

C O N F I D E N T I A L

HEADQUARTERS 47TH WING
APO 520

E: MEF/ML/GR/11s

2 January 1945.

SUBJECT: Tactical Analysis of Mission of 26 December 1944.
(Targets along the BRENNER PASS).

TO : Commanding Officer, 98th Bomb Group, APO 520.
Commanding Officer, 376th Bomb Group, APO 520.
Commanding Officer, 449th Bomb Group, APO 520.
Commanding Officer, 450th Bomb Group, APO 520.

1. Bombing Analysis:

a. The 47th Wing attacked the ORA and the MEZZOCORONA Railroad Bridges with Excellent results, and the AVISIO VIADUCT with Unsatisfactory results.

b. The 449th attacked the ORA Railroad Bridge with Satisfactory results. The first three boxes hit the I.P., but none of the boxes were in trail when starting their run on the target. The lead ship of the first box experienced some trouble in holding a constant airspeed, therefore the Very Satisfactory results scored by this Squadron (the 716th) were probably very good under the circumstances. The second box from the 717th Squadron, cut short of the I.P. on their first approach, so the leader elected to make a 360 and come in for another run - this time over the I.P. The formation was somewhat scattered on the run so that the pattern, like the results, was unsatisfactory. The third squadron, the 718th, was forced to make a PDI run but aside from that the run was normal. Again, however, the pattern and the results were unsatisfactory. The last squadron, the 719th really encountered difficulty in getting squared away at the target. Coming up to the I.P., the first time they elected to make a 360 so that the group following could go on in for the run. When coming up on the I.P. the second time, they somehow picked up the wrong target and began their run on this. The mistake was discovered in time however, and they made a turn and attacked the Bridge on a northerly axis. A good pattern was then laid down by this box, but it started too short and did not walk up to the target.

c. The 450th gave the performance of the day - scoring Excellent Results. The various boxes had not obtained proper spacing before coming up on the I.P. so the first two boxes made a 360 near the I.P. before starting their run on the target. The first box, the 720th, was squared away at the I.P. the next time up and Bombardier GAWNE led the squadron on an excellent run, scoring Superior results. When the 722nd Squadron, flying second, came up on the I.P., the second time they failed to get squared away at

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the target and after having to make a couple turns on the bomb run in an attempt to get squared away and experiencing an autopilot malfunction after they were almost ready for the run, the Squadron did not have time for a bomb run. They turned off this run and did not attempt another. No bombs were dropped. The third box, from the 721st Squadron, experienced a normal run and Bombardier ENOCH led his squadron in to score Very Satisfactory results. The 723rd Squadron, flying fourth, was led by Bombardier McMAHON. Although Lt. McMAHON experienced some difficulty with stiff knobs which made corrections difficult, and found it necessary to bomb with a caged gyro because of inadequate current, he nevertheless performed very creditably. This squadron scored Superior results.

d. The 98th was briefed to attack the AVISIO VIADUCT, but because of very poor visibility in the target area, none of the boxes were able to bomb the primary. One box attacked a target of opportunity - a Railroad Bridge at ROVERETO, another attacked the MEZZOCORONA Railroad Bridge and the other box returned bombs to base. Because of interference by a box from another group, the group formation flew north of the I.P. before turning onto the target. After turning the first box from the 343rd Squadron, encountered a very effective smoke screen, and the bombardier was unable to pick up the target until directly over it. The box then rallied left and made a run on the Railroad Bridge at ROVERETO. The run was too short for complete synchronization however, and the bombs missed the bridge. The 344th Squadron was also unable to pick up the target until directly over it, so they rallied left and followed what they believed to be their lead box, expecting to attack an alternate. The box they were following led them out of the area completely however, so they returned bombs to base. The 345th Squadron was in trail of the other two boxes and turned in trail, taking up the briefed heading. Because they turned north of the I.P. however, this heading took them to an alternate target - the MEZZOCORONA RAILROAD BRIDGE. Although a smoke screen over the target proved to be a handicap, Bombardier McCAULEY was able to complete synchronization, and he succeeded in scoring Superior results.

e. All units of the 376th missed the I.P. Shortly after getting squared away at the target, the optics in the lead ship of the first box frosted up. The bombardier was unable to remedy this situation but since he was partly synchronized, he elected to let the bombs go away on this synchronization. This judgement was very poor - the results unsatisfactory. The second box was being led by the deputy lead after the original lead returned early. The box seemed to be squared away for a good bomb run, but shortly before bombs away the lead ship was severely hit by flak. He then salvoed the bombs and the rest of the ships in this box toggled on him - considerably short of the target. The 513th, flying third, turned in the only successful performance in the group. Bombardier YOUNG was squared away at the target early, experienced a normal

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run and led his squadron in to score SUPERIOR results. The fourth box was also led by the deputy leader. The bombardier experienced difficulty in picking up the target and when he finally squared away at the target, the run was insufficient, and synchronization was incomplete. Again results were unsatisfactory.

f. Summary: The number of units missing the I.P. today was exactly two-thirds of the Wing effort. Improper spacing of the groups, and improper spacing within the groups was responsible for a large part of this error. Another group of errors was caused by unprepared deputy leaders who were called upon to assume lead positions. In four units of the fifteen, deputies were forced to assume the lead and in each case results were unsatisfactory.

<u>GROUP</u>	<u>SCORE</u>	<u>RATING</u>	<u>REPORTS</u>	<u>LEAD PRACTICE</u>
450th	90.7	Excellent	Superior	ALL UNITS
449th	19.6	Satisfactory	Superior	TWO OF FOUR
376th	N.A.	Satisfactory	Superior	ALL UNITS
98th	75.7*	Very satisfactory	Superior	TWO OF THREE

* Score for one box of three - counts as 1/3 mission.

2. Navigation Analysis:

a. Rendezvous: The 376th experiencing difficulty with the weather rendezvoused at SAN VITO seven minutes early at 8500 ft. Because of the overcast the other groups could not pin-point their departure; however, they all reported departing essentially as briefed. The briefed schedule was as follows:

- (1) SAN PAN - 376 at 7000 feet at 0851.
98 at 8000 feet at 0853.
- (2) MANDURIA- 449 at 8000 feet at 0855.
450 at 9000 feet at 0857.

The conditions for rendezvous were very difficult this morning, but we emphasize again that the degree of success in maintaining a well spaced wing formation depends largely on the success of this initial rendezvous.

b. Route out: SAN VITO to keypoint coast 4532 N, 1244 E at 23,000 feet or higher at 1056 to FARRA to I.P. PREDAZZO to target. The schedule made at the keypoint follows:

- (1) 376 at 1052 at 23,000 feet.
- (2) 449 at 1106 at 23,000 feet.
- (3) 98 at 1109 at 23,000 feet.
- (4) 450 at 1111 at 23,000 feet.

The 449th bolted the wing formation to follow the briefed route on its own after reporting that it was led 50 miles right of course by the 376th and 98th. Then in the vicinity of SANSEGO the 449th reported that the 376th and 98th were spotted in trail so it passed over the keypoint first and bombed first. Actually the 376th

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hit the keypoint 14 minutes before the 449th and bombed 9 minutes earlier, but could not communicate with the rest of the wing. The 376th must have been ahead of the wing formation from rendezvous on, while the 98th and 450th remained together.

c. Target area: The 376th unable to contact any of the other groups on the route but hit the keypoint at 1052, 14 minutes before the next group, the 449th; then swinging slightly north of the I.P. came over the target for a run at 1118 at 23,000 feet on an axis of 220 degrees.

The 449th came in next with the first and third boxes hitting the I.P. for a normal run on the target at 1127 at 23,500 feet on an axis of 282 degrees. The second and fourth boxes, however, after weaving around several positions of route flank in the UDINE area, fell behind the formation. The fourth box after missing its I.P. and making a 360 degree turn followed by a run on the wrong bridge, made a 180 degree turn and bombed at 1146 at 23,000 feet from an I.P. at 4613 N, 1115 E. In the meantime the second box which also cut short of the I.P. made a 360 degree turn to hit the briefed I.P. and bombed at 1135 at 23,500 feet on an axis of 282 degrees.

The 450th, after colliding with boxes of the 449th in the vicinity of the I.P. broke up. The first two boxes made a 360 degree turn to hit the I.P. and bombed at 1137 at 24,000 feet on an axis of 282 degrees, while the third and fourth boxes hit the I.P. all right the first try and bombed at 1133 at 24,000 feet on an axis of 300 degrees.

The first box of the 98th flew two minutes past the I.P. when a box from the preceding group interfered with their turning on time. Turning a few miles north of the I.P. they came in on an axis of 233 degrees; then after failing to pick up the target, they rallied left and bombed ROVERETO 4555 N, 1104 E at 1145 at 23,500 feet.

The second box failing to find the target through the dense smoke rallied left with the intention of following the first box for a second run; however, mistaking a strange box for its leader, the box found itself on the way home. As a result of missing the I.P., the third box came in on MEZZO-CORONA instead of AVISIO at 1134 on an axis of 243 degrees at 24,000 feet.

The briefed axes of attack were: 98th and 376th - 243 degs, 449th and 450th - 282 degs. Briefed target time was 1125 for all groups.

d. The route back was followed closely except for minor deviations to get through the weather.

e. The escort was efficient for all groups.

f. The navigation on this mission is considered excellent, although other factors made this a very confused, mixed up mission from an analytical standpoint.

g. Communications were satisfactory for all groups except the 376th which could not contact either the escort or the other groups.

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h. Ratings:

- (1) 376th - navigation excellent - logs excellent.
- (2) 449th - navigation excellent - logs excellent.
- (3) 450th - navigation excellent - logs excellent.
- (4) 98th - navigation excellent - logs excellent.

3. PFF Analysis:

a. Seven pathfinder aircraft were dispatched from the 98th, 376th, 449th and 450th Bomb Groups to aid navigation only.

b. The Radar effort was 85% effective. The 376th experienced a Mickey failure, cause unknown. All bombing was done visually. Fixes, bearings and distances off the briefed course were obtained by all operators. Complete logs were kept by all Mickey Operators.

c. Rating of operator logs:

- (1) 98th - excellent.
- (2) 376th - excellent.
- (3) 449th - excellent.
- (4) 450th - excellent.

By command of Brigadier General RUSE:

Robert H. Warren
ROBERT H. WARREN,
Colonel, Air Corps
A-3.

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