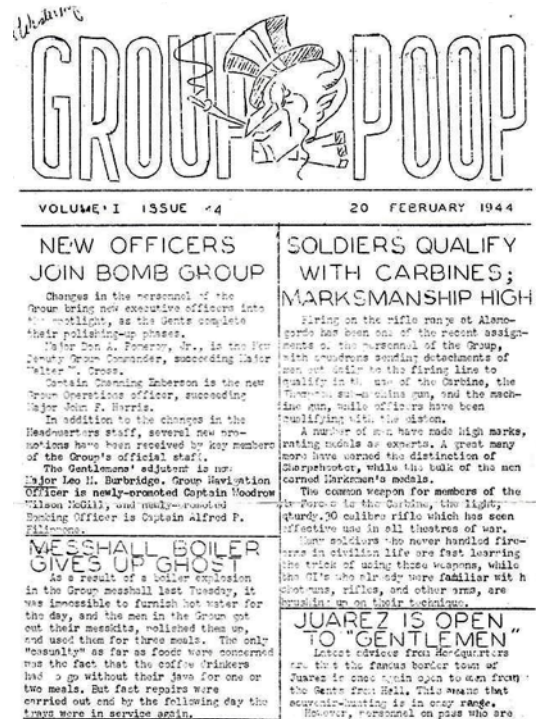


## Memorandum about 487th Bomb Group Insignia

There was no official insignia for the 487th Bomb Group or any of its four Bomb Squadrons (836th, 837th, 838th and 839th) during World War II.

The 'Gentlemen From Hell' motto and patch was used briefly during the Group's training days at Alamogordo, New Mexico. There is a reference to it in an issue of 'Group Poop', a newsletter published at Alamogordo in early 1944.

Right: The issue of '[Group Poop](#)' published at Alamogordo Army Air Base, New Mexico on February 20, 1944. (Bob Jacobs)



Some individual crew members had a patch with this motto and a painted logo, and wore it on their A-2 jackets when flying combat missions from Lavenham later that year. Two examples of this are pilot John F. Martin Jr and navigator James L. Williams, both original members of the Bert R. Zerr Crew in the 836th Bomb Squadron.

Below left: John F. Martin Jr at Station 137, Lavenham, England. (Martin collection)

Below right: 'Gentlemen From Hell' patch on the A-2 jacket of John F. Martin Jr, photographed in 2012. (Paul Webber)





Left: Lt James L. 'Jimmy' Williams at Lavenham, England. Notice the patch on his A-2 jacket. (Martin collection)

The patches worn by Martin and Williams were made at Alamogordo, and are the earliest known examples. There is photographic evidence that five other members of the Group wore a similar patch: S/Sgt Robert W. Beckham, Lt Thomas C. Davis, Sgt Robert C. Doerr, Sgt Harold L. Long, and Lt Edward J. Wilkowski. Doerr arrived at Lavenham in August 1944. The other four men arrived in April 1944 during the original deployment.

Below: The 'Gentlemen From Hell' [patch](#) worn by Lt Edward J. Wilkowski, copilot on the Frank L. Casey crew, 837th Bomb Squadron. (Jerry Ogle)

It is not known whether any B-24 of the 487th Bomb Group carried the 'Gentlemen From Hell' motto and/or logo as its nose art. The motto 'Gentlemen From Hell' was never officially adopted by the Group. Indeed, many veterans of the Group vehemently denied its use in 1944–1945. Except for its documented use by a few early members of the Group, there is no other reference to it during the period that the Group was at Lavenham. One reason for this might be that stricter rules on nose art were applied after the Germans made clever propaganda use of the capture of an American airman wearing a jacket with the motto 'Murder Inc'. However, when the veterans of the Group organized the 487th Bomb Group Association in 1967, the 'Gentlemen From Hell' motto resurfaced and was used by the Association, possibly because



the founding members of the Association were original members of the unit. Of note, the motto is not used on any of the postwar memorials that were erected by the 487th Bomb Group Association. However, the Association had patches made with the motto and logo—similar to the ones worn by Martin, Williams, and Wilkowski—and sold them during reunions.



Left: Example of a 'Gentlemen From Hell' patch sold by the 487th Bomb Group Association.



A number of the original crews had the nose art of their B-24s painted on a patch and sewn onto their jackets. These patches were probably made at a local shop in Alamogordo. Two examples are 'The Tweachewous Wabbit' of the Loye J. Lauraine crew, and 'Blasted Event' of the Lewis A. Huston crew.



Above left: Lt Loye J. Lauraine Jr, a 487th Bomb Group pilot. The patch on his jacket was based on the nose art of B-24H 42-52425 '[The Tweachewous Wabbit](#)'. (Ivo de Jong)

Above right: The patch on the A-2 Jacket of Lt Loye J. Lauraine Jr, photographed in 2013. (Paul Webber)

Left: The patch worn by members of the [Lewis A. Huston crew](#). It was based on the nose art of B-24H 41-29487 'Blasted Event'. (Ivo de Jong)

There was also the motto and logo ‘Strength and Precision’. This was displayed above the officers club bar at Lavenham.



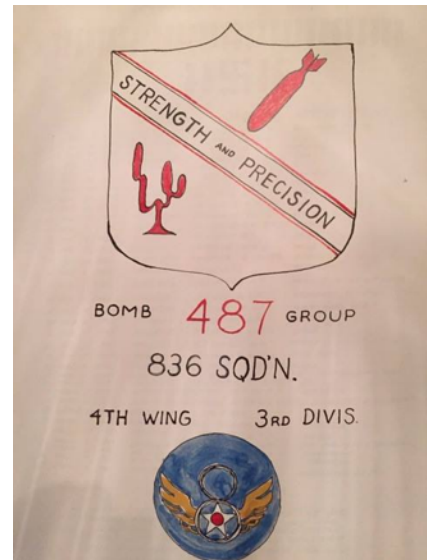
Above left: The [officers club bar](#) at Station 137, Lavenham, England.  
Above right: Closeup of the emblem above the bar. (Photos Ivo de Jong)

There is a variation of this in the diary of Raffaele L. ‘Ralph’ DiFronzo, navigator on the Robert Pittsley crew, who was at Lavenham from November 1944 to April 1945. Perhaps he worked on his diary in his quarters and had to draw from memory. His drawing contains most of the elements of the logo above the officers club bar, but they are arranged differently.

Right: Sketch from the diary of Raffaele L. ‘Ralph’ DiFronzo, navigator on the [Robert Pittsley crew](#), 836th Bomb Squadron. (Ivo de Jong)

Neither the ‘Gentlemen From Hell’ nor the ‘Strength and Precision’ logo was used in the immediate postwar 487th Bomb Group History (the ‘Blue Book’), which would have been quite logical if either of them had any meaning to most veterans of the Group.

There is a third logo that is often overlooked. It is the ‘Winged 487th’, a variant of the Eighth U.S. Army Air Force insignia. It was used at Lavenham during the war, as illustrated in the next photo that shows the 487th Bomb Group ‘Rock-Its’ band performing at Lavenham in 1944.



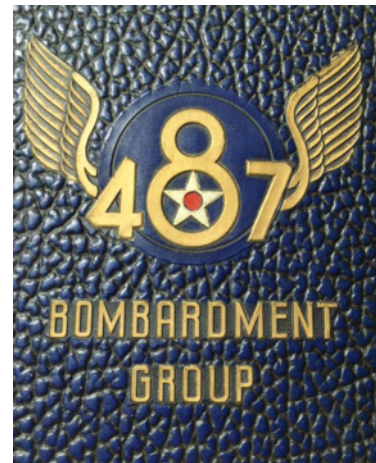




Left: The [487th Bomb Group 'Rock-Its'](#) band performing at the Lavenham officers club on August 24, 1944. Note the 'Winged 487th' logo on the music stands. (Bob Peterson collection)

The 'Winged 487th' logo was used on the cover of the original 487th Bomb Group History (the 'Blue Book') published in 1946.

Right: The 'Winged 487th' logo on the cover of the 487th Bomb Group 'Blue Book'. The title of the book is [The History of the 487th Bombardment Group, 22 September 1943 to 7 November 1945](#). This yearbook-style history was edited by 487th Bomb Group Adjutant Major Leo M. Burbridge, and was published by Newsfoto Yearbooks of San Angelo, Texas in 1946. (Ivo de Jong)



The 'Winged 487th' logo was also used on 487th Bomb Group postwar memorials. Here are two examples:



Above left: Russell A. Grantham at the [dedication](#) of the 487th Bomb Group memorial plaque in Market Square, Lavenham, England on August 2, 1970. Grantham was a bombardier in the 836th Bomb Squadron. (Grantham collection via Elizabeth W. Thomas)

Above right: [487th Bomb Group memorial plaque](#) in Section 33 at Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia. This plaque was dedicated on October 26, 1996.

Duplicates of the plaque at Arlington National Cemetery were later placed in the memorial garden of the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force in Pooler, Georgia; and in the Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul in Lavenham, England.

In 1961 the U.S. Air Force Historical Division published *Air Force Combat Units of World War II*. This book contains a brief history of each U.S. Army Air Corps combat group that was active in World War II. At the beginning of each entry is the insignia of the unit if the insignia was approved. There is no insignia portrayed for the 487th Bomb Group, and the entry under *Insigne* is *None*. The 487th Bomb Group had no official wartime motto or insignia. This was confirmed by Leo Burbridge in 2007. Major Leo M. Burbridge was the 487th Bomb Group Adjutant throughout the Group's existence. He said that there was a proposal for a 487th Bomb Group insignia that came down through Army Air Forces channels in 1945, but it was never approved by the Group.

So, there were three logos that were all used to some extent. None of them is official, but the 'Winged 487th' is prominently displayed on 487th Bomb Group postwar memorials and on the cover of the immediate postwar Group History.

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This document is based on an original document written by Ivo de Jong on August 24, 2015.

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5. Jacobs, Robert J. 'Bob'. *Personal Conversations*. 2007–2012 (son of Lt James J. 'Jimmy' Jacobs, navigator in the 836th Bomb Squadron, 487th Bomb Group; Bob Jacobs researched the 'Gentlemen From Hell' motto and logo in the late 1990s.)
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