

486th BG

General narrative

SUBJECT: Report of operations officer - mission of 24 December 1944 - M/Y - Gros Ostheim, Germany.

TO: Commanding Officer, 486th Bombardment Group (H).

486th "A" Squadron (4th "F" Group)

1. General narrative: The 486th group scheduled thirteen (13) A/C (lead and deputy lead PFF A/C included) to fly as the lead squadron of the 4th "F" group. Take-off was as scheduled from 0914 to 0934 hours followed by climb to assembly altitude of 5,500', over buncher #22. The squadron was completely formed at 1020 hours and the high and low squadrons were in position on "A" squadron one (1) minute later. The first point on the wing assembly line (buncher #22) was made on time at 1025 hours. From here, the group proceeded to make good the remaining points in the wing assembly line. Buncher #22 was crossed at 1055 hours two (2) minutes early and the English coast was crossed at 1107 hours, one (1) minute early at altitude of 7,500'.

Assembly with the other groups in the wing was difficult because the 4th "B" group was slow and the 4th "F" group slightly fast. Considerable "S" ing was necessary after departing CP 1 and the group did not correctly position itself until well over the channel. The Belgium coast was crossed at 1150 hours, ten (10) minutes late. Course was right of briefed and position in bomber stream was assumed before reaching CP 3.

Climb to bombing altitude was begun after the English coast was departed and continued until 22,000' altitude was reached at CP 3. A near briefed course was followed from here on to the I.P. at the I.P., a right turn was made, and the group peeled off into squadron formation to make a visual bomb run on the primary target. Thick haze and sun glare prevented the target from being picked up in time, and the squadrons (high and low trailing) proceeded to a selected I.P. for the secondary target. Ground haze and sun glare made identification difficult, but bombs were dropped at 1450 hours. Rally was effected with little difficulty (1,000' altitude being lost between target and R.P.), and the group proceeded on near briefed route out. Descent to minimum altitude was made as planned and the Belgian coast crossed at 1616 hours. Normal landings were effected from 1650 to 1750 hours.

Formation was generally good. However, interval between groups was too small causing confusion when groups were trying to get into proper position in the bomber stream. No enemy A/C were encountered, and flak was moderate and generally inaccurate in the target area. Fighter support was good.

2. Aircraft not attacking: Thirteen (13) A/C (including two (2) PFF A/C) were dispatched with "A" squadron. A/C #891 was unable to assemble with "A" squadron and joined the 486th "D" squadron of the 4th "C" group. A/C #891 did not attack because the lead could not pick up the target and returned its bombs to base. A/C #859 and #910 left the formation early and attacked targets of opportunity. All other A/C attacked the secondary target visually.

3. Lost aircraft: no A/C were lost on today's mission.

486th "B" Squadron

1. General narrative: Fourteen (14) A/C (including two (2) PFF A/C) were scheduled to fly as the 486th "B" squadron. Take-off was as planned from 0915 to 0935 hours, and by 1020 hours, the squadron had formed and was in position

on the lead. No difficulties were encountered during assembly.

The lead squadron was followed on to the I.P. and at that point, the squadron peeled off and made a visual run on the target. Haze and sun glare prevented the target from being easily identified but the target was picked up and synchronization completed. However, no bombs were dropped on the primary target because of a bombsight salvo switch malfunction. Still in trail behind "A" squadron, "B" squadron proceeded to the secondary target, turned on the selected I.P. and made a visual run on the target. After bombs away on the squadron lead's release at 1451 hours, rally was effected as planned, and the position was again resumed in the group formation. For a general narrative of the mission, as flown, refer to the above report of the 486th "A" squadron.

2. Aircraft not attacking: there were fourteen (14) A/C (including two (2) PFF A/C) dispatched with "B" squadron. A/C #937 attacked the primary target, and the rest of squadron proceeded to the secondary target, attacking visually.

3. Lost aircraft: No A/C were lost on the day's mission.

486th "C" squadron

1. General narrative: Fourteen (14) A/C including two (2) PFF A/C were scheduled to fly as the "C" squadron on today's mission. Take-off was as scheduled from 0921 to 0946 hours, followed by climb to assembly altitude where position was taken on the lead squadron at 1021 hours with no difficulties being encountered.

The low squadron followed the lead on on in to the target, and at the I.P., prepared to make a visual bomb run on the primary target. Haze and sun glare prevented target from being picked up in time and the squadron (still in trail) proceeded to the selected I.P. for the secondary target and made a visual bomb run. Bombs were dropped on the squadron lead's release at 1454 hours (about forty-five (45) seconds late because the bomb bay doors on the lead A/C were not fully open). Rally was effected as planned and position in group maintained on route back. For a general narrative of the mission as flown, refer to the report above for the 486th "A" squadron

2. Aircraft not attacking: there were fourteen (14) A/C including two (2) PFF A/C dispatched with "C" squadron. A/C #970 left the formation early and attacked a target of opportunity. All other A/C attacked the secondary target, visually.

3. Lost aircraft: No A/C were lost on today's mission.

486th "D" squadron

4th "D" (Composite 94th, 486th, 487th) group

1. General narrative: The 486th group scheduled twelve (12) A/C (including two (2) PFF A/C) to fly as the high squadron of the 4th "C" group. Take-off was as scheduled from 0905 to 0948 hours. The squadron was not completely formed (two A/C were still missing from the formation) when the 4th "C" group leader was joined at 1018 hours. First point on the wing assembly line (buncher #22) was crossed at 1022 hours, three (3) minutes late. Timings were nearly perfect on balance of assembly line, and proper position was assumed in the wing formation. After departing CP#1 at 1105 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours three and one-half (3 $\frac{1}{2}$) minutes late at an altitude of 9,500', climb to bombing altitude was begun. The Belgian coast was crossed at 1144 hours, ten (10) minutes late. A near briefed course was flown in to the I.P. where the group peeled off for bombing by squadrons. The mickey set failed at the I.P., and a visual run on the primary target was planned. Just before the time of release, the bombardier's gyro tumbled and bombardier was Unable to complete the run. A visual run was made on the secondary target after a turn off a selected I.P. Ground haze and sun glare obscured the area, preventing

the bombardier from identifying the target of opportunity. None could be found, and the squadron rejoined the 4th "C" group and proceeded on route out.

A near briefed course was followed on route out. Let down to minimum altitude was normal, and the Belgian coast was crossed at 1614 hours. From Ostende, a direct route was taken for base, and landings were effected without incident from 1655 to 1708 hours.

2. Aircraft not attacking: twelve (12) A/C, including two (2) PFF A/C, were dispatched with "D" squadron. A/C #891 (not included in the above figures) joined the formation because it could not find its own 4th "F" group. All A/C failed to attack the primary target because the gyro tumbles just prior to bomb release and the secondary target because ground haze and sun glare prevented target from being picked up. All A/C received sorties and bombs were returned to base.

3. Lost aircraft: No A/C were lost on today's mission.