

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

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

FFE/jmm

319.1

14 February 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 14 February 1945, twenty one (21) B-24 a/c of Blue Force took off starting at 1000A hours to bomb the Primary Target as ordered in Operations Order No 72, 13 February 1945. The twenty one (21) a/c formed one (1) attack unit which was led by Captain Joseph A. Skymanski, Flight Leader, 779th Bombardment Squadron (H).
2. Group form-up and Wing rendezvous were made as prescribed and without incident. Wing lead was reported as being a trifle too slow.
3. Two (2) a/c returned early.
 - a. A/C No 42-51856 turned back during form-up because of No 4 engine failure. Bombs were returned to base.
 - b. A/C No 42-95332 turned back at 1305A hours at 4710N-1500E after No 1 supercharger became inoperative and a/c could not keep up with formation. Bombs were returned to base.
4. Nineteen (19) a/c were at a point seven and three quarters (7 3/4) miles southeast of the primary target, and thirteen (13) a/c dropt twenty six (26) tons of 500 lb RDX bombs from 24,500 feet at 1349A hours.

The Blue Force Leader relinquished the lead to Captain W. T. Black, Flight Leader, 776th Bombardment Squadron (H), (Deputy Blue Force Leader) at 1326A hours (4738N-1453E) after developing serious difficulty with No 2 engine. During change of leaders the formation was broken up and when reformed was off course to the right and the Group Leader aware that it was impossible to bomb the target, made a decision to bomb the second alternate. After discovering that the major portion of the formation had dropt their bombs, he changed his decision and brought the formation back to base.

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

Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, 464th Bomb Gp (H), 14 Feb 45, contd

Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage

| | |
|------------------------|------------|
| 13 a/c dropt | 26 tons |
| 7 a/c returned to base | 14 " |
| 1 a/c dropt on Graz | <u>2 "</u> |
| Total | 42 tons |

Photos taken by this force show numerous strikes in an open area approximately seven and three quarters miles south-east of the Schwechat Oil Refinery. These hits were near a small town two miles south of the a/c components factory at Fuschamend Markt.

A/C No 44-49710 (the original leader) after leaving the formation bombed the first alternate target. Two (2) tons of bombs were dropt on Graz M/Y at 1334A hours from 23,000 feet. Axis of attack 140°. No photographs were taken and observations of crew members place bombs in residential section of the town. C-1 Automatic Pilot was used on the bomb run.

5. No flak was encountered but was observed at the following points:

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| Primary Target area (5 mins) | IH |
| Kameron | SH |
| Gyor | SH |
| Sopron | SH |

6. One (1) unidentified SEF, probably enemy a/c was observed in the primary target area. Flew below the formation and on opposite heading.

7. Rendezvous with thirty five (35) P-51 a/c was made at 1225A hours at 4600N-1520E and remained in the vicinity of the formation until 1435A hours at the Spur. Markings indicated escort was from the 332nd Fighter Group.

8. Weather was as follows:

Clear at take-off, visibility unlimited.

Generally clear to coast. Over Adriatic 9/10-cumulus, top 6,000 feet becoming 8/10 to 10/10 stratocumulus over Yugo coast and Dinarics, top 8,000 feet.

Beyond Dinarics, 2/10 to 3/10 stratocumulus, top 6,000 feet and 3/10 to 4/10 cirrus, base 23,000 feet, tops 24,000 feet.

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

Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, 464th Bomb Gp (H), 14 Feb 45, contd

At target, 2/10 to 3/10 cirrus at 25,000 feet and 3/10 cumulus, top 6,000 feet. Visibility was 20 miles.

Similar conditions were encountered on return.

7/10 - 9/10 small cumulus at 2,500 feet over Spur.

At base on return, 8/10 stratocumulus at 2,500 feet. Visibility at base was 15 miles.

9. Observations:

| <u>Time</u> | <u>Place</u> | <u>Altitude</u> | <u>Observation</u> |
|-------------|----------------------|-----------------|---|
| 1259A | Celje 4614N-1518E | 22,000 | M/Y - Full to capacity - 500/600 wagons. |

10. Route was flown as briefed to IP but from that point to return constant deviations were made. Track chart showing route flown inclosed.

11. Four (4) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer

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