

ATTACK ON MERSEBURG (LEONA) SYNTHETIC OIL REFINERY ON 2 NOV 1944

*Mac*  
*Skul*  
*CAPO*

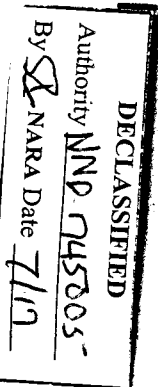
## (i) INFORMATION RECEIVED ON THE ATTACK:

- (a) No. of aircraft : 616, with full fighter escort.  
 (b) Command : U.S. 8TH AIR FORCE.  
 (c) Time : 1206-1244A hours.  
 (d) Bombs : 2706 x 500 lb. G.P.  
 6012 x 250 lb. G.P.

## (ii) DETAILS OF THE ATTACK:

- (a) All photographs received are either partially or completely cloud obscured making plotting of all the bursts impossible. In addition an efficient smoke screen is in operation and at no time during the attack is the target area visible.
- (b) Bursts are visible in areas other than the target as follows:
- (1) At least 120 H.E. are seen in open fields near the village of QUEIS, 6-1/2 miles East of HALLE.
  - (2) Approximately 35 H.E. are scattered in open fields 6 miles South-Southeast of the synthetic oil plant at MERSEBURG.
  - (3) At least 75 H.E. are seen scattered in open fields 2 miles South-east of the oil plant. A possible hit is seen on a small rail bridge in this area.
  - (4) Eight are seen scattered in open fields 3 miles East of the oil plant.
  - (5) Four are seen in open fields 4 miles East-Southeast of the oil plant.
  - (6) At least 60 are seen in open fields and on the autobahn near the town of REIDEBURG, 4-1/2 miles East of HALLE. Three probable hits are seen on the autobahn.
  - (7) At least 50 are scattered in the open fields 3-1/2 miles East of HALLE.
  - (8) Six are seen near a rail line 3 miles South-Southeast of the oil plant.
  - (9) Fifty are seen in open fields bordering a railroad 2-1/3 miles Southeast of DELITZSCH, which is 19-1/2 miles Northeast of MERSEBURG.
  - (10) Ten H.E. are seen in fields 4-3/4 miles Southwest of the LEIPZIG passenger station. Other scattered bursts are visible 2000 yards Southwest of this point.
  - (11) Thirty-five are seen in fields 7 miles Northwest of the oil plant.
  - (12) Six are seen in open areas 3-1/2 miles South-Southwest of BRUNSWICK.
  - (13) A concentration of at least 75 is seen in open areas which are unplotted.
  - (14) Bombs are seen falling in a Southeasterly direction over the Eastern part of LEIPZIG. Bursts are unplottable because of cloud cover.

/(15) Bombs away are seen over the



(15) Bombs away are seen over the southeast part of HALLE, but no bursts are seen.

(16) Bombs are seen falling in a North Northeasterly direction over the South part of BRUNSWICK, but clouds hide the bursts.

(iii) SMOKE SCREEN:

A very efficient smoke screen is seen in operation at the time of the attack.

(iv) ACTIVITY:

(a) MERSEBURG AIRFIELD:

(1) The Southeast corner of the airfield is cloud obscured. The remainder is covered on poor quality photographs.

(2) Eleven, possibly 13, aircraft are visible as follows:

Type	Hangar Area	S.W. Dispersal	W. Side	N. Side	E. Side
Large		1	1	2	1
Medium	3		2, possibly 3	1, possibly 2	
	3	1	4	4	1

4 large hangars 4

(3) The landing ground is serviceable.

(4) Nine aircraft were visible on 16 SEP 1944 (US7GR/3325).

(b) HALLE (NIETLEBEN) AIRFIELD:

(1) Two possible small aircraft are visible in the Southwest corner.

(2) The landing ground is serviceable.

(3) On 18 AUG 1944 (US7GP/3004), no aircraft were visible.

(c) HALLE/KLEEM AIRFIELD:

(1) Four possible aircraft are visible as follows:

Type	N.W. Dispersal	S.E. Dispersal
Small	3 possible	1 possible

(2) The landing ground appears serviceable.

(3) On 26 AUG 1944 (US7GR/3085), three aircraft were present.

(d) HALLE MARSHALLING YARD:

The yard is heavily loaded.

(e) LEIPZIG MARSHALLING YARD (3 miles W.S.W. of main station):

The loading is light.

(v) ANNOTATED PRINT: None.

(vi) BOMB PLOT: None prepared.

(vii) PHOTOGRAPHS RECEIVED:

/SAV 91/770 2 NOV 1944 1244A hrs. 1/47,000

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority NND 745805  
By SP NARA Date 7/17

S.A.V	91/770	NOV 1944	1244A hrs.	1/47,000	(F.L. 7")	27,500'	'B'
"	91/771	"	1243A "	1/27,200	(F.L. 12")	27,200'	"
"	92/671	"	1229A "	1/26,500	( " )	26,500'	"
"	92/672	"	Unknown	1/45,400	(F.L. 7")	26,400'	"
"	94/1085,	"	1233-1238A	1/45,800	( " )	26,700'	"
	1088		hrs.				
"	94/1096,	"	1232-1238A	1/27,250	(F.L. 12")	27,250'	"
	1092		hrs.				
"	95/1147,	"	1221A hrs.	1/47,600	(F.L. 7")	27,800'	"
	1149, 1150						
"	95/1148	"	1222A hrs.	1/27,600	(F.L. 12")	27,600'	'C'
"	96/674, 675.	"	1215A "	1/27,000	( " )	27,000'	'B'
"	96/672	"	" "	1/45,400	(F.L. 7")	26,500'	"
"	100/981-988,	"	1225A "	1/47,000	( " )	27,500'	"
	988-989						
"	100/987	"	" "	1/25,000	(F.L. 12")	25,000'	'C'
"	305/889, 890	"	1230, 1238A	1/47,000	(F.L. 7")	27,500'	'B'
			hrs.				
"	306/1047,	"	1239A hrs.	1/46,200	( " )	27,000'	"
	1048						
"	385/856-858	"	1226A "	1/44,500	( " )	25,000'	"
"	388/731-734	"	1220A "	1/46,200	( " )	27,000'	"
"	388/735	"	1309A "	1/23,600	(F.L. 12")	23,600'	"
"	390/1074,	"	1221A "	1/48,000	(F.L. 7")	28,000'	"
	1075						
"	390/1078	"	" "	1/26,800	(F.L. 12")	26,800'	"
"	398/426-428	"	1238A "	1/24,300	( " )	24,300'	"
"	398/429, 430	"	" "	1/42,000	(F.L. 7")	24,500'	"
"	401/761-763	"	1241A "	1/43,100	( " )	25,300'	"
"	447/735	"	1233A "	1/27,200	(F.L. 12")	27,200'	"
"	447/736	"	" "	1/47,000	(F.L. 7")	27,500'	"
"	452/679-683,	"	1218A "	1/46,200	( " )	27,000'	"
	685						
"	457/640	"	1231A "	1/27,500	(F.L. 12")	27,500'	'C'
"	457/641, 643	"	" "	1/45,800	(F.L. 7")	26,750'	"
"	486/527-529,	"	1206-1226A	1/45,400	( " )	26,500'	'B'
	531, 532		hrs.				
"	487/469	"	1230A hrs.	1/27,500	(F.L. 12")	27,500'	"
"	487/471, 472	"	" "	1/45,800	(F.L. 7")	26,750'	"
"	493/384, 385	"	1217, 1219A	"	( " )	26,700'	"
			hrs.				
"	493/389	"	1227A hrs.	1/27,000	(F.L. 12")	27,000'	"
O	487/220	"	Unknown	Oblique	(F.L. 6- 3/8")	"	"
O	493/110	"	"	"	(F.L. 6- 3/8")	26,700'	"

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority NND 745005  
By SARA Date 7/1/11

*Handwritten initials/signature*

LOCALITY: MERSEBURG (Leuna)  
Synthetic Oil Plant and Ammonia & Nitrogen  
Works of I.G. Barber Industrie A.G.

PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

This report deals with damage to the target between 1130 B hrs on 14 SEP 1944 and 1322 A hours on 14 NOV 1944. This includes the attacks by aircraft of U.S. 8th AIR FORCE on 28 SEP (Sa 2767), 7 OCT (SA 2311), 2 NOV (SA 2388) and 8 NOV (SA 2908)

PROVISIONAL STATEMENT OF DAMAGE

Due to the poor quality of the cover it is impossible to give a complete assessment. Some damage however is visible scattered throughout the plant.

A water gas plant appears to have moderate roof damage, 40% of the remaining roof of a contact oven house has been destroyed, and a compressor house has scattered roof damage. Three gas holders appear to have been collapsed, and two boiler houses have slight roof damage. In addition, an Absorption House has been hit at one end, and Ammonium Sulfate Silo has approximately 1/6 of roof destroyed, and an unidentified shed has been demolished.

Details of damage:

1. Large Gas holder; appears collapsed.
2. 2 small gasholders; appear collapsed.
3. Water Gas Plant; moderate roof damage.
4. Contact Oven House; 40% of remaining roof destroyed.
5. 2 Boiler Houses; slight roof damage.
6. Compressor House; scattered roof damage.
7. Ammonium Sulfate Silo; 1/6 of roof destroyed.
8. Ammonia Absorption House; roof damaged at one end.
9. Unidentified Shed; destroyed.

This report is subject to correction and amplification from a more detailed assessment.

PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY: 14th Squadron.

SORTIE: US7/3572

MEANTIME AND DATE OF PHOTOGRAPHY: 1322 A hrs on 14 NOV 1944.

SCALE: 1/9,000 (F.L. 36")

COVER AND QUALITY: Almost complete cover fairly poor quality.

LAST REPORT: K. 3181 issued on 20 SEP 1944.

COMPARATIVE SORTIE USED: 106G/2908 (3030/5) 14 SEP 44.

PRINT DISTRIBUTED: 3013 (to follow when available)

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority NND 745205  
By SP NARA Date 7/1/9

HEADQUARTERS  
NINETY FIFTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)  
Office of the Operations Officer

APO 559.  
3 November 1944.

SUBJECT: Report of Operations Officer, Mission of 2 November,  
1944. Merseburg.

TO : Commanding Officer, 95th Bomb Group (H), APO 559.

95 A Squadron Formation

1. GENERAL NARRATIVE: The 95 A Squadron formation, flying as lead squadron of 13 A Combat Group, took off at 0814 - 0824 hours. Assembly was effected over the base at 10,000' by 0900, and the 95 high and low squadrons took their positions prior to departure from the base. Wing assembly was made over Hadleigh at 0945 hours, and the Group entered division assembly over buncher 12 at 0950 hours. The coast was crossed over Orfordness at 1006 at 10,000' and climb to bombing altitude was started. The enemy coast was crossed on course at 1054 hours at 17,300'. Shortly afterward the 13th Combat Groups increased airspeed by five miles per hour, following the policy of preceding groups which were attempting to close their gap. The course to the I.P. was flown as briefed; though navigation was largely PFF because of undercast and haze. The I.P. was crossed at 27,000' at 1212 hours, and the formation climbed an additional 800' en route to the target in order to avoid cloud interference. Bombs were dropped in group formation on the PFF flare markers at 1221 hours, and after a right turn the rally point was reached at 1226 hours. At this point the lead PFF equipment failed, and the high squadron deputy leader took over. The route home was flown as briefed, and the formation arrived at the base at 1511 hours, landing at 1525 - 1534 hours.

2. AIRCRAFT NOT ATTACKING: Twelve aircraft, including one PFF leader were dispatched as shown in diagram "A". All twelve aircraft were over the target and received sorties.

3. LOST AIRCRAFT: No. 42-102679 - Crippled by flak over target; last heard from on route out at 12,000 feet, with one (1) feathered and another engine on fire.

THOMAS H. HOLBROOK,  
Lt. Col., Air Corps,  
Operations Officer.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 745205

By SP NARA Date 7/17

HEADQUARTERS  
NINETY FIFTH BOMBER DIVISION (H)  
Office of the Operations Officer

APC 559,  
5 November 1944.

SUBJECT: Report of Operations Officer, Mission of 2 November,  
1944. Merseburg.

TO : Commanding Officer, 95th Bomb Group (H), APC 559.

95 B Squadron Formation

1. GENERAL NARRATIVE: The 95 B Squadron, flying as high squadron, of the 13 A Combat Group, took off at 0800 - 0812 hours. Assembly was made over the base at 11,500 feet. The squadron took its position in the group formation at 0910 hours. Reference is made to the above report of the 95 A Squadron Formation for the remainder of the mission. In addition, however, the following points are to be noted.

(a) Bombs were away at 1220½ hours on a true heading of 130° at an altitude of 26,500 feet.

(b) At 1254 hours, 51°52'N, 10°25'E, and at an altitude 26,000 feet, on the return route, the 95 B Squadron took over the lead of the Group. The route out was flown slightly to the north of briefed course until the position at 52°12'N - 08°38'E was reached, and from there the briefed course was followed. The Enemy coast was crossed at 1418 hours and at an altitude of 21,000 feet. The English coast was crossed on briefed course at 1456 hours and an altitude of 6,000 feet. The base was reached at 1507 hours, and the formation landed at 1513-1533 hours.

2. AIRCRAFT NOT ATTACKING: Twelve aircraft plus one in the lead were dispatched as shown in Diagram "B". One (1) A/C No. 2447, aborted from the formation after crossing the enemy coast, and is credited with a sortie. The remaining twelve aircraft were over the secondary target as shown in Diagram "1" and are credited with sorties.

3. AIRCRAFT LOST: None.

THOMAS H. HOLBROOK,  
Lt. Col., Air Corps,  
Operations Officer.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 745005

By SP NARA Date 7/17

HEADQUARTERS  
NINETY FIFTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)  
Office of the Operations Officer

AFO 559,  
3 November 1944.

SUBJECT: Report of Operations Officer, Mission of 2 November,  
1944. Merseburg.

TO : Commanding Officer, 95th Bomb Group (H), AFO 559.

95 C Squadron Formation

1. GENERAL NARRATIVE: The 95 C Squadron formation, flying as low squadron in the 13 A Combat Group, took off at 0830-0842 hours. Assembly was made over the base at 9,000 feet. The 95 C Squadron took its position in the Group formation at the same altitude while circling the base at 0850 hours.

Reference is made to the above reports of the 95 A and 95 B Squadron formations for the remainder of the mission. In addition, however, the following points are to be noted:

- (a) Bombs were away at 1221 hours on a true heading of 131° and at an altitude of 27,500 feet.
- (b) The formation landed at the base at 1535-1543 hours.

2. AIRCRAFT NOT ATTACKING: Twelve aircraft plus oneIFF load were dispatched as shown in Diagram "C". One (1) A/C, No. 1867, because of mechanical malfunction, was forced to leave the formation and jettison its bombs just short of the I., but is credited with a sortie. The remaining twelve aircraft were over the secondary target as shown in Diagram "1-C" and are credited with sorties.

3. AIRCRAFT LOST: None.

THOMAS H. HOLBROOK,  
Lt. Col., Air Corps,  
Operations Officer.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 745005

By SP NARA Date 7/17

S  
P  
F  
L

HEADQUARTERS 3D BOMBARDMENT DIVISION  
"J" FORM

GP.  
STA.

1. DATE 2/11/44 TARGET \_\_\_\_\_ DUTY OFFICERS Capt. Powers
2. DBW 13'A GROUP 95'A GP. LEADER Lt. Col. Helbrook A/C 335-J<sup>8210</sup> W/T NCZ  
 POSITION Lead DEPUTY LDR. Lt. Helm A/C 335-K<sup>8269</sup> W/T NCZ
3. EST. TAXI TIME 0725-0735 EST. T.O. 1ST A/C 0725-0745 ETD BASE 0736 ETR BASE 1458
4. NUMBER A/C ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED 12 NUMBER OF PFF INCLUDED 1
5. TAKE-OFF: 1ST \_\_\_\_\_ LAST \_\_\_\_\_ LANDING: 1ST \_\_\_\_\_ LAST \_\_\_\_\_
6. SQUADRON 334 NO. OF A/C 3 CALL SIGNS: W/T NSJ

	R	Q	L										
A/C	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
A.T.O.	:	822	823	824	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
A.T.R.	:	:	1531	1534	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
REMS	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

SQUADRON 335 NO. OF A/C 9 CALL SIGNS: W/T NCZ

	J	H	V	S	X	B	K	BT	O				
A/C	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
A.T.O.	:	814	818	815	816	818	819	820	825	821	:	:	:
A.T.R.	:	1525	1526	1524	1528	1504	1527	1532	1530	1529	:	:	:
REMS	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

Authority NND 745805  
By Q NARA Date 7/17



S  
R  
F  
L

HEADQUARTERS 3D BOMBARDMENT DIVISION

"J" FORM

GP.

STA.

- DATE 2/11/44 TARGET \_\_\_\_\_ DUTY OFFICERS Capt. Powers
- DBW 13A GROUP 95B GP. LEADER Maj. Ogden A/C 412-0<sup>8040</sup> W/T PDH  
 POSITION High DEPUTY LDR. Lt. Fletcher A/C 412-F<sup>7788</sup> W/T PDH
- EST. TAXI TIME 0710-0720 EST. T.O. LST A/C 0720-0730 ETD BASE 0715 ETR BASE 1458
- NUMBER A/C ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED 13 NUMBER OF PFF INCLUDED 1
- TAKE-OFF: 1ST \_\_\_\_\_ LAST \_\_\_\_\_ LANDING: 1ST \_\_\_\_\_ LAST \_\_\_\_\_
- SQUADRON 334 NO. OF A/C 2 CALL SIGNS: W/T NSJ

A/C	A	F													
A.T.O.	: 807	: 814	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
A.T.R.	: 1250	: 1533	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
REM'S	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

SQUADRON 412 NO. OF A/C 11 CALL SIGNS: W/T PDH

A/C	N	E	V	Z	L	H	F	G	D	A	Y				
A.T.O.	: 900	: 901	: 902	: 903	: 904	: 905	: 905	: 808	: 809	: 810	: 811	:	:	:	:
A.T.R.	: 1518	: 1519	: 1517	: 1521	: 1522	: 1520	: 1515	: 1523	: 1516	: 1513	: 1514	:	:	:	:
REM'S	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

SQUADRON \_\_\_\_\_ NO. OF A/C \_\_\_\_\_ CALL SIGNS: W/T \_\_\_\_\_

A.T.O.	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
A.T.R.	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
REM'S	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

SQUADRON \_\_\_\_\_ NO. OF A/C \_\_\_\_\_ CALL SIGNS: W/T \_\_\_\_\_

A.T.O.	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
A.T.R.	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
REM'S	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

7. EXPLANATION: Aircraft F.T.O., R.E., Landed away from Base, and Outstanding.

SQDN LETTER	NUMBER	NATION	REMARKS	SORTIE
<u>234</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>2447</u>	<u>#2 Eng failure</u>	<u>:</u>

DECLASSIFIED  
 Authority NND 045805  
 By SP NARA Date 7/19

S  
R  
F  
L

HEADQUARTERS 3D BOMBARDMENT DIVISION  
"J" FORM

GP.  
STA.

- DATE 2/11/44 TARGET \_\_\_\_\_ DUTY OFFICERS Capt. Powers
- DBW 13 GROUP 95<sup>0</sup>C GP. LEADER Capt. Wright A/C 336-0<sup>8144</sup> W/T KKS  
POSITION Low DEPUTY LDR. L. Walker A/C 336-P<sup>8272</sup> W/T KKS
- EST. TAXI TIME 0740 0750 EST. T.O. 1ST A/C 0750 0800 ETD BASE 0935<sup>0920</sup> ETR BASE 1458
- NUMBER A/C ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED 13 NUMBER OF PFF INCLUDED 1
- TAKE-OFF: 1ST \_\_\_\_\_ LAST \_\_\_\_\_ LANDING: 1ST \_\_\_\_\_ LAST \_\_\_\_\_
- SQUADRON 334 NO. OF A/C 1 CALL SIGNS: W/T NSJ

T

A/C	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
A.T.O.	:	<u>842</u>	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
A.T.R.	:	<u>1539</u>	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
REM'S.	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

SQUADRON 336 NO. OF A/C 12 CALL SIGNS: W/T KKS

	<u>O</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>Q</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>Y</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>J</u>	<u>R</u>		
A/C	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	
A.T.O.	:	<u>830</u>	<u>831</u>	<u>832</u>	<u>833</u>	<u>834</u>	<u>835</u>	<u>836</u>	<u>837</u>	<u>838</u>	<u>839</u>	<u>840</u>	<u>841</u>	:
A.T.R.	:	<u>1540</u>	<u>1541</u>	<u>1542</u>	<u>1543</u>	<u>1544</u>	<u>1545</u>	<u>1546</u>	<u>1547</u>	<u>1548</u>	<u>1549</u>	<u>1550</u>	<u>1551</u>	:
REM'S	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

SQUADRON \_\_\_\_\_ NO. OF A/C \_\_\_\_\_ CALL SIGNS: W/T \_\_\_\_\_

Authority NND 745205  
By NSA NARA Date 7/11

Mac

S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS EIGHTH AIR FORCE  
AAF STATION 101  
APO 634

INTOPS SUMMARY NO. 186

PERIOD: 0001 hours 2 November to 2400 hours 2 November 1944

A. STATISTICS

	<u>Missions</u>	<u>Disp.</u>	<u>Sorties</u>	<u>Atkg.</u>	<u>Tonnage</u>	<u>Claims</u>	<u>Losses</u>				<u>Totals</u>
							<u>E/A</u>	<u>AA</u>	<u>N/E</u>	<u>OT</u>	
Heavy Bomber Atks.	5	1168x	1133	1100	2652.1	36-35-27	14	14	2	10	40
Fighter Escort	17	934xx	842	0	0	132-5-25A 25-0-0 G	1	2	10	15	28
Fighter Sweeps	0	0	0	0	0	0-0-0	0	0	0	0	0
Fighter Bombing	0	0	0	0	0	0-0-0	0	0	0	0	0
Photo Recon.	5	5	5	0	0	0-0-0	0	0	0	1	1
Weather Recon.	10	42	40	0	0	0-0-0	0	0	0	1	1
Air/Sea Rescue	0	0	0	0	0	0-0-0	0	0	0	0	0
Special Operations	<u>4</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0-0-0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Totals	41	2186	2057	1100	2652.1	168-40-52A 25-0-0 G	15	16	12	27	70

x 17 spares, 11 used.

xx In addition to above statistics, one group Ninth A.F. P-38s flew general area support. 34 dispatched - 31 sorties. No claims. No losses.

B. OPERATIONAL SUMMARY

1. Bomber Attacks

Thirty combat wings (814 B-17s, 354 B-24s - 1168 a/c) dispatched in five forces against synthetic oil plants at Merseburg/Leuna, Castrop-Rauxel, Sterkrade (Holten) and Bielefeld/Schildesche RR and M/Y. Four assigned targets. 1100 a/c dropped 2652.1 tons on all primaries and several T/Os. All bombing by PFF except force on Bielefeld. Heavy opposition met by two forces in Merseburg target area. Escorting fighters attacked by approximately 500 s/e e/a plus 15 Me-163s. Bomber claims: 36-35-27. Losses: 40 a/c (39 B-17s, 1 B-24).

S E C R E T

DECLASSIFIED

Authority AAW/D 745005

By: H NARA Date 7-18-07

First Force

Twelve combat wings (460 B-17s) dispatched against Merseburg/Leuna Synthetic Oil Plant. 436 a/c dropped 1029.7 tons GP on primary and 8 T/Os at 1203-1238 hours from 23,800-28,500 feet. Primary bombed on PFF. Leaflets dropped on Merseburg. Weather: 6/10-9/10 en route, 10/10 over target. Flak: intense and very accurate. Battle Damage: 252 minor, 87 major. E/A Opposition: strong enemy effort curbed by escorting fighters. No e/a sighted prior to arrival at IP. Attacks on stragglers by 10 FW-190s and 5 Me-109s. Approximately 9 Me-163s made single attacks on one group. Claims against Me-163s, 2-1-1. Total Claims: 6-2-2. Losses: 12 a/c (7 to AA, 1 to non-enemy, and 4 to unknown reasons).

Fighter Support: Eight groups (483 P-51s) dispatched. Up 0930-1012 hours, down 1500-1530 hours. 433 sorties. One additional group of Ninth Air Force P-38s provided general area support (figures not included in above statistics - 34 P-38s dispatched, 31 sorties. No claims or losses). E/A Opposition: strong enemy defensive effort met in target area by approximately 200 e/a. Breakdown of opposition encountered by individual groups as follows:

- Group 1 - 15 plus Me-163s and 4 plus Me-109s encountered S and E of Merseburg. 2 Me-163s and 2 Me-109s destroyed in combats. One Me-163 came through bomber formation in target area and was caught by group leader on making 180 degree turn. Other Me-163 destroyed in similar manner near Leipzig.
- Group 2 - Approximately 20 FW-190s and Me-109s encountered W of Naumburg (S of Merseburg) attacking rear combat wings. Majority of e/a evaded in overcast. Claims: 1-2-2.
- Group 3 - 15 plus Me-109s and FW-190s dived through last combat wing in Mulhausen area (approximately 65 miles W of Merseburg). 9-0-0 claims in combats to deck.
- Group 4 - 100 s/e e/a sighted in gaggles of approximately 30 plus a/c each on SW course from Merseburg. Lead flights routed force, breaking it into elements of 2, 3 and 4 a/c. Claims: 18-1-2.
- Group 5 - 12 Me-109s sighted S of Merseburg. 2 e/a engaged to deck for claims of 1-0-1.
- Group 6 - 6 Me-109s and 2 FW-190s attacking bombers in vicinity of Mulhausen engaged for claims of 1-0-0. Two jet-propelled a/c seen N of Zeitz and vicinity of Einbeck.
- Group 7 - Trailing flight attacked 6 Me-109s making pass on bombers NW of Merseburg for claims of 1-0-1. 25 plus Me-109s engaged W of Naumburg after e/a had completed pass at bombers. 7 e/a destroyed. 4 jet-propelled e/a encountered before target but e/a evaded.
- Group 8 - 20 Me-109s from vicinity of Leipzig attacked bombers S of target. Group claims 3-0-4. One lone FW-190 destroyed on deck NW of target. 6 Me-163s seen in Naumburg area, evading due to high speed.

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority AAD 745005  
By LB NARA Date 7-18-07

S E C R E T

In ground strafing attacks three groups made claims of 0-0-3 gliders, 7-0-2 locomotives and 1-0-36 freight cars. Another group strafed A/F believed to be Wernigrode A/F claiming 25 a/e e/a destroyed on the ground. Total claims: 46-3-10 air, 25-0-0 ground. Losses: 15 P-51s (at least 3 a/e are believed safely down in Belgium).

Details of bomber attacks as follows:

<u>Assigned Targets</u>	<u>Dispatched</u>	<u>Attacking</u>	<u>Tonnage</u> <u>GP</u>	<u>Results</u>
Merseburg/Leuna (Syn. Oil Plant)	460	383	901.7	Unobserved
<u>Other Targets</u>				
Wolfenbuttel (5212N-1032E)		13	29.0	Unobserved
T/O Halle		23	56.5	Unobserved
6 T/Os		17	42.5	Unobserved
Totals	460	436	1029.7	

Second Force

Six combat wings (223 B-17s) dispatched against Merseburg/Leuna Synthetic Oil Plant. 215 a/e dropped 478.5 tons GP on primary and 3 T/Os at 1230-1243 hours from 26,800-29,000 feet. Leaflets dropped on Merseburg. All bombing on PFF. Weather: 7/10-10/10 over most of the Continent; 10/10 at target. Flak: moderate to intense and accurate at Merseburg. Battle Damage: 95 minor, 57 major. E/A Opposition: severe opposition encountered in target area. Four groups attacked by approximately 155 e/a, principally FW-190s and Me-109s including a few Me-163s. E/a made both frontal assaults and concentrated against stragglers. Claims: 30-33-25. Losses: 26 B-17s. (14 to e/a, 5 to AA, 1 to non-enemy, and 6 to unknown reasons).

Fighter Support: Four groups (245 P-51s) dispatched. Up 1007-1015 hours, down 1520-1635 hours. 209 sorties. E/A Opposition: heaviest opposition of operation sustained by this force. Breakdown by groups as follows:

- Group 1 - 200/300 Me-109s encountered near Weissenfels attacking last box of B-17s. Combats from 27,000 feet to deck. Claims: 10-0-2. 4 Me-109s caught in landing pattern over Batterfeld A/F. Claims: 2-0-0. 150 Me-109s and FW-190s attacking bombers ten miles south of target. Claims: 12-0-3. Additional claims from scattered combats: 4-1-0.
- Group 2 - Two waves of 50 plus e/a each (FW-190s and Me-109s) proceeding W from Dresden area engaged. Group split up force, preventing attacks on bombers. Claims: 38-1-4.
- Group 3 - 30 Me-109s intercepted in Weimar area for claims of 5-0-0. Two gaggles of 4-6 s/e e/a chased in target area for claims of 1-0-2.
- Group 4 - Combats with 100 plus e/a, predominantly Me-109s, in target area. Claims: 14-0-4.

S E C R E T

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority AWD 745005  
By L/S NARA Date 7-18-07

S E C R E T

Total claims: 86-2-15. Losses: 10 P-51s (at least 3 a/c are believed safely down in Allied territory).

Details of bomber attacks as follows:

<u>Assigned Target</u>	<u>Dispatched</u>	<u>Attacking</u>	<u>Tonnage</u> <u>GP</u>	<u>Results</u>
Merseburg/Leuna (Syn. Oil Plant)	223	210	469.5	Unobserved
<u>Other Targets</u>				
3 U/I T/Os	_____	<u>5</u>	<u>9.0</u>	Unobserved
Totals	223	215	478.5	

Third Force

Five combat wings (208 B-24s) dispatched against Bielefeld/Schildesche RR viaduct and M/Y. 191 a/c dropped 399.8 tons GP and 38.5 tons IB - 438.3 tons on the primaries and Bielefeld City at 1221-1242 hours from 20,000-24,000 feet. Leaflets dropped on Bielefeld. Weather: 3/10-4/10 undercast permitted some groups to bomb visually, others on Gee-H. Flak: Nil to meager, inaccurate. Battle Damage: 17 minor. E/A Opposition: One Me-262 made ineffective attack on straggler south of Brunswick. Two other Me-262s fired rockets from 150 yards. Three additional Me-262s sighted. Claims: nil. Losses: nil.

Fighter Support: Three groups (146 P-47s dispatched). Up 1022-1030 hours, down 1415-1429 hours. 143 sorties. 6 Me-262s and one Me-163 attacked straggling B-24 and fighter flights in target area, evading combat by outdistancing our a/c. Claims: nil. Losses: 2 P-47s.

Details of bomber attacks as follows:

<u>Assigned Targets</u>	<u>Dispatched</u>	<u>Attacking</u>	<u>Tonnage</u> <u>GP</u>	<u>IB</u>	<u>Results</u>
Bielefeld/Schildesche RR Viaduct	208	172	351.8	38.5	Very Good
<u>Other Targets</u>					
Bielefeld M/Y	_____	10	26.0	_____	Good
Bielefeld City	_____	9	22.0	_____	Good
Totals	208	191	399.8	38.5	

S E C R E T

DECLASSIFIED  
 Authority AAND 745005  
 By: B NARA Date 7-18-07

Fourth Force

Four combat wings (146 B-24s) dispatched against Castrop-Rauxel Synthetic Oil Plant. 131 a/c dropped 403 tons GP on the primary at 1213-1225 hours from 22,000-24,000 feet. All bombing on Gee-H. Weather: 10/10 undercast. Flak: nil to meager, inaccurate. Battle Damage: 23 minor. E/A Opposition: 4 Me-262s sighted in target area, one of which made ineffective attack. One Me-262 made weak pass in vicinity of Deventer. Claims: nil. Losses: 1 B-24 to AA.

Fighter Support: One group (40 P-47s) dispatched. Up 1026 hours, down 1429 hours. 37 sorties. Mission uneventful. No e/a seen. Claims: nil. Losses: nil.

Details of bomber attack as follows:

<u>Assigned Target</u>	<u>Dispatched</u>	<u>Attacking</u>	<u>Tonnage</u> <u>GP</u>	<u>Results</u>
Castrop-Rauxel (Syn. Oil Plant)	146	131	403.0	Unobserved

Fifth Force

Three combat wings (131 B-17s) dispatched against Sterkrade (Holten) Synthetic Oil Plant. 127 a/c dropped 302.6 tons GP on primary and one T/O at 1157-1254 hours from 26,800-29,000 feet. Sterkrade (Holten) bombed on Gee-H. Rheine M/Y bombed visually. Weather: 8/10-10/10 over primary. Flak: moderate to intense, fairly accurate. Battle Damage: 36 minor, 16 major. E/A Opposition: nil. Claims: nil. Losses: 1 B-17 to AA.

Fighter Support: One group (20 P-47s) dispatched. Up 1035 hours, down 1350 hours. 20 sorties. No e/a seen. Sweep of Groningen area resulted in claim of one locomotive destroyed. Claims: nil. Losses: nil.

Details of bomber attacks as follows:

<u>Assigned Target</u>	<u>Dispatched</u>	<u>Attacking</u>	<u>Tonnage</u> <u>GP</u>	<u>Results</u>
Sterkrade (Holten)(Syn. Oil Plant)	131	107	254.5	Unobserved
<u>Other Targets</u>				
Rheine M/Y		20	48.1	Fair
Totals )	131	127	302.6	

2. Fighter Escort

Seventeen groups (728 P-51s, 206 P-47s - 934 a/c) dispatched. Up 0930-1030 hours, down 1350-1635 hours. 842 sorties. One additional group of Ninth Air Force P-38s provided general area support in Merseburg target area without incident, (34 P-38s dispatched, 31 sorties, no claims, no losses). Groups escorting bombers against Merseburg/Leuna Synthetic Oil Plant encountered 500 plus s/e e/a and 15 Me-163s in target area. Groups escorting other forces met negligible opposition. Total claims: 132-5-25 air, 25-0-0 ground. Losses: 28 a/c (26 P-51s, 2 P-47s).

DECLASSIFIED  
 Authority AAD 745005  
 By SP NARA Date 7-18-07

S E C R E T

3. Fighter Sweeps

Nil.

4. Fighter Bombing

Nil.

5. Photo Reconnaissance

Five Mosquitoes dispatched. Two a/c completed experimental navigation for night photography. Two a/c dispatched on night photography flights over Kassel and Eisenach areas; one failed to return. One a/c successfully completed day photographic mission. Losses: one a/c.

6. Weather Reconnaissance

42 a/c (33 P-51s, 4 B-24s and 5 Mosquitoes) dispatched. P-51s scouted weather for bomber forces. Two early returns. All a/c returned safely. One B-24, dispatched from Azores, completed routine flight to home base, two B-24s completed flights over Atlantic to west of England. One B-24, overdue on routine flight to Azores. Mosquitoes completed special flights to Germany, Holland, Belgium and North Sea. Losses: one a/c (missing).

7. Air/Sea Rescue

Nil.

8. Special Operations

Thirty-seven a/c dispatched as follows:

8 P-51s and 2 P-47s dispatched as radio relays. A/c returned safely.

12 B-17s "screened" bomber force. A/c returned safely.

7 B-24s dispatched on RCM mission, jamming between 1815 - 1950 hours. A/c returned safely.

3 B-17s and 5 B-24s dropped leaflets in Holland. A/c returned safely.

C. INTELLIGENCE

1. Enemy Air Opposition

Strong enemy opposition was experienced by the 1st and 2nd Forces in today's bombing operation against Merseburg/Leuna Synthetic Oil Plant. Escorting fighters encountered approximately 500 s/e e/a plus at least 15 Me-163s, all of which attempted to intercept bombers in the Merseburg target area. The other forces on shallower targets were negligibly or not at all opposed.

Of the 1st Force escort, the 55th Fighter Group met the only large formation of e/a approximately 100, flying toward the bombers in three gaggles of 30 plus each at 32,000 feet, southeast of Merseburg. These were dispersed and attack on the bombers prevented. The 4th Fighter Group, sweeping on a wide front ahead

S E C R E T

DECLASSIFIED

Authority AAND 745005

By: B NARA Date 7-18-07



SECRET

of the bombers, encountered only 15 Me-163s in the target area which were also broken up. Other escort groups report engagements with two smaller e/a formations, 20 - 25 each shortly after the target.

The 2nd Force was more heavily opposed beginning with an engagement by the 352nd Fighter Group, north and east of Merseburg with two waves of 50 e/a each. The 364th Fighter Group at the same time, also encountered two waves of 50 e/a each in the target area and the 20th Fighter Group engaged the largest single concentration of e/a, 150 - 200, just south of Merseburg while they were attacking the rear bomber formation. This is the only engagement reported by the bombers when 40 - 60 e/a were able to make coordinated attacks lasting for 10 - 15 minutes.

Penetration and withdrawal routes were uneventful for both forces.

2. Flak

Merseburg/Leuna	- intense, very accurate
Bielefeld	- nil to meager, inaccurate
Castrop-Rauxel	- nil to meager, inaccurate
Sterkrade (Holtzen)	- moderate to intense, fairly accurate
Weissenfels	- meager to moderate, accurate
Naumburg	- meager to moderate, accurate

3. Observations

20 t/e a/c, possibly Me-410, on A/F near Bitterfeld.  
15 plus s/e e/a on A/F vicinity of Seehausen.  
3 Me-163s, 2 Me-109s and Ju-88 on Brandis A/F.  
30 plus s/e fighters, some with engines running, seen on eastern and southern edge of Erfurt/Bindersleben A/F.

4. Damage to Enemy Installations

Merseburg/Leuna - Unobserved Results

Dense undercast and effective smoke screen in operation at the target make it impossible to plot the main weight of bombs dropped. However, the following concentrations could be seen: (1) one concentration of GP bombs fell in open field bursting approximately  $2\frac{1}{4}$  miles southeast of the target. (2) Two concentrations of GP bombs fell into open field northeast of the town and in Klepzig, located  $6\frac{1}{2}$  miles east of Halle and  $12\frac{1}{2}$  miles northeast of Merseburg.

Combat crews of last group over the target reported smoke and flames through 14,000 feet of clouds.

Sterkrade (synthetic oil plant) - Unobserved Results

9/10 to 10/10 cloud cover covers entire area. Through one break in the clouds it is possible to see a small concentration of GP bombs bursting adjacent to the southeast corner of the target area. No assessment of damage can be made.

SECRET

S E C R E T

Rheine M/Y - Fiar Results

Two concentrations of GP bombs can be seen bursting in and adjacent to central portion of M/Y immediately south of the goods depot. There were twelve hits on rail lines in the M/Y. Two large multi-bay factory buildings northwest of the multiple track railroad bridge received three direct hits. The southernmost building which had received two hits at the northwest corner is approximately ten percent damaged. Slight damage will result to residences in the southern part of town.

Castrop/Rauxel - Unobserved Results

10/10 solid cloud.

Bielefeld M/Y and Viaduct - Very Good Results

Viaduct appears to be well hit, remainder of bombs seen to be striking built up part of city.

Bielefeld M/Y - Good Results

Viaduct three miles north northeast of the city was also hit with very good results. No further details.

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

DECLASSIFIED

Authority *AND 745005*

By *L* NARA Date *7-18-07*