

The Business Of Precision Bombing

Excerpted from Straight and Level
Vol II No. 1

Straight And Level has been published for eight weeks prior to this issue. During this time the 15th Air Force has become more than ever alive to the question: "How accurate is our bombing?" Also many problems have been raised and solved and a uniform procedure for determining accuracy has been worked out:

1. Strike photos are roughly analyzed first.
2. As they come in the bomb plots are compared with the strike photos to see whether they represent a fair cross section of the bombing (it is rarely possible to plot all the bombs dropped).
3. The percentage of all bombs plotted within 1000 feet of the briefed mean point of impact is then used as the score.
4. Where a bomb plot does not seem to represent a fair cross section it is rechecked against the strike photos, the tactics report and any other sources of information available including the Wing Photo Officer and the Wing Bombardier.
5. Targets of opportunity are not counted because verification of the aiming point is in most cases impossible.
6. Where the aiming point was changed an investigation is usually made to determine whether or not the change was justified. If it was, the new aiming point is used for the scoring.
7. Bombing by pathfinder is not counted in the record because photos are usually not available; and frag, incendiary and 100 lb. demolition are usually impossible to plot.
8. When a bomb plot is not submitted because the strike photos are clouded, smoke-obscured, etc., a zero score is given unless other evidence is submitted to show that some bombs actually hit in the target area. Photos of bombs leaving a plane can provide this information, as can recon photos.

(Note: The figures used in this publication are approximate, and opinions as to the accuracy of Groups is not necessarily conclusive nor final. They are for the most part close estimates).

During the first eight weeks of Straight And Level many suggestions and comments have been made. In general these have been on two main subjects: (a) The fairness of the scores and (b), the effect of publishing the facts, especially for poor missions.

(a) Through the development of a standard procedure the

figures given represent in a great majority of cases the accuracy achieved within a few percent. In the remaining cases that may slip through the variations work both ways, and it is believed that over a period chance inequalities will iron themselves out.

(b) It is felt that an up to date overall picture of our bombing accuracy will do more to improve our bombing than over praise for an occasional job of high accuracy, and too-ready condemnation for a SNAFU job. If our morale rests on a good understanding of the facts it can withstand the waxing and waning fortunes of day-by-day bombing.

SUMMARY OF THIS WEEK

For this week the 49th Wing regained its position in the lead. The other four wings were bunched together, with the 5th taking second place. Many missions were flown with frags and 100 lb. demos for which bomb plots cannot be made. Thirty-nine missions were flown, two less than last week, one mission being flown on a shuttle basis into Russia. There was one score over 60% and only four over 50%.

Bombing Accuracy By Wings (% within 1000' of B.A.P.)

For the four-week period ending

	June 2	May 26	(April 30)
49th Wing	30.3	27.0	(14.2)
47th Wing	25.6	21.0	(11.4)
5th Wing	23.5	22.1	(22.7)
55th Wing	21.5	21.5	(21.0)
304th Wing	18.2	16.0	(16.9)
<u>15th AIR FORCE</u>	23.9	21.5	(16.3)

For the first time since publication of the record began, a Wing has crossed the 30% line for four weeks of bombing. The Air Force average has been steadily climbing. The April figure is published for comparison.



May 30. Wiener Neustadt - Neudorf Scoring 61%, the 460th Group of the 55th Bomb Wing hit this target.



May 27. Avignon Marshalling Yard. The 301st Group of the 5th Wing hit this target with 57% within 1000 feet.