

**The Air Battle over Jindřichův Hradec**  
*and*

**The Story of Little Lulu**

**15<sup>th</sup> AF B-24 (H) Liberator Bomber**



*In the fight for freedom, lest we never forget...*

*It is not out of heedlessness or cowardice that the Germans keep abandoning immense numbers of tanks and armored vehicles by the roadsides of France. These tanks and trucks are out of gasoline.*

*– General H. M. Arnold, October 1944*

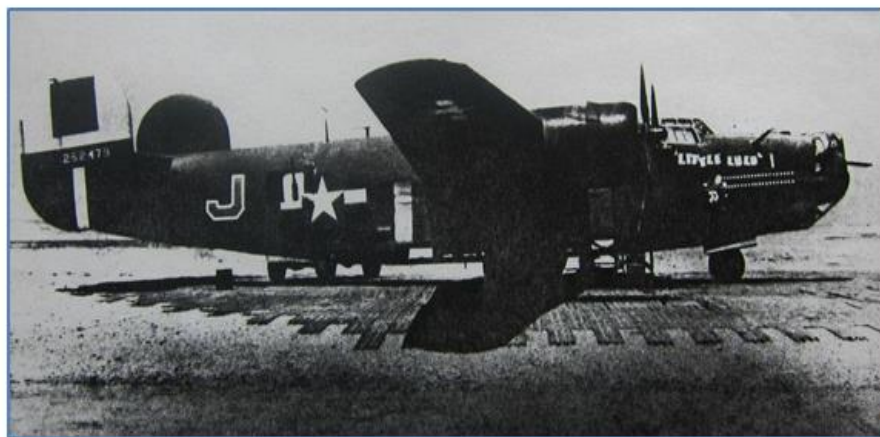
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## The History of B24 (H) Liberator Bomber Little Lulu – 15th Air Force 464th Bomb Group, Pantanella, Italy | Last Sortie 24 August 1944

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Thursday, June 20, 2013 | Jihočesky Kraj, Czech Republic

The B-24H 42-52479 "Little Lulu" ("Red J") from the 776th BS, piloted by 2nd Lt. John H. James was shot down on August 24, 1944 after successful bombing of the David Fanto refinery in Pardubice, Czech Republic. On the way home, the ship was attacked by Uffz. Willi Reschke of I./JG 302. Sixty years later Mr. Reschke wrote: "I selected a B-24 and closed in on it from the rear with a clear height advantage. I opened fire, primarily aiming to disable the tail gunner, streaming his bursts towards me. My second burst hit the inboard port engine which immediately started to burn. At that moment my engine had been hit by several rounds, so I had to break my attack." The bomber was then finished by Fw. Hubert Engst of II.(Sturm)/JG 300. Engst's plane was severely hit too and he had to bail out. Radio operator Sgt. John F. D'Amore was the only survivor of Little Lulu. Lt. James and other nine men perished in their plane when it crashed about two hundred yards north of the village of Vlčice, Czech Republic. (Source: Jiri Sasek) The remains of Lts. John H. James, Edward J. Maloney, Erwin G. Dunham, Walter W. Weaver, as well as of Sgts. Eugene Jeleniewicz, Ralph Robinson, Edward C. Ivan, Thad J. Watson and Felix B. Gleason were buried into six graves by the Western wall of St. Andrew's small church in the graveyard near Strmilov on August 26, 1944. This entry was edited by Apollo II on Friday, 05 July 2013 at 18:01:59 UTC.



**B-24H Little Lulu, s/n 42-52479**

B-24H Little Lulu, s/n42-52479, 776th BS, 464th BG, Pantanella, Italy  
Photo credit: USAF



***Little Lulu (42-52479) crash Site at Vlčice, Czechoslovakia. (Photo from Jiri Sasek)***

**The only survivor, Sgt. John F. D'Amore**

Radio operator Sgt. John F. D'Amore was the only survivor of Little Lulu | Photo credit: USAF



**B-24H Little Lulu, s/n 42-52479**

Source: "Luftwaffe in Detail - Air War over the Czech Lands" wings & wheels Publications (WWP) - History Line No.1



St. Andrew's Church



western wall of St. Andrew's church in the graveyard near Strmilov, with visible plaque and US airmen memorial.



*Little Lulu (42-52479) crash Site at Vlcice, Czechoslovakia. (Photo from Jiri Sasek)*

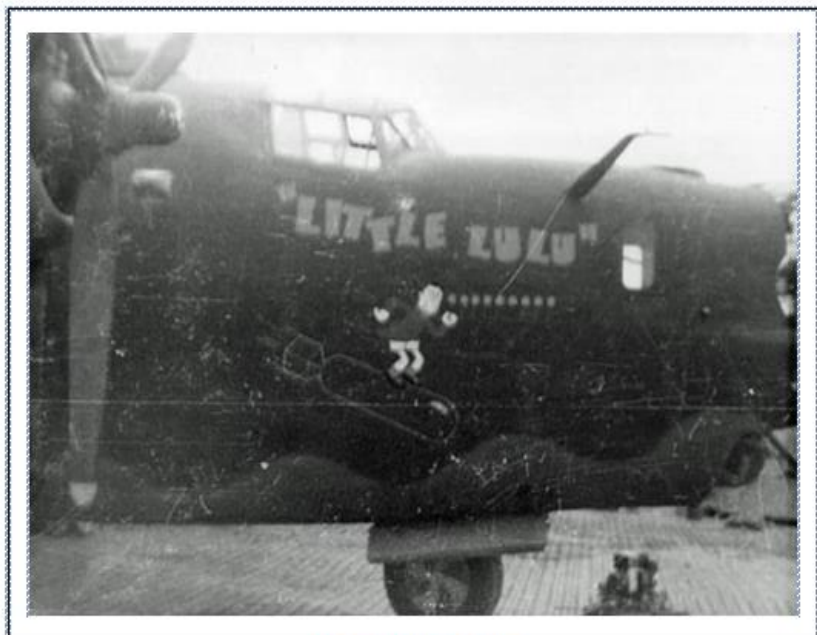




*Little Lulu (42-52479) crash Site at Vlcice, Czechoslovakia. (Photo from Jiri Sasek)*



*Little Lulu (42-52479) crash Site at Vlcice, Czechoslovakia. (Photo from Jiri Sasek)*



**B24H "Little Lulu"**

This B24 Liberator, 42-52479, "Little Lulu," was assigned to the 776th Squadron of the 464<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. On August 24, 1944, the plane was attacked by German fighter pilots and exploded in mid-air as they were returning from the mission. There was one survivor. Eight members of the crew were buried on September 2, 1949 at Zachary Taylor National Cemetery in Section E155-156.

1/LT James, John H.	Pilot	Zachary Taylor Nat'l Cemetery
2/LT Dunham, Erwin G.	Navigator	Zachary Taylor Nat'l Cemetery
SGT Ivan, Edward G	Gunner	Zachary Taylor Nat'l Cemetery
SGT Jeleniewicz, Eugene A.	Engineer	Zachary Taylor Nat'l Cemetery
2/LT Maloney, Edward J,	Copilot	Zachary Taylor Nat'l Cemetery
SGT Robinson, Ralph	Gunner	Zachary Taylor Nat'l Cemetery
SGT Watson, Thad J Sr.	Gunner	Zachary Taylor Nat'l Cemetery
2/LT Weaver, Walter W Jr	Bombardier	Zachary Taylor Nat'l Cemetery
SGT Gleason, Felix E.	Gunner	Lorraine American Cemetery
SGT D'Amore, John F.	Radio Op	Survivor

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## The 464th Bomb Group in WWII - Our Allies

Jiri Sasek, Czech Republic

My name is Jiri Sasek and I am working to open a museum in Jindřichův Hradec, Bohemia in the Czech Republic. As soon as the museum is open (circa 2008), I'll mail photos of the show cases dedicated to the bombers of the 464th BG. This is the results of my research into the events of 24 August 1944 when the 15th USAAF attacked targets in Czechoslovakia.

There were 368 bombers sent to oil refineries at Pardubice (55th Bomb Wing), Kolin (304th Bomb Wing) and the airfield in Pardubice (5th Bomb Wing).

At 12.40 German fighters engaged the first bombers over the Czech Republic near Jindřichův Hradec. The B-24 "Little Lulu" 42-52479, piloted by 1/LT John H. James, was shot down and crashed near Vlčice, Czech Republic. The only survivor of this crew was the Radio Operator, John F. D'Amore.

D'Amore recalls, "On August the 24th, after successfully dropping our bombs on the target we were starting on our way back when we were attacked by several ME109 fighter planes. As the radio operator my battle position was the left waist gun, the attack came from the right side and also from the rear. Six 20 mm shells came into the fuselage about six inches from my toes, and then the ship went into a flat spin. I was thrown to the floor and pinned there due to the centrifugal force of the spin. Then the ship exploded and broke into several parts, leaving me in the rear section and 1/LT James in the front part. As soon as my parachute opened I hit the ground and I never saw any member of the crew from then on. (Both his legs were broken upon landing; the villagers who lived near where the plane crashed turned him over to the Germans, in part so that he could receive medical care. The rest of the men were buried by the villagers, and later reinterred in Zachary Taylor National Cemetery in Louisville, Kentucky.

It is my belief that a shell exploded in the front of the plane and killed everyone up there, thus causing the flat spin; I know if 1/LT James was alive he would have recovered from the spin. To me and the crew he was the best pilot in the world. I only knew 1/LT James for four months, but in that length of time I got to know him as a good officer, a good pilot, and a good sport - a combination very seldom encountered in this army. I feel as if I lost nine brothers. Every night I say a prayer for them."

B-24, Little Gismo II, no. 42-78376 (776th BS) piloted by 1st/Lt. Virgil A. Leverett exploded in mid-air after heavy damages over Cimer (Czech Republic). The



wreckage crashed directly on Cimer killing two crewmembers and grand dame, Sophie Bohm (92).

B-24, Black Hall, no. 42-51083 (779th BS) came near Gross-Gerungs (Austria) with a burning right wing. Shortly after, the pilot 1st/Lt. Kermit F. Dannehl gave the order to bail out. The plane crashed near Kehrback, close to Gross-Gerungs. Two men were killed-in-action.

B-24 Red-O, no. 42-52520 (776th BS), flown by 1st/Lt. Thomas N. Vague's crew was heavily damaged over Jindřichův Hradec and lost altitude. The plane crashed near Klagenfurt, Austria. Seven men managed to survive, but the other three were killed.

B-24 Journey's End, no. 42-78437, (Black K, 779th BS) piloted by 1st/Lt. Joyce W. Lewis recovered first from the German attack over Jindřichův Hradec and with serious damage headed back to the south. During the battle T/Sgt. William F. Wrinn and four injured crew members bailed out. The plane landed late that afternoon on the base in Bari. T/Sgt. Richard L. Du Pre died of his wounds. All 10 men were awarded the Silver Star medal.

But not only American losses were in this battle. About 6 FW 190s and 4 BF 109s were shot down by the American gunners' defensive fire.

Jiri Sasek, Czech Republic

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## B-24 Liberator 42-52479 'Little Lulu' Events of 24 Aug 44



*Boleslav Povolny recalls his eye witnessing the event, aged eleven.*

Vlčice | August 24, 1944

There was a beautiful sunny day on August 24, 1944, sky over the town of Strmilov without a single cloud. At 11.00 a.m. the noise of American bombers flying at the altitude of 20 thousand feet on the 020 course in groups of 7 ships came to my ears. There was a black bomber mid each “seven” and other six ones were in silver. I counted 22 “sevens” but I might have been wrong because there was a no fix point in the sky to launch counting from. At about 11.30 hours the last seven was coming out of sight heading northwest. NOTE – Objectives: Refineries in Pardubice and Kolin.

At 12.25 the bombers were returning on the course of 200 at the same altitude. There was no ship missing in single seven. I saw 2 silver fighter planes taking the left curve above the fifth “seven” of the bombers. Later I saw none of the silver fighter planes. Approximately the mid “seven” of the bundle came under attack of the Luftwaffe fighter planes approaching as a pack from the West in the course of 90. The black ship of this seven got it first making its tail dive first. This plane descended like a falling leaf swinging 5 or 6 times like this – my attention was being

paid to the German fighters going down at this moment, so I wasn't able to give the correct number of the swings.

At the altitude of 1200 – 1500 ft. the engines of the black ship roared. The nose up, the plane nearly stopped. At this moment one white chute appeared. Several German fighter planes were going down doing somersaults and black chutes of their pilots came in my sight. Before this black ship's hitting the ground, the left front airship of the same 'seven' accelerated and about 8 white parachutes turned up. At the same moment the left rear bomber of this 'seven' was being abandoned by its complete crew. This ship started to fall several seconds later and the detonation was heard in a while. About 12 German fighter planes were downed. This 'seven' kept flying southwest box-shaped though reduced to four kites only.

Because the crash site of the black bomber was about two kilometres far, I rushed there riding my bike. Passing the dam of the Hejtman pond I noticed one German pilot climbing down the tree. His chute was in the tree and the pilot was complaining to one civilian from the Rozkose village by Strizkovice. His plane had been hit by the American fire before opening the fire of his own. But I did not care and rode on towards the wreck being in flames in the field about 200 metres North of the village Vlceice at the distance of 25 m from the field track to the German village of Olesna - Nova Olesna now and 150 metres from our pond / rented by my father/ NOTE: German village means the village settled only by the Germans.

The rear turret of this black ship was in the brook flowing into this pond, at the distance of about 60 metres from the bomber's wreckage. An American airman – gunner- was lying on the outer ploughshare next to the field track, approximately 30 metres far from the crash site. He was dead with lots of shots.

The only member of this crew leaving the bomber at the last possible moment landed with his chute about 80 m from the crash site near birch trees, on the opposite side to the rear turret. Because he broke his leg – his ankle was dislocated at the angle of 90 – he was immobile. He introduced himself as James saying one word more I did not understand. Apart from English he spoke also French. We carried him into the house opposite to the village chapel. He was laid onto the owner's bed. The saved airman wore battledress. Then one young man pedaling from the town of Kunzak arrived at the scene. He spoke to the airman in French and translated their conversation into Czech. Later Gestapo i.e. German Secret Police came and took away as the airman as this young Czech man. This civilian never came back from a Nazi Concentration Camp.

The airship was on fire for two days. It must have been full of ammo. There were lots of 12.7. cartridges in the turret mentioned above. The cartridges were of brass color, bullets blunt with red tips. Compared with the German ammunition, the American one was longer. The German 20mm cartridges were shorter, black coloured and bullets round shaped.

The other American airmen from the above mentioned two silver bombers of the same seven landed on the territory of so-called Sudety frontier Region and the

Czechs were barred from entering it. NOTE: annexed by Hitler after the Munich Agreement signed by Prime Ministers Daladier – France and Chamberlain – Britain, as well as by Hitler – Germany and Mussolini – Italy on September 30, 1930. The Czechoslovak Republic was betrayed by its two Allies.

About 6 airmen's chutes landed in the trees by the pond of Ratmírov. There were lots of rumors among the Czechs that an American airman landing on his chute in the field had been pierced by the pitchfork handed by one Sudety-Austrian working there. The airman was said neither to provoke nor defend himself.



St Andrews Church gravesite.



The Little Lulu crash site today.

The remains of Lts. John J. James, Edward Maloney, Erwin G. Durham, Walter W. Weaver, as well as of Sgts. Eugene Jeleniewicz, Ralph Robinson, Edward C. Ivan, Thad J. Jackson and Felix B. Gleason were buried into six graves by the Western wall of St. Andrew's small church in the graveyard nr Strmilov on August 26, 1944. This place was at the distance of about 150 m from our house, passing the churchyard on my way to school, me and Miluska Stranska laid bunches of meadow flowers on these graves. Though there was a man keeping an eye on these graves to prevent us – and not only us – from doing so, we did laying them at the time of his temporary absence. Mrs. Cermakova – the tailor Cermak's wife – was seen by me to put big bunches of flowers onto these six graves. And these ones were all the time covered in flower till the winter 1944/45.

Pieces of plastics as well as aluminum had been found by me and the other boys in the forest near the pond of Hejtman and the surrounding ones. After the field at Vlčice ploughed and harrowed was, me and my 12 year old cousin Milan Povolny went to see the crash site of the No 42-52479 black B-24 bomber. The soil was black within the 11 step-wingspan and the one of 12 steps within the ship's length. An amount of little bones – metacarpals, phalanges and metacarpals was scattered there. These bones had not been picked by the Germans and that is why me and Milan collected them and put into a bag. The bag was laid by us into one of these six graves.

Shortly after the end of WW II in Europe about 82 American soldiers in polished limousines and motorcycles arrived in Strmilov. Two soldiers were in each car and



one on each motorcycle, so the Square of Strmilov village was filled to the brim. The soldiers had clean and neat uniforms, armed with rifles. Strmilov residents and above all girls were in frenzy of enthusiasm. The mourning ceremony was performed by them at the gravesite of these American airmen being watched by the Red Army soldiers. In several minutes after this festive ceremony, the Soviets brought one plain clothed German and shot him dead beyond the churchyard's wall.

This man was buried at the wall, but within the churchyard. The way the Soviets did not hesitate to spoil the sentiment of the American ceremony was shock for all the residents of Strmilov. In August 1945 were the remains of the American airmen transported somewhere to France to find their final resting place there.

I must have my say on one issue more. Some articles published in this country inform about 4 ships downed on Aug 24, 1944. They are wrong. I could see only three bombers going down - the black one differed from the two ships in silver. I'm not sure whether the black bomber downed on Aug 24, 1944 really an B-24 type was. I could see the ship shortly before her falling on the ground – the nose up – and there was not a two-fin rudder construction seen by me at all, possibly cut off by the fire of German fighters, as well as the above mentioned tail turret.

The fourth American bomber seen by me at 1 pm to fly on two engines only and going down in the surroundings of Strmilov on January 7, 1945. The bunch of airships eye witnessed by me on that day was not flying in such a nice formation as the one of Aug 24, 1944. Bombers were missing in several groups of 7 ships heading southwards and lots of them flew only by three engines in action. The bunch on the course of 200 was at the lower altitude as the one on Aug 24, 1944. That is why I was able to recognize feathered props of the damaged engines.

The incident was seen by me from the firm Satrapa's premises – now Strojovna Strizkovice. One of the bombers kept on decreasing guarded by two Mustangs. Flying at the altitude of 1800 feet the ship came out of my sight beyond the forest towards the Krvavy pond and my deduction is, she must have crash-landed somewhere in the territory of Lomy, Clunek, Hospriz. There were no black airships in any "seven" of this bundle of US bombers on Jan 7, 1945 All were silver and of B-24 type.

Recalled by Boleslav Povolny

NOTE: Mr. Povolny has been a long standing Member of Czech Republic's Airmen Association. He had served for more than 20 years as a pilot in the Czech Republic Air Force, even picked by a head constructor of the Albatros jet plane Mr. Vlcek to join the staff of the test pilots. After a suspicious death of the Mr. Vlcek the staff of test pilots was disbanded. Declining to train Libyan pilots in their homeland, Mr. Povolny was sacked from the Forces and had to do his living as a teacher.

Me accompanied by Mr Povolny, we arrived at the churchyard of Strmilov on Aug 24, 2004 to take part in the ceremony there. One woman wearing the Czech Army festive uniform from the Jindrichuv Hradec garrison came to the scene in addition to Mr Burian, the Czech Military History hobbyist. No one from the US Embassy at all!

I was shown the crash sites of the No 42-52479, as well as of a tail turret and tail gunner. Names of the No. 42-52479's crewmen, who lost their lives on Aug 24, 1944 Lt. John J. James, Lt. Edward J. Maloney, Lt. Erwin G. Dunham, Lt. Walter W. Weaver, Sgt. Eugene Jeleniewicz, Sgt. Ralph Robinson, Sgt. Sgt. Edward C. Ivan, Sgt. Thad J. Watson, Sgt. Felix B. Gleason.

The only member of the crew who succeeded in saving his life was Sgt. John D'Amore. He is said to pass away in November 1995.

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## Strmilov -Vlčice [Strmillov / Vlčitse] Aug 24, 2004

Two men set out for this trip into the Southern Moravian-Bohemain border heading for the small town of Strmilov midway of the Telc and Jindřichův Hradec route [Taelch] in Moravia [Yindrzhickoov Hruddaets ] in Bohemia - me and another member of our Plumlov Cz AA No 9 member who had been born there and aged 8 he saw the Luftwaffe fighters attacking a bunch of American heavy bomber planes on August 24, 1944.

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St Andrews Church | Strmilov, Czech Republic



St Andrews Church crew gravesite area today

## The Air Battle above the Jindřichův Hradec Region

### **TARGET 24 AUG 44: PARDUBICE OIL REFINERY, CZ**



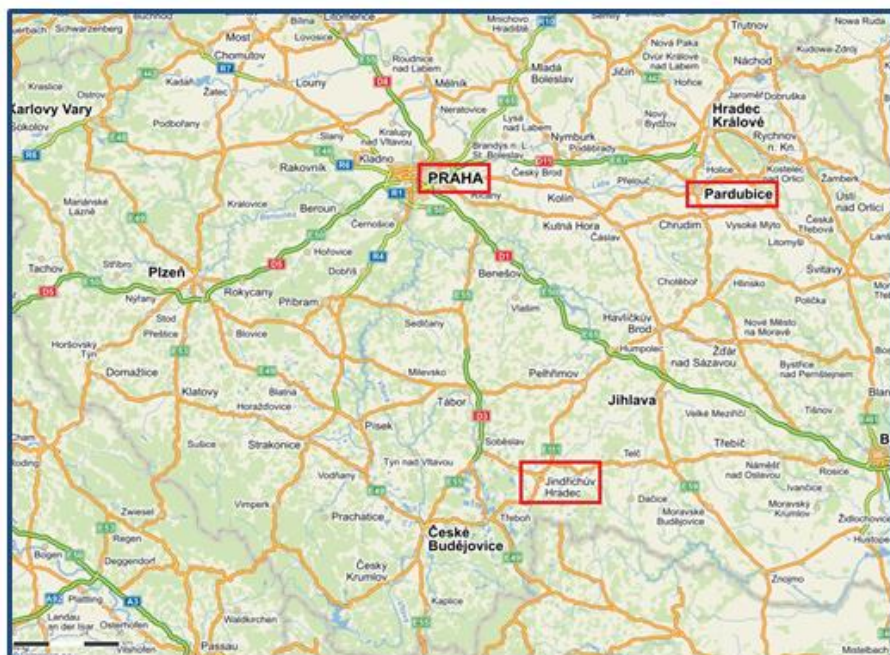
In 1889 David Fanto established a refinery plant for the distillation and later refining of petroleum from crude oil in Pardubice, CZ. A year later, an oil production plant was also running in Kolin, Czechoslovakia.

Bombing at the end of World War II made its mark on both refineries and only a quarter of the plant in Pardubice remained. Rebuilt to Paramo Oil today...

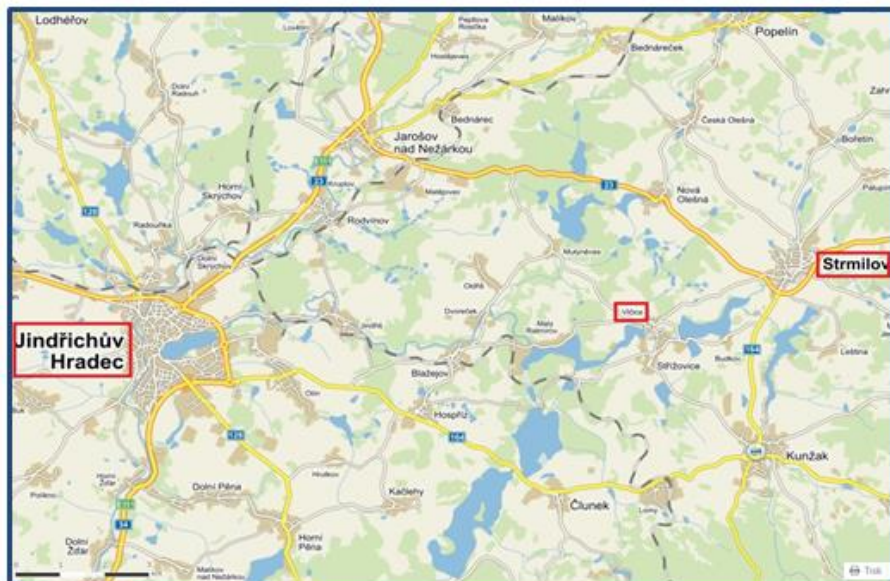


- ✚ *The bombing mission with 22 groups of 'Seven' boxes with 154 B-24(H) Liberators flying at 20 thousand feet on a course of 020 bombed the Pardubice, David Panto Oil Refinery*
- ✚ *On the Liberator's return approximately the mid 'Seven' of the bundle came under attack of Luftwaffe fighter planes approaching as a pack from the West in the course of 90*
- ✚ *A terrible air battle over the Jindřichův Hradec, Czechoslovakia (CZ) region ensued*
- ✚ *The black ship of this seven, 'Little Lulu', got hit first making its tail dive; the plane descended like a falling leaf, reported Czech eye witnesses*
- ✚ *In all, four B-24's from the 464th BG and three B-24's from the 465th and 485th Bomb Groups were lost the 24th of August 1944*
- ✚ *Six German Focke-Wulf Fw-190's and four Messerschmitt bf-109's were shot down by defensive fire in the air battle*





**Pardubice Target, Capitol of Prague and the Jindřichův Hradec Region**



**Jindřichův Hradec Region with the Villages of Včelce and Strmilov, CZ**



## B-24H 42-52479 Crash Site – 200 Yards North of Vlčice, CZ



## Vlčice Village Homes with Little Lulu Crash Site Behind



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## 464<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Losses in the Air Battle over Jindřichův Hradec

### **B-24H 42-52479 ‘Little Lulu’ SQ 776 (Red J) | Piloted by 2<sup>nd</sup> LT John H. James**

Crashed in Vlciice, Jindřichův Hradec Region

### **B-24H 42-78376 ‘Little Gismo II’ SQ 776 | Piloted by 1st Captain Virgil A. Leverett**

Crashed in Cimer, Jindřichův Hradec Region

### **B-24H 42-52520 ‘Com-Batty’ SQ 776 (Red O) | Piloted by 2<sup>nd</sup> LT Thomas N. Vague**

Crashed in Klagenfurt, Austria

B-24H Liberator 42-52520 (Red O) nicknamed ‘Com- Batty’ of the 776th Squadron of the same group, was damaged in an attack of German fighters and crashed near the Austrian town of Klagenfurt, killing three crewmen. The pilot and seven others survived. The pilot 2nd Lt. Thomas N. Vague died in captivity.

### **B-24H 42-51083 ‘Black Hal’ SQ 779 (Black H) | Piloted by 1st LT Kermit F. Dannehl**

Crashed in Kerbach u Gross Gerungs, Austria

B-24H aircraft 42-51083 (Black H) from the 779<sup>th</sup> Squadron, 464th Bomb Group, exploded after repeated attacks of German fighters over the village Kehrbaach at Gross Gerungs. Of the ten man crew of 1st LT Kermit F. Dannehl two gunners perished and the remaining eight crewmen were captured.

### **B-24H 42-78473 ‘Journey’s End’ S 779 (Black ‘K’) | Piloted by 1st LT Joyce W. Lewis**

Heavily Damaged the aircraft was able to make it back to Bari, Italy

Severe damage was suffered in the attack by fighter aircraft by B24 42-78473 (Black K) from the 779th Wing. The crew of ten men of 1st LT Lewis, one jumped with a parachute and was captured, one died after landing and three were injured. This unique picture of the Lewis B -24 was taken shortly after landing in Bari showing the extent of damage to the rear tail fin.



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## Other Bomb Group Losses | 465<sup>th</sup> and 485<sup>th</sup> Bomb Groups

### **B-24H 41-29424 ‘Sans Souci’ 465<sup>th</sup> SQ 783 (Blue E) | Pilot Captain Thomas T. Clark**

Crashed in Lomy, Jindřichův Hradec Region

The formation of the 464 Bomb Group shortly before the German attack due to problems with engines and approached the B-24H 41-29424 (Blue E) on behalf of ‘Sans Souci’ from the 783<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, 465<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, under the management of which saddles the group representing Operations Officer Captain Thomas T. Clark.

### **B24J 42-78501 ‘Flak Shak III’ 485<sup>th</sup> S 831 (Blue M) | Pilot 1st LT James E. Mulligan**

Crashed in Zwettl-Gross Gerung, Austria

After the attack on the 464<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, some German fighters tried to attack the front and formation flying 485<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. The assembly 831<sup>st</sup> Squadron flew her to the position of the last seven B-24J 42-78501 (Blue M) nicknamed ‘Flak Shak III’.

### **B-24J 42-78538 ‘Unknown’ SQ 780 (Yellow G) | Pilot 1st Lt. Harry F. Lengvenisem**

Crashed in St. Valentin, Austria

Two other losses 780<sup>th</sup> Squadron, 465<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, B24J 42-78538 (Yellow G) piloted by 1st Lt. Harry F. Lengvenisem after a direct hit by anti-aircraft artillery crashed near the village of Haas St. Valentin, Austria. None of the ten men onboard the aircraft survived the crash.

**Note:** Besides sacrificing the four aircraft in the Jindřichův Hradec territory, Americans lost other aircraft, especially over Austria.



# The Crew of the Little Lulu

*This post was written for the 75th edition of the Carnival of Genealogy, "Justice and Independence".*

I was fortunate enough to have three grandfathers, and all three served in World War II. My mother's father, Lake Ledford, served in the US Navy. My father's stepfather, Ned Burrell, was in the Army. And my father's father, Thad J. Watson, Sr., served in the Army Air Corps.

Daddy Thad died on August 24, 1944 when his plane, a B-24 Liberator known as "The Little Lulu", was shot down while on a bombing run targeting oil refineries in Czechoslovakia. Of the ten crew members aboard the Little Lulu, only one, Sgt. John F. D'Amore, was able to exit the plane before it crashed. Both of his legs were broken upon landing; the villagers who lived near where the plane crashed turned him over to the Germans, in part so that he could receive medical care. The rest of the men were buried by the villagers, and later reinterred in Zachary Taylor National Cemetery in Louisville, KY.

A few years ago, one of the villagers, who was a young man at the time of this event, shared his memories of that fateful day. My grandmother told me that she had written to several of those villagers after the War ended, and that they were grateful to "the Americans" who fought for their freedom.

My father's mother, Stella (whom we called Nanny), corresponded with the surviving family members of the Little Lulu's crew. When I was a teenager, I helped her put together photo albums for her children which included pictures of the crew members, as well as pictures of their families. Each picture was captioned with additional information, such as rank, age, date of birth, and their address during that time period. For the family members, Nanny usually had at least a name and place of residence. I know at some point she must have had letters, and I wonder what happened to them.

For years, I've wanted to follow up on my grandmother's work and find the descendants of these men. A few weeks ago, I had some spare time, so I searched for enlistment and other records for the other nine members of the Little Lulu's crew. Some were easily located, others not so much so. In fact, I couldn't even find enlistment records for all of the men. But what I do have is listed below. If you are related to these men, please contact me or leave a message here.

Lt. John A. James, pilot, Pleasanton, KS, born June 29, 1923; wife may have been Betty Ruth James. Middle initial might have also been "H" or "M". John may have been the son of Milton P. James and Christina M. Brown.



Lt. Edward J. Maloney, co-pilot, 14 Columbia St., Ansonia, CT, born 1923. Edward may have been the son or grandson of John Maloney, who immigrated from the Irish Free State in 1890.

Lt. Edward G. Durham or Erwin Dunham, bombardier, 45 Grace St., Bloomfield, NJ, born April 19, 1924. There is some confusion as to this crew member's exact name. Our photo album has it recorded in the first instance, while the villager (above) has the second instance. Since I was a teenager when I typed this up (my grandmother had rheumatoid arthritis and was unable to manipulate the keys of a typewriter), I'm fairly certain the mistake was mine.

Lt. Walter W. Weaver, Jr., Rt. 2, Clarion, PA, born April 1, 1922.

Sgt. John F. Damore (also D'Amore and D'A'more), gunner, German POW, 50 Calumet St., Roxbury, MA. Our photo album includes a picture of a Katherine (Kay) D'Amore; could she have been John's wife or sister?

Sgt. Edward G. Ivan, gunner, 304 W. 8th Ave., Homestead, PA, born February 27, 1918.

Sgt. Thad J. Watson, Sr., gunner, born April 15, 1924, married to Stella Martin. This is my grandfather.

Sgt. Bruce Gleason, 1107 4th Ave., Warren, PA, born August 22, 1925. Bruce was also known as Felix. My grandmother kept a clipping of his family that appeared in their local newspaper (I assume), naming his mother, Mrs. G. J. Gleason, and siblings Rose, Walter, Theodore, Mary, Nancy, Jane, John, and Frances. You'd think with all this information I'd be able to track his family down, but no, not yet.

Sgt. Ralph Robinson, 78 Thayer St., New York, NY, born December 30, 1924.

Sgt. Eugene A. Jaleniewicz, 90 Mercer St., Jersey City, NJ, born May 22, 1923.

Our photo album also includes pictures and information on one Sgt. Henry Sullivan, Jr., who was killed in action September 13, 1944 on his 20th mission. I'm fairly certain his wife's name was Hazel that they had a son named Donnie, and that Hazel and Donnie lived in Alexandria, LA, but I'm not certain why these photos were included with the others.

Please, if you are a descendant of or have any information on these men, write to me. I would be very interested in hearing from you.

## Tampa Florida has at least one major link to 'Lake of Blood'

By [Steve Otto](#)

I wanted to tell Leonard Little the news about Flak Shak III, but his mind and body were shutting down. He died last year, and his wife, Grace, died a couple of months ago. I've written parts of his story. He was a Tampa boy from Seminole Heights who married his beautiful Grace and went off to war. His defining moment came one August afternoon in 1944 as he sat scrunched in his tail gunner's position on a B-24 Liberator bomber called Flak Shak III. Little was on his 17th mission, this time over what then was southern Czechoslovakia to bomb oil fields. He was positioned in front of two .50-caliber machine guns. He was 22 years old. On the radio was chatter as other bombers came under fire. Little suddenly saw four fighters, almost in line, coming up directly at him. One flashed beneath the bomber. The remaining Focke-Wulfs continued straight for his plane. Little fired, and one of the fighters blossomed in an explosion and disappeared. There was another explosion, and Little was slammed backward and knocked unconscious. When he came to, the bomber was shaking violently. He tried to stand and discovered most of one leg was missing. He rolled over and out of the plane, into a horrific scene of bombers on fire, fighters swarming around and parachutes — including his — drifting down toward a huge lake. He watched as several parachutes hit the lake, quickly folded up and disappeared into the murky water. He landed at the water's edge and wound up as a prisoner of war. Leonard Little survived, came back to Tampa, went to work for Florida Steel and designed many of the structural skeletons of our downtown. For years he didn't talk much about that day. He spent evenings building model airplanes. He built a model of the plane in which my father-in-law went down, and gave it to him at dinner at our house. That's when he spoke about that August afternoon. On Thursday I received an email from Jiri Sasek. He wrote to me last year trying to find Little. He lives in what is now the Czech Republic, in a village near where that aerial battle happened. For years he and others have tried to build a museum and have gathered artifacts from the German and American aircraft involved. On Nov. 11, Sasek writes, the exhibit "Air battle over Jindřichův Hradec on August 24, 1944" opened with a well-attended ceremony. I doubt many of us ever will find ourselves around Jindřichův Hradec. But if you do, look up the display of that day when a 22-year old from Tampa and his brothers in arms plunged out of the sky into and near a lake that, for hundreds of years, has been known as the "Lake of Blood."



## Aviation Battle Above Jindřichův Hradec



This exposition presents one of the most important battles between the American fliers and German pilots above the Protectorate in the World War II period, on August 24, 1944. The event is supported by archeological finds of fragments of shot down aircrafts, plastic maps, historic photographs and personal effects of the aviators.



### Jindřichův Hradec Museum

Balbinovo náměstí Square 19/I  
377 01 Jindřichův Hradec  
Czech Republic

**Exposition:** (00420) 384 363 660  
**Offices:** (00420) 384 363 661  
**Fax/Answering Machine:** (00420) 384 361 576  
**E-mail:** [muzeum@mjh.cz](mailto:muzeum@mjh.cz)

#### Opening Hours

1 April to 6 January – open daily except Mondays  
1 June to 31 August and 15 December to 6 January – open daily  
Hours: 8.30 - 12.00 and 13.00 - 17.00



## Admission

### Exposition:

Basic admission: **60 CZK/ person (3 EUR)**

Family admission: **140 CZK (5 EUR)**

Children, students, seniors and handicapped: **40 CZK/ person (2 EUR)**

Children up to 4 years of age **free**

Christmas discount: Children up to 6 years of age **free**

Guide notes in English or German: **30 CZK/ person (1 EUR)**

### Exhibitions:

Basic admission **20 CZK/ person (1 EUR)**

Children up to 4 years of age **free**

Tours outside of regular hours are conducted for an extra 100% fee in addition to the basic rate

## Aviation Battle above Jindřichův Hradec, Czech Republic





**World War II Aviation Museum Exhibit with Jiri Sasek B24 Liberator Artifacts**

## Jindřichův Hradec Museum 'Aviation Battle Above Jindřichův Hradec' Exhibition

### B-24 Vlčice

První vzdušný boj amerických letadel s Luftwaffe v rámci 12. vzdušné armády amerického vojska v Evropě. Letadlo B-24 Liberator bylo sestřeleno v blízkosti vesnice Vlčice, nedaleko Jindřichova Hradce, 24. srpna 1944. Piloti a členové posádky byli zraněni a zbytky letadla byly nalezeny v blízkosti vesnice Vlčice.

• pilot	• kapitán	• č. 1	• č. 2
• velitel	• velitel	• velitel	• velitel
• velitel	• velitel	• velitel	• velitel
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### B-24 Čiměř

První vzdušný boj amerických letadel s Luftwaffe v rámci 12. vzdušné armády amerického vojska v Evropě. Letadlo B-24 Liberator bylo sestřeleno v blízkosti vesnice Čiměř, nedaleko Jindřichova Hradce, 24. srpna 1944. Piloti a členové posádky byli zraněni a zbytky letadla byly nalezeny v blízkosti vesnice Čiměř.

• pilot	• kapitán	• č. 1	• č. 2
• velitel	• velitel	• velitel	• velitel
• velitel	• velitel	• velitel	• velitel
• velitel	• velitel	• velitel	• velitel
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Little Lulu crashed in a field two hundred yards north of the Village of Vlčice, Czechoslovakia August 24, 1944; only one airman, Fred D'Amore survived the crash of the Liberator and would become a prisoner of war held until repatriation in June of 1945.

Little Gismo II crashed near the village of Cimer, Czechoslovakia August 24, 1944 south of the village of Vlčice; eight airman survived the crash of the Liberator and the four airmen pictured here would later visit the museum and crash site in May of 1999.



Recovered fragments from the crash site of B-24 (H) Liberator Little Lulu.



Twisted metal remains of the Focke-Wulf Fw-190 piloted by Hubert Engst.

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## Historians make exceptional find, uncovering wreckage of World War II Fighter Plane

18-05-2011 14:48 | [Jan Velinger](#)

Historians in South Bohemia last Friday the 13th dug up the exceptionally well-preserved wreckage of a German fighter jet shot down during World War II. The Fw-190 Focke-Wulf, of which almost 20,000 were originally produced, went down near the village of Otín. The plane was one of several targeted by US pilots on August 24th, 1944 in what was one of the biggest air battles over Bohemia. The German pilot, Hubert Engst, ejected in time and would survive the war. But the aircraft itself smashed into the ground and remained lost and forgotten until now.

Download: [MP3](#)



Photo: CTK The details of the find were revealed on Monday, only after remaining wreckage – in exceptionally good condition, was dug up in South Bohemia. The remains of the aircraft uncovered included the propeller, damaged cockpit, machine guns and part of the engine; some parts buried five metres deep. The Focke-Wulf is the largest plane found that took part in the largest air battle over Bohemia. I spoke to Jaroslav Pikal, the head of the Museum of Jindřichův Hradec which is overseeing the find and is where the wreckage is stored.

*"The battle over the region of Jindřichův Hradec was the last 'act' in a mission by American bombers to destroy a refinery and military base in the Pardubice area. On the way back the bombers were separated from their fighter escort, and four were shot down by German fighters. When the escort arrived they engaged the German planes and shot down 12 of them, including this one. The pilot ejected after burning oil apparently*

sloshed into his cabin. The battle is well-known, but we didn't know until now whether the wreckage was really there."



Photo: CTK

But it was: buried in clayey earth of student Jiří Šašek and his father, whom he described as avid military historians from Prague. They looked up the only remaining witness to the events, an elderly woman by the name of Jiřina Kárová, who was only six when the Luftwaffe plane went down. But she remembered what had happened. The duo then compared historic and present-day satellite imagery to help pinpoint the exact location. Museum director Jaroslav Píkal describes – in more detail – aspects of the find:



Tomáš Fedra of the Museum of Jindřichův Hradec, photo: CTK

*"Any expert will recognize immediately it is one of the best preserved planes from the period. Parts we found include a 20 mm calibre cannon, a 13 mm calibre machine gun, the tail of the plane, the cockpit and other parts. The excellent state of preservation – after 67 years – is what makes this find truly exceptional. When we dug up some of the parts they looked brand-new, as if they had left the factory just yesterday."*

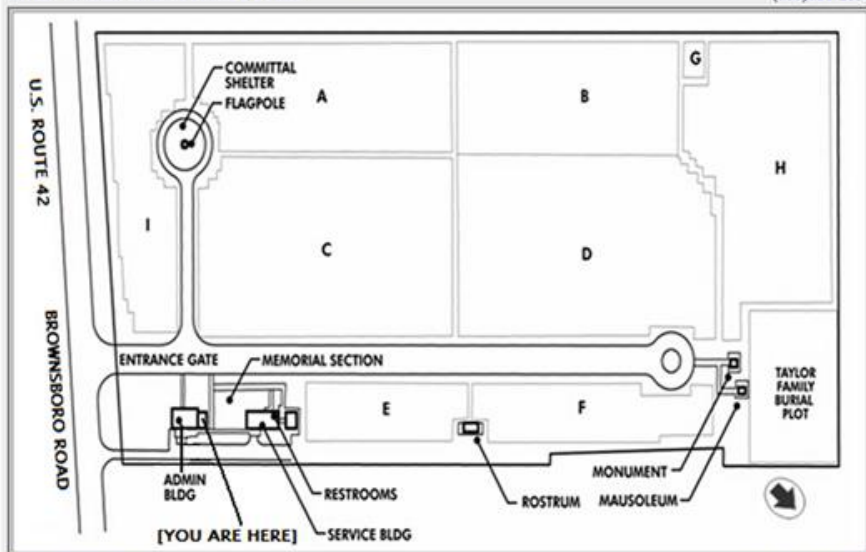
Specialists are now examining, cleaning and preserving pieces of the plane at the Museum of Jindřichův Hradec. The remarkable wreckage will be the focus of a planned exhibition there which will open in early November 2011.



# The Zachary Taylor National Cemetery | Louisville, Kentucky

ZACHARY TAYLOR NATIONAL CEMETERY  
4701 BROWNSBORO ROAD LOUISVILLE, KY 40207

(502)893-3852  
(700)684-1856



JAMES, JOHN H.

Section E, Site 155

<http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/index.html?cemetery=N883>



A mausoleum houses the remains of Zachary Taylor and his wife at Zachary Taylor National Cemetery.

## HOURS

**Office Hours:** Monday thru Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Closed federal holidays except Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

**Visitation Hours:** Open daily from sunrise to sunset.

## BURIAL SPACE

Zachary Taylor National Cemetery is closed to new interments. The only interments that are being accepted are subsequent interments for veterans or eligible family members in an existing gravesite. Periodically however, burial space may become available due to a canceled reservation or when a disinterment has been completed. When either of these two scenarios occurs, the gravesite is made available to another eligible veteran on a first-come, first-served basis. Since there is no way to know in advance when a gravesite may become available, please contact the cemetery at the time of need to inquire whether space is available.

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The History of B24 (H) Liberator Bomber Little Lulu – 15th Air Force  
464th Bomb Group, Pantanella, Italy | Last Sortie 24 August 1944

# Lest We Never Forget...



## The Story of B-24 (H) 'Little Lulu'



The History of B24 (H) Liberator Bomber Little Lulu – 15th Air Force  
464th Bomb Group, Pantanella, Italy | Last Sortie 24 August 1944

Compiled and Edited by: Thomas E. Will | June 2015