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HEADQUARTERS 2d AIR DIVISION
APO 558

EE-S-4

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2948

15 March 1945

SUBJECT: Tactical Analysis of Mission 4 March 1945 - F. O. 618.

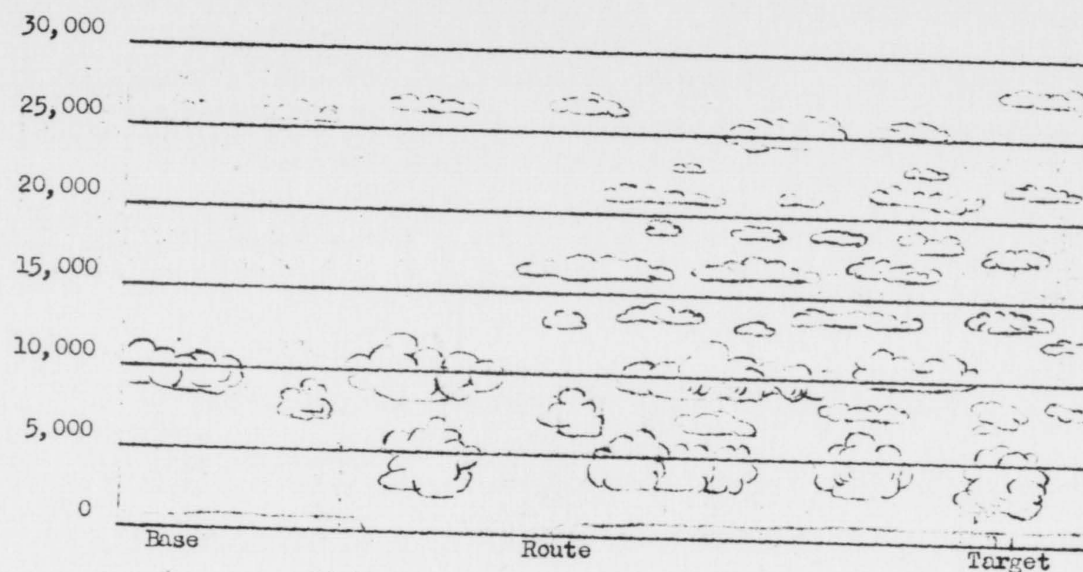
TO : Commanding Generals, All Combat Bomb Wings, This Division, APO 558.

This information is submitted for your consideration and any action you deem necessary. The deductions and remarks made below are the results of the study of mission reports and information obtained from Combat Wings and Groups.

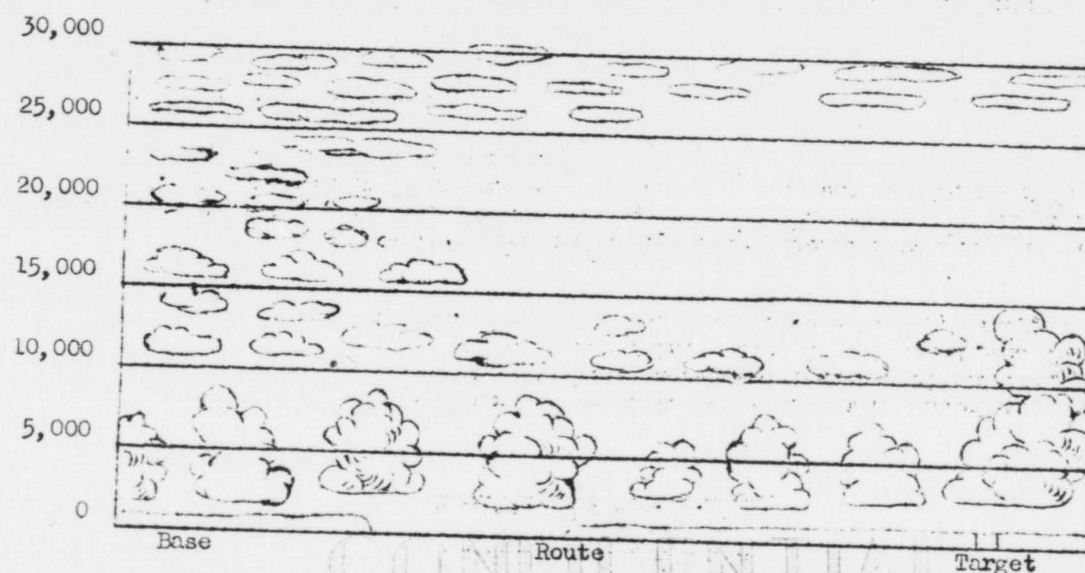
BATTLE ORDER	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	A/C DISPATCHED	A/C OVER TARGET
14th CBW	Aschaffenburg (Vis.)	Aschaffenburg (H2X)	63	54
2nd CBW	Giebelstadt "	Giebelstadt "	64	5
96th CBW	Kitzingen "	Kitzingen "	83	70
20th CBW	Schwabisch-Hall "	Schwabisch-Hall "	65	42
		2AD	275	171

1. Weather Summary

a. Forecast



b. Actual



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c. Remarks

(1) Forecast - Contrails moderate semi-persistent associated with medium and high warm frontal zone with light non-persistent associated with medium and high clouds in assembly area and a few faint contrails between 20,000 feet and 26,000 feet in the target area. Target winds: at 20,000 - 010/75, at 25,000 - 010/85.

(2) Actual - Winds and temperatures in general agreement with the forecast except the last leg, and the target winds were 20 - 30 knots lighter than forecast. - Light moderate semi-persistent contrails with base at 15,000 feet becoming dense and persistent in cloud.

2. Takeoff and Assembly

a. Takeoffs - Times

Combat Wings	Assembly Altitude	First Actual Takeoff	Briefed Time For CP 1	Assembly Time
14th	12,000	0552	0843	2:51
2nd	12,000	0612	0845	2:35
96th	12,000	0545	0847	3:02
20th	12,000	0615	0850	2:35

(1) Takeoffs were normal.

b. Assemblies

(1) A weak warm front was expected to lie through the base areas at dawn; so the continental assembly Plan B was designated for use by Eighth Air Force. The altitude was set at 12,000 feet. Two P-51's were dispatched to scout the assembly area thirty minutes in advance of the Bombers.

(2) Forty-five minutes after takeoffs had begun weather reconnaissance reports indicated 8 - 10/10 middle cloud, tops 14,000 feet, in the assembly area. Contact was maintained with the P-51's through the VHF relay A/C and they were relied upon to advise Bombers as to assembly altitudes.

(3) The warm front had positioned itself in the assembly area, which was covered with 8 - 10/10 cloud up to 15,000 feet with haze and dense persistent contrails extending to 21,000 - 24,000 feet.

(4) The 2nd Combat Wing failed to accomplish an assembly and abandoned the operation. All other units succeeded in forming from 17,000 to 21,000 feet, but were greatly slowed and hampered by the existing weather conditions.

(5) Combat Wings departed on the DAL from five to nine minutes late. Visual contact between Wings was never established.

(6) A-69, the 20th Combat Wing assembly beacon, was not turned on until 0730 hours, and then proved to be located 15 miles NE of its briefed position. This beacon is controlled by 9th Air Force, which had been alerted regarding its use for this operation.

3. Navigation - Penetration

a. Weather was a big factor on this mission, causing trouble in the assembly area; persistent contrails and clouds plus poor visibility along the route made adherence to any semblance of formation extremely difficult. At times Group Leaders lost sight of the Group ahead and Squadrons lost sight of Group Leaders. For this reason, the mission will be analyzed by Groups.

(1) Due to weather conditions, the 2nd Combat Wing had trouble in assembling and abandoned the mission (with the exception of five A/C which bombed with other Wings).

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(2) In the 20th Combat Wing, seven A/C of the 448th Group joined the formation of the 96th Combat Wing, bombing and withdrawing with it. The remaining A/C of this Group abandoned the mission. The 446th Group penetrated on briefed route, decided to bomb a target of opportunity, Donaueschingen, visually, with H2X assistance, on an east to west heading. Because of adverse weather, the 93rd Group became separated from the 20th Wing and joined the 96th Wing - after being assured by the pilotage navigator that it was east of the Rhine, the HR-Squadron of the 93rd Group jettisoned.

(3) The 458th and 467th Groups of the 96th Combat Wing penetrated slightly north of course, corrected and followed the briefed course through the flak gap. They then continued following the briefed route until weather caused the decision to bomb Stuttgart M/Y. The run was made from west to east on H2X equipment. The 466th Group, due to poor visibility, became separated from the Wing just after crossing the battle line. Scout reports indicated that the target area could not be reached and that targets of opportunity should be selected; acting on this information, the Wing Commander decided to bomb Stuttgart on H2X. However on the turn to the bomb run, the 466th Group became separated. The Group Leader then decided to bomb Freiburg. The H2X in the Lead A/C went out and the code word for visual bombing was given. As the town could not be definitely identified, the Group Leader gave the order not to bomb and to close the bomb-bay doors. At this time, GEE was being jammed and was ineffective; however, in the lead A/C of the 2nd Squadron, the bombardier, after being assured by the H2X navigator that the town was Freiburg, dropped his bombs. After bombs away, the DR navigator got his GEE set working and the fix was far south of Freiburg. Basle had been identified as Freiburg.

(4) The 491st Group of the 14th Combat Wing was unable to assemble and flew with seven different Groups. The 44th Group penetrated slightly south of course - were on course through the flak gap, then because of weather bombed targets of opportunity, Tuttlingen, Stade Aach, and Offenburg. The 392nd Group, after an unsuccessful attempt to bomb Stuttgart, decided to attack Pforzheim, a target of opportunity. One Squadron of this Group composed of three A/C from the 392nd, two from the 491st and one from 445th Group lost contact with the Wing - at this time, H2X was out in the lead A/C and GEE was ineffective. The target was identified through a break in the clouds by the pilotage navigator and bombardier as Freiburg - as a consequence Zurich was bombed for Freiburg. Zurich Lake and other surrounding identifying landmarks in the vicinity of Zurich were covered by clouds. The pilot in the lead A/C of this composite Squadron decided to bomb after all crew members agreed the town was Freiburg.

b. The large deviations from the briefed route were caused initially by weather. This applied to all units.

(1) The bombing of targets in Switzerland was caused, first by the weather which caused large deviations from course by these particular units and secondly, by mistaken identification. It is obvious that the units doing this bombing were lost for a period prior to bomb release. This resulted in a snap judgment in identification which was based purely on visual recognition under difficult conditions and some sort of mental navigation. It is significant that the first unit in the 466th Group that flew over Basle recognized it as not being Freiburg but knew the proximity of Switzerland and did not bomb - yet was not sufficiently satisfied with its decision to order the succeeding Squadron not to bomb. It is also significant that two aircraft in the formation which bombed Basle recognized it as such at the time of bombing.

(2) The reason that the weather was permitted to cause these particular units to become lost could be considered as very basic. It is well known that a navigator cannot carry out DR navigation unless the aircraft or formation flies courses and headings. In other words, the units on this mission which got seriously lost were units that made a series of 360° turns and did not fly constant headings over a period of time from one-half to one hour.

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4. Bombing Analysis

a. Because weather conditions were extremely adverse, no unit was able to bomb any of the assigned targets. The following targets of opportunity: Pforzheim, Donaueschingen, Offenburg, Tuttlingen, Stadeln, Champagne, Aschaffenburg, Ulm and Reutlingen were bombed by single A/C and single and two-squadron formations with results ranging from unobserved through poor to fair. Stuttgart was bombed (H2X) with unobserved results by six Squadrons of the 96th Combat Wing and one Squadron of the 20th Wing.

b. The LL Squadron, 466th Group (8 A/C from the 466th Group and one A/C from the 392nd Group) bombed the M/Y at Basle, and the LL Squadron, 392nd Group (3 A/C of 392nd Group, 2 A/C of the 491st Group and one A/C of the 445th Group) attacked Zurich. The bombing at Basle was confined to the M/Y with a few possible hits on adjacent buildings. At Zurich the pattern was centered in a small park and wooded area. A few small dwellings were hit but there were no bursts observed in the city area.

(1) Bombing of these targets resulted from a combination of adverse weather, faulty navigation and poor command decisions. Bombing will not be performed by any formation which is not convinced of its location. A thorough knowledge of and strict adherence to Eighth Air Force and 2d Bombing Group restrictions will prevent further incidents of this nature.

5. Navigation - Withdrawal

a. Due to the poor visibility, changes in course and group positions when attacking the targets of opportunity, no rallies were accomplished.

b. After withdrawing over the battle line, the 446th Group of the 20th Combat Wing was forced south because of weather but corrected on course and made landfall as briefed. The 93rd Group doglegged across course on withdrawal but made landfall good.

c. The 458th and 467th Groups, 96th Combat Wing, withdrew on course and made briefed landfall; however, the 466th Group of this Wing stayed south of course to 0440E-4810N, then corrected to make landfall good.

d. The 392nd Group of the 14th Combat Wing stayed slightly north of course, making landfall north of briefed point. The 44th Group skirted south of course to avoid weather but corrected back at 0410E-4915N to make landfall good.

6. Fighter Support

a. There were four Fighter Groups assigned as close escort to 2d Bombing Group and one Group as area patrol. The 56th Fighter Group covered the command Mosquito and the 14th Combat Wing with the 355th, 479th and 4th Fighter Groups covering the 2nd, 96th and 20th Wings respectively. The 352nd Fighter Group was on area patrol, sweeping the target area. R/V for close escort was 4815-0727.

7. Enemy Action Encountered

a. There was no enemy aircraft reaction.

b. Meager flak was encountered at Freiburg, Basle, the battle line east of Colmar and in the vicinity of 4815N-0744E. At the targets, meager to moderate and generally inaccurate "unseen" fire was encountered at Stuttgart. Meager fairly accurate predictor control "seen" fire was encountered at Offenburg. No flak was encountered at Donaueschingen, Tuttlingen or Pforzheim.

8. Losses

a. One aircraft, 467th Group - Ditched (or crashed, conclusive evidence not available) in the North Sea at 5121-0247. Two crewmen were rescued.

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Tactical Analysis of Mission 4 March 1945 - F. O. 6189. Scouting Force

a. Plan - The Scouting Force was to report target weather twenty-five minutes prior to target time. Two Fighters were to scout assembly areas thirty minutes in advance of the Bombers, then land, refuel and scout route weather to the coast for withdrawal.

b. Execution

(1) Bomber Reports - The 2nd Combat Wing reported it did not receive correct assembly conditions soon enough, resulting in its confusion; however, the 14th, 20th and 96th Combat Wings reported very good weather reports.

(2) Scout Reports - Scouts advised attack of targets of opportunity and attempted, unsuccessfully, to locate open areas for bombing.

(3) Target weather - 7 - 8/10 multilayered clouds up to 28,000 feet. Heavy haze was encountered at all levels with dense, persistent contrails.

(4) Communications - Satisfactory, however, it is suggested that Combat Wing leaders be made responsible for notifying assigned Fighter escort when changes occur in the air.

10. Screening Force

a. Targets were virtually flak free so a screening force was not required

11. Radar

a. H2X Analysis

<u>A/C</u> <u>Dispatched</u>	<u>A/C Over</u> <u>Target</u>	<u>Satisfactory</u> <u>For Navigation</u>	<u>Satisfactory</u> <u>For Bombing</u>
27	22	21	18

b. H2X operation for this mission was considered satisfactory. Two A/C, 458th and 93rd Groups, aborted due to engineering failures. Two A/C from the 466th and 392nd Groups aborted because of equipment malfunctions. One 448th Group A/C landed on Continent before reaching its target. Failures in four other A/C were due to minor equipment malfunctions which operators could not correct. The 2nd Combat Wing abandoned the mission and no H2X reports were submitted.

c. GEE operation - All Groups reported jamming of some type but it was generally ineffective.

By command of Major General KEPNER:

FRANCIS H. GRISWOLD
Brigadier General, U.S..
Chief of Staff

OFFICIAL:

Robert H. Terrill
ROBERT H. TERRILL
Colonel GSC
Dep C of S for Operations

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Group 458

STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

(Part 1)

618

Ordered Targets:

Primary: Kitzingen A/F (Vis)Secondary: Kitzingen A/F (GH)Tertiary: Aschaffenburg M/YDate of Operation 4 March 1945

Division Field Order No.

Squadron	Sorties		Credit Sorties	Effective Sorties	Non Effective Sorties	No. A/C Bombing	Type of Tgt	Name of Target	Number and Type of Bombs on Targets	Aircraft Lost						Time of Take off	Total Time of Mis'n	Comments
	Total	Less Unused Spares								Total	Flak	Flak & E/A	E/A	Acc	U N K			
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	14	15	16	17	18	19	25	27	40
14	9	9	8	7	2	7	OT	Stuttgart M/Y	66 500 RDX	-	-	-	-	-	-	0600	214	Bombed with 44th Gp
2	9	9	9	9	-	9	OT	Stuttgart M/Y	66 500 RDX	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
									20 500 GP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
3	10	10	10	10	-	8	OT	Stuttgart M/Y	79 M17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
						1	OT	Ebingen 4813-0903	10 M17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
									2 M47	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
						1	OT	4824-0806	10 M17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Bombed with 44th Gp
TOTALS	28	28	27	26	2	26	OT		132 500 RDX	-	-	-	-	-	-	0600	214	
									20 500 GP									
									99 M17									
									2 M47									

NON-EFFECTIVE SORTIE SUMMARY (Part 3)

Total Non Eff Sort	Causes of Non-Effectives					Incidents of Mechanical and Equipment Failures															Comments	
	Weather	Personne	Enemy Action	Other Non Mech.	Mech. & Equip.	Total	Engine	Oil System	Fuel System	Super- charger	Propeller & Governor	Communi- cation System	Guns & Turrets	Bomb Release	Bomb Bay Doors	Elect- rical System	Instru- ments	Oxygen System	Bomb- sights	A/C in general		
46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66		67
2	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Footnote 1 Nil																						
Footnote 2 Deputy Lead in Lead Sqdn																						
Footnote 3																						

42-50912

42-51669

4 March 1945

Lead Squadron - Lincoln Red # 1Beno-Betzold

J3 : 261A

(Scope)

2AD

Sealy

J4 : 408I

K-22

RCM

McCormick

J4 : 287J

Ellis-Phillip

J3 : 669J

K-20

8AF

Beckstrom

J4 : 555A

2AD

Brown

J4 : 912D

2AB Cont. K-21

Warrell

J4 : 163M

8AF-RGM

McCoy

J4 : 273T

8AF Cont.

Williams, D.G.

J4 : 285H

K-21

Bomb Load - 10 X 500# GP's

1/10N - 1/100T

2nd Squadron - Lincoln Red # 2Bowers

J3 : 544E

K-20

8AF

Rhoades

Z5 : 179P

8AF

Everett

Z5 : 183U

K-21

Hoffman

J3 : 7400

K-21

2AD

Wallis

Z5 : 298E

Patak

Z5 : 640Q

8AF

Rosen

Z5 : 456D

K-21

Krogh

Z5 : 196Q

Hodge

Z5 : 126L

2AD

Herditi

Z5 : 120M

Bomb Load - 10 X 500# GP's

1/10N - 1/100T

3rd Squadron - Lincoln Red # 3Mitchell

J3 : 837L

(Scope)

Ferrill

7V : 487R

K-21

Perry

7V : 514B

K-21

2AD

Laird

7V : 110M

Dahn

J3 : 5750

8AF

Havnes

7V : 502E

2AD

O'Reagan

7V : 206S

8AF

Craven

7V : 457Q

Josephson

7V : 316H

Bomb Load - 10 X M17's

SPARESDISP

J3-557H (PFF) R/W 28 (500GP's)

J3-516V (Vis) R/W 28 (500GP's)

J3-504S (Vis) R/W 28 (M17's)

J4-602E 8AF 43 (500GP's)

Z5-199A 8AF 7 (500GP's)

7V-270A 8AF 46 (M17's)

7V-352K 37 (M17's)

Marshalling Chief: Lt

Marshalling Crews: 752nd - 755th

752nd

ORDER OF TAKE OFF

RUNWAY 23

DISP	SHIP	NO.	DISP	SHIP	NO.	DISP	SHIP	NO.
Rwy 35	936I	1	3	640Q	15	35	316H	29
Rwy 35	669J	2	10	183U	16	Rwy 35	557H	30
43	408I	3	6	456D	17	Rwy 35	516V	31
45	555A	4	10	298E	18	Rwy 35	554E	32
49	287J	5	8	126L	19	43	602E	33
40	912D	6	1	196Q	20	7	199Q	34
42	285H	7	9	120M	21	46	270A	35
38	273T	8	44	487R	22	37	352K	36
47	163M	9	39	502E	23			
Rwy 35	837L	10	51	514B	24			
Rwy 35	740Q	11	51	475D	25			
Rwy 35	628K	12	44	457Q	26			
Rwy 35	5750	13	46	110M	27			
5	179P	14	53	567G	28			

458th Pilots and Aircraft as listed on Formation Plans

Date	Target	Pilot	458th Msn	Pilot Msn	Cmd Pilot	Ld	Serial	Last 3	RCL	Sqdn	A/C Msn	A/C Name	Comments
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	BECKSTROM	196	30			42-50555	555	A	J4	25	BABY SHOES	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	BENO	196	14	BETZOLD	L1	44-49261	261	A	J3	7	UNKNOWN 042	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	BOWERS	196	24		L2	42-95557	557	H	J3	28	LADY PEACE	REPLACED 544
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	BROWN, R	196	7			42-50912	912	D	J4	15	THE TRAVLIN' BAG	ABORT - SORTIE CREDIT
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	BURMAN	196	14			41-29567	567	G	7V	14	MY BUNNIE / BAMBI	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	CRAVEN	196	25			42-52457	457	Q	7V	97	FINAL APPROACH	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	DAHM	196	25			42-50575	575	O	J3	24	UNKNOWN 020	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	ELLIS	196	ABT	PHILLIP	D1	42-51669	669	J	J3	--	UNKNOWN 026	ABORT - #2 ENG OUT
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	EVERETT	196	NT0			42-95183	183	U	Z5	--	BRINEY MARLIN	NO TAKE OFF - NO REASON GIVEN
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	FERRIELL	196	16			44-10487	487	R	7V	36	Girl on surfboard (no name)	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	HAYNES	196	31			42-50502	502	E	7V	40	LARRUPIN' LINDA	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	HERDTI	196	10			42-95120	120	M	Z5	79	HOOKEM COW / BETTY	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	HODGE	196	7			44-40126	126	L	Z5	63	SPITTEN KITTEN / SKY TRAMP	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	HOFFMAN	196	13			42-50740	740	O	J3	26	OUR BURMA	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	JOSEPHSON	196	31			42-95316	316	H	7V	88	PRINCESS PAT	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	KROGH	196	10			42-51196	196	Q	J3	43	THE GYPSY QUEEN	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	LAIRD	196	9			42-51110	110	M	7V	83	TOP O' THE MARK	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	McCORMICK	196	33			44-40287	287	J	J4	47	BACHELOR'S BEDLAM	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	McCOY	196	9			44-40273	273	T	J4	44	HOWLING BANSHEE	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	MITCHELL	196	23		L3	42-50504	504	S	J3	26	UNKNOWN 019	REPLACED 837
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	O'REGAN	196	12			42-51206	206	S	7V	46	THE PIED PIPER	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	PATAK	196	16			42-50640	640	O	Z5	28	BUGS BUNNY	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	PERRY	196	28			42-51514	514	B	7V	20	BIG CHIEF LIL' BEAVER	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	RHOADES	196	17			42-51179	179	P	Z5	70	DUSTY'S DOUBLE TROUBLE	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	ROSEN	196	9			42-50456	456	D	Z5	40	DOROTHY KAY SPECIAL	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	SEALY	196	28			42-100408	408	I	J4	46	LADY LUCK / THE BEAST	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	WALLIS	196	4			44-40298	298	E	Z5	35	THE SHACK	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	WARRELL	196	28			42-110163	163	M	J4	65	TIME'S A WASTIN	
04-Mar-45	STUTTGART	WILLIAMS, DG	196	19			44-40285	285	H	J4	71	TABLE STUFF	