



B-17
Flying Fortress



Warren's B-17 Flight Crew
Warren Kneeling, Lower Left



Warren Clifford Benjamin Koch
First Lieutenant Army Air Force
13 October 1941 – 26 November 1945



PT-17 Stearman



BT-13 Valiant



AT-9 Jeep



AT-10 Beechcraft

Warren was born at home on 22 February 1915 in Breinigsville, Pennsylvania. In 1917 his family moved to a farm once owned by Warren's great grandfather, **Hiram J. Hiskey**. Warren attended grade school at Wescosville School, and graduated from Allen High School in Allentown, Pennsylvania, in 1931. He then worked as a Mechanic for Town Auto Company, a Chevrolet Dealership on Union Boulevard in Allentown, until he was drafted and inducted into the Army at Fort Meade, Maryland, on 13 October 1941. He underwent basic training at Camp Lee, Virginia, where he applied to become an Aviation Cadet (Pilot). While his application was pending, he was transferred to Fort Holabird, Maryland, and then Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, where he was assigned as a Truck Driver, successively, in Quartermaster Company and Medical Company, 82nd Infantry Division. In May 1942 he was accepted as a Cadet, and on 8 August 1942 reported to Kelly Airfield, Texas, pending orders to the Cadet Center, Nashville, Tennessee, where he underwent and passed rigorous testing for flight duty before being ordered to Pre-flight Training at Maxwell Field, Montgomery, Alabama. After nine weeks there, he went to Carlstrom Field, Arcadia, Florida, for Primary Flight Training in the PT-17 Stearman. After that, he was assigned to Basic Flight Training in the BT-13 Valiant at Bainbridge, Georgia. From there he went to Columbus Army Airfield in Mississippi for training in the AT-9 Jeep and AT-10 Beachcraft. On 28 May 1943, Warren got his pilot wings and was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant. He then underwent training in the B-17 Flying Fortress bomber in Washington and Oregon before leaving for overseas. He left Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, on 15 November 1943 to board the Queen Mary, and arrived at Glasgow, Scotland, on 22 November 1943. He boarded a train for Thurleigh, England, where he was assigned to the 306th Bombardment Group (Heavy), 40th Combat Bombardment Wing, in December 1943. From there he flew 30 combat missions in the B-17, bombing German industrial and civilian targets; airfields and marshalling yards in France, Belgium, and Germany; and railroad bridges and coastal guns in support of D-Day at Normandy on 6 June 1944. Warren returned to the States on 14 August 1944, and was assigned to the 3539th Bomber Unit at Langley Field, Virginia, where he flew training missions for radar operators until his release from active duty. He was released at Sioux Falls Army Air Field in South Dakota on 26 November 1945 as a 1st Lieutenant. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal (w/3 Oak Leaf Clusters), the American Defense Service Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal. After returning home to the family farm, Warren resumed as a Mechanic working for Town Auto and eventually as Service Manager. He then worked as a Sales Representative for Sun Electric Company, a manufacturer of automotive diagnostic equipment, for 18 years from 1963 until 1981 when he retired. Warren married **Louise Aleine Watling** (19 Oct 1919 – 23 May 1988) on 27 September 1952 in St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church at 11th and Tilghman Streets in Allentown. They made their home on Krocks Road, and had one daughter, **Susan Ann**. After he left the Service, Warren continued his love for flying by purchasing an Aerocoup plane that he flew from the Trexlertown Airport. He also enjoyed woodworking and made cradles for all of his grandchildren. Warren was a member of the Lower Lehigh Lions Club and served as its Treasurer from 1975 to 1999. Warren died at home on 6 November 2005. He is buried at Grandview Cemetery in Allentown alongside Louise. Warren's parents were **Clifford Hiram David Koch** (31 March 1890 – 1977) and **Annie E. Bortz** (1893 – 1922).

