

HEADQUARTERS 306TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Intelligence Officer
A.F.O. # 634

29th May, 1943

SUBJECT: Intelligence Report.

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

1. Narrative.

24 a/c of the 306th Group took off at 13:40 to bomb St. Nazaire. Two returned early. 22 were over the target at 17:07, one failing to bomb because bomb bay doors would not open. Twenty returned to base at 19:15, two landed away. Both have since returned, and are included in this report. Route was substantially as ordered, weather good, with clear visibility over target.

2. Bombing.

With a good run at approximately 270 degrees mag. and bombing at 25,000 feet, results look fairly good. There were a number of bursts in the water, and some were short, but several direct hits were reported on and near the A.P. The bursts inside the basin were close to the sub pens and probably produced blast damage. Both sides of both basins were hit.

3. Abortives.

One, with broken oil line #2 engine, turned back at Salisbury England at 15:01 hours, 17,000 feet. One, with engine trouble, no oil pressure on #2 and #3, supercharger on #1 ran away, turned back 5 miles N.W. Guernsey at 16:15 hours.

4. E/A encountered.

Enemy opposition was very slight on this group, only one or two direct attacks being reported, and these were not pressed home. Two crews report one bomb dropped one thousand yards beyond formation. No make no claims.

5. Flak.

Red bursts reported off Guernsey, and off St. Brieuc. Over the target, the flak was moderate, accurate as to altitude, off on deflection. Experienced crews report it not nearly as intense as previously encountered.

JOHN B. WRIGHT,
Major, Air Corps,
Group 8-2.

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, 74500

WARA

By RLB/BAC

Date 1/8/41

HEADQUARTERS 306TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Intelligence Officer
A.P.O. #634

29th May, 1943

Subject: Hot News Report.

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

1. Up to six B-17's reported in distress.

At 1706, one B-17 before target, was hit by flak. (This A/C dropped its bombs) Crashed. 7 chutes.

At 1707 over target, a B-17 was hit by flak, and right wing torn off. This ship from group ahead. No chutes.

At 1721, a B-17 under control was attacked by 4 E/A while straggling and trying to catch up. Four chutes. A/C continued after chutes were seen and crashed at 1729 five miles south of Auray.

At 1731, B-17 turned off to right under control, no fighters there. #4 engine smoking. Ten chutes. Ship then went into spin and crashed between Laurenan and Nonscour.

One B-17 over French Coast just after leaving mainland at 1742 turned back inland, near Traguier. One crew reports a big flash from this ship and says it blew up.

Our A/C #824, letter B, radioed a B-17 in water burning at 1806, at 50 degrees 07 minutes N, 02 degrees 45 minutes W. Phoned to Wing in hot news report.

FLAK DAMAGES:

B 17F No. 42-5826, 369th Sq., Flak entered Radio Compt damaging radio equipment. Plane to be out of status approximately 24 hours.

B 17F No. 42-29564, 367th Sq., 1 very slight flak hole in plane.

B 17F No. 42-30163, 368th Sq., 5 flak holes, nothing serious.
(4 holes in right outboard wing and one hole on right horiz. stab.)

B 17F No. 42-29777, 423rd Sq., No. 4 main tank hit by flak. Tank severely damaged and to be changed
Plane to be out of status approximately 24 hrs

B 17F No. 41-24629, 369th Sq., Right horiz. stab. slightly hit by flak.

B 17F No. 42-5086, 369th Sq., 1 small flak hole in de-icer boot between No. 1 and 2 engines. Nothing serious.

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MABA Date 1/8/91

7E ORDER 12356, Section 3.3, 245005
MABA Date 1/8/91

Target St. Nazaire

1. Route followed: -- Over enemy territory. Flurien to Blain to target to point west of Belleisle to Baden to St. Kayeux to Guinhamp to Pleubian.

2. Visibility at Target (Any condensation trails?) **Good**
No vapor trails

3. No. of A/C over Target. **22**

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:-

			<u>306</u> 25000		<u>172</u> 24500
	<u>991</u> 24300	<u>826</u>	<u>959</u> 25000	<u>794</u> 25000	
<u>629</u> 24500			<u>874</u> 24500	<u>218</u> 25100	<u>167</u> 25000
	<u>426</u> 24500		<u>886</u> 25000	<u>554</u> 24500	<u>900</u> 25000
<u>477</u> 24000		<u>978</u> 24600			<u>777</u> 25000

(OVER) #826 landed away & no information as yet concerning

5. General Axis of attack (from lead A/C if possible) / possible flak damage
270 degrees

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

7. Turn after bombing **Sharp right**

8. Position of Group in relation to other Groups.
3rd. Composite 5th (I believe)

9. What evasive action was taken?
Moderate to violent; changes of altitude and direction.

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. **Heavy slight flak off Guernsey. Some of this was red and some black. Light red bursts reported from the direction of St. Malo. Over the target the flak was heavy, moderate to intense, accurate. Several crews report definite areas of the sky filled with bursts. One crew reported the first salvo as a clump of 27 bursts, then about 50 bursts just in front of them. This might be a predicted concentration, a lot of continuous following or a combination of the two. The description of most crews would indicate continuous following fire control.**

11. Any other Comments, Phenomena, etc. **All damage was slight except that on ship #777 the #4 main tank will have to be changed. Bomb reported dropped on Group following the composite about 1000 yards from the target. One crew reported "several flak batteries" at point 6 on target map**

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By RIB/BAC MABA Date 1/8/99

By RLB/JAC NARA Date 1/18/91

COMPOSITE

High right

161
25300

825
25300

741
25100

502
25300

084
25000

SHUREL J. OWEN,
Captain, Air Corps,
Asst. E-2.

TRACK CHART

DATE 29 May 1943

Planned
Actual

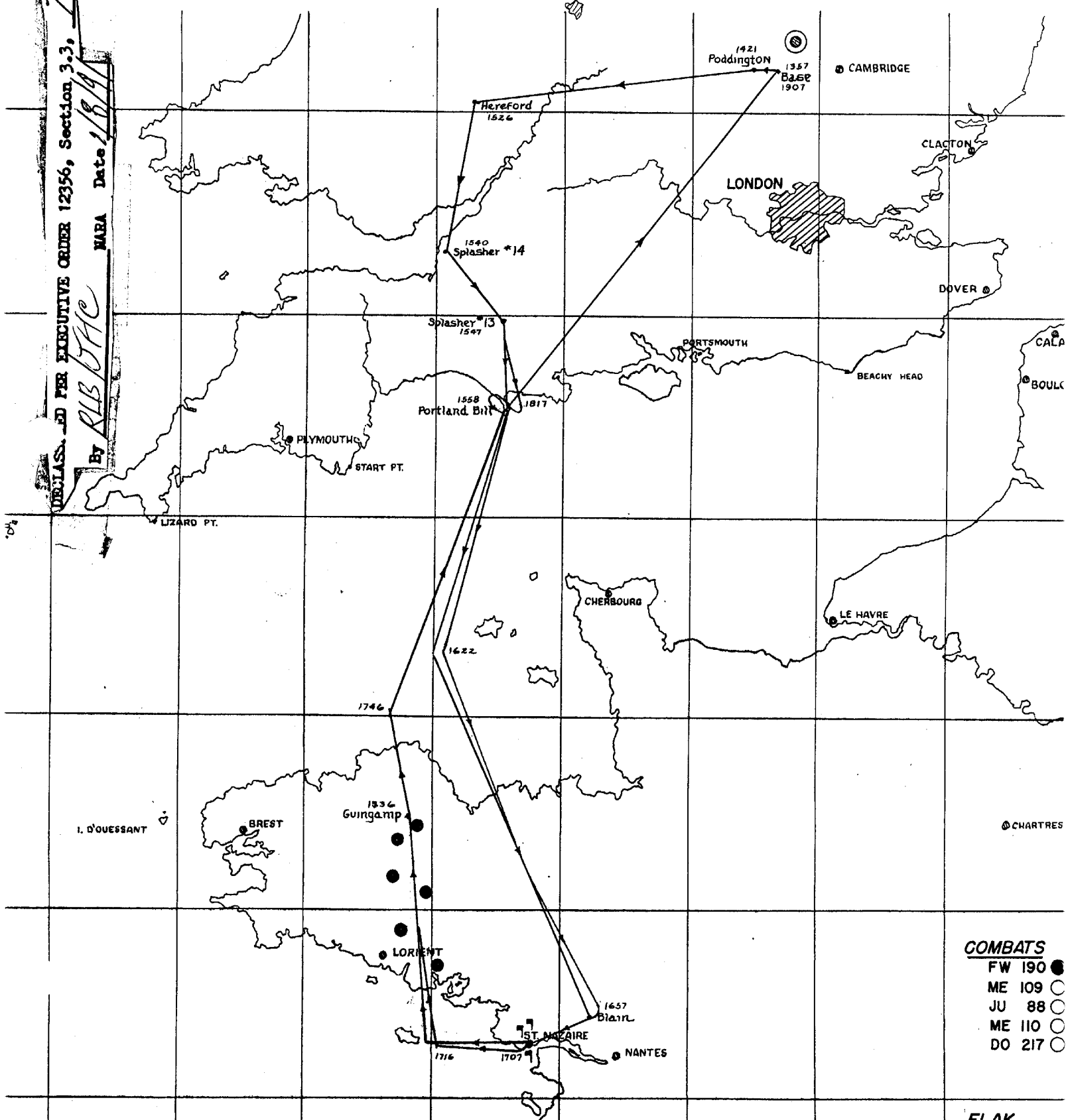
Route followed by

306th Bombardment Group (H)

St. Nazaire

MO
CON
ST F

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 By RLB/BAC MARA Date 1/8/94



COMBATS

- FW 190 ●
- ME 109 ○
- JU 88 ○
- ME 110 ○
- DO 217 ○

FLAK



S.A. 340
ST. NAZAIRE
29 . 5 . 43
Approximate Bomb Plot.
Neg. No. 24991.

box 641

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By RLB/THC
NARA Date 1/8/91

C O N F I D E N T I A L

crew library

HEADQUARTERS
VIII BOMBER COMMAND
A.P.O. 634

Bomber Command Narrative of Operations
Day Operation - 29 May, 1943.
Mission No. 61

- TARGETS: I - St. Nazaire - U-Boat Installations
 II - La Pallice - U-Boat Installations
 III - Rennes - Naval Storage Depot.

The main attack was directed at St. Nazaire where 147 B-17s of the 1st Wing successfully bombed the submarine installations in the Bassin de St. Nazaire and the Bassin de Penhouet. 34 B-24s from the 2nd Wing bombed U-boat installations at La Pallice with good results. 72 B-17s of the 4th Wing were dispatched to bomb the Naval Storage Depot at Rennes, and 57 bombed with poor results, most bombs falling in residential areas. Fighter support was furnished to 1st and 4th Wings by Spitfires and P-47 Squadrons. 14 a/c are missing from the three operations while claims amount to 25 - 5 - 15.

Diversionsary attacks were made on Caen A/D and Cherbourg-Maupertus A/D by R.A.F. bombers and fighters.

Unit and Target	Number of A/C (Dispatched Attacking Abortive Lost)					Claims	Personnel Casualties (Killed Wounded Missing)		
	A.	B.							
ST. NAZAIRE									
1st Wing									
91	23	21	2	0	0	0-0-0	0	1	0
92	22+	19	3	0	0	0-0-0	0	0	0
303	30	28	2	0	1	3-0-1	0	0	10
305	25+	21	4	0	3	0-0-0	0	9	21
306	24	21	3	0	0	0-0-0	0	0	0
351	21	16	5	0	1	1-0-0	0	0	10
379	24	21	3	0	3	2-0-0	0	0	30
	<u>169+</u>	<u>147</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>6-0-1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>71</u>
LA PALLICE									
2nd Wing									
44	21	20	1	0	0	0-0-0	0	0	0
93	17	14	3	0	0	0-0-0	0	0	0
	<u>38</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0-0-0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
RENNES									
4th Wing									
94	18	16	2	0	3	5-1-3	1	2	32
95	18	18	0	0	2	6-0-5	0	1	22
96	20	20	0	0	1	8-4-6	0	7	10
Composite #	16	3	13	0	0	19-5-14	0	0	0
	<u>72</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6</u>		<u>1</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>64</u>

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 By *RLB/BAC* NARA Date *1/8/91*

745005

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Abortive A - Mechanical, equipment or personnel failures.

B - Weather, recall, or enemy action.

+ - 7 a/c of 92 Group and 1 a/c of 305th Group were YB40s.

- Composite Group composed of 4 a/c from the 94th, 2 from the 95th and 10 from the 96th Groups.

PART I - 1st Wing

TARGET: U-Boat Installations at St. Nazaire.

BOMBING RESULTS: 140 B-17s dropped 277x2000 G.P. at 1706-1711 hours from 22,500-25,000 ft., with fair results. Photographs taken during the attack show bursts across the dock area and shipping basins. Hits are seen near both inner and outer ends of the E. Lock, although no direct hit on the lock is seen. One burst is noted immediately outside the U-boat Pens in the Basin de St. Nazaire, and in the Bassin de Penhouet three bursts are very close to a floating dock which at the time of the attack carried a small vessel. Hits are seen on the workshops of the Chantiers and Ateliers de Penhouet.

REASONS FOR FAILURE TO BOMB: 21 a/c failed to bomb, 20 because of mechanical and equipment failures and 1 because of personnel failure. 1 of the 8 YB40s taking part in the mission returned early because of mechanical failure.

ENCOUNTERS: E/a opposition was light. Groups reported that 20-40 e/a mostly FW 190s with a few ME 109s and 1 or 2 ME 110s and JU 88s began attacks just before the I.P. and continued over the target and out to French Coast. Attacks were from 3 to 6 o'clock from the nose, usually high or level, and very few were pressed home vigorously. E/a were observed following the formation and in the main attacking cripples. Two crews reported one aerial bomb was dropped 1000 yds. beyond formation. Varied markings of the e/a included yellow, red, and white noses, fuselages of green-gray, blue, mottled camouflage, solid brown, white belly and tan top; black and silver ME 109s; and black and yellow striped FW 190s. Some FW 190s had white markings similar to those of P-47s.

CASUALTIES: - Personnel: 10 crew members were wounded and 71 are missing. 9 crew members from lost a/c of 305th Group were picked up by Air Sea Rescue E. of Start Point.

Equipment: 8 B-17s were lost, 6 due to flak, 1 to e/a, and 1 for reasons unknown.

Estimated Battle Damage: 58 B-17s - "A".

FIGHTER SUPPORT: 10 Spitfire and 3 P-47 Squadrons furnished withdrawal cover from the vicinity of Guingamp to the English coast. Diversionary attacks were made on Caen A/D by 11 Venturas supported by Spitfires and on Cherbourg-Maupertus A/D by 1 Squadron of Typhoon bombers escorted by Typhoons.

ROUTE: Portland Bill to 49°20'N, 05°00'W; to Redon; to target; to 10 miles E. of Belle Isle; to Guingamp; to 49°00'N, 03°20'W; to Portland Bill; to bases.

WEATHER: At take-off there was 3/10-5/10 cirrus at estimated height of 25,000-26,000 ft., with 2/10-4/10 cumulus having 4,000 ft. base and 6,000 ft. tops. Visibility was 4-5 miles in haze. From bases to English coast there was 4/10-7/10 variable cirrus at estimated 25,000-27,000 ft., with 3/10 altocumulus and altostratus at estimated 10,000-15,000 ft. Medium cloud decreased to nil across the Channel with high cloud remaining the same and no low cloud. Visibility of 6-10 miles in SW England improved to 15-20 miles over the Channel and France. At the target there was 6/10 cirrus at estimated 27,000 ft., no

C O N F I D E N T I A L

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low or medium cloud, and a downward visibility of 20 miles. Conditions on the route back to the English coast were the same as on the route in to target, with bases on return having 5/10 cirrus, 4/10-6/10 altocumulus and altostratus, and no low cloud. Visibility was 6 miles. Persistent contrails were observed at 24,000 ft. from 100 miles W. of bases to English coast on route out. Winds were satisfactory. Temperature over target at 25,000 ft., was -24°C.

OBSERVATIONS: An apparent Army Camp was seen at edge of woods near Floornel, France, with an estimated 100 one-storey buildings of round roof construction. Two large truck convoys of about 100 vehicles were seen headed SE between Floornel and Redon. A concentration of vehicles, barracks and new roads was reported NW of Redon at 47°51'N - 02°13'W. Military construction was reported at Renac, France, and other construction 1 mile N. of St. Nazaire. A large factory with many new buildings was seen at 48°03'N., 01°45'W. An apparently new A/D reported 10 miles E. of Lorient had two crossed uncamouflaged runways. An A/D was also seen near Collinee and Augan. A B-17 was seen through binoculars on A/D at 47°47'N, 02°52'W., just NW of field. SW of Rennes at 47°57'N, 02°22'W, also seen through binoculars, were about 200 barracks buildings and 8 Nissen huts. A large reservoir was observed at 48°26'N, 02°51'W. Considerable construction was noted in shipyards south of Basin at St. Nazaire. A 4-gun (Flak) battery was seen at Escoublac and two 4-gun batteries seen on NW side of Guernsey Island. The harbor at Painbol contained at least 1 large M/V and 6 to 8 smaller vessels. Two large M/V seen in Lorient harbor. Eight M/V were reported at Etel, France, which at 23,000 ft., appeared to be transports. One report stated that e/a attacked with air-to-air bombs (no results stated), and one crew reported seeing 6 red balloons rising toward the formation and exploding with a red flash at about their altitude. Smoke screen at target was ineffective, and boats appeared to be putting up smoke screen south of target. Two rows of smoke pots were seen around south side of Morbihan Bay. Smoke screen at Lorient were reported as ineffective, except for one group which reported them as effective.

PART II - 2nd Wing

TARGET: U-Boat installation at La Pallice.

BOMBING RESULTS: 34 B-24s of the 2nd Wing dropped 99x2000 G.P. in the target area. Strike photographs show bursts near a vessel in Dry Dock No. 1., on or near the new lock under construction and on buildings and warehouses surrounding the basin. Several hits can be seen in the immediate area of the entrance locks. Photographs cover only part of the raid. However, the crews report all bombs hit area close around the basin and that target pin point was well covered.

REASONS FOR FAILURE TO BOMB: 3 B-24s returned early due to mechanical failures, and 1 B-24 jettisoned on approach to target.

ENCOUNTERS: 3 or 4 JU 88s were observed over target area, one of which made several passes at a B-24 out of formation.

CASUALTIES: - Personnel: None
Equipment: No Losses
Estimated Battle Damage: None

FLAK: Slight flak of poor accuracy was encountered over the target area. No other flak encountered.

FIGHTER SUPPORT: None furnished.

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By RLB/BAC MABA Date 1/8/91

