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

SVB/WFE/hob

319.1

1 September 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

TO : Commanding Officer, 50th Bombardment Wing (H),
APO 520, U S Army

1. On 1 September 1944, twenty eight (28) scheduled B-24 a/c and three (3) spare B-24 a/c took off at 0715B hours to bomb the rolling stock in the Szajol N/Y at Szajol, Hungary.

The thirty one (31) a/c formed in two (2) attack units, the first being led by Major Clarence G. Poff, Squadron Commander of the 778th Bombardment Squadron (H), and the second by Captain Robert L. Wingfield, Flight Leader of the 779th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. The form-up was made as planned, however, the line rendezvous was not as prescribed. The 464th Bombardment Group entered the assembly area and executed a 300° turn, at which time the four (4) boxes of the 464th Bombardment Group (H) were not in a group formation but were flying as individual boxes. For this reason the Group leader of the 464th Bombardment Group (H) set course for and was over Spinazzola at 0821B hours in the Wing lead position. This lead was kept until the first TP was reached at which time the 464th Bombardment Group took over and continued to lead to the target.

3. Two (2) scheduled a/c returned early. B-24 a/c No. 42-70540, because of a gas leak in the Tokio tank, turned from 42°08'N-17°00'E and landed at 0924B hours. B-24 a/c No. 42-95555 due to a loss of oil pressure necessitating the feathering of No. 1 engine, and because No. 3 and No. 4 engines were running rough and losing oil, returned from 44°18'N-19°46'E and landed at 1155B hours. Two (2) spares returned as ordered from 42°35'N-17°35'E landing at 1036B hours.

4. Twenty seven (27) a/c were over the target at 1103B hours (briefed target time was 1100B hours) and twenty six

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(20) a/c dropped sixty five (65) tons of 500 pound GP bombs (.1 nose and .025 tail fusing) from 20,200 feet. One (1) a/c over the target with the formation did not release because the bomb release handle would not go into select or into salvo position. This a/c returned two and one half (2½) tons of bombs to base. One (1) early return and the two (2) spares returned seven and one half (7½) tons of bombs to base. One (1) early return in order to lighten the load after the loss of No.1 engine, jettisoned two and one half (2½) tons of bombs at 43°08'N-15°20'E.

Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage Disposition

Dropped on target	65.00 tons
Returned to base	10.00 tons
Jettisoned	<u>2.50 tons</u>
Total	77.50 tons

Bomb strike photos show a heavy concentration of bombs in the Szajol M/Y. Numerous direct hits were made among approximately 400 cars in the yard. An explosion occurred in the midst of several columns of cars near the west end of the M/Y. There were probable direct hits and near misses on the railroad station and adjoining buildings. The largest concentration of hits covered 2500 feet of trackage in the center of the yard. Additional hits extended 2,000 ft north of the yard, and a small concentration is on the river bank 3500 ft north of the MPI. Approximately 30 strikes were one mile short of the target, in the open area between the two sets of tracks.

5. The C-1 Automatic Pilot was used by the leader in each attack unit. Bombing was visual.

6. Flak at the target was SIH and commenced one (1) minute after bombs-away, lasting for about one (1) minute. Thirty (30) to thirty five (35) bursts were counted, mostly to the left of the formation and believed to be from guns defending Szolnok.

7. There were no encounters. One (1) JU 88 was observed at 1200B hours at 45°21'N-20°29'E flying at 18,000 ft, 2,000 ft below the formation, and at right angles of the course of the formation. One (1) FW 190 was observed at 1100B hours in the target area. This e/a came in high from 7 o'clock and closed to within 700 yards of the formation, breaking away without attacking. Four (4) unidentified a/c were observed at 1135B

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hours at 46°00'N-19°40'E. When first seen, the a/c were to the rear of the formation and high, but were engaged by the escort and dispersed.

8. Rendezvous with the fighter escort consisting of ten (10) P-51 a/c of the 52nd and 332nd Fighter Groups was effected at 1015 hours. The escort provided target cover and withdrawal to 43°07'N-18°07'E being last observed at 1234 hours.

9. The weather was generally clear. From the Dinaric Alps to the target cirrus was encountered with a few alto stratus patches. The target was clear with frontal clouds to the northwest of the target. Visibility was restricted to 15 miles in haze. On return the weather was clear, except for scattered cumulus over the Dinaric Alps, with visibility 15 to 20 miles over the entire route.

10. The following observations were reported:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Altitude</u>	<u>Observation</u>
1008B	44°55'N-20°15'E	18,000	Six (6) oil storage tanks.
1008B	44°48'N-20°23'E	18,000	Five (5) S/F on A/F.
1018B	45°23'N-20°24'E Petrovgrad	17,000	Nine (9) S/F on A/D.
1113B	46°55'N-19°43'E	18,500	A/D with twelve (12) 4 engine A/C dispersed in parking Area.
1134B	46°06'N-19°40'E Subotica	14,500	Factory with three (3) smoking stacks.
1134B	46°06'N-19°40'E Subotica	14,500	M/Y containing 400 to 500 wagons.
1200B	44°47'N-19°20'E	14,000	Twelve (12) seaplanes with silver wing tips, one with twin fuselage, in the Drava River.

11. No a/c of this Group received flak damage.

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12. Twenty seven (27) a/c landed at this base from 1322B hours to 1400B hours.

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

14. Seven (7) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer

2 Inclosures:
Incl 1- Track Chart
Incl 2- Selected print