

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

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

BVR/BBE/jd

319.1

24 April 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 24 April 1945, forty two (42) scheduled B-24 a/c took off commencing at 0700B hours to destroy the Brondolo RR Bridge. The a/c formed two (2) attack units led respectively by Colonel Virgel L. Zoller, Deputy Group Commander of the 464th Bombardment Group (H), and Captain George S. Quay, Flight Leader of the 775th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. The Group formed up in the normal area and departed from Spinazzola on course at 0803B hours at 7,000 feet.

3. There were forty two (42) over the Primary Target at 1107B hours and forty two (42) a/c dropped one hundred and five (105) tons of 500 pound RDX (.1 nose and .01 tail fusing) bombs at 1107B hours (briefed target time 1100B hours) from 23,000 feet, axis of attack was 104° TC.

Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage:

42 a/c dropped on Primary Target

105 tons

4. Bomb strike photos show one direct hit at the southern end of the railroad bridge. Several near misses were scored along both sides of this bridge and numerous others fell in the area between the railroad and road bridges. Additional damage was probably inflicted on the previously hit road bridge.

5. C-1 Automatic Pilot was used by all box leaders. Bombing was by boxes in trail by visual means.

6. SIH flak was encountered at the target, duration of one (1) minute before and one half (1/2) minute after bombs away. Most bursts were 1,500 feet to 2,000 feet below the formation.

7. There were several instances of U/I and E/A reported observed.

At 1021B hours at (44°37'N-12°25'E) the weather a/c which preceded the formation observed a possible ME-109 or Macchi-

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

202 and about three (3) miles at 9,500 feet while flying at 10,000 feet. The fighters passed to the left and started a possible pursuit curve while at a range of 800 yards. The pilot of the weather aircraft peeled off to the right reaching an IAS of 360 MPH, and headed south. Not being able to locate the fighter a/c again the weather a/c turned north and proceeded to the target area without further incident.

Five (5) or six (6) probable FW-190s were observed in the area of the TP Rodigo (45°12'N-10°38'E) at 1055B hours. These a/c were flying around in the vicinity of the formation and at about 30,000 miles at 3,000 feet below the formation. The fighters made no effort to close and the distance of from 600 to 1,200 yards out from the formation made positive identification and observation of markings or salient characteristics impossible.

One (1) probable ME-262 was observed at (45°20'N-11°44'E) at 1055B hours at 22,000 feet from 2,000 feet. The jet was 2,000 yards out from the formation and maneuvered around formation, but made no effort to attack.

8. No escort was reported by any a/c of the formation.

9. Weather was reported as follows:

Clear at take off, and generally clear from base to Pistoia, except for 1/10 stratocumulus, top 7,000 feet. North of Pistoia on course to Po River, 8/10-9/10 cumulus top 10,000 feet. 3/10-4/10 cumulus in central Po Valley improving to 1/10-2/10 in East.

The target was clear with 1/1-2/10 cumulus, top 10,000 feet to the west. Visibility 20 miles or more.

Clear over Adriatic on return.

3/10-4/10 fair weather cumulus at base on return at 3,000 feet. Visibility was generally 20 miles or more.

10. Non of our a/c received blast damage.

11. Observations were reported as follows:

| <u>Time</u> | <u>Place</u> | <u>Altitude</u> | <u>Observation</u> |
|-------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|---|
| 1052B | Rodigo (45°12'N-10°38'E) | 22,000 | Roads quite well filled by Army vehicles. |
| 1047B | Mantua (45°09'N-10°48'E) | 22,000 | M/Y full |
| 1108B | Venice | 23,000 | Cargo ships in harbor |

12. Forty two (42) a/c landed at this base between 1231B and 1300B hours.

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Ltr Air Miss Rpt, contd

13. Route was flown as briefed. Track chart showing route as briefed and flown attached.

14. Six (6) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print attached.

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer

2 Incls:
1 - Track Chart
2 - Selected Print