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HEADQUARTERS
20th Fighter Group, Army Air Forces
AAF Station F-367 APO 637 U.S. Army

(E-2)

319.1

14 January 1944.

SUBJECT: Tactical Commander's Report, Field Order No. 216, Headquarters VIII Fighter Command, dated 11 January 1944.

TO : Commanding General, 67th Fighter Wing, AAF Station F-372, APO 637 U. S. Army.

In compliance with VIII Fighter Command Memo 55-3, Sec. V, par 12, dated 23 August 1943, the following Tactical Report is submitted covering the mission of 11 January 1944 as per Field Order No. 216, target area support for B-17's and B-24's.

1. Track Flown.

- a. 1038 All squadrons started engines.
- b. 1046 77th Squadron led by Major Montgomery took off followed by the 79th Squadron. The 55th Squadron at RAF Station Wittering took off at the same time and rendezvoused over Kingscliffe.
- c. 1103 Set Course.
- d. 1127 Landfall out Englist Coast.
- e. Group flew course as briefed until 1155 when at 34,000 feet the group leader ordered the unit to return because of bad weather. A solid overcast made check point identification impossible through time and distance calculations indicate landfall was probably made just north of Haarlem at 1153.
- f. 1306 All planes safely down at home base or nearby airdromes.

2. Description of Rendezvous. No rendezvous.

3 & 4. Description of Tactics & Strategy Employed. Mission abortive at enemy coast.

5. Formation Employed. Flights of four flown in tight "V" used to climb through overcast.

6. Analysis of Encounters with Enemy Aircraft. No encounters, mission abortive.

7. Analysis of Tactics Employed against Anti-aircraft Fire. No anti-aircraft fire encountered.

8. Use of Communications and Malfunctions of such Equipment. No malfunctions encountered controller very weak on "A" channel.

9. Description of effect of equipment failure on conduct of mission. Abortives had no effect on conduct of mission as mission was aborted at the time we crossed the enemy coast.

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10. Description of Weather. Overcast of about 4/10 was encountered on take-off at about 4,000 feet. We climbed through the overcast from 16,000 feet to 34,000 feet. The visibility in this cloud was about 100 yards and the sun could be distinguished from 16,000 feet on up, giving the impression that it was quite a thin overcast. On return the overcast had lowered to approximately 10,000 feet over the English Coast. At home base snow and sleet were encountered with visibility of 1/2 mile and ceiling about 1,000 feet.

11. Description of difficulties encountered and suggested remedies. We encountered difficulty in holding the Group together while climbing and letting down through a light overcast at about 20,000 feet. All flights managed to stay intact. There is no suggested remedy for this.

ROBERT P. MONTGOMERY,
Major, Air Corps,
Executive.

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NND 745005
Authority
By CEC NARA Date 9/27/08

MISSION SUMMARY REPORT

A. 20TH FIGHTER GROUP (55, 77, 79 SQDNS.) MAJ. R.P. MONTGOMERY LEADING.

B. 48 P-38'S (17-55, 16-77, 15-79) TU 1048 , TD 1255 .

4 HALESWORTH

1 ALCONBURY

2 ELY

C. 3 P-38'S , (1- OXYGEN TROUBLE, 1 - LEFT ENGINE BOOSTER PUMP OUT, 1 - DOWN
MEPAL, LEFT TURBO REGULATOR TROUBLE).

D. F.O. 216 - RAMROD WITHDRAWAL SUPPORT.

E. N I L.

F. N I L.

G. N I L.

H. N I L.

I. GROUP SET 92 DEGREE COURSE FROM OVER BASE AT 1103. FLEW COURSE UNTIL
1155, WHEN AT 34,000 FEET THE GROUP LEADER ORDERED UNIT TO RETURN BECAUSE

OF BAD WEATHER, SOLID OVERCAST MAKES CHECK POINT IDENTIFICATION IMPOSSIBLE
Time and distance calculations indicate
THOUGH LANDFALL WAS PROBABLY MADE JUST NORTH OF HAARLEM AT 1153.

WEATHER : OVERCAST FROM 16,000 FEET TO 34,000 FEET OVER CHANNEL AND
DUTCH COAST. GROUP BROKE THROUGH OVERCAST AT 10,000 FEET AT SOUTHWOLD.

CLOUD BREAKS REPORTED ^{at} 21,000 FEET AND 14,000 FEET OVER CHANNEL.

R/T GOOD.

MISSION SUMMARY REPORT

11 JANUARY, 1944

FO #216

ESCORT MISSION

2 BELLY TANKS

- A. 55TH FIGHTER SQUADRON CAPT. JACKSON LEADING
- B. 17 P-38'S UP WITTERING 1047 - 12 DOWN WITTERING 1250
4 DOWN MANSTON 1215 - 1 DOWN MEPAL 1215
- C. 2 - (1) STOCKTON, OXYGEN, (1) ROWLEY, REASON UNKNOWN
- D. W/D SUPPORT. FO #216, V11 F.C.
- E. THRU H. NIL
- I. SQUADRON TOOK OFF AND FORMED AS BRIEFED. WERE ON INSTRUMENTS ALL THE WAY OVER. BROKE OUT OF OVERCAST AT 33,000 AT 1155. TURNED BACK AT THIS POINT. SET A COURSE OF 270 AND STARTED TO LET DOWN. BROKE INTO A CLEAR AREA AT 13,000. APPROACHING THE ENGLISH COAST THE OVERCAST WAS 7 TO 8/10THS. CROSSED ENGLISH COAST AT 1220 NEAR SOUTHWALD AT 9,000. SAW FLAK OVER GREAT YARMOUTH. 4 P-38'S SEEN IN THAT AREA.
R/T GOOD, SOME JAMMING

-17-

MISSION SUMMARY REPORT January 11, 1944

- A. 77th Fighter Squadron, 20th Fighter Group, Lt. Col. Russell leading.
- B. 16 up at 1048. 15 down at 1255. 1 down at Alconbury. 2 down at Ely.
1 down at Wittering. 1 down at Kingscliffe.
- C. One - Mechanical (booster pump left engine out).
- D. Field Order No. 216. (Bomber escort) Withdrawal support.
- E. Nil.
- F. Nil.
- G. Nil.
- H. Nil.

I. Sixteen (16) up at 1048 led by Lt. Col. Russell. After setting course went into overcast at approximately 16,000 feet. Red leader went up to 34,000 feet before breaking out of overcast. Squadron turned back at approximately 11:50. One P-47 seen heading toward enemy coast at 26,000 feet at about 1150. White 2 and 3 report seeing 47's going into enemy coast at approximately 21,000 feet. Enemy flak seen at 23,000 feet. White 2 & 3 also report four (4) ships moving south twenty five (25) miles off Yarmouth, also four or five small ships heading Northeast approximately ten (10) miles off Lowestoft. Squadron penetrated to approximately Dutch coast, before returning.

Weather overcast from 16,000 to 34,000 feet. Opened between 21,000 and 25,000 feet near Dutch coast. Overcast at 2,000 over channel. Cloud layer at 3,000 ft. in vicinity of Kingscliffe up to 9,000 feet. Opened between 9,000 and 16,000 feet.

MISSION SUMMARY REPORT

11 January 1944

A. 79th Fighter Squadron; 20th F. Gp. Capt. L. F. Graham leading

B. 15 P-38s; Up 1050; Down 1300.

C. None

D. Ramrod - F. O. 216

E. None

F. None

G. None

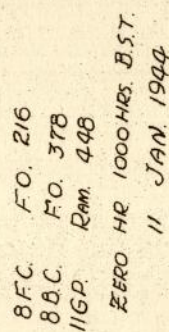
H. None

I. Weather: It was a beautiful day in Chicago; in California the sun bathed the golden oranges with its warm rays; in Florida the Chamber of Commerce ran out of superlatives in describing the day; but in England and on the continent it stank. After climbing through the overcast from 2500 to about 5000 feet visibility was good over East Anglia. Over the channel it was overcast at 3000 ft. At 16000 it was again solid and continued to at least 31,000 ft. with visibility of approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ mile. The mission aborted at 1200. On the return it was solid from 31,000 to 20,000; clear to 14,000 and solid again to 3000 ft. It is suggested that future weather reports not be obtained from the British equivalent of the Chamber of Commerce.

At approximately 1200 the Group Leader ordered the planes to return to base. At this time it was impossible to check position because of the overcast but from time and distance computations it is believed that this squadron was over the approximate center of Zuider Zee. All planes returned to this base and landed safely.

EDWARD J. STEINER
1st Lt. A. C.
S-2

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND 74 E 005
By AM NARA Date 9/30/10



This overlay illustrates the routes of the various types of aircraft as they were directed to be flown by orders of the appropriate headquarters.

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