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27 September 1944.

SUBJECT: Group Gunnery Officer's Report on Mission #169 - Kassel,
Hessol, Germany, on 27 September 1944.

TO : Commanding General, 2d Bombardment Division, AAF Station 147,
Hessol, Germany. (100%) Division Gunnery Officer.
Group Gunnery Officer, 2d Bombardment Division (H). AAF Station 124,
APO 558, S. O. 275, 124th Wing Gunnery Officer.

1. The following report is submitted for your information. It is based on the intelligence survey and on descriptions of the returning crew members.

The report is divided into the following parts:

1. Summary;
2. Description and method of attacks involving types and number of Enemy Aircraft, duration and color.
3. Group Gunnery suggestions from this Station.

Part One.

The participating Bomber / Aircraft numbering thirty five (35), were between fifteen (15) to twenty (20) minutes from the bombed target en-route base when the first attacks were made. The formation being flown at the time by the Bombers is stated to have been a tight and flat one.

Enemy Aircraft were thought to be in the area from the briefing given the crew earlier, but before the first attack came reports indicate that contrails were seen. These contrails were of short duration and crews rather expected they were being made from AF 169's.

The attacks began at 1005 hours. The first attack made came from six (6) o'clock, low in wave form. Each Squadron reported that this first wave aimed at it composed of from 6 to 15 FW 190's. Just previous to the first attack a crew member in the lead squadron stated seeing 5 ME 109's flying just below and right through the Group. Their color was similar to our F-51's which were known to be sweeping the general area below. Right behind the 5 ME 109's and as if chasing them came the FW 190's in line abreast making the first wave of the attack.

This initial wave covered the Bombers some from 3 through 6 around to 9 o'clock, pressing home their attacks to point blank range and flying right on pass the Group formation before breaking away to the left and right. The first wave broke up the formation and accounted for several of our ships. The Low - Left Squadron was hit first.

A second wave of Buns seemed to repeat the first wave's actions and before the remaining Bombers could close back into formation a third wave made an attack similar to the preceding two.

The first wave upon completing their breakthrough, it is thought, carried out frontal fly-thru attacks since our crews reported these attacks and one Bomber was struck directly from 12 o'clock by a single FW 190.

Enemy opposition is averaged at an approximate figure of 125. The minimum number taken from intelligence reports was 90; the maximum set at 200, but each Squadron received varying numbers, so no definite number can be ascertained. The types of A/C used were FW 190's and ME 109's of which the majority were 190's.

Again let it be stressed that most attacks were made from the tail and from slightly below. Color identification varied also and are listed as follows:

ME 109's — Dull Green or Yellow cowlings, Also dull Green Tops and Sides and Green bellies.

FW 190's — White cowlings with grey bodies. Some black ships and several dirty reddish ones. Some of the Buns were thought to be carrying belly tanks.

The duration of the attack was six (6) minutes, at an altitude of 23,000 feet. It is believed that the limiting factor of the attacks was due to exhaustion of gas and ammunition on the part of the fighters. Our friendly fighter support arrived just after the attacks ended.