

# SECRET

HEADQUARTERS  
NIGHTY BEYOND BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AFB E-A-2  
Office of the Operations Officer

AFC #557  
4 August 1944

SUBJECT: Report on Planning and Execution of Operations, 171st  
Mission, Merxwiller, France, 3 August 1944.

TO : Commanding Officer, 32nd Bombardment Group, AFC #557.

## 1. Comment on Planning and Execution.

a. The bomb loading for this operation was received from Headquarters 40th Combat Wing by Maj. McLaughlin at 0200 hours, 3 August 1944. The order called for 36 plus 3 spare B-17's to be loaded with 20 X 250 GP bombs each with 1/10 second nose fuse and 1/40 second tail fuse.

b. The Field Order was received from Headquarters 1st Bomb Division by Maj. McLaughlin at 0200 hours 3 August 1944. Flight plans and details of the mission were completed, briefing being set for 0515 hours and take-off time 1100 hours.

## 2. General Narrative.

c. Thirty-six (36) aircraft plus three (3) spares (No PFF A/C) from the 32nd Bomb Group took off, beginning at 1100 hours to form the complete 40th "C" force, consisting of three (3) groups. These aircraft assembled on the Lt. Farm Bunker.

d. The Lead Group departed the Lt. Farm Bunker at 1212 hours with the High and Low groups in combat wing formation. The briefed route over England was followed to Splasher #6 which was reached one (1) minute early. After departing Splasher #6, the formation made a 360 degree turn to the right in order to assume the proper position and interval in the division assembly. The 40th "C" Force departed the English coast north of Southwold at 1315 hours, three (3) minutes late. The enemy coast was entered at 1347 hours, 15,400 feet. At 1512 hours, a few minutes short of the briefed IP, the 40th "C" Formation made a 360 degree turn to get the proper interval from the Combat Wing ahead for the bombing run. After completing the turn, the Low Group seeing the wings ahead had still not started on their bomb run, established an immediate IP and made a visual run on the Primary target. The Low Group of 40th "C" released its bombs at 1523 hours from 19,700 feet (true) on a magnetic heading of 301 degrees. After bombs away the low group made three (3) 360's while waiting for the Lead and High groups to bomb.

e. The Lead and High Groups after completing the 360 continued on to the briefed IP. At this point these groups were still unable to set the proper interval to bomb because of the Combat Wings ahead; and therefore flew south of the IP, made a 180 degree turn and returned to the briefed IP. The Lead Group released

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visually on the Primary target at 1538 hours from a true altitude of 22,100 feet on a magnetic heading of 314 degrees. The High Group released its bombs on a visual run at 1540 hours, from 21000 feet on a magnetic heading of 320 degrees.

d. At 1548 hours, the 49th "C" force rallied and three (3) minutes later was attacked by about ten (10) enemy aircraft. Two of our aircraft were lost due to these attacks. The return route over the continent was flown according to flight plan and the coast was departed at 1700 hours. The English coast was entered at 1738 hours and the base reached at 1807 hours. The first aircraft to land had an engine on fire and the remaining aircraft were delayed about twenty (20) minutes while the burning aircraft was removed from the runway.

### 3. Aircraft Not Attacking.

a. A/C #4-8017 after receiving flak hits, the #3 engine began throwing oil and the gasoline tanks were damaged. #3 engine was feathered. Manifold pressure on #1 engine dropped to 24 inches. This a/c turned back at 1457 hours, 19000 feet at a position of 51 12'N - 06 23'E.

### 4. Lost Aircraft.

a. A/C #42-27893 in the Low Group and A/C #42-31405 in the High Group were lost due to attack by enemy aircraft at 1521 hours, 43 50'N - 07 00'E. Approximately fifteen (15) chutes were seen to come from these two aircraft.

### 5. Statistical Summary.

See attached.

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STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS  
DIVISION FIELD ORDER NO. 457

GROUP 92nd

DATE 3/8/44

LINE NO.		LEAD FORMATION		LOW FORMATION		HIGH FORMATION		FORMATION	
		REGULAR	PFF	REGULAR	PFF	REGULAR	PFF	REGULAR	PFF
1	No. of Aircraft Failing to Take Off	0		0		0			
2	No. of Aircraft Airborne	13		13		13			
3	No. of Aircraft Airborne Less Unused Spares	12		12		12			
4	No. of Aircraft Sorties	12		12		12			
5	No. of Aircraft Attacking	12		12		12			
	Name of Primary Target			Merkwiller					
	(a) No. Aircraft Attacking Primary Target	11		12		12			
	(b) No. Size and Type of Bomb	219 X 250 GP, 1 sky-marker		239 X 250 GP, 1 sky-marker		228 X 250 GP, 1 sky-marker			
7	Name of Secondary Target								
	(a) No. Aircraft Attacking Secondary Target								
	(b) No. Size and Type of Bomb								
8	Name of Target of Opportunity (T.O.)								
	(a) No. Aircraft Attacking T.O.								
	(b) No. Size and Type of Bomb								
9	Name of Target of Opportunity (T.O.)								
	(a) No. Aircraft Attacking (T.O.)								
	(b) No. Size and Type of Bomb								
10	No. of Aircraft Not Attacking								
11	No. of Aircraft Lost								

One A/C of High Group failed to release 10 of its bombs.  
One A/C of High Group carried only 19 X 250 GP due to defective A-4 release.