

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

11 December 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report.

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

1. On 11 December 1944, twenty-eight (28) and two (2) spare B-24 type a/c of thirty-one a/c scheduled, took off to bomb the South Ordnance Depot at Vienna, Austria, starting at 0830A hours. A/C No 42-51563, failed to take off because of loss of hydraulic pressure due to the breaking of two (2) lines.

2. The thirty (30) a/c formed into two (2) attack units. The first attack unit was led by Lt Col-Elvin E. Goodyear, Group Operations Officer, and the second by 1st Lt Richard R. Price, First Pilot of the 779th Bombardment Squadron (H).

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

3. Four (4) a/c returned early.

A/C No 42-51856 turned back at (42°10'N-16°05'E) at 1030A hours, because of oxygen leaks in all positions, landing at 1045A hours.

A/C No 42-78692 turned back at (46°05'N-16°35'E) because the landing gear would not lock up, and sufficient RPMs to hold altitude and stay with the formation could not be obtained. Landing was at 1325A hours.

A/C No 44-41339 turned back at (43°55'N-16°32'E), because the No 1 engine was out of operation. Landing was at 1210A hours.

A/C No 42-50752 turned back at (47°55'N-15°30'E) at 1215A hours, because the No 4 engine was running away and could not be feathered.

One (1) a/c, No 44-49032, was a prior return. Due to the Radar Operator's oxygen system leaking, decision was made

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by the pilot to bomb the second alternate target. The formation was left at (46°28'N-16°22'E) at 1152A hours. Route was flown to the target selected, bombs dropped, and return made to base at 1445A hours.

4. Twenty-five (25) a/c were at point of bomb release over the primary target at 1237A hours at an altitude of 24,000 feet. From an attack axis of 41°, twenty-three a/c dropped fifty-seven and one-half (57½) tons of M-17 Incendiary Bombs.

A/C O 44-49032, a prior return, dropped two and one-half (2½) tons on the second alternate target -- the M/Y at Graz, Austria. This a/c released its bombs at 1237A hours, from 20,000 feet, on an attack axis of 258°. Crew members report one (1) or two (2) hits in the southern end of the M/Y, with the main concentration in the southeastern portion of the M/Y.

A/C No 42-78692, an early return, brought the full bomb load, two and one-half (2½) tons, back to base.

A/C No 42-51856, an early return, jettisoned two and one-half (2½) tons at 1030A hours at (42°05'N-16°10'E), as the pilot deemed it inadvisable to land with incendiaries.

A/C No 44-41339, an early return, jettisoned two and one-half (2½) tons at (43°05'N-16°25'E).

A/C No 42-50752, an early return, jettisoned two and one-half (2½) tons at 1215A hours at (47°55'N-15°30'E), because of the necessity of lightening the load with an engine running away.

A/C No 41-29394 returned two and one-half (2½) tons to base due to rack malfunction that made it impossible to release or to salvo.

A/C No 42-78613 jettisoned two and one-half (2½) tons at 1255A hours at (48°10'N-17°20'E), because of failure to get the bomb bay doors open over the target.

Bomb Tonnage Recapitulation

Dropped on primary target	57 ½ tons
Dropped on second alternate target	2 ½ tons
Jettisoned (By 3 ER and 1 other a/c)	10 tons
Brought back (By 1 ER and 1 other a/c)	<u>5 tons</u>
Total	75 tons

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5. Bombing results are considered good. Bomb strike photos show a heavy concentration of incendiary hits and fires in the heart of the Ordnance Depot and in the industrial areas extending 5,000 feet eastward. Smoke from previous bombing obscured nearly all of the Ordnance Depot area but groups of incendiary strikes could be seen at the east edge of the goods yards - 2,500 feet southeast of the east railway terminus -- and these continued east through the center of the Depot. Other incendiaries fell on the industrial area adjacent to the southeast corner of the depot. The latter group of hits extended east as far as the large gas holders of the city gas works. Additional fires were started in the factory area midway between the Ordnance Depot and the Donau Canal to the east. A smaller group of fires were in a probable barracks area located 3,000 feet southwest of the railroad repair shops.

A smoke screen is reported to have been used at the target, but was ineffective. Smoke pots were observed between the IP and the target, and to the south and west of the city, but affording little coverage.

6. Making the initial approach to the target by PFF, the Group Leader observed that visual bombing could be employed. Turning to right of course just before the turn point of Fischbach, a shorter route was flown to the Evasive action point of Klausenleopoldsdorf. With this exception, the route was flown as briefed.

The bombing run was flown visually by the Group Leader, with the C-1 Automatic Pilot being used. Due to electrical malfunction, the leader of the second attack unit used PDI during his bombing run.

7. Flak at the primary target was IAH, with the time in range reported as from six (6) to seven (7) minutes. Some very large bursts were reported, occurring simultaneously, and ranging in number from four (4) to eight (8). Both tracking and barrage types were described, as were puffs of black and white smoke. Noted by several crews were rings of smoke left after some bursts.

Flak was further encountered at Nagykaniza (46°27'N-16°59'E) at 1336A hours. The concentration was described as SAH, with the length of time in flak about one (1) minute.

Heavy flak was reported enroute, although not encountered, at Gyor at 1313A hours, intensity moderate, and scant light flak was observed at 1339A hours near Lake Balaton at (46°47'N-17°14'E).

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A/C No 44-49032, prior return, encountered SIH flak at the second alternate target, Graz, at 1236.5A hours, consisting of a few bursts and lasting approximately one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) minute.

8. One (1) a/c, jet-propelled, and leaving a double trail, was seen at 1226A hours, at (47°28'N-15°51'E). The jet a/c was flying at 27,000 feet, and was accelerating away from two (2) pursuing P-51 a/c.

9. Rendezvous was made with twenty-five (25) to thirty (30) P-51s at 1133A hours at (45°40'N-16°50'E). Excellent cover was provided to and after the target, the escort fighters last being seen at 1340A hours at (45°38'N-16°50'E). Fifteen (15) P-38s were seen in the target area from 1235A hours to 1250A hours, at the rally point.

10. Weather conditions encountered during the mission were as follows:

Base - 2/10ths altostratus at 10,000 feet, visibility 20 miles.

Route - 2/10ths altostratus at 10,000 feet at base to 5/10ths stratocumulus, tops 7,500 feet over the Adriatic. 3/10ths cirrus at 28,000 feet, valley stratus and 5/10ths stratocumulus to left of course, over the Dinarics. From Dinarics to the target, 3/10ths to 4/10ths patchy stratus, tops 8-10,000 feet with scattered middle clouds, tops 15,000 feet and 4/10ths to 6/10ths cirrus at 27,000 feet. On return, cirrus had thickened and increased to 7/10ths to 10/10ths, and lowered to 25,000 feet. The middle deck had increased to 5/10ths, perceptibly thinned.

Target - 4/10ths cirrus with 10/10ths dark clouds to the west, base 26,000 feet, visibility was unlimited.

Base on return - 10/10ths thin cirrus at 22,000 feet and 3/10ths to 4/10ths stratus at 7,000 feet. Visibility 20 miles to unlimited during the entire route.

11. One (1) a/c is missing. A/C No 42-95337 was last observed by the crew of the lead a/c of the box in which the missing airplane was flying, at (48°15'N-17°25'E) at 1308A hours. At that time this a/c was under control and proceeding with the formation, then at an altitude of 20,000 feet.

12. The following observations were reported by returning crew members:

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a. Heavy highway and railroad traffic between Lake Balaton and Vienna.

b. No flak observed nor encountered, at Nemelisce (46°23'N-16°23'E), the course was flown within five (5) miles.

c. No flak observed at Zalegirszed (46°51'N-16°51'E).

d. A landing strip, about 6,000 feet long, at (47°23'N-17°25'E). Three (3) a/c were parked near this strip, the observation being made from 20,000 feet.

e. At the A/D at Nowy Duur (48°26'N-17°01'E) at 1250A hours from 22,000 feet, seventeen (17) to twenty (20) SEF.

f. At 1332A hours, from 20,000 feet, at (46°48'N-17°20'E), what was believed to be a large troop concentration and bivouac area.

g. At Nagykaniza (46°22'N-16°59'E), at 1337A hours from 20,000 feet, the M/Y full, with considerable activity. Several trains of about 40 wagons each were leading toward Lake Balaton.

h. At 1318A hours from 20,400 feet, five-hundred (500) plus wagons in the M/Y at Szelldomok (47°15'N-17°09'E).

13. Twenty-four (24) a/c landed at this base from 1520A hours to 1550A hours.

14. Thirteen (13) a/c received damage by flak, with one (1) of these a/c remaining inoperational for more than twenty-four (24) hours.

15. Two crew members received minor injuries during the mission. Both were caused by flak.

16. Three (3) a/c attempted photographs. A selected print is inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

2 Inclosures:

Incl 1 - Track Chart
Incl 2 - Selected Print

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer