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

FFF/hob

319.1

17 September 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 17 September 1944 at 0759A hours, twenty eight (28) scheduled B-24 type a/c and three (3) spare B-24 a/c took off to bomb the Shell Oil Refinery, Budapest, Hungary. The thirty one (31) a/c formed two (2) attack units, the first unit being led by Lieutenant Colonel Elvin E. Goodyear, Deputy Group Commander, and the second unit led by 1st Lieutenant Sharon E. Waggoner, Assistant Operations Officer, 776th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. Group assembly, Group and Wing Rendezvous were executed as ordered and without incident.

3. Two (2) a/c returned early as follows:

a. A/C No. 42-78524 turned back at 0931A hours at (42°48'N-16°28'E) because of oxygen leak, reduced pressure seventy five pounds in first hour without use. No. 3 engine leaking oil through prop governor and booster motor on tail turret inoperative.

b. A/C No. 42-78430 turned back at 1140A hours at (47°10'N-19°10'E) because No. 4 engine and No. 2 turbo governor became inoperative.

4. Twenty nine (29) a/c were over the target at 1152A hours (briefed target time 1200A hours) and twenty eight a/c dropped sixty nine and one half (69½) tons of five hundred (500) pound RDX bombs (.1 nose and mixed .01 and .025 tail fusing) from 23,800 feet.

a. Three a/c jettisoned five and one half (5½) tons as follows:

A/C No. 42-78430 (early return) jettisoned two and one half (2½) tons at (47°10'N-19°10'E) at 1140A hours.

A/C No. 42-95337 jettisoned two and one half (2½) tons at (47°20'N-19°10'E) after malfunction of bomb release mechanism prevented release over target.

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Ltr Narr Mission Rpt, contd

A/C No. 42-51625 jettisoned one half (1) ton at (42° 50'N-16°15'E), A-2 release would not operate over target.

b. A/C No. 42-78524 (early return) returned two and one half tons to base.

Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage

Dropped on target	69.5
Jettisoned	5.5
Returned to base	<u>2.5</u>
Total	77.5

c. A variation in the axis of attack was made to avoid smoke from previous bombing. The turn into the bomb run was made short of the I.P. and the axis of attack was 250°. As a result of this action target visibility was excellent.

Bomb strike photographs show close and heavy concentration of bomb strikes cover target area. A large explosion derived from strikes on the storage tanks for intermediate or finished products. Smoke from explosion obscures crude oil storage tanks, probable lubricating oil plant, distillation unit, boiler house, probable stabilization and purification installations, storage tanks for intermediate or finished products, and distillation unit. Three bomb strikes on despatch building. Three strikes on storage tanks and despatch buildings. Two strikes directly on two oil freighters. Fourteen strikes in residential area. Five strikes fell 2200 feet east of briefed aiming point, running along highway. Four strikes fell on opposite side of river 3500 feet east of crude oil storage tanks. Fifteen bomb strikes fell in river 700 feet south west of target area.

5. Automatic Pilot was used by both attack unit leaders.

6. IAH flak was encountered at the target for a period of four (4) to five (5) minutes. The greatest concentration was immediately after the bomb release line.

7. Fighter escort consisting of forty (40) P-38 a/c was first observed at 1047A hours at (45°48'N-17°30'E) and remained in the vicinity of the group until 1315A hours at the Yugoslavian Coast. A total of twenty five (25) P-51 a/c were observed beginning at 1029A hours (44°58'N-16°57'E) and being observed at intervals until 1331A hours over the Adriatic.

Ltr Narr Mission Rpt, contd

8. Base itself clear with stratocumulus on horizon. 8/10 stratocumulus from Base to coast which became 8/10 altocumulus over Adriatic, tops 12-14,000 feet.

Over Dinarics, 6/10 stratocumulus, tops 8,000 feet. Beyond Dinarics, cloud cover broke to scattered and continued scattered to target.

Clear at target, visibility twenty (20) miles.

On return, some except 4/10 cumulus over Dinarics, tops 12,000 feet.

Clear over Adriatic except for patches of stratocumulus.

5/10 cumulus at Base on return, tops 6-8,000 feet. Visibility, entire route, 15-20 miles.

9. Three a/c were damaged by flak, two (2) will be inoperative for over twenty four (24) hours.

Three (3) crew members received minor flak wounds and four (4) were slightly frost bitten.

Definite instructions having been given all crew members concerning the necessity of protection against frost bite a thorough investigation was made to ascertain the reason for the cases reported today. The results of the investigation follow:

776th Bombardment Squadron (H)

2nd Lt Walter J. Moriarty, Bombardier. Slight frost bite of fingers of both hands. Nose wheel door was opened over target and injury incurred despite gauntlet type wool gloves being worn.

Sgt William H. Folz, tail gunner. Slight frost bite, one toe. Heavy winter flying boots were worn.

778th Bombardment Squadron (H)

Cpl John J. Hoyda and Cpl Robert T. Higgins both received slight frost bite of the hands while alternating as ball turret and waist gunners after connection in ball turret for electrically heated suite has become inoperative.

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Ltr Narrative Mission Report, contd

10. The only observation of importance was at 1320A hours, Split Harbour, 15,000 feet. Two (2) submarines and two (2) merchant vessels.

11. Thirty (30) a/c landed between 1410A hours and 1500 A hours.

12. Route was flown as briefed. Track chart of route attached.

13. Seven (7) a/c attempted photographs. Selected strike photograph attached.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. HLEEB
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer

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