



# **The Lucky Bastard Club: A B-17 Pilot in Training and in Combat, 1943-45/Mister Fletcher's Gang/2 Books in 1 Volume**

*Eugene Fletcher*

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On their first mission in a war-weary B-17 named Government Issue, half the payload jammed in the bomb bay and a shorted motor threatened to ignite the fuel transfer lines. At any moment the plane could have become a 130-knot fireball. The copilot was lowered by his ankles into the gaping bay, 15,000 feet above the English Channel, to disconnect the smoking motor. They landed safely. But because pilot Eugene Fletcher and his nine crewmen had never been in combat, they thought the day had been average. Combining the texts of Fletcher's Gang and Mister, this combination volume affords perhaps the most complete account ever of the experiences of a B-17 crew with the Eighth Air Force in WW II. From his first civilian flying lessons in a Piper J-3 Cub to the Army Air Force's Advanced Flying School, you'll follow Fletcher's education as a pilot. You'll hear what the men thought about the planes they flew and their experiences in England and what they felt toward the Army and officers who sent them there. And from the Initial Point of the bomb run (IP) and the flak-crowned targets to the Rally Point (RP) and home, you'll witness the transformation of ten men into a battle-savvy crew. The life expectancy of a bomber and its crew was 15 missions. But Fletcher and his men survived trips to Hamburg and Berlin, Bremen, Merseburg and other targets. Crews of the 95th Bombardment Group that completed 35 missions earned membership in the exclusive Lucky Bastard Club. Eligibility was celebrated at the last mission's end with a dramatic low-level flyover of the home base at full throttle; a volley of brightly colored magnesium flares spewed from the B-17 in an exuberant display of triumph. The LuckyBastard Club is drawn from Fletcher's own log, his letters to home and the journal entries of Myron Doxon, copilot; Robert Work, navigator; and Frank Dimit, bombardier. It offers an unsurpassed look at a remarkable time when every mission was a roundtrip fight, and every man's lucky

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