

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

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

HHS/FTE/hob

9 February 1945

319.1

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 9 February 1945, three (3) scheduled as took off to bomb the Moosbierbaum, Austria, O/R. A/C No 44-49589 took off at 0930A hours, and a/c No 42-50533 at 0933A hours. Due to electrical trouble with the originally scheduled a/c, change had to be made to spare airplane No 44-95613, which took off late at 0959A hours.
2. The first two (2) a/c, piloted by First Lieutenant Bert A. Pugh Jr., first pilot of the 776th Bombardment Squadron (H), and Captain Forrest J. Robbins, Flight Leader of the 776th Bombardment Squadron (H), respectively, formed up without incident, and effected rendezvous with the 465th Bombardment Group (H) as directed. Just prior to reaching the Key Point at the Yugoslav coast, the two a/c comprising the element were joined by the late take-off airplane, piloted by First Lieutenant Franklin K. Lane, Flight Leader of the 778th Bombardment Squadron (H). Approximately fifteen (15) miles on course beyond the Key Point, multilayer clouds were encountered, necessitating the breaking up of the element, and each airplane flying a individual course.
3. A/C No 44-49589 flew the briefed course, with minor weather deviations to right and to left, to the primary I.P. Then breaks in the clouds were observed in the direction of the primary target, so course was laid south to Graz, the alternate target. After bomb release, rally was made to the right, and a reciprocal of the route out flown to base.
4. A/C No 44-95613 flew a few miles to the right of the briefed course, taking advantage of cloud cover, to the first turn point, Judenberg. To the primary target, and following,

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the briefed course was flown to Altenmarkt. At this point, noting breaks in the clouds ahead, course was altered to the right, and a parallel route flown until approaching Zagrab. A sweep to the right was made around this city, followed by a direct heading to base.

5. A/C No 42-50533 flew the course as prescribed to the primary target and return.

6. The briefed route, and the routes as flown, are graphically shown on the inclosed track chart.

7. A/C Nos. 42-50533 and 44-95613 released their full bomb loads, each of eight (8) five hundred (500) pound RDX bombs, fused .1 nose and mixed .01 and .025 tail, upon the primary target.

8. A/C No 42-50533 first picked up a clear scope image of the target twenty (20) miles away. Five (5) sighting angles were given -- 70° , 65° , 55° and 50° . One (1) correction of nine (9) degrees to the right effected a straight course to the target. A smooth bombing run, utilizing C-1 automatic pilot equipment was effected, and release at 1227A hours from 22,800 feet on a true heading of 68° , is believed to have been on, or in the immediate vicinity of, the assigned target. Momentary difficulty was encountered on the bombing run when the PFF set return faded, but was immediately overcome by increasing the voltage.

9. A/C No 44-95613 first picked up the primary target thirty (30) miles away. The scope image was indistinct, and did not become clarified until fifteen (15) miles away. Five (5) sighting angles were given, from 70° thru 50° , and four (4) course corrections, the last being 4° to the right. A smooth bombing run was made, under manual control by the pilot, as the C-1 automatic pilot equipment had been erratic. Release was made at 1225A hours from 24,500 feet on a true heading of 70° . Bombs are believed to have struck in the immediate vicinity of the assigned aiming point, with a possibility that they might have hit slightly to the right.

10. A/C No 44-49589 first picked the alternate target of Graz, Austria up with a clear scope image, 45 miles away. Four (4)

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course corrections were given, and sighting angles of 70°, 65°, 60° and 50°. C-1 automatic pilot equipment was used on the bombing run, with release at 1255A hours from 25,200 feet on a true heading of 220°. The bombs are believed to have struck in the immediate vicinity of the M/Y. The full bomb load of eight (8) five hundred (500) pound RDX bombs, fused .1 nose and .01 and .025 mixed tail, were dropped.

11. Bombing recapitulation is as follows:

2 a/c dropped on primary target	- 4 tons
1 a/c dropped on alternate target	- 2 tons
	<u>6 tons</u>

12. Photos show bombs way at primary target with ten tenths (10/10) cloud cover. No terrain is visible on any photos. One aircraft bombed Graz M/Y, with unobserved results.

13. a. IAH flak was encountered at the primary target by a/c No 42-50533. This anti-aircraft fire was described as tracking, starting low and to the rear, and building up to altitude, with some bursts as close as fifty (50) feet. The flak at the target continued for about 3½ minutes.

b. IAH flak was encountered at the primary target by a/c No 44-95613. This anti-aircraft fire was described as low and trailing five hundred (500) feet behind, but building up to altitude.

14. IAH flak was encountered at the alternate target by a/c No 44-49589. This anti-aircraft fire was described as black and trailing, with time in range from three (3) to four (4) minutes.

15. Minor, superficial flak damage was sustained by a/c No 44-49589 at the alternate target.

16. Sergeant Henry R. Fulghum, tail gunner of airplane No 44-49589, was injured by flak over the alternate target, and was hospitalized following return from the mission.

17. Weather conditions reported enroute are as follow:

Base at take-off - 8/10ths thin cirrostratus at 18,000 feet, visibility 20-miles. 7/10ths stratocumulus at coast, with tops 7000/8000 feet.

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Route out - 10/10ths stratocumulus, top 10,000 feet, from the central Adriatic, building up to 18,000 feet enroute. Light rime icing in clouds, beginning at 11,000 feet. 10/10ths multilayer cluds over the Dinaric Alps, continuing north and east, tops generally to 25,000 feet, based in the mountains. 2/10ths thin cirrus in patches, at 35,000 feet estimated, throughout the route.

Vienna area - 10/10ths multilayer clouds, tops at 22,000 feet, with a few breaks showing thru a thick undercast, visibility aloft unlimited.

Graz area - 10/10ths multilayer clouds, tops at 22,000 fet, visibility aloft unlimited.

Return route - clouds generally lowering, with tops at Fiume and over the Adriatic at 16,000 / 18,000 feet, becoming 3/10ths at 15,000 feet over base.

Winds MAAF wind inaccurate in direction and speed.
Vienna (23,000 feet), 270°; 30 knots; -38°C.
Fiume (19,000 feet), on return; 310°; 32 knots; -28°C.

18. A/C No 44-95613 reports that a broadcast station in the Vienna area, operating on the same frequency as the ground station of the 55th Bombardment Wing (H), seriously affects reception. This observation was made in connection with difficulties encountered by this a/c in receiving verification of its bombs-away signals.

19. The three (3) a/c landed at this base, as follows:

- a. A/C No 44-49589 at 1500A hours.
- b. A/C No 42-50533 at 1518A hours.
- c. AAC No 44-95613 at 1511A hours.

20. A/C No 42-50533 attempted photographs. A selected print is inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

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

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer