

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

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

HR/FFE/hob

319.1

19 February 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 19 February 1945, twenty eight (28) scheduled B-24 a/c took off at 0740A hours to bomb the primary target designated in Operations Order No 83, forming into two (2) attack units. The first attack unit was led by Captain Joseph A. Shymanski, Flight Leader of the 779th Bombardment Squadron (H), and the second by 1st Lt Franklin K. Lane, Flight Leader of the 778th Bombardment Squadron (H). Because of increasingly adverse winds encountered upon nearing the IP for the Primary Target, the First Alternate Target, Graz S/E M/Y, was attacked, pursuant to decision of the Wing Leader.

2. Hampered slightly by weather, form-up and assembly was made between Barletta and Andria. Upon making rendezvous, this Group fell into second position when the 465th and 485th Groups were late in arrival.

3. There were two (2) early returns:

a. A/C No 42-95364 turned back at the Wing rendezvous area, because of defect in bomb bay booster which pumped fuel overboard, and made return landing at 0910A hours with full bomb load.

b. A/C No 44-49837 also turned back at Wing rendezvous area, because of icing and excessive power, and made return landing at 0930A hours with full bomb load.

4. Two (2) aircraft made prior returns:

A/C No 42-78472, after losing No 4 engine, left formation at (48°05'N-15°15'E) at 1220A hours. Entire bomb load (2 tons) was dropped from 25,500 feet at 1225A hours on axis of 180° on rail sidings at (47°51'N-14°56'E). Return landing was made at 1435A hours. No results observed.

- 1 -

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

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

Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

b. A/C No 42-51903 left formation at (47°35'N-14°53'E) at 1217A hours when No 4 engine was feathered because of loss of oil pressure. Entire bomb load (2 tons) was dropped from 19,000 feet at 1233A hours on axis of 122° on target of opportunity, a rail line, at (46°16'N-14°19'E). Return landing was made at 1420A hours. K-20 photo taken by this a/c shows seven hits astride a roadway midway between a small unidentified town and a river bridge and another hit at the edge of the town.

5. Twenty three (23) a/c dropped 45 3/4 tons of bombs (8x500 lb RDX fused .1 and .01) on the Craz S/E M/Y from 26,000 feet at 1251A hours on an axis of 173°, with a left rally.

6. Following aircraft jettisoned for the reasons and at the places and times indicated:

a. A/C No 44-49589 jettisoned for the reason that the bomb bay failed to open over the target, its entire load of 2 tons in the Adriatic at (43°36'N-15°42'E) at 1348A hours.

b. A/C No 44-10610 jettisoned 1 ton in the Adriatic at (43°30'N-15°46'E) at 1353A hours, after one bomb hung on release over the target.

7. Recapitulation of bomb disposition:

23 a/c dropped on 1st Alt. Target	45.75 tons
2 a/c dropped on targets of opportunity	4.00 tons
2 a/c jettisoned	2.25 tons
2 a/c returned to base	<u>4.00 tons</u>
Total	56.00 tons

8. Bombing was visual, each attack unit leader using C-1 automatic pilot. Result:

Bomb strike photos show a heavy concentration of hits among several columns of freight cars in the center of the marshalling yards. This pattern of hits extended over into the warehouse area along the east side of the yard. At the north end of the yard there were at least two (2) hits on the choke point and two (2) others at either side of the roundhouse. Approximately twenty (20) more hits fell across the south end of the railroad yard, with additional strikes in the area to the west toward the labor camp. Other hits probably fell in the smoke lying across the south end of the yard.

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

Ltr. Narr Miss Rot, contd

9. Flak encountered at the target was SH to MAH, most of the crews reporting SH, with exposure limited to two (2) minutes.

10. Rendezvous was made with 40 P-38s at 1036A hours at (44°51'N-14°50'E); providing good PTW cover, and were last seen at 1300A hours at (44°23'N-15°50'E).

11. Weather:

Base on take off: 6/10 Sc bases 3500 ft. tops 5000 ft. Visibility 15 miles.

Route: 6-8/10 Sc over Adriatic bases 3000 ft tops 5000 ft. becoming 3/10 Sc vicinity of Yugo Coast. Clear over Dinarics with patches of valley stratus. Vsbv 20 miles in haze. 6/10 Sc on E and N Slopes of mts, tops 8000 ft. continuing to Graz becoming 2/10 Sc and breaking to clear.

Target: Clear, vsbv 20 miles in haze. High cirrus deck on Northern horizon.

Return Route: Similar to Graz becoming 9/10 undercast tops 9000 ft from Graz to mts. Clear in mts. and along Palmation Coast to Vis becoming 9/10 Sc tops 7000 ft. from Vis to Base.

Base on Return: 9/10 Sc bases 3500 ft. tops 7000 ft. Vsbv 15 miles.

12. 25-30 unidentified aircraft believed SEF, were observed on Zeltweg A/D at 1230A hours from 25000 feet.

13. Twenty four (24) a/c made return landings, commencing at 1445A hours.

14. Of the four (4) a/c reported missing on Telephone Mission Report, one has returned and another has been reported as landing at a friendly field, leaving two (2) missing.

a. A/C No 42-51264 (B/M), made a late return landing at 1775A hours after having made an emergency landing for refueling at PRKOS (44°03'N-15°30'E). Navigator of crew called attention to the fact that small lake at south end of runway, serving as a distinguishing check point, though shown on 1:1,000,000 map does not appear on the 1:500,000 map.

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

Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

b. A/C No 42-94823 (R/T), according to Telephone Report received by S-3 from Wing A-3 at 0715A hours, landed at Pecs, Hungary.

c. A/C No 44-49751 (B/O) was last seen when it left the formation at (46°30'N-16°45'E) at 1300A hours with one engine out and two engines smoking. Pilot was heard calling for escort, stating he was heading for Russian lines.

d. A/C No 44-49394 (B/R), was last seen at (43°37'N-15°35'E) when it left formation at 1345A hours. Pilot indicated he was low on gas and was heading for Vis.

15. Route was flown substantially as briefed to Moos, thence to Graz, without using the prescribed IP for the alternate target, Track chart enclosed.

16. Four (4) a/c attempted photos. Selected print attached.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer

3 Incls:
Incl1 - Selected Photo
Incl2 - K-20 Photo
Incl3 - Track Chart