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HEADQUARTERS
464TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 U S Army

JFP/ERE/hob

319.1

18 August 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative mission report

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

1. On 18 August 1944, 27 of 28 scheduled B-24 a/c and 3 spare B-24 a/c took off at 0635B hours to bomb Ploesti Targets (Roumania), Target attacked Romana Americana. One scheduled a/c failed to take off because of illness of pilot.

The thirty a/c formed into two attack units, the first unit being led by Maj. William H. Reddell, Commanding Officer of the 776th Bombardment Squadron (H), and the Second Attack unit was by 2nd Lt. John T. Welch, Flight Leader, 778th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. Group assembly, line rendezvous with the 465th Group, and Wing rendezvous were made as planned.

3. Nine a/c returned early, as follows:

A/C No.	Coordinates	Remarks
a. 42-51736	41°37'N-16°34'E	#2 and #4 engines started cutting out.
b. 42-95337	Assembly Area	Bad gas leak in bomb bay transfer pump.
c. 44-10566	41°33'N-17°58'E	Late take off due to inoperative prop governor - unable to catch formation.
d. 42-50533	42°43'N-22°30'E	Navigator killed by flak at SORDULICA
e. 42-52563	42°20'N-22°40'E	#2 Booster pump out, loss of oil pressure at high altitude
f. 42-52504	43°10'N-21°52'E	Electric system out and excessive gas consumption
g. 42-51083	42°59'N-22°17'E	#1 engine feathered
h. 41-29458	44°47'N-24°56'E	Supercharger on #2 out, couldn't climb with 3 superchargers.

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt 464 BG cont'd

1. 42-95374 45°12'N-25°40'E #3 supercharger went out at 24,000' could not maintain formation position in the climb

4. 21 a/c were over the target at 1036B hours. 16 of these 21 a/c dropped 30 tons of 500 pound GP bombs fused .1 nose and .025 tail, from 25,850 feet.

2 a/c of the 16 a/c dropping on the target failed to drop all their bombs and jettisoned 1 1/2 tons of bombs. One of these a/c jettisoned 3 tons of bombs at IP due to inability to climb to altitude, the other a/c jettisoned 1 ton of bombs because of loss of power at 45°25'N-26°05'E at 1027B hours.

5 a/c of the 21 a/c over the target disposed of their bombs as follows: 1 a/c returned 2 tons of bombs to base; one a/c accidentally released 2 tons of bombs 1 minute after IP; 1 a/c jettisoned 2 tons of bombs at 44°52'N-26°30'E due to rack malfunction; 1 a/c jettisoned 2 tons of bombs at 44°40'N-25°50'E because he was low on gas; 1 a/c jettisoned 1 1/2 tons of bombs at 45°32'N-26°03'E because two turbos were inoperative and jettisoned 3 ton, the remainder of its load at 43°40'N-23°15'E because select lever and pilot emergency handle was inoperative.

The 9 a/c which returned early disposed of their bombs as follows: 4 a/c returned 8 tons of bombs to base; 1 a/c dropped 2 tons of bombs from 15,000' at 1100B hours on a heading of 230° on barges in Danube River at 44°28'N-22°10'E. A target of opportunity, the bombs failed to hit the target. 1 a/c jettisoned 2 tons of bombs at 41°37'N-16°34'E because #2 and #4 engines started cutting out; 1 a/c jettisoned 2 tons of bombs at 41°45'N-18°52'E after the Navigator was killed by flak, 1 a/c jettisoned 2 tons of bombs at 43°05'N-22°00'E, 1 a/c jettisoned 2 tons of bombs at 42°23'N-20°30'E because of feathered #1 engine.

Disposition of bombs of 21 a/c over target

<u>Disposition of Bombs</u>	<u># A/C</u>	<u>Tons</u>
Jettisoned not on target	2	1 1/2
Jettisoned nbt on target	3	6
Accidental release not on target	1	2
Returned to Base	1	2
Dropped on target	*16	30 1/2
Total	21	42

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt 464 BG cont'd

* of the 16 a/c dropping on target 2 a/c jettisoned
1½ tons.

Disposition of bombs of 9 a/c returning early

Disposition of bombs	# A/C	Tons.
Jettisoned	4	8
Returned to base	4	8
Target of opportunity	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	9	18

Recapitulation of Bombs.

Dropped on target	30½ tons
Jettisoned	15½ tons
Accidental release	2 tons
Target of opportunity	2 tons
Returned to base	<u>10 tons</u>
Total	60 tons

5. At the beginning of the bomb run the target was obscured by smoke to such a degree it was impossible to see the target. When the formation was directly over the target which was after bombs away the target could be picked up. A few isolated smoke generators could be seen southeast and south west of the target area. The pattern of the smoke generators in the target area could not be ascertained due to the smoke obscured area.

The crews upon interrogation reported several fires and smoke up to 15,000 feet.

Bombing results as shown by Bomb Strike Photographs are as follows:

More than two dozen strikes in the target area, immediately west and south of the center of the plant. Approximately twelve hits were on the four large buildings off the south-east corner of the storage tank area. An oblique photo taken after crossing over the target shows numerous additional strikes in the smoke obscured section across the east end of the storage tank area.

6. The leader of the first attack unit used the A-t Automatic Pilot on the bomb run; the leader of the second attack unit for first three minutes of the bomb run used PFF, then changed and used C-1 automatic pilot and visually bombed the target.

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt 464 BG cont'd

7. IAN flak was encountered for a period of 3 to 4 minutes at the target. M to IAN flak was encountered at SURDULICA 42°42'N-22°11'E. IAN flak was encountered at DZEPA 42°46'N-22°05'E.

The flak at Surdulica and Dzepa was encountered at a time when the formation was to the right of the briefed course. At one point which was as far as 14 miles off course. Maj. Reddell the Group leader's statement points out that the 460th Group was leading the Wing. The 464th Group was echeloned to the right with the 485th Group to the left of the 464th. That the 464th was approximately 14 miles right of course due to flying in right echelon. As the flak areas were approached the 485th was flying abreast of the 464th and at the same altitude, this making it impossible for the 464th to slide to the left and avoid the flak areas. Near the flak area the 464th turned right 45° for four minutes to attempt to miss the flak because to have flown straight ahead would have taken them directly over the flak area. Flak was encountered for a period of about 4 minutes, over an area of about 10 miles.

It was also necessary for the 464th Group to fly at 150 MPH for 2 hours, and for the 485th Group and 465th Group to slow down. The cause due to the slow speed of the 460th Group the Wing leader.

8. 3 ME-109 e/a were observed at 44°43'N-26°20'E (Pitesti). These e/a at an altitude of 25,000 came in from 9 o'clock, made a pass at the formation to within 700 yards, turned and went out same way as they came in. One unidentified e/a was observed in a dog fight with a fighter a/c at the IP.

9. Rendezvous with fighter escort was made at 0940B hours at 43°50'N-23°00'E with 30-35 P-51 a/c. Two P-38 a/c were observed at 1012B hours at 44°35'N-25°50'E.

10. Few small patches of altostratus at take off, visibility 15 miles. Clear over Adriatic, visibility 10 miles in heavy haze. 3/10 to 4/10 stratocumulus over Dinaric Alps, tops 8,000 feet. Scattered middle and low cumulus from Alps to target, visibility improving to 15-20 miles. Clear at target, visibility 20 miles. On return similar conditions except cumulus had built up over Dinaric Alps to 13,000 feet with few scattered higher, tops 5/10 coverage. Clear over Adriatic and 3/10 cumulus at base on return.

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11. 8 a/c were damaged by flak, 4 of which will be inoperative for longer than 24 hours. Lt. John Paul Sevey received a fatal injury from flak from the town of Burdulica, Yugoslavia.

The following observations were reported by crew members upon interrogation:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Altitude</u>	<u>Observation</u>
0924B	43°10'N-22°35'E	20,500 M/Y	500 wagons
1050B	44°35'N-26°05'E	24,000	1t unidentified a/c on ground
1128B	43°46'N-23°43'E	16,000	Large X 15 marked on ground

12. 21 a/c landed at this base from 1345B hours to 1415B hours.

13. Route was flown as briefed except 14 miles right of course 42°35'N-21°54'E between T.P. Ulcins and T.P. Suode. Track Chart showing route as flown inclosed.

14. 5 a/c attempted photographs. Selected print inclosed.

15. In view of the duration and intensity of the flak encountered at Burdulica, Yugoslavia as reported in interrogation. It is possible that additional flak guns have been added to this area. It is suggested that additional reconnaissance of this area might be helpful.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer

2 Incls:
Incl 1-Track Chart
Incl 2-Selected Photograph

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