

U S COMBAT PLANS Equals British COMBAT PLANS

HEADQUARTERS
404th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Intelligence Officer
APO 520 U S Army

EVB/PB/1cm

319.1

19 July 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 19 July 1944 starting at 0651B hours, 34 B-24 a/c of 34 a/c scheduled took off to bomb the Alkath a/c Engine Factory. Twenty-eight (28) a/c were over the target dropping seventy (70) tons of 500 lb GP bombs (.1 nose and .01 tail fuse) at 1144B hours from 23,300 feet.

2. The 34 a/c formed in two attack units. The first unit was led by Major Clarence G. Poff, Commanding Officer of the 779th Bombardment Squadron (H) and the second attack unit was led by Captain Robert L. Wingfield, Flight Leader of the 779th Bombardment Squadron (H). The group form-up, line rendezvous and the wing rendezvous were executed as prescribed.

3. Five (5) a/c returned early. B-24 a/c No 42-51082 landed at 0900B hours, returning with two and one half (2½) tons of bombs, for the reason that the Navigator had forgotten his oxygen mask; B-24 a/c No 42-52563 landed at 0953B hours, returning with two and one half (2½) tons of bombs, because of an injury to the top turret gunner caused when an empty shell case from another a/c test-firing its guns crashed through the top turret rendering this gunner unconscious momentarily, followed by dizziness and headache. The formation leader authorized this return; B-24 a/c No 42-78434 landed at 1117B hours, returning with two and one half (2½) tons of bombs, because of excessive fuel consumption; and a leak in the oxygen system; B-24 a/c No 42-52402 landed at 1205B hours having jettisoned two and one half (2½) tons of bombs at (45°40'N-13°00'E) because of No 2 engine burning out completely; B-24 a/c No 42-78415 landed at 1245B hours, returning with two and one half (2½) tons of bombs,

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because of excessive fuel consumption. The formation leader authorized this return.

4. Rendezvous with the fighter escort consisting of 30 to 40 P-39 a/c and 30 to 40 P-51 was effected at 1143B hours at the Key Point and at 1145B hours in the target area. The escort provided penetration, target and withdrawal cover which the crews described as the best escort so far provided. The escort departed at the Key Point on return at 1740B hours.

5. All of the twenty-eight (28) a/c over the target released ten (10) bombs each on the briefed target for a total of seventy (70) tons. This figure includes two and one half (2½) tons of bombs carried by P-39 a/c No 41-99813 which is listed as missing, but which is believed to have bombed the target with the formation. B-24 a/c No 42-78339, listed as missing was observed to jettison its bombs just before reaching the Initial Point, and the bomb load of two and one half (2½) tons of this a/c is not considered as having been released on the target. Four (4) early returns brought back to this base ten (10) tons of bombs, while one (1) a/c jettisoned two and one half (2½) tons of bombs in the Adriatic. The results of the bombing were fair. Two (2) direct hits on a large workshop including a store near the west edge of the building. One direct hit on a very large workshop with a rail siding and an unloading bay near the north edge of the building. There was an explosion among the fuel storage north of the factory. Direct hits were made on a small workshop adjacent to the canteen, and numerous hits at the southeast section of the aero engine test beds, extending eastward to include hits on cycle sheds. Several hits were made on the main plant offices. At least two (2) hits at the south edge of the boiler house were made while other hits scattered for three-quarters (¾) of a mile north and northwest of the factory. The south and southeast portions of the factory area was obscured by smoke.

6. Due to efficient work of the escort, enemy air opposition was negligible: One (1) ME 109 was observed at 1024B hours at (46°15'N-13°05'E) headed south. Between 1147B hours and 1210B hours, 20 to 30 ME 109s were observed in the target area. These a/c were engaged for the most part with the escort, or remained at a distance and clung to cloud cover. Six (6) FW 190 a/c were observed in the target area and one (1) FW 200 a/c was observed headed south at 1210B hours at (47°20'N-12°10'E). At 1205B hours, one (1) ME 109 made an unaggressive pass at the formation from 2 o'clock high. At this time, about twenty (20) ME 109 a/c

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were observed climbing up apparently coming from the Munich area. Three (3) JU 88 a/c were observed at 1205B hours but made no effort to attack. Flak at the target was described as IAH, but due to the sharp rally left, the formation was exposed to anti aircraft fire for not more than five (5) minutes. Crews report that the main concentration of flak in the area was south of their course and centered around the town of Munich proper. HM flak was observed at Muhldorf. HS flak was observed at Tolmezzo (46°34'N-13°02'E). One (1) early return encountered LSA flak at 13,000 feet at Grado (45°41'N-13°24'E).

7. There was 2/10 alto cumulus at 8,000 feet with visibility 15 miles at the base at take off time, which increased to 4/10 alto cumulus over the Adriatic. Off Ravenna, 5/10 alto cumulus with visibility restricted in haze to 10 miles. From Ravenna to the Alps, 3/10 cirrus, tops 21,000 feet and 5/10 alto cumulus with tops at 13,000 feet. Over the Alps, 6/10 alto cumulus with tops at 14,000 ft, and lower scattered cumulus with 18 to 20 miles visibility. The target itself had 4/10 coverage with visibility 20 to 25 miles, while Munich itself was reported as 8/10 to 9/10 covered. On the return there was 6/10 alto cumulus with tops at 14,000 feet over the Alps, scattered 2/10 alto cumulus in the North Adriatic, and 3/10 to 4/10 swelling cumulus at the base.

8. The following observations were reported: The smoke generators at the Primary Target were observed to be as briefed with the main concentration to the west and north of the target. On arrival of this Group at 1144B hours, the smoke screen had not yet obscured the target which was identified by most bombardiers. The screen was reported as thin and in the early stage of development. The town of Salzburg was totally obscured by a smoke screen as the formation passed at 1105B hours at 22,000 feet. One (1) crew reports the observation of generators mounted on trucks moving north west of Salzburg. The ME 109 a/c observed in the target area was reported as being black to slate grey in color, and some with a wide yellow band around the center section of each wing. Others with red noses were reported.

9. Two (2) a/c are missing:
B-24 a/c No 42-78339 is believed to have been last seen at about 1145 hours at approximately (47°10'N-12°00'E), headed in the direction of Switzerland.

Crew roster is as follows:

P	MacDonald, Thomas J.	1st Lt	0-814595
CP	Rucigay, John C.	2nd Lt	0-820069

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P	Iidiak, Joseph F.	2nd Lt	0-712858
N	Denison, Robert O.	2nd Lt	0-608066
P	Carin, Robert F.	T Sgt	10122266
AE	Weik, Merele O.	S Sgt	37513032
RO	Howard, Guy W.	S Sgt	36563226
G	Cartmille, Charles F.	S Sgt	35623379
G	Lewis, John (NMI)	S Sgt	31301310
G	Marcum, Robert M.	S Sgt	39697848

B-24 a/c No 42-90813 is believed to have been seen about 30 minutes after leaving the target approximately at (46°47'N-12°32'E), flying at about 10,000 feet with one engine feathered.

Crew roster is as follows:

P	Moren, James V.	2nd Lt	0#818193
CP	Moore, Donald F.	2nd Lt	0-822956
N	Furcolo, Michael P.	2nd Lt	0-708810
B	Walker, Virgil F.	2nd Lt	0-707545
E	Hedrick, George L.	T Sgt	15171330
G	Arndt, Jacob R.	S Sgt	37559959
RO	Shive, Howard (NMI)	S Sgt	33597670
G	Riester, Robert L.	Sgt	33607199
G	Souther, Max L.	Sgt	34890615
G	Thompson, Bernard E.	Sgt	35771816

10. S Sgt William C. Petty, 18007188, received a slight eye injury, caused when a flak fragment shattered the glass in the nose turret. S Sgt Petty remains on flying status.

11. Twenty-seven (27) a/c landed from 1438E hours until 1615E hours. B-24 a/c No 41-29453 landed at San Severo to refuel at 1420E hours. This a/c took off, then discovered that the Tokio tanks had not been filled but successfully completed the mission. Captain Raymond W. Drake, Flight Leader of the 776th Bombardment Squadron (H), on what would have been his fiftieth and fifty-first (50 & 51st) missions was forced to return early for his initial early return when he lost No 2 engine.

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12. Eleven (11) a/c received flak damage. Three (3) of the eleven (11) a/c will be inoperational for more than twenty-four (24) hours.

13. The route was flown as briefed. Track chart of the route is inclosed.

14. Five (5) a/c attempted photos. Selected prints are attached.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer