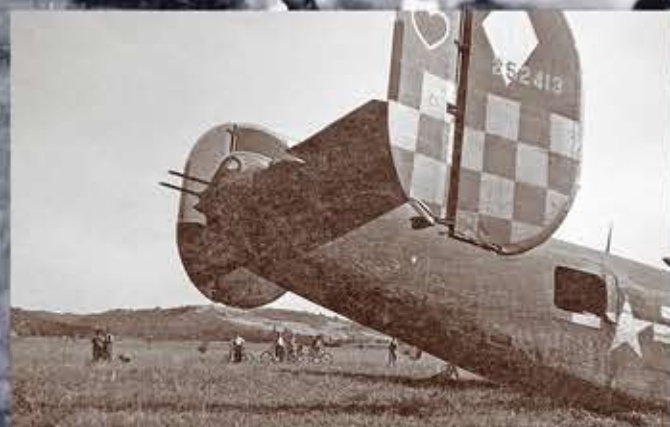


# COST OF WAR

IN THIS INSTALLMENT, WE LOOK AT SOME UNITED STATES  
ARMY AIR FORCE AIRCRAFT THAT WERE WRITTEN OFF  
DURING OR SHORTLY AFTER WORLD WAR TWO  
BY MICHAEL O'LEARY

The name *Lucky 13* reflected the "last two" of B-24H-15-FO's USAAF serial 42-52413 but, as can be seen, it was not a particularly lucky Liberator. On 7 July 1944, the 757th Bomb Squadron, 459th Bomb Group, aircraft was on a bombing mission to Germany but was hit by *flak* over Nagyberki, Hungary. Pilot 1st Lt. Edward John Murphy realized the damage was extensive and the bomber was not going to make it home so he elected for a crash-landing in a Hungarian field. The arrival was hard with the nose broken off and the gear case and props departing from engines three and four.



Hungarians approach the downed Liberator. It is forgotten basically today, but Hungary (along with Bulgaria and Romania) declared war on the United States on 11 December 1941. President Franklin Roosevelt made the mistake of thinking these countries were being forced to declare war by Nazi Germany and the American government did not issue a declaration of war against the three nations until 5 June 1942. As it turned out, Hungary in particular had a strong fascist bent and its aircraft regularly attacked American bomber streams.



A Hungarian civilian inspects the cockpit of the downed Liberator *Lucky 13*. Prior to troops arriving to control the situation, civilians would grab anything they viewed as useful.

Civilians and Hungarian troops with some prizes of war stripped from *Lucky 13*. The bomber crews knew that the civilians could be a murderous lot and some American airmen were murdered after crash-landing in Hungary. The Hungarian military forces were only marginally better and, if there was a choice, it would be better to be captured by the German military since, for the most part, they tended to obey the rules of war.

