

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

465th Bombardment Group (H)
APO 500

151/1/58

310.1

30 April 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

TO : Commanding General, 55th Bombardment Wing (H)
APO 500, U. S. Army

1. On 30 April 1945, forty two (42) scheduled B-24 a/c took off commencing at 0615H hours to bomb the Roi road bridge, Itel. The a/c formed into two attack units, the first attack unit being led by Major James L. Roman, of the 720th Bombardment Squadron (H) and the second attack unit by 1st Lt. John E. Thornhill, Flight Leader of the 720th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. Group form up and rendezvous with the 465th Bombardment Group (H) was as prescribed. The Group departed from Spangzola on course at 0931H hours.

3. B-24 a/c No 42-73177 returned early, turning back at 1102H hours at (A330-1148) after No 4 engine failed.

4. Forty one (41) a/c were over the target at 1200H hours, forty (40) of which dropped one hundred (100) tons of 1,000 pound M7 bombs fused .1 nose and .01 tail from an altitude of 22,500 feet on an axis of attack of 50°.

B-24 a/c No. 42-73473, early return previously mentioned, jettisoned two and one half (2.50) tons of bombs at (A208-1205) at 1102H hours in order to maintain altitude after one engine failed.

B-24 a/c No. 42-73452 returned two and one half (2.50) tons of bombs to base after bombs failed to release over the target due to a bomb shackle malfunction.

Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage:

40 a/c dropped on target	100.00 Tons
1 a/c jettisoned	2.50 Tons
1 a/c returned	2.50 Tons
Total	<u>105.00 Tons</u>

5. Bomb strike photos show at least five direct hits on bridge proper. Several near misses on both sides of bridge with additional strikes on both approaches. Other strikes on road leading to the southeastern end of bridge. Scattered strikes fifteen hundred feet northwest of bridge and five hundred feet south west of bridge.

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6. Both attack units were used as U-1 automatic pilot on the bombing run, bombing the primary target by visual means.

7. A 20 second three (3) minutes duration air encounter over the target and area of the continuously painted target of fire. Three (3) a/c survived minor flak damage.

8. Fighter escort consisted of twenty two (22) P-51 a/c which made rendezvous with the formation at (4345-1030) at 1100 hours providing escort until 1300 hours at (4345-1000).

9. Clear at take off with visibility 20 miles.

2/10 to 4/10 Stratocumulus, top 6 to 8,000 feet and 1/10 to 2/10 cirrus at 21,000 feet, becoming along coast to 2/10 to 10/10 stratocumulus, tops 5 to 6,000 feet. Patchy stratocumulus and 3/10 to 1/10 cirrus in Florence area.

Clear in Po Valley and at target, visibility 20 miles. 2/10 Altostratus, base 15,000 feet to the north east of the target.

On return, cumulus had built up to 14,000 feet over the Apennines, 5/10 to 7/10 coverage.

Clear at base on return, visibility 15 miles. Visibility for the route varied from 10 to 20 miles.

10. Eleven (11) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print attached.

11. Observations:

Time	Place	Altitude	Details
1216P	(4507-1138)	20,000'	100 M/T on Road Rovina South. Crew members report an effective smoke screen extending from Ferrara eastward to Lake Comacchio.

12. Route was flown as briefed on the route out except for a direct course being flown from the keypoint Eistola to the IP Bondeno. The return route was as briefed except for a slight dog-lee effected to avoid clouds at flight altitude. Track chart inclosed.

13. Forty one (41) a/c landed at the base between 1426E hours and 1449E hours.

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

FRANCIS F. ELLER
Major, Air Corps
Intelligence Officer

2 Incls:
1. Selected Print
2. Track Chart