

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

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

LHS/FFE/nob

319.1

27 December 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. a. On 27 December 1944, thirty two (32) of thirty three (33) B-24 type a/c scheduled, took off, beginning at 0840A hours, to bomb the Main M/Y at Maribor, Yugoslavia.
 - b. A/C No 42-51760 failed to take off due to running off the taxi strip, shredding a tire and nicking a propellor.
 - c. A/C No 44-41213, due to losing control because of prop wash, failed to complete assembly with this Group, and, instead, joined the 405th Bombardment Group (H), enroute to the same target.
 - d. The thirty one (31) a/c formed into two (2) attack units, the first being led by Lt. Col. Elvin E. Goodyear, Deputy Group Commander, and the second by 1st Lt. Robert W. Wood, Assistant Operations Officer, 779th Bombardment Squadron (H).
2. Bomber rendezvous were executed as prescribed.
3. Two (2) a/c returned early, for the following reasons:
 - a. A/C No 42-51903 turned back at (41°33'N-16°18'E) at 1018A hours, due to No. 4 engine being out, with its propellor governor inoperative.
 - b. A/C No 44-49048 turned back at (44°05'N-17°40'E) at 1117A hours, due to an oil leak which necessitated the feathering of No. 2 engine.
4. a. Twenty-nine (29) a/c were over the target at 1158A hours at 23,000 feet. From an attack axis of 284 degrees, twenty (20) a/c dropped fifty (50) tons of 500 pound GP bombs, fused .1 nose and mixed .01 and non-delay tail.

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b. One (1) a/c dropped two and one-half (2½) tons of bombs on the primary target at 1231A hours from 20,500 feet, on an attack axis of 268 degrees. This a/c dropped with the 435th Bombardment Group (H).

c. Seven (7) a/c returned seventeen and one-half tons of bombs to base. These a/c, comprising one box (Baker), changed position with their attack unit at (44°12'N-16°40'E) at 1115A hours. In their new position, the last box of the Group (Dog), the leader found he could not contact the Group Leader by radio, so, during a rapid climb, was unable to determine whether bombing would be at prescribed, or lower, altitude. Unable to pre-set his a/c's bombsight, and not receiving good PFF target identification or visual observation in time, release could not be made.

d. Two a/c jettisoned bombs as follow:

(1) A/C No 44-41399, two and one-half (2½) tons fifteen (15) to twenty (20) miles NW of the target at 1210A hours, due to the select arm failing to release the bombs.

(2) One (1) a/c jettisoned two and one-half (2½) tons in the Adriatic Sea on return, due to the failure of the bomb bay doors to open fully over the target.

e. Two early return a/c jettisoned bombs as follows:

(1) A/C No 42-51903 jettisoned two and one-half (2½) tons at 1018A hours at (41°33'N-16°18'E).

(2) A/C No 44-49048 jettisoned two and one-half (2½) tons at 1117A hours at (44°05'N-17°40'E).

f. Recapitulation of Bombing:

Dropped on target	50 tons
Dropped on target with 435th Gp.	2½ tons
Jettisoned near target	5 tons
Jettisoned by early returns	5 tons
Brought back (7 a/c in one box)	<u>17 tons</u>

Total 80 tons

5. a. Bombing by the prescribed second attack unit (actually leading the Group over the target) was visual. C-1 automatic pilot was used by the leader.

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b. Bombing by the prescribed first attack unit (actually in second attack unit position over the target) was likewise visual. PDI was used by the leader, as the A-5 automatic pilot equipment was inoperative.

6. Bomb strike photos show twenty-five (25) hits on trackage and on several columns of freight cars in the south half of Maribor marshalling yard. An explosion occurred among the trains midway up the east side of the yard. Bombing by an earlier group obscured the north half of the yard. Additional hits are probably hidden by the smoke in that part of the yard. The bomb pattern began 1200 feet east of the yard and scattered. Hits extended 4,000 feet west of the railroad, in open country.

7. Flak at the target was MH to MAH. Tracking fire was employed, accounting for variance in reports from Inaccurate to Accurate. A few erratic bursts were seen high. Time in flak was from two (2) to three (3) minutes.

8. Rendezvous was first effected with fifteen (15) to twenty (20) P-51's at 1140A hours at (46°24'N-16°08'E). The fighters, identified as of the 325th Fighter Group, were seen in varying numbers to 1314A hours at (43°57'N-15°28'E).

9. At take off, weather was 2/10ths to 3/10ths stratocumulus, with tops to 7,000 feet. Visibility was fifteen (15) miles.

Enroute to the target, over the Adriatic, 1/10ths stratocumulus, otherwise clear. Twenty (20) miles inland from the Yugoslav coast, 8/10ths to 10/10ths stratocumulus, with tops at 8,000 feet to 10,000 feet, breaking to scattered at the Drava river.

At the target, clear, with 3/10ths ptery stratocumulus to the west. Visibility was fifteen (15) miles.

On the return from the target, conditions were similar to those enroute, with 1/10th stratocumulus at the base on arrival.

10. Route was flown as briefed, with the exception of cutting inside of the turnpoint Popovaca, to improve the formation. This resulted in a slight shortening of the bombing run. At 1115A hours, at (44°12'N-16°40'E), the second attack unit was forced to take the lead for the Group. This was due to the

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Group Leader's discovery that his compass and A-5 automatic pilot were inoperative. A few minutes prior to this, the First Deputy Leader had left the formation, due to an engine failure.

11. a. Crew members observed that many wagons were dispersed throughout the target vicinity in small towns, indicating a possible awareness that the assigned M/Y was subject to attack.

b. A column of black smoke was seen at (45°55'N-15°16'W) at 1210A hours from 20,000 feet. Though too far away to be identified, the possibility of a burning a/c was considered.

12. Twenty nine (29) a/c landed at this base from 1418A hours to 1440A hours. The a/c returning from the flight with the 485th Bombardment Group (H), landed at 1523A hours.

13. Four (4) a/c attempted photographs. A selected print is inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ALDER
Major, Air Corps
Intelligence Officer

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