

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

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

MCK/FFE/rcm

319.1

8 February 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 8 February 1945, twenty four (24) scheduled B-24 a/c, plus four (4) spare B-24 a/c took off starting at 0825A hours to bomb Vienna South East Industrial area.

The twenty eight (28) 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. Franklin K. Lane, Flight Leader of the 778th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. Group form up was made without incident, and two (2) Group rendezvous was made on time over Andria. The wing rendezvous was made over Spinazzola as prescribed, with the 485th Group on the right and the 465th to the right, formation settled into proper positions shortly thereafter.

3. Seven (7) a/c returned early:

(a) A/C No 44-49146 - turned back at 0922A hours at (41°00'N-16°00'E) due to oxygen lak in the nose. This a/c returned its bomb load of two (2) tons to the base.

(b) A/C No 42-95332 - turned back at 1052A hours at (43°27'N-16°42'E) as this a/c could not catch the formation due to a late take off - Reason for late take off the bomb bay doors on the scheduled a/c would not open - This crew took off in a spare a/c - Bomb load of two (2) tons returned to base.

(c) A/C No 44-49048 - turned back at 1043A hours at (43°27'N-16°42'E) due to inability to locate the formation, which was due to a late take off caused by a supercharger being out on

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the scheduled a/c and necessitating taking off in a spare a/c. This a/c returned its bomb load of two (2) tons to the base.

(d) A/C No 44-40928 - turned back at 1230 hours at (47°38'N-15°36'E) due to #3 and #4 superchargers going out. This a/c returned its bomb load of two (2) tons to the base.

(e) A/C No 44-49363 - turned back at 1158A hours at (45°38'N-15°11'E) due to loss of #4 engine. This a/c jettisoned two (2) tons of bombs at 1221A hours at (44°20'N-14°24'E).

(f) A/C No 44-49415 - turned back at (45°52'N-15°25'E) due to loss of #2 and #4 superchargers. This a/c jettisoned two (2) tons of bombs at 1230A hours at (42°30'N-15°10'E).

(g) A/C No 44-49710 - turned back ten (10) miles north of Celje due to the illness of the Co-pilot who was not getting mask. This a/c jettisoned two (2) tons of bombs at 1221A hours at (45°26'N-14°43'E) in order to lighten load due to observing two unidentified fighter a/c.

4. Twenty one (21) a/c were over the target at 1250A hours (briefed target time 1245A hours) and twenty one (21) a/c dropped forty two (42) tons of 500 pound RDX bombs (.1 nose and .01 tail fuse) from 24,500 feet on an axis of attack of 68 degrees.

Bombing was by PFF method due to cloud cover at the target. The lead a/c picked up Vienna forty five (45) miles away and identified the target area on the bomb run. Five (5) course corrections were made, the last one being 2 degrees to the left. Five (5) sighting angles were given being 70°-65°-60°-50°-40°. The lead bombardier and PFF operator state that a good run was made and that they were dead on course. The PFF equipment in the lead a/c worked satisfactorily for the entire mission.

The lead of the 2nd attack unit was unable to pick up the target on the twenty (20) mile range and dropped its bombs on Able 11.

Limited photo coverage did not show any bomb strikes. Pictures taken from Able box show bombs-away from three (3) aircraft at a position approximately 14,000 feet southwest of the East Station.

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From the position of the bombs-away photographed, it is estimated that the probable are of impact would be south of the Ordnance Depot and in the immediate vicinity of the Railroad Repair Shops and the Simmering Railroad Junctions. Heavy cloud cover obscures the western portion of Vienna and all railroad targets with the exception of the southern end of the Vienna South Goods Yards.

Photos were returned from Able box only. Of the nine cameras installed for this mission, two were early returns, one other did not take-off, and the operators of three others did not attempt photography.

Recapitulation of Bombs.

21 a/c	dropped on target	42 tons
3 a/c	jettisoned - early returns Par. #3	6 tons
4 a/c	returned to base - early returns Par. #3	8 tons
<u>28</u> a/c		<u>56</u> tons

5. The Group Leader used the C-1 automatic pilot. The leader of the second attack unit dropped on Able 11 due to PFF equipment being inoperative on the 20 mile range.

6. Flak at the target was described as M to IAH with time in flak estimated to be four (4) minutes. Black bursts with some white bursts above the formation.

Flak was encountered at the following points:

(46°50'N-16°10'E)	SAH - May have been RR flak
(46°10'N-17°00'E)	SIH

Flak was observed at the following points:

Varazdin	SH - 8/12 bursts
Graz	SH
(46°25'N-16°27'E) (Cakovec)	SH
(46°21'N-16°37'E) (Prelog)	SH

7. Ten (10) ME 109 ME 109 a/c were observed at 1230A hours at (47°28'N-15°36'E) at 24,300 feet. The E/A came in from four (4) o'clock level and were immediately engaged by a group of P-51 a/c, and a dog fight took place. The E/A did not open fire on the bomber. E/A were all black with red spinners. This a/c was returning alone.

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Two (2) U a/c were observed at (45°23'N-14°43'E) at 1220A hours flying at 5,000 feet heading north.

One (1) a/c reported seeing five (5) yellow vapor trails at 1241A hours at (47°50'N-16°20'E) ten (10) miles from the formation. No a/c were seen.

8. Rendezvous was made with twenty (20) P-51 a/c at 1145A hours at (44°33'N-14°55'E) and were last observed at 1412A hours at (43°40'N-15°45'E). Eight (8) to ten (10) P-38 a/c were first observed at 1158 A hours at (46°56'N-15°07'E) and last observed at 1334A hours at (45°30'N-16°22'E). The P-51 escort was from the 332nd Fighter Group and the P-38's were not identified. Cover was generally described as good.

9. The weather at take off was 8/10 thin altocumulus, base 11,000 feet. Visibility was 12 miles.

Over Adriatic 3/10 stratus top 8,000 feet, visibility 20 miles. Fiume and Pola were clear. Over Alps, on east side, 3/10 stratocumulus, top 14,000 feet. North of Graz, low layer became overcast, top 9-10,000 feet. This deck extended to the Danube River and broke on return route to 5/10 coverage with main coverage to east of course.

At target, 8/10 stratocumulus, top 10,000 feet which ended at Danube River. Visibility was 20 miles.

7/10 stratocumulus over Spur, top 3,500 feet on return. At base, 2/10 cirrus and 3/10 cumulus at 3,000 feet, visibility 20 miles.

10. Four (4) a/c received minor flak damage.

11. Observations reported:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Altitude</u>	<u>Observation</u>
	(44°45'N-16°39'E)	17,800	Landing strip with snow cleared from the runway. No a/c seen friendly field.
1130A	Maribor	23,300	Forty (40) to fifty (50) cannon lined up in an open area adjoining the town.

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12. A radio call in the clear was picked up from a bomber requesting target information. Subsequent investigation developed that Wing received the call and the a/c was advised to proceed in formation.

13. Twenty one (21) a/c landed at this base between 1505 and 1525A hours.

14. The route was not flown as briefed. The Group Leader was called by "Uphill" at 0929, 0936, 0943 and 0955A hours directing the course be changed. The formation was ordered to fly from the rendezvous area to the Spur, to (44°00'N-14°00'E), and from that point to the IP. The formation flew from (44°00'N-15°42'E) to Trebnje (45°55'N-15°00'E), to Gleisdorf (47°06'N-15°42'E), to the turn point Langenwang (47°35'N-15°36'E). From there on to the target and return, the route was flown as briefed. Track chart showing route flown is inclosed.

15. Three (3) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer

2 Incls:
Incl 1 - Track Chart
Incl 2 - Selecta Print

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