

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

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

FFE/BVB/jd

319.1

21 February 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 21 February 1945, twenty eight (28) scheduled B-24 a/c took off beginning at 0931A hours to bomb the Vienna Matzleinsdorf M/Y. The twenty eight (28) a/c formed two (2) attack units, the first of which was led by Lt. Col. William G. Moore Jr., Commanding Officer of the 777th Bombardment Squadron (H), and the second, by 1st Lt. George H. Grotelueschen, Flight Leader of the 776th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. Local weather made it necessary for the a/c to climb through the overcast off the spur. The form-up was made in the local area and at about 14,000 feet. This group was seven (7) minutes late over Andria, but ahead of the 465th Bombardment Group (H). Wing rendezvous was accomplished in the area of (42°00'N-16°20'E) as the 465th Bombardment Group (H) took over the Wing lead.

3. Two (2) a/c returned early: B-24 a/c No. 44-49837 returned from the form-up area because No. 2 engine was running rough and vibrating excessively. This a/c landed at 1042A hours with two (2) tons of bombs.

B-24 a/c No. 44-49731, a Prior Return, left the formation at (46°04'N-14°50'E) at 1300A hours because No. 4 turbo was out and the fuse on No. 4 prop governor blew out, and replaced fuses continued to blow out. This a/c bombed Fiume Shipyard on return and landed at 1450A hours.

4. Twenty four (24) a/c were over the target at 1350A hours and dropped forty eight (48) tons of 500 pound RDX bombs (.1 nose and .01 tail fusing) from 24,600 feet.

B-24 a/c No. 44-49394 lost No. 4 supercharger and to stay in formation, jettisoned two (2) tons of bombs at (48°07'N-16°00'E) at 1345A hours, then by-passed Vienna and rejoined the formation on the rally.

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, 464th Bomb Gp (H), 21 Feb 45, cont'd

B-24 a/c No. 42-50728 left the formation at the I P for the reason that a gunner was stuck in, and could not be removed from the ball turret. This a/c dropped two (2) tons of bombs from 18,000 feet at 1410A hours on the Gleisdorf M/Y (47°07'N-15°42'E). The bombs hit short in a field and did no damage.

B-24 a/c No. 44-49731, referred to in paragraph No. 3, dropped two(2) tons of bombs from 20,000 feet at 1315A hours on the Fiume Shipyards with negative results. (Photograph attached, showing all hits in the water near the entrance to the shipyards;)

Bomb strike photographs taken southwest of Vienna show at least seven direct hits on the Atzgersdorf Sidings (approximately four miles southwest of the Primary Target) and possible direct hits on the transshipment sheds in the sidings area. Several additional hits fell among buildings of the adjacent Ammerluther Seck aircraft factory. All objectives in the vicinity of Matzleinsdorf are obscured by smoke from earlier bombing.

Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage

	Total
24 Effective Sorties dropped on Primary target	48 tons
2 Effective Sorties dropped on Target of opportunity	4 tons
1 Non-effective sorties jettisoned	2 tons
1 Non-effective sorties returned	2 tons
Total	56 tons

5. Leaders of both attack units used the C-1 automatic pilot.

6. Bombing was by PFF. The Group lead PFF equipment failed to function properly as the "Receiver" gained and the "Tilt" was inoperative. Near the I P the lead was relinquished to the Deputy Lead who took over only to have the bomb sight go out. Able 13 then took the lead at 1340A hours and made a PFF run on an axis of 90° degrees. The PFF equipment worked in a satisfactory manner. Four (4) sighting angles were given to the bombardier and three (3) course corrections were made. A fourth course correction of 2 degrees right was made visually as the bombardier was able to pick up the outline of the city through the smoke and haze and by reference orient the desired M P I.

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, 464th Bomb Gp (H), 21 Feb 45, cont'd

Second attack unit leader reported that his PFF equipment was operative and that the run was made by PFF; that the outline of the city could be seen through the smoke and haze just before bombs away and that the run appeared to be successful.

7. Flak at the target was reported as being from SIH to IAH; however from the varying descriptions of flak encountered a majority of the crews appear to be agreed that flak was MAH. Total time in flak did not exceed four (4) minutes. Two (2) separate barrages of flak of about twenty (20) bursts each appeared on course directly ahead of the formation about 1½ minute before bombs away. Considerable flak was encountered on the rally when scattered bursts from the left and right of the formation were encountered. The formation passed over Wiener Neustadt and did not get flak from this area.

SIH was observed at Nagykanizsa (46°28'N-16°59'E), (46°18'N-16°20'E) and at (46°24'N-16°09'E).

8. Twin contrails were observed between 25,000 and 30,000 feet in the Zagreb area at 1440A hours. The formation was then at 19,600 feet. P-51 a/c were observed in pursuit of the a/c leaving the contrails.

9. Escort of twenty five (25) to thirty (30) P-51 a/c of the 52 F. Gp. rendezvoused with the formation at (43°42'N-15°38'E) at 1154A hours and furnished cover on penetration over the target and on withdrawal to (43°04'N-16°17'E) at 1538A hours at which time the escort was last observed.

10. Weather was as follows:

At base: 8/10 - 10/10 stratocumulus and cumulus at take-off, base 3500 feet with scattered snow showers. The cloud cover extended to the coast with cumulus tops to 14,000 feet. Visibility was 12 miles.

Over Adriatic, 6/10 stratocumulus decreasing to 1/10 to 2/10 on east side and along Yugo Coast.

4/10 to 7/10 cirrus over Dinarics at 25,000 feet with mountains generally visible below.

In Drava River area an overcast of stratocumulus clouds began which broke off near Moos. Tops were 8-10,000 feet.

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, 464th Bomb Gp (H), 21 Feb 45, cont'd

At the target, the weather was clear with visibility 15 miles.

General improvement of cloud conditions on return with 7/10 cumulus at base at 3,000 feet. Visibility was unlimited.

11. Twenty six (26) a/c returned to base between 1606A hours and 1650A hours. A/C No. 42-50723 made a safe landing with the gunner still in the ball turret which could not be rotated because the guns were stuck in elevation and azimuth.

12. Observations:

Time	Place	Altitude	Observation
1400	Wiener Neustadt	23,500	M/Ys full
1350	Target	24,000	One (1) chute at 10,000 feet.
1433	Zagreb	21,000	M/Ys appear jammed

13. Six (6) a/c received flak damage. None of these a/c will be inoperational for a period of 100 hours

14. One (1) a/c of the 460th Bombardment Group (H) bombed the primary target with a/c of the 464th Bombardment Group (H)

15. The route was flown as briefed except with minor deviations to avoid possible flak areas. Track chart showing route flown attached.

16. Seven (7) a/c attempted photographs. Selected print attached.

For the commanding officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, Air Corps
Intelligence Officer

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