

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

S-2 NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION DATE: December 28, 1944

MISSION NBR. 203

TARGET: Brenner Pass, Italy - Railroad Loop

I. CHRONOLOGY

Twenty-seven B-24 type aircraft took off from base at 0815-0849 hours to bomb the railroad loop in the Brenner Pass at 46.58N-11.25E, in North Italy. Two aircraft were early returns, one due to loss of an engine; other, reasons not know. One aircraft was a prior return due to engine on fire. Twenty-four aircraft dropped 68.5 tons of 1000 lb G.P. bombs on the target at 1140-1157 hours from 22,000 - 23,500 feet. Prior return aircraft jettisoned 3 tons 20 miles south of the target, exact location of point bombed not know as crew has not returned to base and landed at Falconara. Aircraft crash landed at Rimini. Jettisoned 3 tons but location is not known as crew has not returned, but is presumed to be in Adriatic. Other early return jettisoned 3 tons in Adriatic due to rack malfunctions. Twenty-four aircraft returned to base at 1447 hours. None lost. None missing. Two aircraft at friendly fields, Falconara and Rimini.

II. ROUTE AND ASSAULT

Rendezvoused with 449th Group as briefed and briefed course was flown to the I.P. at Ponte. Four boxes fell into trail before this point and all made individual runs on the target on an axis of 344-347 degrees. Attack was carried out by boxes as follows:

X-1: Bombed on first run and aimed at north line of the loop.

X-2: Made run on the target but could not pick up AP and made a 270 degree turn and came back attacking the target on about 120 degree axis.

Y-1: Bombed on first run and aimed at north line of the loop.

Y-2: Made run on the target but did not bomb as interphone was out of operation. Made 270 degree turn and came back attacking the target on about 90 degree axis.

All boxes came off the target on about 50 to 120 degree heading and avoided flak from Bressanone. Route was flown back to base as briefed. Escort had not been planned but at 1220 hours from 18,500 feet over 46.05N-12.28E, 12 P-51 type aircraft were observed pursuing an ME-109. Weather conditions was generally slightly hazy, with 1/10 to 2/10 strata-cu over the Adriatic up to Pola. From there to the target and at the target, CAVU conditions existed.

III RESULTS

Results of individual box bombings is as follows:

X-1: Bombed on first run and a compact pattern was obtained with 1 or 2 direct hits on the north line of the loop east of the tunnel near the 100 feet cut from bombing of 27 December. Work cars on tracks appear to be cut and much debris is seen falling around the area.

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S-2 Narrative Report (Continued)

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III RESULTS (continued)

X-2: Made a second run and hits were scattered with 1 or 2 appearing to be hitting near the north line of the loop and extending across the south track and highway. Direct hits were scored on both the south track and highway nearby.

Y-1: Box did superior bombing with many direct hits scored on railroad tracks and a small bridge on north line.

Y-2: Made second run and bombs fell between the north and south tracks of the loop with a near miss on the north line and a possible hit on the south track.

IV. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: None

B. Flak: Reaching the I.P. and making the turn for the run on the target, flak was encountered from Bolzano and Bressanone and was moderate, accurate and heavy. Flak from Bolzano lasted for about 1 minute and was mostly a bit low and to the left of the formation. Bressanone flak continued down the run for about 2 to 3 minutes and broke off at about the same time the flak from Vipitino started. Vipitino flak was moderate, accurate and heavy and lasted for about 1 minute and did not track the rally to the east. Length of bomb run in time was 6 minutes. Boxes making second run ran into flak from Vipitino for about 1 minute before and 1 minute after target. Possibly 4 flak cars about 100 yards apart were observed south of Vipitino and fired on formation on the briefed runs and second runs. 16 aircraft were holed by flak inflicting minor damage.

V. OBSERVATIONS

At 1140 hours from 21,000 feet on railroad south of Vipitino, at least 4 flak cars about 100 yards apart. At 1214 hours from 20,000 at 45.45N-12.53E, light, inaccurate flak was encountered from guns pinpointed at this location. Flak was far below formation. Early return aircraft reported intense, accurate and heavy flak at Porto maghera.

At 1210 hours from 20,000, 46.36N-12.15E, series of buildings of a military nature. Could be a PW camp or similar construction.

At 1309 hours at 44.01N-13.58E, an S-O-S was heard. Repeated at 1334 as "SOS K L47". Location not given.

At 1221 from 19,500 feet, 45.34N-125-E, shadow in water. Appeared to be a sub. Oil slick about 1 mile to the SE and slick trailed to location of shadow. No vessels nearby.

VI. CONCLUSION

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| A. Losses: | None |
| B. Damage: | 16 aircraft received minor flak damage. One aircraft crash landed. |
| C. Casualties: | None |
| D. Victories: | None |