

96th BG

General narrative

SUBJECT: Narrative of operations for the mission of 24 December 1944.
Darmstadt, Germany, 96th A Squadron

TO: Commanding officer, 96th bombardment group (H), AAF.

1. General narrative: The 96th A Squadron took off on time in very good weather. Squadron, group, combat wing and division assembly was effected without any difficulty. The 96th A Squadron formation was fair, element leaders and their wing men were too far out of position despite orders to close in for a tight formation. The group formation was very good throughout the mission. Route out was as briefed however the C.W. leader was ten miles off course throughout mission which made it necessary to pull out from the bomb div. several times to avoid unnecessary flak. The target was visual and bombed by squadrons. The bomb run was made as briefed directly into the sun, making it extremely difficult to spot the target. Route back was followed as briefed. Change of wind other than briefed caused all groups to lose $\frac{1}{2}$ hour in times. Landing was effected safely by all ships. Several landing at Brussels. Flak was as briefed, moderate, accurate at the front lines, also moderate accurate flak N.W. of Frankfurt which inflicted considerable minor battle damage to group formation. fighter support was excellent. No enemy fighters were observed. Weather was as briefed, perfect for bombing, ... out into the sun

2. Aircraft not attacking: 12 A/C left base in the formation as shown in diagram A. All 12 A/C are credited with sorties. PFF A/C 44-8442, A/C 42-32112, and A/C 44-8423 turned back before reaching the target.

All 9 A/C which went over the target bombed and the formation over the target is shown in attached diagram B.

3. Lost aircraft: None.

96th B Squadron : Page 609 / B5495 is unreadable.

SUBJECT: Narrative of operations for the mission of 24 December 1944. Darmstadt, Germany. 96th C Squadron.

TO: Commanding officer, 96th bombardment group (H), AAF.

1. General narrative: Take off and assembly of all units was exceptionally good considering the size of the force. Formation was good, with the exception of a few crews flying on wing which flew a little too wide. Route out was good with the exception of being about 30 miles late at the I.P., because of stronger winds than briefed. Target was visual but bombing was poor due to the bombardier failure to see the target. Bombing was done in squadron formation. Route back was good with considerable time being made up; landing was a bit difficult due to darkness and the great number of aircraft in the air. Moderate, accurate flak was encountered crossing the battle line and in several areas north of Frankfurt. No flak was encountered over the target. Fighter support was good, but spread a little thin. Enemy fighters were seen and attacked preceding groups prior to the I.P. Weather was excellent in all respects.

2. Aircraft not attacking: 12 A/C left base in the formation shown in the attached diagram E. All 12 A/C are credited with sorties.

A/C 43-37775 returned before reaching the target. All 11 A/C which went over the target bombed and the formation is shown in attached diagram F.

3. Lost aircraft: None.

SUBJECT: Narrative of operations for the mission of 24 December 1944.
Darmstadt, Germany, 96th D Squadron.

TO: Commanding officer, 96th bombardment group (H), AAF.

1. General narrative: Take off and assembly were made as briefed over buncher #9. Group formation was over buncher #10. Squadron and group formation was excellent. Bombing was done by squadrons but due to the run being made into the sun and the haze conditions, results were poor. Flak was light and inaccurate. Three Me109s were sighted. Friendly fighter support was fair.

2. Aircraft not attacking: 12 A/C left base in the formation as shown in attached diagram "F". A/C 42-107208 returned to base before reaching the English coast out; the remaining 11 A/C are credited with sorties.

All 11 A/C which went over the target bombed and the formation over the target is shown in attached diagram "G"

3. Lost aircraft: None.

SUBJECT: Narrative of operations for the mission of 24 December 1944. Darmstadt, Germany. 96th E Squadron.

TO: Commanding officer, 96th bombardment group (H), AAF.

1. General narrative: the 96th E took off on time to make a visual ascent and formed satisfactory at 16,000 ft. the 96th XE squadron and a 452nd Gp. Sqdn. Formed the lead and high sqdns. of the 45F Gp. To complete formation 20 mins before departure of base. Base was departed 1 min early, and C.P. 2 5 mins late due to considerable "S" ing on route to enemy territory arriving late. Fighter support was picked up at CP #3 which was arrived at 4 mins late. Group fanned out in satisfactory manner and I.P. was made good and a visual run with haze made. Bombs away on primary at 1458 with fair results. Route back was briefed to near Brussels where leader aborted for lack of gas. Formation was good other than the Hi Sqdn of 452nd Gp., Vampire Brown, who had difficulty keeping Sqdn together and maintaining group formation; also breaking away from formation without authorization after passing Strasburg on return. No enemy fighters attacked 45F group, although reported near. Friendly fighters observed in numbers. Flak was encountered meager accurate by the two groups preceding near 5030N 0530E, 5022N 0600E, at Giesen and 4850N 0840E. Weather clear all over route.

2. Aircraft not attacking: 12 A/C left base in the formation shown in the attached diagram "I". all 12 A/C are credited with sorties. A/C 43-37789 returned back to base before reaching the target. All 11 A/C which went over the target bombed and the form-

ation is shown in attached diagram "J".

4 A/C left base in the formation shown in diagram K. These ships flew with the 388th. All 4 A/C are credited with sorties. all 4 A/C which went over the target bombed and the formation over the target is shown in attached diagram "L".

3. Lost aircraft: None.