

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

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

BVB/FFE/hob

319.1

7 November 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

TO : Commanding General, 55th Bombardment Wing (H),
APO 520, U S Army

1. On 7 November 1944, twenty eight (28) scheduled B-24 type a/c plus three (3) assigned spares took off at 0830A hours to bomb the Isarco/Albes RR Bridge. The thirty one (31) a/c formed in two attack units, the first of which was led by Major James H. Gilson, Commanding Officer of the 779th Bombardment Squadron (H) and the second, by 2nd Lieutenant Howard D. Brown, Flight Leader of the 778th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. The Group form-up, line rendezvous and Wing rendezvous were as prescribed.

3. Thirty one (31) a/c were over the target at 1308A hours (Briefed target time 1237A hours) and thirty one (31) a/c dropped seventy five and three quarters (75 3/4) tons of 500 pound RDX bombs (.1 nose and .01 tail fusing) from 14,500 feet. Two of the a/c over the target were unable to release all bombs for the following reasons:

B-24 No. 42-95340, because the bomb bay doors on the right side jammed. Only one and one quarter (1 1/4) tons were jettisoned at 1320A hours at (46°17'N-12°26'E).

B-24 No. 42-51903 had two (2) bombs hang up when two (2) shackles failed to release. This a/c jettisoned one half (1/2) ton of bombs at 1415A hours at (43°00'N-14°30').

Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage:

31 a/c of 31 over target dropped	75.75 tons
2 a/c of the 31 a/c over target jettisoned	1.75 tons
Totals	77.50 tons

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt cont'd

Bombing was visual and by boxes. The Group Leader did not use the C-1 automatic pilot for the reason that it was erratic. Baker and Charlie box leaders used the C-1 automatic pilot. Dog box leader did not use the C-1 automatic pilot as it was erratic.

Bomb strike photos show the target obscured by smoke from the previous group's bombing. Numerous hits are visible at the edges of the smoke cover 700 feet northwest of the bridge. Two direct hits were on the railroad approach 1200 feet to the northeast. Several strikes were on the highway north and northwest of the bridge. Other concentrations of bombs were in the west of the bridge. Concentrations of bombs were in the river 1200 feet east and in open country 4000 feet east of the railroad bridge.

4. This group encountered no flak. Intense, heavy flak was observed from Pals.

5. There was no escort observed due possible to the fact that the formation was behind schedule encountering stronger head winds than expected.

6. Weather at the base at take off:

3/10 to 4/10 cirrus at 23,000 feet scattered. Stratocumulus over hills. General hazy condition. Visibility 15 to 18 miles.

Route:

Scattered stratocumulus over Adriatic with increasing cirrus at 23,000 feet, and 10/10 coverage in North Adriatic with very thick haze aloft which turned into thin altostratus, base 15,000 to 16,000 feet. The formation was required to pass below this layer where visibility was very poor. Over the lowlands in North Italy 10/10 cirrus at 23,000 feet. 4/10 to 6/10 stratocumulus at 5000 to 6000 feet. Visibility 15 miles. South slopes of Alps, 3/10 stratocumulus, 10/10 lowering cirrus.

Target:

Immediate target clear, with solid clouds to the north and 3/10 stratocumulus scattered in the area. Visibility 18 to 20 miles.

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

Return:

Similar to route out but improved in North Adriatic.

Winds aloft:

More northerly and stronger than briefed making time at target late, with gain on return.

7. The following observations were reported.

Time	Place	Altitude	Observation
1331	(45°58'N-12°50'E)	13,000	Three landing strips one of which appears to be under construction. No aircraft visible.
1208	(46°43'N-11°39'E)	14,500	M/Y well filled with wagons.
1300	(46°33'N-11°58'E)	13,400	6 S E F on L/G located in remote area. Two short runways at right angles to each other.
1310	(46°44'N-11°39'E)	14,500	Large arrow on ground in desolate region. Marker is about 100 yards long with red (or dark) and yellow bands across shaft.

8. Thirty one (31) a/c landed at this base between 1515A hours and 1543A hours without incident.

9. Route was flown as briefed. Chart showing route flown, attached.

10. Six (6) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print enclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

2 Incls:
Incl 1 - Track Chart
Incl 2 - Selected Photo

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer