

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

S-2 NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION DATE: December 17, 1944

MISSION WBR. 195

TARGET: Wels, Austria - Marshalling Yard

I. CHRONOLOGY

At 0814-0838 hours thirty-six B-24 type aircraft took off to bomb rolling stock in main marshalling yard at Wels, Austria. Two aircraft returned early, having lost formation in heavy cloud mass in north Adriatic. Thirty-two aircraft dropped 66.25 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs on the target at 1211 hours from 19,000 - 21,500 feet. Three leaflet bombs were also dropped on the target. Five aircraft jettisoned 12.5 tons five miles beyond the I.P. (Secwalchen) when leader's accidental release caused four other bombardiers to Toggle prematurely. One other jettisoned 2.5 tons 30 miles NNE Vienna. This aircraft had lost the Group formation in the clouds over North Adriatic and attached himself to a B-24 formation headed north. Upon discovering that the formation was attacking a target some distance north of Vienna the decision was made to return with a B-17 unit moving south. Bombs were jettisoned through solid undercast and no attempt made to hit a specific target. One early return jettisoned 1 long delay bomb and 3 others (1 ton), in Adriatic at 1050 hours. 1.5 tons were returned to base. The second early return jettisoned 3 bombs, (.75 tons) in the Adriatic. 1.25 tons were returned to base. One bomb (.25 tons) was jettisoned due to hang-up. One aircraft is missing and is not believed to have gone over the target. Disposition of bomb load of this aircraft is not know. Thirty-two aircraft returned at 1530 hours. One other returned 1645 hours. One is missing.

II. ROUTE AND ASSAULT

The 450th Group (Wing Lead) rendezvoused with 449th group over Manduria at 0905 hours on course to San Vito. The briefed route was flown to I.P. (Secwalchen) and the target attacked on an axis of 60 degrees T.C. A sharp right rally was executed to avoid flak at Linz and Steyr, thence on briefed route to base. The attack was made by attack units of two 9 ship boxes each. The I.P. was closed in with solid undercast and the run was made by synchronous PFF method. The bombs of the lead ship of the second attack unit were dropped prematurely near the I.P. due to an electrical malfunction but the leader continued on over the target. A synchronous PFF run was made and the bombs dropped on the leader's signal in lieu of the usual practice of toggling on his bombs-away. Thirty-six P-38's contacted the formation at Millstatter Lake at 1140 hours at 20,000 feet and provided penetration, target and withdrawal cover to Sansego where they departed at 1345 hours. 9/10 strata-cumulus, tops at 10,000 feet prevailed over the Adriatic, clearing over Pola. The Alps were fairly clear except for haze in the valleys. From Millstatter Lake to the I.P. about 7/10 scattered cumulus was experienced. This thickened at the I.P. and 10/10 solid undercast, tops 10,000 feet formed over the valley leading into the target and extended to the south for 20 miles. Villach was clear on return. Conditions in Adriatic were similar to route out.

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

S-2 Narrative Report (Continued)  
Mission Nbr. 195 Date December 17, 1944  
Target: Wels, Austria - Marshalling Yard

III RESULTS

No visual results were possible due to solid undercast. No terrain features were visible in the photos. The lead "Mickey" operator picked up the I.P. clearly and turned in towards Linz on heading of 60 degrees T.C. The target was clearly identified 25 miles out and good Bombardier-Mickey coordination was reported. Bombs are believed to be in the target area and very likely hits were scored on the marshalling yard.

IV. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: None

B. Flak: 25-30 bursts were observed to the left rear after rally. If directed toward formation they were obviously short on range and low. It is believed guns were located at Horsching, 8 miles to the NE.

V. OBSERVATIONS

At 1241 hours from 18,000 feet near Saak (46.35N-13.37E), a B-24 was seen to slip down through the clouds and level off very low going between canyons in the mountains just left of the town, on a heading 198 degrees. One engine was trailing white smoke when last seen at 1250 hours.

What was believed to be a destroyer was observed in harbor at 45.00N-14.05E at 1109 hours from 17,000 feet.

At 1143 hours from 19,000 feet the marshalling yard at Spittal was observed to be heavily loaded with cars. Approximate number was not reported.

VI. CONCLUSION

A. Losses: One aircraft missing. Lost formation and indicated intention of bomb target of opportunity and return to base at approximately 1130 hours.

B. Damage: Aircraft #954 which went north of Vienna with another group formation ran into flak at Gyor on return and received slight damage.

C. Casualties: None

D. Victories: None