

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

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

WCK/FFE/hob

319.1

29 December 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 29 December 1944, twenty-five (25) of twenty-six (26) scheduled B-24 a/c took off starting at 0905A hours to bomb the Verona Porto Nuova A/Y, Italy.

A/C No. 44-48768 did not take off due to a broken collector ring in N. 2 engine.

The twenty-five (25) a/c formed into two (2) attack units, the first being led by Lt. Colonel Elvin E. Goodyear, Deputy Group Commander, and the second by 1st Lt. August H. Lechner, Flight Leader of the 777th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. Group form up was made as prescribed in area No. 2. After flying to (42°43'N-15°48'E) this Group started a 360° left turn at 1058A hours to allow the lead Group to get into position. The turn was completed and this Group was in its proper position at 1110A hours on course. The course was flown slightly to the right until the control point was reached. Three (3) groups made the wing rendezvous - 460th, 465th and 464th.

3. Twenty-five (25) a/c were over the target at 1247A hours (briefed target time 1227A hours) and twenty-two (22) a/c dropped fifty-five (55) tons of 500 pound GP bomb (.1 nose and .01 tail fuse) from 24,500 feet.

One (1) a/c No. 42-78488 jettisoned two and one half (2½) tons at 1327A hours at (45°12'N-12°56'E). This a/c did not drop on the target as Able 11 did not drop. Bombs jettisoned to lighten load when a/c lost No. 1 engine.

Two (2) a/c returned five (5) tons of bombs to base:

A/C No. 44-49314 returned two and one half (2½) tons due to not being able to get select lever in select over the target.

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

4 A/C No. 44-49638 returned two and one half (2½) tons as the select salvo bar pin stuck in safe position. Broke salvo bar trying to get free.

Recapitulation of Bombs

Dropped on target	55 tons
Jettisoned	2½ tons
Returned to base	5 tons
Total	<u>62½ tons</u>

Bombing was visual, PFF equipment being used for navigational purposes only.

Bomb strike photos show a possible direct hit on a freight train 1,000 feet south of the goods station and more than a dozen hits among several columns of cars 500 feet north of the wagon repair shops. (A later K-20 camera photo shows very numerous additional hits among rolling stock in the area immediately north of the wagon repair shops and goods yards. These hits extend for over one-half (½) mile in the southwestern half of the yard.) Several near misses were scored on the north side of the railroad station and another concentration of hits extended west from the railroad station, through a sparsely populated area.

4. The Group Leader used C-1 automatic pilot and the leader of the second attack unit used PDI and flew course on Able Box.

5. Flak at the target was reported to be MI/MAH lasting for 3/4 minutes. Bursts were black with some white bursts being observed considerably above the formation. The crews reporting inaccurate flak stated it was generally low and off to the left of course.

Flak was encountered along the route at the following points:

Chioggia (45°13'N-12°17'E)	SI to MAH
San Pietro (45°20'N-12°20'E)	MAH
(45°42'N-12°05'E) Thought to be RR flak	SIH
(45°52'N-11°31'E)	MIH
Bovalenta (45°16'N-11°56'E)	SAH
Cologna (45°18'N-11°23'E)	SAH

Ltr Narr Miss Bot, contg

Flak was observed at the following points:

Venice	Sr
Cassano (45°42'N-11°45'E)	Sr
(45°55'N-11°44'E) Believed to be	
SR flak	Sr
(45°57'N-12°30'E)	Sr
(45°37'N-11°02'E)	Sr

There was no flak reported at Pardonone (45°57'N-12°39'E) which had previously been reported by crew members.

6. Rendezvous with twenty (20) P-51 a/c of the 52nd Fighter Group was made at 1237A hours at (45°18'N-11°33'E), and fifteen (15) P-38 a/c were first observed at 1300A hours at (45°54'N-11°44'E). The P-51's were last seen at 1330A hours at (45°00'N-13°00'E) and the P-38's at 1330A hours at (45°14'N-13°00'E). Escort was described as good.

7. The weather was 10/10 stratocumulus at take-off, base 5,000 feet, visibility 12 miles.

The ceiling lowered to east in rain areas but raised over Adriatic to 8-9,000 feet.

North of the Spur, solid layer broke up to 4/10 altc stratus extending to north in long bands.

Generally clear from coast of north Italy to target with scattered cumulus over mountains.

Clear at target; visibility 20 miles with scattered cumulus to north over Alps.

On return, bad weather was encountered about 30 miles north of Ancona. 8/10 to 10/10 multilayer clouds from 1,000 feet to 18,000 feet from here southward.

Ceiling raised over Spur to 2,000 feet. Scattered rain areas.

10/10 stratocumulus at base on return, base 3,000 feet, visibility 10 miles.

8. One (1) a/c failed to return. A/C no 42-51700 was last observed at 1518A hours in the vicinity of (41°37'N-16°12'E), north of the Spur. This a/c, according to information telephoned from Wing ditched in the Adriatic. Two (2) crew members being taken to the 61st Station Hospital, with the body of one (1) crew member recovered.

Two (2) a/c were damaged, neither of which will be inoperative for more than twenty four (24) hours.

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9. The following observations were made by returning crew members:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Altitude</u>	<u>Observations</u>
1227A	Venice	23,000	Two (2) large transports in the harbor at Venice.
1305A	45°58'N-12°38'E	23,000	Saw an object explode in the air and disintegrate. This may have been a fighter a/c.
1304A	46°03'N-12°36'E	22,000	A/D with six (6) to ten (10) a/c-four (4) being in revetments. blue or green color.
	43°50'N-13°10'E		B-24 which had apparently crash landed on the beach. Nose was down in the sand. No activity observed around a/c.

10. Twenty four (24) a/c landed at this base between 1529 and 1544A hours.

11. The route from wing rendezvous to the control point was approximately eight (8) miles right of course. On the return bad weather made it necessary to fly to the right of course. Track chart showing route flown is inclosed.

12. Five (5) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER  
Major, AC  
Intelligence Officer

- 3 Inclosures
- Incl 1 - Track Chart
- Incl 2 - K-20 Photo
- Incl 3 - Selected Print