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Hell In The Heavens: Ill-Fated 8th Air Force Bomb Group Missions



Synopsis

This is a collection of vivid stories of the 8th Air Force bomb groups that met with disaster in WWII. Through it all, these stories tell of the deeds in which bomber crews rose to the very heights to protect, to preserve, and quite often, to die for fellow crew members. During those days of trial and tribulation, there was one entity more important to a flyer than any other: his crew. These are their stories. For military history enthusiasts.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Hell In The Heavens: Ill-Fated 8th Air Force Bomb Group Missions was created in England in 1942 by Brigadier General Ira C. Eaker for the specific purpose of daylight bombings over Europe. B-17s, and later B-24s were used with the expectation of a minimum of casualties due to either the German Luftwaffe or anti-aircraft fire. Despite advice from the British Royal Air Force that such an air campaign was doomed to fail, the initial operation took to the air on August 17, 1942. Eleven B-17Es went out to bomb rail yards in Rouen France. It was the beginning of one of the bloodiest air assault strategies to be employed by the Americans. William Hess' historical account of the air campaigns against Stuttgart, Schweinfurt, Berlin, Rostock, Brux, Politz, Kassel, Magdeburg and other targets is nothing less than riveting. Hell In The Heavens is a superbly researched and presented contribution to the growing library of military literature concerning the Allied campaigns in the European theatre.

This 140-page volume provides detailed accounts of some of the 8th Air Force's most hazardous and costly missions during World War II. Through post-mission debriefs, interviews with aircrews from both the United States and Germany, and extracts from official unit records, William Ness provides insights to the units' horrible and sometimes bizarre experiences. My only criticism of this book is that at times it is a little monotonous, with long recitations of loss figures and lists of KIAs. However, this is a very minor problem in an otherwise very good book.

My father served with the 2nd air division , 492nd bomb group he told me about the Politz mission when they lost the whole 856th squadron and some of his squadron the 857th , losing the most aircraft they ever lost . The 492nd bomb group started operating on 5-11-44 and were disbanded on 8-6-44 due to the highest losses suffered by any group over 3 months Alan Blue wrote a history of the 492nd called The Fortunes of War a history of the 492nd , this book Hell in the heavens goes in to great detail on the Politz mission telling the reader about each aircraft shot down or hit by flack and where they ended up , POW or inturned in a neutral country . This book tells about l'll-fated missions of many groups in the eighth air force bomb .

This is more a listing of official Missing Aircrew Reports and official mission summaries which results in its' feeling of routine repetition in its' writing style, a summary of documents.. A lot more could have been done with this.

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