

55BW Mission Summary No. 156, 19 Jan 45 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 19 Jan 45, 108 B-24 a/c were scheduled and between 0827-0905A, 112 e/c took off to bomb a target in YUGOSLAVIA. There were 6 early returns.

Group assemblies and two line rendezvous of two Bombardment Groups each were effected as ordered. There was no fighter escort scheduled.

106 a/c were over assigned target between 1150-1153. Crews had been briefed to bomb only if target was visible and identified with certainty. Finding Primary Target completely obscured, the Wing Leader proceeded to assigned Alternates, and, finding them also obscured, ordered return to base. One a/c, separated from formation while flying through cloud, dropped 2 tons of 500 lb GP bombs, fused .1N - .01T, from 19,000' at 1208A on the East M/Y at ZAGREB. 2 sortie a/c jettisoned 4 tons, 2 early returns jettisoned 2 tons of bombs. 4 early returns brought back 8 tons and 103 sortie a/c returned 206 tons of bombs to bases.

No flak was encountered.

No e/a was encountered; 6 e/a were seen by one Bombardment Group.

105 a/c were down at bases between 1350-1500A. No a/c was lost, none is missing; 1 a/c landed at a friendly field.

Route was flown as briefed except for deviations necessitated by weather conditions.

Weather: Takeoff, clear and visibility over 12 miles. Route out, clear to coast; 4-7/10 cumulus and stratocumulus undercast with breaks over the YUGO mountains, tops to 13,000'. Thin cirrus at 20,000' and also at 24,000'. Deck of cirrostratus at 24,000' became very dense near target. Conditions on return were the same, but clear over ADRIATIC below 20,000'. Base on return, 4/10 stratocumulus at 3,000' and 1/10 altocumulus above 12,000'. Visibility over 15 miles. Winds at target 180/55K et 20,000' and temperature -18°. An extreme wind shift was encountered near target where dense cirrostratus clouds were encountered.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 19 Jan 45 et 0830A, 28 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb a target in YUGOSLAVIA.

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

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 (8 x 500 GP fused .1N - .01T) in ADRIATIC. One a/c landed at VENOSA and its bombs were removed there. Route was flown as briefed to IP of PT where it was seen to be impossible to bomb visually. The course was changed toward 1st AT. At 1150A it was seen that both the 1st and 2nd ATs were closed in and it was decided to bomb GRAZ by PFF. Weather forced formation to turn back at 4640N-1511E at 1204A. KLAGENFURT was then picked up on PFF scope but due to weather it was impossible to make a run on it. Formation then took another look at PT and 1st AT, and finding them closed in returned to base.

27 a/c returned to base, mean landing time 1500A. The a/c which landed at a friendly field to refuel has returned to base.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 19 Jan 45, 24 scheduled a/c plus 4 spares took off at 0850A to bomb a target in YUGOSLAVIA.

Group form-up and bomber rendezvous made as planned without incident; on course over SPINAZZOLA at 1016A. at 10,000'.

Two a/c returned early. One a/c jettisoned; 1 a/c returned bombs to base.

Group turned back at 1151A at 4530N-1510E after receiving orders from Wing Air Commander of 485th Bombardment Group, who advised that the 485th Group had been over PT and both AT's and that they were closed in.

At the time this Group turned back they were approaching multi-layer clouds with tops at 28,000' with a low layer at 10,000'.

26 a/c returned full bomb loads of 52 tons to base.

26 a/c landed at base between 1340 and 1400A.

Route flown as briefed with only slight deviations to avoid weather.

4. 465th Bomb Group. On 19 Jan 45, 28 a/c of 28 a/c scheduled took off at 0905A to bomb a target in YUGOSLAVIA.

Group assembly accomplished at 0940A. at 7,000' and rendezvous with 464th Group accomplished at 1003A at 9,000'.

There were 3 early returns; 1 a/c jettisoned, 1 a/c returned bombs to base.

No flak or enemy aircraft encountered.

Formation turned back at 1152A. At 4530N-1500E after receiving recall from Wing Leader. 11 bombs returned to base. Solid undercast, tops 11,000', extended from YUGO coast to point of turnback. When

formation turned back a solid bank of clouds extending to 30,000' could be observed immediately ahead to the north.

25 a/c landed at 1405A mean landing time. All a/c returned safely.

Route was flown as briefed except for deviations due to weather.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 19 Jan 45 at 0827A, 28 a/c scheduled took off to bomb a target in YUGOSLAVIA.

Group assembled over base at 9000' and led over ALTAMURA at 0945A with the 460th falling in behind. There was one early return. Bombs were returned to base.

At 0935A Col. Atkinson, after experiencing a complete radio failure of lead ship, relinquished lead to Capt Gerald H. Morris, Flight Commander of the 831st Squadron. Over YUGOSLAVIA a complete undercast at 13,000' was encountered. The leader, after determining that no targets of Plan Baker could be bombed visually and after receiving a message by radio to bomb no targets of Plan Able, decided to return. Point of turnback was 4615N-1525E. Formation became slightly scattered at this point, several a/c temporarily losing the formation. One a/c, #764, flew alone for several minutes, during which time the PT was identified through a break in the undercast. This a/c dropped 2 tons of 500 lb GP bombs fused .1N - .01T from 19,000' at 1208A, on a heading of 179°, on the East M/Y at ZAGREB. The first bomb was observed to have fallen approximately 300' short of the M/Y, which contained approximately 250 goods wagons. Clouds prevented further observations.

26 a/c returned all bombs to base.

Recapitulation:

1 a/c (early return) brought back	2 tons
1 e/c dropped on 2/ GREB E M/Y	2 tons
26 a/c returned to base	<u>52 tons</u>
28 a/c carried	56 tons

No e/a were encountered. Several unidentified a/c were observed at 4416N-1523E. An e/a believed to have been an HE-111 was seen. 5 SE a/c probably Me-109s were seen at 4610N-1528E. No flak was encountered.

PFF was used as navigational aids only. Equipment performed satisfactorily.

27 a/c landed at base, mean landing time 1426A.

Route was flown as briefed except for deviations required by weather conditions.

