

COST OF WAR

WITH THIS ISSUE, WE RETURN TO OUR FILES TO SELECT PHOTOGRAPHS OF AIRCRAFT THAT WERE DAMAGED OR DESTROYED IN COMBAT OR IN ACCIDENTS DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

BY MICHAEL O'LEARY



Perfect side-view photograph of *The Lost Angel* coming in for a belly-landing at RAF Kimbolton. Copilot Sumner Alpert made the decision to land on the grass at Kimbolton rather than the paved runways. The Fort skidded on the grass for quite some time before coming to rest on the asphalt.

Douglas-built B-17G-30-DL USAAF 42-38183 in a position of distress. Named *The Lost Angel*, the belly-landed bomber is surrounded by airmen, many arriving on bicycles, who want to inspect the damaged Fort at RAF Kimbolton. The G model Fort arrived at that base on 10 February 1944 and was assigned to the 525th Bomb Squadron, 379th Bomb Group, and was coded FR'C. On 29 September 1944, the Olive Drab/Neutral Gray bomber was on a raid to Magdeburg and was hit by accurate *flak*. Two engines were knocked out, but another *flak* burst was near the cockpit and pilot Stan Bailey had shards of plexiglass in both eyes. Copilot Sumner Alpert (who would receive a DFC for his actions) took control and flew the plane back to Kimbolton for a belly-landing after tail gunner Phil Maniaci, unable to tell what was happening, bailed out and was made a POW. As can be seen, damage was not extensive and the Fort was repaired and reassigned to the 482nd BG and then the 348th BG on 1 June 1945.



With propellers in near perfect alignment, Boeing B-17G-45-BO USAAF 42-97272 rests on its belly at RAF Molesworth on 9 April 1944. Assigned to the 359th Bomb Squadron, 303rd Bomb Group, coded BN'T, and named *Dutchess' Daughter*, the Fortress was returning from a mission to Beaumetz-les-Aire in France after bombing German V-weapon sites. Unfortunately, copilot Ira Judy raised the gear rather than the flaps after touchdown. The B-17G was scrapped on 7 July 1944. The Group's original *Dutchess* was 41-24561 and it was also coded BN'T. It was the Fort in which Lt. Jack W. Mathis earned his Medal of Honor. Mathis was the lead bombardier for a mission on 18 March 1943, when the aircraft was hit by *flak*. Lieutenant Mathis was seriously wounded but completed the bomb run. He died soon after.

