

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

S-2 NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION DATE: November 23, 1944

MISSION NBR. 184

TARGET: Brod/Sava, Yugoslavia - Railroad Bridge

I. CHRONOLOGY

Twenty-eight B-24 type aircraft took off at 0703-0721 hours to bomb the Brod/Sava Railroad Bridge, in Yugoslavia. None returned early. Twenty-one aircraft dropped visually 57 tons of 2000 lb RDX bombs on Zenica Railroad Bridge, Yugoslavia at 1107 hours from 15,900 feet. (Briefed as first alternate). Seven aircraft dropped visually 21 tons of 2000 lb RDX bombs on highway bridge as target of opportunity; bombing at 1114 hours from 15,200 feet. This highway bridge is just southeast of Zenica, Yugoslavia. partial load dispositions: four aircraft jettisoned 1 ton each of 2000 lb RDX bombs in the Adriatic: three of these to enable the aircraft to stay with the formation during penetration to the target; and one jettisoned during withdrawal, after failure to release over the target due to malfunction. Twenty-eight aircraft returned to base at 1240 hours. None lost. None missing. None at friendly fields.

II. ROUTE AND ASSAULT

Rendezvous and route were as briefed to the primary target, Brod/Sava Railroad Bridge, Yugoslavia. There an alto-cumulus of 9/10 to 10/10 based at 16,000 feet would have rendered visual bombing impossible for the briefed altitude of 22,500 feet and the Group leader elected to bomb an alternate. The formation then proceeded to the alternate, Doboij Railroad Bridge, Yugoslavia and finding the bridge down went on to visually bomb the Zenica Railroad Bridge, Yugoslavia. The last box on approaching the latter railroad bridge saw that it was well hit and the leader elected to visually bomb a highway bridge just southeast of Zenica, as a target of opportunity. The formation proceeded to Porto Laga and to base. The weather was generally CAVU except at Brod, Yugoslavia, where alto-cumulus clouds based at 16,000 feet obscured the target. No escort was provided.

III RESULTS

Photo coverage show destruction of the Zenica Railroad Bridge resulting from a good concentration with several direct hits. A few bombs also hit at the north end of a nearby railroad siding, and some long bombs fell on an industrial plant 2000 feet south of the railroad bridge.

Photo coverage shows the highway bridge southeast of Zenica, Yugoslavia was heavily hit with several near misses and a probable direct hit.

Bombardier's Combat Mission Report: Mission was flown as briefed. Upon reaching the primary target area it was evident that bombing above 15,000 feet would be impossible. For this reason the Group proceeded to an alternate at Doboij. This target had been destroyed so the Group went to the Bridge at Szenica. Three boxes bombed the rail bridge and one the highway bridge.

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S-2 Narrative Report (Continued)
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Bombardier's Combat Mission Report: (continued)

The lead box was led by Lt. MacMahon of the 723rd Sqdn. Lt. MacMahon had a normal run to the target. After dropping his bombs he noticed his fore and aft bubble was not level. Due to poor toggling and a few rack malfunctions the pattern was poor with some bombs falling over and others falling short. The percentage was good but the damage was negligible.

The second box was led by Lt. Welch of the 721st Sqdn. Lt. Welch took a second run on this target because of Auto-pilot trouble on the first run. Everything was all right on the second run but the Bombardier was not completely synchronized. Bombs fell in a good pattern slightly short and right on the bridge.

The third box led by Lt. Gawne of the 720th Sqdn. also took a second run. On the second run he noticed the target already hit and covered with smoke. He changed his axis and made a run of the highway bridge in the same town. The main pattern was slightly right of the bridge with a good possibility of a few hits. Lt. Gawne used good judgement by trying for this target.

The fourth box was led by Lt. Glass of the 722nd Sqdn. Lt. Glass backed up by his box did a superior job of bombing. A good pattern was on the bridge and photos show the bridge has definitely been put out of operation.

IV. ENEMY RESISTANCE

- A. Fighters: None
- B. Flak: Non

V. OBSERVATIONS

At 1025 hours from 15,000 feet at Maglaj, Yugoslavia 40-50 cars in marshalling yard.

At 1005 hours from 17,000 feet at 44.00N-16.30E convoy of 30-40 motor transports, (stationary).

VI. CASUALTIES

None

VII. FLIGHT LEADERS:

<u>PILOT</u>	<u>BOMBARDIER</u>	<u>NAVIGATOR</u>	<u>PILOT</u>	<u>BOMBARDIER</u>	<u>NAVIGATOR</u>
Flair	MacMahon	Hubbard	Bushnell	Welch	Hillman
Martus	Gawne	Shuman	Redding	Glass	Reger