

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Ltr, 464 BC Subj: Narr Miss Rpt of 3 Aug 44 cont'd

to be reduced to 15 inches and the manifold pressure on the other two engines increased to 50 inches, this a/c dropped back in formation and the lead was taken and retained throughout the remainder of the flight by 1st Lt. Ira C. Casey, Jr, Operations Officer of the 777th Bomb. Sq. (H).

4. Rendezvous with fighter escort was first effected at 1212B hours at (42°35'N - 10°30'E). Six P-51s were seen at this time. This type a/c gave cover up to the target, the greatest number being seen at any one time being twelve. P-38 a/c were first observed at 1215B hours at (42°45'N - 10°20'E). Twelve were seen at this time, and excellent cover was provided to, over and upon return, the number varying enroute, with the greatest number reported at one time being thirty-five. P-38 cover was last seen at 1327B hours off Capraia Island.

5. MAH flak was encountered at the target, beginning at 1306B hours, time of bomb release, and lasting for 3 to 4 minutes during the rally left. Excellent tracking was reported with several crews stating that bursts would follow their a/c, a pattern of from 4 to 5 appearing at the same time. The size of bursts varied, indicating both 88mm and 105mm guns being used, the color mainly being black, with some white or gray above. Concentrations of guns were, generally, to the west of the harbor, in the coastal area.

6. Thirty-seven a/c were over the target at 1306B hours (briefed target time 1300B hours). Ninety-two and one-half tons of 500 lb. G.P. bombs (.1 nose and .025 tail fusing) were dropped on the target from 20,000 feet. Two early returns, one, a/c No. 42-78318, brought 2½ tons of bombs back to base; the other, a/c No. 41-29458, jettisoned 2½ tons of bombs at (41°25'N - 12°10'E). Thirty-seven a/c returned to this base from 1529B hours to 1555B hours.

7. Bomb strike photos show numerous hits in the M/Y, extending from the pier (assigned to the second attack unit) westward and into the area obscured by earlier bombing. One hit was made on the northwest corner of the pier mentioned above. Southeast of the target, one probable hit and six near misses were scored on a large partially dismantled liner. Approximately one dozen bombs hit the Odero Terni Orlando Ship Repair Yard across the south edge and at the western extremity of the yard, with damage to several small craft. Fifteen hits were made in the large pier east of the Maritime Station pier, including direct hits on four large warehouses. Twenty-one additional hits were made on the railroad sidings north of this pier, and into the area west of the Piazza Principe Railroad Station.

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Photos showed the entire western half of the harbor obscured by smoke from earlier bombing.

8. Weather at base at take-off was good, with unlimited visibility and but few scattered cumulus clouds. Over the mountains there was 3/10 cumulus at 8,000 feet, and stratus along the western Italian coast. Over the water it was clear, except for patches of low stratus, until a few miles North of Capraia Island, where a thin 10/10 alto-stratus layer was encountered at 10,500 feet, with visibility of 15 miles. The alto-stratus layer broke to scattered in the Gulf of Genoa. At the target it was clear with 6/10 cumulus to the North. Visibility was 25 miles. Over the water, conditions were similar except that the stratus had dissipated. Over the Appennines, 5/10 cumulus had built up to 16,000 feet. There was 3/10 cumulus at the base on return.

9. Observations obtained from interrogation of crews concerned vessels and shipping in Genoa harbor. Good photographic cover of the harbor and the shipping activities mentioned, was obtained.

10. Route was flown as briefed except for slight deviations from route due to weather conditions encountered. Track chart showing route is inclosed.

11. A-5 automatic pilot was used during the bomb run by the Leaders of the Attack Units.

12. One a/c was damaged by flak, and will be inoperational for more than 24 hours.

13. Ten a/c attempted photographs. A selected print is inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, Air Corps,
Intelligence Officer.