

## THE GREEN HORNET (# 42-40101)

“THE GREEN HORNET” was a B-24 D heavy bomber (Serial Number: 42-40101, tail number: 240101, (*see Footnote #1*) built by Consolidated and assigned to First Pilot, 2Lt Herbert T. Kurz in February 1943 at Topeka Army Air Base. Herbert signed for the plane and preserved the original shipping ticket in his archives, which shows that the plane was issued by the 468<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron of the 333<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group. The name was painted on at Hamilton Field later that month (before deployment to Hawaii). It appears on both sides of the fuselage (but in slightly different form). The lighter color of the word “The” was crucial in making a positive identification in some photographs.



“THE GREEN HORNET” on Funafuti (18-23 April 1943) shows tail turret moved to nose position. US AAF photo.

# SHIPPING TICKET

CONSIGNOR: Supply Officer, 46 B Bombardment Sq, 333rd Bomb Gp

CONSIGNEE: HERBERT T. KURZ RANK 2ND LT ASN 0791122

STATION : Topeka Army Air Base, Topeka, Kansas.

ORDERED	UNIT	SHIPPED	ARTICLE
1	ea.	1	AIRPLANE, Type B-24D, Ser No. 42-40101
4	ea.	4	ENGINES, Serial Nos. 1. <u>42-42769</u>
			2. <u>42-42770</u>
			3. <u>42-42771</u>
			4. <u>42-42772</u>
1	ea.	1	KIT, B-24D, complete (1 per plane)
1	ea.	0	KIT, B-24D, complete (1 per plane)
2	ea.	2	KIT, Overwater, complete
2	ea.	2	LIFE RAFTS, complete
1	ea.	1	KIT, Mechanics, Armorers
1	ea.	1	KIT, Mechanics, Crew Chief
1	ea.	1	KIT, Radio Operators
2	ea.	2	CANS, full water, 5-gallon
			ORDNANCE EQUIPMENT
1	ea.	1	PISTOL, Pyrotechnic, M-8
			PLUS ATTACHED SHEET.
			SIGNAL EQUIPMENT
11	ea.	11	HEADSETS, HS-23
11	ea.	11	THROAT MICS, T-30
2	ea.	0	MICROPHONES, T-34-A

"I certify that the items listed in column "Shipped" have not previously been issued to me and that I have received those items this date."

(Responsible Officer(Pilot))

**HERBERT T. KURZ, 2ND LT. A.C.**

"I certify that I have this date issued the items listed in column "Shipped" to the person who accomplished the foregoing certificate."

(Accountable Officer)

WEIGHTS AND BALANCE CHECKED AND FOUND SATISFACTORY:

*George H. Eberhart*  
GEORGE H. EBERHART, 2ND LT.  
 A. C.

Who made this choice or why this name was selected is unknown. Contrary to some information on the Internet, there was no previous name on this aircraft. The plane was assigned new from the factory to Herbert Kurz, and the name was painted as shown in these images. How it was painted after it was reassigned (October 1943) is unknown. (*Footnote #2*) Although difficult to read in this copy of the shipping ticket, the original engine numbers are identified as: #1 42-42849      #2 42-42858      #3 42-42859      #4 42-42765

Incorrect information about this plane has been published and also displayed on the Internet. One of the purposes of this chapter is to consolidate all facts and memoirs about this plane, and include all images. One new image was discovered during this research. Some confusion may have arisen in the way the names **THE GREEN HORNET** and “**Green Hornet**” were recorded by various observers and writers. Both names were documented by photographs on several B-24 bombers and also on other aircraft models (B-25 – Doolittle Raid & B-17 – 359<sup>th</sup> BS). See **Footnote #2** concerning Lou Zamperini on GREEN HORNET at the end of this article.

There were at least four other B-24s named “THE GREEN HORNET” ref.: [www.B24bestweb.com](http://www.B24bestweb.com)

**B-24 H s# 42-52504** 15<sup>th</sup> AF 464<sup>th</sup> BG 778<sup>th</sup> BS (shows hornet riding bomb)

**B-24 H s# 42-52586** 8<sup>th</sup> AF 487<sup>th</sup> BG 837<sup>th</sup> BS (image of mechanical insect with bombs)

**B-24 J s# 44-40286** 8<sup>th</sup> AF 493<sup>rd</sup> BG 862<sup>nd</sup> BS (alternatively shown assigned to 8<sup>th</sup> AF 491<sup>st</sup> BG 852<sup>nd</sup> BS - shows strange humanoid hornet sitting on letter “G” of word “Green”)

**B-24 (probably J model) s# 44-49612** 5<sup>th</sup> AF 22<sup>nd</sup> BG 33<sup>rd</sup> BS “Red Raiders” (from a hand painted picture of the plane showing a hornet diving toward the rear side of a woman bending over, the number 612 is prominently visible on the tail. - on a Val-Pack from with the name: T/Sgt A.D. Schuller #39274816 - listed on eBay) If correct, this was piloted by H. Stone and lost 26 May 1945 over China, however all the crew survived.

#### **Assignments for “THE GREEN HORNET” (42-40101) (ref. H. Kurz orders):**

- Feb 1943 - 333<sup>rd</sup> BG, 468<sup>th</sup> BS (1<sup>st</sup> Pilot, H.T. Kurz)

- 2 Mar 1943 - 307<sup>th</sup> BG (H), 371<sup>st</sup> BS (H) (1<sup>st</sup> Pilot, H.T. Kurz)

- 10 May 1943 - 11<sup>th</sup> BG (H), 98<sup>th</sup> BS (H) through 6 Oct 1943 (1<sup>st</sup> Pilot, H.T. Kurz)

{In October 1943 the 98<sup>th</sup> BS received newer B-24 J models. These planes were equipped with “paddle props” which added about 5-mph airspeed. **THE GREEN HORNET** had a lot of miles but was in excellent condition. There was no combat damage and it had not had hard landings. Kurz was told that it was reassigned to be renovated for a General officer.

(*See Footnote # 3.*) Kurz was subsequently issued B-24 J SN 42-73022, no-name}

- Unknown dates - 494<sup>th</sup> BG, 866<sup>th</sup> BS, 7<sup>th</sup> AF (ref. Jim Leddy and [www.b24bestweb.com](http://www.b24bestweb.com) researchers)

- 15 Dec 1945 – “Condemned Salvage” (ref. Joe Baugher <http://www.joebaugher.com/> )





**Detail From THE GREEN HORNET Landing on Funafuti After Bombing Nauru on 20 April 1943.**



**B-24 Landing on Funafuti after Bombing Nauru on 20 April 1943. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Herbert Kurz, Pilot. (US AAF photo)**

The initial crew of **"THE GREEN HORNET"**

Position	Rank	Name	Serial #	Status		
P	1 <sup>st</sup> LT	Herbert T. Kurz	S# 0791122		Injured	
CP	2 <sup>nd</sup> LT	Kensel E. Clutter	S# 0733611		Injured	Left Crew
N	2 <sup>nd</sup> LT	William R. Doxaras	S# 1662029			Left Crew
B	2 <sup>nd</sup> LT	Frank J. Washburn	S# 0731433	MIA	Injured	
E	T/Sgt	Dennis S. Lodge	S# 13049799		Injured	
R	T/Sgt	Delbert Y. Erickson	S# 37167038	Killed		
AE	S/Sgt	John E. Harmon	S# 37208117		Injured	
AR	S/Sgt	Wm. E. Richards	S# 38179498		Injured	
G	S/Sgt	Owen T. Wilson	S# 15115486	Killed		
AG	S/Sgt	Max G. MacFarlane	S# 35234897		Injured	



**THE GREEN HORNET** parked on Funafuti (18-23 April 1943) during raids on Nauru and Tarawa. Note that the name appears on the right side of the fuselage - as well as the left as seen in other photos. From [www.B24bestweb.com](http://www.B24bestweb.com)



The plane in the middle background may be **THE GREEN HORNET**. B-24 at right is 240072 - Irby.

## Equipment modifications to “THE GREEN HORNET”

**THE GREEN HORNET** was modified in March 1943 (similar to some other B-24 Ds) by moving the tail turret to the nose for better weight distribution and defense. This modification gave an appearance similar to the later B-24J model. Radar was installed at about the same time (likely at Hickham Field). Note change in these photos.

The men from Irby’s crew were identified by Herbert Kurz. Considering the possible identification of **THE GREEN HORNET** in the previous picture in the group on Funafuti next to Irby’s plane, it may be more than coincidental that people from his crew were photographed next to **THE GREEN HORNET** – possibly during the same mission to Funafuti.

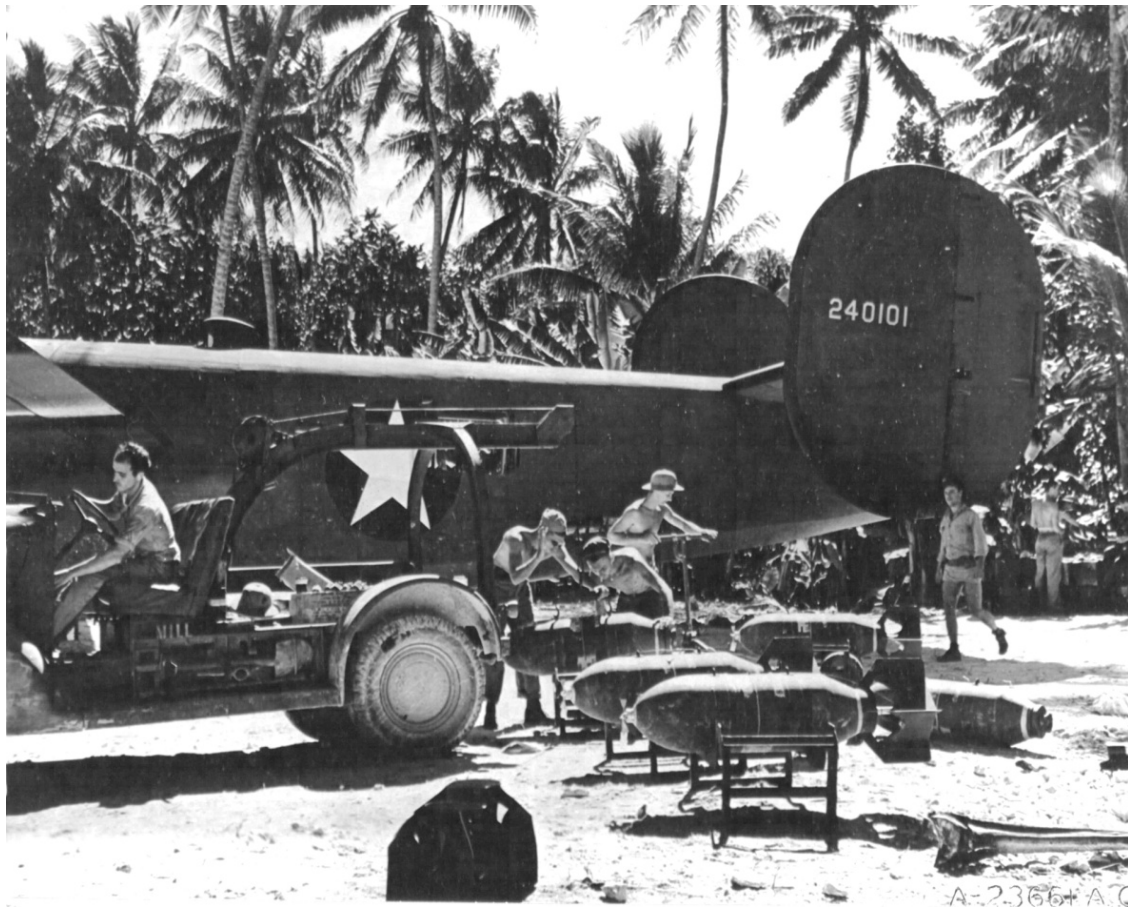


**Crewmen McFarland & Richards.**



**Irby crewmen, Priestly (L) & Smith (R) by THE GREEN HORNET.**  
Note new radar antenna - 4 rods.





Loading up at Funafuti to bomb Nauru (picture clearly shows tail number 240101), both images from USAAF collection. (Richard Bazemore also shared these images from page 24 of an unknown magazine –possibly the June issue of “Impact”. The article reported the raid on Nauru from Funafuti.)



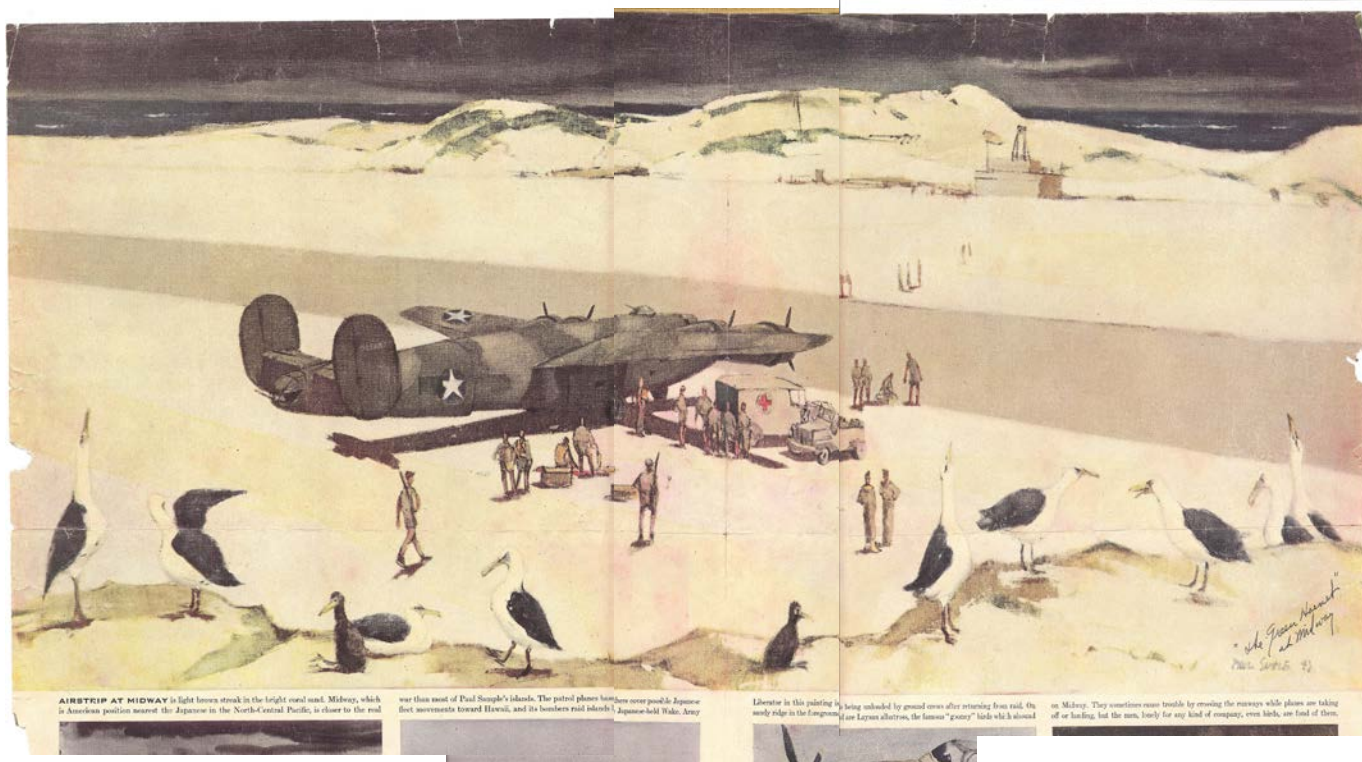
Ground Crew checking an engine on **THE GREEN HORNET** on Funafuti April 1943. USAAF photo

Ground crew checking an engine on **THE GREEN HORNET** while on Funafuti (18-23 April 1943). Kurz saw this picture taken. Aircraft #42-40123 is visible in the background. (No nose art is visible on #123 and this serial number does not appear in the J. Baugher list.) This image is from USAAF archives and it also appeared in a contemporary magazine. It was collected and verified by Herbert. This was the only mission for Kurz on Funafuti.



**The Green Hornet** ground crew. Lou Trudell, crew chief, back row on right.





**THE GREEN HORNET** was portrayed in a painting by Paul Sample in Life magazine. This image was painted on Midway Atoll in mid- 1943 and shows the plane being unloaded on Eastern Island (location of the AAF base) by the ground crew after the mission to bomb Wake Island. While this work was in progress, 2Lt Doxaras saw a man with an easel up on a dune. He went up and asked about the picture. Paul Sample introduced himself and asked, "Is that your plane?" Doxaras confirmed that it was. Then Sample said that he should watch for the picture to be published in Life magazine in a few months. The crew checked the magazines that made their way out to the combat area, but it was almost a year before the picture was published. (Issue: 26 June 1944, page 60 & 61. The plane's name was not mentioned in the article.)

After the mission to bomb Wake, CP 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt K. Klutter was removed from the crew and replaced by CP 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Sherman Reed.



**Paul Sample 1896-1974, Life magazine combat artist.**

**Footnote #1 (Aircraft Serial numbers - Extract from Joe Baugher):**

It is important to recognize that the serial number reflects the Fiscal Year in which the order for the aircraft is placed, NOT the year in which it is delivered

The lack of a readily-visible serial number on Army aircraft began to be a serious problem, and on October 28, 1941, shortly after the USAAF had been formed, an order was given that numbers of no less than 4 digits would be painted on the tail fin of all Army aircraft (where feasible) in a size large enough to be seen from at least 150 yards away. This was officially called the radio call number, but was almost universally known as the *tail number*. Since military aircraft were at that time not expected to last more than ten years, the first digit of the fiscal year number was omitted in the tail number as was the AC prefix and the hyphen. For example, Consolidated B-24D serial number 42-40101 had the tail number 240101 painted on its tail fin.

Consequently, in most situations for a World War II-era aircraft where the tail number is visible, you can deduce the serial number simply by putting a dash after the first digit, prefixing a 4, and you automatically have the serial number. Unfortunately, there were many deviations from these rules--there are examples in which only the last 4 or 5 digits were painted on the tail, which makes identification of the aircraft particularly difficult. (ref: Joe Baugher [http://www.joebaugher.com/usaf\\_serials/usafserials.html](http://www.joebaugher.com/usaf_serials/usafserials.html) )

**Footnote #2 (Confusion about *THE GREEN HORNET* (101) and *GREEN HORNET* which was lost in May 1943 with Lou Zamperini)**

This confusion likely developed due to the similarity of the names, and the way that they may have been identified in various notes or articles. The story about Olympic runner Lou Zamperini has appeared in many articles and at least two books (most recently: *Unbroken* by L. Hillenbrand). Lou Zamperini clearly states the name of the plane that crashed in the Pacific in May 1943 as **GREEN HORNET**, but did not list the serial number. William Cleveland who compiled the 11<sup>th</sup> BG Association archives and edited *Grey Geese Calling* mistakenly added the serial number for **THE GREEN HORNET** to the article about Zamperini published in that book. Joe Baugher identified the correct serial number for **GREEN HORNET** as 41-24097. Zamperini flew as bombardier (aboard another plane – **SUPERMAN**) during the same mission to bomb Nauru when Herbert Kurz piloted **THE GREEN HORNET** in April 1943, but there is no other connection between these two different planes.

**Footnote #3 (Fate of 42-40101 - from [www.b24bestweb](http://www.b24bestweb.com) researchers):**



Photo of 42-40101 with visible tail number and markings of 494<sup>th</sup> BG, 866th BS, 7<sup>th</sup> AF on line at Hickham Field, Oahu on 3 Feb 1945. This plane was called **RUPTURED DUCK** and piloted by COL Laurence Kelly during October 1944 at Barking Sands Airfield (Kauai Island) then the squadron moved that month to Anguar Island in the Caroline Islands. The plane left Anguar Island on 29 January 1945 for Hickham Field "to import supplies not available in the mess or PS." From notes by Jim Leddy – a researcher on the 494<sup>th</sup> BG.

