



Distinguished Flying Cross Award Citation

In January 1944, 2nd Lt. Kirkpatrick was assigned to Bishop Storford AB in England. After 6 wing missions with the 344th, he was detached to the 11th Pathfinder Squadron, a new and highly secretive group that pioneered the rise of radar in tactical bombing. They led bomb groups, in darkness or cloud cover and when near Friendly forces where utmost precision was required. As formation lead navigator, Kirkpatrick led 866 bombers on 44 missions over enemy territory. His crew flew 5 additional missions. As a result of this combo-service, Otto was awarded the European-African-Middle Eastern Theater Campaign Ribbon with 6 bronze stars, five Distinguished Flying Cross medals and the Air Medal A with 10 Oak Leaf Clusters. The French government bestowed upon him the Citation Order of the Brigade and the Cross of War with the Bronze Emblem. One of the more memorable combat experiences came on the evening of July 8th, 1944, during a night mission over France at medium altitude flack, searchlights and night fighters, along with the disadvantage of full moon visibility that resulted in a loss of 11 of the 36 planes. On the mission, Otto's plane received forty holes from enemy fire, but kept flying and was credited with downing the first enemy night fighter in the European Theater. After being promoted to Captain, Otto was discharged from active duty in November 1945.

Branch of Service: U. S. Air Corps * Theatre for DFC: WW II * Aircraft: B26 Marauder