

55BW Mission Summary No. 78, dated 10 Aug 44 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 10 Aug 44, from 0710-0727B, 80 B-24 a/c of 82 a/c scheduled of the 55th Bombardment Wing took off to attack the ASTRA ROMANO O/R. Only 3 groups participated: the 460, 464, and 485 Bomb Gps.

Group assemblies were accomplished without incident except the 460 Gp which due to weather conditions had a late takeoff. Wing rendezvous was made at 0811B. There were 11 early returns.

Escort of P-38s was met at 0940B at 4351N1950E, and later at 1045B, 25 P-51s joined the bomber formation.

A total of 22 SEF e/a, mostly ME-109s were observed by 2 Gps with no encounters. IAH was encountered at the target with MAH observed at BUCHAREST.

A total of 69 a/c were over the target from 1106-1109B from 20,000-23,200'. 67 B-24s dropped 163.75 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs. 7 a/c jettisoned 13¼ tons. 2 a/c returned 1 3/4 tons to bases.

Results:

460 Gp - Photos show: PLOESTI, ASTRA ROMANO O/R. Several strikes in SE corner of storage area. Several strikes across center choke point in M/Y SW of the target. Remainder of strikes in open fields.

464 Gp - Photos show: PLOESTI, ASTRA ROMANO O/R. Strikes in open field SE of the target.

485 Gp - Photos show: PLOESTI, ASTRA ROMANO O/R. Strikes in open fields East of the target.

No damage was inflicted to vital installations. There is possible damage to one or two oil storage tanks and to the M/Y SW of the target.

1 B-24 was lost to flak on the bombing run. 2 a/c are missing. One landed at a friendly field to refuel. From 1427-1435B, 65 a/c landed at home bases.

Route was flown as briefed.

Weather: Enroute visibility 15-20 miles with 6/10 alto stratus tops 12,000' and 3/10 stratocumulus tops 3000'. From DINARIC ALPS to target visibility 25 miles. Visibility over target was 10 miles with much haze and smoke.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 10 Aug 44, at 0727B, 24 of 26 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb the ASTRA ROMANO O/R at PLOESTI, ROUMANIA. 2 a/c returned early.

On the bomb run at 1106B, one of our a/c received a direct flak hit in the bomb-bay which caused an explosion. The left wing broke off at the root and the tail disintegrated. 3 chutes were seen as the a/c spiraled down.

21 a/c were over the primary target, the ASTRA ROUANO O/R, at 1107B. 20 a/c dropped 50 tons of 500 lb RDX bombs, .1N, .025T fusing. Due to rack malfunction, one a/c failed to release bombs. This a/c jettisoned 5 bombs in the ADRIATIC and returned 5 bombs to the base. Bombing was by both Pathfinder and offset.

The route was flown as briefed with a slight variation right of course on the return route to avoid flak at LESKOVAC 4300N2157E.

21 a/c returned to base with a mean landing time of 1435B.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 10 Aug 44, 28 scheduled B-24 a/c took off at 0711 to bomb ASTRA ROMANO O/R at PLOESTI, ROUMANIA.

Group form-up, bomber and wing rendezvous were made as briefed without incident. 4 a/c returned early, 2 of which reached the IP before turning back. Both of these a/c joined another group for protection on return to base.

24 a/c were over the target at 1109B (briefed 1055B) and 24 a/c dropped 57½ tons of 500 lb RDX bombs with .1 and .025T fusing, from 20,000'. 5 a/c jettisoned 12 tons of bombs. Bombing was done by visual means due to the PFF equipment going out during the bomb run.

The leader of the first attack unit used the A-5 automatic pilot. The leader of the second attack unit did not use A-5 because aileron servo motor went out.

There were no encounters with e/a. 1 a/c is missing.

23 a/c landed at base from 1427-1520B. Route was flown as briefed.

4. 485th Bomb Group. On 10 Aug 44, at 0710B, 28 B-24 of 23 a/c scheduled took off to bomb ASTRA ROMANO O/R. 5 a/c returned prior to bombing.

23a/c were over target at 1106B (briefed 1055B). 23 a/c dropped 56.25 tons of 500 lb RDX bomb (.1N and .025T Fusing) at 23,200'. A-5 was not used by 1st wave due to malfunction, target was bombed by PFF. A-5 and PFF were used by 2nd wave.

1 a/c jettisoned 4 bombs at 4440N2432E to lighten load so as to enable the a/c to stay with formation; this a/c incurred turbo malfunction. 1 a/c lost 1 bomb at 4428N2238E.

21 a/c landed, mean landing time 1432B. 1 a/c landed at a friendly field. 1 a/c is missing. Route was flown as briefed.

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