

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

S-2 NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION DATE: November 22, 1944

MISSION NBR. 183

TARGET: Ferrara, Italy - Railroad Bridge

I. CHRONOLOGY

Thirty-nine B-24 type aircraft took off at 0830-0859 to bomb the Ferrara Railroad Bridge. There were two early returns. Twenty-eight aircraft dropped visually 54.5 tons of 1000 lb G.P. bombs on the target at 1250 hours from 25,000 - 26,000 feet. A 1/2 ton was jettisoned due to rack malfunction. In addition, 1 jettisoned 2 tons due to accidental release; 1 jettisoned 2 tons because pilot lost oxygen supply on bomb run; 3 others jettisoned 6 tons to maintain formation; and 4 others returned bombs to base because aircraft didn't go over target. Thirty-six aircraft returned to base at 1453 hours and one additional aircraft returned at a later hour, having stopped at a friendly field. None lost. None missing. None at friendly fields.

II. ROUTE AND ASSAULT

Rendezvous and route to the vicinity of the Initial Point were as briefed. At this juncture, however, the 450th was crowded by another bomber formation and in the ensuing maneuvers for proper spacing, one box of 7 aircraft lost the formation and failed to go over the target. The remainder of the formation made a visual run on the target on an axis of 250-260 degrees and accomplished a left rally and returned to base as briefed. Weather enroute to and from the target was generally clear with scattered alto-cumulus up to 11,000 feet. Over the target, it was clear.

III RESULTS

Photo coverage shows bombs bursting near and across the North approach to the bridge. The main part of the bridge appears to be undamaged.

Bombardier's Combat Mission Report: Report of results of The First Attack Unit unobtainable.

The Second Attack Unit lead Bombardier experienced a malfunction as he crossed the coast, the Rate End of his sight being frozen. The pilot turned the lead over to the Deputy. When he peeled off to leave the lead position all but the Deputy and one other ship in his box followed him including the Yoke 2 box. The Deputy Lt. Heryla of the 722nd Sqdn. took over and led his ship and one other over the target, making a normal run. Lt. Heryla states his synchroization was good and visual observations were that the bombs were near hits on the bridge. Photos show the bombs fell in the smoke in the immediate target area. Yoke 2 box did not get into position to make a run on the target and the bombs were either salvoed in the Adriatic or brought back to base.

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

Lt. Caselli of the 723rd Sqdn. led the Third Attack Unit and was unable at any time to find the bridge which was totally obscured by smoke. However Lt. Caselli exhibited excellent bombing judgement and technique by synchronizing for course and rate on check points going into the target and then off setting his crosshairs on the smoke to where the target should be in relation to the check points. Photos show the mean point of impact of his unit's bombs to be 800 feet right of the assigned aiming point with the pattern developing on both sides of the north approach to the bridge with several near misses on the approach.

IV. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: None

B. Flak: At the target intense, accurate, and heavy type flak was encountered. 15 aircraft here holed, one of these was seriously damaged.

V. OBSERVATIONS

In the target area at 1220 hours and at 26,000 feet, three B-24 type aircraft flew above and out of range of our formation. These three aircraft did not go through flak and when our formation got out over the Adriatic Sea, the said three aircraft headed back to Italy.

Approaching the target at 1245 hours at 26,000 feet, a smoke screen appeared to be laid by an enemy aircraft at 15,000 feet.

The target was effectively blanketed by smoke pots surrounding the bridge. Prevailing ground wind added to its effectiveness on today's axis of attack.

VI. CASUALTIES

Two crew members slightly wounded by flak. 15 aircraft received minor flak damage, 1 severe.

VII. FLIGHT LEADERS:

<u>PILOT</u>	<u>BOMBARDIER</u>	<u>NAVIGATOR</u>	<u>PILOT</u>	<u>BOMBARDIER</u>	<u>NAVIGATOR</u>
Stevens	Miller	Chittero	Young	Friend	Fanshell
Massey	Caselli	Cozart	Wood	Heryla	Zick