

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

S-2 NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION DATE: March 12, 1945

MISSION NBR. 237

TARGET: Vienna, Austria - Florisdorf Oil Refinery

I. CHRONOLOGY

Forty aircraft took off at 0830-0852 hours to bomb the Florisdorf Oil Refinery at Vienna, Austria. A solid undercast at the primary resulted in the bombing of the first alternate target. Thirty-eight aircraft dropped 74 tons of 500 lb G.P. bombs on the Florisdorf Marshalling Yard at 1302-1305 hours from 23.24,500'. Two aircraft returned early due to engine failure and jettisoned a total of 4 tons as follows: 2 tons at 48.20N-15.00E and 2 tons in the Adriatic at 41.05N-17.20E. Thirty-six aircraft returned to base at 1550-1600 hours. One aircraft landed at a friendly field but has since returned to base. None lost. None at friendly fields. One aircraft missing. This aircraft was damaged at the target and was reported by the escort as having had two engines on fire at 47.45N-15.10E where the bomber called for escort cover. The escorting fighters report our missing aircraft at 46.17N-17.05E heading for Russian held territory with the pilot indicating he had 15 minutes fuel supply. No information in regard to condition of ship or time observed is available.

II. ROUTE AND ASSAULT

The rendezvous was effected as planned and the route to the Initial Point (Halflein) was flown as briefed. At the I.P. the solid undercast made necessary a PFF run on the alternate target on an axis of 171/180 degrees. Bombing was by squadrons each employing the PFF method. The formation rallied right off the target and the route to base was flown as briefed. 10-20 P-51's rendezvoused with the bombers at 1245 hours in the vicinity of the I.P. and provided cover until their withdrawal at 1308 hours in the area just south of the target. There was a 9-10/10 layer of stratocumulus up to 10/15,000' over the target while enroute to the target the weather varied from CAVU to 8/10 cumulus up to 10,000'.

III. RESULTS

Due to solid undercast, bombs were dropped by the PFF method and photo assessment is impossible. Crews report, however, that a good run was experienced and results are believed to be good although the bombs may have fallen a short distance east of the M/Y.

IV. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: None

B. Flak:

Squadron	Tgt. time	Bombing Alt.	Flak Exp.	Lost at Tgt	Sev. Dam	Slight Dam.
1st	1302	23,500	M/I I/AH	0	0	2
2nd	1303	24,500	I A H	0	1	7
3rd	1304	23,000	M I H	0	0	0
4th	1305	23,000	I A H	0	0	8

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S-2 Narrative Report (Continued)

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IV. ENEMY RESISTANCE

B. Flak: (continued)

Flak on the bomb run was of the barrage type and reported as being generally moderate in intensity. On the rally, however, the fire shifted to predicted concentration type and increased in intensity and accuracy. For the first squadron most of the bursts were to the right and level but became very accurate for the second squadron. The third squadron reported the flak to be to the right and apparently the number of guns firing at the bombers was split between this squadron and a formation of B-17's off to the right. The fourth squadron again reported the flak very accurate. Some crews reported white bursts above the formation and one crew reports observing pinkish streaks passing diagonally beneath the formation. These streaks are reported to have terminated in a large explosion and puff of black smoke.

No route flak was encountered.

V. OBSERVATIONS

At 1354 hours at Ljubljana (46.03N-14.30E) a single ME-109 flew across the front of the formation, level, at 15,000 feet.

At 1428 hours in the Zara area, 2 chutes were observed from 13,000'. (It was originally believed these chutes came from our missing aircraft.) Subsequent reports indicate otherwise.

VI. CONCLUSION

- A. Losses: Missing aircraft believed to have reached friendly territory.
- B. Damage: 1 serious and 17 minor (all due to flak at target)
- C. Casualties: None
- D. Victories: None
- E. Radar Observations and Report: All PFF operators report a satisfactory run while experiencing only minor difficulties with their equipment.
- F. Corrections to Telephone Mission Report: In view of the fact that escorting fighters report our missing aircraft heading toward Russian held territory, the two chutes reported coming from it in the Zara area may have been erroneous. Seventeen aircraft sustained minor damage instead of 15 aircraft as reported.