

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

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

NH/FFP/jmm

310.1

16 April 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 16 April 1945, forty two (42) scheduled B-24 type a/c took off at 0920H hours to bomb military targets in coordination with 5th Army (Area ST-14), forming into two (2) attack units of three (3) boxes each. The first attack was led by Colonel A. J. Bird, Jr, Commanding Officer, 464th Bombardment Group (H), and the second by Captain August H. Lechner, Flight Leader, 777th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. Assembly and rendezvous was accomplished as prescribed, except that 464th Group was two (2) minutes early over Andria and left Spinzola abreast of 425th Group, from whence the 464th Group dog legged into proper position.

3. There was one (1) early return. A/C No 44-40250, after losing and feathering No 2 engine, turned back at 4158H-1342H at 1145H hours and made an early return landing with full bomb load of two and onequarter (2.25) tons at 1245H hours.

4. a. Twenty (20) a/c of the first attack unit were over the target and dropped forty five (45) tons of clustered 250 lb GP bombs (fused .1 nose and .01 tail) at 1327H hours from 21,500 feet, on an axis of 25°, the C-1 Automatic Pilot being used by the lead a/c.

b. Though adverse visibility prevented precise identification of briefed aiming point, definite recognition of land check points gave positive assurance that formation was in the general target area at time of bomb release. Bomb strike photos show more than nine tenths (9/10) cloud coverage, with no impacts visible. Bombs away photos indicate an impact area on the Reno River and north of the assigned target area. Estimated location of area of impact is three (3) miles southwest of Bologna.

5. a. Twenty (20) a/c of the second attack unit, unable to identify the target area where overcast was rapidly increasing in density, returned to base forty five (45) tons of bombs.

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Ltr Narr Miss Bnt, cont'd

b. One (1) a/c of the second attack unit (No 12-50966) lost an engine on the return course and jettisoned two and one quarter (2.25) tons of bombs at 1355E hours at 4328N-1015E.

7. Recapitulation of bomb disposition:

20 a/c dropped on target	45.00 tons
21 a/c returned to base	47.25 "
1 a/c jettisoned	2.25 "
Total	<u>94.50</u>

8. Rendezvous was made with ten (10) to fifteen (15) P-51s at 1155E hours at 4120N-1112E. Escort was last observed at 1400E hours at 4310N-1000E.

9. Weather was as follows:

At base on take-off: 3-7/10 cumulus, base 1500 ft, tops 5000 ft. 2-3/10 altocumulus 12-14000 ft. 3/10 cirrus at approximately 20000 ft. Very hazy up to 10000 ft. Visibility reduced to 5-8 miles.

Route and Target: Base conditions to east slopes of Apennines. Over Apennines 5-7/10 stratocumulus and altocumulus, tops 10-11000 ft; 2-4/10 high clouds, base unknown. All clouds broke to nil in Rome area and over water. Over northern Apennines and northeast slopes, 7-9/10 thick altocumulus and stratocumulus tops 11-12000 ft, breaking to 6-9/10 altocumulus, which appeared to be thin and in large patches over target area. Visibility over target area was restricted to 10-15 miles in haze.

Return route: Similar to route out, except slight increase in cloud amounts over Apennines with tops generally 14000 ft.

At base on return: 3/10 cumulus, base 4500 ft tops 6000 ft. 3/10 altocumulus in sheets at 10000 ft.

10. Forty one (41) a/c made return landing at 1552E hours.

11. Route was flown as briefed except direct course was flown from Gorzona to Rome on return course. Track chart attached.

12. Six (6) a/c attempted photos. Selected print attached.

13. Directional marker devices and aids proved quite helpful,

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though their effectiveness was limited by poor visibility during the last half of the bombing run.

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

FRANCIS F. LEE  
Major, AC  
Intelligence Officer

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