
Part 3 The Narrative Report

The following Narrative Report is shown as written without editing to show how official documents were organized and to preserve the flavor of army writing style.

MISSION NO. 31 (824th, 825th, 826th, And 827th Squadrons) INNSBRUCK, AUSTRIA

NARRATIVE REPORT

1. MISSION: Main Marshaling Yards, Innsbruck, Austria
2. TARGET: Southern half of Goods Yards
South choke point
Main Line leading south

3. IMPORTANCE OF TARGET Special Intelligence Annex, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, dated 8 June 1944, advises, "the invasion of Northern France has given this Air Force one main objective; to give the most direct and immediate aid to our invading forces. Our range is limited, but two objectives areas are well within our reach. We can destroy German Air Force production and repair facilities and attempt the dislocation of Southern German transportation." Enemy aircraft production has been seriously hit. In the immediate future the enemy will largely depend on the FW 190 and ME 410. Production centers for the ME 410 area at Neaubing in Munich. Marshaling yards at Munich and at Innsbruck are two of the most important links in the German Transportation system. Particularly, the yards at Innsbruck control all traffic between Munich, Friedichshafen, the Balkans, and the Brenner Pass into Italy. Aircraft parts enroute to assembly points, troops and supplies desperately require this main route if enemy redistribution is to be effective. A blow at the nerve center will cause a bottleneck and seriously weaken the enemy.

4. THE BATTLE PLAN The highly co-ordinated battle plan anticipated a saturation of the aircraft production complex in the Munich area. A huge force of heavy bombers, totaling more than seven hundred (700) and escorted by six (6) fighter groups, were scheduled for this assault. Of these, one hundred and eleven (111) bombers were to hit the Neaubing aircraft factory. This attack was planned in three waves, each wave consisting of at least thirty six (36) aircraft. timing of the assault placed two fighters groups in the rendezvous enroute as penetration escort and additional four fighter groups over the target for target and withdrawal support. First alternate target was the important marshaling yards at Innsbruck.

5. AIRCRAFT STATISTICS Thirty seven (37) B-24's (9 from the 824th, 10 from the 826th, and 9 from the 827th took off at 0555 hours after an intensive day and half of repairs. Four aircraft returned without bombing. One of these aircraft had a blown cylinder head and three lost engines enroute and were unable to maintain formation. Three aircraft disabled by fighter attack forced to turn back, bombed targets of opportunity. Twenty-four aircraft finding the primary target obscured by smoke, bombed the important marshaling yards at Innsbruck at 1034, Six aircraft failed to return. Of these, five were shot down by fighters and the sixth, mortally damaged by fighters and flak, ditched in the Adriatic Sea.

6. ASSAULT The axis of attack was 185 degrees true. The bomb load of each aircraft was 9 x 5001 lb. demolition bombs (.1 second nose; mixed .01 and .025 second tail fusings). Altitude over the target ranged from 24,000 to 23,000 feet and our formation rallied left.

7. ATTACK CHRONOLOGY Poor weather conditions made rendezvous exceptionally difficult and the Group immediately scheduled for the Wing Lead failed to make the rendezvous. Our Group immediately assumed lead of the Wing formation and continued on through the weather over the Adriatic.