

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

S-2 NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION DATE: March 31, 1945

MISSION NBR. 251

TARGET: Linz, Austria - North Main Marshalling Yard

I. CHRONOLOGY

In renewal of attacks against the communication system serving the Hungarian Front the 450th Bomb Group participated in a major effort by the entire Air Force to destroy the railway complex at Linz, Austria.

Thirty-two B-24 type aircraft took off at 0730-0804 hours to bomb the Linz North Main Marshalling Yard. Four aircraft turned back before the target. Three of these returned to base early and one landed at a friendly field. Twenty-five aircraft dropped 46.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs on the PFF aiming point (Main Station Repair Shops) at 1210 hours from 24,500 - 26,000 feet. One aircraft jettisoned 2 tons in the vicinity of Muhldorf (48.15N-12.32E) because of runaway prop. Two tons were jettisoned just past the Initial Point due to electrical malfunction which dumped the load through the bomb bay doors. One aircraft salvoed 2 tons four minutes after target at approximately 48.25N-14.35E due to rack malfunction at the target. Partial loads totaling 1 ton were jettisoned as follows: ½ ton at the I.P. because of supercharger failure; ½ ton at 44.28N-13.23E in order to maintain formation position. Of the early returns, 2 tons were jettisoned near Mittersill (47.17N-12.29E); 2 tons at 42.25N-16.28E; 2 tons at 41.20N-17.00E, all because of engine failures. Disposition of bomb-load of early turn-back still at friendly field is unknown. Twenty-eight aircraft returned to base at 1513 hours. None lost, none missing, one at friendly field.

II. ROUTE AND ASSAULT

The planned rendezvous was executed and the Group flew its position in the Wing column to a point midway up the Adriatic. Dense cloud bank caused the column to become dispersed and the Group went on to bomb as a separate unit. Assigned escort was unable to contact the Wing column because of the dispersed units. However 10-15 P-38's and 6 P-51's were observed in the target area at 1230 hours at 26,000 ft. No withdrawal cover was observed. All Squadrons made individual bomb runs and dropped by PFF methods because of 9/10ths undercast which obscured the aiming point. A left rally was executed by all Squadrons and the briefed route flown to base. A strato cumulus deck with tops at 10,000 ft. covered the terrain north from the north slope of the Alps. At the target 2/10ths cirrus was based at 26,500 ft.

III. RESULTS

Visual results were made impossible because of undercast. Photos were cloud obscured. Interrogation and calculations made from bombs-away photographs indicate that results were very satisfactory. Three Squadrons had normal PFF runs killing course and rate with excellent team coordination. Due to poor returns on the scope in the lead Squadron rate was doubtful but drift appeared killed and strikes are believed to be in the target area if not on the aiming point.

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S-2 Narrative Report (Continued)

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IV. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: No enemy fighters were seen or encountered.

B. Flak:

<u>Sqd.</u>	<u>Axis of Attack</u>	<u>Tgt. Time</u> <u>Tgt. Time</u>	<u>Altitude</u>	<u>Flak</u> <u>Exp.</u>	<u>Lost</u> <u>At Tgt.</u>	<u>Sev</u> <u>Dam.</u>	<u>Slight</u> <u>Dam.</u>
723	96	1209/1210	25,5000	M-I-H	0	0	0
721	102	1209	25,500	M to I-A-H	0	0	5
720	95	1210	24,500	I-A-H	0	0	7
722	88	1210/1212	26,000	M-I-H	0	0	1

Moderate to intense, accurate flak was experienced at the target.

The lead Squadron reported no flak after bombs-away. A barrage type concentration was slightly to their left on the bombrun and at formation level.

The second Squadron over was hit by tracking fire just at bombs-away. No flak was reported near the formation on the bomb run.

The third Squadron reported flak about 400 yards to right one minute before bombs-away at formation level. As soon as bombs were released intense, accurate flak came up on the left on the rally heading and covered the formation for two minutes. Evasive action cut down the effectiveness.

The last Squadron experienced flak similar in intensity and accuracy as that reported by the first Squadron. Bursts were observed only on the rally.

V. OBSERVATIONS

At 1245-1300 hours near Pals (47.10N-14.35E) from 21,000 ft. a B-24 flew beneath the formation for about 15 minutes at 16,000-17,000 ft. No guns could be seen in the tail. Air Corps insignia was discernable on left wing. Right wing was marked with a large "P" in a white square.

VI. CONCLUSION

A. Losses: None
 B. Damage: From flak: 14 aircraft received minor damage.
 C. Casualties: None
 D. Victories: None