

41-29382

By
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Thursday, May 25, 1944. During the Allied air operations carried out to destroy the German communications in southern France, 2 groups of B-24 Liberators of the 55th Bomb Wing of the Fifteenth Air Force, 464th and 465th Bomb Groups, attacked the marshalling yards of Givors, a city located about twenty kilometers south of Lyon in the Rhone Valley.

Four aircraft belonging to 464th Bomb Group were very seriously damaged, three of which failed to return to their base in Gioia del Colle, in Italian Puglia. The American bomber groups were attacked on their way back, both by the flak and the Luftwaffe, Messerschmitt 109 and Focke Wulf 190, whose bases were located in Istres, Salon-de-Provence and Channoines.

Aircraft, 41-29382, whose main tanks had been hit, crashed in the Esterel massif less than 2 kilometers south of the Messerschmitt 109 shot down a few seconds before!

Paradoxically, this plane had been nicknamed by its crew: "Lucky Lady"....

Only four parachutes were seen ejecting from the aircraft, witnessed as a fireball by the inhabitants of the Grenouillet farm, in Agay.

Of the four crewmembers that bailed out of the B-24, only the pilot, Second Lieutenant William O. Trotter, landed alive near the Anthenor Viaduct. Immediately captured but badly burned, and after being directed to Draguignan by the occupying forces, this man was taken to a hospital in the Dijon region where he died on August 25, 1944.

Of the other three men, only one was found during the spring of 1945, still wrapped in his parachute which had been burned.

On August 13, 1994 a monument dedicated to Second Lieutenant Trotter's B-24 was erected in the Estérel's forest