

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

HEADQUARTERS
464th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 U S ARMY

BVB/FFB/jmm

319.1

4 January 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 4 January 1945, twenty eight (28) scheduled B-24 a/c took off at 0829A hours to bomb the rolling stock in the Bolzano M/Y. Twenty (20) a/c formed one (1) attack unit which was led by Colonel A. L. Schroeder, Commanding Officer of the 464th Bombardment Group (H).

2. Eight (8) a/c returned early.

B-24 a/c No 42-78613 returned from the area of the Spur at 1038A hours after losing no 1 engine. This a/c jettisoned eight (8) bombs.

Seven (7) a/c of Charlie Box unable to locate the formation turned at 45°30'N-14°25'E at 1219A hours and landed between 1354A hours and 1400A hours. The seven (7) a/c brought back all except one (1) bomb which was accidentally released.

3. The Group form-up was not successfully executed due to weather conditions which made it necessary to change form-up plans. The Group Leader was informed by Wing to form up in Area No 4. Subsequently, the leader was told to form up in the normal area and above the overcast, and was later instructed to form up in Area No 4 above the overcast. Form-up was accomplished south of the Spur as was rendezvous with the 465th Bombardment Group (H). Charlie Box failed to locate the formation after joining up in area No 4 according to radio instructions. This box left Lagosta and Sansago at which time Charlie Box Leader was informed that the formation would be five (5) minutes late at Sansago. Charlie Box executed two (2) 360° turns at Sansago, and being unable to locate the main formation left the area on course at 1155A hours. Still unable to locate the formation, the Leader of Charlie Box made the decision to return to base at 1219A hours from 45°30'N-14°25'E.

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4. Twenty (20) a/c were over the target at 1305A hours, and eighteen (18) a/c dropped thirty six (36) tons of 500 lb GP bombs (.1 nose and mixed .01 and .025 tail fusing) from 23,500 feet.

B-24 a/c No 44-49363 jettisoned two (2) tons of bombs at 1300A hours at 46°40'N-11°15'E because of inability to maintain formation position and altitude after loss of No 2 engine.

B-24 a/c No 42-51563 due to flak damage to the bomb racks was unable to release on the target and jettisoned two (2) tons of bombs at 46°25'N-12°40'E.

One (1) early return jettisoned bombs at 41°30'N-16°30'E at 1105A hours after losing No 1 engine.

One (1) early return accidentally released bombs at 45°30'N-14°20'E, one quarter ton (1/4).

Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage Disposition:

18 a/c of 20 a/c over target dropped	36.00 tons
2 a/c over target jettisoned	4.00 "
7 a/c (early returns) brought back	13.75 "
1 a/c (of the 7 early returns) accidental release	.25 "
1 a/c (early return) jettisoned	<u>2.00</u> "
Total	56.00 "

5. Bombing was visual. The Group Leader used the C-1 Automatic Pilot on the bomb run.

Bomb strike photos show none of this Group's hits on the marshalling yard. The bomb pattern developed one mile northwest of the yard, at the northern edge of the city of Bolzano. There, approximately twenty five (25) hits were in open areas on the east bank of the Talvera River and more than twice as many additional strikes were among buildings in the residential area on the west bank of the river.

6. Flak at the target of from three (3) to four (4) minutes duration was described as IAH. Crews report that the flak was very accurate, many of the a/c receiving flak damage.

Scant heavy flak was observed at 45°56'N-13°38'E.

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Ltr Warr Miss Rpt, 464th Bomb Gp (M), 4 Jan 45, contd

Crews report that no flak was encountered or observed at Albona (45°05'N-14°07'E, the formation passing over this point at 1140A hours at 18,000 feet.

7. Escort consisting of from twenty (20) to twenty five (25) P-51 a/c made rendezvous with the formation at 1138A hours at Sansago and provided cover on penetration, at the target and on withdrawal to Sansago at 1430A hours.

8. Weather was as follows: 9/10ths to 10/10ths stratocumulus, base 5,000 ft, tops 6,500 ft at take-off which covered local area but cleared over Spur.

Route out, 3/10ths to 5/10ths scattered, tops 7,000 ft over Adriatic with 8/10ths to 10/10ths coverage along Italian coast and 3/10ths to 6/10ths along Yugoslavian coast. 1/10th to 3/10th coverage in North Adriatic. Over Alps, 4/10ths to 7/10ths cirrostratus, base 24,000 ft and clear below except for valley stratus.

At target, 6/10ths to 7/10ths cirrostratus, base 25,000 ft. Visibility was 10 miles in haze.

On return, cloud cover had decreased over Adriatic except for Spur and Gulf north of Spur where there was 8/10ths to 10/10ths stratocumulus, base 3000 ft, tops 7,000 ft. Generally clear to scattered south of San Severo and clear at base on return.

Visibility was generally 12 to 20 miles in haze.

9. The following observations were reported:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Altitude</u>	<u>Observation</u>
1200A	Trieste Harbor	20,000	Fifteen (15) medium cargo ships.
1335A	45°30'N-13°35'E	20,000	Four (4) large ships possibly troop ships, and seven (7) cargo ships observed in harbor at Portorose.
1355A	45°00'N-14°10'E	18,800	Large barracks and storage installation at this approximate location.
1215A	46°04'N-13°35'E	21,000	Installation - possible power plant.

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10. Route flown was from base to 42°00'N-16°23'E, then to Sansego and to the target as briefed. From the IP the briefed heading was taken up and flown until just short of the bomb release line where, because of undetermined reasons, the lead a/c went into a skidding left turn which required a sharp correction to the right and a consequent heading of 220 degrees for the axis of attack. The return was generally as briefed to the Spur at which point the Group Leader left the formation to proceed to Bari.

11. Twenty (20) a/c landed at this base between 1532A hours and 1650A hours. The lead a/c landed at Bari at 1605A hours to permit removal of an injured crew member, and landed at this base at 1645A hours. The last a/c landing having difficulty in getting the landing gear down due to flak damage. This a/c circled the field until 1650A hours.

12. Twelve (12) a/c received flak damage. One (1) of these will be inoperational for more than twenty four (24) hours.

There was one (1) minor and one (1) major crew injury, the latter requiring hospitalization at Bari.

13. Five (5) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print attached.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer

2 Inclosures
Incl 1 - Track Chart
Incl 2 - Selected Print