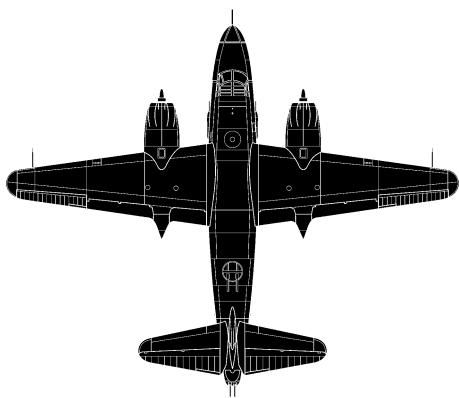


Airpower Classics

Artwork by Zaur Eylanbekov

B-26 Marauder



The B-26 Marauder was a stalwart of World War II. The medium bomber, designed by Martin, was flown in combat by air forces of the US, Britain, Free France, Australia, South Africa, and Canada, mainly in support of Allied ground forces. Early problems produced negative press and unflattering nicknames, but the B-26 overcame all to post the lowest per-sortie loss rate (less than one-half of one percent) of any Allied bomber.

There were no B-26 prototypes; it was ordered into production right off the drawing board. The aircraft had a radically new, streamlined shape and was produced by means of the latest manufacturing technology. The Marauder boasted a huge bomb bay, tricycle landing gear, powered gun turret, and more. Its high wing loading coupled with inadequate training led early on

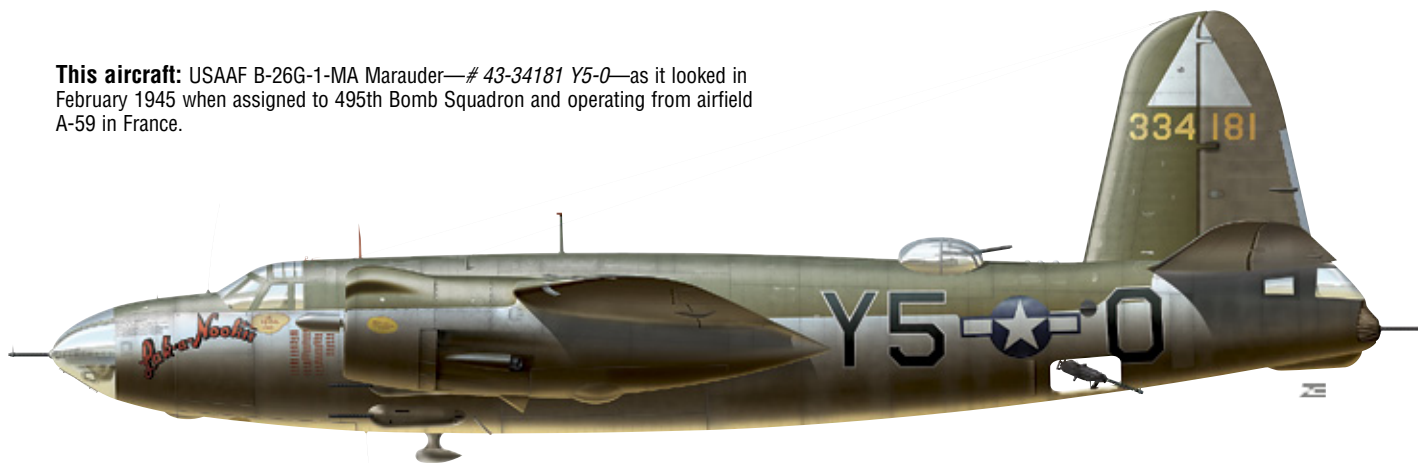
to a high accident rate, but deficiencies were soon corrected.

Early Marauder models entered combat in New Guinea in April 1942, and they subsequently saw action in most theaters of war. The bulk of the new bombers were sent to the European Theater, where the B-26's speed, firepower, and rugged construction served it well. The closing months of the war saw Marauders attack German rocket sites, airfields, and communications centers in France and the Low Countries. By the end of World War II, B-26s had posted more than 110,000 combat sorties and had dropped 150,000 tons of bombs.

The Martin B-26 was retired quickly after the end of the war, and the B-26 designation was reassigned to the unrelated Douglas A-26 Invader.

—Walter J. Boyne

This aircraft: USAAF B-26G-1-MA Marauder—# 43-34181 Y5-0—as it looked in February 1945 when assigned to 495th Bomb Squadron and operating from airfield A-59 in France.



The Marauder was a bomber of radical new design.

In Brief

Designed, built by Martin ★ first flight Nov. 25, 1940 ★ crew of seven (two pilots, bombardier, nav/radio operator, three gunners) ★ number built 5,266 ★ **Specific to B-26C:** two Pratt & Whitney R-2800 radial engines ★ max speed 282 mph ★ cruise speed 214 mph ★ max range 1,150 miles ★ armament, 12 .50 cal machine guns ★ bomb load, up to 3,000 lb ★ weight (loaded) 38,200 lb ★ span 71 ft ★ length 58 ft 3 in ★ height 21 ft 6 in.

Famous Fliers

Medal of Honor: Jimmy Doolittle, Darrell Lindsey. **Test Pilots:** Ken Ebel, Vincent Burnett. **Other notables:** John Moench, Henry Newcomer, David Tallichet, Paul Tibbets Jr., Kermit Weeks Jr.

Interesting Facts

Got its name "Marauder" from RAF ★ built in numbers greater than any Martin aircraft ★ set single American aircraft sortie record in Europe (207, by B-26B *Flak Bait*) ★ flown by Doolittle in loop and roll with only one engine ★ became only USAAF bomber to drop torpedoes ★ ordered in large numbers (1,000) before first flight ★ was tagged with such pejorative nicknames as Widow-Maker, Flying Coffin, B-Dash-Crash, Martin Murderer, Flying Prostitute ★ used ammo transfer tracks built by Lionel Trains.