

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

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

HH/FFE/hob

319.1

2 December 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 2 December 1944, thirty five (35) of thirty eight (48) scheduled B-24 a/c took off at 0750A hours to bomb the Blechhammer South Oil Refinery, Germany. The thirty five (35) a/c formed three (3) attack units, the first unit led by Lt. Col. William H. Reddell, Commanding Officer, 776th Bombardment Squadron, the second unit by 1st Lt. Wayne G. Shearer, Flight Leader, 777th Bombardment Squadron and the third unit by Capt. Sharon E. Waggoner, Operations Officer, 776th Bombardment Squadron.

Three (3) scheduled a/c failed to take off for the following reasons:

1. A/C No 42-78433 - Battery out
2. A/C No 41-29394 - Plug changes
3. A/C No 44-48880 - Plug changes

2. The Group form up was hindered by weather but the time schedule was adhered to and the Group was over Spinazzola at 0904A. The 460th Bombardment Group was late for rendezvous but were able to assume their proper position in the Wing lead at the Yugoslavian coast.

3. Four (4) a/c returned early as follows:

A/C No 44-10610 returned from (42°45'N-16°35'E) landing at 1044A. Fuel leak in bomb bay.

A/C No 42-78613 returned from Split (43°30'N-16°28'E) landing at 1035A. Fuel transfer system inoperative.

A/C No 42-78682 returned from (46°10'N-17°02'E) landing at 1222A. No. 1 turbo inoperative.

A/C No 42-95337 returned from (47°00'N-17°00'E) landing at 1245A. Two (2) heated suits out and three (3) guns inoperative.

All of the a/c returning early jettisoned two (2) bombs with long delay fuses in the Adriatic and returned the balance of their bomb loads to the base.

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

4. Thirty one (31) a/c were over the primary target, Elechhammer South Oil Refinery, Germany at 1245A hours and thirty (30) a/c dropped 59.25 tons of 500 pound RDX bombs. 15.5 tons fused with long delay fuses and 43.75 tons with .1 nose and .01 - .025 tail fuses. Eleven (11) leaflet bombs were also dropped. One a/c, No 42-52070 being unable to release over the primary target, attacked Czeldomolk (47°16'N-17°09'E), no specific target, dropping .5 ton RDX bombs with long delay fuses and 1.5 ton RDX bombs with .1 nose and .01 - .025 tail fuses. One leaflet bomb was also dropped. Results were unobserved. Three bombs, .75 ton were jettisoned. A/C No 42-51689 jettisoned .5 ton, two (2) minutes after target time and a/c No 42-78618 jettisoned .25 ton at 1300A (50°10'N-18°30'E). Rack malfunctions cause of jettisoning in both a/c.

Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage

30 a/c Primary target	(.1 and .01-.025)	43.75 tons
30 a/c Primary target	(long delay)	15.50
1 a/c Target of opportunity	(.1 and .01-.025)	1.50
1 a/c Target of opportunity	(long delay)	.50
2 a/c Jettisoned	(.1 and .01-.025)	.75
4 a/c Jettisoned, E.R.	(long delay)	2.00
4 a/c Ret. to base, E.R.	(.1 and .01-.025)	6.00
TOTAL		70.00 tons

Leaflet bombs - Dropped on primary target	11 bombs
Leaflet bombs - Dropped on target of opportunity	1
TOTAL	12 bombs

Bombing was visual and the altitude 23,500 feet, heading 80°. The approach to the target was by PFF methods until visual contact was possible at which time the formation was fifteen (15) miles from the target.

Bomb strike photos show concentrations of hits extending across the northeast vital area of the refinery. Several hits are in the area occupied by the compressor house and gas generating plants. Numerous other hits are in the north central section of the refinery, near the hydrogenation stalls. A thick haze, and heavy smoke from previous bombing make it impossible to pinpoint specific installations hit by the bombs.

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

5. C-1 Automatic Pilot was used by all attack unit leaders on the bomb run.

6. Flak at the primary target was IAH and of about seven (7) minutes duration. Red, white and black bursts; the pattern of which, indicated predicted concentrations and tracking methods both in use. Scant, heavy flak was observed at Győr, Magykenizse and south of Kajer (47°28'N-17°38'E) also at (49°55'N-17°55'E).

Flak position as indicated on maps dated 31 October 1944 at Skoczow (49°48'N-18°48'E) inactive although on course.

7. One FW-190 was observed at 1415A (45°50'N-16°40'E) flying at 10,000 feet, no direction or tactics given. Observing a/c at 11,300 feet. One a/c reported what appeared to be trails from six jet propelled a/c at 1050A thirty (30) miles south of Lake Balaton. Trails approximately thirty (30) miles to left of formation, one (1) heading in opposite direction and five (5) at approximately 90°. Formation altitude 22,500 feet and trails on same level.

8. Escort was described as excellent with particularly fine withdrawal cover by P-38 a/c. ~~Thirty five (35) P-38 a/c first~~ observed at 1254A (49°50'N-18°30'E) and last observed at 1540A (45°40'N-16°40'E). Twenty six (26) P-51 a/c first observed at 1115A (46°20'N-16°44'E) and last observed at 1445A hours (46°05'N-16°40'E). Markings indicated the P-38 a/c were from the 14th and 82nd Fighter Groups.

9. Weather - 9/10 stratus at take off, base 2,000 feet, tops 4,500 feet with scattered clouds at 500 feet.

Generally 6/10 to 9/10 stratus from base to coast.

Overcast over W. Adriatic with tops 5-6,000 feet improving to clear along Dalmatian coast.

25 miles inland from Yugoslavian coast 10/10 stratocumulus, tops 10,000 feet. This layer persisted to Papa, Hungary where it broke to few scattered. Another overcast was encountered north of Vienna which continued to 25 miles south of Blechhammer.

At target, clear but with visibility restricted to 12 miles in haze.

On return, overcast north of Vienna had moved farther south.

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

7/10 stratocumulus at base on return, base 5,000 feet.  
Persistent vapor trails north of Vienna.  
Visibility for route was 10-15 miles in haze.

10. The following observations were reported:

Time	Place	Alt	Observation
1220A	Papa A/C (47°20'N-17°30'E)	23,000	25/35 a/c silver
1134A	Czelldomolk (47°15'N-17°09'E)	22,000	M/Y full of wagons

11. One (1) crew member killed and two (2) wounded by flak. One crew member was either blown clear of the a/c by flak or bailed out over the target. Reports indicate one chute observed at target apparently from this Group.

12. Eighteen (18) a/c received flak damage, three (3) of which will be inoperational for more than twenty four (24) hours.

13. Twenty eight (28) a/c landed between 1602A and 1650A hours. One (1) a/c, No 42-78452 landed and remains at Gioia. ~~Two (2) a/c are missing. No 44-41231 last seen at (47°30'N-17°20'E) with No 2 engine feathered. No 44-49328 last seen at (45°20'N-16°30'E) with No 1 and 2 engines feathered and unable to keep up with formation.~~

14. The route was flown as briefed. Track chart of route attached.

15. Four (4) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print attached.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER  
Major, AC  
Intelligence Officer

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