

It's a Small World

By Harvey W. Bronstein (776th) as told to Stan Yost, Sec. Editor, "Pilot Classes of WWII"

464th Bombardment Group member Harvey Bronstein (776th) and his crew (right) were at Langley Field, Virginia in 1943 - this photo was taken just before they left to join the Fifteenth Air Force in Italy.

Harvey is in the back, on the left, the other pilot is Gene Stout. They were shot down over the Ploesti oil fields on D-Day. It was Harvey's 24th mission with the 464th Bomb Group.

He was a Prisoner of War for about nine months, until he was able to get out of that mess when the Russians were closing in on the Germans in that area.

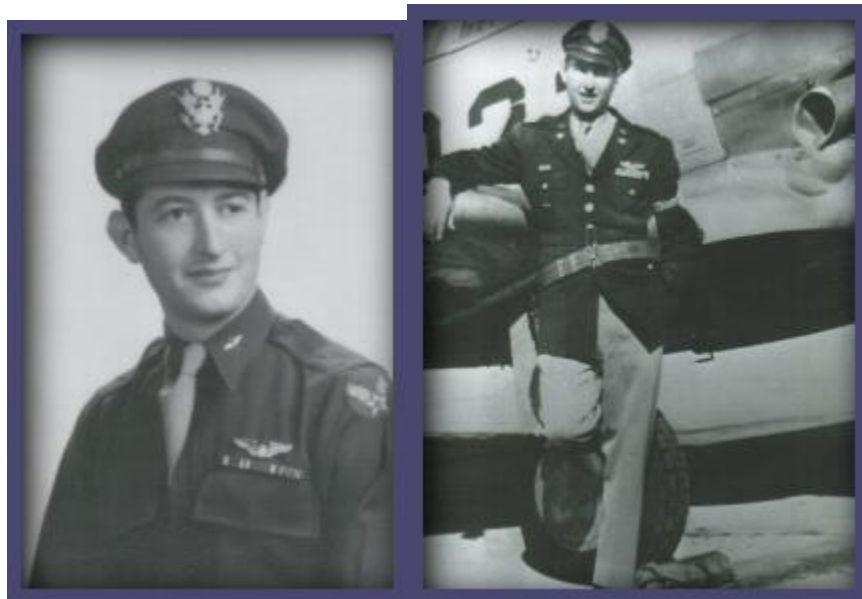


From the Harvey Bronstein (776) collection.

Harvey Bronstein (back, far left), the other pilot is Gene Stout.

Harvey W. Bronstein's (776th) B-24 Crew.

Harvey wasn't always flying B-24s. He began flying single engine planes. He completed his training in Dothan, Alabama. After graduation, he was sent to Hollywood, Florida. While there, he and all the others were lined up according to height. The shortest guys went to the 39s, the medium-sized fellows to the 51s and the tallest to the 47s. As you can see from the photo, Harvey was short and ended up in the 39s.



Lt. Harvey W. Bronstein (776th)

In Hollywood, Harvey was checked out by Lt. Frank Green. Green asked Harvey to climb into the cockpit, then close his eyes and describe the instrument panel. That done, Harvey was then instructed to take the ship up and do some power-on and power-off stalls and to just get the general feel of the aircraft.

After an hour or so Harvey headed for base and requested landing instructions. He came in hot and pulled up into a Schandel to the left. He hit the gear switch at about 600 feet and WOW, the nose wheel broke first and the nose headed for heaven. He had little airspeed so he slammed on the power, put the nose down and prayed.

Harvey got down safely. Then, when Green came over to see how it went, Harvey yelled at him about not telling him about the nose wheel reaction. The answer was, "Sorry, Harvey, I forgot."

Shortly after this incident the P-39 program was put on hold and Harvey was transferred to Blythe, Calif. He thought he was going into 51s.

When he got there and asked where the fighters were, they pointed a field full of B-24s out to him. He didn't see Frank Green again.

Years later Harvey and his wife moved to Florida. They both enjoyed fishing so decided that they would buy a boat of their own. They found a used one that belonged to a woman. When they bought the boat from her they discovered that she was the widow of Frank Green.