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HEADQUARTERS
46th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 U. S. ARMY

MCK/SW/TH

310.1

15 August 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 15 August 1944, thirty (30) scheduled B-24 a/c and one (1) spare B-24 a/c took off at 0815Z hours to bomb the highway bridge at Lonzeve, France.

The spare a/c No 42-52537 turned back at 12033N - 10940E and returned to base, bringing two and one half (2½) tons of bombs back.

The thirty (30) a/c formed into two (2) attack units, the first attack unit being led by Colonel A. L. Schroeder, Group Commanding Officer, and the second unit by 2nd Lt John T. Welch, Flight Leader of the 778th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. Group assembly, line rendezvous with the 465th Group and wing rendezvous were made as briefed without incident.

3. Thirty (30) a/c were over the target at 1254Z hours (briefed target time 1300Z hours) and twenty nine (29) a/c dropped seventy (70) tons of 500 lb. mixed G.P. and E.D.X. bombs (.l. nose and non-delay tail fuzings) from 14,540 feet.

Three (3) a/c returned five (5) tons of bombs to the base; one (1) a/c returned two and one half (2½) tons as bomb racks would not unlock, one (1) a/c returned one and one quarter (1¼) tons of bombs due to rack malfunction, one (1) a/c returned one and one quarter (1¼) tons of bombs because bomb bay doors would not open on right side.

Recapitulation of bombs:

Dropped on target	70 tons
Returned to base	5 tons
Returned to base by spare a/c	2½ tons
Total tonnage	<u>77½ tons</u>

Bomb strike photos show two direct hits on the most westerly span of the highway bridge. Part of the wooden roadway was blown away, but the span was not completely severed.

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~~TOP SECRET~~

Ltr Narr Miss. Rpt 40418 CG cont'd

There were several near misses at both the east and west ends of the bridge. From the west end the bombs struck extended north for 2,000 feet in a concentrated pattern. There are very numerous hits in this area. More than twelve bomb strikes are in the river as far as 1,000 feet short of the target.

4. The leader of the first attack unit did not use the G-1 automatic pilot which was inoperative from right after the form up. This a/c piloted by P.D.I. The leader of the second attack unit used the A-3 automatic pilot.

5. Rendezvous with fighter escort was made at 12173 hours at (44°05'N-09°02'E) with thirty-five (35) P-51 a/c observed. Twelve (12) P-38 a/c were observed at 13013 hours at (44°20'N-04°02'E). Good cover was given on penetration, over the target and withdrawal. P-51 were last seen at 14052 hours at (42°20'N-07°00'E), and P-38 a/c were last seen at 13245 hours at (43°27'N-04°24'E).

6. Weather at base on takeoff was clear with visibility of twenty (20) miles. 2/10 stratocumulus over Appenines at 8,000 feet and 2/10 altocumulus at 11,000 feet. Visibility was thirty (30) miles. Clear from Italian coast to France except for a few cumulus forming over Corsica.

Few scattered cumulus at target. 5/10 cumulus in mountains. Visibility twenty-five (25) miles.

On return 4/10 stratocumulus, tops 8,000 feet. From French coast to Corsica 5/10 cumulus over Corsica, tops 14,000 feet and 5/10 cumulus over Appenines, tops 10,000 feet. 1/10 cumulus at Base on return.

7. One (1) a/c No. 42-78415 crashed on landing; at this base, there being no crew injuries.

8. Observations made by returning crew members are as follows:

TIME

13158	(43°41'N-04°08'E)	13,000	Approximately 400 units in yards, the units looked too small to be railway cars.
	Lunel		
13203	(43°28'N-04°25'E)	12,000	One (1) four gun battery.

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ltr Marr 1150 Rgt 464th CG cont'd

12598	(44°35'N-05°30'E)		Twenty (20) trucks headed west.
12548	(44°38'N-04°41'E)	14,450	Two (2) large river boats on Rhone River, three (3) miles north of our target, near a bridge recently destroyed.
1207	(43°57'N-07°21'E)	13,000	Military barracks consisting of twenty (20) buildings.
12348	(44°18'N-05°55'E)		Small power plant with spillway, square red roofed building.
12553	(1 mile north of target)	13,200	One large river barge on East bank of Rhone River. Could not determine if it was loaded or empty.

Crews report that the country side seemed deserted with very little activity on highways and railroads. The small towns also seemed to be deserted.

9. Thirty (30) a/c landed at this base between 16578 hours and 17328 hours.

10. Route was flown as briefed. Track chart showing route flown inclosed.

11. Six (6) -a/c attempted photographs. Selected print attached.

For the Commanding Officer:

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

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer