

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

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

HHS/FFE/ hob

319.1

7 December 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 7 December 1944, two (2) scheduled PFF B-24 type a/c took off to bomb the West M/Y at Salzburg, Austria, as follow:

a. A/C No 42-52070 (Y:A), 1st Lt. Philip J. Savage, Jr., 1st Pilot, 777th Bombardment Squadron (H), at 0236A hours.

b. A/C No 42-95613, (W:W), 1st Lt. Forrest J. Robbins, Flight Leader, 776th Bombardment Squadron (H), at 0239A hours.

Both a/c report their time and altitude of departure from place of rendezvous to be as prescribed.

2. A/C No 42-52070 dropped two and one half (2½) tons of 500 pound RDX bombs, fused .1 nose and .01 tail, on the primary target (Salzburg West M/Y) at 0540A hours from 24,000 feet, on an attack axis of 120°. Check points used enroute were the Chiem See (47°52'N-12°07'E), and Traunstein (47°52'N-12°38'E). First pick-up of the primary target was made by scope thirty five (35) miles away. During the approach, and the bombing run, the scope was clear, with no interference. Five (5) sighting angles were given; 70°, 65°, 60°, 50°, 40°. One (1) course correction was given of 50 to the right, when ten (10) miles away from the target. Coordination between all crew members was described as exceptionally excellent. Due to malfunction of the automatic pilot equipment, causing the a/c to slip off to the right, the C-1 was not used on the bombing run.

3. A/C No 42-95613 dropped two and one half (2½) tons of 500 pound RDX bombs, fused .1 nose and .01 tail, on the 1st alternate target, (the M/Y at Villach, Austria), at 0510A hours, from 24,000 feet on an attack axis of 180°. Decision to bomb the alternate target was made because weather conditions past the Alps enroute, led to the belief that the Primary Target would be clear.

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

Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

Approach to the 1st alternate, and its bombing run, were performed by PFF, though weather conditions at the target were found to be clear. The PFF equipment was reported to operate efficiently with air crew coordination good. The bombing run was made by C-1 automatic pilot. Five (5) sighted angles were given, from 70° to 40°, plus four (4) corrections for course, one (1) to the right, and three (3) to the left, all of two (2) degrees. Five (5) bombs hung-up upon release, but were salvoed immediately on the target.

4. Bombing results are unknown. A/C No 42-52070 synchronized on and believe they hit, the assigned primary M/Y. A/C No 42-95613 synchronized, and released on, the left half of the town of Villach, Austria, in the vicinity of its M/Y. Flashes from the bombs could be seen but their location in the completely blocked out target area could not be distinguished.

5. A/C No 95613, tho equiped with a scope camera, was unable to take pictures, due to the cameras focusing periscope being missing.

6. Searchlights were observed by the crew of A/C No 42-52070, only. In the vicinity of the primary target, during and just after the bombing run, eight (8) searchlights were seen. These searchlights were seen shining through clouds, and did not illuminate the a/c.

7. SIH flak was encountered at the primary target. About twelve (12) red puffs were seen during the bombing run, ahead and to the left side. Enroute from the target SIH flak was also encountered by A/C No 42-52070 at 0559A hours at Spittal (46°48'N-13°30'E).

SIH flak was encountered at the 1st alternate target. These bursts were well to each side of the a/c. Enroute to the target, SIH flak was encountered by A/C No 42-95613 at 0443A hours at (46°15'N-13°50'E).

8. Route was flown by a/c No 42-52070 as briefed to and from the primary target. A/C No 42-95613 flew its briefed course to the turn point for the alternate target, and the briefed course on return to base.

9. Observations by crew members are as follows:

(a) A large fire was seen on the top of a mountain at (47°35'N-13°18'E) at 0544A hours. The cause could not be discerned.

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

Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

(b) Enroute to the primary target, twelve red flares, shot off singly, were seen from (46°42'N-13°20'E), to just after bombs away. These flares were spaced along the a/c's course, and their points of origin could not be discerned.

(c) At 0518A hours, the crew of a/c No 42-95613, saw a large spot of flame just above the horizon, to the rear. Seem- ing to approach at great speed, corkscrew evasive action was employed in the event that the origin of the flame was an enemy jet-propelled a/c. The flame was brilliant orange and red rounded on the bottom, and flat and jagged on top. The approach of the flame was for about three minutes, when it suddenly went out.

10. Weather at base at take off was overcast at 6,500 feet, with patches of lower scud.

Enroute to the target, an overcast from 6,500 feet to 16,000 feet was encountered from the Spur to the Alps. Over the Alps and northwards, high and middle clouds broke off, only patches of stratus and stratocumulus remaining. Mountains and bodies of water were visible.

In the target area were patches of stratus and stratocumul- us. The primary target was obscured by stratus and the 1st alternate target was clear.

On return, conditions were similar to those encountered on the route out, with clouds further south over the Adriatic.

At the base, on landing, there was 10/10ths coverage at 6,500 feet, plus patches of stratocumulus at 5,000 feet.

11. A/C landed at base as follows:

No 42-52070 at 0800A hours.  
No 42-95613 at 0705A hours.

For the Commanding Officer:

1 Incl  
Incl 1 - Track Chart

FRANCIS F. ELDER  
Major, Air Corps  
Intelligence Officer