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HEADQUARTERS
405th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (A)
Office of the Intelligence Officer
APO 520 U S Army

MCK/ALG/1ea

319.1

16 July 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 15 July 1944, 38 B-24 a/c or 39 a/c scheduled, took off at 0630Z hours to bomb the Uniara-Serantzza Oil Refinery, (Roumania). One (1) a/c failed to take off due to 100 RPM's in #2 engine.

The 35 a/c formed two (2) attack units, the first unit being led by Lt. Colonel Charles F. McKenna III, Deputy Group Commander, and the second attack unit by Colonel Arnold L. Schroeder, Group Commander. Eight (8) a/c returned early for the following reasons:

- (1) A/C No. 76248 - engine failure
- (2) A/C No. 52479 - tail and top turrets inoperative, no heat for flying suits.
- (3) A/C No. 76336 - excessive gas consumption, using between 500 and 400 gallons per hour.
- (4) A/C No. 51023 - bad gas leak in #3 engine, oil leak in #2 engine, -1 RPM swing about 300 RPM's.
- (5) A/C No 52504 - crack in #1 cylinder of #4 engine, throwing oil.
- (6) A/C No. 29351 - oil leak in #3 engine, 3 generators cut, runaway supercharger on #4 engine and runaway prop on #1.
- (7) A/C No. 75093 - #1 engine overheated and cut out, throwing a/c out of formation, was unable to catch up;

2. Group form-up was accomplished without incident. Group rendezvous was made as briefed behind the 405th Group at 9,000 feet. The wing rendezvous was made as briefed.

3. Weather at base on take off was 1.10 atlp-stratus

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at target. 4/10 alto-stratus on route to Adriatic. Clear on course over Adriatic. Visibility 10 miles, overcast with alto-stratus to north. Scattered cumulus from Yugoslavian Coast to just west of Rostoril where an alto-cumulus layer was encountered which increased toward target. At target, 5/10 to 6/10 alto-cumulus at 12,000 feet. City was mostly obscured. Visibility 20 miles. On return to Dinaria area, 5/10 cumulus with scattered tops to 10,000 feet. Over Dinaria Alps, 5/10 stratocumulus, tops over 10,000 feet with visibility 10 miles. Over the Adriatic, 5/10 alto-cumulus base of 1,000 feet. 4/10 cumulus at base on return.

4. Approximately twenty-one (21) a/c were observed consisting of eight (8) ME 109s in the air area at 1215B hours, and of six (6) ME 109s and five (5) ME 190s in the target area between 1050B hours and 1155B hours. Seven (7) encounters took place, five (5) in the target area, one (1) at Craiova and one (1) in the air area. 5/2 in the target area attacked from six (6) o'clock high and low and at eleven (11) o'clock. In the air area, e/a appeared to have a rocket under each wing. Several e/a fired rockets, gunners stated they did not see any tracers fired by e/a. Combat Claims for this Group are two (2) ME 109s probably destroyed.

5. Rendezvous with fighter escort at 1025B hours in the vicinity of Rostoril de Vene where 15/20 P-51 a/c were observed. Cover continued until 1135B hours just past the target area. Consensus of opinion among returning crew members was that excellent cover was given the Group and wing formation.

6. Flak at the target was IAA with black and white bursts. The white bursts were mostly considerable higher than the formation. Numerous red and pink bursts were observed. SA Flak was observed at Pitesti and AAA observed at Bucharest.

7. Thirty-one (31) a/c were over the target at 1059B hours (briefed target time was 1045B) and dropped seventy-four (74) tons of 1,000 lb G.P. bombs (.1 nose and mixed .01 and .025 tail fusing) from 20,000 to 23,000 feet. Five (5) a/c returning early returned twelve and one half (12 1/2) tons to base and two (2) jettisoned five (5) bombs were jettisoned by one (1) a/c twelve (12) miles east of Novi Pazar at 0950B hours (43°57'N - 24°13'E) at 1145B hours, due to rack malfunction, and one (1) a/c jettisoned five (5) bombs

at (44°00'N-25°50'E) at 1030Z near the target area (2) a/c

lost contact with the formation. This a/c continued over the target with the formation. Due to cloud cover and heavy smoke from previous bombing of the target, the target was obscured by the formation. The entire area was obscured and it was difficult to see the target. Photo reports show the five (5) bomb sites, 200 feet south of the target point directly in front of the target and a/c dropping later into the target area.

8. Position of objects of interest retained are listed below:

Time	Place	Altitude	Observations
0745	(42°25'N-13°42'E)	15,000	Large freighter in harbor
1036	(44°05'N-26°00'E)	22,000	LA stored tanks on bank of river.
1015	(44°07'N-25°00'E)	15,000	42 barges in Danube headed south east.
	(44°23'N-23°37'E)		500 yards square ammunition dump in woods.

9. Two (2) a/c are missing.

A/C No. 42-73281 received a direct flank hit over the target, behind it in the camera water. A/C broke in two and went down. There were no chutes seen to open. Crew roster is as follows:

P	FULLON, BENJAMIN A.	1st Lt	0-798999
CP	WHITE, JAMES M.	2nd Lt	0-743222
N	RADLER, ARTHUR J.	2nd Lt	0-685723
B	KIDD, ALVIN S.	2nd Lt	0-686195
ENG	CORLETT, REUBEN S.	T sgt	14182340
RO	FREUNDLICH, HAROLD E.	S sgt	19045781
BTG	FOWLER, RAYMOND D.	S sgt	34474215
WG	FARRIS, WYLLIS T.	S sgt	18169975
NO	TARGE, NORMAN L.	S sgt	17471593
TG	SNYDER, RICHARD H.	Sgt	14107803

A/C No. 42-50403 is missing. Reports indicate this a/c left the formation at the I.P. with #1 engine smoking or #1 turbo torching. One (1) crew reports this a/c joined formation, went over the target, dropping its bombs and then pulling out and back of the formation. Other crew

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Sir, your message of 24 July 1954 is received.

Members of the group observed this target between the 5 and 10 miles from the mouth of the river, but were unable to pinpoint the location. History of the crew is as follows:

P	ORION, RONALD G.	Captain	0-24100
CP	BECKER, RONALD G.	2nd Lt	0-750310
N	RECTOR, ROBERT B.	2nd Lt	0-699305
B	BRADY, WILLIAM S.	P/O	4-122995
AWO	PETERSON, ALVIN B.	T Sgt	17154777
AO	WAGON, ROBERT H.	S Sgt	19084382
G	BLANCHARD, GLENN L.	S Sgt	19151218
G	BLANK, ROBERT F.	Sgt	39287555
G	GIBBELL, ROBERT M. JR.	Sgt	12155605
G	BRADY, WILLIAM S.	Sgt	14105135

10. Twenty-eight (28) a/c returned to this base between 1217E hours and 1230E hours. One (1) a/c landed at 1225E hours having previously landed at Bari at 1220E hours.

11. There were twelve (12) a/c damaged, one (1) will be inoperative for more than ten (10) hours.

12. Route was flown as briefed. Track chart is inclosed.

13. Nine (9) a/c attempted photographs, and nine (9) took pictures. Selected print inclosed.

14. It was impossible for members of the group to determine the effect of the smoke screen at the target, due to earlier bombing which caused clouds of heavy black smoke to almost entirely obscure the forest area. Smoke was seen 75/100 miles away, rising to 17,000 to 20,000 feet. One (1) crew member observed one (1) smoke generator at the south west end of railroad yards. Coordinates on T.C. 11-101B-WA is (19-H).

15. The Group Commander, Colonel Arnold B. Schroeder, expressed his satisfaction at the excellent formation flown by this group on to-day's mission. Colonel Schroeder is of the opinion that his good formation was responsible to some extent in discouraging attacks by enemy aircraft.

For the Commanding Officer:

MAURICE C. MILLING
Captain, Air Corps,
Actg Intel Officer.