

DECLASSIFIED
 Authority NND745005
 By VDJ NARA Date 8/19/91

2/2/44

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

HEADQUARTERS EIGHTH AIR FORCE
 AAF STATION 101
 APO 634

E I G H T H A I R F O R C E N A R R A T I V E O F O P E R A T I O N S

235th Operation - 25 February, 1944

- 1st Bombardment Division - Augsburg, Stuttgart
- 2nd Bombardment Division - Furth
- 3rd Bombardment Division - Regensburg

754 heavy bombers, 558 B-17s and 196 B-24s, escorted by twenty groups of USAAF fighters and twelve squadrons of RAF Spitfires and Mustangs, were dispatched in a mass penetration of southern Germany to attack three Messerschmitt aircraft production centers and an important ball-bearing factory at Stuttgart. Weather was excellent and all four primaries were bombed visually; 511 B-17s and 161 B-24s dropping a total of 1667 tons. Five combat wings bombed the Me-109 complex at Regensburg with excellent results about an hour after a coordinated attack by the Fifteenth Air Force had struck one of the plants. Four combat wings attacked the parent Messerschmitt plant at Augsburg and two combat wings attacked the Stuttgart ball-bearing plant with fair results. Three combat wings bombed the Me-110 and Me-410 complex at Furth with excellent results. Enemy fighter opposition was generally weak but aggressive attacks were made by small numbers of e/a. Flak was moderate to intense and accurate. 34 bombers, 25 B-17s and 6 B-24s; and 3 fighters were lost. Tentative claims for the bombers are 23-7-13. Fighter claims are 26-4-13 making total claims for the operation 49-11-26.

B O M B E R O P E R A T I O N S

Unit	(AB)	Disp.	Number of Aircraft		Lost)	Primary		O.T's		Claims
			Attacked	O.T's		G.P.	I.B.	G.P.	I.B.	
<u>1ST BOMB DIV.</u>										
<u>AUGSBURG - STUTTGART</u>										
40th C.W.	59	55	49	0	7	86	38.5	0	0	3-1-1
94th C.W.	60	51	49	0	2	97.5	35.5	0	0	1-0-1
41st C.W.	56	52	45	2	1	83	29.5	6	0	2-2-1
1st C.W.	57	53	49	1	1	98	27	3	0	1-0-0
41st Comp.	62	54	48	0	2	64.5	37.5	0	0	1-1-1
Pathfinders	4	3+	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0-0-0
	<u>298</u>	<u>268</u>	<u>243</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>432</u>	<u>168</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>8-4-4</u>
<u>2ND BOMB DIV.</u>										
<u>FURTH</u>										
2nd C.W.	61	55	46	0	2	110	0	0	0	0-1-0
14th C.W.	59	57	44	8	0	132	0	24	0	0-0-0
20th C.W.	90	84	71	3	4	118	59	7	0	2-1-2
	<u>210</u>	<u>196</u>	<u>161</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>360</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2-2-2</u>

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

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NMD745005By VDD NARA Date 8/19/11C O N F I D E N T I A L

Unit	(AB)	Number of Aircraft			Lost)	Primary		O.T's		Claims
		Disp.	Attacked	O.T's		G.P.	I.B.	G.P.	I.B.	
<u>REGENSBURG</u>										
13th C.W. (A&B)	119	114	108	0	4++	174	82	0	0	1-0-3
45th C.W.	93	81	71	0	4	177.5	0	0	0	8-0-4
4th C.W. (A&B)	103	95	87	1	4+++	207.5	0	2.5	0	4-1-0
	<u>315</u>	<u>290</u>	<u>266</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>559</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>2.5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>13-1-7</u>
TOTALS	823	754	670	15	31	1351	309	42.5	0	23-7-13

- + One PFF a/c landed away from base; report not included.
 ++ Includes one a/c ditched in Channel, all crew members rescued.
 +++ In addition - one a/c crashed in U.K. - Category "E".

1st Bombardment Division - AUGSBURG, STUTTGART

Four combat wings, comprising a force of 210 B-17s were dispatched to attack the Messerschmitt A.G. plant at Augsburg, and two combat wings, a force of 54 B-17s, the Norma ball-bearing plant at Stuttgart. A "spoof" diversion was provided for the benefit of this and the other attacking divisions by 43 non-combat and special-equipment a/c which flew a northeasterly course over the North Sea toward Denmark and returned safely without incident.

The Messerschmitt A.G. plant at Augsburg is the parent plant of the Messerschmitt Company and is the center of all Messerschmitt experimental work. It is also the plant at which the new experimental models are first produced and put into serial production. Furthermore, at the south end of the airfield are component and assembly shops now believed to be producing the new Me-410 twin-engined fighters. The Norma ball-bearing plant is one of the largest single ball-bearing producing units in German Europe and is believed to be engaged wholly in the production of ball-bearings for the aircraft industry.

All but one a/c of the attacking force failed to bomb the primaries. Results on Augsburg are excellent, while at Stuttgart, poor to fair. Four PFF a/c flew with the 1st Division, three on Augsburg and one on Stuttgart, but all bombing was visual and PFF equipment was used only for navigational purposes.

Enemy air opposition was varied, strong against the lead combat wing of the force on Augsburg and weak on the 41st Composite Wing which went to Stuttgart. 13 B-17s were lost against claims of 8-4-4.

BOMBING RESULTS: 195 B-17s dropped 1458 x 500 G.P., 6 x 1000 G.P., and 2617 x 100 I.B., a total of 498 tons on Augsburg between 1352 and 1415 hours from 20,000 to 23,300 feet.

Bombing results on Augsburg are reported as good with bursts observed on MPI's, fires started and black smoke rising to 15,000 feet. Many important buildings have received direct hits and near misses have caused much damage.

50 B-17s dropped 36 x 500 G.P., 123 x 1000 G.P. and 753 x 100 I.B., a total of 108.2 tons on Stuttgart between 1423 to 1424 hours from 20,800 to 23,000 feet.

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

DECLASSIFIED

Authority: NND745005By VDJ NARA Date 8/14/91C O N F I D E N T I A L

Strike attack photographs show bombing results of Stuttgart to be poor to fair. The majority of bombs fell in an adjacent park. The ball-bearing plant received two direct hits. Three near misses fell close to an unidentified industrial building located 750 feet due east of the target. There are three or four hits on the railroad lines near the plant.

One B-17, impaired by e/a action, dropped 12 x 500 G.P., three tons, on Gunzburg (30 miles west of Augsburg) at 1409 hours at 22,700 feet. Results were unobserved.

2,000,000 US G 25, 26 and 27 leaflets were also dropped on Augsburg.

ENCOUNTERS: E/a opposition first appeared about 1220 to 1225 hours and continued all the way over the target. Fiercest opposition was encountered by the two lead groups of the first combat wing over Augsburg. E/a only numbered about 50 a/c, but these made vicious and repeated attacks, many in pairs of four. At least two B-17s were lost by two e/a coming out of the sun, raking the formation with fire and getting away rapidly. Succeeding combat wings over Augsburg encountered diminishing opposition, and the last wing over the target received only one or two slight attacks.

The combat wing attacking Stuttgart had weak opposition, several of their attacks being made by t/e a/c. As usual the enemy fell on stragglers on the return trip, as many as 10-15 a/c ganging up on one a/c. Several Me-109s were observed carrying what appeared to be cable bombs in the Karlsruhe area, but P-47s chased them away.

2nd Bombardment Division - FURTH

The 2nd Bombardment Division dispatched three combat wings, a force of 196 B-24s to attack the Furth a/c components and repair factory of Bachmann von Blumenthal & Co. a few miles northwest of Nurnburg. This plant is believed to be engaged presently in the production of components and final assembly of Me-110 and Me-410 a/c. The 2nd Division was the last to make penetration and encountered weak enemy opposition. Weather over the target was clear and the plant was bombed visually as briefed with excellent results. Four other targets of opportunity were bombed by a small number of a/c. Six B-24s were lost while claims of 2-2-2 are made.

BOMBING RESULTS: 161 B-24s dropped 999 x 500 G.P., 1192 x 100 I.B. and 1838 x 120 fragmentation clusters, a total of 419.7 tons on Furth between 1402 and 1420 hours from 16,000 to 19,000 feet.

Strike attack photographs show an excellent bomb pattern on the MPI. About 50 a/c parked on the field are believed to be either totally destroyed or severely damaged. Many were observed to be on fire. A dense cloud of black smoke, rising 4,000 to 5,000 feet high was visible for thirty miles. Smoke obscured many of the strike attack photographs.

The final assembly plant, a large structure at the north end of the field is believed to have been destroyed. Hangars, assembly shops and boilers along the eastern end of the field were blanketed with bursts and many of the buildings

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

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND745005By VDJ NARA Date 8/19/91C O N F I D E N T I A L

are also believed to have been destroyed or severely damaged. Several explosions were started, apparently of petroleum stores.

Of the targets of opportunity, eight B-24s dropped 96 x 500 G.P., a total of 24 tons on a railroad siding at Burgfarrnbach, (immediately adjacent to the Furth a/c plant), at 1402 hours from 18,000 feet with fair results.

One B-24 dropped 2.5 tons of G.P. on Karlsruhe, one B-24 dropped 2.5 tons of G.P. on Hochstadt; and one B-24 dropped 2.3 tons of G.P. on Heroldsbach between 1412 to 1426 hours from 16,500 to 18,600 feet with fair results.

ENCOUNTERS: E/a opposition was not strong; some groups reported no attacks and others reported from 10 to 50 e/a seen with the strongest attacks occurring just before the target and thirty minutes after the target. The majority of e/a were FW-190s with a small number of Me-109s and two Me-410s and a JU-88. Several groups received sporadic attacks from the nose and tail high and from 8 to 10 o'clock out of the sun. There were a few reports of air-to-air bombing.

3rd Bombardment Division - REGENSBURG

Five combat wings were dispatched to attack two a/c plants of the Messerschmitt complex at Regensburg, two combat wings on the Regensburg/Prufenning Me-109 component factory, and three combat wings on the Regensburg/Obertraubling plant. The Regensburg/Prufenning plant has undergone extensive repairs since the last Eighth Air Force attack on 17 August, 1943, and is believed to be in full production, probably producing major components for Me-109s which are assembled at the neighboring plant at Regensburg/Obertraubling. This plant was attacked by the Fifteenth Air Force on 22 February, 1944 and was again attacked one hour previous to today's attack. Bombing results were rated excellent. Enemy opposition was weak, although relatively strong in the target area. 12 B-17s were lost and claims of 13-1-7 are made.

BOMBING RESULTS: 158 B-17s dropped 1295 x 500 G.P., and 1028 x 120 fragmentation clusters, a total of 385 tons on Regensburg/Obertraubling between 1350 and 1409 hours from 16,000 to 19,000 feet.

108 B-17s dropped 695 x 500 G.P. and 1636 x 100 I.B., a total of 255 tons on Regensburg/Prufenning between 1356 and 1406 hours from 17,000 to 19,000 feet.

At the Regensburg/Obertraubling plant, strike attack photographs show that the first groups over the target started large fires covering about two-thirds of the target area. Subsequent photographs of later groups over the target indicate that all bombs fell in the target area or very close to it. A large number of Me-109s noted on PRU cover of 23 February were seen to be still in the same position. The bombing pattern over these positions is very heavy and it is assumed that most of the a/c are probably destroyed or severely damaged.

At the Regensburg/Prufenning plant, at least three-fourths of the important buildings have been seriously damaged by the attacks of the Fifteenth Air Force and Eighth Air Force bombers. The largest building was hit and many fires were started. The machine gun testing range, flight hangar and apron received direct hits, and many a/c on the field are possibly destroyed. The Fifteenth Air Force started four big fires and the I.B.'s of the Eighth Air Force added to the fire damage.

One B-17 dropped 10 x 500 G.P., a total of 2.5 tons on Worms, an opportunity target, between 1405 and 1409 hours from 17,000 to 19,000 feet with unassessed results.

ENCOUNTERS: About 35-50 e/a mostly s/e with a few t/e e/a were encountered and attacked intermittently from the French coast to the target area and back to the

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

DECLASSIFIED

C O N F I D E N T I A LAuthority NND745005By MD NARA Date 8/14/91

ks generally were weak with a number of single passes made on two groups experienced vicious and sustained attacks by e/a and relays. The heaviest concentration of attacks were encountered in the target area and from the target to Luxembourg on the route out. Attacks from the nose and tail predominated and sneak attacks out of the sun were frequent.

REASONS FOR FAILURE TO BOMB: 45 B-17s failed to bomb - 23 due to mechanical or equipment failure, 1 due to weather, 17 because of enemy action, and 4 for reasons unknown. 24 B-24s failed to bomb - 21 due to mechanical or equipment failure, 1 due to enemy action, and 2 for reasons unknown.

CASUALTIES: Personnel - 10 crew members were killed, 54 are wounded, 301 are missing and 10 were rescued.

Equipment - 25 B-17s and 6 B-24s were lost - 7 B-17s and 2 B-24s to AA fire, 13 B-17s and 3 B-24s to e/a, 1 B-17 to AA and e/a, 4 B-17s and 1 B-24 to reasons unknown.

Estimated Battle Damage - 301 B-17s and 88 B-24s Category "A", 47 B-17s and 3 B-24s Category "B", 2 B-17s and 1 B-24 Category "C".

ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE: Augsburg Mission - Fire on the route in was mostly meager and inaccurate. However, one wing reported that it was led over Saarbrücken and encountered intense and very accurate AA gunfire. Flak at Augsburg was moderate to intense and accurate for nearly all groups. The same was encountered at Stuttgart. AA fire was encountered from a number of single track railroads along route.

Furth Mission - Flak was moderate to intense and accurate at the target area. Moderate and accurate flak was encountered in the Germerheim, Saarbrücken and Pas de Calais area.

Regensburg Mission - Target fire was moderate and accurate. Meager flak at Poix and Chaulnes. Highly inaccurate flak was seen over Strasbourg, Mannheim and Crecy.

WEATHER: Although weather was principally 10/10 over England at take-off time, CAVU weather conditions prevailed along most of the route and at the targets. All targets were attacked visually as briefed.

OBSERVATIONS: A semi-circle of smoke pots was observed at Augsburg creating a partial smoke screen. A light smoke screen was also in operation at Stuttgart.

A large A/D was seen at 4818N - 1056E with about 50 or more parked a/c reported as t/e, 4-engine and 6-engine a/c.

Many railroad cars were seen near Luxembourg. Traffic on Rhine river was heavy. A huge cone-shaped building was observed at 4930N - 0550E. Excellent smoke screen at Kitzingen.

A large V-shaped factory was reported at 4930N - 0550E, apparently camouflaged with grey canvas. An A/D was reported at Dietfurt with five hangars and 50 t/e e/a on the ground. A huge new built-up area and factory with much activity and railroad lines about observed at 4821N - 0620E.

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

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND745005By YDD NARA Date 8/19/91C O N F I D E N T I A LFIGHTER OPERATIONS

<u>Group</u>	<u>Type of A/C</u>	<u>Type of Support</u>	<u>No. A/C on Mission</u>	<u>Lost</u>	<u>Claims</u>
363	P-51	Penetration	30	0	0-0-0
365	P-47	Penetration	22	0	0-0-0
361	P-47	Penetration	42	0	2-1-3
362*	P-47	Penetration	43	0	1-0-0
4	P-47	Penetration	46	0	5-0-0
359	P-47	Penetration	45	0	0-0-0
78A	P-47	Penetration	39	0	1-0-0
78B	P-47	Penetration	40	0	0-0-2
357	P-51	Target (Regensburg)	40	2 x	5-0-0
20	P-38	Target (Furth)	32	0	0-0-0
55	P-38	Target (Augsburg)	41	0 x	1-2-0
354*	P-51	Target (Stuttgart)	45	0	7-0-3
56A	P-47	Withdrawal	27	0	2-0-1
56B	P-47	Withdrawal	34	0	1-0-1
353A	P-47	Withdrawal	21	0	1-1-1
356	P-47	Withdrawal	46	0	0-0-2
353B	P-47	Withdrawal	20	0	0-0-0
352	P-47	Withdrawal	40	0	0-0-0
355	P-47	Withdrawal	50	0	0-0-0
365**	P-47	Withdrawal	23	0	0-0-0
363**	P-51	Withdrawal	24	0	0-0-0
358*	P-47	Withdrawal	48	1	0-0-0
361**	P-47	Withdrawal	28	0	0-0-0
TOTALS			826	3	26-4-13

* Ninth Air Force Groups.

** Groups flying second sortie.

x One a/c additional Category "E".

20 groups of USAAF fighters, including three groups of Ninth Air Force fighters, one of P-51s and two of P-47s, gave penetration, target and withdrawal escort to the bombers of all Divisions. Ten squadrons of RAF Spitfires and two squadrons of RAF Mustangs also provided withdrawal cover for the bombers. Enemy reaction was small. About 125 e/a were seen, only 18 of which were t/e e/a. Attacks on bombers were mainly by small, well-coordinated formations of e/a, but the opposition was not considered generally aggressive. The only break in fighter support came just before and after the target. The absence of an anticipated headwind brought formations to the target ahead of schedule and may have been the reason for this lapse. Three groups flew double missions, two of P-47s and one of P-51s. Fighter claims are 26-4-13 for two P-51s and one P-47.

PENETRATION SUPPORT: 365th and 363rd Groups rendezvoused with the bombers at 1130 and 1138 hours respectively in the vicinity of Amiens, and escorted uneventfully until 1155 hours in the vicinity of Mezieres. Two squadrons of 361st Group rendezvoused on time with second section of combat wings. Because bombers were south of course, lead squadron of 361st Group rendezvoused four minutes

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

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND745005By YDD NARA Date 8/14/91C O N F I D E N T I A L

late at 1206 hours with lead combat wings which were under attack by 15 Me-109s and FW-190s southeast of San Quentin. E/A were dispersed and two destroyed. Escort was broken off southwest of Luxembourg and Metz at 1232 to 1237 hours. 362nd made rendezvous at 1210 hours in San Quentin area and escorted to Mannheim area where escort was broken off at 1317 hours. En route home north of Reims one flight was dispatched to escort a straggling B-17. The B-17 was attacked by two FW-190s and exploded before flight could close with the e/a, which evaded combat with fighters. 4th Group rendezvoused in the vicinity of Sedan at 1220 hours. South of Luxembourg five FW-190s made a frontal attack on the bombers, but these e/a were dispersed and three were destroyed. A few minutes later four FW-190s were sighted, two of which were destroyed. Escort was broken off at 1302 hours east of Homburg. 359th Group made rendezvous at 1227 hours and provided uneventful escort until 1305 hours. 78 A and 78 B rendezvoused with front and rear combat wings at 1235 and 1250 hours respectively. 78 A continued escort until 1325 hours when relieved by P-51s in the Rhine area. 78 B broke escort at 1335 hours southeast of Mannheim.

TARGET SUPPORT: 357th Group rendezvoused northwest of Landau and escorted the bombers over the target and back to Landau at 1525 hours. This group saw a total of five e/a in the target area and destroyed all five. 354th Group escorted both B-17s and B-24s over the target, leaving them in the vicinity of Verdun. This group claims 7-0-3 for no loss. 55th Group rendezvoused with three boxes of B-17s of the 1st Division and escorted them through the target area and to the vicinity of Ulm. This group saw approximately 40 s/e and t/e e/a, dispersed many and claim 1-2-0 without loss. 20th Group escorted the 3rd Division B-17s from Ansbach at 1357 hours through the target area and out to Neunhirschen. This group saw 15 s/e e/a along the route.

WITHDRAWAL SUPPORT: 56 A Group, finding P-38s with first box, rendezvoused at Landau with second box of three combat wings of B-17s and B-24s at 1500 hours and escorted them to San Quentin at 1545 hours. Group destroyed two of four Me-109s attacking a B-17 straggler near Karlsruhe. 56 B Group rendezvoused at 1505 hours at Neunhirschen with three combat wings and escorted them to Amiens at 1600 hours. Group destroyed one FW-190 near Homburg and drove off four other e/a in the vicinity of Rehel. The 353rd Group rendezvoused at 1510 hours, twenty miles north of Saarbrücken with the 1st Division formations, one box of 3rd Division B-17s and several boxes of B-24s. The group escorted them uneventfully to the vicinity of Sedan at 1555 hours. The 356th Group, when advised that bombers were 15-20 minutes early and under attack, flew ten degrees to right of briefed course and rendezvoused with first box of B-17s twenty miles east southeast of Luxembourg at 1503 hours, dispersing three Me-109s at that time. This group also escorted 100 plus additional B-17s and two combat wings of B-24s, escorting them to the vicinity of San Quentin. 358th Group made rendezvous at 1534 hours ten miles northwest of Saarbrücken, and escorted uneventfully to the vicinity of Abbeville. 353 B Group also provided uneventful escort from Sedan to San Quentin. 352nd Group flew over briefed bomber track and picked up both B-17s and B-24s as opportunity arose, escorting them to the vicinity of Mezieres, at 1535 hours. This group dispersed several e/a along the route. 355th, 363rd, 365th and 361st Groups all provided final withdrawal escort, which was uneventful. No e/a were seen by these groups. Additional withdrawal support was provided by 120 RAF Spitfire IXs and 24 RAF Mustangs, which saw no e/a and had no claims or losses.

NOTE: The foregoing is based on preliminary information and should not be used for record purposes.

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

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND745005By VDD NARA Date 8/19/91C O N F I D E N T I A LMission Report of 25 February 44 (Cont'd)
(Part II Cont'd)

- 1136 - Group leader of 365th had a jammed A transmitter, so wanted to put the whole group on to C channel. Controller told 70th Wing he would pass to the group on C any information they desired.
- 1140 - 70th Controller called back to say they want to transmit direct to the 365th on C channel. Controller suggested that this not be done as it would make for greater congestion on the channel, and 70th doesn't have a relay on C channel.
- 1150 - Pinetrec; Part of the 1st TF is 10 miles S of course.
- 1200 - Controller ordered 4th warned of bandits in St. Quentin area; acknowledged.
- 1208 - R/T of 365th now all on A channel.
- 1327 - Part of 4th group coming out.
- 1421 - From Ajax; The bombers are 20 minutes early. This was passed to all groups and acknowledged by the 56th and 356th at once, and by the 355th at 1436.
- 1502 - Weather report; Ceiling at Bluefrock down to 1500 feet.
- 1525 - Ajax called and was informed that the 56th was beyond R/T range, but should be with the bombers; that the 356th was barely in range, and no knowledge of the bombers.
- 1620 - Controller informed 11 Group that B-17s in the Amiens area were calling for help. Shortly thereafter a further report was passed of a B-17 with only 2 engines. This information was also relayed on the conference line.

III. GROUP CONTROLLER'S POSITIONS.

4th Group (Lt. Gumz, Controller) A/B 1112, L/F in at Dunkirk, 1150. Bombers were first sighted at 1210 and R/V was believed to have been made at 1220 just west of the scheduled point. It is not known when or where escort was broken off, but it was known to have been before 1315. L/F out at 1351, vicinity of Calais. At 1200 leader was warned of bandits in St. Quentin area; acknowledged. At 1220 Group leader was notified of e/a 50 miles west of Luxembourg and again at 1227 of e/a 30 miles south of Luxembourg; neither message acknowledged. Communications: R/T faded at 1227 about 8 miles east of Fourniers and was not resumed until 1315 in the vicinity of Brussels. Radar plotting carried the Group to the vicinity of Charleville and picked them up on the way out around Brussels. Heathfield relay provided R/T coverage for 180 miles.

56A Group (Lt. Moreland, Controller). A/B 1333. L/F in near Flushing at 1415. No "pip" received at R/V and it was impossible for the Controller to determine where and when R/V made. A "pip" at 1543 east of St. Quentin indicated that escort had been broken off. At 1423 leader acknowledged message that bombers were 15 minutes early. At 1519 Group was informed that bombers were being attacked 25 miles east of Luxembourg; acknowledged. Communications: R/T was very good with a range from Heathfield relay of about 270 miles. R/T contact was out between 1456 and 1505. Radar plots carried the Group inland to the vicinity of Antwerp.

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

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND745005By MD NARA Date 8/19/91C O N F I D E N T I A LMission Report of 25 February 44 (Cont'd)
(Part IV Cont'd)

Stedman 35 at 1427 when 100 miles out and over France requested a homing to Bluefrock. One steer was given after which check calls were not answered. The a/c landed OK.

Stodman 46 at 1431 requested an emergency homing from 30 miles out. The a/c had only 25 gallons of fuel. Landed safely at Bluefrock.

Keyworth 70 and 73, 90 miles out from Bluefrock over France requested an emergency homing at 1448. One steer was given the a/c and then due to a misunderstanding in the number of miles they were from that base went over to Bluefrock control at 1450. They landed safely.

Stedman 41 requested an emergency homing for some a/c who were very low on fuel at 1532. The a/c were vectored to the Bradwell drome, but after they crossed in were too low to fix accurately. Stedman 41 advised that they would be OK. A safe landing was made.

Vinepress 31 requested an emergency homing at 1532, when 60 miles out. The a/c was vectored to Bluefrock but the oranges were so bad there, decided to go on to home base. One steer was given heading the a/c to home base and it then changed over to channel D. Landed OK.

Beachouse 83 from about 100 miles out, over France requested a homing at 1558. Two vectors were given the a/c and it landed OK.

Cutdress Blue One requested a homing at 1611. The a/c was answered, but nothing more heard from it. Landed safely.

Beachouse 76 requested homing at 1604. Two vectors were given 76 and a safe landing was made.

Handspun 44 very low on fuel requested homing at 1618. The a/c was vectored to Lyme. Nothing more heard, but a safe landing was made at some south coast field.

Some bomber mayday'd at approximately 1620 hours. A fix was obtained and passed to 11 Group and a search started immediately. The position was 50 miles south of Dungeness. However later an a/c called stating it had not yet ditched and at that time the call sign was given as Goldsmith 31. A continuous line of fixes were obtained and each time a vector passed. It was impossible to understand the bomber transmissions and the continuous transmissions jammed the channel so that other a/c calling could not be taken care of satisfactorily. Goldsmith 31 crossed the coast between Beachy Head and Dungeness, turned left along the coast transmitting almost continuously, none of which could be fully understood. Finally Goldsmith 31 arrived over Shoreham where it was told it was over a base and could and should land. Nothing more was heard so a safe landing is presumed.

Regardless of the above, spotters were vectored to the mayday position and searched until lack of fuel forced them to return to base. They found no trace of any a/c or dinghy. 11 Group searched until nightfall and plan to make a general search of the whole area tomorrow morning.

At 1625 Woodfire 45 requested an emergency homing stating it would probably be necessary to bail out when over land. Woodfire 45 was vectored to the nearest point of land and then decided to try to land the a/c. A vector was given to West Malling when about 15 miles from that field. Nothing more heard as the channel was jammed.

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

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND745005By vDD NARA Date 8/19/11C O N F I D E N T I A L

Mission Report of 25 February 44 (Cont'd)
(Part III Cont'd)

56B Group (Lt. Moreland, Controller) A/B 1338 L/F in near Flushing at 1420. R/V "pip" was received at 1454. Group escorted bombers to Amiens at 1602. L/F out south of Berck at 1614. At 1423 Group was advised that bombers were 15 minutes early. At 1519 they were told that the bombers were being attacked 25 miles east of Luxembourg. Both messages acknowledged. Communications: Same as 56A.

355th Group (Lt. Foster, Controller) A/B 1432. L/F in near Dunkirk about 1512. Bombers were sighted at 1541 and Group took up escort position at this time. Escort was furnished until L/F out was made at 1642. At 1436 Group acknowledged the information of bombers being 15-20 minutes early; At 1528 passed warning of bandits east of St. Quentin; acknowledged. At 1634 information of bandits between Ostend and Calais was passed and acknowledged by Group. Communications: Heathfield relay provided an R/T coverage of approximately 245 miles. Contact was maintained throughout the mission.

356th Group (Capt. Saul, Controller) A/B 1341. L/F in on time at 1419 just north of Ostend. At 1422 Group was informed that the bombers were 15-20 minutes early; acknowledged. R/V was made at Luxembourg at about 1500 and escort was furnished to the vicinity of St. Quentin at 1549. L/F out between Berck and Boulogne. Warnings of bandits in their area were passed at 1446 and 1527, neither acknowledged. Relay a/c had to return shortly after this. Leader acknowledged warning of bandits east of St. Quentin passed at 1539. Communications: R/T contact was lost at 1445 and was not regained until 1539 when Group was 45 miles east of St. Quentin. R/T coverage from forward relay at Southminster was 192 miles. Radar plots were good and carried the Group as far inland as Ghent.

IV. CHANNELS B, C, AND D.

Channel B (Lt. Messinger, Controller) Wildcat 23 called at 1156 and 1205 requesting a homing each time. The a/c was answered each time but nothing heard.

Some bomber gave an SOS signal at 1250. Spotters were vectored to the area but were not needed as the bomber in distress crossed the English coast OK.

Gaylord 30 at 1305 hours requested a homing while over France. Three vectors were passed but after that further check calls were not answered. The a/c landed OK.

Wildcat 19 requested an emergency homing at 1319. The a/c was vectored to a spot near Martlesham and after that check calls were not answered. The a/c landed safely.

Shirtblue 60 at 1345 requested a homing from across the channel in the Calais area. The a/c was badly shot up but made Bluefrock OK and landed there under Bluefrock control.

Rebuke 41 at 1407 with one engine out, requested a homing from across the channel. The a/c was vectored to Bluefrock arriving there at 1430. The oranges were sour at that base so 41 decided to go on to home base. One steer was given and then 41 went over to Fineboy and was homed successfully.

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

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND745005By YDD NARA Date 8/14/91C O N F I D E N T I A LMission Report of 25 February 44 (Cont'd)
(Part IV Cont'd)

Some Handspun a/c, probably 28, requested a homing at 1643. It was impossible to obtain a fix due to the many a/c calling at the same time. Later it was reported that 28 landed OK.

Vinepress 47 requested a fix at 1652. The same condition existed as set forth in the above paragraph.

Vinepress 58 was given one steer at 1701. No further fixes could be obtained.

The same condition existed when Vinepress 33 requested a homing about 1703.

Some bomber mayday'd at 1706 just as it was crossing the coast between Beachy Head and Dungeness. The a/c was given its position and a steer to Lyme 30 miles away. According to reports from 11 Group the crew bailed out shortly thereafter.

Same condition existed when Wildcat 32 requested a homing at approximately 1710.

Communications were very good and fixing good until approximately 1620. After that and until approximately 1720, it was almost impossible for the fixer stations to sort out the many calls made to controller and obtain bearings on any particular one.

Channel C (Capt. Hecht, Controller) Usual amount of information received from the bombers and passed to the fighters to aid the R/V's. Toward the end of the mission the channel was again jammed up so badly with homings that various bombers calling for help could not be reached by the controller.

Communications generally good, but some RDF whine at beginning of mission on local, also from 1320 to 1340.

Channel D (Lt. Newell, Controller). Fairly light traffic, with 28 vectors passed to a/c singly and in groups. One emergency homing resulted in a landing in the vicinity of North Weald, after trying repeatedly to get voice fixes, had to use the pip-squeak. In such cases, lack of an additional D/F station is very noticeable.

Fixing was generally fast and accurate, with some trouble caused by low altitude work. R/T and R/T discipline were both good.

Jesse Auton
JESSE AUTON,
Colonel, Air Corps,
Commanding.

Distribution: Special.

65th FW Reg. No. 3143

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

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND745005By VDD NARA Date 8/19/91

107

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

HEADQUARTERS
65TH FIGHTER WING
APO 637 AAF Station F-370

NUMBER 25

26 February 1944.

NARRATIVE REPORT OF WING OPERATIONS ROOM
Bomber Escort Mission of 25 February 44 (VIII FC FO 251)
(Targets - Stuttgart, Augsburg, Regensburg, Furth)

I. GENERAL.

The 4th Group was on penetration escort and all other groups of this Wing were on withdrawal. A good track was kept of the bombers and fighters with the help of calls from Pinetree, good R/T, and good radar plots. The penetration with R/Vs went according to schedule. Apparently 15 to 20 minutes were gained in the target area, but groups making R/Vs on the withdrawal were warned in time to follow the schedule. Crossing out times of the bombers ranged from 20 minutes early to 6 minutes late.

The 355th Group stayed with the bombers until crossing out; the other groups had to leave earlier, and no group was available to dispatch to several known stragglers which were obviously receiving the attention of the Huns. The RAF controller reported his aircraft were with bombers and engaged and couldn't be diverted.

R/T indicated fairly continuous enemy opposition especially on the withdrawal. There were not many radar plots of hostile activity.

Coordination of the Wings and Ajax was fair. Less information than usual was passed.

Communications were satisfactory with all groups on all channels with the exception that emergency homings on C channel again interfered seriously at the end of the mission with bomber position and distress calls.

Again the task forces, divisions and bomber call signs were very confusing

B channel was blocked for over an hour at a crucial period by the almost steady R/T from one particular bomber, Galsmith 31, and it is believed several other mayday attempts were foiled on this account.

Chief Controller, Capt. Larrabee. Staff Officer, S/L Hydes.

II. PRINCIPAL EVENTS AT CHIEF CONTROLLER'S POSITION.

1040 - An a/c of one of the outgoing Task Forces partially identified as J for Jake, reported on C channel the presence of a strange B-17 definitely not belonging to that TF. The position as 5102N - 0057W or E, and asked that it be investigated. 11 Group immediately informed.

1120 - C channel and the conference line both indicate that all TF's on course and time.

1121 - 11 Group called to report that the strange B-17 had been found stooging around the Hawkinge area at 3000 feet. It was described as a lone American B-17 marked T for Tare. 11 Group requested a check up to see if such a plane should be there, and the above information was passed to Pinetree on the conference line. No further information was received from either Pinetree or 11 Group

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