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

(B-5)

319.1

16 January 1944.

SUBJECT: Tactical Commander's Report, Field Order No. 217, Headquarters  
VIII Fighter Command, dated 14 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 14 January 1944, as per Field Order No. 217.

1. Track Flight.

- a. All Squadrons started engines at 1343.
- b. The 79th Squadron led by Lieutenant Colonel Russell took off followed by the 77th Squadron at 1351. The 55th Squadron at RAF Station Wittering took off at the same time and rendezvoused over Kingscliffe.
- c. Set course at 1408.
- d. Landfall out English coast 1435, ten miles northeast of Hastings.
- e. Made Landfall in French Coast 1450, between Le Treport and Dieppe.

2. Description of Rendezvous. Penetration into the French Coast was made at an altitude of 23,000 feet. After penetrating to a depth of fifteen miles, the Group was split into Squadrons, which operated at predesignated patrol areas. Altitude was maintained until the first bombers were seen approaching from the west. These bombers were picked up by sections of squadrons and escorted throughout their bomb run into enemy territory and out. Assembly with the bombers was made at 15,000 feet, the bombers flying at an altitude of 12,000 to 13,000 feet.

3. Analysis of Strategy. The bombs of bombers coming in being small, sections of squadrons were employed as protective cover. The sections were composed of two four ship flights, flying flights abreast and line astern within flights.

4. Analysis of Tactics. All sections and flights maintained altitude above the bombers they were protecting and stayed on the sun side. Bounces on enemy fighters were made by the four ship flights flying in line astern, with the other flight as top cover.

5. Formation Employed. Formation employed on climb and route to

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French Coast was a close formation of four ship V's. Upon reaching a point five miles from the French Coast battle formation was assumed, which consisted of squadrons on line, flights in line astern with a distance of one hundred to one hundred fifty yards between aircraft.

6. Analysis of Encounters with the Enemy. Two (2) FW 190's approached the first box of bombers from two o'clock, our level. These two aircraft were turned away from their attack by diving between them and the bombers. They then made a wide orbit to the right and attempted an attack on the rear of the bombers, at which time Greenright White Flight bounced them, chasing them to the deck where they were both destroyed. The 190's had approximately a half mile lead when they started for the deck - this distance was closed to one hundred fifty to two hundred yards by the time zero altitude was reached. This closure was made with external tanks. Greenright Red Flight bounced six FW 190's and in the encounter, which took place at 14,000 feet, one FW 190 was destroyed and several more were damaged. The enemy appeared only in small numbers, and were not too aggressive.

7. Anti-aircraft. No anti-aircraft fire was encountered on the way into France. Tactics employed against this possibility were change of course and gain and loss of altitude.

8. Communications. Inter Group communication was excellent. The controller was very weak. No contact was made on "C" Channel with the bombers.

9. Effect of Equipment Failure on Conduct of the Mission. Equipment failure had no significant effect on the conduct of the mission. The Group dispatched fifty-six (56) aircraft of which only five aborted. This small number of planes turning back did not hinder us in any way. Equipment failure caused only four of these abortives. Two abortives were due to supercharger regulators, one to starter switch failure, and one to a stuck oil dilution valve.

10. Description of Weather. The weather was clear. There was a layer of cloud extending to the south from the Seine River at an altitude of 24,000 feet. Horizontal visibility was excellent. Vertical visibility was excellent.

11. Description of Difficulties Encountered. There were no difficulties encountered.

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By CEC NARA Date 9/28/10

B. M. RUSSELL,  
Lt. Colonel, AG.,  
Commanding,

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MISSION SUMMARY REPORT

14 JANUARY, 1944

FO #217

TARGET COVER

2 BELLY TANKS

A. 55TH FIGHTER SQUADRON CAPT. MCAULEY LEADING

B. 17 A/C UP WITTERING 1351 DOWN WITTERING 1645

C. 1 (ONE) 1ST LT. EARL HOWER, LEFT SUPERCHARGER

D. F.O. #217 TARGET COVER

E. NIL

F. NIL

G. NIL

H. NIL

I. SQUADRON MADE L/F IN VICINITY OF PTE D'AILLY AT 1453 HOURS AT 19,000 FEET. AT 1456 CAPT. MCAULEY SAW 2 BOGIES FLYING AT 14,000 FEET AND DIVING. HIS FLIGHT TURNED TO ATTACK BUT SAW ANOTHER FLIGHT OF P-38'S ABOVE THE BOGIES, SO CAPT. MCAULEY GAVE TOP COVER. BOGIES DOVE AWAY. SQUADRON SAW 4 P-38S MIXING IT UP WITH 5 OR 6 E/A (ME 109'S) AT ABOUT 12,000 FEET OVER RAMELY AREA AT 1520 HOURS. STRIKES WERE SEEN ON ONE P-38. ALSO SAW ANOTHER FLIGHT OF 4 P-38S OVER SEINE RIVER CHASE E/A. NO RESULTS KNOWN. ABOUT 20,000 FEET ABOVE LES ANDELYS SQUADRON SAW 8 TO 10 E/A AND CONTRAILS. E/A CAME IN TOWARDS OUR FORMATION. AS SQUADRON MADE A CLIMBING TURNED TO MAKE ATTACK THE E/A MADE 180° TURN AND LEFT AREA.

SAW UNIDENTIFIED A/C EXPLODE AT 1530 OVER CORMEILLES ABOUT 9,000 FEET, NO CHUTE. SAW B-24 GOING OUT VICINITY OF LILLEBOUNE ON FIRE. MOST OF OUR ACTIVITY SOUTH OF BRIEFED AREA.

THERE WAS NO FLAK SEEN.

BOMBERS WERE IN GROUPS OF ABOUT 16 A/C AND BOMBING WAS WELL CONCENTRATED.

L/F OUT CRIEL AT 1555 AT 16,000 FEET.  
WEATHER - CLEAR. GOOD VISIBILITY VERTICALLY.  
R/T GOOD.

MISSION SUMMARY REPORT

January 14, 1944.

- A. 77th Fighter Squadron, 20th Fighter Group, Major H. E. Johnson Jr. leading.
- B. 18 up at 1400. 15 down at Kingscliffe at 1702. 1 down at Cheddington at 1715.
- C. 2 - 1 Pilot error. Down at 1425  
1 Escort down at 1544.
- D. Field Order No. 217. Patrol mission.
- E. Nil.
- F. Nil.
- G. Nil.
- H. Nil.
- I. In at 20,000 near Le Treport at 1450. Squadron split into sections. Second section broke into flights and squadron swept area. Blue flight swept area near Seine River and Rouen. Other flights were in area between Amiens and Dieppe. B-24's and B-17's seen going in at 11,000-12,000 feet in squadrons 6 to 12 in number. Large fires seen Southeast of Abbeville which were burning for about thirty (30) minutes. Fires seen along Siene River area between mouth and Rouen. One large fire between Lillebonne and Norville. Three (3) 190's seen at 13,000 feet going under blue flight firing cannon but no target visible. This was about ten (10) miles north of Rouen. Flak seen in this area. ~~West~~ of Bolbec four (4) P-38's seen in Lufberry with single engine ship. Flak seen to north of Abbeville. Two bogies reported high but were never positively identified. Two (2) ships (a/c) trailed flight out into channel. One turned back and other was lost. Not identified. White and yellow flight out at 15,000 feet south of Le Treport at 1555. Red and blue flights out over Dieppe at 1410. No shipping at Dieppe. Large splash seen in water outside of Dieppe harbor.

Entire time in enemy territory spent taking bombers in and bringing them out. Weather was good. Visibility unlimited. No clouds. R/T discipline was excellent except for several outbursts.





## TELEPHONE FLASH REPORT

F.O. 217.DATE 14 January 1944.

(Not to be teletyped)

(Not to be teletyped)

a. Designation of Unit	20th Fighter Group.
b. Time of Landing	1700
c. Aircraft MYR (State if believed Lost)	1. Lt. Archer, believed lost.
d. Estimated Claims	Destroyed 3 Probable 0 Damaged 8
e. Brief description of Mission	In 1450 South of Dieppe at 20,000 feet. Patrolled area at 1510 in area North of Formiere. 7-190's were bounced by 79th. Sq. from 12,000 feet. 1 destroyed at 1530-40. 6 E/A were encountered just south of Rouen. Col. Russell and Lt. Nichols claim 1 destroyed each. Out vicinity of San Valery 1555 bombers out of area. 2 battle damage. 2 A/C-1 cat engine.
f. Weather - Battle damage	

## TELEPHONE FLASH REPORT

F.O. 217.DATE 14 January 1944.

(Not to be teletyped)	(Not to be teletyped)
a. Designation of Unit	55th. Fighter Squadron.
b. Time of Landing	1645.
c. Aircraft NYR (State if believed Lost)	
d. Estimated Claims	Destroyed      Probable      Damaged
e. Brief description of Mission	Landfall in 1453. 17,000 to 19,000 feet. Vicinity of point D'Ailly. Saw many groups of B-17's and B-24's concentrated bombing. 5 or 6 E/A target. 190's seen in vicinity. Landfall out 1532 vicinity of Triel.
f. Weather - Battle damage	Clear and haze over South England. Battle damage none.

## TELEPHONE FLASH REPORT

F.O. 217.

DATE 14 January 1944.

(Not to be teletyped)	(Not to be teletyped)
a. Designation of Unit	77th. Fighter Squadron.
b. Time of Landing	1703.
c. Aircraft NVR (State if believed Lost)	1 - Lt. Quinn. (IN)
d. Estimated Claims	Destroyed      Probable      Damaged
e. Brief description of Mission	In 20,000 feet, at 1450 South of Dieppe. Broke into sections at coast. Swept West of Amiens South to Rouen. Escorting bombers in and out no encounters. Out 1555 various places.
f. Weather - Battle damage	Weather clear. Bogies high.



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TELEPHONE FLASH REPORT

F.O. 217

DATE 14 January 1944.

(Not to be teletyped)

(Not to be teletyped)

a. Designation of Unit	79th. Fighter Squadron.
b. Time of Landing	1700
c. Aircraft NYR (State if believed Lost)	1- Archer. Seen explode. -believed. Nichols 190 Ott & Mednick 190.
d. Estimated Claims	Destroyed 2 Probable 0 Damaged 8
e. Brief description of Mission	1450 in South Dieppe. Patrolled area. Formiere. 1510 left hand lower corner of area. B-24 seen to explode. first encounters. 1530-40-battle South of Rouen. 12,000 feet. left 1555 about St. Y Valery. 6000 to 7000 feet. 2 planes E/A. Both Wittering. (Gael belly landing A/C Wyman. Some blew up 1540 - 10,000 feet near Fauville.
f. Weather - Battle Damage	

