

Training Gunners

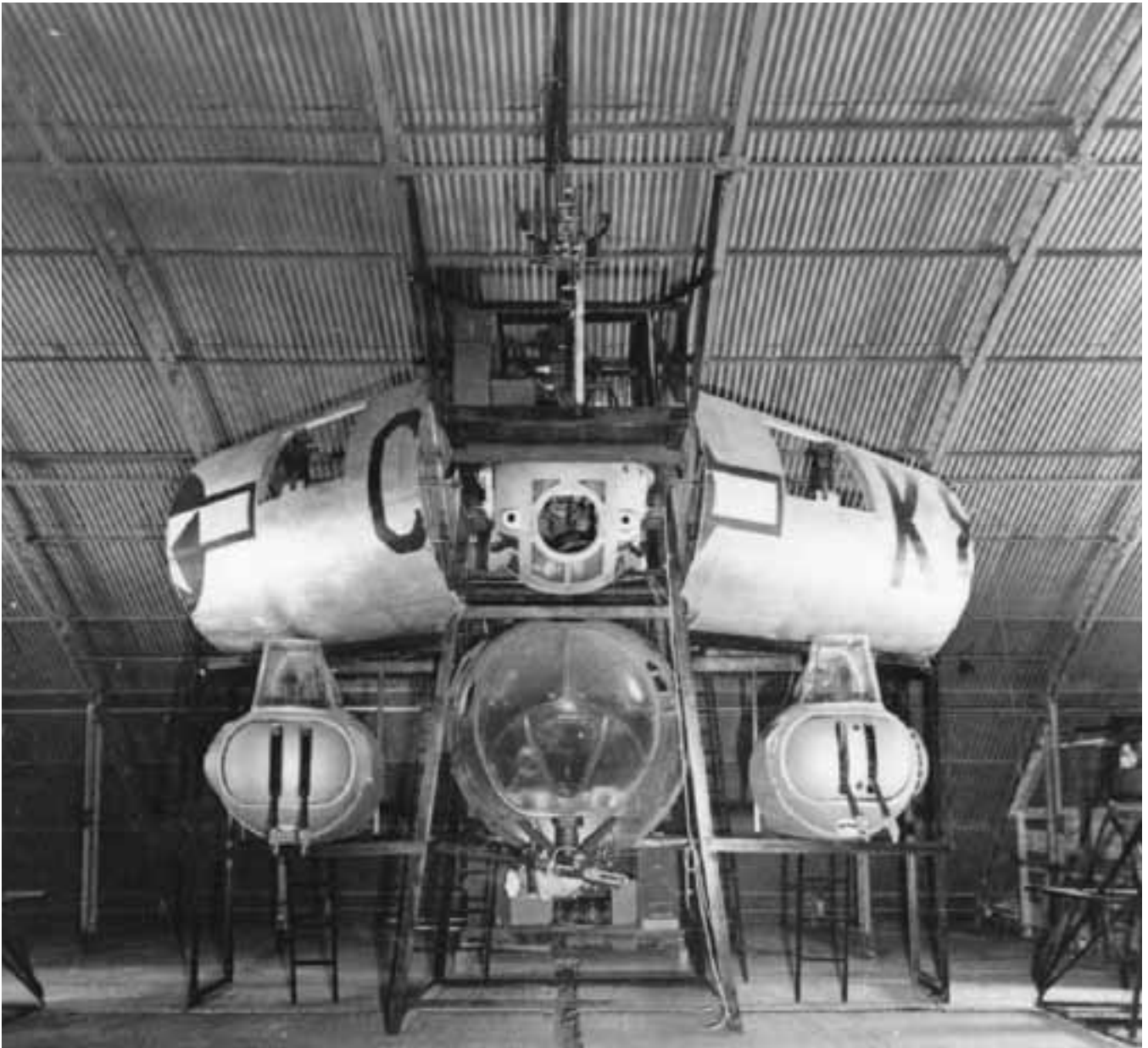


Photo courtesy Robert F. Dorr

The specifics of this photo—the what, where, and when—have been lost over time, but this appears to be a World War II part task trainer for B-17 gunners. The split fuselage section has waist guns; the ball turret gun is in between. Below, tail gun positions flank the chin turret gun. Early training for Flying Fortress gunners was largely hit or miss. By one account, when then-Col. Curtis E. LeMay began prepar-

ing his 305th Bomb Group for combat, he discovered that some of the gunners had never flown on an airplane. He said, "I got my gunners one ride in an airplane, shooting at the desert as you ran across at low altitude. That was it; then we went into combat." Fortunately, B-17 gunners subsequently received air-to-air and air-to-ground training.