

DECLASSIFIED
 Authority WMD 745005
 By DTD NARA Date 3/14/01

C O N F I D E N T I A L

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129

HEADQUARTERS
 VIII BOMBER COMMAND
 APO 634

Bomber Command Narrative of Operations
 Day Operation - 24 August, 1943
 Mission No. 86

PART I

Aircraft from the 1st and 4th Wings were dispatched as follows: Two Combat Wings attacked Villacoublay; one Combat Wing attacked Evreux/Fauville and Conches airfields; and the third carried out a diversion. Results at Villacoublay were excellent and those at Conches were good. Bombing at Evreux/Fauville was poor because target was obscured by cloud at time of bombing. Fighter escort was provided all three forces by P-47s, Spitfires and Typhoons. One B-17 is missing from these operations. Claims are 1-0-~~1~~³.

Unit	(Dispatched)	Number of A/C		Lost	Claims	Personnel Casualties			
		Attacked	Failed To Bomb+			(Killed)	Wounded	Missing	
<u>VILLACOUBLAY</u>			A.	B.					
91	14	0	2	12	0	0-0-0	0	0	0
92	19	17	1	1	0	0-0-0	0	2	0
305	18	17	1	0	0	1-0-1	0	4	0
306	18	18	0	0	0	0-0-0	0	4	0
351	22	16	2	4	0	0-0-0	0	0	0
379	12	12	0	0	0	0-0-0	0	0	0
381	7	6	1	0	0	0-0-0	0	10	0
	<u>110</u>	<u>86</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1-0-1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>DIVERSION</u>									
303	18	18	0	0	0	0-0-0	0	0	0
379	6	6	0	0	0	0-0-0	0	0	0
384	12	11	1	0	0	0-0-0	0	0	0
	<u>36</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0-0-0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>4TH WING</u>									
<u>CONCHES AND EVREUX/FAUVILLE AIRFIELDS</u>									
94	6	0	0	6	0	0-0-0	0	0	0
95	7	6	1	0	0	0-0-0	0	3	0
96	3	3	0	0	0	0-0-0	0	0	0
100	7	7	0	0	0	0-0-0	0	2	0
385	6	0	3	3	0	0-0-0	0	0	0
388	6	0	0	6	0	0-0-0	0	0	0
390	7	6	0	1	1	0-0-2	1	4	0
	<u>42</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0-0-2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTALS	188	143	12	33	1	1-0-3	1	19	0

+Failed to Bomb - A - Mechanical and Equipment Failures.
 B - Other than Mechanical and Equipment Failures (includes weather, enemy action, recall, etc.)

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TARGETS: 1st Wing - Villacoublay Factory Airfield.
4th Wing - Evreux/Fauville and Conches Airfields.

BOMBING RESULTS: 1st Wing - 86 B-17s dropped 1029 x 500 G.P. fused 1/10 sec. nose and 1/40 sec. tail from 22,000 - 24,000 feet at 1800 - 1805 hours with excellent results. A heavy concentration of bursts fell on the north boundary of the airfield and extended across part of the aircraft works, (S.N.C.A. du Nord), and the former French Air Force Technical Depot. A hangar on the west side of the landing field and a building of the aircraft works (S.N.C.A.-LOIRE AND OLIVIER-BLOCH-ANIOT) were left burning. A concentration of bursts also fell on the landing field itself causing possible damage to a JU-52 and three medium sized aircraft which were on the field. 35 B-17s of the 1st Wing carried out a diversion without any incidents.

4th Wing - 22 B-17s dropped 280 clusters of 6 x 20 pound fragmentation bombs on Conches airfield, and 216 clusters of 6 x 20 pound fragmentation bombs on Evreux/Fauville from 22,000 - 23,000 feet at 1844 - 1858 hours. Results of the attack on Evreux/Fauville are poor. The bursts fell in a long line about a quarter mile north of the airfield and on the dummy airfield of Evreux/Huest. Results at Conches were good. An extremely heavy concentration almost completely blanketed the dispersal area on the northwest side of the field. There are twelve dispersal hangars in the area and all but three are covered by hits. Another heavy concentration fell across the northwest side of the landing area and at least twelve direct hits were scored on the end of the northwest southeast runway.

REASONS FOR FAILURE TO BOMB: 1st Wing - 25 a/c failed to attack - 8 because of mechanical and equipment failures, 12 because of personnel failure, 1 bombed short of target on the leader whose bombs released prematurely due to faulty bomb rack mechanism, and 4 which failed to bomb due to leader's bombs failing to release.

4th Wing - 20 a/c failed to attack - 4 because of mechanical and equipment failure, 15 because of weather and 1 because of flak damage.

ENCOUNTERS: 1st Wing - E/a opposition was weak. Two groups reported encountering 20 - 35 e/a, one group 10 - 15, while the other groups experienced little or no opposition. Most of the e/a were FW-190s and Me-109s, with a few Me-110s and 1 JU-88. Attacks began in the vicinity of the I.P. at approximately 1803 hours and continued until 1840 hours when bombers were near Le Havre on return route. Most attacks were from above on nose and tail, with a large proportion executed in line abreast. Nose attacks were from 10-2 o'clock and tail attacks from 5-8 o'clock. A few level, low and vertical attacks were reported. One group reported several e/a maneuvering like P-47s above the formation before suddenly turning in to attack. Some e/a were also reported dog-fighting among themselves, gradually working in close and above the formation to the rear and then suddenly breaking away to attack. Several tail attacks were observed to come from an angle which prevented waist guns from shooting without bringing rear stabilizer into line of fire. One group observed a small number of e/a flying 1200 - 1500 yards out to the side and level with the formation and firing from side gun positions.

4th Wing - 15 - 20 e/a were seen at a distance, but attacks were not pressed due to the very effective fighter cover provided by Spitfires.

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CASUALTIES: 1st Wing - Personnel - 10 crew members wounded.
Estimated Battle Damage - 40 category "A" and 1 category "B".

4th Wing - Personnel - 1 crew member was killed and 9 were slightly wounded.

Equipment - 1 B-17 was lost because of flak.
Estimated Battle Damage - 7 category "A" and 2 category "AC"

ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE: 1st Wing - At Villacoublay and in the target area fire varied from moderate to intense and inaccurate to accurate. Meagre accurate fire came from Rouen. Moderate inaccurate fire was met at Chartres, while that at Evreux, Trouville and St. Andre de l'Euve was described as meagre and inaccurate.

4th Wing - Meagre continuous following fire encountered at Evreux and accurate on the lead group. At Conches fire was moderate and accurate. Meagre inaccurate fire was reported coming from Bernay and Le Havre.

ROUTE: 1st Wing - Beachy Head, to 49°51'N-00°40'E, to 49°02'N - 01°10'E, to 48°53'N - 01°35'E, to Villacoublay, to 48°27'N - 01°50'E, to 48°48'N - 01°33'E, to 49°10'N - 00°40'E, to Trouville, to 49°44'N - 00°35'W, to Selsey Bill.

4th Wing - Beachy Head, to 49°59'N - 01°16'E, to Vernon, to Evreux, to Conches, to 48°55'N - 00°45'E, to 49°35'N - 00°30'W, to Selsey Bill.

WEATHER: 1st Wing - Route Out - From English coast to mid-channel there was 1/10 - 3/10 cumulus and small amounts of medium and high cloud. From mid-channel to target there was 6/10 - 9/10 swelling cumulus, 2/10 - 4/10 altocumulus and 2/10 - 4/10 cirrus, with visibility of 10 plus miles. Target: At Villacoublay there was 1/10 - 3/10 cumulus, 1/10 - 3/10 altocumulus, 1/10 - 3/10 cirrus above 23,000 feet and visibility of 10 miles. Return Route: Conditions were similar to route out with some decrease in cloud amounts. Contrails were reported above 20,000 feet.

4th Wing - Route Out - At English coast there was to 9/10 low cloud, 1/10 - 3/10 altocumulus and 3/10 - 5/10 high cirrus. Low cloud became 8/10 - 10/10 over mid-channel, to break to 3/10 - 5/10 over the continental coast where there was 3/10 - 5/10 above 25,000 feet. Target: At Evreux and Conches there was 3/10 - 5/10 cumulus and stratocumulus, with 2/10 cirrus above 25,000 feet. The two targets were alternately visible and obscured by cloud. Visibility was 8 - 15 miles. Return Route: Cloud decreased and except for scattered cirrus had cleared when continental coast was reached. Dense persistent contrails were reported at 20,000 - 25,000 feet.

FIGHTER SUPPORT AND DIVERSIONS: 10 squadrons of VIII Fighter Command P-47s provided escort for the B-17s attacking Villacoublay, and as a result of combats six e/a were destroyed without loss. 13 squadrons of R.A.F. Spitfires escorted the B-17s attacking Evreux and Conches, and in combat one e/a was destroyed without loss. 3 squadrons of Typhoons and 2 squadrons of Spitfires escorted 3 groups of B-17s which made a diversionary sweep toward Holland. In connection with these operations two diversionary sweeps toward Holland were carried out by VIII Air Support Command B-26

OBSERVATIONS: 6 large silver a/c were observed taking off at Villacoublay just before bombing began. 30 - 40 balloons were reported at Trouville.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

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Authority VND 745005By SPD NARA Date 3/14/81C O N F I D E N T I A LPART II4TH WING - ATTACK ON BORDEAUX BY B-17s ENROUTE FROM NORTH AFRICA TO BASES IN ENGLAND

Enroute from North Africa to bases in England, 4th Wing B-17s dropped 141.75 tons on the Bordeaux/Merignac Airfield with fair results. Nine of the aircraft returned to North Africa without bombing. Enemy opposition was only slight and 3 B-17s are missing for reasons unknown. Claims are 3-3-10.

Unit	(Dispatched	Number of A/C		Lost	Claims	Personnel Casualties		
		Attacked	Failed To Bomb			(Killed	Wounded	Missing)
			A. B.					
94	17	12	0 5	1	0-0-2	0	0	10
95	8	3	0 5	0	1-0-4	0	0	0
96	15	14	0 1	0	0-0-0	0	0	0
100	6	5	0 1	0	0-0-0	0	0	0
385	13	0	0 13	2	0-1-0	0	0	20
388	16	15	0 1	0	0-1-1	0	0	0
390	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>0 1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2-1-3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	<u>85</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>0 27+</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3-3-10</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>30</u>

+ 9 a/c returned to North Africa.

x Failed to Bomb - A - Mechanical and Equipment Failures.

B - Other than Mechanical and Equipment Failures (includes weather, enemy action, recall, etc.)

BOMBING RESULTS: 57 B-17s dropped 567 x 500 G.P. from 20,000 - 21,000 feet at 1157 - 1200 hours on the Bordeaux/Merignac Airfield. A large concentration of bombs fell at the east end of the east dispersal area with direct hits on at least one aircraft shelter and near misses by three others. The largest part of the bombs fell in a wood adjoining the eastern boundary of the airfield where an ammunition dump may be located. Bursts could also be seen among a group of huts in the woods.

REASONS FOR FAILURE TO BOMB: Nine a/c returned to North Africa and the reasons for returning are not known. 3 a/c were lost and 15 which landed in England failed to bomb because of adverse weather.

ENCOUNTERS: Slight enemy opposition was encountered, the greatest number being 20 e/a in the Bordeaux area, with approximately 8 to 10 in the Toulouse area. Most of the e/a were FW-190s with a few Me-109s reported in the vicinity of Toulouse. There were some vigorous attacks but the majority were broken off before getting to close range. Many feints were tried, and on several occasions these feints were used to cover up for two or more a/c that did attack. All in all the attacks were not pressed home. There were no unusual markings reported.

CASUALTIES: (Does not include 9 B-17s which returned to North Africa).

Personnel - 30 crew members are missing.

Equipment - 3 B-17s were lost for reasons unknown.

Estimated Battle Damage - 36 category "A", 4 category "AC" and 2 category "E".

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE: Moderate inaccurate barrage type fire was encountered at Bordeaux, along with some continuous following fire. Meagre inaccurate continuous following fire was reported at Toulouse from 8 to 12 guns, and some bursts were observed from Carcassonne, Castres and Perpignan. At Narbonne gun fire was fairly accurate of the continuous following type from about 8 guns.

ROUTE: Telergma, to 38°42'N - 05°00'E, to 39°50'N - 04°23'E, to 42°00'N - 03°40'E, to 42°30'N - 03°30'E, to 44°30'N - 00°39'W, to Bordeaux, to 45°00'N - 00°50'W, to 45°00'N - 01°30'W, to 45°46'N - 03°14'W, to 47°00'N - 06°00'W, to 49°00'N - 07°00'W, to Milford Haven.

WEATHER: Route out - Weather was clear over the Mediterranean Sea, with cumulus and cirrus beginning to develop near the continental coast. Cloudiness increased and at Bordeaux there was 4/10-6/10 swelling cumulus and stratocumulus, 5/10-7/10 cirrus and cirrostratus above 20,000 feet and unlimited visibility. Route back - Cloudiness increased over the Bay of Biscay where there was 9/10 stratocumulus at 6000 feet and 10/10 altocumulus at 14,000 feet. One quarter of the way across the English Channel ceilings dropped to less than 1000 feet, with visibilities generally 1-2 miles except zero to 1 mile during rain. Clouds broke near mid-channel, becoming 4/10-6/10 cumulus and 2/10-3/10 medium and high clouds at English bases. Flight passed through frontal area on return trip from target, encountering moderate to severe turbulence with light clear icing.

OBSERVATIONS: Numerous smoke pots were observed in operation at Bordeaux. On an airfield 5 miles northeast of Carcassonne, 50-60 twin-engined a/c were reported seen in dispersal area.

Bombs Jettisoned: _____
 (Time, Place, Reason)

5. ENEMY FIGHTER OPPOSITION:

ABOUT 16 FW 190
 DID NOT ATTACK - SAW SPITFIRE'S
 SHOOTING AT

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Destroyed Probably Destroyed Damaged

6. FIGHTER SUPPORT:

1st saw 4 fighters (Spitfires) just as our a/c crossed
 French coast @ 1822 @ 23000, they were at 6000 ft
 below us. Also with us at 1827 at 11,000 ft at 9+3000 ft