

303rd BG (H) Combat Mission No. 71

23 September 1943

Target: Submarine Supply Ship in Loire River, Nantes, France

Crews Dispatched: 19

Length of Mission: 5 hours, 40 minutes

Bomb Load: 10 x 500 lb G. P. M-43 bombs

Bombing Altitude: 25,500 ft

Ammo Fired: 3,960 rounds

The 41st Combat Wing formed to fly a practice mission to test the feasibility of "Blind Bombing" over solid overcast using recently developed radar equipment. Each Group dispatched 18 aircraft flying a normal "combat box" formation.

The 482nd BG(H) at Alconbury (about eight miles east of Molesworth) provided a "Pathfinder" (PFF) B-17 and crew that was specially equipped with an H2S airborne radar scanner that would be used in lieu of the normal bombsight target scanning. The 482nd BG(H) had been activated on 20 August 1943 at Alconbury with a three-fold mission: develop combat operations, develop techniques and test radar devices, and train Pathfinder crews. Pathfinder crews were trained to fly as lead aircraft from stations of other Bomb Groups. The RAF provided considerable technical assistance and instruction, particularly during the formative months. On 23 September the 482nd Pathfinder crews had yet to fly an operational mission, nor had 8th Air Force Bomb Groups attempted to use this new mission bombing technology.

The practice mission plan was for the radar navigator ("Mickey" operator) to use his H2S radar scope (Stinky) to determine the target aiming point. The lead ship bombardier then dropped his bombs and signaled all other Combat Wing aircraft to drop their bombs. British colored parachutes were dropped as the signal for the Group bombing. Each Group was instructed to fly formations as close as safely possible to permit the bombing pattern to be as small as possible.

Major Kirk R. **Mitchell**, 358th BS Commanding Officer, led the 303rd BG(H) Group. The bombing was conducted in the North Sea practice ranges. After bombing, the Group aircraft returned home without difficulty. Maj. **Mitchell** reported that two aircraft from the High Squadron of the lead 379th BG(H) straggled far behind their Group throughout the entire trip and prevented the 303rd BG(H) from getting into position for a good bomb pattern. It also was suggested that the Pathfinder ship's flare be fired about two seconds before reaching the bomb release line because of the "time lag" between the moment the flare is fired and when it lights up.

After the return of Group aircraft from the practice mission, Nineteen B-17s were dispatched on a return mission to Nantes, France. Four aircraft aborted:

#42-5360 *War Bride* 358BS (**Hendry**) - A crew member became ill.

#42-5257 *Miss Bea Haven* 359BS (**Brown**) - A crew member became ill.

#42-29846 (*No Name*) (**Hullar**) - The B-17 left the formation when the fuse to the ball turret gunner's electric flying suit blew out.

#42-5177 *Fast Worker MK II* 359BS (**Phelps**) - The electric gloves for the ball turret gunner, waist gunner and tail gunner shorted out.

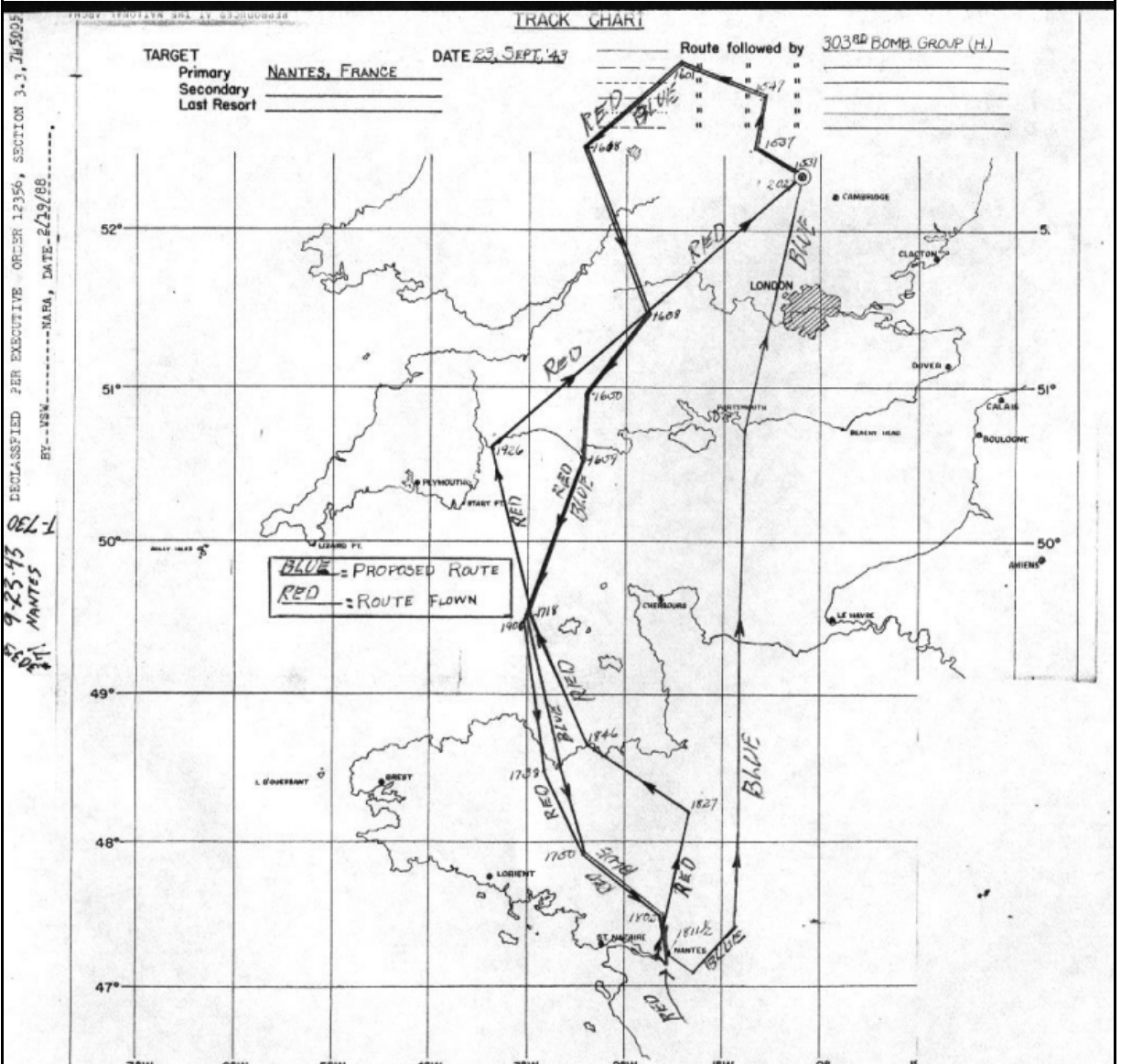
The 303rd BG(H) formation attacked the target from 25,500 feet. There were no clouds and the three to five mile visibility was hampered by a slight haze. Forty-five tons of M-43 500-lb. bombs were dropped in the target area. The target was the U-boat supply ship *Kertosono*, which was moored on the west side of the Port of Maritime. The *Kertosono* was 471 ft. long, had a 57-ft. beam and was registered at 8,700 tons. Bombs did not hit the target ship, but heavily damaged other vessels, facilities and building in the target area.

Anti-aircraft fire at the target was moderate to intense and fairly accurate. The fire was reported as being noticeably heavier than that encountered when the target was attacked on 16 September. Flak was also seen at other locations. The VHF radios were badly jammed over France. Enemy fighter opposition numbered 10 to 15 FW-190s. No attacks were made. There were no casualties or battle damage. P-47s gave excellent close support.

According to Maj. **Shayler**, results were pretty good. He said, "P-47s were marvelous and stayed with us the entire time. However, as they circled around us over the target, I looked up and there were seven FW-190s in front of us. They made one swoop, but we dove and got out of their way and I didn't see them again. All of our bombs were well in the target area. We also knocked hell out of the marshalling yards." Capt. **Casello** added, "It was all smoked up, but we had a good run and dropped our bombs in an excellent pattern. They had a helluva lot of guns on us, but we did all right."

Lt. Walter R. **Kyse**, co-pilot on the original 303rd BG(H) B-17 *Jersey Bounce* #41-24539 remarked, "It certainly was a wonderful feeling to see those P-47s. They were in there all the time. Even though the flak was tough, with our fighter cover I knew we were going to have a free run on the target. Four enemy fighters made an attack on the Group ahead, but the P-47s got two of them. The target was really smoking." S/Sgt. Jesse E. **Tripp**, waist gunner on *Mr. Five by Five* 427BS stated, "I only saw one pass by enemy fighters today. Our P-47s were really keeping them out there away from us."

All Group aircraft returned safely to England. Seven Group aircraft landed away from base for fuel. Sixteen of the aircraft and crews that flew the four-hour morning practice mission were also dispatched to fly the nearly six-hour combat mission.



Route Map

Aircraft Formation at Assembly Point



Four (4) aircraft aborted this mission:

Lt. Hendry in 360	Lt. Brown in 257
Lt. Hullar in 846	Lt. Phelps in 177

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

CREW POSITIONS CMP - Command Pilot P - Pilot CP - Co-Pilot NAV - Navigator ANV - Ass't. Navigator MNV - Mickey Navigator ENG - Engineer BOM - Bombardier RO - Radio Operator	TOG - Toggler BT - Ball Turret Operator TT - Top Turret Operator TG - Tail Gunner NG - Nose Gunner RG - Radio Gunner WG - Waist Gunner LWG - Left Waist Gunner RWG - Right Waist Gunner GUN - Gunner	VI - Voice Interpreter OBS - Observer PAS - Passenger PHO - Photographer RESULTS OF MISSION KIA - Killed in action WIA - Wounded in action MIA - Missing in action POW - Prisoner of war	DOW - Died of wounds EVD - Evaded the enemy INT - Interned in neu cntry REP - Repatriated RES - Rescued ESC - Escaped BO - Bailed out DCH - Ditched CR-L - Crashed on land CR-S - Crashed at sea
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358th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17F #42-29664 Jersey Bounce, Jr.

P Gamble, Donald, 1Lt
CP Kyse, Walter R., 2Lt
NAV McSween, William D., 2Lt
BOM Coburn, Ralph F., 2Lt
ENG Wagner, Clyde E., T/Sgt
RWG Vaughn, Norville, S/Sgt
RO DiMartino, Dante, Sgt
BT Scharch, Richard G., S/Sgt
TG Gilbert, Bill A., S/Sgt
LWG Schmeltzer, Charles S., S/Sgt

B-17F #42-5360 Old Faithful

P Hendry, John W., Jr., 1Lt
CP Wise, Calder L., 2Lt
NAV McNamara, Bernard T., 2Lt
BOM Webster, Richard E., 2Lt
ENG Biddle, Loran C., T/Sgt
TG Doherty, John J., S/Sgt
RO Brown, James J., T/Sgt
BT Hargrave, Alfred J., Sgt
RWG Raesley, Wilmer G., Sgt
LWG Arasin, John C., S/Sgt
(Abortive)

B-17F #41-24577 Hell's Angels

CP Johnston, John R., 1Lt
CP Lake, Lester A., Jr., 2Lt
NAV Karraker, William H., 2Lt
BOM Sweet, William D., 2Lt
ENG Lopez, Rudolph S., T/Sgt
RWG Mills, James E., S/Sgt
RO Matthews, James O., T/Sgt
BT Griffin, Edward W., S/Sgt
TG Moody, John P., S/Sgt
LWG Cobb, Edward N., S/Sgt

B-17F #42-29571 Charley Horse

P Sanders, Roy C., 2Lt
CP Nogash, Henry F., 2Lt
NAV Wood, Gordon W., 2Lt
BOM Peed, Philip A., 2Lt
ENG Rozek, Joseph A., T/Sgt
RWG Carll, Martin V., Sgt
RO Trest, James G., T/Sgt
BT Kremer, Mathias J., S/Sgt
TG Cockrum, Alfred E., S/Sgt
LWG Smith, Riker K., S/Sgt

359th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17F #42-5257 Miss Bea Haven

P Brown, Malcolm E., 2Lt
CP Szelwian, Felix T., 2Lt
NAV Alloway, Hillard C., 2Lt
BOM Schreidell, Matthew, 2Lt
ENG Kress, Beryl W., T/Sgt
RO Cirello, Ralph T., T/Sgt
LWG Boucher, Henry C., S/Sgt
BT Konecko, John, Sgt
TG Boggs, Calvin E., S/Sgt
RWG Wright, Malcolm, S/Sgt
(Abortive)

B-17F #42-5177 Fast Worker MK II

P Phelps, Robert L., Jr., 1Lt
CP Bolsover, Harold S., F/O
NAV Johnson, Lloyd S., 2Lt
BOM Rothman, Theodore I., 1Lt
ENG Powell, Marvin F., S/Sgt
TT Robb, Charles W., Sgt
RO McGee, Paul P., S/Sgt
BT Joubert, Francis M., Sgt
TG Perryman, Jack L., Sgt
LWG Robichaud, Joseph E., Sgt
(Abortive)

B-17F #42-5482 Cat-O-Nine Tails

P Manning, John P., 1Lt
CP Case, Spencer F., 1Lt
NAV Antman, Jack, 2Lt
BOM Shafer, John H., 1Lt
ENG Keesling, George R., T/Sgt
TG Jennings, Harley F., S/Sgt
RO Fitzsimmons, Kenneth P., T/Sgt
RWG Santella, Albert C., S/Sgt
BT Mace, LeRoy L., S/Sgt
LWG McEachern, David C., S/Sgt

B-17F #41-24605 Knockout Dropper

P Quinn, Thomas J., F/O
CP Eisenhart, William E., F/O
NAV Howlett, Oscar D., 2Lt
BOM Van Zandt, Roland, 2Lt
ENG Holper, Ralph M., T/Sgt
RWG Kalafut, Joe J., S/Sgt
RO Vieira, Joseph, T/Sgt
BT Bergman, Harvey F., S/Sgt
LWG Reynolds, James B., S/Sgt
TG Pelkey, Elwood R., S/Sgt

360th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17F #42-5393 *Thumper Again*

P Fyler, Carl J., 1Lt
CP DeWall, Hershel R., Lt
NAV Cobb, Edward L., Lt
BOM Gibson, Steve M., Lt
ENG Addison, Bill J., T/Sgt
RWG Fisher, George C., S/Sgt
RO Jillson, John S., S/Sgt
BT Ford, Ray D., S/Sgt
TG Stickler, John J., S/Sgt
LWG Stachowiak, Martin G., Sgt

B-17F #42-5260 *Yardbird II*

P Tippet, Paul S., Lt
CP Nemitz, Lewellyn H., Lt
NAV Mims, Edwin E., Lt
BOM Clark, Fred T., Lt
ENG Smith, Oaks H., Lt
RWG Greason, William R., S/Sgt
RO Richardson, Thomas L., T/Sgt
LWG Gibney, Hugh F., Jr., S/Sgt
BT Rasch, Abraham J., S/Sgt
TG Randall, Jack H., S/Sgt

B-17F #42-29931 *Satan's Workshop*

P Casello, John J., Capt
CP Shayler, Walter K., Maj
NAV Effinger, Lawrence E., Lt
BOM Butt, Byron K., Lt
ENG Carnathan, Hugh S., T/Sgt
RG Stout, Otis T., S/Sgt
RO Calco, Anthony, T/Sgt
LWG Frost, Carlyle A., S/Sgt
BT Ponder, Truly S., S/Sgt
RWG Gray, Johnnie E., S/Sgt
TG Rice, Bernard, Lt

B-17F #42-5483 *Red Ass*

P Brinkley, Pharis C., Lt
CP Parrott, John H., Lt
NAV Becker, Sylvester J., Lt
BOM Petrolino, James S., Lt
ENG Worthington, Arthur J., T/Sgt
LWG Lance, Guy A., S/Sgt
RO Snyder, Richard N., T/Sgt
RWG Ferguson, Charles R., S/Sgt
BT Reid, Harold C., S/Sgt
TG Rein, William E., S/Sgt

B-17F #42-5854 *Alley Oop*

P Jokerst, Leonard E., Lt
CP Bergeron, Willard H., Lt
NAV Noland, James B., Lt
BOM DeFeis, Robert N., Lt
BOM Kulesa, Frank E., Lt
ENG Serwa, Alphonse B., T/Sgt
RWG Stephen, William H., S/Sgt
RO Cline, Leroy, T/Sgt
BT Stevens, A.S., T/Sgt
LWG Wilson, George W., S/Sgt
TG Appleton, Vernon R., S/Sgt

427th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17F #41-24562 Sky Wolf

P	Shelhamer, David P., Jr., Lt
CP	Tucker, Frederick W., Lt
NAV	Kotz, Warren C., Lt
BOM	Lewis, William L., Lt
ENG	Willett, John K., S/Sgt
RO	Harvie, Warren L., T/Sgt
BT	Garrett, Frank O., Sgt
TG	Humphreys, Robert R., S/Sgt
RWG	Keaton, Joe J., S/Sgt
LWG	Volz, Robert J., S/Sgt
PHO	Moffett, Ralph M., Sgt

B-17F #42-3158 Max

P	McClellan, George S., Jr., Lt
CP	Greenwood, Ernest G., Lt
NAV	Kaliher, John C., Lt
BOM	Cornish, Merlin L., Lt
ENG	Tempesta, David, T/Sgt
RWG	Chiles, Alfred B., Jr., S/Sgt
RO	Callihan, George A., T/Sgt
BT	Yarian, Robert G., S/Sgt
LWG	Heaton, Barnell S., Sgt
TG	Dugan, Charles E., S/Sgt

B-17F #42-29846 (No Name)

P	Hullar, Robert J., Lt
CP	Klint, Wilbur, Lt
NAV	Brown, Elmer L., Lt
BOM	McCormick, James E., Lt
ENG	Rice, Dale W., S/Sgt
RWG	Marson, Charles H., S/Sgt
RO	Hoyt, George F., S/Sgt
BT	Sampson, Norman A., S/Sgt
TG	Miller, Merlin D., S/Sgt
LWG	Fullem, Charles, S/Sgt

(Abortive)

B-17F #42-3131 Flak Wolf

P	Woddrop, Edward M., Lt
CP	Henderson, Grover C., Lt
NAV	Iverson, Ingvald M., Lt
BOM	Bierman, Leonard B., Lt
ENG	Barlow, Benjamin, T/Sgt
BT	Allen, Glen R., S/Sgt
RO	Mulholland, John J., T/Sgt
LWG	Baggs, Charles C., S/Sgt
TG	Valis, William, S/Sgt
RWG	Priestly, Van B., S/Sgt
PHO	Chuhran, Erven A., Sgt

B-17F #42-29955 Mr. Five by Five

P	James, Jacob C., Lt
CP	Barker, John C., Lt
NAV	Scroggins, Paul W., Lt
BOM	Witt, Walter E., Lt
ENG	Scheuerer, Joseph E., T/Sgt
TG	Misiak, Frank L., S/Sgt
RO	Reaves, Vaughan, T/Sgt
RWG	Kuehl, Fred T., S/Sgt
BT	Knight, Frederick B., Sgt
LWG	Tripp, Jesse E., Sgt

B-17F #42-5221 Son

P	Clifford, Bernard J., Lt
CP	Jahn, Charles O., Lt
NAV	Stata, Charles M., Lt
BOM	Bruce, Robert V., Lt
ENG	Dyke, Andrew A., Lt
TT	Horning, A.E., S/Sgt
RO	Hartzog, F.G., T/Sgt
BT	Gale, Charles L., S/Sgt
TG	Heller, W.O., S/Sgt
LWG	McLarty, J.L., S/Sgt