

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

HEADQUARTERS
465th Bombardment Group (H)
APO 520 U.S. Army

100/112/100

310.1

2 February 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

TO : Commanding General, 46th Bombardment Wing (H)
APO 520, U.S. Army

1. On 1 February 1945 forty one (41) B-24's (40) scheduled B-24 type a/c, took off to bomb the primary target as designated in 55th Bombardment Wing (H) Operations Order No. 41, 31 January 1945. The forty one (41) a/c took off from 0805 hours to 0808 hours, three (3) of these a/c engines and bats.

a/c No LL-49363, on take off pulled straight to the left and had to be immediately circled and landed.

2. The forty one (41) a/c formed into three (3) attack units. The first unit was led by Colonel J. L. Schroeder, Group Commander; the second unit by First Lieutenant Robert V. Wood, Assistant Operations Officer of the 728th Bombardment Squadron (H); the third unit by First Lieutenant Edward I. Troia, Flight Leader of the 728th Bombardment Squadron (H).

3. a. Group form-up and assembly were accomplished as prescribed.

b. Rendezvous with the 465th Bombardment Group (H) was at proper time and altitude, with the formation of both groups reported by the lead a/c as being loose.

c. The wing rendezvous was accomplished correctly, with all formations being somewhat extended.

4. Reaching a point three (3) miles right of Split, at 1036 hours, at 17,000 feet, due to weather to the north the 465th Bombardment Group Leader altered course toward alternate target AF No 2, as designated in 55th Bombardment Wing (H) Operations Order No 41, 31 January 1945. The wing formation then made several 180° turns and large circles. The approximate course as flown is shown graphically on the inclosed track chart. Course for return to base was set at (45°50'N-16°30'E) at 1250A hours.

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Ltr Navy Miss Int, contd

5. One (1) a/c, No 42-52122, returned empty due to a blowout cylinder in No 3 engine. This a/c landed at 1215 hours, turned back at (41°01'N-16°40'W) at 1252 hours. Its engine bomb load of two (2) tons was returned to base.

6. Nine (9) a/c jettisoned bombs, as follows:

a. A/C No 42-51011, at 1205A hours, (40°53'N-15°15'W), accidentally dropped two (2) tons of bombs due to electrical malfunction. Believing the formation to be on the bomb run to the second alternate target, bomb bay doors were open when the malfunction occurred.

b. Flying formation positions behind a/c No 42-51644 were four a/c (Nos. 44-48767, 44-18610, 41-29594, 42-51689). These a/c it is believed, dropped their bombs upon the accidental release, in the belief that they were dropping on the second alternate target. A total of eight (8) tons of bombs were, in this way, jettisoned.

c. A/C No 44-49394 jettisoned two (2) tons of bombs at 1230A hours at (47°12'N-14°45'W), due to a runway roller which prevented keeping up with the formation with a full bomb load.

d. A/C No 42-51856 jettisoned two (2) tons of bombs at 1238A hours in the area of the second alternate target, due to an accidental release.

e. A/C No 42-52537 jettisoned two (2) tons of bombs in the Adriatic Sea, due to gasoline shortage. This a/c landed at Medna, Italy, refueled, and then returned to base.

7. Due to the Wind formation not approaching any designated 15th Air Force BEF target, and prescribed visual alternates being 10/10ths overcast, no bombs were dropped on targets. Thirty one (31) a/c returned their full bomb loads of sixty two (62) tons of 500 pound mixed G.E. and HIX bombs; fused .1 nose and mixed .01 and .025 tail; to base. Bombing recapitulation is as follows:

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By Norm Miss Pat, cont'd

None (0) a/c identified	10 tons
One (1) a/c brought back	2
Thirty one (31) a/c brought back	62
Total	<u>74 tons</u>

8. A negative strike assessment report is submitted for this operation. One camera attached aboard the a/c does show a ten-tenths overcast. No bombs were seen on these photos. Nine aircraft identified their bombs along the route, with results unobserved. The remainder of the group returned to base.

9. Flak reports were observed, but not encountered, in the area of Graz, Austria. Intensity was reported from scant to moderate. Due to complete cloud overcast, it was found impossible to pin-point the location from which this anti-aircraft fire originated. Report is made by Capt. Lacey P. Warren, Group Navigator, in the lead a/c, that two crew reports listed flak sites were observed visually, and that the formation went directly over them, but encountered no flak. They are: Bos Rudica (45°11'N-16°40'E) and Jasenovac (45°16'N-16°54'E). Formation at these points was at 24,000 feet.

10. Rendezvous with forty five (45) B-51 escort fighters was made at 1106A hours at (44°25'N-16°38'E). Excellent cover was provided, and last contact observed at 1348A hours at (43°05'N-15°35'E). Escort was identified as a/c of the 52nd Fighter Group.

11. Weather was reported as follows:

Clear at take off, visibility 15-20 miles. Over the Adriatic about 4/10 stratocumulus, top 6,000 feet with scattered cirrus above 20,000 feet.

7/10 stratocumulus over Yugo Coast. Decreasing to scattered over Dinaric Alps. Beyond Alps the stratocumulus was overcast with breaks and thin spots. Cirrus increased Northward to 4/10 to 5/10 base above 26,000 feet.

At point formation turned around, there was 10/10 stratocumulus top 12,000 feet, 4/10 cirrus and to the North multilayer clouds to 30,000 feet were seen.

Little change on return except some clouds had moved in over Southern Italy. 3/10 cirrus and 2/10 stratocumulus at Base

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Ltr Narr Miss Ent, contd

on return. Visibility was 15 miles.

12. Thirty one (31) a/c landed at this base from 1437A hours to 1501A hours.

13. One (1) a/c attempted photographs, showing 1/10ths cloud underst, with no books appearing. A selected print is inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

ELBERT F. BLISS
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer

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

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