

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

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

LSI/DTM/hck

310.1

9 April 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 9 April 1945, forty two scheduled B-24 a/c took off commencing at 1120E hours to bomb Apple Area. The forty two (42) a/c formed into two forces of twenty one (21) a/c each, Red Force being led by Lt. Colonel James W. Gilson, Commanding Officer of the 772th Bombardment Squadron (H), and Blue Force by Colonel A. J. Bird Jr., Commanding Officer of the 464th Bombardment Group (H).

2. Form-up assembly, and rendezvous were accomplished in excellent fashion by both forces, Red Force departing from Andria at 1303E hours at 15,000 feet, and Blue Force departing from the same point at 1304E hours at 13,000 feet.

3. Twenty one (21) a/c of Red Force were over Apple Area at 1451E hours, dropping 45.36 tons of clustered fragmentation bombs from 21,000 feet on an axis of attack of 304°.

Twenty one (21) a/c of Blue Force were over Apple Area at 1457E hours, eighteen (18) a/c of which dropped 35.00 tons of one hundred pound clustered CP bombs (.1 nose - .01 tail fusing) from 20,000 feet on an axis of attack of 302°.

4. Six (6) a/c of Blue Force disposed of their bomb load as follows:

A/C No 44-49688 accidentally released two (2) tons at (44°23'N-11°58'E) at 1456E hours, one and one half (1½) miles to the rear of the Allied front lines, for reasons as yet undetermined.

A/C No 44-49419 prematurely released two (2) tons at (44°23'N-11°58'E) at 1456E hours, trailing on the deputy lead a/c, A/C No 44-49688 mentioned above, who accidentally released.

A/C No 44-50475 jettisoned one tenth (.1) tons at (43°15'N-13°52'E) at 1543E hours, after two (2) bombs did not release over the target.



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Ltr Narr Miss Fmt, cont'd

A/C No 44-50120 jettisoned five tenths (0.5) tons at (11°10'N-13°00'E) at 1520E hours, after ten (10) bombs failed to release over the target.

A/C No 44-50774 jettisoned four tenths (0.4) tons at (13°42'N-13°30'E) at 1530E hours, after eight (8) bombs did not release over the target.

A/C No 44-49769 returned two (2) tons to base, as the intervalometer would not function over the target, preventing the release of the bomb load.

5. Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage

(a)	21 a/c of Red Force dropped on Anole Area		45.36 tons
		Total	45.36 tons
(b)	18 a/c of Blue Force dropped on Anole Area		35.00 tons
	1 a/c of Blue Force accidentally released		2.00 tons
	1 a/c of Blue Force prematurely released		2.00 "
	3 a/c of Blue Force jettisoned		1.00 "
	1 a/c of Blue Force returned		2.00 "
		Total	42.00 tons

6. Bombing was performed visually by both Red and Blue Forces. The C-1 Automatic Pilot was used successfully on the bombing run by leaders of both forces.

7. Red Force Photos show an excellent area coverage of the lower two-thirds (2/3) of the assigned target area. Frag hits start at the eastern edge of the target and continue west to the Santerno River at the western edge of the target area. A small pattern of strikes extended west of the river at a point immediately north of the town of S. Agata.

Blue Force photos show three distinct groups of strikes, with the center group located on the southeastern corner of the assigned target area. A second group of hits is immediately southwest of the town of Lugo, and the third group is seen starting 2,000 feet northwest of Lugo and running west into the target area. The target was one half (1/2) smoke obscured for Blue Force.

8. Weather at base at take-off consisted of 6/10 strato-cumulus at 3500 feet and 1/10 altocumulus at 10,000 feet, visibility twenty (20) miles.

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, cont'd

Enroute to the coast, stratocumulus increased to 7/10-9/10, tops at 6,000 feet and 1/10-2/10 altostratus at 14,000 feet. Generally clear over Adriatic. Stratocumulus along Italian coast decreasing northward.

At target area, conditions clear except for few small cumulus. Visibility twenty (20) miles in haze. Weather conditions on return similar to route out except coverage had decreased in Base area to 3/10-4/10 cumulus, tops at 6,000 feet.

2/10 cumulus at Base on return, visibility twenty (20) miles.

9. Route was flown as briefed by both RED and BLUE FORCES. Track chart of route flown inclosed.

10. Nine (9) a/c attempted photos. Selected prints attached.

11. Flak over the target was S to MIH and was encountered for one and one half (1½) minutes. The concentration, encountered on the rally only, was of the tracking variety and was correct for altitude but burst to the right of and behind the formation.

12. No enemy aircraft were either observed or encountered.

13. All crew members were unanimous in reporting that all identification devices, including panels, smoke pots, friendly flak, fluorescent markers, and radio localizer functioned perfectly and contributed immeasurably to the success of the mission.

14. No aircraft suffered any flak damages.

15. The 454th Bombardment Group (H) of the 304th Wing was encountered by BLUE FORCE in the 464th form-up area at 1255B hours, flying on a collision course of 250° at 12,000 feet. BLUE FORCE was forced to make a right turn to avoid collision.

16. Forty two (42) aircraft returned safely to base, landing from 1627B to 1718B hours.

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer

- 2 Incls
- 1. Track Chart
- 2. Bomb Strike Photos