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MALMEDY, BELGIUM MISTAKEN BOMBING,  
23 AND 25 DECEMBER 1944.

7234

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## C R I T I Q U E.

### SUMMARY.

MALMEDY was erroneously bombed on 23 and 25 December, not the 24th, by the IXth Bombardment Division(M), according to Ninth and Eighth Air Forces' records. Photographs revealed the location, not pilot observation. Personnel mis-identification was responsible. Acknowledgement was made by the IXth BD in its daily report, but not by the Ninth AF. During the Allied Air Commanders' Conference on 4 January 1945, General Carl Spaatz referred to an Alleged MALMEDY mis-bombing by the Eighth AF in December. That reference was the source for the only allusion to the MALMEDY accidents by the Air Force's official history.

ZULPICH was the assigned primary of the 322d Bombardment Group for the 23d, but of the 28 dispatched B-26's, six dropped 86 x 250 General Purpose bombs upon MALMEDY about 1526. Their personnel realized ZULPICH was not bombed, but believed LAMMERSUM six miles beyond had been attacked. Photographs disclosed MALMEDY as the victim. The flight was off course, bombed some 33 miles short, a town in hilly, forested country, whereas ZULPICH was in the open. Visibility was unlimited. Enemy aircraft did not oppose, nor did flak prevent full load drops.

Four B-26's from the 387th BG dropped 64 x 250 GP's upon MALMEDY about 1600 on the 25th, instead of the nearby ST. VITH, the Group's objective. Pilot interrogation indicated a mistake, and BORN was believed to have been the locality. Photographic interpretation by the IXth BD again pointed to MALMEDY as the location. Personnel error was the apparent cause. Flight officers believed ST. VITH to be their position, inasmuch as instruments and visual observation agreed. Plane-to-ground visibility was three to four miles.

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Orders.

ZULPICH(F-230327) was the primary target---no secondary, for the afternoon mission of the 322d BG.(VI,Bibl. #5, V) It was a necessary railhead for the German Seventh Army, according to the IXth BD, which named the town as the 322d BG's target. Bombing could be visual, if conditions permitted. In turn, the 99th Bombardment Wing added that the route was to be from the base to K-7746, to the target, and bombing was to be blind from approximately 12,000 feet at 1500. At 1145, the 322d's Operations notified A-2, and pilots were briefed at 1230-1330.

The Flight and Reports.

Six B-26's attacked MALMEDY at 1526, while 22 others also dispatched to ZULPICH were aborted or bombed elsewhere.(I,IV,XI) Maj. C. J. Watson's flight took off at 1328-1408. According to the course map, the briefed route was flown, which was from the base to ROTGEN(Initial Point), to target, left to SIERVENICH, and return.

Pilots named LAMMERSUM(F-3445), some six miles northeast of ZULPICH, as the target of their 86 x 250 GP bomb.(IV,V) Their A-2 statements immediately after the 1655-1730 landing were descriptive.

Flight Leader, Maj. C. J. Watson. --- "Hit town-not target-might be Lammersum. Excellent results on town."

2d Lt. D. R. Gustafson. --- "Center of town and walked out. Not target. Ex."

1st Lt. S. E. Eyberg. --- "Hit town of Lammersum - not target. Excellent on town."

1st Lt. R. W. Pike. ---"Bombs through center of town - not target. Excellent results."

1st Lt. H. S. Isaacs. --- "Hit center of town - was not target. Excellent results on town."

Conley. --- "Bombs blanketed small town. Did not bomb primary. --- 3 or 4 runs on T/O."

Based upon pilot reports, the Group telephoned the IXth BD about 1845 that ZULPICH had not been bombed, and believed LAMMERSUM had been attacked.(III,V) A 2210 amendment to the official OPFLASH #228 of 1915, repeated that data.

Photographs Identified MALMEDY.

Flight cameras operated "100%," and Capt. Bernhard O. Hougén, IXth BD Photo Interpreter reported:

"6 A/C. P.N.B. Bombs hit through the center of the town of Malmedy, on buildings and streets in the town."

His "center of town" description was identical with pilots'. (II,IV)

Although the IXth BD acknowledged the mistake, the Ninth AF did not.(I, Bibl. #5) The IXth's daily Mission Summary as to the 322d BG reported "... 6 a/c bombed the town of Malmedy, 1/2 mile W of bomblines, due to mis-identification of target..." by bombardier. In turn, the Ninth AF's Summary of Operations for the 23d, dated the 26th, referred only to EUSKIRCHEN and GLADBACH attacks by the 322d BG.

Pilot statements based upon impressions were the original 322d BG information, then when later photographic interpretation provided accurate details, the Group's December history related this version.(IX)

"The Group's bombers headed for the defended area of Zulpich in the afternoon but weather conditions interfered with the operation and the majority of the aircraft brought their bombs back to base. Six aircraft misidentified the target and bombed the village of Malmedy in Belgium while four others bombed east of the village. ... Because of the fluid situation of the troop lines during the German counter-offensive no serious damage to our troops was reported in the bombing of Malmedy."

Mistake Explanations.

Pilots were lost and committed a personnel error, yet several mission factors seemed to favor the flight.

Location. ---- MALMEDY was 33 air miles from ZULPICH, a substantial distance, even for aircraft, and LAMMERSUM was yet another six miles beyond ZULPICH.(X) Actually, the flight was off course and did not approach ZULPICH.(XI) MALMEDY was en route to both base-to-target and base-to-IP of ROTGEN where the formation was to take positions.

Terrain Could Be a Guide. ---- MALMEDY was in hilly, forested country, ZULPICH in the open.(X) LAMMERSUM and MALMEDY were both on rivers, however, possibly a perplexity. The former was on the ERFT, MALMEDY at the junction of LA MARCHE and LA MARCHENNE RAU.(X)

Weather Was Favorable. ---- Pilots reported CEILING AND VISIBILITY UNLIMITED.(IV) Their descriptions of results and photographs were both detailed, suggesting sharp observation.(IV,II) Weather did not affect bombing, the IXth BD Weather Office reported.(VIII)

Enemy Was Not Distracting. ---- Aircraft opposition was lacking, and flak did not prevent dropping of 86 of the 87 carried bombs.(IV) Attention is called to possible tactical significance in the IXth BD's flak analysis of the 322d BG ZULPICH mission.(1) The location's identity was uncertain, however, inasmuch as ZULPICH was the target, MALMEDY was bombed, but pilots believed LAMMERSUM had been attacked.

24 DECEMBER.

No MALMEDY bombing evidence was found among air force records.

Such an incident was not mentioned in the IXth BD's Mission Summary, as on the 23d and 25th. (I) Descriptions of missions to the nearby ZULPICH and NIDEGGEN did not refer to formations striking MALMEDY by mistake. Records were not examined of the 387th, 397th, 410th, 416th BG's, which also attacked those two communication centers, inasmuch as they were unsuspected.

Some Eighth AF heavy bomber attacks were made within the tactical area, but MALMEDY was not among them, according to the day's mission report No. 760. (2)

#### Bibliography.

1. IXth Bombardment Division, Mission Summary, 24 Dec. 44. In Maxwell Field, Alabama. Air University. Air Historical Archives. 534.333, Dec. 44. Mission Summaries, Dec. 44.
2. Eighth Air Force, Mission No. 760. German A/F's & Communication Center, 24 Dec. 44. In Ibid. 520.332 (or AF-8-SU-OP-8, 24 Dec. 44)

25 DECEMBER.

Flight and Reports.

Erroneous MALMEDY bombing by four 387th BG aircraft occurred during the executed afternoon mission of the IXth BD against ST. VITH.(VII, VI) The 387th and 323d BG's dropped approximately 362-533 of 250 GP bombs, plus some 100's, enveloping the town in smoke. Briefing by the 387th BG was at 1300, and 36 B-26's were dispatched at 1430, to fly a course southeastward from an undesignated point, below SPA and STAVELOT to ST. VITH. Actually the flight passed between STAVELOT and MALMEDY, bombed about 1600, then turned right at ST. VITH for the return.

Green Flight flew farther north, dropping 64 x 250 GP's upon MALMEDY.(1) This was Flight A, Box I, led by Pilot Anderson and Bombardier Shannon, followed by Pilots Missimer, Patterson, and Mueller.

The 387th BG realized at once that a mis-bombing had taken place, but believed BORN(P-850940) to be the locality, a view repeated by the IXth BD in its first report.(II,V,VIII) This town was mentioned in the Group's interrogation report, which was likely made within two hours of the landing. The more official OPFLATH to the IXth BD carried the same information. In turn, the IXth BD's 15 Minute Mission Report noted in the 'deviation from route' column that "...850940 bombed by 1 flight" of the 387th BG. Thus, based upon pilot observation, early reports pointed to BORN as the victim.

Photographs revealed it to be MALMEDY, which was acknowledged immediately by the IXth BD.(III) Camera's of the 387th BG operated "100%," and 1st Lt. Ben "Ann, IXth BD Photo Interpretation Officer,



reported:

Box I, Flight A did not bomb the primary. "Apparent misidentification of target as primary completely enveloped by smoke. Hits in town of Malmedy approx. 10-3/4 mi. N.W. of primary."

Official confirmation was made by the IXth BD's Mission Summary for the 25th, dated the 26th.(VII) Referring to the 387th BG:

"The leader of one flight misidentified primary. This a/c plus 3 others dropped 64 x 250 GP at Malmedy - friendly territory. Bombardier and navigator believed they were synchronized on primary. 'Gee' operator obtained fix 3 minutes from BRP which corresponded with visual observation. Snow cover and haze made pinpoint navigation difficult."

The section 'Failures to Bomb' classified personnel as responsible, the reason: "Leader misidentified primary, dropping at Malmedy -friendly territory."

The only other details were provided in 'Unsatisfactory Bombing Report', an issuance probably by the IXth BD.(IV)

"Bombardier misidentified target. Bombed town of Malmedy, 12 miles NNW of St. Vith. Bombardier and Navigator were both positive they were on briefed target. 'Gee' box was not working well but operator obtained supposedly accurate fix on course 3 minutes from BRP. This fix corresponded exactly with bombardier's visual observation and no doubt existed as to his correct position. Snow cover and haze made pinpoint navigation difficult. All details concerning error not yet coordinated."

#### Mis-identification Reasons.

Personnel error was the apparent cause. Flight officers believed ST. VITH to be their position, inasmuch as navigation and visual observation agreed.

Weather seemed to favor the latter. Plane to ground visibility was three to four miles.(VII) Detailed photography was obtained, sufficient to identify the victim.(III)

# ALLIED AIR COMMANDERS' CONFERENCE.

This was held at SPAEF in Versailles, Thursday, 4 January 1945. (1) General Carl Spaatz, U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe, reported:

"Eighth Air Force had operated... Towns in the battle area had also been attacked, including (so it was said) MALMEDY which was on our side of the line. ..."

General Spaatz was reporting presumably about the period since the last conference on 28 December.

cited

That conference report was the source of information for the following statement in the Air Force history: (2)

"One such town, Malmedy, was the scene of a tragic error, for it was held by Allied troops at the time it was bombed." The reference was then the heavy bombers of the Eighth Air Force, but no date was mentioned, on an allusion to December operations of Ardennes.

## Bibliography.

1. Notes on the Allied Air Commanders' Conference, 4 January 1945. In Files of the Air Historical Archives, Air University, Maxwell Field, Alabama.

2. The Army Air Forces in World War II. Vol. Three, Europe: Argument to V-E Day, January 1944 to May 1945. Chap. 18, Autumn Assault on Germany, By John E. Fagg. p. 670. In Army Library; General Reference Section, OCMH; Air Force Historical Office.

# DOCUMENTATION.

## MALMEDY BOMBING ON 23 DECEMBER 1944.

By 322d Bombardment Group(M), 99th Combat Bombardment Wing,  
9th Bombardment Division(M).

~~(Source: Maxwell Field, Ala. Air University. Air Historical  
Archives. GP-322-SU-OP-S, 23 Dec. 44. Subject: Defended Area.)~~ File  
obtained through the Air Historical Liaison Office in Washington.)

### 1. 27th BD(M) Mission Summary (Afternoon) 23 Dec. 44.

Dated 24 Dec. 44.

(Bibl. #1)

#### "Zulpich (Communications Center)

322 BG: 28 a/c dispatched (including 2 PFF a/c). 5 a/c bombed  
other targets, dropping 64 x 250 GP. 3 window a/c.

18 a/c failed to bomb: 6 a/c flight leader could not  
locate target due to weather. 2 PFF a/c returned to  
base after navigators determined that formation would  
be 12 minutes late at target due to late takeoff. 6 a/c  
bombed the town of Malmedy, 1/2 mile W of bombline, due to  
misidentification of target. xxx 4 a/c other reasons:  
2 a/c jettisoned bombs when a/c were hit by flak. 1 a/c  
could not catch formation. 1 a/c did not drop as leader  
jettisoned. Bombs of 1 a/c which landed at Couvron  
unaccounted for.

4 a/c attacked casual target, the location and type  
unknown at this time. No photo coverage or visual  
observation.

1 a/c attacked the town of Goldbach (F-230410). No  
photo coverage or visual observations of results.

No losses, 18 a/c flak battle damaged, no casualties."

#### Failures to Bomb.

Group	No. A/C	Classification	Reason.
322	1)	Personnel	Bombardier misidentified target;
	5)	Other	bombs hit town of Malmedy in friendly territory.

#### Observations.

WEATHER: Zulpich 322 BG: Clear, Snow on ground, Visibility 4-6 miles  
in haze

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S/A Photo Reports.

322d's cameras photographing 100%

Flak Analysis Annex.

Zulpich Rail Communications Center. 322 BG.

No A/C were lost to flak, but 18 were damaged.

"Flak in the target area started out to be moderate and inaccurate. However, as the /c reached the inner defense zone of 18 heavy guns, the fire became intense and accurate. This target represents one of the more heavily defended areas of the enemy's communication system. Moderate to intense fire could be expected from the 18 heavy guns plotted."

II. 322d BD Photo Interpretation.

S-2 Report (First Phase Interpretation), signed (typed name) by Capt. Bernhard O. (Haugen), Photo Interpreter.

Photos of 322d Group.

Target hit: Malmedy.

A. Target Briefed: Zulpich---Primary.  
None ---Secondary.

M.P.I.: Center of Town.  
A.P. : Same.

C. No. & Type of A/C dispatched: 26 B-26s. 11 attacking.

D. Bombing by 3's 6's, ...: 6's.

E. No. and size of bombs dropped:  
4 x 1000 GP  
150x 250 GP

F. Heading A/C when bombs dropped: Approx. 30°

G. Time bombs dropped: 1526.

H. Activity at target: None.

J. Results of bombing:

"Due to operational difficulties, weather, and enemy activity the A/C could not fly their designated positions in their respective boxes and flights; it is impossible to determine the bombing by either boxes or flight due to this.

#6 A/C. P.N.B. Bombs hit through the center of the town of Malmedy, on buildings and streets in the town.

#1 A/C. P.N.B. Location of strikes undetermined due to

#3. 23 Dec.

poor quality of photos, hits in fields, A/C hit by Flak, one engine out, jettisoned bombs.

No photos of other bombings."

N.B. --- PNB was probably Primary Not Bombed, according to postwar AF sources.

III. 322d BG's OPFLASH REPORT.

(Bill. #1)

To be teletyped to the IX BD within two hours after last plane landed.

B. Briefed Primary: Zulpich.

D. No. A/A attacking:  
\_\_\_\_ Primary.

\_\_\_\_ 6 Secondary. "Believed Lammersum F3435 -- hit center of town -- Excellent."

F. Bombs.  
86 Secondary.

G. Results of Bombing On:  
Primary. \_\_\_\_

Secondary. "Believed Lammersum - hit center of town and walked through. Excellent."

H. No. A/C: (As to casualties)  
5 damaged.

J. Flak:  
Target: Mod & Inacc.  
Elsewhere: IP Intense and Acc.

L. Altitudes of Attacks: 12,000 Secondary.

M. Time over Targets 1526-1530, Secondary.

The more official OPFLASH from the 322 322 Group was the teletyped OPFLASH No. 228 for 23 Dec. at 231915A Dec., to the IX Bomber Command (A/C: A-2) and CG, 9th Combat Wing.

It contained none of the above information of the preliminary report, but, was amended at 2210A, to indicate some of the above data. The most important was Par. D to read: 11 A/C - Secondary-Lammersum(F3435).



IV. Pilot Interrogation Reports.

*(Rich. 40)*  
Watson(Maj. G.J.); Eft Ldr; Box 1, Flt. 1, Pos. 1; took off, 1408,  
landed, 1655.

Altitude, 12,300; hour, 1526.

"Hit town - not target - might be Lammersum. Excellent results  
on town."

Bombs: Dropped load of 13 x 250 GPs.

Weather: Ground haze. CAVU.

Flak: Intense and accurate.

Opposition: None.

Gustafson(2d Lt. D.R.); 451 Sq.; Box 2, Flt. 2, Pos. 4; took off, 1340,  
landed 1700.

Alt., 12,000; 1529.

"Center of town and walked out. Not target. Ex."

Bombs: Dropped load of 16 x 250 GPs.

Weather: 0/10 in haze.

Flak: Intense, accurate.

Opposition: None.

~~Eyberg(1st Lt. S.E.); 451 Sq.; Box 1, Flt. 1, Pos. 1; took off, 1408,  
landed 1655.~~

~~"Hit town - not target - might be Lammersum. Excellent results  
on town."~~

~~Bombs: Dropped all of 13 x 250 GPs.~~

~~Weather~~

Eyberg(1st Lt. S.E.); 452 Sq.; Box 1, Flt. 3, Pos. 1; took off, 1404,  
landed 1705. Alt.: 12,300; 1526 hrs.

"Hit town of Lammersum - not target. Excellent on town.

Bombs: Dropped load of 16 x 250 GPs.

Weather: Ground haze. CAVU.

Flak: Intense, accurate at IP.

Opposition: None.

Pike(1st Lt. R.W.); 451 Sq.; Box 2, Flt. 2, Pos. 1; took off 1328, landed  
1700.

Alt. 12,000; 1530 hrs.

"Bombs through center of town - not target. Excellent results."

Bombs: Dropped load of 13 x 250 GPs.

Weather: Haze on ground. CAVU.

Flak: Intense and accurate.

Opposition: None.

Isaacs(1st Lt. H. S.); 450 Sq.; Box 1, Flt. 2, Pos. 4; took off, 1408,  
landed 1720.

Alt.: 12,000; 1526 hrs.

"Hit center of town - was not target. Excellent results on town."

Bombs: Dropped 12 of 13 x 250 GPs.

Weather: CAVU.

Flak: Intense, accurate.

Opposition: None.

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~~Conley~~

Conley(?); 451 Sq.; Box 2, Flt 2, Pos. 2; took off, 1335, landed 1730.

Alt. 12,000; 1530 hrs.

"Bombs blanketed small town, did not bomb primary. -- 3 or 4 runs on T/O"

Bombs: Dropped load of 16 x 250 GPs; "Salvoed bombs around."

Weather: Over secondary, grd-haze 2/10 strato.

Flak: Primary target, intense, accurate.

Opposition: 2 ME 109s SE Zulpich.

V. 322 BG's A-2 Log of Mission, 23 Dec. 44.  
(Bibl. #1)

Zulpich Defended Area.

1145 - Notified of target by operations.

1230-1300 - Prebriefing.

1520 - F/O #399 and Intelligence annex rec'd.

1640 - Interrogation started.

1730 - " ended.

1845 - OPFASS and 2-hour phone report.

#### VI. Orders.

A. 7th Bombardment Division(V)  
(Bibl. #4)

##### 1. Typed summary of FO #680.

The 322d BG of the 99th BW was to bomb, blind, the Zulpich Railhead, F-230327, at 1530.

##### 2. A chart(typed) of the wing's missions and detailed

The 99th B Wing's target was the Zulpich Railhead, WF 230327. The notation "Spec. Photos" was entered in the target column, probably indicating the requirement to take them or the target had been set up as the result of such photos. Specifically, the target was a small railhead 7 miles from the bomb line, and in general, Zulpich was to be bombed as a small village with important road net. Attack's objective was to destroy supplies in the railhead and to cut communications in the area. A TACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE column applied to railheads of MUNSTEREIFEL, ZULPICH, NIEDEGGER, as follows: "The German 7th Army which jumped off in an attack about 6 days ago are depending on these 3 feeder line railheads for all types of supplies and reinforcement, as the Germans expected to capture a great deal of supplies and as they did not, they are rather in bad need of supplies." Bombing Visual and Blind.

N.B.---Bombline mentioned was that of the Medium Bomber interdiction line which curved westward from the RHINE near BONN to pass midway between ZULPICH and DUREN.

(Bibl. #5, p. 691.

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B. 99th B Wing's FO #399, 231430 Dec. 44, and Intelligence Annex at 231441 Dec.

(Bibl. #1)

ZULPICH (F-230237) was specified as the target, with zero hour to be 231500 for Plan B(Blind.), and bombing at 12,500 and 12,000 feet. The route was to be from base to K-7746 to Target, thus was well north of MALMEDY.

#### VII. Maps.

U.S.G.C. 4042: North West Europe, 1:250,000. Sheet 3, Brussels-Liege.  
" " " " " " " 6, Namur-Luxembourg.  
" 4346; Central Europe, 1:250,000. Sheet K 51, Koln.  
" 4416; 1:100,000. Sheet S 1, Bonn.

#### VIII. Weather Office of 322d BG. (Bibl. #4.)

Its Flash Report, dated 23 December, for the 322d BG was the following:

322ND Bomb Group Target: F-23027 (1530) ZULPICH  
Target: Clear, Snow on Ground. VSBY 4-6 Miles in Haze.  
Did Weather Effect Bombing: No.

#### IX. 322d BG's History, December 1944. Undated. (Bibl. #2)

"The Group's bombers headed for the defended area of Zulpich in the afternoon but weather conditions interfered with the operation and the majority of the aircraft brought their bombs back to base. Six aircraft misidentified the target and bombed the village of Malmedy in Belgium while four others bombed east of the village. Several others bombed casual targets. Because of the fluid situation of the troop lines during the German counter-offensive no serious damage to our troops was reported in the bombing of Malmedy. Eighteen aircraft were flak damaged but there were no losses or casualties.

#### X. Malmedy-Zulpich Distances and Terrain.

Examination of a 1:100,000 map (see VII above) indicates the air distance to have been approximately 33 miles. MALMEDY was situated at the junction of the LA MARCHE RIVER and LA MARCHE RAU, the terrain being hilly and forested. ZULPICH and the nearby (northeastward) LAMMERSUM were in open country, the latter also on a river, the ERFT.

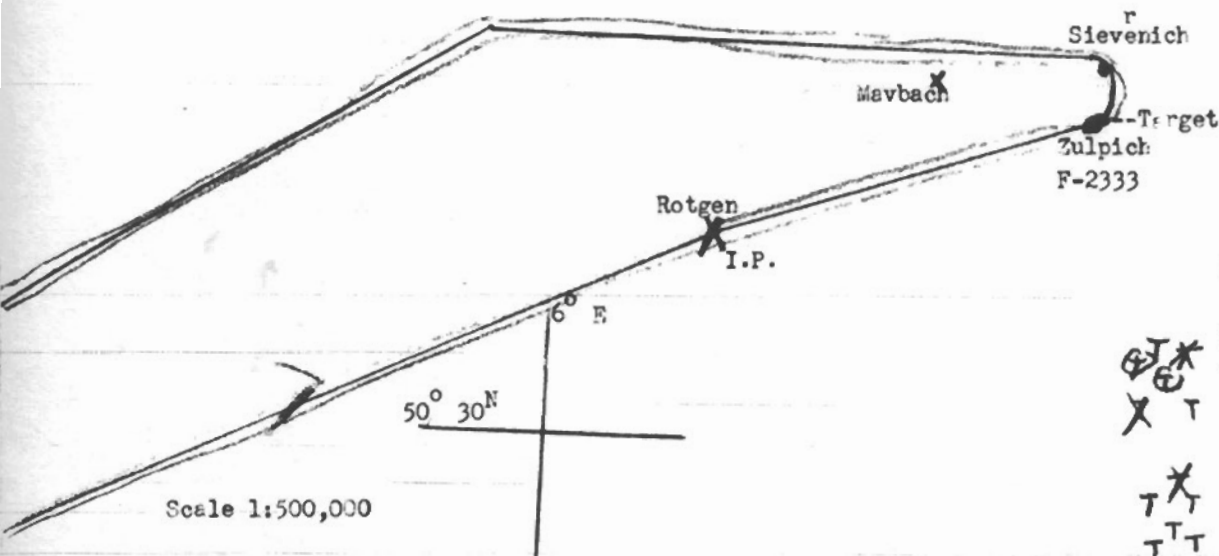


322nd Bomb Group(4). 23rd Dec 1944 ---Route

Target: Zulpich Defended Area. TOT: 1530-1532. ~~Alt~~

Alt: 12,200-11,500. Weather: CAVU.

- Briefed Route
- 1st Box's Route
- 2nd Box's Route



XL Route.

Formation:



Intense, accurate, IFF in Zulpich area.

Source:

GP-322-SU-OP-S, 23 Dec. 44. Zulpich Defended Area.

534.332A. 23 Dec. 44. 9th BD. F.O's 680. 23 Dec. 44

(Bibl. #1, #4.)

O Capt A. Battle Damage  
X Capt. AC. " "

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Bibliography.

Maxwell. --- Documents were obtained through the Air Historical Liaison Office in Washington, from Maxwell Field, Alabama. Air University. Air Historical Archives.

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1. 322d Bombardment Group, Supporting Documents. GP-322-SU-OP-S, 23 Dec 44. Zulpich Defended Area. In Maxwell.
2. 322d BG, History. GP-322-H. Dec. 1944. (Bomb.) In Maxwell.
3. IXth Bombardment Division(M), Daily Mission Summaries, December 1944. 534.333. In Maxwell.
4. IXth BD, Field Order #680. 23 Dec. 44. 534.332A, 23 Dec. 44. In Maxwell.
5. Ninth Air Force, Mission Files, 23 Dec. 44. 533.334. In Maxwell.

25 DECEMBER 1944.

By 387th Bombardment Group, 98th ~~squad~~ Bombardment Wing,  
IXth Bombardment Division(M), Ninth Air Force.

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1. Formation for 25 Dec. 44, 387th BG.  
(Bibl. #2)

Green Flight: Records did not identify the following as to  
rank and given names:

Lead A/C---Pilot Anderson, Bombardier Shannon, in A/C #684.  
Other A/C--- Pilots Mueller, Missimer in #880, #700; and  
probably Patterson in #717, instead of Moffett of #899.

Briefing at 1300; Takeoff at 1432.

II. Interrogation Form of 387th BG, 25 Dec.  
(Bibl. #2)

The flight lead by Anderson appeared to have been composed of  
Anderson, Mueller, Missimer, Patterson. Tookoff at 1432; Target was  
St. Vith; Date 25 Dec. Flight dropped ~~16~~ x 250 on the target. BORN was  
noted as a locality. <sup>64</sup>

III. IXth BD, Photo Interpretation(First Phase Inter.)  
(Bibl. #2)

Report by 1st Lt. Ben Mann, Photo Interpretation Officer, of  
398th BG(98th BWg) operations of 25 Dec.

Target briefed and hit---St. Vith. A/C attacking--30.  
Drop at 1605. Activity at target: "Target area completely enveloped  
by smoke, making identification of target on their heading extremely  
difficult."

Results of bombing: Box I, Flight A. Anderson-Shannon.  
PNB(Primary Not Bombed). "Apparent misidentification of target as primary  
was completely enveloped by smoke. Hits in town of Malmedy  
approx. 10-3/4 mi. N. of primary."

Flights B and C of Box I attacked St. Vith.  
Box II, not involved in Malmedy. Flight  
A, Morse-Britton bombed Rocherat by mistake, instead of St. Vith, and  
that incident was that referred to in the history(December) of the  
387th BG.(Bibl.#1)

IV. "Unsatisfactory Bombing Report."  
(Bibl. #2)

For 387th BG, Mission of 25 Dec. 44 to ST. VITH. Issuing organization  
was not identified, but it was likely the ~~Group~~. Unsigned; undated.

*B D*

#2. 25 Dec.

Box I, Flight A, Pilot Anderson, Bombardier Shannon.  
Visual Bombing. Results: PNB.

"Reasons for ? Bombing or Failure to Attack Primary:

"Bombardier misidentified target. Bombed town of Malmedy, 12 miles NNE of St. Vith. Bombardier and Navigator were both positive they were on briefed target. 'Gee' box was not working well but operator obtained supposedly accurate fix on course 3 minutes from BRP. This fix corresponded exactly with bombardier's visual observation and no doubt existed as to his correct position. Snow cover and haze made pin point navigation difficult. All details concerning error not yet coordinated."

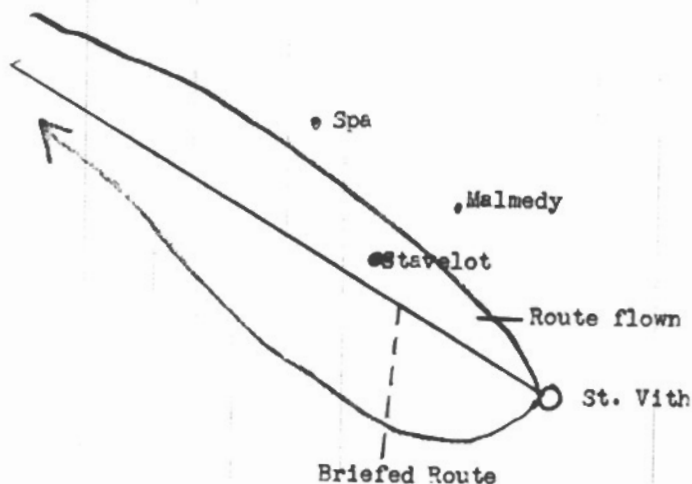
Re

V. Group's OPFLAT, 25 Dec.  
(Bibl.#2)

No mention of Malmedy mistake. Report would give impression the primary had been bombed as briefed, with certain exceptions. One flight of 4 a/c may have bombed Born P-850940.

VI. Overlay of Mission, by 387th BG.  
(Bibl.#3)

TOT, 1600; Altitude 12,500; Weather Nil clouds, Vis. 5 mi.



43 25 Dec.

VII. IXth BD, Mission Summary(Afternoon), 25Dec. 44.  
Dated 26 Dec. 44, as to Field Order #683  
(Bibl. #3, #4)

"St. Vith (Defended Village)"

387 BG: 36 a/c dispatched, 26 dropping 426 x 250 GP on and in vicinity of primary. ...

...

The leader of one flight misidentified primary. This a/c plus 3 other dropped 64 x 250 GP at Malmedy - friendly territory. Bombardier and navigator believed they were synchronized on primary. 'Gee' operator obtained fix 3 minutes from BRP which corresponded with visual observation. Snow cover and haze made pinpoint navigation difficult.

...

Box I - Bligh. A. P.N.B. Apparent misidentification of target as primary was completely enveloped by smoke. Hits in town of Malmedy approximately 10 3/4 miles NW of primary.

..."

Other S<sup>+</sup>. Vith Attacks.

323d BG dropped from 40 a/c; 533 x 250, 168 x 100 GP

394th BG dispatched 39 a/c, but none bombed.

Failures to Bomb.

GP	A/C	Classification	Reason.
387	14/C	Personnel	"Leader misidentified primary, dropping at Malmedy - friendly territory."

S/A Photo Reports.

387th cameras operating 100%.

WEATHER: Nil clouds. Visibility 3-4 miles plane to ground.

VIII. IXth BD. Mission Report(15 Minute Report'  
(Bibl. #3)

387th BG: 36 A/C; TOT 1500; Bombed primary; Deviation from route, etc. --- "-850940 bombed by 1 flight."

IX. Eighth Air Force.  
(Bibl. #5)

No indication found among records.

#4. 25 Dec.

Bibliography.

Maxwell. --- Documents were obtained through the Air Historical Liaison Office in Washington, from Maxwell Field, Alabama. Air University. Air Historical Archives.

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1. 387th Bombardment Group, History. GP-387-H-1 Dec. 44. In Maxwell.

2. 387th BG, Supporting Documents. GP-387-SU-OP-S(b), 25 Dec. 44. In Maxwell.

3. IXth Bombardment Division(M), Field Order #683, 25 Dec. 44. 534.332A FO #683, 25 Dec. 44. In Maxwell.

4. Ninth Air Force, Mission Summary, 25 Dec. 44. 533.334. Mission File, 25 Dec. 44. In Maxwell.

5. Eighth Air Force, Mission #761, 25 Dec. 44. 520.332.8th AF Night FO 1451A and Mission No. #761. 25 Dec. 44. In Maxwell.