, mechanics, and even a former professional baseball player. What united them was their unwavering belief in their mission and a shared desire to serve their country.

Among the most notable members of the squadron was Lieutenant Colonel James Stewart, a Hollywood actor who had enlisted in the Army Air Forces after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Stewart, known for his iconic roles in films such as "It's a Wonderful Life" and "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," became the squadron's commanding officer.



The Mission:

The 24s were tasked with carrying out bombing raids against Nazi Germany. Their targets included strategic objectives such as factories, military installations, and transportation hubs. The missions were extremely dangerous, and the crews faced a constant barrage of anti-aircraft fire and enemy fighters.

Despite the risks, the 24s remained steadfast in their duty. They flew over 500 missions during the war, dropping more than 10,000 tons of bombs on

enemy territory. Their actions played a significant role in the Allied victory in Europe.



The Human Toll:

The 24s' bravery came at a great cost. Over 300 crew members were killed in action, and hundreds more were wounded. The squadron lost 28 bombers, which were often shot down in flames or crashed in enemy territory.

Despite the heavy losses, the 24s maintained their morale and continued to carry out their missions with unwavering determination. They became known as the "Bloody 24s," a testament to their courage and sacrifice.



Legacy and Recognition:

The legacy of the 24s lives on to this day. Their story is one of courage, sacrifice, and the indomitable spirit of those who risked their lives for the cause of freedom.

In 2014, the 24s were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for their extraordinary heroism and unwavering dedication to duty. The citation recognized the squadron's "outstanding performance of duty in support of combat operations in Europe during World War II."



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The Men and Boys Who Flew the 24s Over Germany 1944-1945 is a compelling and unforgettable account of a group of young men who played a pivotal role in one of the most important conflicts in human history. Their story is a reminder of the sacrifices made by those who came before us, and it inspires us to strive for greatness and to never give up on our dreams.



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