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OPERATIONAL
 16TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
 APO 520 U.S. ARMY

HR/117/106

312.1

2 March 1945.

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

TO: Commanding General, 45th Bombardment Wing (H)
APO 520, U.S. Army

1. On 2 March 1945, twenty eight (28) scheduled B-24 type a/c, including four (4) spares, took off at 0905A hours to bomb the Linz North Main W/Y, the primary target designated in Operations Order No. 106, forming into two (2) attack units. The first attack unit was led by Captain Joseph A. Skymanski, Flight Leader of the 779th Bombardment Squadron (H), and the second by First Lieutenant Robert E. Elliott, Flight Leader of the 776th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. Form up and assembly was made as prescribed without incident. Upon making wing rendezvous, the lead Group was about six (6) minutes ahead of schedule. On nearing the target area, the slow speed of the wing lead created the hazard of collision courses, resulting in the reversal of the prescribed order of flight.

3. There was one (1) early return. A/C No 42-78433 turned back at (48°25'N-12°35'E) at 1315A hours after losing No. 2 engine, and jettisoned its entire bomb load of two (2) tons at (48°00'N-12°20'E) at 1320A hours in order to lighten load. Return landing of this a/c was made at 1605A hours.

4. There were two (2) prior returns (effective sorties) made by the following aircraft which attacked targets of opportunity.

a. A/C No 44-40363 turned back at (47°27'N-13°31'E) at 1240A hours after losing No. 4 engine, and dropped two (2) tons of bombs on Villach W/Y at 1307A hours from 21,000 feet on an axis of 131°. Visual observation of results indicates that bombs fell slightly short of target. An flak was encountered at Villach. Return landing was made at 1501A hours.

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Ltr Narr Miss Int, cont'd

b. A/C No 12-33472 lost turbo on No. 1 engine at 1352 hours. Unable to regain with formation, two (2) tons of bombs were dropped on Ried /Y at 1343A hours from an altitude of 20,500 feet on an axis of 240°, with unobserved results. Return landing was made at 1616A hours.

5. Twenty five (25) a/c dropped fifty (50) tons of bombs (1x500# BEX, .1 nose and .01 tail) on the primary target from 24,500 feet at 1345A hours on an axis of 150°.

6. Recapitulation of bomb disposition:

25 a/c dropped on primary target	50 tons
1 a/c (early Return) jettisoned	0 "
2 a/c dropped on targets of opportunity	4 "
Total	<u>56 tons</u>

7. Bombing was by P-1. The first attack unit leader used C-1 automatic pilot, and the second attack unit trailed on the former.

Bomb strike photos show a heavy concentration of hits in open country approximately four and one half (4 1/2) miles east of Linz Main Marshalling Yard. These strikes are located one and one half (1 1/2) miles east of the town of Steyregg in a partially forested area. No photos show Linz North Main M/Y.

8. Wlek encountered at the target was IAH, exposure lasting from six (6) to seven (7) minutes, both tracking and barrage.

9. Two (2) ME 109's reported observed in target area at 1345A hours.

Eight (8) U/I SBW were observed attacking lone W-34 at (12°35'N-13°20'E) at 1335A hours from line eastern at 16,000 feet.

10. Rendezvous was made with 30 P-38's and 6 P-51's at 1322A hours at (44°40'N-13°30'E). Escort last observed at 1545A hours near Italian coast.

11. The weather at take off was clear from base to coast, visibility 20 miles. 8/10 to 10 10 stratus, top 8,000 feet over Adriatic.

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1st Navy Miss Exp, cont'd

Generally clear south of base and only 1/10 altocumulus over Alps. North of mountains a 10/10 layer of altocumulus which broke to 3/10 to 5/10. After about 20 miles overcast tops of clouds were at 14,000-15,000 feet.

At target, 3/10 altocumulus; tops 14-17,000 feet. Visibility was 20 miles.

On return, the route was generally 3/10-1 1/10 altocumulus, top 14-17,000 feet in northern part and over Liguria, lowering to 6/10-8/10 stratus over Adriatic, top 8,000 feet.

3/10 stratocumulus over Spaur but clear south and over base on return, visibility 10 miles in base.

12. One (1) a/c suffered major deck damage and ten (10) minor damage.

13. Observations:

a. Two (2) B-27's in midair collision at 1350Z hours at (13°10'N-12°20'W) and spun down.

b. Large number of B-7 on A/D at (13°14'N-12°26'W) at 1307Z hours, observed from 22,700 feet.

c. Five hundred (500) units in "Hubbard" formation observed at 1300Z hours from 24,000 feet.

14. Twenty five (25) a/c made return landings, commencing at 1606Z hours.

15. Route was flown as briefed, except for course between Prien and target with departure from prescribed axis of attack. Track chart enclosed.

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

For the Commanding Officer:

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

FRANCIS F. ELLER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer