

HEADQUARTERS 454TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

WAR DIARY

2 April 1944: Mission #19, target – Steyr - Damlier Puch A/C Factor. Bombs fell South and East of briefed target area. Some scattered hits in target area.

3 April 1944: Mission #20, target Budapest M/Y. Target well covered.

4 April 1944: Mission #21, target Bucharest M/Y. M/Y well covered. Many fires and numerous explosions, smoking, rising to 7500'. Oil refinery North of target burning. Hits on industrial plant adjacent North and South of M/Y.

“ Captain Pinney transferred to Headquarters 15th Air Force.

“ Captain Abramson Transferred to 739th Bomb Sq. (H).

“ 1st Lt. E. R. Morgan joined the Group from 739th Bomb Sq. (H). Duty Group Armament Officer.

5 April 1944: Flag pole erected in front of Group Headquarters.

7 April 1944: Mission #22, target Bologna M/Y. Target area well covered, particularly central and Western portions. Some bombs fell short and over.

Pfc. Currie, 35521926, and Pfc. Sheedy, 19175642, promoted to Corporal since the 1st.

Pvt. Ambrosoli, 3912230, promoted to Pfc. since 1st.

8 April 1944: Enlisted men's day room completed.

12 April 1944: Mission #23, target Bad Voslau A/D. Bombs fell South and on the Western portion of the target. Several strings observed to fall across hangers. Numerous hits on airdrome.

Major Skinner, transferred to 736th Bomb Sq. (H), this Group.

Captain Jamison joined from the 736th Bomb Sq. (H), this Group. Duty, Group Operations Officer.

1st Lt., W.R. Grady joined from the 736th Bomb Sq. (H), this Group, appointed Assistant Operations Officer.

Captain McKee transferred to 737th Bomb Sq. (H), this Group.

1st Lt. Story transferred to 738th Bomb Sq. (H).

Cpl. B. J. Kobe, 35417093 assigned and joined 737th Bomb Sq.(H), this Group.

WAR DIARY CONTINUED:

- 13 April 1944:** Mission #24, target – Budapest – Tokol A/D. Bombs covered airdrome and hangers.
- 14 April 1944:** Mission #25, target – Bucharest. This Group, seeing no red - red flare from lead Combat Wing to airdrome PT, observing lead Combat Wing rally off target, and the ETA having reached, bombed at point where lead Combat Wing rallied off target. It is believed this was six miles S. E. of Bucharest. No visual observation possible because of 10/10 overcast.
- 15 April 1944:** Trying to make this place look more like home, some of the officers have built a tea garden in front of their tents. As yet, there have been no tea parties.
- 16 April 1944:** Mission #26, target Turnal Severin M/Y. Some bombs fell in river, and some on river bank opposite city. Good concentration of bombs in M/Y's, workshops, adjacent warehouse by preceding Group.
- 17 April 1944:** Mission #27, target – Sofia M/Y. Aiming point was to the left part of the PT due to collision course with Group on our right and left. Bombs fell short, through the M/Y, and over into the city.
- 20 April 1944:** Mission #28, target – Monfalcone Dockyards. PT was obscured by solid overcast. At IP for ST, ST was observed to be obscured. Bomb run was then made on Monfalcone, target of opportunity. Ship building yards believed well hit. Warehouses and dock installations were left on fire. Workshops, floating drydock were hit. Near misses on torpedo boats.
- 21 April 1944:** Mission #29, target – Bucharest M/Y. Pathfinder method used because of 10/10 overcast, with unobserved results.
- 22 April 1944:** Lieutenant Colonel Aymesworth received Air Medal from General Twinning. Formal presentation was made.
- 22 April 1944:** Mission #30, target – Bad Voslau A/D. Entire pattern of bombs concentrated in target area. Large fires in factory and hangers observed, numerous hits in airdrome. Railroad lines North and South of target, and two gun A/A battery South of target believed hit.
- 24 April 1944:** Mission #31, target – Bucharest M/Y. Assigned target well covered. Two large railway repair shops, roundhouse destroyed. Possible hits on oil refinery.

SECRET

WAR DIARY CONTINUED:

- 24 April 1944:** Group commended for excellent results of bombing of Bad Voslau A/D on 23 April 1944. The following TWX was received from General Twinning
“The superior performance on the bombing attack on Bad Voslau, 23 April 1944, by the 304th Bombardment Wing is deserving of the highest commendation. No Bombardment organization has ever done a better job. The skill of your Bombardier’s and the Pilot’s ability to maintain good bombing formations is evidenced by the strike photos.
- 25 April 1944:** Mission #32, target – Turin A/C Factory. 12 – 15 direct hits on the target. Some bombs short and some over, but target believed well covered. Smoke obscured accurate visual observation, two aircraft destroyed on ground.
- 26 April 1944:** Mission #33, target – Port San Stefano. Bombs fell short, on and over target. There were hits on the loading and unloading facilities, in the town and in the water.
- 28 April 1944:** Mission #34, target – Toulon Munitions Factory. Target area believed well covered, but accurate observation impossible because of smoke from smudge port and prior bombing. Some hits South side of LaSeyne Bay and on Mediterrale Shipyards.
- 29 April 1944:** 2nd Lieutenant Kodros, O-575231, Special Services Officer, was promoted to 1st Lieutenant since 26 March 1944.
- 30 April 1944:** Mission #35, target – Milan/Lambrate M/Y. Good concentration in Western portion of fairly heavily loaded M/Y. Some hits on roundhouse and turntable. Some bombs carried over into industrial area.
- 30 April 1944:** Party held in the Officer’s Club in honor of P-38 pilots.

SECRET

OPERATIONAL MISSION SUMMARY

Mission #19 2 April 1944: At 0745 hours, 35 B-24's took off to bomb Steyr Damlier Puch A/C Factory, escorted by P-38's and P-47's. 7 A/C returned early because of malfunctions. 28 A/C dropped 280 x 500lb. (70 tons) GP.1 second nose .01 second tail fuse bombs on primary target at 1217 hours from 21,000'. 28 A/C returned at 1413 hours. Flak was intense, accurate, heavy at Steyr. Use of chaff believed most effective. 20 – 30 FW 190's and ME 109's, first observed in Northern Yugoslavia at 1043 hours, did not attack, but were attacked by P-38 escort. These E/A followed into the target area where 30 – 40 additional S/E/A, plus ME 110's, ME 210's, and JU88's, joined the attacks. Attacks were not aggressive, which came in from 3 and 9 o'clock. S/E/A came in at 6 o'clock, but dove below the formation. ME 110's attacked in pairs. 15 FW 190's were observed firing rockets, in line from 9 o'clock into the Group ahead. 10 ME 109's fired cannons from 9 o'clock after the bomb run, black and orange burst. 5 JU 88's with rockets at 3 o'clock, 800 yards away did not attack. S/E/A were generally silver colored, some with broad white bands around fuselage. ME 210's were painted black. Some S/E/A had belly tanks. Claims are 3,2,1. Results; Bombs fell South and East of briefed target area. Some scattered hits in target area.

Mission #20 3 April 1944, At 0710 hours, 31 B-24's took off to bomb North half of Budapest Main M/T, Hungary, escorted by P-38's and P-47's. 2 A/C returned early and 5 A/C returned prior to bombing. 24 A/C dropped 240 x 500 lb. (60 tons) GP.1 second nose .025 second tail fuse bombs on primary target at 1105 hours, from 22,000'. 24 A/C returned at 1351 hours. 1 Bombardier slight flak wound. 1 radio operator, flak in right arm, slight. No fighters encountered, flak was intense, accurate, heavy at Budapest. Results: Target well covered.

OPERATIONAL MISSION SUMMARY (Continued)

Mission #21 4 April 1944, At 1003 hours, 26 A/C took off to bomb Bucharest M/Y and RR facilities escorted by 20 P-38's. 4 A/C returned early, and 2 A/C returned prior to bombing. 17 A/C dropped 170 x 500 lb. (42 ½ tons) GP.1 second nose, 0.25 second tail fuse bombs on primary target at 1413 hours from 22,000'. 2 A/C jettisoned 20x 500 lb. bombs at IP Lunguletul because of supercharger trouble. 19 A/C returned at 1731 hours. 1 A/C lost at 4000N/1900N. Last reported, it was on fire. 30 – 40 E/A encountered. ME 109's, FW 190's, and a few ME 210's. S/E/A attacked singly and in pairs from 6 and 12 o'clock, high, level, and low. Attacks were not well organized and enemy pilots appeared inexperienced. Attacks were made from 1350 hours to 1425 hours. ME 210's didn't attack. Several ME 109's seemed to fire disc or platter like objects to 300 yards at 12 o'clock. These broke into numerous pieces. S/E/A were silver, some with red spinners. Some S/E/A had belly tanks or wing tanks. Flak was moderate, inaccurate, heavy at Bucharest. Barrage type, white burst above formation. Results: M/Y well covered. Many fires and numerous explosions, smoking, rising to 7500'. Oil refinery North of target burning. Hits in industrial plants adjacent North and South of M/Y.

Mission #22 7 April 1944. At 1100 hours, 33 A/C took off to bomb Stazione Nupia M/Y – Bologna, Italy, escort not seen. 1 A/C returned early, and 2 A/C returned prior to bombing. 29 A/C dropped 925 x 100 lb. (46.25 tons) GP.1 second nose .025 second tail fuse bombs on primary target at 1321 hours from 21,800'. 14 of these A/C returned to base with 225 x 100 lb. (11 1/2 tons) because of rack malfunctions and 5 A/C jettisoned 50 x 100 lb. (2 ½ tons) in Adriatic for some reason. 1 A/C returned 40 x 100 lb. bombs to base because of rack malfunctions. 30 A/C returned at 1503 hours. No casualties. No fighters and slight, inaccurate, medium flak. Results; Target area well covered, particularly central, and Western portions. Some bombs fell short and over.

OPERATIONAL MISSION SUMMARY (Continued)

Mission #23 12 April 1944. At 0842 hours, 42 A/C took off to bomb Bad Voslau Assembly Plant, buildings 1,2,3,4 Germany, escorted by P-38's. 2 A/C returned early and 1 A/C returned prior to bombing. 38 A/C dropped 1270 x 100 lb. (63.5 tons) GP clustered 1 second nose fuse and non – delay tail fuse bombs on primary target at 1216 hours from 18,600'. 11 of these A/C returned bombs to base and 11 of these A/C jettisoned 102 x 100 lb. bombs in the sea. 37 A/C returned at 1441 hours. 1 A/C lost at target area. 1 tail gunner, navigator, engineer seriously hurt. 70 – 80 E/A, ME 110's, ME 210's, JU 88's, ME 109's and FW 190's attacked the Group over target area at 1205 to 1245 hours. T/E/A, in groups of 4 – 6, attacked from 12 o'clock high in line abreast, firing rockets and cannons passing through the formation, and also attacked singly and in pairs from 6 – 10 o'clock, these E/A flying parallel with Group and then coming to attack. S/E/A attacked from 6 – 9 o'clock high, low, and level, S/E/A carried 2 rockets. T/E/A were generally colored gray or silver, S/E/A brown, orange, or silver. S/E/A had belly tanks, attacked were aggressive. Flak was moderate, inaccurate, heavy.

Mission #24, 13 April 1944. At 0950 hours, 24 A/C took off to bomb Budapest/Tokol A/D, Hungary. 4 A/C returned early. 20 A/C dropped 388 x 120 lb. (23.04 tons) frag instantaneous fuse bombs on primary target at 1253 hours from 22,800'. 2 of the above A/C returned 6 clusters to base. 16 A/C returned at 1530 hours. 4 A/C lost in vicinity of rally point. 1 A/C lost when landing at home base because tire blew out. 16 FW 190's were over the formation at the IP, but did not attack. 30 – 36 E/A, ME 109's, FW 190's, ME 110's, and ME 210's attacked aggressively after bombs away from 1250 to 1320 hours. Five ME 110's inline abreast, firing rockets come in from 3 – 5 o'clock low, in waves of two. 1 ME 109 with 2 wing tanks, 1 ME 210 with belly tanks was observed. Flak was moderate, inaccurate, heavy, Bombs covered airdrome and hangers.

OPERATIONAL MISSION SUMMARY (Continued)

Mission #25, 15 April 1944. At 0822 hours, 30 B-24's took off to bomb secondary target, industrial center of Bucharest, Rumania. 6 A/C returned early. 24 A/C dropped 240 x 500 lb. (60 tons) GP bombs on secondary target at 1206 hours from 22,500'. 24 A/C returned to base at 1510 hours. 1 A/C lost after take-off, A/C crashed in our area and exploded. 10-man crew of A/C was killed. Approximately twenty (20) E/A were observed in the target area. P-38's were excellent cover no passes were made on the formation. S/E/A were painted gray or silver. All E/A were several hundred feet beneath formation. The Group, seeing no red – red flare from lead Combat Wing to abandon PT, observing lead Combat Wing rally off target, and the ETA having reached bomb at point where lead Combat Wing rallied off target. It is believed, this was six miles S. E. of Bucharest. No visual observations possible because of 10/10 undercast. Flak moderate, inaccurate, heavy,

Mission #26, 16 April 1944. At 0730 hours, 30 B-24's took off to bomb secondary target – Turnal Severin M/Y. 4 A/C returned early. 26 A/C dropped 260 x 500 lb. (65 tons) GP bombs on secondary target at 1046 hours from 20,600'. 26 A/C returned to base at 1307 hours. No fighters and moderate, accurate, heavy flak encountered. Good concentration of bomb in M/Y, workshops, adjacent warehouse by preceding Groups.

Mission #27, 17 April 1944. At 0930 hours, 30 A/C took off to bomb M/Y at Sofia. 4 A/C returned early. 26 A/C dropped 971 x 100 lb. (48.55 tons) on primary target at 1220 hours from 21,500'. 4 of the above A/C returned 30 x 100 lb. bombs to base and 6 of the A/C, jettisoned 39 x 100 lb. bombs in the sea. 26 A/C returned to base at 1148 hours. E/A engaged by escort, were observed in target area. E/A attacked a group preceding this one. 4 FW 190's, 3 of which were black and 1 silver, passed under the formation between IP and PT. 2 ME 109's were observed shot down by our fighters in target area. Flak, moderate to intense, inaccurate, and heavy. Aiming point was to the left part of the PT due to collision course with groups on our right and left. Bombs fell short, through M/Y and over the city.

OPERATIONAL MISSION SUMMARY (Continued)

Mission #28, 20 April 1944. At 1008 hours, 39 A/C took off to bomb Monfalcone Dock Yards. 26 A/C dropped 253 x 500 lb. (63.25 tons) GP bombs on target of opportunities at 1306 hours from 18,500'. 2 of the above A/C returned 7 x 500 lb. bombs to base. 39 A/c returned to base at 1502 hours. At 1309 hours at 18,500', 4 miles N. W. of Trieste, 3 E/A, probably ME 210's, brown with a yellow band around fuselage came in from 3 o'clock level, peeled off to 6 o'clock low, and came in again from 9 o'clock. These E/A did not attack, never came any closer than 800 yards, but may have attacked the following formations. No flak. Solid overcast obscured PT. At IP to ST, ST was observed to be obscured. Bomb run was made on Monfalcone. Ship Building Yards believed well hit. Warehouses and Dock installations were left on fire. Workshops, Floating dry dock were hit. Near on torpedo boats.

Mission #29, 21 April 1944. At 0850 hours, 35 A/C took off to bomb S. E. portion of Bucharest M/Y. 1 A/C returned early, and 3 A/C returned prior to bombing. 31 A/C dropped 309 x 500 lb. (77.25 tons) of GP bombs on primary target at 1225 hours at 23,600'. 1 of the above A/C jettisoned 1 x 500 lb. bomb in the sea. 28 A/C returned to base at 1620 hours. 2 A/C are missing. Pathfinder method use because of 10/10 undercast, with unobserved results. Flak was intense, accurate, and heavy.

Mission #30, 23 April 1944. At 1025 hours, 34 A/C took off to bomb Bad Voslau A/D. 9 A/C returned early, and 2 A/C returned prior to bombing. 23 A/C dropped 230 x 500 lb. (57.5 tons) RDX bombs on primary target at 1416 hours from 21,600'. 23 A/C returned to base at 1637 hours. 10 – 15 ME 109's were observed in the target area, but did not attack this Group. 6 – 10 ME 109's, staggered, attacked preceding group from 12 o'clock high. 3 ME 109's, abreast, passed over the groups, high right out of range and did not attack. 1 ME 109 attacked the Group behind from 1 o'clock low. E/A were generally dark with light markings, some possibly with blue bellies. Entire pattern of bombs concentrated in target area. Large fires in factory and hangers observed. Numerous hits on airdrome. RR lines North and South of target, and 2 A/A guns South of target believed hit. Flak was intense, inaccurate, and heavy.

OPERATIONAL MISSION SUMMARY (Continued)

Mission #31, 24 April 1944. At 0840 hours, 38 A/C took off to bomb Bucharest M/Y. 3 A/C returned early. 35 A/C dropped 350 x 500 lb. (87.50 tons) GP bombs on primary target at 1234 hours from 21,300'. 35 A/C returned to base at 1548 hours. No fighters and flak was intense, accurate and heavy. Assigned target well covered. Two large railway repair shops, roundhouse were destroyed. Possible hits on oil refinery.

Mission #32, 25 April 1944. At 0854 hours, 38 A/C took off to bomb Turin A/C Factory. 2 A/C returned early, and 2 A/C returned prior to bombing. 30 A/C dropped 300 x 500 lb. (75 tons) GP bombs on primary target at 1310 hours from 21,000'. 1 A/C dropped 10 x 500 lb. (2.5 tons), 10 miles South of Airasca. 1 A/C returned with 6 x 500 lb. bombs to base and 2 A/C jettisoned 20 x 500 lb. bombs in the sea. 31 A/C returned to base at 1611 hours. 1 A/C was lost. No fighters and flak was moderate, accurate, and heavy. Results were 12 – 15 direct hits on the target. Some bombs fell short and some over, but target believed well covered. Two E/A destroyed on the ground.

Mission # 33, 28 April 1944. At 1143 hours, 35 B-24's took off to bomb loading and unloading facilities of Port San Stefano. 3 A/C returned to base early. 31 A/C dropped 310 x 500 lb. (77.5 tons) GP bombs on primary target at 1459 hours from 23,000'. 1 A/C returned 10 x 500 lb. bombs to base. 32 A/C returned to base at 1640 hours. No Fighters and flak was moderate, inaccurate and heavy. Bombs fell short, on and over the target. There were hits on the loading and unloading facilities, in the town and in the water.

Mission #34, 29 April 1944, At 0830 hours, 30 A/C took off to bomb Toulon Munitions Factory. 4 A/C returned early to base. 26 A/C dropped 150 x 1000 lb. (75 tons) GP bombs on the primary target at 1227 hours from 23,000'. 2 of the above A/C returned to base with 4 x1000 lb. bombs and 1 A/C is missing. NO Fighters, but flak was intense, accurate and heavy. Target area believed well covered, but accurate observation was impossible because of smoke from smudge pots and prior bombing. Some hits on the South side of La Seyne Bay and Mediterrale shipyards.

OPERATIONAL MISSION SUMMARY (Continued)

Mission #35, 30 April 1944. At 0825 hours, 32 B-24's took off to bomb Milan/Lambrate M/Y. 1 A/C returned to base early. 31 A/C dropped 308 x 500 lb. (154 tons) of GP bombs on primary target at 1204 hours from 18,600'. 2 of the above A/C returned to base with 2 x 50 lb. bombs. 31 A/C returned to base at 1440 hours. In the target area, 3 black ME 109's preceded by a single ME 109, attacked the second Combat Unit from 6 o'clock low, breaking away at 100 yards. The single ME 109, made a second attack. One ME 109 was destroyed. Flak was moderate, inaccurate, and heavy at Milan. Good concentration in Western portion of heavily loaded M/Y. Some bombs carried over into industrial area.