

55BW Mission Summary No. 86, 21 Aug 44 (Cont'd).

1. General Summary. On 21 Aug 44, between 0645-0703B, 122 B-24 a/c, of 122 a/c scheduled, took off to frag the A/D at NIS, YUGOSLAVIA. There were 2 early returns.

Group assemblies, line rendezvous, and Wing rendezvous were effected as ordered. Fighter escort, furnished by the 306th Fighter Wing, joined formation at 0945B near the IP, and, after giving excellent cover, left the formation at 1045B at the YUGOSLAV coast.

120 a/c were over the target between 0959-1004B. 117 a/c dropped 246.27 tons of clustered fragmentation bombs with instantaneous fusing from 18,800-20,500'. 7 a/c jettisoned 11.015 tons; 4 a/c returned 3.84 tons of bombs to bases.

Results:

460 Gp - Photos show NIS A/D with the NE portion of the l/g well covered with strikes. 1 bomber-transport and 1 SEF type a/c were destroyed.

464 Gp - Photos show NIS A/D with the pattern covering the NW portion of the a/d and the M/Y. 1 SEF type a/c was destroyed.

465 Gp - Photos show NIS A/D with the concentration located slightly W of the 2 W hangers. The S and SE portion of the a/d was covered with possible direct hits on the hangers. 1 SEF and 1 bomber transport type a/c were damaged.

485 Gp - Photos show NIS A/D with the N end NE portion covered with strikes. All 4 main hangars and workshops received many direct hits. 5 SEF and 1 bomber-transport type a/o were destroyed.

The a/d was well covered with strikes. Direct hits were scored on all hangers. 7 SEF and 2 bomber-transport type a/c were destroyed. 1 SEF and 1 bomber-transport type a/c were damaged. 9 a/c present remain apparently serviceable.

Reconnaissance photos show all 6 hangars to have roof damage, 4 of them with numerous holes in the roof. 1 hangar has one half of the roof missing and the interior is blackened, probably from fire.

Flak at target was SIH. MAH flak was encountered at 4317N-2037E. No e/a were seen.

Claims are 9 e/e Destroyed and 2 e/a Damaged (on ground).

119 a/c were down at bases between 1200-1210B. 1 a/c landed at a friendly field. No a/c was lost nor missing.

Route was flown as briefed.

Weather: Over ADRIATIC 5/10 cloud to 5,000', over DINARIC ALPS 6/10 altostratus and altocumulus at 12,000'. Target: 3/10 low cumulus forming and 8/10 cumulus-stratus at 20,000' (necessitating bombing altitude below cloud). Return: 2-3/10 cumulus over land to 10,000'. Visibility 15-20 mi. through haze.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 21 Aug 44, at 0650B, 31 scheduled a/c were dispatched to NIS A/D, YUGOSLAVIA.

The Gp formed its 2 attack units at 0745B. Rendezvous with the 485 Gp over ALTAMURA was accomplished at 0758B and with the Wing over SPINAZZOLA at 0809B. The P-51s were first sighted over the IP at 0947B and furnished target and withdrawal cover. They were last seen over the coast of YUGOSLAVIA on course at 1050B. 1 a/c returned early.

From 18,800', 30 a/c were over the PT, the A/D at NIS, YUGOSLAVIA at 1004B. 30 a/c dropped 63.06 tons of frag clusters. 1 a/c salvoed 7 clusters. SIH flak was encountered at target.

30 a/a returned to base with a mean landing time 1205B. .

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 21 Aug 44, 28 scheduled B-24 a/c and 1 spare took off at 0650B to bomb dispersed a/c and installations of the A/D at NIS, YUGOSLAVIA. Spare a/c returned.

Form up, line rendezvous and Wing rendezvous were as planned.

28 a/c over target 0959B (briefed 1000B). 26 dropped 54.84 tons from 19,500'. 1 a/c jettisoned 2.16 tons; 1 a/c jettisoned .24 tons; 1 returned 1.08 tons to base; 1 returned full load to base.

The A-5 pilot was used by the Group leader.

SIH flak was encountered at the target. S-MAH flak was also encountered at 4317N2037E.

Fighter escort consisting of 15-20 P-51s were first seen in the vicinity of the IP, ALEMSIxxO 4333N2142E at 09503 and provided target and withdrawal cover until 1048B at 4153N1910E.

27 e/c landed at base at 1140-1223B. 1 landed at BARI for gas and later returned.

4. 465th Bomb Group. 31 a/c of 31 schedule took off at 0645B on 21 Aug 44 to attack the dispersed a/c on NIS A/D, YUGOSLAVIA. 1 a/c returned early.

Group assembly and Wing rendezvous were effected as planned. The formation was joined by an escort of P-51s just as it was leaving the target at 1000B at 19,500' and the escort which is reported as

being very good, stayed with the formation until reaching the YUGOSLAV coast, leaving at approximately 1115B.

Flak at target was SIH and only a few bursts were seen. Enroute to target, SAH was encountered at RASKA. 4318N2057E, YUGOSLAVIA. No e/a were seen or encountered.

30 e/c were over target at 0959B at 19,250'; 29 dropped 59.75 tons of 20 lb frag clusters. 1 a/c dropped full load between IP and target; 1 jettisoned 30 bombs et 4142N1835E; 1 a/c jettisoned 18 bombs off coast of YUGOSLAVIA. Bombing was done visually using A-5 pilot.

30 a/c landed at 1210B.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 21 Aug 44 at 0703B, 32 B-24 a/c scheduled took off to bomb NIS A/D. Assembly was effected satisfactorily at 0730B, 9000'. Wing rendezvous was made over SPINAZZOLA at 0806B. Rendezvous with fighter escort, 12 P-51s was effected at 4335N2120E, 0955B. Escort left formation 4203N1940E at 1045B. There were no early returns.

32 a/c were over target et 1001B (briefed 1000B). 32 dropped 68.52 tons of frags from 20,500'. 1st wave used A-5 on bomb run; 2nd wave used PDI on bomb run. .6 tons were returned to base.

No e/a were seen or encountered. Flak at PT was SIH. En route, SIH flak was encountered at 4315N-2040E.

32 a/c landed, mean landing time 1200B.