

B17s in German Hands

Don't know if Walter ever mentioned this, the Germans had P51s as well.

Most of you probably heard stories about secret special Luftwaffe units such as KG 200 and Zirkus Rosarius. There are some other info about planes used by those units. One of most wanted Allied plane was B-17 Flying Fortress. During whole World War Two Germans were able to capture several dozen of Fortress and they could use as many as seven Fortress. Five of them were B-17F version and two others were B-17G planes. It's short story of capture and use all B-17 in German hands.

B-17F-27-BO "Wulf Hound"

First Fortress captured by Germans was B-17F-27-BO "Wulf Hound" (41-24585) from 360BS 303BG "Hell's Angels". Damaged by German fighters during bombing run 12th of December 1942 and heavily damaged during return flight by Bf 110 from NJG 1. Pilot of B-17 Lieutenant Flickinger was forced to landing on Leeuwarden airfield in Netherland. Plane was repaired and two days later (after adding German national insignia) with cover of two Bf 110 flew to Rechlin. Aircraft was tested and later had tournee in Germany and France in different fighter units. Pilots could recognize strong and weak points of Flying Fortress and could better fought with them. Plane was exhibited at Lärz airfield in 12th of June 1943 during exhibition of captured Allied planes. Together with B-17F other planes such as B-24, P-47D, P-51, P-38, Avro Lancaster, DH Mosquito, Typhoon and Spitfire were shown. "Wulf Hound" come back to Rechlin in July 1943 and was used in trials with DFS 230 glider. German engineers still examined technical data and engineering. Plane was transferred to KG 200 in September 1943 and coded A3+AE. Below you may see some photos made between June and September 1943 during trials in Rechlin.



Wulf Hound, the first B-17F captured intact by the Luftwaffe. (Petrik).



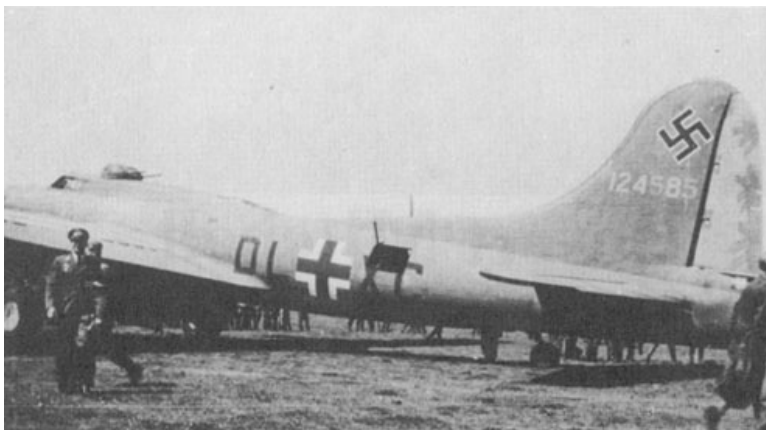
Wulf Hound toured France to acquaint fighter pilots with the B-17. (Bart M. Rijnhout).



Wulf Hound being tested at the Luftwaffe Test And Evaluation Center A Rechlin. (Heinz J. Nowarra).



Wulf Hound found itself to be the center of attention where ever it went. (Heinz J. Nowarra).



Wulf Hound was eventually transferred to KG 200 in September 1943. (Petrik).

B-17F-85-BO "Flak Dancer"

Second B-17 in German hands was B-17F-85-BO "Flak Dancer" (42-30048) from 544BS 384BG. Plane piloted by Lieutenant Dalton Wheat forced landed at Laon airfield in France. After repairs and traditional period of trials in Rechlin plane was transferred to KG 200 in Spring 1944 and coded A3+CE.

B-17F-90-BO "Down and Go!"

B-17F-90-BO "Down and Go!" was surely cursed plane. Problems with plane piloted by Lieutenant Ned Palmer begun soon after take off. Both inner engines failed and pilot was forced to disable them. Crew wanted to drop some bombs on Germany and flew forward. Shortly before target engine number four overheated and pilot had to disable it too. Navigator set course on Sweden but plane has landed on Wehrmacht exercise field in Avedore Holme, Denmark. Plane was encircled by German soldiers but crew was able to destroy secret Norden gunsight. Plane was transported to city Kastrup, Denmark where was repaired by Heinkel plants' engineers. After repairs and traditional period of trials in Rechlin plane was transferred to KG 200 in Spring 1944 and coded A3+EE (however later had code A3+BB).

B-17F-100-BO "Miss Nonalee II"

Last B-17 captured by Germans in 1943 was B-17F-100-BO "Miss Nonalee II" (42-30336) from 548BS 385BG. This plane piloted by Lieutenant Glyndon G. Bell was damaged 9th of October 1943 during bombing run on Arado plant in Anklam (Eastern Prussia). Crew decided to go to Sweden but they made mistake and flew to Denmark. All crew members excluding pilot jumped and were caught by Danish police collaborating with Germans. Lieutenant Bell made forced landing near Varde, Denmark and after failed try to set fire on bomber evaded Danish policeman and was transported by Danish Resistance to Sweden. Meanwhile Germans sent from Flensburg transport plane Ar 232 with technicians. After few hours work lightened plane took off to Rechlin. There in unknown what happened with plane after repairs and traditional period of trials in Rechlin.

B-17G-25-DL

First B-17 captured in 1944 was B-17G-25-DL (42-38017) from 349BS 100BG "Bloody Hundredth". Plane piloted by Lieutenant John G. Grossage was damaged 3rd of March 1944. After loss one of engines and heavy wounding one of crew members (plane technician) pilot decided to flew to Sweden but navigator made mistake and plane landed at Schleswig-Jagel airfield in Northern Germany. After repairs and period of trials in Rechlin plane was transferred to KG 200 in Spring 1944 and probably coded A3+GE.

B-17F-115-BO "Phyllis Marie"

Last B-17F captured by Germans was B-17F-115-BO "Phyllis Marie" (42-30713) from 568BS 390BG. Plane was captured 8th of March 1944 after landing at Vaerloese, Denmark.

B-17G-10-VE

Last airworthy B-17 captured in 9th of April 1944 by Germans was B-17G-10-VE from 731BS 452BG.

B-17 in Kampfgeschwader 200

All B-17 (excluding "Miss Nonalee II") were transferred to KG 200 - special Luftwaffe unit. Germans had not enough planes with that range as B-17s. Planes had applied German national insignia, code letters (beginning from A3 - letters of KG 200) and special night camouflage. Germans added some equipment: barometrical altimeter ASI and radioaltimeter FuG 101. B-17s served in KG 200 in two Staffeln, 1. Staffeln was combat when 4. Staffeln was training one. Planes based on Finsterwalde airfield. German pilots were happy, because Fortress was formidable plane. They flew everywhere: Soviet Union, Poland, Greece, Italy, France, Belgium, Netherland, Ireland and even Palestine and Africa! All planes were top secret and target was known only for pilot and navigator. Service in KG 200 was very dangerous - first planes were lost 15th of May and 27th of June 1944 during combat missions. Next plane was heavily damaged 19th of November 1944. B-17 "Down and Go!" was destroyed during mission in Spanish-French border area. Plane piloted by pilots Knappenscheider and von Pechmann with 10 French collaborators took off in 9th February 1945. Shortly after took off plane exploded (about one hundred meters above airstripe) and all aboard were killed. Last plane lost during war took place 2nd of March 1945. Plane took off 11.08 p.m. from airfield Stuttgart-Euchterdingen with 8 members of crew, 9 agents and 3 containers with equipment. When plane come back to home base was shot down by British night fighting Mosquito. Part crew jumped with parachute.

Since September 1944 B-17 of KG 200 started from Finnow airfield. During following months planes made several dozen sorties over Soviet Union and Poland area. One of most dangerous flights was 20th of December 1944 when plane which took off from airfield in Cracow (Poland) with 6 agents on board had to flew in Odessa area. Just before jump one of Soviet agents threwed hand grenade. One of gunners had incredible reflex and jettisoned primed grenade. When next time crews had to carry Soviet agents, they bowsed Russians and jettisoned them over targed unconscious.

To the end of the war planes started from Hildesheim, Wackersleben and Fürstenfelsbruck airfields. Last combat mission took place in 2nd of May 1945. All survived planes were probably destroyed by their crews or captured by Soviets.