

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

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

BVB/FFE/rcm

319.1

8 January 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 8 January 1945, twenty eight (28) scheduled B-24 a/c took off to bomb the primary target designated in Operations Order No 6. The twenty eight (28) a/c formed in two (2) attack units, the first of which was led by Lt Colonel James H. Gilson, Commanding Officer of the 779th Bombardment Squadron (H), and the second, by 1st Lt Harry E. Heineman, Flight Leader of the 776th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. The Group form up, line rendezvous and Wing rendezvous were executed as prescribed.

3. B-24 a/c No 44-49402, designated as the Deputy Lead a/c, returned early from 4135N-1540E, landing at 1015A hours. No 2 engine caught fire and was burning to such an extent, the pilot, after jettisoning bombs bailed out the crew intending to bail out also. The fire extinguished itself and the a/c returned to base on three (3) engines, manned by the pilot alone.

4. Twenty seven (27) a/c were over Klagenfurt, a target of opportunity, at 1158A hours and fourteen (14) a/c dropped twenty eight (28) tons of 500 pound RDX bombs (.1 nose and mixed .01 and .025 tail fusing) from 26,200 feet.

Thirteen (13) a/c of Charlie and Dog boxes returned twenty six (26) tons of bombs to base. These a/c did not release on the target because the second attack unit leader did not release due to the fact that the target could not be identified in the scope, and thick vapor trails obscured the bomb release of the first attack unit.

The one (1) early return jettisoned two (2) tons of bombs at approximately 4135N-1540E at 1000A hours.

Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage Disposition

14 a/c of 27 a/c over target dropped	28 tons
13 a/c over target returned to base	26
1 a/c jettisoned	2
Total	<u>56</u> tons

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Bombing was by PFF method. The leader of the first attack unit made the bomb run using the C-1 automatic pilot, while the second attack unit leader made the run manually.

Bombs away photos show a ten-tenths overcast obscuring bomb strikes and all terrain detail. It is not possible to estimate the area of impacts.

5. No flak was encountered at the target or on the route; however SH flak was observed at Pola.

6. Forty (40) to fifty (50) P-38 a/c were reported observed at 1105A hours at 4440N-1310E. Though not designated as escort the P-38 a/c furnished escort on penetration to the target and withdrawal from the target being last observed at 1225A hours at 4516N-1410E.

7. Weather was 2/10 cumulus and stratocumulus at take-off and 3/10 cirrus above 2000 feet, visibility 20 miles.

Generally clear to coast. Over south and central Adriatic 3/10 to 10/10 cumulus in eastern half and generally clear to scattered in western half.

Over south slopes of Alps a 10/10 cumulus with tops to north to 15000 feet.

Over south slopes of Alps a 10/10 cirrus layer was encountered, base 22000 feet, tops 25000 feet. A 10/10 cumulus layer was below, tops unknown. Persistent vapor trails were forming at 25000 feet.

At target 10/10 cirrus, tops 24000, visibility 20 miles.

Little change on return, scattered cumulus at base on landing.

8. Twenty six (26) a/c landed at this base between 1405A hours and 1430A hours without incident. One (1) a/c is down at a friendly field.

9. The route up the Adriatic was flown left of the briefed course and west of Pola. At 1130A hours the Wing leader instructed the Group leader to bomb Villach a/c. The formation passed seven (7) miles west of Udine, then to 4533N-1320E, there on a heading of 110° into the target. Villach could not be picked up in the scope of the lead a/c; so the run was continued on the same approximate heading. Klagenfurt was identified in the scope and the decision was made to bomb Klagenfurt. On return the formation passed between Trieste and Fiume, thence straight to base.

10. The PFF set in the lead a/c worked satisfactorily, being used as an aid to navigation enroute and for the bomb

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run. Villach could not be identified in the scope, but Klagenfurt was picked up and identified without difficulty by its shape and its position in the valley. The navigator gave four (4) sighting angles to the bombardier and made four (4) course corrections, the last one being a 2 degree right correction.

The PFF set in the lead a/c of the second attack unit worked in a satisfactory manner for navigational purposes on route to target. In the target area, only weak returns appeared on the scope due to malfunction of the oscillator. With manual operation neither Villach or Klagenfurt could be identified.

11. One (1) crew member of those who bailed out of the Deputy Lead a/c received major injuries and was hospitalized. One (1) crew member bailing out is not accounted for.

12. Three (3) a/c-attempted photos. A bombs-away photograph is attached.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer

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