

HEAD QUARTERS
454TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO 520 U S ARMY

APL/lob

319.1

5 September 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 5 September 1944, thirty one (31) scheduled B-24 a/c took off at 0700 hours to bomb the Szob, Hungary RR Bridge (primary target). The thirty one (31) a/c formed two (2) attack units. The first attack unit was led by Colonel A.L. Schroeder, Group Commanding Officer and the second attack unit by Major James H. Gilson, Assistant Group Operations Officer.

2. Group assembly and wing rendezvous were executed as planned and without incident.

3. Thirty one (31) a/c were over the target at 1050 hours and twenty five (25) a/c dropped sixty two and one half (62½) tons of 1,000 pound FOX bombs (.1 nose and non delay tail fusing) from 15,500 feet. Six a/c failed to drop on target for the following reasons:

A/C No 42-75431 jettisoned two and one half (2½) tons because of accidental release between IP and target. Bomb release handle slid past safety stud and into salvo position instead of release.

A/C No 44-41053 jettisoned two and one half (2½) tons at (42°30'N-17°35'E). Could not release on target, bomb bay doors crept.

A/C No 42-50963 jettisoned two and one half (2½) tons at (47°10'N-19°38'E). Unable to release at target due to bomb bay door malfunction and had to jettison on return route to maintain formation position.

A/C No 42-78472 jettisoned one half (½) ton at (42°05'N-17°04'E) two (2) tons were returned to the base. Unable to drop on target because bomb bay doors would not open. Could jettison only one bomb without injury to bomb bay doors.

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A/C No 42-21126 returned two and one half (2.5) tons to base. Could not release due to broken rack linkage.

A/C No 44-10573 returned two and one half (2.5) tons to base. A-2 release froze at altitude.

Accumulation of bombs

Dropped on target	52.50 tons
Jettisoned	3.00 tons
Returned to base	7.00 tons
Total	62.50 tons

Target visibility was excellent and bombing was visual. The first attack unit bombed on PDI as the automatic pilot would not bank and was inoperative. The second attack unit used automatic pilot.

Lomb strike photos show several near misses along both edges of the Szob railroad bridge. No direct hits were seen before the bridge became obscured by smoke from hits close by. Several strikes were among approximately 50 railroad cars 1,000 feet east of the bridge. The main concentration of bombs extends from the bridge to the junction of the two rivers, 1,000 feet to the south. One 100 foot long barge was sunk and another probably damaged by near misses. Nineteen (19) undamaged railway hospital cars were standing on a side track one half (1/2) mile east of the bridge.

4. No flak defense was encountered at the target but 5 to 10 flak was encountered between the IP and the target being variously reported at the following positions. Tardos (47° 40'N-18° 27'E) and Tokod (47° 43'N-18° 39'E). No e/a were observed.

5. Fighter escort was described as excellent with the 325th Fighter Group predominate. A/C from the 52nd and 332nd Fighter Groups were also observed. Escort was first observed at 09258 hours (44° 11'N-16° 56'E) and withdrawal was at 12403 hours (42° 41'N-17° 45'E). 20/50 fighters being in the vicinity of this group at all times.

6. The weather was generally clear on route out with a few stratocumulus over Adriatic and a few patches of cirrus and altostratus over Alps and Hungarian planins. Clear at

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target, visibility 25 miles. On return, 8/10 to 10/10 stratoscalus over Dinaric Alps, tops 10-12,000 feet. 1/10 small cumulus at base on return. Visibility generally unrestricted.

7. Two (2) a/c were damaged by flak but neither will be inoperational for twenty four (24) hours.

8. The following observations were made:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Altitude</u>	<u>Observation</u>
0937Z	Split Harbour	12,500	Transport and two (2) small vessels.
1010Z	(46°17'N-17°18'E)	15,000	A/T convey-two miles long.
1023Z	(46°52'N-17°24'E)	15,000	A/D twenty two (22) silver TE a/c-transport type.
1025Z	(46°58'N-17°32'E)	15,000	A/D nine SEF. Previously reported and a/c positions unchanged. Possibly German.
1100Z	Katean (47°46'N-19°40'E)	15,000	M/Y 500 wagons.
1116Z	(46°55'N-19°40'E)	14,500	A/D twenty (20) a/c.

All crews reported heavy barge traffic in Danube river in vicinity of Budapest.

9. Thirty one (31) a/c returned to this base landing between 1326Z and 1342Z hours.

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

11. Four (4) a/c attempted photographs. Selected strike photo inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

2 Incls:
Incl 1 - Track chart
Incl 2 - Selected photo

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer