

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

7 February 1945.

SUBJECT: Bombing-Navigation-Pathfinder Analysis for 5 February 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 were briefed to bomb the WINTER HARBOR OIL STORAGE at REGEBSBURG. It is believed that the 461st BG bombed the initial point, STRAUBING, instead of the primary target. The 484th BG bombed the primary target with excellent results. The 451st BG dropped bombs in the REGENSBURG area; at the second alternate, ROSENHEIM M/Y; and on a road bridge near COMIGLIANS which was a target of opportunity. All bombing except that at COMIGLIANS, was by PFF. Col. Lawhon was the combat wing commander.

b. The 461st BG, flying thirty-five aircraft, was led by Col. Lawhon with Lt. Goodfriend as bombardier. They led the Wing with two attack units of three boxes each. Prior to the bombing run this Group was off course to the right. The bomb run was made on the briefed axis of attack, but it is believed that the mickey operators leading both attack units mistook the IP for the primary target. A smooth bomb run was made on what was believed to be the primary target, but no results were observed.

c. The 484th BG, led by Major Derby with Lt. Jorgenson as bombardier, was second in the wing formation. Thirty-two aircraft bombed in two attack units. Each attack unit flew three boxes in a nine ship front. The Group had some trouble at the beginning of the run in getting the boxes into proper position; however, the run was long enough to make a smooth PFF approach to the target. The briefed axis was flown and excellent results were observed through a cloud break. The lead ship had to salvo the last five bombs over the target because of a faulty RS-2 release mechanism.

d. The 451st BG, led by Col. Stefonowicz with Lt. Ayres as bombardier, flew over the IP and proceeded on the bomb run by PFF. As the formation approached the bomb release point, the lead bombardier noticed through a hole in the clouds that the PFF coursed was about 5 miles off. Realizing that the primary target could not be hit, bombs were not dropped from this aircraft. At almost the same instant, bombs dropped from the deputy lead aircraft. Eighteen other aircraft dropped off the deputy leader. Bombs were held in only nine aircraft, and these, led by Col. Stefonowicz, bombed the second alternate, ROSENHEIM M/Y, by PFF. A good bomb run was reported and good results are expected. One box of six aircraft of the second attack unit was separated from the group formation due to weather over the Adriatic. This box continued along to the area of the sixth alternate target, TARVISIO M/Y. This area was cloud obscured so

a target of opportunity, a road bridge near COMEGLIANS, was bombed visually with excellent results.

2. Navigation Analysis.

a. The 461st BG, 484th BG, and 451st BG were scheduled to depart from BOVINO at 0938A at a base altitude of 8,000 ft. The rendezvous was successful with the 461st BG departing on time and the other two Groups following in Wing formation.

b. All Groups followed the briefed course to KP (NORTH Tip of Adriatic). The KP was reached at 1138A at an altitude of 21,000 ft. Briefed KP time was 1136A. Enroute to KP, Easy Flight of the second attack unit of the 451st BG became separated from the Group formation in weather near ANCONA. This flight proceeded along and bombed a target of opportunity (COMEGLIANS ROAD BRIDGE (46-31, 12-51)). Bombs were dropped at 1227A on a heading of 150°.

c. The 461st BG flew slightly right of the briefed route to TP #2 to avoid flak at JOHANN (47-30, 12-30). At TP #2 course was altered to the right to keep from overrunning the 55th Wg. Scattered burst of flak were encountered at MUHLDORF (48-15, 13-02) and slight corrections were made to the left to TP #3. At this point the flux gate compass became erratic and when the navigator called for a 358° heading the flux gate compass continued to read 08°. Once again a dog leg had to be inserted to the right to enable the 55th Wg to turn on IP into the target. The compass continued to read 08°. The navigator, aware that the formation was right of course, but not knowing exact position because of an undercast, asked the PFF Operator for a PFF fix from REGENSBURG. The PFF Operator gave the navigator a fix three miles east of the IP. The bomb run was then made on an axis of 308° TC. Bombs were dropped at 1302A from 23,100 ft.

The Group rallied right then left around REGENSBURG flak. The briefed route was followed to base.

The navigator checked on Groups ahead and headings flown and believes Group dropped their bombs on the IP STRAUBING and not on REGENSBURG.

The 484th BG, second in Wing formation, followed the briefed course except for slight corrections to avoid route flak to the IP STRAUBING. At this point the Group was forced to make a 360° turn to the left to avoid the 461st BG turning right off the IP. After coming back over the IP the bomb run was made on an axis of 297° and bombs were dropped at 1315A from 24,300 ft. The Group rallied right, then left and followed the briefed route to base.

The 451st BG, third in Wing formation, followed the lead Group from KP to IP STRAUBING. From this point the Group made the bomb run on an axis of 298° TC. 19 ships dropped their bombs at 1308A from 26,000 ft. Rally was right, then left.

The Group then proceeded to (48-00, 12-30) which they used as an IP to bomb ROSEBHEIM M/Y. 9 ships dropped their bombs at 1345A from 23,000 ft.

From ROSENHEIM the 451st BG flew to 10 miles south of TP #1 to KP to base.

d. The fighter escort of P-51s intercepted the 49th Wing at 1215A near (47-10, 13-40).

e. RATINGS: 461st BG-Lead Navigator Lt Toth.
Navigation Good. Log Good.

484th BG- Lead Navigator Lt. Markowitz
Navigation Good. Log Good.

451st BG- Lead Navigator Lt. Carstetter
Navigation Good. Log Good.

3. Pathfinder Analysis.

a. 461st BG- Lt Phalon was PFF Operator in Able 11, Lt Levin in Able 12, and Lt Lowerin in Dog 11. The lead PFF set was used for navigation over approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the route from the time of leaving the coast of Italy to a point east of Munich on the route back, when Able 12 took over the lead position. Able 12 and Dog 11 sets were satisfactory for navigation although azimuth stabilization in Dog 11 was inoperative. A synchronous bomb run was made with four course corrections and seven range readings. The course was easily defined and range signals matched very closely with the pre-computed data set up by the bombardier. In Able 11 there was trouble with the flux gate compass which stuck several times at irregular intervals. At approximately fifteen minutes before turning into the target, they turned left to avoid flak and then right to get behind the last group in the wing ahead. While in these turns the flux gate compass stuck on a heading of 08° . The magnetic compass at this time showed a heading of 25-30 degrees. The target was identified in the PPI and when the target was at a true bearing of 295° the Group turned into the target and made the bomb run. Subsequent checks of other navigators point to the fact that the target bombed was the IP STRAUBING and not the primary. The cause of the flux gate compass was found to be a loosely seated fuse in the compass starter junction box. The PFF set in Able 12 had no bombing circle, but the set ground checked properly. Two cameras were carried in Able 12 and Dog 11. Both cameras had 25 or 30 feet of film unwound but no pictures were obtained from either. The cause of failure was apparently a frozen or stuck shutter in both cameras.

b. 484th BG- Lt McCauley was PFF Operator in Able 11, F/O Tynan in Able 12 and Lt Denault in Dog 11. The PFF set was not needed for the rendezvous. The route was undercast 65% of the time and the PFF Operator in the lead ship assumed the burden of navigation during these periods. The PFF sets was used for avoiding flak areas and guiding the formation around turn points. There was very good cooperation between the DR navigator and the PFF Operator in the lead ship. The approach to the IP

was made by PFF and the target area was identified on the scope at a distance of 40 miles. Good cooperation was reported between the bombardier and the PFF Operator. The rate checked closely at all of the sighting angles. The bombardier gave a course correction when he caught a glimpse of the target area. Bomb strike photos show that the target was hit. The PFF set in A-11 was good. Approximately twenty-five scope pictures were taken plus the bomb run pictures.

c. 451st BG- Lt Fraser was PFF Operator in Able 11, Lt Hayden in Able 12, Lt Hyne in Dog 11 and Lt Seidletz in Dog 12. Forty-five "mickey" fixes were given to the navigator enroute to the target. A synchronous bomb run was made. The bombardier observed through breaks in the undercast that the target would not be hit because the formation was too far off course to the left. The target was abandoned and the second alternate was attacked by synchronous PFF with unobserved results. No PFF set malfunctions were reported. The PRI camera froze so that no scope photos were obtained.

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