
TYING UP THE MYSTERY LIBERATORS

IN OUR CONTINUING SEARCH FOR THESE POST-WAR B-24 BOMBERS,
TWO HAVE BEEN RULED OUT AS SURVIVORS

BY NICHOLAS A. VERONICO

This full starboard side view of B-24M 44-51901 has had historians guessing where the Liberator sat, and what was its purpose? Was it a war memorial or parked for use by a technical school? The lack of hills or mountains ruled out its being at the Reconstruction Finance Corporation's Depot 41 at Kingman, Arizona, where more than 5400 aircraft met the scrapper's torch. (Peter Bowers Collection)



Before flying overseas to join the 7th Air Force, 44-50960 had a short assignment at Camp San Luis, California. The Liberator was photographed at Camp San Luis in early November 1945, on her way to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation's Depot 41 at Kingman, Arizona.



Through diligent research and networking with other historians, two B-24 Liberator photographs that appeared to be post-war survivors have turned out, unfortunately, not to have had careers in the late 1940s. Photos of this pair of Liberators have run on the pages of *Air Classics* in the past, yet no further information about their post-war careers has developed.

The first of the two, 7th Air Force, 11th Bomb Group, 98th Bomb Squadron combat veteran *Tricky Mickey*, Ford-built B-24M USAAF 44-50960, was photographed after returning from the Pacific Theater at an airbase with foothills

close behind and a "Woody" station wagon with US Navy markings greeting the Liberator. The bomber's last entry on its Individual Aircraft Record Card shows the Reconstruction Finance Corporation's Depot 41 at Kingman, Arizona, as its final disposition. So where was the photo of *Tricky Mickey* shot — was she en route to serve as a war memorial or at a technical school? That has been the assumption for more than two decades.

Turns out that *Tricky Mickey* had a short posting to a station with the code "9178" before she departed for combat on 18 April 1945. Camp San Luis, station code 9178, is approximately 225 miles south

It appeared that B-24M 44-50960 *Tricky Mickey* was headed to a new, post-war career when this photo was taken. Further research shows the photo was shot after the bomber returned from combat in the Pacific Theater and was en route to Kingman, Arizona, for storage and final disposition. The US Navy 1942 Ford Woody station wagon added to the thoughts that the bomber was headed somewhere to serve as a possible war memorial. (Peter Bowers Collection)