

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

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

FFW/LSD/jd

319.1

15 March 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 15 March 1945, forty two (42) scheduled B-24 a/c took off commencing at 0805A hours to bomb the primary target designated in Operations Order No. 130. The forty two (42) a/c formed into two forces of twenty one (21) a/c each, Red Force being led by Colonel A. J. Bird Jr., Commanding Officer, 464th Bombardment Group (H) and Blue Force by Captain Walter Steves, Operations Officer, 778th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. Form-up assembly, and rendezvous were accomplished in excellent fashion by both forces.

3. Sixteen (16) a/c of Red Force were over Graz M/Y's Austria at 1328A hours, and fourteen a/c dropped thirty three and one quarter (33.25) tons of 500 pound RDX bombs (.1 nose - /.01 tail fusing) from 25,000 feet.

Twenty (20) a/c of Blue Force were over Graz M/Y's, Austria at 1329A hours and dropped forty nine and three quarters (49.75) tons of bombs (type and fusing same as Red Force) from 23,500 feet.

4. Five (5) a/c of Red Force disposed of their bomb load as follows:

(a) A/C No. 42-51563 jettisoned two and one half tons at (47°30'N-16°40'E) at 1310A hours in order to maintain formation after number three engine lost oil pressure.

(b) A/C No. 44-49146 jettisoned two and one half tons at (47°30'N-16°40'E) at 1310A hours because of number two supercharger trouble and excessive fuel consumption.

(c) A/C No. 42-78433, an early return, jettisoned two and one half tons at (47°49'N-14°55'E) at 1215A hours because of number two engine trouble.

(d) A/C No. 44-40928 jettisoned one half tons at (47°28'N-14°44'E) at 1145A hours because of supercharger trouble.

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

Htr Narr Miss Rpt, 464th Bomb Gp. 15 March 45, cont'd

(e). A/C No. 44-50471 returned one and one quarter tons to base due to malfunctioning bomb bay doors over the target.

Four (4) a/c of Red Force were prior returns, having lost the group formation and joined the 460th Bombardment Group (H), dropping ten (10) tons on Moosbierbaum O/R, Austria at 1231A hours from 24,500 feet.

5. Two (2) a/c of Blue Force disposed of their bomb load as follows:

(a). A/C No. 44-41337 jettisoned one quarter tons at (43°10'N-15°50'E) at 1440A hours as one bomb could not be released over the target because of flak damage to the bomb release handle.

(b). A/C No. 44-49415, an early return, jettisoned two and one half tons at (47°15'N-15°30'E) at 1318A hours because of number three engine trouble.

6. Recantulation of bomb tonnage:

(a). 14 a/c of Red Force dropped on Graz	33.25 Tons
4 a/c of Red Force jettisoned	8.00 "
1 a/c of Red Force returned	1.25 "
4 a/c of Red Force (prior returns) dropped on Moosbierbaum O/R	10.00 "
Total	<u>52.50 Tons</u>
(b). 20 a/c of Blue Force dropped on Graz	49.75 Tons
2 a/c of Blue Force jettisoned	2.75 "
Total	<u>52.50 Tons</u>

7. Bombing was performed visually by both Red and Blue Forces. The C-1 Automatic Pilot was used successfully on the bombing run by the leader of Red Force. However, the C-1 used by the leader of Blue Force tumbled partially on the bombing run one minute before bombs away, requiring manual operation for the balance of the run.

8. Red Force photos show at least twelve hits among rolling stock in the freight yard which lies north of Graz main station. Several hits were in the warehouse area. Three hits were on the choke point adjacent to the south end of the railroad station. A heavy concentration fell among buildings adjacent to the east edge of the freight yard. Blue Force photos show more than ten hits on trackage at the choke point which separates the north and south marshalling yards. Several additional hits were on the shoe factory and on the bridge construction works. A majority of the bombs of Blue Force are obscured by smoke which

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

Ltr Harr Miss Rpt, contd

covers the southern half of the north marshalling yard. Some of the impacts are visible in the marshalling yard and adjacent to the engineering works.

9. Fighter escort was provided by sixteen (16) P-38 a/c which made rendezvous with the formation at 1057A hours at (4512N - 1453E) and were last observed at 1430A hours at (43 55N - 1533E)..

10. Weather at base consisted of 4/10 altocumulus, tops at 17,000 feet, bases at 15,000 feet, and visibility of fifteen (15) miles.

Over the Spur, conditions consisted of 3/10 stratocumulus with tops at 8,000 feet, bases at 6,000 feet and 5/10 altocumulus with tops at 17,000 feet, bases at 15,000 feet, visibility twenty (20) miles. Over the Adriatic, altocumulus increased to 7/10-10/10 with bases at 14,000 feet and tops at 17,000 feet.

From primary target to Graz, 10/10 altocumulus at 10,000 feet were encountered. Over Graz, 4/10 altocumulus with tops at 15,000 feet, 2/10 cirrus at 20,000 feet and visibility of twenty (20) miles.

On the route back, 3/10 altocumulus at 17,000 feet along most of the route. Patches of 2/10 cirrus at 20,000 feet over the Yugo coast, visibility twenty (20) miles.

11. Two (2) a/c returned early as follows:

(a). A/C No 42-78433 of Red Force turned back at 1205A hours at (4820N - 1448E) because of excessive cylinder temperature in number two engine, landing at 1441A hours.

(b). A/C No 44-49415 of Blue Force turned back at 1158A hours at (4725N - 1445E) because of low oil pressure and a runaway supercharger in number three engine, landing at 1413A hours.

12. Route was flown as briefed to Roseldorf (4839N - 1455E), IP for the Primary Target. At this point it was decided to bomb an alternate target because of adverse weather conditions at the primary target, consisting of almost a solid undercast of stratocumulus clouds. The group then proceeded to Val Levary (4830N - 1700E) to Nagy Magyar (4808N - 1725E) to (4727N - 1709E) to (4727N - 1523E) to the selected target, Graz, then rallied right to Wolfsberg (4650N - 1450E) to (4357N - 1524E) and from there proceeded to base. Track chart of route flown enclosed.

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

Ltr Narr Miss Rpt, contd

13. Eight (8) a/c attempted photos. Selected print attached.

14. Flak at Graz was M to IAH and was encountered for three minutes. Crew members report that this flak was of the tracking type. S to MAH flak of minimum duration was also encountered in the Bruck - Leoben area, the group just touching the outer perimeter of this area's flak defenses.

15. No enemy aircraft were either observed or encountered.

16. Observations reported:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Altitude</u>	<u>Observation</u>
1202A	Gr Pertholtz (4838N-1450E)	25,000	M/Y full - at least 500 units
1213A	Gmund (4846N-1459E)	24,000	500 units in M/Y

Crew members reported effective smoke screens at Moosbierbaum and Vienna.

17. Nine (9) a/c suffered minor flak damage.

18. Six (6) a/c landed at friendly fields, two of which have already returned to base.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER
Major, AC
Intelligence Officer

2 Incls
I ncl 1 - Track chart
Incl 2 - Selected print