

351st BG

General narrative

SUBJECT: Operational narrative.

TO: Commanding officer, AAF station 110, APO 557, U.S. Army.

1. Date of mission: 24 December, 1944.

a. Targets attacked: the following targets in Germany were attacked by one or more aircraft: Biblis, Kaiserslautern, Koblenz, Frankfurt-Rhein-Main, Merzhauzen and Giessen.

b. Position: The spoofing force put up from home base flew alone. the other aircraft participating in the mission flew with several other groups in filling out formations.

c. Force:

No. of Flew Aircraft	with	Attacked	Bombs
26	351 st GP-	-	
16	384 th GP	Biblis	320 x 250
1	457 th GP	Koblenz	12 x 500
2	384 th GP	Kaiserslautern	40 x 250
2	91 st GP	Merzhauzen	23 x 500
1	303 rd GP	Merzhauzen	12 x 500
1	306 th GP	Giessen	11 x 500
1	305 th GP	Giessen	12 x 500
2	493 rd GP	Frankfurt-Rhein-Main	76 x 100

d. Lead Teams: Spoofing force:

Leader:	Major Leonard B. Hoper
Pilot:	1 st James M. Purcell
Navigator:	1 st Lt John W. Bury
Bombardier:	1 st Lt Alan B. Reed

Biblis Force:

Leader:	1 st Lt. Wendell Secrest
Pilot:	2 nd Lt. Elmer G. Johnson
Navigator:	1 st Lt. Howard S. Love
Bobardier:	1 st Lt. Leonard L. Schuler

2. Narrative: (Spoofing force)

a,b. Assembly: The twenty-six aircraft comprising of the spoofing force made good the assembly over the kings cliff buncher at the briefed altitude of 7,000 feet.

c. Route over England: The briefed route was closely followed over England. A delayed take-off due to fog had made it impossible to reach the briefed points at the previously planned times. The formation, however, flying in three-ship elements, was able to make good the briefed points after allowing for the delay in take-off.

d. Division Assembly line: There was no division assembly. Departure from the coast was made from Clacton at an altitude of 10,000

feet. Close contact with Cycle relay was maintained. In accordance with the instructions of cycle relay, a turn to the left of the briefed course was made in mid-channel and bombs were dropped at 52°23'N - 02°55'E. It would have been impossible to have continued the briefed route to the target and attacked as had previously been planned.

e. Flight to base: After releasing its bombs in the channel, the formation took up a direct heading towards Felixstowe. After crossing the coast, the formation flew directly to base, only to find the weather conditions such that ships could not land. The formation was diverted to Ridgewell and landed there at 1719.

3. Narrative: (Other attacking Aircraft)

a. Targets attacked: Sixteen aircraft of this group flew as high squadron and two aircraft flew in the lead squadron (384th Group). The high squadron attacked the airfield at Biblis, Germany, while the two aircraft flying with the lead squadron followed it on the attack on Kaiserslautern. Three aircraft flew with the 401st group and attacked Koblenz, Germany. Two aircraft flying with the 91st group attacked Merzhausen, Germany. One aircraft flew with the 457th group and attacked Koblenz. Merzhausen was attacked by one aircraft flying with the 303rd group. Giessen was attacked by one aircraft flying with the 305th group and by one flying with the 306th group.

b. Diversion bases: Due to the extremely bad weather in the area of the base, it was impossible to permit any of the aircraft to land at base. As a result, all aircraft were diverted, forty-seven (47) landing at Ridgewell, five (5) at Knettishall, and one (1) each at Downham Market, Debach, and Castle Camp.

c. Description of the bombing run: The target at Biblis was attacked by the 351st high squadron flying on the lead squadron composed of aircraft of the 384th group and two ships from the 351st group. The high squadron attacked the assigned primary, with the squadron lead bombardier performing his own sighting operation. The briefed turn was made at the I.P. Airspeed on the bomb run was slowed to 140 in order to stay behind the lead squadron. The C-1 pilot was not used.

d. Comments: No aircraft were lost. No enemy aircraft were encountered. Reports from the aircraft attacking the various targets indicated that flak was generally moderate and accurate. Good visual bombing conditions prevailed over all of the targets bombed by this group. All bombing was done visually and what PFF aircraft were used, were used as navigational aids. Fighter support on this mission was generally good.

NARRATIVE TELETYPE REPORT, MISSION OF 24 DEC., 1944, 351st BOMB GROUP

1. No leaflets were carried on today's mission.

2. Sixteen A/C of this group flew a high squadron and two A/C flew in the lead squadron of a composite group which bombed Biblis A/F in Germany. The high squadron dropped its entire load on the A/F in an effort to post-hole the field. Based on incomplete reports results of this bombing are poor with the main pattern falling to the northwest of the field. The two A/C flying with the lead squadron went on with that squadron to bomb the secondary at Kaiserslautern M/Y. there are no photographs of this bombing but visual observations indicate good results. Eight of our A/C were scheduled to fly with a group from Deenethorpe and three of these A/C plus one A/C

of this group which took off from Honington bombed the M/Y's at Koblenz with that group. Results of this bombing were unobserved because of smoke in the area. There are no photographs. The other 5 A/C joined other groups when they were unable to form with Deenethorpe and bombed the following targets: three on Merzhausen A/F with appearantly very good results as per visual observations; and two on Giessen A/F also with reported good results. There are no photographs of this bombing. Two of our A/C flew with the 493rd bomb group and bombed the Frankfurt/Rhein Main A/F with good visual results reported.

3. No enemy A/C were encountered and no claims are being submitted.

4. The first flak encountered by our crews who flew to Biblis was reported as scattered along the line from 5020N 0550E to 5013N 0621E; it was meager and accurate. There were various reports of moderate accurate flak in the area Spa-Odighe-Julich. Moderate accurate flak was encountered at Zell and Koblenz. There was meager fairly accurate flak at Giessen and at the target (Biblis) intense accurate flak was encountered in the vicinity of Worms and North Mannheim. On the way out moderate accurate continuous following was encountered along a line beginning in the vicinity of Kaiserslautern and continuing approximately to 4905N 0742E. Our planes that bombed Koblenz encountered meager to moderate accurate flak at the target.

5. Good visual bombing conditions prevailed over all of the targets bombed by this group.

6. There are no observations of military importance at this time.

7. All bombing was done visually and what PFF A/C were used, were used as navigational aids. Since none of our A/C led formations which bombed targets no contact was made with the scouting force. Fighter support for this mission was generally good. None of our A/C was lost from the day's operations.