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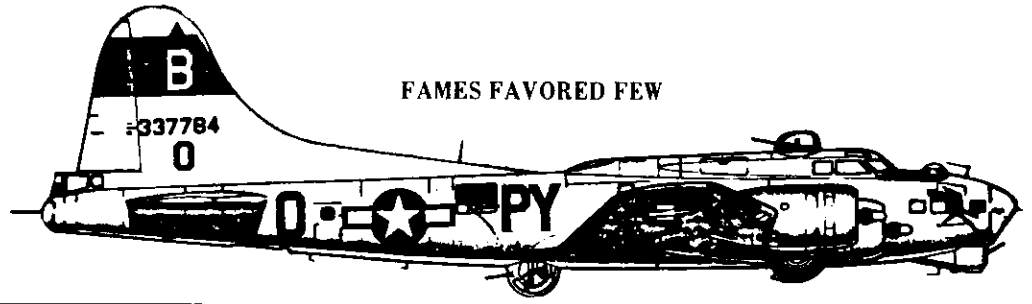
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92nd Bombardment Group NEWS



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TARGET - JULY 4, 1943 LE MANS-NANTES-LA PALLICE

The VIII Bomber Command celebrated its second July 4 in England by giving the Germans a demonstration of just how a moderate-sized force of heavy day bombers could be used. Weather dictated the choice of three targets in Occupied France — the Gnome and Rhone Aero Engine Factory at Le Mans, an aircraft factory at Nantes, and the U-boat installations at La Pallice. Both factories, of course, were working hard for the Nazis.

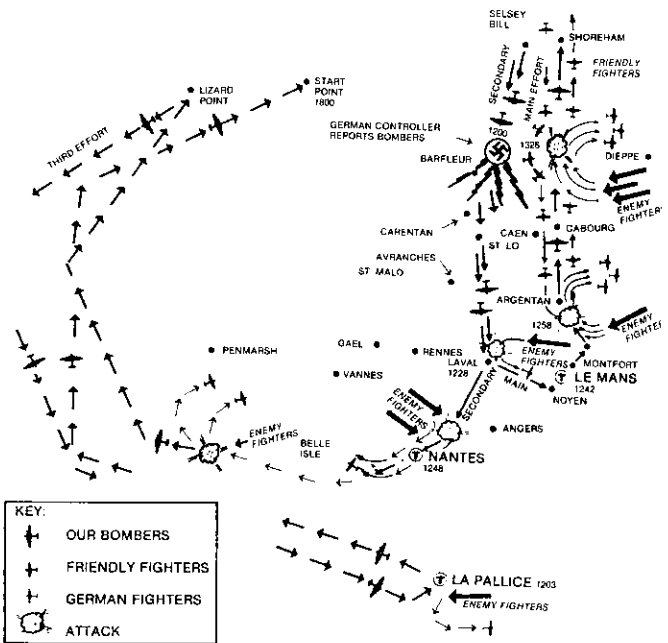
Shortly after noon two strong forces of Forts flying parallel courses crossed the French coast, just east of the Cherbourg peninsula. As the German fighter force made hurried preparations to defend this area, a third force of some seventy Fortresses, having made a wide swing out to sea, appeared over the installations at La Pallice 200 miles to the south. This part of the operation bombed effectively and returned without meeting any effective enemy opposition.

Meanwhile, the two main forces had reached Laval, eighty miles south of the Channel, at 1230. Here the full force of the Nazi fighters converged upon them. At Laval, following the flight plan, one of the bomber forces swung left and hit Le Mans. The other force turned right and attacked Nantes, to the southeast. This effectively split the Nazi fighter concentration. The Le Mans force withdrew north, picking up friendly fighter support at Argentan. The Nantes force continued from their target in a southwesterly direction, withdrawing out to sea and flying a great semicircle back to England.

The German fighter force, dispersed to face the several prongs of this operation and held at bay by friendly fighters during the last part of the Le Mans withdrawal, was able to account for less than three per cent of the bombing force despite its persistent and ferocious attacks. Returning crews claimed 52 Nazi fighters. The bombing against all three targets — a total of 542 tons being dropped — was exemplary.

On July 4 high-level precision bombing added a third development, tactical deception, to its already - established reputation for accuracy and effective self-defense — it proved that, given sufficient force, the hand that guided the high-level daylight bomber could be quicker than the Nazi eye.

The 92nd aircraft consisting of 16 Forts and three YB-40's attacked Nantes. Fighter attacks began at the 1P and continued uninterrupted until the aircraft were 35 miles past the coast of France. This mission is discussed on page 45 of "The Route As Briefed". John Ford's recollection of the mission is as follows — (he was serving as tail gunner on Ruthie I). "After being clobbered over the target and dropping out of formation, quite a



Published in Target, Germany - Simon & Schuster
Courtesy of John C. Ford (M1)

few F-190's proceeded to do a number on us. Dick Gettys and I were possibly hit by the same FW boring in from 6 o'clock low. Gettys ball turret was hit by a 20mm shell which pierced the glass and exploded inside the turret. Gettys seriously injured in the chest and face by shell fragments survived. Somewhere at this point, Lt. Bob Campbell brought the plane down on the deck and two long range JU-88's took a crack at us but we managed to beat them off despite the extensive damage." The aircraft condition and the landing were described in the Stars & Stripes as follows:

No Plane At All

Both an engineer's report and the crew of Ruthie agree the ship they flew back from Nantes was no plane at all.

Just after the Fort loosed its bombs, enemy fire punctured two gas tanks, tore part of the fuselage into shreds, knocked the wing flaps down into the braking system and wrecked the hydraulic system, and punctured one of the landing wheel tires.

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Target-July 4, 1943 continued from page 1

A 20mm shell pierced the floor between the waist gunners, Sgt. Walton Reece, of Joplin, Missouri, and Sgt. Eugene Ponte, of St. Louis, and entered the radio compartment, wounding Sgt. Glenn E. Johnson, of Garner, Kansas.

The waist tail gunner was crippled and Sgt. John C. Ford of Highland Park, Michigan, was hit in the leg. Then a shell exploded in the ball turret, seriously injuring the gunner, who continued to fire until he became unconscious.

Lt. Robert L. Campbell, of Liberty, Mississippi, the pilot, signaled the leader with a lamp — the radio was out — to send an SOS when he was preparing to land.

"When I started to land," he said, "I discovered we had a flat tire. I held her on the runway as long as I could and then whirled her around in front of the control tower, but she stayed up.

"The report I got said the ship was a total loss. Boy, she was."

An additional incident attributed to by Weaver occurred as the craft approached the English coast still on the deck. "A lone ME-109 flew alongside our waist position for a few minutes. Finally he gave us a salute, waggled his wings and flew off. He could of clobbered us." John Ford adds, "time heals all wounds" so I hope that this "Kraut" survived the war."

Damage photos of Ruthie I appear on page 4.

1984 REUNION PROGRAM

Your Reunion Committee chaired by Charles Kelly (LA) has submitted the preliminary program for the 1984 Reunion. A finalized program will be published after the 1st of the year.

TENTATIVE 42ND ANNIVERSARY REUNION PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY - OCTOBER 3, 1984

2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Registration - Hotel Lobby

2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Hospitality Room Open

Dinner on your own

Time is made here for you to arrange your own special small group get togethers. RED RIVER REVEL will be in full swing during your stay here, and there are several good restaurants that specialize in CATFISH DINNERS in the area.

THURSDAY - OCTOBER 4, 1984

Breakfast on your own

8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
Registration will resume in the Hotel Lobby

11:30 a.m.
Chartered busses leave for LOUISIANA DOWNS RACE TRACK.

12:00 Noon
Meet outside the bus gate. We will be escorted immediately to the SKY ROOM (reserved for the 92nd), racing forms will be available. There will be continuous FREE FOOD. No evening meal will be needed. When the races are over we load our busses and return to our hotel. The rest of the evening is free.

9:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.
Hospitality Room Open

FRIDAY - OCTOBER 5, 1984

Leisure breakfast on your own. Free time for the RED RIVER REVEL, and for shopping.

10:00 a.m.
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

Lunch own your own. Get ready to go to BAFB.

1:30 p.m.
Load USAF Busses for a TOUR OF BARKSDALE AF BASE, and a short MEMORIAL SERVICE.

6:00 p.m.
Bar opens at the Officers' Club, pay your own.

7:00 p.m.
Everyone take their seats in the banquet hall at the O. Club for a special LOUISIANA CAJUN FEAST. No formal program tonight.

Announcements Will be made to load the busses for transport back to your hotel.

Note: Hospitality Room will be opened until 11:00 p.m.

SATURDAY - OCTOBER 6, 1984

BREAKFAST & LUNCH on your own. Everyone has the morning free to tour the Red River Revel (located on the River Front).

9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Hospitality Room Open. Meet your friends here to have a drink, shoot the bull, tell war stories, or discuss other important matters.

1:30 p.m.

GENERAL MEETING. Election of officers, selecting the next Reunion site, discuss aid to 8th AF Museum, and other business.

2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Hospitality Room Open

5:30 p.m.

Load USAF busses for transportation back to BAFB for a BANQUET AND A DINNER DANCE.

6:00 p.m.

Cash Bar Open in the Club.

7:00 p.m.

Everyone take their seats in the banquet hall for a Welcoming Ceremony & a Special Prime Roast (Rib) Dinner.

During our meal and afterward for the dance we will be entertained by the 8th Air Force Band playing special selections of GLENN MILLER MUSIC.

At Approximately 24:00 hrs.

Load busses for transportation back to your hotel.

SUNDAY - OCTOBER 7, 1984

Breakfast on your own. Meet your friends and say your good-byes in the hotel dining room.

9:30 a.m. - 12:00 Noon

Hospitality Room Open. Coffee, aspirins, etc. If you need any assistance in departing let it be known.

Check-out time.

The committee tried to leave time for individual groups to do their own thing. Events are informal (casual) except for the night at the Barksdale Officers' Club (Saturday, October 6). Transportation will be furnished by the Air Force (except to the races). The hotel will provide wheels from the airport for those flying in. The committee welcomes your comments/suggestions providing they are received prior to September 1983. Write to Charles J. Kelly, 6304 Pawnee Trail, Shreveport, LA 71107.