

CONFIDENTIAL

MISSION # 128

FRANKFURT

4 FEBRUARY 1944

BPF V POD NR 3 F
 FROM: PODINGTON 050010A
 TO : COMBOMDIV ONE
 COMBAT WING FORTY
 ATT : A-2
 CONFIDENTIAL 92 BG F-82-D

NARRATIVE: This report covers both 92nd "A" and "B" Groups.

1. No leaflets carried as none were available.

2. "A" Group: "A" group crews reported attacking Frankfurt. This report is confirmed by the Group Navigator's route analysis. Strike photos confirm reports of 10/10 cloud undercast over the target. Bombing was accomplished by PFF technique and no results of bombing were observed. Two crews reported identification of Frankfurt Town through a sudden small break in the clouds.

"B" Group: "B" crews reported attacking Frankfurt. However the group navigator from his staff interrogation and analysis of navigators logs, reports "B" group attacked Bonn. Bombing was accomplished by PFF technique over 10/10 cloud cover. Strike photos confirm this could condition. No visual observation of bombing results were observed.

3. Enemy air opposition nil.

4. "A" and "B" Groups: At the enemy coast on way in seager black inaccurate gunfire which was continuously pointed was observed from over Flakkee Island. At Roermond seager black inaccurate gunfire was encountered. This gunfire was also continuously pointed. At Munchin-Gladback moderate inaccurate black bursts were encountered. The type of fire control was again continuously pointed fire. At Köln the group encountered intense black inaccurate gunfire which was continuously pointed. At Bonn intense accurate black and white bursts were encountered. Continuously pointed fire was the type of fire control used. From Frankfurt to the vicinity of Mainz accurate continuously pointed gunfire was

CONFIDENTIAL

1920

Mission # 128

Page 2

encountered. This gunfire was spasmodic, varying from meager, continuously pointed fire to intense barrage type fire. Both black and white bursts were seen in the vicinity of St. with, meager white bursts were observed. From the direction of Antwerp moderate black gunfire was observed. At Ghent meager black inaccurate continuously pointed gunfire was encountered. At Bruges moderate very accurate black and white gunfire was encountered. In this instance the white bursts appeared to explode high above the formation and the black bursts in the formation. Continuously pointed fire again was used. From both Dunkirk and Calais black gunfire was observed which was moderate.

5. "A" and "B" Groups: "B" group experienced 8/10 broken undercast from English coast to enemy coast, rising to 10-12,000 feet. From the enemy coast along route inland for 75 miles the undercast thickened to 9/10 at 12,000 feet. From that point to the target the undercast developed to 10/10 solid with only a rare break in the clouds. These clouds rose in some cases as high as 20,000 feet. Thin Cirrus lay above 20,000 feet but under the formation. PFF bombing technique required. 5-8/10 overcast over bases and most of England., rising to 19,000 feet delayed group rendezvous.

6. "A" Group: One A/C reported numerous huts and unidentified emplacements all along the coast between Ostend and 5124N 0330E, following shoreline. This A/C also reported what appeared to be an almost continuous chain of gun flashes along this same line. One A/C reported and A/D, barracks and "T" shaped buildings at Knocke. Two A/C reported spherical shaped balloons which were partially inflated, appearing like inverted tear drops. One of these A/C reported on such balloons at approximately 5020N 0700E at 30,000 feet with a gondola of other objects suspended below it. The other A/C reported a similar balloon over Brussels. Two of twelve objects, giving the appearance of large gas bags or cylinders were reported by several crew members as seen in the vicinity of 5027N 0500E at 1330 hours and lying below the altitude of our formation at about

Mission # 128



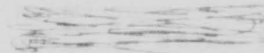
Page 3

CONFIDENTIAL

20,000 feet and at an estimated 5-8 miles off our port beam. These objects were collected in a gathered but haphazard formation. They appeared to be somewhat longer than ordinary barrage balloons and also of smaller diameter. Both ends of the objects observed presented elliptical curves such like a full plan view of an elliptical A/C wing tip. The longitudinal axis of these objects lay at 70-80 degrees from the horizontal. The tops appeared pointed in several directions and activity was noted. They appeared to be stationary and lying just above the cloud undercast. At 5145 N 0345E at 1322 hours and from 22,000 feet, one crew member observed, at a distance of about 10 miles, what ~~happened~~ appeared to be a shiny silver ball of several feet in diameter and shining by its own incandescence. This object was below the altitude of the observing A/C of 22,000 feet at a 15 degree drop from the horizontal. No smoke was seen nor was any cable or attachment observed. This object was observed to be stationary for 5 minutes after which clouds hid it from view. There were no clouds between this object and the ground although broken clouds covered the area. The degree of brilliance was compared to a very bright weather balloon with a metal sheen.

"B" group: One A/C reported a flak ship throwing up very accurate flak and located one mile off the enemy coast at Graveline. Two A/C reported 15 to 20 large river craft in the Rhine River 15 miles south of Mainz. Another A/C reported oil storage tanks concentrated in an area 3/4 of a mile square and located approximately 4 miles N.W. of Brussels. One A/C reported a balloon shaped like an inverted wind sock and suspended vertically, located in the target area. Four A/C reported a balloon, spherical in shape, black in color, and located at approximately 5015N 0600E at approximately 21,000 feet.

7. "A" and "B" Groups: Friendly fighter support was excellent resulting in no enemy A/C being encountered. A B-17 from the group following our formation was



CONFIDENTIAL

Mission # 128

Page 4

seen to be hit by flak and exploded at 26,500 feet over 5050N 0709E at 1129 hours. Another B-17 was seen on fire and wing fell off at 26,000 feet over 5019N 0822E at 1135 hours. Another B-17 from the group behind our formation was seen to explode at 25,000 feet over 5020N 0700E at 1152 hours. Another B-17 from a group with letter "H" on vertical stabilizer was seen on fire and losing altitude from 10,000 feet about 3 miles SE of Dunkirk at 1344 hours. This A/C was last seen heading back into France with fire out and under control at 1347 hours. Six chutes were reported to come from this A/C while it was on fire. A B-17, possibly the same A/C was reported to have crashed in a cloud of white smoke on the French coast at 1350 hours. Two of our aircraft are missing and unaccounted for and one of our A/C crash landed at Wathling, England, killing six.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

1923