



# Beaufighters in the Night: 417 Night Fighter Squadron USAAF

*Brick Eisel*

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# Beaufacturers in the Night: 417 Night Fighter Squadron USAAF

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## **Beaufacturers in the Night: 417 Night Fighter Squadron USAAF** Brick Eisel

The 417th Night Fighter Squadron USAAF was only the fourth such unit to be formed. In the early days of WWII, the US sent observers to England to study how the latest form of air warfare would take shape and it very soon became apparent to them that a night fighting capability was of increasing importance. When they joined the battle against the Reich they found themselves without a suitable American aircraft and were forced to utilize RAF Beaufacturers. Having 're-learned to fly' this British design the 417th were sent to North Africa. Most of the ex-RAF aircraft they had inherited were battle weary and no supplies of spares were available through the US supply chain. The squadron found an elderly B-25 bomber, nicknamed the "Strawberry Roan," and they ranged throughout the Mediterranean in search of Beaufacturer parts. 417 soon built a healthy score of downed German and Italian aircraft and as the war progressed they were moved to Corsica to support the Italian invasion, After D-Day they were moved to Le Vallon from where they attacked the night-time movements of the German Army. Perhaps their most famous operation was to attack the low flying German Condor that ran the route from the Reich to Spain carrying Nazi gold and treasures.

## REVIEWS

"...well written, entertaining and highly informative tribute that serves to finally bring this unique and little known chapter of USAAF history to light. "  
Aviation History Magazine 01/2008

"...The author conducted numerous interviews with veterans and their families, uncovering a bounty of likely never before published photographs in addition to preserving their stories for future generations... Eisel succeeds in painting a compelling picture of airmen at war, beating the odds in a forgotten fighter in an often overlooked theater."  
Air Power History 2/2008

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