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

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

AJL/FFE/jmm

319.1

9 March 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 9 March 1945, twenty one (21) of twenty one (21) scheduled B-24 a/c comprising the Red Force took off starting at 0900A hours to bomb the target named in Operations Order No 118 dated 8 March 1945.

Red Force of twenty one (21) B-24 a/c was led by Major Harry S. Wilson, Assistant Group Operations Officer of the 464th Bombardment Group (H).

2. Group form-up was effected as planned and was on course over Vieste at 1047A at 4,200 feet.

3. Twenty one (21) a/c flew the route as briefed to 4557N-1543E where they were instructed by the Wing Leader to bomb Air Force Alternate No 4.

4. Twenty one (21) a/c made two (2) unsuccessful runs on Air Force Alternate No 4, but as the PFF Operator was unable to identify the target, the decision was made not to release bombs.

Three (3) a/c jettisoned six (6) tons:

A/C No 44-49409 jettisoned two (2) tons at 4642N-1600E at 1335A hours due to the loss of all oil in No 3 engine and the prop running away.

A/C No 42-51563 jettisoned two (2) tons at 4245N-1615E at 1502A hours as the pilot did not want to land with a full bomb load.

A/C No 42-78472 jettisoned two (2) tons at 4640N-1600E at 1352A hours as No 2 prop was running away.

Eighteen (18) a/c returned thirty six (36) tons of bombs to base as this force did not bomb.

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, 464 Bomb Gp (H), 9 Mar 45, contd

Recapitulation of Bombs

Returned to Base	36 tons
Jettisoned	<u>6</u> tons
Total	42 tons

5. Rendezvous was made with thirty (30) P-38 a/c at 1224A hours at 4520N-1510E and were last observed at 1420A hours at 4400N-1600E.

6. Weather was as follows:

6/10 to 9/10 stratocumulus and stratus at take-off in two layers, base 7,500 feet; tops 10,000 feet. 3/10 cirrostratus at 25,000 feet. Scattered altostratus at 12-14,000 feet.

Over Adriatic, similar conditions with cirrostratus lowering to east.

Over Yugo Coast and Dinarics 8/10 altostratus, base 16,000 feet, tops 22,000 feet. 8/10 to 10/10 stratocumulus below, tops 10,000 feet.

North of Dinarics, 4/10 to 8/10 stratocumulus, tops 8-10,000 feet.

At target, 7/10 to 8/10 total coverage of altostratus and stratocumulus, tops 16,000 feet. Visibility was unlimited.

On return, conditions had improved over the Dinarics and the Yugo Coast but had gotten worse over the Adriatic with two layers of clouds.

6/10 stratocumulus, base 4,000 feet and 3/10 cirrostratus at base on return.

Visibility was generally unlimited.

7. The following message was heard over the VHF radio set: An a/c (designation 939X) crash landed at 4600N-2100E with all crew members safe. Time: 1100A hours.

8. Twenty one (21) a/c landed at this base between 1532A and 1600A hours.

9. Route was flown with many changes of course, and to

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the left at all times. After passing one (1) mile left of Vieste at 1047A hours at 4,200 feet, the formation flew to one (1) mile left of Zirje Isle, 1142A hours, 15,000 feet; then to four (4) miles left of Vrgada, 1148A hours, 15,500 feet; to 4557N-1452E at 1243A hours (where the Red Force received orders to bomb Air Force Alternate No 4); to three (3) miles north of Grades (4658N-1426E), which was used as an IP; after making a 360° turn over the target to Celje, 1348A hours, 23,400 feet; to Yugo Coast, 1434A hours, 21,000 feet; to Vis where the formation circled to let down to an altitude of 4,000 feet was reached, and then to base. Track chart showing route flown is inclosed.

10. The Blue Force comprising twenty one (21) B-24 a/c took off starting at 0920A hours to bomb the same primary target as was assigned to Red Force.

The Blue Force of twenty one (21) B-24 a/c was led by Captain William T. Black, Flight Leader of the 776th Bombardment Squadron (H).

11. Group form-up was as planned. Assembly was poor due to multi-layered clouds. Rendezvous was made on time, but due to clouds, it was left of course ten (10) miles.

12. Twenty one (21) a/c flew the route as briefed to 4640N-1432E at 1256A hours when they were instructed by the Wing Leader to bomb Graz Station and Freight Yard.

13. Twenty one (21) a/c were over Graz at 1328A hours and twenty one (21) a/c dropped forty two (42) tons of 500 lb GP bombs (.1 nose and .01 tail fusing) from 23,500 feet on a heading of 70°.

The target at the time of bombing was 7/10 to 8/10 cloud covered necessitating the bomb run being made by both PFF and Visual methods.

The Mickey set was operating satisfactorily and one (1) slight course correction of two (2) to three (3) degrees was given just before bombs away. Course was well killed.

Observations of the target area after bombs away indicated a compact pattern on the south choke point of the M/Ys and the building area adjoining.

Photos taken by the Blue Force show a heavy concentration of hits on at least seven (7) large buildings of the railroad car works. Another group of bomb strikes was on the warehouses

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and on the south choke point of the marshalling yard. Additional hits were among several columns of freight cars parked on the forwarding and reception sidings located south of the goods depot. Southeast of the marshalling yard, several hits fell on buildings of a motorcycle factory.

14. The Group Leader used the C-1 Automatic Pilot which operated well.

15. Flak at the target was M-IAH which was of the tracking type, consisting of black bursts and high white bursts above the formation and lasted from three (3) to four (4) minutes.

16. Rendezvous was made with forty (40) P-38 a/c at 1210A hours at 4447N-1555E and were last observed at 1430A hours at 4345N-1555E.

17. Weather for Blue Force was as follows:

Base: 6/10 to 9/10 stratocumulus, two layers, base 7,500 feet, tops 10,000 feet. 3/10 to 5/10 altostratus at 12-14,000 feet. 3/10 cirrostratus at 25,000 feet. Visibility unlimited.

Route out: Base conditions held over local area and most of Adriatic with slightly higher tops on stratocumulus over Adriatic.

Over Yugo Coast and Dinarics 8/10 altostratus, base 16,000 feet, tops 22,000 feet.

Beyond Alps, 6/10 to 8/10 stratocumulus, top 10,000 feet. Vapor trails 22,000 feet.

Target: 7/10 altostratus and stratocumulus, top of altostratus 16,000 feet. Visibility unrestricted.

Return route: Altostratus had moved to south over Dinarics. Two layers of thick clouds over Adriatic - stratocumulus, top 12-14,000 feet and altostratus 14-16,000 feet, base, both 6/10 to 8/10. Rain storm north of Spur.

Base: 6/10 stratocumulus, base 4,000 feet. 3/10 cirrostratus at 20,000 or above. Visibility unlimited.

18. Five (5) a/c received minor flak damage. One a/c, No

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Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, 464 Bomb Gp (F), 9 Mar 45, contd

44-49736, suffered severe damage after landing. A flak burst in the accumulators caused the hydraulic pressure to go out, and in turning at the hardstand it ran off onto rough ground causing the gear to collapse and damaging the wings.

19. Twenty one (21) a/c landed at this base between 1520A and 1600A hours.

20. Route was flown as briefed to 4640N-1432E at 1256A hours; then to 4706N-1448E (this point used as IP to Graz); from Graz, SE to 4609N-1612E; then as briefed to base. Track chart showing route flown is inclosed.

21. There were six (6) a/c attempting photos. Selected strike photo is inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER  
Major, AC  
Intelligence Officer

3 Incls  
Incl 1 - Track chart (Red Force)  
Incl 2 - " " (Blue Force)  
Incl 3 - Selected strike photo