

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

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

FFR/FHS/jd

319.1

22 February 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. Forty eight (48) of forty nine (49) a/c scheduled to bomb targets as specified in Operations Order No. 87, Hq., 55th Bombardment Wing (H), 22 February 1945, took off as follows.

a. On 22 February 1945, twenty three (23) of twenty four (24) B-24 type a/c for the first wave, took off as scheduled.

(1) A/C No 42-50728, due to collector rings on No. 3 engine blowing out, failed to take off.

b. Twenty five (25) B-24 type a/c of the second wave, took off as scheduled.

c. Formation take off times for both waves were from 0816A hours to 0836A hours. Two (2) a/c were late take offs at 0836A hours and 0841A hours.

2. A. Due to an overcast to 4,000 feet, the first wave, led by Lt. Col. Elvin E. Goodyear, Group Operations Officer, could not form up in their prescribed area. Finding the only suitable clear space immediately above base. Formation form up was attempted there, despite confusion with other formations. The two (2) regularly scheduled trailing boxes joined the first wave leader, but the fourth box, though at one time in sight, failed to join.

b. The leader of the second wave, Lt. Col. James H. Gilson, Commanding Officer of the 779th Bombardment Squadron (H), found considerable difficulty in form up, due to confusion with other groups forming up at the same altitude and time.

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With form-up completed, five boxes had joined this wave, including "Doc" box from the first wave.

3. Approaching the rendezvous line, the leader of the first wave could not observe the three waves of the 55th Bombardment Wing (H) scheduled to precede, so continued on course, leading two other waves. Contact with other bomber formations was not made until the elements of the 5th Bombardment Wing (H) were overtaken enroute.

4.. The course was not flown as briefed, and differed for each wave.

a. The first wave flew the briefed course to (47° 16'N*12°30'E) at 1217A hours. Encountering insurmountable solid clouds, a 360° right turn was made to S. Candice. Then route was flown to Sacile, where a left turn was made and bombing run executed on the RR bridge at Maniago (46°09'N-12°41'E), where "Able" and "Charlie" boxes dropped bombs at 1242A hours. Then a sweeping left turn was made to Sacile, followed by a left turn to provide a bombing run for "Baker" box on the M/Y of Casaren (45°57'N-12°51'E) at 1256A hours. A right rally was made from this target, and route flown to the turn-point at (44°40'N-13°40'E), from where prescribed course was flown to base.

b. The second wave flew the prescribed course to (47°14'N-12°30'E) at 1214A hours. Encountering insurmountable solid clouds, a 360° right turn back to briefed course at (46°35'N-12°20'E) at 1234A hours. Then the route was flown to the turn-point of Sacile, where a 180° right turn was made to the town of Carazzo at 1302A hours, as an IP for a bombing run on Udine. Approaching Udine, high clouds were encountered that forced the bombing run to be discontinued, followed by a right turn and route to avoid weather and flak areas, to a point eight (8) miles south of Villach at 1314A hours. Then a right turn was made and route flown to Uni Isle, reached 1345A hours, followed by a direct course to base.

c. A graphic track chart of the routes flown is inclosed.

5. The first Group bombed a single track railroad bridge (of the Aviano-Fenna line) located two miles west of the town of Maniago. This bridge crosses the Cellins river approximately two miles northwest of Maniago L/C. Photos show a concentration

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of about forty hits running across the bridge, with two probable direct hits on the structure and several close near misses on the multiple stone arch spans.

Several aircraft of the first group dropped 32 x 500 BBX bombs (not listed above) on Casarsa M/Y without photo coverage of results.

The second group returned its bombs to base.

6. In the first wave as flown bomb disposition is as follows:

a. A/C No. 42-51856 jettisoned one-quarter (1) tons of bombs hung up, immediately after bombing the target of the Maniago RR bridge.

b. Fourteen (14) a/c dropped twenty seven and three quarters (27.75) tons of bombs on the Maniago RR bridge from 17,000 feet, on an attack axis of 42° T, at 1242A hours.

c. Four (4) a/c dropped eight (8) tons on the M/Y at Casarsa from 15,700 feet, on an attack axis of 102° T, at 1256A hours.

7. In the second wave as flown, bomb disposition is as follows:

a. A/C No. 42-51726 on early return, turning back at 1153A hours at ($44^{\circ}00'N-13^{\circ}36'E$) because No. 1 engine failed, jettisoned two (2) tons of bombs at 1158A hours at ($43^{\circ}51'N-13^{\circ}35'E$).

b. A/C No. 42-95613 jettisoned two (2) tons of bombs at 1227A hours at ($46^{\circ}40'N-12^{\circ}55'E$); when No. 4 engine failed.

c. A/C No. 42-50533 jettisoned two (2) tons of bombs at 1355A hours at ($44^{\circ}08'N-14^{\circ}03'E$), due to No. 3 engine failing.

d. Twenty seven (27) a/c returned fifty four (54) tons of bombs to base.

Bombing recapitulation is as follows:

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a. First Wave:

1 a/c jettisoned	.25 tons
14 a/c bombed Menigo PR bridge	27.75 "
4 a/c bombed Casarsa W/V	8.00 "
Total	<u>36.00 "</u>

b. Second Wave

1 FR a/c jettisoned	2.00 tons
2 other a/c jettisoned	4.00 "
27 other a/c returned	54.00 "
Total	<u>60.00 "</u>

9. All bombing was visual and bombs dropped were 500 pound RDX, fused .1 nose and .01 tail.

10. S/MAH flak was encountered by the first wave at 1255A hours at Casarsa (45°57'N-12°51'E). Bursts were described as coming up in threes.

11. SH flak was observed by the second wave upon approach to the target of Udine. This flak was believed to have originated from the Udine defenses.

12. One (1) unidentified a/c was observed at 1301A hours in the Udine area. Two (2) a/c, recognized as P-51s, seemed to be chasing the unidentified a/c.

13. Twenty (20) escort P-51 a/c were first observed by the first wave at 1335A hours at (45°38'N-13°06'E). Intermittent contact with these fighters continued enroute, with five (5) fighters last observed at (44°55'N-14°05'E).

14. The twenty (20) P-51 fighter escort a/c were first observed by the second wave at the same time and place as specified in paragraph 13. Intermittent contact was also retained enroute with these a/c, with twelve (12) last seen at 1340A hours at (45°00'N-14°10'E).

15. Weather was reported as follows:

Base on take-off, there was 4-5/10 Sc with bases at 3500-4000 and tops to 8000, some tops to 10,000. Vsbly was 10 miles being reduced by haze. Same conditions prevailed to the coast where the clouds started to decrease and because 3-4/10 Sc

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, 44th Bomb Gp. 22 Feb 45, cont'd

with bases at 4000 and tops to 8000. Visibility was 15-20 miles over the Adriatic.

Over the North Adriatic there was no low clouds, but there was a layer of clouds with bases at 20,000 that gradually lowered towards the North so that over the Alps the layer was 18,000 ft with tops to 21,000. This layer began at a point opposite Ancona and increased towards the North. On the Northern slopes of the Alps the layer lowered to 15,000 ft. in the Innsbruck area. This layer was 10/10.

In the Udine area there was no low clouds but 10/10 as with bases at 18,000 and tops to 20,500. No report of any high clouds above this layer. Visibility in this region was 15 miles being reduced by haze.

Adriatic on return, this 10/10 layer continued as far south as Ancona, where it broke rapidly to few patchy as at 18,000. The low clouds were 3-4/10 with tops to 8-10,000.

At base on return, there was 5-6/10 Sc with bases at 4,000 and tops to 8,000. No middle or high clouds. Visibility 15-20 miles.

Altitude	Temp	Wind	Position
10500	-11	055 29knts	Base
12500	-12	350 40knts	
14000	-14		Adriatic off Spur
15500	-16	040 37knts	
17000	-21		Udine area
18000	-23		
22500	-32		Udine area
23000	-36		

Heavy persistent condensation trails at the South side of the Alps and continuing over the Alps.
Surface wind at base on return Nw 10 mph.

16. Observations reported by crew numbers are as follows:

- a. From 15,000 feet, twenty (20) SEF on Udine A/D.
- b. From 21,000 feet, at 1305A hours, approximately twenty (20) smoke generators in operation, twelve (12) miles west of Udine.

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, 464 th Bomb Gp(H) 22 Feb 45, cont'd

a. From 23,000 feet, at 1320A hours, twelve (12) vessels - - one (1) large and eleven (11) medium size - - in the Harbor of Trieste.

17. A/C landed at this base as follows:

a. One (1) a/c, an early return, at 1310A hours.

b. Forty seven (47) regular return a/c from 1441A hours to 1538A hours.

18. One (1) a/c reported slight flak damage, repairable in less than one hundred (100) man hours.

19. Four (4) a/c from the first wave attempted photographs. A selected print is attached.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, Air Corps
Intelligence Officer

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