

## The History Of BT-13 "G300"

It starts with these 2 snapshots taken of my dad, Robert Lawsen, in the summer of 1943. These photos are small, 2 1/2 x 3 1/2". He trained on the BT-13 Valiant at Malden field, MO, down by the boot at the SE corner. In late 2005, a freeware



vs. of the BT-13 became available for Microsofts Flight Simulator, FS9. I started making "repaints" just a year before in Dec. 2004 and was still a novice at graphic skills, so my first rendition looked like this:



I noticed an emblem or shield on the side of the fuselage in the first snapshot, but had no idea what it represented. The details above and below the emblem were difficult to decipher, so I just made a shield with what looked like a fist holding lightning bolts.



I didn't know for sure about the large lettering code that I could faintly make out on the second picture, so I left it off:



Years later, when I did more research I found that Malden Field during the war had the code "ML", so my next rendition had the markings: ML300. But I always questioned why the top of the 1st digit didn't resemble an "M", but

looked like it could be a C, G O, or Q. Later I found out there were no codes using O, or Q, that left C or G as candidates.

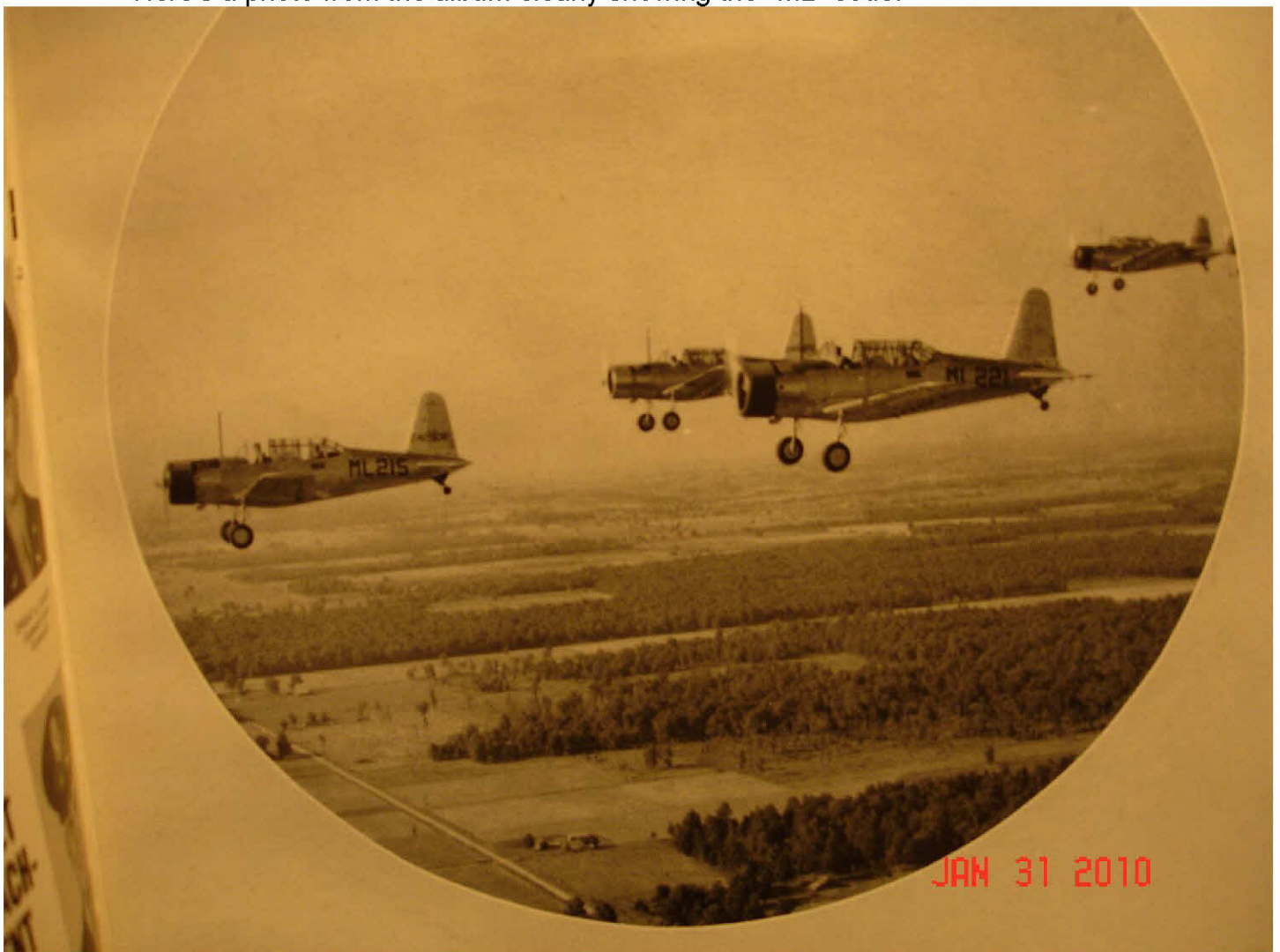
Then in 2010 I decided to redo the rendition because I found that the Malden Airfield had a little museum and I noticed a photo of a display of cadet graduation albums and I could barely make out what looked to be the same image of an emblem that resembled the

one on dad's photos. I called the museum and asked if they would take some photos of the album cover and look inside to see if there are any photos of BT-13's with the "ML" code, and this is what I received:



Here's the cover of the album and a close-up of dad's picture.

Here's a photo from the album clearly showing the "ML" code:





Here's rendition #2 I created in early 2010:



I had learned a lot more about making detailed renditions using Photoshop, so this version had all the stencil markings, quality looking rivets, weathering and a more accurate emblem now that I had the cover photo of the album at Malden field.

A year later, another BT-13 virtual model showed up by Chris Herring of Top Flight Simulation "<http://www.topflightsimulation.yolasite.com>" and was larger so the paint rendition would look even better. I was excited to make a 3rd rendition



for this high quality model and began an extensive research on the web, finding new photos and data. Then I discovered two photos that answered a lot of questions.

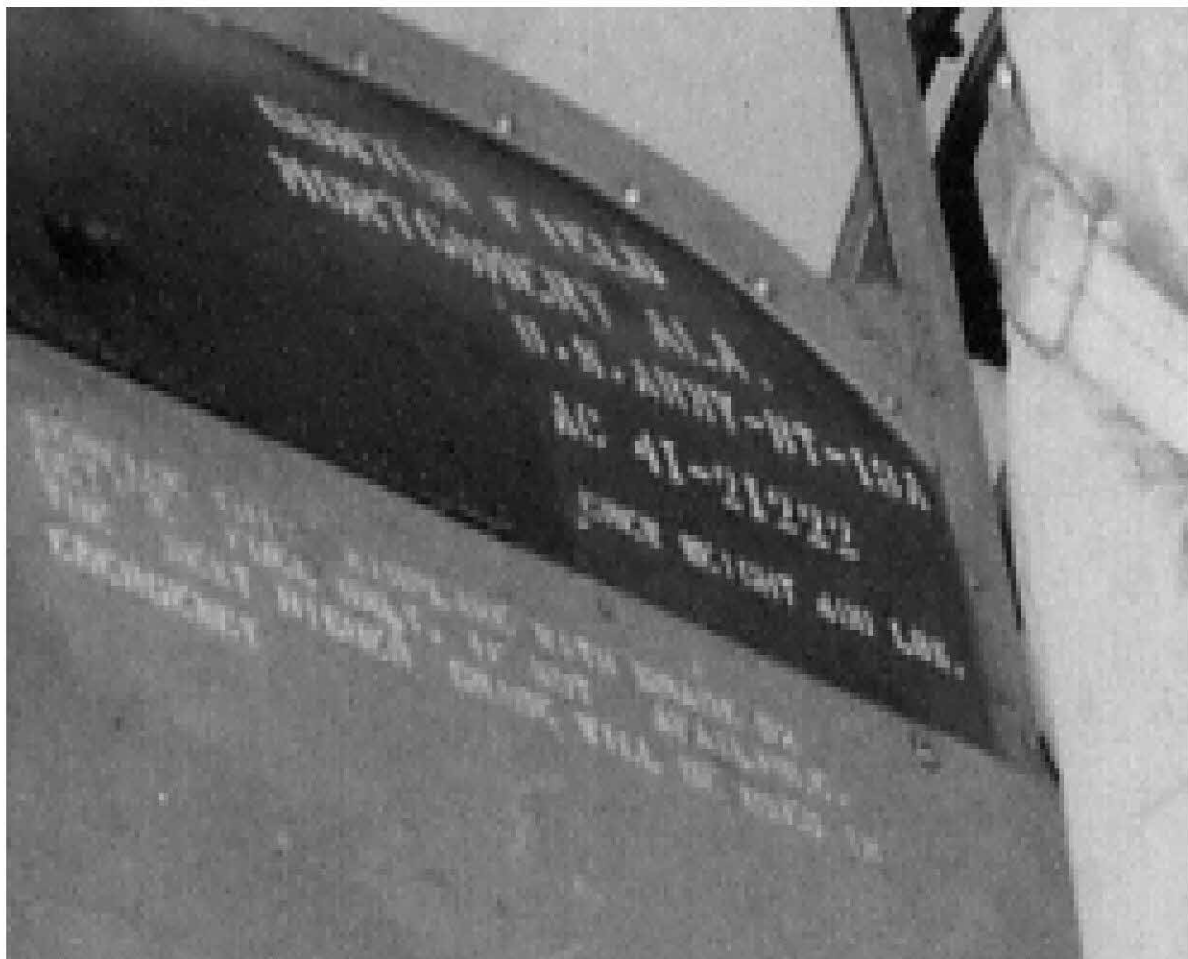
First, on the left is a photo of a flight instructor posing on a BT-13 that clearly shows that emblem on the side.

Next is a color photo taken of a good friend of mine, Ole Griffith, that also had some B & W photos of the same serial # that clearly

shows it was from Gunter Field in Montgomery, AL. Plus it had a blue fuselage which means it was a blue & yellow pre-war paint scheme.



Here is a close up comparison of both photos:







Notice in this B & W photo of my friend Ole Griffith that the serial # is the same as in his color picture: 41-21558. It is very clear that this plane is from Gunter Field, in Montgomery, AL. Thus with the clues of these three photos I know for certain that the two photos I have of dad, that the plane he's posing with was from Gunter field in Alabama and not an aircraft from his training field in Missouri. It must of got transferred there, and the day his friend took those photos, it was not a plane from Malden at all and thus ended the mystery I had of why the 1st digit was not an "M" but a "G". You can also see the number "300" on the leading edge,



thus the code and # was "G300". I always wondered if the plane dad posed with was painted or not, I couldn't verify this for sure until years later so I opted to make the first 2 renditions bare metal.

Here is the 3rd rendition with the correct markings:

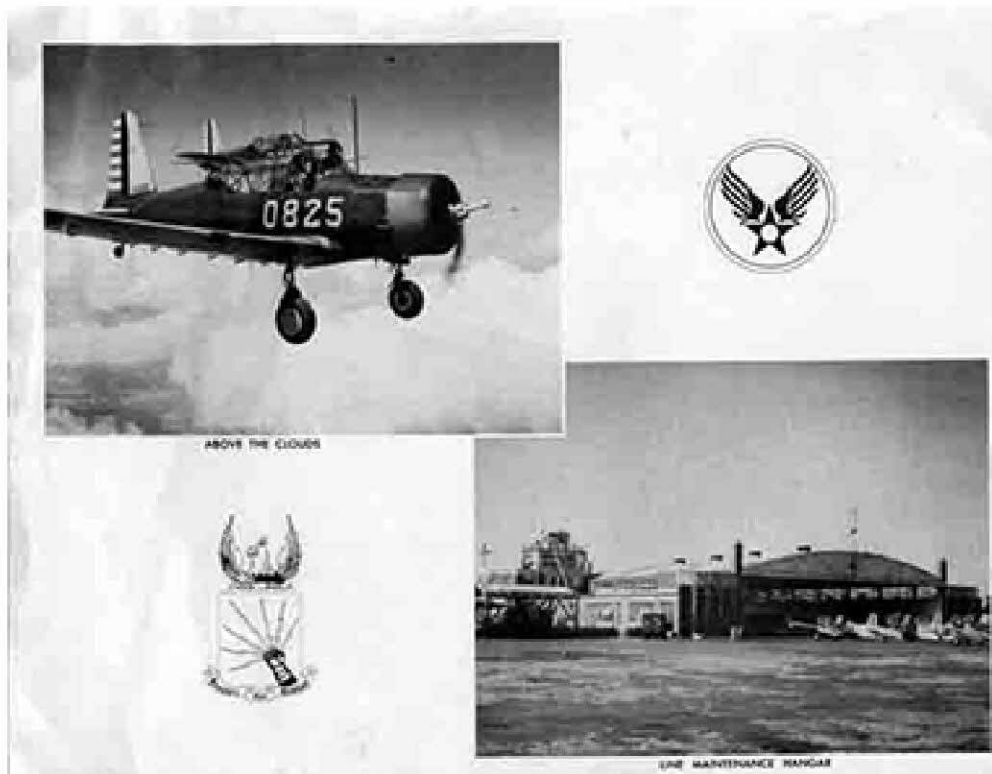


Here's a close up of the detail:





Now I'll turn attention to that emblem on the side of the fuselage, turns out that it is a coat of arms shield representing the Southeast Airforce Training Center. During the war, cadet training was divided into divisions, Western, Eastern and so on. The Southeast division headquarters was at Maxwell Field in Montgomery, AL. It was established in 1940, and eventually became the Eastern Flying Training Command and covered S. Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. More research turned up photos of the emblem made as pins, which Ole informed that every cadet was issued one upon graduation from flight school. Also a match cover, and a photo from their booklet given to all cadets:



Here's a description of the emblem I found:

The background is azure (or blue sky) from a base a clenched fist in armor proper, from the palm thereof seven rays beveled. CREST: On a wreath or and azure wings displayed. MOTTO: Prepare for Combat. SYMBOLISM: The blue of the shield represents the sky throughout which the activities of the South East Air Force Training Center take place. The clenched fist in armor represents defensive action. The fist is emanating from the southeast part of the shield to represent the SE AFTC. The seven bolts of lightning represent the seven phases of instruction which together prepare trainees for aerial combat. The crest, wings displayed symbolic beast of the East of unassailable spirit and enlightenment - is believed representative of the objective established by higher authority for this activity, i.e., watchfulness, courage, perseverance, and rapidity of execution. Old heralds gravely relate of this creature that when he attains his full growth he will never be taken. Rather than yield himself to his enemy he exposes himself to the worst of dangers and as such he is considered representative of the growth of the fledgling pilots who begin their flying training in the primary school and proceed by intermediate steps to their full status upon being awarded the pilot's badge upon graduation from the advanced schools. DISTINCTIVE INSIGNIA The distinctive insignia is the shield, crest and motto of the coat of arms, approved 10 November 1941. The sample of the distinctive insignia was approved 20 January 1942.

In closing, I dedicate this effort to my dad who in the 8th AF flew 30 missions, was shot down, and survived 8 months in Stalag Luft III. He was awarded the Air Medal, the DFC, and 3 oak leaf clusters for his valiant effort as a B-17 pilot. Here is a page from his log book while at Malden Field. His first entry was July 5, 1943 and he graduated from advanced training there flying BT-13's on August 28.

| DATE   | FLIGHT FROM | FLIGHT TO | AIRCRAFT MAKE AND MODEL | AIRCRAFT CERTIFICATE MARK | CLASSIFICATION                           | DURATION OF FLIGHT |
|--|-------------|-----------|-------------------------|---------------------------|--|--------------------|
| 7-5  |             |           |                         |                           |  | .7                 |
| 7-6  |             |           |                         |                           |  | .8                 |
| 7-7  |             |           |                         |                           |  | 1.0                |
| 7-8  |             |           |                         |                           |  | 1.1                |
| 7-9  |             |           |                         |                           |  | 1.0                |
| 7-10   |             |           |                         |                           |  | 1.0                |
| 7-11   |             |           |                         |                           |  | .8                 |
| 7-12   |             |           |                         |                           |  | 1.8                |
| 7-13   |             |           |                         |                           |  | 2.7                |
| 7-14   |             |           |                         |                           |  | 2.5                |
| 7-15   |             |           |                         |                           |  | 2.0                |
| 7-16   |             |           |                         |                           |  | 1.56               |
| 7-17   |             |           |                         |                           |  |                    |
| THE RECORD ON THIS PAGE IS CERTIFIED TRUE AND CORRECT. |             |           |                         |                           |  |                    |
| PILOT  |             |           | ATTESTED BY             |                           | CARRY TOTALS FORWARD TO TOP OF NEXT PAGE |                    |

| BREAKDOWN OF TRIP TIME INTO CLASSIFICATIONS |            |     |       |       |       | REMARKS          |
|---|------------|-----|-------|-------|-------|------------------|
| INSTRUMENT                                  | INSTRUMENT | DAY | NIGHT | SOLAR | SOLAR |                  |
|   |            | .7  |       | .7    |       |                  |
|   |            | .8  |       | .8    |       |                  |
|   |            | 1.0 |       | 1.0   |       |                  |
|   |            | 1.1 |       | 1.1   |       |                  |
|   |            | 1.0 |       | 1.0   |       |                  |
|   |            | 1.0 |       | .7    | .3    | First Solo Ride  |
|   |            | .8  |       | .8    |       |                  |
|   |            | 1.8 |       | 1.1   | .7    |                  |
|   |            | 2.7 |       | 1.8   | 1.3   |                  |
|   |            | 2.5 |       | .9    | 1.6   |                  |
|   |            | 2.0 |       | 1.0   | 1.0   | Second Solo Ride |
|   |            |     |       | 107   | 49    |                  |
| CARRY TOTALS FORWARD TO TOP OF NEXT PAGE    |            |     |       |       |       |                  |

by Chuck Lawsen

charleslawsen@cox.net