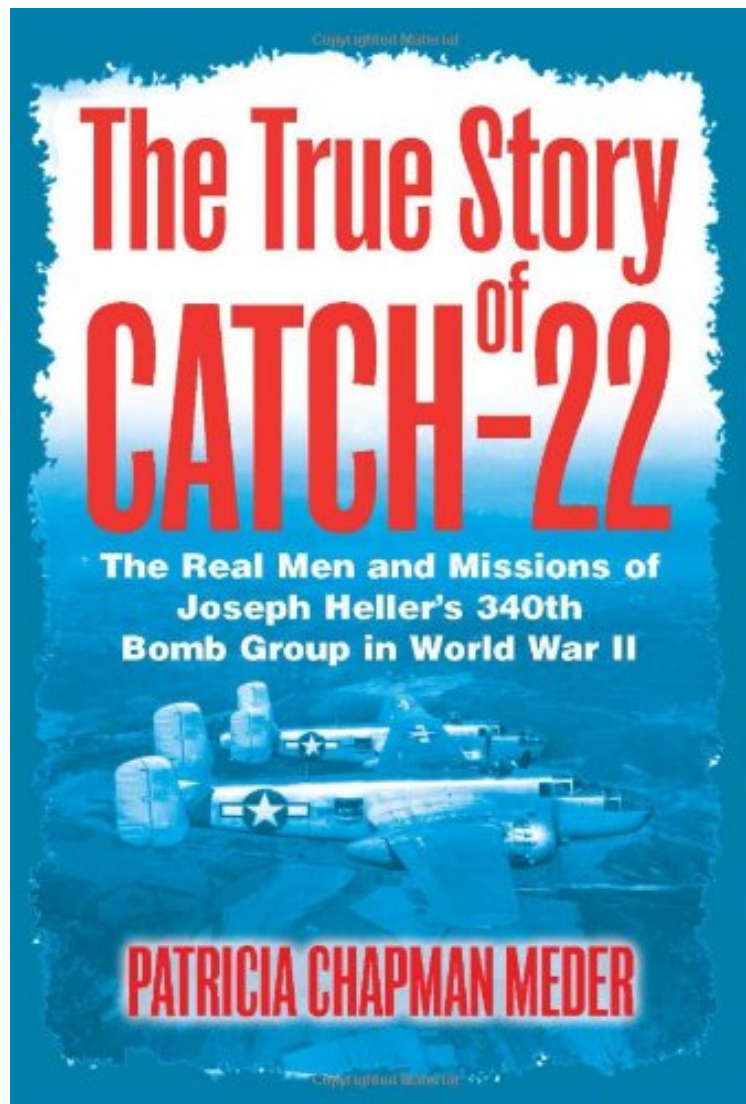


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The True Story of Catch 22: The Real Men and Missions of Joseph Heller's 340th Bomb Group in World War II

Patricia Chapman Meder

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Patricia Chapman Meder : The True Story of Catch 22: The Real Men and Missions of Joseph Heller's 340th Bomb Group in World War II before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The True Story of Catch 22: The Real Men and Missions of Joseph Heller's 340th Bomb Group in World War II:

20 of 20 people found the following review helpful. Daugther of George L. WellsBy WWAs a daughter of George L.

Wells (Capt. Wren), I am indebted to Pat Meder for writing a true version of what the brave men of the 340th Bomb Group accomplished during World War II. Although my father surely enjoyed humor, he and his war buddies did not appreciate the satire and dark humor of "Catch-22". They were in fact humiliated by the description of them supposedly bombing their own air field and running around naked. For years I would listen to my father and his war buddies discuss "Catch-22" and how someone should write a book about what really happened--the "true" story. Pat's accurate version of what these proud heroes believed in and accomplished during the war will make them rest in peace. In writing this book, Pat has captured the true characters of the men of the 340th Bomb Group. As I read her book, my childhood returned and I could once again see my humble father's war buddies visiting and telling stories of his and their missions and the life they shared. I could hear my father talking about those they lost and those he would respect until his last days, heroes like General Chapman. I cannot find the words to thank Pat for bringing my father back to me as I read her book. I hope that reading this book and seeing the glimpses into these men's characters will inspire others to live optimistically, seek excellence in all they do and love and serve their country.

Wenda Wells Halter0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Book Reviews: A Catch-22 History Twofer Review By Mudcat Catch-22: 50th Anniversary Edition is my all time favorite book. So when I learned about The Bridgebusters: The True Story of the Catch-22 Bomb Wing, it immediately shot to the top of my Goodreads "Want to Read" list. It has everything to make it a perfect read for me: airplanes, history and Heller. Then I found out about The True Story Of Catch-22: The Real Men and Missions of Joseph Heller's 340th Bomb Group in World War II, written by the daughter of the real Colonel Cathcart, so I daisy-chained right into what turned out to be the Yin for Cleaver's Yang. The Bridgebusters is a history book of the 57th Bomb Wing in which Joseph Heller served as a bombardier on a B-25 during World War II. Cleaver details the missions primarily in the context of the Allied campaign to liberate Italy which, frankly, I am less familiar with than Operation Overlord and the action of the Eighth Air Force's B-17s bombing Germany from England. Heller is shown as the cog he was in the U.S. fighting machine that defeated the Nazis and Cleaver puts forth an interesting theory of the author's true relationship to Yossarian. The True Story of Catch-22 is less a history book and more a collection of personal memoirs of the men of Heller's 488th squadron. As the daughter of the group's commanding officer, Meder has a direct and much more personal relationship with the subject and her focus is mapping the novel's characters to real men fighting a real war, which is a much different story than Bridgebusters, but an equally interesting one, especially with all of the pictures she pulled out of her father's attic. Now that I've read "the rest of the story," as Paul Harvey was fond of saying, I'm re-reading Catch-22. On a personal note, having attempted a satirical novel (In the Black: 1965-1969) based on personal experiences and inspired by Heller's masterpiece, these books were a fascinating study in the tangled web of fact and fiction for me.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Heroes of the 340th BG By James D. Crabtree Joseph Heller's classic novel Catch-22 centers around Yossarian, a bombardier in a B-25 unit which is conducting a war of insanity against targets in Italy. In this book the author tries to connect, with some success, the lives of members of the 340th Bomber Group (Heller's WWII unit) with characters in Catch-22. While the information is there it centers around the author's father, who served as the inspiration for Colonel Cathcart in the book. The format of the book varies, from graphic portrayals to interviews to excerpts from news articles. The sources actually confused me in some parts because I was not sure who was supposed to be who. There are maps and graphics but the spots where they appear in the book seems to have little to do with the corresponding text. This is a pity because the graphics were done well. I could suggest improvements but the book is what it is. Certainly it is worth reading if you already know and like Catch-22 but I don't think it would inspire someone NOT familiar with the novel to read it. It could have done both. As an aside, I have read several books with first-person accounts of the airmen who fought in WWII skies and the accounts of 340th BG are no less inspirational. We owe a debt to these men which cannot be repaid.

After the publication of his bestselling novel Catch-22, Joseph Heller usually chose to deny that any of his richly drawn characters were based on his actual war mates. However, to those who served with Heller in the 340th Bomb Group the novel's characters were indeed recognizable?the hard-drinking, vengeful, and disillusioned Chief White Half Oat, young, sliced-in-half Kid Sampson, shrieking, frenzied Hungry Joe, Colonel Cathcart, General Dreedle, Yossarian and that capitalist supreme, Milo Minderbinder. In this book, written and colorfully illustrated by the daughter of the 340th Bomb Group's commander, Colonel Willis Chapman, we finally encounter the real men and combat missions on which the novel was based. While Heller's fully developed characters stand solely, solidly and uniquely on their own merits, The True Story of Catch-22 proves that any resemblance to persons living or dead is, in fact, actual. This three-part book blends fact, fancy, and history with full-blown original illustrations and rare, previously unpublished photos of these daring USAAF flyers and their Corsican-based B-25 Mitchell. Along with descriptions of the 340th's real wartime events, the work includes twelve men of the Bomb Group relating twelve richly told tales of their own. Now all of the men upon whom Heller based his characters are gone. However, the last survivor, George L. Wells, was an extraordinary combat pilot who tied the record for the number of bombing missions flown in WWII with 102. George, the model for Catch-22's Capt. Wren, is the common thread who weaves through this book, allowing the reader to truly feel the war and even thumb through George's well-worn mission book

describing attacks on Axis ports, ships, bridges, and the notorious Brenner Pass. In this book the reader will discover that truth is indeed as fascinating as fiction! Author Patricia Chapman Meder has been a professional artist in both fine and commercial art for the past 35 years, 13 of them in Europe. When *Catch-22* was published it was quickly apparent that this book was based on the Bomb Group her father commanded in World War II. This true-life parallel book thus begged to be written. Pat Meder has also written a full-color companion work to "*The True Story of Catch-22*," containing her delightful original artwork and caricatures of the individuals, "*The True Story of Catch-22 Illustrated*".

Heller's satiric caricatures are here shown to have stemmed from patriotic, courageous, highly decorated airmen who daily performed heroic wartime feats against overwhelming obstacles. The log of George Wells (Captain Wren in *Catch-22*), who flew a record 102 missions in his B-25, is included in an appendix. (*Library Journal*) "...uses rare and unpublished photos to bring our actual heroes to life through use of first person narrative...Fans of *Catch-22* will enjoy the book. It makes good use of diaries, logs, and photos to bring the people to life. For those unfamiliar with *Catch-22* the book will make you curious enough to pickup Heller's book..." (*Irish Defence Forces Veterans Association*) Fans of *Catch-22* will enjoy the book. It makes good use of diaries, logs, and photos to bring the people to life. For those unfamiliar with *Catch-22* the book will make you curious enough to pickup Heller's book... would make a nice companion volume or commentary for the serious student of the original work. It would make a nice inclusion in university or community libraries as a resource for Joseph Heller's book. (*Kepler's Military History*)

About the Author
Author Patricia Chapman Meder has been a professional artist in both fine and commercial art for the past 35 years, 13 of them in Europe. When *Catch-22* was published it was quickly apparent that this book was based on the Bomb Group her father commanded in World War II. This true-life parallel book thus begged to be written. Pat Meder has also written a full-color companion work to "*The True Story of Catch-22*," containing her delightful original artwork and caricatures of the individuals, "*The True Story of Catch-22 Illustrated*".