

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

21 October 1944

SUBJECT: Bombing - Navigation Analysis for 20 October 1944.

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 451st BG, 461st BG and 484th BG of the 49th Wing attacked the MILAN INDUSTRIAL Targets.

b. The 451st BG, bombing in a nine ship front with two attack units of three boxes each, attacked the BREDA WORKS with very poor results. Bombs of the lead plane of first attack unit were dropped just after turning from the IP to the target; the exact cause of the release is not yet known, but a thorough investigation is being conducted. As the tail flare was fired, evidently the toggle switch either shorted or was accidentally hit. The deputy leader had his sight on the target and did not release, but the remainder of the box dropped off the leader. The lead bombardier of the high box had not picked up the target, and being confused when told over the interphone that bombs were away in the lead box, immediately released his bombs. Familiarity with the target area and location of the formation would have prevented releasing bombs at that point. The entire box dropped off that plane. The low box, with all its bombs hitting the target, did a beautiful job. The second attack unit, lagging far behind the first unit, wandered around for no good reason and came in on an axis of attack which gave over 15° drift. The run was too short for the bombardier to make proper course corrections, and he did not have time to set up rate. The other two box leaders, realizing that the briefed target could not be hit, dropped off unit leader. Because of poor judgment and teamwork, this mission for the Group was a colossal failure.

c. The 461st, bombing with six boxes in trail, attacked the ISOTTA FRASCHINI WORKS with fair results. Because of smoke from bombs of previous Groups, the target could not be picked up. Displacement sighting was used by all boxes. The briefed axis of attack was flown, and there were no interferences or malfunctions.

d. The 484th, bombing in a nine ship front with two attack units of three boxes each attacked the ALFA ROMEO WORKS with good results. The formation was loose, and bombs from one box hit several thousand feet left of the target. Each attack unit, using different aiming points, hit the briefed target. The briefed axis of attack was flown, and there were no interferences or malfunctions.

2. Navigation Analysis.

a. The 461st BG, 484th BG and 451st BG, were scheduled to rendezvous over BOVINO at 0730A, at 7,000, 8,000 and 9,000 feet respectively. Due to bad weather in the vicinity of the rendezvous area take off was delayed approximately 30 minutes.

(1) The 451st BG, the first GP to enter the rendezvous area departed at 0758A at 9,000 ft SOUTHWEST of BOVINO. A dog

leg was inserted to allow the 461st BG, the scheduled Wing lead, to pass them. However, the 461st continued circling to let the 484th BG assemble.

(2) The 484th BG departed from ROCETTA at 0814A at 8,000 ft.

(3) The 461st departed from MELFI at 0813A at 7,000 ft.

b. From the rendezvous area to the KP, bad weather was encountered over Italy.

(1) The 451st BG flew approximately 15 miles south of course to the coast. A correction was made to the KP and reached at 1006A at 19,000 ft.

(2) The 484th BG also flew approximately 15 miles south of course to the coast a correction was made to the KP and reached at 1029A at 18,000 ft.

(3) The 461st turned left around bad weather, after leaving the rendezvous area, and were forced 35 miles left of course. After crossing the coast, a correction was made to the KP and reached at 1029A at 18,000 ft.

c. From KP to the target the briefed route was followed by all Gps.

(1) The 451st BG dropped their bombs at 1127½A from 22,000 ft. The axis of attack was 135° for the first box.

(2) The 484th BG dropped their bombs at 1137A from 21,000 ft. The axis of attack was 150°.

(3) The 461st BGdropped their bombs at 1201A from 20,000 ft. Axis of attack was 150°.

d. There was no escort.

e. The rally was slight right as specified in the field order.

f. All Gps followed the briefed route from target to base.

g. Ratings:

(1) 461st BG - Lead Navigator Lt. Toth.
Navigation Good. Log Good.

(2) 484th BG - Lead Navigator Capt Albertassi.
Navigation Good. Log Good.

(3) 451st BG - Lead Navigator Lt. Elahay
Navigation Good. Log Good.

h. COMMENTS: The take off time was planned to be as early as possible with 1st A/C of two Gps taking off at daylight. However, due to low clouds and poor visibility the take off was delayed approximately 30 minutes. When the planes were in the air, the 461st BG (Wing Lead) tried to contact the 451st BG but was unsuccessful due to the confusion resulting from insufficient VHF Channel crystal for Wing frequency - therefore, there wasn't a Wing Formation.

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