

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

S-2 NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION DATE: March 2, 1945

MISSION NBR. 233

TARGET: Padua, Italy - Marshalling Yard

I. CHRONOLOGY

Twenty-eight aircraft took off at 0830-0904 hours to bomb the marshalling yards at Padua, Italy. Adverse weather conditions were encountered over the primary target and the formation proceeded to an alternate. Fourteen aircraft dropped 34 tons of 500 lb EDX bombs on the marshalling yard at Brescia, Italy, at 1256 hours from 21,500 - 23,000 feet. Twelve aircraft were unable to bomb due to weather, and returned 30 tons to base. One aircraft (a prior return) jettisoned 2.5 tons, due to flak damage, in the Adriatic at 44.00N-13.40E. One aircraft jettisoned 2.5 tons in the Adriatic at 42.38N-14.14E due to fuel shortage. Twenty-six aircraft returned to base at 1534-1550 hours. One aircraft landed at a friendly field but has since returned to base. None lost. None missing. None at friendly fields.

II. ROUTE AND ASSAULT

Rendezvous was effected as planned and the route was flown as briefed to the vicinity of Modena where the formation was approximately 12 miles right of the briefed course. At this juncture flak was encountered and a turn to the right was effected as evasive action to carry the bombers into the vicinity of Cento. At this point a left turn was made to get back on the briefed course. The formation then proceeded to 45.10N-10.20E where it became apparent that the primary target would be cloud covered. A course was then flown to the I.P. for Brescia. Two squadrons bombed this target on an axis of 150/170 degrees employing both visual and offset method. Two squadrons were unable to pick up the target on the first run due to cloud cover and made a 360 degree turn to make a second run. The target was again obscured. The route Brescia to base was flown as briefed. 10-15 P-51's effected rendezvous with the bomber formation at 1300 hours at 44.40N-10.15E and remained with the formation approximately 5 minutes. At Padua there was 10/10 stratocumulus up to 10/15,000', while over Brescia there was 8/10 cloud cover up to 10,000'. Enroute the weather varied from clear to 10/10 cumulus up to 10,000'.

III. RESULTS

Two squadrons bombed Brescia by visual and offset method and photo assessment is impossible due to cloud cover over the target. Visual reports, however, indicate that the bombs fell generally to the east of the marshalling yard.

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S-2 Narrative Report (Continued)
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IV. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: None

B. Flak:

<u>Squadron</u>	<u>Tgt. time</u>	<u>Bombing Alt.</u>	<u>Flak Exp.</u>	<u>Lost at Tgt</u>	<u>Sev. Dam</u>	<u>Slight Dam.</u>
1st	1256	21,500	Nil	0	0	0
2nd	1256	23,000	Nil	0	0	0
3rd	1320	21,800	Nil	0	0	0
4th	1320	21,500	Nil	0	0	0

Enroute to the primary target the formation was east of the briefed course in the vicinity of Modena and experienced M A H flak from the fringe of the Bologna defenses. For reasons unknown a right instead of left turn was made and the formation was carried over the Cento defenses where M A H flak was experienced and nine aircraft sustained minor damage. Flak was of the tracking type and excellent for altitude. Evasive action however limited its effectiveness although the formation was subjected to fire 5-8 minutes before the bombers got back on the briefed course.

V. OBSERVATIONS

At 1151 hours from 21,500' white smoke was observed covering the valleys in the battle area south of Bologna.

VI. CONCLUSION

A. Losses: None

B. Damage: 9 aircraft sustained minor flak damage.

C. Casualties: None

D. Victories: None

E. Radar Observations and Report: This was not a PFF target although operator did report picking it up with his equipment.