

HEADQUARTERS
464TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
Office of the Intelligence Officer
APO 520 U S Army

319.1

13 September 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative Mission Report

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

1. On 13 September at 0620B hours, twenty eight (28) scheduled B-24 type a/c and three (3) spare B-24 type a/c took off to bomb the Oswiecim Synthetic Oil and Rubber Plant, (primary target) Oswiecim, Poland. The thirty one (31) a/c formed two (2) attack units, the first unit being led by Lt. Colonel Clarence G. Poff, Commanding Officer, 778th Bombardment Squadron (H), and the second unit by Lieutenant Charles F. Fowler, Flight Leader, 778th Bombardment Squadron (H).

2. Group assembly, rendezvous with the 465th Bombardment Group and Wing rendezvous were as planned and without incident. The 460th Bombardment Group (H) was reported as using a portion of the area assigned to this group for assembly but no interference with either groups assembly resulted.

3. Four a/c returned early for the following reasons:

(a) A/C No. 42-52533 returned from the assembly area after three (3) generators became inoperative.

(b) A/C No. 41-29458 returned from (42°45'N - 16°50'E) because gas leak in selector panel of transfer system made it impossible to transfer fuel.

(c) A/C No. 42-59340 returned from (45°26'N - 17°11'E) after loss of oil pressure compelled feathering of No. 1 engine.

(d) A/C No. 42-51856 returned from (43°09'N - 16°48'E) after collector ring on No. 3 engine blew out causing induction system to burn out, resulting loss of power preventing climb to altitude.

4. Twenty seven (27) a/c were over the target at 1120B hours (briefed target time 1101B hours) and twenty four (24) a/c dropped 58.75 tons of 500 pound R.D.X. bombs (.1 nose - .025 tail fusing) from 23,200 feet. Five a/c jettisoned 10.25 tons of bombs.

(a) A/C No. 42-95340 returning early jettisoned 2.50 tons at (4314'N - 1650'E) as a/c was losing altitude and it was necessary to reduce weight.

(b) A/C No. 42-78431 jettisoned 2.50 tons at 1140B hours at (48°50'N - 19°10'E). Bomb bay door malfunction prevented release on target and it was necessary to keep formation position.

(c) A/C No. 42-78415 jettisoned 2.50 tons at 1121B hours at (50°03'N - 19°21'E). Bomb bay doors malfunction prevented release on target and it was necessary to keep formation position.

(d) A/C No. 42-52563 jettisoned 2.50 tons at 1135B hours at (49°38'N - 19°26'E). Rack malfunction prevented release on target and loss of power in one engine and oil leak in another made it necessary to jettison to conserve gasoline.

(e) A/D No. 44-41043 jettisoned .25 tons at 1131B hours at (49°38'N - 19°30'E). Rack malfunction prevented release on target.

(f) Five (5) a/c returned 8.50 tons of bombs to base. Three (3) a/c returning early returned 7.50 tons. A/C No. 42-95364 returned .25 tons and a/c no. 42-52526 returned .75 tons both due to rack malfunctions preventing release.

Recapitulation of Bomb Tonnage

Dropped on target	58.75
Jettisoned	10.25
Returned to base	<u>8.50</u>
Total tonnage	77.50

Target visibility was only fair due to cloud coverage, haze and a partially effective smoke screen. Bomb strike photographs indicate largest concentration of bomb strikes are in the center of the refinery area. Direct hit causing explosion on possible Styrene Plant. Direct hit on western side of gas storage tank north of Reactor House. Several strikes on unidentified buildings west of transformer station. Twelve (12) strikes on probable Contractors Offices. Numerous strikes two hundred (200) feet west of Butylene Glycol Compressor House and Butylene Glycol Stalls. Several strikes on Distillation Units. Five strikes on long rectangular buildings east of Distillation Units. Five strikes adjacent to Gas Plant. Fifty three (53) strikes eight thousand (8000) feet west of Labour Camp.

5. Bombing was visual and C-1 Automatic Pilot was used by 1st attack unit leader, second attack unit leader used PDI as C-1 was acting erratically.

6. I A H flak was encountered at the target for approximately five (5) minutes the greatest intensity being immediately after bombs away. Some bursts were exceptionally light and black, red and white bursts were observed. Several were encountered at approximately (47°36'N - 18°23'E) just north of Banbida. Flak described as Scant Heavy was observed at Komaron (47°46'N - 18°08'E).

7. Three (3) ME-109 a/c were observed. One (1) at 1023B hours (48°10'N - 18°10'E) being engaged by escorting P-38 a/c and two at 1143B hours (49°37'N - 19°41'E). No markings or tactics reported.

8. Thirty P-38 a/c were first observed at 0931B (45°45'N - 17°20'E) and remained in the vicinity of the formation until 1304B hours (45°08'N - 17°34'E) the markings reported would indicate that a/c of the 1st, 14th and 81st Fighter Groups were observed. Twenty five to thirty 25/30 P-51 a/c were first observed at 0945B hours (46°20'N - 17°30'E) and last observed at 1346B hours (43°09'N - 16°48'E) these a/c belonging to the 325th Fighter Group.

9. 3/10 stratocumulus, tops 5000 feet at base at takeoff decreasing to 1/10 to 2/10 over Adriatic.

Over Dinaric Alps 10/10 stratocumulus, tops 1000 feet which broke up over the plains, 7/10 in Prijedor Area and 2/10 to 3/10 at Drava River.

North of Drava River, 1/10 to 2/10, small cumulus which increased over Carpathians to 4/10 to 5/10.

At target, 3/10 to 4/10 small puffs of cumulus. Visibility was 20 miles.

Little change on return, except clouds had decreased in amount. 5/10 cumulus over Dinaric, tops 12,000 feet.

Clear over Adriatic and 2/10 at base on return.

Visibility entire route 15/20 miles.

10. Seven a/c received flak damage, one of which will be inoperational for twenty four (24) hours.

11. The following observations were reported:

TIME	PLACE	ALT	OBSERVATION
1121B	Osuecim (50°03'N - 19°13'E)	22,600	M/Y over 500 wagons
1127B	Wadowice (49°54'N - 19°30'E)	22,600	M/Y over 500 wagons
1210B	47°46'N - 18°23'E)	17,000	Two (2) factories and steel plant.
1211B	Tato (47°40'N - 18°30'E)	16,500	M/Y over 500 wagons
?	Marovska-Ostrova (49°50'N - 18°18'E)	?	Effective smoke screen
1200B	(47°40'N - 18°30'E)		B-17 tried to join formation acted very

strangely pulled out to side and maintained altitude and speed. One gunner reports 3 chutes came out of this ship but they could have been dummy men as the ship never lost altitude or speed. After this occurrence at (47°40'N - 18°30'E) B-17 a/c stayed with group about one (1) hour.

12. Twenty six a/c returned to this base between 1429B and 1458B hours. A/C No. 42-50500 landed at 1800B hours after first landing at the Isle of Vis to refuel at 1410B hours.

13. Route to target was generally as briefed. The 464th rallied left off the target and then right again and caught the 465th which did not appear to have dropped bombs or to have rallied. The Radio Operator picked up message on Liason which he believed was from 465th which said they were proceeding to the second alternate target. The 464th was unable to contact the 465th on VHF Channel "B". The 464th attempted to follow the 465th but some difficulty was experienced due to slow airspeed and indefinite course. In the area of the IP for the second alternate the 464th took lead of the Wing and the 465th dropped behind and to the left. The 464th was now at (48°10'N - 18°55'E) at 1203B, 18,000 feet. The 464th continued from (48°10'N - 18°55'E) to Varoslo (47°09'N - 17°39'E), 1225B at 18,000 feet where they turned to the route out and continued on course to the coast 1337B, 17,500 feet. At the Yugoslav coast the Wing Formation loosened up and the Groups flew back to their bases in very loose formation.

Addendum to this report is self explanatory. Conference of lead pilots of 464th and 465th together with their navigators produced the following information relative to the route home from the target. When Colonel Clark's ship was hit and also the deputy's, both ships started to leave the formation and Able box, not aware of the leader's difficulties, attempted to follow them and were dispersed. Second attack leader rallied the rest of the group to his box and took the lead. Captain Shee, leading this box, while rallying the group, called 464th leader to take over lead of the wing. Due to faulty communications this was not received by 464th though several channels were attempted. When Captain Shee pulled off to 1st 464th take lead, 464th followed, thinking 465th was heading for their alternate target, Szob. Thus there was no wing leader until near Szob. The 464th saw 465th was not going to bomb and being in the lead at the time, kept the lead to base.

14. Eight (8) a/c attempted photographs. Selected trike photograph attached.

15. Location of smoke generators in target area can best be obtained from strike photographs as excellent coverage was obtained. Late starting of generators and improper winds made this screen ineffective although sufficient generators are located around target to effectively screen it under favorable conditions.

For the Commanding Officer

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Major, Air Corps
Intelligence Officer

2 Incls:

Incl 1 - Track Chart
Incl 2 - Selected Photograph