

# WWII Airman Gets Belated Service Honor

## FLYING CROSS GIVEN AFTER 60-PLUS YEARS

By CARLOS MONCADA  
The Tampa Tribune

**SAFETY HARBOR** — George Costage doesn't like to talk about his service as a nose gunner aboard a World War II bomber. About the times he was shot down, or his plane crashed, or he had to be smuggled to safety by the French underground.

Others have written histories of those times, though,



**Costage**

On Wednesday, more than six decades later, Costage let others speak of his service when he stood to receive an honor the war forgot.

"It's a big surprise," said Costage, 84, who was told

and they reveal a terror that grew routine as heavy bomber crews faced 10, 20, 30 missions if they survived. Most did not.

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*Bilirakis calls him "true hero."*