

NIGHT RAID REPORT NO. 30

COPY NO. 16

Bomber Command Report on Night Operations, 25-26th March, 1942.

Meteorological Advice Submitted to the Command

0915 hours. Home bases:- Variable amounts of cloud and moderate visibility.

Target areas:- N. Germany, much convection cloud with showers; further south, well broken medium and low cloud, improving to little or no cloud with local ground haze.

France:- generally fine with moderate visibility during first part of night.

0315 hours. Home bases:- 5 Group's visibility doubtful.

Target areas:- Essen; small amounts of cloud, poor visibility.

France; fine weather, poor visibility.

Frisian Is.; much low cloud at first.

1610 hours. Home bases:- 5 Group: radiation fog expected to set in early.

4 Group and eastern part of 1 Group, satisfactory all night.

2 & 3 Groups expected to hold until 0200-0300 hrs.

Target areas:- Frisian Islands; fog and low stratus cloud during first part of night.

Other areas, unchanged.

2. Executive Orders

Conditions at bases were expected to be reasonable, at least for the first half of the night, and the weather in the target areas gave some choice in the Ruhr and Rhine districts.

Essen, the target with the highest priority was chosen for a heavy attack. The operation was planned for T.R. 1335 fitted aircraft to assist those not so equipped to find the target. The attacking force was divided into a flare force, an incendiary force and the main striking force. The T.R. aircraft included 32 flare carriers, whose flares were to be released on a T.R. fix, under an arrangement intended to provide good illumination of the target for at least 30 minutes. Picked crews were to drop red flares over the target if they identified it unmistakably. The incendiary force fitted with T.R. 1335 was to approach along a lattice line and identify the target visually by means of the flares. The flares started by this force would illuminate the target for the main striking force.

In addition to the attack on Essen a small force from 5 Group was given a task in connection with the sea-mining plan. The Whitleys of 4 Group were ordered to bomb the submarine base at St. Nazaire.

3. Sorties

The total number of sorties despatched was 359. For details of the operations see attached table.