

U.S. AIR FORCE - MILITARY AIRCRAFT DIVISION

1. 1944 OFFICE
 107th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (A)
 Office of the Intelligence Officer
 PO 520 U.S. Army

10.1

20 July 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

TO : Commanding Officer, 55th Bombardment Wing (A),
 PO 520, U.S. Army

1. On 20 July 1944, 35 scheduled B-24 a/c took off at 0620B hours to base in the vicinity of Spinazzola, Germany. The 35 a/c formed two (2) attack units; the first being led by Lt Colonel Charles F. McKenna III, Deputy Group Commander, and the second by Capt. Lt Sherman M. Martin, Operations Officer of the 77th Bombardment Squadron (A).

2. Six (6) a/c returned early for the following reasons:

- A/C No 42-78336 - Complete loss of oxygen.
- A/C No 41-29351 - Failure of #4 engine.
- A/C No 42-51082 - RPM was fluctuating on #1 engine for an hour. Engine ran away over Venice, had to feather prop.
- A/C No 42-73472 - Fuel pressure #4 engine four (4) rounds. Engine ran too rough to keep up with the formation. Lower ball turret out.
- A/C No 42-50962 - Pilot's oxygen regulator broken and shortage of oxygen.
- A/C No 42-52522 - Oil leaking #4 engine, pressure dropping below 60 lbs, necessitating feathering this engine.

3. Group and bomber rendezvous was made according to plan without incident. The wing rendezvous was made as briefed on course over Spinazzola at 0739B hours.

4. Rendezvous with fighter escort was made at (45°29'N-12°40'E) at 0945B hours when twelve (12) P-51 a/c were observed. The main escort consisting of thirty (30) P-51 and thirty (30) P-38 a/c were observed at (46°15'N-11°50'E) at 1010B hours. Fighter escort continued to the target increasing in number, and on withdrawal left the Group at 1240B hours on the Italian Coast. Returning crews advised that the escort today provided the best cover and protection that had yet been given.

U S C A F B U I L D U P S I M I L A R I T Y C O U N C I L

Ltr Narrative Mission Report, contd

5. Between twenty (20) and thirty (30) B/A were observed, all but one being ME 109's and one (1) Fw 190. 20/30 B/A appearing to come from A/D at Aviano, Italy attacked the 125th Group and shot down one B-24 a/c at 0955B hours in the vicinity of (45°50'N-12°13'E). Some B/A were dark color with light brown on belly, some a yellowish silver with red tails. Some attacked 12 to 2 o'clock high, diving through formation and up under second attack unit. Other attacks from 4 to 6 o'clock. Two (2) B/A were observed going down in spins with --51 a/c after them. Several dog fights were observed in the target area, between ME 109s and our escort. Ten (10) ME 109s observed at the target below and out of flak area, as though waiting for our a/c crippled by flak. This Group had no encounters.

6. Flak at the target N to IAH. This Group's formation encountering the heaviest concentration of flak after bombs away. The Group following appeared to be encountering IAH flak where this Group had escaped it. Time in flak was from 3/4 minutes. Two (2) batteries located on TC 13-43-NA at coordinates 4-6 were observed to be hit by bombs. 8/10 guns at NE section of airdrome coordinates on TC 13-40-NA N-23 to E-24 were observed. Several gun flashes were observed, at 250 and around directly north of target. Also M-11, O-13 and E-16. Bursts were mostly black, with some white bursts observed considerably above the formation. One crew reported seeing some red bursts. Flak was observed at the following points:

Bolzano - Moderate to intense heavy
 Venice - Scant heavy
 Treviso - Scant to moderate heavy

Due to distance it was impossible to judge the accuracy at these points.

7. Twenty nine (29) a/c were over the target at 1055½B hours (briefed target time 1100B hours), and dropped seventy two (72) tons of 1,000 lb GP bombs (.1 nose and non-delay tail) from 23,000 feet. Four (4) a/c returned ten (10) tons of bombs to base, one (1) a/c jettisoned two and one half (2½) tons of bombs at (41°18'N-16°43'E) in Adriatic at 0645B hours. One (1) a/c (early return) dropped two and one half (2½) tons on target of opportunity, a bridge at S Dona De Piano (45°38'N-12°33'E) at 0957B hours with no results, bombs missing this target. Bombs returned to base and jettisoned for reasons stated in paragraph two (2). One (1) a/c which was over the

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1st Narrative Mission Report, cont'd

target jettisoned one half (1/2) ton at (47°30'N-10°10'E) at 1100 hours, one to one bomb being run up, at 1100 hours. Bombing results were good, with a heavy concentration of bombs hits in and around the briefed aiming point. There were several hits in a coded area to east of target and several hits extending northwest of the target, with some hits in the built up area to south east of the target. After the rally, heavy black and gray smoke was seen over the entire target area.

8. This Group suffered no losses, either to personnel or a/c, and there were no injuries. There were no a/c damaged.

9. The A-5 Automatic Pilot was used on the bomb run by both the Group Leader and the leader of the second attack unit.

10. Weather at base on take-off was 2/10 alto cumulus, patches 11,000 feet, visibility twenty (20) miles. Over the Adriatic was clear except for patches of stratus along shore lines. Visibility fifteen (15) miles in haze. Over the Alps 4/10 to 5/10 strato cumulus, 14,000 feet base, 18,000 feet tops. Visibility eighteen (18) miles. At the target it was clear with very few scattered cumulus tufts building up, slight haze, visibility 15/18 miles. On return, over the Alps 6/10 to 7/10 cumulus, base 14,000 feet, tops 17,000 feet. Over the Adriatic 2/10 cirrus at 24,000 feet, cumulus visible towards Lago Coast. Over Italian mainland 5/10 cumulus visibility twelve (12) miles slight haze. At the base on return 2/10 to 3/10 cumulus 4,000 feet base, tops 6,000 feet, heavy cumulus to west. Visibility twenty (20) miles.

11. Twenty nine (29) a/c landed at this base from 1350 hours to 1425 hours.

12. The following observations were made by crew members:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Altitude</u>	<u>Observation</u>
1005	45°20'N-13°00'E	20,000	One (1) large freighter headed west.
1056	Lindau	22,500	A/D with one (1) very large twin engine a/c
1105	Target area	22,000	A/D with one (1) large a/c and fifteen (15) S/E a/c.
1130	Chivea (46°35'N-11°33'E)	19,000	Medium sized dam and power house.
1150	Treviso	19,000	Many oil storage tanks in this area.

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Ltr Narrative Mission Report, contd

<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Altitude</u>	<u>Observation</u>
1150	Venice	14,900	Nine (9) ships in harbor appeared to be freighters or tankers.

13. When this group approached and went over the target there was no evidence of a smoke screen. After some delay and during the rally night, smoke generators were observed starting to emit smoke between the target and the A/D to the east. The generators appeared to emit smoke in series. The wind was from the north west and blew smoke away from the target. One area one quarter (1/4) mile square located at the north east part of the city was covered with thick white smoke. Smoke generators were pinpointed on TC 13-43-1 at 3-1, 3-2 and 14-J.

14. One crew, five (5) minutes after target during rally, reported seeing square metal disks approximately six (6) inches square in the air around their a/c. These disks were in clusters or concentration of about one hundred (100). Disks were at an altitude of 22,500 feet.

15. Route was flown as briefed. Track chart showing route is inclosed.

16. Eight (8) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

PRECIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
— Cap Int Officer

2 Incls
Incl 1 - Track Chart
Incl 2 - Selected print