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EIGHTH AIR FORCE

TACTICAL OPERATIONS

IN SUPPORT OF

ALLIED LANDINGS IN NORMANDY

2ND JUNE - 17 TH JUNE

1944

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(D) and 5(D) of (C)
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DAILY OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

for period

2 June - 17 June

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2 JUNE OPERATION

(D minus 3 at time of operation; became D minus 4 when D-Day was postponed.)

Operation No. 384

First Mission

Field Order 709

1. DECISION: Operations on this day were specified for D minus 3 by the Overall Air Plan as modified by Headquarters A.E.A.F. All objectives were located in the Pas de Calais (Fortitude) area, the attacks having as their purpose deception of the enemy as to the actual assault area. (Cover Plan.) It was provided that in these operations immediately preceding D-Day only one-half of the available heavy bombers were to be employed in order to conserve the force for an all-out assault in direct support of the troop landings.

2. PLANNING.

a. The weather forecast for the Pas de Calais area indicated 8/10-10/10 stratocumulus with bases 800-1500 feet and tops 7000-9000 feet.

b. In view of predicted cloud conditions, plans were made to employ through the overcast bombing technique in this operation which would utilize approximately one-half of the available heavy bombers. The following allocation of targets among the three Bomb Divisions was made, the nature and size of the objective determining the strength of the attacking force:

Chart Ref. No.	Target	Force Assigned
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Force I - 3rd Bomb Division (Tactical Unit - Group of 18 B-17's with 1 H2X Pathfinder)

*1. Boulogne Area	Medium Battery	3 Groups
*3. Equihen Area	Medium Battery	3 Groups
*4. Boulogne Area	Medium Coastal Battery	3 Groups
16. Wimereux Area	Field Battery	3 Groups
17. Wimereux Area	Heavy Coastal Battery	3 Groups

Force II - 1st Bomb Division (Tactical Unit - Group of 18 B-17's with 1 H2X Pathfinder)

*1. Boulogne Area	Medium Battery	2 Groups
2. Neufchatel Area	Medium Battery	2 Groups
*3. Equihen Area	Medium Battery	2 Groups
*4. Boulogne Area	Medium Coastal Battery	2 Groups
5. Hardelot Area	Medium Coastal Battery	2 Groups
6. Dannes Area	Defended Locality	2 Groups
7. St. Cecily Area	Medium Coastal Battery	3 Groups

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Chart
Ref. No.

Target

Force
Assigned

Force III - 2nd Bomb Division
(Tactical Unit - Squadron of 12 B-24's with 1 H2X Pathfinder)

8. St. Aubin Area	Medium Coastal Battery	3 Squadrons
9. Stella Plage Area	Medium Coastal Battery	2 Squadrons
10. Berck sur Mer Area	Field Battery	3 Squadrons
11. Berck sur Mer Area	Medium Coastal Battery	3 Squadrons
12. Berck sur Mer Area	Radar Installation	2 Squadrons
13. Berck sur Mer Area	Light Coastal Battery	2 Squadrons
14. Berck sur Mer Area	Defended Locality	1 Squadron
15. Stella Plage Area	Defended Locality	2 Squadrons
18. Beauvoir Crossbow Installation (Dump)		6 Squadrons

* Units from more than one Force assigned to these targets.

H2X Pathfinder aircraft utilizing GEE fixes for navigation were to be used for target location except in the case of the units attacking the Crossbow installation at Beauvoir. GH bombing equipment was to be used in this instance.

c. The general plan for routing of the bomber forces followed a pattern similar to that employed on previous large scale Crossbow operations, the problem being to avoid interference among the large number of units attacking 18 different targets located within a relatively small area and at the same time concentrate the attacks so that a minimum of anti-aircraft fire could be brought to bear against the bombers as a whole. Penetration and withdrawal corridors were assigned to each force as well as specified periods of attack which were 1200-1210 hours for Force I, 1220-1230 hours for Force II, and 1240-1250 hours for Force III. As a further measure to improve maneuverability, it was specified that each force would fly as three formations of equal size. The units of Force III assigned to the Crossbow Installation at Beauvoir were not included in the aforementioned plan of attack. The six Squadrons detailed to this target were to be divided into two waves, the first to attack at 1310, the second at 1335. These timings were set to avoid interference with bombers returning from their attacks on the coastal installations and the interval between the waves was to permit the GH ground station to change transmitter settings for the Aiming Point of the later wave. The routing to this target afforded the long, straight approach required by the GH equipment and due consideration was given to avoidance of the strongest anti-aircraft defenses on both the penetration and withdrawal.

d. In determining the strength and disposition of the fighter support, it was considered unlikely that enemy aircraft would react to a very limited penetration of the coastal area. Accordingly, area support by three P-47 Groups and one P-38 Group was deemed adequate for the bombers operating along the Pas de Calais. For the units assigned to Beauvoir, which would make a somewhat deeper penetration, one P-51 Group was assigned as close escort. In addition, one P-47 Group and two P-51 Groups were designated to patrol the Tournai, Compiègne and Evreux areas under Ground (type 16) control for the purpose of intercepting enemy aircraft which might be assembling as a precautionary measure against a possible deep penetration by the heavy bombers.

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3. EXECUTION.

a. Eight hundred and sixty-two heavy bombers were dispatched in the three forces participating in this operation. Despite the presence of some cloud layers at assembly levels, units formed without difficulty and flew their missions essentially as planned.

b. Bombing through 10/10 cloud was accomplished on H2X Pathfinders supplemented by GEE fixes except in the case of the units directed against Beauvoir which utilized GH Pathfinders. Three units of the Force I were unable to attack due to failure of Pathfinder equipment and two Squadrons of the Force III attacked assigned targets of other units when their respective lead Pathfinder became inoperative. A total of 776 bombers dropped 2322 tons, all except 23 aircraft dropping on assigned targets. Strike photographs were unrevealing but subsequent reconnaissance cover was obtained. Bombing results are summarized as follows:

Force I - 3rd Bomb Division

Chart Ref.No.	Target	A/C Disp. Includes	A/C Att. () PFF	Total Bombs Dropped	Results
*1.	Boulogne	58 (5)	38 (3)	438x500 HE	Nil
16.	Wimereux	56 (3)	18 (1)	210x500	Good
*3.	Equihen	58 (3)	56 (3)	651x500	Nil
*4.	Boulogne	54 (3)	52 (3)	600x500	Nil
17.	Wimereux	57 (3)	54 (3)	625x500	Nil
		283 (17)	218 (13)	2524x500	

Force II - 1st Bomb Division

*1.	Boulogne	38 (2)	38 (2)	444x500	Nil
*3.	Equihen	37 (2)	35 (2)	372x500	Nil
*4.	Boulogne	37 (2)	37 (2)	394x500	Nil
5.	Hardelot	38 (2)	37 (2)	406x500	Nil
2.	Neufchatel	43 (2)	42 (2)	500x500	Nil
6.	Dannes	38 (2)	38 (2)	415x500	Nil
7.	St. Cecily	55 (3)	52 (3)	610x500	Nil
		286 (15)	279 (15)	3141x500	

Force III - 2nd Bomb Division

9.	Stella Plage	24 (2)	23 (2)	4x1000 84x2000	Fair
15.	Stella Plage	24 (2)	24 (2)	4x1000 88x2000	Nil
12.	Berck sur Mer Other Targets	24 (1)	23 (0)	92x2000	Nil
13.	Berck sur Mer	24 (2)	24 (2)	275x500	Nil
14.	Berck sur Mer	12 (1)	12 (1)	138x500	Nil



Chart Ref. No.	Target	A/C Disp. Includes	A/C Att. () PFF	Total Bombs Dropped	Results
11.	Bereck sur Mer	37 (3)	36 (3)	402x500	Good
10.	Bereck sur Mer	37 (3)	36 (3)	26x1000 113x2000	Nil
8.	St. Aubin	39 (3)	38 (3)	6x1000 137x2000	Nil
18.	Beauvoir	71 (6) 293 (23)	63 (5) 279 (21)	744x500 40x1000 514x2000 1559x500	Fair
Total		862 (55)	776 (49)	7224x500 40x1000 514x2000	

*Units from more than one Force assigned to these targets.

Although it is indicated that only four of the specific targets were affected by the bombing, there is evidence of damage to other installations in this heavily fortified area.

c. Fighter support was provided by 365 aircraft, 175 P-47's, 46 P-38's, 144 P-51's from the eight assigned Groups. As planned, one P-38 Group and three P-47 Groups afforded area cover, one P-51 Group gave close escort to the units assigned to Beauvoir and one P-47 and two P-51 Groups operated under Ground (type 16) control.

d. Enemy opposition was confined solely to anti-aircraft fire which varied from meager to moderate and was generally ineffective.

e. All bombers and fighters returned from this operation. Eleven of the former and one of the latter sustained battle damage, all due to anti-aircraft fire.

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STATISTICAL SUMMARY

First Mission

2 June 1944

	Force I (3rd B.D.) B-17's	Force II (1st B.D.) B-17's	Force III (2nd B.D.)	Mission Totals
<u>HEAVY BOMBERS</u>				
A/C Airborne	283	286	293	862
A/C Sorties	273	283	284	840
A/C Executing Assignments	218	279	279	776
Bombs Dropped (Tons)	631	785.25	923.75	2340
A/C Lost	0	0	0	0
Category "E"	0	0	0	0
A/C Battle Damaged	11	0	0	11
Claims Against E/A	0	0	0	0
<u>FIGHTERS</u>	<u>P-47</u>	<u>P-38</u>	<u>P-51</u>	<u>Mission Totals</u>
A/C Airborne	175	46	144	365
A/C Sorties	171	43	139	353
A/C Executing Assignments	166	40	133	339
A/C Lost	0	0	0	0
Category "E"	0	0	0	0
A/C Battle Damaged	1	0	0	1
Claims Against E/A	0	0	0	0

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