

Gotha Mission – 24 Feb 44

By

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"My commanding officer, Maj. Evans went down on this mission. His crew lived in our barracks. We became very close friends. It was a great loss for me. We later found out he and his crew were prisoners of war in Germany. My commanding officer was also shot at while he was still in his parachute. He was unconscious and laying on the ground when the German soldiers picked him up. All of his crew but one survived. We put 25 B-24's over the target, and 13 were shot down. Our plane, the BTO, survived the mission. We received much battle damage."

"My tail turret was knocked out of commission. The electrical and hydraulic systems were knocked out. I shot down two FW-190's. We were hit by Goring's special squadron, the yellow nose gang, and those guys were no amateurs. The air battle lasted two hours and twenty minutes of continuous air attacks. We should go down in history as the longest air battle ever recorded. Approximately 82% of the target was completely damaged; the Gotha air factory, putting it out of commission. For this mission we got the Presidential Unit Citation. In spite of all this air battle, none of my crew was injured. This mission should stand out as one of the greatest feats in air warfare, of any war. I am honored to have survived this mission; more than half didn't."