

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

464th Bombardment Group (H)
APO 520, Army

WFB/FFB/hob

319.1

12 April 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Incident Report

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

1. On 12 April 1945, thirty two (32) scheduled B-24 type a/c took off, from 0845H hours to 0915 hours, to bomb the Ponte di Piave RR Bridge, Italy.

2. The thirty two (32) a/c formed into two (2) attack units.

(a) The first attack unit, under the leadership of Major ROBERT F. LONGHILL, Operations Officer, 464th Bombardment Group (H), enjoyed smooth and exact form-up and rendezvous, with times and position being met as prescribed.

(b) The second attack unit, under the leadership of 1st Lt WILLIAM A. MCRAM, Flight Leader, 377th Bombardment Squadron (H), likewise enjoyed form-up and rendezvous free from confusion or difficulty.

3. The course, to and from the primary target, was flown as briefed, with minor deviations to skirt weather and cloud areas. A graphic track chart is enclosed.

4. One (1) a/c, No 44-49746, returned early, due to losing the group formation as it made a turn into clouds. This a/c, handicapped by lack of power, was trailing the formation at the time it lost visual contact, and turned back at 1150H hours at (46°20'N-14°00'E).

(a) Four (4) bombs were jettisoned by this a/c at 1300H hours at (43°10'N-16°20'E). Two (2) long delay bombs were disposed of at this time, with two (2) other regular bombs being accidentally released. The remaining six (6) bombs were returned to base.

5. One (1) a/c, No 42-50728, was a prior return due to internal failure of its No. 3 engine. This a/c turned back at the Initial Point (46°02'N-12°30'E) at 1220H hours.



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

Ltr Narr Miss Ret, contd.

(a) Upon turning from the IR, the pilot of this a/c sighted a railroad which he decided to utilize as a target of opportunity. The entire bomb load was released upon this target (46°09'N-12°55') from 11,800 feet, upon an attack axis of 240°TC, at 1226B hours, the pilot not equipped with a camera, visual observation indicates the probability that the rail line was damaged.

6. Thirty (30) a/c dropped seventy three and three quarters (73.75) tons of bombs upon the primary target at 1230B hours from 20,200 feet, upon an attack axis of 188°TC.

(a) A/C No 44-50703 jettisoned three quarters (.75) ton of bombs, hung up from the primary target due to rack malfunction, at 1250B hours at (45°22'N-13°00'E).

(b) A/C No 44-50842 jettisoned one half (.5) ton of bombs, hung up at the primary target due to shackle malfunction, in the Adriatic Sea soon after leaving the Italian coast.

(c) Bomb load for each a/c assigned to today's mission was ten (10) 500 pound RDX bombs, eight (8) fused .1 nose and .01 tail, and two (2) fused long delay. Five (5) a/c carried additional leaflet bombs, one (1) per each of these airplanes.

(d) Bombing recapitulation follows:

30 a/c upon primary target	73.75 tons
1 a/c upon target of opportunity	2.50 "
1 a/c jettisoned	.75 "
1 a/c jettisoned	0.50 "
1 E.R. a/c jettisoned	1.00 "
1 E.R. a/c brought back	1.50 "
Total	<u>81.00 tons</u>

7. Difficulty upon the bombing run was encountered by the Group Leader due to a cloud drifting over the target. This necessitated the actual bomb release to be accomplished by off-set method, tho the first two thirds (2/3) of the run was effected visually. C-1 was utilized by the Group Leader, and the Leader of the second attack unit.

(a) The following three (3) boxes each effected their bombing run and accomplished bombing by visual means, the cloud over the target which had handicapped, the lead box by then having drifted away.

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

Ltr 4-11-54, contd

8. Bomb strike photos show at least two (2) direct hits on the northern half of the bridge and several others along the north approach to the bridge. Additional hits were scored at the northern end of the adjacent unserviceable railroad bridge. A heavy concentration of hits fell immediately west of the target and others extended 2,000 feet to the north.

9. Fleet was neither encountered nor observed during the entire flight.

10. Two u/i ref were observed at 1130Z hours at (45°09'N-14°51'E). These u/c were at 15,000 feet (bomber formation at 16,000 feet), about two (2) miles to the northeast, upon a heading of 170°, and passed by without action. An additional four (4) u/i ref were observed at 1237Z hours at (45°12'N-12°35'W). These u/c were at 4,000 feet (bomber formation at 16,500 feet) and were headed about the North.

11. Identifiable escort was not observed en route. Radio contact, however, was effected with escort u/c by the Group Leader about two (2) minutes before bombs away, and received the message that the fighters at that time had the bombers covered.

12. Weather was as follows:

(a) Base at take off 3/10 Ci at 24,000 feet. Vsby, 15 miles. Sfc winds west at 18 mph.

(b) Base on return 5/10 Ci at 20,000 feet. Vsby, 20 miles. Sfc wind, southwest 6 mph.

(c) Route out. - Ci over the base, continuing in patches to landfall at the Yugo coast. Cirrus layer was 8-10/10 with base at 17,000 feet and tops to 20,000 feet. Below this layer were patches of Ac at 15,000 feet. There were intermittent light vapor trails, below the Ci; above this layer were heavy persistent vapor trails. At Villach, the Ci layer gradually broke, so at a point about 75 miles from the target it was clear, except for 4/10 Ci at 28,000 feet. Vsby was, generally, 15 miles.

Target - 4/10 Ci at 28,000 feet. Vsby was 20 miles. Sc Cu at 15,000 feet.

(d) Route back - Ci layers again started at the Adriatic coast and continued to the base, being variable from 6-8/10, at 17,000 feet with tops to 20,000 feet. Vsby was 15 miles. There was

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

Lar Marr Miss Rpt, contd

Ac at the Adriatic coast in a few patches in northern Italy. Over the North Adriatic, light non-persistent vapor trails.

13. Observations were reported as follows:

(a) What appeared to be miles of surplines at 1222B hours at (46°07'N-12°56'E), from 12,500 feet.

(b) Fifteen (15) CEP on a/c, in patches, at 1237B hours, twenty (20) miles east of Rome, from 20,000 feet.

14. Seven (7) a/c attempted photographs. A selected print is inclosed.

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

- 2 Incls
1. Track chart
2. Selected print

FRANCIS S. GLENN
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Intelligence Officer