

HEADQUARTERS
450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF
APO-520 US ARMY

S-2 NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION DATE: November 7, 1944

MISSION NBR. 170

TARGET: Brenner Pass, Italy - Railroad

I. CHRONOLOGY

Twenty-eight B-24 type aircraft took off at 0715-0735 to bomb a section of the Brenner Pass Railroad at 46.57N-11.25E. There were three early returns. Twenty were over the alternate target area at 1132-1138 hours at 18,000 feet. The primary target area was cloud covered and could not be bombed. Five aircraft dropped 11.75 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs on Vipiteno, Italy, marshalling yards. Six aircraft dropped 15 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs and twelve aircraft dropped 34 tons of 2000 lb RDX bombs on Fortezza, Italy, marshalling yard. One aircraft dropped 2.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs prematurely due to undetermined rack malfunction. One aircraft dropped 3 tons of 2000 lb RDX bombs in attempt to catch formation after failure to release on target. The three early returns jettisoned 5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs and 3 tons of 2000 lb RDX bombs in the Adriatic. Twenty-five aircraft returned to base at 1425 hours.

II. ROUTE AND ASSAULT

The route was flown as briefed and a run was attempted on the primary target, but it was completely obscured. A 180 degree turn was made and bombing was done along the rail lines at marshalling yards selected by the box leaders. The return route was flown as briefed. Escort: 40 P-51 aircraft made rendezvous at 1030 hours, 18,000 feet and withdrew at 1130 hours, at 18,000 feet. Weather was 8/10-10/10 undercast up to 18,000 feet, and hazy, at target; and 6/10-8/10 up to 18,000 feet, with visibility good, enroute.

III RESULTS

One box hit the marshalling yards at Vipiteno, Italy, with a heavy concentration among rolling stock causing several large explosions. Three direct hits cut the main line. This from bomb strike photo assessment.

The second box had no photo coverage but bombed with third box at Fortezza, Italy. Photographs from latter box show bursts across the Brenner Pass line: direct hits apparently cutting the railroad at two places. A very large explosion is visible on highway paralleling the railroad.

The fourth box hit 500 - 1000 feet east of marshalling yards at Fortezza, Italy. This bombing destroyed one small building. This from bomb strike photo assessment.

Bombardier's Combat Mission Report: The mission was flown as briefed to the I.P.. Bombing was done in individual boxes, the first two boxes carried 10 500 lb RDX bombs per ship and the last two boxes carried 3 - 2,000 lb bombs per ship.

The first box (X-Ray 1) was led by Lt. Myers of the 720th Squadron. Due to bad weather, briefed altitude could not be maintained so they came over the I.P. at 18,000 feet. Checkpoints could be picked up, but a heavy haze prevailed around the target so Lt. Myers called for a 360 degree turn and made a run on the Marshalling Yard at Vipiteno. Results were excellent. A good concentration of bombs fell in the center of the Marshalling Yard.

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S-2 Narrative Report (Continued)
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Bombardier's Combat Mission Report: (continued)

Y-Ray was led by Lt. Friend of the 722nd Squadron and the bomb run was flown at 18,000 feet. The target was obscured by haze and he too made a 360 degree turn. An attempt was made to drop the bombs on this run but the release mechanism of the sight did not work. A third approach was made and Lt. Friend salvoed his bombs at release point. This box was scored as unsatisfactory. No photo coverage was obtained.

Yoke 1 was led by Lt. Campbell of the 723rd Squadron. The bomb run was flown at 17,400 feet and he too called for a 360 degree turn on first run because of cloud coverage. On the second run the C-1 auto-pilot went out and hit propwash so he didn't drop. A third run was made and Lt. Campbell aimed for a section of the railroad lines southeast of the lake at Fortezza. Photo reports show the line out in three places. Results were scored as satisfactory.

Yoke 2 box was led by Lt. Frank of the 721st Squadron. He had an early return and the deputy lead Bombardier, Lt. Murphy, took over. Lt. Murphy was informed by his pilot that the target was not visible so he did a 360 degree turn and picked up the Marshalling Yard at Fortezza. Lt. Murphy was not synchronized for course, but dropped his bombs anyway. Photo results are that the bombs hit 500 feet to the right of the yard with no visible damage. Results were unsatisfactory.

IV. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: None

B. Flak: At target: slight, inaccurate, heavy. At Brioni, Italy: moderate, intense, heavy. At Sacile, Italy: slight, inaccurate, heavy.

V. OBSERVATIONS

At 1135 hours from 17,000 feet, at Vipiteno marshalling yard target, one green flare shot off at each end of marshalling yard just at bombs away. At 0919 hours from 8,000 feet, small brown object on water, possibly sea marks left by life raft.

At 1115 hours from 18,000 feet at Bressanone, about 150 wagons in marshalling yard. At 1205 hours from 17,000 feet at Belhuno, a marshalling yard full of wagons.

VI. CASUALTIES

None

VII. FLIGHT LEADERS:

| <u>PILOT</u> | <u>BOMBARDIER</u> | <u>NAVIGATOR</u> | <u>PILOT</u> | <u>BOMBARDIER</u> | <u>NAVIGATOR</u> |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Alexander | Leavitt | Suey | Kent | Banks | Ellis |
| McLain | Heryla | Fanshell | Lewis | Miller | Chittero |