

92nd BG

General narrative

SUBJECT: Report on planning and execution of operational mission, 24 December 1944, Target: Giessen A/C - Nidda.

TO: Commanding officer, 92nd bombardment group (H) AAF, APO #557

1. Comment on planning and execution.

a. The bomb loading for this operation was received from headquarters 40th combat wing by Capt. Stroud at 2335 hours, 23 December 1944. The order called for Forty-one B-17's plus 4 PFF aircraft and any other A/C we could put up to be loaded with max 100 Lb. GP bombs, each with no nose fuse and 1/40 second tail fuse.

b. The field order was received from headquarters 1st bomb division by Capt. Stroud at 0540 hours, 24 December 1944. Flight plans and details of the mission were completed, briefing being set for 0700 hours and take-off time 1000 hours.

2. General narrative.

a. Thirty-nine (39) aircraft including four (4) PFF aircraft of the 92nd bomb group began take-off at 1000 hours for assembly on the Honeybourne buncher at 6,000, 7,000 and 8,000 feet. These aircraft formed the lead, low and high squadrons of the 40th "A" group. This group was the fifth of the 1st air division.

b. twelve (12) aircraft including one (1) PFF of the 92nd bomb group began take-off at 1035 hours for assembly on splasher 12 at 8,000 feet. These aircraft formed the high squadron of the composite 40th "D" group.

c. 40th "A" group accomplished assembly on the assigned buncher and departed on course six (6) minutes late. Following the prescribed route over England the group departed control point one (1) on course, on time. The briefed route was flown to the I.P. for the primary target. At the I.P. the squadrons took interval for visual bombing. The lead and high squadrons bombed individually on the first run with the lead squadron's bombs away at 1442 hours, from 21,600 feet true, on a true heading of 050 degrees. The high squadron bombs away at 1442 hours, from 22,200 feet true, on a true heading of 062 deg. The low squadron made a second run, bombing at 1501 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours, from 21,600 feet true, on a heading of 069 degrees true. The bombing of all three squadrons was excellent.

d. The lead and high squadrons executed a 360 degrees turn at the rally point, but the low squadron did not rendezvous with them. Then briefed route out was followed by all three squadrons crossing the Belgium coast on course and entering England at Clacton. From Clacton the squadrons returned directly to base. The low squadron was diverted to Bury St. Edmunds because of nil visibility at base.

c. The 40th "D" high squadron was delayed on take-off because of an accident. The squadron assembled, but was unable to locate 40th "D" lead and low squadrons at control point 1. Departing that point 13 minutes late the squadron proceeded along the briefed route to the target alone. The squadron attacked a target of opportunity through mistaken identity with good results.

d. At the rally point the group swung south of course to avoid another group, but returned to course and withdrew as briefed to Clacton where they took a direct course to base. Five A/C from this squadron were diverted because of weather conditions at base.

e. In the 40th "A" force, 29 A/C attacked the primary target, eight (8) targets of opportunity, one (1) was unknown. The 40th "D" force, eleven (11)

A/C attacked the same target and one (1) A/C another target of opportunity.

3. A/C Failing to attack.

a. A/C #42-38101 crashed on take-off and exploded. Six men were killed, 3 men seriously wounded. A/C salvaged.

4. A/C lost.

a. A/C #1574 GH-PFF (A/C of 303rd Bomb group) took off at 1047 hours. This A/C did not join our formation and no report has been received since take-off

b. A/C #44-8022 - A/C took off at 1024 hours, hit by flak over enemy territory and A/C failed to return to base. Four (4) crew members are reported as being safe in France.

c. A/C #44-6017 - A/C took off at 1013 hours, hit by flak over enemy territory and failed to return to base. Eight (8) crew members reported safe in England and one (1) crewmember reported in a hospital in Belgium.

d. A/C #44-8172 - A/C took off at 1025 hours, hit by flak over enemy territory and eight (8) crew members reported safe in England, and one (1) crew member in a hospital in France. This A/C was forced to land on a airdrome near Lille and crew abandoned plane.

e. A/C #42-97870 took off at 1015 hours and completed the mission. Aircraft crashed at diversion field, six (6) crew members were killed, two (2) seriously injured and one (1) is missing. A/C salvaged.