

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

APC 557  
24 August, 1944

SUBJECT: Intelligence Narrative  
Mission: Merseburg and Vorden A/D

TO : Commanding Officer 306th Bombardment Group (H)

1. Narrative

The 306th Group flew 34 A/C plus 2 PFF A/C as the 40th "C" Combat Wing. Route in was slightly north of course. At Treuenbrietzen, formation did not turn, and the route to the I.P. was further east and south than briefed, closely skirting the northern fringe of Leipzig flak.

English coast 0853, Louth; enemy coast 1103, 5346N x 0832E; Merseburg 1228½; enemy coast 1342, 5325N x 0603E; Cromer 1458; Base 1547.

Of the two PFF A/C, #586 turned back over England, after smoke bomb went off in bomb bay. A/C #660 was used as a navigational aid only.

2. Fighter Opposition and Fighter Support

No E/A opposition on this Group.

Crews report good fighter support, though scattered, to target. A few P-38's seen on way in. P-51's first picked up near Heligoland and at briefed points thereafter. Very few seen on route out.

3. A.A. Gun Fire

The only accurate A.A. fire encountered was in the primary target area. Groups flew a little too close to Leipzig and were under fire for three minutes before bombs away and for two minutes after target. A moderate to intense barrage of fair accuracy was thrown up from Leipzig followed by accurate tracking fire from target area. Out of 32 A/C over target, damage was 19 slight, 9 severe. There was no A.A. fire at Vorden A/D, nor at Stade.

4. Bombing

Lead Group: Deputy took over lead after smoke bomb went off inside leader's A/C over England. On way in, deputy discovered bomb bay doors would not open and that he would have to use pilot's emergency release. He therefore picked bigger target, main Merseburg plant, instead of briefed water-works. He found area covered by smoke. Thought he identified points immediately to east of Target, and moved cross hairs to middle of smoke. Pictures show hits probably slightly west of 075080/15.

Low Group: While on bomb run, crews suddenly saw a group (G in triangle) very close on collision course from one o'clock. Low group scattered and did not drop bombs. They reassembled, returning to course NE of Kassel, and bombed Vorden A/D. Pictures show complete pattern on south-east dispersal areas.

High Group: On approach, lead bombardier, found water works obscured by smoke screen in good operation, made visual reference on main plant. Pictures show hits on south-east corner of main plant.

A/C 093-V, pilot Boswell, bombed Stade A/D. Pictures show bombs away and positive identification. Bombardier was experienced and is sure of good hits on main dispersal area.

5. Nickels  
A/C #053-U, Pilot Pederson, dropped 10 T-127 at primary.

6. Weather

On route in and out: Weather was clear with some haze and a few, broken, scattered clouds. At the target: 4-5/10 high cirrus at from 28,000 to 30,000 feet, a few low scattered clouds, haze, with visibility from 15 to 20 miles. A few contrails reported in target area.

7. Observations

Smoke screen at target, also at Water Works, others at Brunsbuttel, Hamburg, Leipzig, Brunswick, and Hannover.  
20 ships at Wilhelmshaven, 15 ships at Wesermunde, and 18 ships at Hamburg.

8. A/C Returning Early

A/C #586-PFF, pilot Chalfant, turned back 0704 hours, 5 miles north of Aylesbury after smoke bomb went off in bomb bay. Four crew members in rear section bailed out; all landed safely. 10 x 500 returned to base.

A/C #444-Y, pilot Broz, turned back at 0824 hours, at 5320N x 0021W, mechanical failure; brought back 10 x 500.

A/C #633-Z, pilot Dryar, turned back 1018 hours, 5415N x 0523E; jettisoned 10 x 500 at 5414N x 0522E.

A/C 093-V, pilot Boswell, with oxygen leak, left formation, bombed Stade A/D 1120 hours.

9. Other A/C In Distress

About 1336 hours, near Dummer Lake, 40th "A" leader (G in triangle) 305th Group, reported over VHF that gas was leaking and wing was on fire; 9 chutes seen; A/C then exploded.

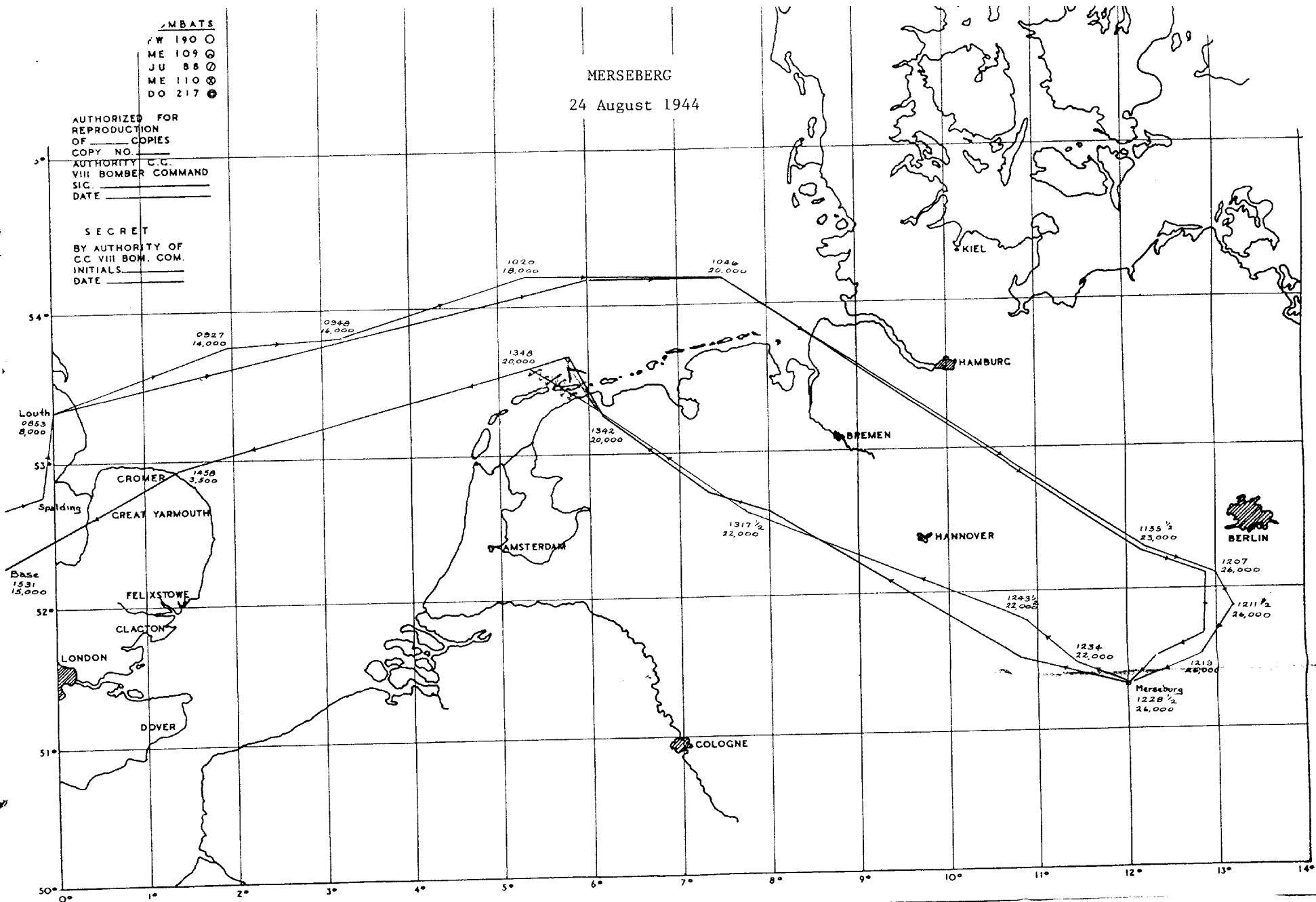
JOHN A. BAIRNSFATHER,  
Major, AC,  
Group S-2.

MBATS  
 W 190 O  
 ME 109 O  
 JU 88 O  
 ME 110 O  
 DO 217 O

MERSEBERG  
 24 August 1944

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1. TARGET: **Merseburg** ..... DATE OF MISSION: **24 August, 1944**  
**Vorden A/D (Low Group)**

2. ROUTE AS FLOWN: - **Slightly North of course in and out. Formation overshot turn to South at Treunbrietzen swinging in wide turn to Schonewalde, to Ellenburg and North of Leipzig to target.**

3. Weather Conditions (a) At Target: **Clear, haze, 4/10 high cirrus at 28,000 ft**  
(b) En Route: **Scattered Low cloud.**

4. Were our A/C "Seen" or "Unseen" Targets? (a) At Target: **seen** (b) En Route: **seen**  
Any Condensation Trails? **At target**

5. Description of Flak at Target, including METHOD OF FIRE CONTROL, if possible.  
**Moderate to intense barrage of fair accuracy at Leipzig three minutes before bombs away, followed by accurate tracking until two minutes after bombs away.**

6. Flak encountered or observed en route. (In the order experienced if possible)  
**Heligoland - Obs.**  
**Neuwerk - Meager, inaccurate, tracking.**  
**Magdeburg - Obs.**  
**Ameland - Meager, inaccurate, tracking from approx. 4 guns.**

7. Was CHAFF carried? Was it used as briefed, if not how was it used?  
Observation of crews.  
**9,808 units of chaff as briefed.**  
**15 A/C equipped with carpet.**

8. Position of Group and Combat Wing: **40th "C" CBW.**

9. Details:-

Group	Nr. of A/C over E/Territory	A/C hit by Flak	Lost to Flak	T.O.T.	height	Axis of Attack	Bomb run off
<b>Lead</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8 (2 sev.)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1228</b>	<b>26,200</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>285</b>
<b>Low</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9 (4 sev.)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1332</b>	<b>19,000</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>307</b>
<b>High</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11 (3 sev.)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1228</b>	<b>27,300</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>283</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>28 (9-S)</b>	<b>0</b>				

10. OBSERVATIONS: 1. S/S at Leipzig, Merseburg, Harburg and Mouth of Keil Canal.  
2. Two red bursts of flak obs. from **Ameland**.  
3. **Flak tower obs. beside river at 52°12'N - 09°00'E.**  
4. **No flak from Dummer Lake.**