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HEADQUARTERS
464th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Intelligence Officer

FBE/hob

319.1

25 August 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 25 August 1944 at 0645E hours twenty four (24) B-24 a/c of twenty six (26) scheduled took off to bomb the installations on Prostejov A/D, Czechoslovakia (Primary target). The twenty four (24) a/c formed two (2) attack units, the first unit being led by Colonel A. L. Schroeder, Group Commanding Officer, and the second by 1st Lt Frank T. Price, Flight Leader, 779th Bombardment Squadron.

Two (2) a/c scheduled failed to take off for the following reasons:

No 42-78336 Prop governor inoperative.

No 42-78514 No bombs loaded.

2. Group assembly and Wing rendezvous was satisfactory but Wing formation enroute to the target was not good, over target and on return formation was satisfactory.

3. Twenty four (24) a/c were over the target at 1128B hours (briefed target time 1118B hours) and dropped fifty five (55) tons of 500 lb GP bombs (fusing .1 nose and .01 tail) from 20,000 feet. Axis of attack 290°.

One (1) a/c released two and one half (2½) tons 8/10 miles before target, faulty target identification responsible. One (1) a/c returned two and one half (2½) tons to base as bomb bay doors would not open. Visibility at the target was excellent and bombing was visual. The first attack unit leader bombing with C-1 and the second attack unit lead using PDI as C-1 in his a/c was inoperative.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

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3. There were three (3) early returns:

a. A/C No. 41-29417-Turned back at 1210B hours at (49°23'N-15°35'E) because No. 2 engine lost all its oil and had to feather. No. 3 turbo was oscillating.

b. A/C No. 42-295332-Turned back at (47°02'N-14°13'E) at 1302B hours. Lost oil in No. 2 engine and had to feather.

c. A/C No. 42-51644-Turned back at (44°32'N-14°58'E) at 1022B hours, as prop governor and No. 4 engine went out and prop ran away. Manifold pressure dropped on No. 3 engine.

4. Twenty-five (25) a/c were over the target at 1218B hours (briefed target time 1210B hours) and twenty-five (25) a/c dropped sixty-two and one half (62½) tons of 500 pound RDX bombs (.1 nose and .025 tail fusing) from 21,800 feet.

Two (2) a/c jettisoned five (5) tons of bombs; one (1) a/c jettisoned two and one half (2½) tons at (42°21'N-15°58'E) for reasons outlined in paragraph No. 3 (b) and one (1) a/c jettisoned two and one half (2½) tons at (48°55'N-15°18'E) for reason outlined in paragraph No. 3 (a).

Four (4) a/c returned ten (10) tons of bombs to base; the three spare a/c returning seven and one half (7½) tons, and one (1) a/c returned two and one half (2½) tons for reason outlined paragraph No. 3 (c).

Recapitulation of bombs:

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Dropped on target | 62½ tons |
| Jettisoned | 5 tons |
| Returned to base | 10 tons |
| Total tonnage | <u>77½ tons</u> |

Bomb strike photos show the target almost completely obscured by heavy black smoke from earlier bombing. However, at the edge of the smoke, several hits can be seen on the packing sheds and on the railroad tracks adjacent to the northeast sector of the refinery. Other strikes were made in a residential section one mile southeast of the target, and continued north through the marshalling yard and to the river. Approximately ten hits were on several columns of cars in the marshalling yard. Numerous strikes are in the area due north

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of the M/Y, and south of the river. On the Pardubice air-drome, twenty-two (22) single engined fighters are visible in the south dispersal area.

5. The Group leader used C-1 automatic pilot, but the leader of the second attack unit did not use the A-5 because the speed of the formation was too slow and was not steady and this box was overrunning Able box. Bombed by P.D.I.

6. SIL flak was reported at the target. Flak was encountered at the following locations:

| | |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Zeltweg | SAH |
| Steyr | M to IAH |
| Trest | SIH |
| St. Valentine | IIH |
| (49°10'N- 15°00'E) | MAH |

7. Two (2) or three (3) E/A were observed in the target area being ME 109s. Thirty (3) to forty (40) E/A predominately ME 109s with a few FW 190s, attacked the formation at 1235B hours, in the vicinity of (49°15'N-15°10'E) at 18,000 feet. Attacks were made in waves of two (2) to five (5) a/c in each wave, from 6 o'clock level, going through the entire formation, breaking off to both right and left. E/A were slate gray and black color some with yellow and some with light blue bellies. One (1) FW 190 had a red cowling. Some had a white stripe around the nose.

The E/A made but one attack on the formation.

Preliminary evaluation of claims submitted are as follows:

- 14 - ME 109s Destroyed
- 2 - FW 190s Destroyed
- 5 - ME 109s Probably Destroyed
- 2 - FW 190s Probably Destroyed
- 2 - ME 109s Damaged
- 2 - FW 190s Damaged

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Our fighter escort engaged the E/A after the attack, but was apparently not in reach of the formation during the attack.

8. Rendezvous was made with 20/25 P-38 a/c at 1020B hours at (45°00'N-15°00'E) and with 30 P-51 a/c at 1100B hours at (46°23'N-14°53'E). P-38 a/c were last seen at 1345B hours at (45°50'N-15°03'E) and P-51 a/c at 1420B hours at (43°45'N-15°10'E).

9. The weather on take off was scattered strato cumulus, visibility 20 miles. Clear over Adriatic, visibility 15 miles, in haze. Overcast over Dinarics at 9,000 feet, tops 10,000 feet and 2/10 cirrus at 25,000 feet. From Dinarics to target, patchy strato cumulus and 1/10 to 3/10 cirrus. Visibility was 15 to 20 miles. At the target 1/10 cirrus and few scattered cumulus, visibility 25 miles. On return, 5/10 cumulus over mountains, tops 13,000 feet. 4/10 cirrus over Austria. Little change otherwise. 1/10 to 2/10 cumulus at base on return.

10. Four (4) of our a/c failed to return, three (3) being lost to E/A and one (1) missing.

A/C No. 42-78376 was last observed at (48°35'N-14°58'E). This a/c was shot down by E/A. Eight (8) chutes were seen to open.

A/C No. 42-78376 was last observed at (49°08'N-14°18'E) under aggressive attack by E/A. One (1) engine was on fire and the a/c went down in a spin. Seven (7) chutes were seen to open.

A/C No. 42-52479 was last observed at (49°08'N-15°13'E) when the a/c blew up in midair. There were no chutes seen to open.

A/C No. 42-52520 was last observed at (49°02'N-15°18'E). A/C was hit by E/A. Had a large hole in the fuselage near the camera hatch. A/C dropped back and out of formation. There were no chutes seen to open.

The time of these losses was from 1235B hours until 1241B hours.

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Three (3) a/c were damaged and will be inoperative for more than twenty-four (24) hours. One (1) a/c, No. 42-78473, landed at Bari, Italy with four (4) wounded crew members and the crew reports the a/c badly damaged. This crew were brought to this Base by another a/c.

Two (2) crew members were killed and there were four (4) major, two (2) minor injuries, all due to wounds received as a result of encounters with E/A. Three (3) major and one (1) minor injured crew members were taken to the 26th General Hospital at Bari, Italy.

One (1) crew member, Radio Operator on a/c No. 42-78473, apparently believing the a/c was about to succumb to enemy fire attack, causing a fire in the waist, bailed out at (49°12'N-15°10'E).

11. The following observations were made by returning crew members:

| Time | Place | Altitude | Observation |
|-------|------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1312E | (47°34'N-14°29'E) | 17,000 | Several barracks buildings around a large parade ground. Also six (6) large warehouses. |
| 1150B | (48°44'N-12°25'E) | 21,000 | Military establishment-large number of buildings in a group (photo inclosed). |
| 1410E | (44°16'N-14°43'E) | 16,000 | Large naval vessel - cruiser or destroyer (photo inclosed) |
| 1206E | (48°37'N-15°10'E) | 21,600 | Active A/D - two (2) miles east of town. |
| 1230B | (49°37'N-15°32'E) | 18,000 | Six (6) S/E and numerous unidentified a/c. |
| 1411E | (44°17'N-14°47'E) | 15,000 | One large and one small ship in harbor |
| 1052B | (46°04'N-15°11'E) | 17,000 | Two (2) large active factories. |
| 1103B | Radace (46°39'N-14°54'E) | 18,300 | Three (3) large dams and possibly a powerhouse |
| 1435E | (43°05'N-15°40'E) | | Believe submarine |
| 1130B | St. Valentine and Steyr area | | Smoke screen |
| 1140B | (48°35'N-15°10'E) | | Possible troop concentration encampment |
| 1143B | (46°08'N-15°00'E) | | Five (5) tanks and a factory. Presumably underground as smoke was coming out of the ground |
| 1140B | Markersdorf A/D | 21,000 | Effective smoke screen. |

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12. Twenty (20) a/c landed at this base between 1520B hours and 1555B hours.

13. Route was flown as briefed to (48°37'N-15°00'E). From this point the course paralleled the briefed course 10/11 miles to the right in Wing formation. At Steyr cut to left to avoid flak and back on briefed course at (47°25'N-14°40'E). Track chart showing route as briefed and as actually flown is inclosed.

14. Six (6) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print attached.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer

4 Incls:
Incl 1-Track Chart
Incl 2-Selected bomb strike photograph
Incl 3-Observation photograph
Incl 4-Observation photograph

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