

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

S-2 NARRATIVE REPORT

MISSION DATE: December 2, 1944

MISSION NBR. 186

TARGET: Straszhof, Austria - Marshalling Yard

I. CHRONOLOGY

Forty-one B-24 type aircraft took off from base at 0746-0815 hours to bomb the marshalling yard at Straszhof, Austria. Three aircraft returned early of which two were caused by engine trouble and one due to a cracked nose turret from being hit by a shell case from another aircraft. Two aircraft were prior returns due to engine trouble. All aircraft carried 500 lb type M-17 incendiary clusters set to explode and scatter at 3000 feet. Thirteen aircraft dropped 26 tons on the primary target, Straszhof Marshalling Yard by PFF with last minute visual corrections by bombardier through small cloud break at 1243 hours from 25,500 feet. Ten aircraft dropped 19.5 tons on the alternate target, Vienna/Florisdorf Oil Refinery by PFF at 1244 hours from 25,500 feet. Two aircraft dropped 4 tons on a target of opportunity, the marshalling yard at Czelldomolk (47.16N-17.09E) through a cloud break at 1315 hours from 15,000 feet. Ten aircraft jettisoned 20 tons through the undercast over (46.50N-16.55E) at 1320 hours from 15,000 feet. One aircraft jettisoned 2 tons at Savar, Hungary at 1306 hours from 23,000 feet. One aircraft returned 2 tons to base. One prior return jettisoned 2 tons near Csorna at 1155 hours from 15,000 feet. One prior return jettisoned 2 tons south of Gyor at 1224 hours from 20,000 feet. Of the three early returns, one aircraft returned 2 tons to base, and two aircraft jettisoned 4 tons in the Adriatic.

Straszhof M/Y (primary)	13 A/C	26 tons
Vienna/Florisdorf (alternate)	10 A/C	19.5 tons
Czelldomolk (target of opportunity)	2 A/C	4 tons
Jettison in enemy territory	12 A/C	24 tons
Returned to base	2 A/C	4 tons
Adriatic jettison	2 A/C	4 tons
TOTAL	41 A/C	81.5 tons

Thirty-one aircraft returned to base at 1525 hours. One aircraft landed at friendly field, returned later. Three aircraft landed at Island of Vis, due to mechanical difficulty and lack of fuel. None lost. None missing. Three at friendly field.

II. ROUTE AND ASSAULT

After taking off from base the Group formed into 3 Attack Units, X, Y, and Z, composed of 2 boxes each. The plan was to attack the primary target by boxes if the target could be sighted visually. If not, alternate was to be attacked visually or by use of PFF bombing procedures. The route to the target was flown as briefed but an undercast obscured the primary, necessitating attacking the alternate target.

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II. ROUTE AND ASSAULT (Continued)

As the X Unit made the approach to the initial point at Poysdorf, the lead aircraft encountered engine and PFF trouble. The deputy lead aircraft had been an early return and the lead was turned over to the lead aircraft of Y Unit. Y Unit made a turn near the I.P. and made a good PFF run on the alternate on an axis of 190 degrees and bombed through a 10/10 undercast. X Unit had lost distance due to loss of the lead aircraft and fell quite far behind Y unit, but went over alternate but did not bomb. Z Unit made a good PFF run on the primary on an axis of 180 degrees and bombed the target through a 10/10 undercast. A small cloud break enabled the bombardier to make a last minute visual correction. After bombing, Y Unit crossed over eastern Vienna and came out at Neusidler Lake. X and Z Units made a sharp left rally and went north around Bratislava as briefed. The 3 Attack Units came back separately, but followed the briefed course to base. Enroute to base the X Unit caught a glimpse through a 9/10 undercast of the marshalling yard at Czelldomolk and two aircraft dropped. The balance of X Unit jettisoned shortly after. Weather over the Adriatic was clear. About 30 miles inland from the Yugoslavia coastline, 7/10 to 9/10 undercast of strata-cu at 13,000 feet. On return no changes in weather were noted. Group had not been briefed for escort, but approximately 30 P-51 type aircraft were contacted at Split at 1040 hours at 19,000 feet. Escorts were observed over Split at 1420 hours at 15,000 feet. Escort was furnished some of our early return aircraft, and also those landing at Vis.

III RESULTS

X Attack Unit: Two aircraft dropped on target of opportunity, the marshalling yard at Czelldomolk. Photographs do not disclose any bomb strike results. It is believed they landed in fields to the W of the target.

Y Attack Unit: PFF run on Florisdorf Oil Refinery in Vienna. Had a good run. No smoke observed at the target prior to bombing. After bombing a large pillar of black oil smoke was observed rising to an altitude of 15,000. Topped the undercast by 2000 feet. Photos showed bombs away but no indication of results.

Z Attack Unit: PFF run on Straszhof Marshalling Yard. Run was good, and small cloud break gave bombardier a chance for last minute visual corrections. Photos show only the bombs away and results not known.

IV. ENEMY RESISTANCE

A. Fighters: No enemy aircraft intercepted the formation. It is believed that enemy fighters were active in the Lake Balaton area and followed the formation looking for stragglers. At 1137 hours at 20,000 over 47.20N-17.30E, 3 ME-109's were observed attacking an unidentified B-24 headed south.

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IV. ENEMY RESISTANCE (continued)

B. Flak: No flak was encountered at the primary target, Straszhof. At Vienna it was intense, inaccurate and heavy, both white and black bursts. No flak encountered at Czelldomlk. Enroute there was no flak encountered. Intense heavy flak was observed at Gyor. Z Attack Unit, bombed the primary and took a sharp left rally to avoid flak at Vienna, then swung north of Bratislava and did not encounter flak at either location.

The Y Attack Unit: Bombing the Alternate on an axis of 190 degrees had a 10 minute bomb run. They encountered intense, inaccurate and heavy flak for about 4 minutes before the target and 2 minutes after for a total of 6 minutes. Departed on axis of 120 degrees that brought them across easter Vienna out to Neusidler Lake. Had been briefed for a sharp left rally. Two aircraft received minor damage. One man bruised by flak. X Attack Unit made a run on the alternate but did not bomb. Axis of 180 degrees than a sharp left rally out of the target area on axis of 90 degrees. Did not encounter flak. Swung north of Bratislava and did not encounter flak from that location.

V. OBSERVATIONS

At 1141 hours from 24,500 feet, 30 silver aircraft were observed on the Papa Airdrome (47.20N-17.30E) and in dispersal areas. 20 aircraft were too large to be fighters.

VI. CASUALTIES

One man slightly bruised by flak at Vienna. Two aircraft slightly holed by flak at Vienna.

VII. FLIGHT LEADERS:

NOTE: Names of the Flight Leaders, previously listed on the S-2 Narratives from January 8, 1944 through December 2, 1944 were obtained from the "Pilot-Bombardier Mission Reports" and "Bombardiers Combat Mission Reports" of 450th Bombardment Group. These mission reports are no longer available and therefore all succeeding S-2 Narrative Reports will not include the names of the Flight Leaders.