

HEADQUARTERS 320TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (M)
Office of the Group Intelligence Officer
NATOUSA A.P.O 520

Intelligence Narrative No. 14 Day Operation 9 May 1943

Forty B-26's of the 320th Bombardment Group took off this morning to bomb Palermo, Sicily. Three spares returned early. They were escorted by 60 P-38's of the 14th Fighter Group. One B-26 caught on fire probably during their gas transfer, and fell into sea twenty miles north of Cape S. Vito, Sicily or twenty miles due north of Marettime Island. Conflicting stories from crews made it difficult to exactly pinpoint the position. The time is given as 11:40 or 11:45 hours. Two parachutes were seen to open, at 2000 feet. The bomb bay doors opened, and another figure leaped out; his parachute opened, but seemed to be damaged or ripped. As the plane struck the water, another figure was seen on top of the B-26, but an explosion blew the plane apart, and it submerged immediately. A life raft is reported to have emerged from the plane just prior to the explosion.

The remaining B-26's bombed the target successfully. Shortly after the bombing run, three (3) Italian Reggiane 2001's attacked one element. Peeling off above our formation, each plane made individual pass, from sides and rear. Shots exchanged, but no claims on either side. Nine bombers landed at Scuk el Arba, six later proceeding this base. Three B-26's remained there for repair. A total of thirty-three (33) B-26's landed safely this base by 16:43 hours.

Route: This base to rendezvous at Cape Rosa to target to this base.

Chronology: Off between 09:29 and 09:48-30 hours. On course 10:13 hours, Cape Rosa 10:29 hours; bombs away 12:25 hours. Down this base between 14:37 and 16:43 hours.

Bombs: 296 X 300 lb. demolition, 1/10, .025 sec. delay carried by 37 planes, of which 288 X 300 lb bombs were dropped on target. 8 bombs were destroyed when one B-26 caught on fire and fell to sea.

Results: Our bombs were seen to fall directly into target area. The dock area north east of railroad yard reveals considerable damage; crews report smoke rising to 5000 ft., visible for 40 miles from target. Considerable damage and some fire was evident in the dock area, with central pier revealing huge gaping holes.

Flak: Intense heavy flak in barrage pattern over target area and aimed fire encountered from positions north of Palermo; and from a battery or batteries on the northern tip of the island. Heavy flak-fire is also reported.

The pattern fire was "stepped up" from 12000 to perhaps 15000 ft., and caused minor damage to several of our ships. The aimed fire was accurate for deflection, inaccurate for altitude. Most intense flak came from positions N and W of town; with reports of flak from positions in the city proper.

Enemy Aircraft: Seven single engine enemy aircraft reported 3 or 4,000 ft. above bomber formation during bombing run. Enemy aircraft flying in formation of five and two, did not attack.

Three Reggiane 2001's were sighted at 12:30 hours. They peeled off above and behind our formation to make individual passes from sides and rear. After initial pass, they dove away. Our planes sustained no material damage; our crews make no claims. Attack was made at 8000 ft.

Weather: ~~Clear~~ enroute and at target; on return slight haze, about 4/10 cloud at 12000 feet with few scattered at 8000 ft. over land on approach to this base.

Observations: Explosions described as tremendous in dock area as our first flight started bombing run.

One large L/V with 10 to 16 smaller vessels reported at Terrini, Sicily, at approximately 12:10 hours from 12,500 ft. altitude.

Two smoking L/V's reported at 37° 30' N, 11° 10' E, at 13:45 hours from 8000 ft. altitude.

Seven ships, believed to be destroyers sighted heading north about ten miles due north of Cape Serrat at 14:15 hours from 8000 ft. altitude.

Saw a light colored life boat with four to eight men waving white flag at 37° 30' N, 10° 20' E at 13:25 hours from 2500 ft. altitude.

At airdrome west of city, three large enemy aircraft sighted at 12:27 hours from 12000 ft.

Comments: The following crew is still missing.

Nav.	<u>Captain Elliott, Danna E.,</u> O-789460, next of kin and home address, Virginia M. Elliott, 5115 Page Blvd., St. Louis, Mo.
Gunner	<u>S/Sgt. Howard, Haileye E.,</u> 39022900, next of kin and home address, Mrs. Nora Howard, 3483 Corrington Road, Memphis, Tenn.
Pilot	<u>1st. Lieutenant Bathews, Ernest E.,</u> O-725626, next of kin and home address, Mr. W.C. Bathews, 7332 W. Vincent Ave., Portland, Ore.
Bomb.	<u>1st. Lieutenant Norman, A.,</u> O-661018, next of kin and home address, Mr. Charles E. Norman, Pleasant Valley, Chic.
Obs.	<u>Captain Ellsworth, F.R.,</u> O-431955, next of kin and home address, Mrs. F.R. Ellsworth, 1 Kingstand Fl., Oakland, California.
Co. Pilot	<u>2nd. Lieutenant Simon, Paul,</u> O-790883, next of kin and home address, Mrs. Mary Simon, 206 Heather Rd., Upper Darby, Pa.
Pacific	<u>Sgt. Nelson, R.L.,</u> 19064833, next of kin and home address, Carl Nelson, 1321 1st. Street, Red Bluff, California.

James H. Macia Jr.
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