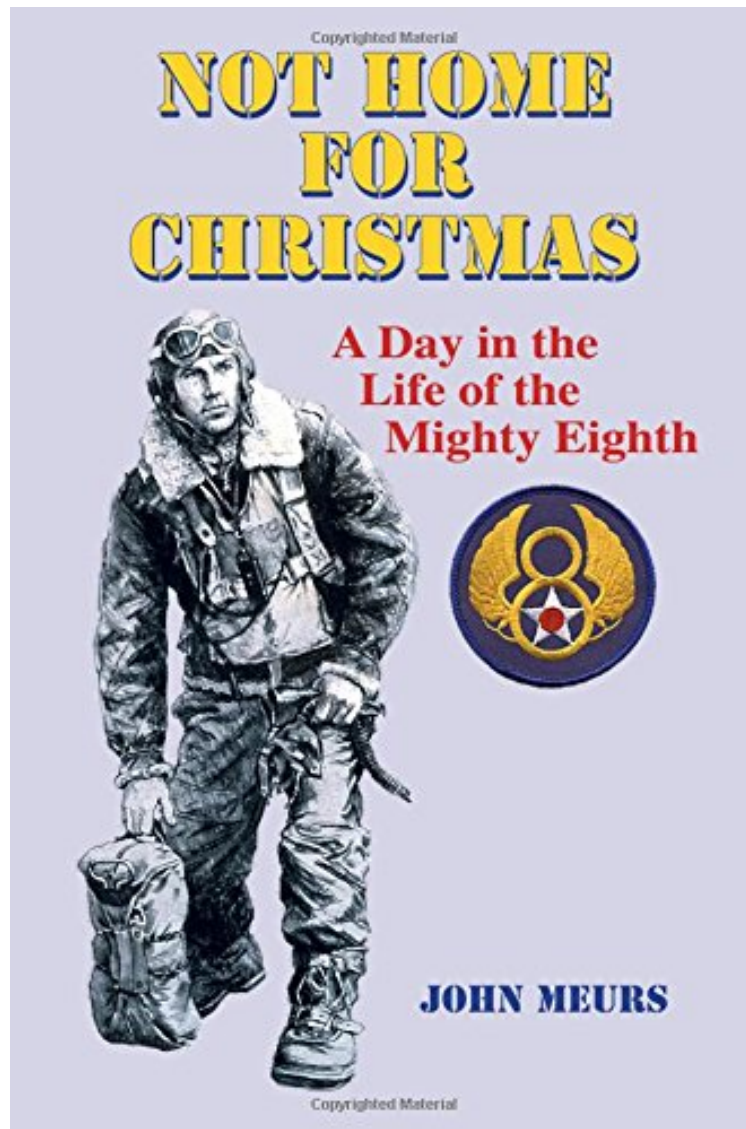


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# Not Home for Christmas: A Day in the Life of the Mighty Eighth

*John Meurs*

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**John Meurs : Not Home for Christmas: A Day in the Life of the Mighty Eighth** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Not Home for Christmas: A Day in the Life of the Mighty Eighth:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. I highly recommend Not Home For ChristmasBy Clifford L. deetsI purchased this book because Mr. John Meurs wrote me and asked the 306th Bombardment Group Historical Association, where I am the volunteer historian, for assistance in collecting information on ten aircrews and the one

hundred one men of the 306th that were lost 24 April 1944 on a mission to bomb Oberpfaffenhofen. His third book will be addressing this 24 Apr 44 mission. I highly recommend *Not Home For Christmas*, which is his first book. It is an anthology of the stories, letters and relatives accounts of the men lost on 26 November 1944 flying B-17s and B-24's against various targets in the Third Reich. It is not a history book. It is not a history of the mission or the 8th AAF per se, but recounts the events that took place in each aircraft when shot down, what the men experienced in first person narrative, what happened after they were captured. It also has stories told through letters from loved ones after they had lost their husbands and sons. There is the recounting of an evasion by three men of the same crew, behind enemy lines, with the help of the Dutch underground which cost two Dutch families dearly. Mr. Meurs tells the story of each man on the crew of the thirty-four planes that were lost that day, recounting what they did before the war or what their life was after being held as POWs and being repatriated after the end of the war. Simply put, this is a book honoring each of those men. There is much to be learned in the details found in the narratives of the airmen, from what navigator manning was on PFF "Mickey" radar ships to a navigator who delayed pulling his ripcord and found that he could maneuver around while free falling by changing the position of his arms and legs (an early skydiving experience?). There are many terrific anthologies of stories and the heroics of these incredible men who fought the greatest air battles in history, such as *Through the Eye of the Needle* by Joe Consolmagno, and *The Mighty Eighth* by Gerald Astor. *Not Home for Christmas* by John Meurs should be part of any collection of these books.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. *A Costly Day For The "Mighty Eighth"* By Jeffrey T. Munson  
Author John Meurs had the experience of seeing an American B-17 bomber crash in his yard in Holland when he was just a child. The date of the crash was Sunday, November 26, 1944. Many years later, Meurs began investigating the events of this day. He found out that well over 1,000 American planes were in the air that day, and many of them attacked the synthetic oil fields near Misburg, Germany. 34 American bombers were lost that day, and Meurs has researched each one. In *"Not Home For Christmas"*, Meurs discusses each lost plane's roles in the mission that fateful November day. The skies around Misburg were filled with German fighters and flak. Despite having fighter escorts, many bombers found themselves being shot from the sky. Many of the crews were killed or captured; some were murdered by furious civilians. Relying on first-person interviews from survivors as well as testimonies from relatives and other crew members, Meurs paints a picture of what it was like for the crews of the 8th Air Force on this bloody day. I found *"Not Home For Christmas"* to be an informative book, but it did have some drawbacks. There are many spelling and grammatical errors throughout which makes it difficult to follow. Further, there is very little input from the author. Instead, he relies solely on the first-person accounts while adding very little of his own thoughts. On the other hand, the first-person accounts are very eye-opening, and I learned a great deal from them. For example, Americans who were captured by the German military were usually treated fairly well, unlike prisoners of the Japanese, who were constantly tortured, starved, and many times, killed. Once the American POWs neared liberation, many Germans threw down their arms and surrendered to the former POWs. I recommend this book to readers of 8th Air Force history. The first-person recollections of survivors paint a clear picture of what it was like to be an air crew member fighting in the skies over Germany.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Personal insight from the people who were actually involved. By #1racefan  
Being the daughter of one of the brave men of the *Mighty Eighth*, my heart broke for all of these men and their families. John Meurs contacted me personally while he was researching this book. Sadly to say, I didn't ever respond to him about my father and his story about that time because I didn't think I had anything to contribute. Now, looking back, I wish I would have at least told him about that wonderful, talented, loving and spiritual father that I knew. He never spoke of his time in the war except to say that he was a prisoner for 6 months and they had a guard that resembled Schultz from TV. He had three girls and I am sure we would not have understood the significance of his story. My dad's picture and name are in this book and I am very proud of him for defending our country at a time that I am sure he would have rather have been home on the ranch and planning the wedding to my mother. He was taken prisoner on Nov. 26th. This is significant to me as I was born on Nov. 25th 1952. I now wonder if he thought about that day every year around my birthday and what were those memories. This book is very interesting as it was written as an accounting of that time through the eyes of the men that were there and also from the perspective of their families as the story was told to them.

When author John Meurs was a nine-year-old schoolboy living in Nazi-occupied Holland, an American B-17 bomber crashed behind his house near the village of Apeldoorn. The date was Sunday, November 26, 1944. Meurs always wanted to know more about what happened in the air on that Thanksgiving Sunday. So, more than sixty years later he started researching the B-17. He quickly found that the bomber was part of the 8th Air Force Air Combat Command. Meurs findings intrigued him and after discovering many interesting facts, Meurs focused his research on the 34 heavy bombers of the *Mighty Eighth* that were lost that day. He collected the personal stories of veterans who lived through it, families of veterans lost, and witnesses of the crashes. These first-hand recollections, captured in this book, provide a compelling and terrifying account of the reality of war. Thanks to the noble men of the *Mighty Eighth* who would not be home for Christmas in 1944 and their comrades in arms, many people the world over now live in peace and

freedom.