

# 452<sup>nd</sup> BG

## General narrative

SUBJECT: Operation's officer's report of mission 24 December 1944, "A" squadron.

TO: Commanding officer, 452<sup>nd</sup> bombardment group (H)

1. The 45<sup>th</sup> "C" group formed north of the 452<sup>nd</sup> buncher and could have caused trouble, the 452<sup>nd</sup> was forced to stay away from the buncher. Assembly was as briefed. Wing and division assemblies were as briefed. Group formation was excellent, squadron was excellent after our fighter attack. Climb to bombing altitude was as briefed. enemy coast was reached on time, a great deal of "S" ing was done after crossing coast, last 35 minutes. Weather was as briefed. Route into I.P., I.P into target as briefed, briefed heading was flown. Fen-out of squadrons five minutes before I.P. was accomplished with no difficulty. The 452<sup>nd</sup> group rally was made as briefed, descent was not as briefed, due to shortage of gas, started descent later than briefed and at a slower rate of descent.

2. Friendly fighters were not visible to this group, could not contact support when it was needed.

3. This mission was planned with the run from I.P. to target in the sun. It was impossible for bombardier to .... On the target in sight, because of the glare.

4. Of the 452<sup>nd</sup> "A" squadron, 10 A/C plus 2 PFF A/C, scheduled and airborne. 2 A/C aborted prior to reaching English coast out. B&M, 1 A/C aborted over Belgium - Personnel, 1 A/C aborted 5010N-0702E - enemy action, 1 A/C aborted 5011N - 0647E - personnel. 4 A/C plus 2 PFF, attacked and bombed primary target - visual. Credit given for 9 sorties.

SUBJECT: Operations officer's report of mission 24 December 1944, "B" squadron.

to: Commanding officer, 452<sup>nd</sup> bombardment group (H).

1. Group assembly was effected as briefed, except B-24's formed at same altitude. Wing and division column was as briefed. Formation for both group and squadron was good, usual tendency of rear ships to struggle. Climb to bombing altitude was as briefed, except for considerable "S" ing on on part of groups ahead, causing us to do the same.

route from enemy coast in as briefed, except for "S" ing noted above. Also somewhat north of course. Visibility was very good except for ground haze in target area. I.P. into the target was as briefed, bombing done by squadrons - individually, ground haze and run being made into the sun. Made target difficult to pick up with sight. Briefed heading from I.P. to target was flown. Rally was quickly effected by the high squadron, lost 1,000' after target. Route out as briefed except rate of descent which was approximately 160 .PM due to loss gasoline supply.

2. Friendly fighter support was very good, as briefed.

3. Target run should be planned to give the bombardier a break. Had run been made on reciprocal course, results would have been greatly improved. Wing and division assembly line might be made to follow English coast from some point south of the wash to eliminate interference from other wings and divisions forming inland. Group could fly due east to coast.

4. Of the 452<sup>nd</sup> "B" squadron, 12 A/C plus 1 PFF A/C, scheduled and airborne.

12 A/C plus 1 PFF, attacked and bombed primary target - visual; 1 A/C - 2 bombs on target of opportunity - R.P. credit given for 13 sorties.

SUBJECT: Operations officer's report of mission 24 December 1944, "C" squadron.

TO: Commanding officer, 452<sup>nd</sup> bombardment group (H).

1. Assembly was as briefed, 96<sup>th</sup> formation circled over our field, interfering twice with our formation, however there was plenty of open space for us to the North-West if our leader had chosen. Other groups assembled and left on time, on course, as briefed, no difficulties. Our position was 16<sup>th</sup> in the division column. Division leader was 2 or 3 minutes late at CP #1 causing groups behind to push together, making them "S" to hold interval. Group formation was fair, lead squadron formation was very poor - too many aborts and too much radio conversation in regard to their aborting. Climb was made very easy. Climb was not begun at coast out point, but a few minutes later. Green began climb then levelled off to wait for red to begin climb. From enemy coast to target - flight plan was as briefed, except being late. Flak was more than expected, flak was encountered at the battle line. Visibility was good, both downward and at altitude. No deviations of flight plan except some "S" ing. Squadrons over the target were A, B and C. Interval was approximately 1 minute. Briefed heading was flown. No evasive action was necessary. Target was little difficult to pick up. No unusual occurrences. Rally was effected very good. Low and high reached the lead about the same time. Rally was made quicker than briefed. Route from target was as briefed and let down the same. It was according to briefed plan.

2. Fighter support was as briefed. The fighters did not give as close support as usual. Enemy fighters made attacks on the "B" squadron and other flew out of range to our left.

3. Express on crew the necessity of good formation. When fighters were sighted everyone flew tight so they can do it all the time. Stop the arguments over VHF, especially on return to base.

4. Of the 452<sup>nd</sup> "C" squadron, 12 A/C plus 1 PFF A/C, scheduled and airborne. 1 A/C aborted prior to I.P., KNE(?), attacked and bombed target of opportunity - cologne M/Y. 11 A/C plus 1 PFF, attacked and bombed primary target. Credit given for 13 sorties.

SUBJECT: Operations officer's report of mission 24 December 1944, "D" squadron.

TO: Commanding officer, 452<sup>nd</sup> bombardment group (H).

1. Assembly was good and as briefed, left on course, on time. 45 "A" group assembled over buncher with 45 "D" group and was in proper position throughout entire assembly. The taskforce as it left CP #1 seemed very good and the 45 "A" group was in proper position and interval. Formation was fair, due to ?HE?, this squadron consisted mostly of new crews and an number of war weary ship. Climb started at CP #1, was 2000' below brief altitude at CP #3 because the group ahead levelled off for a time to give his high squadron chance to catch up. Our group continued its position in wing formation. considerable "S" ing of all groups from English coast into target, probably started by division leader by evading flak areas. Time at target was 35 minutes late due to wind change from briefed. The "A" squadron, 45 "E" group failed to drop on primary target or secondary and continued on to target of opportunity. High and low squadrons

rallied after target, continuing on course. Lead squadron joined bomber stream following 45 "F" group back to continent. Order of groups was 45 "E" group. Bombed by squadrons in order of A, B and C. Good and proper interval was held by both group and squadrons. Fan-out was very good, heading from I.P. to target as briefed. Lead group failed to bomb primary because of the bad visibility bombing into the sun. failed to drop on secondary because the bombardier saw that bombs were not going to hit the target area. Bombed target of last resort -visual. 45 "E" lead squadron did not rally but held altitude and continued to target of last resort, high and low squadron descended 1,000' off target as briefed and continued on briefed route out. Lead squadron, after bombing target, fell into bomber stream, following 45 "F" group out. Route out flown as briefed.

2. Friendly fighter support was very good, none were observed in and around the target area.

3. it is felt that faulting planning occurred in having bomb run into sun.

4. Of the 452<sup>nd</sup> "D" squadron, 10 A/C plus 2 PFF A/C, scheduled and airborne. 1 A/C aborted - 5018N-0620E - enemy action. 1 PFF A/C MIA before target - direct hit, 5015N-0600E. 1 A/C attacked primary target - 9 bombs, 3 bombs - target of opportunity - 4935N-0845E. 2 A/C attacked and bombed target of last resort - Niskarsuln??. 6 A/C plus 1 PFF, attacked and bombed target of last resort - Hellbroun. Credit given for 12 sorties.

SUBJECT: Operations officer's report of mission 24 December 1944, "E" squadron.

TO: Commanding officer, 452<sup>nd</sup> bombardment group (H).

1. Group assembly was effected without incident. The "E" group was three minutes late at the wing assembly point, but time was made up by cutting short the route. no difficulties were encountered. The assembly at CP#1 was as briefed except our interval was about 1 minute too close. This was corrected by "S" ing and flying echelon to the left at CP#2. Our position was the 5<sup>th</sup> group in the wing as briefed. Group formation was good. Squadron formation was loose until the preceding group was attacked by fighters. The climb and course to bombing altitude was as briefed. The route in was as briefed. The visibility was good except for some thin low stratus clouds. the target was difficult to find due to the low haze and reflection of the sun. briefed route was flown into target. The high squadron reached target first as the lead was off course. The order of squadron from I.P. was Lead, high and low. The lead squadron failed to attack the primary target, therefore attacked secondary. The rally was made good only by the high and low squadrons because the lead squadron got behind at the target. We lost 1,000' after leaving the target, rallied with the low squadron. Started let down after crossing the battle line, taking briefed route out. Let down was made all the way, 160 MPH - 200 ft/min, in order to conserve fuel.

2. Friendly fighter support was good. They met us as briefed and left the formation after the rally point.

3. This target could have been more successfully attacked if the route planning had not been into the sun.

4. Of the 452<sup>nd</sup> "E" squadron, 12 A/C plus 1 PFF A/C, scheduled and airborne. 1 A/C aborted 5032N-0620E - ????. 1 A/C over target, failed to attack - ???, 1 A/C

over target, failed to attack - personnel. 9 A/C plus 1 PFF, attacked and bombed primary target - visual. Credit given for 13 sorties.

SUBJECT: Operations officer's report of mission 24 December 1944, "F" squadron.

TO: Commanding officer, 452<sup>nd</sup> bombardment group (H).

1. Assembly was effected quickly. Vampire Fox leader left the base about a minute early putting us ahead of vampire Easy. Fox leader "S"ed into position behind Vampire Easy. Group, wing and division assemblies were as briefed. Lead and low squadrons were in good position, but we were straggling behind. Climb to bombing altitude was as briefed. Crossed enemy coast on time. After crossing enemy coast the leader "S"ed a great deal. Haze on the ground and the sun being at 12 o'clock to us made the target difficult to pick up. Enemy coast into I.P., I.P. into target as briefed. The briefed heading was flown. Fan-out was executed prior to the I.P. with no unusual difficulty. The bombardier was unable to pick up the primary target, making it necessary to bomb the secondary target. Rally was as briefed. A descent of 1,000' was made between the target and the rally point. Route out was as briefed. Descent was at a slower rate due to the shortage of gas.

2. Friendly fighter support was good.

3. Axis of attack should have been planned so the sun wouldn't be at 12 o'clock on the bomb run.

4. Of the 452<sup>nd</sup> "F" squadron - 1<sup>st</sup> division A/C - 13 A/C plus 2 PFF A/C, scheduled and airborne. Attacked and bombed secondary target. All A/C returned to home base.