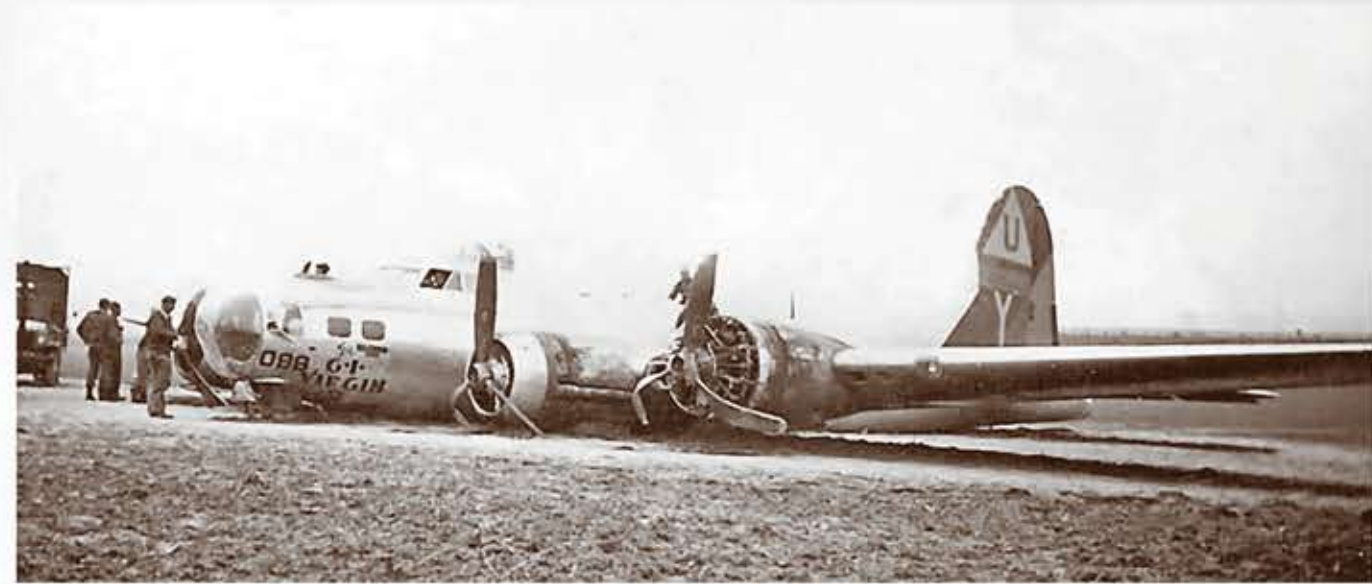


# COST OF WAR

THE CHALLENGE FILES BRING FORTH ANOTHER SELECTION OF DOWNED AIRCRAFT FROM THE SECOND WORLD WAR

BY MICHAEL O'LEARY

As can be seen, this Fortress had a very hard forced landing as the bomber's back is broken and two engines have been torn from their mounts. B-17G-30-VE 42-97767 had been built by Lockheed Vega at Burbank and was initially assigned to the 305th Bomb Group at Chelveston but on 2 August 1944, it was transferred to the 306th Bomb Group at Thurleigh. On 11 September, the bomber was on a mission to Merseburg when it was hit by *flak* and fighters. One of the waist gunners was killed and the stricken Fortresses crash-landed at Nully, which is east of Troyes, France. Nine of the crew returned to duty and the wrecked aircraft became an attraction for the locals. The USAAF salvaged the bomber on 14 November 1944.



B-17G USAAF 42-32098 flew the storm-tossed North Atlantic during February 1944 to arrive at Knettishall on 25 February where the new bomber was assigned to the 388th Bomb Group. As was common, on 4 March, the aircraft was transferred to the 467th BG at Glatton where it became part of the 750th Bomb Squadron with the individual aircraft letter of "Y" and the name *GI Virgin II*. On a mission to Cologne on 2 October, the Fort was savaged by *Luftwaffe* fighters. With two engines out, the crew struggled to get back to England. However, that was not going to happen and pilot Capt. Jim Franklin belly-landed the plane in a Belgian field. A USAAF crew scrapped the aircraft on 14 November 1944.



Sadly, it is doubtful if the crew of this Royal Navy Grumman Avenger survived this incident. The torpedo-bomber was operating off HMS *Ravager* on 28 December 1943 when something went horribly wrong. The Avenger stalled and was in the process of rolling inverted when it impacted the ocean.



Good only for parts. With their long-range capabilities, Lockheed Lightnings were particularly useful in the Pacific. P-38-1-LO USAAF 44-24850 was assigned to the 432nd Fighter Squadron, 475th Fighter Group, at Mindoro in the Philippines. On the night of 12 December 1944, Japanese Betty bombers operating out of Formosa attacked the field at low-level and scattered bombs across the runway and ramp. As can be seen, one bomb came down near our subject aircraft and shredded the right side of the Lightning.