



Personal info

Full name

BUONAROBO, Louis J

Date of birth

1922

Age

unknown

Place of birth

New York

Hometown

The Bronx, Bronx County, New York

Military service

Service number

12144418

Rank

Sergeant

Unit

**331st Bombardment Squadron,
94th Bombardment Group, Heavy**

Awards

Purple Heart

Death & Grave

Status

Killed in Action

Date of death

14 October 1943

Cemetery

American War Cemetery Lorraine

Plot	Row	Grave
K	36	30

Immediate family

Members

Edward Buonarobo (father)

Saveria Buonarobo n(mother)

John Buonarobo (brother)

Alfonso Buonarobo (brother)

Jenie Buonarobo (sister)

Rosie Buonarobo (sister)

Nancy Buonarobo (sister)

Felomema Buonarobo (sister)

Anthony Buonarobo (brother)

Vincent Buonarobo (brother)

George Buonarobo (brother)

Plane data

Serial number

42-3338

Data

Type: B-17F

Nickname: Sleepy Time Gal

Destination: Schweinfurt, Germany

Mission: Bombing of the ball bearing plants

MACR: 791

More information

Sgt Louis J. Buonarobo enlisted in New York City, New York on 20 September 1942.

Sgt. Louis J. Buonarobo, a kid from the Bronx, served as a ball turret gunner on B-17 flying fortresses during WWII. Based at Rougham Air Field in Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, England, he was attached to the 331st Bomber Squadron of the 94th Bomber Group, part of the "Mighty Eighth" U.S. Air Force.

He and the rest of his crew took off on a mission around 10:00 on the morning of October 14, 1943 unaware their bombing target was one of the deadliest the 8th Air Force would face: the ball-bearing factory at Schweinfurt, Germany.

Sgt. Buonarobo, his pilot, and three other crew members were killed that day when their B-17 was shot from the sky by anti-aircraft fire.

His Co-Pilot, 2nd Lt. John T. Chandler, survived and despite his injuries managed to escape capture with the help of the French Resistance and eventually return to England. During his debriefing after his return, Lt. Chandler described what happened that day:

"Hit by flak over Schweinfurt on Oct. 14, 1943. We lost the formation and headed for France. At 18,000 feet we caught fire, fighters came in to finish us off. We began bailing out. I told Sgt. Louis Buonarobo, ball turret gunner to get out. He refused saying that he would stay put and swing his empty guns to keep fighter(s) off. He was hit by a 20mm (shell) which killed him. Most of the crew bailed out at 15,000."

Despite being out of ammunition and in a fatally damaged plane, Sgt. Buonarobo elected to stay behind and pretend to fire his now-useless guns in an attempt to ward off the German fighters and buy the rest of his crew some time to safely bail out of the flaming airplane before the fighters finished it off.

First buried in Toule, France, near where the wreckage of his plane landed, his remains were later moved to the Lorraine American Cemetery at St. Avold, France.

Photos

