THE UNSUNG HERO'S LAMENT

The Unsung Hero's Lament. Nobody knows who wrote it, but it turned up in the 484th Bomb Group, training in Kansas prior to moving to Italy to join the Fifteenth Air Force. The story recounted the story of a B-24 pilot who made it to the Heavenly Hall of Fame where he was called upon to give his qualifications to be there with the likes of Julius Caesar, Ulysses S Grant, and others. His credentials were his flight in the Liberator.

This poem appeared in part in the book "Log of the Libertors", by Steve Birdsell. Edwin C. Range of Santa Clara, California who attempted to find the remaining stanzas ended up adding some of his own. We are reprinting some of the stanzas in the hope that the original author will step forward to be recognized. Reprinted by permission.

"Where does it say," they growled and glared, while dodging German flak,
"That when we came to save the world, they'd surely shoot us back?
We sought this place, this Italian base, to make the people glad;"
But, it became quite plain to the ten insane, they'd been surely had.

They banked steep left, turned homeward bound, these Army men who fly,
One might think they're safe and sound, but there's always time to die;
Six hundred miles, four hours still, to sweat the engines more,
And now the eyes would scan the skies, as through the soup they bore.

The Alps ahead, three miles high, they couldn't see a thing,
But, this Bomb Group knew the pertinent poop of Davis and his wing;
Why there were two engines there, and two to spare, the B-24, no Jinney!
With props in synch and mixture lean, now it's up to Pratt and Whitney.

So, over the Alps and past the Po, losing altitude as they flew,
Past the place where Nero fiddled, and where Vesuvius blew;
But, Big Gas Bird began to falter, to show that it was human,
The leaks appeared, the instruments failed, nowhere was landfall loomin'.

As they let-down, the water came up, and lots of props were feathered,
Hydraulic leaked and fuel got low, and now young faces leathered
The radio-gunner called D/F, who asked "Did he know if they'd make it?"
"I'm not sure," the radio-man said, "Hum a few bars and I'll fake it."

The Bird droned on, the land appeared, the crew felt glad inside,
'Cause, if they had to bail out now, it was Land to which they'd glide;
There's the base, those lovely tents, the chow-hall was in sight,
But, first the landing, then debriefing, before the end of flight.