

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

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

BVB/FFE/hob

319.1

16 October 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 16 October 1944, thirty six (36) scheduled B-24 a/c plus four (4) designated spare a/c took off at 0650A hours to bomb the St. Valentin Tank Works in Austria. The forty (40) a/c formed in three (3) attack units. The first attack unit was led by Major William G. Moore Jr., Commanding Officer of the 777th Bombardment Squadron (H). The second attack unit was led by Captain Charles F. Fowler, Flight Leader of the 778th Bombardment Squadron (H), and the third attack unit was led by 1st Lt Dean F. Lovitt, Flight Leader, 777th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. The Group form-up, assembly and Wing rendezvous were executed as prescribed.

3. Five (5) B-24 a/c returned early:

B-24 a/c No. 42-78618, due to loss of No. 3 turbo, left the formation at 0927A hours at 43°36'N-15°21'E and landed at 1038A hours.

B-24 a/c No. 42-78452, due to defective turbo governor resulting in a ten (10) to twelve (12) inch oscillation in manifold pressure on No. 1 engine, interphone and emergency interphone inoperative at 8,000 feet and because there was no oxygen line to the ball turret, left the formation at 0941A hours at 44°55'N-14°18'E and landed at 1050A hours.

B-24 a/c No. 42-78431, due to loss of No. 2 turbo, left the formation at 0950A hours at 44°22'N-14°30'E and landed at 1105A hours.

B-24 a/c No. 42-95603, with No. 1 engine feathered because of the loss of oil pressure, left the formation as Group Leader at 1015A hours at 45°42'N-14°00'E and landed at 1110A hours.

B-24 a/c No. 42-95332, with No. 1 turbo out and No. 3 and No. 4 turbos pulling only 40 inches and an oil leak in No. 3 engine, left the formation at 1047A hours at 47°02'N-13°53'E and landed at 1250A hours.

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

Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

4. Thirty-four (34) a/c were over the target at 1126A hours (briefed target time 1129A hours) and thirty-three (33) a/c dropped eighty two and one half (82.5) tons of 500 pound RDX bombs (.1 and .01 tail fusing) from 23,800 feet.

B-24 a/c No. 42-52514 jettisoned two and one half (2½) tons of bombs at (48°10'N-14°35'E) at 1121A hours being unable to keep up with the formation after the loss of two (2) superchargers. This a/c by-passed the target and rejoined the formation just south of Steyr.

B-24 a/c No. 42-51663 failed to release on the target due to the fact that the release lever was broken. This a/c jettisoned two and one half (2½) tons at (47°10'N-13°45'E)..

One (1) early return, B-24 a/c No. 42-95603, dropped two and one half (2½) tons of bombs on a target of opportunity (M/Y and Warehouses) at 1030A hours at (45°41'N-14°11'E). The bombs hit in the warehouse area NE of and adjacent to the M/Y.

One (1) early return, B-24 a/c No. 42-95332 dropped two and one half (2½) tons of bombs on a target of opportunity (RR and Quarry) at 1041A hours at (46°43'N-13°38'E). The results were not observed.

Three (3) other early returns brought back to base seven and one half (7½) tons of bombs.

Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage

33 a/c dropped on target	82.5 tons
1 a/c jettisoned prior to target time	2.5 tons
1 a/c unable to release on target jettisoned	2.5 tons
2 a/c bombed targets of opportunity	5.0 tons
3 a/c early returns brought back	7.5 tons
Total	100.0 tons

Bombing was by PFF. The first attack unit leader did not use A-5 automatic pilot as it was inoperative. Run was made manually. The second attack unit leader bombed manually, the C-1 automatic pilot being erratic. Third attack unit leader bombed on PDI, the C-1 automatic pilot being erratic.

Bomb strike photos show impacts to be not in the vicinity of the briefed target, but instead at the south edge of the city of Linz. Approximately three dozen hits are visible in an open area one mile southwest of the Linz Tank Works. Heavy cloud cover and a smoke screen obscured a majority of the impacts.

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

Ltr Narr Miss Ret, contd

5. I A H flak was encountered at the target. Crews report being in flak from five (5) to seven (7) minutes. The formation encountered the first flak about two minutes before bombs away and the last while on the rally. The exact location of flak positions could not be given because of the overcast which obscured air to ground visibility. Flak was reported as very intense at the target.

At Villach S I H was encountered
 At 45°00'N-14°12'E S I L observed
 At Fiume S I H observed
 At 45°28'N-14°12'E S I H observed
 At Klagenfurt S I H observed
 At 48°11'N-15°05'E S I H observed

6. Fighterescort of 40 P-38 a/c made rendezvous with the bomber formation at 1010A hours at 45°13'N-14°16'E providing penetration and target cover. The escort was last reported observed in the target area at 1129A hours. 11 P-51 a/c were sighted in the target area at 1128A hours and last reported at 1140A hours at 47°50'N-13°50'E.

7. 3/10 to 4/10 thin alto cumulus at take off, continuing to coast.

In South Adriatic, 3/10 alto stratus and 1/10 to 2/10 cumulus, tops 6000 feet with cloudiness increasing northward.

In Trieste area, 5/10 cirrostratus at 20,000 feet and 7/10 cumulus, tops up to 12,000 feet.

Over Alps, stratocumulus varied from 2/10 to 6/10 with thick stratus in valleys.

At target, 7/10 low cumulus, tops 7000 feet which obscured target.

A bank of cirrostratus from 20 to 26,000 feet was encountered on rally off target.

On return, cumulus over mountains had increased and built up to 13,000 feet with coverage 8/10 to 10/10, layer extending to south of Trieste.

From mid-Adriatic to base 6/10 to 8/10 alto stratus at 12,000 feet and 1/10 to 3/10 cumulus.

Visibility was 15-20 miles entire route.

8. One (1) a/c No. 42-51389 was lost at the target due to direct hit from flak in No. 1 engine. The left wing was knocked off. Two (2) to four (4) chutes were reported observed prior to a/c disappearance in the overcast.

9. Observations as follows were reported:

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

Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

Time	Place	Altitude	Observation
1040A	Villach	20,500	M/Y with 400 units
1129A	48°10'N- 14°27'E	24,000	A/D with two (2) runways, one of which appears to have been lengthened.
1337A	42°10'N-16°00'E	8,000	Large ripple in the water, Yellow substance floating. Flame and smoke appeared to come from center of area. Believed to be person and Mae West. (Reported by telephone to A-2)

10. Thirty four (34) a/c landed at this base between 1407A hours and 1440A hours. The crew of B-24 a/c No. 44-10573 bailed out at 1455A hours five (5) miles SE of the base when this a/c ran out of gas. This a/c received considerable flak damage over the target rendering inoperative the hydraulic system and on arrival over this base, the crew was unable to lower the gear. The a/c was circling the field in an attempt to get the gear down when it ran out of gas. All crew members parachuted to ground without injury.

11. The route was flown generally as briefed except that the formation up the Adriatic was to right of briefed course, at one point as much as twenty (20) miles. The formation at this point passed over Vis. At the Key Point, the formation was back on course and stayed on the briefed course to the IP. From the IP to the target, navigation was by PFF. Track chart showing route flown attached.

The Group lead was taken over at 1015A hours by 1st Lt Donald L. Nann. Flight Leader of the 779th Bombardment Squadron (H) when the scheduled Group Leader was forced to return early.

12. Thirteen (13) a/c received flak damage. Four of which will be inoperational for more than twenty four (24) hours.

13. Six (6) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

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

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 Intelligence Officer