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164th Bomb Group (H)  
10500  
U.S. Army

1/21/45

20.1

11 January 1945.

Subject: Narrative Mission Report

To: Commanding General, 55th Bombardment Wing (H)  
10500, U.S. Army

1. On 20 January 1945, twenty four (24) a/c plus four (4) spares, took off to both Communist Air Installations at Linz, Austria. Twenty seven (27) of these a/c took off from 0810 hours, to 0850 hours, with the twenty eighth (28th) a/c a late take-off at 0917 hours.

2. The twenty eight (28) a/c formed into two (2) attack units, the first being led by Lt. Col. William G. Cope, Commanding Officer of the 777th Bombardment Squadron (H), and the second by Captain Keith Cooke, Flight Leader, 777th Bombardment Squadron (H).

3. a. Group formation and altitude were as prescribed; with no adverse effects from local weather.

b. The two group rendezvous was made at 10,000 feet, rather than at 8,000 feet, in accordance with line instructions, due to known weather conditions ahead, and the need for rapid climb necessary to surmount cloud forms. Weather offered no difficulties to this rendezvous, which was executed as prescribed.

c. To further expedite his Group's climb above expected weather conditions, the 164th Bomb Gr's Leader commenced to climb immediately following the group rendezvous. This rendezvous was then made as prescribed, except that the 164th Bomb Gr was at 11,500 feet, at 0936 hours (one minute late).

d. Starting enroute toward the target area, climb was rapidly made to get above expected weather ahead. Due to solid built-up cumulus clouds to 24,000 feet along course over the Adriatic, the wing formation detoured to twenty (20) miles left over the Adriatic until sufficient altitude had been obtained to get above the cloud undercast. During this portion of the flight, the Group Leader, to retain his correct bombing altitude in relation to the other Groups of the Wing, endeavored to remain 1,000 feet higher than the other Groups of the Wing. No weather difficulties were encountered, and the somewhat scattered, the

Low temperature conditions.

elements of the formation flying formation.

e. Just before the turn point, on a line about 100 feet was reached, 1,500 feet above the other planes. Low Point, the weather was 4/10ths clouds, temperature 25,000 feet, with temperature -51°C. At this time, formation flying conditions were, with not many other difficulties as yet having been encountered.

f. Leveling off at 27,000 feet, flight course turned to the right. From the turn point to the target, no relatively adverse weather conditions were encountered. At the southern edge of the Alps, the undercast disappeared, with the remainder of the route clear. The extreme cold conditions, however, caused increasing difficulties. Pilots and co-pilots found their windshields becoming heavily coated inside. Very heavy vapor trails were formed. Because of their greatly decreased visibility, pilots of individual a/c found it increasingly difficult to retain their respective formation positions. Cold further complicated the flying of close formation by stiffening of controls, and in some cases, by their freezing, necessitating constant effort to break them free. On many a/c, the additional and more difficult of freezing caused some extra encounters.

g. Following from the target, cloud undercast was again encountered on the return route, with tops from about 20,000 to 27,000 feet. These clouds, in themselves, offered no difficulties for formation flying, except in necessitating the retention of high altitude, in extreme cold, to the Yugoslav coast. Pilots of individual a/c found their difficulties steadily increasing as more and more frost accumulated on their windshields, further obscuring their vision.

h. From the Yugoslav coast to base, the briefed course could not be flown, due to solid clouds to high altitudes. Twenty (20) miles to the right of course, however, 4/10ths clouds, tops from 12,000 to 20,000 feet, were not considered detrimental to formation flying.

A. Missions (9) a/c returned early:

a. A/C No 44-41227 turned back at 1042a hours at 4230N-1538E, due to severe oxygen leaks. This a/c returned one and eight-tenths (1.8) of bombs to base.

b. A/C No 49146 turned back at 1112a hours at 2506N-1401E, due to a lost turbo on No 4 engine, and No 3.

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Ltr Warr Miss Apt, contd

engine running away. This a/c returned one and eight-tenths (1.8) tons of bombs to base.

c. A/C No 42-51264 turned back at 1145A hours at 4537N-1254E; due to engines delivering insufficient power to keep up with formation. This a/c returned one and eight-tenths (1.8) tons of bombs to base.

d. A/C No 42-78472 turned back at 1123A hours at 4450N-1325E, due to the loss of all oxygen from all stations except the right waist and bull turret. This a/c returned one and eight-tenths (1.8) tons of bombs to base.

e. A/C No 44-49337 turned back at 4810N-1350E, due to an oxygen leak. This a/c jettisoned one and eight-tenths (1.8) tons of bombs at 4610N-1350E at 1216A hours.

f. A/C No 42-50752 turned back at 1127A hours at 4455N-1315E, due to loss of power in Nos 1 and 3 engines. This a/c returned one and eight-tenths (1.8) tons of bombs to base.

g. A/C No 42-51736 turned back at 1220A hours at 4749N-1230E, due to fuel shortage and inability to keep up with formation, because of a bomb bay door stuck half open, causing drag. This a/c returned one and eight-tenths (1.8) tons of bombs to base.

h. A/C No 44-49731, turned back at 1223A hours at 4700N-1350E, due to freezing of the oxygen system. As a result of this freezing, three crew members lost consciousness and it was necessary to lose altitude immediately and quickly to revive them. Due to the bomb bay doors freezing open, causing excessive gasoline consumption, it was necessary to jettison one and eight-tenths (1.8) tons of bombs at 1229A hours at 4630N-1450E.

i. A/C No 42-78490 returning early, crashed at 4700N-1350E at approximately 1430A hours. Eight (8) of the crew members bailed out of this a/c at low altitude, with the pilot and co-pilot remaining in as it crashed. Cause of the crash is not, as yet, conclusively known, but is believed to have been loss of controls. Of the eight (8) men jumping, five (5) were killed, two (2) were injured, and one (1) seriously injured. The pilot and co-pilot both received major injuries, and have been hospitalized.

5. a. Nineteen (19) a/c were over Linz at 1251A hours.

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Ltr. Mark Miss act, contd

From an attack axis of 115°, from 20,000 feet, thirty one and ninety five hundredths (31.95) tons of 100 pound clustered GP bombs, fused .1 nose and .025 tail, were dropped.

b. A/C No 44-49060, as a result of what was believed frozen racks, was forced to jettison eight (8) of its bombs at 4827.1415E, or four-tenths (.4) tons. Still unable to release one (1) bomb, five one-hundredths (.05) ton was returned to base.

c. A/C No 44-49796, jettisoned its full bomb load of one and eight-tenths (1.8) tons at 1237A hours at 4828.1527E. This action was necessary to retain position with the formation, as two turbo super-chargers had become inoperative.

d. Bombing recapitulation is as follows:

|                               |                |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Six (6) B-24 a/c brought back | 10.80 tons     |
| Two (2) B-24 a/c jettisoned   | 3.60 "         |
| One (1) B-24 a/c (crashed)    | 1.50 "         |
| Eighteen (18) a/c on target   | 31.95 "        |
| One (1) a/c brought back      | .05 "          |
| Two (2) a/c jettisoned        | 2.20 "         |
| Total                         | <u>50.40</u> " |

6. Bombing was visual, with assistance on approach to the target being rendered by PFI operators of both Group Leader and Second Attack Unit Leader. C-1 automatic pilot equipment was used during the bomb run by the Group Leader. Due to extremely erratic functioning of his C-1 equipment, the second attack unit leader used PDI for his bombing run.

7. Limited photo coverage shows a few of the first impacts in the residential area 2500 feet northwest of the railroad station. A bombs away photo from Charley box shows the marshalling yard as yet free of impacts. From the position of the falling bombs, it is estimated that their point of impact would be several thousand feet northeast of the target and near the Danube river. On this mission, a majority of the cameras dispatched were either lost, returned early, or landed at other airfields.

8. a. Iah Flak was encountered at Linz. Duration of time in range was expressed at 4/5 minutes. An unusually large percentage of white bursts was observed.

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

Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

b. IAH fiak was encountered by an ER a/c at Celje (4615N - 1505E). OIR course, due to avoiding the Uaine area, considerable damage occurred to this a/c at this location.

c. M H fiak was observed at 1245A hours at Burghausen 4810N-1250E. This fiak was described as highly concentrated.

d. S A H fiak was observed from Trieste by an ER a/c at 1210A hours. Though away from this a/c, altitude was reported as very accurate.

9. Rendezvous with thirty (30) P-58s was made at 1145A hours at 4530N-1500E. Escort was last observed at 1410A hours at 4530N-1445E.

10. Weather enroute was reported as follows:

Base on take-off,

4/10 altostratus 10000'. Few patches of stratocumulus.

Route out,

Heavy cumulus was encountered over Spur, base 4000' tops 15000'. Up the Adriatic heavy swelling cumulus, 10/10 coverage, tops 2000' with some cumulonimbus visible - building higher. Clouds appeared heavier to east, but breaks were visible to west over Italian mainland. Undercast of swelling cumulus continued over entire Adriatic, tops lowering gradually over land in north Italy, tops 15000', and became more stratiform. Cloudiness stopped at Alps, with mts visible. North of Alps clear with 20 mile visibility.

Target,

Clear. Visibility 20 miles.

Route back,

Clear north of Alps. South of Alps, 10/10 thick stratiform deck, tops 20000', merging into cumulus over Adriatic. Over Adriatic 8/10 heavy cumulus tops to 20000' with some building to 25000'. Cumulus continued to Italian mainland, breaking west of Spur.

Base on return,

5/10 cumulus, base 3500'. Heavy cumulus swelling visible to east.

Temperatures,

|                     |        |     |
|---------------------|--------|-----|
| Italian Coast (out) | 15700' | -20 |
| North Adriatic      | 15500' | -52 |
| Prata               | 25000' | -50 |
| Ancona              | 6500'  | -06 |
| Target              | 27500' | -53 |

Winds,

|             |         |         |      |
|-------------|---------|---------|------|
| Spur        | 10000'  | 310 deg | 25 K |
| 4540N-1400E | 235000' | 310 deg | 45 K |

OPERATIONAL REPORT

Lt. Harry Miss, Det, command

|             |        |           |      |
|-------------|--------|-----------|------|
| APCEN-11564 | 151000 | 310 (est) | 3000 |
| APCEN-11557 | 151000 | 320 (est) | 3000 |

11. a. Twelve (12) a/c landed at this base from 1510 hours to 1540 hours.

b. A/C No 11-11800, successfully bailed out its crew close to this base at 1513A hours, because it is believed of engine failures. Of the ten (10) crew personnel, four (4) were injured, two (2) sufficiently to require hospitalization. The a/c flying on automatic pilot crashed in the Adriatic Sea.

12. Four (4) a/c landed at friendly fields. One of these a/c, No 11-10314, crash landed at the 481st Bomb Co (B) base. This a/c, flown by Major John H. McNeely, Group Deputy Leader and Group Asst Operations Officer, after extensive mechanical difficulty to end from the target, aggravated by flak damage at the target, turned in to land at the other field, due to lack of gasoline. On the downwind leg, Nos 3 and 4 engines ran out of gasoline, with No 2 engine the only one remaining in operation. A crash, wheels up, landing was effected. The a/c was reported damaged beyond repair, with all crew members uninjured.

13. Two (2) a/c are missing.

a. Information concerning a/c No 12-38457, is completely lacking. Interrogation of crews has disclosed no evidence of this a/c being in difficulties, nor time nor place where last seen. An unidentified F-24 type a/c seen in a steep dive at 1315A hours, at (APCEN-1503E) affords the only information received, which might be connected with this a/c.

b. A/C No 42-50070 was last seen when it dropped out of formation and headed for base at (481EN-1243E). At this time all four (4) engines were operating, and no apparent trouble could be seen. During prior flight, however, this a/c had lagged behind the formation several times.

14. Route was flown as briefed except for deviations due to heavy cloud formations. These variations in route are described in paragraph 3, and are graphically shown on the inclosed track chart.

15. Fourteen (14) a/c are known to have received flak damage. Of these a/c, four (4) will be out of operation for

CONTINUATION

Ltr Narr Miss Part, contd

more than seventy two (72) hours.

16. A total of six (6) injuries have been presently reported as a result of this mission. Three (3) crew members received major injuries requiring hospitalization, while three (3) others had minor wounds. These figures do not include killed and injured personnel as described in paragraph 4 a, and paragraph 11 b.

17. One crew reported no flak observed at Volkerrmarkt (L/337-14387) from course above, at 24,000 feet. This has been listed as a crew reported flak location.

18. One (1) a/c, returning to base, attempted both strike photographs, with limited coverage. A selected print is inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. BLIFF  
Major, AC  
Intelligence Officer

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