

15 August 1943

Merville-Lille – VIII Bomber Command Mission #82 – “A Summary of Operations”

[Details compiled by Kimberly Ann Lindner (*incl. bibliography*) 20090813 0202 PST]

It was raining heavily in London on Sunday, August 15th 1943 when the US Eighth Air Force dispatched its forces to target Luftwaffe airfields in France and the Netherlands. 147 B-17 bombers from the 13th Combat Bombardment Wing are sent to the Merville, Lille Vendeville, and Vitry en Artois Airfields in France, and 143 airplanes managed to hit their designated targets between 19:25 and 19:33 hours.

Starting around 17:04 hours, the 95th Bomb Group sent out 22 bomber crews, and although 3 aircraft suffered damage during the mission, there were no losses. Due to the fact that their primary target was only about 129 miles away from Horham Air Base, the men in the skies that evening knew this would be a *milk run*.

Joe Noyes and his crew reportedly took off around 17:12 hours, flying in B-17F-90-BO, “Blondie II”, (serial number 42-30182), and then arrived back at base at 20:44 hours.

Some rather relaxed 95th Bomb Group crew members who weren’t scheduled to fly on that day were even inclined to compose passes for themselves, before gleefully hopping on a train bound for London.

“It was raining very heavily and we all felt there was absolutely no chance that we would be flying the next day”, remembered Sergeant Trammel Hollis, a Waist Gunner from the 335th Bomb Squadron.

Unfortunately for Sergeant Hollis, the following day the sun was shining brightly and there was a bulletin board notice at the nearest Red Cross Club reading, “Lieutenant Broman’s crew report to base immediately”. The men arrived back to Horham early enough on August 17th, to watch their own aircraft, (now carrying replacement gunners), as it left on the infamous Schweinfurt-Regensburg mission.

Although they were promptly court-martialed, grounded, and reduced in rank – it might have been a good thing they didn’t join the 4th Bombardment Wing and the Regensburg task force in the skies that day.

Bibliography

"Army Air Forces in World War II." USAAF.net Combat Chronology of the United States Army Air Forces.
<<http://www.usaaf.net/chron/43/aug43.htm>>.

Hawkins, Ian. B-17s Over Berlin: Personal Stories from the 95th Bomb Group (Memories of War).
Chicago: Potomac Books Inc., 2005.

"95thbg.org - Home." Official Website of the 95th Bomb Group (H) Memorials Foundation.
<<http://www.95thbg.org>>.