

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

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

MCK/FFE/hob

319.1

13 October 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 13 October 1944 forty five (45) of forty nine (49) B-24 scheduled a/c took off at 0635A hours to bomb Blechhammer South Oil Refinery, Germany.

Four (4) a/c failed to take off:

A/C No. 41-29441 Turbo out.
A/C No 42-51514 Scavenger pumps on #2 engine out.
A/C No 42-52504 Heaters, #1 generator, and auxiliary power unit out.
A/C No 42-52522 #1 induction system, #3 prop governor out. Oil leak in #1 engine.

The forty five (45) a/c formed into two Groups. Able Group of 23 a/c being led by Major William H. Reddell, Commanding Officer of the 776th Bombardment Squadron (H), and Baker group of 22 a/c by Major John W. Nance, Assistant Group Operations Officer.

2. Group form up, two Group and Wing rendezvous were made as planned without incident.

3. Six (6) a/c returned early

- (a) a/c No 42-51886-returned before assembly, landing at 1018A hours, due to leak in hydraulic system which prevented landing gear from retracting. All bombs returned.
- (b) a/c No 44-18610-Turned back at 0920A hours at (44°00'N-16°10'E) due to #2 prop governor becoming inoperative. All bombs returned to base. Landed at 1042A hours.

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- (c) a/c No 42-95364-Turned back at 0952A hours at (45°35'N-16°53'E) due to loss of #4 turbo. All bombs returned to base. Landed at 1137A hours.
- (d) a/c No 42-95364-Turned back at 0958A hours at (46°32'N-17°22'E) with three (3) superchargers inoperative. Landed at 1147A hours. Returned all bombs to base.
- (e) a/c No 42-25514-Turned back at 1011A hours at (46°47'N-17°40'E) because of loss of #3 turbo.
- (f) a/c No 42-78431-Turned back at 0958A hours at (45°50'N-16°50'E) because of loss of #2 turbo. Turbo could not be repaired in the air. Landed at 1149A hours. This a/c returned eight (8) bombs to base, and jettisoned two (2) bombs at (42°20'N-16°05'E) at 1115A hours over the Adriatic.

4. Thirty eight (38) a/c were over the target at 1120A hours (briefed target time 1123A hours) and thirty five (35) a/c dropped eighty seven and one half (87½) tons of 500 pound RDX bombs (.1 nose and .01 and .025 tail fusings) from 22,950 feet.

One a/c dropped two and one half (2½) tons of 500 pound RDX bombs (.1 nose and .01 and .025 tail fusings) on the second alternate target, the Ersekujvar M/Y at 1101A hours from 20,000 feet. This a/c returned to base after takeoff with #4 engine out, and just before landing succeeded in getting the engine in operation again. Being unable to overtake the Group formation, the pilot followed another Wing until arriving in the vicinity of this alternate target. This a/c did not have a camera, but the crew stated that their bombs hit on the rail-road tracks in the M/Y.

Four (4) a/c jettisoned eight (8) tons of bombs:

a/c No 42-78671-Jettisoned two and one half (2½) tons at 1141A hours at (48°00'N-18°20'E) as bombs would not release due to bomb bay doors would not open.

a/c No 42-51953-Jettisoned two and one half (2½)

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tons in the vicinity of (50°06'N-18°35'E) at 1128A hours due to a shell case lodging in the bomb bay doors causing the breakage of several rollers making it impossible to open the bomb bay doors. It was necessary to hold doors open while releasing the bombs one by one..

a/c No. 42-51389-Jettisoned two and one half (2½) tons starting at 1129A hours until 1208A hours from (50°06'N-18°35'E) continuing to (48°10'N-18°00'E), due to rack switch being frozen. The bombs were released by-hand one at a time.

a/c No 42-78431-Jettisoned one half (½) ton, see paragraph No. 3 (f) for details.

Six (6) a/c returned fourteen and one half (14½) tons of bombs to base for reasons outlined in paragraph No. 3.

Recapitulation of Bombs

Primary Target	87.5 tons
2nd Alternate Target	2.5 tons
Jettisoned	8.0 tons
Returned to Base	<u>14.5 tons</u>
Total	112.5 tons

Bombing was visual by Able Group. Baker Group was by offset, with PFF being used solely to 50° dropping angle, after which PFF was used for course and offset method for rate.

Target visibility was obscured by an effective smoke screen, with smoke generators observed on the North West, North and South East of the target area. Smoke generators had apparently been in operation for some time, as the target area was well covered with smoke from the generators. Ground wind was from the South East. Inclosed strike photograph shows the location of a number of smoke generators.

Bomb strike photos show the north half of Blechhammer South refinery almost completely obscured by the smoke screen and by heavy smoke from earlier bombing. Approximately two dozen hits are visible (at the edge of the smoke covered area) between the northwest corner of the refinery and the railroad. Twenty additional strikes are 2,000 feet southwest of the briefed MPI, in the general area of the distillation units. The heart of the refinery and the briefed MPI are obscured by a column of heavy black smoke. Probable

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numerous additional hits are in the central and northeastern sections of the target area.

5. The leader of Able Group used the C-1 automatic pilot on the bomb run, but the leader of Baker Group did not as the C-1 was inoperative.

6. Flak at the target was IAH for a period of 5/6 minutes. Flak was encountered or observed at the following locations:

Mor Ostrava	(49°50'N-18°18'E)	IIH
Dunaalmas	(47°44'N-18°15'E)	SI toMAH
Komarom	(47°46'N-18°08'E)	S toMAH
Veszprem	(47°06'N-17°54'E)	SAH
Gyor	(47°42'N-17°39'E)	MAH
Mezoore	(47°35'N-17°55'E)	SIH
Bodajk	(47°20'N-18°12'E)	SIH

7. Rendezvous was made with 45/50 P-38 a/c at 0905A hours at (43°38'N-15°44'E) and with 25/30 P-51 a/c at 1118A hours at the target area. Last escort was observed at 1330A hours at the Yugoslavian Coast.

8. Scattered altostratus and stratocumulus at take off. Visibility 20 miles.

Over Adriatic 2/10 to 3/10 cirrus, base 25,000 feet and 2/10 to 3/10 stratocumulus, tops 5,000 feet.

4/10 to 5/10 cirrostratus over Dinarics and 2/10 to 3/10 stratocumulus.

Beyond Dinarics to target cirrostratus varied from 4/10 to 7/10 at 23-25,000 feet. Below plane was 4/10 to 6/10 altocumulus, tops 10-12,000 feet.

At target, scattered cirrus and clear below planes. 4/10 to 5/10 altocumulus to south. Visibility was 15-20 miles in haze.

Returning conditions were similar, 2/10 to 3/10 altostratus and 2/10 cumulus at base on return.

Frontal clouds were observed to west of course both going and return.

Visibility was 20 miles to unlimited.

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9. One (1) a/c was lost at the target to flak and three (3) a/c are missing. Two (2) a/c landed at friendly fields.

a/c No 44-41043 was lost to flak over the target, with 6/10 chutes seen to open.

a/c No 42-78415 missing, last seen at (49°43'N-17°25'E) with #1 engine feathered at 1104A hours.

a/c No 42-51840 missing, last seen on rally off the target at 1122A hours, dropping out of formation and losing altitude.

a/c No 42-78434 missing, last seen wobbling over the target at 1121A hours with apparent difficult control.

a/c No 42-50500 landed at Vis.

a/c No 44-41213 landed at Iesi.

Two (2) crew members suffered minor flak wounds.

Fourteen (14) a/c were damaged, five (5) of which will be inoperative for more than twenty four (24) hours.

10. The following observations were made by returning crew members:

Time	Place	Altitude	Observations
1030	(47°45'N-17°55'E)	23,000	100 barges on Danube.
1258	(45°53'N-17°02'E)	15,000	B-24 or B-17 a/c in open field.
1220	(47°40'N-18°20'E)	18,000	Very effective smoke screen.
1010	(46°38'N-17°30'E)	16,000	Twelve (12) S/E on airdrome.
1221	(Komaron)	17,000	30/50 Barges and twelve (12) oil tanks.
1016	(47°03'N-17°34'E)	22,100	Camouflaged A/D with six (6) large hangars in groups of two (2). Two (2) a/c parked.
1154	(48°53'N-18°14'E)	19,000	Thirty (30) long white buildings. Ten (10) in each group.
1127	(50°06'N-18°35'E)	20,000	M/Y with well over 500 wagons. Lots of activity.
1101	(49°27'N-17°26'E)	24,000	M/Y with over 500 wagons.
1229	Papa	18,000	A/D under construction.
1227	(47°09'N-18°09'E)	18,000	A/D with six (6) new hangars and 16 S/E. A/C dispersed near a wooded area in center of field.
1318	(44°55'N - 16°25'E)	14,500	Three (3) separate fires and smoke following an explosion on a wooded hill.
0814	(41°43'N-16°25'E)		A large explosion in the water of

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			Adriatic between Barletta and the Spur. No. a/c above the spot.
1030	Komaron	23,000	M/Y, 500 plus wagons.
1034	Krsekujvar	23,000	M/Y, 500 plus wagons..
0915	(44°00'N-16°05'E)	17,000	B-17 a/c joined formation for approximately ten (10) minutes. Gradually pulled off to left and out of sight. Had a white leading edge on horizontal stabilizer.
1215	(47°46'N-18°08'E)	19,000	Eight (8) barges tied up in river.
1254	(46°15'N-16°57'E)	17,000	Observed a bridge blown up by a/c thought to be B-25's. South end of bridge destroyed.
1009	(46°43'N-17°31'E)	22,000	Landing strip being lengthened.
1103	(49°36'N-17°17'E)	23,000	M/Y, 500 wagons and large factory buildings.
1155	(48°36'N-18°29'E)	19,000	35/40 Barracks type buildings.
1233	(47°06'N-17°32'E)	18,000	Large active factory.
1158	(48°05'N-18°00'E)	20,000	Large group of oil tanks and to the west a large number of barracks.
1229	(47°20'N-17°28'E)	17,000	Smoke screen.
1230	Veszprem	17,300	A/D, 3 S/E a/c.
1200	(44°50'N-17°07'E)	15,500	Strip which appeared to be new.

11. Thirty two (32) a/c landed at this base between 1452 and 1535A hours.. One (1) a/c that bombed the second alternate target landed at this base at 1340A hours.

12. Route was flown as briefed to the target. The rally was sharper than planned and the formation was from 10/15 miles left of course to Guts, where the correct course was flown back to the base. Track chart showing route flown is inclosed.

13. Five (5) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

2 Incls:
Incl 1 - Track Chart
Incl 2 - Selected Print

FRANCIS E. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer

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SUBJECT: Amendment to Narrative Mission Report, 13 October 1944

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

1. A/C No. 42-78418 reported as missing. Correct to lost as report received that a/c crashed when attempting emergency landing at Island of Vis. All crew members reported killed.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer