

HEADQUARTERS 49TH BOMBARDMENT WING (H)
APO 520 U S ARMY

21 January 1945

SUBJECT: Bombing-Navigation-Pathfinder Analysis for 20 January 1945.

TO : Commanding Officer, 451st Bomb Group, APO 520, U S Army.
Commanding Officer, 461st Bomb Group, APO 520, U S Army.
Commanding Officer, 484th Bomb Group, APO 520, U S Army.

1. Bombing Analysis.

a. The 461st BG, 484th BG, and 451st BG bombed LINZ NORTH MAIN M/Y with fair results. Captain Roberts was the combat wing commander.

b. The 461st BG led the wing with twenty-five aircraft in two attack units of two boxes each. Captain Roberts led the group with Lt Johnson as the lead bombardier in the first attack unit. The briefed axis was flown. The lead ship of "C" box was hit by flak and caught fire while on the bomb run. This ship was out of control and it caused "C" box to veer off the axis. The pattern was spread from this box due to a loose formation caused by the leader being hit and the resultant loss of control.

In the second attack unit, Lt Pierce was the lead bombardier. Their formation was disrupted when the "C" box leader came back through the second section. This broken formation caused a scatter pattern for this attack unit.

Most of the bombs for this group hit northwest of the target in the built up area. Some direct hits were scored on the rail lines and freight yards north of the target.

c. The 484th BG, led by Major Derby with Lt Jorginsen as the lead bombardier, was second in the Wing formation. Twenty-six aircraft were flown in two attack units of two boxes each. Due to smoke and ground haze the first attack unit started the bomb run on PFF. The target was picked up in time for a visual run, but a C-1 malfunction threw the first attack unit off course and their bombs hit to the left of the briefed MPI.

The second attack unit with Lt Billges as the lead bombardier made a smooth PDI run. Very good results were observed but no pictures were available due to MIA camera ships.

This group also hit northwest of the target with several bombs walking into goods wagons and ordnance warehouses north of the target.

d. The 451st BG, led by Major Dooley and Lt Ayers as bombardier, was third in the Wing. Twenty-five aircraft were flown in two attack units of two boxes each. The run started on PFF but the bombardier took over in the last two minutes for a visual run. In order to prevent disrupting the formation by a large course correction so late in the run, the bombardier sighted on the north choke point of the M/Y.

The second attack unit lead bombardier was Lt Baum. "D" Box followed the first attack unit. The lead of "F" box aborted and the deputy's airspeed meter was out. This box flew beside the 461st BG and dropped on their rate.

This group scored a compact pattern on the north choke point of the M/Y. One string of bombs scored direct hits on the Loco Depot and a number of strikes fell in rail sidings near the south edge of the Chemical Works.

2. Navigation Analysis.

a. The 461st BG, 484th BG, and 451st BG were scheduled to rendezvous over BOVINO at 0906A at a base altitude of 5,000 ft. The lead group departed from BOVINO one (1) minute early with the other two groups following at one and one half (1½) minute intervals.

b. Enroute to the KP (45-38, 13-00) weather conditions made it necessary to fly 20 miles west of course in the vicinity of Ancona. The briefed KP time was 1132A with a base altitude of 19,000 ft. Actual KP time and altitude were as follows:

461st BG- 1127A at 20,300 ft.

484th BG- 1127A at 22,800 ft.

451st BG- 1130A at 26,000 ft.

c. All Groups followed the briefed course from KP to the IP (SCHARDING) to target.

d. All Groups rallied left then right around STEYR.

e. All Groups flew from target to TP #5 to West of TP #6 to base. The Groups cut short of TP #4 to move time and flew West of TP #6 to avoid weather.

f. The escort of approximately 50 P-38s was sighted at 1105A at (44-50, 13-20) and provided close penetration, target and withdrawal cover.

g. RATINGS: 461st BG - Navigation Good. Log lost in flight. Lt. S. Toth, Group Navigator, was lead Navigator.

484th BG - Navigation good. Log Fair. Lt. C.D. Harrison, 824th Squadron was lead Navigator.

451st BG - Navigation Good. Log Good. Lt F.R Carstotter of the 725th Squadron was lead Navigator.

h. COMMENTS: Over the ADRIATIC, South of ANCONA 4/10 to 6/10 altocumulus between 14,000 ft and 18,000 ft were encountered. Over the ADRIATIC, North of ANCONA 10/10 middle clouds up to 20,000 ft were encountered. This weather continued to TREVISO where the weather became CAVU. On the north slope of the ALPS there were 4/10 and 6/10 low clouds. The target itself was CAVU.

The 484th BG flew too close to STEYR while turning off the target and encountered slight flak.

3. Pathfinder Analysis.

a. 484th BG- The 484th BG bombed the NORTH MAIN M/Y visually on 20 January. Lt McCauley was the Pathfinder operator in Able 11, Lt Wosor in Able 12, and Lt Moody in Dog 11. All PFF sets were satisfactory. Fifty to sixty percent of the route was undercast and the Pathfinder assumed the burden of navigation while the formation was over the undercast. The lead DR Navigator was furnished with approximately 20 Mickey fixes. The Pathfinder set was not needed for rendezvous. The Pathfinder operator in Able 11 started the bomb run, but the bombardier identified the target visually just as the operator called out the 70° sighting angle.

b. The 461st BG DG Pathfinder operators were: Able 11, 2nd Lt John N. Panagiotopolous; Able 12, 1st Lt Robert F. Phalon; Dog 11, 2nd Lt Russell T. Holmes. The equipment was used for navigation during the entire route. Approximately 60 fixes were furnished to the DR navigator by the lead Pathfinder operator. The PFF set was not used for rendezvous, but was used to identify TPs and the IP. There was no PFF run; bombing was visual. All PFF sets worked satisfactorily. No malfunctions were reported. Of the two (2) cameras allotted to the group, one (1) was in the photo lab for repairs and the second (2) was installed in a ship that did not take off. No pictures were obtained.

c. The 451st BG Pathfinder operators were: Lt Heydon, lead; Lt Igielski, deputy; Lt Dorosier, lead of the 2nd attack unit. PFF was used for navigation and for identifying turn points. The Pathfinder operator started the bomb run setting up the course. Just prior to the 70 sighting angle the bombardier identified the target visually and assumed control of the bomb run. Twenty-five fixes were given to the lead navigator by the Pathfinder operator. The flux-gate compass was shot out over the target. There was a moderately severe condition of spoking and arcing in the PFF. The return to the base was made in a routine manner. The deputy operator was wounded over the target, and was landed at FOGGIA MAIN airport. Therefore, there is no report available of the PRI camera which was in this plane.

The PFF set in the lead of the second attack unit had good range and definition, except for occasional blurred pictures. The Pathfinder operator directed the second attack unit on to the briefed axis of attack and the bombardier accomplished the bomb run visually.

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