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 HEADQUARTERS
 AAF LBS APO 634
 Office of the Operations Officer

6 March 1944.

SUBJECT: Report of Operations Officer - Mission of 5 March 1944.

TO: Commanding Officer, 458th Bomb Group (H), AAF.

The 458th Bomb Group's flight of B-24's participating in the Operational Mission of 5 March 1944 prepared to have the lead ship take off at 0645. The flight consisted of two sections, the second section being led by Maj Hogg. The 458th Group was to assemble over Buncher #1 and join the 24th and 382nd Groups of the 12th Wing. This Wing was then to join the 2nd Wing for the mission. The target for the 458th Group was the West hangars on an airfield just west of Bordeaux, France, which is being used as a German R.T.U. base.

Just prior to take off time dense ground fog formed and the take off was delayed for 50 minutes. It was decided to take off and attempt to assemble at 0900 hours with the 12th Wing at Buncher #1 as they flew South at 12,000'. There was insufficient time for a proper Group assembly and climb to altitude, and as a result the 458th Bomb Group was unable to effect its assembly. Further difficulty was encountered in assembling when planes from the other Groups fired yellow-yellow flares (begin climb signal). This confused many of the pilots of the Group, as they had been told at briefing that yellow-yellow would be used for identification of the 458th Group.

As the two wings proceeded Southward to the Coast, several small flights of this group formed and attached themselves to other groups. The 458th leader picked up seven other planes and proceeded on course.

The only enemy action that we witnessed on the way in consisted of a few scattered burst of light flak. Only friendly fighter aircraft came in close enough to be identified.

When we reached Bordeaux, we found 10/10 cloud coverage over the target, and a green yellow flare from the Wing leader indicated that the secondary target would be attacked. Consistent with good air discipline we followed the Wing leader in maneuvered not according to the briefing plan.

Flying Northward on the return trip we observed one small group of planes drop their bombs, aiming on an unidentified sod airfield to our right. These bombs fell short of their target. Later on we observed bombs falling on the airfield at Cognac. Several of these struck the runways and buildings. Just after we saw these bombs fall, we encountered concentrated light flak which was very accurate. Several bursts were very close to our eight (8) ship formation and exactly on our level, which was then about 16,500 feet. We began taking evasive action and my formation received only a few hits, which caused no damage. This was the only flak encountered on the way out. No enemy fighters were identified, probably due to our excellent fighter cover of P-47's and P-38's.

- 1 -

SECRET

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No other targets of opportunity were seen and our formation jettisoned their bombs about ten (10) miles after we crossed the French coast. We jettisoned the bombs because we had head winds of fifty (50) to sixty (60) MPH and wanted to avoid the risk of having to make an instrument let down at our base with a short gasoline reserve. Three of the ships in our formation turned off to the left just before we reached the English Coast and assume that they were short of fuel and were going to land at some field in Southern England. We continued on to my base and landed under contact conditions.

The first aircraft took off at 0741 hours and the last landing at 1732 hours.

Charles M. Booth
 CHARLES M. BOOTH,
 Captain, Air Corps,

Asst. By Order of

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- 2 -

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SEC
AUTH Co 458th BG.
INITIALS WTF
DATE 3/6/44

458th BOMB GROUP (H)
AAF 123 APO 634

5 March 1944.

SUBJECT: Lead Bombardiers Narrative on Mission of March 5, 1944. Airdrome
West of Bordeaux, France.

TO: Commanding Officer, 458th Bomb Group (H).

1. Bombing Approach and Run.

Due to difficulties in assembling our Group consisted of only (8) eight aircraft in the formation at the I.P. The lead and deputy lead of the second section included in the number. We were flying the low left section in a lead Group made up of planes from several different Groups. Upon approaching the target we found it to be 10/10 overcast and the leader of the Group gave the signal, a Green-Yellow flare, to bomb a secondary target. The lead turned in a westerly direction and bombed an air field identified as Chateau Bernard Airdrome near Cognac. Our Group did not bomb because of the position we held in the formation and the Command Pilot's decision was not to drop the bombs because of the proximity of the town. Direct hits on hangars and runways by the lead Groups bombs were observed. Heavy flak was encountered on the bombing run.

We salvaged our bombs at a point approximately (5) miles from the French Coast on the way back, due to fuel shortage.

John J. Provenzano
JOHN J. PROVENZANO
2nd Lt, Air Corps
Lead Bombardier.

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HEADQUARTERS
AAF 123 APO 634
Office of the Group Operations Officer

SECRET
AUTH: *CO 453788*
INITIALS: *LLB*
DATE: *3/6/44*

6 March 1944

SUBJECT: Navigator's Narrative, Mission of 5 March 1944.

TO: Commanding Officer, 458th Bombardment Group (H) AAF 123, APO 634.

1. **ASSEMBLY:** The entire group take-off was delayed because of low visibility over the field. The second section started take-off at 0742. The first section, which was held up by minor mechanical trouble, got off at 0810. The lead ship proceeded directly to buncher # 1, arriving there at 11,500 feet at 0847. Making a counter clockwise circle with a radius of about 12 miles, we were flying due south at 0900 on the planned course about 3 miles back of the remainder of the division.

2. **ROUTE OUT AND BACK:** We flew high left element on this formation. Before we reached the English coast, we had a total of nine planes in formation. We leveled off over the Channel at 18,000 feet on course. We followed the prescribed course with reasonable accuracy up to the control point. A course of 220° was flown from here for 14 minutes, which placed us 8 miles S.W. of the Wing I.P. at (44°-18'-N, 00°-42'-W). At this time the group leading the formation, made a wide counter-clockwise circle and headed N.E. At 1131 the leader signaled to bomb a target of opportunity. The formation continued to St Foy and flew due east to La Linde and then due west back to St Foy. We were 21 minutes ahead of schedule here. The formation "S'ed" on the leader to enable fighter rendezvous to be made. At 1242, another group of B-24's bombed the Chateau Bernard Airfield, scoring several direct hits. The flak was intense and very accurate. At 1250 the formation to our left was attacked by enemy fighters. At 1336, we passed over St Florentz nearly on course and followed the prescribed course to base. We passed the French coast at 1431, jettisoned our bombs at 1437, crossed the English coast at 1508, arrived over base at 1557 and landed at 1605.

Robert H. Lawrence
ROBERT H. LAWRENCE
2nd Lt. AC

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○ Did not take off
32-3=30 Took off

3-5-44

FORMATION PLAN

LEAD SECTION

LaRoche - Weber

C D R 365x

Grant Clark Henson-Freeman Alvestad
J | 382x d | 408x A 311x R 286x

C-RAF Hetzler Taylor Schuman Kovich Gulick
F | 667x M | 718x K | 671x P | 733x K | 352x

Robeson Gaines
H | 705x S | 735x

Davidson
I | 306x

Sievers Roubal
M | 300x H | 303x

Nyman
I | 709x

SECOND SECTION

Hogg-Combs
D 357x

Brauer Bittler Sullivan-Whitlow Chamberlain
I | 682x M | 678x B 366x D Burtis
L | 288x

Logie Watson Raiter Vogel Dunlevie
P | 432x P | 697x G | 450x S | 342x J | 331x

Hopkins Schlze
M | 299x R 335x

Pierce
J | 353x

Stilson Wells
A | 362x N 720x

Stroup
R | 423x

1st Section - East

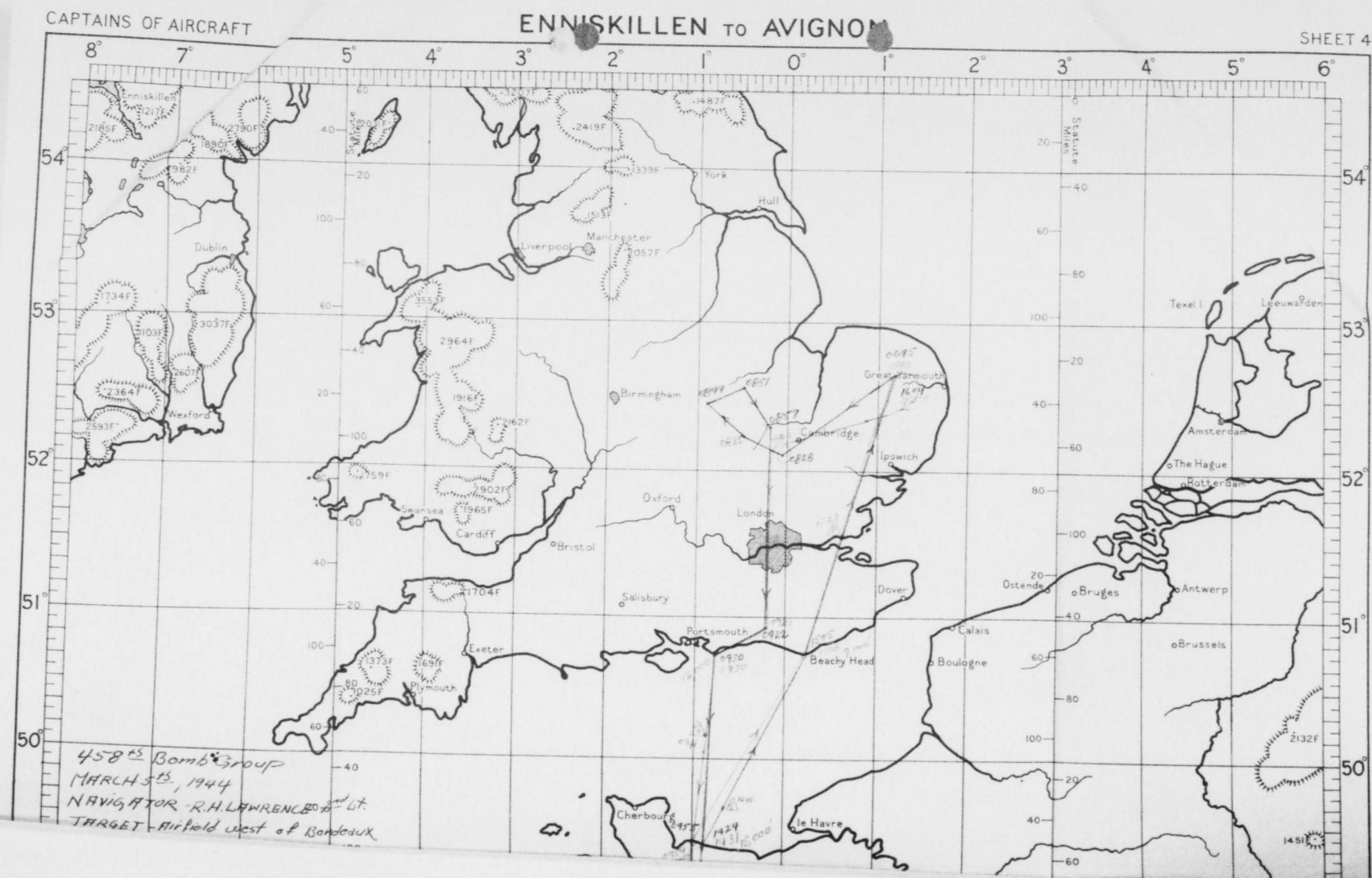
1 - 365	9 - 352
2 - 311	10 - 733
3 - 408	11 - 718
4 - 671	12 - 667
5 - 286	13 - 306
6 - 382	14 - 303
7 - 735	15 - 300
8 - 705	16 - 709

2nd Section - West

1 - 357	9 - 331
2 - 366	10 - 342
3 - 678	11 - 697
4 - 450	12 - 432
5 - 288	13 - 353
6 - 682	14 - 720
7 - 335	15 - 362
8 - 299	16 - 423

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458th Pilot List

DATE	TARGET	PILOT	458th Msn #	Pilot Msn#	Cmd / Inst Pilot	LD	Serial	Last 3	RCL	Sqdn	A/C Msn#	A/C Name	Notes
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	ALVESTAD	3	2			41-29286	286	R	J4	2	UNKNOWN 011	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	BITTLER	3	3			41-28678	678	M	J3	2	UNKNOWN 002	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	BRAUER	3	3			41-28682	682	I	Z5	3	UNKNOWN 003	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	BURTIS	3	2	CHAMBERLAIN	L	41-29288	288	L	J3	2	BIG-TIME OPERATOR	SECOND SECTION
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	CLARK	3	2			42-100408	408	D	J4	3	BEASTFACE	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	COMBS	3	2	HOGG	L2	42-100357	357	D	Z5	1	VALE OREGAN	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	DAVIDSON	3	2			42-52306	306	I	J4	3	UNKNOWN 030	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	DUNLEVIE	3	1			41-29331	331	F	J3	2	BLONDIE'S FOLLY	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	GAINES	3	1			41-28735	735	S	J4	1	UNKNOWN 005	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	GRANT	3	2			42-52382	382	J	7V	2	WURF'LESS	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	GULICK	3	1			41-29352	352	K	7V	2	WOLVE'S LAIR	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	HENSON	3	1	FREEMAN	D1	42-100311	311	A	7V	2	YOKUM BOY	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	HETZLER	3	2			41-28667	667	F	7V	3	JAYHAWKER	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	HOPKINS, T	3	2			41-29299	299	M	Z5	1	ROLL CALL	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	KOVICH	3	1			41-28733	733	P	J4	1	RHAPSODY IN JUNK	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	LOGIE	3	1			42-52432	432	P	J3	2	BACHELOR'S PARADISE	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	NYMAN	3	2			41-28709	709	I	7V	2	LUCKY STRIKE	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	PIERCE	3	2			42-52353	353	J	Z5	3	UNKNOWN 049	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	RAITER	3	3			42-52450	450	G	Z5	2	UNKNOWN 032	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	ROBESON	3	2			41-28705	705	H	J4	3	YE OLDE HELLGATE	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	ROUBAL	3	2			41-29303	303	H	Z5	2	LIBERTY LIB	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	SCHULZE	3	3			42-52335	335	R	Z5	3	ADMIRABLE LITTLE CHARACTER	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	SCHUMAN	3	2			41-28671	671	K	J4	2	UNKNOWN 001	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	SIEVERS	3	2			41-29300	300	M	J4	2	LORELEI	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	STILSON	3	1			42-100362	362	A	Z5	2	SWEET LORRAINE/BOOMERANG	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	STROUP	3	2			42-52423	423	R	J3	2	UNKNOWN 031	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	TAYLOR, O	3	2			41-28718	718	M	7V	3	BO	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	VOGEL	3	1			41-29342	342	S	J3	1	ROUGH RIDERS	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	WATSON	3	1			41-28697	697	P	Z5	1	DIXIE BELL II	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	WEBER	3	2	LaROCHE	L1	42-100365	365	B	7V	2	WOLFGANG (maybe)	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	WELLS	3	2			41-28720	720	N	J3	3	UNKNOWN 004	
05-Mar-44	BORDEAUX/MERIGNAC	WHITLOW	3	2	SULLIVAN, JF	D2	42-100366	366	B	Z5	3	MIZPAH	