

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

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

HRS/FRE/hob

319.1

18 February 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 18 February 1945, twenty four (24) and four (4) spare B-24 type a/c, scheduled to bomb the primary target as designated in Operations Order No 81, Headquarters, 55th Bombardment Wing (H), 17 February 1945, took off, starting at 0853A hours. Replacement of one (1) a/c, in which the electrical system failed, necessitated a late take off at 0943A hours.

2. The twenty eight (28) a/c formed into two (2) attack units. The first unit was led by Captain Joseph A. Shymanski, Flight Leader of the 779th Bombardment Squadron (H), and the second unit by 1st Lt Franklin K. Lane, Flight Leader of the 778th Bombardment Squadron (H).

3. a. Due to only one (1) runway being presently available for use at this base, take off, immediately following the 465th Bombardment Group (H), as scheduled, was unavoidably begun late, at the time stated in Par 1.

b. The Group form up was effected smoothly, and line rendezvous made at prescribed altitude and time, on course.

4. The course was not flown as briefed. Information received from the Navigator of the lead a/c of the second attack unit who stated that thru "Gee" and other fixes, exact locations were obtained, indicates that from the TP of 4200N-1620E, route was flown to 4310N-1640E at 1100A hours. Course was then altered to the point at which the formation turned back, 4424N-1640E at 1122A hours. Following a sweeping turn of approximately 200°, course was laid to 4332N-1630E at 1135A hours. From this point, route was followed immediately around the Spur, and directly to base. A graphic track chart is inclosed.

5. The Group Leader states that an early climb was begun, due

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

to radio weather reports, that clouds were over the middle Adriatic Sea to 12,000 and 14,000 feet. When the clouds were first reached, the formation was above them, but soon was forced to enter the building up layers at 16,000 feet. From that time on, with only intermittent breaks, flight was made thru clouds to the point of turning back, at 21,500 feet altitude. The turn back was begun when the Wing Leader was heard over the radio to state that he was at 23,000 feet and that insurmountable clouds continued ahead. Instrument conditions were still encountered on the return flight similar to those encountered on the route out.

6. All bombs - fifty six (56) tons of 500 lb RDX, fused .1 nose and .01 tail - were returned to base.

7. A formation of sixteen (16) P-51 type a/c were first observed at 1030A hours at 4318N-1700E, and visual contact retained for ten (10) minutes. It is not believed that these a/c were assigned escort for the 55th Bombardment Wing (H).

8. Weather was reported as follows:

Base: 2/10ths to 3/10ths stratus base 1,500 feet, tops 2,000 feet. Scattered cirrus at 20,000 feet in the north. Generally scattered 2/10ths to 3/10ths stratocumulus, tops 5,000 feet, from the base to the coast.

Route: North of the Spur, the formation encountered 8/10ths to 10/10ths thin altostratus, base 14,000 feet, tops 17,000 feet. Farther north, enroute, 10/10ths cirrus at 19,000 feet, tops unknown was encountered. Visibility, air-to-air, two (2) to five (5) miles.

Return: North of the Spur, the formation encountered 8/10ths to Spur, similar conditions prevailing, tops 5,000 feet. The high cloudiness had spread southward in a thin layer.

Base: 9/10ths cirrostratus on return, visibility fifteen (15) miles in haze.

9. Twenty eight (28) a/c landed at this base from 1229A hours to 1300A hours.

For the Commanding Officer:

1 Incl:
Incl 1 - Track Chart

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer

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