

384th BG

General narrative

SUBJECT: Concise narrative of 384th bombardment group aircraft flying from diverted bases on 24 December, 1944.

TO: Commanding officer, AAF station No.106, A.P.O. 557.

1. Major T.N. Hutchinson with twelve (12) of our aircraft who were diverted to Horham on 23 December, 1944, took off from said base on 24 December, 1944, to form the lead squadron of the 13th "F" group to attack an airfield approximately six (6) miles northeast of Worms. All assemblies were made normally and without difficulty. We left control point 1 on time, but due to the fact that the division appeared to be flying at S.O.P. minus 10 on the route in, we were four (4) minutes late at control point 2 and twelve (12) minutes late at control point 3. Due to this slow airspeed, the division line got as far as eighteen (18) miles off course. On the route in, we received moderate and very accurate flak at the front lines just north of St Vith, moderate and very accurate flak at Giessen, and meager and accurate flak at Billengen.

At the I.P. of the primary target, we started a visual bombing run. However, although the target could be seen with the naked eye, thick haze plus the fact that we were heading directly into the sun, prevented the bombardier of picking up the target in his bombsight. We therefore turned off this target and proceeded to the secondary target (Kaiserslautern M/Y, Germany). Due to bas visibility and haze, we started a P.F.F. bombing run but approximately three (3) minutes before the target, it was picked up visually and bombs were away at 1459 hours from 25,000 feet on a magnetic heading of 167 degrees. Results were observed to be good. Weather over the target was C.A.V.U. and we were engaged by moderate and very accurate anti-aircraft.

We made a left turn off the target and proceeded home about five (5) miles right of course to stay out of propwash. No enemy opposition was encountered on the route back, and we were not attacked by enemy aircraft on the entire mission. At the English coast, we contacted Cycle relay and they advised us to return to our home buncher, which we did. We circled the buncher a couple of times whereupon we were further advised that we were being diverted to Sudbury. All of our aircraft landed at this base. A total of thirteen (13) sorties were flown and all attacked the secondary target.

Fighter escort for this squadron was good on the entire mission.

2. Two (2) of our aircraft which were diverted to Ridgewell on 23 December, 1944, took off from said base on 24 December, 1944 and attacked the primary target (Steinback Airfield, Germany) with this group.

3. One (1) of our aircraft which was diverted to EYE on 23 December, 1944, took off from said base on 24 December, 1944 and attacked the primary target (Airfield three (3) miles south of Frankfurt, Germany) with this group.

4. One (1) of our aircraft which was diverted to Great Ashfield on 23 December, 1944, took off from said base on 24 December, 1944 and proceeded to assemble with aircraft of the 384th bombardment group over our home base. He filled in with the lead squadron of the 41st "C" group and attacked the primary target (Kirch Gons Airfield, Germany).

5. A total of seventeen (17) operational sorties were flown by aircraft of the 384th bombardment group from diverted bases on 24 December, 1944.

SUBJECT: Air commander's narrative, 41st "C" group, for mission flown on 24 December, 1944.

TO: Commanding officer, AAF station No.106, A.P.O. 557.

The following is a dictated narrative by Major A.C. Strickland, 41st "C" group air commander plus additional statements by Captain C.M. Bishop, low squadron leader for mission flown on 24 December, 1944:

1. Twenty-four (24) aircraft (no spares) of the 384th bombardment group took off between 1010 and 1054 hours to form the lead and low squadrons of the 41st "C" group to attack the Kirch Gons airfield, Germany. Each squadron consisted of twelve (12) aircraft with no spares. The lead aircraft of these two (2) squadrons were equipped with P.F.F. Aircraft from the 379th bombardment group composed the high squadron of the 41st "C" group. All navigational data for this narrative was taken from the log of the group lead navigator.

a.	Number of A/C taking off (no spares):	24 *1
	Number of A/C attacking (any target):	24 *1
	Number of A/C not attacking	0
	Number of A/C returned to bases in England:	24 *1
	Number of A/C unaccounted for:	0
	Number of A/C known missing:	0
	Number of sorties flown:	24 *1

b. Due to inclement weather, four (4) aircraft were forced to land away: A/C 8027 (Capt. Bishop, low squadron Air Commander) landed away at Wratting Common, one (1) aircraft landed away at Ridgewell, and two (2) aircraft landed away at Sudbury.

2. None of our aircraft is missing.

3. Squadron and group assembly was accomplished without difficulty at 1204 hours, 51°41'N. -01°40'E. , 10,000 feet. Wing assembly was good and accomplished over Halsted at 1143 hours, 10,000 feet. One (1) group of the 1st combat wing did not arrive and we had to move up into #3 slot in the division line instead of the briefed #4 position. We therefore departed the English coast two (2) minutes late over Clacton at 1153 hours, 10,000 feet where the division also assembled.

4. On the route out, climbs and air speeds were S.O.P. We crossed the Belgian coast at 1228 hours, 51°09'N. -02°45'E. , 16,000 feet. The route in was flown as briefed but we lost nine (9) minutes over the continent due to a wind change. We encountered no flak on the route in and no enemy aircraft were observed on the entire mission.

5. At the I.P. , the squadron took interval for a visual run as informed by Buckeye-White. On the bomb run, two (2) squadrons of the 1st combat wing were criss-crossing our course giving us quite a bit of prop wash. One (1) of these squadrons was on a heading of 60 degrees and we were flying an 80 degree course and were therefore flying a collision course. However, we did get our bombs away visually at 1431 hours from 22,000 feet on a magnetic heading of 84 degrees. The primary target (Kirch Gons airfield, Germany) was attacked with good results. Weather over the target was C.A.V.U. and we encountered no flak.

Our low squadron also made a visual run releasing at 1431 hours from 21,100 feet on a magnetic heading of 80 degrees. Bombing results were good.

6. A very sharp left turn was made off the target and we immediately re-assembled with our low squadron and slowed down to permit the high squadron to catch up with us, however, they never did. We flew the briefed course back to

England without incident, departing the Belgian coast over Ostend at 1529 hours, 14,000 feet and recrossed the English coast over Felixstowe at 1553 hours, 5,000 feet. On the route back, we gained fifteen (15) minutes due to another shift in winds.

7. Fighter escort was good on the entire mission. Buckeye-White notified us that the primary target was open and could be bombed visually. This information was accurate.

8. There are no further comments or suggestions.

(* A/C 8752 (Lt. Klatt, Pilot) which landed away at Great Ashfield on 23 December, 1944, assembled and flew the entire mission with the 41st "C" group. This makes a total of twenty-five (25) aircraft of the 384th bombardment group attacking the primary target.)

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