

55BW Mission Summary No. 87, 22 Aug 44 (Cont'd).

1. On 22 Aug 44, between 0555-0611B, 118 B-24 a/c were scheduled and 118 a/c plus 3 spares took off to bomb the KORNEUBURG O/R near VIENNA, AUSTRIA. 16 scheduled a/c and the 3 spares returned early.

Group assemblies, line rendezvous, and Wing rendezvous were effected as ordered. Fighter escort joined formation at 0930B in the vicinity of LAKE BALATON, and remained with formation until 1120B at a point near the YUGOSLAV coast.

102 a/c were over target between 1015-1017B. 96 a/c dropped 237.25 tons of 500 lb GP bombs (.1N, .025T fusing) from 23000-24000'. 17 a/c jettisoned 30 tons; 11 a/c returned 26 tons to bases.

Results:

460 Gp - Photos show the KORNEUBURG Mineral Oil Refinery with no strikes visible in the target area.

464 Gp - Photos show the KORNEUBURG Mineral Oil Refinery completely covered with strikes. Numerous hits are visible on and around the distillation unit, the packing and dispatch section, the loading sidings and the oil storage tanks. Fires are visible within the vital area of the plant.

465 Gp - Photos show the KORNEUBURG Mineral Oil Refinery with no strikes visible in the target area.

485 Gp - Photos show the KORNEUBURG Mineral Oil Refinery with no strikes visible in the target area.

Reconnaissance photographs show the weight of the attack to have fallen on the center of the vital area inflicting severe damage. The gasoline rectifier, the oil treatment plant, and storage warehouses have been damaged severely. The boiler house, the dispatch building, and numerous goods wagons and tank cars were damaged. All through tracks leading to the refinery have been cut. Streets have been blocked. Additional heavy damage is expected to have been inflicted on the vital installations but smoke prevents further assessment.

Flak at target was M-IAH. No e/a were seen approaching formation.

97 8/c wore down at bases between 1210-1306B (mean landing time). 1 a/c was lost, 1 is missing, 2 landed at a friendly field.

Route was flown as briefed.

Weather: Few patches of cumulus over ADRIATIC, clear to target and in target area. Visibility 15 miles over entire route. 2/10

cumulus in WIENER NEUSTADT area; 1/10 cirrus off YUGOSLAV coast On return; clear at bases.

2. 460th Bomb Group. On 22 Aug 44, at 0600B, 31 scheduled a/c were dispatched to bomb the KORNEUBURG O/S near VIENNA, AUSTRIA.

Group formed two attack units in regular assembly area at 0652B and rendezvous with 485 accomplished over ALTAMURA. at 0700B. ling formed over SPINAZZOLA at 0711B, with 460 flying #3 position. Fighter escort of P-51s first sighted at 0927B near LAKE BALATON, furnishing penetration, target and withdrawal cover, and leaving formation at 1128B near BANJA LUKA.

7 a/c returned early.

From 24,000' 24 a/c were over target at 1017B. 22 a/c dropped 55 tons 500 lb GP bombs. Due to malfunctions 2 a/c failed to release bombs on target. 1 a/c (Gp Leader's) lost bombs midway between IP and target; the other jettisoned bombs 5 minutes after target time.

IIH flak over target area. Crews reported flak at 4736N-1552E from approximately 11 guns.

Route flown as briefed.

24 a/c returned to base with mean landing time of 1255B.

3. 464th Bomb Group. On 22 Aug 44 28 scheduled a/c and 3 spares took off at 0555B to bomb KORNEUBURG O/S, near VIENNA.

Group form-up, line rendezvous and Wing rendezvous were as prescribed.

3 scheduled a/c and 3 spare a/c returned early.

25 a/c over target at 1016B (briefed target time 0950B). 23 a/c dropped 57½ tons bombs from 23,200'. 1 a/c jettisoned 2½ tons at 4821N-1618E just after target time due to rack malfunction. 1 a/c jettisoned 2½ tons at 4812N-1604E at 1025B; select bar could not be put in select position and bombs could not be salvoed on target so were jettisoned individually by hand. 1 early return jettisoned 2½ tons et 4420N-1700E at 1047B in order to maintain altitude after loss of 2 turbos. 3 other early returns and 2 spares brought back 12½ tons of bombs.

The C-1 automatic pilot was used by the leader of each attack unit and the bombing was visual.

IAH flak at target, commencing at 1013B and lasting until 1020B. Formation on fringe of range from guns to east of VIENNA. Flak here reported includes flak from STOCKERAU 4824N-1612E, TULLN, 4818N-

1607E, and from 4814N-1610E. The various areas of flak overlapped one another. No e/a observed or encountered.

Fighter escort consisting of 16 P-51s first observed at 0930B at 4650N-1725E and provided escort to target, cover over target and withdrawal escort. 4 P-38s observed at 1113B et 4538N-1701E. Escort last observed at 1141B et 4420N-1700E.

1 a/c lost to flak at target. A/C hit in No. 1 and No. 2 engines and salvoed bombs immediately and went into steep controlled glide. 5 chutes seen to open before a/c hit the ground.

24 a/c landed at base between 1245B and 1307B.

Route flown as briefed.

4. 465th Bomb Group. On 22 Aug 44 31 a/c scheduled took off at 0605B to attack oil storage et KORNEUBURG, AUSTRIA.

Group assembly at 0654B at ANDRIA at 6,000' and Wing rendezvous at 0710B at SPINAZZOLA at 6,000'. P-51s joined as escort at 0930B at LAKE BALATON at 21,500' and followed through to target. P-38s joined at target end covered on withdrawal to YUGOSLAV coast.

There were 3 early returns.

IAH flak at target, but good axis of approach carried formation through relatively slight to moderate flak operating at extreme range. No e/a were encountered but a large number of e/a, believed to be ME-109s, were observed in the distance aggressively attacking another Wing at 4730N-1715E at 1000B with 4 B-24s seen to explode in mid-air. This was reported by an early return. A huge vapor trail being created by a very fast a/c believed to be a jet-propelled plane was seen at a distance of 3 miles in vicinity of BANJA LUKA, heading north enroute to target, and the same phenomenon was observed on return from a distance of 30 miles in vicinity of KNIN, YUGOSLAVIA with the a/c again heading north.

28 a/c dropped 67½ tons of bombs at 1015B. 1 a/c jettisoned 3 bombs in an open field near BARE, YUGOSLAVIA, from 22,300' to keep with formation; another jettisoned 4 bombs in LAKE BALATON at 0930B for some reason; and another jettisoned 2 bombs at 0913B and 2 more at 0937B also to keep up with formation.

Bombing was attempted visually using C-1 automatic pilot.

27 a/c landed et 1210B. 1 e/c landed at a friendly field.

Route flown as briefed.

5. 485th Bomb Group. On 22 Aug 44 at 0611B 28 a/c scheduled took off to bomb KORNEUBURG O/S.

Assembly of 485 effected et 0650B at 9,000'. Formation was satisfactory. Rendezvous with 460 effected at 0700B at 9,000', and Wing rendezvous over SPINAZZOLA accomplished at 0709B at 9,000'.

Rendezvous with fighter escort, consisting of 20 P-51s and P-38s, was effected without incident et 4540N-1720E at 0930B. Escort left formation at 4440N-1700E at 1130B.

3 e/c returned prior to bombing.

25 a/c over target et 1017B, target time 0950B. 23 a/c dropped 57.5 tons of bombs at 23,000'. 1 a/c had an accidental release on the bomb run and dropped its bombs between IP and target. A-5 was used on bomb run.

No e/a were seen or encountered. Flak at PT was M-IAH.

Return made without incident. 22 a/c landed, mean landing time 1306B. 2 a/c made emergency landings at VIS. Pilots of these crews evacuated to base but both a/c remained at VIS for repairs.

1 a/c is missing.