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

EVB/FFE/hob

319.1

18 September 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 18 September 1944 at 0630A hours, twenty eight (28) scheduled B-24 type a/c and three (3) spare B-24 a/c took off to bomb the Szob Railroad Bridge in Hungary. The thirty one (31) a/c formed in two (2) attack units, the first unit being led by Colonel A.L. Schroeder, Group Commander, and the second unit being led by Captain Robert H. Fowler, Assistant Operations Officer of the 779th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. The Group form up was hampered by low clouds in the form up area. The Group Leader circled the field three (3) times at 2500 feet, then proceeded to a point three (3) miles South of Spinazzola, then climbed to 4000 feet between Spinazzola and a point five (5) miles Southeast of Andria. A turn was executed and the Group formation crossed Spinazzola at 4000 feet at the rendezvous time. The two (2) Group rendezvous was not accomplished as prescribed. The 464th Bombardment Group (H) assumed the Wing lead at 45°09'N-17°01'E.

3. Thirty one (31) a/c were over the target at 1116A hours (briefed target time 1055A hours) and twenty nine (29) a/c dropped sixty three (63) tons of 1000 pound bombs and 2000 pound RDX bombs (.1 nose and non-delay tail fusing) from 18,000 feet. Of the twenty nine (29) a/c dropping on the target, sixteen (16) a/c dropped thirty seven (37) tons of 1000 pound bombs and thirteen (13) a/c dropped twenty six (26) tons of 2000 pound bombs. Three (3) of the a/c carrying 1000 pound bombs returned a part of their bomb load as follows:

- a. One (1) a/c returned one (1) ton of bombs to base when the left front racks failed to release.
- b. One (1) a/c returned one half (½) ton of bombs to the base when the bomb failed to release. This bomb came free and fell, together with the bomb bay door on the runway as this a/c landed.

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Ltr Narr Mission Rpt, contd

- c. One a/c returned one and one half (1 1/2) tons of bombs which failed to release because the intervalometer stuck.
- d. Two (2) a/c carrying 2000 pound bombs returned four (4) tons of bombs as follows: One a/c did not release for the reason that the select bar was not in all the way. One a/c failed to release due to a rack malfunction.

Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage

1000 Pound Bombs	
Dropped on target	37 tons
Returned to Base	3
2000 Pound Bombs	
Dropped on target	26 tons
Returned to Base	4
Total	70 Tons

Bomb strike photographs show two direct hits and several near misses on the Szob Railway Bridge. The hits were on the Eastern and on the Western spans of the bridge. There were two hits on the tracks approaching the bridge from the West and seven hits on the tracks East of the bridge. Two other hits were on the highway 900 feet Northeast of the bridge and a few strikes were among installations of the surface nine adjacent to the East end of the bridge.

4. The C-1 automatic pilot was used by the first attack unit leader. The second attack unit leader used PDI as the turn control of the C-1 automatic pilot was erratic.

5. No flak was encountered either at the target or enroute. Flak from the Budapest area was observed at a distance.

6. Fighter escort consisting of fifty (50) P-38 a/c and twenty (20) P-51 a/c was first observed at 0834A hours at (43°14'N 16°10'E) at which time the P-51 a/c passed the formation. P-38 a/c sighted at (43°24'N-16°19'E) at 0834A hours. The P-38 escort was from the 14th Fighter Group and the P-51 escort was from the 325th Fighter Group. The escort was last reported at (46°45'N-18°55'E) at 1157A hours.

7. Weather at take off, 7/10 multilayer stratus and stratocumulus clouds with tops at 9000 feet and scattered showers from base to coast. Over the Adriatic 6/10 to 8/10 stratocumulus 12,000 feet.

Over the Dinaric Alps 3/10 stratocumulus, tops 18,000 feet and generally clear from Alps to the target.

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Ltr Narr Mission Rpt, contd

There was 1/10 to 2/10 altocumulus at the target with tops at 16,000 feet and with visibility eighteen (18) miles.

On the return similar conditions were encountered except that the clouds over the Adriatic had diminished to 3/10 to 4/10, tops at 8000 feet; 7/10 stratocumulus and cumulus over the Spur with tops up to 6000 feet.

At the base, 3/10 to 4/10 cumulus. Visibility generally 15 to 20 miles in haze occasionally reaching 25 miles.

8. The following observations were reported:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Alt</u>	<u>Observations</u>
0925A hours	45°19'N-16°59'E	17,000	M/Y with 400 to 500 units
1025A hours	46°55'N-19°41'E (Keeskemet)	18,000	A/D 6 to 8 a/c dispersed
1036A hours	47°47'N-19°56'E	18,000	M/Y with 500 units
1126A hours	47°40'N-19°41'E	18,000	M/Y with 400 to 500 units

9. Thirty one (31) a/c landed between 1404A hours and 1430A hours.

10. The route was not flown as briefed because of weather in the local area, as described in paragraph number 2. From Spinazzola to Island of Lagosta, to Vis, to K.P., to (43°55'N-16°25'E) to (44°48'N-16°56'E) to (45°19'N-17°06'E) thence as briefed but generally about three (3) miles right of course.

11. Eight (8) a/c attempted photographs. Selected strike photograph attached.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer