

General narrative

Headquarter  
Ninety first bombardment group (H) Army Air Forces  
APO 557

26 December 1944.

SUBJECT: Report of Operations Officer, Mission 24 December 1944.

TO: Commanding Officer, 91<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group (H) APO 557

1. Targets assigned: Kirch Gons A/D, Germany (1<sup>st</sup> "C" Group)  
Merzhauzen A/D, Germany (1<sup>st</sup> "D" Group)  
Targets attacked: Kirch Gons A/D, Germany (1<sup>st</sup> "C" Group)  
Merzhauzen A/D, Germany (1<sup>st</sup> "D" Group)

2. Fifty-two aircraft, including four PFF aircraft, formed the lead squadron of the 1<sup>st</sup> "C" Group and the entire 1<sup>st</sup> "D" Group, with thirteen aircraft in each squadron. Forty-nine aircraft including all four PFF aircraft, attacked their assigned primary targets; three aircraft failed to attack. No losses were sustained.

3. General narrative, lead squadron, 1<sup>st</sup> "C" Group: Thirteen aircraft, including one PFF, took off from 1031-1044 hours to form the lead squadron of the 1<sup>st</sup> "C" Group, the low and high squadrons being furnished by the 398<sup>th</sup> and 381<sup>st</sup> groups respectively. The take-off was delayed by ground fog and by the large number of aircraft taking off from this base, including a number of aircraft of 303<sup>rd</sup> bombardment Group. The assembly was made at 11000 Feet over Bassingbourn Buncher. Departure from the base was on time and on course, and immediately thereafter the formation let down to 10,000 feet as briefed. The 1<sup>st</sup> "B" group was late in taking off because of weather, so this group moved in that position, immediately in trail of the 1<sup>st</sup> "A" Group. The English Coast was departed on time and on course at Clacton.

After leaving the English coast the formation started its climb to bombing altitude, 22,000 feet. The continental coast crossed at Ostend at 1228 Hours at 17,500 Feet, and the formation continued its SOP climb on course, with an excellent interval being maintained. Before the formation arrived at the I.P., a message from the scouting force reported that the target weather conditions were excellent for visual bombing. The I.P. was reached at 1415 hours at 22,000 Feet, the formation cutting the I.P. a little short. Bombs were away at 1429 hours from the same altitude. Bombing was visual and excellent results were observed.

On the withdrawl this formation flew slightly right of course and in the area of the front-lines made frequent minor variations in course to avoid uncharted flak which had been noticed both on the way in and ahead on the way out. The formation flew at 22,000 Feet until about 1530, when it began its let-down, continuing it down to 2,000 feet. The continental coast was crossed at 1552 Hours at 12,500 Feet, the English coast at Felixstowe at 1616 Hours at 4,500 Feet, and Bury St Edmunds was reached at 1700 at 2,000 Feet, the formation having been diverted there because of extremely poor weather conditions prevailing at Bassingbourn.

No enemy fighters were observed. Fighter support was good

Weather was as briefed except the base weather at the end of the mission. The base was completely closed in so aircraft had to be diverted to Bury St. Edmunds.

Flak was light and inaccurate over the front lines both on the penetration and withdrawl.

4. Aircraft not attacking: A/C 43-38946 had a crash landing seven minutes after take-off. A/C 43-37993, although over the target, failed to attack because of bomb rack malfunction; it is credited with a sortie.

5. Aircraft losses: No aircraft failed to return, but reference is made to the crash landing mentioned in paragraph below

1. General narrative, lead squadron, 1<sup>st</sup> "D" Group: Thirteen aircraft, including one PFF aircraft, took off from 1047-1113 Hours to form the lead squadron of 1<sup>st</sup> "D" Group. Persistent ground fog had delayed the take-off for about twenty-five minutes. The weather at the assembly altitude of 8,000 Feet was excellent and the assembly of the 1<sup>st</sup> "C" Group was accomplished without difficulty. The base was finally departed twelve minutes late and the formation headed directly for control point #1 in order to make up the lost time. The formation had by this time climbed to 10,000 Feet as briefed. When the English coast was reached this group took its interval on the 41<sup>st</sup> "B" Group and started its climb to bombing altitude, leaving the English coast at Clacton at 1216 hours at 10,000 Feet.

The continental coast was reached at 17,500 Feet at Ostend at 1252 Hours, the formation following the briefed course. Bombing altitude was reached at 1337 Hours. Prior to reaching I.P., the formation was advised by Buckeye, the weather scouting force, that the target was open but that ground snow might make the target difficult to pick up. At the I.P. the high and low squadrons assumed their intervals, the I.P. having been reached at 1434 Hours at 22,000 Feet. Bombs were away visually at 1453 Hours from 22,000 feet, with varying degrees of results for the three squadrons. On the bomb run the high squadron did not uncover the low squadron, so the former consequently found it necessary to make a 360° turn and a second run on the target. Their bombs were away at 1459 hours. The rally of the lead and low squadrons was effected with no difficulty. After the target, the high squadron cut the next two turns short in order to re-join the lead and low squadrons.

Bombing altitude was maintained on withdrawal until after crossing the enemy lines, where a let-down was begun. The continental coast was recrossed at 51-18N, 03-04E at 1552 Hours at 12,500 Feet, and the English coast at Felixstowe at 1616 at 4,500 Feet. The squadrons proceeded to their stand-off points and were then diverted to Bury St Edmunds, where landings were made, in view of the fact that Bassingbourn was completely closed in.

No enemy fighters were encountered; fighter support was good.

Light and accurate flak was encountered over the front lines.

Weather was as briefed except at the base upon the return

4. Aircraft not attacking: all thirteen aircraft attacked the target.

5. Aircraft losses: No losses were sustained.

1. General narrative, Low squadron, 1<sup>st</sup> "D" group: Thirteen aircraft, including one PFF aircraft, took off from 1050-1118 Hours to form the low squadron of the 1<sup>st</sup> "D" Group. The assembly was accomplished without difficulty and the entire mission was flown in company with the rest of the 1<sup>st</sup> "D" Group. Reference is made to the narrative of the leader of the lead group for a more complete description of the entire mission. Aircraft of this squadron were diverted to Bury St Edmunds upon completion of the mission.

2. Aircraft not attacking: 42-97061 turned back before leaving England, landing at Ridgewell.

3. Aircraft losses: No losses were sustained.

1. General narrative, High Squadron, 1<sup>st</sup> "D" Group: Thirteen aircraft, including one PFF aircraft. Took off from 1049-1106 Hours to form the high squadron of the 1<sup>st</sup> "D" Group. The assembly was accomplished without difficulty and the entire mission was flown in company with the rest of the 1<sup>st</sup> "D" Group except for a time when this squadron made a 360° turn and a second run the target, then cutting short a couple of turns to catch up with the rest of that formation. Reference is made to the narrative of the leader of this group for a more complete description of the mission. Aircraft of this squadron were diverted to Bury St Edmunds upon their return to England.

2. Aircraft not attacking: all thirteen aircraft attacked the target.

3. Aircraft losses: No losses were sustained.