

HEADQUARTERS 306TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Intelligence Officer
United States Forces

APO 634
20th February, 1944

SUBJECT: Intelligence Narrative. 306th "B" Group.
Mission: Leipzig, 20 February, 1944.

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

1. Narrative

306th "B" Group flew high in 40th B CBW, leaving Lowestoft 1055. They crossed the enemy coast 1137 at 52° 34'N, 04° 35'E. Course followed as briefed to target, accurate pilotage being possible over open "corridor" between clouds from west of Magdeburg to target area. Course was followed approximately as briefed, flying over 10/10 cloud from target to base. Formation crossed enemy coast at 1559 at 51° 05'N, 02° 35'E., crossed the English coast at 1621 at 51° 43'N, 00° 57'E., Base at 1705.

2. Fighter opposition and Fighter Support

Weak attacks occurred after target between 1355 and 1455 hours during gap in fighter support, which otherwise constantly was in sight over enemy territory. Only two attacks against this group, by dull grey T/E from 6 o'clock low, about 1430 hours; by Me 109, 6 o'clock high, 1455 hours. Enemy fighters apparently preferred to wait for stragglers. S/E friendly fighter shot down T/E, 1400 hours. About 10 each S/E and T/E A/C were encountered on entire trip, including orange nosed Me 109's; one probable Ju-87; one possible FW 190 with longer nose than usual. Four fast S/E planes with elliptical wings, cannon in prop hub, spotted red under wings, weakly attacked formation to rear at 1300 hours. We claim 0-0-2 also 3 no claim.

3. A.A. Gun Fire

A moderate barrage was observed at the target. This group turned left and avoided most of it, but one of our A/C suffered a direct hit and was last seen under attack by fighters. Flak from other towns enroute was either very meager and inaccurate or not aimed at this group. Only three instances of minor flak damage on ships returning to base.

4. Bombing

Strike photos show bombing on 306th "B" Primary, to be excellent. Demolition bombs from the groups ahead were on the button, causing a cloud of heavy black smoke completely obscuring the target. Bombs of the 92nd Group were observed short of target with a few bursts on target. Smoke was observed pouring from one of the other assigned targets. Some crews report smoke over the city of Leipzig, although the western half beyond the railway station was obscured by cloud. Several crews also report heavy, black oily smoke from Halberstadt, and state that at the IP they saw smoke from Berlin.

5. Weather

Better than briefed. Both coasts visible on way in. Ground visible at sufficient intervals to pinpoint course. Clear from IP to target and halfway over city of Leipzig, 10/10 undercast obscuring western half of city beyond railway station. Almost solid undercast on way back to base.

6. Aircraft Returning Early

Our A/C #850-B, Pilot Clark, turned back at Dutch coast at 1140 due to trouble with #2 engine. Jettisoned 42 x M47A1. Two A/C each brought back one M47A1.

7. A/C in Distress

306th Group: Our A/C #463-Z, Pilot Richard, was hit by flak on #2 engine over target at 1350 hours. He dropped back of formation. At approximately 1407 hours he was attacked by fighters and was last seen going down into clouds in a slow spiral under control.

Other B-17's in Distress

1. 1318 hours, hit by fighters and spun down; 10 chutes.
2. Immediately after target, tail shot off by flak; no chutes.
3. 15 minutes after target, attacked by FW's and exploded; no chutes.
4. 1425 hours, straggling, attacked by 14 fighters, under control when last seen going into clouds.
5. 1514 hours, 50° 20'N, 05° 00'E, in spin, hit by fighters; 7 chutes.

JOHN A. BAIRNSFATHER,
Major, Air Corps,
Group S-2.

LEIPZIG AGAIN IN 2,000-PLANE BLOW

Biggest day raid ever after R.A.F. pounding



MAP shows the relation of Leipzig—target both of the first R.A.F. night raid and the American day raid—to England.

LEIPZIG, STILL BURNING FROM THE R.A.F.'S SHATTERING 4 A.M. BLOW, WAS ONE OF THE TARGETS YESTERDAY IN THE GREATEST DAYLIGHT RAID OF THE WAR, CARRIED OUT BY 2,000 PLANES.

Both attacks were aimed at Germany's fighter industry, and in the day assault it is estimated that 25 per cent. of the enemy's fighter production capacity was destroyed.

In addition the German fighters suffered heavily in the air. Sixty-one of them were destroyed by the escort planes alone.

The U.S. Eighth Air Force lost only 22 out of the largest number of heavy bombers ever employed in a day operation.

Early this morning the number of German fighters shot down by the bombers had not been determined.

U.S. and R.A.F. escort force

The Fortresses and Liberators were escorted by strong forces of long-range A.A.F. fighters, and were supported by large formations of R.A.F. Dominion and Allied fighters.

Attacks were made with good results on fighter assembly factories at Leipzig, Bocha and Berneberg, and on major airplane component factories at Brunswick and Leipzig.

Installations at Tutow and Oeschersleben were bombed, as were other military targets in Germany.

One Allied fighter is known to have been destroyed and three others are missing.

Conservative estimate

The estimate that 25 per cent. of the present Nazi fighter production was smashed in the raid was "conservative," said Maj.-Gen. H. L. Arnold in Washington last night.

He said it was "the biggest united mission in history," adding that visibility was good over most targets, bomb aimers reporting that the targets were hit and heavily damaged.

More than 100 German planes were either destroyed or damaged during the raid, he estimated.

Marauders raided Holland unchallenged, and Mosquitoes, without loss, twice attacked military objectives in Northern France, while the German fighter strength was roped in from all bases to meet the Fortresses and Liberators.

Smashing at Nazi industrial centres on a 350-mile-long front, the U.S. heavier drove in from the south-west, the north and the east.

It is likely that the Luftwaffe was roused to meet what was probably considered to be a multi-pronged thrust at the capital.

Planes down in Denmark

Air battles took place yesterday over the great belt between the Danish islands of Fynen and Zealand, the Swedish radio said last night.

A Copenhagen report of the Swedish News Agency said that nine Allied planes, including three

which made forced landings, came down on Danish territory. Some numbers of the crews were saved.

In the 4 a.m. attack a huge force of Lancasters and Halifaxes, helped all the way by German fighters, flew through bitter weather to drop considerably more than 2,300 tons of bombs on Leipzig.

The raid equalled in force last Tuesday's "greatest-ever" attack on Berlin by over 1,000 bombers.

Bomber Command paid the night's first price yet for the night's operations—79 bombers. Apart from Leipzig smaller raids were carried out on other targets, including Berlin.

Our previous heaviest losses were in the Berlin attack of August 23-24, when 58 bombers failed to return—a slightly higher percentage.

Conditions were all against the bombers. A dense cloud belt, heavy with ice, covered the route.

Through this lay the first stage of the bombers' 530-mile flight.

Later they flew above the clouds under a clear sky. But even then the winds were variable, and Leipzig was a menace all the way.

A number of bombers arrived over the target too soon, and had to circle round the city waiting for the dark to go.

By the end of the attack smoke was rising to 22,000ft. and fires could be seen clearly through breaks in the cloud.

Over Leipzig itself German fighters were not so numerous as along the route, although more arrived in the later stages of the bombing.

The attack began a minute before 4 a.m. The searchlights could not cover the target.

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BIG EXPLOSION

Flying Officer H. C. Darnton, an experienced bomb aimer from Edinburgh, saw a huge explosion near the beginning of the attack.

"We were on our bombing run," he said, "when I saw it, a vivid blue flash right underneath the target indicators."

After we had left Leipzig I thought the glow of the fires was about the brightest I had ever seen.

In their last raid on Leipzig on December 5 the R.A.F. dropped 1,500 tons, starting huge fires which were sweeping the city 12 hours after the attack.

Nearly 30 per cent. of the most densely built-up area in this city of 470,000 population, fifth largest in Germany and a vital centre of aircraft production, was devastated.

Apart from its aircraft industry, in which some 20 firms are engaged, Leipzig is now one of the largest junctions in the European continent.

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Football result

INTERNATIONAL—England 2, Scotland 1

LEAGUE SOUTH CUP—Aston 1, Luton 0

LEAGUE NORTH CUP—Aston 1, Luton 0

LEAGUE SOUTH CUP—Aston 1, Luton 0

LEAGUE NORTH CUP—Aston 1, Luton 0

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United States Forces

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20th February, 1944

SUBJECT: Intelligence Narrative. 306th "A" Group.
Mission: Leipzig, 20 February, 1944.

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

1. Narrative

306th "A" Group was scheduled to fly high group of 40th C.M.A., but failed to complete rendezvous with balance of wing at Splasher 11, and left 3 minutes early. Before arriving at Lowestoft, Bullpen Leader was heard reporting Lead Group as two minutes late. Arriving at Lowestoft early, 306th "A" Group circled over water and returned to Lowestoft without being able to locate Wing. Departed Lowestoft starting across Channel at 1110 hours. At this point Bullpen Leader was heard reporting he was 34 miles out to sea. 306th "A" Group crossed enemy coast North of Zandvoort at 1150 hours, at 21,300 feet; north of Haarlem, turning left over Purmerend at 1153 hours. Bullpen Leader then reported his position as 45 miles inland. Nothing but B-24's were in sight and Group "A" turned back, leaving enemy coast South of Egmond at 1158 hours, then 3 miles South of Lowestoft at 1230 hours, landing at Base at 1321 hours.

2. A.A. Gun Fire

There were a few A.A. gun fire bursts at point of turn back over enemy coast.

3. Bombing

No bombs dropped. All A/C brought bombs back, except two which jettisoned 18 x 500.

4. Weather

The weather was better than briefed. The ground was visible in spots, and both Coasts could be seen.

5. Aircraft Returning Early

One A/C returned early due to supercharger trouble, turning back at English Coast. Another A/C was dispatched out returned before reaching enemy coast, with two engines out.

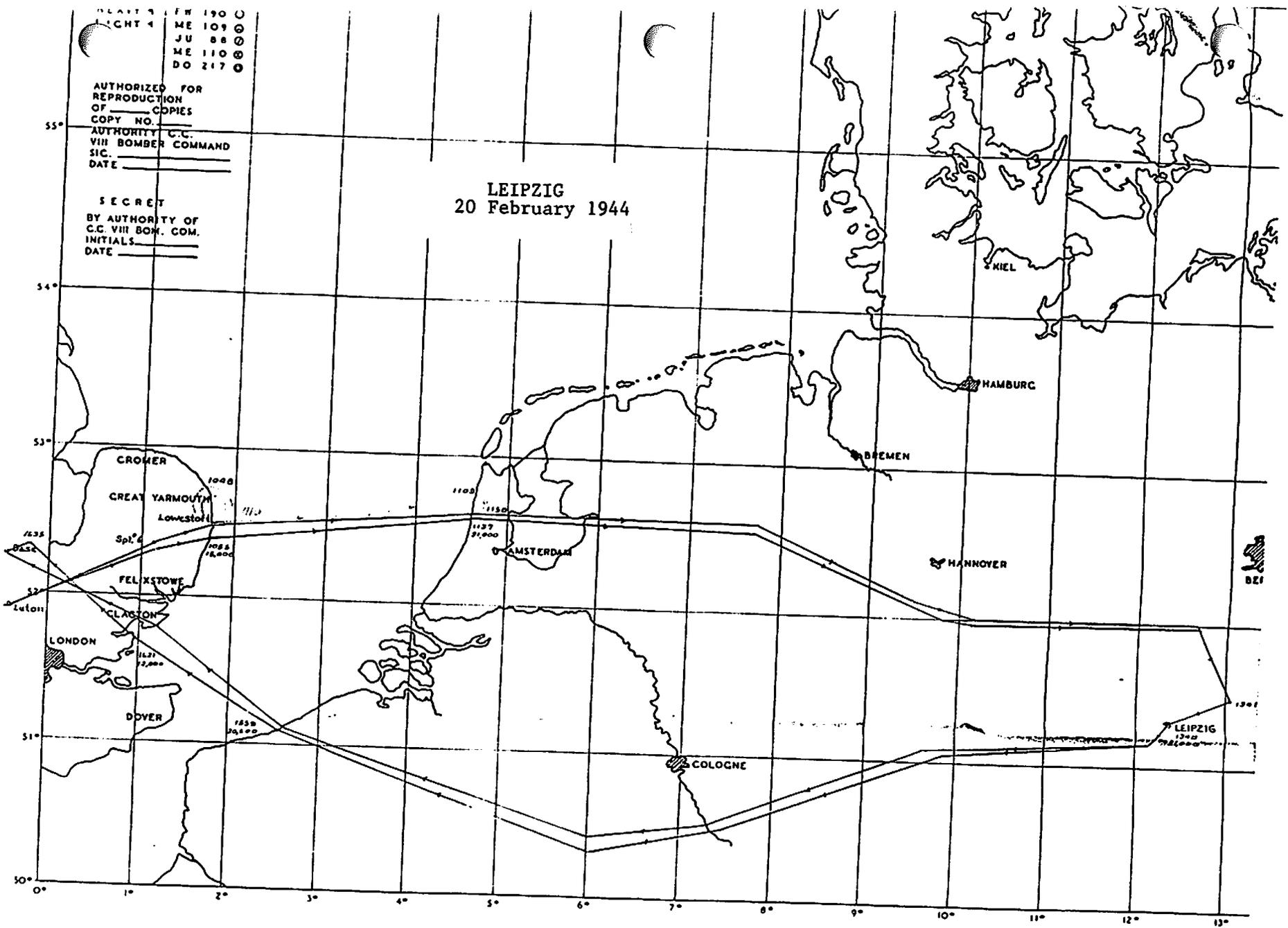
JOHN A. BATHSPATER,
Major, Air Corps,
Group S-2.

PLATT 3 FR 190 C
LICHT 4 ME 109 C
JU 88
ME 110 C
DO 217 C

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LEIPZIG 20 February 1944



Hq. 306th. Bomb Group (H)

FLAK REPORTDate 20 February, 1944Target AMSTERDAM (arrived early)

1. Route followed. Crossed enemy coast north of Zandvoort, north of Haarlem, Purmerend, south of Edmond.

2. Visibility at Target (Any condensation trails?) No condensation trails. 2/10ths cloud at enemy coast, some haze at altitude.

3. No. of A/C over Target. 18 A/C crossed enemy coast, turned back at 1153 hours, Purmerend, 21,300 ft.

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:-

NO FLAK DAMAGE.

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

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

7. Turn after bombing. ✓

8. Position of Group in relation to other Groups. ✓

9. What evasive action was taken? USUAL

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.

AMSTERDAM - barrage obs., not on this group.

BERGEN - moderate barrage from flat boats.