

CONFIDENTIAL

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

FORM 806

310.1

26 March 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 26 March 1945, thirty two (32) B-24 a/c took off beginning at 0955A hours, to bomb the Bratislava Hangar, Austria. The thirty two (32) a/c formed two (2) attack units. The leader of the first attack unit was Captain Walter Stoves, Operations Officer, 778th Bombardment Squadron (H), and of the second attack unit, Colonel Virgil L. Keller, Deputy Group Commander.

2. Form-up was accomplished as prescribed and the Group was on course over Andria at 5,000 feet, 1041.5A hours.

3. One (1) a/c returned early.

a. A/C No 44-49837 returned from the Spurr. Low oil pressure in No 2 engine necessitated feathering.

4. The lead a/c experienced C-1 trouble on approach to the target and relinquished the lead to the Deputy Group Leader, Captain Keith W. Cooke, Operations Officer, 777th Bombardment Squadron (H). The shift in position took place at 1155A hours, 4412N-1707E. Radio contact at that time indicated that C-1 was erratic when turning. No further radio contact was made.

5. Thirty one (31) a/c were over the target at 1402.5A hours (briefed target time 1340A hours) and dropt 69.63 tons of 250 lb GP bombs (.1 nose and .025 tail fusing) from 21,300 feet.

A/C No 44-49409 jettisoned one (1) bomb, .12 ton, at 1654A hours (4530N-1620E). Bomb failed to release over target due to rack malfunction.

A/C No 44-49837, early return, brought back two and one quarter ton (2.25 ton).

Bomb strike photos show several dozen hits on the A/Y in the close vicinity of the repair sheds and another concentration of more than three dozen hits on the yard at a point 2,000 feet east of the repair sheds. Approximately half of the bombs.

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

Ltr Herr Miss Rpt, contd

Dropped struck in open country, one mile north of the yard, in the area between Sattendorf station and the airframe.

Reconciliation of Bomb Tonnage

Dropped on target	69.63 tons
Jettisoned	.12 "
Returned to base	2.35 "
Total	<u>72.00 tons</u>

6. C-1 Automatic Pilot was used by leaders of both attack units.

7. Flak at the target was reported by Able and Charlie as IAH and by Baker and Dog as IAH. No other variety indicated.

8. One (1) E/A was reported by one crew as observed at 1345A hours (4840N-1820E). E/A remained out of range at two o'clock and at same altitude as formation. Crew suspected the e/a was giving firing data to flak defenses.

9. No escort was observed.

10. Weather was as follows:

Base: At take off there was 8/10 cirrostratus with bases at 25,000 feet; no clouds below. Visibility was 15 miles. Surface wind was SE 13 mph.

Route out: Over the Adriatic there was 9/10 cirrostratus at 25,000 feet. Visibility was 15 miles with light haze. In patches there was 1/10 altostratus at 14,000 feet with tops to 15,000 feet. This condition continued to the target area.

Target: 10/10 cirrostratus with bases at 23,000 feet, in some patches bases at 21,000 feet. Visibility 10 miles in the haze, immediately under the cloud layer the visibility was less than 2 miles.

Route back: There was 10/10 cirrostratus at 21,000 feet which gradually lowered toward the base. South of Vienna there was 5/10 altocumulus with tops to 15,000 feet. Visibility was 10 miles over the return route. Over the Adriatic there was 10/10 altostratus at 15,000 feet on return.

Base: On return there was 10/10 altostratus at 15,000

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

Ltr Terr Miss Act, contd.

feet. There was 3/10 stratus clouds, at 5,000 feet. Visibility 10 miles with dust. Surface wind 20 mph.

11. A/C No 44-47194 crashed at 1422A hours (4835N-1600E). No information obtained as to exact nature of trouble but it is believed a/c suffered fuel damage at the target. When last seen a/c appeared unstable on controls and then went into a steep climb, leveled off momentarily and then went into a dive, hitting the ground and exploding. Eleven (11) chutes were observed.

12. Battle damage consisted of minor damage to two (2) a/c, and major damage to three (3).

13. Observations:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Altitude</u>	<u>Observation</u>
1337A	4843N-1615E		A/T convoy 6/7 miles long. Moving east.
1436A	4815N-1520E	16,000	Concentration of barges at dock, 50 100.

14. Thirty one (31) a/c returned to base between 1735A and 1810A hours.

15. Route was flown as briefed. Time and altitude varied slightly due to weather. Track chart inclosed.

16. Seven (7) a/c attempted photographs. Selected strike photograph inclosed.

For the Commanding Officer:

2 Incls

1. Track Chart
2. Selected strike photographs

FRANCIS F. ELDER  
Major, AC  
Intelligence Officer