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Aerial Engineer Gunner, 5th Bombardment Group

(Pennsylvania Military Museum, T. Gum, Site Admin.)



Photo of Handkerchief.

This handkerchief belonged to Michael Yadsco (1925-1986). A native of Freeland PA, Yadsco entered the service in August 1943 at New Cumberland, PA and served in the 5th Bombardment Group. Printed on the handkerchief is the bombardment group's name, imagery, and nickname, the "Bomber Barons."

At the start of the Pacific War, the 5th Bombardment Group was assigned to the 7th Air Force, and in 1943 was reassigned to the 13th Air Force for a period of time. The Group's last assignment was to the Far East Air Force (FEAF) until the end of the war.

Yadsco served as an Aerial Engineer Gunner with the 31st Bombardment Squadron, 5th Bombardment Group Heavy and participated in campaigns in China, New Guinea, Bismarck Archipelago, the Western Pacific, and Southern Philippines – better known as the "island hopping" campaign. The campaign concentrated limited Allied resources in the region on strategically important but poorly defended islands that were capable of supporting the drive to the Japanese mainland, enabling Allied forces to reach Japan quicker.



In 1943 the 31st Bombardment Squadron began flying the B-24 Liberator, replacing the B-17 Flying Fortress. Pictured here are two B-24 Liberators, the Snow Job II and Mask-A-Raider, belonging to the 31st Bombardment Squadron, the type he would have served in – at this time it is unknown in which planes Yadsko flew.

Awarded the Good Conduct Medal, the Air Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Philippine Liberation Ribbon with 1 bronze star, the American Theater Service Medal, and the Asiatic-Pacific Service medal with five bronze stars. Yadsko was honorably discharged in October of 1945.