

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

HEADQUARTERS
4647th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520

AM/TBE/jd

312.1

23 April 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

TO : Commanding General, 54th Bombardment Wing (H)
APO 520, U S Army

1. On 23 April 1945, forty two (42) scheduled B-24 type a/c, comprising Yellow Force, took off as two separate attack units to bomb the targets designated below.

2. The First Attack Unit of 11 a/c, led by Major James A. Anderson, Deputy Squadron Commander, 776th Bombardment Squadron (H), took off at 0915H hours to bomb Padua Road Bridge No. 2. Assembly and rendezvous was made as prescribed without incident.

(a). Twenty one (21) a/c dropped fifty two and one half (52:50) tons of bombs (1,000 RDX, .1 nose and ND tail) on target at 1355H hours from 23,000 feet. Bombing was accomplished visually by individual boxes, each box lead using C-1 automatic pilot.

(b). Bomb strike photos show at least three and probably two additional hits on Padua Road Bridge No. 2. Other strikes blanketed both approaches and several near misses were scored north and south of the bridge.

(c). FIE flak was encountered at the target. Only eight or ten bursts were seen, and exposure as for less than a minute.

(d). Rendezvous was made with 10/15 P-51s at 1151H hours at (46°10'N-13°40'E), providing reduced escort and target cover. Escort was last observed at 1415H hours at (44°20'N-12°50'E).

(e). Twenty one (21) a/c made return landing at 1540H.

(f). Route was flown as briefed, except for omission of turn-point at water coordinate of (42°00'N-16°00'E). Track chart attached.

(g). Four (4) a/c attempted photos. Selected print attached.



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

Ltr Marr Miss Dpt, contd

3. The Second Attack Unit of twenty one (21) a/c, led by Major Elmer E. Balzer, Commanding Officer 779th Bombardment Squadron (H), took off at 0925B hours to bomb the Cavarzere Road Bridge. Assembly and rendezvous was made as prescribed without incident.

(a). Thirteen (13) a/c dropped thirty two and one half (32.50) tons of bombs (1,000 RB, .1 nose and MD tail) on target at 1336B hours from 22,000 feet. Bombing was accomplished visually by individual boxes, each box lead using C-1 automatic pilot.

(b). Bomb strike photos show two direct hits and two near misses on Cavarzere road Bridge. Additional strikes were on both banks of the river at the bridge approaches.

(c). SIH flak was encountered at the target, all ost entirely after bomb release, exposure lasting for one half minute or less..

(d). Rendezvous was made with 10/15 P-51s at 1224B hours at (44°05'N-13°00'E) which provided limited cover and were last seen at 1340B hours at (44°59'N-12°02'E).

(e). There was one (1) early return. A/C No, 42-50500, upon order of the attack unit commander, withdrew from the formation at 1223B hours at (44°05'N-13°00'E) and descended to circle what was believed to be a dinghy afloat in the Adriatic. Following an unsuccessful sea search, a vain attempt was made to overtake and rejoin the formation. Return landing of this a/c was made at 1417B hours with full bomb load of 2.5 tons.

(f). The lead bombardier of the last box erroneously picked up the wrong bridge as the target for his run. Discovering his mistake too late for correction, no bombs were released by the lead or by any other a/c of this box. Consequently, the seven (7) a/c of this box returned to base a total of 17.5 tons of bombs, bringing the aggregate to 20 tons, including the one early return.

(g). Twenty (20) a/c made return landing at 1508B hours.

(h). Route was flown as briefed, except for omission of turn-point at Reggio Emilia to save time.

(i). Four (4) a/c attempted photos. Selected print attached.

4. Weather along each course and at each target was substantially the same, and was as follows:

THIS PAGE IS UNCLASSIFIED

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

Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

4/10 cirrus and 4/10 stratocumulus at take off, cirrus at 24,000 feet, stratocumulus at 3,500 feet, top 6,500 feet. Visibility 20 miles or more.

On course, over Adriatic, 2/10 cirrus and 0/10 to 2/10 cumulus, top 7,000 feet. Visibility 25 miles.

3/10 cirrus at target at 25,000 feet, otherwise clear, visibility 20 miles in haze and smoke. 6/10-7/10 cumulus top 9,000 feet to east of target.

On return, visibility was unlimited.

3/10 altostratus at 11,000 feet and 1/10 cumulus at 3,000 feet at base on return, visibility unlimited.

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer

- 4 Incls:
1. Selected Prints
2. Track Charts