

HEADQUARTERS 306TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Intelligence Officer
A.P.O. # 63A

11th June, 1943

SUBJECT: Intelligence Report.

TO.....: Commanding Officer, 306th Bombardment Group (H).

I. Hot News.

1. One B-17 blew up over target at 1755 hours.
2. One B-17 spun and landed in water near Wilhelmshaven at 1806 hours.
3. One B-17 hit by fighters, spun and hit sea 15 miles N. of Schiermonnikoog. No chutes. Time 1816 hours.
4. One B-17 in distress and probably ditched. Three chutes. Time 1820 hours.
5. One B-17 chased back to Germany by fighters. Time 1823 hours.

II. Narrative.

27 A/C took off at 1450 to bomb the submarine yards at Bremen. Due to heavy cumulus cloud rising to 30,000 feet the formation turned after crossing German coast and bombed Wilhelmshaven the secondary. The leading combat wing was slightly south of course and paralleled the Frisian Islands until turn was made toward target.

2 A/C returned early due to mechanical troubles and one failed to bomb when racks refused to release.

III. Bombing Results.

While the group had practically an uninterrupted run it is apparent that bombing results are only fair. Visibility was good but a very effective smoke screen almost obscured the target. The composite group may have scored a few hits in and around the target area but the bombs of the main group were observed to have been dropped several thousand feet away. The run was made on a heading of about 210 degrees magnetic at an altitude of 26,000 feet.

IV. Enemy Aircraft.

Probably 75 to 80 E/A mostly FW 190's were seen but this group had very few direct attacks, the leading combat wings taking the brunt of the fighting. Only two or three of the attacks on this group were pressed home, the rest being feeble and ineffective. Many enemy pilots were again seen discharging their guns aimlessly and then heading for home thus confirming the belief that a great number of E/A in this area are manned by inexperienced pilots.

Aerial bombing was again resorted to, at least 3 bombs, fairly accurate for altitude, being reported.

We claim 5 destroyed 1 probable.

A phenomenon of some sort was observed by several crew members and was described as a series of white bursts, probably 800 yards ahead of formation, exploding at regular intervals, perpendicularly from top to bottom. It was not seen where these originated.

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, 74501
RIB/BAC
MARA
Date 1/8/91

V. Flak.

Flak over the target was only moderate and ineffective on this group today, but appeared more intense and accurate on preceding and following groups. There was nothing unusual in the color or size of the bursts.

Flak ships near the Frisian Islands opened fire but it was far below the formation and entirely harmless.

About 12 bursts were sent up from the Island of Ardorf and these were quite accurate as to altitude and deflection.

VI. Comments.

Captain Check complained vehemently about the formation flown by the 92nd in the composite group. He said that the leader was OK but that the rest of the pilots were terrible.

JOHN B. WRIGHT,
Major, Air Corps,
Group S-2.

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, 745005
By RLB/JHC
MARA Date 1/8/91

TRACK CHART

Date 11 June, 1943

Route followed by 306th Bombardment Group (H)

Planned _____

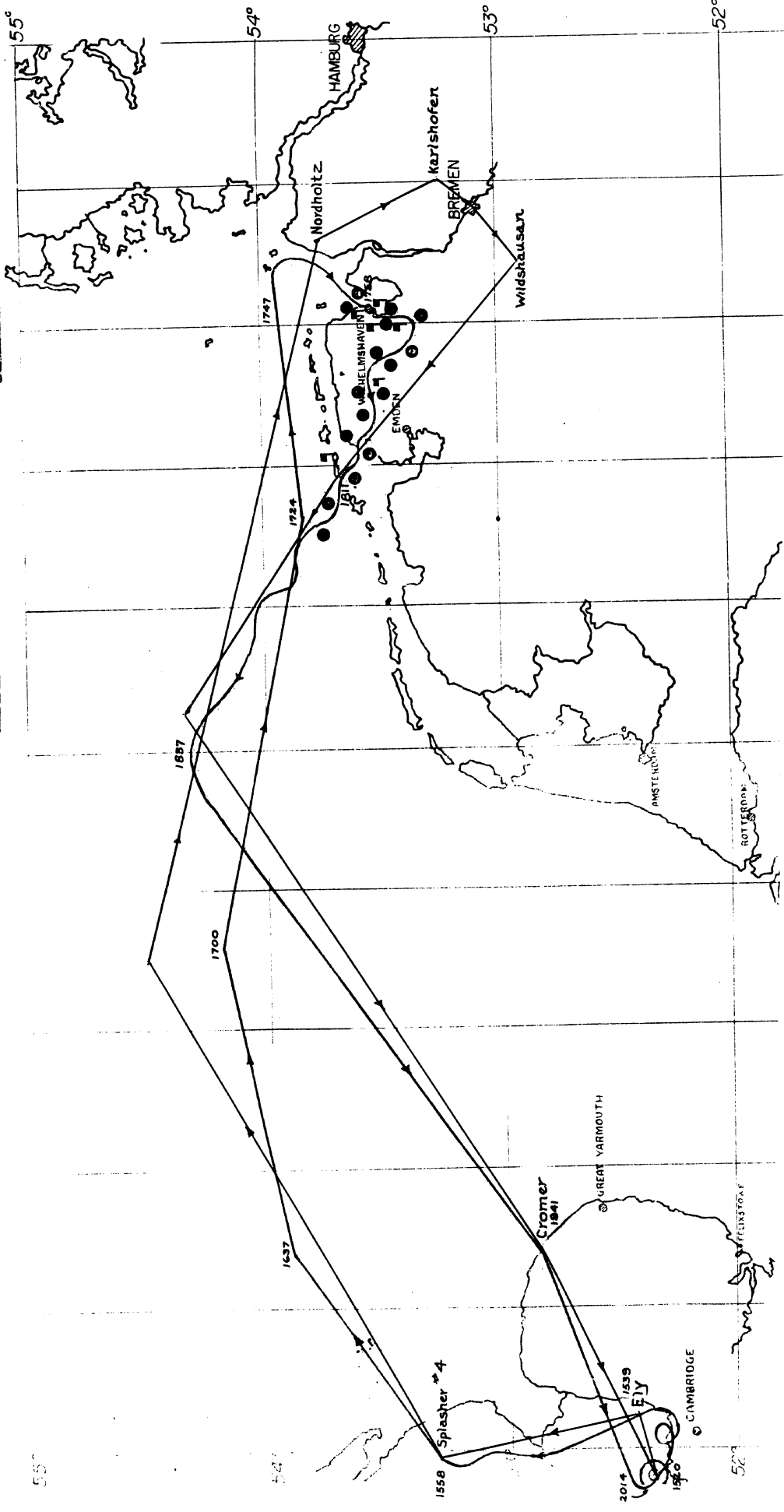
Actual _____

TARGET _____

Primary Bremen

Secondary Wilhelmshaven

Last Resort _____



Target # 2 Slip, Wilhelmshaven

1. Route followed.

~~Scharhorn Island to target to west end of Jutland Island~~

2. Visibility at Target (Any condensation trails?)

~~Good - slight haze, no condensation trails~~

3. No. of A/C over Target.

25

4. Formation over target, with height of each A/C. Those A/C damaged by Flak to be circled, and if seriously damaged, insert small "S". If any A/C shot down by Flak, say so:-

		973 26000			
	794 26700	040 26000	626 26000		163 26300
274 26000		426 26200		793 26000	809 26000
	959 26000	978 26500	477 23900		937 26500
	766 26000			084 26000	741 26000

5. General Axis of attack (from lead A/C if possible)

240 degrees Mag.

6. How long did formation fly straight and level before bombing?

10 seconds

7. Turn after bombing.

Gradual right turn after passing over target

8. Position of Group in relation to other Groups. 6th Gr. over target. I believe composite was 7th Gr. over target.

9. What evasive action was taken?

No change in altitude but sharp 20 degree turns

10. A short description of Flak en route (if any) and at the Target, including if possible a suggestion as to type of fire control employed - i.e. Continuous following predicted concentrations, predicted barrages, or fixed barrages.

**1751 Meager A.A. fire at coast near Nordney Island
1759 moderate, inaccurate, low and to right of this group, black.
Fire central continuous following and possibly predicted concentrations.
Three flak ships in harbour N.E. of Wilhelmshaven.
Meager A.A. from Baltrum Island on way out.**

11. Any other Comments, Phenomena, etc.

No other comments

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, 74501
By RLB/BAC MABA Date 1/8/94

COMPOSITE

	172	
	<u>27000</u>	
167		811
<u>26600</u>		<u>27000</u>
	777	
	<u>27000</u>	
218		180
<u>27200</u>		<u>28000</u>

No flak damage

OBSERVATIONS:

1. One crew reports rocket like object going up with repeated explosions and white smoke.
2. One crew reports large cone shaped white smoke starting at top and going down , Was about 1000 ft. long. Saw bomb bursts nearby. There were fighters above us at this time.
3. One crew reports a streak of white smoke about 500 yards long with explosion at the top.
4. One crew reports three bursts which in turn broke into a mass of small puffs similar to star shell fireworks.
5. Several crews report air to air bombing - dropped from above.

EDWARD T. MURTHA
2nd. Lt. A.C.

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, 745005
 By RLB/BAC NARA Date 1/18/91

HEADQUARTERS 306TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Operations Officer

A P O 634,
12 June 43.

SUBJECT: Mission of June 11, 1943.

TO : Commanding General, First Bombardment Wing, APO 634.
(THRU Channels).

1. On the surface, the planning of this mission was not too good, for the route laid out brought the force too close to the East Frisian Islands so that it was unnecessarily exposed in the enemy RDF screen. The enemy RDF picked up the formation at an altitude of 8,000 feet, a considerable distance out in the North Sea and, due to the route flown, was able to guess the target a long time in advance of our arrival. Then, being able to prepare his defences, he was able to take the toll of our force which he did.

2. The route was not flown as ordered, which made the whole thing that much worse. The lead Combat Wing flew far south of course until the East Frisian Islands were sighted, and then flew parallel to the islands almost to Heligoland. This was another useless exposure of the formation to enemy defenses.

3. The mission should never have been flown, under the weather conditions prevailing. Weather was not too good for take-off or assembly, and the cloud cover in the target area was considerable. The forecast of cloud was five to seven tenths, and those were approximately the conditions met.

4. The rendezvous of the 102nd Combat Wing was accomplished practically as planned, but allowed the Groups time to become somewhat confused in the rendezvous. This rendezvous should be planned with two points on a line, with times for each group to pass the points, so that a definite direction or compass heading is given, in order that circling is eliminated, thereby facilitating the rendezvous.

This Group, leading the 102nd Combat Wing, made a continuous series of "S's" after leaving the target, until they were about 30 miles at sea. This was done to pick up stragglers, who insisted on staying at bombing altitude instead of coming down to the altitude of our Combat Wing where they could have had the protection of almost sixty airplanes. Pilots should be briefed to seek the shelter of succeeding Combat Wings when they are knocked out of their own formations.

The 92nd Bombardment Group (H) again proved itself a disgrace to the Air Force and a menace to the rest of the Wing by their display of so-called formation flying. At no time during the entire flight did they

resemble anything more than a casual gathering of aircraft, and at times they were scattered so as to be a menace to the squadron from our Group which flew with them. The 92nd Group is definitely not capable of flying the formation necessary to good defensive firepower, and should therefore not be required to participate in combat missions until such a time as they can demonstrate such a capability. It is recommended that some of the pilots who have finished their operational tour of duty and who are good formation pilots, be detailed for a month with the 92nd Group on a definite program designed to improve their formation flying. The lack of skill on the part of these pilots does not appear to be due to a lack of practice, since their reports show that they practice as much as the other Groups in the Wing, but seems to be due to the fact that they do not know the exact positions in which they should fly. The only way to impart this knowledge is to send them some experienced and highly-skilled pilots to fly with them and put the airplanes into the positions in which they should be flown. With a few weeks of this training, the 92nd Group can be made to fly the formation necessary to good defensive firepower. This is not the first time this matter has been mentioned in this report.

For the Commanding Officer:

ROBERT C. WILLIAMS,
Major, AC,
Operations Officer.

SECRET

*Raid file '43
11 June '43*

HEADQUARTERS
VIII BOMBER COMMAND
A.P.O. 634

Bomber Command Narrative of Operations
Day Operation - 11 June, 1943
Mission No. 62

TARGETS: Port Facilities at Wilhelmshaven
Targets of Opportunity in Western Germany.

166 B-17s of 1st Wing and 86 B-17s of 4th Wing were dispatched to attack targets in Western Germany. Fighter support was not furnished to the bombers. The primary target was cloud covered so the main attack was directed by 168 B-17s against Wilhelmshaven, the secondary. Bombing results are good. 30 B-17s attacked Cuxhaven with fair results, while 20 more dropped bombs on other targets of opportunity. Eight B-17s were lost and claims against e/a are 85 - 20 - 24.

Group	Number of A/C				Claims	Personnel Casualties		
	(Dispatched)	(Attacking)	(Abortive)	(Lost)		(Killed)	(Wounded)	(Missing)
			A.	B.				
1st Wing								
91	21	18	3	0	0	0	0	0
92	14	12	1	1	0	0	0	0
303	25	19	5	1	1	0	3	10
305	24	19	3	2	0	0	0	0
306	27	24	3	0	0	0	0	0
351	24	18	4	2	0	2	4	0
379	31	29	2	0	6	1	13	60
	<u>166</u>	<u>139**</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>70</u>
4th Wing								
94	29	25	4	0	0	0	0	0
95	29	27	2	0	1	0	0	10
96	28	27	1	0	0	0	0	0
	<u>86</u>	<u>79**</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10</u>
Total	252	218**	28	6	8	3	20	80

*Abortive A. - Mechanical or personnel failure

B. - Weather, recall, enemy action

** - 168 A/C attacked Wilhelmshaven

30 A/C " Cuxhaven

20 A/C " Targets of Opportunity

BOMBING RESULTS: 168 B-17s dropped 560 x 500 G.P. fused 1/10 sec. nose, 1/100 sec. tail and 327 x 1000 G.P. fused 1/10 sec. nose, 1/40 sec. tail on port facilities at Wilhelmshaven from 24,000 - 27,500 ft. with good results. A heavy concentration of bombs fell on the barracks and new buildings E. and NE. of the Bauhafen. The buildings of the former Minesweeping Depot near the Entrance No. 1 were severely damaged and a jetty with rail access received a direct hit. There were a few hits on the main workshop buildings S of the Bauhafen, and another group of bombs fell on or around the

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, 7450
By RLB/BAC MARA Date 1/8/91

the Wiosbadon Brucke, hitting and setting fire the USARAD class liner alongside. Other hits were seen among other buildings and stores, at channel between Schoor and Tirpitz basins and on oil storage area to the south. 2 of the 5 bursts in the oil storage area caused prodigious explosions with 2 columns of smoke, measured from Strike Photos, at least 2000 and 1500 ft. high. It would appear that the tanks contained fuel when hit.

30 B-17s of the 4th Wing attacked the port area at Cuxhaven, dropping 150 x 1000 G.P. fused 1/10 sec. nose, 1/40 sec. tail with fair results. A small industrial plant N. of the Bremerhaven Road has been gutted and minor damage caused to the railroad marshalling yards and small adjacent buildings. Bursts were observed near the East Quay of the Amerika Hafen, of which one is near the stern of the depot ship Heligoland D.9. A number of business or residential buildings NW. of the Alter Haven and in the Ritzebuttel district were destroyed or damaged.

20 B-17s dropped 11 x 1000 G.P. and 170 x 500 G.P. on targets of opportunity in the vicinity of Jever, Wangerooge, Aurich, Hago Airfield and Marx Airfield. Results were generally poor.

REASONS FOR FAILURE TO BOMB: 1st Wing - 21 a/c failed to bomb because of mechanical and equipment failures. 1 a/c was lost before reaching target. 4 a/c were sent up on spares and returned as instructed. 1 a/c turned back because formation was filled.
4th Wing - 7 a/c failed to bomb because of mechanical and equipment failures.

ENCOUNTERS: 1st Wing - More than 100 e/a mostly FW 190s and ME 109s with a few ME 110s, ME 210s and JU 88s were encountered, with attacks beginning south of Heligoland, continuing over the target and on the way out to north of the Frisian Islands. Attacks were from all directions but in most cases were not pressed too closely. One FW 190 was reported to have collided with a B-17. Attacks on the group losing 6 a/c were mostly from the nose. Air-to-air bombing was again reported. Observed colorings of o/a were as follows: some FW 190s had checkerboard design on the tail; black ME 109s; ME 210s with gray bellies and fuselage and blue or green wing tips; at least one ME 210 was painted white; silver FW 190s; green ME 109s; and some ME 109s had maroon and dark brown crosses on the wings.
4th Wing - Slight o/a opposition was reported. Approximately 25 o/a attacked after the formation had passed over Wilhelmshaven. Attacks continued to about 20 miles north of Baltrum Island. Most of the o/a were FW 190s with a few ME 109s and ME 210s. The majority of attacks were from 11 to 1 o'clock, out of the sun, and the attacks were persistent although the pilots were reported as apparently inexperienced.

FLAK: 1st Wing - Slight, inaccurate flak was reported from Alte Mellum and Eokwarden. Moderate flak at Wilhelmshaven was inaccurate. There was a concentration of bursts near Nounenburg and Juist Island. Inaccurate flak was reported at Marx, Ardhof and Wangerooge. Just past Wilhelmshaven a heavy red flare went through the formation.

4th Wing - An intense predicted flak barrage was reported on the route in at Heligoland. Moderate accurate flak was encountered at Wilhelmshaven and Cuxhaven. A fixed barrage was reported over Bremen but none of the groups were affected. On the return route slight inaccurate flak was observed at Baltrum and Heligoland. Considerable flak was also reported from

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, 74500
By RLB/BAC
NARA Date 1/18/91