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MISSION # 131

FRANKFORT

8 FEBRUARY 1944

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TO: COMBIX ONE AND COMBIX TWO: ATTN: 1-2

FROM: COMBIX (92).

MESSAGE SUMMARY:

1. No nickels were carried on this mission as none were available.
2. No bombs were dropped due to the group turn back.
3. Heavy air opposition was determined and in strength. About 30 E/A were seen. 20 ME-109's, 8 FW-190's and 2 ME-262's. These were seen in the vicinity of from 4900N 0240E to 5000N-0400E. The ME-109's were reported in a swarm and were camouflaged grey with grey-black markings and reddish crosses on the fuselage back of the cockpit and yellow wing tips. They attempted to achieve initial surprise by attacking our formation from high out of the sun from ten o'clock. Then the swarm broke up and two other types of attack were attempted. The first of these consisted of attacking our A/C from eleven thirty and twelve thirty o'clock high simultaneously. The second type of attack was from five o'clock high to seven o'clock low made by 3 E/A in tandem. The FW-190's seemed to be waiting around in the background for stragglers. Tentative claims: one E/A destroyed, two E/A probably destroyed and one damaged.
4. At Bayeux, Abbeville, Albery, St. Quentin, Terguier, and Transvilliers heavier black gunfire was encountered. This gunfire was continuously pointed. At the St. Quentin position bright silver flashes were observed bursting 500 feet to 1000 feet above the formation. One crew describes this gunfire as phosphorous colored.
5. The weather over the enemy coast and to point of turnback by this group was 6-8/10th clouds up to 16,000 feet. with extremely bright sun and unlimited visibility above cloud formation.

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6. One A/C reported construction works between Boullons and Albert. A very long trench was observed, approximately 400 yards long with a mound on the South side of the trench. Adjacent to the trench on the opposite side from the mound a rectangular road was seen surrounding four buildings.

One B-17 with no visible markings followed this formation for about five minutes. It was first seen at 4920N-0240E.

7. The 92nd Group assembly was normal over the 40th Combat Wing bunch at 14,000 feet. Combat Wing assembly was made as briefed on the Combat Wing Assembly line. The 92nd Group flying in high position. Departure from the English coast was made two minutes early. The lead A/C of this group failed to take off due to mechanical difficulties. The group leader transferred to the deputy lead A/C and take off and assembly proceeded as briefed. This lead A/C was forced to abort at the French coast. Due to the fact that the formation at the time was flying straight into the sun, there was some confusion before the leader of the high squadron was able to assume the group lead. During this time, contact with the remainder of the Combat Wing was lost, the group having proceeded to a point approximately thirty miles South of the briefed course. While attempting to rejoin the Combat Wing formation, the group was attacked by about thirty enemy fighters, and the leader of the high squadron was shot down together with one of his wing A/C.

At this point, the leader of the low squadron, who assumed the lead of the group, realizing that it would be impossible to rejoin the Combat Wing formation, decided to abandon the mission, and return to base. This was done by all remaining A/C, one additional being lost presumably to fighters enroute back.

A B-17 was seen to explode at 20,000 feet over 5010N-0430E at 1040 hours. Three chutes were seen before this A/C exploded. Another B-17 was seen a few minutes later diving into cloud cover at 8000 feet with an E/A on his tail. Fighter support was good even though this group was considerably off briefed course. Three of our A/C are missing.

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