

ANATOMY OF A SHOOT-DOWN



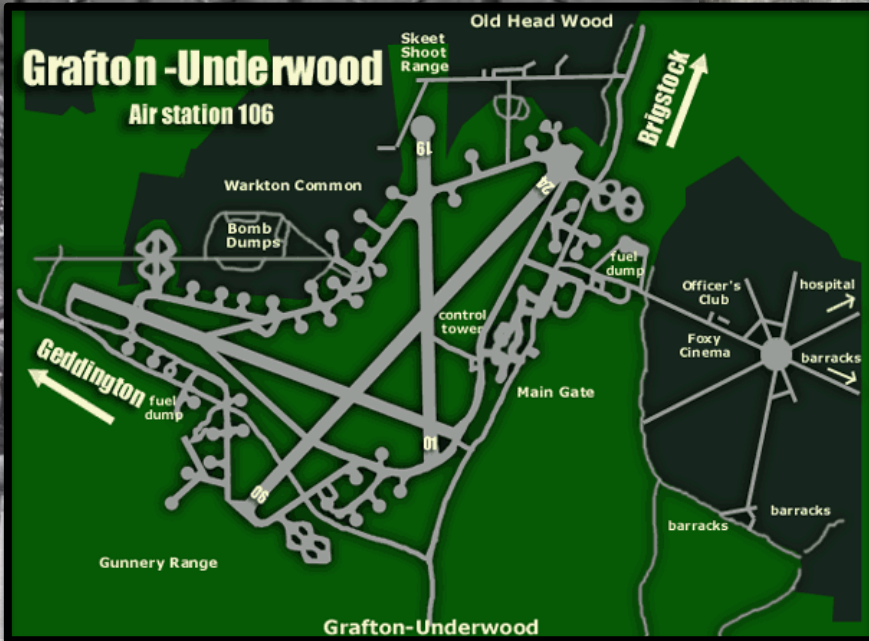
Schweinfurt Mission
13 April 1944



ANATOMY OF A SHOOT-DOWN

Outline

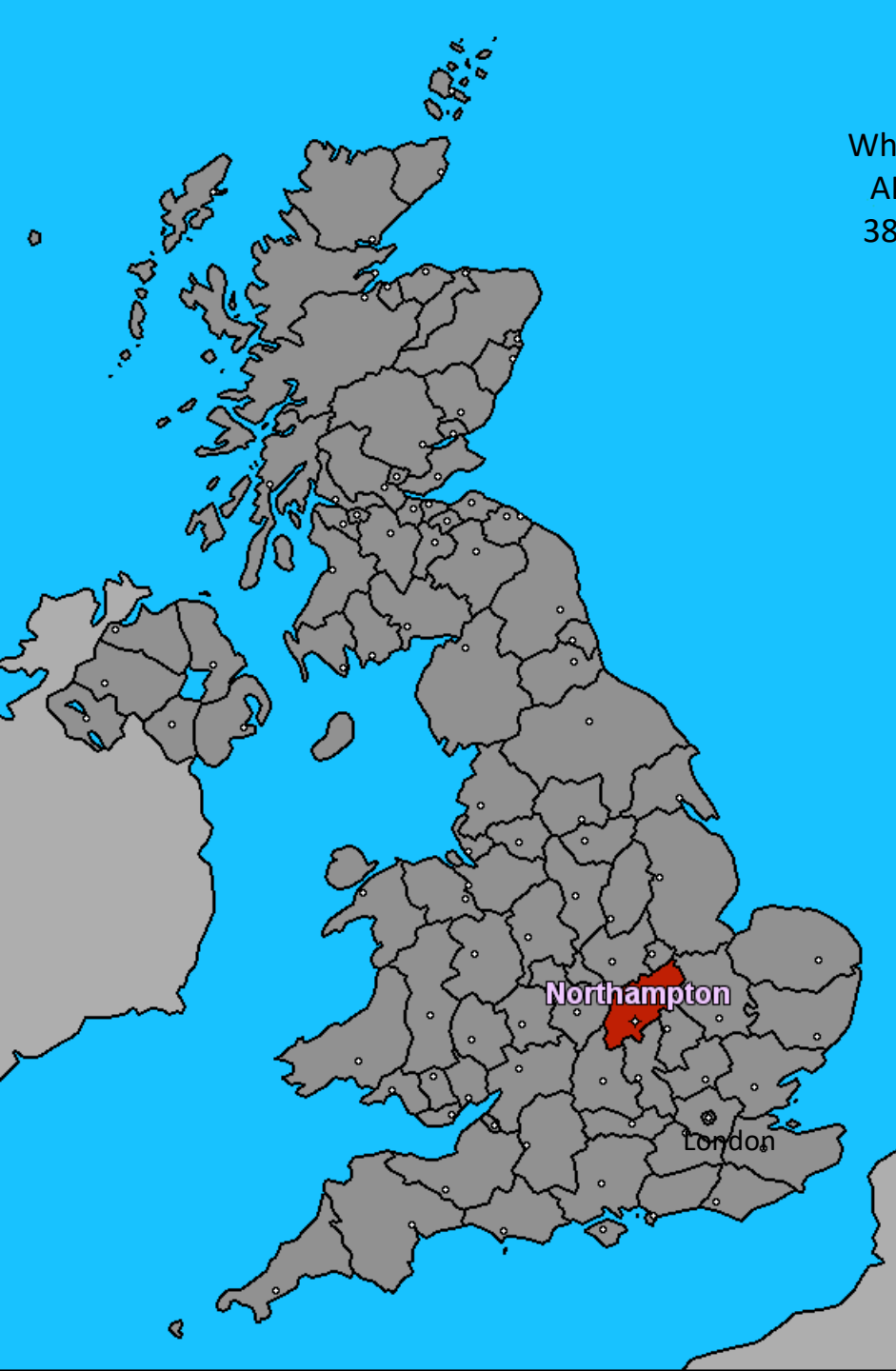
- **AAF Station 106, Grafton Underwood, England**
- The Mission, 8th AF #301, Group #89, 13 April 1944
- Group, Wing, and Division Formation
- Entering Enemy Airspace
- Luftwaffe Response
- First Luftwaffe Attack & Re-formation
- Second Attack at the IP – only 11 drop on Schweinfurt
- RTB
- The rest of the story....



Col. Dale Smith



Where is Grafton Underwood,
AKA Station 106, which the
384th Bomb Group operated
from?





8th USAAF
Memorial
Window

TELEPHONE

10 yds

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Operations Room, 384th Bomb Group



Servicing systems on aircraft before a mission.



My father's airplane before they were shot down
545th BS Line Chief MSgt. Efland

Father Billy blesses a crew before a mission



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The Taxi to Takeoff Parade



GROUP ASSEMBLY through OVERCAST

Mission : SCHWEINFURT, 13 April 1944
Take-Off at 0941

LEAD A/c OF HIGH SQUADRON CIRCLES AT 9,000' (5 MILES

LEAD A/c OF LEAD SQUADRON CIRCLES AT 8,000' (5 MILES

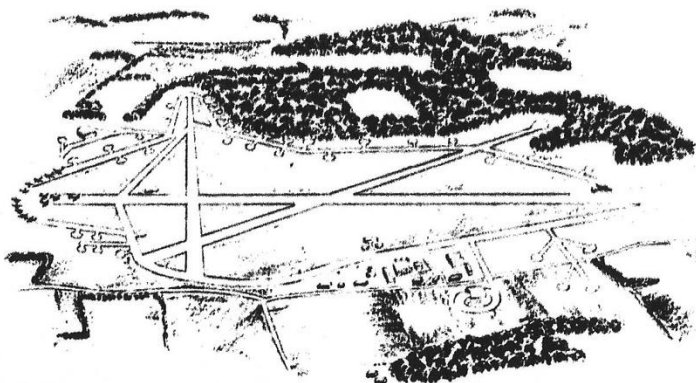
LEAD A/c OF LOW SQUADRON CIRCLES AT 7,000' (5 MILES F



EACH A/c FLIES 5 MINUTES LEG AT 150 M.P.H. (12½ MILES)
CLIMBING 300' PER MINUTE.

BUNCHER
NO 29

SIDE VIEW

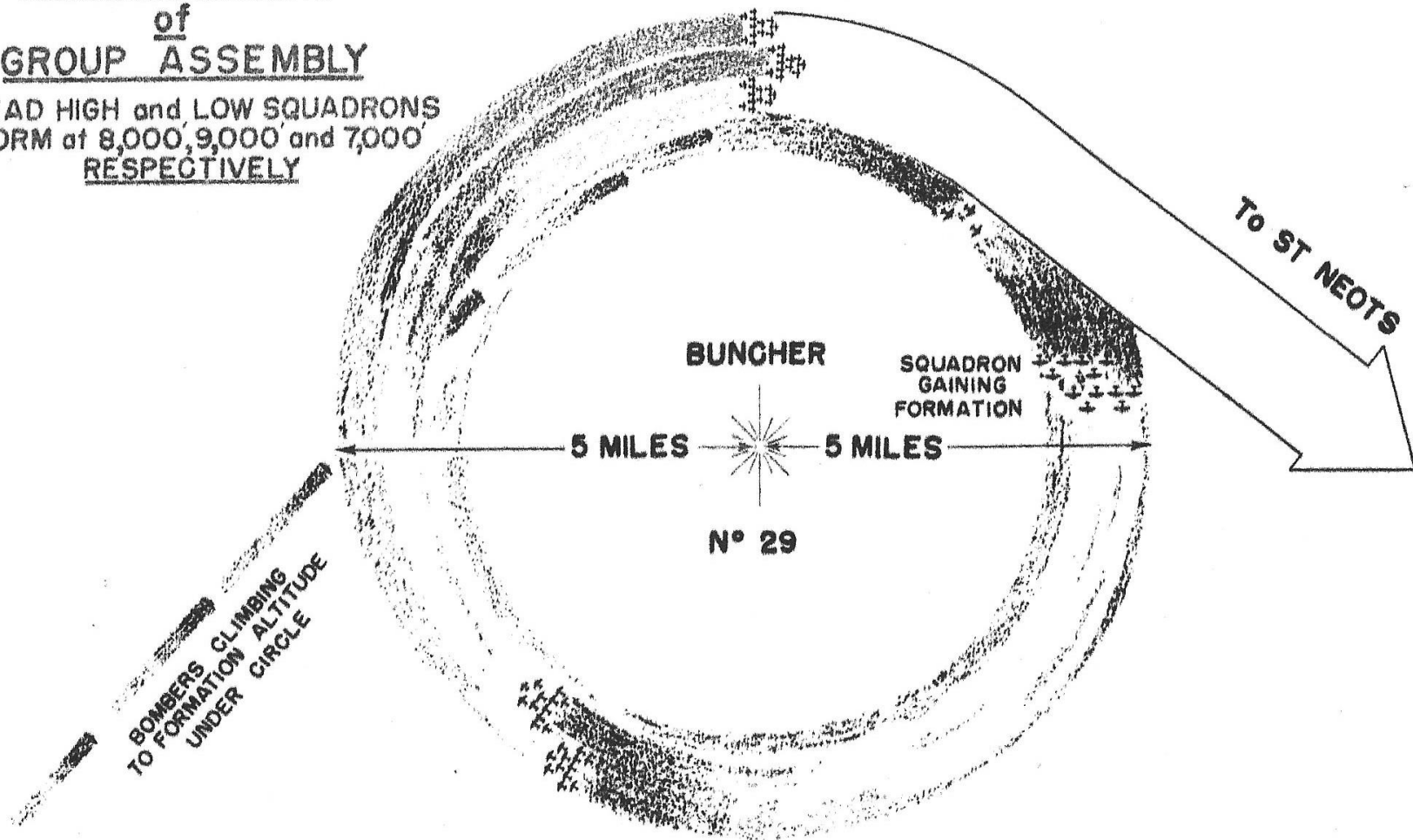


DETAIL PLAN

of GROUP ASSEMBLY

LEAD HIGH and LOW SQUADRONS
FORM at 8,000', 9,000' and 7,000'
RESPECTIVELY

36 A/C GROUP FORMED AT 0816HRS.
PROCEEDING ON FIRST LEG AT 8,000 FT.

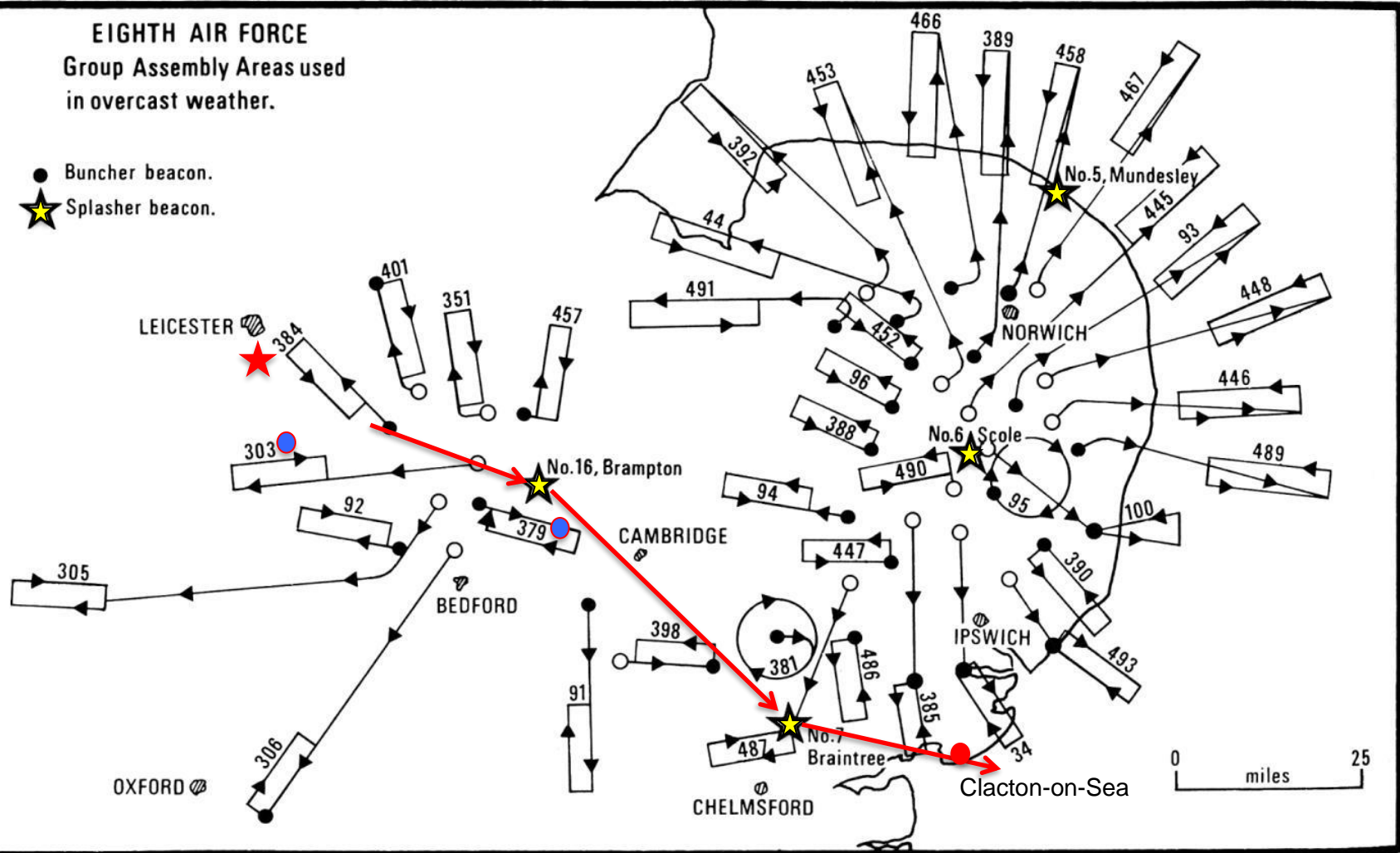


Top View

41st Combat Wing

EIGHTH AIR FORCE Group Assembly Areas used in overcast weather.

- Buncher beacon.
- ★ Splasher beacon.



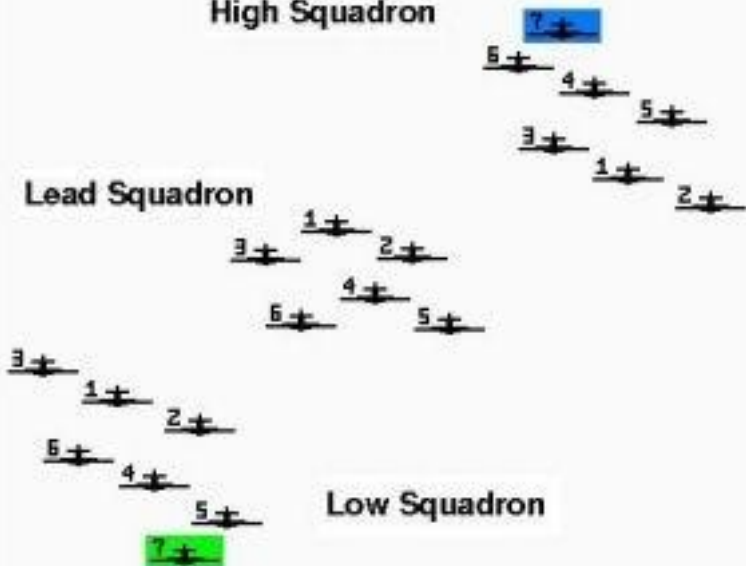


Top View

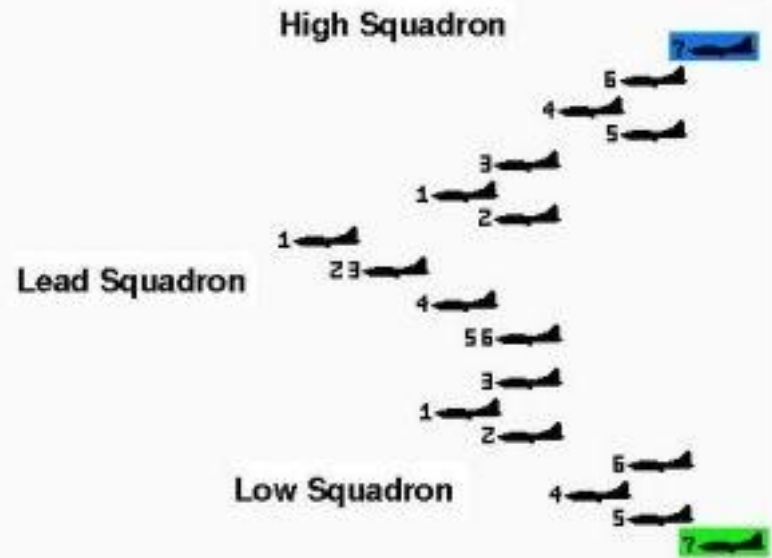


Tail View

High Squadron



Left Side View

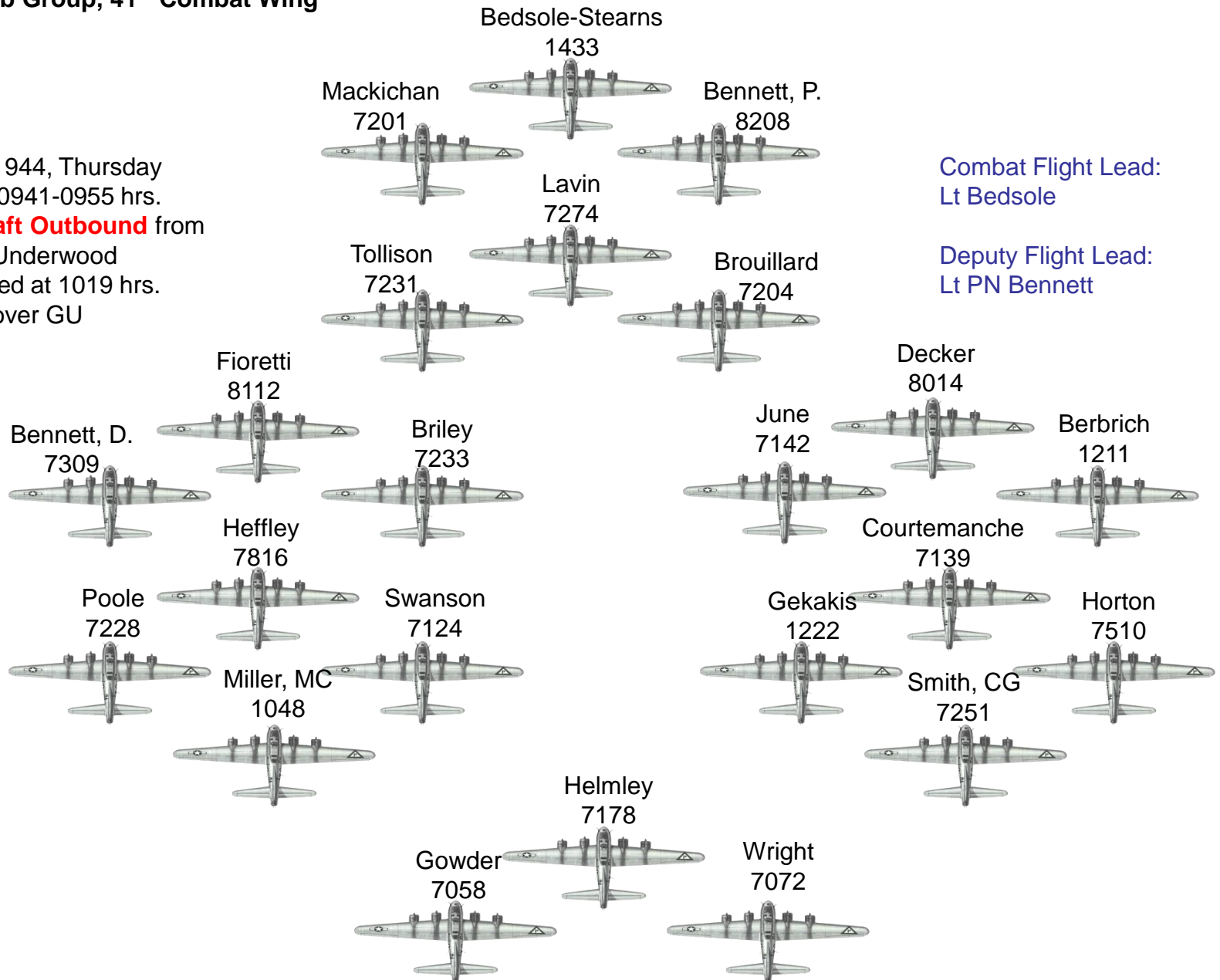


Tail-end Charlie - High Squadron
Tail-end Charlie - Low Squadron

HIGH GROUP FORMATION

384th Bomb Group, 41st Combat Wing

13 April 1944, Thursday
Take-off 0941-0955 hrs.
23 Aircraft Outbound from
Grafton Underwood
Assembled at 1019 hrs.
8,000 ft over GU



Combat Flight Lead:
Lt Bedsole

Deputy Flight Lead:
Lt PN Bennett

HIGH GROUP FORMATION

384th Bomb Group, 41st Combat Wing

Aborts & Spare Returns

Helmley Spare - **RTB**
 Gowder Spare - **RTB**
 Gekakis **Aborted** with #1 rough
 & smoking at Clacton
 Decker **Aborted** for #3 losing oil,
 feathered at 51°04' N-02°50' E

Bedsole-Stearns
1433

Mackichan
7201



Bennett, P.
8208



Lavin
7274



Combat Flight Lead:
Lt Bedsole

Deputy Flight Lead:
Lt PN Bennett

Tollison
7231



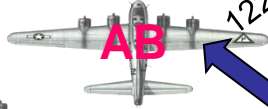
Brouillard
7204



Fioretti
8112



Decker
8014



Bennett, D.
7309



Briley
7233



June
7142



Berbrich
1211



1228 hrs

Heffley
7816



Courtemanche
7139



Poole
7228



Swanson
7124



Gekakis
1222



Horton
7510



Miller, MC
1048



Smith, CG
7251



1157 hrs

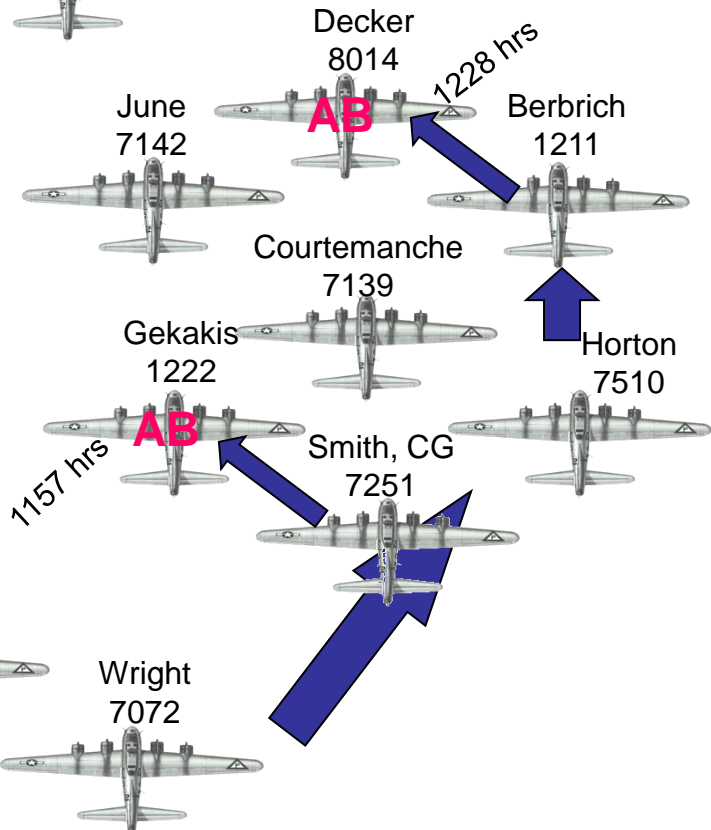
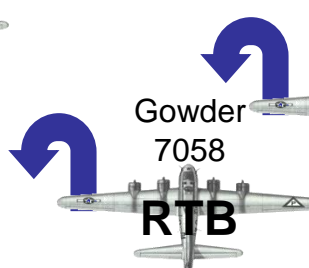
Helmley
7178



Wright
7072



Gowder
7058



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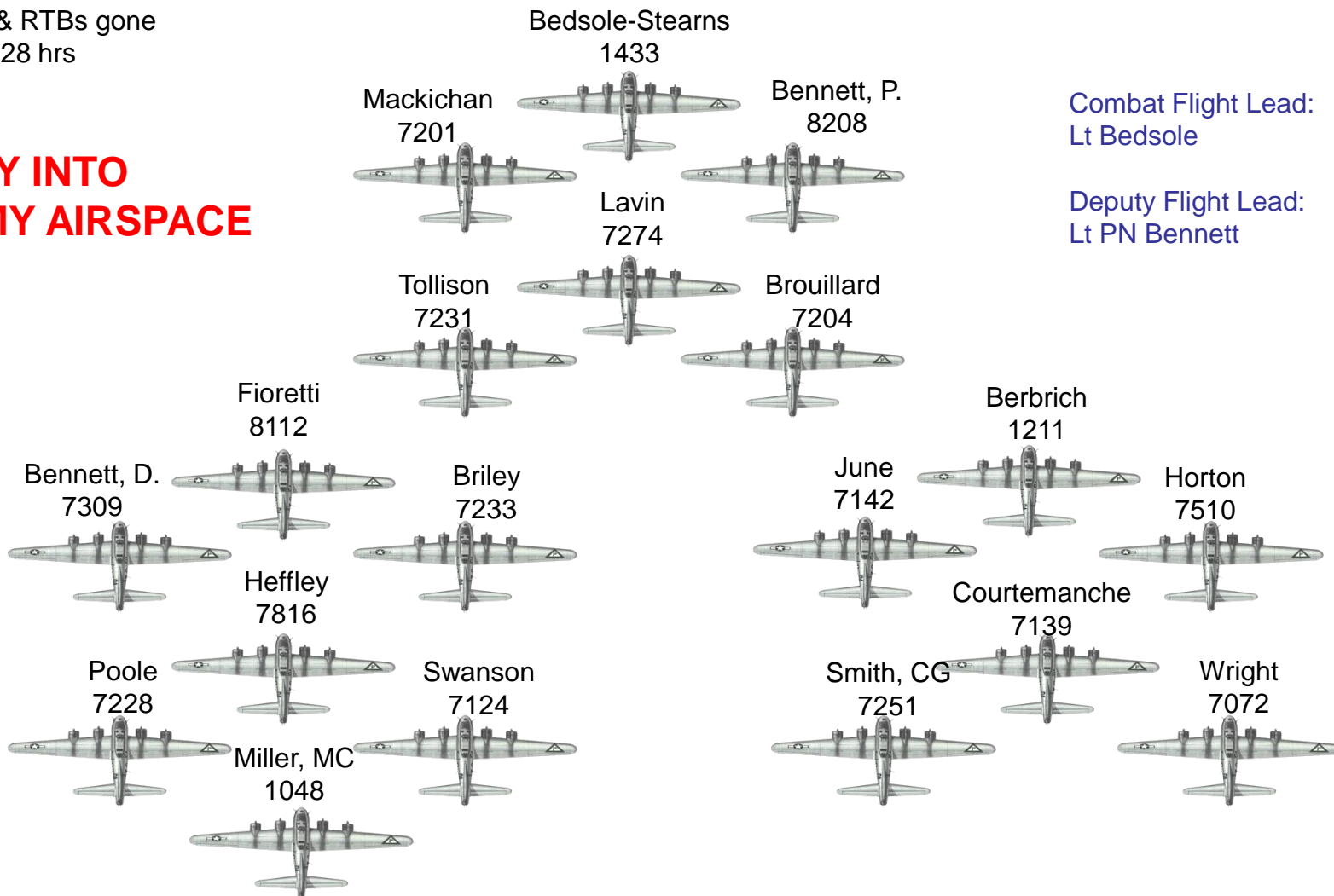
HIGH GROUP FORMATION

384th Bomb Group, 41st Combat Wing

Entering Enemy Airspace

Aborts & RTBs gone
after 1228 hrs

**19 FLY INTO
ENEMY AIRSPACE**



Combat Flight Lead:
Lt Bedsole

Deputy Flight Lead:
Lt PN Bennett

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Luftwaffe Fighter Defenses Attacking the 384th Bomb Group

FG 1 Oesau at Stormede & Lipspringe: with 24 Me-109s & 18 Fw-190A-6s and 7s

FG 11 at Oldenburg, Wunstdorf & Rothenburg with 22 Me-109G-6s

Timeline

1245 Luftwaffe Alert to Take Off and assemble over Paderborn, then fly cover over Frankfurt Fighter Groups 1 and 11

1320 - 1350 1st Sq FG 1 attacks head-on with 15 Fw-190s and shoots down first Tollison and then the Lead Stearns/Bedsole

1354 - 1357 FG 11, Hohengruppe sets the trap with 22 Me-109G-6s, drawing off P-47 escort; Then 1st Sq FG 1 attacks the low sqdn (545th) with three heavily armed Fw-190A-7s backed up by 15 Fw-190A-6s
Six B-17s are shot down in less than three minutes: Fioretti, Briley, Heffley, Poole, Swanson and Miller



Me 109G-6

1 each 20 or 30mm gun through engine C/L
2 each 13mm guns over engine



Fw 190A-6

4 each 20mm wing guns
2 each 7.92mm guns over engine



Fw 190A-7 (Up-Armored)

2 each 20mm wing guns
2 each 30mm wing guns
2 each 13mm guns over engine

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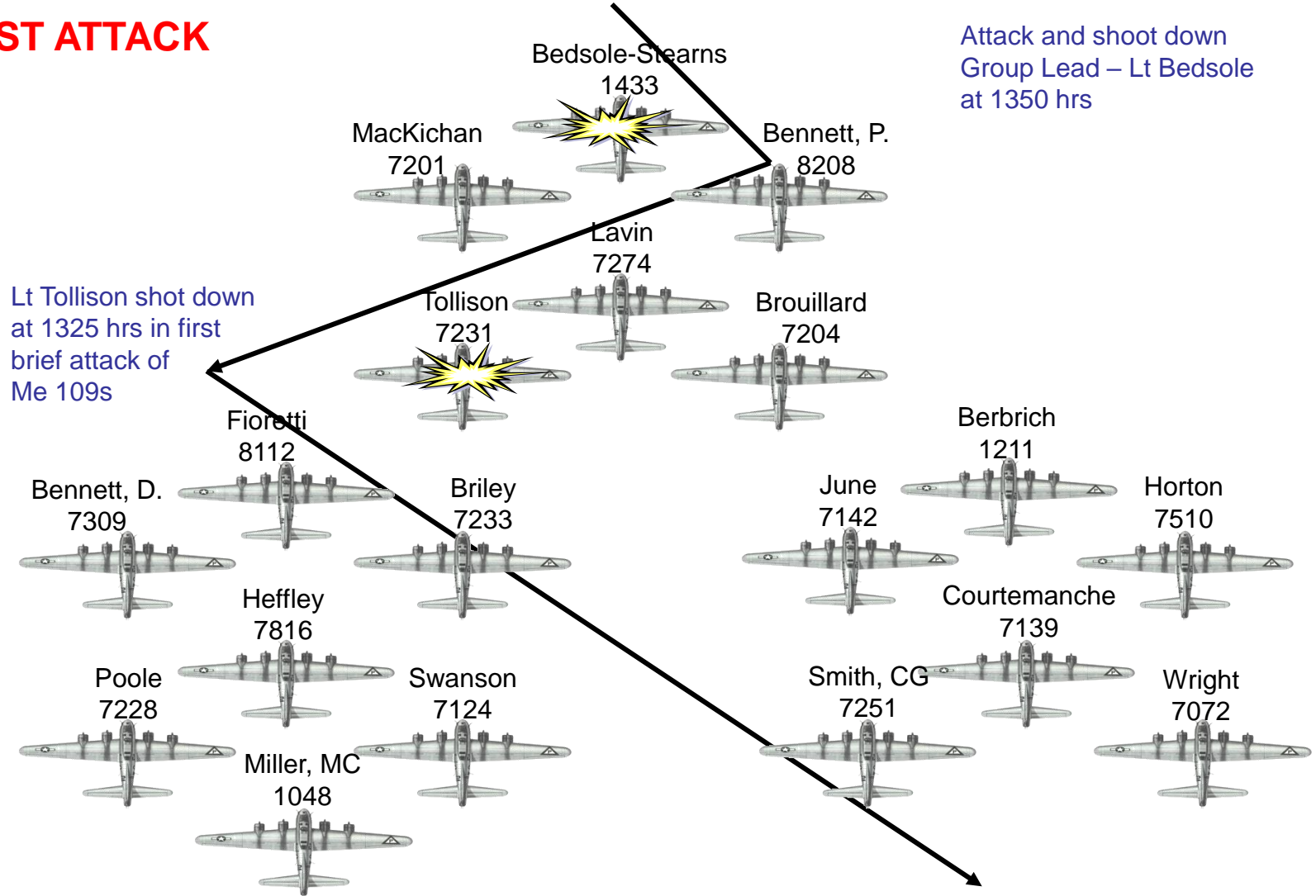
GROUP FORMATION ENEMY ACTION

First Attack 1320-1350 Hours
13 April 1944

15 Me 109s of 1st Sq, FG 1

FIRST ATTACK

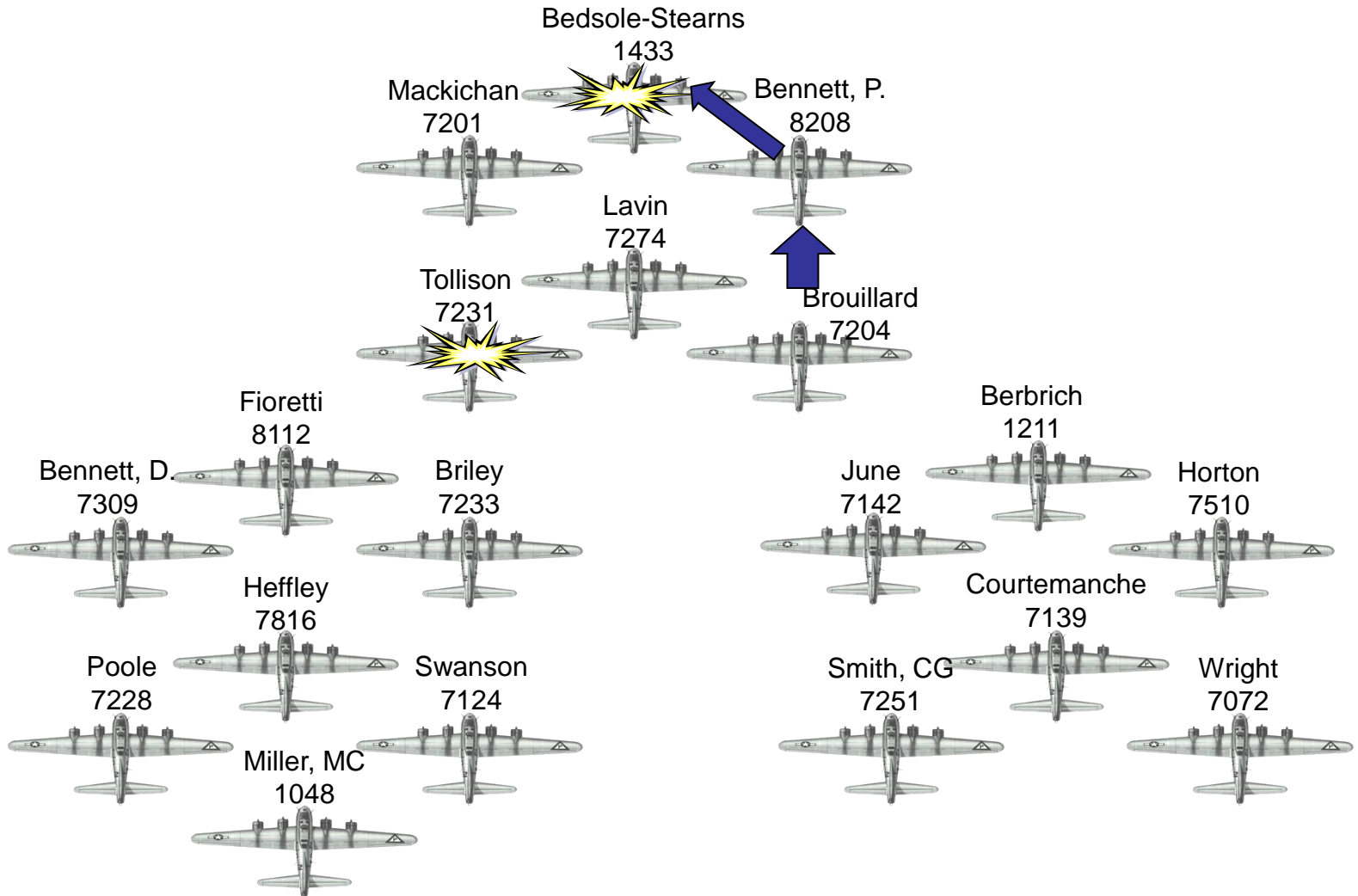
Attack and shoot down
Group Lead – Lt Bedsole
at 1350 hrs



HIGH GROUP FORMATION

First Group Re-formation

1350 Hours



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GROUP FORMATION

ENEMY ACTION

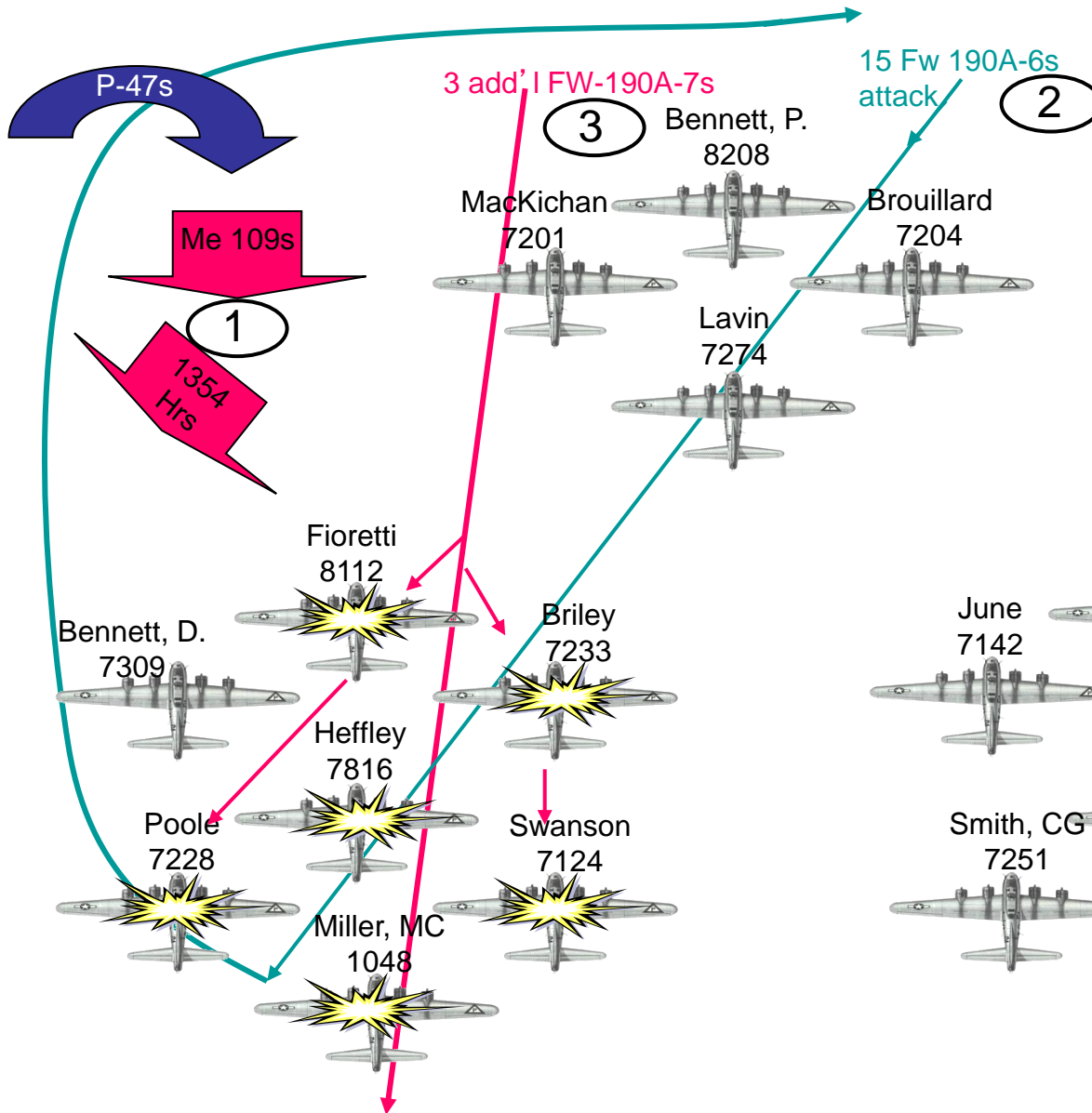
Second Attack 1354-1357 Hours

13 April 1944

SECOND ATTACK The Sucker Punch!

FG 11 with 22 Me 109s
draw off P-47s and FG 1
with 3 FW 190A-7s backed
up by 15 Fw 190A-6s

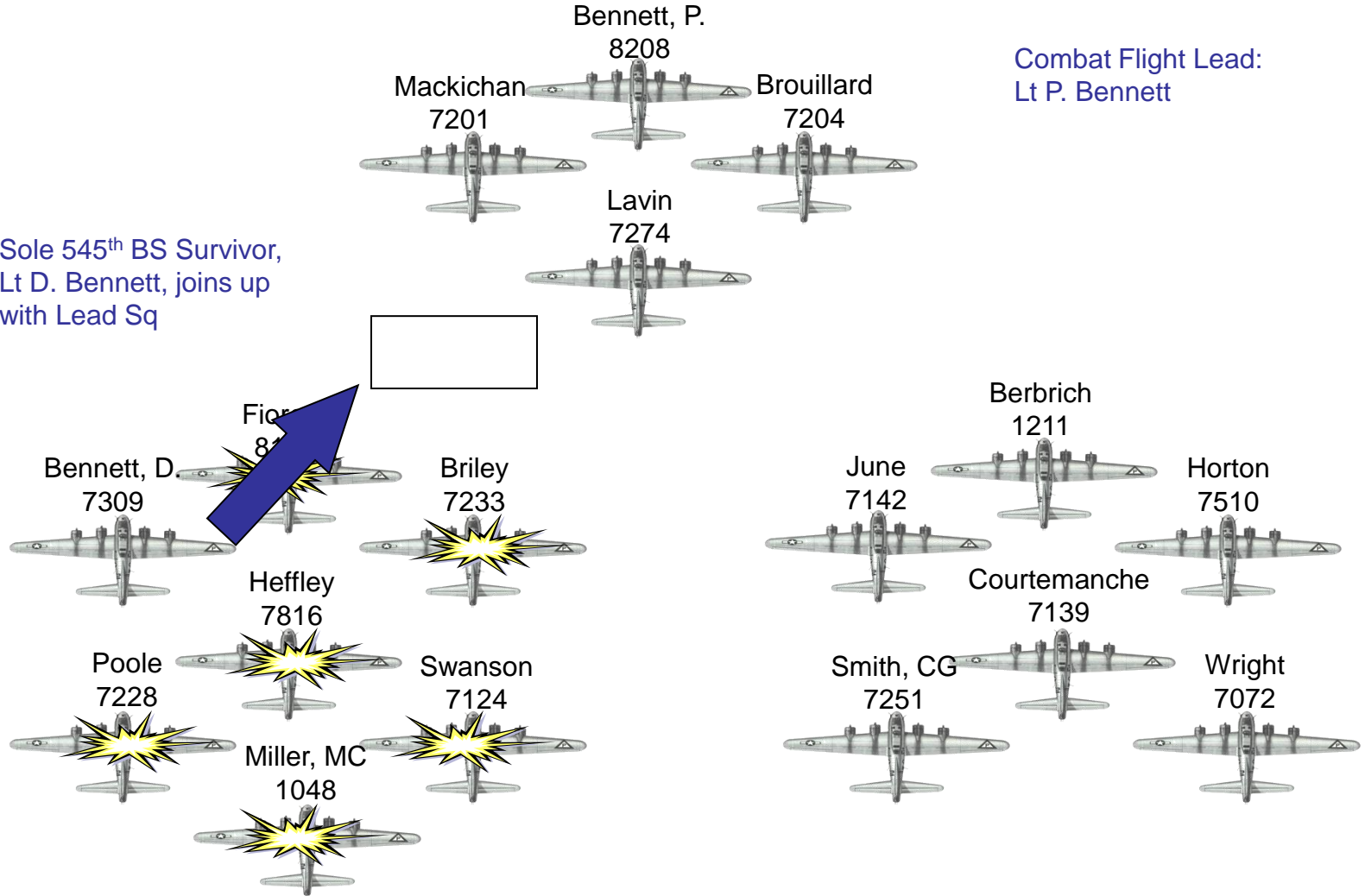
Attack and shoot down 6 of 7
545th Sq B-17s



HIGH GROUP FORMATION SECOND GROUP RE-FORMATION FOR BOMB RUN 1357 Hours

Combat Flight Lead:
Lt P. Bennett

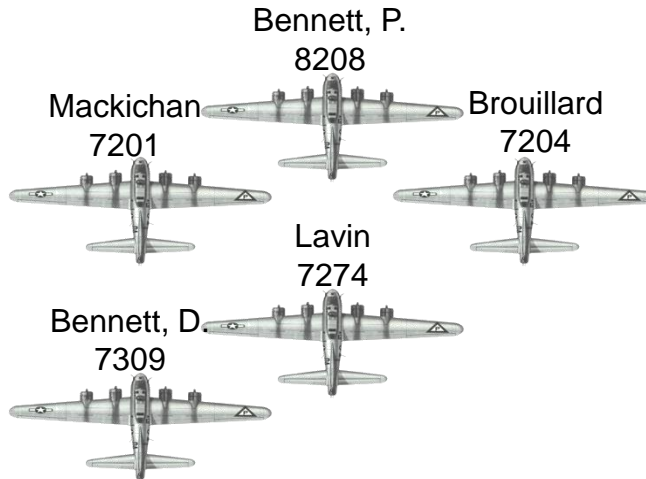
Sole 545th BS Survivor,
Lt D. Bennett, joins up
with Lead Sq



GROUP FORMATION

Attacking Schweinfurt

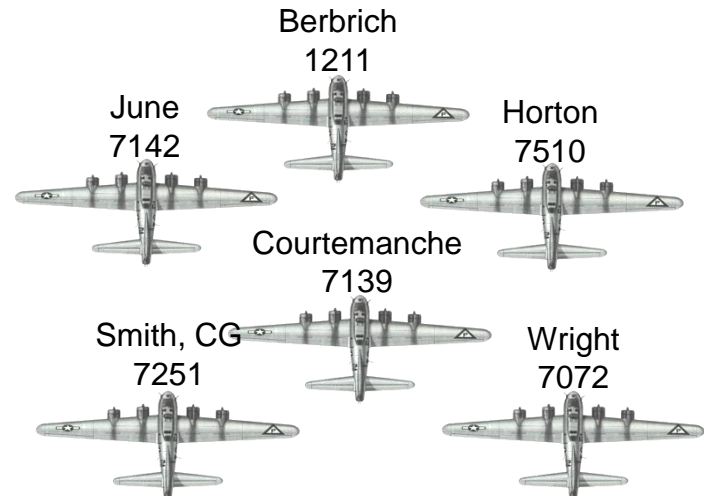
1409 hrs



Combat Flight Lead:
Lt PN Bennett

Deputy Flight Lead:
Lt Brouillard

**ONLY 11 DROP BOMBS
ON SCHWEINFURT**



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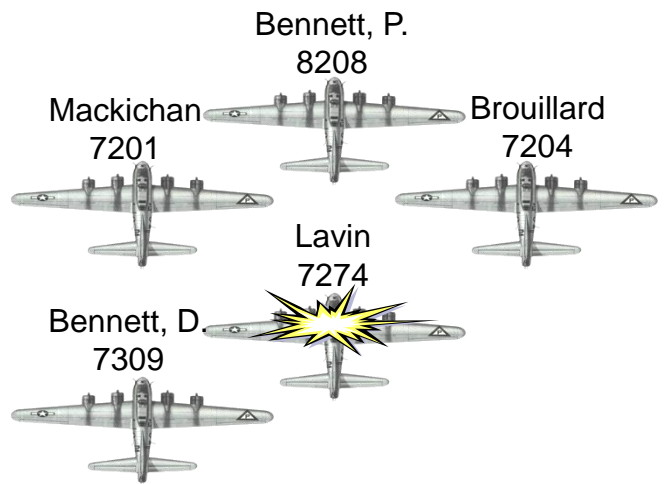
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HIGH GROUP FORMATION FLAK LOSS RETURNING TO BASE

1545 Hrs, 51°02' N - 03°30' E

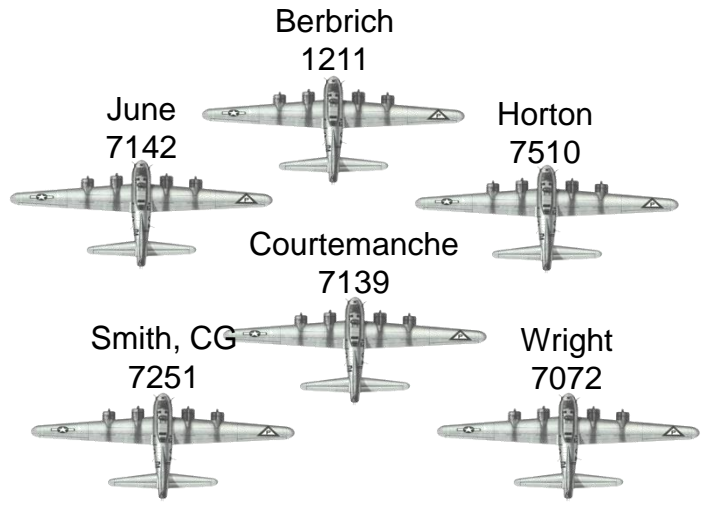
Lt Lavin took direct
flak hit at 1545 hrs;
aircraft exploded

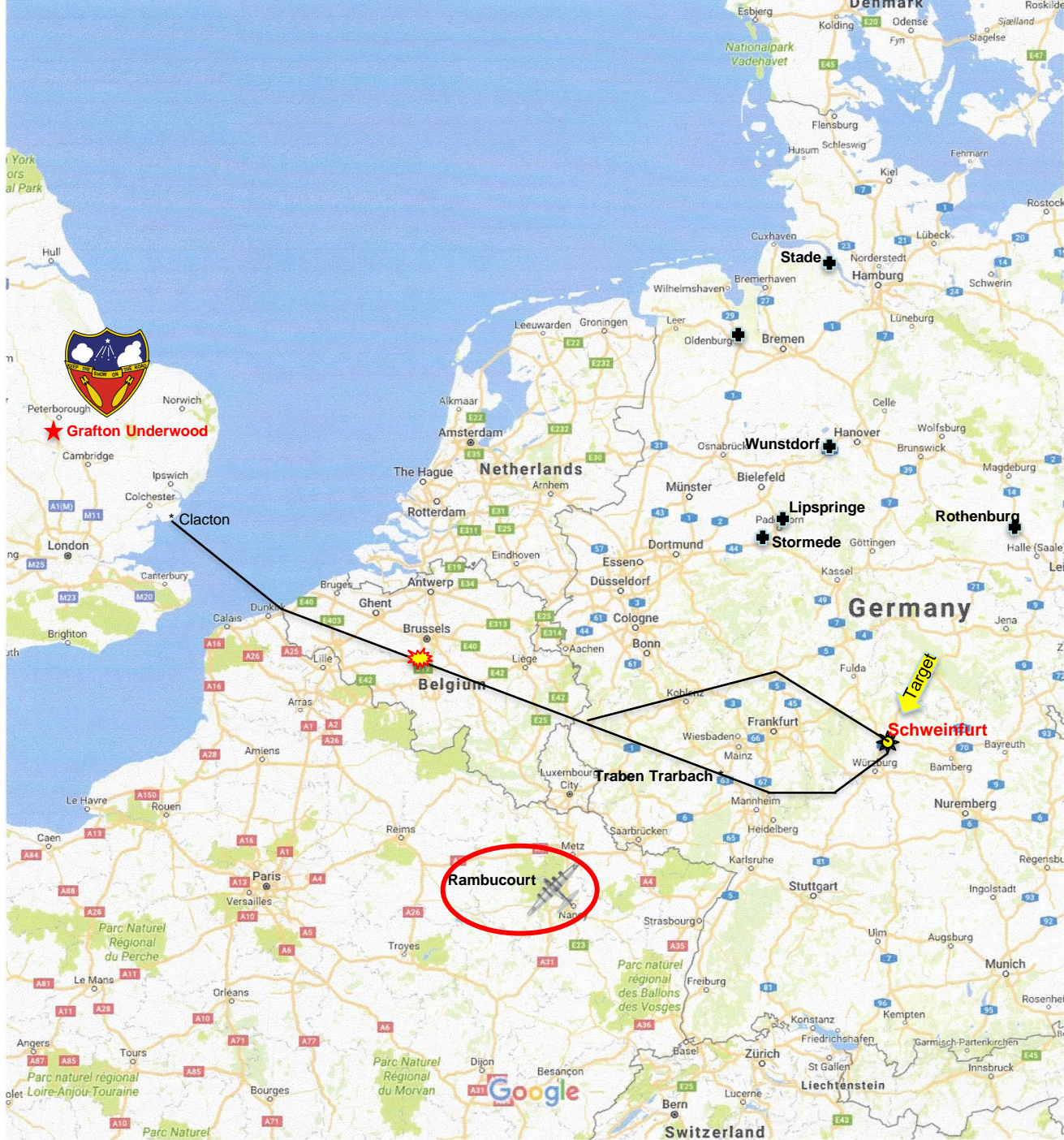


Combat Flight Lead:
Lt PN Bennett

Deputy Flight Lead:
Lt Brouillard

ON THE WAY HOME OVER BELGIUM





Luftwaffe Fighter Defenses Attacking the 384th Bomb Group

FG 1 Oesau at Stormede & Lipspringe: with 24 Me-109s & 18 Fw-190A-6s and 7s

FG 11 at Oldenburg, Wunstdorf & Rothenburg with 22 Me-109G-6s

Timeline

1548 Flak knocked down one more 384th B-17 over Brussels on the way home; Pilot was Lavin

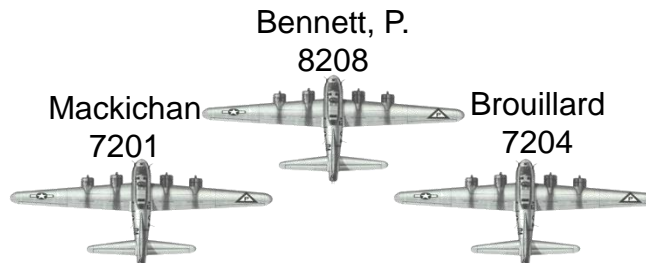
Big Stupe V is now on the ground Near the village of Rambucourt, France

Only ten aircraft RTB at Grafton Underwood

HIGH GROUP FORMATION REMNANTS RETURNING TO BASE

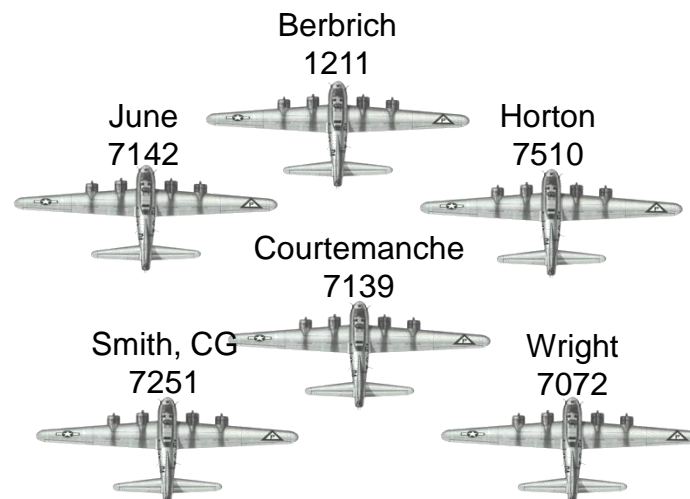
1654 Hours

10 RTB



Combat Flight Lead:
Lt PN Bennett

Deputy Flight Lead:
Lt Brouillard



544th Bomb Sq Losses

Helmley Gowder

7178 7058

545th Bomb Sq Losses

Fioretti Briley Hefley Swanson Poole Miller, MC

8112 7233 7816 7124 7228 1048

547th Bomb Sq Losses

Bedsole-Stearns Tollison

1433 7231

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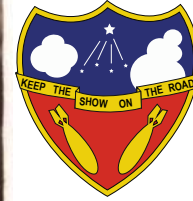
Combat Crew Training
Dalhart, Texas 1943



Standing left to right: Sam Deutsch, Glen Alfter, Bill Shade, _ Dangar, George Allen, Ralph Gatzman
Kneeling: Farris Heffley, _ Bash, Louis Carini, John Bettolotti



545th Bomb Sq Line Chief, MSgt Efland
and *Big Stupe* V, B-17G, 42-37816



545th BS

N:
104793



Dad's POW Photo &
ID Number



Rene Fourriere & Jimmy Jamin in 1999



Colette Jamin in 2014



Dad's "Office"



Big Stupe V after thermite bomb destruction

French children playing on the wreckage
before the Germans hauled it away for
scrap. Photos were taken by the
French Resistance





At the Crash Site in 2014



Where my Father, SSgt Glen Alfter was Captured

Piece of the Control Yoke from *Big Stupe V*



Where 3 Evaded Capture (Mabe, Deutsch, Bechtel)





384th Bombardment Group (Heavy)



"Keep The Show On The Road"



384th Bomb Group website:
www.384thbombgroup.com

Mission # 89

MISSION SUMMARY

Mission Date	13 April 1944
384th Mission	Mission Number 89 Previous Mission Next Mission
8th Air Force Mission	Mission Number 301
Mission Comments	Primary Attacked, Huge Losses The 384th Bombardment Group (H) flew as the high group of the 41st Combat Wing on today's mission. Vicious fighter attacks knocked down nine of our aircraft - the greatest one mission loss for the Group during the war - but the bombers were able to attack the assigned target with good results.
Primary Target	Target: Ball-Bearing Plant Type: Bearings Industry Location: Schweinfurt, Germany
Target Attacked (Mode)	Primary (Visual)
Sortie/Aircraft Summary	Completed Mission, not including spares - 9 Failed To Return - 9 Aborted - 2 Flying Spare, Completed Mission - 1 Flying Spare, Returned As Briefed - 2 Ground Spare Aircraft, Unused - 4
Mission Personnel	Mission Personnel Roster or Mission Loading Lists
Mission Documents	Combat Mission Records and Plans obtained from the National Archives

27 AIRCRAFT ASSIGNED TO THIS MISSION

Table is sorted by Pilot, and may be sorted by any column: click the column head.

Aircraft	Pilot ▾	Results	Mission/Sortie Information
42-97309	Bennett, Dewayne (NMI)	Completed Mission	SORTIE REPORT
42-38208	Bennett, Phillip Nathan	Completed Mission	High group deputy; led mission after high group lead went down. SORTIE REPORT
42-31211	Berbrich, John Martin	Completed Mission	High Squadron deputy. SORTIE REPORT
42-97233	Briley, Scott Andrew	Failed to Return	Shot down during fighter attacks which lasted from 1354 to 1357 hrs; crashed near Vielbrunn, Germany (27 km south of Aschaffenburg). MACR 3874 SORTIE REPORT
42-97204	Brouillard, Richard Vernon	Completed Mission	SORTIE REPORT
42-97139	Courtemanche, Ralph Eudor	Completed Mission	SORTIE REPORT
42-38014	Decker, Charles Edgar	Aborted	High Squadron lead; turned back at 1228 hrs (after entering enemy territory) because #3 engine was losing oil and the prop had to be feathered. SORTIE REPORT
42-38112	Fioretti, Edward Anthony	Failed to Return	Shot down during fighter attacks which lasted from 1354 to 1357 hrs; crashed near Lindenfels, Germany. MACR 3869 SORTIE REPORT
42-31222	Gekakis, Anthony	Aborted	Turned back at 1157 hrs because #1 engine was running rough and smoking. SORTIE REPORT
42-107058	Gowder, Charles Fred	Flying Spare, Returned As Briefed	SORTIE REPORT
42-37816	Heffley, Farris Ormond	Failed to Return	Shot down during fighter attacks which lasted from 1354 to 1357 hrs; crashed Rambucourt, France. MACR 3868. SORTIE REPORT

VIII FIGHTER COMMAND SUPPORT

66th FIGHTER WING

78 FS (A) P-47	43
78 FS (B) P-47	21
361 FS P-47	92
353 FS (A) P-47	28
357 FS P-51	41
353 FS (B) P-47	30
55 FS P-38	<u>46</u>
	301

67th FIGHTER WING

352 FS (A) P-51	31
352 FS (B) P-47	13
20 FS P-38	46
364 FS P-38	42
359 FS P-47	<u>40</u>
	172

65th FIGHTER WING

356 FS P-47	39
355 FS P-51	39
4 FS P-51	40
56 FS (A) P-47	21
56 FS (B) P-47	<u>24</u>
	163

Total Fighter Supt 636



356 FS - Penetration



355 FS – Penetration/Target & Withdrawal



55 FS - Withdrawal



54-24113

