

IV. JOURNAL OF OPERATIONS, JANUARY: continued:

13 Jan 45

10/10s to 4/5000 feet at the target, with scattered high cirrus. The weather condition was so bad that it necessitated landing at other fields than our own. One Pilot, Lt Ksanznak, of the 358th Squadron was killed when he spun in for a crash near Melbourne. The cause of the crash was unknown. Flak over the target was moderate, heavy, and inaccurate.

CLAIMS: Nil

LOSSES: LT Thomas Ksanznak, 358th Squadron, killed in crash-landing.

14 Jan 45

FO 1515A; Mission: Ramrod; Major Wilson leading "A" Group

Up: 1032 Down: 1550; a/c disp: 30 P51s; early returns: 8 (1 escort)

"A" Group of the 355th Fighter Group was briefed to escort the 2nd box of Second Division B24s on a ramrod. They made rendezvous with the bombers at 1200 at 22000 feet at 5400-0800E, but not with the assigned bombers. They observed bombing results in this area and escorted on withdrawal. They then flew south and picked up their assigned bombers at Brunswick at 1400, at 22000 feet. Escort was broken at 1500 at the Dutch Coast, after which the fighters swept the Zwolle area uneventfully. One squadron went down to 10000 feet to investigate bogies that proved to be friends. Later they strafed as follows:

1430: 2 Locomotives destroyed and freight train damaged southeast of Dummer Lake, heading west.

1445: 1 Locomotive and freight train damaged east of Paderborn, heading east.

1450: 1 Locomotive with 15 flat cars attacked at Sinslaken (west of Gladbeck) heading northwest.

Rockets were seen at 1429 at Frankfurt, at 1228 at Zuider Zee, at 1345 at Magdeburg, at 1415 south of Brunswick, south of Hannover at 1445 and 1435. A B17 was seen to crash and its explosion north of Brunswick at 1345. Eleven ships were seen east of Vlieland in the Zuider Zee at 1445. Six large and several smaller vessels seen east of Cuxhaven anchored with balloons flying from them.

The bombers we were to escort were reported as being on time and on course, but this Group was at designated place on time and was unable to effect a rendezvous. Cloud formation was 10/10s cumulus north of withdrawal route.

CLAIMS: (see above and Mission Summary Report)

LOSSES: Nil

14 Jan 45

FO 1515A; Mission: Ramrod; Captain Fortier leading "C" Group

Up: 1039 Down: 1610; a/c disp: 17 P51s; early returns: 2 (1 escort)

"C" Group of the 355th Fighter Group was briefed to furnish area support for the 1st Division B17s bombing Cologne. They arrived in the area of Coblenz at 1234 at 26000 feet, and patrolled from Coblenz to Siegen to Cologne at 30000 feet. Nuthouse reported bandits west of Bonn, at which time the Group let down to 12000 feet, but they couldn't find any enemy aircraft. They circled the Hangelar airfield at 10000 feet, but they saw no activity. They left Laacher Lake area at 1430 at 15000 feet.

Rocket launchings were observed in a forest east of Coblenz. Three rockets were believed to have been fired from a woods at 5026-0744E; it was definitely identified as the correct location and the rockets are believed to have been fired from the top of a hill in the woods. Flak at Cologne was heavy, intense, and accurate.

CLAIMS: Nil

LOSSES: Nil

continued:

IV. JOURNAL OF OPERATIONS, JANUARY: continued:

14 Jan 45

PO VOCC PINETREE; Mission: Sweep; Major Elder leading

Up: 1235 Down: 1620; a/c disp: 13 P51s; early returns: 1

"D" Group's sweep for today was highly successful. After "A" and "C" Groups had been out for about two hours, "D" Group took off on a sweep. They arrived in the Munster area at 1400 at 12000 feet. At 1430, 10 miles east of Meppen the Group sighted 10 ME109s at 14000 feet climbing to our altitude of 16000 feet from the east. The enemy aircraft dropped tanks and an encounter ensued. After this attack Nuthouse reported bandits 35 miles southwest of Dummer Lake. In this area at 1450, one squadron sighted 9 FW190s at 16000 feet flying in trail with 4 FW190s as top cover. The enemy dropped their tanks and orbited to the right making the pickings much easier. From the former and ensuing encounters the Group claimed 11-0-1 S/E Air.

Along the Vecht river flak was heavy, intense, and accurate.

CLAIMS:: 11-0-1 S/E Air (354th and 357th Sqdns) (See Mission Summary)
LOSSES: Nil

15 Jan 45

PO 1519A; Mission: Area Support to Bombers, thence strafing Lechfeld Airfield

"A" Major Sluga, "B" Major Graham leading

"A" Up: 0954 Down: 1540; a/c disp: 29; early returns: 3

"B" Up: 1002 Down: 1555; a/c disp: 29; early returns: 2

The Group arrived in the assigned area (Lechfeld Airfield) at 1225 at 20000 feet, and patrolled while the bombers bombed at 1230. They couldn't strafe because of a 10/10s undercast but they found Landsberg and Oberpfaffenhofen open and strafed these airfields with the claims listed below. Also they strafed trains north of Landsberg.

It was observed that there were from twelve to fourteen aircraft on Landsberg and from 10 to 12 fires. There were four or five aircraft on Oberpfaffenhofen and three to five fires. Three transports were parked in the northeast corner of Oberpfaffenhofen. A JU52 which had been destroyed at the latter field, and it emitted billowing, black, oily smoke. All of the aircraft claimed destroyed were left burning. The twin engine enemy aircraft claimed on Landsberg were parked in revetments on the northeast corner of the field. These were unidentified, but they were painted black and were believed to be jet aircraft. A large oil storage dump was spotted in the woods two miles northeast of Landsberg airfield; a large military camp north of Goppingen; a barracks and tank depot east of Landsberg; and a large camp with a runway of firebreak 20 miles east of Worm Sea.

One pilot who returned early from the target area reported seeing a silver-colored ball, resembling a Christmas tree decoration, floating slowly downward at 16000 feet north of Laupheim at approximately 1315. The object was within thirty feet of the aircraft, but it did not affect the radio or engine. It was about two feet in circumference, and had no forward speed.

One Squadron investigated Kaubeuren airfield, but observed no activity though field appeared to have been heavily used.

Flak: Landsberg: light, intense, accurate; Oberpfaffenhofen: light, moderate, accurate from barracks area east of the field; Munich: heavy, moderate, accurate; Stuttgart: heavy, meagre, accurate.

CLAIMS: 12-0-19 (See Mission Summary for breakdown)

2-0-1 Locomotives

0-0-6 Freight cars

1-0-0 MP

LOSSES: Nil

continued:

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MISSION SUMMARY REPORT

14 JANUARY 1945

1. 355TH "D" FIGHTER GROUP, MAJOR ELDER LEADING
2. 13 P51s: 8 354TH SQ, 2 357TH SQ, 3 358TH SQ. UP: 1235 DOWN: 1620
3. ONE
4. VOCO PINETREE
5. THRU 7. NIL
8. 10-0-1 S/E AIR
9. ARRIVED MUNSTER AREA 1400 AT 12000 FEET. AT 1430, 10 MILES EAST MEPPEN, GROUP SIGHTED 10 ME109s AT 14000 FEET CLIMBING TO OUR ALTITUDE OF 16000 FEET FROM THE EAST. E/A's DROPPED TANKS AND ENCOUNTER ENSUED. AFTER THIS ATTACK NUTHOUSE REPORTED BANDITS 35 MILES SOUTHWEST DUMMER LAKE. IN THIS AREA 1450 ONE SQUADRON SIGHTED 9 FW190s AT 16000 FEET FLYING IN TRAIL WITH 4 FW190s AS TOP COVER. E/A's DROPPED TANKS, ORBITED TO RIGHT MAKING PICK-INGS MUCH EASIER. L/F OUT 1545 KNOCKE, 20000 FEET. ONE FLIGHT ESCORTED B24 FROM ZWOLLE TO ANTWERP 16000 FEET.
10. NIL
11. ROCKET POSITION S/W THE HAGUE.
12. 10 PLUS ME190s 10 MILES EAST MEPPEN FLYING IN STRING, AND ROLLERCOASTING WITH NO APPARENT REASON WHILE CLIMBING FROM 14000 FEET TO 16000 FEET. NINE FW190s FLYING IN STRING WITH 4 FW190s 1500 FEET ABOVE, ALSO IN STRING. ONE P51 WITH BLACK NOSE, BLACK STABILIZER WITH WHITE CIRCLE ENCLOSING A LETTER ON THE TAIL SEEN IN COMBAT. MAY HAVE BEEN E/A. E/A's DID NOT APPEAR TOO AGGRESSIVE.
13. ALONG VECHT RIVER, HEAVY, INTENSE, ACCURATE.
14. CAVU
15. NIL
16. 10-0-1 S/W AIR

(354TH SQUADRON)		
2 FW190s	DESTROYED	MAJOR GRAHAM
2 FW190s	"	LT KEMPER
1 ME109	"	LT MILLS
1 FW190	"	LT MILLS
1 ME109	"	LT DECKLAR
1 FW190	"	LT DECKLAR
1 ME109	"	LT WOOD
1 FW190	DAMAGED	MAJOR GRAHAM
(357TH SQUADRON)		
1 ME109	DESTROYED	MAJOR ELDER

AMENDMENT TO MISSION SUMMARY 14 JANUARY 1945:

8. 11-0-1 S/E AIR INSTEAD OF 10-0-1 S/E AIR

16. (TO ABOVE BREAKDOWN OF CLAIMS ADD: 1 ME109 DESTROYED LT MILLS