

C O N F I D E N T I A L

HEADQUARTERS
464TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 U S Army

MCK/FFE/hob

319.1

29 October 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

TO : Commanding General, 54th Bombardment Wing (H),
APO 520, U S Army

1. On 29 October 1944, forty one (41) of forty two (42) scheduled B-24 a/c took off at 0745A hours to bomb the primary target named in Operations Order No 228 dated 28 October 1944.

A/C No 42-50962 did not take off due to illness of the pilot just prior to take off.

The forty one (41) a/c formed into three (3) attack units. The first attack unit being led by Major Weldon K. Burton, Group Operations Officer, the second attack unit by Captain Harry S. Wilson, 1st Pilot of the 777th Bombardment Squadron (H), and the third attack unit by 1st Lt Wayne G. Shearer, 1st Pilot of the 777th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. Group form up was made, but the two (2) Group rendezvous with the 465th Group was not made until just before reaching Spinazzola at 0914A hours. At 10,000 feet the Wing rendezvous was made over Spinazzola at 0917A hours.

3. One (1) a/c returned early. A/C No 44-10610 returned from the form up area due to the ball turret gunner becoming ill from a small tumor in the left ear. Pain caused gunner to pass out.

Twenty six (26) a/c including the early return, returned sixty five (65) tons of 500 lb M-17 Incendiary bombs, and twelve (12) a/c returned thirty (30) tons of 500 lb RDX bombs (.1 nose and .01 tail fusing) to base.

One (1) a/c jettisoned two and one half (2½) tons of 500 lb RDX bombs at (45°15'N-13°21'E) at 1111A hours to lighten load to maintain altitude.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

One (1) a/c jettisoned two and one half (2½) tons of 500 lb M-17 Incendiary bombs at 1120A hours at (45°36'N-13°40'E) to lighten load in order to climb through overcast. Disposition of two and one half (2½) tons of 500 lb RDX bombs of one (1) missing a/c is unknown.

Recapitulation of Bombs

500 lb M-17 Incendiary bombs

Returned to base
Jettisoned

65 tons
2½ tons

500 lb RDX bombs

Returned to base
Jettisoned
Missing a/c
Total tons (41) a/c

30 tons
2½ tons
2½ tons
102½ tons

5. One (1) a/c encountered IAH flak over Pala at 1125A hours while flying at 20,000 feet. The bursts were mostly black with a few white bursts observed above the a/c. The altitude of the bursts was very accurate. This a/c was separated from the formation and was off course due to the G-Box and remote indicating compass being inoperative.

6. Forty (40) to fifty (50) P-51 a/c were observed at 1035A hours in the vicinity of (44°35'N-13°35'E). These a/c were observed for just a short time before they were lost in the clouds. Markings indicated these a/c were from the 52nd and 332nd Fighter Groups.

7. One (1) a/c is missing. A/C No 42-50867 was last observed at (45°15'N-13°21'E) when it went into a sharp left turn at 22,500 feet which developed into a tight spiral. The a/c then rolled over on its back and dropped straight down in a steep dive. Was last seen diving into the overcast at 20,000 feet. No chutes were seen to open.

8. One (1) crew reported an unusual vapor trail over the Adriatic on the return flight at 1135A hours. Trail appeared 10 miles off to the west and at first appeared to be small, but grew larger with black color at the end at approximately 14,000 feet. The trail was solid and was two (2) to three (3) miles in length. Cause of this was unknown, as there were no a/c visible in the direction of the vapor trail at the time it was observed.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

9. One crew reported that at 1130A hours at (44°45'N-12°55'E) they monitored Big Fence. A voice called "This is Big Fence, take heading of 340°." Big Fence was asked to repeat but our a/c received no reply. This heading would have taken them into enemy territory.

10. Weather at the base on take off was a few scattered strata cumulus 4,000 feet, 3/10 alto cumulus and alto stratus 9,000 feet. 3-4/10 cirrus 19,000 feet.

Route out base conditions to north of Spur, there clouds began and increased to 10/10 thick cirrus from 13,000 to 27,000 and 7/10 cumulus 6-16,000 at approximately 45°20'N-13°15'E.

On return 4/10 alto cumulus and alto stratus and 6/10 thin cirrus and 3-4/10 low clouds at the base.

11. Due to weather conditions the Group turned back on orders from the Group leader at 1111A hours at (45°15'N-13°21'E) and returned to the base. Thirty nine (39) a/c landed between 1240 and 1352A hours.

12. The route was flown as briefed up to the point of return with the exception of changes in course to avoid weather conditions. Track chart showing route flown is inclosed.

13. Five (5) K-20 photographs showing cloud conditions are inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer

2 Incls:
Incl 1 - Track Chart
Incl 2 - Five (5) photographs