

CONFIDENTIAL

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

FMH/hob

310.1

20 March 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 20 March 1945, forty two (42) B-24 a/c took off, starting at 0920A hours, to bomb the primary target specified in Operations Order No. 142, 19 March 1945. The forty two (42) a/c formed two (2) forces of twenty one (21) a/c each. Red Force Leader was Colonel A. J. BIRD, JF., Commanding Officer with Lt. Col. JAMES H. GILSON, Commanding Officer, 779th Bombardment Squadron (H) as first pilot. Blue Force Leader was Captain ROBERT V. MOORE, Assistant Operations Officer, 779th Bombardment Squadron (H). Amstetten W/Y, Austria was attacked.

2. Group form-up for both forces was as proscribed and Red Force was on course over Andria at 1010A hours, Blue Force at 1020A hours.

3. Two (2) a/c returned early.

(a) A/C No 44-40928 (Red Force) a late take off due to mechanical difficulties with first a/c assigned, turned back at 1208A hours (44°40'N-15°30'E) after failing to overtake the formation. Bomb load of two and one-half (2½) tons was returned to base.

(b) A/C No 44-49389 (Blue Force) turned back at (43°58'N-15°34'E) after blowing cylinder head on number three (3) engine. Bomb load of two and one-half (2½) tons was jettisoned at 1140A hours (43°30'N-15°40'E) in the Adriatic.

4. Three (3) a/c over the target with the formation failed to release as follows.

(a) A/C No. 44-49857 (Red Force) returned two and one-half (2½) tons to base as the bombardier failed to identify the target.

(b) A/C No. 42-51178 (Blue Force) jettisoned two and one-

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

Ltr Narr Miss Pnt, contd.

half (21) tons at 1500A hours in the Adriatic southwest of Vis. Flak damage incurred over primary target prevented opening bomb bay doors in time to release on target.

(c) A/C No 42-78692 (Blue Force) jettisoned one (1) ton at 1500A hours (42°55'N-15°40'E) in the Adriatic. Rack malfunction prevented release on target.

5. Nineteen (19) a/c of Red Force dropt forty seven and one half (47.5) tons of one thousand (1,000) pound G.P. bombs (.1 nose - .01 tail fusing at 1250A hours from 18,200 Feet. Axis of attack 61°.

Nineteen (19) a/c of Blue Force dropt forty six and one half (46.5) tons of bombs (type and fusing same as Red Force) at 1321A hours from 19,200 feet. Axis of attack 191°.

Bombing was by attack units, using visual methods and both force leaders used the C-1 automatic pilot on the bomb run.

Red Force bombs were all short of the east yard. Pattern started one (1) mile south, at the river, and continued northeast through open country towards the east choke point.

Blue Force had a heavy concentration on the east end of Amstetten east marshalling yard. Several additional hits on the yard extend toward the center. Other hits scattered south of the yard.

Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage

Dropt on target	94 tons
Jettisoned	6 "
Returned to base	5 "
Total	105 tons

6. Red Force encountered no flak defenses. Blue Force approaching the primary target entered the defense area before it became apparent they would be unable to continue to the target. IAF flak was encountered for approximately three (3) minutes.

Additional flak was observed by the lead a/c of Blue Force and plotted at (46°26'N-16°43'E) by the navigator, this is the location of a crew report on sectional maps. The flak was described as being three (3) rounds of seven bursts each.

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

Ltr Narr Miss Bnt, contd

7. Five (5) ME 109 a/c were observed by one crew of Red Force at 1417A hours ($44^{\circ}10'N-15^{\circ}20'E$), a/c altitude 1,000 feet, our altitude 11,000 feet. F/A passed under the formation on a heading of approximately 333° . A/C black with white crosses on wing tips.

8. Weather was clear at take off and generally clear over route to Dinaries, visibility 20 miles.

Over Dinaries 5/10 altostratus, top 15,000 feet. Further north at ($46^{\circ}46'N$ -) patchy cirrus at 22,000 feet which increased and lowered steadily to the north.

Over NE Alps, 6/10-7/10 cirrus, base 17-18,000 feet.

At target (Amstetten) 8/10 cirrus based at 19-20,000 feet. Visibility 15 miles in haze. Multilayer cirrus to north and east, top 28,000 feet.

Little change on return; clear at base, visibility 15 miles.

9. Forty (40) a/c returned to this base between 1525A and 1555A hours.

10. Red Force flew the course as briefed to the IP. Almost immediately after starting on the bomb run it became apparent the primary target could not be reached and a right turn was made and direct heading for Amstetten taken up. Rally off the target was to the right and course set to intersect the route out at ($46^{\circ}58'N-15^{\circ}03'E$), this point being reached a reciprocal of the route out was flown to T.P. Zirje, then direct to base.

Blue Force flew as briefed until the primary target was practically reached before making a right turn. There was not sufficient time for a satisfactory bomb run and as the target was over a 270° turn was executed to the left and the target attacked on axis of 191° . Rally was to the left and briefed course again taken up at Murrzschlag and flown to base. Track charts showing routes as briefed and flown enclosed.

11. Eleven (11) a/c attempted photographs. Selected strike photographs attached.

For the Commanding Officer:

3 Incls:
Incl 1 - Track Chart (Red Force)
Incl 2 - Track Chart (Blue Force)
Incl 3 - Selected prints

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