

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

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

AJL/PFE/hob

319,1

22 March 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 22 March 1945, forty-two (42) scheduled B-24's/c took off, between 0828 hours and 0847 hours to bomb the primary target, Heiligenstadt M/Y, at Vienna.

The forty two (42) a/c formed into two (2) attack units, the first being led by Major John H. McNeely, Assistant Operations Officer of the 464th Bombardment Group (H), and the second by Captain Keith M. Cooke, Operations Officer of the 777th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. Group form up and bomber rendezvous was made as planned without incident.

3. Three (3) a/c returned early:

(a) A/C No 42-50500 turned back at (41°37'N-14°44'E) as the oil pressure was lost in No. 1 engine.

(b) A/C No 42-95355 turned back at (45°22'N-15°13'E) because of a runaway prop on No. 3 engine which had to be feathered.

(c) A/C No 44-49419 turned back at (42°15'N-16°25'E) as all turbos went out.

4. Thirty eight (38) a/c were over the primary target at 1249A hours and thirty six (36) a/c dropped 69.25 tons of 100 pound GP bombs (.1 nose and .025 tail fuses) from 21,500 feet, nine (9) minutes later than the briefed bombs away time.

Ten (10) a/c jettisoned 2.05 tons of bombs - partial loads each and one (1) other a/c jettisoned the full bomb load of two (2) tons:

(a) A/C No 44-49857 jettisoned three (3) bombs at (44°22'N-14°28'E) as the bombs would not release.

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(b) A/C No 44-50350 jettisoned four (4) bombs at (41°03'N-15°03'E) which had hung up due to bomb shackle malfunction.

(c) A/C No 44-42394 jettisoned two (2) bombs at (42°40'N-15°10'E) which had hung up over target.

(d) A/C No 44-49409 jettisoned two (2) bombs at (42°15'N-15°20'E) over the Adriatic - shackle malfunction.

(e) A/C No 42-51356 jettisoned two (2) bombs at (44°10'N-15°00'E) - bombs were frozen to the shackles.

(f) A/C No 44-50842 jettisoned ten (10) bombs at (42°30'N-16°10'E) - bomb shackle malfunction.

(g) A/C No 44-48880 jettisoned four (4) bombs at (48°11'N-16°08'E) - bomb shackles frozen.

(h) A/C No 44-40247 jettisoned two (2) bombs at (43°50'N-15°10'E) - hung up in bomb racks.

(i) A/C No 44-48768 jettisoned four (4) bombs at (42°35'N-15°50'E) - hung up in bomb racks.

(j) A/C No 42-95364 jettisoned eight (8) bombs at (42°20'N-16°00'E) - rack malfunction over target.

(k) A/C No 44-40194 jettisoned forty (40) bombs at (48°04'N-15°17'E). This was the 1st Unit Leader whose plane lost No. 2 engine between the IP and the target and who was unable to hold altitude with one engine out.

(l) A/C No 42-50500 an early return jettisoned forty (40) bombs at (41°37'N-14°44'E) at 1216A hours as he lost No.1 engine and was unable to hold altitude.

(m) A/C No 42-95355 an early return jettisoned forty (40) bombs at (43°30'N-15°00'E) - lost No. 3 engine and was unable to hold altitude.

A/C No. 44-49797 returned two (2) tons of bombs to base as the lead ship did not drop.

A/C No. 44-49653 returned two (2) tons of bombs to base because of a P.D.I. malfunction.

Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage Disposition

36 a/c of 38 a/c over target dropped	69.95 tons
10 a/c jettisoned partial loads	2.05 "
1 a/c jettisoned	2.00 "
3 a/c jettisoned (early returns)	6.00 "
2 a/c over target returned to base	4.00 "
Total	<u>84.00 tons</u>

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Crews reported white smoke pots around the outer sections of the city of Vienna, but none in the target area which was in the clear.

All bomb hits are in small suburban areas. The largest concentration of bomb strikes are five (5) miles due west of the Nordbahn RR bridge. A smaller concentration of strikes are two and one half (2 1/2) miles west of same bridge. A third patterns bombs are four and three quarters (4 3/4) miles due west of the northern end of the north station goods depot.

5. On the bomb run, between the IP and the target the First Attack Unit Leader lost an engine and left the formation. The lead was taken over by the Deputy Lead, Lt. Laser of the 778th Bombardment Squadron (H) three (3) minutes before the target. Due to the C-1 and P.D.I. not working properly, the Deputy Lead did not drop on the target. (Bombardier put in left corrections and P.D.I. indicated right)

The second Attack Unit Leader reported that the C-1 was working very well on the bomb run.

6. Intense, accurate, and heavy flak was encountered over the primary target for an average time of 5-6 minutes. It was tracking and black in color.

7. Rendezvous was made with twenty five to thirty (25-30) P-38 c/c at 1129A hours at (45°50'N-14°56'E) and were last observed at 1407A hours at (44°20'N-14°40'E). This escort was over the target area with the bombers.

8. The weather at take off was a few altocumulus at 10,000 feet, visibility 10 miles in haze. On return a few cumulus in area. Visibility 10 miles.

Enroute: Clear but hazy to Yugoslav Coast. From (44°00'N- to 46°00'N) there was a band of 7 to 8 tenths strato-cumulus, tops 3 to 10,000 feet. In the valley south of Klagenfurt there was no clouds. At (47°00'N) and to the north over the Alps there was 4 to 5 tenths altocumulus, tops 10,000 feet. Over the lowlands of the Danube Valley altocumulus broke to 3 tenths cumulus, tops 10,000 feet. Visibility out was 10 miles to Yugoslav coast and from there northward 15 miles in haze. Snow cover only over higher mountains.

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Target; 2 to 3 tenths low cumulus, tops 1,000 feet. Visibility 15 miles. No snow cover. Surface winds SE 3 to 10 mph estimated. Cloud cover seemed to be same all around target.

Route on return: In the plains of Hungary and Yugoslavia there was 3 to 4 tenths cumulus tops or 10,000 feet. Over the Dinaric Alps 3 tenths altocumulus, tops 10,000 feet. The Adriatic was clear. Visibility on return 15 miles north of Yugoslav coast. 10 miles over Adriatic and Italy in haze. No high clouds were observed on the entire route.

9. Our losses were two (2) a/c destroyed by flak:

(a) A/C No 44-58932 (B-I) - place (43°22'N-16°20'E).

Just before bombs away, B-I fell out of formation, rolled over on its back and went into a spin. A few thousand feet below the formation the a/c leveled off for a short distance, and then spun in again. When last seen the a/c was aflame from the wing roots to the tail assembly. A/C apparently suffered flak hits in the bomb-bay. Four (4) chutes were seen to open.

(b) A/C No 44-49146 (W-F) - place (48°10'N-16°17'E).

W-F suffered a direct flak hit under No. 3 engine. On rally off target, the plane went into a tight spin with No. 3 engine on fire. Part of the planes wing was seen to come off while in the spin. Eight (8) chutes were seen to open. The plane was last seen as it hit the ground.

The Group also suffered 13 minor flak damaged ships.

10. Observations reported by returning crew members:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Altitude</u>	<u>Observation</u>
1201A	(47°13'N-14°50'E)	21,200	Knittelfeld M/Y seen to be about half full - approximately 500-600 units.
1200A	(47°12'N-14°45'E)	21,000	250/300 units seen in Zeltwig M/Y
1150	Eberndorf M/Y	21,000	150 cars seen in M/Y
	(46°35'N-14°40'E)		M/Y between Klagenfurt and Maribor full of units.

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11. Thirty-seven (37) a/c landed at this base between 1500A and 1543A hours.

12. Route was flown as briefed to the target. After the rally the formation flew due south to a point between Graz and Maribor; then on a heading of  $260^{\circ}$  to ( $46^{\circ}30'N-14^{\circ}30'E$ ) where a south heading was flown to ( $44^{\circ}00'N-15^{\circ}00'E$ ), over the Adriatic; from there to ( $42^{\circ}00'N-16^{\circ}20'E$ ); then to base.

Track chart showing route flown is inclosed.

13. Nine (9) a/c attempted photos and selected strike photos are attached.

For the Commanding Officer:

FRANCIS F. ELDER  
Major, AC  
Intelligence Officer