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HEADQUARTERS
464th BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 U S Army

JFP/FBE/nob

319.1

23 August 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 23 August 1944, twenty-six (26) of twenty-eight (28) scheduled B-24 a/c and three (3) spares took off at 0756B hours to bomb Markersdorf A/D, Austria.

2. The twenty-nine (29) a/c formed in two attack units. The first attack unit was led by Major Clarence G. Poff, Squadron Commander, 778th Bombardment Squadron (H), and the second attack unit was led by Emmett T. Drake, 1st Lt., Flight Leader, 778th Bombardment Squadron (H). Near the IP Lt. Drake feathered an engine and his lead position was taken over by 2nd Lt. Dale R. Morlan, 778th Bombardment Squadron (H), First Deputy Leader of the second attack unit.

3. The Group form-up and the line rendezvous were executed as planned. The 465th Bombardment Group (H), Wing Leader, climbed at around 150 MPH, making it difficult for the 464th Bombardment Group (H) to stay in the formation. The 465th Bombardment Group (H) missed the IP, made 180° turn and hit latter. The 464th Bombardment Group (H) took Wing Lead, after being called by Wing Leader, to take over.

4. The two (2) a/c of the twenty-eight (28) scheduled failed to take off for the following reasons: One (1) a/c No. 42-78243 because fuel cells were out; One (1) a/c No. 44-10573 hydraulic line, which had been cut was not completely repaired. One (1) spare a/c turned back at 0950B hours and landed at 1110B hours at this base.

5. Twenty-eight (28) a/c were over the target at 1232B hours (briefed target time was 1210B hours). Twenty-five (25) a/c dropped 61 3/4 tons of 500 pound GP bombs (fused .1 nose and non-delay tail) from 23,400 feet. One (1) a/c of the twenty-five (25) a/c dropping on the target jettisoned 3/4 tons of bombs at 48°03'N-15°34'E in order to keep up with the formation after No. 4 supercharger ran away.

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The three (3) additional a/c over the target which did not drop bombs on target jettisoned their bombs as follows: One (1) a/c jettisoned 2 1/2 tons at 47°50'N-15°50'E after loosing No. 2 engine, one (1) a/c jettisoned 1 ton at 46°28'N-16°04'E in order to keep with the formation after loosing No. 2 supercharger, this spare a/c was unable to keep up with the formation and jettisoned the remainder of its bomb load 1 1/2 tons at 47°23'N-16°06'E, one (1) a/c jettisoned 2 1/2 tons of bombs at 48°03'N-15°45'E in order to maintain altitude after loss of No. 3 engine. One (1) spare a/c returned 2 1/2 tons of bombs to base.

Recapitulation of bombs:

Dropped on target	61 3/4 tons
Jettisoned	8 1/4 tons
Brought back to base	2 1/2 tons
Total	72 1/2 tons

Bomb strike photos show concentration of hits on the eastern side of the airdrome and in the hangar area. Thirty-six (36) single engined and four twin engined aircraft were present on the field. Of these, seven (7) single engined a/c were destroyed and three damaged. Bomb strikes started at the southeast corner of the landing area and ran northward up the east side of the airdrome, through the hangar area and into the barracks area. There were direct hits on three hangars and near misses on a fourth. Several hits were scored on the M/T Depot.

6. C-1 and A-5 was used respectively by the leaders of the 1st and 2nd Attack Units, and the bombing was visual.

7. No flak was encountered at the target. SAH flak was encountered at 43°43'N-16°40'E, SIH at 46°42'N-15°59'E, SAH to MMH at 43°25'N-17°14'E, SAH at 43°31'N-17°04'E.

8. Fighter escort consisting of 30 P-51 a/c were first observed at 1130B hours at 45°40'N-15°59'E, which provided escort of the target, cover over the target and withdrawal escort. Twenty (20) P-38 a/c were first observed at the target which provided target cover and withdrawal escort. The escort was last reported observed at 1344B hours at 44°46'N-17°15'E.

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9. Weather at base on take off clear with visibility twenty (20) miles. On the route out, Adriatic scattered patches of strata cumulus at 11,000 feet and haze, visibility fifteen (15) miles. Over the land areas, scattered cumulus becoming 3/10 and some swelling cumulus in Graz area. On the approach to the target some patches 5/10 cumulus in upland areas. Generally hazy with visibilities 18 miles. Scattered cirrus at 28,000 feet. At the target, hazy visibility 12 to 15 miles, 2/10 scattered cirrus at 28,000 feet, 3/10 cumulus tops 14,000 feet, with increase toward uplands. On the return route the lowlands to the Drava River area, only scattered 3/10 strata cumulus tops 11,000 feet. Visibility 15 miles in haze. From this point to the coast of Yugoslavia, cloudiness increased, and route altered to avoid heavy clouds. 7/10 to 8/10 heavy cumulus, most tops to 16,000 feet with some scattered CB to nearly 30,000 feet. Associated middle clouds and high clouds off the heavy cumulus. Adriatic clear away from the coastal cumulus with visibility 15 miles in continued haze. Base on return, 2/10 cumulus bases 25,000 feet with increase in mountains to west, visibility 15 to 18 miles. No winds aloft available, generally more easterly than briefed resulting in left drift to aircraft.

10. None of the a/c returning received flak damage. There were no casualties on today's mission.

11. Two (2) ME 109 e/a were observed at 1230B hours in the target area at an altitude of 5,000 feet. One (1) of these a/c was observed to have been shot down by a P-51 a/c. Two (2) FW 190 e/a were observed at 1231B hours in the target area at an altitude of 1,000 feet, two (2) FW 190 e/a were observed at 1224B hours at an altitude of 23,000 feet flying in the opposite direction to that of the formation. The a/c were of a black color. One (1) ME 109 e/a was observed at 1220B hours at 47°45'N-15°45'E flying ahead of formation at an altitude of 20,000 feet. This a/c was of a black color. None of the e/a observed attacked the formation.

12. The following observations were reported on interrogation:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Altitude</u>	<u>Observation</u>
1338	45°09'N-17°16'E	17,000	10 barges headed SE

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1254	47°23'N-15°12'E	22,000	A/C burning on ground
1323	46°01'N-16°32'E	17,900	M/Y - 300 cars
1343	44°51'N-17°14'E		3 a/c parked on A/D
1344	44°47'N-17°18'E		4 SE a/c on A/D

13. Twenty-eight (28) a/c landed at this base between 1500B hours and 1523B hours.

14. The route was flown as briefed except on the return a change was made to avoid weather. Track chart showing route as briefed and as flown is attached.

15. Eight (8) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print attached.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer

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