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# The Ploesti Raid Through The Lens



## Synopsis

'If it is granted that the successful destruction of the target would warrant the possible expenditure of the entire force...' So wrote Major General Lewis Brereton, the US Ninth Air Force commander in the Middle East, as the planners contemplated the options of a high or low level attack on the oil refineries at Ploesti in Rumania. If this source of 40 per cent of Germany's oil could be eliminated, it would deal a vital bodyblow to the Third Reich's ability to wage war, and a surprise attack by heavy B-24 Liberators flying at tree-top height was considered the best method of achieving success. Three bomb groups from the Eighth Air Force based in Britain flew out to join two groups of the Ninth already in North Africa, the combined force of 179 aircraft destined to carry out the first massed low-level heavy bomber mission in history. The Ploesti Raid took place on Sunday, August 1, 1943 and, but for a navigational error which put the leading formation on a course away from the target, the operation might have resulted in the destruction of the seven chosen targets. However, by the time the mistake was realised, the defences were on the alert and over 20 Liberators were brought down in and around Ploesti. A further 35 aircraft were lost. Although the operation resulted in the award of five Medals of Honor - America's highest decoration for bravery - the cost was high: 308 airmen lost their lives and 208 were taken prisoner or interned. Out of the 1,753 men who are known to have set out on the mission, a total of 516 had failed to return.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I currently have read 17 books about the August 1, 1943 Ploesti raid. This book is the 2nd most detailed recounting of that event thus far. While I still intend to add more books about THE Ploesti raid to my personal library, I doubt that I will manage to find another which will provide more facts of

the planning, training, and execution of this raid.

As much information as you could want about Tidal Wave, including planning maps, before and after action photo recon aerials, and more photographs of crew, aircraft, and the raid itself than ever before available to the public. Formation diagrams of each group make the narrative much easier to understand than in any previous work. Complete crew lists. Invaluable for a person interested in all aspects of the mission of August 1, 1943. Pricey but worth it. A worthy coda to the work of Roger Freeman.

through the lens books are great for period photos, this is no exception. for modellers a great background for recreating the raid

As a dean of US Army Air Force historians, Roger Freeman has set yet another standard before us to enjoy. The Ploesti Raid through the Lense is a brief but comprehensive volume which takes the reader from the origins and importance of Romanian oil production to a final recapitulation of the destruction of those facilities with the emphasis being, quite naturally, on the August 1, 1943 low level raid, code named TIDAL WAVE. As befits its emphasis, this volume incorporates photography which is second to none: aircraft, oil facilities, personalities, combat action and strike photography are well chosen and provided with thoroughly informative captions. Also included are detailed and contemporary maps of the general and specific areas traversed, pre-attack planning charts and navigational procedures along with detailed layouts of the facilities struck by the Army Air Force. Freeman's volume rotates around the planning, the training, analysis of the targets and their defenses, a roster of personnel assigned to the mission by group and aircraft, schematics of the formations to be used during the attacks and a recapitulation of the raid itself on each of the designated targets. Every B-24 airborne on the mission is accounted for in extensive notes on each aircraft, with an additional compilation including extensive B-24 crash site photography taken by Romanian authorities in the aftermath of the raid. The volume concludes by tabulating later attacks on Ploesti by the Fifteenth Air Force based in Italy up to the middle of August 1944. Freeman's work is certainly not the only volume to be published on Ploesti raids but it is one which any student of history absolutely requires for a thorough understanding of TIDAL WAVE. Roger Freeman's work is exceptional and this volume is testimony to that observation. I highly recommend this book and without reservation; it is worth every penny.

Wow! The legendary low-level U. S. air strike on Ploesti, Rumania is magnificently documented in words and images in Roger Freeman's PLOESTI THROUGH THE LENS, published in 2004 by After the Battle Publishing. It's safe to say no combat mission has been ever been documented as thoroughly as the 1 August 1943 strike covered in PLOESTI THROUGH THE LENS; Freeman's book sets the standard! And it's a damn fine read to boot! Superlatives come easy when discussing Freeman's book. He packs tons of information and images in the book's 160 pages. A smooth-flowing, incisive text is complimented by hundreds of photographs, maps, diagrams and formation plan views that cover every aspect of the daring but costly strike by five 8th and 9th AF B-24 groups on the lucrative Ploesti oil refineries. All the material is blended together to make a coherent whole that lets the reader follow the mission from start to finish. Needless to say, the many photos taken during the actual mission are spell-binding...and well captioned by Freeman. Almost all of the pix have never been published so PLOESTI THROUGH THE LENS is quite a treasure trove for air war enthusiasts. In short, six stars got to Roger Freeman and After the Battle Publishing for putting together this fascinating, evocative recreation of one helluva mission. Highly recommended.\*\*\*\*\* Readers might also want to check out Michael Hill's BLACK SUNDAY, the best of the "other" books on Ploesti.

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