

10-26-44

371st BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)
307th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

A/C # 719,
27 October 1944.

NARRATIVE ON THE ACCOUNT OF THIS MISSION 307-353D

- A. MISSION NUMBER : 307-353D/ 26 October 1944/ 371st Bomb. Sq. (H).
Six of seven scheduled B-24's.
- B. TARGET : Japanese Naval target of opportunity resulted in attack of Japanese BB of the Yamato Class, proceeding in 12 ship Task Force consisting of 2 BB's, 4 CA's or CL's and 6 DD's.
- C. TIME AND ALTITUDE OF AT ACK : 1055-1058 I 9,500-10,100 feet true.
- D. RESULTS : Excellent. One direct hit was reported on the Yamato Class BB and at least 8 bombs were seen to hit just off the starboard side within less than 100 feet. Another string of three fell about 500 to 700 feet off the stern and six were seen to hit in the wake more than 100 feet from the ship. A small column of gray smoke was observed coming from almost amidships as the formation pulled away. This was denser than the smoke made by the guns firing and was billowing rather than sporadic.
Excellent bombing by the leading squadrons, who dropped on the Kongo Class BB, was observed. Two direct hits or very near misses were observed.
Enemy losses: The two BB's were undoubtedly damaged, though the extent cannot be assessed.
Our losses: Five of our aircraft were holed by flak. Most of the damage was minor in nature, A/C #356 had a 2' x 2' foot hole in the left rudder, A/C #587 had the right elevator control cable cut, A/C #421 was hit in the right tire and the balance were small holes in wings and fuselage. No personnel casualties.
- E. INTERCEPTION : Nil.
- F. COMBAT TACTICS : Nil.
- G. AA FIRE : Antiaircraft fire was intense, heavy and medium, and accurate. AA opposition began 10 to 12 minutes before going into the attack when the big guns opened. For such extreme range, these bursts were surprising in their accuracy. These

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Yamato, who was in the approximate center of the formation. To the left and slightly trailing the Yamato was the Nagato, with another cruiser about equidistant to the right. Following was a line of one cruiser with a DD on each flank and another DD bringing up the rear. The attack was made on heading of 335° to 340°, which made the run across the task force between the leading DD and the 1st cruiser on the left. All the vessels went into violent evasive action immediately. The general policy was to feint a sharp turn to the right, then immediately reverse and turn sharply to the left. The evasive tactics were well planned and executed, with the force reassembling very quickly as soon as the attack had terminated.

A warship was observed, believed to be a cruiser, at 1007 L. at 10°00'N. - 133°01'W. This ship was burning fiercely and lying dead in the water.

At 1030 L. one large and 3 smaller rafts were observed at anchor at the base of the main island. One of the rafts was observed to have beached near this point.

A b-7c freighter observed at 1040 L., near Caye Island, heading approximately 130° and heading of 280°.

One b-7c freighter proceeding along the coast of Negros on heading of 100° at 1045 L.

A medium sized AK was observed dead in the water at 1045 L. at 10°30'N. - 121°39'W.

Two b-24's in the 424th Squadron were seen going down in flames, one in several pieces, over the target. No clusters were seen to crash. The two aircraft exploded within a few seconds of each other and both were seen to hit the water. Another 424th plane was observed level in altitude and with one engine smoking after the squadron left the target.

From 1000 to the equator mild from all conditions prevailed with a few towering cumulus built up to 10,000 feet and mild turbulence. From 1000 to equator a thick stratus with tops prevailed with several peaks of 10,000 feet. Cumulus built up to 10,000 feet and unbroken altitude. From equator to 1000 generally prevailed from 1000 to the target with cumulus up to 7,000 feet. There was a .7 stratus cumulus underneath over the target and Lindero, built up to 10,000 feet over the mountains. Weather was good over the return trip.

D. Bomb Load : Four aircraft each dropped 3 x 1000 pound GP bombs and 1 x 500 pound M-100.
Two aircraft each dropped 3 x 1000 pound GP bombs. All bombs were fused in M-100 mode only.

Ammunition expended in test series only.

E. Accident : A/C 435, flown by Lt. Johnston, failed to pick up altitude on take off and crashed on the runway about one mile off the end of the runway. Four enlisted crew members were killed instantly. Six escaped with minor injuries and one sustained serious injury, though it is not believed fatal.

This mission was flown on the second anniversary of this Squadron's departure from the continental United States and a day which climaxed numerous spectacular raids which began on Christmas Eve, 1942, on Wake Island, continued through the Solomons, Rabaul, Truk, Wak, Yap, Palau, and Salikpapan. The anniversary was celebrated in a manner fully in keeping with the tradition of this Squadron and the results obtained fulfill the highest expectations.

JAMES H. [REDACTED],
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Asst. Intelligence Officer.