

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

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

FFE/hob

319.1

14 February 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 14 February 1945, beginning at 0900A hours, twenty one (21) B-24 a/c of the Red Force took off to bomb the primary target specified in Operations Order No 72, 13 February 1945. The twenty one (21) a/c formed one (1) attack unit which was led by Major Sherman F. Martin, Squadron Commander, 778th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. Group form-up was excellent and bomber rendezvous was as prescribed. Wing formation was very good except for the 460th Group which was a little ahead and continued to pull ahead enroute until weather separated this Group from all the formation.

3. Three (3) a/c returned early.

a. A/C No 44-41337 turned back at 1000A hours at (41°05'N-16°50'E) with No 4 turbo inoperative and insufficient power to reach and maintain altitude. Bombs were returned to base.

b. A/C No 44-49363 turned back at 1057A hours at (43°50'N-16°00'E). Rate of fuel consumption was four hundred and fifty (450) gallons per hour and it was unable to transfer fuel in No 2 engine. Bombs were returned to base.

c. A/C No 42-50728 left the formation just before reaching the target after finding the Ball Turret Gunner unconscious from lack of oxygen due to frozen mask. Bombs were jettisoned in the Adriatic just before landing at Falconara for medical aid.

4. Eighteen (18) a/c were over target of opportunity, Air Force Alternate No 5, Villach M/Y, Austria, and eventeen (17) a/c dropped thirty three and one half (33.5) tons of 500 lb RDX bombs from 22,000 feet at 1310A hours. Axis of attack 175°.

Bombing was visual and target identification was aided by visibility of twenty (20) miles or better. Excellent photo

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, 464th Bomb Gp (H), 14 Feb 45, contd
coverage was obtained.

Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage

17 a/c dropt on target	33.5 tons
2 a/c returned to base	4.0 "
2 a/c jettisoned	4.0 "
1 a/c (included in those dropping on target) jettisoned	<u>.5 "</u>
Total	42.0 tons

Bomb strike photos show a heavy concentratin of hits in the central portica of Villach south marshalling yard. These hits extend into the freight sidings at the west edge of the yard and into the goods sidings adjacent to the transhipment sheds at the east edge of the yard. Additional hits extend southeast to the military barracks area. Photos of Villach north marshalling yard show several hits on the west choke point and a few others at the west end of the main railway station. There was a probable direct hit on the west end of the transhipment shed located at the south edge of the yard. Approximately one (1) dozen additional hits fell in the city and between the two (2) yards.

5. The Red Force leader used C-1 Automatic Pilot on the bomb run.

6. No enemy opposition was encountered and all a/c returned to this base between 1500A and 1532A hours.

7. Rendezvous with twelve (12) P-51 a/c was made at 1150A hours at (45°52'N-15°21'E) and they were within sight of the formation at frequent intervals until 1427A hours at (42°47'N-16°00'E). Sixteen (16) P-38 a/c were reported in the target area only. Markings indicated P-51 a/c were from the 52nd Fighter Group. No markings for P-38 a/c reported.

8. Weather was as follows:

Clear at take-off with visibility unlimited. Scattered cumulus over Adriatic, increasing on course to 9/10, top 6,000 feet. Over Yugo coast and Dinarics 10/10 stratocumulus, top rising to 10,000 feet.

Scattered wispy cirrus north of Dinarics which increased rapidly to 8/10 multilayer cirrus. Base 23,000 feet, top 29,000 feet. Formation turned back at (46°05'N-15°15'E) and bombed Villach.

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, 464th Bomb Gp (H), 14 Feb 45, contd

Clear over Villach itself with an overcast of strato-cumulus in immediate area. Visibility was unlimited.

On return, mostly 10/10 low clouds, top 6,000 feet to Spur, 7/10 small cumulus at 2,500 feet over Spur.

3/10 flat stratocumulus, base 2,500 feet on landing. Visibility was 15 miles.

9. Observations:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Altitude</u>	<u>Observation</u>
1340A	4523N-1507E	?	130 trucks parked at Ry siding.
1235A	4603N-1440E Ljubiana	22,000	M/Y - 300 cars (See K-20 photographs inclosed)

10. The route was flown as briefed until (46°15'N-15°00'E) was reached at which time our formation encountered multi-layer cirrus clouds built up to 30,000 feet. Our altitude at this point was 26,500 feet and it was impossible to go over the clouds. Red Force Leader observing better conditions to the west of briefed course selected Villach as a target of opportunity, and route to and return from the target is shown on enclosed track chart.

11. Four (4) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print enclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer

3 Inclosures
Incl 1 - Track Chart
Incl 2 - Selected print
Incl 3 - K-20 print - Ljubiana (in dup)