



In Defense of Freedom: Stories of Courage and Sacrifice of World War II Army Air Forces Flyers

Wolfgang W. E. Samuel

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The twenty-seven stories in this book serve as a graphic reminder of the selfless heroism of America's World War II Army Air Forces flyers and how necessary they were to achieve Allied victory. Wolfgang Samuel and the pilots he interviewed reveal the peril these men faced to achieve a daunting task, impossible without their bravery. And their sacrifices were stunning--American bomber crews suffered the highest casualties (KIA, MIA, POW, wounded) of all American armed services in World War II. The stories preserved in this book bear that grave danger out. A member of a heavy bomber crew in the 8th Air Force in the period from mid-1942 to spring 1944 was less likely to survive than a US Marine fighting on Iwo Jima or Okinawa.

The stories in this unique book are about men who went face to face with their adversaries, who saw their buddies die, who crashed planes, and who became prisoners of war. Many later went on to become the backbone of the postwar Air Force, serving in Korea and Vietnam and during the Cold War.

Young Ken Chilstrom led a flight of eight A-36 fighter bombers on a low-level foray in Italy. Only he and two others came home. Bob Hoover thought he could take on the entire German air force, but on his first mission he was shot down, nearly perished, and suffered the remainder of the war in a prisoner-of-war camp. Wolfgang Samuel's new book is all about men like Ken, Bob, and the many friends they lost, who saw World War II through to the end and gave freedom to so many others.

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