

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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

RFE/hob

319.1

21 August 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 21 August 1944, twenty-eight (28) scheduled B-24 a/c and one (1) spare B-24 a/c took off at 0650B hours to bomb the dispersed a/c and installations of the A/D at Wis, Yugoslavia.

The twenty-nine (29) a/c formed into two attack units. The first attack unit was led by Colonel A. L. Schroeder, Group Commander, and the second by Captain Robert B. Fowler, Assistant Operations Officer of the 779th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. Form up, line rendezvous and wing rendezvous were as planned.

3. The one (1) spare a/c returned at 0915B hours, after accompanying the formation to (41°35'N-18°00'E).

4. Twenty-eight (28) a/c were over the target at 0959B hours (briefed target time 1000B hours). Twenty-six (26) of these a/c dropped 54.84 tons of Fragmentation Clusters (instantaneous fusing) from 19,500 feet. One (1) a/c jettisoned 2.16 tons of bombs at 1120B hours at (41°35'N-18°00'E), due to a rack malfunction which made it necessary for the bombardier to unload them manually, with the use of a screwdriver. Another a/c jettisoned .24 tons of bombs in the Adriatic Sea due to a rack malfunction causing four (4) clusters to hang up. A third a/c returned 1.08 tons of bombs to base as, upon release, the bomb bay doors crept and broke the electrical circuit and after eighteen (18) clusters had been dropped. A fourth a/c returned its entire bomb load (2.16 tons) as a malfunction of the selector bar prevented their release upon the target.

## Recapitulation of Bombing Information:

Dropped on target	54.84 tons
Jettisoned	2.40 tons
Returned to base	3.24 tons
	<hr/> 60.48 tons

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Ltr Warr Miss Rpt 464th BG cont'd

Bomb strike photos show a good concentration of bomb hits in the target area. The pattern, started 1,000 feet short of the northwest corner of the assigned target area and ran southeast through the target and as far as the river bend, 7,000 feet away. Twelve (12) single-engined and three (3) twin-engined fighters were present on the airdrome, and of these it is estimated that one (1) SE fighter and one (1) TE fighter were damaged. In addition, a sizeable concentration of bombs hit among eight columns of freight cars in the marshalling yard, 2,000 feet west of the assigned target.

5. The A-5 automatic pilot was used by the Group Leader. Due to extensive cloud cover at the IP the leader of the second attack unit found it necessary to shift from side to side to line up on the target. The A-5, then on, was not functioning properly and the attack unit was beginning to spread out. The second attack unit leader decided to turn off his automatic pilot and completed the bombing run with P.D.I.

6. In flak was encountered at the target. Information gained from interrogation of crews indicates that the heavy guns were few in number, probably about four, and that they commenced firing at the lead elements far beneath the formation, and though improving, were generally very inaccurate. Scant to moderate medium flak is also indicated, as all elements of the formation report a concentration of bursts below them, at about 10,000 feet.

S/MAH flak was also encountered at (43°17'N-20°37'E), at 0936B hours. The accuracy of this flak was considered as excellent, being exactly on the formation's altitude of 19,000 feet, with a few white bursts about 1,500 feet above the group. The source of this anti-aircraft fire is unknown, though one crew reported it as coming from an open field at (43°14'N-20°43'E). Another crew reported that the main concentration of this fire was directed at another group which was behind and to the left. The heading of the formation at this time was approximately forty-five (45) degrees.

7. Fighter escort consisting of 15/20 P-51 a/c were first seen in the vicinity of the IP Aleksinac (43°33'N-21°42'E) at 0950B hours and provided target and withdrawal cover until 1048B hours at (41°53'N-19°10'E).

8. The weather was clear at take-off with a few patches of alto stratus to coast. Over Adriatic 5/10 strato cumulus, tops 6,000 feet. Over Dinaric Alps, 4/10 alto stratus, base 18,000 feet with 3/10 to 4/10 cumulus, tops 12,000 feet. Visibility was 15 to 20 miles.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Ltr Narr Miss Rpt 464th BG cont'd

At target 6/10 alto stratus, base just above 19,000 feet. Few scattered cumulus in area. Visibility 25 miles.

On return, alto stratus layer had increased to 10/10 over Alps, base 17,000 feet. 4/10 cumulus below with tops to 18,000 feet in spots and general level 12,000 feet. Clear over Yugoslavian coast with 4/10 cumulus over Adriatic, tops 7,000 feet.

Clear at Base on return with scattered cumulus in mountains to west.

9. Observations made by returning crew members are as follows:

<u>TIME</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>ALTITUDE</u>	<u>OBSERVATION</u>
1050	(42°00'N-19°08'E)	15,000	Vessel-Possible DD, heavily camouflaged. Anchored just off shore.
1014	(42°40'N-21°10'E) 2 miles S. of Pristina	17,000	Large cream colored tanks. 14 in one group, 4 in another.
0900	(41°57'N-19°10'E)	15,000	M/V's in bay.
1047	(42°00'N-19°14'E)	12,000	A/C on ground, possible B-24.
0948	(43°35'N-21°35'E)	19,000	Concentration of 70 barges.

10. Twenty-seven (27) a/c landed at this base between 1140B hours and 1223B hours. One (1) a/c landed at 1315B hours after first landing at Bari for gas at 1145B hours.

11. Route was flown as briefed, track chart showing route as flown inclosed.

12. Five (5) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print attached.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER  
Major, AC  
Intelligence Officer

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

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~