

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

S-2 NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION DATE: February 16, 1945

MISSION NBR. 220

TARGET: Southern Germany - Hall West Marshalling Yard (#5 Alternate)

I. CHRONOLOGY

Thirty-five B-24 type aircraft took off at 0800-0820 hours to attack a target in southern Germany. (See Intelligence Annex to Operations Order for 16 February 1945). Weather conditions prevented visual bombing of the prescribed primary target so the formation turned at the Initial Point and proceeded to the #5 Alternate (Hall West Marshalling Yard, 47.26N-11.53E). Two aircraft returned early due to engine failure. Twenty-five aircraft dropped 48.25 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs on the center of the West Marshalling Yard at 1253 hours from 23,000 - 25,000 feet. Eight others dropped 16 tons on target of opportunity (Ord. Depot). See Results. The two aircraft returning early jettisoned 3½ tons in the Adriatic. Partial loads jettisoned were as follows: .25 tons in Adriatic - rack malfunction; .5 tons at 47.10N-12.02E - hang-up; .5 tons at 47.18N-11.53E - to lighten load in order to maintain position in formation. Thirty returned to base at 1602 hours. At the time telephone report was submitted one aircraft was at friendly field and two were missing. Telephone Report was subsequently changed to one missing and two at friendly fields. Those at friendly fields have since returned. One is missing.

II. ROUTE AND ASSAULT

The 450th Bomb Group rendezvoused with 449th Bomb Group over Manduria on course to San Vito as briefed. The Wing formation departed San Vito on course with 450th in Wing lead position. Briefed course was flown to a point just short of I.P. experiencing CAVU conditions. A bank of strato cumulus 8/10-10/10 with tops at 12,000-15,000 feet was encountered in the direction of the primary target. A left turn was executed and the target area was observed to be covered by solid undercast. The Group Leader reversed his course and proceeded to the alternate target. The turn was made on the briefed I.P. and the target attacked on an axis of 240 degrees. Bombs were dropped visually; box leaders sighting for range and deflection. A left rally was executed and a course flown directly to the coast and thence to base. 15-20 P-51's contacted the formation at Seespitz (47.26N-11.44E) at 30,000 feet. Escort withdrew at 1332 hours at 45.38N-13.06E at 25,000 feet. Briefed escort was 50 P-51's

III. RESULTS

Bomb strike photos show a good concentration across the center of the yard. Direct hits were scored on units of rolling stock causing explosions and fires. Some bombs fell short and hit buildings adjacent to north side of yard.

The last box was unable to drop because the target was smoke obscured so dropped on a target of opportunity, (Ordnance Depot). Direct hits were scored on the buildings starting fires and causing explosions.

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S-2 Narrative Report (Continued)

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IV. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: No enemy aircraft were encountered. Interrogation disclosed several observations of single and twin engine aircraft but all were extremely indefinite as to details.

B. Flak: Moderate, inaccurate flak was experienced at the target. All four boxes reported flak as scant on the run in increasing to moderate and more accurate on the rally. Flak was evidently fired from batteries in the eastern Innsbruck area.

V. OBSERVATIONS

At 1115 hours 10 miles south of 45.38N-13.06E a large naval vessel described as a possible cruiser was at anchor. Observation from 19,500 feet.

At 1335 hours from 20,000 feet a very large transport was observed at 46.33N-13.08E heading 20 degrees.

VI. CONCLUSION

A. Losses: One from other reasons than flak or fighters.

B. Damage: 7 holed (minor).

C. Casualties: None

D. Victories: None

E. Miscellaneous At Aviano Airdrome at 1131 hours 17 aircraft were observed in the dispersal area from 21,500 feet. 5 were JU-88's, 12 ME-109's.

At the target at 1255 hours two small elements of B-17's approached target on collision course. Three to four ships in each element crossed above and below. One B-17 was observed to explode directly below our formation. Observations differed as to chutes seen varying from one to eight. One-half rudder on B-17 was painted red.