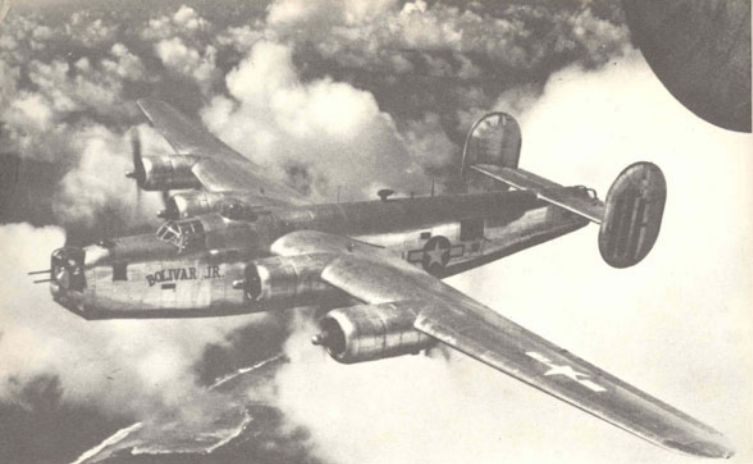


AIRCAM AVIATION SERIES

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(VOLUME 1)

# USAAF HEAVY BOMB GROUP MARKINGS & CAMOUFLAGE 1941-1945 CONSOLIDATED B-24 LIBERATOR





- Above: Fine flying shot of "Bolivar Jr", a B-24L donated by Consolidated workers to the 11th Bomb Group and operated with the 431st Squadron from the Marianas. Three vertical black stripes on fin, "Bolivar Jr" in black, OD anti-dazzle panel, note inboard cowls carry no OD. (USAF)



- Above: "Kuulipo", a B-24J of the 494th Bomb Group, 864th Squadron being readied for a raid against Japanese targets in the Palau, November 1944. Black chevron on fin and rudder, serial 440559. (USAF)

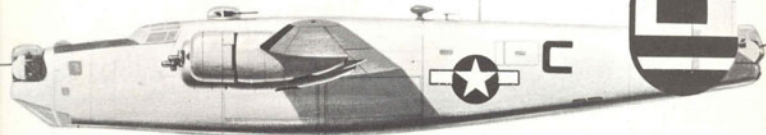
Below: "Lady Kaye" a B-24J of the 494th Bomb Group, 867th Squadron high over the Gulf of Davao off Mindanao in the Philippines en route for an attack on Japanese installations in the small village of Ising about four miles north of the Gulf, 24 February 1944. Black tail markings, 647 and anti-dazzle panel, serial 440647 in OD. See side-view illustration. (USAF)



LB-30, one of 15 aircraft of a British contract commandeered by the USAAF at the time of Pearl Harbour. Four of these LB-30's saw service with the 7th Bomb Group in Java. They retained their RAF camouflage of green and brown upper surfaces, matt black under surfaces and RAF serials. US ARMY on under surfaces of wings in white on the aircraft illustrated which was used by Mr. W. A. Harriman on a fact finding mission to the Far East.



B-24J, 465th Bomb Group, 15th Air Force, Italy. In natural metal scheme with black Group markings and block C. 1945.



# USAAF HEAVY BOMB GROUP MARKINGS & CAMOUFLAGE 1941-1945 CONSOLIDATED B-24 LIBERATOR

Illustrated by Richard Ward

Text by E. A. Munday

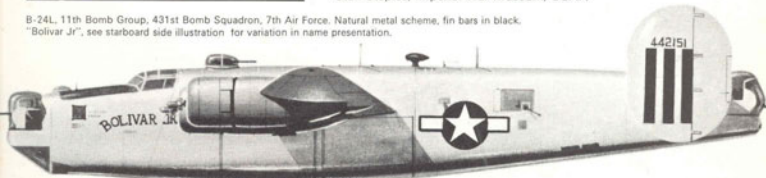
Compiled by  
Richard Ward & E. A. Munday

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is the first of two volumes covering USAAF Heavy Bomb Groups will be followed with Vol. 2 illustrating the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress. The author and illustrator wish to acknowledge frequent references to *The Mighty Eighth* by Roger A. Freeman so far as the 8th Air Force is concerned. Thanks are also due to all those who assisted with photographs and information whose names are listed below in alphabetical order:

Jack Canary, Richard M. Bueshel, Rene J. Francillon, R. C. Jones, David W. Menard, Earl Reinert, Frank F. Smith, ? Stacey, Stan Staples, Imperial War Museum, USAF.

B-24L, 11th Bomb Group, 431st Bomb Squadron, 7th Air Force. Natural metal scheme, fin bars in black. "Bolivar Jr", see starboard side illustration for variation in name presentation.



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A flak damaged B-24J of the 460th Bomb Group returning from a raid on Munich on the 23 September 1944. Note the rather ornate presentation of the Group marking on the tailplane (see tailplane illustration) which was usually black only on natural metal aircraft. (USAF)



Probably a 49th Bomb Wing Liberator dropping its load on the rail yards at Krems, 35 miles north-west of Vienna, Austria, on the 2 April 1945. (USAF)

## USAAF HEAVY BOMB GROUP Markings & Camouflage 1941-1945 Consolidated B-24 Liberator

The USAAF was the largest user of the B-24 Liberator, of the nearly 20,000 built, 18,188 were used by the USAAF in all theatres of war.

Ironically, the first aircraft of this type used in action by the USAAF wore the dark green and dark earth with black under surfaces of the RAF. These were aircraft awaiting delivery to Britain in December 1941, but were commandeered by the USAAF after Pearl Harbour. The Liberator was produced in many versions, of which the B-24J was the most numerous, other versions were the B-24D, E, H, L and M, produced at no less than five centres. All these versions served alongside each other in the units, as newer aircraft replaced older versions in the squadrons. As late as early 1945 one or two elderly D versions were in use as bombers alongside shiny Natural Metal (NM) B-24L and M's.

Basically there were three types of camouflage or finish used on the B-24 Liberator in the USAAF. These were the Olive Drab (OD) upper surface and Neutral Grey (Pale Grey) under surface, intended as camouflage for aircraft on the ground in North West Europe and the Pacific Area. The demarcation between the two colours was normally a wavy line, but on some aircraft the two colours met in a straight or near straight line.

The second colour scheme was intended for use in the desert areas of the Middle East and Mediterranean and was to be seen on aircraft used by the 98th and 376th Groups in 1942 and 1943. On these aircraft the upper surfaces were painted in a light stone colour for desert use, the under surfaces being pale blue, the demarcation line was usually straight. This colour had a definite pink

shade, and is the basis for the well known stories of "Pink Liberators". According to legend, the USAAF in 1942 asked a well known US paint manufacturer for a paint suitable for desert use, and this manufacturer based his colour mix on desert colours of the USA, which apparently have a pinkish hue. This colour scheme had been discontinued before the USAAF discontinued the use of camouflage in general, and the last pink B-24's were a few B-24H's which reached the Mediterranean area as replacements for aircraft lost on the Ploesti raid. Those units, however, already had a few olive drab aircraft on hand at the time of the Ploesti raid on the 1 August 1943.

The third standard finish on USAAF aircraft was natural metal (NM). In December 1943 the USAAF decided not to use camouflage on most of its combat aircraft, except those in certain special roles, such as night-fighters. Existing stocks of OD paint were to be used up first and the last production block of B-24's built at San Diego to wear OD was the B-24J-140-CO.

These unpainted aircraft had either OD or matt black anti-dazzle panels in front of the pilot's cockpit, in addition some aircraft had the inboard half of the engine nacelles painted OD as well. A few aircraft had the fuselage top decking painted in OD but this was comparatively rare.

The unpainted aircraft began to arrive as replacements from about February 1944 onwards, but did not appear in large numbers until about April or May 1944, when new combat groups began to arrive in the theatres with a majority of NM aircraft on their strengths. All fabric

areas such as rudders and ailerons were silver doped. Until August 1943 the USAAF had a few squadrons engaged in anti-submarine and coastal patrol operations, the B-24's engaged on these operations were camouflaged OD on the upper surfaces and white on under surfaces, such operations in August became the prerogative of the US NAVY and the OD and white became a scheme of the past.

The exceptions to the four basic schemes mentioned above were the very few special operations squadrons in the ETO and Pacific Area engaged in night operations and these aircraft were as a general rule camouflaged in matt black overall, a few aircraft were painted glossy black. Another scheme, local in application as it only applied to the 308th BG in the CBI was a matt black under surface to the fuselage only in some cases and in others to the complete under surfaces of NM aircraft wing, engine nacelles and tailplane. One last scheme to see limited use was the overall grey/blue applied to radar equipped B-24M's of the 15th Air Force, this scheme on these aircraft, dubbed "Radar Miceys", was short lived, only being used during the closing stages of the war in Europe.

Liberator Force consisted of only two groups, the 44th and 93rd.

On these planes, the only marking was an individual letter on the lower part of the fin, this letter was usually painted yellow. Most B-24's of this era had medium green blotching on the edges of the wings and tailplane, usually restricted to the trailing edges to break up the aircraft outline when viewed from above.

In September 1943, there were only four Liberator groups in the 8th Air Force, but in late 1943 and early 1944 there was a spectacular increase in numbers and because of this the 2nd Air Division was subdivided into five bomb wings, each with two or three bomb groups assigned.

Formation join-ups were very difficult with the large numbers of aircraft involved orbiting the concentrated East Anglian airfields, some of which were only five miles apart. For this reason most of the B-24 groups used multi-coloured forming aircraft or "lead ships" upon which the rest of the group's aircraft formed. The "lead ship", being a war weary unarmed aircraft, it returned to base as soon as its job was done.

From about April 1944, the outer surfaces of the tails



✓ A B-24D of the 376th Bomb Group, 9th Air Force coming in to land at Solluch LG, near Benghazi, Libya after the first Floesti raid. Desert sand and pale blue scheme with white 88 on nose and fin, RAF fin flashes and early insignia without surround and white bars. De-icer boots on all leading edges. (USAF)

## COMBAT MARKINGS OF B-24 LIBERATOR GROUPS

### 8th AIR FORCE

As is well known, at the end of the war in Europe in May 1945, the 8th Air Force had 12 B-24 bomb groups all assigned to the four bomb wings of the 2nd Air Division. Earlier, in the summer of 1944, the 8th had no less than 19 operational B-24 groups, with B-24's forming partial equipment of a twentieth. Five of these groups were in the 3rd Air Division, and because of the difficulties of operating B-24's and B-17's in the same bomber stream these five groups were re-equipped with B-17's by September 1944. One B-24 group was taken off daylight bombing operations in August 1944, whilst another was returned to the USA in November 1944.

Each bomb group was allocated a letter which was painted on its aircraft as an identity mark, each wing had a geometric symbol as a background to the letter, and that used by the 2nd Wing, later 2nd Air Division was a circle. White on Olive Drab, black on natural metal aircraft.

This circle appeared on the upper starboard wing and the outer surfaces of the fins and rudders, on the tail the circle with the group letter appeared above the serial number. On the OD aircraft the circle was white with a black letter, on the NM aircraft the circle was black with a white letter. These symbols and letters began to be used about July 1943, when most of the Eighth's Liberators were operating in the Mediterranean area, on detachment to the 9th Air Force. When the Liberators returned to the UK about the end of August 1943, they were then painted with the group symbols. Earlier, between October 1942 and July 1943, the Eighth's

B-24's were painted in distinctive colours, indicative of the bomb wing to which the group belonged. A stripe of contrasting colour, vertical, horizontal or diagonal indicated the bomb group. This applied to the 2nd Air Division, the circle and letter continued to appear above the starboard wing.

Each bomb group had four squadrons assigned to it and each squadron had a code, consisting of either two letters or a letter and a number. This two-symbol code was painted on the rear fuselage, grey on OD, black on NM. The individual aircraft letter appeared on the centre of the stripe on the fin. Some groups, the 389th, 445th and 453rd among them, repeated the aircraft letter alongside the squadron codes on the fuselage.

8th Air Force B-24 markings and codes, listed by Combat Wings (BS = bomb squadron).

### 2nd Wing

389th Group—group code C: 564thBS-YO, 565thBS-EE, 566thBS-RR, 567thBS-HP; black tail, white or NM vertical stripe. Base, Hethel.

445th Group—group code F: 700thBS-RN, 701stBS-MK, 702ndBS-WV, 703rdBS-IS; black tail, white or NM horizontal stripe. Base, Tibenham.

453rd Group—group code J: 732ndBS-E3, 733rdBS-E8, 734thBS-F8, 735thBS-H6; black tail, white or NM diagonal stripe. Base, Old Buckenham.

### 14th Wing

44th Group—group code A: 66thBS-WQ, 67thBS-NB, 68thBS-GJ, 506thBS-QK; white or NM tail, black vertical stripe. Base, Shipdown.

392nd Group—group code D: 576thBS-C1, 577thBS-DC, 578thBS-EC, 579thBS-GC; white or NM tail, black horizontal stripe. Base, Wendling.

492nd Group—group code U: 856thBS-SZ, 857thBS-



Line-up of desert sand and OD camouflaged Liberators of the 376th Bomb Group, note nose and fin numbers and yellow surround to national insignia. Dark bands on tails are wing shadows. The photograph was taken just before take-off on the first Ploesti raid, 1 August 1943. The nearest aircraft 36 "Brewery Wagon". (USAF)

9H, 858thBS-9A, 859thBS-X4; white or NM tail, black diagonal stripe. Base, North Pickenham. In August 1944 this bomb group was taken off daylight bombing and re-assigned to other duties, such as air supply of partisans, spy dropping etc. During three months operations the 492nd Group lost no less than 57 Liberators, mostly due to German fighter attack. The group was disbanded and its personnel were distributed among several other bomb groups. The designation "492nd Bomb Group" was assumed by the provisional 801st Bomb Group at Horrotington, then engaged on special operations. The 492nd Group was replaced in the 14th Wing by the 491st Group from August 1944 until VE Day.

#### 20th Wing

93rd Group—group code B: 328thBS-GO, 329thBS-RE, 330thBS-AG, 409thBS-YM; yellow tail, black vertical bar. Base, Hardwick. The first B-24 group to arrive in England, first operated with the 8th Air Force on 9 October 1942.

446th Group—group code H: 704thBS-FL, 705thBS-HN, 706thBS-RT, 707thBS-JU; yellow tail, black horizontal stripe. Base, Bungay.

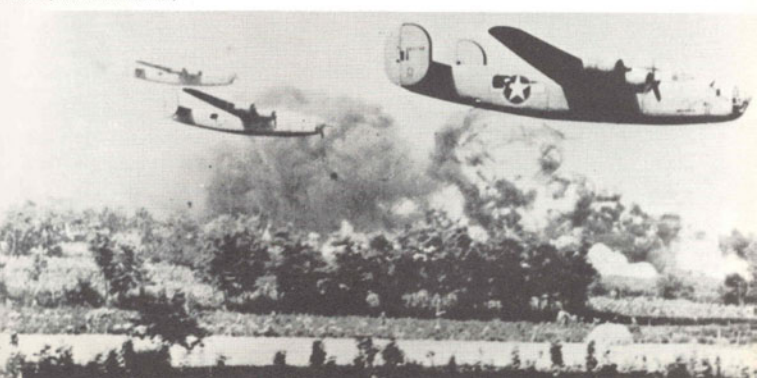
448th Group—group code I: 712thBS-CT, 713thBS-IG, 714thBS-EI, 715thBS-IO; yellow tail, black diagonal stripe. Base, Seething. From the summer of 1944 squadron codes were discontinued, and instead a geometric symbol was used. These were a hollow triangle, square, circle and diamond, representing the 712, 713, 714 and 715 Bomb Squadrons respectively. These hollow devices were painted on the fin and the aircraft individual letter was painted in it.

489th Group—group code W. For a short while this bomb group operated with the 20th Wing. This was from August 1944 when the 95th Wing ceased operations, until the 489th was re-assigned to the USA in November 1944. During this period the 489th used an all yellow tail with no black bar.

#### 96th Wing

458th Group—group code K: 752ndBS-Z5, 753rdBS-J4, 754thBS-7V, 755thBS-J3; red tail, white vertical bar.

Sand and pale blue B-24D's of the 98th Bomb Group going in low against a background of flame and smoke from burning fuel at Ploesti. Lead aircraft has old yellow surround to disc of insignia plus thin red surround to both disc and bars, aircraft is D, on lower fin and engine cowling, serial 243758. (USAF via R. J. Francillon)



Base, Horsham St. Faith.

466th Group—group code L: 784thBS-T9, 785thBS-2U, 786thBS-U8, 787thBS-6L; red tail, white horizontal stripe. Base, Attlebridge.

467th Group—group code P: 788thBS-X7, 789thBS-6A, 790thBS-Q2, 791stBS-4Z; red tail, white diagonal stripe. Base, Rackheath.

#### 95th Wing

This wing had only two groups, and both were re-assigned to other wings in August 1944, no further bomb groups were assigned.

489th Group—group code W: 844thBS-4R, 845thBS-S4, 846thBS-8R, 847thBS-T4; green tail, white vertical stripe = 95th, yellow tail = 20th. Base, Halesworth.

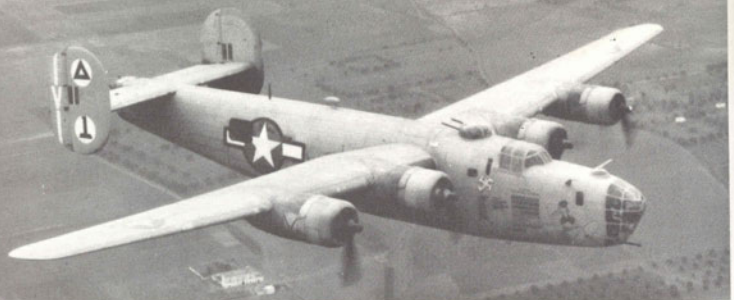
491st Group—group code Z: 852ndBS-3Q, 853rdBS-T8, 854thBS-6X, 855thBS-V2; green tail, white horizontal bar. The 491st, as mentioned above, replaced the 492nd in the 14th Wing in August 1944. The 491st crews did not want to paint the black diagonal stripe on NM tails of their aircraft, as this, it was felt, had too many unfortunate connections with the ill-fated 492nd. Accordingly, for several months the 491st continued operations with its green and white tail marking. Eventually the change was made about January 1945, to the black diagonal stripe on NM. Base, while assigned to 95th Wing was Metfield, when re-assigned to 14th Wing the 491st moved to North Pickenham.

The above relates to the 14 B-24 groups assigned to the 2nd Air Division of the 8th Air Force. During the summer of 1944, five other groups operated B-24's in the 3rd Air Division. Details are as follows: the group letter was painted in a square, the 3rd Air Division symbol.

#### 92nd Wing

486th Group—group code O: 832ndBS-3R, 833rdBS-4N, 834thBS-2S, 835thBS-H8. Base, Sudbury. The group was re-equipped with B-17 Flying Fortresses early in August 1944.

487th Group—group code P: 836thBS-2G, 837thBS-



"Chug-a-lug", a B-24D of the 98th Bomb Group, 15th Air Force with 105 missions to its credit, three of them to Ploesti, is here shown returning from the last mission before returning to the States. Note the double marking of the national insignia on the upper surface of the wings; the partial Group marking on the rudder. Wing and Group symbols on fin on white discs, aircraft letter V and absence of de-icer boots and freshly applied blue surround to national insignia on fuselage. (USAF)

4F, 838thBS-2C, 839thBS-R5. Base, Lavenham. The group was re-equipped with B-17 Flying Fortresses early in August 1944.

#### 93rd Wing

34th Group—group code S: 4thBS-Q6, 7thBS-R2, 18thBS-S1, 391stBS-3L. Base, Mendlesham. The group was re-equipped with B-17 Flying Fortresses in September 1944. From about early July 1944, the S in square was discontinued and the front half of the fins were painted red.

490th Group—group code T: 848thBS, 849thBS, 850thBS, 851stBS; codes were issued but not used. Base, Eye. The group was re-equipped with B-17 Flying Fortresses in late August 1944. From about the beginning of July 1944 the T in square was discontinued and the upper third of the fin and rudder painted red, the lower two thirds either NM or on OD aircraft white.

493rd Group—group code X: 860thBS, 861stBS, 862ndBS, 863rdBS; codes were issued but not used. Base, Debach. The group re-equipped with B-17 Flying Fortresses in early September 1944. From about the beginning of July 1944 the lower third of the fin and rudder were painted red, the remainder white or NM, the X in square was discontinued.

One other group operated B-24's although other aircraft types were used as well, this was the 482nd, a pathfinder unit which was, after about March 1944, mainly concerned with the development of radar bombing techniques and the training of personnel in the use of radar equipment. No group code was allocated and a squadron code used on B-24's was PC, 814th BS. Some aircraft used group codes of other units during the early months of 1944, when the group regularly provided pathfinder aircraft for operations with other groups. The 482nd Group was under the command of the 1st Air Division, as the majority of its aircraft were B-17 Flying Fortresses.

The advent of the fully-coloured tails in May 1944 covered the aircraft serial number which was normally on the outer surface of B-24 fins, most groups merely repainted the serial on the inside of the fin, or in the case of the 448th not at all, some, the 392nd and 467th for example, repainted the "last three" on the nose from about December onwards, other groups also followed this practice.

#### 15th AIR FORCE

The 15th Air Force operated from Southern Italy from November 1943 till VE Day. Twenty-one heavy bomber groups were eventually assigned, of which no less than 15 were equipped with B-24's. None of the B-24 groups operated by the 15th Air Force was re-equipped during

the war with any other aircraft type.

Two of the 15th's B-24 groups, the 376th and the 98th, originally operated with the 9th Air Force. As mentioned earlier their aircraft camouflaged in the so called "Desert Pink". For many months these were the only two B-24 groups in the Mediterranean Area. Apart from the National Insignia in four positions and an RAF fin flash on the fins, both outboard and inboard, the only other marking was, in the case of the 376th Group, a number on the fin repeated on the nose, and in the case of the 98th Group a letter on the fin sometimes repeated on the outboard engine cowl. A few OD aircraft arrived in time to receive these markings. At first, for a few months, these markings continued in the 15th Air Force, but as the 15th expanded a marking system gradually appeared.

#### 47th Wing

From about December 1943 to the end of 1944 two white discs were painted, one above the other, on the fins of the B-24's of this wing. In the upper disc there appeared a hollow black triangle, in the lower disc there was a number, 1, 2, 3 or 4, which indicated respectively the 98th, 376th, 449th, 450th Bomb Groups. This number was always in bold block form, not always in the traditional USAAF form of presentation. When NM aircraft appeared the black triangle and number were painted straight on to the fin and tailplane. On most aircraft a "plane in group" number was painted on the rudder, sometimes in "fraction" style, i.e. one digit above the other. At the same time, December 1943, rudders and ailerons were also marked with distinctive black and white stripes and symbols, which appear, with the exception of the 376th Group, to have been used for a short period of time only. Early in 1945 the triangle and number was discarded and the fin was roughly halved diagonally, the lower, leading half being painted yellow and/or black as illustrated.

98th Group: 343rdBS, 344thBS, 345thBS, 415thBS. Base, Lecce.

376th Group: 512thBS, 513thBS, 514thBS, 515thBS. Base, San Porenzio.

449th Group: 716thBS, 717thBS, 718thBS, 719thBS. Base, Grottaglie.

450th Group: 720thBS, 721stBS, 722ndBS, 723rdBS. Base, Monduria.

#### 49th Wing

This wing had only three groups, the group markings were red on OD or NM as illustrated on tails and tail-plane pages.

451st Group: 724thBS, 725thBS, 726thBS, 727thBS. Base, Castelluccio.



With Mt. Vesuvius belching forth in the background a time expired B-24D of the 376th Bomb Group, "Blue Streak", starts her return journey to the States. Note the Group flash on lower rudder. The transfer sheet in Revells B-24D kit illustrates this aircraft. (USAF)

461st Group: 764thBS, 765thBS, 766thBS, 767thBS.  
Base, Torretto.

484th Group: 824thBS, 825thBS, 826thBS, 827thBS.  
Base, Torretto.

These groups also numbered their aircraft in the following system: 1-19 1st Squadron, 20-39 2nd Squadron, 40-59 3rd Squadron, 60-79 4th Squadron. This system was common to all three groups, the numbers were painted, on front and rear fuselage, in figures at least three feet high. On early aircraft they were white on a rectangular background which might be red, black or white and on later aircraft they were applied in black straight on the natural metal. The 461st Group painted their front engine cowl in yellow, white, green or red to denote the 764, 765, 766, 767th Squadrons respectively.

#### 55th Wing

This wing also halved its fins and rudders, in the upper half there was a large square, in the lower half a hollow circle, a horizontal bar, a short vertical bar or a cross, denoting the 460, 465, 464, 485th Squadrons respectively. These markings were originally yellow on OD, later yellow with black replacing OD, later still with NM replacing yellow. Thus the marking was by the end of the war black on NM. Originally the markings were painted on the upper surface of the tail-plane, but this was discarded in favour of an all yellow tail-plane. All groups used a heavy block capital letter on the side of their Liberators as plane-in-group identity markings.

460th Group: 760thBS, 761stBS, 762ndBS, 763rdBS.  
Base, Spinazzola.

464th Group: 776thBS, 777thBS, 778thBS, 779thBS.  
Base, Pantanella.

465th Group: 780thBS, 781stBS, 782ndBS, 783rdBS.  
Base, Pantanella.

485th Group: 828thBS, 829thBS, 830thBS, 831stBS.  
Base, Venosa.

#### 304th Wing

In this wing also the fin and rudder was also halved, in the top half, on the fin there appeared a diamond, white or yellow on OD, black on NM. The lower half was painted in a colour (s) indicative of the group within the 304th Wing. These colours were white, yellow, red for the 454th, 455th, 456th Groups respectively; the

459th used black/yellow checks. On 454th Group aircraft the white area did not show up too well on NM aircraft and was often outlined in black. The black diamond was sometimes painted over the serial number obliterating it, or sometimes the diamond was divided above and below the serial. The illustrations show the various dispositions.

The 454th and 455th Groups painted a large aircraft in group number on the rear fuselage, whilst the 456th used a large block letter in the same location. The 459th Group used 6, 7, 8 or 9 to denote the 756, 757, 758, 759th Squadrons respectively. This figure was followed by a letter denoting the aircraft within the squadron, both were usually painted on a black rectangle. All 304th Wing aircraft had a black centre section area on the tail-plane, sometimes extending to half span of the leading section of the tail-plane, see illustrations.

454th Group: 736thBS, 737thBS, 738thBS, 739thBS.  
Base, San Giovanni.

455th Group: 740thBS, 741stBS, 742ndBS, 743rdBS.  
Base, San Giovanni.

456th Group: 744thBS, 745thBS, 746thBS, 747thBS.  
Base, Stornara.

459th Group: 756thBS, 757thBS, 758thBS, 759thBS.  
Base, Giulia.

The 15th Air Force did not use highly coloured formation leader aircraft like the 8th Air Force. The 15th did, however, use radar-equipped aircraft for bomb through cloud leaders which were painted a grey/blue overall, with and without group markings on the tail surfaces. The B-24's mounted a radome in place of the ball turret and led formations in blind bombing. These aircraft were also intended to operate at night individually and this may have been the reason for the lack of group markings on the tail surfaces until the closing stages of the war. Each group had up to eight of these aircraft, dubbed "Radar Miceys", by VE Day.

As will be seen from the above the bomber forces in the European and Mediterranean Theatres of Operation used a marking system which was part of a corporate whole. Each wing, group and to a certain extent squadron, was indicated in a certain way, particularly in the 8th Air Force, with its use of squadron code letters and group/wing tail colours. The 15th Air Force with its use of coloured tail markings was no less comprehensive, but its markings depended on the shape and colour of the marking, rather than letter codes.



A 98th Bomb Group B-24E flying over the Isle of Capri upon its return from a raid. Reason for the black square in place of the standard triangle Wing symbol nor for the yellow square upon which the lower white disc has been applied is not known. (USAF)

### USAAF LIBERATORS IN THE WAR AGAINST JAPAN

Seven "numbered" air forces operated against Japan between 1941 and 1945. They were the 5th, 7th, 10th, 11th, 13th, 14th and 20th. All except the 20th Air Force operated Liberators. The 11th Air Force had one group partially equipped with the B-24, the 10th and 14th had one group each, the 13th two groups and the 5th Air Force had four groups. These were by comparison with ETO numbers, quite small forces. However, a lack of numbers was often nullified, especially in the later stages of the war, by co-operation in various theatres, in particular, the 5th and 13th Air Forces achieved a high degree of co-operation when linked as the Far East Air Forces under the command of General Kenney.

With these smaller forces, the markings, which did not become prevalent until late in the war, were indicative of individual groups and often reflected *esprit de corps* of individual groups as in the 5th Air Force. In the 7th Air Force the tail markings used on their B-24's indicated the squadron rather than the group.

#### 5th AIR FORCE

This was the best known air force in the Pacific but it's crews achieved spectacular results in low level attacks, particularly with medium bombers. All bomb groups, medium and heavy, were commanded through a lower organisation, the Fifth Bomber Command. The B-24's and their colours were as follows:

22nd Group: 2ndBS, 19thBS, 33rdBS, 40thBS.  
This group re-equipped with B-24's from B-25's and B-26's. The marking was a quarter of the aircraft fin and rudder, white on OD aircraft, black on NM.

43rd Group: 63rdBS, 64thBS, 65thBS, 403rdBS.  
Re-equipped with B-24's after using B-17's up to late 1943. Markings were a vertical and diagonal or diagonal black stripe on NM fin with white and blue horizontal stripes on rudder. Some few aircraft may have carried red stripes in place of the blue.

90th Group: 319thBS, 320thBS, 321stBS, 400thBS.  
Known as the "Jolly Rogers", this group displayed a grinning skull with crossed bombs on the fins of its aircraft from late 1943 onwards. There was some variation in the presentation of the skull and bombs on some aircraft but on others they were identical suggesting a stencil had been cut. Originally painted in white on OD aircraft, sometimes with a black background, when NM

aircraft appeared the fin was first sprayed OD to make a contrasting background. Often the serial number was obliterated and the last three digits were painted on top of the fin above the skull.

380th Group: 528thBS, 529thBS, 530thBS, 531stBS.

This group's markings consisted of a coloured patch applied chordwise to the fin, upon this there appeared in bold type figures the last three digits of the aircraft serial number or in some cases an aircraft identity letter. These markings were only applied shortly before VJ Day.

#### 13th AIR FORCE

This Air Force was originally based in the Solomon Islands, and commanded several groups detached from other air forces. Later it teamed up with the 5th Air Force to form the Far East Air Forces. At VJ Day two B-24 groups were assigned, the 5th and 307th.

5th Group: 23rdBS, 31stBS, 72ndBS, 394thBS.  
By VJ Day most aircraft had a large hollow black square painted on the upper part of the fin, below this appeared a large number, usually two digits. The last three or four digits of the serial number were painted on the nose of the aircraft. The 5th Group was originally assigned to the 7th Air Force with B-17's, converted to B-24's in 1943.

307th Group: 370thBS, 371stBS, 372ndBS, 424thBS.  
Known as the "Long Rangers", by VJ Day this group had a black disc painted on the fins of its aircraft with a monogram LR in white on the disc. This LR was uniform on each aircraft and it is likely that a stencil was used. The last three or four digits of the serial number appeared on the nose, and on some aircraft was repeated on the fin below the black disc.

#### 7th AIR FORCE

Strung out for thousands of miles in the Central Pacific, the 7th Air Force attacked many tiny Japanese-held islands, often far to the rear of the main battle lines. The bombers of the 7th were the first over Truk, the island naval base known as the "Japanese Gibraltar".

Later the 7th moved up to Saipan and Okinawa to join up with the Far East Air Forces. B-24 groups assigned at VJ Day were the 11th, 30th and 494th.

11th Group: 26thBS, 42ndBS, 98thBS, 431stBS.  
The markings of the 11th were yellow or white on OD, black on NM, see tail illustrations. The 11th originally flew B-17's and was detached to the 13th Air Force

A pair of B-24H's of the 450th Bomb Group complete with Wing/Group symbols on tailplane and vertical surfaces. Note white fuselage band. (USAF)



between July 1942 and August 1943.

30th Group: 27thBS, 38thBS, 392ndBS, 819thBS.

Although assigned to the 7th Air Force this group was at Hawaii on VJ Day, re-equipping and engaged on patrol work. Between October 1943 and March 1945 it had been engaged in hazardous long-distance operations against many Japanese bastions in the Central Pacific. During the last few months in combat its aircraft were mostly OD, the markings were in yellow or white on OD, black on NM, see illustrations. It is believed the point down triangle was the marking of the 28th Squadron. In addition, the 21st Squadron was assigned for a short period earlier in the war.

494th Group: 864thBS, 865thBS, 866thBS, 867thBS.

Known as "Kelly's Cobras", this group had NM B-24's from the outset, entering combat in November 1944. All markings were black on the natural metal of the fin and rudder, see illustrations. In addition the 866th and 867th Squadrons repeated the last three digits of the serial number on the fin.

#### 11th AIR FORCE

28th Composite Group: 77th, 404th during the period 1941-1945; 18th, 36th, 37th, 73rd, operated with the group for short periods.

Operating in the fog-bound Aleutian Islands, not far from the Arctic Circle, this group operated a mixed force of aircraft alongside its B-24's by VJ Day, earlier it had operated fighter type aircraft as well. It is believed the 404th Squadron operated the B-24 and apart from a plane-in-group number on the nose of its aircraft no marking was carried.

#### 14th AIR FORCE

308th Group: 373rdBS, 374thBS, 375thBS, 425thBS.

This China-based air force had just the one group assigned. The 14th's operations were made very difficult because virtually all supplies to it had to be air-lifted over the "hump", the Himalayan Mountains from India. The B-24's of the group assisted sometimes to the extent of five or six transport sorties to one raid. One squadron of this group, believed to be the 373rd, were unique in so far as they painted the diagonal white and blue stripes on both the outer and inner surfaces of the rudders as will be seen in the photograph of two of this units B-24's.

#### 10th AIR FORCE

7th Group: 9thBS, 436thBS, 492ndBS, 493rdBS.

This group converted to B-24's late in 1942 after using B-17's and LB-30's. By VJ Day the group marking was yellow checks on OD and yellow/black checks on NM, usually with a large plane identity number in the lower half of the fin. The 493rd Squadron pioneered the use of the Azon radio controlled bomb and scored many successes with it against railway bridges and similar targets.

As will be seen the B-24 achieved world wide service with the USAAF. It ranged far and wide in all climates over enemy targets, against the most vigorously defended to the "milk runs". As befits its widespread use it had probably the most varied of all bomber markings. In Europe, its markings were part of a definite plan, in the Far East the markings were more individually inspired, but the effect was the same—in many cases it is by their tail markings that the units are remembered.

- An OD and grey B-24J of the 449th Bomb Group dispersed near the waters edge at Grottaglie, Southern Italy. See colour illustration B5. (USAF)



- Another B-24J of the 449th Bomb Group with extensive flak damage, see colour illustration B6. (via Frank F. Smith)



A B-24J of the 451st Bomb Group over an Austrian target. Note red 24 on fuselage and absence of de-icer boots. (via Frank F. Smith)



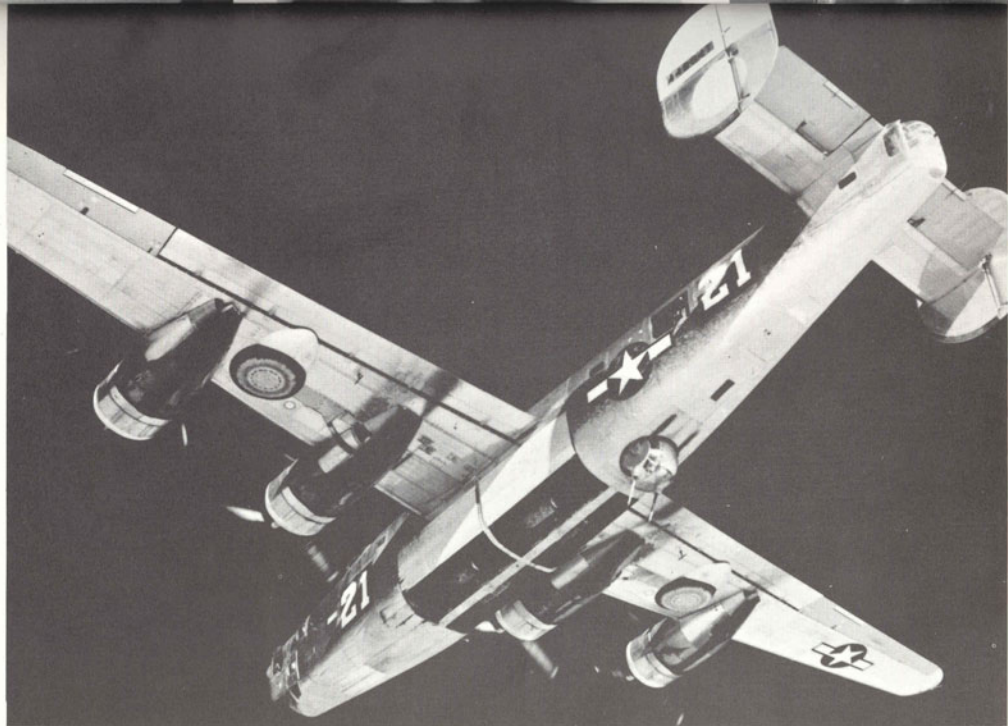


Above: "Screamin' Meemie II" a B-24J of the 451st Bomb Group in full Group tail markings, OD and grey scheme without de-icer boots. Photo was taken during the 15 July 1944 raid on Ploesti, Rumania. (USAF)



Above: Upper surface view of 21 shown on facing page, target this time was the rail yards at Linz, Austria.  
Below: "Minnesota Mauler" of the 451st Bomb Group during an attack on the Herman Goering Steel Works, Linz, Austria. See colour illustration C2. (USAF)

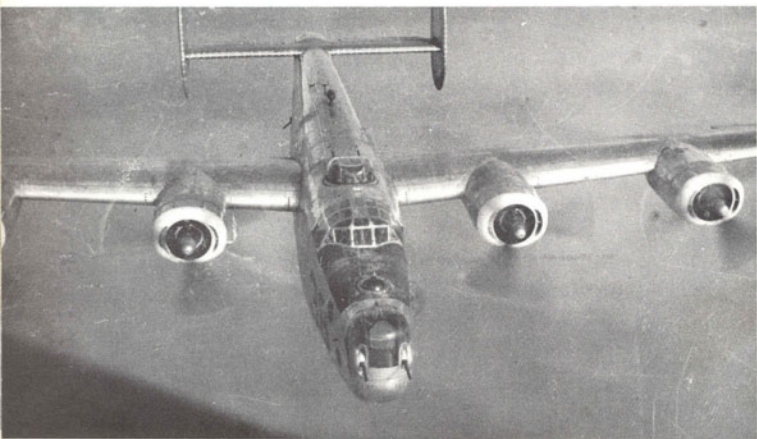




Seconds from the point of release a B-24J of the 451st Bomb Group over the rail yards of Vienna, Austria on 15 January 1945. Excellent under surface detail shot, note Group markings and cowl fronts in red, white 21 on black squares. (USAF)

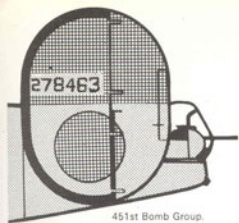


Above: B-24J of the 461st Bomb Group, note peculiar form of 4. See colour illustration C4. (Stan Staples)

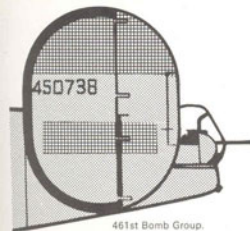


Above: Front view of 39 showing anti-dazzle panel and white cowf fronts. Below: A three-quarter front view of 39, a B-24J of the 461st Bomb Group, serial 450616. (Photos Stan Staples)

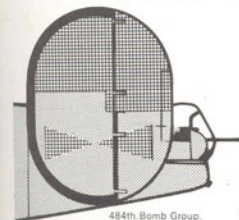




451st Bomb Group.



461st Bomb Group.

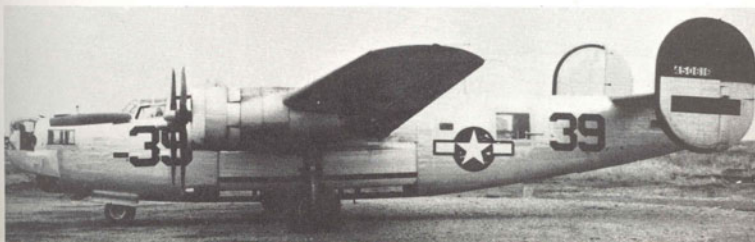


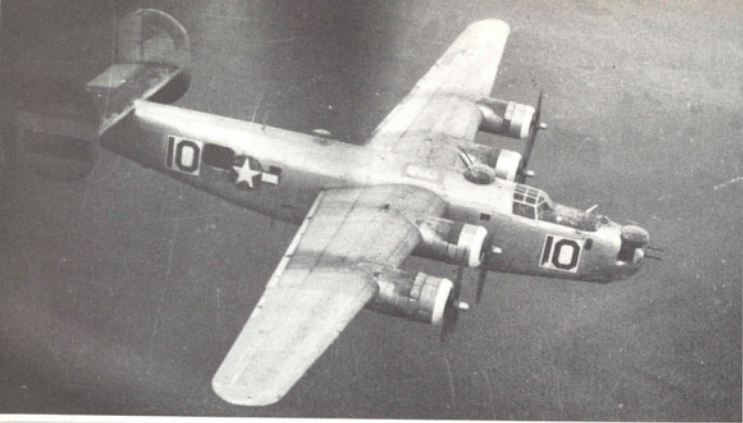
484th Bomb Group.  
Note variation in red areas and presentation of the serial.

Right & below: Port and starboard views of 39, note the bulged windows forward and the glazed aft fuselage gun position. Black 39 and serial, tailplane as 49th Bomb Wing May 1945—VE Day, see plan view. (Photos Stan Staples)



Above: 33 another B-24M of the 461st Bomb Group dropping supplies to a POW camp shortly after VE Day. Compare the red area of the tail with 39 below. (Stan Staples)





Above: B-24J of the 461st Bomb Group, see colour illustration C3. (Stan Staples)



Left: A B-24M "Radar Mickey" of the 464th Bomb Group in the same camouflage scheme as the B-24M below but without Group markings on vertical tail surfaces.

Below: "Billie K" a "Radar Mickey" B-24M of the 461st Bomb Group in overall grey-blue scheme. See colour illustration C5. (Stan Staples)



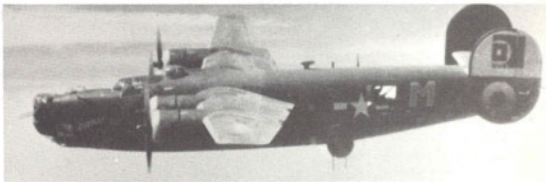
Left: Rare photo showing an OD and grey B-24J of the 464th Bomb Group on a Balkan airfield, see black and white side-view. (USAF)



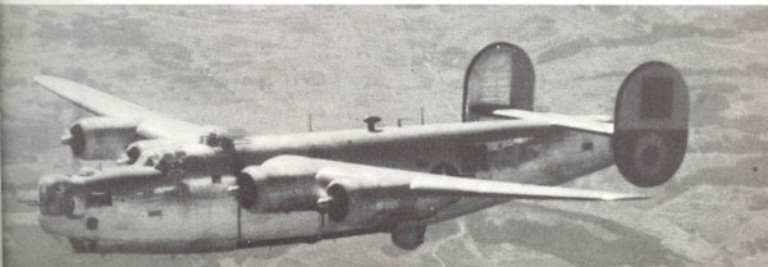
Above: A load of grief in the form of fragmentation bombs going down on the Luftwaffe at Neuberg airfield, Austria on the 26 March 1944, B-24J's of the 460th Bomb Group in yellow and black Group markings.

(USAF)

Right: "Cuddles" a B-24J of the 460th Bomb Group with non-standard tail markings. Note red M outlined thinly in white, photo was taken over Vienna Austria, 16 June 1944. (IWM)



Below: A 460th Bomb Group B-24J leaving the rail yards at Gmund, Austria on 23 March 1945, note aircraft letter H in yellow, full Group markings. (USAF)





“Above” A “Radar Mickey” B-24M of the 464th Bomb Group displaying full Group tail markings, see colour side-view illustration D4, (USAF via R. J. Francillon)



Left: Formation of 464th Bomb Group B-24J's complete with Group markings on tail surfaces, note red C on nearest aircraft. (USAF)



B-24J L of the 485th Bomb Group with yellow on OD Group markings. Note white L on black panel on what appears to be a lighter OD panel. (USAF)



“Buzz Job” with white H and yellow on OD 485th Bomb Group markings. (Stacey)



Good clear shot of the yellow on OD 485th Bomb Group markings, white Q on fuselage and what appear to be white, fronts to the engine cowl. Note de-icer boots have been removed from all three aircraft. (Stacey)



Above: Natural metal B-24J of the 485th Bomb Group with markings only partly painted on the tail in yellow.

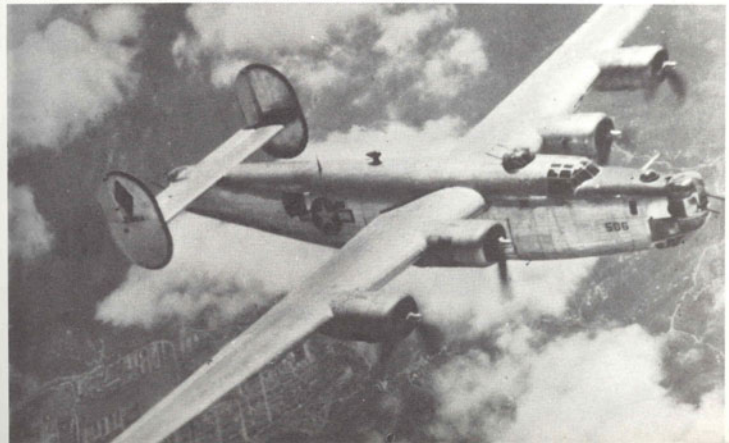
Right: Rear view of a B-24J with Group markings in yellow, black L on fuselage, serial 441065. (Stacey)



Below: Another B-24J of the 485th Bomb Group clearly displaying the yellow Group markings, note square black S on fuselage. (Stacey)

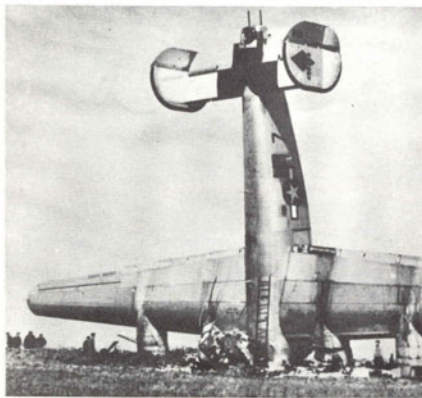


Below: A B-24H of the 304th Bomb Wing, without definite knowledge of the colour of the lower half of the fin the group cannot be determined, the colour is either white or yellow, 454th or 455th Bomb Group, the 455th seems to be the more probable, serial is 128914. Note 506 on nose and de-icer boots on vertical tail surfaces. Attack was on La Spezia on 22 May 1944. (IWM)





Above: Olive drab B-24J of the 456th Bomb Group with a rudder from a 485th BG aircraft, see side-view illustration E2. Below: Another B-24J of the 455th BG in natural metal finish, see side-view illustration E2. Both aircraft had their hydraulics damaged in combat and resorted to parachutes fastened to the beam gun mounts to shorten the landing roll. (USAF)



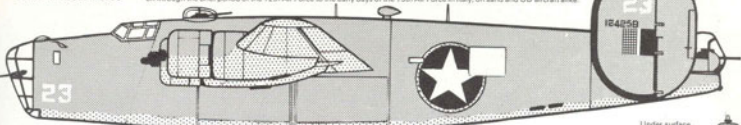
Left: B-24J of the 454th Bomb Group after running out of runway on landing, probably due to damage during combat to the hydraulic system. Note the extended black area on the tailplane, black 7 on fuselage and de-icer boots fitted.

Bottom: B-24M of the 459th Bomb Group, 759th Bomb Squadron, serial 450725 in OD. Similar colour scheme as for side-view illustration E3.



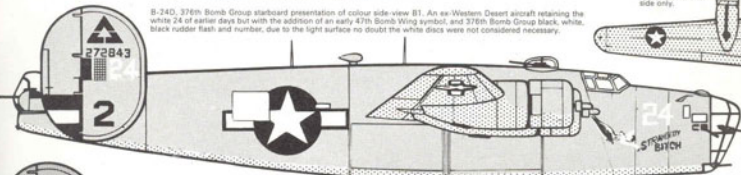
B-24D, 376th Bomb Group, 9th Air Force, showing the early markings used during the Western Desert and North African campaigns. During this period the national insignia went from white star on blue disc to white star on blue disc with yellow surround, white star on blue disc with white bars and yellow surround, to red surround to the ultimate blue surround, also during the Western Desert and North African campaigns it was common practice to double mark the upper surface insignia on both port and starboard wings. This additional insignia was usually applied to Liberators in desert sand scheme though OD ones also were so marked. The RAF fin flash, standard in the 9th Air Force (except on through the brief period of the 12th Air Force to the early days of the 15th Air Force in Italy, on sand and OD aircraft alike.

9th—15th Air Force



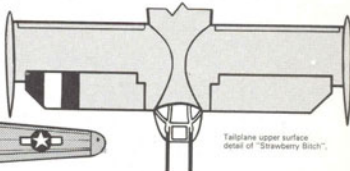
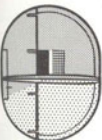
Under surface, insignia starboard side only.

B-24D, 376th Bomb Group starboard presentation of colour side-view B1. An ex-Western Desert aircraft retaining the white 24 of earlier days but with the addition of an early 47th Bomb Wing symbol, and 376th Bomb Group black, white, black rudder flash and number, due to the light surface no doubt the white discs were not considered necessary.



Inside surface of fin and rudder detail showing camouflage demarcation line and position of RAF flash.

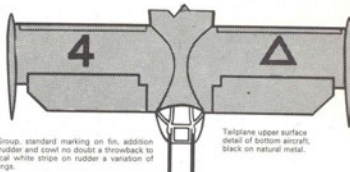
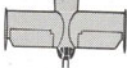
Plan view showing port and starboard national insignia.



Tailplane upper surface detail of "Strawberry Bitch".

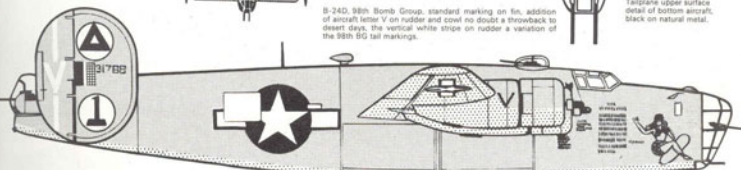
Port fin and rudder detail of bottom illustration.

Desert Sand

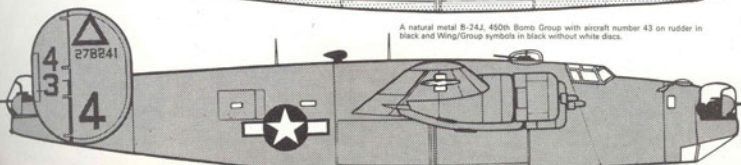


Tailplane upper surface detail of bottom aircraft, black on natural metal.

B-24D, 98th Bomb Group, standard marking on fin, addition of aircraft letter V on rudder and cowling no doubt a throwback to desert days, the vertical white stripe on rudder a variation of the 98th BG tail markings.

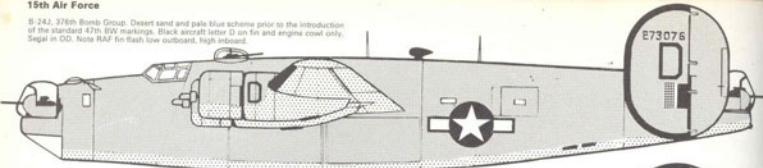


A natural metal B-24J, 450th Bomb Group with aircraft number 43 on rudder in black and Wing/Group symbols in black without white discs.

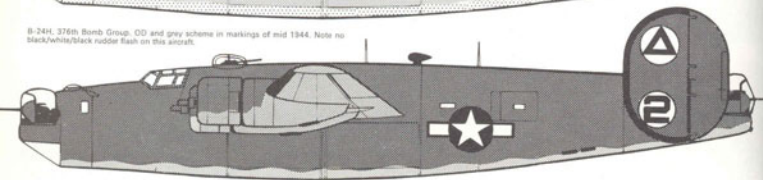


15th Air Force

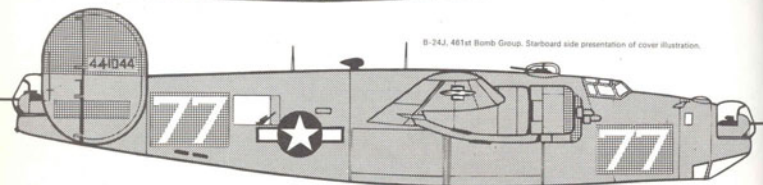
B-24J, 376th Bomb Group. Desert sand and pale blue scheme prior to the introduction of the standard 47th BW markings. Black aircraft letter D on fin and engine cowling only. Segal in OD. Note RAF fin flash low outboard, high inboard.



B-24H, 376th Bomb Group. OD and grey scheme in markings of mid 1944. Note no black/white/black rudder flash on this aircraft.

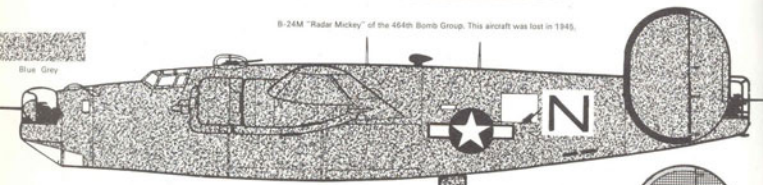


B-24J, 461st Bomb Group. Starboard side presentation of cover illustration.

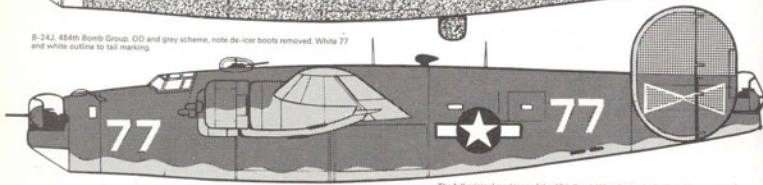


B-24M "Radar Mickey" of the 466th Bomb Group. This aircraft was lost in 1945.

Blue Grey

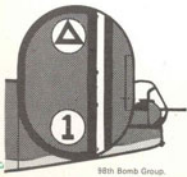


B-24J, 484th Bomb Group. OD and grey scheme, note de-icer boots removed. White 77 and white outline to tail marking.

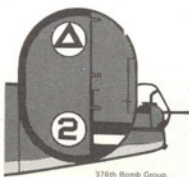


15th Air Force 47th Bomb Wing

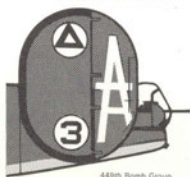
The full original markings of the 47th Bomb Wing for vertical tails as illustrated here were seldom applied in full. See top row, page 22 for usual presentation. Note: There was no black outline to the white discs.



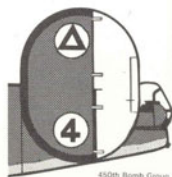
98th Bomb Group.



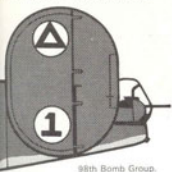
376th Bomb Group



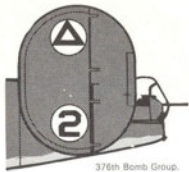
449th Bomb Group.



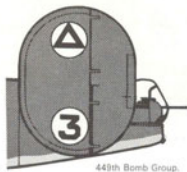
450th Bomb Group



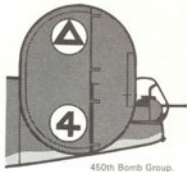
98th Bomb Group.



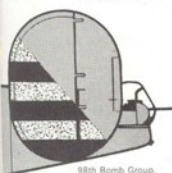
376th Bomb Group.



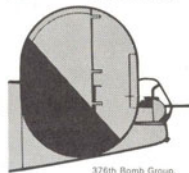
449th Bomb Group.



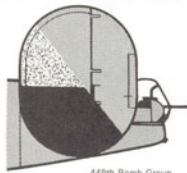
450th Bomb Group.



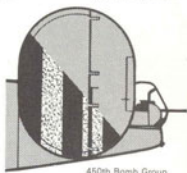
98th Bomb Group.  
From February 1945  
to VE Day.



376th Bomb Group.  
From February 1945  
to VE Day.

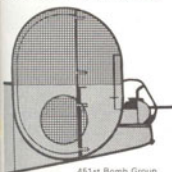


449th Bomb Group.  
From February 1945  
to VE Day.

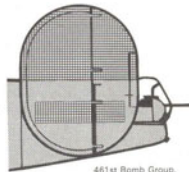


450th Bomb Group.  
From February 1945  
to VE Day.

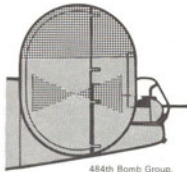
15th Air Force 49th Bomb Wing



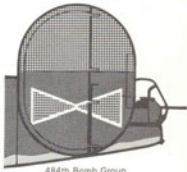
451st Bomb Group.



461st Bomb Group.



484th Bomb Group.

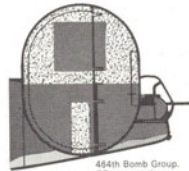


484th Bomb Group.  
On OD scheme, lower marking  
usually outlined in white.

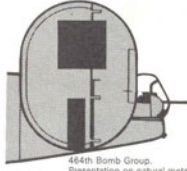
15th Air Force 55th Bomb Wing



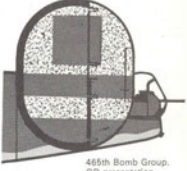
460th Bomb Group.



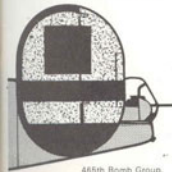
464th Bomb Group.  
OD presentation.



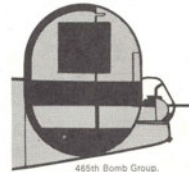
464th Bomb Group.  
Presentation on natural metal  
towards end of war.



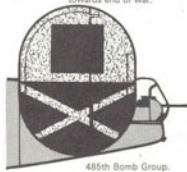
465th Bomb Group.  
OD presentation.



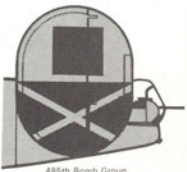
465th Bomb Group.



465th Bomb Group.  
Presentation on natural metal  
towards end of war.

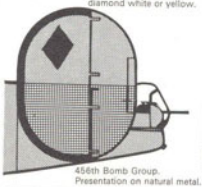
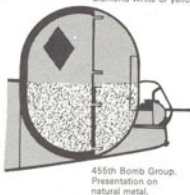
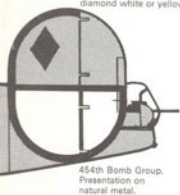
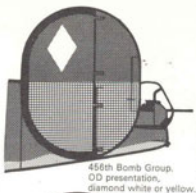
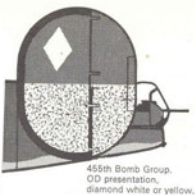
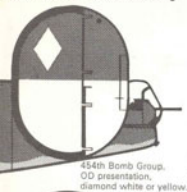


485th Bomb Group.  
Presentation on OD.

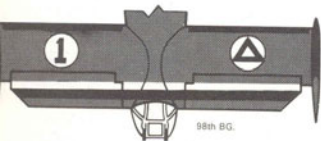


485th Bomb Group.  
Presentation on natural metal  
towards end of war.

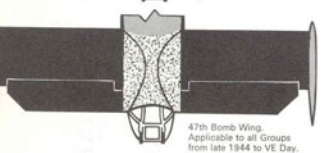
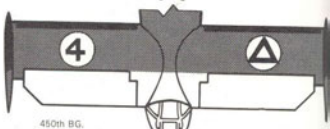
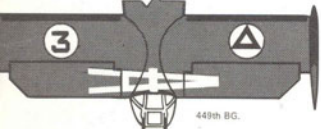
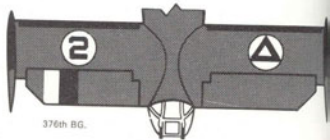
Note: Colour code on page 22.



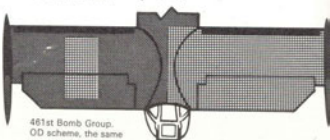
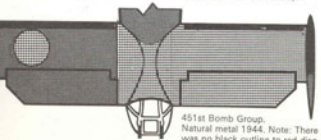
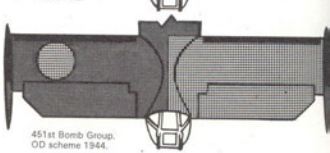
The markings for tail-planes were seldom applied in full, the more usual presentation was the triangle and number combination in white discs. Note: There was no black outline to the white discs.

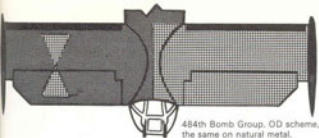


47th Bomb Wing

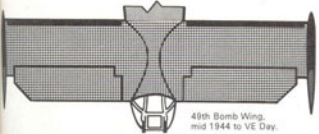


49th Bomb Wing

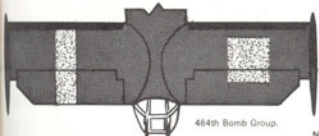




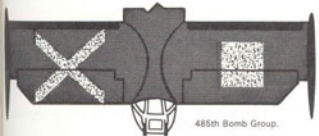
484th Bomb Group. OD scheme, the same on natural metal.



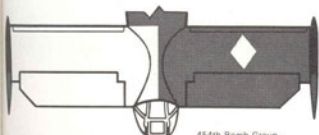
49th Bomb Wing, mid 1944 to VE Day.



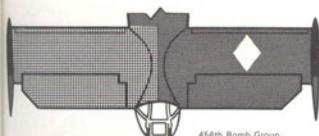
464th Bomb Group.



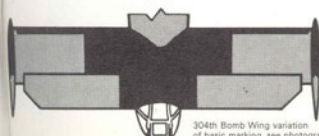
485th Bomb Group.



454th Bomb Group.

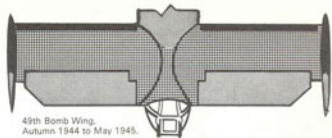


456th Bomb Group.



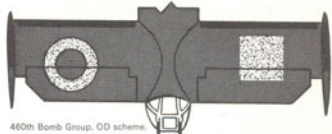
304th Bomb Wing variation of basic marking, see photograph.

49th Bomb Wing

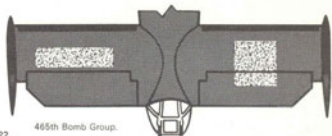


49th Bomb Wing, Autumn 1944 to May 1945.

55th Bomb Wing



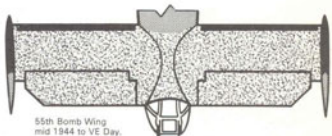
460th Bomb Group, OD scheme.



465th Bomb Group.

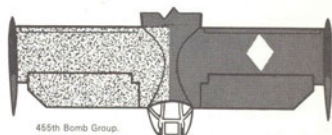
Note: Colour code on page 22.

Exceptions were the use of Group symbols in black on natural metal.

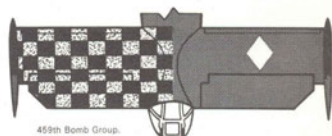


55th Bomb Wing, mid 1944 to VE Day.

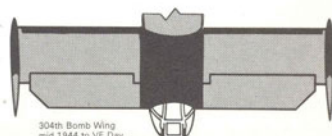
304th Bomb Wing



455th Bomb Group.

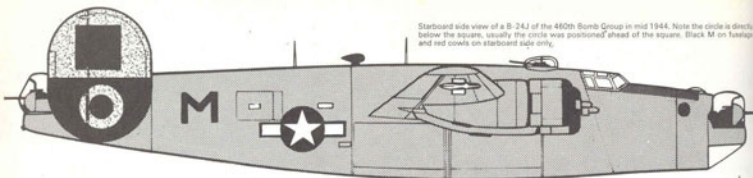


459th Bomb Group.

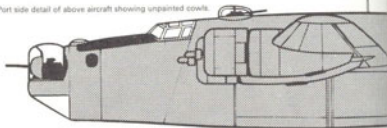


304th Bomb Wing, mid 1944 to VE Day.

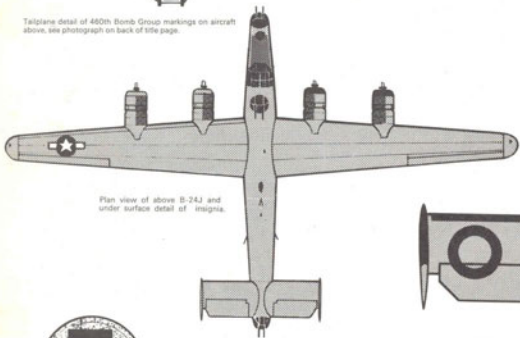
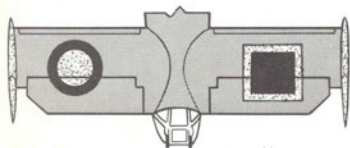
Starboard side view of a B-24J of the 460th Bomb Group in mid 1944. Note the circle is directly below the square, usually the circle was positioned ahead of the square. Black M on fuselage and red cowls on starboard side only.



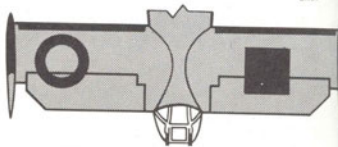
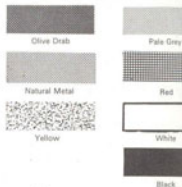
Port side detail of above aircraft showing unpainted cowls.



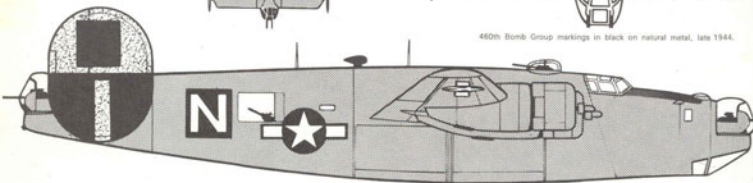
Tailplane detail of 460th Bomb Group markings on aircraft above, see photograph on back of title page.



Plan view of above B-24J and under surface detail of insignia.

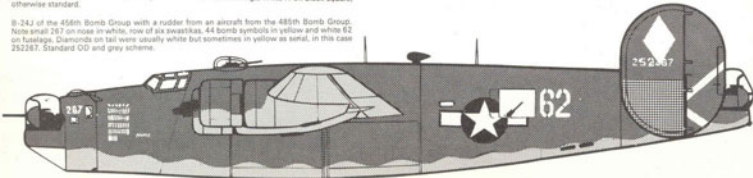


460th Bomb Group markings in black on natural metal, late 1944.



B-24J of the 464th Bomb Group with yellow and black tail markings, white N on black square, otherwise standard.

B-24J of the 456th Bomb Group with a rudder from an aircraft from the 480th Bomb Group. Note small 267 on nose in white, row of six swastikas, 44 bomb symbols in yellow and white 62 on fuselage. Diamonds on tail were usually white but sometimes in yellow as serial, in this case 352267. Standard OD and grey scheme.



5th Air Force

1 B-24J, 22nd Bomb Group, South West Pacific Area. Equipped with B-24's February 1944. See tail view pages for marking sequence.



2 B-24H, 43rd Bomb Group, South West Pacific Area. Equipped with B-24's May-September 1943.



3 B-24J, 90th Bomb Group, South West Pacific Area.

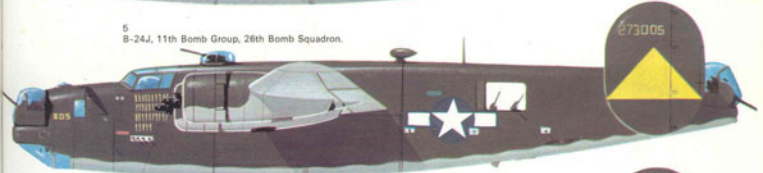


7th Air Force

4 B-24J, 11th Bomb Group, 98th Bomb Squadron, Equipped with B-24's late 1943.



5 B-24J, 11th Bomb Group, 26th Bomb Squadron.



6 B-24J, 11th Bomb Group, 431st Bomb Squadron.



15th Air Force

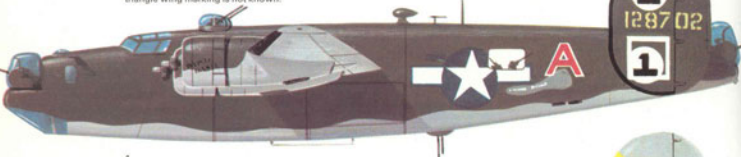
1  
B-24D, 376th Bomb Group, 512th Bomb Squadron, Western Desert, North Africa and Italy,  
1942-1943. "Strawberry Bitch".



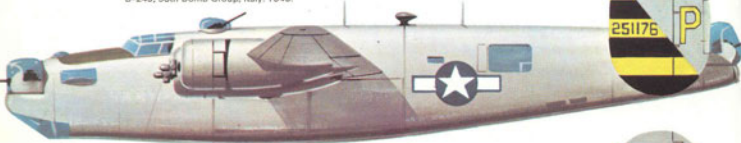
2  
B-24D, 376th Bomb Group, 312th Bomb Squadron, Italy, 1943.



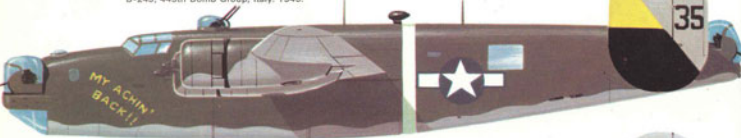
3  
B-24J, 98th Bomb Group, Italy, 1943. Reason for the heavy square in place of the standard triangle wing marking is not known.



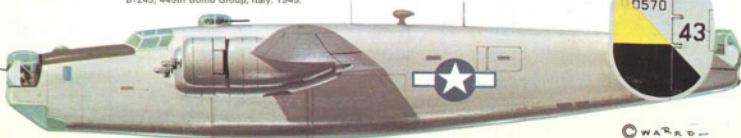
4  
B-24J, 98th Bomb Group, Italy, 1945.



5  
B-24J, 449th Bomb Group, Italy, 1945.



6  
B-24J, 449th Bomb Group, Italy, 1945.





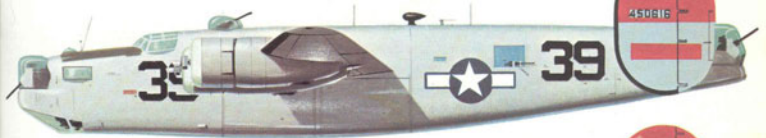
2 B-24J, 451st Bomb Group, Italy, 1944-1945. "Minnesota Mauler".



3 B-24J, 461st Bomb Group, Italy, 1944-1945.



4 B-24J, 461st Bomb Group, Italy, 1944-1945.



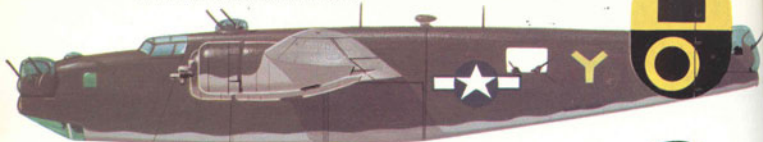
5 B-24M, 461st Bomb Group, Italy, 1944-1945. A "Radar Mickey" in overall grey-blue scheme.



6 B-24J, 484th Bomb Group, Italy, 1944-1945.



B-24J, 460th Bomb Group, Italy. Mid 1944. An early presentation of the Group marking, note the circle is further forward than the square.



B-24J, 460th Bomb Group, Italy. Late 1944.



B-24J, 464th Bomb Group, Italy. Late 1944.



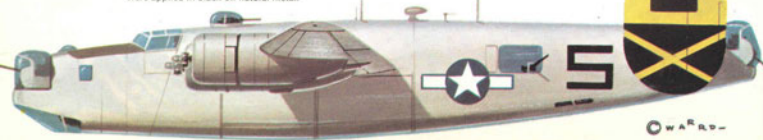
B-24M, 464th Bomb Group, Italy. Late 1945.



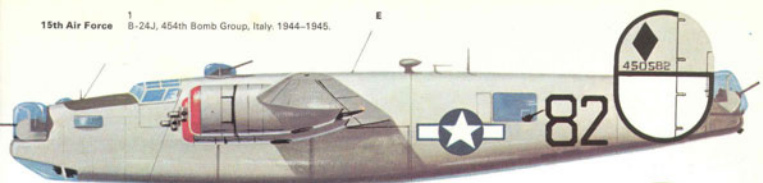
B-24J, 465th Bomb Group, Italy. 1945.



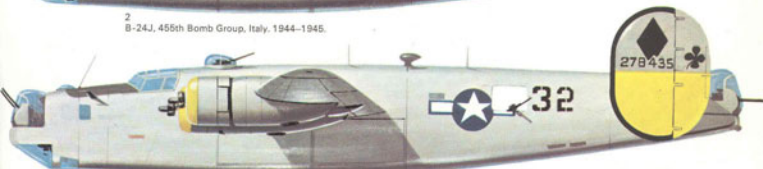
B-24J, 485th Bomb Group, Italy, 1944-1945. All tail markings towards the end of the war were applied in black on natural metal.



15th Air Force 1 B-24J, 454th Bomb Group, Italy, 1944-1945.



2 B-24J, 455th Bomb Group, Italy, 1944-1945.



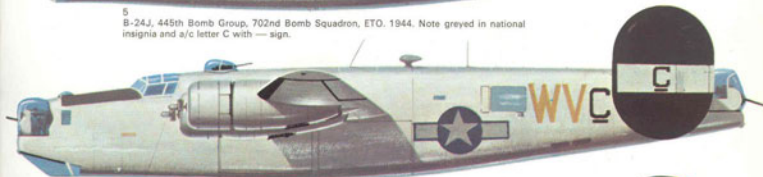
3 B-24J, 459th Bomb Group, 756th Bomb Squadron, Italy, 1944-1945.



8th Air Force 4 B-24J, 389th Bomb Group, 566th Bomb Squadron, ETO, 1944. Note yellow H and + sign.

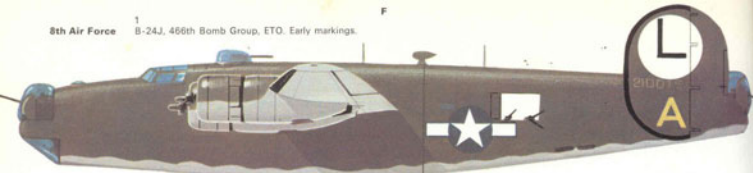


5 B-24J, 445th Bomb Group, 702nd Bomb Squadron, ETO, 1944. Note greyed in national insignia and a/c letter C with — sign.



6 B-24J, 458th Bomb Group, 754th Bomb Squadron, ETO, February 1945. "Final Approach".





2 B-24J, 466th Bomb Group, 784th Bomb Squadron, ETO, 1944-1945.  
Serial 251141 inside fin top.



3 B-24J, 467th Bomb Group, 788th Bomb Squadron, ETO, 1944-1945.  
Serial 440140 inside fin top.



4 B-24J, 489th Bomb Group, 845th Bomb Squadron, ETO, 1945.



5 B-24J, 491st Bomb Group, 856th Bomb Squadron, ETO. Illustrated whilst the Group was part of the 95th Bomb Wing.

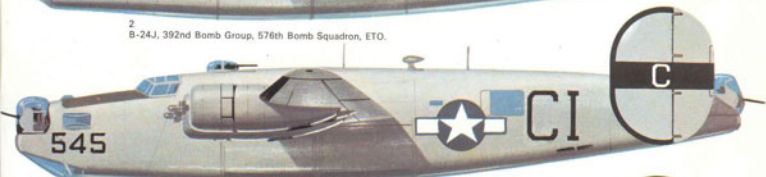


6 B-24J, 491st Bomb Group, 854th Bomb Squadron, ETO. Illustrated in the later markings.  
serial 251453 inside fin top.





2 B-24J, 392nd Bomb Group, 576th Bomb Squadron, ETO.



3 B-24J, 492nd Bomb Group, 857th Bomb Squadron, ETO. Showing early overpainted black disc on tail.



4 B-24J, 93rd Bomb Group, 330th Bomb Squadron, ETO.



5 B-24J, 446th Bomb Group, 704th Bomb Squadron, ETO. "Ronnie".



6 B-24J, 446th Bomb Group, 704th Bomb Squadron, ETO. The circle marking indicates a Pathfinder aircraft (PFF).



10th Air Force 1 B-24J, 7th Bomb Group, Burma-India.



2 B-24J, 7th Bomb Group, Burma-India.



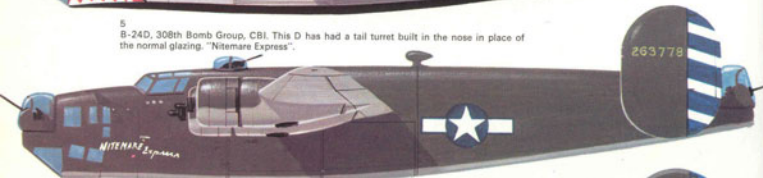
14th Air Force 3 B-24J, 308th Bomb Group, 375th Bomb Squadron, CBI. "Bitch's Sister".



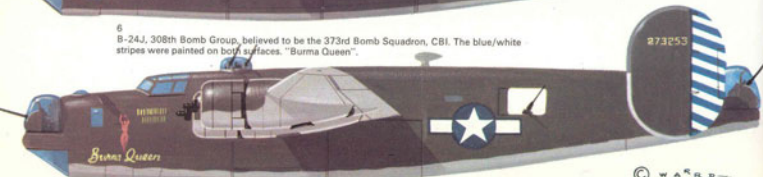
4 B-24J, 308th Bomb Group, 375th Bomb Squadron, CBI. Showing matt black under surfaces and greyed in national insignia and white rudder stripe.



5 B-24D, 308th Bomb Group, CBI. This D has had a tail turret built in the nose in place of the normal glazing. "Nitemare Express".



6 B-24J, 308th Bomb Group, believed to be the 373rd Bomb Squadron, CBI. The blue/white stripes were painted on both surfaces. "Burma Queen".





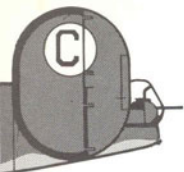
• Above: Olive Drab and grey B-24H of the 392nd Bomb Group, 576th Bomb Squadron heading out over the English Channel for a target somewhere in Europe. Note the white disc on tail and upper wing surfaces, aircraft letter D and serial 129433 in yellow, code CI in pale grey. Note near straight demarcation line between OD and grey. (USAF via R. J. Francillon)



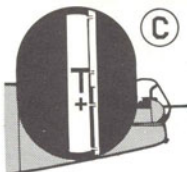
• Above: The 446th Bomb Group heading for a target in Europe on the 24 November 1944. Note the wavy demarcation line. (USAF via R. J. Francillon)

• Below: B-24H "Chief Wapella" of the 487th Bomb Group, 839th Bomb Squadron. Note square presentation of Group letter repeated on upper surface of starboard wing. See colour side-view illustration F6. (USAF via R. J. Francillon)

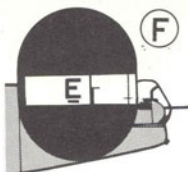




389th Bomb Group,  
2nd Combat Bomb Wing.



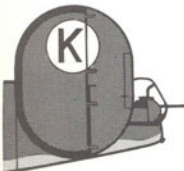
389th Bomb Group,  
2nd Combat Bomb Wing.



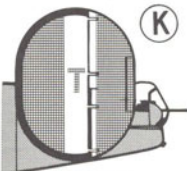
445th Bomb Group,  
2nd Combat Bomb Wing.



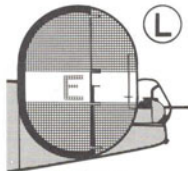
453rd Bomb Group,  
2nd Combat Bomb Wing.



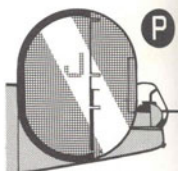
458th Bomb Group,  
96th Combat Bomb Wing.



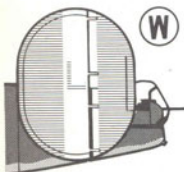
458th Bomb Group,  
96th Combat Bomb Wing.



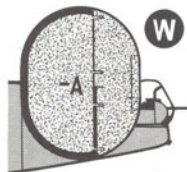
466th Bomb Group,  
96th Combat Bomb Wing.



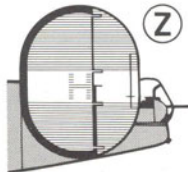
467th Bomb Group,  
96th Combat Bomb Wing.



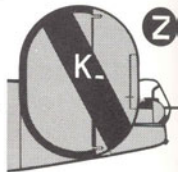
489th Bomb Group,  
95th Combat Bomb Wing.



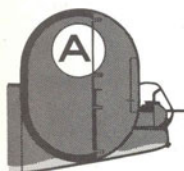
489th Bomb Group,  
20th Combat Bomb Wing.



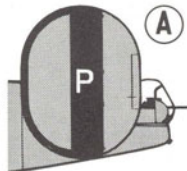
491st Bomb Group,  
95th Combat Bomb Wing.



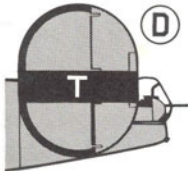
491st Bomb Group,  
14th Combat Bomb Wing.



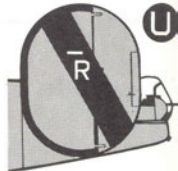
44th Bomb Group,  
14th Combat Bomb Wing.



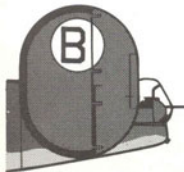
44th Bomb Group,  
14th Combat Bomb Wing.



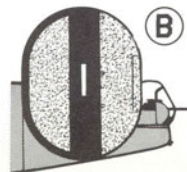
392nd Bomb Group,  
14th Combat Bomb Wing.



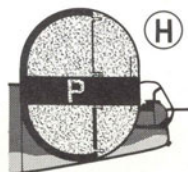
492nd Bomb Group,  
14th Combat Bomb Wing.



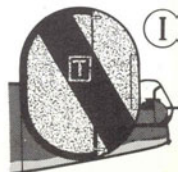
93rd Bomb Group,  
20th Combat Bomb Wing.



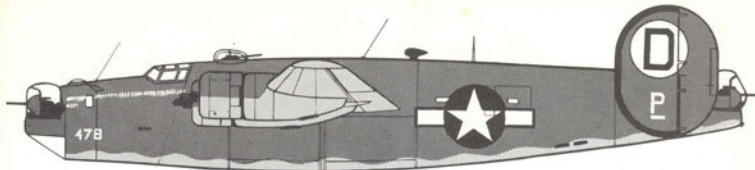
93rd Bomb Group,  
20th Combat Bomb Wing.



446th Bomb Group,  
20th Combat Bomb Wing.

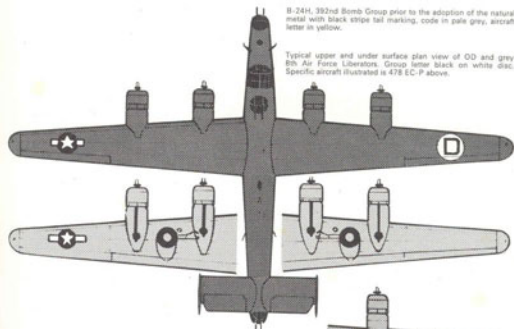


448th Bomb Group,  
20th Combat Bomb Wing.

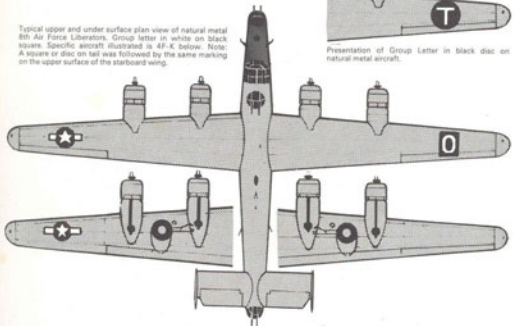


B-24H, 392nd Bomb Group prior to the adoption of the natural metal with black stripe tail marking, code in pale grey, aircraft letter in yellow.

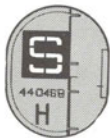
Typical upper and under surface plan view of OD and grey 8th Air Force Liberators. Group letter black on white disc. Specific aircraft illustrated is 478 EC-P above.



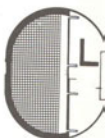
Typical upper and under surface plan view of natural metal 8th Air Force Liberators. Group letter in white on black square. Specific aircraft illustrated is 4F-K below. Note: A square or disc on tail was followed by the same marking on the upper surface of the starboard wing.



Presentation of Group Letter in black disc on natural metal aircraft.



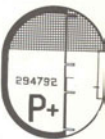
34th Bomb Group.  
June 1944 only.



34th Bomb Group.  
July-August 1944.



490th Bomb Group.  
June 1944 only.



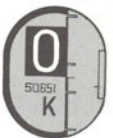
490th Bomb Group.  
July-August 1944.



493rd Bomb Group.  
June 1944 only.



493rd Bomb Group.  
July-August 1944.

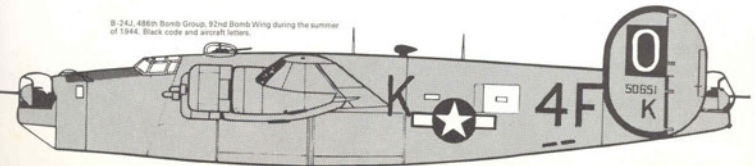


488th Bomb Group.  
Until August 1944.



487th Bomb Group.  
Until August 1944.

B-24J, 486th Bomb Group, 92nd Bomb Wing during the summer of 1944. Black code and aircraft letters.





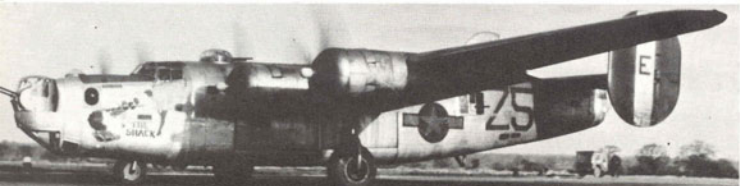
➤ Above: A B-24D of the 93rd Bomb Group in Olive Drab and Grey scheme with red surround to the national insignia. Note aircraft letter Q in yellow and full chord white disc carrying Group letter B on upper starboard wing. One radio mast aft of DF loop. Serial 272869. The red border on the national insignia was only used from June to September 1943. (USAF)

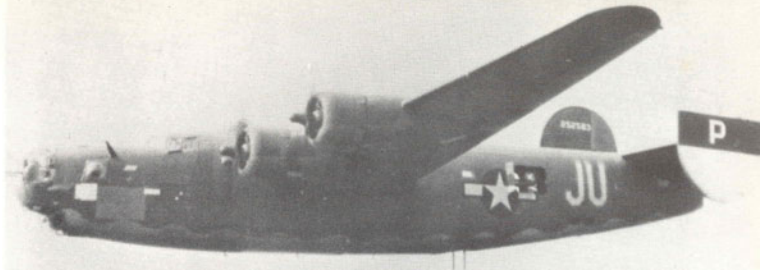
➤ Below left: Upper surface view of a 389th Bomb Group Liberator in the early Olive Drab scheme showing the white disc with black Group letter on the starboard upper surface of the wing and vertical tail surfaces. (USAF)



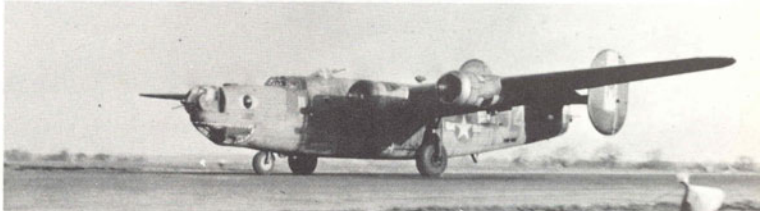
➤ Above right: Similar view of the later natural metal scheme showing the reversed colours of the Group letter presentation, white letter on black disc. A 467th Bomb Group Liberator. (USAF)

➤ Below: The standard natural metal scheme during the closing months of the war, a B-24J of the 458th Bomb Group with additional armour plate below cockpit covering tart, greyed in national insignia and red/white/red Group colours on tail. (USAF)





Above: An OD B-24J of the 446th Bomb Group, 707th Bomb Squadron with an early application of the yellow tail with black band denoting the 446th BG. Note serial, 253583 in yellow inboard on the starboard fin, grey code and wavy demarcation line of fuselage camouflage. (USAF via R. J. Francillon)

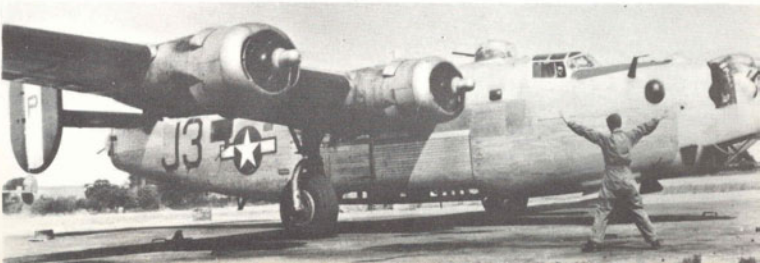


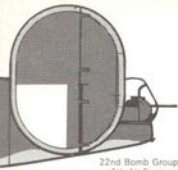
Above: A sharkmouthed OD B-24J of the 458th Bomb Group, 753rd Bomb Squadron, revving up prior to take-off for the 200th mission, 26 February 1945. A colour illustration of this aircraft appears in SHARKMOUTH Vol. 2. (USAF)

Below: A NM B-24J of the same unit awaiting take-off on the same mission. "Table Stuff". (USAF via R. J. Francillon)

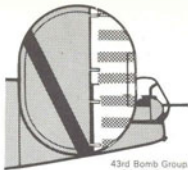


Below: A crew chief signals stop engines as this B-24J of the 458th Bomb Group, 755th Bomb Squadron arrives on its dispersal area. The nose of this aircraft appears to have been painted yellow in the same style as some aircraft of the 93rd BG painted theirs red. (USAF via R. J. Francillon)

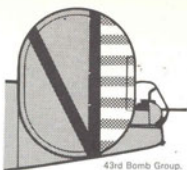




22nd Bomb Group,  
5th Air Force.



43rd Bomb Group,  
5th Air Force.



43rd Bomb Group,  
5th Air Force,  
variation.



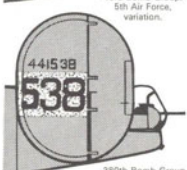
90th Bomb Group,  
5th Air Force,  
early presentation.



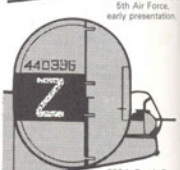
90th Bomb Group,  
5th Air Force.



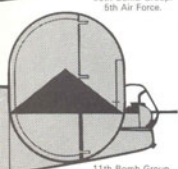
90th Bomb Group,  
5th Air Force,  
variation.



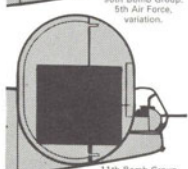
380th Bomb Group,  
5th Air Force.



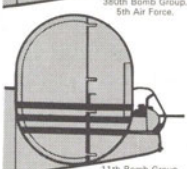
380th Bomb Group,  
5th Air Force.



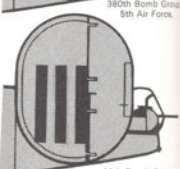
11th Bomb Group,  
26th Bomb Squadron,  
7th Air Force.



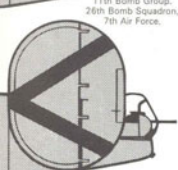
11th Bomb Group,  
42nd Bomb Squadron,  
7th Air Force.



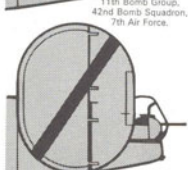
11th Bomb Group,  
98th Bomb Squadron,  
7th Air Force.



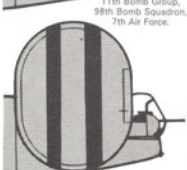
11th Bomb Group,  
431st Bomb Squadron,  
7th Air Force.



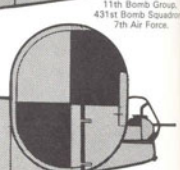
494th Bomb Group,  
864th Bomb Squadron,  
7th Air Force.



494th Bomb Group,  
865th Bomb Squadron,  
7th Air Force.



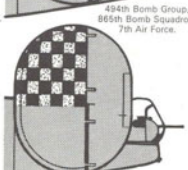
494th Bomb Group,  
866th Bomb Squadron,  
7th Air Force.



494th Bomb Group,  
867th Bomb Squadron,  
7th Air Force.



7th Bomb Group,  
10th Air Force.



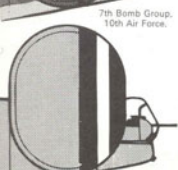
7th Bomb Group,  
10th Air Force.



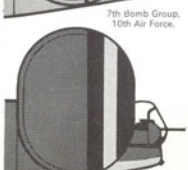
5th Bomb Group,  
13th Air Force.



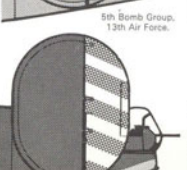
307th Bomb Group,  
13th Air Force,  
"Long Rangers".



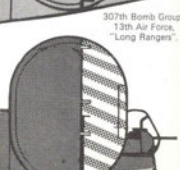
308th Bomb Group,  
376th Bomb Squadron,  
14th Air Force.



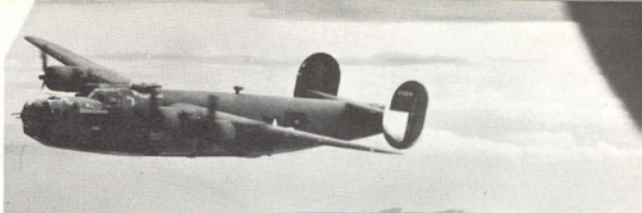
308th Bomb Group,  
375th Bomb Squadron,  
14th Air Force, variation.



308th Bomb Group,  
14th Air Force.



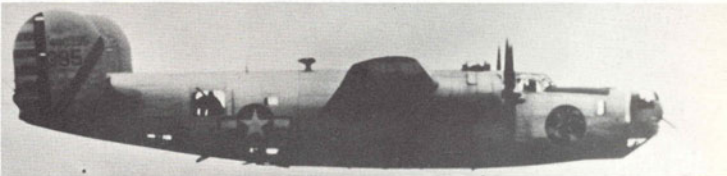
308th Bomb Group,  
14th Air Force.



Above: Believed to be a B-24J of the 22nd Bomb Group, 5th Air Force, photo taken over Kolono Bay during an attack on the Celebes, NEI. Note lack of aerials and de-icer boots removed. 8 January 1944. (USAF)

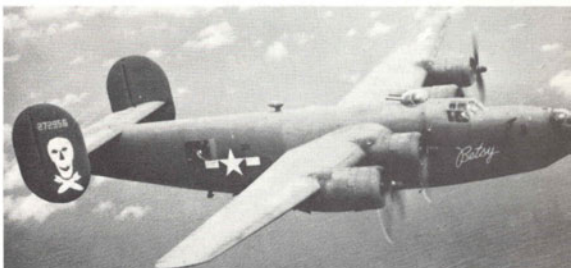


Above: A B-24J of the 43rd Bomb Group, 5th Air Force, note the horizontal and diagonal tail stripes. (via D. W. Menard)



Above: A B-24J in the full markings of the 43rd Bomb Group flying along the New Guinea coast. Note last three of serial, 395 in black below serial 440395 on fin. (USAF)

Right: "Betsy" a B-24D of the 90th Bomb Group heading for Japanese targets at Wewak, New Guinea on the 22 February 1944. "Betsy" and serial 272956, stencil style in yellow, OD and grey scheme with nearly straight demarcation line. (USAF)



Below: Another 90th Bomb Group OD and grey Liberator coming in to land on an airfield on Biak, see colour side-view A3. (Norb Krane via R. M. Hill)





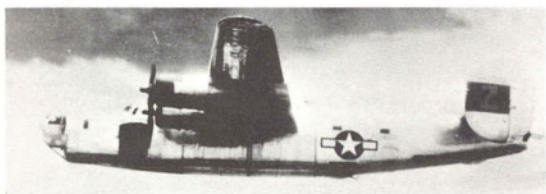
A formation of B-24L's of the 380th Bomb Group, 5th Air Force outward bound to the target area. Note last three in black on yellow band on fin, serials of nearest aircraft 441538 and 441366.



Another 380th Bomb Group B-24L, serial 441652, yellow band on fin without last three repeated on it.



723 in white on black fin band no doubt identifies a B-24J of another squadron of the 380th Bomb Group, Serial 440723.



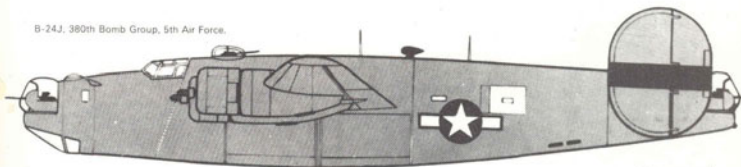
Port and starboard views of another B-24J of the 380th Bomb Group. Note black fin band with yellow Z, which must certainly identify a third squadron of the Group, Serial 440396 in O.D. Aircraft named "Red Raider". (Photos via R. C. Jones)



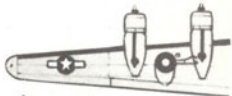


—A trio of B-24J's of a formation believed to be of the 380th Bomb Group taken during an attack on Japanese fortifications on Iwo Jima. (USAF)

B-24J, 380th Bomb Group, 5th Air Force.

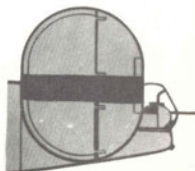
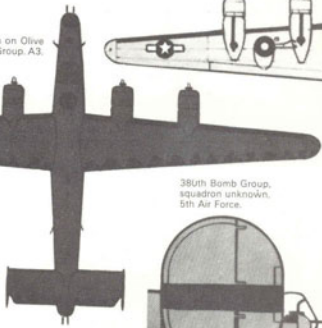
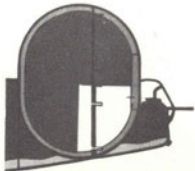
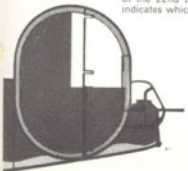
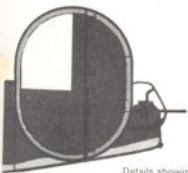


Plan view showing dapple medium green on Olive Drab camouflage of B-24J of 90th Bomb Group, A3.

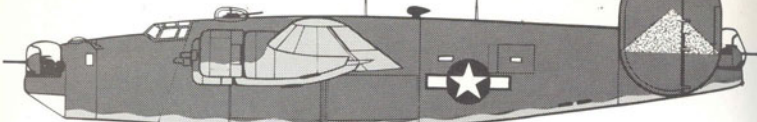


Details showing the white quartered tail of the squadrons of the 22nd Bomb Group, 5th Air Force. Which quarter indicates which squadron is not known.

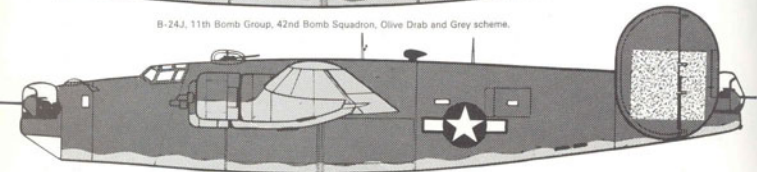
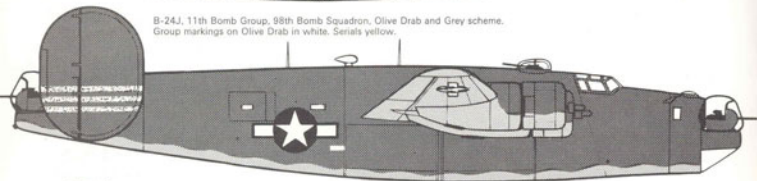
380th Bomb Group, squadron unknown, 5th Air Force.



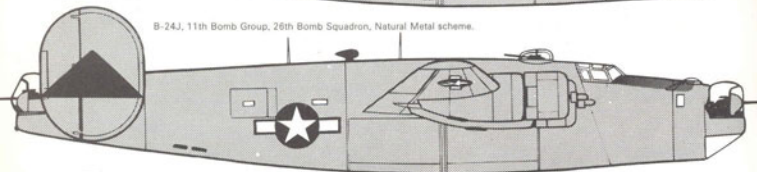
B-24J, 11th Bomb Group, 26th Bomb Squadron, Olive Drab and Grey scheme.



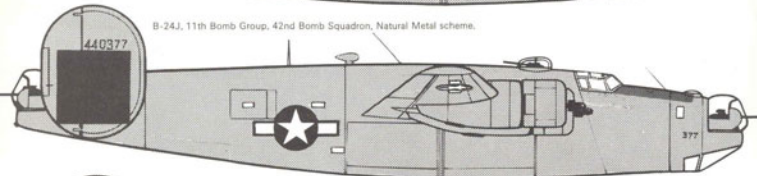
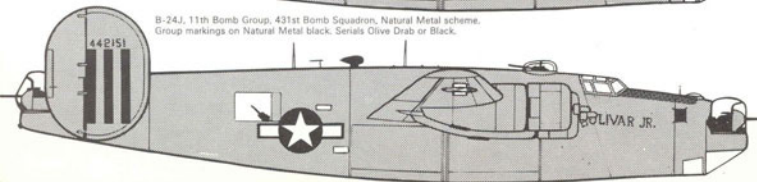
B-24J, 11th Bomb Group, 42nd Bomb Squadron, Olive Drab and Grey scheme.

B-24J, 11th Bomb Group, 98th Bomb Squadron, Olive Drab and Grey scheme.  
Group markings on Olive Drab in white. Serials yellow.

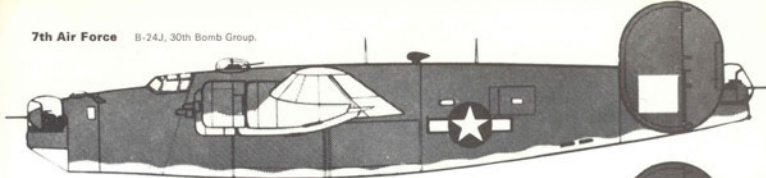
B-24J, 11th Bomb Group, 26th Bomb Squadron, Natural Metal scheme.



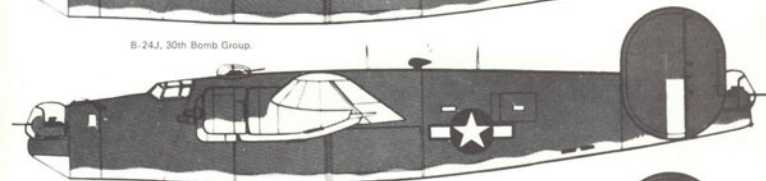
B-24J, 11th Bomb Group, 42nd Bomb Squadron, Natural Metal scheme.

B-24J, 11th Bomb Group, 431st Bomb Squadron, Natural Metal scheme.  
Group markings on Natural Metal black. Serials Olive Drab or Black.

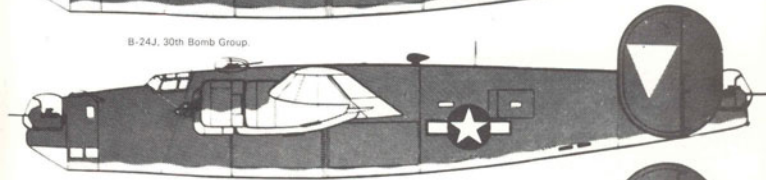
7th Air Force B-24J, 30th Bomb Group.



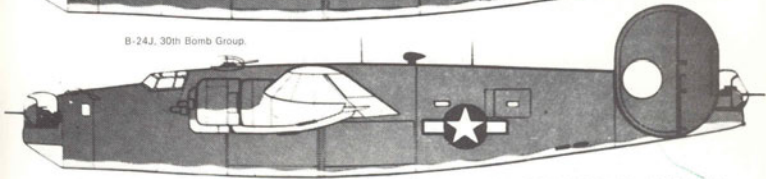
B-24J, 30th Bomb Group.



B-24J, 30th Bomb Group.



B-24J, 30th Bomb Group.

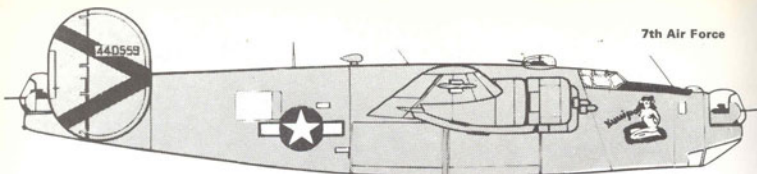


Below: A pair of B-24J's of the 11th Bomb Group, 26th Bomb Squadron on a mission to Truk in the Caroline Islands, 29 July 1944. Note array of aenas along fuselage. (USAF via R. J. Francillon)

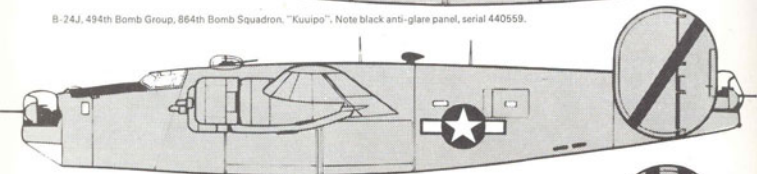


Below: A B-24J of the 11th Bomb Group, 431st Bomb Squadron over Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands in June 1944. (USAF via R. J. Francillon)

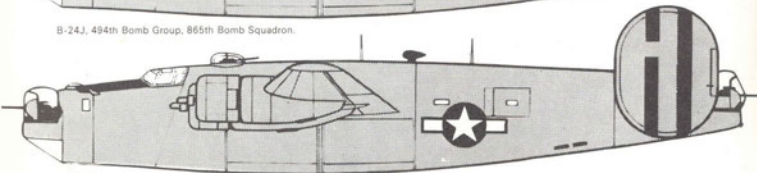




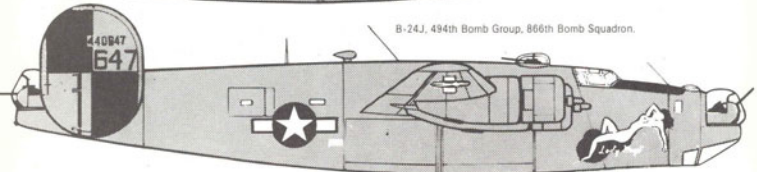
B-24J, 494th Bomb Group, 864th Bomb Squadron, "Kuuiipo". Note black anti-glare panel, serial 440559.



B-24J, 494th Bomb Group, 865th Bomb Squadron.



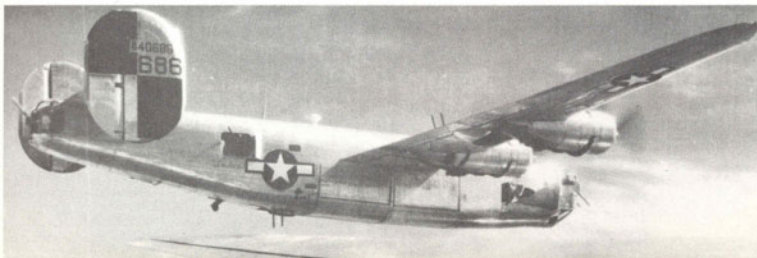
B-24J, 494th Bomb Group, 866th Bomb Squadron.



B-24J, 494th Bomb Group, 867th Bomb Squadron, "Lady Kaye". Note black anti-glare panel, serial 440647.

All Squadron markings in black on natural metal; it was the usual practice of the Group to remove all de-icer boots.

A B-24J of the 494th Bomb Group, 867th Squadron heading back to base from a raid on Caballo and Corregidor Islands in Manila Bay, Philippines, February 1945. Note black squadron markings on rudder, serial 440686, the last three repeated larger underneath in black. (USAF via R. J. Francillon)





→ Above: An all black B-24J on Negroes airstrip said to be of the 11th Bomb Group but if the tail marking is anything to go by than it is of the 864th Bomb Squadron of the 484th Bomb Group, 7th Air Force. Note the white band round the engine cowls and the natural metal shield-like shape on the tail with the 864th diagonal black stripe. (F. F. Smith)



Above: A B-24J of the 494th Bomb Group, 864th Bomb Squadron taking off from Yontan airstrip for a mission against the Japanese Home Islands. Note the black diagonal stripe on tail. Line-up of PB4Y-2 Privateers of the US NAVY in background. (USAF)

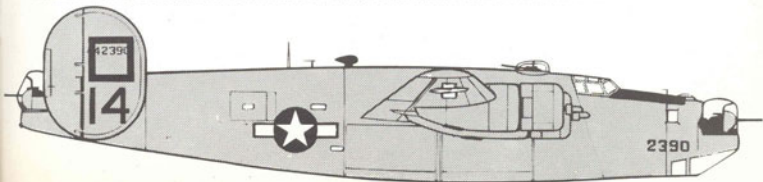


→ Right: A natural metal B-24J of the 7th Bomb Group attacking the Bala railroad bridge in Burma on 13 November 1944. See colour illustration H2. (IWM)



→ Above: Olive Drab and Grey B-24J of the 7th Bomb Group, 10th Air Force coming in to land at Kumitola airfield, India, January 1944. Note yellow checks on OD fin, see colour illustration H1. (USAF)

Below: B-24M, 5th Bomb Group, 13th Air Force. Note black anti-glare panel, open square, 14 and 2390 on nose. Serial 442390.





— Above: B-24J "Bitch's Sister" of the 308th Bomb Group, 375th Bomb Squadron on Kweilin airfield, China, 14th Air Force. The tail markings of the 375th have been variously reported as being black/white/black and blue/white/blue, both are probable. Note serial 273319 and 505 in yellow on fin, all de-icer boots in position. (Eric Hart via R. M. Hill)

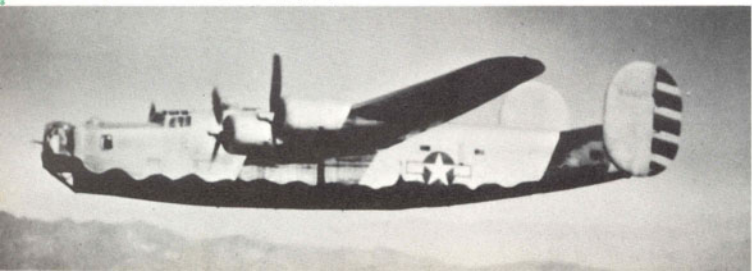


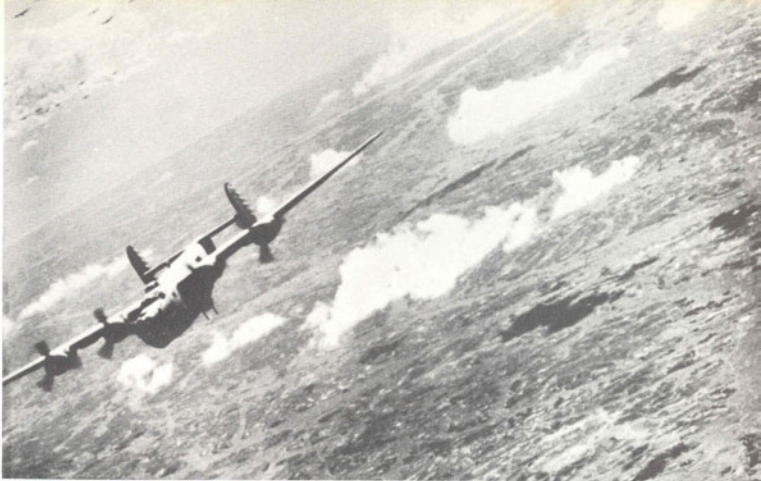
— Above: A natural metal B-24J of the 375th Bomb Squadron departing Hengyang, China after bombing supply dumps on outskirts of city, 16 September 1944. Note rudder stripe and national insignia on fuselage have been greyed in. Serial 440584. See side-view illustration H3. (USAF)



Left: "Nitemare Express", a modified B-24D, tail turret built in the nose and extra window area, of the 308th Bomb Group on a Chinese airfield. Serial is 263778, blue and white squadron marking on outside of rudders. OD and grey aircraft with de-icer boots removed.

— Below: A natural metal 308th Bomb Group Liberator with matt black under fuselage and blue on natural metal rudder stripes flying over the "Hump" with a load of supplies bound for Chabua from Kunming. (USAF)





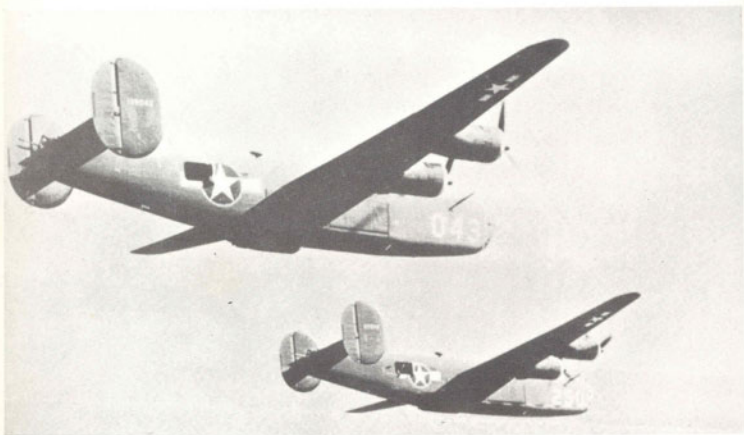
Above: 308th Bomb Group Liberators bombing a Japanese supply point in the Tung Lung-Lake Changsha area of China. Note diagonal rudder blue and white stripes. (USAF)

Below: A pair of B-24J's of the 308th Bomb Group, squadron unknown of the 14th Air Force heading out for Japanese targets in Hunan Province, China. Nearest aircraft is 273318 and the other "Burma Queen" 273253. OD and grey scheme with blue and white diagonal stripes on the rudders. (USAF)





- Left: A radar equipped B-24D of the 28th Composite Group, 11th Air Force. Serial in yellow on rudder 123873, note large white 22 on nose, no other identity markings were apparently used by the Liberator element of the Group. (USAF)



Above: Standard Olive Green and grey B-24D's of the Air Proving Grounds in typical Stateside training markings ... large white three figure numbers on the nose sometimes repeated on the fin, usually the last three of the serial. Serials of the Liberators above, 129043 and 27250. (via Earl Reinert)

Below: A mixed OD and Desert Sand Air Proving Ground Liberator formation. (USAF)





Above: "Calamity Jane", a B-24J of the 451st Bomb Group, 727th Squadron, note 56 in yellow on nose but 60 in white on red square on fuselage, white DF loop, standard group colours on tail, serial 252440 on OD background. Note forward red square with white 60 below inboard engine. (USAF via R. J. Francillon)



Above: A B-24M of the 451st Bomb Group, 728th Squadron, standard group colours on tail, serial 449043, red 5 on dirty square on aft fuselage, note RCM aerial. (USAF via R. J. Francillon)

Below: B-24H of the 465th Bomb Group photographed during an attack on the marshalling yards at Forli, Italy, 19 May 1944. (USAF)



Below: "Judith Ann", a B-24J of the 459th Bomb Group, 756th Squadron arriving at Poltava in Russia on 12 April 1945. See colour illustration. (USAF via R. J. Francillon)



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