

H I S T O R Y

O F T H E

4 6 0 T H B O M B A R D M E N T G R O U P ( H )

1 January 1945

to

31 January 1945

\* \* \*

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

Narrative History of 460th Bomb Group (H)

Annex #1 - Narrative Mission Reports and Bomb Plot  
Strike Photos

Annex #2 - Historical Photographs

\* \* \*

Chain of Command:

TO: Commanding General, Fifteenth Air Force, APO 520, U.S. Army

THROUGH: Commanding General, 55th Bombardment Wing (H), APO 520,  
U.S. Army

\* \* \*

HEADQUARTERS  
460TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF  
APO 520, US ARMY

(January 1 - 31, 1945)

NARRATIVE HISTORY

The 460th Bombardment Group (H) closed the least active month since it became operational when a mission was dispatched to Moosbierbaum on the last day of January. Inactivity was caused almost entirely by adverse weather conditions. January as a whole presented a dismal picture of snow on the ground and thick clouds over Europe.

Another factor contributing to inactivity was the advance of Allied Ground Forces which reduced the area subject to attack from Italy. A year ago, the arc of occupied territory that could be reached extended from the Spanish Border through twelve countries to the Aegean Sea. Now the area open to attack lies to the north. It consists of Northern Italy, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Germany. The arc has narrowed, so that adverse weather conditions affect the whole general plan. Western and eastern alternative targets are available no longer.

Only three missions were dispatched during the entire month. One was flown to Zagreb East (M/Y), one to Rosenheim (M/Y), Germany and one to Moosbierbaum (O/R), Austria. The mission to Rosenheim M/Y in Germany on 20 January 1945 was led by the Group Commanding Officer, Colonel John M. Price.

Narrative reports and bombfall plot photos, where available, covering the three missions flown in January are attached as Annex #1.

Casualties for the period under review were as follows:

Killed in Action:	5 Officers	7 Enl. Men
Missing in Action:	11 Officers	19 Enl. Men
Wounded in Action:	-	4 Enl. Men

The strength of the Group covering officers and enlisted men for the month of January was as follows:

At Beginning:	523 Officers	1958 Enl. Men
Net Increase:	18 Officers	42 Enl. Men
Net Decrease:	-	-
At End	: 541 Officers	2000 Enl. Men

During the month of January, Officers and Enlisted Men continued to receive recognition for outstanding performance of duty in the air and on the ground. To Officers and Enlisted Men were awarded: 6 Silver

Stars, 29 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 2 Soldier's Medal, 1 Bronze Star Medal, 53 Air Medals and 83 Oak Leaf Clusters and 9 Purple Hearts. Total: 134 awards.

During the month of January twelve (12) new crews were assigned to the Group, less than half the number that reported in January.

Incidental photos concerning the Group are included as Annex #2.

Reference was made in last month's History to the taking up and relaying of the 6,000 foot runway. Now the story can be told.

This work was carried out by Company "C", 1898<sup>th</sup> Engineering Aviation Battalion, commanded by Captain Edward Stanek. One-hundred and twenty men divided into 3 shifts, worked 18 hours a day. Work would have been carried out around the clock, had more men been available. Photos of the men at work will be found in Annex #2. This work was carried out in the remarkable time of four days, starting on January 6, 1945 and completed by midnight on January 10, 1945.

While the Engineers supervised the project and contributed many man hours, it should be recorded that the 460<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group contributed all available ground crews and equipment. The importance of this task is such that an article from a recent issue of Sortie is quoted in full:

#### Engineers Rebuild Base in Four Days

"There are 3,276,000 pounds of steel or 52,000 separate steel strips in a typical B-24 Liberator bomber runway.

Suppose someone said to you, "Pick it up, fill under it and lay it down—and in four days." Sounds like a large order—and it was—because Company "C" of a certain aviation engineers battalion just finished such an order.

The constant fall of rain and thaws had rendered the runway of a Fifteenth Air Force bomber base unsafe for the constant pounding of combat traffic. But, you just can't close a bomber runway for the normal three to five weeks necessary to re-lay it. There are too many juicy targets that have to be bombed in Naziland and the war won't wait.

#### Rush Job

They called the Aviation Engineers and said, "There it is. The job's got to be done, but it's got to be done now, so hop to it. You've got four days." An all-negro outfit, under white officers, they started off eighteen hours a day, not that they wouldn't put in twenty four, but the trucks and the rollers and the other machinery just

wouldn't hold up. Hundred foot strips of the 6,000' runway were peeled back and the trucks began unloading sand and earth to be packed. Then the scrapers and the tractors and the heavy rollers began leveling and packing it down. Sometimes, the stripping wouldn't peel and then men dug in and hauled it off and back onto the runway bed, at 63 pounds a strip.

#### Weather Handicap

It took over six hundred truck loads of sand to repack the soft spots in the runway—six hundred trips over muddy, slippery, treacherous Italian roads.

The first day and night—it snowed.

The second day and night—it rained.

The third day and night—you couldn't see your ankles for the fog.

The fourth day and night—it snowed again. But the job was done - and on time - and on the fifth day the runway was ready for traffic, ready for the pounding of the seventy thousand pound Liberator bombers as they rolled on and off into the sky to smash the enemy in his homeland."

This particular job earned a commendation from Major General Nathan F. Twining, Brigadier General George R. Acheson and Colonel John M. Price.

\* \* \* \* \*

NARRATIVE MISSION  
REPORTS AND  
BOMB PLOT STRIKE PHOTOS

of

460TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF

APO 520, U.S. ARMY

\* \* \*

(January 1 - 31, 1945)

TABULAR SUMMARY OF 3 MISSIONS

<u>MISSION NUMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>TARGET</u>	<u>COUNTRY</u>
155	19 Jan.	Zagreb East M/Y	Yugoslavia
156	20 Jan.	Rosenheim M/Y	Germany
157	31 Jan.	Moosbierbaum O/R	Austria

HEADQUARTERS  
460TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF  
APO 520, U.S. ARMY

20 January 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Report, Operations Order #18.

TO: Commanding Officer, 55th Bombardment Wing (H),  
APO 520, U.S. Army (Attn: A-2).

1. On 19 January 1945, at 0830 hours, 28 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb a target in Yugoslavia. The Group was led by Major Henry D. Downey, C.O., 761st Bomb Sqdn (H), the second attack unit by Captain Francis Galarneau, 763rd Bomb Sqdn (H).

2. The Group assembly was at 0930 hours. The 485th was late over Altamura and rendezvous was not accomplished until 0948 hours, ten miles SE of Altamura.

3. Due to adverse weather, the Group was not able to bomb any assigned target. 25 a/c returned bomb loads to base, two a/c jettisoned bomb loads (8x500 GP fused .1N-.01T) in the Adriatic. One a/c landed at Venosa and its bombs were removed there. Weather on take off was generally clear with 3-5/10th stratocu over the western Adriatic, tops 6-7000'. Stratocu increased to 9-10/10th over Adriatic and Yugoslav coast with a few large holes over the Yugoslav coast. 10/10th stratocu tops 8-10,000' over northern Yugo with line of cirrus 10-15 miles west at the PT, bases 20,000', tops 25,000'. Some weather prevailed over alternate targets. On return, stratocumulus broke to 5-7/10th over eastern Adriatic, tops 8000', becoming 4-5/10th over western Adriatic, tops 7000', prevailing to southern Italy and base. Visibility, gen. 10-15 miles.

4. The route was flown as briefed to the IP of the PT where it was seen it would be impossible to bomb visually. The course was then changed toward the 1st AT. At 1150 hours, it was seen that both the 1st and 2nd ATs were closed in and it was decided to bomb Graz by PFF. Weather forced the formation to turn back at (4640N-1511E) at 1204 hours. Elagenfurt was then picked up on PFF scope but due to weather, it was impossible to make a run on it. The formation then took another look at the PT and 1st AT, found them closed in and returned to base.

5. 27 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1500 hours. The a/c which landed at a friendly field, Venosa, to refuel has returned to base. One a/c blew its nose wheel tire on landing. No further damage resulted.

For the Commanding Officer:

ROGER WARNER,  
Major, Air Corps,  
S-2

1 Incls.  
Incl 1 - TC



HEADQUARTERS  
460TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF  
APO 520, U.S. ARMY

21 January 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Report, Operations #20 Mission #2.

TO: Commanding Officer, 55th Bombardment Wing (H),  
APO 520, U.S. Army (Attn: A-2).

1. On 20 January 1945, at 0806 hours, 28 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb a target in Austria. The Group was led by Colonel John M. Price, Group Commander, and the second attack unit by Captain Joe R. Edene, 760th Bomb Sqdn (H).

2. Group assembly and rendezvous with the 485th and the Wing were as scheduled. Fighter escort, 25 P-38s & 4 P-51s, first sighted at (4640N-1220E) at 1206 hours, furnished penetration, target and withdrawal cover. They left the formation at (4520N-1250E) at 1404 hours.

3. Two a/c returned early for the following reasons: (1) out of oxygen, (2) #2 supercharger out and #4 prop governor failure. One a/c jettisoned bomb load in the Adriatic, the other a/c returned bombs to base.

4. Weather conditions over the Adriatic made it necessary to climb to altitude at Wing rendezvous. The attendant strain on crews and airplanes explains partially the difficulty under which the mission was flown. Temperatures of 30 degrees below zero (0) further hampered operations. The airplanes were frosted in, so that pilots' vision was almost nil. Bombsights froze. Bomb-bay doors stuck. Oxygen regulators froze, causing loss of oxygen.

5. Five minutes before IP, the Group leader was forced to leave the formation due to oxygen supply rapidly giving out, oxygen masks freezing, and a report from the engineer that there were bad gas leaks which had dangerously reduced fuel supply. The deputy leader was successfully notified to take over and continue on course. A blind broadcast to the formation was made several times by the leader on VHF and command. The SOP signal of dives and zooms was given by the leader. #3 lead box, did not hear instructions because he was on interphone and could not see signal due to frosted cockpit glass. He followed the leader out of formation, as did two others. All airplanes had poor visibility due to badly frosted windows, and could not rally on the deputy successfully. In many cases defrosters were not working and pilots were flying loose formation by scraping small holes to sight through. The Group leader could not see the rest of the formation.

6. Individual units went on to bomb Braunau (4815N-1342E) and Rosenheim M/Y. From 25,200', eight a/c dropped 12.25 tons of 100 lb GP clustered bombs, .1N-.025T fusing on Rosenheim M/Y at 1320 hours, 286 degree heading. From 23,000', three a/c dropped 3.55 tons on Braunau M/Y at 1248 hours, 290 degree heading. Due to malfunction, 62 bombs were jettisoned in the Adriatic and 18 bombs jettisoned 30 miles south of Rosenheim. Two a/c bombed targets of opportunity: Ried (4813N-1329E) and Traunstein (4750N-1240E). From 24,500', 1.8 tons of bombs were dropped on Ried at 1250 hours, 210 degree heading. From 21,000', 1.8 tons were dropped on Traunstein at 1259 hours, 178 degree heading. Automatic pilot was used on the bomb run at Rosenheim and Braunau. Nine a/c did not attack targets due to malfunction and the split-up formation. Disposition of bomb loads follows:

- 1 a/c jettisoned 36 bombs, south of Rosenheim.
- 1 a/c jettisoned 30 bombs, (4743N-1535E), 6 in Adriatic.
- 1 a/c jettisoned 36 bombs, over 30 minute period beginning at  
**XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX**.
- 1 a/c jettisoned 36 bombs, (4630N-1325E).
- 2 a/c jettisoned 54 bombs, **XXXXXXXX (xx)**, 18 returned.
- 3 a/c jettisoned 108 bombs, in Adriatic.
- 4 a/c - unknown.

7. No flak was encountered at Rosenheim. Over Braunau, MAH flak was experienced for approximately four minutes. Flak was observed at Salzburg and Linz.

8. Two unidentified SEFs were seen at 1330 hours at (4730N-1203E). One of these a/c came in on a pursuit curve from three o'clock high, closing to 400 yards. The waist gunner fired at this SEF but no hits were scored, nor did the SEF return fire. Gunner believes this a/c could have been either a P-51 or an ME-109.

9. Route on penetration was flown as briefed. Return route virtually the reverse of route out. Weather: patchy condition to Adriatic with line of towering cumulus over Adriatic running north and south, tops 12-13,000', bases 4-6000'. Scattered tops to 10,000' especially over western Adriatic. Over Yugoslavia, variable 7-10/10th cumulus, tops 15-20000', breaking slightly to 5-7/10th over Alps, tops 15000'. Becoming 7-10/10th over Alps, tops 15-20000'. Similar conditions prevailed on return route with increased cumulus activity over water. Over targets, 3-5/10th low clouds, 2-4/10th middle clouds, tops 12-15000'. Icing in clouds from 4-10,000'. Visibility, 15-20 miles generally, with 0-3 miles in snow storm on return.

10. The Wing leader kept in touch with the weather a/c. He was able to transmit his bombing intentions clearly to the groups in the Wing.

11. 20 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1345 hours. One a/c ran out of gas as it approached the field and made a crash landing ten miles south of the base. No one was injured. Four a/c are at friendly fields: **xxxx**, Macha, Biferno & Remitelli. One of our a/c is missing: a/c #0746 was last seen at 1346 hours at (4644N-1223E) falling back under control and in no apparent trouble.

12. Two a/c received minor flak damage. Seven crew members were frost bitten by the extreme cold, one of them seriously.

13. Ten a/c attempted photos. A print is attached showing results at Rosenheim M/Y where the main concentration fell 3000' SW of the target. One bomb hit the tracks in the southern end of the curved M/Y which is east of the main M/Y.

For the Commanding Officer:

ROGER WARNER,  
Major, AC,  
S-2

1 Incl.  
Incl 1 - photo.

HEADQUARTERS  
460TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF  
APO 520, U.S. ARMY

1 February 1945

SUBJECT: Narrative Report, Mission #3, Operations Order #3.

TO: Commanding Officer, 55th Bombardment Wing (H),  
APO 520, U.S. Army (Attn: A-2).

1. On 31 January 1945, 30 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb the Moosbierbaum O/R near Vienna, Austria. RED FORCE led by Lt. Colonel Robert H. Martin, C.O., 760th Bomb Sqdn (H), and the second attack unit by Captain Frank E. Mitchell, 761st Bomb Sqdn (H). The BLUE FORCE, consisting of 20 a/c, took off at 0915 hours. The force was led by Major Britt S. May, S-3, 761st Bomb Sqdn (H), and the second attack unit by Captain Joe E. Edens, 760th Bomb Sqdn (H).

2. Assembly by both forces and rendezvous with the 485th and the Wing were on time. PFF was used during assembly by the Red Force. Fighter escort, 8 P38s & 25 P-51s, were first seen at 1206 hours at (4600N-1730E) by the RED FORCE. Escort furnished penetration, target and withdrawal cover, leaving the formation at 1357 hours at (4553N-1640E). BLUE FORCE reported 25 P-51s at San Jaluka at 1210 hours, furnishing penetration cover. They left the formation at 1400 hours at (4519N-1737E).

3. Two a/c of RED FORCE returned early for the following reasons: (1) nose gunner caught in turret, lost his oxygen mask and passed out, (2) engine failure. One a/c jettisoned bombs at (4823N-1715E), the other a/c jettisoned bombs 7x500 at (4814N-1749E). One bomb, hung up, was lost on the runway while landing. Two a/c of BLUE FORCE returned early for the following reasons: (1) & (2) superchargers out. A/c jettisoned four bombs in Adriatic, four at (4605N-1707E), two at (4745N-1723E) and six at (4800N-1725E).

4. 35 a/c penetrated to the primary target, 17 a/c of RED FORCE and 18 a/c of BLUE FORCE. From 25,300', 17 a/c of RED FORCE dropped 33.5 tons of 500 lb GP bombs, .1N-.01&.025T fusing 1324 ½ hours. One a/c jettisoned two bombs before target time in order to hold formation. At 26,000', 27 a/c of BLUE FORCE were over the target at 1431 hours. 11 a/c dropped 21.5 tons of bombs at 1431 hours. Two bombs were jettisoned at (4815N-1555E). Seven a/c of BLUE FORCE failed to bomb the target due to malfunction of PFF equipment on bomb run. A/c was unable to contact a/c in box which subsequently did not bomb the PT. This a/c went on to bomb a town at (4639N-1610E), dropped two tons on this target of opportunity at 1459 hours from 23,500'. One a/c returned eight bombs to base, one a/c jettisoned 8 at (4720N-1530E), one a/c jettisoned 8 in the Adriatic and one a/c jettisoned 8 at

(4315N-1610E). Disposition of two a/c is unknown. Bombing was accomplished by boxes and auto pilot was used on the bomb run by all leaders.

5. Both forces used PFF for navigation as well as bombing. RED FORCE leader reported set worked poorly. PFF operator believes a good run was made. Baker box made individual run, the bombardier the bombardier being given five angles and two in-course corrections of three degrees each. BLUE FORCE leader reported PFF equipment worked poorly, though bombardier was given four angles and three course corrections. Baker box failed to bomb target when PFF equipment blew a fuse on the bomb run. Charlie box reported poor PFF returns above 12000'. Target was picked up on bomb run and six angles were given bombardier. Consensus of opinion among PFF operators is that bombs were dropped on target.

6. Scant to moderate, inaccurate flak was encountered over the target by both forces. Flak was observed at Palrac (4509N-1725E).

7. Three U/I a/c were seen on the mission: one U/I a/c believed to have been jet-propelled, was seen at 1534 hours at (4500N-1600E). In the target area, two U/I TEFs were seen. It is thought that P-51s destroyed one of these.

8. Route was flown to right of course on penetration. Forces were 30 miles right of course at Lake Balaton where course was altered to hit the next TP, Csornas. Weather: On take off, 3-5/10<sup>th</sup> thin altocum at 9-10,000' becoming 6 to 8/10<sup>th</sup> over Adriatic. Over Austria, 8-10/10<sup>th</sup> altostratus, tops 12-14000' which rose abruptly in target area to tops of 20-22,000'. Clouds appeared multilayer in target area. On return, altostratus lowered abruptly to 12-14000' tops which prevailed most of return route breaking to 3-5/10<sup>th</sup> over Adriatic at 25000' which became 5-7/10<sup>th</sup> over Yugo coast and thereafter remaining 2-3/10<sup>th</sup> rest of route to target and return. Visibility 15-20 miles at times 10 miles in haze.

9. 35 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1600 hours. A/c #0854 landed at Vis, a/c #0712 crash-landed in Yugoslavia at (4350N-1635E), a/c #8513 crash-landed at Manfredonia and one a/c #8805 is missing. This a/c was last seen at 1337 hours at (4730N-1714E), straightline and in no apparent trouble.

10. No a/c was damaged by flak. There was no casualty.

11. 10 a/c attempted photos. Results show complete undercast.

For the Commanding Officer:

ROGER WARNER,  
Major, AC,

2 Incls.

Incl 1 - 3 photos

Incl 2 - TC

H I S T O R I C A L

P H O T O G R A P H S

\* \* \* \*  
\* \* \*  
\* \*  
\*