

HEADQUARTERS
464th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (F)
APO 520 U. S. Army

HHS/PP/jm

310.1

15 February 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report (Blue Force)

TO: Commanding General, 55th BOMBARDMENT Wing (F)
APO 520, U. S. Army

1. On 15 February 1945, eighteen (18) and three (3) spare B-24 type a/c, scheduled for BLUE FORCE, took off to bomb the Forting Sidings at Wiener Neustadt, Austria. Take-off was from 1015A hours to 1024A hours.

2. The twenty one (21) a/c formed into one (1) attack unit of three (3) elements, being led by Captain Joseph A. Szymanski, Flight Leader of the 770th Bombardment Squadron (F).

3. Due to adverse weather conditions, Group form-up was effected between Barletta and Trani. Wing rendezvous was effected with the 465th and 485th Bombardment Groups (F), on course at the prescribed time. It is not believed that the 460th Bombardment Group (H) effected rendezvous with the wing formation.

4. The course was flown as briefed, with the exception that the IP of Freiland was passed slightly to the left, and course continued northeast for six (6) to eight (8) miles beyond this point. This deviation was caused by the dimming out of the primary target's returns on the scope of the lead a/c over the mountains. The approximate route is shown graphically on the inclosed track chart.

5. Two (2) a/c turned back early, as follow:

a. A/C No 41-29394, was observed turning back at 1255A hours, and was heard to state over the radio that he was having engine trouble. This a/c is reported to have landed at Bari. The disposition of its bomb load of two (2) tons is unknown.

b. A/C No 41-29594 was observed turning back at 1328A hours, with No 3 engine feathered. Over the radio, it was heard that this a/c had an extreme oil leak in No 3 engine. The a/c is reported to have landed at Vis, and the disposition of its bomb load of two (2) tons is unknown.

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6. Two (2) a/c jettisoned bombs, as follows:

a. A/C No 42-78692, at 1410A hours, at 47°18'N-16°23'E, dropped one quarter (.25) ton of bombs, hung up over the target by a shackle malfunction.

b. A/C No 42-51264, at 1533A hours at 42°30'N-16°15'E, dropped one quarter (.25) ton of bombs, hung up over the target by a shackle malfunction.

7. Nineteen (19) a/c released thirty seven and one half (37.5) tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, fused .1 nose and .01 tail, on the primary target at 1403A hours, from 21,000 feet, upon an attack axis of 131°. Bombing recapitulation is as follows:

19 a/c dropped on primary target	37.5 tons
2 ER a/c at friendly fields, bomb disposition unknown	4.0
2 a/c jettisoned	.5
Total	<u>42.0 tons</u>

8. Bombs away photographs show the target obscured by a solid cloud cover. No terrain is visible on any of the photographs returned from the target area.

9. Bombing on this mission was accomplished by PFF.

a. The PFF Operator of the lead a/c reports that his set operated efficiently during the entire route. The target was first picked up forty five (45) miles away. Crossing over the mountains to the IP, their bright return dimmed out the primary target, causing course to be flown slightly to the left, and from six (6) to eight (8) miles beyond the IP. A strong target return was then achieved, which when checked with Vienna, clearly identified the target. The bombing run then began, and was effected smoothly. Four (4) sighting angles were given, from 70° thru 50°, and five (5) course corrections, the last being 2° left. The Bombardier and PFF Operator believe that their bomb release was close to the prescribed aiming point, toward the city.

b. The PFF Operator of the lead a/c of the second element. (Baker Box) reported his set as operating correctly enroute. He first picked up the target thirty (30) miles away, and retained it to the bomb release. Five (5) sighting angles were given, from 70° thru 53°, and in Radar Operator's and Bombardier's opinions, bombs hit in the immediate target area.

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c. The PFF Operator of the lead a/c of the third element (Charlie Box) reported his set as functioning fairly en-route, with the range weak. On the fifty (50) mile range, reception only to thirty five (35) to forty (40) miles could be secured. The target was first received thirty two (32) miles away, and retained throughout to bombs away. Five (5) sighting angles were given, from 70° thru 40°, and corrections for course likewise supplied. The Bombardier and PFF Operator believe that the bombs hit the assigned target area.

10. No flak at the primary target was observed by crews of this Force.

11. Rendezvous with P-51 escort fighters was made at 1318A hours at 46°39'N-14°47'E. Cover provided was described as excellent, with maximum number seen at one time being thirty (30). Certain of these P-51 fighters were identified as of the 325th Fighter Group. Escort was last seen at 1525A hours over the Adriatic Sea.

12. Weather was reported as follows:

Base: At take-off, 10/10ths stratocumulus, base 1,500 feet, top 3,000 feet. Similar conditions to the coast, breaking over the Adriatic to 1/10th to 2/10ths small cumulus.

Route: 3/10ths small cumulus over the Yugoslav coast, with the Dinaric Alps clear except for valley stratus. Scattered cumulus and 1/10th cirrus at 28,000 feet to the vicinity of Judenberg, where an overcast of stratocumulus began, extending to the target. Tops of these clouds were 10,000 feet.

Return: Similar conditions, with the base 10/10ths cumulus and stratocumulus at 2,500 feet. Visibility was 15 miles.

Target: 10/10ths stratocumulus, top 10,000 feet with visibility unlimited above the clouds.

13. Military observations were as follows:

a. At 1210A hours from 18,000 feet, an airstrip with ten (10) SEF was seen at 45°35'N-15°18'E.

b. At 1332A hours from 20,000 feet, an A/D with twelve (12) SEF was observed six (6) miles east of Judenberg, Austria.

c. At 1445A hours from 18,000 feet, the M/Y of

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Zagreb, Yugoslavia was observed full of cars, comprising more than five hundred (500) units of rolling stock.

d. At 1445A hours from 18,000 feet, one (1) T/E e/a was seen at the Zagreb, Yugoslavia A/D.

14. Nineteen (19) a/c landed at this base from 1608A hours to 1637A hours.

15. Five (5) a/c attempted photographs. A selected print is attached.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, Air Corps
Intelligence Officer

2 Inclosures
Incl 1 - Track chart
Incl 2 - Selected Print