

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

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

MCK/FFE/hob

319.1

15 December 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 15 December 1944, twenty seven (27) of twenty eight (28) scheduled B-24 type a/c took off at 0800A hours to bomb Amstetten M/Y.

One (1) a/c failed to take off. A/C No 42-95613 did not take off due to a broken supercharger governor. This crew tried to take off in another a/c but it was too late to catch the formation.

The twenty seven (27) a/c formed into two (2) attack units, the first being led by Lt Col James H. Gilson, Commanding Officer of the 770th Bombardment Squadron (H), and the second attack unit by 1st Lt Bedford D. May, Flight Leader of the 776th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. Group form-up was satisfactory, but Wing rendezvous was three (3) minutes late. The Group had some difficulty in making the Wing rendezvous but the formation was correct at 0950A hours at (43°35'N-15°00'E). The Wing formation was satisfactory with the exception of one (1) box in the lead formation which continually pulled out of position.

3. Three (3) a/c returned early:

a. A/C No 42-51856 turned back at 0935A hours at (42°50'N-15°20'E) due to loss of No 4 supercharger. This a/c jettisoned one half (½) ton of long delay fuse bombs at 0946A hours at (42°20'N-15°35'E) in the Adriatic and returned one and one half (1½) tons to base.

b. A/C No 42-51736 turned back at 0940A hours at (42°41'N-15°18'E) due to loss of No 3 engine. This a/c jettisoned one half (½) ton of long delay fuse bombs at 1000A hours at (42°05'N-16°00'E) in the Adriatic, and returned one and one half (1½) tons to base.

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c. A/C No 42-51644 turned back at 1032A hours at (45°30'N-14°02'E) due to loss of oil pressure on No 2 and No 3 engines. This a/c jettisoned one half (½) ton of long delay fuse bombs at 1228A hours at (43°00'N-15°33'E) in the Adriatic, and returned one and one half (1½) tons to base.

4. Twenty four (24) a/c were over the target at 1144A hours (briefed target time 1125A hours) and twenty three (23) a/c dropped thirty four and one half (34½) tons of 500 lb GP bombs with .1 nose and non delay tail, and eleven and one half (11½) tons of 500 lb GP bombs with one (1) to seventy two (72) hour delay fuse. Total tonnage dropped on target, forty six (46) tons. Bombing altitude was 20,000 feet.

Five (5) a/c each dropped one (1) leaflet bomb.

One (1) a/c over the target jettisoned one half (½) ton of long delay fuse bombs at 1313A hours at (43°40'N-15°00'E) in the Adriatic, and returned one and one half (1½) tons of bombs to base due to rack malfunction caused by the safety pins in select freezing up.

Three (3) early returns jettisoned one and one half (1½) tons of long delay fuse bombs and returned four and one half (4½) tons to base (see par No 3 a, b, c for details).

Recapitulation of bombs

	<u>.1 nose and non delay tail</u>	<u>1/72 hour delay</u>
Dropped on target	34 ½ tons	11 ½ tons
Jettisoned		2 tons
Returned to Base	<u>6 tons</u>	<u> </u>
	40 ½ tons	13 ½ tons

Bombing was by PFF method. The PFF equipment in the lead a/c functioned excellently and the coordination between the PFF Navigator and Bombardier was good.

A/C No 44-49402 flying Able 11 identified the target on the scope during the bomb run. The last correction for range was made five (5) miles, and for course six (6) miles from the target. Six (6) range readings were made and seven (7) course corrections were made; with the last course correction of two (2) degrees. The bombardier determined the preset

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dropping angle and drift by meteorological data. The set was satisfactory for the entire mission. The target was first picked up on the scope thirty five (35) miles from the target.

A/C No 44-49073 flying Charlie 11 picked up the target forty (40) miles away, and was identified on the scope during the bomb run. Six (6) range readings were made and two (2) course corrections made, with the last correction being three (3) degrees. The bombardier used meteorological data for dropping angle and drift. The set worked satisfactory for the entire mission.

A/C No 42-52070 flying Dog 11 picked up the target thirty five (35) miles away and identified the target on the scope during the bomb run. The tube blew out, which prevented bombing circle operation on this a/c. The bombardier used ABC Computer to determine dropping angle and drift.

A/C No 44-49049 flying Able 12, first deputy lead, picked up the target forty five (45) miles away and identified the target on the scope during the bomb run. The last correction was made for range five and one half (5½) miles from the target, with seven (7) range readings being made. No course corrections were made due to this a/c flying deputy lead. The set operated in a satisfactory manner during the entire mission.

Bomb strike photographs show a solid overcast at the time of bombs away. It is not possible to estimate where the bomb strikes occurred.

5. Both the Group Leader and the leader of the second attack unit used the C-1 Automatic Pilot on the bomb run.

6. This Group did not encounter any flak either at the target or on the route. Flak was observed at the following places:

Bruck	SH	45°32'N-14°28'E	SH
Lussinpiccolo	SL	Klagenfurt	SH
47°23'N-15°06'E (Leoben)	SH	47°35'N-14°43'E	MH
47°43'N-15°30'E	SH	47°04'N-14°35'E	IH
46°50'N-14°25'E	S/MH		

7. There were no encounters with e/a. One (1) crew reported observing vapor trails at 1136A hours at 20,000 feet. These were intermittent vapor trails suggesting jet propelled

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a/c. These trails were five (5) miles to the left of course going in an easterly direction.

8. Fighter escort consisting of approximately fifty (50) P-51 a/c was first observed at 1005A hours at 44°28'N-14°18'E. Escort gave good cover on penetration, over the target and on withdrawal, last being observed 1305A hours at 44°00'N-15°00'E. Escort was from the 52nd and 325th Fighter Groups.

9. Weather at Base on take-off was 9/10 stratocumulus, base 1,000 feet, tops 3,500 feet.

9/10 stratocumulus, tops 5-6,000 feet over southern Italy and southern Adriatic, tops rising to North to 10-12,000 feet with a few scattered thunder storms. Along Dalmatian Coast, 8/10 stratocumulus, tops 10-12,000 feet with an additional 10/10 altocumulus layer starting over mid alps beyond Klagenfurt. Tops of this deck was at 16-17,000 feet.

At target, 10/10 altocumulus, tops 16,000 feet with visibility unlimited. Clear to west. 4/10 to 6/10 thin cirrus at 24,000 feet to east.

On return, broken cumulus over Adriatic and 8/10 to 9/10 cumulus at Base on return, base 2,500 feet, tops 8,000 feet. Visibility 20 miles or more entire route.

10. What was thought to be a submarine was observed at 45°18'N-14°33'E at 1230A hours from 16,000 feet. Beam with a ratio of 10-1. This information was phoned to Wing A-2 at 1540A hours.

A barracks and bivouac area was observed at 1242A hours from 16,000 feet at 45°05'N-14°08'E.

11. Twenty four (24) a/c landed at this base between 1435A and 1455A hours.

12. Route was flown as briefed with slight deviations due to weather. Track chart showing route flown is inclosed.

13. One (1) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

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

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer