

COLORS OF WAR

MORE RARE IMAGES FROM OUR FILES
THAT HELP DEFINE AVIATION HISTORY
BY MICHAEL O'LEARY



This photograph is of interest because it illustrates how some Americans operated in England during WWII. While not focusing entirely on aircraft, the image shows how farming went on as USAAF crews fought and died in the skies over Occupied Europe. The base at which the photo was taken was originally known as Great Saling (Station 485) but as US Army engineers began expanding the field in 1942 it was renamed Andrews Field in honor of Gen. Frank Andrews who was killed on 3 May 1943 when the B-24 in which he was traveling crashed in Iceland. Home to the 322nd Bomb Group, Martin B-26B-25-MA 41-31814 was assigned to the 450th Bomb Squadron. Named *Bag of Bolts* and coded ER*F, the Marauder was finished in standard Olive Drab/Neutral Gray. On 8 July 1944, the aircraft was on a low-level raid to Amiens when it was hit numerous times by *flak*. Pilot 1st Lt. Richard Waters was struck in the stomach by shrapnel and ordered the crew to bail out. He managed to keep the wings level as the crew escaped but became unconscious and the plane flew into the ground and exploded. Waters, strapped into his armored seat, was ejected by the explosion but was killed. Decades later, his dog tags were found in the farm field. The other five crewmen safely parachuted but were soon pursued by German troops. Three were caught and became POWs while two evaded and made it back to Allied lines.