

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

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

HHS/FFE/hob

319.1

4 December 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 3 December 1944, two (2) scheduled PFF B-24 type a/c took off to bomb Linz, Austria, Industrial Area targets, as follow:

a. A/C No 44-49048 (J:J), 1st Lt. Philip J. Savage Jr., 1st Pilot, 777th Bombardment Squadron (H), at 0733A hours.

b. A/C No 42-95613 (W:W), 2nd Lt. Raymond E. Beaubien, 1st Pilot, 778th Bombardment Squadron (H), at 0741A.

~~Both a/c report their time and altitude of departure from place of rendezvous to be as prescribed. Lt. Beaubien states that the spacing of the a/c at rendezvous was good.~~

2. The two (2) PFF a/c bombed the 1st Alternate Target, M/Y at Villach, Austria. Each pilot states that his decision to bomb the 1st alternate target was based upon overhearing radio conversations from a/c of Groups ahead, stating that the weather over the primary target was clear.

3. A/C No 44-49048 dropped 2 1/2 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, fused .1 N and .01 T, at 1110A hours from 24,000 feet, on an attack axis of 135°. Two (2) of these bombs were fused for long delay, and an additional leaflet bomb was dropped at the same time. C-1 automatic pilot was used for the bombing run, with IP identification, run and bomb release all being performed visually. Visual observation of the target was said to be possible because of a break in cloud cover, described as moving rapidly, and drifting over the target immediately after bombs away.

Reports from the PFF navigator and other crew members indicate that the PFF equipment of this a/c was operating sat-

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isfactorily, that crew coordination was good, and that the target material issued was adequate. The PFF navigator, however, states that, coming into the target, and throughout the bombing run, only momentary scope contacts with the target area could be made, due to blotting out by mountain peaks. Positive scope identification was not made until just about two (2) minutes before bombs away. In the opinion of this navigator, the 1st alternate target attacked is not suitable for PFF bombing, due to the difficulties in making adequate scope contact.

Malfunction of the "gee" navigation equipment was reported as occurring during the entire flight to the target. Fluctuations were continuous and of such magnitude that no useful navigational purposes were achieved. No defects in the equipment could be found during the flight to the target, and perfect functioning was experienced throughout the entire return trip.

4. A/C No 42-95613 dropped 2 1/2 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, fused .1 N and .01 T, at 1046A hours, from 24,500 feet, on an attack axis of 108°. Two (2) of the bombs dropped by this a/c were fused for long delay. Visual pick up of the IP was made by this a/c with, however, the entire bombing run and release being performed on PFF and C-1 automatic pilot. Reports from this crew state that the PFF equipment worked perfectly, and that the scope was used, and picked up the target, immediately after turning from the IP. No trouble was experienced in target identification. Check points were utilized -- one, a valley with mountains on either side. The town of Villach was used to kill rate. There were two (2) corrections of 5° right and 3° left. Five (5) sighting angles were given, 70° - 65° - 50° - 40°. Release was made on an angle of 34°. A further 2° correction to the right, it is believed, would have improved accuracy. Synchronization was made on the center of the town.

RDX bombs dropped on this mission total nineteen (19), and four and three quarters (4 3/4) tons, plus one (1) leaflet bomb.

5. Bombing results are unknown. Neither a/c was able to observe visually the effect of its release. One a/c (No 42-95613) attempted photographs, but no results were obtained, due to electrical malfunction.

6. A/C No 44-49048 flew the briefed course to (46° 44'N-

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12°25'E), then to the IP to the target, to (45°19'N- 14°34'E), to (44°30'N - 14°20'E), to Base.

7. A/C No 42-95613 flew the briefed course to (46°45'N- 12°45'E), then to the IP, to the target, to (44°40'N- 15°30'E), to (43°50'N-15°00'E), to Base.

8. Contact with fighter escort of 9 to 10 P-51s was made by a/c No 42-95613 at 1019A hours at (46°30'N-12°30'E). These a/c remained in sight until 1029A hours at (46°57'N- 12°23'E). A/C No 44-49048 observed six (6) P-51s at 1003A hours at (46°00'N-12°30'E), retaining visual contact for about five (5) minutes. The pilot and the co-pilot of this a/c further state that considerable radio conversation between friendly fighters and bomber a/c of the 47th Bombardment Wing (H), could be heard at about this time.

9. Observations by crew members are as follow:

a. From 1000A to 1015A hours - radio messages from large cup were heard that one jet-propelled fighter had been sighted at 10000 feet at (45°30'N-12°32'E).

b. A possible motor depot or storage facilities at (46°28'N-12°25'E); seen at 1124A hours, from 23,000 feet. Many buildings of barracks type were seen, and darkness of roads compared to snow covered terrain, indicated considerable m/t activity.

10. Weather at base at take off was 3/10th stratocumulus, base, 3,500 feet, tops 5,500 feet, with visibility of 20 miles. Weather conditions enroute to the target were 5/10th to 6/10ths Stratocumulus, tops 6/8,000 feet, over the Adriatic Sea. North from Ancona to 20 miles inland from the Italian coast, 7/10th to 10/10ths altocumulus, tops 16,000 feet. Over the Alps, weather was clear except for valley stratus.

At the target (Villach), there was a low overcast of stratus, tops 4/5000 feet, with mountain tops protruding thru.

On return, 6/10th to 8/10ths cirrostratus over Yugoslavia, with tops at 26,000 feet. Over the Adriatic, 4/10ths to 6/10ths altostratus, tops at 17/19,000 feet, and 6/10ths to 8/10ths altocumulus.

At base, altostratus at 18,000 feet and scattered

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stratocumulus at 4,000 feet. Visibility was 20 miles to unlimited.

11. A/C landed at base as follow:

No 44-49048 at 1323A hours.

No 42-95613 at 1351A hours.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, Air Corps
Intelligence Officer