

C O N F I D E N T I A L

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

FFF/ph

319.1

7 October 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 7 October 1944, beginning at 1007A hours forty five (45) of forty eight (48) scheduled B-24 type a/c took off to bomb the Ersekujvar, Hungary M/Y, (Primary Target). The forty five a/c formed two (2) groups. Able group comprising twenty three (23) a/c and Baker group twenty two (22) a/c. Each group formed two attack units Able groups first attack unit was led by Major William H. Reddell, Commanding Officer, 776th Bombardment Squadron (H) and second attack unit by 1st Lt Bedford D. May, pilot, 776th Bombardment Squadron (H). Baker groups first attack unit was led by Major John W. Nance, Assistant Group Operations Officer and the second attack unit by Major James H. Gilson, Commanding Officer, 779th Bombardment Squadron (H).

Three a/c failed to take off for the following reasons. A/C No 42-78431 and a/c No 42-52526 because of gas leaks. A/C No 42-52537 because of broken expander tube.

2. Group assembly and bomber rendezvous were as prescribed in Operations Order No 200.

3. Two (2) a/c returned early.

A/C No 42-51178 turned back at 1200A hours from (42°17'N-16°11'E) after feathering No. 3 engine due to broken exhaust valve causing oil leak and vibration.

A/C No 42-51760 turned back at 1225A hours from (42°35'N-15°40'E). Immediately after take off this a/c returned to the base with a propellor governor inoperative, changed propellor governor and again took off but was unable to overtake the group formation.

4. Forty three (43) a/c were over the target at 1405A hours (briefed target time 1353A hours) and dropped 105.25 tons of five hundred (500) pound RDX bombs (.1 nose and .01 tail fusing) from 18,000 feet. One (1) a/c dropped 1.25 tons on a target of opportunity after rack malfunction prevented their release over primary target. The target attacked was a factory located on the Danube River at (47°45'N-18°32'E).

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Axis of attack 140°, altitude 17,000 feet, time 1415A hours. 2.75 tons were jettisoned. 2.50 by a/c No 42-51178 (early return) at 1225A hours (43°49'N-16°20'E). .25 by a/c No 42-78618 at (46°45'N-18°40'E), bomb hung up when releasing on the target. 3.25 tons were returned to the base. 2.50 tons by a/c No 42-51760 an early return and .75 ton by a/c No 44-40503 after failing to release over target attack unit leader ordered their return to the base as a/c had no bombsight.

Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage

Dropped on Primary target	105.25 tons
Dropped on target of Opportunity	1.25 tons
Jettisoned	2.75 tons
Returned to Base	3.25 tons
	<u>112.50 tons</u>

On the bomb run the lead bombardier of Able Box, Baker Force, finding the assigned portion of the target smoke obscured from previous bombing and being unable to definitely establish the location of the briefed MPI decided to synchronize on a portion of the M/Y beyond the smoke and selected the western edge of the work shops for his aiming point. The majority of the a/c in Able Box dropped on the leader but the balance of Baker Force dropped into the smoke surrounding the briefed MPI.

The axis of attack was 151° instead of the briefed axis of 104°. This change was made necessary by a deviation in course between the IP and target. Overcast conditions at the IP caused the formation to pass beyond the turning point.

Bomb strike photos show a heavy concentration of hits in the northwestern half of the marshalling yard, with smaller concentrations extending through the yard to the southeast choke point. An explosion occurred among several closely group columns of freight cars situated 2500 feet northwest of the workshops; close to the briefed MPI. Several hits in the M/Y bordered the workshops area on the west, while additional hits fell on the southeast end of the yard--opposite the locomotive depot. There was a probable direct hit and several near misses on the railroad station. Numerous hits were short and to the northwest of the target. Several additional bombs fell in the residential area 1000 feet south of the center of the M/Y.

5. Bombing was visual and both Able and Baker force leaders used C-1 Automatic Pilot.

6. No flak defenses were encountered and observations of flak were as follows.

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(47°30'N-18°37'E)	Bicske	SIL
(47°57'N-17°28'E)	Fel Bar	SIL
(46°54'N-16°57'E)		SIH
(46°36'N-17°00'E)	Gelse	SIL
(46°22'N-16°49'E)		SIL
Split (25 Bursts-Believe 5 guns)		SIH

7. Fighter escort was reported as far below usual standards being reported at very infrequent intervals and generally in small numbers. A total of 25 P-51 and 25 P-38 a/c were reported. Escort was first observed at 1318A hours (46°10'N-16°56'E) and last reported at 1632A hours over the Adriatic. Group markings could not be identified.

8. 3/10 cumulus and 8/10 alto stratus, Base to coast.

8/10 strato cumulus over Adriatic with 8/10 alto stratus.

Over Dinarics, 4/10 scattered cumulus, tops 8,000 feet and 3/10 alto stratus at 16,000 feet.

Generally clear over Hungarian Plains except for patches stratus and scattered cirrus.

On return, same with a 8.10 alto stratus at Base. Visibility 5-10 miles over Adriatic in haze, improving to 25 miles at target.

9. Observations of importance.

Time

1215A	(42°59'N-16°00'E)	10,000	Large transport, anchored
1341A	(47°17'N-17°09'E)	18,000	M/Y, 500 Wagons
	Czelidomok		
1348A	(47°42'N-17°21'E)	17,700	50 TE a/c dispersed in wooded area
1416A	(47°39'N-18°20'E)	16,000	M/Y, 600 wagons
1417A	(47°32'N-18°36'E)	18,000	Barrack type building on railroad spur
1512A	(45°10'N-17°18'E)	16,000	Bridge under construction
1545A	(43°35'N-17°00'E)	11,500	2 Chutes landed. Did not see jump

10. Forty three (43) a/c landed at this Base between 1700A and 1739A hours.

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11. Weather necessitated a deviation from the briefed route and from Spinezzola the formation was slightly to right of course and continuing to right of course after first turn point reached the Yugo Slav coast at (43°28'N-16°04'E) Male Drivenik from that point a direct course was flown to turn point Buc (45°28'N-17°23'E) then as briefed to the IP but the formation passed beyond the IP before turning into the target. Return route was as briefed except slight deviation to the left of course to avoid weather between Buc and the Adriatic. Track chart showing route as briefed and Flown attached.

12. Ten (10) a/c attempted photographs. Select strike photo attached.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, Air Corps
Intelligence Officer

2 Inclosures:
Inclosure 1 - Track Chart
Inclosure 2 - Select Strike Photo