

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

S-2 NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION DATE: November 19, 1944

MISSION NBR. 180

TARGET: Vienna, Austria - Schwechat Oil Refinery

I. CHRONOLOGY

Twenty-seven B-24 type aircraft took off at 0800-0833 hours to bomb the Vienna/Schwechat Oil Refinery. There were three early returns. Eighteen aircraft dropped 35.5 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs on the target at 1231 hours from 25,500 feet by PFF. Five others dropped 9 tons on the alternate, the Gyor marshalling yard at 1251 hours from 25,000 feet, also by PFF. One of these five jettisoned 1 ton because of inability to maintain formation. One aircraft jettisoned 2 tons having failed to observe the release of the lead box at the target. Twenty-three aircraft returned to the base at 1543 hours and one additional aircraft returned the following day, having stopped at a friendly field. None lost. None missing. One early return still at Vis.

II. ROUTE AND ASSAULT

Rendezvous and route to the target were as briefed. A run was made by PFF due to an undercast of 10/10 at 17,000-18,000 feet on an axis of attack of 240 degrees and three of the four boxes in the formation released. The PFF equipment of the fourth box did not pick the target up with satisfactory clarity and the decision was made for that box to bomb the alternate target of Gyor. The alternate was attacked on an axis of 238 degrees also by PFF due to 7/10 alto-cumulus at 12,000-14,000 feet. This run was made with an excellent PFF pick-up of the target and was aided by visual check points to a small extent. The route back to the base was flown as briefed. Escort of 25 P-28's provided cover at the primary target at 21,000-27,000 feet at 1220 hours and at the alternate area of Gyor, 25 P-38's at 23,000 feet provided cover at 1240 hours.

III RESULTS

Photo coverage shows bombs bursting in the area of the Gyor Machine Works which was hit by one box but due to cloud cover, it was impossible to assess damage definitely. At the primary, clouds completely obscured the terrain. Visual observation at the primary disclosed two billowing pillars of smoke spaced 2 to 3 miles apart coming up through the cloud cover and indicating the possibility of hits on both the Schwechat Refinery and Winterhafen Storage Facility.

Bombardier's Combat Mission Report: Mission was flown as briefed to the target area. The Group leader decided to bomb by attack unit due to the weather condition. All units were notified of the decision.

The First Attack Unit was led by Lt. Carter of the 723rd Sqdn. as Bombardier and Lt. Ryan of the 721st Sqdn. as "Mickey" Navigator. The run on the primary was started by PFF but Lt. Ryan was unable to pick the target up with his set. Because of this the lead box proceeded to the secondary target of Gyor which was bombed by PFF. Both Bombardier and Mickey state the run was excellent and coordination was perfect.

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S-2 Narrative Report (Continued)

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Bombardier's Combat Mission Report: (continued)

The second box flying on the first as an attack unit released their bombs on the first run over the primary target on the deputy leader of this box. The deputy leader dropped after being hit by "flak" and loosing an engine on the bombing run. All of this box dropped on the deputy leader because they were unable to see the leader of either the lead box or their own box. The box leader Lt. Martini of the 721st Sqdn. held his bombs and dropped on the lead box at Gyor.

The Second Attack Unit was led by Lt. Cobena of the 720th Sqdn. as Bombardier and Lt. Cody of the 720th Sqdn. as "Mickey" Navigator. Lt. Cody the "Mickey" Navigator states he was getting a weak return from the primary target but it was sufficient to make a satisfactory run. Both "Mickey" Navigator and Bombardier state the run was excellent and coordination was good. A large column of Black Smoke was observed coming through the overcast after the formation turned off the run. The fourth box dropped as an Attack Unit on the third box.

No results can be determined from the photos because of the complete under-cast.

IV. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: None

B. Flak: At the primary target, flak was accurate, moderate and heavy. Ten aircraft were holed, nine of them sustaining minor damage and one having an engine shot out. At the secondary target, flak was scant, inaccurate, and heavy.

V. OBSERVATIONS

None

VI. CASUALTIES

One crew member slightly wounded by flak. Ten aircraft damaged by flak, one severe.

VII. FLIGHT LEADERS:

<u>PILOT</u>	<u>BOMBARDIER</u>	<u>NAVIGATOR</u>	<u>PILOT</u>	<u>BOMBARDIER</u>	<u>NAVIGATOR</u>
Blair	Carter	Hubbard	Bushnell	Martini	Hillman
Lewis	Cobena	Chittero	Young	Friend	Halton