

COMPETITION FOR THE DRAGON

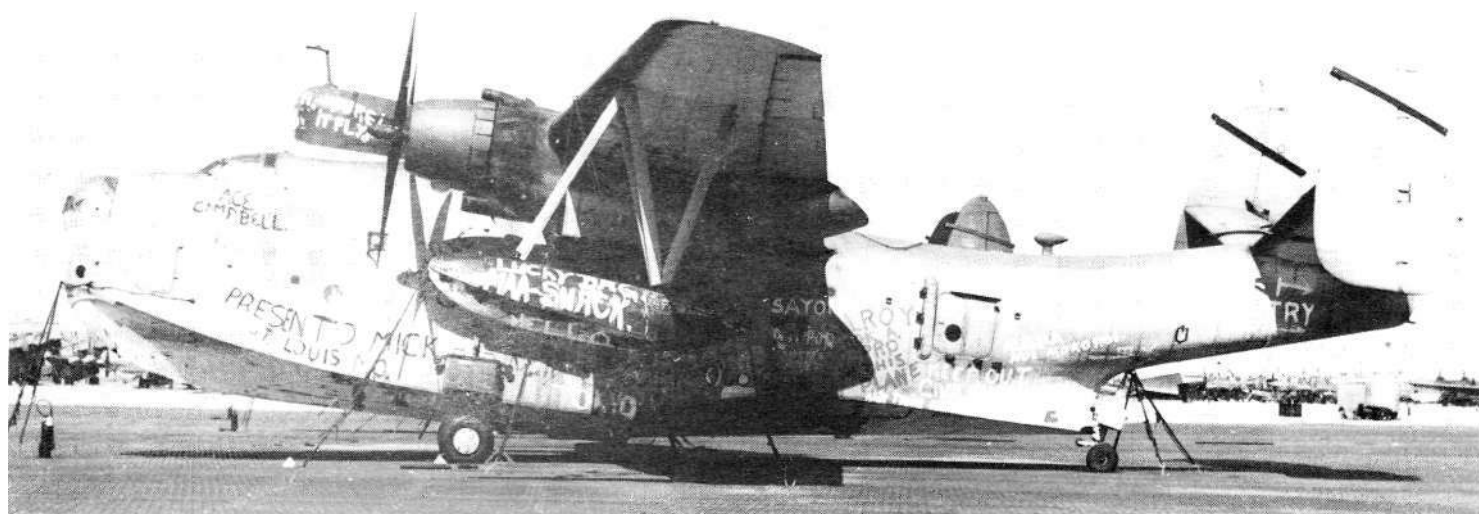
The photographs on the right are a continuation of the statements made on page 48 of Volume 2, and continued on pages 18-21 of Volume 3, regarding unusual markings on military aircraft.

While the markings in the last issue are interesting, they do not fall into the same category as the now-famous "Dragon". Thanks to Nicholas Hauprich, and Myron Weckbacher, we are now able to further identify that B-24, and in addition present some more amazing B-24 photos. The "Dragon" was part of the 64th Squadron, 43rd Bomb Group, 5th Air Force in the Pacific. The squadron was based at Tac Loban, Leyte; Clark Field, Luzon; and Ie-Shima, Ryukyus. The name of the artist who painted the dragon was Bartigan, first name and rank unknown. The B-24 did fly in combat with those markings, and was never hit. The photo in the Journal was taken at Kingman, Arizona, after the war when it and 7,000 other aircraft were junked at that airbase. Perhaps a better contender for the title of "the most fantastic markings on a military airplane in the history of the world", and certainly an equal, is a B-24 with cartoon characters painted on the fuselage from the nose to the tail. The photo on the right showing the front section of this plane is unfortunately the only view available at this time.

We hope that more of you will hunt for these rare and unusual photos. Pictures of the zebra-striped, polka-dot colored B-24 "lead ships" still remain buried and unpublished. Won't you WW-2 aircrew veterans hunt through that old foot locker or album to see if you can't find some of these photos before they are lost forever?



B-24 Nose paintings - 64th Sqdn, 43rd Bomb Group, 5th AF (1945) (Courtesy of N.H.Hauprich)



Martin PBM-5 returned from Pacific, photo 7-29-46