

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

15 February 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 15 February 1945, eighteen (18) and three (3) spare B-24 type a/c, scheduled for RED FORCE took off to bomb the Sorting Sidings at Wiener Neustadt, Austria. Take-off was from 0915A hours to 0925A hours.

2. The twenty one (21) a/c formed into one (1) attack unit, of three (3) elements, being led by Lt Col William G. Moore, Jr., Commanding Officer of the 777th Bombardment Squadron (H).

3. Due to existing weather conditions, the Group form-up was accomplished above the overcast at 6,500 feet altitude. Arriving at the prescribed Wing Rendezvous point three minutes late, the Group Leader found only the 465th Bombardment Group (H) in the immediate vicinity. Rendezvous was made with this Group, with the other two (2) Groups of the 55th Bombardment Wing (H), joining enroute.

4. The course was flown as briefed. A track chart is inclosed.

5. Twenty one (21) a/c released forty two (42) tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, fused .1 nose and .01 tail, on the primary target at 1301A hours from 21,000 feet, an attack axis of 122°.

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

7. Bombing on this mission was accomplished by PFF.

a. The PFF operator of the Group lead a/c reports that he encountered considerable interference during the entire route, due to two (2) spirals appearing on his scope, believed caused by the radar sets in two (2) adjacent a/c, in twelve (12) and thirteen (13) positions. Despite this handicap, he

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successfully used his equipment throughout the mission. The first pick-up of the target was about forty five (45) miles away, near the turnpoint of Moos. This identification was retained to the target. A smooth and exact bombing run was effected, with five (5) sighting angles being given, from 70° thru 40°, and three (3) course corrections of 5°R, 3°R, and 2°L. C-1 Automatic Pilot equipment was used during the bombing run. It is considered by the Bombardier and PFF Operator of this a/c that rate was nearly perfect, and that bomb strikes were obtained close to the MPI, with possibility of a little left from this point.

b. The PFF Operator of the lead a/c of the second element of the Group formation (Baker Box), reports excellent operation of his set, with the exception of his return fading about 10 seconds before bombs were released. The target was first picked up twenty three (23) miles away. A smooth bombing run was effected with six (6) sighting angles being given, from 70° thru 53°. It is the opinion of the Bombardier and PFF Operator of this a/c that bombs were released directly upon the target.

c. The PFF Operator of the lead a/c of the third element of the Group formation (Charlie Box) experienced good operation from his set enroute. Target pick-up was effected sixty five (65) miles away, and retained. A smooth bombing run was effected. Three (3) sighting angles were given, from 70° thru 63°. Course as flown by the Group Leader, was found good. Bomb release was a few seconds after the Group Lead a/c and is definitely believed to have placed the bombs in the briefed target area.

8. Flak at the target was extremely Scant and Inaccurate Heavy. Seventeen (17) a/c report seeing no flak. Observations from the other a/c indicate that two (2) to three (3) bursts below and to the rear of the formation occurred immediately after bombs away.

9. Rendezvous with fighter escort was first effected at 1230A hours at (47°10'N-14°40'E). Varying numbers of P-51 a/c were seen enroute until 1420A hours at the Yugoslav Coast, with maximum cover believed to consist of about twenty five (25) escort fighters. The P-51 a/c were identified as of both the 325th and 52nd Fighter Groups.

10. Weather was reported as follows:

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

Base: At take-off, 10/10ths stratocumulus, base 1,500 feet, top 3,00 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 1/10 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.

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

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

11. Military observations were reported as follow:

a. At 1209A hours, from 21,000 feet, three (3) to four (4) rows of tents, twenty (20) to a row were in the valley along both sides of the river to the northwest of Celje (4615N-1515E). Further tents were seen in clear spots in nearby hills.

b. At 1234A hours, from 21,000 feet, approximately five hundred (500) units were in the M/Y at Judenberg, Austria.

c. At 1325A hours, from 18,000 feet, a large smoke column was seen at 4525N-1655E, possibly from a wrecked a/c.

d. At 1355A hours, from 15,000 feet, an airstrip, cleared of snow, was seen at 4543N-1602E.

12. Twenty one (21) a/c landed at this base from 1522A hours to 1544A hours.

13. Five (5) a/c attempted photographs. A selected print is enclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

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

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer

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