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HEADQUARTERS
 46ATTY BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
 Office of the Intelligence Officer
 APO 520 U S Army

JFB/MCK/lem

319.1

16 July 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

TO : Commanding Officer, 55th Bombardment Wing (H),
 APO 520, U S Army
 (Attn: A-2)

1. On 16 July 1944 at 0625B hours 30 B-24 of 32 a/c scheduled took off to bomb Wiener Neudorf a/c engine factory (Primary target). 2 a/c failed to take off because the copilot of one a/c and the pilot of the other a/c were both ill. The 30 a/c formed in 2 attack units, the second attack unit consisting of only 2 boxes; the first unit was led by Maj William G. Moore Jr, Commanding Officer 777 Sq and the second unit was led by Capt. Robert H. Fowler ass't operations officer 779 Sq. One a/c returned before assembly because of the loss of #2 engine after T/O.

2. The group assembly was executed according to plan. Line and wing rendezvous was as prescribed. The Group leader received flak damage two minutes before bombs away resulting in severe gas leaks around #3 engine, and in the bomb bay. Immediately after bombs away the Group leader left his position and the deputy leader took over.

3. Rendezvous of fighter escort which consisted of 35 to 50 P-38 a/c of 306th Fighter Wing was effected without incident in the vicinity of Lake Balaton at 0955B hours.

4. Five a/c returned prior to bombing: Two a/c because of uncontrollable manifold pressure and turbos in 3 engines; one a/c because of 3 leaky superchargers, which resulted in blown rubbers; one a/c because of oxygen leak; one a/c because #3 engine vibrated badly was throwing excessive oil.

5. 21 a/c were over target at 1030B hours (target time 1021B hours), and dropped 52 1/2 tons of 1,000 G.P. (.1 nose and

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.025 tail mixed fusing) at 23,000 feet; 2 a/c jettisoned 10 bombs; 5 bombs at 41°38'N-18°00'E and 5 bombs at 45°12'N-17°15'E; 4 a/c returned 20 bombs to base; 7 1/2 tons of bombs went down in 3 shops, which were shot down between I P and target. Target area was completely obscured by undercast. Bombs away photos and bomb bursts which are slightly discernable beneath clouds indicate strikes in or near the target.

6. Clear at take off. Visibility 20 miles. 1/10 Stratus over Adriatic at 4,000 ft visibility 15 miles.

Clear over Dinaric Alps - Scattered Strato cumulus to East.

From Dinaric Alps to Target 7/10 Alto Stratus at 12,000.

At Target 8/10 Alto Cumulus, tops 15,000 ft. Visibility 15 miles in haze.

RETURN: Middle layer had increased to nearly overcast to Lake Balaton. Gradually dissipated in the vicinity of Sava River.

Scattered Cumulus over Dinaric Alps, tops 12,000 ft.

Thin scattered cumulus over Adriatic at 3,000 ft.

Base 3/10 cumulus at 4,000 ft on return.

7. 25/30 ME 109 e/a and 3/7 FW 190 e/a were observed between I P and target. These e/a were very aggressive in their attacks on the formation. One series of attacks came from 6 o'clock, at 2,000 yds the e/a about 30 in number were abreast as they approached the formation, the width of the attacking e/a narrowed similar to a funnel sliding from side to side, thus presenting a difficult target. The e/a pressed their attack to within 150' veering off to right and left. Another series of attacks were from 1030 o'clock high, pressed very close to the formation. Another series of attacks were from all clock positions. Our bomber crews claim 9 ME 109s' destroyed, and probably destroyed 6 ME 109s' and 3 FW 190s'.

8. 19 a/c landed at 1300B hours; one a/c landed at Vis; one a/c #42-52487 with 20mm shell damage from e/a crash landed at Foggia and will be salvaged. Tail turret gunner received wound in side of head from 20mm shell, hospitalized Foggia. 3 of our bombers were lost apparently to e/a between I P and target. One a/c attack ve e/a between I P and target had direct hit in #2 engine at 1025B hours, spiraled down to approximately

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16,000 feet, where left wing broke off, 5 to 6 chutes were seen to open; one a/c left formation between I P and target with #3 engine on fire after attack by e/a. One crew reported seeing 2 chutes at 1025R hours and one crew reported 10 chutes at 1028R hours; one a/c shot down between I P and target, #3 engine on fire.

9. Smoke pots were observed along the North, North West and West side of the target area. The pots were located approximately 2,000 feet from the target along the road.

10. ITH to IAH flak was encountered between I P and target.

11. Route as briefed and as flown, axis of attack plotted on chart attached.

12. 3 a/c attempted photographs. Selected prints attached.

For the Commanding Officer:

MAURICE C. KIPLING
Captain, Air Corps,
Actg Intel Officer.