

U S C O N F I D E N T I A L Equals British C O N F I D E N T I A L

HEADQUARTERS  
 464th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)  
 Office of the Intelligence Officer  
 APO 520 U S Army

RVB/WFF/lem

319.1

2 July 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

TO : Commanding Officer, 55th Bombardment Wing (H),  
 APO 520, U S Army  
 Attn: A-2

1. On 2 July 1944 starting at 0630B hours, 39 B-24 a/c of 39 a/c scheduled, took off to bomb the Budapest-Rakos M/Y (primary target). The 39 a/c formed in two (2) attack units. The first unit was led by Major Clarence G. Poff, Commanding Officer of the 778th Bombardment Squadron (H) and the second by Lt Robert M Fowler, Flight Leader of the 779th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. Group take off and assembly was accomplished according to plan. Line rendezvous with 465th Bombardment Group (H) at Andria was as prescribed. The 464th Bombardment Group (H) arrived two (2) minutes early at Spinazzola, and to permit the other two (2) groups of this wing to fall in proper formation, a slight dog-leg was executed. The wing was formed shortly after passing over Spinazzola and proceeded on course.

3. Rendezvous with the fighter escort which consisted of 20 P-38 a/c, 10 P-47 a/c and 40 P-51 a/c was effected commencing at 0929B hours at 44°19'N-18°20'E. The Bombers were given excellent penetration escort, target cover and withdrawal escort to the Yugoslavian coast, the escort departing at 1205B hours. All of the crews at interrogation report the recognition of P-51 a/c with red noses. No yellow nosed P-51 a/c were observed, nor were the wing markings or recognition letters identified.

4. Five (5) B-24 a/c returned early: B-24 a/c No. 42-52357 returned early due to complete failure of No 3 engine necessitating the feathering of the engine. This a/c jettisoned ten (10) bombs safe at (41°15'N - 16°50'E). B-24 a/c No. 42-78701 returned early when the nose turret, the tail turret, and the ball turret were found inoperative. This a/c returned ten (10) bombs to base. B-24 a/c No. 42-78340 returned

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early due to the fact that the right landing gear failed to lock in the retracted position. This a/c jettisoned ten (10) bombs safe at (41°33'N - 16°56'E). B-24 a/c No. 42-78318 returned early due to gas lead in lines in the rear of the bomb bay which was flocking the bomb bay. This a/c jettisoned ten (10) bombs at (44°40'N - 19°02'E). B-24 a/c No. 42-78261 returned early when loss of oil in No. 2 engine made it necessary to feather the engine. This a/c jettisoned ten (10) bombs at (44°26'N - 18°59'E).

5. No flak or enemy planes were encountered or observed enroute to the target. At the target IAH flak was encountered. The main formation flying at its assigned altitude was above most of the flak bursts. However, due to the fact that the lead a/c of Dog Box had two superchargers out and was unable to reach the assigned altitude, this box, coming into the target at between 19,500 feet and 20,000 feet, received many flak hits. The a/c in this box, which maintained a tight box formation at all times, suffered considerable flak damage, and four (4) crew members of a/c flying in Dog Box received flak injuries. In the target area, at 1031B hours, 4 ME-109 a/c were observed, deployed for attack, one of which attacked from 12 o'clock high and pressed, the attack to within 400 yards of a/c No. 42-52549 which was flying in Dog Box. Sgt. Walter H. Stutts, nose gunner of a/c 42-52549 opened fire on the ME-109 at about 600 yards. The e/a pulled up and over Dog Box, smoking badly, and was seen to crash. E/A observed in the target area consisted of six (6) ME-109 a/c and four (4) FW-190 a/c. These e/a appeared to be well engaged by our friendly escort with the exception of the encounter mentioned. No particular markings or peculiar tactics were employed by the enemy. On the return route, the formation flying west off of the briefed course was engaged by flak at Sarajevo while flying at between 15,000 and 16,000 feet. The crews had been briefed to avoid this flak area. Flak at Sarajevo was MAH apparently consisting of about 12 heavy guns. Also SIH flak was encountered at Tuzia (44°33'N - 18°45'E). SIL flak was observed at Mostar.

Thirty four (34) B-24 a/c of this group were over the target at 1028B hours (assigned target time was 1014B hours). Thirty four (34) a/c dropped 64½ tons of 500 pounds General Purpose Bombs (.1 nose and mixed .01 and non-delay tail fuses) from 23,700 feet. Dog Box dropped from 19,500 feet to 20,000 feet. Four (4) early returns jettisoned ten (10) tons of bombs. B-24 a/c No. 42-95228 jettisoned ½ ton of bombs west of the target when one (1) bomb failed to release due to rack malfunction. B-24 a/c No. 42-78326 returned ½ ton of bombs to base when, due to a rack malfunction, bombs could not be released or salvaged. One (1) early return brought back 2½ tons of bombs to the base.

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Very good bombing results are indicated from description given by the crews at interrogation, who stated that the M/Y was full of wagons and that the M/Y was well covered by strikes.

7. Weather at the base at take off was 1/10 scattered cumulus at 20,000 feet. There was 2/10 cumulus at 18,000 feet over the Adriatic, lowering to 14,000 feet over the mountains of Yugoslavia and coverage increasing to 3/10. Visibility was 18 miles with slight haze. Some alto-stratus prevailed. At the target there was 5/10 cirro-stratus at 20,000 feet with visibility 18 miles. On return near the Hungarian Yugoslavian border, visibility increased to 25 miles with 5/10 alto-cumulus with tops at 15,000 feet, which lowered to 10,000 feet over the mountains of Yugoslavia. The Adriatic was hazy with visibility 18 miles and alto-cumulus activity at 14,000 feet. At the base on return the scattered cumulus had lowered to 7000 feet with a 5/10 coverage and visibility was restricted in haze.

8. Thirty-four a/c landed at 1250B hours without incident.

9. Seven (7) a/c received minor flak damage, and three (3) a/c were sufficiently damaged to be inoperational for more than 24 hours.

10. S Sgt Lewis R. Cook, ASN 35118567, 779th Bombardment Squadron (H), right waist gunner on a/c No. 42-95337 suffered a flak wound in his right thigh, and has been removed to the 26th Station Hospital in Bari.

Sgt A. W. Mc Neil, ASN 13084807, 779th Bombardment Squadron (H), radio - gunner on a/c No. 42-95337 suffered a flak wound in his right thigh, and has been removed to the 26th Station Hospital in Bari.

S Sgt Ernest J. Turner, ASN 20220540, 779th Bombardment Squadron (H), right waist gunner on a/c No. 42-29351 received a slight wound on the right check from flak. He remains on duty status.

2nd Lt. Scott S. Murphy, ASN 0-736553, 779th Bombardment Squadron (H), co-pilot on a/c No. 42-52526 received a slight scratch from flak on his left check. He remains on duty status.

11. Observations of importance were reported by crews at interrogation as follows:

Two (2) B-24 a/c burning on the ground were observed at 1039B hours at (47°00'N - 18°47'E) from air altitude of 18,000 feet. No chutes were seen in the vicinity.

About 40 large barges were observed in the Danube River at 1045B hours from 20,000 feet. All crews report heavy barge traffic in this river.

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12. The route as briefed and as flown is plotted on attached target chart. To the target the route was flown as briefed, then to Szekszard (46°21'N - 18°41'E) as briefed, then directly to Sarajevo at which point a turn was made to the left to bring the formation back on to the briefed course.

13. Six (6) a/c attempted photographs. Six (6) a/c took photographs. The negatives from one (1) camera do not show bomb strikes. Selected prints from five (5) a/c are attached.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER,  
Major, Air Corps,  
Intelligence Officer.

2 Incls:  
Incl 1 - Track Chart  
Incl 2 - Photos (5 sets)