

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

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

MCK/FFE/jmm

319.1

18 December 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 18 December 1944, thirty (30) scheduled B-24 a/c took off at 0720A hours to bomb Blechhammer North Synthetic Oil Refinery.

The thirty (30) a/c formed into two (2) attack units, the first being led by Lt Colonel William G. Moore Jr., Commanding Officer of the 777th Bombardment Squadron (H), and the second by 1st Lt Robert W. Wood, Assistant Operations Officer of the 779th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. Form-up, Group and Wing rendezvous was made as prescribed. Following the 465th Group over Spinazzola, a Group came in on a collision course of nearly 180° from the same altitude. After avoiding collision course by swinging to the west, this Group then fell in behind. This Group is thought to be the 460th Group but positive identification was not made.

3. Five (5) a/c returned early, four (4) to the base, and one (1) landing at a friendly field.

(a) A/C No 42-52070 turned back at 1006A hours at 44°42'N-16°31'E due to loss of #4 turbo at 19,000 feet. This a/c returned two (2) tons of bombs to base.

(b) A/C No 42-78590 turned back at 1026A hours at 46°04'N-16°19'E due to transfer pump being out. This a/c returned two (2) tons of bombs to base.

(c) A/C No 41-29453 turned back at 0945A hours at 44°00'N-16°30'E as #2 prop governor went out. This a/c returned two (2) tons of bombs to base.

(d) A/C No 42-50752 turned back at 1140A hours at 49°18'N-17°28'E due to loss of oil pressure necessitating feathering #3 engine. This a/c jettisoned two (2) tons of bombs at 49°05'N-17°27'E at 1145A hours to lighten load for return to base.

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

(e) A/C No 42-52526 landed at Vis at 1030A hours. This information was telephoned to this Group by Major Jones of Neptune to our S-3 section. Disposition of bomb load unknown. Crew members reported that this a/c had one (1) engine on fire.

4. Twenty five (25) a/c were over the target at 1158A hours (briefed, target time 1125A hours) and twenty five (25) a/c dropped fifty (50) tons of 500 pound GP bombs (.1 nose and mixed .01 and .025 tail fuse) from 25,000 feet.

Three (3) early returns brought back six (6) tons to base, and one (1) early return jettisoned two (2) tons (see paragraph No 3 (a) (b) (c) (d) ) The disposition of bomb load of a/c No 42-52526 which landed at Vis is unknown (see paragraph No 3 (e)).

## Recapitulation of bombs

25 a/c	dropped on target	50 tons
3 a/c	returned to base	6
1 a/c	jettisoned	2
1 a/c	at Vis - disposition unknown	2
<u>30 a/c</u>		<u>60 tons</u>

Bombing was by PFF with PFF equipment working excellently, and coordination between the PFF operator and bombardier very good. The lead a/c picked up the target area on the scope forty five (45) miles away with the approach to the IP and target being made by PFF. The briefed target was identified on the scope during the bomb run. Course determination and range synchronization was made on both the target area and the briefed target.

The last correction for range was made five (5) miles and for course twelve (12) miles from the target.

Seven (7) range readings were made and two (2) course corrections made, the last being two (2) degrees.

The bombardier used Meteorological data to determine preset dropping angle and drift.

Bombs away photos show a nine-tenths cloud cover on the approach to the target, with the refinery proper completely obscured by the overcast. Enough terrain check points can be seen on these photos to locate bomb releases at approximately two miles west of Blechhammer North Refinery. It is estimated that impacts occurred in the target area.

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

5. The Group Leader used C-1 Automatic Pilot, but the leader of the second attack unit was unable to use the automatic pilot due to a malfunction of the elevator controls.

6. Flak at the target was reported to be M I to M A H, lasting for approximately three (3) minutes. Bursts were black and red with some scattered white bursts. The greatest concentration being experienced after the bomb release line on the rally off the target.

Flak was observed at the following points:

Bratislava	S H
46°24'N-16°42'E	I H
M.Bukovec 46°17'N-16°45'E	S H
Nagykanizsa	S H

7. No e/a were observed, but one (1) crew reported seeing fifteen (15) vapor trails very high at 1212A hours, just after leaving the target area. One (1) crew reported observing six (6) to eight (8) SEF take off from Papa at 1315A hours.

8. Rendezvous was made with 20/25 P-38 a/c at 0959A hours at 45°03'N-16°35'E, and 50/55 P-51 a/c at 0951A hours at 44°44'N-16°30'E. Escort was last observed at 1320A hours at 47°10'N-17°05'E. Escort was described as being very good. P-51 a/c were observed from the 325th Fighter Group, others could not be identified.

9. Weather at take off was 7/10 to 8/10 stratus, base 8,000 feet.

Route: Scattered thin altostratus clouds at 14,000 feet over Adriatic with 3/10 stratocumulus below 9/10 to overcast of middle clouds began near Vis and continued to Zagreb. Tops of this deck was estimated at 16-18,000 feet and below was 7/10 to 9/20 stratocumulus, tops estimated at 10-12,000 feet.

Clear to scattered from Zagreb to 47°15'-17°13'E. From here to target, generally overcast altocumulus, tops 16,000 feet.

Target 9/10 altocumulus, top 16-18,000 feet with stratocumulus layer below. Visibility was 15-20 miles. Clear 15 miles north of target.

On return, similar conditions 6/10 cirrus over Adriatic at 23,000 feet and 6/10 cumulus, tops, 8,000 feet.

Base on return 10/10 stratus, base 5,000 feet. Visibility 20 miles.

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

10. Five a/c were damaged, none of which will be in operational for more than twenty four (24) hours.  
One (1) minor case of frost bite was reported.

11. The following observations were made by crew members:

Time	Place	Alt.	Observation
1209A	5028-1737	24,300	Large camp with barracks and tents located north of small town in an open area
1315A	4715-1656	20,000	M/Y with over 500 units. Six (6) or seven (7) tracks.
1331A	4626-1659	20,000	Long train believed to be a troop train headed west.
1207A	5040-1750 (Oppeln)	24,800	Two (2) M/Y north yard had over 500 units, and south yard which is the largest, filled to capacity.
1214A	5028-1720 (Neisse)	24,700	M/Y with 400-500 units
1314A	4716-1709	22,000	M/Y with large number of wagons.

Considerable rail activity was reported north and northwest of Lake Balaton.

12. Twenty four (24) a/c landed at this base between 1517A and 1553A hours. One (1) a/c landed at this base at 1719A hours after having landed at Lesina for gasoline at 1540A hours.

13. Route was flown approximately fifteen (15) miles to left of course from Split to TP at Joka, then as briefed to target and rally. On return from TP at Friedeburg to Joka route was approximately twenty (20) miles to right of course. From Joka to base was as briefed. Track Chart showing route flown is inclosed.

14. Five (5) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER  
Major, AC  
Intelligence Officer

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