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 HEADQUARTERS
 464TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
 APO 520 U S ARMY

DVB/PFE/NOB

319.1

15 August 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 16 August 1944, twenty eight (28) scheduled B-24 a/c and three (3) spares took off at 0655B hours to bomb the Ober Raderach Chemical Works at Friedrichshafen.

The thirty one (1) a/c formed in two attack units. The first unit was led by Capt. William G. Shoemaker, Operations Officer of the 779th Bombardment Sq. (H) and the second was led by 1st Lt. Ira C. Casey, Operations Officer of the 777th Bombardment Sq (H).

2. The Group for-up, line rendezvous and Wing rendezvous were executed as prescribed.

3. B-24 a/c No 42-78340, one of the scheduled a/c returned early from the form-up area, landing at 0805B hours, due to a gas leak in the left wing tank and also a gas leak in No 3 booster pump. B-24 a/c No 42-78091, one of the scheduled a/c returned early from Andria landing at 0815B hours, because No 1 engine was excessively throwing oil and No 2 engine oil temperature gauge registered low. B-24 a/c No 42-95374, one of the scheduled a/c returned early from 42°40'N-15°40'E landing at 0925B hours, because of an injury to Sgt Marvin G. Miller caused by an empty shell case from another a/c crashing through the top turret and striking the Sgt on the left side of the face. B-24 a/c No 42-52479, one of the scheduled a/c returned early from 45°52'N-12°32'E landing at 1159B hours, because of an oil leak in No 1 engine. The Box leader gave permission for the return of this a/c when neither the Group Leader or Deputy Group Leader could be contacted. B-24 a/c No 42-95337, one of the scheduled a/c returned early from 46°25'N-11°50'E landing at 1239B hours because No 4 prop governor and oil pressure oscillated preventing this a/c from keeping up with the formation.

4. Twenty-six (26) a/c were over the target at 1128B hours (briefed target time was 1130B hours) and the twenty-

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five (25) a/c dropped sixty and one half (60½) tons of 500 pound fixed MDA and GP bombs (.1 nose and mixed .01 and .025 tail fuse) from 23,000 feet. B-24 a/c No. 42-52537 was unable to maintain formation position because of one bad turbo and to lighten the load, jettisoned one and one half (1½) tons of bombs at 46°20'N-12°10'E and proceeded with the formation over the target and released one half (½) ton of bombs. Due to a rack malfunction, one half (½) ton of bombs which failed to release on the target were returned to base. B-24 a/c No. 42-51644 failed to release on the target due to a rack malfunction and salvoed two and one half (2½) tons of bombs one (1) minute after the formation had released. Four (4) of the a/c returning early brought ten (10) tons of bombs back to base, while the fifth early return jettisoned two and one half (2½) tons of bombs at 45°41'N-15°24'E.

Bomb strike photos show numerous hits in the target area with precise points of impact obscured by smoke from the previous group's bombing. However, the hits which were definitely pin pointed are on all four sides of the briefed MPI. Approximately 2,000 feet further north, at least one direct hit and several near misses were scored on the hydrogen plant. A few hits were on the railroad and highway junction north of the plant. Sixteen (16) bombs fell 6,000 - 7,000 feet short of the target.

5. The leader of the first attack unit used the C-1 automatic pilot. The leader of the second attack unit did not use the C-1 automatic pilot because it failed to function.

6. The flak at the target was described as M to IIR and as IAH. It appears that Charlie and Dog boxes were over the target at 22,000 feet and these two boxes were hit by considerable flak, while Able and Baker boxes at 23,000 feet and 23,200 feet respectively were above most of the bursts and received very little flak. Moderate, heavy flak was observed at Bolzano but was not directed at this Group.

7. Four (4) ME-109 a/c were observed at Bolzano at 1235B hours flying 3,000 feet below the formation which was at 18,000 feet. The e/a were flying a course at right angles to that of the formation. These e/a were reported only by members of one crew and the observation is not otherwise corroborated.

8. Rendezvous was made with thirty five (35) P-38 a/c at 0950B hours at 44°15'N-13°36'E which provided excellent cover until 1245B hours at 47°43'N-09°25'E. The P-51 a/c were first sighted at 1105B hours at 47°30'N-10°30'E and provided penetration, target and withdrawal escort and top

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cover. As many as seventy five (75) of the P-51 a/c were observed keeping watch over the formation. This fighter escort and cover was highly praised by all crew members. The P-51 a/c were last sighted at 1300 hours at 44°45'N-13°15'E.

9. The weather at take-off was clear with moderate haze restricting visibility to fifteen (15) miles. It was clear over the Adriatic with haze thickening and visibility lowering to ten (10) miles. A few scattered patches of stratus were encountered near the coast of northern Italy continuing over land. At 22,000 feet, 2/10 cirrus. Over the Alps there was 6/10 cumulus up to 15,000 feet and cirrostratus increasing to 6/10 coverage with base at 26,000 feet. In places the cumulus merged with the cirrostratus necessitating circumvention. Scattered thunderstorms were encountered, visibility was fifteen (15) miles. At the target 4/10 cirrus with a few low scattered cumulus. Visibility fifteen (15) miles. The weather conditions on return were similar, with the exception that the cumulus had increased slightly and built up to 18,000 feet. There was 2/10 altostratus tops 10,000 feet at the base on return with visibility twenty (20) miles.

10. One crew member received minor injuries (referred to in paragraph three).

11. One (1) a/c received considerable flak damage as a result of which this a/c crashed on landing at this base. This a/c will be inoperational for more than twenty four (24) hours.

12. The following observations were reported by returning crew members:

a. At 1151B hours at 47°34'N-10°12'E while the formation was at 19,000 feet, a silver B-24 was sighted 2,000 yards to the rear of Charlie Box at 16,000 feet. The B-24 crossed over the route of the formation and pulled up into a position 100 yards and directly behind Baker 23. The B-24 remained in this position for only one minute then passed below the formation and flew on to join the group ahead. This B-24 had orange cowlings and the leading edge of the wings was orange. There was a plain white star, without the background, on the left wing, and the tail assembly carried no markings. A large orange "R" was painted on the fuselage in the usual position but without the conventional background. The tail

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turret was O.D. color. This a/c had the nose, upper and ball turrets trained forward. This a/c could not be identified as belonging to any known Bomb Group and by its actions aroused the suspicion of the entire crew making this report of observation. This peculiar circumstance was not reported by members of any other crews.

b. At 1115B hours at 47°52'N-10°37'E from 22,000 feet about twenty five (25) silver twin engine a/c were observed on the ground at an L/G and adjoining factory installation.

c. At 1115B hours at Memmingen 47°59'N-10°14'E from 22,000 feet, forty (40) to fifty (50) a/c and T-47 were observed dispersed to the north and to the south of the runway, and in the northeast part of the area. Several a/c were parked near the hangars.

d. At 1142B hours at 47°43'N-10°20'E from 21,000 feet an extensive installation consisting of barracks and factory buildings was observed. The installation covered an area of one square mile and was located in a wooded section and well concealed.

13. Twenty six (26) a/c landed from 1445B hours to 1740B hours. B-24 a/c No 42-52504 landed at Fermo at 1400B hours to refuel and landed at this base at 1655B hours. B-24 a/c No 42-78472 landed at Pescara at 1417B hours likewise to refuel and landed at this base at 1740B hours.

14. Because of weather conditions encountered and also due to the fact that every effort was made to maintain a good wing formation the route was flown different than as briefed. From the T.P. at Caorle, the formation flew to 47°30'N-12°10'E, then to Fuszen 47°35'N-10°40'E, and then to the I.P. and thence to the target. A track chart showing the route as briefed and as flown is attached.

15. Seven (7) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print attached.

For the Commanding Officer:

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

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer