

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

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

FFE/hob

319.1

17 November 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 17 November 1944, twenty nine (29), of thirty (30) scheduled B-24 a/c, took off at 0700A hours to bomb the Florisdorf Oil Refineries at Vienna, Austria. Due to a broken starter on No 3 engine, a/c No 42-78433, was unable to take off.

2. The twenty-nine a/c formed in two attack units. The first unit was led by Lt Col Clarence G. Poff, Commanding Officer of the 778th Bombardment Squadron (H), and the second by 1st Lt Lewis M. Perkins, Flight Leader of the 776th Bombardment Squadron (H).

3. The Group form-up was accomplished without incident. In line rendezvousing with the 465th Bombardment Group (H), minor difficulty was encountered when the 465th Group cut inside course at the rendezvous area. Rendezvous with other Wings was as prescribed.

4. Twenty-five (25) a/c were over the target at 1144A hours (briefed target time 1110A hours), and twenty-five (25) a/c dropped 49.75 tons of 500 pound RDX bombs from 24,000 feet. One hundred and forty nine (149) bombs were fused .1 nose and mixed .01 and .025 tail. Fifty (50) bombs were fused long delay. Four (4) a/c each dropped one leaflet bomb in addition to eight (8) 500 pound RDX bombs, while the Group lead a/c dropped one leaflet bomb in addition to seven (7) 500 pound RDX bombs.

Bombing was by PFF. The Group Leader employed automatic pilot during his bombing run. The leader of the second attack unit did not use his automatic pilot, as it was found to be not working properly.

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

PFF equipment was described as functioning excellently, A smooth and exact bombing run was believed to have been attained. The Group Leader reports that coordination between the PFF operator and the Bombardier was excellent.

Bombs away photos show approximately fifty (50) bombs released over a ten-tenths cloud formation. The area of impact cannot be determined from the mission photos.

5. M/IIH flak was encountered at 1142A hours at the target. Time in flak averaged 4/5 minutes. Black and white bursts were observed, with barrage fire generally being employed. Scant and heavy flak was observed at 1148A hours, in the vicinity of Bratislava, coordinates about (48°10'N-17°00'E).

6. Thirty (30) P-38s rendezvoused with the formation as escort at 0945A hours at (44°15'N-15°26'E). Escort continued until 1300A hours at (46°00'N-17°02'E).

7. Weather at the base on take-off was 3/10 to 4/10 stratocumulus, with tops at 8,000 feet. Off the Italian Spur, these clouds rapidly increased to solid 10/10, with tops from 8,000 to 10,000 feet. Further north, this layer broke up, and the Yugoslavian coast was clear.

Over the Dinaric Alps, 1/10 to 2/10 clouds were found, with tops from 10,000 to 12,000 feet. North of the Dinarics, the layers became scattered, with 2/10 to 5/10 coverage, average tops at 15,000 feet. 10/10 clouds completely blanketed the target, tops at 16,000 feet, with air-to-air visibility approximately 18 miles.

On the return route, from the target to the Dinaric Alps, there was generally 8/10 to 10/10 scattered stratocumulus, with tops at 12,000 feet. Over the Dinarics, and the Adriatic, the cumulus increased. On arrival at the base, cloud coverage was 2/10 to 3/10 cumulus, with tops at 6,000 feet.

8. The following observations were reported:

A. The PFF operator of the lead a/c of the second attack unit picked up a very bright spot on his scope at 1010A hours, at (45°19'N-14°18'E), from an altitude of 21,000 feet. Nothing on the map shows that would indicate such a bright return.

B. Twenty five (25) a/c were seen parked on a snow

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covered airfield (Zeltweg) (47°11'N-14°43'E), at 1056A hours from 22,500 feet.

C. On a double-track railroad near Rajic (45°18'N-17°07'E), at 1251A hours, from 16,500 feet, three hundred (300) wagons were observed standing and closely grouped.

9. Twenty-four (24) a/c landed at this base between 1410A hours and 1450A hours, without incident. One a/c No 42-51736, landed at the 460th Bombardment Group's (H) base.

10. Two a/c received minor flak damage from today's mission.

11. Enroute to the target, over the Adriatic, difficulty was encountered with the 47th Bombardment Wing (H). Due to their flight path approaching that of this Group, deviations to the left of course had to be flown. Other minor deviations in course were made to avoid weather areas, which are shown on the inclosed track chart.

12. Five (5) a/c attempted photographs. A selected print is inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER  
Major, AC  
Intelligence Officer

2 Inclosures  
Incl 1 - Track Chart  
Incl 2 - Selected print