

HEADQUARTERS
450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF
APO-520 US ARMY

S-2 NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION NBR. 243

MISSION DATE: March 20, 1945

TARGET: St. Valentin, Austria - Tank Works

I. CHRONOLOGY

Thirty-nine aircraft took off 1030-1050 hours to bomb the St. Valentin Tank Works, Austria, but adverse weather at the primary necessitated the bombing of an alternate target. Thirty-five aircraft dropped 72.5 tons of 1000 lb G.P. on the Amstetten Marshalling Yard at 1430-1434 hours from 17,000-20,000'. One aircraft had engine failure and jettisoned 1 ton in the Adriatic and then went on to bomb a target of opportunity, the Zeltweg Marshalling Yard (47.11N-14.45E) at 1423 hours from 17,000'. One aircraft that dropped on the assigned target had a rack malfunction and jettisoned .5 ton in the Adriatic. Due to engine failure one aircraft returned early and jettisoned 2 ton in the Adriatic. One aircraft that was separated from other aircraft making an individual bomb run was unable to pick up the target and subsequently jettisoned 2 tons at 48.08N-15.00E. Thirty-eight aircraft returned to base at 1710-1730 hours.

II. ROUTE AND ASSAULT

The rendezvous was effected as planned and the route was flown was briefed to Judenburg (47.10N-14.40E and thence to the I.P. for the first alternate target which was attacked by squadrons in trail on an axis of 320/330 degrees. Bombing was by visual method. The rally off the target was to the right to Gloggnitz (47.41N-15.57E) and then to base as briefed. 30-40 P-38's rendezvoused with the formation at 1245 hours at Zirje (43.40N-15.40E) and provided cover until their withdrawal at 1545 hours at 45.53N-16.50E. There was a 10/10 layer of cirrus clouds over the primary target with bases at 20,000' and the Wing leader informed our formation to proceed to the first alternate target.

III. RESULTS

Photo cover shows a heavy concentration of hits across the M/Y. There was much smoke and full assessment is impossible. Crews reported seeing fires in the yard.

IV. ENEMY RESISTANCE

- A. Fighters: None
- B. Flak: Nil at the target. Enroute to the home base at 1510 hours S/M A H flak was experienced in the vicinity of 46.23N-16.35E. Our formation was flying at an altitude of 12/15000' on a heading of 170/180 degrees. Four aircraft sustained minor damage.

V. OBSERVATIONS

At 1520 hours at 45.50N-16.50E from 12,000' a B-24 type aircraft was seen going down in flames. 6-7 chutes were seen to open.

VI. CONCLUSION

- A. Losses: None
- B. Damage: 4 aircraft sustained minor flak damage
- C. Casualties: None
- D. Victories: None