

## Boeing B-17G, 1:72 Airfix A08017B and A06304



Box Art of A12010, general RAF Chelveston layout, circa 1944

Using the 1:72 Airfix A08017B B-17G (2021 re-box with new decals of the 2016 A08017) and the 1:72 Airfix 2016 A06304 WWII USAAF Bomber Re-Supply Set, Heritage Model Aircraft model builders William Walshe and Gilles Pepin will jointly build one 2' x 2' diorama of B-17G DF-A "Sally B", currently based at Imperial War Museum Duxford (UK), and three more dioramas (see below).



Heritage Model Aircraft is also building a far more elaborate 4' x 4' 1:32 scale B-17G diorama of B-17G WF-E "297533", destined for a museum in the US.

The other three dioramas will depict B-17G WF-E "297533", in bare metal livery. Two are destined for Washington, DC. The third is for the Hornby Hobbies Visitor Centre in Margate, UK. Airfix is a subsidiary of Hornby Hobbies; visit

<https://uk.hornby.com/hornby-hobbies-visitor-centre>



#### A word about the code letters of B-17G WF-E "297533"

The above drawing is as close to B-17G WF-E "297533" as I could find in my archives. Squadron code letters WF refer to aircraft belonging to 364<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron (BS), 305<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group. However, the B-17G WF-E "297533" dioramas, in 1:72 and 1:32 scales, are being built as a tribute to Lt. Lester Sorensen, the lead bombardier of 305<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group on the fateful day, August 24, 1944, when B-17G WF-E "297533" was downed by German 88mm flak near its target, Merseburg, 115 miles south-west of Berlin. Lt. Sorensen was part of 365<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron, not 364<sup>th</sup>; after much research and with the kind help of Dr. Vivian Rogers Price, Research Center Director at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, Georgia, here is the answer to that riddle:

- 364<sup>th</sup> and 365<sup>th</sup> BS were both based at the same airfield, RAF Chelveston (North Northamptonshire)
- It was not unusual for one squadron to "borrow" an aircraft from another squadron based at the same Station (in this case: RAF Chelveston: Station 105), when the "borrowing" squadron could not be at full complement for

any given mission, and assuming the “lending” squadron would remain at full complement after the temporary “loan”

- So, on August 24, 1944, B-17G WF-E “297533” was crewed by 365<sup>th</sup> BS personnel, even though it was officially part of 364<sup>th</sup> BS.

All ten crew members survived, and were interned at Stalag Luft III until liberated by Patton’s Third Army in the spring of 1945. For a more complete story, visit:

<https://www.heritagemodelaircraft.com/b-17g-297533-diorama-1-32>

<https://www.heritagemodelaircraft.com/lt-l-sorensen>

The bases, display cases, and shipping crates will be created by a true artist, Mark Whittaker, from Canada. All five dioramas (the four in 1:72 and the one in 1:32) will have full remotely-controlled functional electronics manufactured by Steve Roberts of Smart Fx, Rugby, Warwickshire, UK; features:

- Quadra sonic Wright R-1820-97 “Cyclone” turbosupercharged radial engine sound; two stereo amplifiers and four speakers
- Sequenced Wright Cyclone engine starts, with prototypical Cyclone “coughing”; the accumulation of the starting sequence engine sounds will be progressive, prototypical, and loud
- Navigation, landing, formation, cockpit, bombardier, upper turret, tail gunner position, radio compartment, and mid-fuselage lights, all turning on and off in sequence
- The 12VAC wiring from the Smart Fx microprocessor (mounted underneath the display case) to the models will run through the tail casters and the display bases, and will be invisible once the models are placed on said bases
- The remote-control activated sequence will be +/- 4 minutes long

