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

ASL/EVB/hob

310.1

31 March 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

TO : Commanding General, 45th Bombardment Wing (H)  
APO 520, U.S. Army

1. On 31 March 1945, thirty two (32) of thirty two (32) scheduled B-24 a/c took off from this base starting at 0745A hours to bomb the primary target listed in Operations Order No. 159, dated 30 March 1945.

The 1st attack unit was led by Major John H. McNeely, Group Training Officer of the 464th Bomb Gp (H).

The 2nd attack unit was led by 1st Lt Matthew T. Arlington, Flight Leader of the 776th Bomb Sq (H).

2. Group form-up was as planned and without incident. The formation was on course and ahead of Antria at 0906A hours at 10,000 feet. On the route out over the Adriatic, Eaker Box consisting of eight (8) a/c lost the Group formation in weather and flew with the 485th Bomb Gp (H) which bombed the same target, Villach M/Y.

3. Twenty three (23) a/c were over the Alternate Air Force target, Villach, M/Y, at 1258A hours and twenty three (23) a/c dropped 51.375 tons of 250 lb GP bombs (.1 nose and .025 tail fuses) from 25,000 feet on a heading of 140°.

One (1) a/c, No 44-50920, jettisoned a full bomb load, 2.25 tons, over the Adriatic (4340N-1510E), 1300A hours, as they had to feather No 2 prop due to loss of oil pressure and had a run-away prop on No 4 engine.

One (1) a/c, No 42-78472, jettisoned .375 tons at (4320N-1440E), at 1355A hours due to a rack malfunction which prevented the bombs being dropped on the target.

The eight (8) a/c forming Eaker Box which bombed with the 485th Bombardment Group (H) dropped eighteen (18) tons on the same target at 1250A hours from 22,500 feet.

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Ltr Narr Miss Ent, contd

Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage

Front on target	(23 a/c)	51.275 tons
" " "	(Baker Box) (.3 a/c)	15.000 "
Jettisoned		2.625 "
	Total	<u>72.000 tons</u>

Bombing was by BEE and visual methods combined as the lead crews reported 7/10-9/10 cloud cover on the bomb run. Just before the target, however, the target was clear and the bombardier had several minutes to synchronize on it.

Bomb strike photos show approximately seven (7) hits on the eastern half of Villach North R/V. These hits are in the vicinity of the railroad over pass. Heavy concentrations of strikes fell both north and south of the yard, in built up areas.

4. C-1 Automatic Pilot was used by both attack unit leaders; the Group Leader reporting that operation of his auto pilot was satisfactory, but the C-1 in the 2nd attack leader's plane, a/c No 44-42580, worked erratically (operations and corrections set in were rough and the plane would not hold a heading well).

5. Flak at the target was reported by a few crews as S-WIF for a period not exceeding two (2) minutes.

6. Two (2) unidentified jet a/c were seen at 1230A hours at (4600N-1503E) and five (5) ME 109's were seen in the target area ten (10) minutes before and after target. Both of these reports were unconfirmed by other crews. These a/c did not attack any planes in the formation.

7. Ten (10) to fifteen (15) P-51's were picked up at 1220A hours at (4640N-1228E). They were in the target area and were last observed at 1337A hours at the Yugo coast on the return route.

8. Weather for the mission was as follows:

Clear at take-off and to the Adriatic coast. Large patches of stratocumulus clouds, tops 8,000 feet off the Spur with clouds increasing rapidly northward.

At (4320N-) the formation encountered a cold front with 9/10 multilayer clouds, from 13,000 feet to 24,000 feet, associated above were scattered layer to 30,000 feet. Farther north at (4430N-) the cloudiness decreased to 10/10 altocumulus, top 18,000 feet.

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

Ltr Marr Miss Int, cont'd

In North Yugoslavia and South Austria, 5/10-6/10 cirrus at 25,000 feet and 4/10-6/10 alto-cumulus, top 13-14,000 feet.

At target, 3/10 to 4/10 cirrus at 25,000 feet, 2/10 alto-cumulus below, top 15,000 feet. Visibility 20 miles.

On return, frontal clouds had moved 50 miles to the southeast.

6/10 cirrus and 3/10 to 4/10 cumulus over South Italy and base on return. Visibility was 20 miles or more for base and route.

9. A/C No 44-49415 landed at Lesina fighter strip, (4153N-1501E) at 1430A hours as it was low on gas and three (3) booster pumps were inoperative. This plane was gassed up and returned to this base the same afternoon.

A/C No 44-50220 landed at Zara. The oil pressure in No 2 engine was lost necessitating feathering of the prop. There was also a runaway prop on No 4 engine. This crew left their a/c at Zara and returned to this base in another plane.

10. Thirty (30) a/c landed at this base between 1445A and 1501A hours. The remaining two (2) a/c landed at this field before 1800A hours.

11. Route was flown with many deviations due to weather. It was as briefed to (4338N-1559E) at 1112A hours, then to (4407N-1615E) at 1140A hours; to (4645N-1502E) at 1232A hours; to (4652N-1333E) at 1250A hours (used as IP); after target a slight left rally was made and a course flown which interceded the briefed return route to base. The Group Leader decided to bomb Villech as the formation was unable to penetrate the bad weather enroute to the primary target. Track chart showing route flown is inclosed.

12. Seven (7) a/c attempted photographs. Selected strike photos are attached.

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

BYRON V. BRIFORD  
Captain, AC  
Intelligence Officer

- 2 Incls  
1. Track chart  
2. Bomb strike photos