

MISSION

RECORD AND REPORTS

OF

LT. WILLIAM H. STELTE

450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

15TH ARMY AIR FORCE

1944-1945

ITALY

C O M B A T
FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE (B-24)
450TH B.G. 783RD B.S.
AFG 523

One DECEMBER 18 1944 Two

Florisdorf Oil Refinery, Vienna, Austria.

Co-pilot for Fagan T745 985-3 UC-PFF Temp-350 A 25.5 E-51-38

No engine trouble and returned with good supply of gasoline. F-light to moderate, heavy to accurate. They tracked us pretty good; reports from number four man said we had burst following us all the way of the bomb run. Ben into light F on the rally. No damage. Heard a 17 say he had two engines out and a supercharger on another and that at present he was throwing things out and intended to bail out and for some one to radio in his position. Everyone calm to the end.

Two DECEMBER 20 1944 Four

Salzburg M/Y, Germany.

Co-pilot for Fleming T800 311-2 UC-PFF Temp-300 A94.5

Engine run-up wasn't so hot but the ship worked swell thru-out the mission. First mission for the crew except Sievers and Evans; Starke was checked out by another engineer. F-heavy and accurate but skant. Two burst rocked the ship.

Three DECEMBER 21 1944 Six

Rosenheim M/Y, Germany.

Co-pilot for Marston T915 777-2 UC-PFF A22.0 B10.5s E-51-38

This was the pilots last mission. No engine trouble. F-None. Number three man fell out after leaving the target. Landed in Northern Italy.

Four DECEMBER 25 1944 Seven

Innsbruck M/Y, Austria.

Co-pilot for Cornnezier T800 941-6 Vis B10.5s E-none

No engine trouble. F-heavy and accurate and intense. The pilot got a piece of flak in his foot about inch and half at bombs away so I had to bring the ship home. Stayed with the formation until out of the Udine Area then came on in alone. Jake lead making two 350s on the target area. Fagan (with Home) was seen going down smoking pretty bad. Another ship blew-up on the second pass at the gun-batteries. Ambulances met us at the field after shooting off our red flares.

Five DECEMBER 27 1944 Eight

Railroad Line, Brenner Pass, Italy.

Pilot T745 339-5 Vis B3.20s

F-heavy, intense and accurate. We lost the use of the number four supercharger on the way up. We ran into an unpredicted flak area and they peppered us good. Five good flak holes...even less than the previous day. Nearly lost the right sileron due to this flak. Jim noticed one ship that blew up. Bombing was good causing a landslide on the rail-loop.

SixDECEMBER 29 1944NineBrenner Pass (Loop), Italy

Pilot T745 405-5 Vis B6.10 A24.0 E-None

No engine trouble. Weather not so good. Not prepared for first flak which hit lead ship killing box leader, our CO. Formation stayed together but lost altitude. Lead salvoed, number two salvoed thru bomb-bay doors just missing us. Number two fell out (Ehrlich). Caught up with the leader who took us over more flak, believed Bolzano. R/C missed with a good piece that went thru ammo. cans and out the other side. We left formation and climbed to 25.5 over Venice. Weather drove us to 1000 feet over the Adriatic. Got a bearing from B/F and few on instruments. Finally came in at 500 feet. Tower directed me to the field.

SevenDECEMBER 30 1944TenOra R.R. and M/Y, Italy

Pilot T800 658-7 Vis A24.0 B8.5s E-None

No engine trouble. Ship was Paoli Local. Got heavy prop-wash on takeoff and getting into formation. This mission was a cooks tour of Italy. Our wheels would not lock down after peeling off of the formation on return. Cranked down...finally landed...wheels locked. F-slight and inaccurate..saw some of the rocket flak today.

EightFEBRUARY 7 1945TwelveMoosebierbaum Oil Refinery, Vienna, Austria.

Pilot T730 787-5 Vis A25.5 B8.5s E-51

F-Heavy, intense, accurate. Supercharger trouble on number two. Had strong head wind on the way up but a quick return trip. We got a hit in number four supercharger and lost it completely over the target; our MP fell from 40 to 24". We stayed at A18.0 and beat the group home. We had some damage to one aileron. Seen the biggest bursts yet so far.

NineFEBRUARY 13 1945FourteenSouth East Goods Yards, Vienna, Austria.

Pilot T915 787-6 Vis A25.5 B8.5s Temp-28C E-?

F-Intense, inaccurate and heavy, barrage type. Route Flak by Lake Balton. Saw two German Jet Jobs. Received several flak holes in waist and around tail and one into the nose wheel section.

TenFEBRUARY 17 1945FifteenGraz M/Y, Austria.

Pilot T745 787-6 UC-PFF A24.0 B8.5s E-?

F-Target Heavy and accurate but light. We were scheduled for the St. Valentine Tank Works, near Linz. Got Flak at Graz on the way to primary and at primary, but bombed alternate. No engine trouble. Vapor trails proved beautiful. Land with about 200 G.G.

Eleven

FEBRUARY 24, 1945

Sixteen

Verone, M/Y, Italy.

Pilot	787-6	V1s	B8.5s	A24.0	E-none
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Got lost on rendy, but got together at remote rendy point. We climbed through about 10.Oft of solid overcast, breaking out at 24.Oft. We made a 360 on the target. Leader had to fall out after the target because of the failure of number 3 engine. Got Hell for a bad landing from the Group Operations Officer. We had good bombing that day.

Twelve

FEBRUARY 27 1945

Seventeen

Salzburg M/Y, Germany (Primary)
Lienz M/Y, (Alternate)

Pilot 339-6 Vis B6.10s A25.5 E-none

The Mickey set went out and we headed for the flak. Did not drop the bombs, so headed for the alternate. The F-Heavy, intense, inaccurate at Salzburg, but none at Lienz. My co-pilot was our new Commanding Officer, Major Ingstrom. We left the target with 800 G.G. We lost number four due to lost of fuel pressure on the way back, but engineer transferred fuel to keep the engine operating.

Thirteen

MARCH 1 1945

Nineteen

Moosebierbaum Oil Refinery, Vienna, Austria.

Pilot T710 968-8-5 UC-PFF A27.0 B8.5g E-?

F-Heavy, inaccurate. Number two fell out at rendy, we moved up to number five position. The weather was clear up until Braslavka. Had new navigator that day

loaded in spite the fact that this was its 77th mission.

Fourteen

MARCH 9 1945

Twenty-One

Komaron M/Y, Austria. (Primary)
Maribor Loco-Depot, Yugoslavia.

Pilot T815 339-6 A23.5 B8.5s V1s E-?

The primary was covered and were only permitted to bomb it visual due to the fact it was so close to the front lines. We picked up some fact on the target. We headed out for the alternate. We started out in number nine position, but ended up in number 6. Hamer fell out and landed at Zara. Made a 360 on the target and finally bombed at 26.0. F-Heavy, intense, accurate. It never came up until bombs away. Lost number four supercharger off of the target, but got it back in. Flak holes in waist and rudder. Number seven man lost all four for awhile.

Fifteen

MARCH 10 1945

Twenty-Two

Maribor M/Y, Yugoslavia.

Pilot T1015 787-5 A24.0 B8.5s Temp 54C E-?

This was a visual mission, and everything was covered over. We got severe prop-wash and almost turned over on the bomb-run. The weather was pretty bad up and back. I brought my bombs back to the Adriatic and dropped them. Hit a thunderhead and snow at the spur. One ship was lost in the weather. We were pretty well froze up, had trouble seeing to land. Landed with a flat nose wheel.

SixteenMARCH 13 1945Twenty-FourRegensburg M/Y, Germany.

Pilot T745 845-5 A25.0 B6.5s UC-PFF E-51

F-Moderate and inaccurate. We flew and old Mickey Ship with a lot no-good radar equipment in it. This was one of the longest missions the group flew. It turned out to be one of the best of missions.

SeventeenMARCH 15 1945Twenty-SixMoosebierbaum Oil Refinery, Vienna Austria.

Pilot T745 454-1 A24.0 B6.5s PFF(Vis) E-7

I got credit for being Group Pilot today on the mission Reports from 15th Air Force. My co-pilot was Operations Officer of the Group. It was quite the experience flying lead, and the mission on the whole was good. The weather wasn't so hot, but good enough for us.

EighteenMARCH 20 1945Twenty-EightSt. Valentine Tank Works, Linz, Austria.
Amstettin M/Y, Austria.

Pilot T800 593-6 A19.0 B6.10s Vis E-7

The primary was covered over so we went to the Alternate at Amstettin. No flak was encountered at the target, but we got well peppered by some route flak in Yugo on the way home. It got a B17 which blew up a little distance from us. Seen a few chutes. One was caught on the plane as it went down.

NineteenMARCH 22 1945ThirtySouth-East Goods Siding, Vienna, Austria.

Pilot T715 787-2 A26.0 B8.5s Vis E-7

The weather was fine for flying. We were forced to drop four bombs on the way up to keep up with the formation. We finally went over allons behind the formation. There was malto flak, about the most I've ever seen. The group lost four ships this day.

TwentyMARCH 23 1945Thirty-TwoSt. Polten M/Y, Austria.

Pilot T730 803-7 A23.0 B40.1s Vis E-7

This was a no flak target. We had no navigator. The bombardier dropped the front left 3 racks through the doors and the rest of the bombs piled up in the bays without going through the doors. We had to take the bombs out to the Adriatic and throw them out by hand. Starks is in for the DFC on this.

Twenty-OneMARCH 25 1945Thirty-FourBruck Lietha M/Y, Austria.

Pilot T800 045-3 A20.0 B40.1s Vis E-7

Another no flak target for us, however another box caught some. We had a hundred-pounder go off a few feet underneath of us. We ran into a lot of weather on the return. The lead missed the target.

Twenty-Two

MARCH 31 1945

Thirty-Six

Linz Main M/Y, Austria.

Pilot T715 593-7-4 A25.5 B8.5S E-?

An Infantry Captain from the lines flew with us this morning. We ran into a lot of weather, some of the worse. We went over the target in number four position as Deputy Lead. No. 4 mistakenly dropped his bombs thru the doors before the target. We lost our oxygen in part of the ship, but managed to stay with the formation.

Twenty-Three

APRIL 6 1945

Thirty-Seven

Verona (Side Rail-Track), Italy.

Co-pilot for James W. Evans T845 787-5 A24.0 B40.1s E-none.

I was checking out Jim today and let him fly left seat. The last time we ever flew together. We had no particular trouble. We ran into a lot of flak, but our steep rally prevented our going through the worst of it. The navigator was strickly off the ball.

Twenty-Four

APRIL 8 1945

Thirty-Eight

Vipiteno Railroad Bridge, Italy (Brenner Pass)

Pilot (Check-out Co-pilot by name of Celkers) T 405-8 B5.10s
A25.5 E-none

I was checking out a new first pilot. We used Innsbruch for an IP and made two 360s on the target (bad navigation) I don't know what saved us this day. Took over number seven spot after he fell out smoking. Heard him call for fighter support the last I heard. We thought we would have to feather number three. Lost three ships today with one going to Switzerland.

Twenty-Five

APRIL 18 1945

Thirty-Nine

Tactical Defenses, Bologna, Italy.

Pilot (Deputy Lead) T1200 603-4 B10.5s A23.0 E-38

Had Street for Co-pilot this time. We held the formation together real well in spite of my first time at Deputy Lead. The Flak was Henry Intense, inaccurate. We had to open our bomb-bays about 1 hr. before the target to prevent accidental dropping on our own troops. Noticed the markings the ground forces had for us. Really something new in bombing.

Twenty-Six

APRIL 19 1945

Forty

Railroad Viaduct, Avisio, Italy.

Pilot (Deputy Lead) T 481-4 B8.5s A25.5 E-?

Had Street for Co-pilot again. We flew a new M model for the first time in my history in flying a B24. A late rally by a new box leader drew us into heavy, intense, but inaccurate flak. Nos 2,5,8. took off for themselves. 20-Italian Mel09 we in the area for stragglers.

Correction
(Sorte 10 & 12 Double Missions not Single)

<u>Twenty-Seven</u>	<u>APRIL</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>1945</u>	<u>(Forty-Two)</u> <u>Forty-Four</u>
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Mairhof Railroad Viaduct, Austria.

Pilot (Deputy Lead) T 481-4 A17.0 B5.10s E-7 Vis

Had Steve Ramely for co-pilot. There was no flak and it turned out to be a good one. We had to increase our altitude after the target to get over the Alps and to get home. The Group did 100% bombing on this target.

<u>Twenty-Eight</u>	<u>APRIL</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>1945</u>	<u>Forty-Five</u>
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Legnago Road Bridge, Italy.

Pilot T 603-7 A20.5 B5.10s E-7 Vis

Had Steve with me again. We did not get any flak, but the two boxes ahead of us did. We got another 100% on this target. Everything went fine.

<u>Twenty-Nine</u>	<u>APRIL</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>1945</u>	<u>Forty-Six</u>
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San Ambrogio Marshalling Yards, Verona, Italy.

Pilot T 986-2 A24.5 E10.5s E-7 Vis

Another new first pilot for a co-pilot. Guy by the name of Carrell. We actually encounter no flak at the target. The lead ship only dropped one bomb. Turned out to be a fair mission. Three ships failed to make the field because of the lost of engines. One lost three engines.

<u>Thirty</u>	<u>APRIL</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>1945</u>	<u>Forty-Seven</u>
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Casara Ammunition Stores Dump, Italy.

Pilot T 405-5 A24.0 E10.5s E-51

Weatherforced us to return to the base with our bombs however we did cross the target. We could only bomb visually so all the alternates were covered. No. 2 prop governor stuck at 2000rpm so we dropped our bombs in the Adriatic and beat the rest of the formations home. This was also the groups last mission in the war, and I believe the 16th Air Forces.