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

FWR/rom

310.1

25 July 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 25 July 1944, 39 scheduled B-24 a/c of this Group took off at 0655B hours to bomb the Linz, Austria, Hermann Goering Tank Works. The 39 a/c formed into 2 attack units, the first being led by Captain William H. Reddell, Commanding Officer of the 776th Bomb. Sq. (H), and the second by Captain John W. Nance, Assistant Group Operations Officer.

2. Four a/c returned early. A/C No. 42-525161 returned at 0738B hours, because of No. 4 supercharger going completely out. The crew of this a/c attempted to obtain a spare, but none were available. A/C No. 42-52537 returned at 1000B hours due to the illness of the pilot. A/C No. 42-52526 returned at 1145B hours because of gasoline leaks in Nos. 2, 3, and 4 tanks and an oil leak in No. 1 engine. A/C No. 42-78437 returned at 1316B hours because loss of its No. 4 engine made it impossible to keep up with the formation.

3. Visibility of 3 to 5 miles due to haze, caused the box leaders to encounter difficulties in the Group form-up, which was effected 5 minutes late. Two group assembly, however, was effected on time, and according to plan. Wing rendezvous was effected as prescribed, with the 485th and 460th Groups first paralleling, and then joining the formation.

4. Rendezvous with fighter escort was effected first at 0956B hours at 45°00'N - 15°05'E. Twenty P-38 a/c and 30 P-51 a/c were seen at this time. Fighter escort continued to and over the target, observations enroute ranging from 10 to 60 P-51 a/c and from 2 to 30 P-38 a/c. Over the target, top cover a/c dropped chaff bombs. Upon withdrawal, both types of a/c were continuously seen, the last escort observations being up to 1245B hours and a position of 45°00'N - 15°10'E. All crews were uniformly warm in their praise of the escort and fighter protection provided.

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5. Enemy a/c observed were one Me-109 at the target, flying in a direction opposite to that of the Group, and ten SBF, otherwise unidentified, at Melk, Austria, 48°14'N - 15°19'E. These latter a/a were engaged in a dog fight with friendly escort at a considerable distance away. This Group had no encounters.

6. I I F flak was encountered at the target, and during the rally from the target. Spot concentrations were observed off and on in the target area for about 6 minutes, leading several crews to report that the flak was of barrage type. The flak picture, as gained from interrogation, indicates that the flak batteries were sending up salvos from all guns in the battery at the same time, and that their fire was very scattered, being at times high, low, and off to both sides. Several crews reported seeing chaff bombs from friendly escort a/c exploding above them, and were of the opinion that this increased chaff materially aided to decrease the efficiency in aim of the A.A. below. Flak was observed at Tschreb, Moderate and Heavy, and at Steyr, Intense and Heavy. The accuracy of the A.A. fire at these points could not be judged. One of our a/c, on early return, encountered S A H flak at St. Janz 46°30'N - 15°45'E.

7. Thirty-four a/c were over the target at 1128B hours (briefed target time 1120B hours). Eighty-two tons of 1,000 lb. G.P. bombs (.1 nose and .025 tail fusing) were dropped on the target from 23,000 ft. One a/c at 48°05'N - 15°28'E, was forced to jettison one bomb (1/2 ton) to keep up with the Group. The remaining four bombs were released on the target. Due to rack and door malfunctions, another a/c, after successfully making its bomb run, was forced to return its 2 1/2 tons of bombs to Base. A third a/c, on early return, released their five bombs (2 1/2 tons) at 46°30'N - 15°45'E, on a target of opportunity which they believed to be a flak installation, then firing at them on their return route. Three a/c, early returns, brought back their entire bomb loads to base, a total of 7 1/2 tons. One a/c, now missing, was known not to have flown over the target. The disposition of its bomb load (2 1/2 tons) is unknown.

8. Results of the bombing are considered excellent. Previous bombing had covered the area with considerable smoke and dust, but it is believed that this Group scored numerous hits on the southeast section of the steel works, and also hit the transformer station and railroad tracks adjacent. The smoke screen over the target was, in general, considerably obscured by smoke from previous bombings. Smoke pots were

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spotted as briefed and also along a line at right angles to that briefed. An excellent picture showing these illustrations is inclosed for interpretation and evaluation.

9. One casualty to crew personnel was inflicted on this mission. S/Sgt Robert J Lamb, of the 778th Bomb Sq., was slightly cut on the right cheek by glass from the nose turret, broken by flak. Two a/c were slightly damaged by flak, neither of them being inoperational for more than 24 hours.

10. The weather at Base on Take-Off was good, except for a heavy haze that restricted visibility to 3 to 5 miles. Clouds in the area were to the North, of 2/10 cumulus, base at 5000 ft. Enroute, it was clear over the Adriatic. Over the Dinaric Alps there was stratus 4/10 in patches, tops 8000 ft. In the Target area, there was scattered cumulus and over the Austrian Alps, 6/10 cumulus with tops at 15,000 ft. At the Target, visibility was 20 miles, with 6/10 alto cumulus, tops 15,000 ft. to 18,000 ft. Over the Dinaric Alps there was 5/10 alto cumulus, tops 12,000 ft. Over the Adriatic, there was 2/10 cirrus, and at the base on return, 4/10 cumulus.

11. Thirty-three a/c landed at this base from 1352B hours to 1422B hours. One a/c landed at 1630B hours, due to first landing at Foggia No. 2 in order to replenish fuel. One a/c, B-24 No. 42-52484, is missing. This a/c was last observed at 1045B hours at 46°38'N - 15°52'E. Its No. 2 engine had been smoking for a while, the pilot feathered it, peeled off and turned back, seemingly under control.

12. The following observations were made.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Alt.</u>	<u>Observation</u>
1137B	47°35'N - 14°08'E	22,000	Large Smelting Plant and Hydro Electric Plant
1230B	45°20'N - 15°35'E	15,000	Word "TITO" on ground 100 ft. letters
1030B	45°50'N - 15°51'E	20,000	Large factory, signs of activity, stacks smoking
1010B	45°30'N - 15°33'E Kaelovac	18,000	M/Y over 500 wagons
1148B	Zeltweg	21,000	A/D 30/40 e/a fighters

13. Route was flown as briefed except for evasive action on return route to avoid flak at Klagenfurt. Track chart

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showing route is inclosed.

14. Five (5) a/c attempted photographs. Selected
print inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer

FRANCIS F. FLEET,
Major Air Corps,
Group S-2 Officer.