

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

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

FFE/hob

17 February 1945

319.1

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 17 February 1945, forty (40) of forty two (2) scheduled B-24 a/c took off beginning at 1120A hours to bomb the harbor installations at Pola, Italy. The forty (40) a/c formed three (3) attack units. The first attack unit leader was Lt Col James H. Gilson, Commanding Officer, 779th Bombardment Squadron (H), the leader of the second unit was 1st Lt Willard A. Patterson, Flight Leader, 777th Bombardment Squadron (H), and the third unit leader was 1st Lt George H. Grotelueschen, Flight Leader, 776th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. One (1) a/c, No 42-51856 failed to take off due to engine trouble, and one (1) a/c, No 44-48767 crashed on take off. The cause of the take off crash has not been determined.

3. Thirty nine (39) a/c were over the target, and twenty nine (29) dropt fifty seven and one quarter (57.25) tons of 500 lb RDX bombs (.1 and .01 - .025 fusing) from 23,000 feet at 1438A hours.

A/C No 42-51264 being unable to locate the Group formation joined the formation of the 461st Bombardment Group (H) and dropt two (2) tons of bombs on Trieste Harbor Installations at 1500A hours from 22,500 feet, axis of attack 275°. This crew reports good pattern on harbor and edge of city.

Eight (8) a/c failed to drop as the Group Leader did not drop and all of these a/c returned their entire bomb load totaling sixteen (16) tons of bombs to base.

A/C No 42-52068 jettisoned two (2) tons in the Adriatic on the rally at 1444A hours due to rack malfunction.

A/C No 44-49364 jettisoned two (2) tons in the Adriatic at 1515A hours to lighten load after No 1 engine became inoperative and No 2 engine oil pressure was fluctuating.

- 1 -  
C O N F I D E N T I A L

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

Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

A/C No 44-40653 returned one (1) bomb, one quarter (.25) ton as it was hung up in racks and could not be released.

A/C No 44-40746 jettisoned one half (.50) ton in the Adriatic at 1444A hours due to error in intervalometer setting.

Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage

Dropped on primary target	57.25 tons
Returned to base	16.25 "
Jettisoned	4.50 "
Dropped on Trieste	2.00 "

Total 80.00 tons

Bomb strike photos show at least seven (7) direct hits on the drydocks and four (4) other hits in the adjacent shops area. Three (3) additional hits fell between the administration building and the west end of the swing bridge - which was probably damaged by previous bombing. Another Group of strikes extended from the Naval Aviation Quarters northwest to Casada Island. In this area, direct hits were scored on the Naval Aviation Quarters, on Barracks buildings, on the oiling pier and adjacent installations and on a fort near the oil stores. Several near misses occurred among the oil storage tanks. Approximately sixty (60) additional strikes were at the southern tip of Brinoni Island - five miles west of the navy yard.

4. The Group Leader did not drop his bombs due to a malfunction of the bomb sight or the C-1 Automatic Pilot just before bombs away causing them to be off course and making release on the target impossible. The second attack unit leader did not drop because the leader did not. The third attack unit leader making an individual bomb run continued on course and dropt on the target. The Group Leader made a 360° turn preparatory to making a second bomb run but the majority of the a/c having dropt, they proceeded on course for the base.

5. Flak at the target was encountered only by the third attack unit and was reported as MAH and duration of approximately one and one half (1½) minutes.

6. Weather was as follows:

8/10 stratocumulus at take off, base 2,500 feet, top

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

Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

6,000 feet, visibility five (5) miles.

Enroute clouds broke a short distance off the Italian coast and was clear to scattered along course to about thirty (30) miles south of Pols. From here to IP 8/10 to 10/10 low clouds, top 8,000 feet which appeared to cover shore of north Italy and northwest Italy.

Over North Italy and the north Adriatic there was also a deck of cirrus clouds based at 19,000 feet, 4/10 to 5/10 coverages.

Cluds broke up short of the IP and at the target were a few scattered low clouds, top 8,000 feet. Visibility was ten (10) miles.

Similar conditions on return with 8/10 stratocumulus at base on return at 2,000 feet. Visibility fifteen (15) miles.

7. The route to the target was flown as briefed after some difficulty in form up due to weather. Different courses on return were followed by several Groups of a/c. Track chart showing route as briefed and as flown by the Group Leader inclosed.

8. Fight (8) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

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

FRANCIS F. ELDER  
Major, AC  
Intelligence Officer