

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

*Early Return*

S-2 NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION DATE: December 20, 1944

MISSION NBR. 198

TARGET: Salzburg, Austria - Main Marshalling Yard

I. CHRONOLOGY

This operation was planned for attack on Freilassing Marshalling Yard as the primary target. In the event weather prevented visual bombing of the primary, crews were briefed to attack the main marshalling yard at Salzburg by synchronous PFF methods.

Thirty-one B-24 type aircraft took off at 0801-0829 hours. Two aircraft returned early because of engine failures. Twenty-nine aircraft dropped 56 tons on Salzburg Main Marshalling Yard by synchronous PFF methods at 1241 hours from 23,000 - 25,000 feet. Bomb load was two tons 500 lb RDX each aircraft. One-quarter ton was jettisoned due to hang-up. One bomb was returned to base because of frozen racks. Twenty-eight aircraft returned at 1542 hours. None lost. One aircraft reported on telephone report as missing was later reported at Vis.

II. ROUTE AND ASSAULT

Rendezvous was effected with 449th Bomb Group over Manduria on course to San Vito. The 98th and 376th Bomb Group did not take off because of weather. The briefed route was flown to the Initial Point (Chieming - 47.54N-12.32E) and the target attacked on an axis of 100 degrees T.C. The formation was 45 minutes later than briefed target time due to weather encountered enroute.

The decision to bomb Salzburg Marshalling Yard was made when the I.P. was found to be covered with at 10/10 undercast. The lead attack unit made the run with boxes in trail; each of the two boxes dropped individually on the "Mickey" lead. The second attack unit, having only one PFF aircraft dropped as a unit on the leader. The first box of the lead attack unit continued on course after bombs away; the second box rallied to the right which was contrary to briefed instructions. The second attack unit varied heading slightly left and each box varied altitude approximately 500 feet.

Observations of friendly fighters varied from 5 to 15 P-38's in the target area at 24,000 - 25,000 feet. Escort was not seen after rally.

A 10/10 undercast was encountered just off San Vito and persisted throughout the entire route. A few small breaks were observed in the target area although the target itself was obscured. The Pola area was only about 3/10 covered on the return. From Pola south very dense strata-cumulus covers the Adriatic and South Italy.

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S-2 Narrative Report (Continued)

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III RESULTS

Visual observation was not possible due to cloud cover. Interrogation of "Mickey" operators and Bombardiers indicated that all three experienced a good run and dropped in the target area.

Photos of bombs away of lead box showed no visible terrain. However, one photo beyond the target showed the course to have been over the target. The photos from other boxes indicate that bombs fell in the southern part of the city and possibly on the barracks building at I-24, T.C. 13-13-NA

IV. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: None

B. Flak: Flak received over the target was moderate and accurate for the second box. All other boxes reported flak to their left and low. Three minutes was average time in flak with about one minute after bombs away.

V. OBSERVATIONS

None

VI. CONCLUSION

A. Losses: None

B. Damage: 5 ships holed by flak at target (minor)

C. Casualties: None

D. Victories: None

E. Corrections: One aircraft previously reported as missing is at Vis.