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HEADQUARTERS
 404TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
 Office of the Intelligence Officer
 APO 520 U.S. Army

BVB/PFE/jmm

319.1

6 July 1944

Subject: Narrative Mission Report.

TO : Commanding Officer, 5th Bombardment Wing (H),
 APO 520, U.S. Army
 Attn: A-2

1. On 6 July 1944 starting at 0650B hours, 33 B-24 a/c of 38a/c scheduled, took off and bombed the Porto Marghera Oil Storage facilities, dropping 82 1/4 tons of 500 lb GP bombs (.1 nose and mixed .01 and .025 tail fuses) at 1047B hours (assigned target time was 1034B hours) from 19,000 feet.

2. The 33 a/c formed in two (2) attack units. The first unit was led by Major Clarence G. Poff, Commanding Officer of the 776th Bombardment Squadron (H), and the second unit was led by Major Harold E. Blehm, Commanding Officer of the 776th Bombardment Squadron (H). The Group form-up was executed according to plan. Line rendezvous with the 465th Bombardment Group (H) was as prescribed, as was the Wing rendezvous.

3. Five a/c failed to take off for the following reasons: B-24 a/c No 42-78248 failed to take off because of excessive magneto drop in two engines resulting in reduced power on full throttle. B-24 a/c No 42-52522 failed to take off when the superchargers on all four engines stuck. B-24 a/c No 42-51083 failed to take off because No 4 engine was out. B-24 a/c No 42-52536 failed to take off because broken electrical lines could not be repaired in time. B-24 a/c No 42-95355 failed to take off because the electrical system on No 3 engine was out.

4. Rendezvous with the fighter escort which consisted of 30 to 35 P-38 a/c was effected at 0933B hours at 43°27'N-15°10'E. The fighters escorted the bombers to the target and on withdrawal to 41°55'N-15°20'E departing at 1208B hours.

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Ltr Narrative Mission Report, contd

5. There were no early returns and all a/c dropped all bombs on the target with the exception of a/c No 42-73374 which had a rack malfunction and was able to drop only nine (9) of the ten (10) bombs on the target. This a/c jettisoned 1/4 ton of bombs in the Adriatic at 1134B hours. The results of the bombing were generally poor in that the main concentration of bombs hit short and to the west of the briefed aiming point. Three bombs hit in the southern edge of the Oil storage area, and five (5) bombs hit in the northeast corner of the area. Outside of the briefed target, eighteen (18) bombs hit the Ammonia Plant and seventeen (17) bombs struck the Aluminium Plant, with a few bombs striking close to the Power Station and the Carbide Plant.

6. No flak or enemy fighters were observed or encountered enroute to or on return from the target. At the target, AAA flak was encountered and crews report nine-point positions of batteries as briefed. One crew reports that five (5) FW 190s were observed at the target flying about 5000 feet below and away from the bomber formation. There is no confirmation of this observation.

7. Weather at take-off at the base consisted of scattered middle clouds increasing to 2/10 strato cumulus with bases at 7000 feet and tops at 10,000 over the Adriatic with visibility 20 miles. At the target, 1/10 cumulus with visibility about 20 miles. The weather on return was the same as the weather out except the strato cumulus had increased to 3/10 to 4/10 near the spur and 6/10 to 7/10 over land to base.

8. Thirty two a/c landed at 1245B hours without incident. B-24 a/c No 42-73374 received a flak hit before bombs away and Flight Officer Williard E. Layne, T-121360, received a severe wound on the middle finger of his left hand which bled profusely. This a/c landed at Foggia main at 1225B hours in order that Flight Officer Layne could be given treatment. The wounded Bombardier was left at the Station Hospital at Foggia Main while the rest of the crew returned to base landing at 1400B hours. Flight Officer Layne remained at the bombsight and released his bombs with the formation only to have one (1) bomb hang up.

9. Six (6) B-24 a/c received flak damage, one of which will be inoperational for more than twenty four (24) hours.

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1. Reactive Mission Report, contd

10. The route was flown as briefed and is plotted on the attached track chart.

11. Six (6) a/c attempted photo runs. Selected strike photos are attached.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. MASON
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer

2 Inclosures

Incl 1 - Track Chart

Incl 2 - Selected strike photos